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The Influence of Family Solidarity on Religious Participation and Religiosity Among College Students

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THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY SOLIDARITY
ON RELIGIOUS PARTICIPATION AND RELIGIOSITY
AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

A Thesis

Presented To

The Faculty Of The Department of Sociology

Western Kentucky University

Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment

Of The Requirement For The Degree

Master of Arts

by

Michael Thomas Collins

December 1994

**THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY SOLIDARITY
ON RELIGIOUS PARTICIPATION AND RELIGIOSITY
AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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THE EFFECTS OF FAMILY SOLIDARITY ON
RELIGIOUS PARTICIPATION AND RELIGIOSITY
AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Michael T. Collins December 5, 1994 75 pages
Directed by Joan Krenzin, Lynn Newhart, Steve Groce
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The objective of this thesis was to gauge the predictive effects of family solidarity on religious participation and religiosity among college students. The study was undertaken using the theoretical perspective that the function of religion has changed as society has become increasingly modern. A short questionnaire was administered in mid-October 1994 to students in a mid-sized Southern university. The final sample consisted of 299 students under age 25. Cross-tabular analysis, bivariate correlations, and multiple regression were used to analyze the data. Results suggest that student's level of family solidarity was an influential factor in determining both religious participation (measured by church attendance) and religiosity. However, it had a much greater effect in terms of predicting religiosity.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Young adults are often cited as making a significant contribution to the consistently high percentage of people who discontinue religious participation (Caplovitz and Sherrow 1977; Hadaway 1989; Hoge 1981). The focus of this thesis is on young adults, specifically college students, and their highly publicized withdrawal from religion. In taking this focus, I will be addressing the general nature of religious participation and religiosity among college students. By religiosity, I am referring to the depth of one's religious feelings and the degree to which these feelings are translated into religious behavior (Roberts 1984). In the present study, religious participation refers exclusively to church attendance.

Any study that addresses the religious activity of young adults must take into account the influence of family. Religion is a social phenomenon that is inextricably linked to family life (Berger 1967; Grasmick, Wilcox, and Bird 1990). For example, research has shown that the family of origin has profound influence on the religious activity of young adults (Babchuk, Crockett, and Ballweg 1967). More specifically, I project that the family of origin's sense of

unity--in terms of interests, objectives, and standards-- influences one's religious attitudes and activity. Therefore, the influence of family solidarity on the religious attitudes and activity of college students was investigated. Family solidarity refers to the degree to which there is a shared feeling of unity and a willingness to put the needs of the family above one's own needs (Daatland 1990).

A major objective of this study was to gauge the predictive effects of family solidarity on religious participation and religiosity. While it could be safely assumed that there is a connection among these variables, in the present study I attempted to better clarify the nature of these relations in a fully modern setting. In view of this aim, a short questionnaire was administered to students in Introductory Sociology classes in a regional Southern university.

What follows in Chapter 2 is a review of the theoretical perspective taken for the study. In Chapter 3, a review of the literature is presented, addressing religious participation and religiosity in general and among college students. The hypotheses and the manner in which they were tested will be covered in Chapter 4; the other variables included in the study will also be covered in this section. The results of the data analysis are presented in Chapter 5. Last, in Chapter 6, I will summarize the findings, acknowledge limitations of the study, and provide

suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The approach taken for this study is essentially a functionalist approach. Religion has always performed societal functions. However, the functions of religion have been altered and transformed through time.

Durkheim's Study of Religion

Emile Durkheim was one of the first sociologists to analyze the role of religion in society, which he did in his oft-cited The Elementary Forms of Religious Life ([1915] 1965). His approach was decidedly functionalist, and his definition of religion is as follows:

a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things which unite into one single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them. (Durkheim [1915], 1965 p. 62)

Acknowledging that some form of religion has been active in all places and at all times, Durkheim sought to identify the most elemental features common to all religions. In doing so, he studied (or drew from studies of) the most primitive religions. It was in these religions, he reasoned, that these common features would be most easily discernable. These religions existed in societies less complicated than modern societies. In exploring the religions of such primitive Australian tribes

as the Narrinyeri, the Arunta, the Loritja, and others, he sought to identify features common to all religions that perform vital functions in holding society together as a whole. Durkheim explained religion in social, not supernatural, terms. He asserted that the conceptions of gods and supernatural beings are essentially mythical. Yet, he did not believe that individuals were being deceived in believing in such supernatural beings or forces. These beliefs create a moral power which, in fact, does exist and performs societal functions. According to Durkheim, religious beliefs

give the effect of an outside power,
superior to us, which gives us our law
and judges us, but also aids and sustains
us. (Durkheim [1915] 1965, p. 317)

Durkheim divided all things into two categories: the above mentioned "sacred" and the profane. The former category consisted of extraordinary items which inspire awe, reverence, and possibly fear. In Durkheim's own words, these items were "set apart and forbidden" ([1915] 1965, p. 62). Examples of the sacred include a church, a synagogue, a crucifix, or a totem pole. Naturally, what is considered to be sacred varies from religion to religion and from person to person. The profane, quite simply, refers to all items which are not sacred (i.e, the ordinary and commonplace).

The beliefs and practices to which Durkheim refers above are centered around those items considered to be sacred. Religious practices include, most obviously,

attendance at church services. There is a need periodically to acknowledge and reaffirm the shared sentiments of the group. These practices reinforce and strengthen beliefs and conceptions in regard to the sacred. Such practices also assure that these beliefs and conceptions will be passed along from generation to generation.

It follows that people are brought together in a "moral community" as they share the same ideals, beliefs, and activities. Hence, religion serves a vital function in maintaining social order, bringing people together around a set of common values, laws, and mores. This convergence is necessary for the survival of society. Otherwise, the priorities of the individual would prevail over the priorities of the group (which is society).

Durkheim ([1915] 1965) viewed the principal functions of religion as being performed on the social and not the personal level. Social solidarity is enhanced via religion acting as an agent of social control, investing questions of right and wrong with religious authority. To illustrate, consider the Ten Commandments, several of which are reflected in formal and punishable laws. In fact, Durkheim referred to a supernatural being such as the Christian god as being the "legislator and judge of human conduct" ([1915] 1965, p. 219). Hence, as individuals are brought together with religion, they are also brought together with society.

On the other hand, a functional perspective on religion is not universally accepted. Religion can also be

approached from an angle that is decidedly conflict theory. A brief examination of the ideas of Karl Marx will serve to illustrate.

Marx's Theory of Religion

Marx ([1844] 1970) agreed with Durkheim in the assertion that religion is a social, not supernatural, phenomenon that plays an influential role in society. However, this point of convergence is perhaps the only theoretical agreement that can be discerned between the two. Marx is universally acknowledged as being the "Father of Conflict Theory." He is also the father of any conflict theory of religion. A thorough examination of Marx's ideas is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, Marx's ideas relating to religion deserve acknowledgement.

Marx ([1844] 1970) viewed religion, like all aspects of society, as being a product of economic factors and relations. According to Marx ([1844] 1964), the most important element in society was the "mode of production," the mechanism by which all wealth in society is produced; it also shapes all other aspects of society. In Marx's estimate ([1844] 1970), religion was used as a tool in order to maintain this mode of production and the corresponding conditions and relations that it shaped. Hence, religion was nothing more than a means of exploitation by which the bourgeoisie (i.e., the priveleged class, the property-owners) maintained power over the proletariat (i.e., the working class, the propertyless).

More specifically, religion is a diversionary tactic which forces the proletariat to focus on the afterlife or their "eternal reward" instead of their unfortunate and immediate conditions. Religion serves as a means of rationalization or justification for their inferior place in society. Rather than make efforts to better their situation, they are inclined to respond with sentiments in the manner of "it is God's will" or "it is part of God's plan." Hence, they are complacent and do not pose a threat to the ongoing system. Thus, existing injustices and inequalities are preserved along with the advantages of the upper class. In Marx's own words, "the more man puts into God, the less he puts into himself" ([1844] 1964, p. 108).

In fact, Marx called for the abolishment of religion. This attitude is in stark contrast to that of Durkheim ([1915] 1965), who viewed religion as being a positive force upon which society depended. The theoretical perspective that religion promotes social solidarity is further illustrated by the interplay between religion and family.

Socialization

In tandem with the family, churches serve as key agents of socialization (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton 1985; Sandomirsky and Wilson 1990). This socialization includes formal religious instruction and rites of passage (baptism, confirmation, bar mitzvah, etc.) which formally mark passage into the adult world. According to Durkheim ([1915] 1965), such rites often mark the passage

from the world of the profane to the world of the sacred; the initiated can then participate fully in religious activities. These rites of passage are merely marking points in a socialization process that is subtle and gradual. Cultural norms and rules are passed along in this manner, also serving to enhance social solidarity (Durkheim [1915] 1965).

For many, religion may not be considered primarily as a resource for satisfying ultimate questions in regard to the supernatural and inexplicable (such as the question of the existence of an afterlife or the question of how the world came into being) (Durkheim [1915] 1965). Instead, it is a social resource that many consider necessary in the rearing of children. As a consequence married couples with children express greater religious interest than do those without children (Lenski 1953).

In fact, a vast majority of the United States population is born into families that have religious preferences (Newport 1979)--that is, people are born into certain religious groups and take part in activities related to those religions when they are young (Sandomirsky and Wilson 1990). At the same time, religion is also a means of enhancing family solidarity (Hoge 1981).

Family Solidarity

Family solidarity serves to bring a family closer together as members spend time with one another and share spiritual ideals (Johnson 1973; Lenski 1961). Therefore, it

can be seen that religion and family solidarity are two concepts which appear to be mutually supportive. In recognition of this, many individuals change religious preference upon marriage, switching to the religion or denomination of a spouse (Newport 1979). It has also been shown that religiously similar couples show greater religious participation and involvement (Babchuk et al. 1967; Lenski 1953). It appears, then, that religion is an element which brings a family together in a setting where cultural norms and values are reinforced. These functions often occur simultaneously with the socialization function.

According to D'Antonio and Aldous (1993), religious beliefs and practices have long served as a means for enhancing family solidarity. The two institutions share a set of common values that set them apart from other societal institutions. Moreover, these values are often at odds with those of other institutions. For example, contrast the ideals emphasized by religion and the family (such as support, nurturing, and respect) with the rigid competition, inequality, and deception that often accompany the institutions of work, the economy, politics, and government. This is not to say that religion and the family are above and beyond internal trouble and strife. D'Antonio and Aldous (1993) conclude that religion can be a valuable aid in helping families cope with modern change.

Modernization

Modernization is the process by which societies are transformed from older, more rural conditions into urbanized, industrialized societies (Tumin 1973). The Industrial Revolution is typically referred to as a starting point in the modernization process. For the purposes of this paper, I refer to modernization as a **continuing process** and cannot apply an exact date of reference to it. Nevertheless, it can be safely assumed that modernization has progressed and will continue to progress in accord with the passage of time.

Berger (1967) detected a reshaping of the classic function served by religion. In modern society, religion serves less as an agent that binds society together. Instead, the functions performed by religion are more personal and individualized. Parsons (1963) and Bellah (1970) would agree, each citing a decline in the societal function performed by religion. In short, the primary functions of religion no longer pertain to the solidarity of the larger society; the primary functions pertain to how religious ideas and ideals are utilized or incorporated into an individual's personal life.

Modernization has had a profound influence on the roles performed by both the family and the church (Hargrove 1983; Parks 1986). For example, in preindustrial societies, families played a more direct role in the religious socialization of children; religious services, training, and

instruction were more likely to occur in the home (Duberman and Hartjen 1979).

Hargrove (1983) notes that the institutions of religion and the family are no longer so fully integrated into the larger society. Rather, they now serve as agents facilitating the transition into a larger and more complex society. Hargrove draws from Mead (1970), who noted that in traditional societies parents (and older generations) provided a direct model for children to follow (in terms of adult activities and associations). In contrast, parents in modern families are not so influential in providing a concrete example to emulate. There are more choices and more opportunities and, thus, a greater potential for geographic and social mobility. Therefore, as one is subsumed into an increasingly complex society, chances increase that one will depart from the parental model. The surrounding culture, then, will ultimately have a greater influence than the family of origin (Mead 1970).

Moreover, previous research indicates that many young adults drift from their religion of origin (Hoge 1981; Sherkat 1991). Youth subculture and asserting one's own identity are oft-cited causes (Caplovitz and Sherrow 1977; Hout and Greeley 1987; Sandomirsky and Wilson 1990). Religion often takes a back seat to other concerns, such as employment and school. Furthermore, young adults are less likely to devote leisure time (which is typically much scarcer than in the earlier stages of life) to religion

(Hadaway 1989).

Parks (1986) specifically examines religious commitment among young adults during the transition from young adulthood to conventional adulthood. This stage that parallels the period in between having a "conventionally assumed faith" and a "critically assumed faith" (p.xvi); it could also be considered a transitional stage between going through the motions of going to church and making church an important element in one's own life. Parks (1986) even goes so far as to say that the college has replaced the family in facilitating this transition (which she claims is often left incomplete). In that same vein, Hastings and Hoge (1976) note a large increase in the number of college students "rejecting home religious traditions" (p. 237).

As children grow older, there is less incentive to maintain home religious traditions for the sake of family unity. Children may not live at home or may have concerns which overshadow religion (Hoge 1981). In fact, parents also have been shown to reduce their rates of religious participation after the children leave home (Lazerwitz 1962).

It is possible that once a child reaches adulthood or maturity, the task of the parents may be complete; the children are socialized into a particular religious faith. While their children may not remain active participants, valued concepts have been imparted and rites of passage have been handled. Once childhood and adolescent socialization

have been completed or when time dictates that family members no longer act as an interdependent unit, continued religious participation is not as important. Nevertheless, religion can still perform important functions on the personal and individual level.

Modernization no longer demands that parents and children share the same interests and objectives; the family becomes less a cooperative entity. Of course, this is not an absolute. It seems reasonable that higher levels of family solidarity may still facilitate a smooth transition between considering religion as another element in the family program and adopting or incorporating religion as an essential element in one's own program. Over the course of the past half century, much research has addressed this topic, both directly and indirectly.

CHAPTER III
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In recent years much attention has been focused on the decline in the importance society places on religion (Hadaway 1989; Hadaway, Long Marler, and Chaves 1993). At the same time, the group receiving the greatest attention in this regard is the young (including college students). This thesis is centered largely around a convergence of these concerns, as the following studies will illustrate.

Religion and the Postwar College Student

For the sake of historical perspective I refer to Allport, Gillespie, and Young's (1948) study in which they investigated the "religion of the postwar college student." Their sample was comprised of 414 undergraduate students at Harvard and 86 undergraduates at Radcliffe (N = 520). A five-page questionnaire was administered addressing attitudes regarding various religious beliefs and activities. Their study yielded particular results pertinent to the present study.

These researchers found that 85 percent of those sampled claimed to engage in some form of religious activity. These students not only **identified** with a certain group but also **participated** as members of that group. However, the researchers also reached the conclusion that

one-half of all those students engaging in some form of participation did so without firm doctrinal beliefs. It could be said, then, that they were "going through the motions" of going to church. Of course, this characteristic is not reserved for the young or the college crowd. These findings raise questions when considering the following conclusion: one half of all students sampled had rejected their religion of upbringing (to either switch religious preference or to drop out of religion entirely).

For the purposes of the present study, a 1948 study by Allport et al., although nearly a half century past, is a valuable starting point. It is by no means fully representative of the interplay between religion and modernization. Yet, it can be taken as a sign of things to come. The high percentage of religious practitioners coupled with a large percentage of those "going through the motions" suggests a "classic" societal function of enhancing social solidarity. Their study supports ideas of Durkheim ([1915] 1965) in that social order is maintained as people are brought together around a common set of norms; here the spiritual is secondary to the social. Even so, the foundations for a more personalized religious viewpoint are being established.

Researchers attribute the trends mentioned above to motivating factors of a general social and ethical nature. According to Allport et al. (1948), rather than haggle on points of doctrinal and personal disagreement or be

irreligious, the young chose to accept a general religious package wherein the positive outweighed the negative. Even so, this finding still seems incompatible with the high percentage of college students rejecting their religion of origin. These factors would seem to be indicative of general societal trends brought on by modernization which, in 1948, had yet to be fully realized.

Religion and the Modern College Student

Hastings and Hoge (1976) also addressed church attendance in their longitudinal study. Questionnaires were administered to students at a small liberal arts college in 1948 (N = 92), in 1967 (N = 205), and again in 1974 (N = 210). They found a general decrease in church participation over time and a marked increase in the percentage of students rejecting their religious origins. They interpreted these trends not as a decline in personal religious conviction but as a decline in support of organized religion.

According to Hastings and Hoge (1976), college students had developed a more individualized conception of religion and its role in their lives. The research attributed this change in conception to an increase in personal autonomy as society has become more modern. Consistent with ideas put forth by Hargrove (1983) organized religion and the family, while still wielding some influence, do not appear to be as influential as they once were.

Hoge (1981) specifically addressed a general sample of

Catholics who had stopped attending church. A sample of 182 Catholics was interviewed via phone (a similar number of converts and returnees were also interviewed in that same study). These individuals were randomly selected from census and parish registry lists; they were then contacted, identified as no longer attending church, and finally interviewed (if they agreed to do so); males refused more often than females.

Hoge (1981) found that most of the individuals interviewed were young; 54 percent had stopped attending church between the ages of 16 and 25. Among those who had stopped attending church at age 22 or younger, 42 percent were living away from their parents at the time.

Hoge identified five types of persons no longer attending church. These included the following: those who objected to changes in the mass or parish, those who felt their spiritual needs were not being met, those who objected to moral teachings, those who had come to find the church boring, and finally, "family tension dropouts":

individuals who experienced tension
in their parental families and rebelled
against both the family and the church....
often this took place when they left
home. (Hoge 1981, p. 96)

Fifty-two percent of those age 22 or younger fell into the "family tension dropout" category. The findings concerning family tension dropouts appear to support the position that religion and the family are mutually supportive. Still, Hoge (1981) also found that ceasing to

attend church did not necessarily indicate a severing of ties or loyalty to the church. In fact, in the majority of cases, Hoge found the opposite to be true. While many young Catholics had stopped **attending** Sunday mass, very few had stopped **being** Catholic.

This finding supports the general theoretical positions on religion and modernization put forth by Berger (1967), Bellah (1970), and Parsons (1963); the primary functions of religion no longer pertain to the solidarity of the larger society, nor even to the solidarity of the family, but to how religion is incorporated into the individual person's life. In general the young are not accepting the religious packages that they are presented without reservation. Still, they are not abandoning them either. It seems, instead, they are incorporating the more digestible features into a more individualized religious perspective.

Based on the research, then, the functions of religion appear to have become less social and more personal. To illustrate, contrast the religious drifters of Allport et al. (1948) with Hoge's (1981) family tension dropouts. The former continued their religious participation in spite of personal discrepancies; the latter maintained only their religious identity.

Family Solidarity and Socialization

Lenski (1953) measured "interest in religion" in a

survey involving face-to-face interviews with 860 married couples. His hypothesis, that religious interest would be greater in the time period following marriage, was supported. Support was especially strong in cases where a baby had been born. Here the socialization function of religion was readily apparent:

Casual observation has suggested to this writer that once children arrive, there is often a quickening of religious interest on the part of the new parents. This frequently develops when the problem of transmitting the cultural heritage is faced. (Lenski 1953, p. 536)

Hoge, Petrillo, and Smith (1982) examined this same theme at another point in the socialization process (with a different sample). They analyzed patterns of religious transmission from parent to child among 254 tenth graders and their parents in a Washington, D.C. suburb. They found that the children expressing the greatest religious interest were likely to come from families in which both parents held the same religious preference; they were also more likely to come from families in which religious socialization practices had been present. These practices included discussion about religion, pressure on children to attend church, and the execution of religious rites of passage.

The researchers also found that students expressing religious interest were more likely to report good relations with parents. One drawback of the research was that only intact families were used in the sample and only child-mother-father triads were examined. The study was unable to

shed any light on the influence of single-parent families on child's religious interest.

In a similar study, Johnson (1973) examined the relation between student religious commitment and perceived parental religiosity, family warmth, and acceptance. Four hundred fifty-three questionnaires were filled out by students at the University of California-Davis. Using a factor analytic technique it was found that the religious students were more likely to view their families as being happy families. Such families were typically characterized as having greater understanding, mutual respect, and better communication patterns. While 10 percent of those students sampled reported that their parents were not living together (due to divorce, separation, death, etc.), differences between these and intact families were not explored. Again, the need to investigate general differences among one-parent families presents itself. From such studies it can be safely assumed that the aforementioned characteristics (communication, respect, understanding) are typically affiliated with high solidarity families.

Hunsberger's (1983) findings are compatible with the studies mentioned above. He administered a 12-page, 43-item questionnaire to 156 students in a Canadian university. Half of the sample ($N = 78$) was composed of apostates (those rejecting their background religion in favor of none at all); each of these was matched with a control group ($N =$

78) with respect to background religion, gender, age, and year in school. Hunsberger found support for his hypothesis that apostates would be more likely to report having received less emphasis on religion while growing up. In addition, members of the control group (those maintaining their religion) were more likely to report better current relationships with parents.

Demographics

There are still other factors--such as gender, marital status, education, and living arrangement--that cannot be ignored in any study addressing religious behavior. For example, previous research has supported the hypothesis that church attendance is positively related to social class (Lazerwitz 1962; Lenski 1953). To further illustrate, Lazerwitz (1962) drew a sample from a national survey of a cross section of adults (N = 2,469) who completed a questionnaire including items on church attendance, religious affiliation, and membership in voluntary organizations. He concluded that participation in voluntary organizations (including activity related to organized religion) is associated with higher levels of income, occupational status, and education. Lenski (1953), too, found that college graduates expressed greater religious interest than did individuals who had gone to college, but had never finished.

In that same study, Lenski (1953) found religious interest to be greater among females than males. It follows

that gender is another important factor, for there is a widely supported assumption that females are more religious than males. To illustrate, the study of Allport et al. (1948) concluded that females were not only more religious but were also more mindful of religious traditions and observances. More recent studies provide support for the same conclusions (Hoge 1981)

Nelson (1981) found gender differences of a different sort in a study in which he addressed the effects of "parental discord" on the religiousness of children. A sample of 2,724 fourth through eighth graders was administered a questionnaire concerning religious attitudes and activity and the child's estimate of how often his or her parents argued or fought with one another. His key finding was that "parental discord," characterized by a high degree of arguing and fighting, had a negative effect on the religiousness of the youth. However, this finding was true in the case of males only. This finding indicates the importance not only of gender but also of interpersonal relations within the family. Nelson's (1981) study is not unique in that it is one of several that examined only families in which both parents were present.

Last, living arrangement is a crucial factor worthy of mention. Previous research has indicated that young individuals tend to stop attending church (at least temporarily) once they are out of the parental home (Hoge 1981). In summary, the literature suggests that in spite of

the changes brought on by modernization, the institutions of the family and religion still perform important societal functions. The fact that their roles have been altered does not diminish their importance. They are mutually supportive, and I anticipate that those individuals reporting the highest family solidarity will be the most religious.

CHAPTER IV
METHODOLOGY

Thus far, I have traced the functions of religion from its traditional role to its more modern role. I have also attempted to better comprehend the underlying causes and conditions of the college student's alleged withdrawal from religion. The following section pertains to my projections and the manner in which the hypotheses were evaluated.

Hypotheses

Based on the review of the literature, the following hypotheses were tested:

Gender

- H₁: Females will report higher levels of church participation than will males.
- H₂: Females will report higher levels of religiosity than will males.

Marital Status of Biological Parents

- H₃: Students from families in which the biological parents are currently married to one another will report higher levels of church participation than will those whose parents are not married to one another.
- H₄: Students from families in which the biological parents are currently married to one another will report higher levels of religiosity than will those whose parents are not married to one another.

Living Arrangement

- H₅: Students who live with their parents will report higher levels of church participation than will

those who live away from their parents.

H₆: Students who indicate a combination type of living arrangement will report higher levels of church participation than will those who live away from parents.

H₇: Students who live with their parents will report higher levels of religiosity than will those who live away from parents.

H₈: Students who report a combination type of living arrangement will report higher levels of religiosity than will those who live away from parents.

Parent's Education

H₉: The mother's level of education will positively correlate with the student's level of church participation in college.

H₁₀: The father's level of education will positively correlate with the student's level of church participation in college.

H₁₁: The mother's level of education will positively correlate with the student's level of religiosity.

H₁₂: The father's level of education will positively correlates with the student's level of religiosity.

Family Solidarity

H₁₃: The level of family solidarity will positively correlate with the student's level of church participation in college.

H₁₄: The level of family solidarity will positively correlate with the student's level of religiosity.

H₁₅: Among students who indicate never attending church (in an average month), high family solidarity students will report higher levels of religiosity than will low family solidarity students.

Sample

A convenience sample was drawn from students in Introductory Sociology classes in a large, regional,

Southern university. The original sample consisted of 324 respondents. After adjusting the sample for those over the age of 24, a final sample size of 299 was obtained. Of these, 167 were female (56.1%), and 133 were male (43.9%). This sex-ratio corresponds closely with statistics from the university for the previous spring which reported an undergraduate enrollment that was approximately 60 percent female and 40 percent male. The mean age of the sample was 19.39 which is considerably lower than the university undergraduate average (23.8). The lower mean age is not surprising due to the fact that I omitted from the sample those older than age 24.

Introductory classes were selected in order to obtain a sample which best represented the younger college student who has received the greatest research attention. A self-administered, 20-item questionnaire was administered in mid-October, 1994 (see Appendix A). Respondents provided information pertaining to church attendance, religious identification, and religiosity. They also responded to statements relevant to the solidarity of their family of origin.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables were "religious participation" and "religiosity." These two concepts are not synonymous; they are very different and may vary independently. In other words, religious participation is not the sole manifestation of religious feeling and behavior. Religious

feelings and behavior include attitudes and activity (often not directly traceable to religious motive or influence) that are incorporated into one's everyday life. To illustrate, people can maintain strong loyalties in spite of low participation (Hastings and Hoge 1976; Hoge 1981). Hout and Greeley's work on the decline in church participation among Catholics is illustrative: "in their hearts, they are as Catholic as the Pope, whether he thinks so or not" (1987, p. 342).

To measure the first variable, respondents were asked, "How many times do you attend religious services in an average month?"--never, once, twice, three times, four or more (coded 0-4). To measure religiosity I adapted five Likert-type items previously employed by Grasmick et al. (1990). Each statement was measured along a five point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (coded 0-4); "don't know" was also offered as a possible response option and was coded (2), as was "undecided." The items are as follows:

- Religion is a very important part of my life.
- Religion should influence how decisions are made in the family.
- I believe in obeying the decisions of religious leaders concerning moral issues.
- I would describe myself as very religious.
- Religion should influence how I live my life.

These items were combined to form an additive index which ranged from 0 (low) to 20 (high). Cronbach's alpha,

measuring the internal reliability of the religiosity index, was .8998--indicating the scale is valid and reliable. The mean for the religiosity index was 12.86, indicating that most respondents are not at either end of the continuum. The kurtosis indicates that the variable is not highly skewed.

Independent Variables

The main independent variable was "family solidarity." To measure the concept, I used five Likert-type items, adapted from Angell's (1965) and Hill's (1949) questions used to gauge solidarity within the family. Again, each was measured along a five point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" (coded 0-4); "don't know" was an eligible response and was coded (2), as was "undecided." The items are as follows:

- I have a great deal of pride in my family of origin.
- There is a great deal of cooperation toward common aims and objectives within my family.
- There is a strong feeling of unity within my family.
- There were many common activities in which my family participated.
- There are family objectives or concerns which are so important that I put them above my own.

These items were also combined to form an index ranging from 0 (low) to 20 (high). Cronbach's alpha for the family solidarity index was .8034, indicating the scale is valid and reliable. The mean for the family solidarity index was 14.47, meaning most respondents indicated neither

strong nor weak levels of family solidarity.

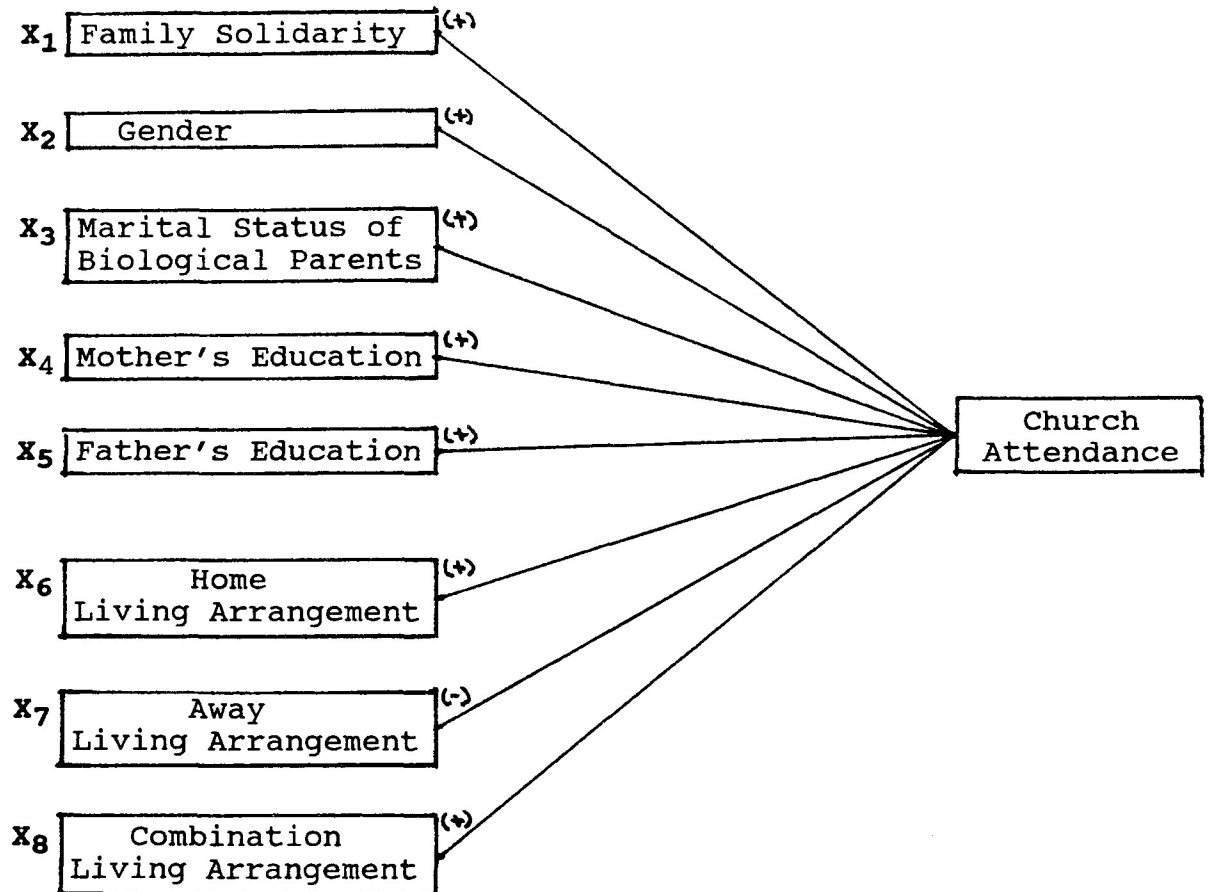
Other variables included in the analysis were mother's education and father's education (each coded "less than high school" = 1, "high school" = 2, "some college" = 3, "bachelor's degree" = 4, "graduate degree" = 5, and "don't know" = 6); those in this category (6) were excluded from the bivariate analysis. Marital status of biological parents (coded 1 = married to each other, 2 = divorced or separated, 3 = widowed, 4 = other) and gender (coded 0 = male, 1 = female) were also included.

In addition, current living arrangement was taken into account: "lives with parents" (coded 1), "lives away from parents" (coded 2), and a "combination" type of living arrangement (coded 3). This latter category was provided in order to account for those students who routinely spend weekends and breaks with parents; since the university from which the sample was drawn is the prototype "suitcase college."

For the purposes of the bivariate and multiple regression analyses, the variable "living arrangement" was broken into three separate dichotomous variables. Each was a "dummy" variable with '0' coded to identify the absence of a given trait. The first variable, "home," indicates whether or not the student lives exclusively with his or her parents. The second variable, "away," indicates whether or not the student lives exclusively away from parents. The third variable, "combination," indicates whether or not the

student reports a living arrangement that is a combination of living with parents (home) and living away from parents (school).

Figure 1 Conceptual Model of Church Attendance

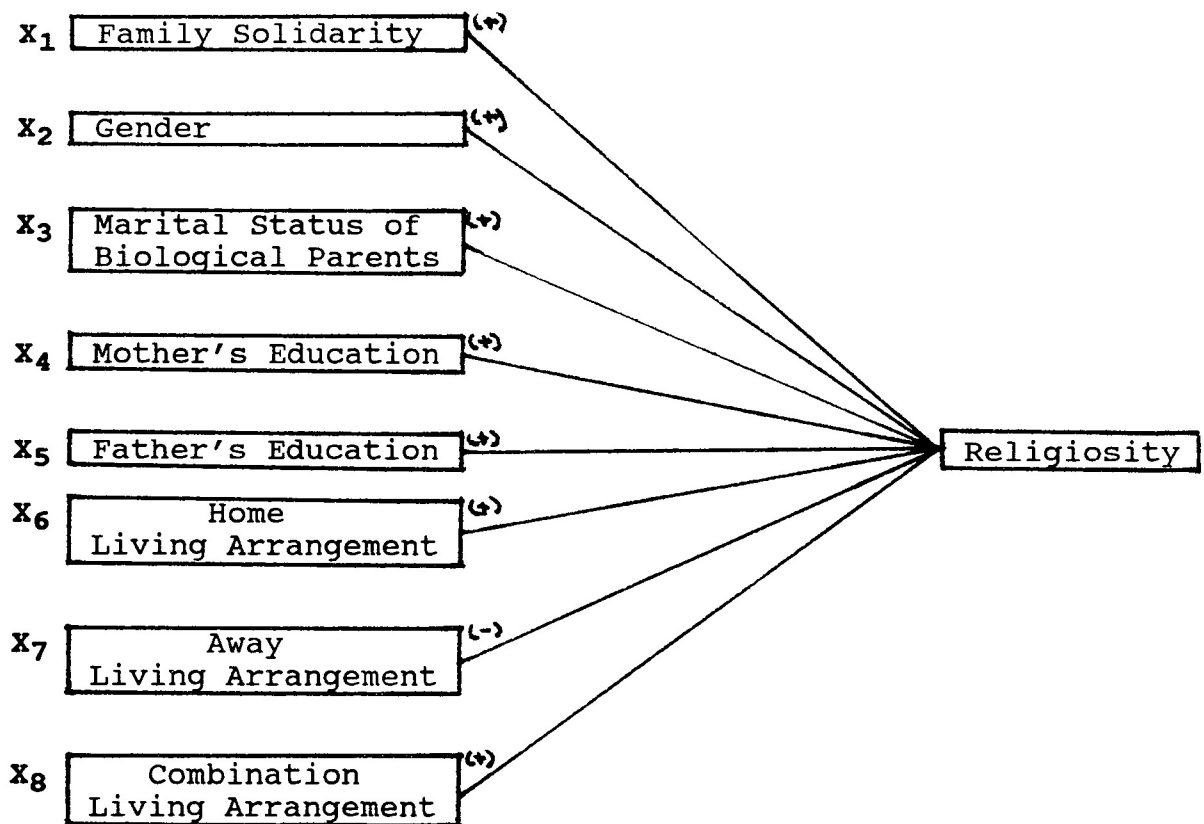


Analytic Procedures

Crosstabulations and bivariate procedures were used to test the aforementioned hypotheses. In addition, to better understand the importance of each variable when controlling for the other variables, multiple regression was employed. Figures 1 and 2 present the conceptual models being tested in the current research. The direction of the effect

(positive or negative) that each of the independent variables was expected to have on the dependent variable is indicated. The independent variables being tested in each model are identical. These variables include: Family solidarity, gender, marital status of biological parents, mother's education, father's education, "home" living arrangement, "away" living arrangement, and the "combination" living arrangement.

Figure 2. Conceptual Model of Religiosity



CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS

In an effort to better understand the influence that family solidarity has upon church attendance and religiosity, questionnaires were administered to students in Introductory Sociology classes. Data from the questionnaires were analyzed by way of crosstabulations, bivariate correlations, and multiple regression. What follows is a discussion of the results. First, I examine the frequencies. Then I discuss results of the crosstabulations and bivariate correlations to see if support is found for the hypotheses. Finally, multiple regression analysis allows assessment of the effects of each of the independent variables when controlling for the effects of the others.

Categorical Analysis

The frequency distribution of the sample according to religious preference can be seen in Table 1. Of the 299 respondents, more than half were Protestant (54.2%). Religious preference was not used in the other data analyses. However, the distribution is included here to show representation of religious preference among the sample. It is interesting to note that nearly one in ten respondents indicated no religious preference whatsoever

(9.4%).

The frequency distribution of the variable "living arrangement," is shown in Table 2. Of the 298 respondents who answered this question, over one-half (56.4%) reported a "combination" type of living arrangement, that is, these respondents spend time living away from parents (school) and living with parents (weekends, breaks, etc.). The next most frequently given response was "lives away from parents" (25.8%) followed by "lives with parents" (17.8%).

Table 1. Frequency Distribution for Religious Preference

Preference	Frequency	Percent
Protestant	162	54.2
Catholic	48	16.1
Jewish	2	.7
Other	59	19.7
None	28	9.4
TOTAL	299	100.0

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Living Arrangement

Living Arrangement	Frequency	Percent
With Parent(s) Away from Parent(s)	53	17.8
Combination of the Two	168	56.4
TOTAL	298	100.0

The frequency distribution showing marital status of

biological parents is presented in Table 3. Nearly two-thirds of the sample (64.5%) indicated their parents are currently married to one another. "Divorced or separated" was indicated by 28.1 percent of the sample while "widowed" was mentioned least frequently (5.4%).

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Marital Status of Biological Parents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married to Each Other	193	64.5
Divorced or Separated	84	28.1
Widowed	16	5.4
Other	6	2.0
TOTAL	299	100.0

The frequencies for both mother's and father's educational attainment are displayed in Tables 4 and 5 respectively. For both parents, the response most frequently given was high school (35.8% for mothers versus 36.1% for fathers). Both mother's and father's educational attainment were also matched in terms of the rank order of the other frequencies: some college (31.1% for mothers versus 28.1% for fathers), graduate degree (14.7% versus 15.4%), bachelor's degree (12.4% versus 12.0%), and less than high school (5.7% versus 7.0%). It is interesting to note that in the case of educational attainment, a greater percentage of parents obtained graduate degrees (master's or doctorate) than bachelor's degrees only.

The last frequency distribution addressed in this

Table 4. Frequency Distribution of Mother's Education

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
Less than High School	17	5.7
High School	107	35.8
Some College	93	31.1
Bachelor's Degree	37	12.4
Graduate Degree	44	14.7
Don't Know	1	.3
TOTAL	299	100.0

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Father's Education

Education Level	Frequency	Percent
Less than High School	21	7.0
High School	108	36.1
Some College	84	28.1
Bachelor's Degree	36	12.0
Graduate Degree	46	15.4
Don't Know	4	1.3
TOTAL	299	99.9

section is church attendance. It can be seen in Table 6 that more than one-third of the sample (35.8%) did not attend church at all during an average month. The next most frequently given response was at the other extreme of the attendance scale. Nearly one-fourth (23.7%) of the sample indicated that they attended church four or more times during an average month. The remainder of the sample was distributed fairly evenly between these two extremes.

The frequency distributions of the sample for the family solidarity and religiosity indexes can be found in

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of the Sample According to Church Attendance per Month

Times Attended	Frequency	Percent
Never	107	35.8
Once	48	16.1
Twice	36	12.0
Three Times	37	12.4
Four or More	71	23.7
TOTAL	299	100.0

Appendices B and C. The frequencies for the individual index item are also provided.

Cross-classification Analyses

The cross-classification analyses of effects of the independent variables on church attendance and religiosity are presented in Tables 7 through 19. The chi-square test of significance was used with a conventional significance level of .05. To facilitate the crosstabs analyses each of the dependent variables was collapsed. Church attendance was collapsed by combining the responses "two times" and "three times" into one category. The religiosity index was collapsed into three categories: "low" religiosity was considered to be individuals scoring 9 or lower on the index (N = 65); "moderate" religiosity was composed of individuals scoring between 9 and 16 (N = 131), and "high" religiosity was composed of those scoring 16 or greater (N = 100). In analyzing religiosity, cases were excluded if respondents left one or more of the index items unanswered,

producing a differing N in various tables.

As shown in Table 7, there is a significant relation between church attendance and gender ($p < .01$). Females had higher percentages of church participation at all levels, with the exception of the "never" category where nearly half the male respondents (47.0%) indicated that they do not attend church at all during an average month. Only 26.9% of the female respondents reported no attendance.

Table 7. Percentage of Church Attendance (per month) by Gender

Times Attended	Males	Females
4 or more	18.9	27.5
2 or 3	18.2	29.3
Once	15.9	16.2
Never	47.0	26.9
TOTAL	(132)	(167)

Chi-Square = 14.32 D.F. = 3 $p < .01$

As can be seen in Table 8, in which the relation between religiosity and gender is reported, an overwhelming majority of females (84.9%) reported either high or moderate religiosity while a smaller proportion of males (69.2%) reported the same. In that same vein males were more than twice as likely to report low religiosity (30.8% versus 15.1% for females). In summary, females differed significantly from males in level of religiosity ($p < .01$).

For the purposes of the bivariate, crosstabs, and

multiple regression analyses, marital status of biological

Table 8. Percentage of Student Religiosity by Gender

Religiosity Level	Males	Females
High	29.2	37.3
Moderate	40.0	47.6
Low	30.8	15.1
TOTAL	(130)	(166)

Chi-Square = 10.56 D.F. = 3 p < .01

parents was dichotomized: (1) "married to each other," and (0) "not married to each other," which encompassed all other response categories. The relation between marital status of biological parents and church attendance is shown in Table 9. Those respondents with biological parents married to one another differ significantly from those whose biological parents are not ($p < .01$). Those with parents married to one another are twice as likely to attend church four or more times per month (29.0% versus 14.2%). Even so, those whose parents are married to one another are even more likely to report not attending at all (31.1%). This percentage is even greater among the "not married" group (44.3%). The relation between marital status of parents and religiosity is displayed in Table 10; the differences were not significant.

A significant relation between living arrangement and church attendance is shown in Table 11. The greatest

percentage of those who live with parents attended church four or more times per month (37.7%). The smallest

Table 9. Percentage of Church Attendance (per month) by Marital Status of Biological Parents

Times Attended	Married to Each Other	Not Married to Each Other
4 or more	29.0	14.2
2 or 3	25.9	21.7
Once	14.0	19.8
Never	31.1	44.3
TOTAL	(193)	(106)

Chi Square = 11.66 D.F. = 3 p < .01

Table 10. Percentage of Student Religiosity by Marital Status of Biological Parents

Religiosity Level	Married to Each Other	Not Married to Each Other
High	36.3	29.2
Moderate	44.2	44.3
Low	19.5	26.4
TOTAL	(190)	(106)

Chi-Square = 2.50 D.F. = 2 p < .29 (n.s)

percentage of those who live away from parents reported the same (13.0%). Furthermore, over one-half of these students (51.9%) reported not attending at all. In contrast, well over two-thirds (73.6%) of those respondents who live with their parents attended church at least once a month.

From Table 11 differences can also be seen between

Table 11. Comparison of Church Attendance (per month) by Living Arrangement

Times Attended	Lives With Parents	Lives Away from Parents	A Combination
4 or More	37.7	13.0	23.8
2 or 3	22.6	16.9	28.6
Once	13.2	18.2	16.1
Never	26.4	51.9	31.5
TOTAL	(53)	(77)	(168)

Chi-Square = 19.46 D.F. = 6 p < .01

Table 12. Percentage of Student Religiosity by Living Arrangement

Religiosity Level	Lives with Parents	Lives Away from Parents	A Combination
High	41.5	17.1	38.6
Moderate	41.5	50.0	42.8
Low	17.0	32.8	18.7
TOTAL	(53)	(76)	(166)

Chi-Square = 14.63 D.F. = 4 p < .01

those who live away from parents and those who report a combination type of living arrangement. Here the differences between the two groups are less pronounced. Almost one-fourth (23.8%) of those who reported a "combination" type living situation attend church four or more times per month, and over two-thirds (68.5%) attend at least once. The percentages on living arrangement show that those students who live with parents attended church most often, followed by those with a "combination" type living

arrangement. Those who live away from parents attended least of all.

The relation between living arrangement and religiosity is presented in Table 12. More than two-fifths (41.5%) of those who responded "lives with parents" reported high religiosity. Less than one-fifth (17.0%) of the "lives away from parents" group report the same. Nearly one-third (32.8%) of those students who do not live with parents scored low on the religiosity index.

Almost two-fifths of those with a "combination" type living arrangement reported high religiosity (38.6%) while less than one-fifth of this type living arrangement (18.7%) scored low on the religiosity index. In terms of religiosity, there was little difference between those who live at home and those with a "combination" type living arrangement. In summary, those who live away from parents differed significantly in their level of religiosity from those who live with parents and those who report a "combination" type living arrangement ($p < .01$).

None of the cross-classification analyses related to parents' education were significant; however, they are presented here for the reader's information. The relation between mother's education and church attendance is presented in Table 13, while the relation between father's education and church attendance is shown in Table 14. The relation between mother's education and student religiosity is presented in Table 15; the relation between father's

education and religiosity is indicated in Table 16.

The main independent variable, family solidarity, was also collapsed for the crosstabular purposes. It was broken into three categories. Students who reported "low" family solidarity scored 10 or lower on the index (N = 48). The "moderate" category is made up of those students scoring between 10 and 16 on the scale (N 117). Finally, "high" family solidarity students scored 16 or higher (N 132). As.

Table 13. Percentage of Church Attendance (per month) by Mother's Education

Times Attended	Less Than High School	High School	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Grad. Degree
4 or more	29.4	25.2	23.7	16.2	25.0
2 or 3	23.5	27.1	18.3	29.7	27.3
Once	5.9	20.6	10.8	16.2	20.5
Never	41.2	27.1	47.3	37.8	27.3
TOTAL	(17)	(107)	(93)	(37)	(44)

Chi-Square = 15.0 D.F. = 12 p < .24 (n.s.)

Table 14. Percentage of Church Attendance (per month) by Father's education

Times Attended	Less Than High School	High School	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Grad Degree
4 or More	28.6	20.4	28.6	19.4	26.1
2 or 3	19.0	28.7	22.6	16.7	26.1
Once	14.3	17.6	16.7	19.4	8.7
Never	38.1	33.3	32.1	44.4	39.1
TOTAL	(21)	(108)	(84)	(36)	(46)

Chi-Square = 7.48 D.F. = 12 p < .82 (n.s.)

was the case with the religiosity index, cases were excluded from the analysis when respondents left one or more

Table 15. Percentage of Student Religiosity by Mother's Education

Religiosity Level	Less Than High School	High School	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Grad. Degree
High	52.9	33.0	29.3	33.3	36.4
Moderate	35.3	44.3	44.6	47.2	45.5
Low	11.8	22.7	26.1	19.4	17.2
TOTAL	(17)	(106)	(92)	(36)	(44)

Chi-Square = 4.82 D.F. = 8 p < .78 (n.s.)

Table 16. Percentage of Student Religiosity by Father's Education

Religiosity Level	Less Than High School	High School	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Grad. Degree
High	52.4	30.8	36.1	14.3	41.3
Moderate	33.3	49.5	42.2	51.4	37.0
Low	14.3	19.6	21.7	34.3	21.8
TOTAL	(21)	(107)	(83)	(35)	(46)

Chi-Square = 12.83 D.F. = 8 p < .12 (n.s.)

of the five index items unanswered.

As indicated in Table 17, there is a significant relation between church participation and family solidarity ($p < .05$). This relation is evidenced by the fact that 31.1% of the high family solidarity group reported church attendance of four times or more per month; this percentage is compared to 20.5% among moderate solidarity students and

12.5% among low solidarity students. At the other end of the spectrum, more than half of the low solidarity students (52.1%) never attended, compared to approximately one-third of the rest of the sample (34.2% of the moderate group and 31.1% of the high group). It is interesting to note that among high solidarity students the percentage of those who reported never attending is identical to the percentage of

Table 17. Percentage of Church Attendance (per month) by Family Solidarity

Times Attended	"Family Solidarity"		
	Low	Moderate	High
Never	52.1	34.2	31.1
Once	16.7	21.4	11.4
2 or 3	18.8	23.9	26.5
4 or More	12.5	20.5	31.1
TOTAL	(48)	(117)	(132)

Chi-Square = 15.22 D.F. = 6 p < .05

Table 18. Percentage of Student Religiosity by Family Solidarity

Religiosity Level	"Family Solidarity"		
	Low	Moderate	High
High	20.8	22.4	48.5
Moderate	43.8	56.9	33.1
Low	35.5	20.7	18.5
TOTAL	(48)	(117)	(132)

Chi-Square = 27.76 D.F. = 4 p < .01

those who attended four times or more.

A similar relation between family solidarity and religiosity is evidenced in Table 18. Nearly half of the high family solidarity students (48.5%) indicated a high level of religiosity, while approximately one-fifth of the rest of the sample reported the same (20.8% among low solidarity students and 22.4% among the moderates). As family solidarity decreased, religiosity also decreased. This relation is illustrated by the fact that 35.5% of the low solidarity students reported low religiosity, compared to 20.7% of the moderate students and 18.5% of the high solidarity students. Last, the relation between religiosity and family solidarity among students who never attend church is displayed in Table 19; it is not significant.

Table 19. Percentage of Student Religiosity by Family Solidarity among Students who Never Attend Church

Religiosity Level	"Family Solidarity"		
	Low	Moderate	High
High	12.0	5.0	19.5
Moderate	36.0	50.0	31.7
Low	52.0	45.0	48.8
TOTAL	(25)	(40)	(41)

Chi-Square = 5.46

D.F. = 4

p < .24

In summary, the cross-classification analyses indicate the following:

1. Females engaged in higher levels of church

attendance and religiosity than did males.

2. Students whose biological parents are married to one another reported higher levels of church attendance than did those whose parents are not married to one another.
3. Students who live with their parents reported both higher levels of church attendance and religiosity than did those who live away from their parents.
4. Students whose living arrangement is a combination of living at school and with parents (weekends, breaks, etc.) reported both higher levels of church attendance and religiosity than did those who live away from parents.
5. Family solidarity was positively correlated with both church attendance and religiosity.

Bivariate Correlations

In general, the bivariate correlations were consistent with the results of the cross-classification analyses. The results of the bivariate correlations for the variables in the church attendance model are presented in Table 20. Support can be found for the proposition that family solidarity is positively correlated with church attendance. A positive and significant relation existed between these two variables ($r = .19, p < .001$).

Church attendance was also significantly correlated with gender ($r = .21, p < .001$) and marital status of biological parents ($r = .20, p < .001$). In other words,

both females and students whose biological parents are married to one another were more likely to report greater church attendance. Church attendance was also significantly correlated with the "away" living arrangement variable ($r = -.16, p < .001$) and the "home" living arrangement variable ($r = .16, p < .01$), that is, those students who live with their parents report they attend church more often than those who do not live with parents.

Also worthy of mention are the correlations with the main independent variable, family solidarity. Family solidarity was significantly correlated with marital status of biological parents ($r = .22, p < .001$) and the "away" living arrangement variable ($r = -.15, p < .01$). Hence, those with biological parents who are married to one another reported higher levels of family solidarity while those who live away from parents reported lower levels. Father's education attainment also had a significant association with family solidarity ($r = .14, p < .001$).

The results of the bivariate correlation for the religiosity model are presented in Table 21. Support is found for the proposition that family solidarity is positively correlated with religiosity. A positive and significant relation existed between these two variables ($r = .27, p < .001$). A significant relation existed between religiosity and gender ($r = .15, p < .01$), indicating that being female was positively related to religiosity. Two of the living arrangement variables were also significantly

Table 20. Bivariate Correlations among Variables in the Church Attendance Model

Variables	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	X9
X1 Attendance	1.00								
X2 Family Solidarity	.18**	1.00							
X3 Gender	.20**	.04	1.00						
X4 Marital Status of Biological Parents	.19**	.22	.05	1.00					
X5 Mother's Education	-.02	.00	.02	.02	1.00				
X6 Father's Education	-.01*	.14*	-.02	.08	.48**	1.00			
X7 "Home" @	.16*	.01	.02	.02	-.20**	-.05	1.00		
X8 "Away" @	-.23*	-.14**	-.12	-.15*	-.03	-.06	-.27**	1.00	
X9 "Combination" @	.07	.11	.08	.11	.19**	.10	-.52**	.67**	1.00
Mean	2.72	14.46	.56	.65	2.96	2.94	.17	.26	.56
SD	1.61	3.82	.50	.48	1.14	1.17	.38	.44	.47

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

@ refers to type of living arrangement

Table 21. Bivariate Correlations among Variables in the Religiosity Model

Variables	X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	X7	X8	X9
X1 Religiosity	1.00								
X2 Family Solidarity	.27**	1.00							
X3 Gender	.14**	.04	1.00						
X4 Marital Status of Biological Parents	.10	.22**	.05	1.00					
X5 Mother's Education	-.01	.00	.01	.02	1.00				
X6 Father's Education	-.04	.14*	.14*	.08	.48**	1.00			
X7 "Home" [@]	.08	.01	.02	.03	-.20**	-.05	1.00		
X8 "Away" [@]	-.24*	-.14**	-.12*	-.15*	-.03	-.05	-.27**	1.00	
X9 "Combination" [@]	.14*	.11	.08	.11	.19**	.01	-.52**	.67**	1.00
Mean	12.84	14.45	.56	.65	2.96	2.94	.18	.26	.56
SD	4.94	3.83	.50	.48	1.14	1.17	.38	.44	.50

* p < .05

** p < .01

[@] refers to type of living arrangement

correlated with religiosity: "away" ($r = - .24, p < .001$) and "combination" ($r = .14, p < .01$). This correlation indicates that those who live away from parents reported lower levels of religiosity while those with a "combination" type living arrangement reported higher levels. The "home" living arrangement variable was not significant.

As was the case in the church attendance model, each of the following had a significant correlation with family solidarity: marital status of biological parents ($r = .22, p < .001$), father's education ($r = .14, p < .01$) and the "away" living arrangement variable ($r = - .15, p < .01$).

Multiple Regression

The crosstabs and bivariate analyses have indicated that gender, living arrangement, marital status of biological parents, and family solidarity are significantly correlated with higher levels of church attendance and religiosity. Forced entry multiple regression was employed in order to ascertain which variables were most important when controlling for the others. Listwise deletion was used to handle missing data. Two models were tested to explain the variation in the dependent variables (church attendance and religiosity).

The results of the regression procedure used to explain variation in the church attendance variable are shown in Table 22. Both the metric (B) and the standardized (beta) regression coefficients are provided for each independent variable. Only three of the variables entered into the

equation were found to be significant. The single best predictor of church attendance among college students was gender (beta = .17, $p < .01$)--that is, if one was female, one was more likely to attend church. Family solidarity (beta = .13, $p < .05$) and marital status (beta = .13, $p < .05$) were also significantly and positively related to church attendance. In other words, students whose biological parents were married to one another were more likely to attend church. Students with higher levels of family solidarity were also more likely to attend church. The multiple coefficient of determination (R^2) for the church attendance model was .141, indicating that 14.1 percent of the variation in church attendance is explained by the variables in the model.

The results of the regression procedure used to explain variation in religiosity are presented in Table 23. The main independent variable, family solidarity, was the single best predictor of religiosity (beta = .24, $p < .01$). It is both positively and significantly related to religiosity. Those respondents who report higher levels of solidarity are more likely to report higher levels of religiosity than their counterparts. Gender was the only other significant variable in the model (beta = .11, $p < .05$)--that is, being female indicated a likelihood for higher levels of religiosity. For this model, the multiple coefficient of determination (R^2) was .136, indicating that 13.6 percent of the variation in the religiosity variable is accounted for

Table 22. Regression of Church Attendance on Predictors

Variables	B	beta	T
Gender	.55	.17**	3.06
Family Solidarity	.05	.13*	2.22
Marital Status of Biological Parents	.44	.13*	2.29
Home Living Arrangement	- 1.03	- .245	- .67
Away Living Arrangement	- 2.06	- .56	- 1.32
Combination Living Arrangement	- 1.50	- .46	- .98
Father's Education	- .04	- .03	- .50
Mother's Education	.00	.00	.06
R ² = .141			
Sample Size = 297			

* p < .05 ** p < .01

by the variables in the model.

In summary, both level of family solidarity and gender are significant predictors of both church attendance and religiosity, indicating students who are female or who have higher levels of religiosity are likely to report both higher levels of church attendance and religiosity. Marital status was also a significant factor in predicting church attendance. If one's biological parents were married to one another, one was more likely to report attending church. The living arrangement variables, which significantly correlated with the dependent variables in the cross-classification and bivariate analyses, failed to attain

significance when controlling for other variables in the model.

Table 23 Regression of Religiosity on Predictors

Variables	B	beta	T
Family Solidarity	.31	.24**	4.21
Gender	1.06	.11*	1.93
Home Living Arrangement	- 3.79	.29	- .80
Away Living Arrangement	- 6.18	- .55	- 1.30
Combination Living Arrangement	- 4.10	- .41	- .87
Father's Education	- .41	- .10	- 1.52
Mother's Education	.16	.04	.58
Marital Status of Biological Parents	.15	.01	.25
R ² = .136			
Sample Size = 294			

* p < .05
 ** p < .01

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The focus of this study has been on college students and their alleged withdrawal from religion. In taking this focus I specifically examined the influence of family solidarity on the religious participation and religiosity of young adults. Religious participation was measured by the number of times one attended church in an average month while religiosity was measured by summing scores on a five-item additive index. College students were studied using the theoretical perspective that the function of religion has changed as society has become increasingly modern. The findings suggest that family solidarity is, indeed, an influential factor when considering religious feelings and behavior.

Summary of Findings

In terms of church attendance the largest percentage of students report "never" attending in an average month while only 2.0 percent of the sample indicates no religiosity whatsoever (N = 6). This contrast provides support for the basic theoretical positions set forth by Parsons (1963), Berger (1967), and Bellah (1970) that the primary functions of religion are no longer necessarily social, but often personal. While over one in three

respondents indicates never attending church, only one in fifty indicates a complete lack of religiosity. This difference suggests that individualized religious perspectives have been developed which do not necessarily correspond with the social religious forms.

To further illustrate, the proportion of those students indicating no religious preference (9.4%) is higher than the proportion of those indicating absolutely no religiosity (2.0%). It appears, then, that the fact that a person does not identify with a religious group does not necessarily imply that the person is irreligious. This finding supports Hastings and Hoge's (1976) research which concludes that a decline in church attendance among young people is not a decline in personal religious conviction but rather a decline in support of organized religion.

Support was found for both hypotheses concerning gender and the dependent variables. As hypothesized, females reported both higher levels of church attendance and religiosity than did males. In addition, being female was the best predictor of church attendance and the second best predictor of religiosity. Support was also found for the third hypothesis. Students whose biological parents were married to one another reported higher levels of church attendance than did those whose biological parents were not currently married to each other. This variable was also a significant predictor in the multiple regression model explaining variation in church attendance.

However, no support was found for the hypothesis that those with biological parents married to one another would report higher levels of religiosity. None of the hypotheses related to parents education was supported. Neither parent's educational attainment was positively correlated with either church attendance or religiosity.

Each of the four hypotheses related to living arrangement was supported. In terms of church attendance, those who lived with parents attended most often, followed by those who reported a combination type living arrangement. Finally, those who lived away from parents attended church the least. In terms of church attendance, those who lived away from parents showed lower levels of attendance than did the other two groups.

Upon examining the bivariate and crosstabs analyses, "living arrangement" appears to be an excellent predictor of church attendance and religiosity. However, the living arrangement types are not significant predictors in either of the regression models; the predictive power of all three dichotomous living arrangement variables ("home," "away," and "combination") disappears when controlling for the other variables.

Even so, I return to the fact that over one-half of the sample (56.4%) reported a combination of living at school and living with parents. A distinct arrangement for living that may be characteristic of modernization and the corresponding importance that is placed on education is

suggested. Such an arrangement may be a means for coping with modern demands while maintaining ties to family. This conclusion is suggested by the finding that differences in terms of religiosity between those who live with parents and those with a "combination" living arrangement are negligible. Eighty-three percent of the former group report either high or moderate religiosity compared to 81.4 percent of the latter group. This unremarkable difference suggests that the two groups have more in common than not. In both cases the influence of family appears to be strong.

The 13th and 14th hypotheses, both relating to family solidarity, were supported. Family solidarity, as hypothesized, was positively correlated with both religious participation and religiosity. Restated, a sense of family unity tends to correspond with higher levels of church attendance and a deeper sense of religious feeling. These relations held constant across the cross-tabs, bivariate, and multiple regression analyses. However, family solidarity explained more variation in terms of religiosity than in terms of church attendance. This difference is in part due to the large percentage of the sample who reported never attending church. Even among high family solidarity students a person was as likely to indicate "never" attending church as attending church four or more times in an average month. Similar findings can be found among other subgroups in the sample (e.g., females and students with biological parents married to one another).

On the other hand, higher levels of family solidarity more directly translated to higher levels of religiosity.

Even so, the 15th hypothesis--that among those who report never attending church high solidarity students report higher levels of religiosity than do low solidarity students--was unsupported. This lack of support suggests that while personalized religious viewpoints are being formed, such viewpoints certainly have not made the traditional forms obsolete. The fact still remains that those with higher levels of religiosity are the ones who attend church most often.

Regardless, even among those who never attend church, the data indicate that the vast majority retain some sense of religious identity and or religiosity. This finding suggests that religion has become less a social, and more a personal, matter. At the same time it is not a radical departure from the classic function of social solidarity first suggested by Durkheim ([1915] 1965).

A "moral community" in which common values, laws, and mores are shared is still in effect. Social solidarity is enhanced as college students maintain some religious ideas and ideals. However, these ideas and ideals are less likely to be recognized in a formal worship setting. Continued religious participation is not requisite for social solidarity after a young person has been socialized into the above-mentioned "moral community." Still, church attendance remains an important aspect of the traditional family

program. This fact is evidenced by the following findings:

1. The largest proportion of those students who live with their parents indicated attending church four times or more per month.
2. Students who do not live with parents attended church least often.
3. Students with biological parents married to one another reported higher levels of attendance than did those whose parents are not.

In the more traditional family program, going to church may often be little more than just another family activity, comparable to visiting relatives, dining out, or going to the movies. It may be considered a social activity, a way of reinforcing family solidarity, or simply a pretext for getting out of the house. Those students who live with parents or whose biological parents are married to one another are likely to go along with the family program. As predicted, family solidarity is a significant factor in predicting church attendance.

However, it is an even better predictor of religiosity, a better gauge of whether or not a student has made religion an important element in his or her personal program. Hence, it seems reasonable to assume that high family solidarity families are better able to convey favorable impressions of religion to their children. The impressions may be reshaped or reformulated, but they are often, at least in part, retained. Individualized religious perspectives have always

been formed; this finding is not new. Consistent with Durkheim ([1915] 1965), such perspectives are merely outgrowths of collective religious perspectives. Yet, today, it is very possible that young adults feel more confident in applying these views in their personal lives.

Limitations of the Study

In view of the above mentioned findings, there are several limitations which should be acknowledged. First, the fact that only introductory classes were used resulted in a biased sample, composed disproportionately of younger undergraduates. Hence, the sample was not representative of the entire undergraduate population. For example, it is likely that those preparing to graduate will have very different views and experiences in regard to religion than those just entering college. Furthermore, the sample is biased in that only sociology classes were used in the sample. For instance, a sample of students taking sociology classes may differ from a sample taken from business or religious studies classes.

There is also a basic problem that corresponds with Likert scaling; this is especially important, considering that two of the major variables in the study were Likert indices. To illustrate, the fact that two individuals have the same score on an additive index implies that their attitudes and feelings are equivalent, when they may be widely divergent. In truth, there are many different ways to the same score. Likert scaling fails to take this into

account.

There are also problems which correspond with any type of questionnaire research. Bias results from the fact that respondents fill out the questionnaire voluntarily. Their responses may be very different from those of a group who refuses to fill out the same questionnaire. Moreover, there is no way to gauge the truthfulness of a respondent. This fact is especially noteworthy when considering the major topic of concern. Religion is an often sensitive topic, one that many consider best not discussed.

Last, there are certain concepts which proved difficult to capture adequately on the questionnaire. For example, the education variables may not have been the most ideal measures of social class. Another variable, such as parents' income or occupational status, may have been used in addition or as an alternative to the education variable. Due to the sample size, I was also unable to examine differences between families in which biological parents were not married to one another. These include families characterized by divorce or death of parent, reconstituted families, or cases in which children are raised by other relatives.

Even so, the findings presented are valuable and worthy of attention. They underline the importance of family solidarity as a powerful influence on religious view and activity.

Suggestions for Future Research

As a starting point, a study such as this one may be expanded to better represent a cross section of undergraduates. Simply, questionnaires could also be administered to upper level classes and in other disciplines. By doing so, findings would be more generalizable to young adult and college student populations. Along these same lines a longitudinal study similar to ones mentioned earlier would also prove valuable. Patterns and processes of religious feeling and involvement could be better identified and understood.

The underlying systems of relations explaining religious feeling and involvement are complex and multifaceted. Much research has been based on data from polls and questionnaires, focusing on the decline in church attendance and a corresponding decline in the importance placed on religion. Still, clearer explanations are needed. The attitudes and rationales of college students (and young adults in general) regarding religion need to be further probed.

They need the opportunity to better articulate their conceptions of their ties to religion, religious services and ceremonies, and the importance of religion in their lives. It is only then that we will be able to comprehend more fully this alleged withdrawal from religion.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

ATTITUDES AND VALUES SURVEY

Please respond to the following questions. Do not put your name on this paper. Your answers will be confidential. This will in no way affect your grade. Your voluntary participation is important in obtaining valid information concerning religious attitudes and activity. THANK YOU.

For the following, circle the number of the most appropriate response.

What religion do you consider yourself?

- (1) Protestant
- (2) Catholic
- (3) Jewish
- (4) other
- (5) none

What religion was followed in the family in which you grew up?

- (1) Protestant (for example: Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Church of Christ)
- (2) Catholic
- (3) Jewish
- (4) other
- (5) none

What is your current living arrangement?

- (1) live with parent(s)
- (2) live away from parent(s)
- (3) a combination of living away from parent (s) (school) and living with parents (summers, weekends, etc.)

How many times do you attend religious services in an AVERAGE month?

- (1) never
- (2) once
- (3) two times
- (4) three times
- (5) four or more times

What is the marital status of your biological parents?

- (1) they are married to each other
- (2) they are divorced or separated
- (3) widowed
- (4) other

What is the highest degree of education achieved by your father?

- (1) less than high school
- (2) high school
- (3) some college or vocational school
- (4) bachelor's degree
- (5) graduate degree (master's or doctorate)
- (6) don't know

What is the highest degree of education achieved by your mother?

- (1) less than high school
- (2) high school
- (3) some college or vocational school
- (4) bachelor's degree
- (5) graduate degree (master's or doctorate)
- (6) don't know

Answer each of the following with either (SA) strongly agree, (A) agree, (D) disagree, (SD) strongly disagree, (U) undecided, or (DK), don't know. Circle the most appropriate response. All items refer to your family of origin (the one in which you grew up).

Religion is a very important part of my life SA A D SD U DK

Religion should influence how decisions are made in the family SA A D SD U DK

I would describe myself as being a religious person. SA A D SD U DK

I believe in obeying the decisions of religious leaders concerning moral issues. SA A D SD U DK

Religion should influence how I live my life. SA A D SD U DK

I have a great deal of pride in my family of origin. SA A D SD U DK

There is a great deal of cooperation toward common aims and objectives within my family. SA A D SD U DK

There is a strong feeling of unity within my family. SA A D SD U DK

There were many common activities in which my family participated when I was growing up. SA A D SD U DK

There are family objectives which are so important that I put them above my own. SA A D SD U DK

What is your age? _____

Are you male or female? _____

How many children (including self) are there in the family
in which you grew up? _____

APPENDIX B

FREQUENCIES FOR RELIGIOSITY INDEX AND INDIVIDUAL
INDEX QUESTIONSTable 24. Frequency Distribution of Scores on the
Religiosity Index

Score	Frequency	Percent
0 (lowest)	6	2.0
1	3	1.0
2	5	1.7
3	7	2.4
4	5	1.7
5	6	2.0
6	3	1.0
7	10	3.4
8	8	2.7
9	12	4.1
10	13	4.4
11	21	7.1
12	12	4.1
13	29	9.8
14	27	9.1
15	29	9.8
16	27	9.1
17	23	7.8
18	18	6.1
19	20	6.8
20 (highest)	12	4.1
TOTAL	296	100.0

Table 25. Frequency Distribution of Response to "Religion
Is a Very Important Part of My Life."

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	17	5.7
Disagree	30	10.0
Undecided-Don't Know	25	8.4
Agree	124	41.5
Strongly Agree	103	34.4
TOTAL	299	100.0

Table 26. Frequency Distribution of Response to "Religion Should Influence How Decisions Are Made in the Family"

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	15	5.0
Disagree	48	16.1
Undecided-Don't Know	38	12.7
Agree	119	39.8
Strongly Agree	79	26.4
TOTAL	299	100.0

Table 27. Frequency Distribution of Response to "I Believe in Obeying the Decisions of Religious Leaders Concerning Moral Issues."

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	27	9.1
Disagree	70	23.5
Undecided-Don't Know	60	20.1
Agree	114	38.3
Strongly Agree	27	9.1
TOTAL	298	100.0

Table 28. Frequency Distribution of Response to "I Would Describe Myself as Very Religious."

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	25	8.4
Disagree	46	15.4
Undecided-Don't Know	37	12.4
Agree	148	49.5
Strongly Agree	42	14.0
TOTAL	298	100.0

Table 29. Frequency Distribution of Response to "Religion Should Influence How I Live My Life."

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	20	6.7
Disagree	38	12.7
Undecided-Don't know	24	8.0
Agree	140	46.8
Strongly Agree	76	25.4
TOTAL	298	100.0

APPENDIX C.

FREQUENCIES FOR FAMILY SOLIDARITY INDEX AND INDIVIDUAL
INDEX QUESTIONSTable 30. Frequency Distribution of Scores on the
Family Solidarity Index

Score	Frequency	Percent
0 (lowest)	1	.3
2	1	.3
3	1	.3
4	3	1.0
5	1	.3
6	1	.3
7	7	2.4
8	8	2.7
9	11	3.7
10	14	4.7
11	12	4.0
12	14	4.7
13	35	11.8
14	24	8.1
15	32	10.8
16	31	10.4
17	27	9.1
18	34	11.4
19	22	7.4
20 (highest)	18	6.1
TOTAL	(297)	100.0

Table 31. Frequency Distribution of Response to "I Have a
Great Deal of Pride in My Family of Origin."

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	1.0
Disagree	4	1.3
Undecided-Don't Know	15	5.0
Agree	136	45.5
Strongly Agree	141	47.2
TOTAL	299	100.0

Table 32. Frequency Distribution of Response to "There is a Great Deal of Cooperation toward Common Aims and Objectives within My Family."

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	10	3.4
Disagree	36	12.1
Undecided-Don't Know	28	9.4
Agree	146	49.0
Strongly Agree	78	26.2
TOTAL	298	100.0

Table 33. Frequency Distribution of Response to "There is a Strong Feeling of Unity within My Family."

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	7	2.3
Disagree	39	13.1
Undecided-Don't know	19	6.4
Agree	129	43.3
Strongly Agree	104	39.9
TOTAL	298	100.0

Table 34. Frequency Distribution of Response to "There Were Many Common Activities in which My Family Participated."

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	8	2.7
Disagree	43	14.4
Undecided-Don't Know	17	5.7
Agree	151	50.5
Strongly Agree	80	26.8
TOTAL	299	100.0

Table 35. Frequency Distribution of Response to "There Are Family Objectives which Are So Important That I Put Them Above My Own."

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	20	6.7
Disagree	56	18.7
Undecided-Don't Know	38	12.7
Agree	140	46.8
Strongly Agree	45	15.1
TOTAL	299	100.0

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