Original Research Article

Review of Religious Research

Review of Religious Research
2023, Vol. 65(1) 91–120

DOI: 10.1177/0034673X231172987
journals.sagepub.com/home/rrr
Sage

Transcendent Accountability and Pro-Community Attitudes: Assessing the Link Between Religion and Community Engagement

Sung Joon Jang[1], Matt Bradshaw[1], Charlotte V. O. Witvliet[2], Young-Il Kim[3], Byron R. Johnson[1] and Joseph Leman[1]

Abstract

Prior research has established a positive relationship between religiosity and civic engagement but focused on public religiosity rather than private religiosity without explaining the relationship. We examined private religiosity as well as public religiosity in relation to community engagement, explaining the religiosity-community engagement relationship with two understudied mechanisms: "transcendent accountability" (seeing oneself as accountable to God or a higher power for one's influence on other people or the environment) and pro-community attitudes. For this examination, we applied structural equation modeling to analyze data from a nationally representative survey. We found that survey respondents who believed in a higher power, privately practiced devotional prayer and study of religious texts, and attended religious group activities (other than worship services), were more likely to report transcendent accountability to a higher power for their influence on other people and the environment. We also found that transcendent accountability was related positively to pro-community attitudes, which in turn was positively associated with community engagement. The

[1]Baylor University, Waco, TX, USA
[2]Hope College, Holland, MI, USA
[3]George Fox University, Newberg, OR, USA

Corresponding author:
Sung Joon Jang, Institute for Studies of Religion, Baylor University, One Bear Place #97236, Waco, TX 76798, USA.
Email: Sung_Joon_Jang@baylor.edu

indirect relationships between religiosity and community engagement were mostly significant. In conclusion, both private and public religious behaviors are consequential in the religiosity-civic engagement relationship, and the religiosity-linked virtue of transcendent accountability and its associated pro-community attitudes contribute to civic engagement.

Keywords
public religiosity, private religiosity, civic engagement, transcendent accountability, pro-community attitudes

Introduction

A growing number of studies have linked an individual's involvement in religion with prosocial orientations and behaviors (Cavendish 2001; Driskell, Embry, and Lyon 2008; Lewis, MacGregor, and Putnam 2013; Park and Smith 2000; Wuthnow 2002). To date, researchers have studied the link between religious involvement and social integration, social capital, and civic engagement broadly defined, such as relationships with neighbors and others in one's community (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Putnam and Campbell 2010). Social scientists have also explored the impact of religiosity on volunteering, a specific prosocial act that is regarded as an important manifestation of social and community engagement and ties, involving trust in others and concern for the collective good (Campbell and Yonish 2003; Cnaan and Boddie 2002; Kim and Jang 2017; Wilson and Musick 1997; Wuthnow 1990, 1996). This topic is particularly relevant given recent debates about declines in social capital in contemporary America, as well as political changes including the devolution of responsibility for social service delivery from federal and state governments to local communities and non-profits, especially religious organizations (Bartkowski and Regis 2000; Putnam 2000; Wilson 2000; Wuthnow 2004).

The current study addresses two key issues that have not been adequately examined. First, prior research has tended to focus on public, organizational religiosity (e.g., religious service attendance) to explain community engagement (Putnam and Campbell 2010; Wilson and Musick 1997), while limited attention has been given to private, nonorganizational religiosity (e.g., private practices such as prayer or reading of sacred texts). According to Putnam and Campbell (2010:444), when it comes to "the 'religious edge' in good citizenship and neighborliness … communities of faith seem more important than faith itself." While it may be true that public, organizational participation in religion makes an important contribution to community and civic engagement (Bekkers and Wiepking 2011; Lewis et al. 2013), it seems premature to dismiss the potential relevance of private, nonorganizational religiosity, especially among those who are not well connected to a religious organization or who claim to be religiously unaffiliated (see Levin et al. 2022). Second, while previous work suggests that the relationship between public religiosity and community engagement may be explained primarily by social networks and opportunities to volunteer and help others (Putnam 2000; Putnam and Campbell 2010;

Putnam, Feldstein, and Cohen 2004), these factors may be less likely to explain the relationship between private religiosity and civic engagement, and relatively little work has been conducted on explanatory mechanisms for this relationship.

To address these issues, this study simultaneously examines the relationships between both private and public aspects of religious involvement and community engagement. It also introduces two rarely studied mechanisms that may help us understand these associations: (1) seeing oneself as accountable to God or a higher power for one's impact on other people or the environment, called "transcendent accountability," and (2) positive attitudes toward community engagement or "pro-community attitudes." Researchers often allude to the effects of religion on virtues when discussing how religious involvement leads to community engagement (e.g., Loveland et al. 2005; Sharp 2019), but the virtuous effect of religion has rarely been empirically examined (but see Beyerlein and Vaisey 2013). Recent work in both criminology (Jang et al. 2022; Johnson, Hallett, and Jang 2021) and mental health (Bradshaw et al. 2022; Witvliet et al. 2023) demonstrates the potential contribution that virtues may make to understanding the effects of religion on human behaviors, and this study extends this line of research to include community engagement.

To achieve these goals, we begin with a review of prior research on religiosity and civic engagement, distinguishing between public, organizational religiosity and private, nonorganizational religiosity. We then introduce the concept of transcendent accountability as a rarely examined explanation of the relationship between religiosity and pro-community attitudes, as well as community engagement. After explaining our hypotheses, we describe our methods including data, measurement, and analytic strategy. Data were drawn from a recent nationally representative survey that includes new and unique measures of transcendent accountability, pro-community attitudes, and other variables. Briefly, findings suggest that both public and private religiosity are important, as private religiosity is more likely to be related indirectly to civic engagement through transcendent accountability and pro-community attitudes than public religiosity. This finding suggests that research in this area should continue to focus on both private and public aspects of religious life, as well as examine the role of virtues. The implications of these findings are then discussed, and suggestions for future research are offered.

Background

Putnam and Campbell (2010) provide a compelling discussion of relationships among religious involvement, prosocial orientations, social integration, and community engagement. In Chapter 13, "Religion and Good Neighborliness," a statement provides context for these relationships: "To be sure, religious folks have sat through hundreds of sermons admonishing them to 'love thy neighbor as thyself' and to 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you'" (Putnam and Campbell (2010:443). Teachings like these may admonish adherents toward prosocial attitudes and behaviors, but do they actually lead to positive attitudes toward the community and, more importantly, higher levels of community engagement among religious compared with non-religious individuals?

The answer to these questions would appear to be "yes," as Putnam and Campbell (2010:444) provided empirical evidence that "religious Americans are, in fact, more generous neighbors and more conscientious citizens than their secular counterparts." For example, using data from the 2006 Faith Matters Survey, they showed that religious involvement was positively associated with both religious and secular volunteering.[1] Similar to volunteering, they found that religious individuals were more likely to make monetary donations to charitable causes than their non-religious counterparts, and also that individuals who give money to religious causes were likely to donate to various secular organizations as well, particularly those that help the needy.

These findings lead us to ask: Why would religious involvement be positively related to prosocial attitudes and behaviors, particularly those associated with the community? To answer this question, we look to prior research, focusing on two domains of religious involvement, public, organizational religiosity and private, nonorganizational religiosity: that is, public participation in religious organizational activities (e.g., attending religious services and other group activities, like a small group Bible study or prayer meetings) and private engagement through beliefs and behaviors such as prayer and reading sacred texts.[2]

Public Religiosity and Community Engagement

Public, organizational religious behaviors are known to be positively associated with community engagement for several reasons. First, participation in religious organizations exposes individuals to prosocial teachings, including scriptural narratives, stories, and parables such as the Golden Rule and the story of the Good Samaritan (Wuthnow 1996). For many people, these examples come to define their faith and worldviews (Ammerman 1997; Wuthnow 1991). In the Christian tradition, for example, compassion and self-giving love are central scriptural messages and guide adherents to love their neighbors and even their enemies (Sider 1997, 1999).

Second, religious organizations may establish behavioral guidelines and enforce prosocial norms (Son and Wilson 2012). For example, religious groups may reward certain types of conduct, such as charitable pursuits and other-directed acts of generosity. People who engage in such behavior may be esteemed among members or even officially recognized by clergy or other leaders within the congregation. Moreover, these people may be regarded as role models who exemplify religious lifestyles and expectations, and they may become reference groups for fellow church members who may voluntarily emulate their practices. By contrast, when violations occur (e.g., hostile or malicious behavior toward others), religious groups can impose informal sanctions such as criticism and possibly even formal discipline, which may signal the loss of religious and non-religious rewards associated with membership (Ellison and Sherkat 1995; Sherkat 1997; Stark and Finke 2000).

Third, religious organizations are places where prosocial ideals can be lived out via formal and informal interactions among coreligionists. As Putnam and

Campbell (2010) noted, religious groups are network-driven institutions. Individuals may be recruited into congregations via preexisting friendship ties (Stark and Bainbridge 1980), and people may also cultivate friendships with like-minded others—with whom they share common values, interests, and activities, including prosocial orientations—within religious congregations (Merino 2013). Thus, individuals who regularly attend religious services report having more friends, interacting with them more often, receiving more types of social support, and valuing and trusting their support networks more than those who do not regularly attend services (Bradley et al. 2020; Ellison and George 1994; Merino 2014).

Fourth, within religious congregations, individuals also informally exchange various types of tangible aid such as goods, services, and information, as well as socioemotional assistance including companionship, morale building, sharing of personal feelings, prayer, and spiritual support (Krause 2002; Wuthnow 1994). These vibrant networks provide opportunities for recruitment and participation in various activities, including civic ones, as well as promoting community engagement. Religious organizations often sponsor charitable activities, such as visitation and providing resources for shut-ins and soup kitchens for homeless people (Ammerman 2005; Chaves 2004), scouting and youth organizations, as well as a host of other social services (Johnson 2002). Members are often encouraged and recruited via personal appeals from friends and clergy to give time and money to these efforts (Musick, Wilson, and Bynum 2000).

In sum, prior research tends to suggest that public indicators of religiosity are positively related to community engagement with pro-community attitudes being a potential mediator for the relationship. Some scholars, including Putnam and Campbell (2010), have even suggested that organizational participation in religion is more important than private practices and beliefs for civic engagement (Bekkers and Wiepking 2011; Lewis et al. 2013), but it seems premature to dismiss or marginalize the potential contribution of private, nonorganizational religiosity.

Private Religiosity and Community Engagement

Private religious behaviors. Private, nonorganizational religious behaviors, such as praying and reading religious texts, are likely to facilitate the internalization of prosocial teachings of religion. For example, private practices may help to internalize the view that believers should display the same compassion toward other people that God has shown toward them (Regnerus, Smith, and Sikkink 1998). As people spend time in prayer and reflection on sacred texts, for example, their personal relationship with divine others (i.e., God or gods) may deepen in much the same way that interpersonal bonds deepen with other humans (Pollner 1989; Wikstrom 1987). That is, as an individual continues to engage God or a higher power via private devotional practices, the relationship, values, beliefs, and behaviors associated with the divine other are likely to become increasingly important and carry implications for one's attitudes and actions. Through prayer and engagement with

scripture, people may develop impressions of what kinds of behavior the divine other may require (Poloma and Gallup 1992).

As a result, individuals may begin to interpret their own situations from the vantage point of what they perceive to be a divine perspective. Given that many religious teachings and stories involve prosocial orientations, it is reasonable to anticipate that the processes of religious perspective-taking may foster compassionate, other-directed attitudes and behaviors, leading to positive attitudes toward the community and higher levels of community engagement. Previous research shows that those who pray more often are more likely to provide assistance to others, both known and unknown (Sharp 2019), be more involved in a range of community organizations (Loveland et al. 2005), and volunteer more frequently (Einolf 2013; McClure 2013; Paxton, Reith, and Glanville 2014; Yeung 2018).

Also, many devout individuals see themselves as answerable for living out their faith and sharing with others the positive difference religious faith has made in their lives (Ellison 1992). Some believers may do this through silent example, letting their moral conduct and good works speak for themselves, while others may witness or testify to others. Prosocial behaviors are likely to be involved in such encounters, which are intended as an indication of the believer's positive internal spiritual state. In contrast to formal, organizational charitable efforts, participation in informal acts of kindness and generosity do not require any special knowledge or information about groups, dates and times, or other details, nor do they typically require material or other resources. Opportunities for such acts often surface on the spur of the moment and require only trust and spontaneity for persons to take advantage of them. Thus, devout individuals who have privately internalized religious norms of prosocial conduct may be prone to have more positive attitudes toward community activities as well as engage in those activities.

Religious beliefs. The effect of private religiosity on community engagement is likely to be influenced by beliefs as well as behaviors, although prior research has examined religious beliefs less often than its behavioral counterpart. For example, people can be motivated to be actively involved in community work by religious beliefs, such as belief in God or a higher power. However, it is one thing to believe in the existence of God or a higher power, but it is another to engage in community activities. This means that the effect of theological belief on community engagement may be indirect through other variables. Consistent with this possibility, Smidt (1999) suggested that religious beliefs increase civic engagement by affecting the extent to which members of a religious community relate to those outside of their religious community. Belief in God or a higher power may also contribute to civic engagement by increasing a perception that one will answer to God or a higher power for loving one's neighbor. In addition, religious beliefs may contribute to civic engagement through religious behaviors. Putnam and Campbell (2010) used several religious belief measures and found that once religious service attendance was controlled for, their effects on civic engagement became non-significant.[3] This finding does not necessarily indicate that religious beliefs are irrelevant;

instead, it suggests that they may lead to civic engagement by enhancing religious behaviors, like attending religious services.[4]

The Present Study

Our review of the literature suggests that religious beliefs as well as behaviors, both public and private, may promote community engagement, showing that social networks and opportunities to volunteer and help others are key mechanisms explaining the religiosity-community engagement relationship (Putnam 2000; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Putnam et al. 2004). While important, these factors may be less likely to explain the effects of private religiosity, and relatively little work has been conducted on alternative explanatory mechanisms. To address this weakness in the literature, we introduce two rarely examined explanatory factors that may help link religiosity with community engagement: (1) transcendent accountability (i.e., seeing oneself as accountable to God or a higher power for one's impact on other people and/or the environment); and (2) pro-community attitudes (i.e., positive attitudes toward community activities).

Research on religiosity and community engagement has largely overlooked an important aspect of religious life—living out one's faith in God or a higher power with responsibility to make a positive difference in the world (Sacks 2005). Across theistic religions, people often have a sense of accountability to God for how they live, looking to the transcendent for guidance and perceiving a calling to use their gifts and opportunities to influence the world for the better (Poloma and Gallup 1992). In fact, some individuals may welcome accountability to God or a higher power as a virtue (Evans 2019). Drawing on Witvliet et al.'s (2023) and Bradshaw et al.'s (2022) research on transcendent accountability, we propose that attending religious services and group activities, praying and reading or studying religious texts, and religious beliefs contribute to embracing accountability *to* God or a higher power *for* one's decisions and actions in alignment with one's faith. To the extent that people see themselves as accountable to God or a higher power for their influence on other people and the environment, their attitudes and actions are likely to be evident in community engagement. In thinking about the positive association between religious involvement and a wide range of civic activities such as volunteering to help others in need, Wuthnow (2004) identified the importance of religious values. Here, we propose that welcoming transcendent accountability for one's behavior is an untested mechanism with a potential role linking religiosity to community engagement.

Participation in both public and private forms of religion may also promote pro-community attitudes, which may subsequently impact actual community and civic engagement. For example, regularly attending religious services may result in repeated exposure to teachings about one's answerability to God or a higher power for one's decisions and actions, which may engender compassion and generosity toward others in the community (Putnam and Campbell 2010; Regnerus et al. 1998; Wuthnow 1991). This is likely to lead to pro-community attitudes. Similarly, the associations between religion and helping others (Sharp 2019), being involved

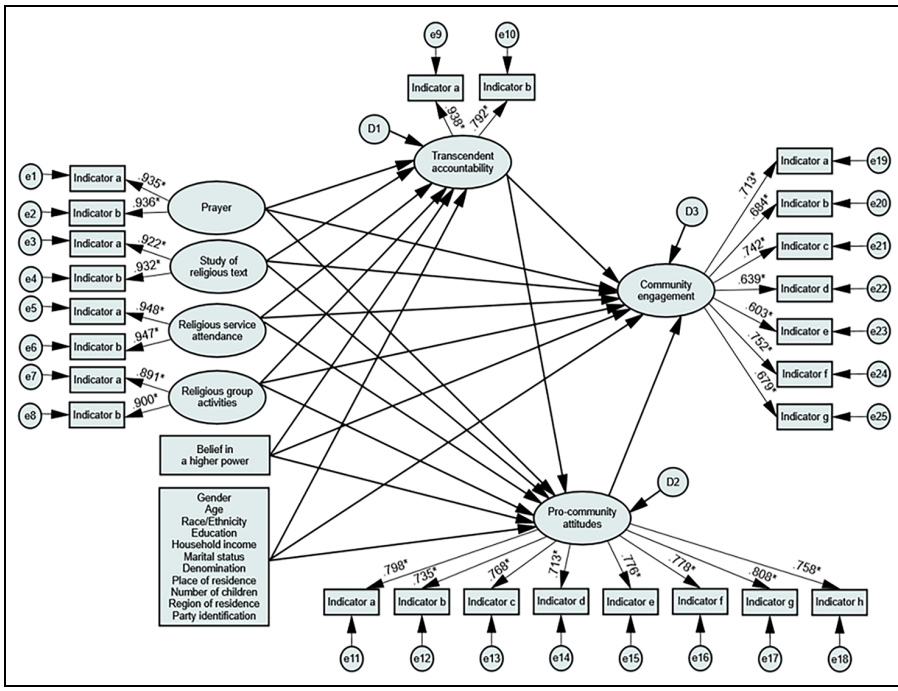

Figure 1. Theoretical model of religiosity, transcendent accountability, pro-community attitudes, and community engagement.

Note. See Table 1 and Supplemental Appendix A for the description of indicators.

*$p < 0.05$ (two-tailed test).

in one's community (Loveland et al. 2005), and volunteering (Einolf 2013; McClure 2013; Paxton et al. 2014; Yeung 2018) are likely to be explained, at least in part, by positive attitudes toward one's community. This likelihood, while implicit in the literature, has rarely been subjected to empirical scrutiny.

To address these gaps in the literature, this study examines whether an individual's transcendent accountability and pro-community attitudes help to explain the linkages between religiosity and community engagement. To achieve this goal, we constructed a structural equation model (see Figure 1), where religiosity was operationalized by belief (belief in a higher power) and behaviors, both public (religious service attendance and religious group activities) and private (prayer and study of religious texts). To facilitate readability, we opted to focus on the terms "religion" and "religiosity" rather than using "spirituality." This decision is based on the fact that prior research on community engagement has mostly examined the concept of religiosity rather than spirituality.[5] Private and public religious behaviors as well as transcendent accountability, pro-community attitudes, and community engagement

are specified as latent variables, whereas religious belief and sociodemographic controls are manifest variables.

First, we hypothesize that religiosity is positively related to transcendent accountability because how much a person is religiously involved is likely to affect one's perception of being responsible to a transcendent guide for having a positive impact on other people and the environment (Hypothesis 1). Second, transcendent accountability is hypothesized to be positively associated with pro-community attitudes because the perception of being accountable to a transcendent guide is expected to enhance positive attitudes toward people and needs in the community (Hypothesis 2). Third, the pro-community attitudes are expected to be positively related to community engagement since prosocial attitudes are likely to increase the probability of actually engaging in community activities (Hypothesis 3).

Next, combining all three hypothesized relationships above generates a final hypothesis about indirect relationships (Hypothesis 4): that is, religiosity is positively related to (a) pro-community attitudes indirectly through transcendent accountability and (b) community engagement via transcendent accountability and/or pro-community attitudes, which includes an ancillary relationship that (c) transcendent accountability is positively related to community engagement indirectly through pro-community attitudes.

Methods

Data

Data to test these hypotheses came from a national survey, National Religion and Spirituality Survey 2020, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago on behalf of the Fetzer Institute (which funded the *Study of Spirituality in the United States*; https://spiritualitystudy.fetzer.org) and Hattaway Communications (Association of Religion Data Archives 2020). A general population sample of U.S. adults (18 years or older) was selected from NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel (a probability-based household panel representative of the entire U.S. population), using 48 sampling strata including age, gender, race/Hispanic ethnicity, and education (Association of Religion Data Archives 2020). The response rate was 28.1 percent, as a total of 3,609 of 12,842 sampled/invited panelists completed surveys (3,256 by web mode and 353 by phone mode) between January 16 and February 10, 2020. Sampling weights created to adjust for potential nonresponse bias were applied to our data analysis. Additional details are included in a supplementary document (see Supplemental Appendix A).

Measurement

To measure a respondent's religious belief, we used a single item asking about *belief in a higher power*, "whether it be God, gods, or some other divine source or universal energy" (1 = I don't believe in a higher power, 2 = I don't know whether there is a higher power, and I don't believe there is any way to find out, 3 = I doubt a higher power's existence more than I believe, 4 = I believe in a higher power's

existence more than I doubt, 5 = I know a higher power exists and I have no doubts about it). Next, we focused on how often the respondent engaged in public behaviors (*religious service attendance* and *religious group activities*) and private behaviors (*prayer* and *study of religious text*). For each of these behaviors, the survey asked about them first as "spiritual activities" and then as "religious activities," and high inter-item reliability, ranging from .890 to .946, indicated that respondents tended to perceive each behavior as similarly "spiritual" and "religious" (see Supplemental Appendix A). Thus, a latent variable was created for each religious behavior, using the pair of items as indicators (see indicators *a* and *b* in Figure 1).

A latent variable of *transcendent accountability* was measured by two items about the inclination of a respondent perceiving themselves to be accountable to a higher power for his or her impact on (a) other people and (b) the natural environment, which had high internal reliability ($\alpha = .851$). To measure a latent variable of *pro-community attitudes*, eight items of a respondent's tendency to perceive community involvement as important were used as indicators, whereas a behavioral propensity of *community engagement* was measured by seven items about the respondent's actual behaviors, such as attending community events and participating in organized volunteer opportunities (see Supplemental Appendix A).[6] Exploratory factor analysis of the eight attitude items and seven engagement items each generated a single-factor solution with high loadings, ranging from 0.722 to 0.802 and from 0.611 to 0.754, respectively, and reliability analysis revealed high internal consistency ($\alpha = .919$ and .862).

In subsequent analyses, we controlled for respondents' religious tradition. While the survey measured a respondent's current religion using 14 categories (Protestant, Roman Catholic, Mormon, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Atheist, Agnostic, nothing in particular, Just Christian, Unitarian, and something else), a variable was created—and made available in the data—by collapsing the 14 categories into five: Protestant, Catholic, Other, Atheist/Agnostic/Nothing in particular, and Just Christian. We recoded this variable, combining "Just Christian" with "Protestant" to create three dummy variables: *Protestant, Catholic*, and *other religion* with "Atheist/Agnostic/Noting in particular" being the reference category.[7]

Also controlled for were other sociodemographic characteristics: (1) gender (0 = female, 1 = *male*), (2) *age* (1 = 18–24 years, 2 = 25–34 years, … 6 = 65–74 years, 7 = 75 years or older), (3) race/ethnicity (five dummy variables of *Black, Hispanic, Asian, other race*, and *mixed race* with White being the omitted category), (4) *education* (1 = no high school diploma, 2 = high school graduate or equivalent, 3 = some college, 4 = bachelor's degree or above), (5) employment (0 = not working, whether unemployed, retired, disabled, or other; 1 = *employed*, whether fulltime, parttime, or self-employed), (6) *household income* (1 = less than $5,000, 2 = $5,000–9,999, … 17 = $175,000–$199,999, 18 = $200,000 or more), (7) marital status (five dummy variables of *married, living with partner, divorced, separated*, and *widowed* with "never married" being the reference category), (8) place of residence (0 = a non-metropolitan area and 1 = a *metropolitan* area), (9) the *number of children*, ages 0 to 17 years, living in the same household, and (10) region of residence (three dummy variables of *Northeast, Midwest*, and *South* with West being

the omitted category), and (11) *party identification* (1 = strong Democrat, 2 = moderate Democrat, 3 = lean Democrat, 4 = don't lean/independent/none, 5 = lean Republican 6 = moderate Republican, and 7 = strong Republican).

Analytic Strategy

To estimate the model shown in Figure 1, structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied. Latent-variable modeling was appropriate given that all the key concepts are not directly observable. Furthermore, SEM enabled us to control for measurement errors so more valid and reliable results could be generated than what manifest-variable modeling would produce, while testing the significance of hypothesized mediation. For model estimation, we employed Mplus 8.8 (Muthén and Muthén 2017) that incorporates Muthén's (1983)"general structural equation model" and full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation. Since categorical as well as continuous variables were included in the model, the estimation method of maximum likelihood with robust standard errors (MLR) was used. Finally, FIML was employed to treat missing data, which tends to produce unbiased estimates, like multiple imputation (Baraldi and Enders 2010; Graham 2009). Additional details are included in Supplemental Appendix A.

Besides the χ^2 statistic, three types of model fit index were used to determine the degree to which our proposed model fit the present data: incremental (CFI: comparative fit index), absolute (SRMR: standardized root mean squared residual), and parsimonious fit index (RMSEA: root mean square error of approximation). A model was determined to have a good fit to data if one of two Hu and Bentler's (1999) joint criteria were met: ($CFI \geqslant 0.950$ and $SRMR \leqslant 0.080$) or ($SRMR \leqslant 0.080$ and $RMSEA \leqslant 0.060$). For statistical significance ($\alpha = 0.05$), we conducted two-tailed tests but applied one-tailed test as well to the hypothesized relationships because their directions were predicted *a priori*.

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of variables used in our analysis. For example, the sample was 48.4 percent male and 51.6 percent female, and the respondents were, on average, about 48 years old with the youngest and oldest being 18 and 93 years, respectively (not shown in the table because we used a seven-category measure of age for analysis instead of actual age). Most (63.1%) respondents were White, and the remainder of participants self-identified as Hispanic (16.4%), Black (11.8%), Asian (3.4%), mixed race (3.4%), and "other race" (1.8%). The average education (2.838) was almost "some college," whereas the mean of household income (9.518) fell between the categories of 9 ("$40,000–$49,999") and 10 ("$50,000–$59,999"). Almost half (47.9%) of the sample were married with the second largest group being never married (23.5%). Nearly 60 percent (56.8%) of respondents were employed at the time of survey, and a typical number of children living in the same household was less than one (0.604). Next, about two-thirds (65.4%) of respondents self-identified as Christian (50.6% Protestant,14.8%

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics (Weighted) of Variables Used in Analysis ($n = 3,609$).

Variable	*n/f*	Mean/%	SD/c%	Min.	Max.
Male	3,609	0.484	0.500	0	1
Age	3,609	3.778	1.814	1	7
Education	3,609	2.838	1.007	1	4
Employed	3,609	0.568	0.495	0	1
Household income	3,609	9.518	4.421	1	18
Metropolitan	3,609	0.785	0.411	0	1
Number of children (age 0–17)	3,609	0.604	1.294	0	15
Party identification	3,606	3.840	1.932	1	7
Belief in a higher power	3,492	4.115	1.257	1	5
Private religious behavior					
Prayer					
a. … as spiritual activities	3,593	3.526	1.656	1	5
b. … as religious activities	3,596	3.519	1.641	1	5
Study of religious text					
a. … as spiritual activities	3,587	2.475	1.517	1	5
b. … as religious activities	3,586	2.458	1.519	1	5
Public religious behavior					
Attending religious services					
a. … as spiritual activities	3,596	2.385	1.291	1	5
b. … as religious activities	3,585	2.416	1.276	1	5
Attending other religious or spiritual groups					
a. … as spiritual activities	3,594	1.768	1.103	1	5
b. … as religious activities	3,581	1.793	1.118	1	5
Transcendent accountability					
a. Accountable to a higher power for your impact on other people	3,587	2.931	1.082	1	4
b. Accountable to a higher power for your impact on the natural environment	3,558	2.819	1.023	1	4
Pro-community attitudes					
a. Making a difference in my community	3,597	3.922	1.032	1	5
b. Being informed of community issues	3,593	3.899	1.012	1	5
c. Welcoming people who are different from me into my community	3,591	3.925	1.081	1	5
d. Speaking up when other people have been wronged	3,592	4.192	0.980	1	5
e. Helping other people in need	3,585	4.359	0.881	1	5
f. Volunteering	3,582	3.921	1.021	1	5
g. Supporting causes or organizations that are important to me	3,587	4.040	0.987	1	5
h. Contributing to the greater good in the world	3,596	4.172	0.956	1	5
Community engagement					

(continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

Variable	*n/f*	Mean/%	SD/c%	Min.	Max.
a. Working with others, I make positive changes in my community.	3,590	2.562	0.976	1	4
b. I stay informed of events in my community.	3,590	2.583	0.943	1	4
c. I make an effort to attend community events.	3,584	2.175	0.949	1	4
d. I make an effort to know my neighbors.	3,586	2.559	0.992	1	4
e. I make an effort to interact with strangers.	3,594	2.434	0.984	1	4
f. I participate in organized volunteer opportunities.	3,596	2.197	1.023	1	4
g. I donate to causes or organizations that are important to me.	3,587	2.633	1.037	1	4
Age					
18–24	419	11.6%	11.6%		
25–34	700	19.4%	31.0%		
35–44	541	15.0%	46.0%		
45–54	565	15.7%	61.7%		
55–64	623	17.3%	78.9%		
65–74	505	14.0%	92.9%		
75+	255	7.1%	100.0%		
Total	3,609	100.0%			
Race/Ethnicity					
White, non-Hispanic	2,279	63.1%	63.1%		
Black, non-Hispanic	427	11.8%	75.0%		
Other, non-Hispanic	63	1.8%	76.7%		
Hispanic	594	16.4%	93.2%		
Two or more, non-Hispanic	124	3.4%	96.6%		
Asian, non-Hispanic	123	3.4%	100.0%		
Total	3,609	100.0%			
Education					
No high school diploma	383	10.6%	10.6%		
High school graduate or equivalent	1,022	28.3%	38.9%		
Some college	1,002	27.8%	66.7%		
Bachelor's degree or above	1,202	33.3%	100.0%		
Total	3,609	100.0%			
Household income					
Less than $5,000	118	3.3%	3.3%		
$5,000–$9,999	125	3.5%	6.7%		
$10,000–$14,999	184	5.1%	11.8%		
$15,000–$19,999	167	4.6%	16.5%		
$20,000–$24,999	224	6.2%	22.7%		
$25,000–$29,999	201	5.6%	28.2%		
$30,000–$34,999	170	4.7%	32.9%		

(continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

Variable	*n/f*	Mean/%	SD/c%	Min.	Max.
$35,000–$39,999	151	4.2%	37.1%		
$40,000–$49,999	344	9.5%	46.7%		
$50,000–$59,999	339	9.4%	56.1%		
$60,000–$74,999	351	9.7%	65.8%		
$75,000–$84,999	159	4.4%	70.2%		
$85,000–$99,999	355	9.8%	80.0%		
$100,000–$124,999	255	7.1%	87.1%		
$125,000–$149,999	166	4.6%	91.7%		
$150,000–$174,999	114	3.2%	94.8%		
$175,000–$199,999	60	1.7%	96.5%		
$200,000 or more	126	3.5%	100.0%		
Total	3,609	100.0%			
Marital status					
Married	1,728	47.9%	47.9%		
Widowed	188	5.2%	53.1%		
Divorced	427	11.8%	64.9%		
Separated	96	2.7%	67.6%		
Never married	847	23.5%	91.1%		
Living with partner	322	8.9%	100.0%		
Total	3,609	100.0%			
Religious denomination					
Protestant	1,812	31.2%	31.2%		
Catholic	530	14.8%	46.0%		
Other religion[a]	380	10.6%	56.6%		
Atheist/agnostic/none	861	24.0%	80.6%		
Total	3,583	100.0%			
Region of residence					
Northeast	630	17.5%	17.5%		
Midwest	750	20.8%	38.2%		
South	1,369	37.9%	76.2%		
West	860	23.8%	100.0%		
Total	3,609	100.0%			
Party identification					
Strong Democrat	488	13.5%	13.5%		
Moderate Democrat	663	18.4%	31.9%		
Lean Democrat	449	12.4%	44.4%		
Don't lean/Independent/none	673	18.7%	63.0%		
Lean Republican	378	10.5%	73.5%		
Moderate Republican	584	16.2%	89.7%		
Strong Republican	372	10.3%	100.0%		
Total	3,606	100.0%			

Note. SD = standard deviation; c% = cumulative percent.

[a]Refers to adherents of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Orthodox Church (Greek, Russian, or some other Orthodox Church), Unitarian Church, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and some other religion.

Catholic) with about 11 percent being adherents of other religion (including Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism), whereas a quarter (24.0%) of the

sample reported that they had no religious affiliation. Finally, the sample consisted of 44.4 percent Democrat, 18.7 percent Independent, and 36.9 percent Republican.

We began with estimating two baseline models without any mediators (i.e., transcendent accountability and pro-community attitudes). Baseline Model 1 consisted of five sub-models, which added religiosity variables one at a time. Baseline Model 2 included all of the religiosity variables simultaneously. Table 2 shows that model fit indices (presented in the second section) indicated Baseline Model 1 had a good fit to data, meeting one of the two joint criteria that used SRMR (0.020 or $0.021 \leqslant 0.080$) and RMSEA (0.029, 0.030, or $0.032 \leqslant 0.060$), whereas Baseline Model 2 met both criteria with CFI being higher than its minimum cutoff ($0.953 > 0.950$).

We found that all religiosity variables were positively related to community engagement when they were included individually (see Baseline Model 1). However, when they were added jointly (Baseline Model 2), three religiosity variables continued to be positively associated with community engagement—prayer ($b = 0.050$), study of religious text ($b = 0.045$), and religious group activities ($b = 0.186$)—with the religious group involvement ($\beta = 0.265$) being more strongly related than the private practices ($\beta = 0.113$ and 0.091). However, religious service attendance was no longer significantly related to community engagement ($b = 0.022$, $p > 0.05$), whereas belief in a higher power was significantly related but in the opposite direction ($b = -0.039$).

To explore which religiosity variable(s) led to belief in a higher power that was inversely related to community engagement, we estimated Baseline Model 1 of belief in a higher power by adding other religiosity variables one at a time. Supplemental analysis results (presented in the third section of Table 2) revealed that it was prayer that changed the statistical direction of belief in a higher power (from 0.066 to -0.039); by contrast, including study of religious text, religious service attendance, and religious group activities resulted in non-significant relationships between the belief and community engagement ($b = -0.009$, -0.001, and 0.011; all $p > 0.05$). Consistent with the results, we found that belief in a higher power was more strongly correlated positively to prayer ($r = 0.722$) than study of religious text ($r = 0.509$), religious service attendance ($r = 0.502$), and religious group activities ($r = 0.334$), as shown in the bottom section of Table 2. These findings tend to imply that religious belief is likely to be positively associated with community engagement only to the extent that it is related to religious behaviors. That is, simply believing in a higher power—without being coupled with or expressed in religious behaviors—is unlikely to lead to community engagement and, in fact, may lead to disengagement from the community.

Next, Table 3 presents the estimated full structural model, whereas estimated measurement models are reported in Figure 1 (see Table 1 for the content of indicators).[8] Model fit indices show that the full model had a good fit to data (see the second section), as RMSEA (0.030; 90% CI 0.029, 0.031) and SRMR (0.026) were both smaller than their maximum cutoff that Hu and Bentler (1999) suggested (0.060 and 0.080, respectively) with CFI (0.933) coming a bit short of its minimum cutoff (0.950). Thus, the results are acceptable for testing our hypotheses.

Table 2. Baseline Models of Religiosity and Community Engagement.

Variable	Baseline Model 1					Baseline Model 2	
	Community engagement					Community engagement	
	b	*b*	*b*	*b*	*b*	*b*	β
Male	−0.077*	−0.039	−0.068*	−0.079*	−0.066*	−0.053	−0.038
Age	0.054*	0.041*	0.047*	0.053*	0.068*	0.057*	0.150*
Black	0.103	0.029	−0.019	−0.001	0.061	−0.002	−0.001
Hispanic	−0.012	−0.031	−0.047	−0.037	−0.031	−0.044	−0.024
Asian	−0.084	−0.118	−0.104	−0.138	−0.145*	−0.151*	−0.040*
Other race	0.093	0.056	0.040	0.053	0.048	0.020	0.004
Mixed race	0.207*	0.197*	0.173*	0.184*	0.179*	0.172*	0.045*
Education	0.093*	0.093*	0.073*	0.078*	0.068*	0.067*	0.097*
Employed	−0.030	−0.040	−0.025	−0.021	−0.017	−0.025	−0.018
Household income	0.004	0.005	0.006	0.004	0.006	0.007	0.045
Married	0.004	−0.010	−0.002	−0.027	−0.004	−0.015	−0.011
Living with partner	−0.026	−0.017	0.008	0.006	−0.005	0.005	0.002
Divorced	−0.043	−0.052	−0.025	−0.036	−0.037	−0.040	−0.019
Separated	0.086	0.072	0.071	0.053	0.072	0.056	0.013
Widowed	0.080	0.070	0.018	0.018	0.030	0.011	0.003
Protestant	0.065	−0.014	−0.033	−0.060	−0.003	−0.055	−0.037
Catholic	0.182*	0.091	0.184*	0.071	0.162*	0.119*	0.061*
Other religion	0.124*	0.077	0.026	0.039	0.028	−0.001	−0.001
Metropolitan	−0.001	0.019	0.025	0.010	0.006	0.020	0.012
Number of children	0.023	0.019	0.017	0.016	0.016	0.014	0.027
Northeast	−0.001	0.008	0.031	0.006	0.003	0.015	0.008
Midwest	−0.010	−0.001	0.001	−0.013	−0.012	−0.004	−0.002
South	0.105*	0.090*	0.091*	0.097*	0.081*	0.079*	0.055*
Party identification	−0.039*	−0.048*	−0.054*	−0.048*	−0.043*	−0.050*	−0.141*
Belief in a higher power	0.066*					−0.039*	−0.071*
Prayer		0.121*				0.050*	0.113*
Study of religious text			0.171*			0.045+	0.091+
Religious service attendance				0.191*		0.022	0.040
Religious group activities					0.262*	0.186*	0.265*
R^2	0.107	0.147	0.185	0.180	0.214	0.231	

(continued)

Table 2. (Continued)

Variable	Baseline Model 1					Baseline Model 2	
	Community engagement					Community engagement	
	b	*b*	*b*	*b*	*b*	*b*	β
Model fit indices							
χ^2	776.374	793.259	819.066	842.269	796.308	1331.183	
d.f.	164	194	194	194	194	330	
p-Value	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	
RMSEA	0.032	0.029	0.030	0.030	0.029	0.029	
90% C.I.	0.030, 0.034	0.027, 0.031	0.028, 0.032	0.028, 0.033	0.027, 0.031	0.027, 0.031	
CFI	0.894	0.934	0.929	0.931	0.922	0.953	
SRMR	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.020	
Supplemental analysis							
Belief in a higher power	0.066*	−0.039*	−0.009	−0.001	0.011		
Prayer		0.142*					
Study of religious text			0.174*				
Religious service attendance				0.190*			
Religious group activities					0.255*		
Zero-order correlations							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
(1) Belief in a higher power	1.000						
(2) Prayer	0.722*	1.000					
(3) Study of religious text	0.509*	0.704*	1.000				
(4) Relig. service attendance	0.502*	0.697*	0.808*	1.000			
(5) Religious group activities	0.334*	0.454*	0.665*	0.666*	1.000		

+$p < .05$ (one-tailed test).
*$p < .05$ (two-tailed test).

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, a respondent's religious belief and behaviors were positively related to the respondent's transcendent accountability with the one exception being religious service attendance. That is, the more a respondent believed in a higher power ($b = 0.328$) and engaged in prayer ($b = 0.203$), study of religious text ($b = 0.099$), and non-service group activities ($b = 0.065$), the more likely the respondent was to report a sense of being accountable to a higher power for his or her influence on other people and the natural environment. Among these four religiosity variables, belief in a higher power ($\beta = 0.407$) was the most strongly related to transcendent accountability, followed by prayer ($\beta = 0.311$), study of religious text ($\beta = 0.138$), and religious group activities ($\beta = 0.063$).[9] Although religious service attendance was not directly related to transcendent accountability ($b = -0.022$, $p > 0.05$), a supplemental analysis indicated it may be related indirectly through other religiosity variables. Specifically, we found that religious service attendance was significantly related to transcendent accountability without other religiosity variables in the model ($b = 0.393$; not shown in the table), but the relationship became smaller, while remaining significant, when belief in a higher power, prayer, study of religious text, and religious group activities were added one at a time ($b = 0.204$, 0.081, 0.134, and 0.331, respectively). Positively stated, religious service attendance may be likely to lead to transcendent accountability to the extent that it was associated with religious belief and other religious behaviors.[10]

Hypothesis 2 also received support, as transcendent accountability was positively related to pro-community attitudes ($b = 0.095$). The more a respondent had a sense of accountability to a higher power for his or her influence on other people and the natural environment, the more likely the respondent was to say that civic engagement, such as "helping other people in need" and "contributing to the greater good in the world," was important.

Hypothesis 3 was supported, too, in that pro-community attitudes had a positive relationship to community engagement ($b = 0.366$). This finding confirms our expectation that individuals who had positive attitudes toward community involvement were more likely to practice what they perceived to be important, such as "working with others … in [the] community" and "participating in organized volunteer opportunities."

Next, consistent with Hypothesis 4a, four religiosity variables found to be positively related to transcendent accountability—belief in a higher power, prayer, study of religious text, and religious group activities—were all related to pro-community attitudes indirectly via transcendent accountability in the expected direction ($b = 0.031$, 0.019, 0.009, and 0.006). Specifically, the indirect relationship of belief in a higher power was stronger than the others ($\beta = 0.047$ vs. 0.036, 0.016, and 0.007), as shown in the third section of Table 3. Further, consistent with Hypothesis 4b, the relationships between the four religiosity variables and community engagement were mediated, at least in part, by transcendent accountability and/or pro-community attitudes. Specifically, both private religious behaviors (prayer and study of religious text) were related to community engagement indirectly via pro-community attitudes only ($b = 0.043$ and 0.026), as well as both transcendent accountability and pro-community attitudes ($b = 0.007$ and 0.002).

Table 3. Full Model of Religiosity and Community Engagement.

Variable	Transcendent accountability		Pro-community attitudes		Community engagement	
	b	β	*b*	β	*b*	β
Male	−0.060	−0.029	−0.152*	−0.092*	0.005	0.004
Age	0.007	0.013	0.027	0.060	0.048*	0.124*
Black	−0.040	−0.013	−0.165*	−0.064*	0.059	0.028
Hispanic	−0.123*	−0.045*	−0.073	−0.033	−0.012	−0.007
Asian	−0.069	−0.012	−0.091	−0.020	−0.122	−0.032
Other race	0.196*	0.025*	−0.160	−0.025	0.068	0.013
Mixed race	0.049	0.009	0.030	0.007	0.161*	0.042*
Education	0.021	0.021	0.075*	0.092*	0.039*	0.057*
Employed	−0.014	−0.007	0.008	0.005	−0.026	−0.019
Household income	0.004	0.016	0.012*	0.063*	0.003	0.016
Married	−0.029	−0.014	−0.005	−0.003	−0.013	−0.009
Living with partner	−0.137*	−0.039*	−0.023	−0.008	0.019	0.008
Divorced	0.026	0.008	−0.057	−0.022	−0.021	−0.010
Separated	0.152	0.024	0.151	0.029	−0.005	−0.001
Widowed	−0.054	−0.012	0.031	0.008	0.003	0.001
Protestant	0.079*	0.036*	−0.060	−0.034	−0.038	−0.026
Catholic	−0.011	−0.004	−0.124*	−0.053*	0.164*	0.084*
Other religion	0.106	0.032	−0.056	−0.021	0.012	0.005
Metropolitan	0.012	0.005	−0.019	−0.010	0.027	0.016
Number of children	−0.001	−0.001	−0.002	−0.003	0.015	0.028
Northeast	0.060	0.022	−0.031	−0.014	0.023	0.012
Midwest	0.056	0.023	−0.015	−0.008	−0.003	−0.002
South	−0.029	−0.014	−0.016	−0.010	0.086*	0.060*
Party identification	0.024*	0.046*	−0.087*	−0.205*	−0.020*	−0.056*
Belief in a higher power (HP)	0.328*	0.407*	−0.045	−0.068	−0.035	−0.064
Prayer	0.203*	0.311*	0.117*	0.220*	−0.004	−0.010
Study of religious (R) text	0.099*	0.138*	0.071*	0.120*	0.014	0.028
Religious service attendance	−0.022	−0.027	−0.001	−0.002	0.025	0.044
Religious group activities	0.065*	0.063*	0.038	0.045	0.170*	0.240*
Transcendent accountability (TA)			0.095*	0.116*	0.015	0.022
Pro-community Attitudes (PCA)					0.366*	0.433*
R^2	0.653		0.187		0.387	
Model fit indices						
χ^2	2981.202					
d.f., *p*-value	704, <.001					
RMSEA	0.030					
90% C.I.	0.029, 0.031					
CFI	0.933					

(continued)

Table 3. (Continued)

Variable	Transcendent accountability		Pro-community attitudes		Community engagement	
	b	β	*b*	β	*b*	β
SRMR	0.026					
Indirect effects						
(Hypothesis 4a)						
Belief in a HP → TA →			0.031*	0.047*		
Prayer → TA →			0.019*	0.036*		
Study of R text → TA →			0.009*	0.016*		
Group activities → TA →			0.006+	0.007+		
(Hypothesis 4b)						
Belief in a HP→ TA → PCA →					0.011*	0.020*
Prayer → PCA →					0.043*	0.095*
Prayer → TA → PCA →					0.007*	0.016*
Study of R text → PCA →					0.026*	0.052*
Study of R text → TA → PCA →					0.002*	0.007*
R group activities → TA → PCA →					0.003*	0.003*
(Hypothesis 4c)						
TA → PCA →					0.035*	0.050*

+$p < .05$ (one-tailed test).
*$p < .05$ (two-tailed test).

By contrast, belief in a higher power and religious group activities had relationships with community engagement that were attributable in part to both mediators ($b = 0.011$ and 0.003). In addition, consistent with Hypothesis 4c, the indirect relationship between transcendent accountability and community engagement via pro-community attitudes was significant ($b = 0.035$).

While not hypothesized, some relationships between control and endogenous variables are worth mentioning. First of all, as expected, Protestants tended to report higher levels of transcendent accountability than their peers without any religious affiliation ($b = 0.079$), whereas Catholics and "other religion" adherents were not different from the reference group ($b = -0.011$ and 0.106, $p > 0.05$). Second, Catholics were more likely to report community engagement than the religiously unaffiliated ($b = 0.164$), whereas Protestants and "other religion" adherents did not differ from religiously unaffiliated respondents ($b = -0.038$ and 0.012, $p > 0.05$). Next, males reported lower levels of pro-community attitudes than

females ($b = -0.152$), and older people were more likely to engage in the community compared to their younger counterparts ($b = 0.048$). With White respondents as the reference group, Asian respondents did not differ significantly from them on either mediating variable ($b = -0.069$ and -0.091, $p > 0.05$), whereas Hispanic ($b = -0.123$) and Black respondents ($b = -0.165$) reported lower levels of transcendent accountability and pro-community attitudes, respectively. We also found that two measures of socioeconomic status—education and household income—were positively related to pro-community attitudes ($b = 0.075$ and 0.012), and the more educated respondents were also more likely to do something for their community relative to the less educated ($b = 0.039$). The only regional difference observed was that Southerners reported higher levels of community engagement than Westerners ($b = 0.086$). Lastly, holding transcendent accountability and pro-community attitudes constant, Republican respondents reported lower levels of community engagement than their Democratic peers ($b = -0.020$), but a supplemental analysis revealed that Republicans were more likely than Democrats to engage in community activities because of their transcendent accountability and its associated pro-community attitudes ($b = 0.001$; not shown in the table).

Discussion

Previous studies have established a positive relationship between religious involvement and civic engagement, such as volunteering and other prosocial community activities (Campbell and Yonish 2003; Cnaan and Boddie 2002; Kim and Jang 2017; Wilson and Musick 1997; Wuthnow 1990, 1996). However, prior research tended to focus on public, organizational involvement in religion—mostly religious service attendance—while paying limited attention to its private, nonorganizational counterpart because private religiosity variables have often not emerged as significant when examined together with public religiosity variables (e.g., Lewis et al. 2013). Although this finding may indicate that public, organizational religiosity is more important than private practices and religious beliefs for civic engagement (Bekkers and Wiepking 2011; Putnam and Campbell 2010), the present study's results suggest that private religiosity may contribute to community engagement primarily through mediators, such as transcendent accountability and pro-community attitudes.

The present study was conducted to address some gaps in prior research. Specifically, we tested relationships of private as well as public religiosity with community engagement, using data from a recent nationally representative survey that includes new and unique measures of transcendent accountability and attitudes about community engagement, as well as measures of religiosity and community engagement that are consistent with previous research. We tested whether the relationships were attributable to two never-to-seldom studied explanatory factors: transcendent accountability and pro-community attitudes. As hypothesized, we found that both private religiosity and public religiosity were positively related to transcendent accountability, which was associated positively with pro-community attitudes, which was in turn positively related to community engagement.

Specifically, individuals who believed in a higher power, privately practiced devotional prayer and study of religious texts, and attended non-service group activities were more likely than those who did not, to have a sense of being accountable to a higher power for their influence on other people and the natural environment and also to believe the importance of positive community involvement, whether simply being informed of community issues or taking action to address the issues. As a result, more religious individuals tended to engage in community activities compared to their less or not religious peers.

We found religious service attendance was positively related to community engagement when examined alone in a model, but it became non-significant when other religiosity measures were added to the model. This pattern is consistent with previous findings (Lewis et al. 2013; Merino 2013; Putnam and Campbell 2010), and future research should examine this pattern more exhaustively. For example, it may be that the relationship between religious service attendance and community engagement is indirect to the extent that attending religious services leads to other religious group activities and devotional practices, which in turn contribute to community engagement.[11] Similarly, religious service attendance was positively related to transcendent accountability without other religiosity measures in a model, but the relationship became smaller, remaining significant, when other measures were added one at a time, though it turned non-significant when all the measures were included simultaneously. This finding also implies an indirect relationship: that is, service attendance may lead to transcendent accountability to the extent that it contributes to religious belief and other religious behaviors, private and public.

The present study provides evidence that private, nonorganizational religiosity is important in explaining the relationship between religiosity and community engagement, while public, organizational religiosity may be the primary explanation for the relationship. In this study we found that belief in a higher power and private practices were positively associated with community engagement *indirectly* through transcendent accountability and/or pro-community attitudes. Thus, private as well as public religiosity is important in understanding how religion contributes to civic engagement.

We found that attending religious group activities other than religious services was more proximate than other measures of religiosity. Specifically, the religious group activities variable remained significant after the mediators explaining its relationship with community engagement were controlled for ($b = 0.170$; see Table 3), and it had the second strongest relationship with community engagement ($\beta = 0.240$) next to pro-community attitudes ($\beta = 0.433$). The remaining significant relationship indicates that attending non-service group activities is likely to contribute to community engagement via other mechanisms than transcendent accountability and pro-community attitudes. One such mechanism is religious social networks, which mediate the effect of religious involvement, particularly organizational participation on civic engagement (Lewis et al. 2013). While religious service attendance and non-service group activities are often used as a proxy of religious social networks, a direct measure of the networks is desirable.[12]

Researchers have often discussed or at least alluded to the effect of religion on virtues when they discussed how religious involvement leads to civic engagement, but the virtuous effect of religion has rarely been empirically examined (but see Beyerlein and Vaisey 2013), while it has been tested in other research areas (Jang et al. 2021; Johnson et al. 2021). To address this gap in research, we examined transcendent accountability (Evans 2021; Witvliet et al. 2023). As a relational virtue, accountability makes people more responsive and responsible in their relationships and consists of two types, depending on the object of relationships, human and transcendent accountability (Evans 2019; Witvliet et al. 2022). This study focused on the latter: a sense of being accountable to God or a higher power for one's impact on others and the natural environment. Compared to other relational virtues, such as forgiveness and gratitude (Emmons and McCullough 2004; McCullough, Pargament, and Thoresen 2000), accountability is more relevant to civic engagement, as the greater sense of being accountable to a higher power that an individual has, the more likely the individual is to be responsive to community issues (e.g., people in need) and feel responsible for doing something about them (e.g., volunteering to help the needy). We found evidence of the virtuous effect of religion on civic engagement.

Despite these contributions to the civic engagement literature, we need to acknowledge some limitations of our study. While these cross-sectional data enabled us to measure various aspects of religiosity and understudied mediators for the religiosity-community engagement relationship, the present data do not allow any causal inferences about relationships among the key constructs. For the same reason, we could not examine reciprocal relationships among them, so readers need to keep in mind that the relationships might have been overestimated. For example, the estimated "effect" of religiosity on transcendent accountability may include the effect of opposite direction given that a sense of accountability to a higher power is likely to enhance religious involvement. Also, we did not examine gender and racial/ethnic group differences in the hypothesized relationships because they were beyond the scope of our study. However, given some group differences in religiosity and civic engagement (Ellison and Sherkat 1993; Finlay, Flanagan, and Wray-Lake 2011; Smidt 1999), it is worth testing such interactions.

Conclusion and Implications

This study reaffirms the positive relationship between religiosity and civic engagement: the more an individual is involved in religion, whether publicly or privately, the more the individual is likely to engage in civic activities for the benefit of community. It also addresses two key issues that have not been adequately examined. First, previous research has tended to focus on public, organizational religiosity (Putnam and Campbell 2010; Wilson and Musick 1997), with less attention devoted to private, nonorganizational aspects of religious life. While the relationship between private religiosity and community engagement may be partly mediated by public religiosity, we found private practices and theological belief to be important explanations of the religion-civic engagement relationship as well. Thus, our study

suggests that scholars should continue to examine multiple aspects of religious life, and not focus solely on public, organizational participation in religion.

Second, existing research indicates that social networks and organizational opportunities to help others account for the association between religion and community engagement (Putnam 2000; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Putnam et al. 2004). While important, these mechanisms may not be adequate to account for the effects of private religiosity and may not fully explain the impact of public religiosity. The current findings imply that mechanisms such as transcendent accountability and pro-community attitudes are likely to enhance our understanding of the connection between religion and community engagement. In the same vein, scholars have alluded to virtues when discussing how religious involvement leads to community engagement (e.g., Loveland et al. 2005; Sharp 2019), but the virtuous effect of religion has rarely been empirically examined in religious research. The findings reported here build on recent work in criminology (Jang et al. 2022; Johnson et al. 2021), sociology of health (Bradshaw et al. 2022), and mental health and relationality (Witvliet et al. 2023) which implies the importance of virtues in understanding the role of religion in human social life. That is, religion is likely to foster virtues such as transcendent accountability, which is further associated with embracing accountability in human relationships, thereby leading people to serve their communities (Witvliet et al. 2022, 2023).

These findings have practical implications as well. Historically, the United States has been characterized by high levels of community engagement and voluntary participation, as famously noted by Tocqueville (2003:594–595). These norms and behaviors are key to the functioning of a healthy society. Unfortunately, overall civic engagement and social connections may be declining in America (Putnam 2000), so identifying sources that promote community ties and activities is crucial. A growing literature dating back to the work of Tocqueville shows that religious practices and beliefs are positively associated with many different types of civic engagement including education, recreational programs, medical and health services, mentoring of at-risk youth, shelters for the homeless, substance abuse counseling, and offender treatment and rehabilitation programs (Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Johnson 2002; Johnson et al. 2021; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Wuthnow 2004). The current study provides additional evidence, and suggests that community engagement may be promoted and perhaps sustained by religion in ways that are beneficial to society as a whole, in areas such as family life, economic prosperity and stability, and overall health and well-being.

Future research should continue this line of study by examining other virtues with civic implications, such as compassion, empathy, and altruism, as well as accountability to other people in relation to community engagement. Given the often-reported decline in social capital and membership in houses of worship (Gallup 2021; Putnam 2000), the focus on public, organizational religiosity is understandable. Yet, the current study highlights the value of private, nonorganizational religiosity and internalized virtue such as accountability to a higher power for one's influence on others and the environment, as well as positive attitudes

toward one's community as important for civic engagement and functioning of a healthy democracy.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared the following potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was generously funded by the Templeton Religion Trust (TRT) and the Fetzer Institute. The research was conducted independently, and the results were not affected by this support. The content of the study is only attributable to the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the TRT or the Fetzer Institute.

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: This research was funded by a grant from the Templeton Religion Trust (Award #: TRT-0171) and the Fetzer Institute (Grant #: 4235.03).

ORCID iDs

Sung Joon Jang https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2228-158X

Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Data Availability Statement

The data (National Religion and Spirituality Survey 2020) needed to duplicate and replicate the findings in the paper are available for download at the website of the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA; https://thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/NRSS2019.asp).

Notes

1. In their study, 91 percent of individuals who volunteered for a religious organization also volunteered for a secular one, suggesting that religion does not simply involve volunteering in religious contexts. In fact, Putnam and Campbell (2010:445) argue that "regular churchgoers are also much more likely to volunteer for secular causes."
2. We conceptualize religious beliefs as private religiosity in that they are internalized, while we also acknowledge that people learn about and often profess beliefs publicly.
3. Similarly, Lewis et al. (2013) found that religious beliefs were not consistently related to civic engagement when religious service attendance was also included in a model, although they reversed the causal order between the two: that is, they first estimated a regression model including religious attendance and then added religious beliefs to see whether the latter changed the relationship between religious attendance and civic engagement.
4. Another potential indicator of private religiosity is "spirituality." Though understudied, when examined, spirituality has often been measured based on how the term was

understood by study participants. Thus, it is difficult to know exactly what "spirituality" has measured (e.g., Steensland, King, and Duffy 2022).

5. This terminology decision also had an empirical basis. Specifically, the survey data we analyzed showed that respondents tended to understand the terms "religious" and "spiritual"—used to measure various behaviors with parallel items (e.g., praying as "religious" activity and praying as "spiritual" activity)—as practically the same rather than conceptually distinct, which was evidenced by very high internal reliability of those parallel items.
6. The survey question about the importance of community involvement was not worded specifically to ask whether respondents *believed* or *felt* a listed action was important. Thus, the latent variable could have been labeled as pro-community beliefs, while we decided to call it "pro-community attitudes."
7. Thus, respondents of "other religion" included adherents of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Orthodox Church (Greek, Russian, or some other orthodox church), Unitarian Church, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and "something else."
8. Estimated measurement models show that the factor loadings of all indicators were higher than .600, consistent with the results from exploratory factor analysis and initial measurement model estimation (see Supplemental Appendix A).
9. Belief in a higher power having stronger relationship than the other three may be attributable in part to the belief and transcendent accountability both being cognitive variables unlike the others that were behavioral variables.
10. Consistent with this finding, we found religious service attendance was moderately to strongly correlated positively with belief in a higher power ($r = 0.502$), prayer ($r = 0.697$), study of religious text ($r = 0.808$), and religious group activities ($r = 0.666$) as shown in the bottom section of Table 2.
11. Alternatively, the pattern may partly reflect spuriousness in this relationship, as some people regularly attend religious services for something other than religious reasons. For example, an individual may attend due to extrinsic motivations or out of obligation (Sherkat 1997). However, given that most people attend services out of religious piety, we generally expect the relationship between religious service attendance and community engagement to be mostly indirect, mediated by other domains of public and private religiosity, and only partly spurious.
12. For example, using the network module of the Portraits of American Life Study, Merino (2013) measured religious social networks based on items asking about persons survey respondents felt close to, not including people living in their home. He also created variables measuring volunteer recruitment from not only those friends but also network alters, with whom they had regular interaction in person. It was found that, whether individuals are religious or not, close ties to people highly active in a congregation led them to volunteering, confirming the importance of social networks as recruitment channel. If we had such network data, we might have been able to further explain the remaining link between religious group activities—a source of social network involvement and exposure to volunteer recruitment—and community engagement.

References

Ammerman, Nancy T. 1997. *Golden Rule Christianity: Lived Religion in the American Mainstream*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ammerman, Nancy T. 2005. *Pillars of Faith: American Congregations and Their Partners*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.
Association of Religion Data Archives. 2020. "National Religion and Spirituality Survey 2020." Retrieved February 2020 (https://thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/NRSS2019.asp).
Baraldi, Amanda N. and Craig K. Enders. 2010. "An Introduction to Modern Missing Data Analyses."*Journal of School Psychology* 48(1):5–37. doi: 10.1016/j.jsp.2009.10.001
Bartkowski, John and Helen Regis. 2000. "Can Religious Congregations Satisfy Those Who Hunger and Thirst for Justice? *An Assessment of Faith-Based Food Assistance Programs in Rural Mississippi*." Mississippi State, MS: Southern Rural Development Center.
Bekkers, René and Pamala Wiepking. 2011. "A Literature Review of Empirical Studies of Philanthropy: Eight Mechanisms That Drive Charitable Giving."*Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 40(5):924–73. doi: 10.1177/0899764010380927
Beyerlein, Kraig and John R. Hipp. 2006. "From Pews to Participation: The Effect of Congregation Activity and Context on Bridging Civic Engagement."*Social Problems* 53(1):97–117. doi:10.1525/sp.2006.53.1.97.
Beyerlein, Kraig and Stephen Vaisey. 2013. "Individualism Revisited: Moral Worldviews and Civic Engagement."*Poetics* 41(4):384–406. doi: 10.1016/j.poetic.2013.05.002
Bradley, Christopher S., Terrence D. Hill, Amy M. Burdette, Krysia N. Mossakowski, and Robert J. Johnson. 2020. "Religious Attendance and Social Support: Integration or Selection?" *Review of Religious Research* 62(1):83–99. doi: 10.1007/s13644-019-00392-z
Bradshaw, Matt, Blake V. Kent, Charlotte V. O. Witvliet, Byron Johnson, Sung J. Jang, and Joseph Leman. 2022. "Perceptions of Accountability to God and Psychological Well-being among US Adults."*Journal of Religion and Health* 61(1):327–52. doi: 10.1007/s10943-021-01471-8.
Campbell, David E. and Steven J. Yonish. 2003. "Religion and Volunteering in America." Pp. 87–106 in *Religion as Social Capital: Producing the Common Good*, edited by C. E. Smidt. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.
Cavendish, James. 2001. "To March or Not to March: Clergy Mobilization Strategies and Grassroots Antidrug Activism." Pp. 203–23 in *Christian Clergy in American Politics*, edited by S. E. S. Crawford and L. R. Olson. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Chaves, Mark. 2004. *Congregations in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Cnaan, Ram and Stephanie C. Boddie. 2002. *The Invisible Caring Hand: American Congregations and the Provision of Welfare*. New York, NY: New York University Press.
Driskell, Robyn, Elizabeth Embry, and Larry Lyon. 2008. "Faith and Politics: The Influence of Religious Beliefs on Political Participation."*Social Science Quarterly* 89(2):294–314. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-6237.2008.00533.x
Einolf, Christopher J. 2013. "Daily Spiritual Experiences and Prosocial Behavior."*Social Indicators Research* 110(1):71–87. doi: 10.1007/s11205-011-9917-3
Ellison, Christopher G. 1992. "Are Religious People Nice People? Evidence from the National Survey of Black Americans."*Social Forces* 71(2):411–30. doi: 10.1093/sf/71.2.411
Ellison, Christopher G. and Linda K. George. 1994. "Religious Involvement, Social Ties, and Social Support in a Southeastern Community."*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33(1):46–61. doi: 10.2307/1386636
Ellison, Christopher G. and Darren E. Sherkat. 1993. "Conservative Protestantism and Support for Corporal Punishment."*American Sociological Review* 58(1):131–44.

Ellison, Christopher G. and Darren E. Sherkat. 1995. "Is Sociology the Core Discipline for the Scientific Study of Religion?" *Social Forces* 73(4):1255–66. doi:10.1093/sf/73.4.1255.

Emmons, Robert A. and Michael E. McCullough, eds. 2004. *The Psychology of Gratitude*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Evans, C. Stephen. 2019. *Kierkegaard and Spirituality: Accountability as the Meaning of Human Existence*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Evans, C. Stephen. 2021. "Accountability as Part of the Human Moral Condition." Pp. 275–91 in *Faith and Virtue Formation: Christian Philosophy in Aid of Becoming Good*, edited by A. C. Pelser and W. S. Cleveland. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Finlay, Andrea K., Constance Flanagan, and Laura Wray-Lake. 2011. "Civic Engagement Patterns and Transitions Over 8 Years: The AmeriCorps National Study."*Developmental Psychology* 47(6):1728. doi: 10.1037/a0025360

Gallup. 2021. "U.S. Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time." Retrieved August 4, 2022 (https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx).

Graham, John W. 2009. "Missing Data Analysis: Making It Work in the Real World."*Annual Review of Psychology* 60:549–76. doi: 10.1146/annurev.psych.58.110405.085530

Hu, Li-tze and Peter M. Bentler. 1999. "Cutoff Criteria for Fit Indexes in Covariance Structure Analysis: Conventional Criteria Versus New Alternatives."*Structural Equation Modeling* 6(1):1–55. doi: 10.1080/10705519909540118

Jang, Sung Joon, Byron R. Johnson, Matthew L. Anderson, and Karen Booyens. 2021. "The Effect of Religion on Emotional Well-being among Offenders in Correctional Centers of South Africa: Explanations and Gender Differences."*Justice Quarterly* 38(6):1154–81. doi:10.1080/07418825.2019.1689286.

Jang, Sung Joon, Byron R. Johnson, Matthew L. Anderson, and Karen Booyens. 2022. "Religion and Rehabilitation in Colombian and South African Prisons: A Human Flourishing Approach."*International Criminal Justice Review*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/10575677221123249.

Johnson, Byron R. 2002. *Objective Hope: Assessing the Effectiveness of Faith-Based Organizations: A Review of the Literature*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania.

Johnson, Byron R., Michael Hallett, and Sung Joon Jang. 2021. *The Restorative Prisons: Essays on Inmate Peer Ministry and Prosocial Corrections*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Kim, Young-Il and Sung Joon Jang. 2017. "Religious Service Attendance and Volunteering: A Growth Curve Analysis."*Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 46(2):395–418. doi: 10.1177/0899764016655619

Krause, Neal. 2002. "Church-Based Social Support and Health in Old Age: Exploring Variations by Race."*The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* 57(6):S332–47. doi: 10.1093/geronb/57.6.S332

Levin, Jeff, Matt Bradshaw, Byron R. Johnson, and Rodney Stark. 2022. "Are Religious "nones" really Not Religious?: Revisiting Glenn, Three Decades Later."*Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion* 18(7):1–29.

Lewis, Valerie A., Carol A. MacGregor, and Robert D. Putnam. 2013. "Religion, Networks, and Neighborliness: The Impact of Religious Social Networks on Civic Engagement."*Social Science Research* 42(2):331–46. doi: 10.1016/j.ssresearch.2012.09.011

Loveland, Matthew T., David Sikkink, Daniel J. Myers, and Benjamin Radcliff. 2005. "Private Prayer and Civic Involvement."*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44(1):1–14. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-5906.2005.00261.x

McClure, Jennifer M. 2013. "Sources of Social Support: Examining Congregational Involvement, Private Devotional Activities, and Congregational Context."*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52(4):698–712. doi: 10.1111/jssr.12076

McCullough, Michael E., Kenneth I. Pargament, and Carl E. Thoresen. 2000. *Forgiveness: Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Merino, Stephen M. 2013. "Religious Social Networks and Volunteering: Examining Recruitment Via Close Ties."*Review of Religious Research* 55(3):509–27. doi: 10.1007/s13644-013-0113-6

Merino, Stephen M. 2014. "Social Support and the Religious Dimensions of Close Ties."*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 53(3):595–612. doi: 10.1111/jssr.12134

Musick, Marc A., John Wilson, and William B. Bynum, Jr. 2000. "Race and Formal Volunteering: The Differential Effects of Class and Religion."*Social Forces* 78(4): 1539–70. doi: 10.2307/3006184

Muthén, Bengt O. 1983. "Latent Variable Structural Equation Modeling with Categorical-Data."*Journal of Econometrics* 22(1–2):43–65.

Muthén, Linda K. and Bengt O. Muthén. 2017. *Mplus User's Guide*. Los Angeles, CA: Muthén & Muthén.

Park, Jerry Z. and Christian Smith. 2000. "'To Whom Much Has Been Given...': Religious Capital and Community Voluntarism among Churchgoing Protestants."*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 39(3):272–86. doi: 10.1111/0021-8294.00023

Paxton, Pamela, Nicholas E. Reith, and Jennifer L. Glanville. 2014. "Volunteering and the Dimensions of Religiosity: A Cross-National Analysis."*Review of Religious Research* 56(4):597–625. doi: 0.1007/s13644-014-0169-y

Pollner, Melvin. 1989. "Divine Relations, Social Relations, and Well-being."*Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 30(1):92–104. doi: 10.2307/2136915

Poloma, Margaret M. and George H. Gallup. 1992. *Varieties of Prayer: A Survey Report*. Philadelphia, PA: Trinity Press International.

Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Putnam, Robert D. and David E. Campbell. 2010. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Putnam, Robert D., Lewis Feldstein, and Donald J. Cohen. 2004. *Better Together: Restoring the American Community*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Regnerus, Mark D., Christian Smith, and David Sikkink. 1998. "Who Gives to the Poor? The Influence of Religious Tradition and Political Location on the Personal Generosity of Americans Toward the Poor."*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37(3):481–93. doi: 10.2307/1388055

Sacks, Jonathan. 2005. *To Heal a Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility*. New York, NY: Schocken Books.

Sharp, Shane. 2019. "Prayer and Helping."*Social Currents* 6(2):141–62. doi: 10.1177/23294965187978

Sherkat, Darren E. 1997. "Embedding Religious Choices: Preferences and Social Constraints into Rational Choice Theories of Religious Behavior." Pp. 65–87 in *Rational Choice Theory and Religion: Summary and Assessment*, edited by L. A. Young. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sider, Ronald J. 1997. *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity*. Dallas, TX: Thomas Nelson.

Sider, Ronald J. 1999. *Just Generosity: A New Vision for Overcoming Poverty in America*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Smidt, Corwin. 1999. "Religion and Civic Engagement: A Comparative Analysis."*The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 565(1):176–92. doi: 10.1177/000271629956500112

Son, Joonmo and John Wilson. 2012. "Volunteer Work and Hedonic, Eudemonic, and Social Well-being."*Sociological Forum* 27(3):658–81. doi: 10.1111/j.1573-7861.2012.01340.x

Stark, Rodney and William S. Bainbridge. 1980. "Towards a Theory of Religion: Religious Commitment."*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 19(2):114–28.

Stark, Rodney and Roger Finke. 2000. *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Steensland, Brian, David P. King, and Barbara J. Duffy. 2022. "The Discursive and Practical Influence of Spirituality on Civic Engagement."*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 61(2):389–407. doi: 10.1111/jssr.12788

Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2003. *Democracy in America and Two Essays on America*. London: Penguin.

Wikstrom, Owe. 1987. "Attribution, Roles and Religion: A Theoretical Analysis of Sundén's Role Theory of Religion and the Attributional Approach to Religious Experience."*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 26(3):390–400. doi:10.2307/1386442.

Wilson, John. 2000. "Volunteering."*Annual Review of Sociology* 26:215–40. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.215

Wilson, John and Marc A. Musick. 1997. "Work and Volunteering: The Long Arm of the Job."*Social Forces* 76(1):251–72. doi: 10.2307/2580325

Witvliet, Charlotte V. O., Sung Joon Jang, Byron R. Johnson, C. Stephen Evans, Jack W. Berry, Joseph Leman, Robert C. Roberts, John Peteet, Andrew B. Torrance, and Ashley N. Hayden. 2022. "Accountability: Construct Definition and Measurement of a Virtue Vital to Flourishing."*Journal of Positive Psychology*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/17439760.2022.2109203.

Witvliet, Charlotte V. O., Sung Joon Jang, Byron R. Johnson, C. Stephen Evans, Jack W. Berry, Andrew B. Torrance, Robert C. Roberts, John Peteet, Joseph Leman, and Matt Bradshaw. 2023. "Transcendent Accountability: Construct and Measurement of a Virtue that Connects Religion, Spirituality, and Positive Psychology."*Journal of Positive Psychology*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1080/17439760.2023.2170824.

Wuthnow, Robert. 1990. "Religion and the Voluntary Spirit in the United States." Pp. 3–21 in *Faith and Philanthropy: Exploring the Role of Religion in America's Voluntary Sector*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Wuthnow, Robert. 1991. *Acts of Compassion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Wuthnow, Robert. 1994. *Sharing the Journey: Support Groups and America's New Quest for Community*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Wuthnow, Robert. 1996. *Christianity and Civil Society: The Contemporary Debate*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International.

Wuthnow, Robert. 2002. "Religious Involvement and Status-bridging Social Capital."*Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41(4):669–84. doi: 10.1111/1468-5906.00153

Wuthnow, Robert. 2004. *Saving America? Faith-Based Services and the Future of Civil Society*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Yeung, Jerf W. 2018. "Are Religious People Really More Helpful? Public and Private Religiosity and Volunteering Participation."*Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 47(6):1178–200. doi: 10.1177/0899764018783277