

ABSTRACT

Religion and Interracial Marriage

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The history of racial intermarriage in the United States intersects with its religious history. Religious people, beliefs and institutions have both supported and opposed social and legal boundaries regarding the marriage of people from different races. Despite this history we have little knowledge about how religion relates to the current stage of interracial marriage. This project examines the ways that religion has changed in its effects on attitudes towards interracial marriage, religion is expressed in the lives of people who marry interracially, and religion affects the stability of those relationships. I find that, consistent with the diverse history of religion and race in the United States, the effects of religion on interracial marriage in the current era are varied, and may both support and undermine those relationships depending on the social conditions surrounding them.

Religion and Interracial Marriage

by

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A Dissertation

Approved by the Department of Sociology

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
Baylor University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Accepted by the Graduate School
August 2015

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my dissertation chair, Paul Froese, for his invaluable guidance throughout my graduate education and the dissertation process. He has accommodated my idiosyncrasies with more patience and calm than I could have reasonably asked for. Jerry Park has been a constant source of encouragement and insight to me, both inside and outside of the classroom, for the past five years. I am grateful for the direction provided by Jeremy Uecker and Matt Bradshaw, who have made this dissertation much better through their involvement in the project. Many thanks as well to Jon Singletary for the support and insights he brought to my master's thesis and my dissertation.

I am equally appreciative of the many faculty who have nurtured my growth as a scholar and teacher. Kevin Dougherty has provided for me the quintessential picture of the integrated life of a teacher and scholar. Working for Charles Tolbert and Carson Mencken has been a privilege, and they have given me the tools to explore the social world. The classes and conversations that occurred under the supervision of Martha Sherman, Diana Kendall, Chris Pieper, Kyle Irwin, Sung Joon Jang, Kay Mueller, Peter Berger and James Hunter have all been influential in shaping my scholarly development. Being educated under so many accomplished and brilliant people has been a true pleasure.

My time at Baylor was made exceptional by the many colleagues and friends I have met along the way. The graduate cohort I entered with has been a constant source of

energy and enthusiasm. I have taken more classes, traveled more places and reminisced about more movies from the 80's with Brandon Martinez than anyone else, and it has been a privilege to walk through the program with him. Kimberly Edwards's positivity, and our shared Pacific Northwest background, made graduate student life a blast. Matt Martinez's sense of purpose gave me much-needed perspective on our graduate school endeavors, and he did not rat me out to the armed gunmen who robbed our apartment while I called the police from a closet.

Sharing an office with Brandon, Todd Ferguson and Brita Andercheck made the workplace a wellspring of inspiration and joy. I fear I will forever compare future coworkers to their character, humor and work ethic. Together with my graduate cohort this group of scholars were the best traveling companions I could have hoped for.

They are all brilliant and I am much better for having known them.

Graduate school has been utterly enjoyable thanks to the wonderful students I have been privileged to work with over the past five years. Many thanks to Wes Hinze, Andrew Whitehead, Scott Draper, Sam Stroope, Shanna Granstra, Jenna Griebel, Aaron Franzen, Shanna Granstra, Phil Davignon, Jeff Tamburello, Katie Halbesleben, Brittany Fitz, Matt Henderson, Bob Thomson, Jasmine Wise, Su-Jin- Kang, Murat Yilmaz, Xiuhua Wang, Paul McClure, Blake Kent, Emily Hunt, Kenneth Vaughan, and many others.

Thank you to the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, who supported this dissertation through a generous research grant.

My family, more than anything, gave me all the opportunities in the world to pursue the scholarly life. Thanks to my mother, Rose, and my father, Jerry, for supporting

me as I majored in the unmarketable areas of philosophy and sociology. My sister, Stephanie, and brother, Mikey, inspire me to excellence daily. And finally, to Esther, my wife and best friend, I could accomplish none of this without your support and love. You have been a reservoir of comfort in trying times and the inspiration for all my work. This one's for you.

DEDICATION

For Esther

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Of all the socially erected barriers to racial integration in the United States, opposition to racial and ethnic intermarriage is one of the most intransigent. This can be seen historically, as the Supreme Court decision in *Loving v. Virginia* striking down anti-miscegenation laws nationwide occurred in 1967, four years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, one of the last formal boundaries barring social interaction between whites and non-whites. (Sollars, 2000) Informal boundaries are more persistent, and although public opinion polls show a steep decline in the proportion of people willing to admit they disapprove of interracial unions the relative rarity of these pairings suggest that other structures exist to enforce boundaries of interracial romance beyond individual preferences. (Kennedy, 2012; Sollars, 2000)

Given the history of opposition to racial intermarriage in the United States it is unsurprising that social scientists consider it an important barometer of race relations. (J. Bratter & King, 2008; Matthijs Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2010) Intermarriage implies a variety of social conditions- on the simplest level it requires interaction between groups, and is therefore a way to draw conclusions about the relative spatial and social segregation of racial and ethnic identities. The relative scarcity or commonness of these marriages also yields suggestive insights into that the cultural values that govern the marriage market, and the acceptability of marital matching. (M Kalmijn, 1998) While the cultural opposition to intermarriage was and is largely based on fears of group contamination by outsiders, the increasing acceptance and presence of these relationships

are no small reminder that these cultural mores change over time. Interracial marriage is therefore of interest to scholars of race both for its utility and its symbolic importance in taking the measure of American race relations.

The contribution of America's religion in reinforcing or challenging boundaries surrounding norms of racial intermarriage remains largely unexplored. Religion and race in the United States share a complex history, and while the common narrative suggests that religion has served as a legitimation of racial segregation and white supremacy, this does little justice to the diversity within American religion and the varied responses to racism that exist within its history. (Botham, 2009; Washington Jr., 1971) While some Americans found in the Bible support for belief in a created order where Blacks were meant to be subservient to Whites, others saw the imperative for challenging the accepted social order. While the transition out of the antebellum period required not-insignificant adaptation to a new social order, religious traditions generally continued in their pre-war disposition towards Black Americans, being more or less open towards integrating congregations and common spaces according to their established norms. (Washington Jr., 1971)

Intermarriage, while not unheard of in the antebellum period, remained the most stubborn boundary across the country. (Sollars, 2000) This is perhaps not surprising; what formal and informal boundaries that exist between whites and nonwhites are legitimated through fiercely contested definitions of personhood and group identity. To enter into the legal and religious status of marriage, and implications of mixed-race procreation, is the most dramatic way to flout those social boundaries. (Kennedy, 2012) So while religious groups were varied in their openness to integration in common areas of social life,

education and worship there was widespread uneasiness toward the idea of intermarriage at best, and outright hostility in many circles.

The tumultuous changes that occurred in the latter half of the century regarding America's cultural orientation towards race swept up America's religious bodies with it. Formal or informal policies against racial intermarriage gave way towards increased acceptance of these relationships, although conservative religious institutions held onto these policies longer than most. Bob Jones University, a religious school in the fundamentalist Protestant tradition, had school policies against interracial dating as late as 2002, (Yancey & Lewis Jr., 2009) and as we will see Evangelical Protestants took longer than individuals of other religious traditions in coming to a consensus regarding the acceptability of these relationships.

The birds-eye view of how interracial marriage developed in the United States alongside religious opposition, toleration or encouragement is representative of the diversity within the race and religion literature more generally. The central question in this literature inquires about the role that religion plays in encouraging or discouraging the social norms that make race such a divisive status. For example, religious groups may embrace ideologies that openly support the essentialization of racial and ethnic differences, lending divine legitimation towards existing structures of discrimination. (Emerson & Smith, 2000)The widespread belief among Southern Protestants in the early 20th century that blacks were the cursed descendants of Biblical malcontents is one of the boldest illustrations. (Botham, 2009) That America's religious congregations, one of the few thriving voluntary organizations of the modern era, are largely homogeneous populations; that this homogeneity outpaces the homogeneity of their neighborhoods

suggest that churches function as place where individuals choose to be more segregated than their everyday lives. (Edwards, Christerson, & Emerson, 2013; Emerson, 2006)

Yet religion has also proven to be a resource for integration and racial progress. The spiritual legitimation of racial discrimination is certainly matched by the spiritual legitimation of the Civil Rights Movement in many religious circles, and the contributions of religious Americans to the destruction of the racialized structures of Jim Crow America cannot be denied. (Botham, 2009) And while American congregations remain very homogeneous, the presence of growing numbers of multi-racial churches hint at the potential for religion to provide overarching identities that can encompass and render insignificant the tensions between racial groups- a source of ‘ethnic transcendence’. (Marti, 2008, 2009)

So to the extent that racial intermarriage is a barometer of racial progress- of greater integration, opportunity for social mobility and liberalized norms of interaction- it is surprising that religion’s relationship with its modern form has not been adequately discussed. While we have some idea about the ways that religion shapes the openness that people have towards relatives marrying interracially, or towards dating interracially, there is a noticeable gap in our understanding of how religion and interracial marriage interact in the modern world. The research question that animates this project mirrors the center of the race-religion literature: Does religion encourage or discourage interracial marriage, and by proxy the progress of race and ethnic relations in the modern United States? We may find that it inhibits the presence of interracial marriage on the American landscape, according to the long-standing trends of many American religious traditions. Alternatively, we may find that religion provides an opportunity for the kind of ethnic

transcendence that researchers have noted in multi-racial churches, making the boundaries between races less salient in arena of romantic relationships.

This project utilizes the most recent and appropriate data available to explore these possibilities. Chapter 1 examines the changing attitudes towards interracial marriage by white Americans over the 1972-2002 waves of the General Social Survey, assessing the religious differences that exist through time and the ways that those differences change or stay the same. Chapter 2 and 3 use data from the 2011-2013 National Survey of Family Growth to explore the religious lives of individuals in interracial relationships, as well as the ways that religion may affect the outcomes of those marriages, comparing them to people who are in same-race marriages. By using the existing data to the fullest extent to explore the religion-interracial marriage connection, I hope to add to the literature about the diverse ways that religion and race interact in American society and encourage future research on a topic that lies at the intersection of three powerful institutions of social life: race, marriage and religion.

CHAPTER TWO

Religion and White Support for Anti-Miscegenation Legislation: 1972-2002

Introduction

Racial intermarriage represents the most fundamental repudiation of socially-constructed boundaries between racial groups. Marrying across racial lines is a challenge to the definitions of race and personhood that underscored centuries of segregation in the history of the United States. Even as these conventions eroded over time, entrance into romantic relationships between people of different races is one instance where attitudes were slower to change. (Golebiowska, 2007) This is evidenced in the way that formal laws against interracial marriage were banned in 1967, several years after the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 barring discrimination based on race.

Religion had its own role to play in the history of racial intermarriage in the United States. This is most easily seen in the way that religion is used to legitimate social ideologies, both by opponents and proponents of anti-miscegenation legislation. While many assumptions have been made about this relationship, very little has actually been done to explore the ways that individual religion affected views on interracial marriage and its legalization.

Support for Anti-Miscegenation Legislation

Laws against intermarriage between individuals of different races were common in the United States, even predating its existence as an independent nation. As far back as the 1600's freed black slaves were forbidden from marrying whites. (Kennedy, 2012)

While federal laws against racial intermarriage were never enacted, legislation against these unions were created as high as state-level. Although these laws were generally made to deflect the threat of white-black intermarriage, others targeted different ethnic groups, such as prohibitions against Chinese or Filipinos marrying whites in California. (Sollars, 2000)

Religious legitimation of these laws often rested on interpretations of the Bible that purportedly forbid marriages between “nations”, which were often conflated with the socially-constructed boundaries of race. (Botham, 2009) Popular folk theology from the early 1800’s suggested that blacks were the descendants of Biblical figures who had been cursed for their sins, usually the characters Cain or Ham, and that their black skin was a perpetual marker of that curse. This theological claim was most common among Southern White Protestants, but also took root among the early Mormons. The immigration of East Asians into the United States initially presented something of a puzzle for this theology of race, but the increasing number of racial groups on American soil was accommodated for as time went on. (Washington Jr., 1971)

Among those religious groups who found such arguments compelling, the case against interracial marriage was clear- tainting the bloodlines of whites with the ancestry of cursed Biblical figures was undesirable. Maintaining the purity of the races took on religious overtones in the minds of many in the era, and the threat of intermarriage between the races was therefore based on spiritual (and not merely economic) fears. (Washington Jr., 1971) The idea that God had ordained the segregation of the races became a persistent legitimation of America’s racial status quo, and was a central feature

in Judge Leon M. Bazile's initial ruling declaring the Loving family guilty of violating Virginia's law against interracial marriage:

“Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix”

From the period of Reconstruction to the Civil Rights era, most religious denominations in the United States had little to say officially on sanctioning marriage between people of different races. Religious bodies that were officially permissive or supportive of such marriages included the Roman Catholic Church, United Church of Christ, Episcopalians, Mennonites, Quakers, and Unitarians. The Catholic Church was notable in this time period for its open support for repealing anti-miscegenation legislation on the grounds that it impeded their ability to practice their religion freely by marrying whosoever they chose. Others were not overt in their support for racial intermarriage but gave tacit backing through broad support of racial justice issues. Groups like this included the Church of the Brethren, the American Baptist Convention and the American Lutheran church. (Washington Jr., 1971)

For most other religious organizations the dominant attitude was one of avoidance or indifference. This is possibly based on the notable gap between the official statements of denominational authorities, most of whom generally affirmed the equality of all men before God, and the laity who were more likely to uphold the status quo of racial segregation and status inequality. United Methodists, Mormons, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Southern Baptist Convention are typical of this orientation. These denominational authorities of America's predominantly white churches did not tend to take overt stances regarding the laws against interracial

marriage, preferring ambiguous statements of brotherhood to avoid alienating laypeople. (Botham, 2009; Washington Jr., 1971) In this manner their silence gave tacit approval to the dominant social mores of their constituency.

The Southern Baptist Convention's avoidance of the topic is instructional on this point. Openly discussing the issue was often tabled in favor of discussing issues surrounding marriage (divorce and unstable families) more generally. Notes from the Southern Baptist Annual Conventions of the 1930's, for example, attempt to allay the fears of laypeople who feared federal prohibition against anti-miscegenation laws. Statements declared such changes unlikely, while notes from the 1945 meeting claim that legal intermarriage was a "remote possibility" that should offer "no fear for those who abhor the idea of amalgamation". (Southern Baptist Annual, "Marriage and Divorce Section," 1932) Other arguments stated that interracial marriage, while not forbidden in principle, should be discouraged on account of practical concerns for the children of these marriages or the people in the relationship itself.

America's religious history is therefore deeply tangled with the nation's history of interracial marriage. Its primary role in this sense was as a legitimating force for beliefs that undergird the segregation of races: that races are divinely ordained categories, and that mixing across those categories is to usurp this mandated order. The organizational leadership of America's religious bodies, if they did not actively take a stance against this belief, were inclined to tacitly accede to the views of its constituency while avoiding any specific statements.

The final blow against anti-miscegenation legislation with the Supreme Court ruling on *Loving v. Virginia* brought the era to a close, but the issue was not dead to the

millions of Americans who had grown up with such laws as the norm. Support for laws forbidding interracial marriage persisted through the following decades. The relative rarity of interracial marriages nearly fifty years after *Loving v. Virginia* attests to the extended period required for Americans to moderate on the issue. (Kennedy, 2012)

Examining the intersection of religion and interracial marriage legislation is difficult due to the lack of appropriate datasets from the time period. However, it is possible to explore the ways that religion affects views about interracial marriage laws in the time period following *Loving v. Virginia*. Previous research on white antipathy towards legalized interracial marriage has done little to shed light on the ways that religion factors into these attitudes, hampered by imprecise specification of religious measures. Protestants were found to be more supportive of laws banning racial intermarriage in early studies. (Leon, 1977; Thomas, Leon, & Cretser, 1985) Later studies would be more precise in their identification of conservative, fundamentalist Protestants as being more opposed to legalized interracial marriage (S. D. Johnson & Tamney, 1988), and the most recent polls are suggestive that a gap between white conservative Evangelical Protestants and people of other faiths persist. (Taylor, 2012)

More research exists on openness towards interracial marriages on a personal level. Golebiowska (2007) finds that personal religiosity (measured by church attendance) is not associated with attitudes towards interracial marriage between a close family member and a black person, although no other measures of religion were included. White Evangelicals have been found to be less open to marrying interracially than the religiously nonaffiliated, although this is contingent on other factors such as the racial composition of their church and personal devotional practices. (Samuel L. Perry, 2013)

But on the question of anti-miscegenation legislation, research tends toward socio-demographic analyses. Findings from the studies that exist demarcate age, Southern region of residence and lower education as predictors of support for anti-miscegenation legislation. (Jorgenson & Jorgenson, 1992; Leon, 1977, 1982; Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, & Krysan, 1997; Thomas et al., 1985) Whites have tended to show greater willingness to outlaw racial intermarriage compared to people of other races (Thomas et al., 1985), and less likely to approve of it at all. (Jacobson, 2006; B. Johnson & Jacobson, 2005) There is some evidence that attitudes towards interracial marriage vary by gender and race, with black women appearing somewhat less likely to support it. (E. C. Childs, 2005; Paset & Taylor, 1991) Attitudes towards interracial dating follow similar patterns. (Schoepflin, 2009; Todd, McKinney, Harris, Chadderton, & Small, 1992)

Political conservatism has been found to be associated with support for anti-miscegenation laws, although differences largely disappear when accounting for socio-demographic controls. (DiMaggio, Evans, & Bryson, 1996) Opposition has also been associated with a number of traditionalist cultural views, like support for capital punishment and opposition to abortion (S. D. Johnson & Tamney, 1988), as well as individualist accounts of racial inequality. (Kluegel, 1990)

Trends in Support for Anti-Miscegenation Legislation

The General Social Survey's (GSS) use of repeated surveys allows me to explore relationship of religion with attitudes towards anti-miscegenation laws over an extended period of time. These trends are visually presented in the series of figures showing how support for anti-miscegenation legislation has changed over time by a variety of social categories, including three long-running measures of religiosity included in the GSS.

Table 2.1

Support for Anti-Miscegenation Law

Variables	Start of Time Series (1972)	End of Time Series (2002)
<i>Full Sample (White Adults)</i> ^a	39.27	10.38
<i>Birth Cohorts</i>		
Born 1915-1924 ^a	41.84	22.86
Born 1925-1934 ^a	34.93	21.43
Born 1935-1944 ^a	33.33	15.38
Born 1945-1954 ^a	20.4	7.5
Born 1955-1964 ^b	33.33	7.52
Born 1965-1974 ^c	7.14	9.82
Born 1975-1984 ^d	5.88	4.04
<i>Religious Service Attendance</i> ^a		
Never	28.81	11.88
Several times a year or less	37.94	11.21
1-4 times a month	20.13	10
Weekly or more	35.58	10.26
<i>Bible Views</i> ^c		
Literal Word of God	49.8	24.84
Inspired	17.16	7.7
Fables	17.54	4.5
<i>Religious Affiliation</i> ^a		
Evangelical Protestant	59.77	23.81
Mainline Protestant	41.12	8.51
Catholic	30.69	6.35
Nonaffiliated	20.55	7.2
<i>Political Party Identification</i> ^a		
Republican	40.12	11.06
Democrat	46.47	13.02
Independent	28.39	7.97
<i>Region of Residence</i> ^a		
Non-South	33.23	5.9
South	56.83	21.17
<i>Educational Attainment</i> ^a		
Less than High School	57.58	36.67
High School Degree	32.08	9.23
College Degree	15.79	2.5
Graduate Degree	14	1.45

Data: General Social Survey 1972-2012; values weighted by adults in household

^a begins 1972 ^b begins 1973 ^c begins 1984 ^d begins 1994

Proportions for the beginning and end of the time series for each set of variables are reported in Table 2.1, weighted by the number of adults in the respondent's household. Because the GSS initially only asked the question of white respondents I have reported the trend lines for whites only across the entire time period. In order to smooth out the data for presentation the values comprising the trend lines were calculated as moving weighted means.

Figure 2.1 shows the trend from 1972-2002 in white adults supporting a law banning black-white marriages, not accounting for any other socio-demographic factors. While 39.27% of white Americans favored such laws in 1972 there was a steady and precipitous decline by 2002, the last year this question was asked on the General Social Survey, where only 10.38% of white adults answered affirmatively. This amounts to an average drop in opposition to interracial marriage of about one percent per year.

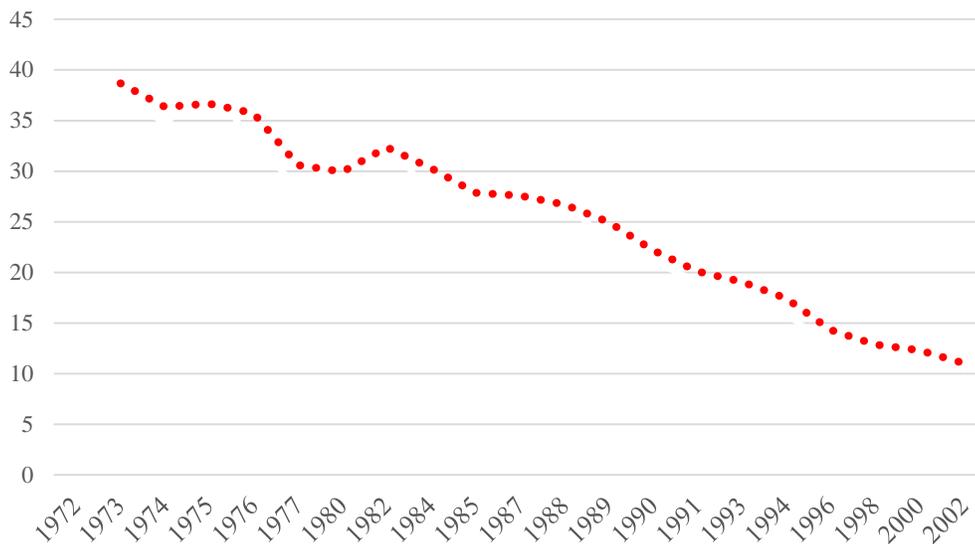


Figure 2.1. White Support for Anti-Miscegenation Law, 1972-2002.

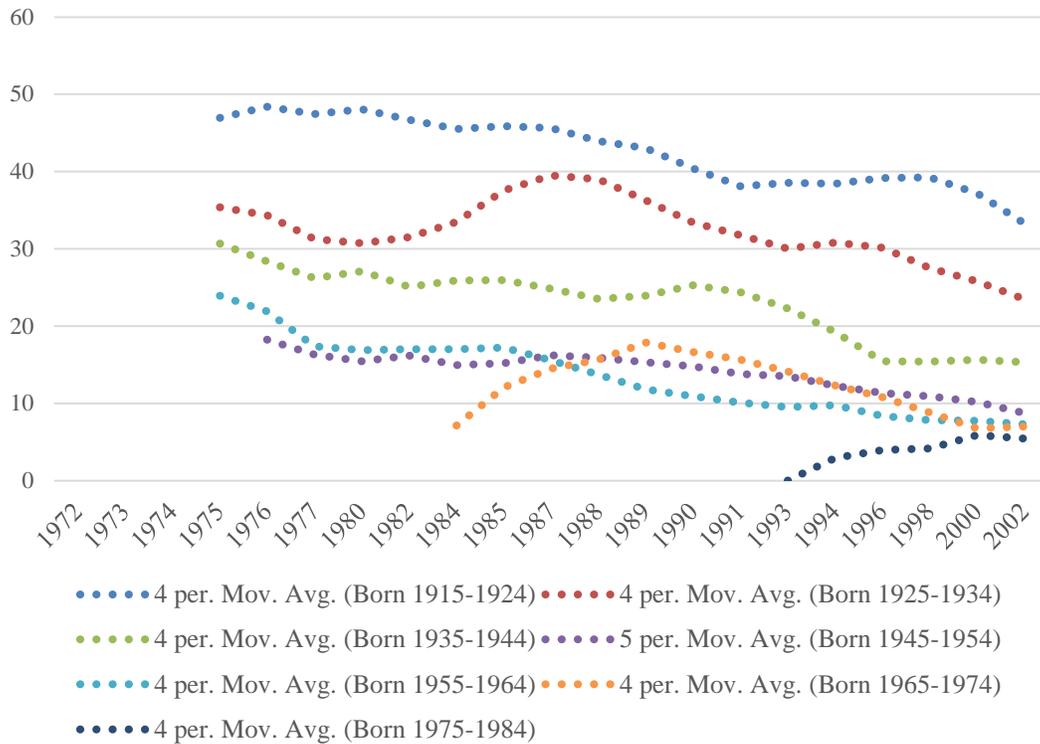


Figure 2.2. White Support for Anti-Miscegenation Law by Birth Cohort, 1972-2002

We might wonder whether the overall decline in support for anti-miscegenation legislation is due to generational succession- are the older generations, presumably more opposed to racial intermarriage, simply dying off, with younger and more open generations taking their place? Figure 2.2 displays the trends in support for anti-miscegenation laws by birth cohorts in the GSS. The three oldest birth cohorts were the most likely to oppose interracial marriage over this time period, with each successively younger cohort less opposed. The remaining birth cohorts show roughly similar levels of support for these laws over time, and have converged by 2002, while the three oldest cohorts remain more opposed. If generational replacement were responsible for the thirty-year drop in support for anti-miscegenation laws in the GSS we would expect to see a series of flat lines (Hout & Fischer, 2014); the relatively consistent decline across birth

cohorts, save the youngest, suggest that overall decline in support for anti-miscegenation laws is at least partially due to changes in attitudes over time within cohorts.

A simple test for inter-cohort and intra-cohort change can explain to what extent generational replacement accounts for this decline. (Firebaugh, 1989; Marsden & Wright, 2010) A logistic decomposition model is presented in Table 2.2. On the basis of the logistic regression coefficient, the estimated effect of cohort replacement is $(-.779 / (-.624 + -.779))$, or 55%, while intra-cohort attitudinal changes account for the remainder of changes from 1972-2002. In other words, about 55% of the change in attitude towards interracial marriage can be attributed to cohort replacement, and 45% can be attributed to intra-cohort (or aggregated individual) changes. These figures are consistent with previous research that emphasizes the effect of generational replacement on changes in attitudes towards race relations. (Davis, 2013; Fischer & Hout, 2006; Mayer, 1992)

Table 2.2

Changing Attitudes Towards Anti-Miscegenation Law: Cohort Replacement versus Aggregated Individual Change

Variables	Point Estimate	P	S.E.
Intercept	-0.093	***	0.036
Year of Survey (β_1)	-0.021	***	0.002
Birth Cohort (β_2)	-0.419	***	0.014
Estimated Contribution of within-cohort change ($\beta_1 \times \Delta \text{SurveyYear}$)	-0.624		
Estimated Contribution of replacement ($\beta_2 \times \Delta \text{AverageBirthCohort}$)	-0.779		
R ²	0.113		

N=16,973; *** p<.001

Data: 1972-2002 General Social Survey; weighted for adults in household

Figure 2.3 shows the trends for this time period by religious tradition, omitting the categories of Black Protestant, Jewish and Other Religions because of small sample sizes that resulted in unreliable year-to-year estimates. While there is some notable variability, religiously Non-Affiliated respondents were consistently the least likely to support such a law, followed by Catholics and Mainline Protestants. White Evangelicals displayed the most favorability towards these laws over the entire time period, and although the Catholic, Mainline Protestant and Non-Affiliated respondents had essentially converged on this issue by 2002, Evangelical Protestants were still significantly more likely to say they would favor anti-miscegenation legislation. Indeed, by the end of the time period in 2002 over twenty percent of White Evangelical Protestants still supported laws against black-white intermarriage, a sharp drop from sixty percent in 1972 but still much higher than comparison groups.

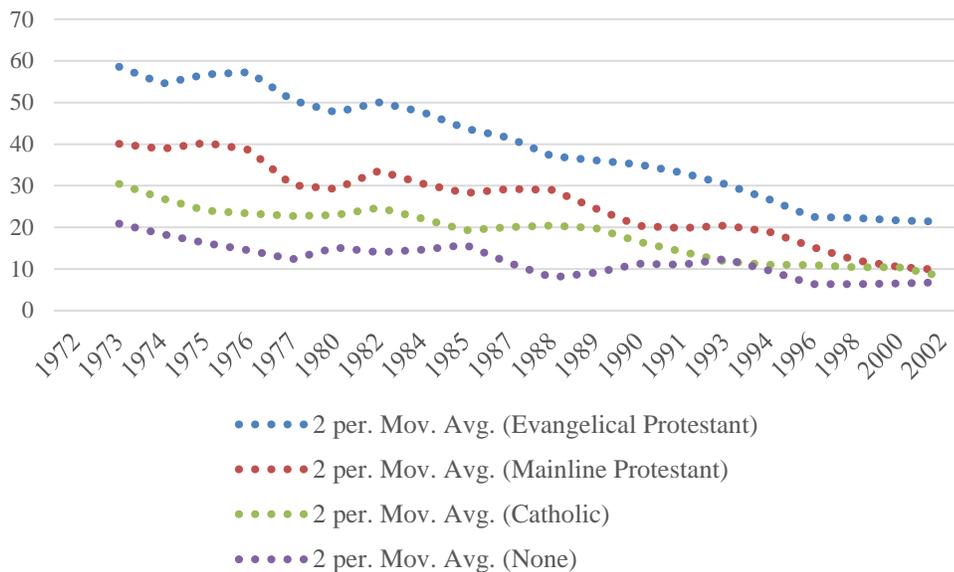


Figure 2.3. White Support for Anti-Miscegenation Law by Religious Tradition, 1972-2002

Thus, from the time period described here Evangelical opposition to interracial marriage dropped sixty-six percent; Mainline Protestant opposition dropped seventy-five percent; Catholic opposition dropped sixty-six percent; and Non-Affiliated opposition dropped fifty percent. Despite these relative changes White Evangelicals are still more likely to oppose interracial marriage because they were initially more likely to oppose it at the beginning of the data series.

The trends associated with religious service attendance among white Americans is less obvious. The trend lines in Figure 2.4 do not easily lend themselves to interpretations about the relationship between frequency of church attendance and likelihood of supporting anti-miscegenation laws. Despite the movement of respondents on the question of interracial marriage along these categories of church attendance, attitudes had converged by 2002, indicating that it is unlikely that any significant differences currently exist.

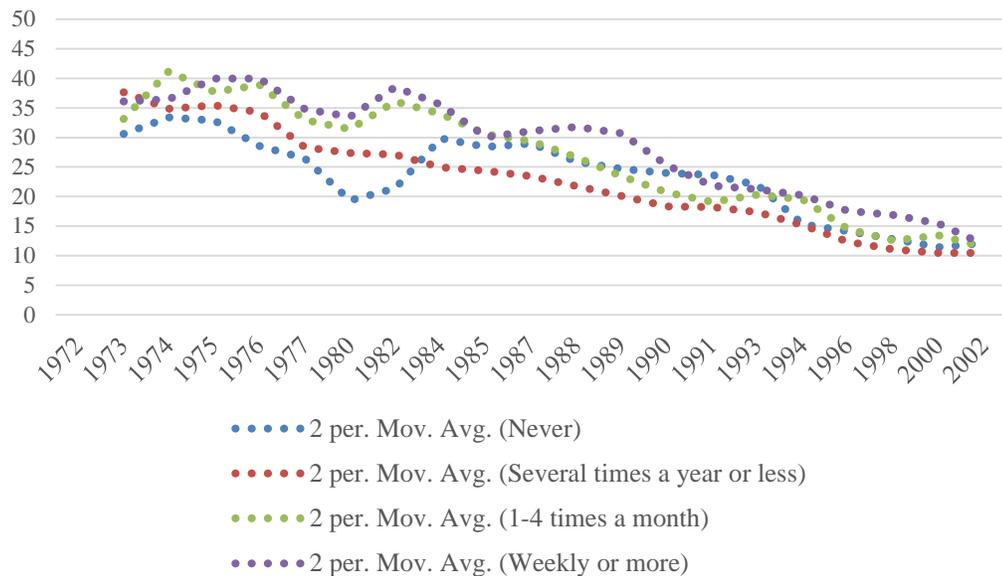


Figure 2.4. White Support for Anti-Miscegenation Law by Church Attendance, 1972-2002

More dramatic are the differences displayed in Figure 2.5, depicting outcomes by the respondent's beliefs about the Bible. Because the question was not asked until the 1984 GSS the chart's trend lines begin at a later date than previous figures, but some significant differences are apparent. Those respondents who affirm that the Bible is the word of God, to be understood literally in its interpretation, were far more likely to support anti-miscegenation laws than respondents who believe the Bible to be either inspired (but in need of proper interpretation) or a book of fables and stories. While those who saw the Bible as a book of fables were consistently the least likely to oppose interracial marriage, people who think of the Bible as inspired were not particularly different, especially by 2002. However, the tremendous gap between literalists and all others persists, although somewhat shrunken by 2002. Among literalists opposition has almost halved, although some twenty-four percent would still support anti-miscegenation laws in 2002.

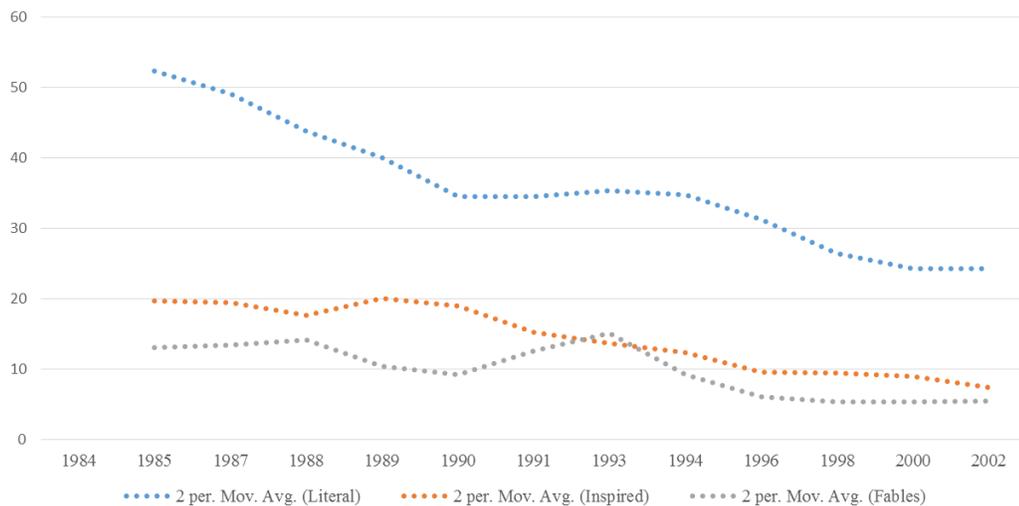


Figure 2.5. White Support for Anti-Miscegenation Law by Bible Beliefs, 1972-2002

Other figures display trend lines in similar fashion. Figure 2.6 shows that an unsurprising gap exists between white southerners and respondents from other regions, although the decline in support for anti-miscegenation laws appear to drop at roughly the same rate.

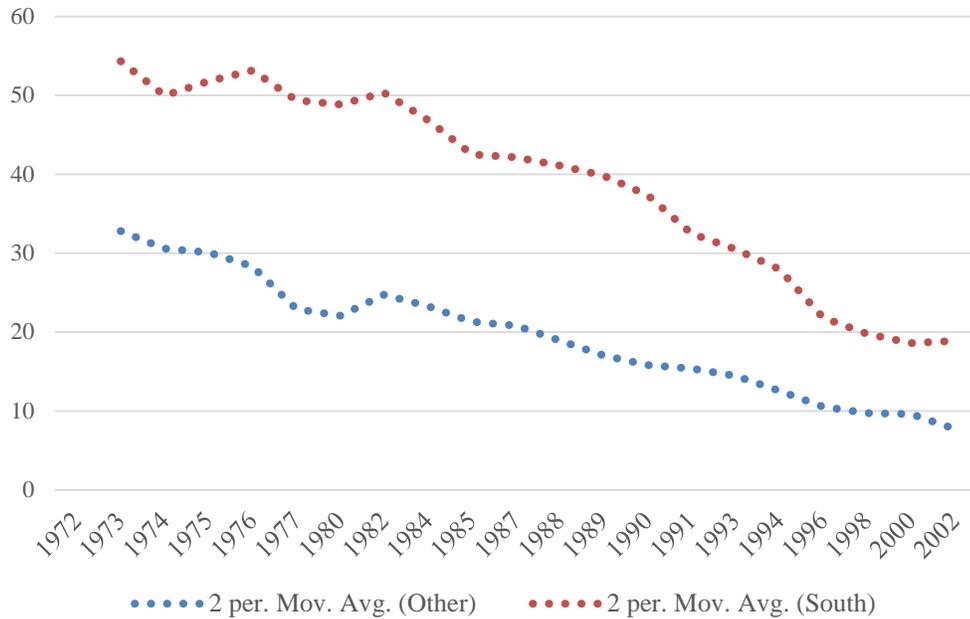


Figure 2.6. White Support for Anti-Miscegenation Law by Region of Residence, 1972-2002

Figure 2.7 shows some clear differences by educational attainment, as respondents with college educations were less likely than high school graduates, who were less likely than those below high school educated, to support such a law. Those with less than a high school education still persist in opposing interracial marriage, although their decline has been precipitous since 1972.

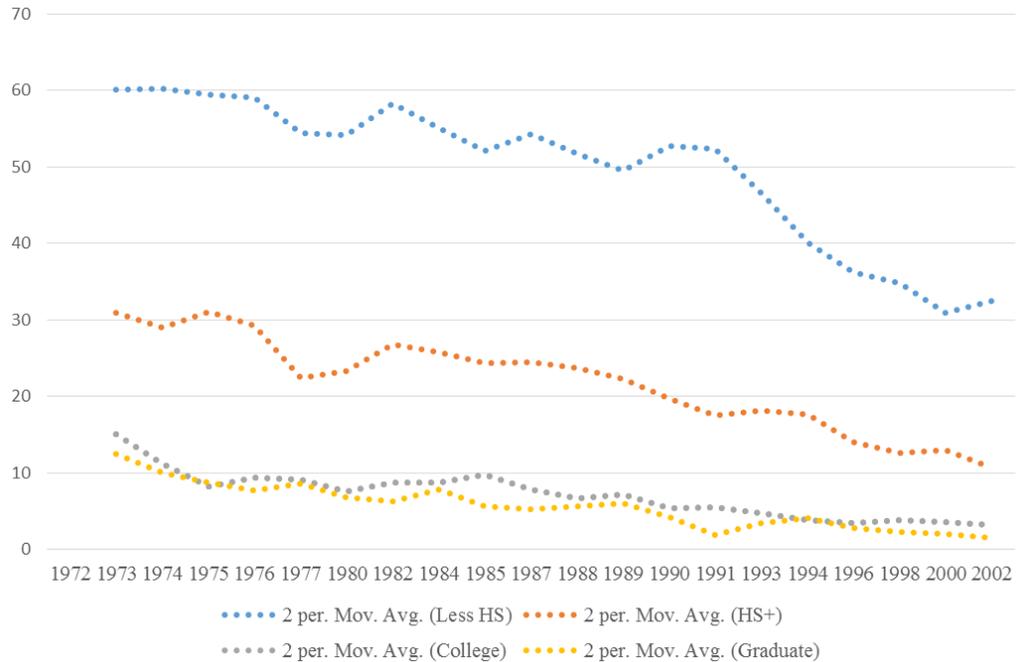


Figure 2.7. White Support for Anti-Miscegenation Law by Educational Attainment, 1972-2002

Figure 2.8 shows the trends associated with political party identification from 1972-2002. What is perhaps most noticeable is that white Republicans and white Democrats do not differ sharply in their opposition to interracial marriage; in fact, for much of the timeline white Democrats maintain a small (but statistically insignificant) gap over white Republicans. This is illustrative of how interracial marriage as a cultural issue was not at the forefront of the political culture wars we associate with Republican and Democratic conflict; greater gaps can be seen on issues like abortion, for example. (DiMaggio et al., 1996) The larger gap appears to be between those who identify with political parties and those who identify as independents; this latter group was consistently least likely to support anti-miscegenation legislation, although by 2002 viewpoints appear to have converged.

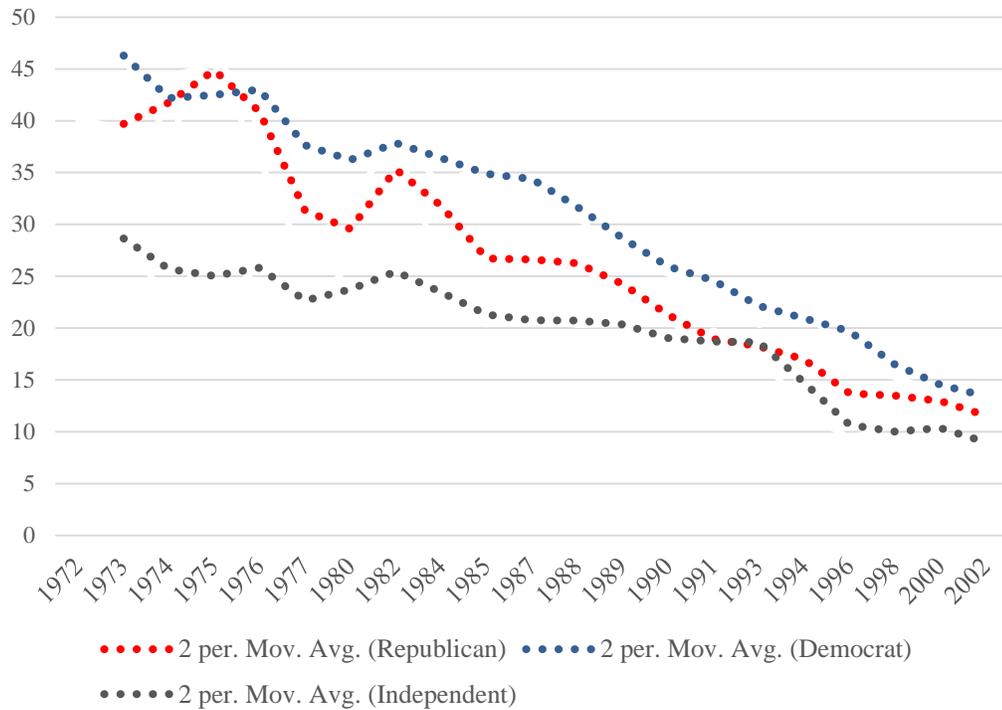


Figure 2.8. White Support for Anti-Miscegenation Law by Political Party Identification, 1972-2002

These figures give some clues into the changing effects of religion on attitudes towards anti-miscegenation laws for the thirty year time period represented in the GSS data. First, while there was likely significant variation in religious affiliation in support for anti-miscegenation laws in 1972 much of that variation has probably disappeared in 2002, although Evangelical Protestants may remain distinct in this regard. Religious service attendance is unlikely to have predicted support for anti-miscegenation laws between 1972 and 2002, while Bible views maintain the longest and most persistent gap among all three measures of religiosity.

The large gap in attitudes towards interracial marriage by Bible beliefs is more difficult to parse out. To be sure, religious arguments against interracial marriage that have been used in American history have largely hinged on particular interpretations or

presentations of scripture. It is very likely that those Americans who would advance these religious justifications for anti-miscegenation laws would have views of the Bible that fit in the category of 'literalist'. More profoundly, this is a view of the Bible that has been historically associated with conservative and fundamentalist branches of American Protestantism, and Evangelicalism in particular. Literalist vs. interpretivist conceptions of the Bible have been a considered a marker of a cultural divide between traditionalist and progressivist ideologies in many studies, (Franzen & Griebel, 2013) and it appears that similar patterns may be at play here.

The data from the GSS allow me to answer several questions regarding the intersection of religion and attitudes towards interracial marriage laws. Were people of certain religious traditions more or less likely to support anti-miscegenation legislation? Does this vary by levels of religious participation or by religious belief? And to what extent did the effect of religion in predicting opposition to interracial marriage change over time?

Data

GSS samples were predominantly white for much of its history, and questions about black-white interracial marriage were accordingly restricted to whites only for the first five waves of the survey. While the proportion of non-white respondents in the GSS has grown considerably, for the purposes of continuity and historical comparison all analyses presented here include only whites. The changing cultural views of the dominant white majority are arguably of greater importance in understanding the shifting landscape of the issue, providing further justification for restricting the sample. As recommended by the National Opinion Research Center all multivariate analyses have been weighted by

the number of adults in the respondent's household in order for the results to be generalizable. A list of personal characteristics used in these analyses can be found in Table 2.3 along with minimum and maximum values for each.

Table 2.3

Personal Characteristics of the Sample

Variable	Minimum	Maximum
Gender (Female)	0	1
Ever Married	0	1
Ever Had Children	0	1
Region of Residence (South)	0	1
Family Income (1986 dollars)	312.85	162607
<i>Educational Attainment</i>		
Less than High School Degree	0	1
High School Degree or more	0	1
College Degree	0	1
Graduate Degree		
<i>Political Party Identification</i>		
Republican	0	1
Democrat	0	1
Independent	0	1
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>		
Evangelical Protestant	0	1
Mainline Protestant	0	1
Catholic	0	1
Jewish	0	1
Other Religion	0	1
No Religious Affiliation	0	1
Religious Service Attendance	0	8
Biblical Literalism	0	1
<i>Birth Cohort</i>		
1915-1924	0	1
1925-1934	0	1
1935-1944	0	1
1945-1954	0	1
1955-1964	0	1
1965-1974	0	1
1975-1984	0	1

Source: General Social Survey 1972-2002

The GSS first collected data in 1972, and continued annually through 1977. Data collection for successive waves of the GSS occurred at unstandardized intervals until 1994, at which point new waves were introduced every two years. While the latest wave of GSS data was collected in 2012, the question regarding laws about interracial marriage were only asked up to 2002. The analyses in this project therefore focus on the period in which the GSS asked respondents about interracial marriage, from 1972-2002. The question in the GSS is worded, “Do you think there should be laws against marriages between (Negroes/Blacks/African-Americans) and whites?” This variable was dummy coded, with respondents answering affirmatively coded as ‘1’ and those answering negatively as ‘0’.

Birth cohorts were assigned by values used by Hout and Fischer (2014) for use with the GSS. Because the last version of the GSS included in this project comes from 2002, the youngest possible cohort eligible for inclusion are those born between 1975 and 1984. Respondents born between 1915 and 1924, the oldest cohort included in these analyses, are left out as the contrast category in multivariate models.

Political party identification is coded as a series of dummy variables indicating whether the respondent identified with the Republican or Democratic parties, or as an Independent. Based on the breakdown in Figure 8 the significant gap appears to be between those who identify as either a “Strong” or “Not Strong” Republican or Democrat and those who identify as an Independent or lean Independent. Therefore, the “Independent” category includes all respondents who identified as an Independent or leaned that way.

Attendance is a continuous variable with values ranging from 0-8, indicating higher rates of attendance with increasing values. At the lower range of values respondents reported “Never” attending religious services, while at the upper end they reported attending “Several times a week”. Operationalizing this variable as a series of dummies with different attendance thresholds yielded substantively similar results as operationalizing it as a continuous variable, so for the purposes of the analyses presented here it is a continuous measure.

Biblical literalism is based on a GSS question that asks respondents to choose which answer most closely describes their view of the Bible. Respondents choose between three answer: “The Bible is the actual word of God, and is to be taken literally word for word”, “The Bible is the inspired word of God but not everything should be taken literally”, and “The Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history and moral precepts”. I ran regressions using this variable as a series of three dummy variables as well as a single dummy variable denoting Literalist interpretation or not, and the results were substantively the same. In the models presented here the Literalism variable is the single dummy variable, with Literalist coded as (1) and all others coded as (0). The Bible belief question was first asked in 1984, and then in every subsequent survey, so multivariate analyses include this variable when possible.

Religious affiliation is categorized using the RELTRAD coding introduced by Steensland et al (2000). Respondents are placed into the dominant historical religious traditions in American history by virtue of their responses regarding religious affiliation and denominational affiliation. The final categories are Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Other religions, and No religious affiliation (“None”).

Because the analyses presented here pertain only to the white respondents in the GSS the RELTRAD category of “Black Protestant” has been omitted; while this affiliation does not preclude white members the cell sizes were too small to be of any analytical interest. As Evangelical Protestants were the most likely to favor anti-miscegenation laws across the time period in view, they are left out as the contrast category in multivariate analyses.

I control for a variety of socio-demographic variables in my analyses. Gender is a dummy variable with ‘Female’ coded as ‘1’ and Male coded as ‘0’. Included in the models are dummy variables that denote whether the respondent had ever been married or ever had children (‘1’ as yes and ‘0’ as no). The respondent’s region of residence is a dummy variable indicating whether or not the respondent lives in the South, versus all other regions of the country. Family income is a variable transformed to values corresponding to 1986 dollars. Educational attainment is a series of dummy variables showing the respondents’ varying levels of education, including having less than a high-school education; having a high-school education or more; having a four-year college degree; and having a graduate degree. When included in multivariate analyses “Less than high-school education” is left out as a contrast category.

Analysis

To describe the effects of religion on attitudes towards interracial marriage over this time period I estimate logistic regression models predicting the likelihood of answering yes to the GSS question regarding interracial marriage. Table 2.4 presents logistic regression models for five selected years; one model at either endpoint of the data series (1972 and 2002) and three models at selected to represent the entry of new birth

Table 2.4

Odds Ratios and Standardized Coefficients from Selected Models of Support for Anti-Miscegenation Law: White Adults, 1972-2002

Variable	1972			1977			1985			1994			2002		
	Odds Ratio	P	Standardized Estimate												
Gender (Female)	1.058		0.023	1.081		0.030	0.884		-0.045	0.850		-0.061	0.326	***	-0.412
Ever Married	1.333		0.078	1.179		0.045	1.394		0.082	1.463		0.109	1.950		0.202
Ever Had Children	1.273		0.082	1.268		0.080	1.053		0.017	0.974		-0.009	1.039		0.013
Region of Residence (South)	1.648	***	0.174	3.429	***	0.442	2.352	***	0.305	1.973	***	0.242	4.559	***	0.529
Family Income (1986 dollars)	1.000	***	-0.244	1.000	***	-0.271	1.000	**	-0.224	1.000		-0.054	1.000		0.051
<i>Educational Attainment^a</i>															
High School Degree or more	0.517	***	-0.269	0.394	***	-0.363	0.658	*	-0.157	0.416	***	-0.323	0.191	***	-0.605
College Degree	0.291	***	-0.285	0.120	***	-0.502	0.244	***	-0.364	0.066	***	-0.785	0.036	***	-0.951
Graduate Degree	0.200	***	-0.261	0.150	***	-0.337	0.135	***	-0.421	0.116	***	-0.445	0.016	***	-0.899
<i>Political Party Identification^b</i>															
Republican	1.219		0.071	0.849		-0.055	1.731		0.198	1.314		0.096	1.912		0.227
Democrat	1.655		0.205	1.298		0.101	1.749		0.198	1.938		0.234	1.838		0.209
<i>Religious Affiliation^c</i>															
Mainline Protestant	0.622	***	-0.185	0.584	***	-0.199	0.985		-0.005	0.658		-0.127	0.627		-0.142
Catholic	0.356	***	-0.398	0.422	***	-0.305	0.491		-0.239	0.678		-0.136	0.686		-0.128
Jewish	0.172	***	-0.265	0.309	*	-0.139	<0.001		-1.819	<0.001		-1.242	<0.001		-1.170
Other Religion	0.603	†	-0.081	0.216	**	-0.201	0.589		-0.088	0.284		-0.217	0.540		-0.117
No Religious Affiliation	0.497	*	-0.121	0.468	*	-0.139	0.460		-0.147	0.535		-0.146	0.730		-0.085
Religious Service Attendance	1.027		0.056	1.021		0.043	0.964		-0.074	0.948		-0.112	0.977		-0.048
Biblical Literalism							1.879	***	0.225	3.140	***	0.384	1.814	*	0.194
<i>Birth Cohort^d</i>															
1925-1934	0.532	***	-0.200	0.421	***	-0.255	1.426		0.095	0.956		-0.009	0.751		-0.064
1935-1944	0.591	***	-0.166	0.434	***	-0.263	0.467	**	-0.224	0.305		-0.313	0.765		-0.066
1945-1954	0.339	***	-0.355	0.161	***	-0.577	0.460	**	-0.246	0.249	***	-0.452	0.303	*	-0.357
1955-1964				0.254	***	-0.321	0.358	**	-0.312	0.251	***	-0.456	0.290	*	-0.362
1965-1974							0.431	*	-0.073	0.309	***	-0.333	0.554		-0.166
1975-1984										0.619	**	-0.041	0.228	*	-0.409
N	1089			1147			656			630			574		
R ²	0.379			0.453			0.422			0.331			0.330		

Source: General Social Survey 1972-2002; All values weighted

All values weighted, ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10

^a"Less than High School" is the contrast category^b"Independent" is the contrast category^c"Evangelical Protestant" is the contrast category^d"1915-1924" is the contrast category

cohorts into the data (1977, 1985 and 1994). The only differences between all five models is the introduction of the Biblical Literalism dummy variable for the years 1985, 1994 and 2002, as previous waves of the GSS did not include this measure of religiosity. To aid interpretation I present odds ratios and standardized coefficients for each covariate.

Among socio-demographic controls the Southern residence control remained strongly linked with support for anti-miscegenation legislation for the entirety of the time series, even when controlling for all covariates. While overall support for these laws has declined over time the gap between the Southerners and other white Americans remains large and statistically significant. Total family income was negatively associated with support for such laws in the models for 1972, 1977 and 1985 but are not significant in the models for 1994 and 2002, suggesting that other factors became more salient as time passed.

The educational attainment variables were also significant in all models, suggesting a general relationship where higher educational attainment is associated with lower odds of supporting anti-miscegenation legislation. For example, in 1972 having respondents with less than a high-school degree were more than three times as likely than college graduates to support these laws¹; the gap was even higher in 2002. Political party identification was not consistently related to support for anti-miscegenation laws, and by 1994 Republicans, Democrats and Independents did not differ on the issue net of other factors.

¹Negative odds are calculated as the reciprocal of their odds ratio (Stroope, Draper and Whitehead 2013). Thus, an odds ratio of .517 would be transformed to $1/.517=1.934$, or a 93% higher odds.

Compared to the oldest birth cohort, those born between 1915 and 1924, younger cohorts tended to be less likely to support anti-miscegenation legislation. Some differences begin to disappear for older cohorts as the models progress through time, likely because of the dwindling sample size.

Religious service attendance was not associated with higher or lower odds of supporting laws against racial intermarriage in 1972, and remained non-significant throughout the time series. The estimating models for 1972 and 1977 show that religious affiliation was the most important religious factor in predicting support for anti-miscegenation laws, with Evangelical Protestants being more likely than all other religious traditions. However, the introduction of the Biblical Literalism variable in the model for 1985 wipes out the differences in religious tradition, suggesting that Bible views can account for the variation in religious affiliation in predicting interracial marriage attitudes; subsequent analyses confirmed this was the case even for the most recent model years. Indeed, the effect remains in 1994 and 2002, with Biblical Literalists remaining more likely than non-Literalists to support anti-miscegenation laws, and no differences between Evangelical Protestants and other religious traditions. Other than cohort and socio-demographic controls Biblical Literalism is the only predictor in the model of attitudes towards interracial marriages, with Literalists being 81% more likely to approve of laws banning intermarriage compared to non-Literalists.

To summarize, it appears that religious service attendance has no relationship with the likelihood of supporting laws against interracial marriage for the 30 year timespan that the question was asked in the GSS. While Evangelical Protestants were more likely than all other groups to oppose interracial marriage across the time series, the

introduction of the Biblical Literalism variables suggests that this variation can be accounted for factors other than simple denominational affiliation. Further models were run interacting Biblical Literalism, Religious Affiliation and Church Attendance, but results were non-significant.

Next, I ran changing parameter models to estimate the relative change in effects of different religiosity measures at the beginning of the data series compared to the end. (Glenn Firebaugh, 1997) This is accomplished by restricting the dataset to the first and last years of the data series, creating a dummy variable for the last year of the series, 2002, and introducing interaction terms of $\text{Year}(2002) * \text{ReligiosityMeasure}$; I interact this dummy year variable with all measures of religiosity found in the full time span of the data series, including religious service attendance, Evangelical Protestant affiliation, and Biblical Literalism.

Because the Literalism variable was first asked of respondents in 1984 I estimate two models, one for the full time period that includes interactions between the $\text{Year}(2002)$ dummy and both attendance and Evangelical, and another model for the years 1984-2002 that introduces the $\text{Literalism} * \text{Year}(2002)$ interaction. The interaction terms in Table 2.5 are key to interpreting these results. Significant interaction terms indicate whether or not the effects of the variable that is interacted with the year dummy have changed over time.

Model 2.5.1 includes interactions with the dummy variable for 2002, the last year of the time period, and religious service attendance and Evangelical religious affiliation. As the table shows, these two interaction terms are non-significant in the full model, indicating that the effect of these two measures of religiosity have not changed over time.

Table 2.5

*Religious Differences in likelihood of Support for Anti-Miscegenation Law:
Regression Results for Changing-Parameter Model of Gross Effects*

Variable	2.5.1 Significance Test for Changing Effect of Religiosity, 1972-2002			2.5.2 Significance Test for Changing Effect of Religiosity 1984-2002		
	Point Estimate	P	Odds Ratio	Point Estimate	P	Odds Ratio
Gender (Female)	-0.108		0.898	-0.284	*	0.753
Ever Married	0.425	*	1.530	0.779	**	2.179
Ever Had Children	0.129		1.137	0.026		1.026
Region of Residence (South)	0.813	***	2.254	1.205	***	3.335
Family Income (1986 dollars)	0.000	***	1.000	0.000		1.000
<i>Educational Attainment^a</i>						
High School Degree or more	-0.794	***	0.452	-0.989	***	0.372
College Degree	-1.479	***	0.228	-2.300	***	0.100
Graduate Degree	-2.071	***	0.126	-2.576	***	0.076
<i>Political Party Identification^b</i>						
Republican	0.382	**	1.466	0.428	**	1.533
Democrat	0.422	***	1.525	0.378	*	1.459
Religious Service Attendance	0.016		1.016	-0.079	*	0.924
Attendance*Year(2002)	-0.042		0.959	0.027		1.028
Biblical Literalism	-	-	-	0.975	***	2.652
Biblical Literalism*Year(2002)	-	-	-	-0.320		0.726
Evangelical	0.636	***	1.888	0.304		1.355
Evangelical*Year(2002)	0.185		1.203	0.131		1.140
Year (2002)	-0.946	***	0.388	-1.003	***	0.367
<i>Birth Cohort^c</i>						
1925-1934	-0.609	***	0.544	0.091		1.095
1935-1944	-0.432	***	0.649	-0.222		0.801
1945-1954	-1.073	***	0.342	-1.220	***	0.295
1955-1964				-1.021	***	0.360
1965-1974				-0.375		0.687
1975-1984						
N	1686.000			1249.000		
R ²	0.464			0.479		

Source: General Social Survey 1972-2002; All values weighted

All values weighted, ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10

^a"Less than High School" is the contrast category

^b"Independent" is the contrast category

^c"1915-1924" is the contrast category

The 2002 dummy is significant, indicating that the odds of being in favor of anti-miscegenation legislation is lower in 2002 compared to 1972.

Model 2.5.2 adds the variable Biblical Literalism and the interaction term Literalism*Year(2002). This model assesses the period from 1984, the first year the GSS asked about Biblical Literalism, and 2002. Again, the interaction terms are non-significant, indicating that for the time period 1984-2002 the effects of church attendance, Evangelical affiliation and Biblical Literalism have not changed. The 2002 dummy is significant, showing that the odds of supporting anti-miscegenation are lower in 2002 than in 1984.

Discussion

Support for anti-miscegenation legislation declined from 40% to 10% among white American adults between 1972 and 2002. Within that period certain measures of religiosity were persistent predictors of whether or not a respondent would support laws banning interracial marriage. The major difference in white attitudes towards interracial marriage appears to be between Evangelical Protestants and all other religious affiliations, although the introduction of the Biblical Literalism measure in 1984 appears to account for this variation. While religious service attendance had been found to be associated with attitudes towards interracial marriage, on this issue it was non-significant in all models from 1972 through 2002.

The changing parameter models clarify that the effects of religion, in this Evangelical Protestant identity (when not controlling for Biblical Literalism) and Biblical Literalism (in the full model) did not change from 1972-2002. That is, net of all other factors, the gap between Evangelicals/Literalists and others in terms of predictive power

persisted for a full thirty years. While support for anti-miscegenation legislation dropped amongst all people, across all categories, on these two measures of religion the gaps did not decrease; compare this with Figure 4 depicting church attendance, which converges by 2002. The dominant relationship between religion and support for banning interracial marriage in the post-Loving v. Virginia era comes down to conservative Christian identity as the most stubborn predictor of anti-interracial marriage attitudes.

This relationship is not surprising considering the history of religious legitimation for bans on interracial marriage. While Literalism by no means necessitates the theological interpretations that made racial segregation possible, it is the orientation towards scripture that is most likely to be affirmed by those groups. What these results most probably signify is the extent to which conservative Protestantism, the institution through which much of America's religious opposition to racial integration resided, replicated those general orientations into the latter half of the twentieth century. The fact that these differences still exist in 2002 attest to the durability of those cultural forces.

Indeed, the few religious groups that still openly forbid interracial marriage among their members are members of fringe conservative Protestant groups. (Barkun, 1997) These "Christian Identity" groups espouse doctrines that conflate white racial identification with Christian Nationalism, identifying White Christians of European background as the descendants of Biblical Israel. The theological categories that underscored America's history of segregation find their most overt modern support in the teaching of these groups. While the populations of these religious movements are relatively small in modern America they are the descendants of the most extreme wings of conservative Protestantism that were decidedly anti-interracial marriage for much of

the 20th century; what seems likely is that these attitudes have persisted among Evangelical Protestants who participate in more mainstream religions as well.

This analysis is limited in its generalizability to white American adults for the given time period. This constraint was a product of the GSS and its initial sampling method as well as the decision to ask the question to whites only for the first several waves of the survey. While this project focused on white attitudes toward banning interracial marriage for the purposes of studying the long-term continuity of these beliefs, there is certainly value in assessing the attitudes of all respondents across time. Religion could conceivably interact differently with racial identification on this issue, and more focused projects might be able to take advantage of this shortcoming.

Further, while the GSS stopped asking that question in 2002, it is impossible to tell how attitudes have changed in between then and now. While the trends certainly look like they converged towards a consensus against bans on interracial marriage, the figures presented here also show that certain categorizations of American religiosity reveal patterns that betray disconcerting levels of support among certain sectors of the public. As late as 2002 almost a quarter of white Evangelicals and Literalists would have supported formal bans on interracial marriage, and while these proportions have also trended down over time it is impossible to say the extent to which they persist to the present day.

While the analyses in this project fill some gaps in the literature, further research is needed to fully understand how religion affected views on interracial marriage in the time period covered by the GSS. Long-term attitudinal changes have generally been considered the product of cohort replacement and rising levels of educational attainment.

(Davis, 2013; Hyman & Wright, 1979; Nie, Junn, & Stehlik-Barry, 1996) Still, much of the change must still be accounted for via intra-cohort changes in attitudes. (Cutler, 1983; Danigelis & Cutler, 1991; Glenn Firebaugh & Davis, 1988) What this present study does not answer is whether the intra-cohort changes in attitudes toward anti-miscegenation laws are connected to changes in religion; does the drop in support for these laws by Evangelicals or Biblical Literalists account for significant amounts of these intra-cohort changes, or do the changing attitudes of individuals along other socio-demographic lines explain this overarching trend?

CHAPTER THREE

Religion in Interracial Coupling

Introduction

Religion has had a conspicuous role in the history of interracial marriage in the United States, with some of the strongest support and opposition coming from religious circles. A consistent justification for anti-miscegenation laws pointed to the creation of separate races by God and warned against interfering with this divinely appointed state of affairs; in the original judicial decision in *Loving v. Virginia* (the case that would eventually lead to the United States Supreme Court striking down anti-miscegenation laws) the judge ruled against the Lovings, noting that God did not intend for races to mix. (Botham 2009; Kennedy 2012; Sollars 2000) With the striking down of anti-miscegenation laws in opposition to interracial relationships was largely confined to proscriptions at religious institutions- Bob Jones University had such school rules in place as late as 2000. Conversely, many (but by no means all) religious abolitionists fought against anti-miscegenation legislation, and the Catholic Church was instrumental in the initial legal forays that led to their repeal. (Botham, 2009)

Despite the presence of religious influences in the racial history of the United States, and in the issue of interracial relationships particularly, current research has curiously passed over religion and its possible intersections with modern trends in racial exogamy. A handful of studies have examined the role that religion plays in predicting openness to and the likelihood of interracial dating (Perry 2014a; Perry 2014b); these studies do not extend to the topic of marriage, but generally find that higher degrees of

religiosity and attachment to traditional religious bodies are negatively associated with interracial dating.

The research that does exist on religion and interracial marriage has looked at attitudes toward the issue by religious tradition. As of 1998 people of any religious tradition, including religious Nones, were equally likely to oppose anti-miscegenation laws.(Putnam and Campbell 2010) There is some variation when we look at personal attitudes towards interracial marriages by religious tradition, with Evangelical and Mainline Protestants more likely to think that they are bad for society while Black Protestants, Catholics and Nones are least likely to hold this view. (Taylor, 2012) Beyond this, we lack even basic demographic information about the religious lives of people in interracial relationships.

In a racially diverse society with a history of racial tension interracial marriages have been generally seen as signs of social progress. (Z Qian, 1997; Zhenchao Qian & Lichter, 2001) Interracial marriages challenge old notions about race as a biological category rather than a social category, resist legitimizations of racism, and are arguably a proxy measure for racial group relations. (M Kalmijn, 1998; Pagnini & Morgan, 1990; Yancey & Lewis Jr., 2009) Multi-racial marriages and families are a growing proportion of the American people, and understanding the social consequences and location of this group in the larger population are necessary for understanding modern race issues to the fullest possible extent. Thus, the study of religion's intersection with this social phenomenon allows us to ask new questions about religion's relationship to racial issues and the direction of future social change.

This paper examines these issues by exploring the religious makeup of individuals in interracial relationships. Are they more likely to be religiously affiliated or nonaffiliated? Further, is there variation in religious affiliation among the interracially married? Other aspects of religiosity, such as religious salience or religious behaviors, are also examined in light of their intersections with racial exogamy.

Interracial Relationships

The dearth of information concerning religion and interracial relationships leads me to a variety of hypotheses. Ultimately these hypotheses are preliminary attempts at theorizing relationships that have not been tested and may not be testable for the foreseeable future given the limit of current data, and I have attempted to hypothesize in accordance with our current understanding of racial exogamy and the relationships between religion and race.

In simplified terms, there are three possible outcomes of such an analysis. Religion could be found to have no interaction with interracial marriage; conceivably, interracial marriage through the lens of religion could simply mirror patterns in the larger social world, and categories like class, income or education could turn out to be truly significant factors rather than religion. Alternatively, religion could be found to have a significant association with marrying interracially, independent of other conventional social categories, either positively or negatively. The current gap in the literature obviously cannot state definitively whether a non-effect, a positive or a negative relationships exists, but it is possible to hypothesize some possible relationships based on what is known about racially exogamous marriages and current understandings of the relation between race and religion.

Exogamous marriages are non-normative according to any social category, including class, religion, and race. Simply, endogamy is more common and people exhibit preferences in line with homogeneous tendencies. (Gullickson, 2006; M Kalmijn, 1998; Matthijs Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2010) Even younger generations who date interracially at higher rates than their elders tend to fall into patterns of homogamy when it comes time to settle down. (Joyner & Kao, 2005; Lewis & Ford-Robertson, 2010) In 2010 about 15% of new marriages were between spouses of different races; however, that percentage has steadily grown since the early 1980's from very small proportions, and taking into account the higher divorce rate of interracial versus single-race marriages the actual proportion of current marriages that are interracial are still quite low. Interracial marriages therefore made up about 8.4% of all marriages in 2010. (Taylor, 2012) The relative rarity of exogamous marriages has led researchers to analyze mate selection through the interplay of three social forces: preference fulfillment, marriage markets and influences of the individual's social context. (M Kalmijn, 1998; Matthijs Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2010)

Most individuals, when analyzing available choices in the marriage market, exhibit preferences for homogamy across a variety of social categories. Shared cultural, educational and religious backgrounds are preferred when selecting mates. The availability of potential mates that meet these criteria will affect the degree to which an individual can fulfill their preferences. Since racial homogeneity is the norm, a marriage market that has a greater proportion of the desired racial pairing will result in more same-race pairings. The large majority of interracial marriages that occur in the United States include an individual of the dominant group, i.e. white, and an individual of a minority

racial group. (J. Bratter & King, 2008; Fu, 2001; Kennedy, 2012; King & Bratter, 2007) As a result, most racially homogeneous social contexts favor larger proportions of white populations and lead to fewer interracial contacts and relationships.

Spatially, groups generally require social contact in order to encourage movement across boundaries. Groups that are spatially isolated from each other are unlikely to have inter-group relationships occur. (Harris & Ono, 2005) This is an important reason why interracial marriages have been considered as a proxy measure for racial progress; the very existence of these relationships and the changing patterns and rates of marriages suggests an increase in inter-group communication and exchange, an important indicator of progress to observers looking to attenuate the deleterious effects of racial segregation. (B. Johnson & Jacobson, 2005) Conservative Protestant traditions have generally been associated with lower likelihood of cross-racial contact compared to Mainline Protestants, Catholics and Non-Affiliateds; similarly, higher rates of religious service attendance and religious commitment have been associated with racially homogeneous social networks and interactions. (Edwards et al., 2013; Emerson & Smith, 2000; Emerson, 2006)

The social context of the individuals also shapes the likelihood of crossing racial boundaries, or approving of their crossing, in romantic relationships. (B. Johnson & Jacobson, 2005) Individuals may feel great social pressure from the groups they identify with to maintain social boundaries and retain cultural identities. Marrying outside the group represents a loosening or breaking of group boundaries that can be interpreted as threatening to the group's identity. (Fu, 2001; Kennedy, 2012; Yancey & Lewis Jr., 2009) This pressure can extend past the choice to marry a person outside the group, leading to

greater instability in the relationship based on the lack of support or outright hostility from family, friends and larger social networks (Erica Chito Childs, 2005; Lewis Jr. & Yancey, 1995; Nemoto, 2009; Persaud, 2004; Yancey, 2007) In the most extreme, but not unfamiliar, cases there are strong social sanctions against marrying out, as illustrated by the history of anti-miscegenation laws in the United States. When compared to socio-structural accounts of intermarriage, variation in cultural norms of boundary-crossing and the relative openness of groups to intermarriage have been found to be among the most powerful predictors of exogamy. (Matthijs Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2010)

Research on American religion and race tends to focus on the ways that religious institutions, beliefs and behaviors prop up or transgress these boundaries. These concerns naturally mesh with the questions that arise from the study of interracial relationships and religion, insofar as they are interpreted as measures of racial progress. While there have been a variety of formal and informal barriers erected between racial groups in American history, interracial relationships is one of the most persistent and meaningful. This is evidenced by the relative rarity of these relationships even fifty years after the Loving v. Virginia ruling, which in itself was ruled several years after the passing of the Civil Rights Act. To engage in romantic relationship, and in more permanent ways through the institution of marriage, is the most dramatic form of racial boundary crossing possible. Declining rates of people saying that interracial marriage is a bad thing for society evidence some popular-level support for this belief. (Taylor, 2012)

The lack of research on religion and interracial relationships is therefore notable. We do know some information about how religion appears to shape attitudes towards interracial relationships. Religious identity has also been associated with varying

openness to relatives marrying interracially, as well as with personal preferences towards dating and marrying outside one's race. Conservative Protestantism is associated with lower openness with dating or marrying interracially, while religious unaffiliated report higher openness. (Samuel L. Perry, 2013) What is not known is how religion intersects with people who are actually in interracial marriages or long-term cohabiting relationships. Are the religiously Non-Affiliated more likely than the religiously affiliated to enter into long-term interracial relationships? How religious are people who enter into these unions?

Religion and Interracial Relationships

Table 3.1 compares groups in the sample on religious measures included in the 2011-2013 wave of the National Survey of Family Growth, not controlling for any other factors. Included in this table are respondents who were either currently married or in long-term cohabiting relationships. What is immediately obvious is that married and cohabiting couples differ markedly on most measures of religiosity. The difference in proportions in religious affiliation noted previously are all statistically significant, with cohabiters far more likely to identify as non-affiliated and less likely to identify as all other religious identities, save 'Catholic', compared to marrieds.

The gap in religious service attendance is both statistically and substantively significant, as the average married respondent attended about twenty-seven weeks a year and the average cohabiter only attended fourteen weeks a year. The religious salience differences are also significant, with marrieds more likely to say religion is 'Very' important and cohabiters more likely to say that it is 'Somewhat' and 'Not' important.

Table 3.1

Religiosity Measures by Relationship Status and Racial Pairings

Religiosity Measures	Currently Married or Cohabiting	Currently Married	Currently Cohabiting	Difference	Interracial Married or Cohabiting	Same-Race Married or Cohabiting	Difference	Interracial Marriage	Same-Race Marriage	Difference	Interracial Cohabitation	Same-Race Cohabitation	Difference
<i>Religious Salience</i>													
Religion is Important	0.428	0.479	0.299	*	0.364	0.440	*	0.421	0.488	*	0.242	0.308	*
Religion is somewhat Important	0.290	0.276	0.326	*	0.305	0.287		0.276	0.276		0.368	0.317	
Religion is not important	0.281	0.245	0.373	*	0.331	0.272	*	0.303	0.235	*	0.390	0.372	
<i>Religious Service Attendance</i>													
Weeks per Year	23.485	27.078	14.225	*	20.794	23.956	*	25.716	27.320	*	10.333	14.745	*
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>													
Evangelical Protestant	0.226	0.241	0.187	*	0.210	0.226		0.218	0.244		0.193	0.178	
Mainline Protestant	0.163	0.176	0.129	*	0.168	0.163		0.180	0.176		0.143	0.127	
Black Protestant	0.071	0.064	0.090	*	0.079	0.070		0.070	0.063		0.097	0.091	
Catholic	0.245	0.247	0.240		0.203	0.253	*	0.207	0.254	*	0.194	0.250	
Other Religion	0.090	0.101	0.062	*	0.076	0.093		0.090	0.103		0.048	0.066	
No Religious Affiliation	0.205	0.171	0.292	*	0.264	0.195	*	0.235	0.161	*	0.325	0.288	
N	4207	2922	1296		703	3470		461	2451		242	1022	

Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2011-2013; All values weighted

* Difference in proportions statistically significant, p<.05

The other comparison columns show what we might expect in terms of the differences in the religiosity of interracial and same-race couples. When looking at all the people in the analytic sample divided into interracial vs. same-race categories there are two significant differences on measures of religious affiliation: interracially coupled respondents, compared to same-race coupled respondents, are less likely to identify as Catholic (20.3% vs 25.3%) and more likely to identify as non-affiliated (26.4% to 19.5%). Differences also appear on measures of service attendance and religious salience. Interracial couples appear to attend somewhat services less frequently than same-race couples (20.7 vs. 24.0 weeks a year). Interracially coupled individuals are also more likely to claim religion is ‘Not’ important to their lives (33.1% to 27.2%) and less likely to say it’s ‘Very’ important (36.4% vs 44%).

Further breaking down the sample comparing the married respondents by racial pairing, the significant differences described in the previous paragraph persist. The gap between interracial and same-race respondents on average weekly attendance narrows somewhat (25.7 vs 27.3 weeks per year), but same-race marrieds are still more likely to say religion is ‘Very’ important and less likely to say it’s ‘Not’ important. Conversely interracially marrieds are less likely to identify as Catholic and more likely to identify as non-affiliated. Fewer differences exist comparing interracial and same-race cohabiters, who differ only on average religious service attendance and saying religion is ‘Very’ important.

From these difference of proportion tests several patterns become apparent. First, married and cohabiting respondents differ markedly on most measures of religiosity, with married respondents tending to be more religious. Second, there are also significant

differences in religiosity when comparing individuals in interracial and same-race long-term relationships, with those in interracial couples being somewhat less religious. Third, these differences are unlikely to be entirely due to the higher likelihood of interracial couples to be cohabiting rather than married, as the significant differences persist when comparing the married respondents.

Hypotheses

The literature on race, religion and intermarriage, as well as the proportions in Table 1, lead to a variety of hypotheses concerning the religiosity of people in interracial relationships. As people become more religious, measured by attendance at religious services, they tend to have less racially diverse social networks. Additionally, churches, as voluntary associations, tend to be less diverse than the neighborhoods, schools and workplaces of their congregants. (Emerson, 2006) Religious congregations remain places where interracial contact and interaction are difficult to encourage, and the racially homogeneous character of America's religious congregations may act as a barrier to participation for interracially coupled individuals. (Becker 1998; Perry 2014) .

Interracial couples may find that finding a church that suits both partners is difficult, as it is likely that one will have to settle for being the notable minority. What few multi-racial churches exist in America are less stable and more prone to failure than racially homogeneous congregations, making the search for a church suitable for racially mixed couples even more difficult. These processes may be why religious service attendance is also correlated with a lower likelihood of dating interracially.

Hypothesis 1: *Religious service attendance is negatively associated with the likelihood of being in an interracial married or cohabiting relationship.*

Similarly, previous research has demonstrated that individuals who report greater levels of religious salience are more likely to perceive interracial marriage as a negative for society, as well as being less likely to have been in an interracial relationship (Putnam 2010). Higher religious salience is also associated with religious traditions that have been traditionally less open to interracial relationships.

Hypothesis 2: *Religious salience is negatively associated with the likelihood of being in an interracial marriage or cohabiting relationship.*

Hypotheses concerning the likelihood of interracial marriages by religious tradition can be inferred by the normativity of homogamy preferences, as well as the marriage market offered by the population, of the religious tradition itself. Emerson's work in *People of the Dream* demonstrated some support for the idea that the number of multi-racial congregations in a religious tradition can be predicted simply by the size of the religious tradition (Emerson 2006). The reason for this is that people will be able to realize their preferences for racially homogeneous congregations when congregants are drawn from a larger population pool. The added variable of multi-racial congregations has implications for interracial marriage rates as well. Since inter-group contact is necessary for these relationships to occur multi-racial churches offer unique opportunities for people of differing racial backgrounds but similar religious backgrounds to interact. (Dougherty, 2003; Emerson, 2006)

A complicating factor is the history of racial tension found within individual religious traditions. By the mid 20th- century few American religious denominations had officially hostile stances towards interracial marriages. Some were explicitly permissive

of such unions (e.g. the Catholic Church, Unitarians, Mennonites, Quakers), while others were indirectly permissive through larger statements of racial reconciliation (e.g. American Baptist Convention, American Lutheran Church). Others, like the Assemblies of God or Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, took no official position on the issue, although their silence was widely understood to be in tacit support of dominant social mores that found intermarriage undesirable. (Washington Jr., 1971)

However, while official denominational stances could be noncommittal, the stances of their constituencies followed broader cultural patterns. Individuals from more traditional religious traditions were more likely to be opposed to interracial marriages, while people from more progressive Mainline denominations tended towards acceptance or support of these relationships. (Washington Jr., 1971) Further, the most virulent religiously-based opposition to racial intermarriage came from fundamentalist or conservative Protestant groups. (Barkun, 1997; Botham, 2009) From these historical trends we may expect that more 'conservative' denominations, broadly construed, may be a less friendly religious environment for interracial relationships, leading those who identify with these traditions to be less likely to marry interracially.

Additionally, we know that the religiously unaffiliated have generally exhibited less opposition to interracial marriages than the religiously affiliated; while attitudes on the issue have lately converged among people of all religious affiliations, (Putnam & Campbell, 2010) we may expect that the historical gap between the nonaffiliated and everyone else would manifest in rates of interracial marriage. Similarly, the religious unaffiliated tend to be more open to marrying interracially than religious affiliated. (Samuel L. Perry, 2013) Given the greater likelihood of racially diverse social networks,

as well as a smaller probability of having personal feelings that are hostile to these arrangements, I am led to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Individuals who identify as Evangelical Protestant are the least likely to be in an interracial married or cohabiting relationship.

Hypothesis 4: Individuals who identify as religiously Non-Affiliated are the most likely to be in an interracial married or cohabiting relationship.

Rosenfeld and Kim (2005) connect rising rates of interracial unions with the greater independence and social mobility of young adults; the non-traditionalist leanings of these groups increase the likelihood of crossing racial boundaries in romantic relationships. Early life-course decisions tend towards spurning established social norms in favor of culturally novel relationship forms, such as cohabitation, while eschewing traditional patterns of religious engagement. (Joyner & Kao, 2005; Zhenchao, 2011) Given with the proportions shown in Table 1, I expect that any religious differences between interracial and same-race coupled individuals is due to the higher likelihood of interracial couples to be cohabiting, and the relative irreligious nature of cohabiting individuals.

Hypothesis 5: Because cohabiting relationships are more likely to be interracial than marriages, religious differences between individuals in interracial and same-race relationships will be due to the religious differences between cohabiting and married couples.

Also of interest is the religious lives of people by racial pairings *within* religious traditions. Because of the historical and modern variations among religious traditions when dealing with the problem of race, religion may be lived out very differently according to the religious identity of interracial individuals. Because of sample size concerns, I restrict my analysis and hypotheses on these lines to Evangelical Protestants, Mainline Protestants and Catholics, who make up the majority of the analytical sample.

Critical race theories about interracial relationships offer an intriguing possibility concerning the religiosity of Evangelicals in interracial marriages. Critical race theorists have argued that interracial marriages are mistakenly thought to be signs of racial progress and closer group relations; instead, they should be correctly perceived as the assimilation of minority groups by the dominant white culture. (Kennedy, 2012; Persaud, 2004; Rosenblatt, Karis, & Powell, 1995; Yancey & Lewis Jr., 2009) That is, minorities in interracial relationships with whites are most likely ones who have more readily assented to the normative cultural pressures of being ‘white’. (Childs 2005) Minorities with strong racial identities and personal ties to that racial heritage are unlikely to marry interracially. (Fong & Yung, 1995) Exogamy therefore represents the loss of racial identity by the minority in the relationship, as well as by potential future offspring, through the process of whitening. (Hill & Thomas, 2000; Nemoto, 2009; Rosenblatt et al., 1995)

Ideologically, ‘color-blind’ race attitudes are most likely to encourage assimilation into white America rather than strengthening personal pride in a racial culture or heritage. (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) Emerson and Smith argue that these ideologies are especially salient in Evangelical Protestant communities. (Emerson & Smith, 2000) If minorities in exogamous relationships have assented to the dominant racial hegemony then we would actually expect *higher* religiosity among Evangelicals who are in interracial relationships compared to those who are not.

Further, the historically hostile social circumstances of American Evangelicalism to interracial relationships means that interracially coupled Evangelicals may incur social sanctions from their religious contexts. (Barkun, 1997; Botham, 2009) Those who do still identify as Evangelical and simultaneously choose to couple interracially may be the

individuals who are more committed to their religion. In other words, the higher costs of interracial coupling within Evangelicalism may manifest itself in higher rates of religiosity (salience and attendance) among Evangelical interracial marrieds and cohabiters.

Data and Methodology

Data for this project come from the 2011-2013 wave of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG). Funded by the United States Department of Health and Human services, the 2011-2013 version of the NSFG comprises a national probability sample of 5,601 women and 4,815 men for a full sample size of 10,416 respondents. In-person interviews were conducted between September 2011 and September 2013, with respondents ranging in age from 15 to 45. The NSFG contains topic modules concerned primarily with fertility, pregnancy and sexual relationships; of particular interest to this project were questions regarding the race of the respondent's spouse as well as the respondent's religious background. This allowed me to test my hypotheses with a large, generalizable data set. Because NSFG data are compiled using complex sample designs all statistical tests were conducted using provided weights and SURVEY procedure commands in SAS that allowed me to take into account the design-based variance. These procedures allow multivariate analysis that yield nationally representative results for the sampled population.

I have restricted the sample to individuals that were married or cohabiting at the time of the interview. This restriction to the marriage sample ensures that I am comparing the religiosity of respondents at the time of the interview to other aspects of their lives at the time of the interview, and not parts of their past. Further, it allows for a more natural

comparison to the cohabiting portion of the NSFG sample. These two relationship statuses constitute the two most common ways that adults in long-term relationships; further, the rising rates of cohabitation suggest that it seen as an acceptable alternative to marriage in the modern era. (Cherlin, 2010; Macklin, 1986) Including and comparing both types of relationships allows me to analyze the traditional and changing faces of marriage as an institution. These restrictions yielded a final analytic sample of 2,912 married and 1,264 cohabiting respondents.

The NSFG race coding is broken down into the categories “White”, “Black” and “Other”. Respondents were also asked if they were of Hispanic ethnicity. I recoded these variables to indicate whether the respondent and the respondent’s spouse were Hispanic, White Non-Hispanic, Black or Other. Unfortunately the survey did not allow me to make further distinctions within the “Other” race category, although the category’s proportion of the entire sample suggests that it is largely comprised of the Asian population. Nonetheless, lacking any way to shed further light on this category I have retained its label in tables and figures. It should also be noted that the NSFG is not translated into non-English languages, excluding populations that are not fluent in English. Such limitations may alter outcomes, particularly when dealing with topics related to race and ethnicity.

Interracial marriages were defined as any exogamous combination of these four racial variables, including those respondents who indicated that their spouse was multi-racial. While non-White Hispanic and White Non-Hispanic pairings are, strictly speaking, interethnic and not interracial marriages, the literature on interracial marriage has generally included them as they still constitute exogamous pairings that transgress

significant group boundaries. Taking into account the likelihood that non-White Hispanics will become a distinct racial category in social science research in the near future, the inclusion of white and white non-Hispanic pairs in the interracial marriage category ensures that the variable accurately describes the population of individuals who choose racial exogamy. My examination of respondents currently in cohabiting relationships use the same parameters in defining racially endogamous and exogamous pairings.

Several socio-demographic variables were included in multivariate analysis to control for non-religious effects. Age is a continuous variable indicating the age of the respondent at the time of the interview, gender is a dichotomous measure (male=1 female=0), and metropolitan measures the type of area in which the respondent resides (metropolitan=1, other=0). The respondent's region of residence at the time of interview was recoded into a dummy variable contrasting residence in the South versus all other regions (Midwest, Northeast and West). Household income is coded in the NSFG as a categorical variable, with possible values range from 1-15 corresponding to a particular income range (e.g. \$0-\$5000). I recoded this income measure into a continuous variable by taking the midpoint of each income category range (e.g., the previous example would be recoded as \$2,500). The highest income range was unbounded (“\$100,000 and above”), so the average income for this category was estimated using a Pareto curve equation. (Shryock & Siegel, 1980) The final household income measure is an interval variable with values starting at \$2,500 and ending at \$239,088; these values were further transformed by dividing them by 1000 for ease of use in analyses.

Education is measured with categorical variables indicating the highest level of educational attainment for the respondent. Possible responses are “Less than High School”, “High School Diploma”, “Some College”, “College Degree”; when utilized in multivariate analyses respondents with a college degree were left as a contrast category.

Conservative political affiliation has been demonstrated to be a significant predictor of in-group racial preferences for romantic relationships among White Americans, while the opposite is true for Black Americans (Eastwick, Richeson, Son and Finkel 2009). We therefore have good reason to presume that political ideology is potentially powerful in its ability to account for variation in individuals being in an interracial marriage or not. Unfortunately, direct measures of political ideology or affiliation are not available in the NSFG data. However, I include a proxy measure that attempts to account for cultural ideologies that are strongly associated with political ideologies.

NSFG respondents answered a battery of questions related to sex, romantic relationships and social issues, including their approval of same sex marriage, unmarried women having children, adoption of children by homosexuals, cohabitation before marriage, premarital sex between adults, and cohabiting couples have children. These questions were then dummy coded with ‘1’ indicating a stance in line with culturally progressive views and ‘0’ indicating agreement with more traditional views. These six measures loaded on a single factor with a Cronbach Alpha score of .706; the final measure, labeled “Progressivism” in the multivariate analyses presented here, ranges from zero to six and serves as a proxy for political affiliation/ideology.

The NSFG includes a variety of measures of individual religiosity, three of which are used for this project's analyses. *Religious tradition* was constructed using the respondent's self-report of their current religious affiliation. Where respondents reported a particular religious denomination they were recoded into one of the major Christian Protestant traditions. Additionally the measure does not parse out different religious tradition from those listed, and respondents who identify as other religions (Buddhism, Islam, etc) are combined in the heterogeneous category of "Other". The final religious affiliation categories are Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Black Protestant, Catholic, Other and None.

Religious service attendance is coded in the NSFG as a categorical variable indicating respondent's self report of the frequency with which they attend religious services. Values for this variable, from lowest frequency to highest frequency, include "Never", "Less than Once a Month", "1-3 times per Month", "Once a Week", and "More than Once a Week". These categories were converted to numeric values approximating the number of weeks per year the respondent attends religious services; this variable transformation yielded possible values of 0, 6, 24, 52 and 104.

The measure of *religious salience* is a categorical variable with the respondent's answer to the question, "Currently, how important is religion in your daily life?" Possible responses were "Very Important", "Somewhat Important" and "Not Important". As the hypothesized relationships are in relation to those who do not think religion is personally important, for multivariate analyses the responses of "Not Important" is left out as a contrast category.

To test my hypotheses I ran a series of logistic regressions. The first series compares the religious and socio-demographic characteristics of the married and cohabiting respondents in the sample. This determines the extent to which the religious differences seen in Table 1 exist when controlling for socio-demographic factors. The second series of models predicts the likelihood of the respondents in any of these relationships being in an interracial relationship; these analyses determine what religious differences exist between individuals in interracial relationships compared to same-race ones, and whether those differences are explained by cohabitation versus marriage. The third set of models breaks up the analysis by the major Christian religious traditions to explore how religion is lived among individuals in interracial relationships according to their religious affiliation.

Results

Table 3.2 shows the descriptive statistics for the sample, broken up by respondents who were currently married and currently cohabiting at the time of the interview. The married respondents tended to be older than the cohabiting ones (34.8 years vs. 29.3 years, respectively). Similar proportions of the married and cohabiting respondents lived in the South. The racial makeup of the two groups differed markedly in their likelihood of being white (66.1% of marrieds vs. 54% of cohabitators), and married respondents reported higher household incomes (\$97,346 a year vs. \$53,358 a year). Respondents in both categories were equally likely to live in a metropolitan area.

Table 3.2

Descriptive Statistics of Sample, Currently Married and Cohabiting Individuals

Variable	Currently Married					Currently Cohabiting				
	N	Mean	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum	N	Mean	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Age	2922	34.828	0.249	15	45	1296	29.290	0.309	15	45
Gender (Male)	2922	0.479	0.013	0	1	1296	0.473	0.019	0	1
Region (South)	2922	0.201	0.031	0	1	1296	0.215	0.042	0	1
<i>Race</i>										
White	2922	0.661	0.020	0	1	1296	0.540	0.033	0	1
Hispanic	2922	0.188	0.020	0	1	1296	0.271	0.029	0	1
Black	2922	0.085	0.009	0	1	1296	0.124	0.015	0	1
Other Race	2922	0.066	0.008	0	1	1296	0.065	0.033	0	1
Income	2922	97.346	4.790	2.5	239.088	1296	53.358	3.345	2.5	239.088
Metropolitan Residence	2922	0.863	0.032	0	1	1296	0.820	0.045	0	1
<i>Educational Attainment</i>										
Less than High School Degree	2922	0.098	0.011	0	1	1296	0.208	0.024	0	1
High School Degree	2922	0.242	0.016	0	1	1296	0.329	0.019	0	1
Some College Education	2922	0.280	0.016	0	1	1296	0.306	0.026	0	1
College Degree	2922	0.381	0.023	0	1	1296	0.158	0.021	0	1
<i>Religious Salience</i>										
Religion is Very Important	2922	0.479	0.020	0	1	1296	0.299	0.020	0	1
Religion is Somewhat Important	2922	0.276	0.012	0	1	1296	0.326	0.019	0	1
Religion is Not Important	2922	0.244	0.016	0	1	1296	0.373	0.026	0	1
Religious Service Attendance	2920	27.078	1.236	0	104	1295	14.225	0.981	0	104
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>										
Evangelical Protestant	2916	0.241	0.014	0	1	1291	0.187	0.016	0	1
Mainline Protestant	2916	0.176	0.010	0	1	1291	0.129	0.016	0	1
Black Protestant	2916	0.064	0.009	0	1	1291	0.090	0.012	0	1
Catholic	2916	0.247	0.015	0	1	1291	0.240	0.020	0	1
Other Religion	2916	0.101	0.017	0	1	1291	0.062	0.015	0	1
No Religious Affiliation	2916	0.171	0.012	0	1	1291	0.292	0.024	0	1
Progressivism Scale	2922	3.774	0.089	0	6	1296	4.517	0.081	0	6
Interracial Relationship	2912	0.137	0.012	0	1	1264	0.170	0.018	0	1

Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2011-2013; All values weighted

Consistent with the age difference between the two groups, married and cohabiting respondents were noticeably different on the extreme ends of the education measure. Thirty-eight percent of married respondents have a college degree, while only sixteen percent of cohabiting respondents do; likewise, only ten percent of married respondents had less than a high-school education while twenty-one percent of cohabiters do.

A little less than half of married respondents say that religion is ‘Very’ important in their life, while only thirty percent of cohabiters say the same. This gap reflects a similar gap in those who say religion was not important in their life, where twenty-four percent of marrieds and thirty-seven percent of cohabiters answered in the affirmative. Married respondents also attend religious services more frequently, averaging about twenty-seven weeks of attendance a year compared to an average of slightly more than fourteen for cohabiters.

The biggest difference in religious affiliation between the two groups is the likelihood of identifying Evangelical or Nonaffiliated. Compared to cohabiters, married respondents were more likely to identify as the first (24.1% vs. 18.7%) and less likely to identify as the latter (17.1% vs. 29.2%). Married respondents were somewhat more likely to identify as Mainline Protestants (17.6% vs. 12.9%) and Catholic (24.7% vs. 24.0%), although cohabiters were more likely to identify as Black Protestant (9% vs. 6.4%).

Cohabiters on average were more progressive than the counterparts, scoring 4.5 out of 6 on the scale of progressive cultural values compared to 3.7 among married respondents. They also had a higher proportion of people who were in interracial

relationships; seventeen percent of cohabiting individuals claimed to be in an interracial relationship, while about fourteen percent of marrieds claimed the same.

Table 3.3 shows the results of logistic regressions predicting cohabitation versus marriage in the analytic sample, essentially parsing the religious differences between cohabiters and marrieds while controlling for other variables. Model 3.3.1 includes only the religiosity measures, and shows that cohabiters differ from marrieds on religious service attendance (attending less often) and on some measure of religious affiliation. With “No Affiliation” as the contrast category, cohabiters are less likely to identify as Mainline Protestant or Other religion, while they are equally likely to identify as Evangelical, Black Protestant, or Catholic.

Model 3.3.2 introduces socio-demographic controls to the model. As expected cohabiters tend to be younger than marrieds, and more likely to be Black or Hispanic rather than White. Cohabiters also tend to be less educated than marrieds and report lower household income. Inclusion of these socio-demographic controls does not account for all of the religious differences found in Model 3.3.1: cohabiters still attend religious services less frequently, while religious affiliation relationships are no longer significant. Including these controls shows cohabiters are somewhat less likely than marrieds to say religion is ‘Very’ important compared to ‘Not’ important.

Model 3.3.3 introduces the cultural Progressivism scale, which shows that cohabiters score more highly on this scale than marrieds. This does not account for the difference in religious service attendance or religious salience. The persistent religious difference between cohabiters and marrieds in the sample is religious service attendance and the likelihood of saying religion is ‘Very’ vs. ‘Not’ important

Table 3.3

Binary Logistic Regressions Predicting Cohabitation vs. Marriage

Variable	Model 3.3.1				Model 3.3.2				Model 3.3.3						
	Point Estimate	P	Std. Error	Odds Ratio	Standardized Estimate	Point Estimate	P	Std. Error	Odds Ratio	Standardized Estimate	Point Estimate	P	Std. Error	Odds Ratio	Standardized Estimate
Age						-0.109	***	0.012	0.896	-50.181	-0.105	***	0.012	0.900	-48.254
Gender (Male)						-0.049		0.100	0.953	-1.618	0.029		0.099	1.030	0.981
South						0.163		0.182	1.177	4.397	0.161		0.186	1.174	4.333
<i>Race</i> ^a															
Black						0.812	***	0.248	2.252	16.001	0.900	***	0.237	2.460	17.740
Non-White Hispanic						0.341	*	0.162	1.407	9.298	0.398	*	0.165	1.489	10.850
Other Race						0.452		0.487	1.571	7.464	0.520		0.511	1.682	8.588
Income						-0.004	***	0.001	0.996	-23.536	-0.004	***	0.001	0.996	-24.467
Metropolitan Residence						-0.185		0.272	0.831	-4.400	-0.223		0.272	0.800	-5.317
<i>Educational Attainment</i> ^b															
Less than High School Degree						1.056	***	0.172	2.874	23.594	1.186	***	0.172	3.274	26.503
High School Degree						0.530	**	0.172	1.698	15.626	0.600	***	0.170	1.821	17.692
Some College Education						0.432	**	0.161	1.540	13.038	0.478	**	0.163	1.612	14.417
<i>Religious Salience</i> ^c															
Religion is Important	-0.265		0.236	0.767	-8.751	-0.590	**	0.230	0.554	-19.486	-0.430	*	0.224	0.651	-14.205
Religion is Somewhat Important	0.125		0.197	1.133	3.784	-0.153		0.204	0.859	-4.624	-0.111		0.201	0.895	-3.379
Religious Service Attendance	-0.013	***	0.003	0.987	-26.926	-0.013	***	0.003	0.987	-26.184	-0.010	***	0.003	0.990	-19.747
<i>Religious Affiliation</i> ^d															
Evangelical Protestant	-0.250		0.241	0.779	-6.967	-0.111		0.262	0.895	-3.098	-0.009		0.264	0.991	-0.239
Mainline Protestant	-0.640	**	0.247	0.528	-15.761	-0.354		0.234	0.702	-8.716	-0.348		0.230	0.706	-8.586
Black Protestant	0.414		0.282	1.513	7.107	-0.047		0.336	0.954	-0.808	-0.020		0.332	0.980	-0.345
Catholic	-0.291		0.237	0.748	-8.346	-0.077		0.255	0.926	-2.200	-0.126		0.254	0.882	-3.618
Other Religion	-0.603	*	0.296	0.547	-11.544	-0.344		0.266	0.709	-6.584	-0.285		0.274	0.752	-5.456
Progressivism Scale											0.212	***	0.046	1.236	25.718
Intercept	-0.384	**	0.126			3.046	***	0.473			1.797	***	0.052		
N	4206					4206					4206				

Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2011-2013; All values weighted

All values weighted, ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10

^a"White" is the contrast category

^b"College Degree" is the contrast category

^c"Religion is not Important" is the contrast category

^d"No Religious Affiliation" is the contrast category

Table 3.4 shows logistic regression models predicting the likelihood of the respondent's relationship, whether married or cohabiting, being interracial versus same-race. Model 3.4.1 includes all socio-demographic controls and religiosity measures, while Model 3.4.2 introduces a control for cohabiting relationship status. Consistent with prior research, respondents who are younger, racial minorities and with lower incomes are more likely to be in an interracial relationship. There was no significant educational variation in these models. Interracially coupled respondents scored higher on the progressivism scale in both models, but surprisingly cohabiting individuals were not more likely to be in interracial relationships.

In the presence of all socio-demographic controls there were no differences in religious salience or religious service attendance between interracial and same-race couples. There were some significant differences in religious affiliation, with Catholics and Other religious individuals less likely to be in an interracial relationship compared to the non-affiliated; however, Evangelicals, Mainline and Black Protestants did not differ from religious Nones in their likelihood of being in an interracial relationship.

Table 3.5 replicates the analyses in Table 3.4 by the largest religious traditions in the sample: Evangelical and Mainline Protestants, and Catholics. These analyses show no significant differences in religiosity when comparing interracially coupled individuals within these religious traditions. Interracial and same-race coupled respondents did not differ in the frequency of religious service attendance or in their levels of religious salience at the aggregate and within these religious groups.

Table 3.4

Binary Logistic Regressions Predicting Interracial Relationship

Variable	Model 3.4.1					Model 3.4.2				
	Point Estimate	P	Std. Error	Odds Ratio	Standardized Estimate	Point Estimate	P	Std. Error	Odds Ratio	Standardized Estimate
Age	-0.030	**	0.010	0.971	-13.664	-0.030	**	0.010	0.971	-13.517
Gender (Male)	0.143	***	0.129	1.153	4.756	0.142		0.129	1.153	4.750
South	-0.093		0.197	0.911	-2.511	-0.093		0.198	0.911	-2.518
<i>Race</i> ^a										
Black	0.863	***	0.304	2.370	17.071	0.860	**	0.298	2.364	17.015
Non-White Hispanic	1.295	***	0.246	3.649	35.251	1.294	***	0.247	3.647	35.232
Other Race	1.668	***	0.376	5.300	27.545	1.667	***	0.375	5.296	27.532
Income	0.002	**	0.001	1.002	11.822	0.002	***	0.001	1.002	11.860
Metropolitan Residence	0.467		0.191	1.596	11.111	0.469	*	0.188	1.598	11.142
<i>Educational Attainment</i> ^b										
Less than High School Degree	-0.520	†	0.280	0.594	-11.655	-0.524	†	0.277	0.592	-11.728
High School Degree	0.032		0.192	1.032	0.932	0.030		0.190	1.031	0.895
Some College Education	0.235		0.173	1.265	7.108	0.234		0.173	1.264	7.071
<i>Religious Salience</i> ^c										
Religion is Important	-0.116		0.245	0.890	-3.839	-0.116		0.245	0.891	-3.823
Religion is Somewhat Important	0.157		0.237	1.170	4.753	0.157		0.237	1.169	4.750
Religious Service Attendance	0.002		0.003	1.002	4.503	0.002		0.003	1.002	4.540
<i>Religious Affiliation</i> ^d										
Evangelical Protestant	-0.105		0.279	0.901	-2.910	-0.104		0.280	0.901	-2.895
Mainline Protestant	-0.144		0.367	0.866	-3.557	-0.143		0.369	0.867	-3.526
Black Protestant	-0.491		0.408	0.612	-8.456	-0.490		0.408	0.613	-8.439
Catholic	-0.788	**	0.318	0.455	-22.673	-0.788	*	0.320	0.455	-22.653
Other Religion	-0.894	**	0.347	0.409	-17.151	-0.892	*	0.351	0.410	-17.127
Progressivism Scale	0.124	**	0.044	1.132	15.085	0.124	*	0.044	1.132	15.027
Cohabiting ^e						0.015		0.147	1.016	0.460
Intercept	-2.234	***	0.497			-2.249	***	0.507		
N	4165					4165				

Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2011-2013; All values weighted

All values weighted, ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10

^a"White" is the contrast category^b"College Degree" is the contrast category^c"Religion is not Important" is the contrast category^d"No Religious Affiliation" is the contrast category^e"Married" is the contrast category

Table 3.5

Binary Logistic Regressions Predicting Interracial Relationship by Religious Tradition

Variable	3.5.1 Evangelical Protestant				3.5.2 Mainline Protestant				3.5.3 Catholic						
	Point Estimate	P	Std. Error	Odds Ratio	Standardized Estimate	Point Estimate	P	Std. Error	Odds Ratio	Standardized Estimate	Point Estimate	P	Std. Error	Odds Ratio	Standardized Estimate
Age	-0.053	**	0.021	0.948	-24.603	-0.024	0.020	0.976	-11.714	-0.018	0.019	0.982	0.982	-8.076	
Gender (Male)	0.224		0.289	1.252	7.587	-0.117	0.323	0.890	-4.094	-0.182	0.333	0.834	0.834	-6.031	
South	-0.179		0.376	0.836	-4.520	-0.764	†	0.439	0.466	-25.037	-0.232	0.383	0.793	-6.084	
<i>Race^a</i>															
Black	1.153		0.761	3.168	14.020	1.827	1.424	6.217	16.597	1.226	**	0.451	3.408	12.764	
Non-White Hispanic	1.045	**	0.351	2.844	25.905	1.714	***	0.466	5.550	39.218	0.755	*	0.359	2.127	24.794
Other Race	2.448	***	0.650	11.563	29.580	3.010	***	0.733	20.284	40.929	1.076		0.663	2.933	14.895
Income	0.000		0.002	1.000	2.339	0.000	0.002	1.000	0.412	0.001	0.002	1.001	1.001	6.339	
Metropolitan Residence	1.029	†	0.604	2.798	28.726	0.238	0.282	1.269	6.215	1.032	0.710	2.806	20.499		
<i>Educational Attainment^b</i>															
Less than High School Degree	-0.225		0.478	0.799	-5.216	-0.628	0.667	0.534	-11.669	-1.230	*	0.636	0.292	-32.434	
High School Degree	0.623	†	0.343	1.865	19.423	-0.043	0.425	0.958	-1.260	-0.469	0.406	0.626	0.626	-12.856	
Some College Education	0.272		0.379	1.312	8.573	-0.034	0.370	0.967	-1.081	0.340	0.416	1.405	9.921		
<i>Religious Salience^c</i>															
Religion is Important	0.820		0.712	2.271	26.235	0.774	†	0.441	2.168	26.383	-0.276	0.448	0.759	-9.029	
Religion is Somewhat Important	0.877		0.670	2.403	26.775	0.658	†	0.371	1.931	23.244	0.168	0.499	1.183	5.560	
Religious Service Attendance	0.006		0.005	1.006	14.572	0.004	0.008	1.004	6.262	-0.003	0.008	0.997	0.997	-4.721	
Progressivism Scale	0.201	**	0.068	1.222	25.575	0.157	†	0.089	1.170	19.283	0.211	*	0.092	1.235	22.196
Intercept	-3.475	**	1.246			-2.769	**	0.999			-3.425	***	1.025		
N	904					609					1041				

Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2011-2013; All values weighted

All values weighted, ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10

^a"White" is the contrast category

^b"College Degree" is the contrast category

^c"Religion is not Important" is the contrast category

Discussion

While there are significant differences in religiosity between individuals in interracial and same-race relationships (Table 1), these differences largely disappear once other background variables are controlled for. Notably, there is no difference in the levels of religious salience and religious service attendance when comparing interracial and same-race coupled respondents. Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, predicting that religious salience and religious service attendance would be associated with lower likelihood of being in an interracial relationship, are therefore not supported by the data. There are differences in effect of religious affiliation on the likelihood of being in an interracial or same-race relationship; however, these effects are quite different from what we would expect based on the existing race and religion research.

Notably, the non-affiliated do not differ in their likelihood of marrying or cohabiting interracially when compared to Evangelicals, Mainline, or Black Protestants. Those respondents who identified as Catholic or belonging to some Other religious tradition were the least likely to be in an interracial relationship. These differences are not affected by the inclusion of a control for cohabitation. Therefore Hypothesis 3, predicting Evangelical Protestants as being the least likely to be in an interracial relationship, and Hypothesis 4, predicting the religiously non-affiliated as the most likely to be in an interracial relationship, are not supported by the data. Hypothesis 5 is additionally unsupported by the results; few religious differences between interracial and same-race coupled respondents regardless, and the differences that do exist are not explained away by controlling for cohabiters.

There is therefore little support for the claim that interracial coupling is associated with a lower rates of religiosity. Overall, interracially married and cohabiting individuals do not place different importance on religion and do not participate in religious services less than those in same-race couples. This is surprising, considering the contentious nature of much of America's religious history with the idea of racial intermarriage. Moreover, the racially homogeneous nature of America's congregations make religious participation a trickier proposition for interracially coupled individuals than same-race coupled ones; if these couples do wish to be attend religious service it is likely that one of them will be in the distinct racial or ethnic minority.

The lack of difference between the nonaffiliated and Protestants of all stripes in their propensity for interracial coupling is surprising, given the literature on interracial dating and religious affiliation. One possible explanation is that, while religious affiliation interacts with an individual's openness to dating interracially, when it comes to long-term relationships other influences become more salient. Indeed, principles of homogamy may simply be stronger influences on partner choices than the religious identity of the individual. (Herman & Campbell, 2012) In this case religious identification may make no effect on the decision to marry or cohabit with a person of a different race.

That Catholics were less likely to couple interracially is also unexpected, particularly given the historical friendliness of the American Catholic church towards interracial marriage. Further, Catholic churches are actually a little more likely than Evangelical and Mainline Protestants to be multiracial; however, the structure of these Catholic churches may hide racial homogeneity, as many congregations divide masses on

racial and ethnic lines for linguistic purposes. (Emerson, 2006) It is possible that the lower rates of interracial marriage among the sample's Catholics are related to fewer opportunities to interact with potential partners of different races.

The heterogeneity of the Other religion category makes generalizations inadvisable. While we might expect certain religious groups that make up this category to be less likely to marry interracially (Mormons, for example), without larger survey samples it is impossible to make educated attempts to explain the lower likelihood of this religious category to be in interracial relationships.

While the racially homogeneous nature of most American religious congregations (Perry 2014) led me to expect interracially coupled respondents to attend services less often, the results suggest otherwise. One possible reason for this finding may be that respondents select into certain relatively diverse religious congregations, therefore making the homogeneity of most organizations moot. This can also make some sense of the finding that, within the Evangelical, Mainline Protestant and Catholic samples I did not find variation in attendance by relationship racial makeup. If a respondent in an interracial relationship does wish to attend a church they likely find a congregation that both partners can agree on, presuming that they attend together. Simply, if there are barriers to religious participation for people in interracial relationships, it appears that they are not significant enough to cause any noticeable difference when compared to same-race coupled individuals.

Certain measurement issues need to be noted as potential areas for future research. First, important factors like the diversity of the respondent's social network (such as neighborhood, job or friends) are not found in the dataset. These controls are

particularly important in ascertaining the kind of marriage market that respondents were likely drawing from, as well as parsing out the effects of cultural variation in openness to crossing racial boundaries that may exist from one location to another. (Matthijs Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2010; Taylor, 2012; Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1990) Additionally the measure of progressivism here is not a perfect substitute for measures of political affiliation or ideology; while aspects of the political spectrum in the United States are captured in the questions that make up the progressivism scale (such as alternative sexualities and family arrangements) it can be improved upon.

Finally, the measurement of religious affiliation in the NSFG is less precise than those found in other surveys. Religious traditions are generally grouped by denominational affiliation, attendance or some combination of the two; the NSFG has respondents affirm affiliation based on broader categories. While these categories roughly match with the religious affiliation categories used by sociologists greater precision would allow for better understanding of the religious identities of interracial married individuals. Further complicating the analysis is the lack of a variable that measures Biblical Literalism, a common sociological measure associated with fundamentalist or traditionalist religions. As Biblical Literalism is highly predictive of attitudes about interracial marriage (see Chapter 1) its inclusion in project could potentially have drawn out some of the effects of religious identity upon the likelihood of interracial coupling. Other measures of religious participation, such as prayer or scripture reading, would yield greater insight into the religious lives of people in these relationships and any differences that may possibly exist.

The data are also not perfectly suited to answering some of the larger research questions raised in this project. Causal inference cannot be strictly inferred by the data used. Short of better-specified variables, or extensive qualitative work, these results are descriptive rather than truly predictive of interracial marriage or cohabitation. Perhaps more importantly, I do not know information about the religiosity of the respondent's partner, and whether their religious affiliation and participation levels match. This affects the conclusions that can be drawn from the data concerning the effect of religion on interracial marriages and cohabiting relationships. These results are therefore best interpreted as the characteristics of individuals in interracial relationship. However, until better data is available this project represents the best possible analysis of how religion is manifest in the lives of interracial relationships.

Conclusion

While religion has proven an effective predictor of attitudes towards interracial marriage, the religiosity of individuals in interracial relationships do not significantly differ from those in same-race relationships. Apart from Catholics, who exhibit a lower likelihood of being in an interracial relationship, individuals of different religious affiliations do not significantly vary in their likelihood of being in an interracial relationship, contrary to expectations based on historical issues of race within these respective groups. Additionally, I find no significant variation in religious salience and religious service attendance between same-race and interracially coupled respondents.

Whatever religious differences exist between interracially and same-race coupled individuals can be accounted for by other socio-demographic controls. While interracial marriage and cohabitation remain relatively rare in modern society, religion does not

appear to be a marked dividing line between those who have crossed racial boundaries and those who have not, even when examining within religious traditions. This may be good news to America's Protestants, as the historical barriers to religious participation for interracial couples have not led to a present where irreligion is a marker of those relationships. It also raises questions for American Catholics, whose rates of interracial marriage belie their history with the issue.

CHAPTER FOUR

Religion and Marital Stability in Interracial Marriages: A Survival Analysis

Introduction

While interracial marriages are known to be more unstable than same-race ones, (J. Bratter & King, 2008) little research has been done on the various protective factors against marital dissolution in these relationships. However, the literature on religion and its effect on marital stability is long and established. Religious commitment, especially in the form of religious service attendance, is a consistent and positive predictor of marital stability. Whether this varies for marriages by their racial composition has been unexplored in the literature. Given the higher propensity for divorce in interracial marriages, research on possible ameliorative factors against marital dissolution is timely and helps to further fill the gap in our knowledge of the intersection of religion and interracial marriage.

Interracial Marriages and Divorce

Interracial marriages have been found to have higher risk of divorce than same-race marriages. (Jones, 2010; R. M. Kreider, 2000) This gap appears to be significant, with some 41% of interracial marriages and 31% of same-race dissolving in the first ten years of the relationship (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; R. M. Kreider, 2000), numbers that have been confirmed in subsequent analyses. (J. Bratter & King, 2008) While the effect of being in an interracial versus same-race marriage is not as strong as other background

factors, such as marrying young or cohabiting prior to marriage, net of these and other variables interracial marriages still dissolve at distinctly elevated rates.

The most common explanation for this gap in divorce rates point to the additional challenges and pressures faced by couples in interracial marriages. For much of American history such pairings were not looked upon with much favor, particularly by the White racial majority. (Leon, 1977; Mayer, 1992; Thomas et al., 1985) Even with the termination of formal barriers to interracial marriages, culminating with the Loving v Virginia Supreme Court ruling banning anti-miscegenation legislation nationwide, interracial marriages remained relatively rare. (Sollars, 2000) While interracial marriages made up some 3% of marriages in 1980, by 2010 they made up 15% of new marriages. (Taylor, 2012) Although these increasing rates may be seen as a sign of greater overall acceptance of these unions, the historically lower rates of marriage together with higher rates of divorce for these couples means that the overall proportion of marriages that are interracial is actually around 8.4%. These statistics are suggestive of the degree to which these marriages are still a significant social boundary to cross. (Kennedy, 2012)

Those who do choose to cross these social boundaries face challenges unique to the racial nature of their relationship. (Erica Chito Childs, 2005; Nemoto, 2009; Rosenblatt et al., 1995) They may face overt disapproval from family members, particularly from older generations who are more opposed to racial intermarriage, or from immigrant generations who generally have greater preference for families marrying within their race or ethnicity. The lack of social support that may otherwise have been given to racially matched partners get these relationships off on uneven ground from the start, and they have difficulty accumulating social capital across the lifespan of the

relationship. (Yancey & Lewis Jr., 2009) If they do get married, they often find it difficult to lean on familial relationships to get through times of marital conflict or instability. (Erica Chito Childs, 2005) These conflicts are highlighted by the higher psychological distress experienced by people in intermarriages compared to those in endogamous ones. (J. L. Bratter & Eschbach, 2006)

The added dimension of childbearing and childrearing can be another point where the stability of interracial marriages is unsettled. (Bulanda & Brown, 2007; Yancey & Lewis Jr., 2009) The challenges of raising a multi-racial child in a country where racial identity is already lived out in unpredictable and not altogether equitable ways are multitude. Spouses may disagree on cultural norms of childrearing that are closely linked to their own personal racial or ethnic background, adding stress to the marriage even before the birth of a child. After a child is introduced to the marriage the question of how to raise them and develop their multi-racial identity becomes even more salient, providing many couples with a permanent point of contention.

An additional hurdle that interracial couples face is navigating the different cultural backgrounds and experiences that each individual brings to the relationship. (Bulanda & Brown, 2007; Fong & Yung, 1995; Hill & Thomas, 2000; Nemoto, 2009) White partners may have difficulty understanding the experiences of discrimination or prejudice that are commonplace to partners of racial or ethnic minority status, and conflict can arise when partners find themselves in social situations where race becomes a salient issue for one and not the other. Interracial marriages can be further complicated with the dimension of immigration generation status, as the cultural experience of growing up in a mainstream American versus non-assimilated household is

another point of dissimilarity where conflict can fester. The complexity of these processes has been documented in past studies that show rates of divorce in interracial marriages vary significantly by the gender and racial and ethnic pairing of the couple. (J. Bratter & King, 2008)

While these factors can certainly be attenuated through self-selection into interracial marriages by people who would not find these difficulties unduly burdensome, they remain as points of conflict that are less likely to exist for people in same-race marriages. Choosing to marry across racial lines does not only means choosing to have a permanent fixture of the relationship on which the couple does not match (race); it implies a variety of issues that the couple will have to face together that are less likely to cause stress to the marriages of same-race couples.

While certain aspects of the marital relationship are known to contribute to the long-term stability of the relationship, such as avoiding mismatches on educational attainment level or delaying marriage past an early age, an unstudied factor is the effect of religiosity and whether this interacts with the racial composition of the marriage. The existing literature on religion and marital stability may provide some supporting clues for hypothesizing about this relationship.

Religion and Marital Stability

The intersection of religion and marital stability has been the focus of a growing number of studies over the past few decades, using measures of religious affiliation, religious homogamy and religious service attendance. (Amato, 2010; Bahr & Chadwick, 1985; Boyle, Kulu, Cooke, Gayle, & Mulder, 2008; Mcdaniel, Boco, & Zella, 2013; Schramm, Marshall, Harris, & Lee, 2012; Vaaler, Ellison, & Powers, 2009) Higher

religiosity, broadly construed, has generally been modestly associated with increased relationship quality and lower the risk of divorce. (Booth, Johnson, Branaman, & Sica, 1995; Kunz & Albrecht, 1977; Lehrer & Chiswick, 1993; Mcdaniel et al., 2013; Schramm et al., 2012; Vaaler et al., 2009; Village, Williams, & Francis, 2009) This is particularly true in marriages where the husband and wife are religiously homogamous and participate at similar rates. (Call & Heaton, 1997; Christopher G. Ellison, Burdette, & Wilcox, 2010; Schramm et al., 2012)

Higher frequency of religious service attendance in particular is consistently associated with lower risks of divorce. (Call & Heaton, 1997; Lehrer & Chiswick, 1993; Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar, & Swank, 2001; Mcdaniel et al., 2013) This association with marital stability and attending religious services has been explained through a variety of theories. Greater religious service attendance may allow individuals to access to informal social support networks that benefit the stability of marriages. (Mullins, 2006; Vaaler et al., 2009) These type of social environments tend to encourage and reward stable marriages, creating social incentives for maintaining marital stability. Frequently associating with members of a religious congregation who maintain a shared interests in matters of spirituality and religion may be a source of support in difficult times, through informal interactions at social gatherings or structured interactions such as services or Sunday school. (Bermudez, Ms, & Karen, 2013; Webb et al., 2010)

Additionally, greater religious service attendance can be construed as evidence of religious commitment, particularly to religious ideals and beliefs. Religious groups at the very least do not overtly encourage marital dissolution, and the more traditionalist groups may have relatively strict social norms against it, so greater religious participation may

reinforce these ideals and minimize the likelihood that a person will see divorce as an option. (Bermudez et al., 2013; C. G. Ellison, Wolfinger, & Ramos-Wada, 2012; Vaaler et al., 2009) At the aggregate level greater religious participation has also been associated with lower rates of divorce, giving some credence to this possibility (Mullins, 2006), although higher density of conservative Protestants have been linked to *higher* rates of divorce. (Jennifer Glass, Levchak, & Manning, 2011)

Other factors related to religious service attendance may also contribute to lower risks of divorce. Higher frequency of attendance is associated with lower rates of domestic violence and marital conflict, for example, suggesting that the hypothesized benefits of church engagement extend outside of the congregation and into the home. (Ellison et al 1999; Curtis and Ellison 2002). The possibility also exists that religious groups, and greater religious participation, is a self-selecting process, wherein individuals who are relatively less likely to get divorced anyway are also the ones who are more likely to be religious. (Bahr & Chadwick, 1985)

Research on religious affiliation and risk of divorce has revealed many complex relationships. Despite religious beliefs that hold stricter sanctions against divorce, conservative Protestant affiliation has been associated with higher rates of divorce compared to other religious identification. (Call & Heaton, 1997; Chi & Houseknecht, 1985; Schumm, Obiorah, & Silliman, 1989) Norms associated with conservative Protestantism, such as earlier entry into marriage, are strongly associated with higher risk of divorce. (J. Glass & Jacobs, 2005) However, most studies show no relationships between religious affiliation and divorce risk, once other factors are controlled for, suggesting that religious identity is not a central part of the way that religion affects the

stability of marriages (Mullins, 2006) Religious homogamy and heterogamy has generally been found to be more influential in this regard. The risk of marital dissolution is lower for couples that share denominational affiliation, and this risk is lowered more when both partners participate in services regularly. (Schramm et al., 2012; Vaaler et al., 2009) The benefits of religious participation appear to cross denominational boundaries, although the strength of these benefits vary by identity. (Vaaler et al., 2009)

Another common measure of religiosity, religious salience, defies certain expectations concerning the association between religious commitment and divorce risk. While previous research would suggest that higher levels of religious salience, the extent to which religion is an important part of a person's life, should be associated with marital stability, findings have been mixed. Mcdaniel et al (2013) use longitudinal data to find that higher levels of religious salience are associated with lower risk of divorce or separation, although this effect did not hold when controlling for multiple aspects of religiosity. Alternatively, Edgell (2006) finds that people who had been divorced previously or were going through a divorce were slightly more likely to say religion was an important part of their life. Edgell suggests that this finding may give some insight into the ways that religion is lived out in everyday life, as people who have or are currently experiencing relationship failure may find some greater comfort in turning to religion in response to personal trauma. This particular finding is possibly a result of the time-sequence of the data collection, as religious salience was not measured prior to divorce.

In summary, the literature on religion and marital stability generally finds small to modest associations between religiosity and marital stability. (Mcdaniel et al., 2013;

Vaaler et al., 2009) Religious service attendance stands out as a consistent, significant predictor of divorce, with higher rates of service attendance being associated with lower risk of marital dissolution net. In studies where it is possible to analyze attendance over time, and compare the attendance rates of spouses, this is particularly notable. Religious affiliation is not consistently found to be a predictor of divorce, net other factors, although homogamy along these lines is. Religious salience, depending on the structure of the data collected, can be positively or negatively associated with marital dissolution.

Unexplored to this point is the degree to which religion may operate differently among interracially married couples compared to same-race married couples in predicting their risk of divorce. As interracial marrieds are at overall higher risk of divorce than same-race married couples, the possibility of potential buffers against the risk of divorce are particularly salient. The analysis presented here is a first attempt to untangle the ways that religion is similar and dissimilar as a risk factor for divorce among interracial and same-race married individuals.

Data and Methods

To test the relationship between religion and the stability of interracial marriages, I conduct survival analyses of the interracial marriages in the 2011-2013 wave of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG). The NSFG is a large, national probability sample of Americans aged 15-45 funded by the United States Department of Health and Human services. The final sample consisted of 4,815 men and 5,601 women. Data were collected from in-depth interviews with respondents conducted between September 2011 and September 2013, with topic modules relating to sexual, relationship and marital histories. Notably, respondents were asked questions about the race and ethnicity of

select significant others in their history, including their first marital partner. Additionally this cycle of the NSFG included several measures of religiosity. The size of the survey sample, as well as the relevant information collected on the respondents and their personal relationships, make it well suited for exploring the questions posed in this project. I restricted the sample to respondents who had necessary information regarding their first marriages, including the century month of the marriage, the century month that marriage ended in divorce (if applicable), and racial information about their first spouse. The final analytical sample consisted of 3,077 respondents.

NSFG data are collected using complex sampling techniques, requiring all statistical tests be conducted using provided weights and appropriate statistical software coding in order to produce generalizable results. SURVEY commands in SAS statistical software package allowed me to account for design-based variance and generate representative results for the sampled population in descriptive and multivariate analyses. (Allison, 2010)

The NSFG collects data on the marital relationships of respondents, including the month and year that the marriage began and the month and year that they ended, if such an event occurred prior to the interview. Following Bratter and King (2008) marriages were right censored at ten years (120 months) to account for the average duration of marriages that end in divorce, which is eight years. (R. Kreider, 2005) This also allowed sufficient time for a divorce to occur while minimizing the censoring of relationships. Therefore there are three possible outcomes for each marriage in the dataset: the respondent experienced a divorce in the first ten years, the marriage remained intact at

the end of the ten year period, or the marriage remained intact at the time of interview before reaching its tenth year (censored).

The NSFG's coding of race is based upon three categories, "White", "Black", and "Other". Respondents also reported whether they identified as being of Hispanic ethnicity. Using these reports I recoded the respondent's race into the categories of White Non-Hispanics, Hispanic, Blacks, and Other. The data available in the NSFG do not allow me to make further distinctions in the 'Other' category, and therefore includes respondents who identify as Asian and Native-American. Lacking any other way of discerning its contents I have let the label remain in tables and figures. The same coding was used to create categories for the racial identity of the respondent's first spouse.

Marriages were coded as interracial if the respondent's race and their first spouse's race did not match. Following the most recent categorizations of interracial marriages in the literature I have coded Hispanic and White Non-Hispanic pairings as interracial, although they are interethnic in the strictest terms. The basis for the inclusion of this pairing lies in accurately assessing the number of people who choose to cross socially constructed boundaries in their choice of marriage partner, and the rise of Hispanic populations in the United States has led to a recognition of their collective identification as a group distinct from White Americans.

There are three measures of religiosity available in this cycle of the NSFG. *Religious Affiliation* denotes how the respondent self-identified in terms of their religious tradition. Respondents also reported their religious denomination based on response categories provided by the NSFG interviewer; based on these reports I recoded denominations into one of the major Christian Protestant traditions. The final religious

affiliation categories closely approximate the standard religious affiliation categories suggested by Steensland et al (2000): Evangelical Protestants, Mainline Protestants, Black Protestants, Catholics, a catch-all category for Other religions (Buddhism, Islam, etc) and the Non-Affiliated. In multivariate analyses the religiously Non-Affiliated are left out as a contrast category.

Respondents also self-reported on the frequency of their attendance in religious services. In the NSFG this is coded as a categorical variable; these values were transformed into numerical values approximating the number of times a year the respondent attended a religious service. The categorical coding in the NSFG, with the final numerical equivalent in parentheses, includes “Never” (0), “Less than once a month” (6), “1-3 times a month” (24) , “Once a week” (52) , and “More than Once a Week” (104).

The final measure of religiosity available in the NSFG is a categorical variable indicating how important religion is to their lives. This measure of religiosity is commonly called *religious salience*, and asks respondents “Currently, how important is religion in your daily life?” The response categories were “Very Important”, “Somewhat Important”, and “Not Important”. In multivariate analyses the response “Not Important” is left out as a contrast category.

Following Bratter and King’s (2008) analysis of interracial marriage I include a variety of covariates that are generally associated with the likelihood of getting a divorce. This includes the respondent’s age at first marriage and their age at the time of the interview, both of which are continuous variables that range in value from 15 to 45, and the respondent’s region of residence at the time of the interview (dummy coded with

‘South’ as 1 and all other regions as 0). *Parent’s marriage Intact at age 14* is a dummy variable indicating whether or not the respondent was living with both parents at the age of 14 (‘1’ yes, ‘0’ no). *Premarital birth* and *premarital cohabitation* are both dummy variables that indicate whether or not the respondent or their partner had ever had a child or cohabited prior to their relationship, respectively, with an answer of yes coded as ‘1’ and no as ‘0’.

Hypotheses

While there appears to be a general protective effect of religious participation, measured in church attendance, against the risk of divorce, we have good reason to suppose that this effect may be muted for interracial marriages. The findings of the previous chapter demonstrate that interracially coupled individuals overall attend religious services less frequently than same-race coupled individuals, although not when controlling for other factors. It was proposed that the racial homogeneous nature of most religious institutions is something of a barrier to full religious participation for interracially marrieds. Churches represent social contexts where racial diversity is unlikely, so interracial couples may not be able to find a religious congregation where they are both comfortable.

While this explanation may account for the reason interracial couples attend religious services less frequently, it also is suggestive of the possible ways that religious service attendance would interact with the stability of these marriages. Interracially married individuals who do attend church services may find that the unique relationship stressors they experience are not mitigated against by their association with a religious body. Both interracial and same-race couples can have access to the general social

support and benefits of church attendance, but the likelihood that the church is racially homogeneous means that the risk factors for interracial marriage dissolution are unlikely to be addressed. Therefore, I expect that same-race marrieds experience the protective benefits of religious service attendance against marital dissolution, while those benefits are not active in the same way for interracially married individuals.

Hypothesis 1: Religious service attendance will be negatively associated with the risk of divorce for same-race married individuals.

Hypothesis 2: Religious service attendance will be unassociated with the risk of divorce for interracially married individuals.

While religious affiliation has not consistently been found to be a predictor of an individual's risk for divorce, some influences may be present for interracially married individuals compared to same-race individuals. I do not expect any variation to be found for all married individuals or for same-race individuals by religious affiliation, but I hypothesize that Evangelical Protestant identification is associated with higher risk of divorce for interracially married couples. The association of conservative Protestant traditions with anti-miscegenation support and racial inequality suggests that such social contexts would be uniquely conducive toward marital instability for interracial marriages compared to other religious affiliations.

Hypothesis 3: Evangelical Protestant interracially married individuals will have a higher risk of divorce than individuals of other religious identities.

The dynamics of religious service attendance and interracial marriages are also likely to be played out differently within separate religious traditions. Evangelical Protestant's history of opposition towards racial integration distinguishes these congregations as places where interracial marriages may be particularly unlikely to thrive.(Emerson, Smith, & Sikkink, 1999; Emerson & Smith, 2000) I propose three

hypotheses comparing the effect of religious participation upon same-race and interracial married individuals who identify as Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant and Catholic, the largest religious traditions in the sample. As the three dominant traditions of American Christianity they also serve as useful comparison groups for each other. Because of Evangelicalism's history with racial inequality I expect that, within Evangelicals as a sub-sample, religious service attendance will be negatively associated with risk of divorce for same-race marrieds and unassociated with risk of divorce for interracial marrieds.

Hypothesis 4: Religious service attendance will be associated with lower risk of divorce for same-race married Evangelicals, and unassociated with the risk of divorce for interracial married Evangelicals.

Alternatively, Mainline Protestant and Catholic congregations are somewhat more likely than Evangelical ones to be multi-racial. (Emerson, 2006) Whatever benefits of religious service attendance exist for same-race marrieds may also be available to interracial marrieds in a more diverse social context. Therefore I hypothesize that religious service attendance will be associated with lower risk of divorce for both same-race and interracial married individuals who identify as either Mainline Protestant or Catholic.

Hypothesis 5: Religious service attendance will be associated with lower risk of divorce for same-race married Mainline Protestants, and associated with lower risk of divorce for interracial married Mainline Protestants.

Hypothesis 6: Religious service attendance will be associated with lower risk of divorce for same-race married Catholics, and associated with lower risk of divorce for interracial married Catholics.

To test my hypotheses I use the PROC PHREG procedure in SAS to create Cox proportional hazard regression model to estimate hazard ratios for various contributing

factors to marital instability. To compensate for the NSFG's complex sampling design I used the SURVEY commands in SAS and used provided weights. Cox regression models output coefficients that are exponentiated to give the relative risk of divorce by each explanatory variable, controlling for all other factors in the model. (Hall & Zhao, 1995; Vaaler et al., 2009) A hazard ratio of 1 means that there an even risk of the event (in this analysis, divorce) at any time in the period being surveyed (the first ten years of marriage). Hazard ratios greater than 1 imply an increasing risk of the event occurring, while hazard ratios less than 1 imply a decreasing risk of the event occurring.

These analyses are presented as follows: Table 4.2 shows various risk factors for divorce, including measures of religiosity, for the entire sample. The full sample is then broken down by same-race and interracial marriages to compare the differing (if any) effects of religion upon the risk of divorce for these sub-groups. To test the hypotheses concerning the effects of religion upon interracially marrieds by religious group, I divide up the analysis by religious affiliation and estimate risk factors for divorce by respondents who identify as Evangelical Protestant (Table 4.3), Mainline Protestant (Table 4.4) and Catholic (Table 4.5).

Results

Table 4.1 contains descriptive statistics for the variables used in the sample. The average age at first marriage is 25.2, and the average age at the time of the interview is 35.1. Twenty percent of the respondents lived in the South when interviewed. Sixty-nine percent of the sample reported their parent's was intact at the time they were fourteen, sixty-one percent reported cohabiting prior to their first marriage and twenty-six percent

reported that either they or their partner had children before their first marriage. On measures of educational attainment, thirty-five percent have at least a four-year college degree, twenty-nine percent have some college education, twenty-five percent had completed a high school degree, and ten percent had less than a high school degree. Interracial relationships comprise 14.5% of all first marriages in the sample.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics of Sample, First Marriages

Variable	Mean	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Age at First Marriage	25.228	0.188	15	45
Age at Interview	35.130	0.231	15	45
Southern Residence	0.201	0.031	0	1
Parent's Marriage Intact at Age 14	0.687	0.015	0	1
Premarital Cohabitation	0.607	0.016	0	1
Premarital Birth	0.262	0.013	0	1
<i>Educational Attainment</i>				
Less than High School Degree	0.102	0.010	0	1
High School Degree	0.254	0.015	0	1
Some College Education	0.294	0.015	0	1
College Degree	0.350	0.022	0	1
<i>Religious Salience</i>				
Religion is Very Important	0.472	0.017	0	1
Religion is Somewhat Important	0.276	0.010	0	1
Religion is Not Important	0.252	0.015	0	1
Religious Service Attendance (Days per year)	26.327	1.107	0	104
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>				
Evangelical Protestant	0.240	0.014	0	1
Mainline Protestant	0.171	0.010	0	1
Black Protestant	0.075	0.009	0	1
Catholic	0.240	0.016	0	1
Other Religion	0.095	0.015	0	1
No Religious Affiliation	0.180	0.011	0	1
Interracial First Marriage	0.145	0.012	0	1

Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2011-2013. All values weighted

A little less than half of the sample say that religion is very important to their lives, with twenty-seven percent saying it is somewhat important and twenty-five percent saying it is not important. Respondents' average religious service attendance is a little over twenty-six days per year. Twenty-four percent identify as Evangelical Protestant, seventeen percent as Mainline Protestant, seven and a half percent as Black Protestant, twenty-four percent as Catholic, nine and a half percent as Other religion, and eighteen percent say that they have no religious affiliation.

Table 4.2 depicts Cox Proportional Hazard Models predicting divorce within the first ten year of marriage for all marriages in the data set, including a term interaction religious service attendance with interracial first marriage. Several of the respondent background covariates are statistically significant. An older age at the time of marriage is associated with a lower risk of divorce, while a higher age at the time of the NSFG interview is associated with higher risk of divorce. Respondents whose parents' marriage was intact when they were 14 were less likely to have experienced a divorce, while those who had a child with their partner prior to marrying were more likely to have divorced. Premarital cohabitation with their eventual spouse did not predict risk of divorce.

Neither educational attainment level nor religious salience predicted risk of divorce. More frequent religious service attendance is associated with a significantly lower likelihood of the respondent's first marriage ending. Meanwhile, the only variation in religious affiliation is found when comparing Black Protestants to the non-affiliated, with Black Protestants more likely to have experienced a divorce in their first marriage. Respondents who reported being in an interracial first marriage were also more likely to have had it end in divorce.

Table 4.2

Cox Proportional Hazard Models Predicting Divorce in First 10 Years of Marriage

Variable	Beta	P	SE	Exp(β)
Age at First Marriage	-0.175	***	0.016	0.839
Age at Interview	0.040	***	0.009	1.041
Southern Residence	-0.101		0.151	0.904
Parent's Marriage Intact at Age 14	-0.427	**	0.132	0.652
Premarital Cohabitation	0.044		0.101	1.045
Premarital Birth	0.463	**	0.161	1.589
<i>Educational Attainment^a</i>				
Less than High School Degree	-0.072		0.239	0.930
High School Degree	0.005		0.192	1.005
Some College Education	0.310		0.173	1.363
<i>Religious Salience^b</i>				
Religion is Important	0.004		0.251	1.004
Religion is Somewhat Important	-0.160		0.293	0.852
Religious Service Attendance	-0.006	***	0.002	0.994
<i>Religious Affiliation^c</i>				
Evangelical Protestant	0.284		0.303	1.329
Mainline Protestant	0.195		0.338	1.215
Black Protestant	0.806	*	0.333	2.239
Catholic	-0.015		0.302	0.985
Other Religion	0.096		0.337	1.101
Interracial Marriage	0.361	*	0.216	1.435
Attendance*Interracial Marriage	0.006	*	0.003	1.000
N	3077			

Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2011-2013. All values weighted

All values weighted, ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10

^a "College Degree" is the contrast category

^b "Religion is not Important" is the contrast category

^c "No Religious Affiliation" is the contrast category

The attendance*interracial interaction term is significant, suggesting that there is a different relationship between religious service attendance and divorce risk when comparing interracial and same-race marriages. The independent effect of religious service attendance for same-race couples ($\beta = -.006$) differs dramatically from the effect of religious service attendance for interracial couples ($-.006 + .006 = 0$). In other words, there is no significant relationship between religious service attendance and divorce risk for interracial marriages, contrary to the relationship found for same-race marriages.

Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 estimate risk factors for divorce by the respondent's religious affiliation, breaking down the analysis by Evangelical Protestants, Mainline Protestants and Catholics, respectively. These three religious affiliations represent the largest traditions in the sample, except for the non-affiliated, and are therefore well suited for further exploration into the possible divergent effects of religion on same-race and interracial marriages. Each of these tables present three models: first includes all first marriages, the second includes same-race marriages, and the third interracial marriages.

In many respects Evangelical Protestants appear similar to the full sample divorce risk factors, with age at first marriage, age at the time of the interview and intact parents's marriage having significant relationships with the likelihood of divorce (Table 4.3). Evangelicals with some college education were more likely to have their first marriage end in divorce compared to those with a college degree, correlated with a 28% increased risk. Religious salience is not associated with greater or lower risk of divorce, while religious service attendance significantly predicts lower likelihood of divorce (Model 4.3.1).

Table 4.3

Cox Proportional Hazard Models Predicting Divorce in First 10 Years of Marriage, Evangelical Protestants

Variable	4.3.1 All Marriages				4.3.2 Same-Race Marriages				4.3.3 Interracial Marriages			
	Beta	P	SE	Exp(β)	Beta	P	SE	Exp(β)	Beta	P	SE	Exp(β)
Age at First Marriage	-0.173	***	0.027	0.841	-0.174	***	0.030	0.840	-0.109	*	0.048	0.897
Age at Interview	0.053	**	0.018	1.055	0.056	**	0.019	1.058	-0.020		0.037	0.980
Southern Residence	-0.096		0.341	0.908	-0.147		0.356	0.863	0.154		1.142	1.167
Parent's Marriage Intact at Age 14	-0.617	**	0.216	0.540	-0.597	**	0.219	0.550	-1.040	*	0.493	0.353
Premarital Cohabitation	0.391		0.236	1.478	0.461	†	0.243	1.586	-0.297		0.415	0.743
Premarital Birth	0.379		0.272	1.461	0.328		0.285	1.389	1.146	*	0.493	3.146
<i>Educational Attainment^a</i>												
Less than High School Degree	0.531		0.437	1.701	0.580		0.474	1.785	-0.796		1.051	0.451
High School Degree	-0.004		0.328	0.996	0.029		0.353	1.029	-0.207		0.459	0.813
Some College Education	0.640	*	0.286	1.897	0.682	*	0.310	1.978	0.209		0.513	1.232
<i>Religious Salience^b</i>												
Religion is Important	0.491		0.504	1.635	0.692		0.551	1.998	-1.018		1.442	0.361
Religion is Somewhat Important	0.207		0.520	1.230	0.467		0.597	1.595	-1.560		1.517	0.210
Religious Service Attendance	-0.006	*	0.003	0.994	-0.004	**	0.001	0.901	-0.028	**	0.008	0.973
Interracial	-0.092		0.250	0.912								
N	742				630				112			

Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2011-2013. All values weighted

All values weighted, ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10

^a "College Degree" is the contrast category

^b "Religion is not Important" is the contrast category

Table 4.4

Cox Proportional Hazard Models Predicting Divorce in First 10 Years of Marriage, Mainline Protestants

Variable	4.4.1 All Marriages				4.4.2 Same-Race Marriages				4.4.3 Interracial Marriages			
	Beta	P	SE	Exp(β)	Beta	P	SE	Exp(β)	Beta	P	SE	Exp(β)
Age at First Marriage	-0.199	***	0.027	0.820	-0.257	***	0.063	0.773	-0.120		0.087	0.887
Age at Interview	0.021		0.018	1.022	0.049	*	0.019	1.050	-0.047		0.044	0.954
Southern Residence	-0.155		0.341	0.856	-0.190		0.365	0.827	0.438		0.782	1.550
Parent's Marriage Intact at Age 14	-0.593	*	0.216	0.553	-0.369		0.286	0.691	-1.270	*	0.502	0.281
Premarital Cohabitation	-0.399		0.236	0.671	-0.205		0.350	0.815	-0.588		0.635	0.556
Premarital Birth	0.208		0.272	1.232	0.217		0.524	1.243	0.759		0.698	2.137
<i>Educational Attainment^a</i>												
Less than High School Degree	-0.854		0.437	0.426	-1.527	†	0.816	0.217	2.255	*	0.920	9.538
High School Degree	-0.052		0.328	0.950	-0.015		0.525	0.985	-0.812		0.782	0.444
Some College Education	0.257		0.286	1.293	0.116		0.626	1.123	-0.585		0.601	0.557
<i>Religious Saliency^b</i>												
Religion is Important	0.096		0.504	1.100	0.219		0.599	1.245	0.028		1.790	1.029
Religion is Somewhat Important	-0.010		0.520	0.990	0.060		0.540	1.062	0.411		1.606	1.508
Religious Service Attendance	-0.013	†	0.003	0.988	-0.016		0.010	0.984	-0.007		0.011	0.993
Interracial	0.371	*	0.124	1.450								
N	465				388				77			

Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2011-2013. All values weighted

All values weighted, ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10

^a "College Degree" is the contrast category

^b "Religion is not Important" is the contrast category

Table 4.5

Cox Proportional Hazard Models Predicting Divorce in First 10 Years of Marriage, Catholics

Variable	4.5.1 All Marriages				4.5.2 Same-Race Marriages				4.5.3 Interracial Marriages			
	Beta	P	SE	Exp(β)	Beta	P	SE	Exp(β)	Beta	P	SE	Exp(β)
Age at First Marriage	-0.182	***	0.049	0.833	-0.197	***	0.051	0.821	-0.189	*	0.076	0.828
Age at Interview	0.059	**	0.018	1.060	0.061	**	0.022	1.063	0.096	*	0.047	1.101
Southern Residence	0.048		0.313	1.049	0.131		0.362	1.139	-1.223		0.778	0.294
Parent's Marriage Intact at Age 14	-0.592	*	0.258	0.553	-0.815	**	0.244	0.443	0.046		0.680	1.047
Premarital Cohabitation	0.260		0.224	1.296	0.282		0.245	1.326	0.050		0.401	1.051
Premarital Birth	0.732	**	0.262	2.080	0.640	*	0.324	1.896	1.368	*	0.628	3.927
<i>Educational Attainment^a</i>												
Less than High School Degree	-0.212		0.420	0.809	-0.291		0.407	0.747	1.735		1.377	5.666
High School Degree	-0.056		0.474	0.946	-0.241		0.425	0.786	-0.138		1.013	0.871
Some College Education	0.153		0.334	1.165	0.110		0.347	1.117	-0.018		0.895	0.982
<i>Religious Salience^b</i>												
Religion is Important	-0.063		0.431	0.939	-0.449		0.556	0.638	1.310		0.894	3.707
Religion is Somewhat Important	-0.330		0.478	0.719	-0.293		0.548	0.746	-1.186		1.124	0.305
Religious Service Attendance	-0.003		0.005	0.997	0.002		0.005	1.002	-0.030		0.021	0.971
Interracial	0.972	*	0.373	2.644								
N	732				640				92			

Source: National Survey of Family Growth, 2011-2013. All values weighted

All values weighted, ***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, †p<.10

^a "College Degree" is the contrast category^b "Religion is not Important" is the contrast category

Notably, Evangelicals whose first marriage was interracial were no more likely to have that marriage end in divorce compared to same-race first marriages, bucking the trend in the full sample. Similarly, Evangelical Protestants depart from the full sample in the ways that religious service attendance is associated with lower risk of divorce for both same-race and interracial marriages, rather than just same-race marriages.

Mainline Protestants (Table 4.4) follow the full sample trend with interracial marriages being more likely to end in divorce than same-race ones (Model 4.4.1) and with religious service attendance not being associated with lower risk of divorce for interracial marriages (Model 4.4.3). However, religious service attendance was not significantly associated with lower risk of divorce for the full Mainline Protestant model or the same-race Mainline Protestant model either. Similarly, interracial marriages from the Catholic sample were more likely to end than same-race marriages (Model 4.5.1), while religious service attendance provided no advantage against the risk of divorce for marriages regardless of the racial makeup of the relationship.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1 and 2 find support in my analyses, as Table 4.2 shows differing effects of religious service attendance for same-race and interracially married individuals. While religious service attendance is negatively associated with risk of divorce for same-race married couples, no such effect exists in the interracially married sample. Hypothesis 3 is not supported by the results, as there is no variation in risk of divorce by religious affiliation among the interracial marriages in the sample.

I find mixed support for my hypotheses concerning the ways that religion affects the risk of divorce for same-race versus interracially married individuals within religious

traditions. Hypothesis 4 is not supported by the results of my analyses; Evangelical marrieds follow the pattern of all married couples by having religious service attendance be associated with lower risk of divorce for same-race married individuals, but the same relationship exists for interracially married Evangelicals.

However, hypotheses 5 and 6 concerning Mainline Protestants and Catholics were not supported. Neither group had significant relationships between religious service attendance and risk of divorce, and this non-significant relationship was the same for same-race and interracially coupled individuals.

The divergent effect of religious service attendance is the most notable difference in the models comparing risk factors for same-race and interracial marriage dissolution. While greater frequency of religious service attendance is associated with lower risk of divorce in the first ten years for the entire sample, and the same-race marriages, no such effect exists for the interracially married people in the sample. Religious service attendance does not appear to have the same protective influence against marital dissolution for interracial couples as it does for same-race couples. This means that the well-established effects of religious service attendance contra divorce is only beneficial to same-race couples; this fills a gap in the literature, where the potential unique relationships of religious service attendance with interracially paired marriages has been heretofore unexplored. Whatever the benefits of religious service attendance to marital stability are, they apparently do not extend towards interracial couples.

Also notable is the relative non-effect of religious affiliation on the risk of divorce, particularly for non-Evangelical, interracially married couples. This is consistent with previous research that suggests that variation in religious identification does not

explain risk of divorce net of other factors, and the results here provide evidence that the same relationship exists for interracially married individuals.

This is particularly surprising in light on the findings in chapter 2 that indicate that interracially coupled individuals attend church just as often as same-race coupled individuals. It was hypothesized that, because most American religious congregations are racially homogeneous, it is unlikely that an interracially married couple would find a religious institution where they are both racially represented in the congregational makeup. This was supported by research that shows that religious service attendance is negatively associated with the likelihood of dating interracially. If the racial structure of American congregations are a possible barrier to full participation by interracially coupled people, it was not manifested in the levels of religious participation. However, it may be that these structures still provide hurdles to fully accessing the social capital that may protect against marital dissolution for same-race couples.

One of the other unexpected outcomes of these analyses is that Evangelical Protestants do not see the same relationship between interracial marriage and higher risk of divorce. Contrary to expectations given the history of Evangelicalism and interracial marriage, Evangelical respondents were equally likely to divorce whether they were in a same-race or interracial relationship. Further, the fact that interracial marriages of Evangelical Protestants enjoyed the same ‘protective’ effect of religious service attendance as same-race marriages also confounds expectations. While the data cannot speak to the reasons why these relationships exist, it is possible that the greater emphasis on ‘color-blind’ race ideology delineated in chapter 2 coupled with the emphasis on

strong families within Evangelical subcultures have yielded some benefits that do not discriminate between marriages of different racial makeups.

The NSFG data do have some limitations that restrict interpretation of these results. First, the measure of religious affiliation is not as precise as other measures used in the sociology of religion. While the relative lack of variation in divorce risk by religious affiliation does fit with what previous literature would predict, greater precision with this measure would provide more weight the model's validity. However, the most significant limitation of the finding is related to time-dependent variables collected by the NSFG. The data can tell the time at which the respondent's first marriage began, and the time at which it ended (if it did), but the respondent's socio-demographic and religious profile is largely composed of information about them *at the time of the interview*. Thus, I do not know whether the individual identified with their particular religious tradition at the time they were married or if they had switched at any point in their marital history. This same issue exists for the measures of religious salience and religious service attendance; whether they were attending at the same rate prior to divorce compared to the time of the survey is unknown. Further, the lack of variables, longitudinal or cross-sectional in nature, regarding the religiosity of the respondent's spouse is less than ideal, particularly given the literature on the importance of the religious homogamy on marital stability.

While these are certainly limitations, they are not unusual to the literature on religion and divorce. (Amato, 2010) Longitudinal data that allows for comparison of levels of religiosity at different points in time (see Vaaler et al., 2009), and for both marriage partners, is beginning to become more common and easily accessible. However,

these data sets do not have data suitable for projects concerning the racial pairing of marriages, making them unsuitable for answering the research questions of this paper. Further, the findings are consistent with previous studies that have examined the effect of church attendance on marital dissolution risk. What this limitation should ultimately underscore is the necessity of future data collection to include longitudinal measures of religiosity in addition to greater in-depth information about the respondent's relationship and marital histories; in the interim, conservative interpretation of the data is an appropriate and justifiable approach.

Conclusion

The stability of same-race and interracial marriages are similarly affected by religious affiliation, inasmuch as respondents of all religious traditions are equally likely to divorce net of other factors. The more significant gap appears in the effect of religious service attendance, which has been established in the literature as a protective factor against the risk of divorce. Higher service attendance is associated with the social support found in congregations, the social capital of high religiosity and marital satisfaction. While the association between religious service attendance and lower risk of divorce was found for same-race marrieds, no relationship exists for interracial marrieds. The protective benefits of religious participation do not extend to those in interracial marriage, and their risk of divorce is the same no matter what frequency they report attending services. This is possibly due to the racial structure of American religion, which is highly homogeneous and segregated. While this may be a barrier to participation at all, as suggested in Chapter 2, it appears that it may have deleterious effects for interracially marrieds who do attend. Rather than benefiting from their participation, these results

suggest that the benefits are restricted to those in same-race marriages. Whatever factors may ameliorate the elevated risk of divorce in interracial married couples, religiosity does not appear to be among them.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to explore the various ways in which religion intersected with interracial marriage in its contemporary forms. Because religion's place in the history of interracial marriage is inescapable, the present gap in our knowledge of how religion relates to the current state of interracial marriage is especially intriguing. Towards that end I have made use of the most current survey data to investigate questions heretofore unanswered in the meager literature on religion and interracial marriage. Is there still an effect of religion on attitudes towards interracial marriage? How might religion affect the likelihood of marrying interracially? And what kind of connections does religion have with the outcomes of those relationships? While history, and more modern survey research, would suggest a clear relationship between interracial marriage and religion, the outcomes emerging out of this research are more equivocal, defying assumptions and calling for more nuanced considerations in the future.

Chapter One examined data from the thirty year period where the General Social Survey asked opinions regarding anti-miscegenation legislation reveal declining opposition to interracial marriage among white Americans; however, while this decline is consistent along all measures of religiosity, there remain striking gaps that reveal some of the enduring relationships between America's religious history and the history of racial intermarriage. For example, while white opposition to interracial marriage dropped considerably among Americans of all religious traditions (Chapter 1 Table 1), nearly a quarter of white American Evangelicals would still have supported laws banning black-

white intermarriage in 2002. This proportion in and of itself is striking, especially in comparison to Americans of other religious identities who supported for anti-miscegenation laws at rates lower than ten percent in 2002. Indeed, the raw proportion of white Evangelicals opposed to interracial marriage at that time is comparable only to whites with less than a high-school education (thirty-six percent), white southerners (twenty-two percent), white biblical literalists (twenty-five percent) and whites born before 1935.

Multivariate analyses spanning the period of 1972-2002 revealed that the relationship between religiosity and support for anti-miscegenation laws among white Americans is particularly associated with American Protestant fundamentalism. Evangelical Protestants were significantly more likely to support these laws than all other religious groups, until Biblical Literalism was controlled for. This measure of religiosity, closely associated with conservative fundamentalism, accounted for the variation in religious identity predicting support for these laws. This effect could be found even in the most recent data from 2002. Whether this relationship between Biblical Literalism and anti-miscegenation attitudes is particularly due towards a particular reading of the Bible or group identity is unclear, but the fact that this gap exists into the present day suggests lingering religious undertones towards opposition to interracial marriage that cannot be accounted for by things like region of residence or political identity.

I also assessed whether these religious effects remained constant between 1972-2002, and changing-parameter models indicate that the differences between Evangelicals and non-Evangelicals, as well as the differences between Biblical Literalists and non-Literalists, have not significantly changed over time. In other words, while all groups

overall have become more accepting of interracial marriage, the gap between these groups is essentially the same. These results speak toward the persistent religious roots of opposition to interracial marriage in a time where public opinion of the issue has otherwise shifted dramatically towards approval- roots that lie in America's conservative Protestant traditions.

Moving beyond attitudinal measures, I made use of data from the 2011-2013 wave of the National Survey of Family Growth to explore the religiosity of those survey respondents who identified themselves as being in interracial relationship. Previous literature had not examined the religious lives of these individuals. While white conservative Protestants remain noticeably more opposed to interracial marriage compared to people of other religious and non-religious identities, these differences did not translate into significantly different levels of religiosity among same-race and interracially coupled individuals. The analyses of chapter 2 revealed few significant differences in religiosity among those respondents who were in same-race or interracial relationships at the time they were interviewed. Respondents identifying as Catholic or Other religion were less likely than all other religious traditions to say they were in an interracial relationship; however, there were no differences in the frequency of religious service attendance or levels of religious salience.

Even when examining respondents by the religious affiliation there were no significant differences in the religiosity of same-race or interracially coupled respondents- e.g., interracially-married Evangelicals and same-race married Evangelicals did not attend church at different levels, nor did they claim religion to be more or less important in their lives. While these findings cannot be strictly interpreted to show the

effect of religion on the likelihood that an individual *will* marry or cohabit interracially, it does point towards a need for more research in that direction. In the absence of better data that could more directly address the research question, we are left with findings that show no differences in religiosity by the racial pairing of an individual's marriage or cohabiting relationship. Altogether these findings suggest that, contrary to expectations derived from the findings in Chapter 1, religion does not seem to be a major deciding factor in the likelihood of coupling interracially.

I further examined the relationship between religion and interracial marriage by using the NSFG data on marital history to show how religion might affect the survival rates of same-race and interracial marriages differently. The NSFG included data on respondent's first marriage, as well as the racial background of the respondent's first spouse; I therefore examined the features of the marriage and the respondent that predicted the likelihood of that first marriage ending within ten years of its inception through survival analysis. While respondents who reported attending religious services more frequently were less likely to have had their first marriage end in divorce, this was only true for respondents in same-race first marriages. Respondents in interracial first marriages did not show the same effect of religious service attendance on marital stability.

In theme with previous findings of the project, breaking down the sample into major religious traditions yielded unexpected findings. Evangelical respondents, contrary to larger trends, did not show significantly different likelihoods of having their first marriage end in divorce if it was interracial. Indeed, the relationship between religious service attendance was the same for same-race and interracially married Evangelicals,

something that could not be said for Mainline Protestants or Catholics. Despite having good reason to suppose that interracial marriage would be rarer and more unstable among Evangelicals, I found that they no less rare and notably more stable.

The shortcomings of the NSFG data, notable in the analyses of Chapter 2, are even more pronounced in Chapter 3. The strictest interpretation of the data does not allow me to say that these religious behaviors and identities affect the likelihood of divorce, but are rather descriptive of the respondent at the time of the interview. Additionally, the lack of data regarding the other half of these marriages and cohabiting relationships is unfortunate. The fullest exploration of the research questions animating this project would necessitate longitudinal data and matched-pair information about couples. That these data do not exist is an unhappy reality, but the analyses presented here are consistent with relationships that are theoretically surprising and give credence to the necessity of continued efforts to collect data appropriate for this agenda.

The final picture of religion and interracial marriage in the contemporary United States is decidedly mixed. There remains persistent opposition to the very idea of racial intermarriage, which appears to have origins in long-standing religious prejudices. This fits with a large literature detailing the ways that religious institutions, beliefs and behaviors have anchored the social boundaries that make race such an intimidating hurdle to the interests of a thriving American society. Yet, despite the religious origins of these prejudices, the overall acceptance of interracial marriage as a conventional social reality appears to moderate the effects we might expect it to have on people marrying and cohabiting interracially. Indeed, there is some reason to think that Evangelicalism provides an unexpected context in which these marriages can find stability. These

findings suit the literature that suggests religion can be a social force that helps individuals transcend racial and ethnic boundaries. Therefore, it is perhaps fitting that the religion-interracial marriage outcomes of this project reflect the varied theoretical bases found in the religion-race literature.

The importance of interracial marriage as a measure of racial progress remains salient. A society only decades removed from the changes brought on by the civil rights movement can look towards rising rates of interracial marriage as an optimistic sign, and as such relationships become more commonplace the cultural prejudices of past generations may find fewer footholds among the new. The success of these relationships is therefore of particular import in ensuring that the progress of the past few decades continues into the future. And while the instability of these relationships highlight the societal strains that stem from persistent racial tensions, this research does provide some hope that the religious institutions and contexts of the United States may provide resources to support these marriages in an otherwise unfriendly milieu. That such support may exist among Evangelical Protestant contexts is encouraging; that it doesn't exist in other Christian contexts shows the space for such religious bodies to contribute to the forward movement of race relations in tangible and substantial ways.

Also wrapped up in these marriages is the future of America's racial identity. Multi-racial Americans are gaining greater shares of the American population, a trend that looks to continue as interracial relationships become more common. Family and child-rearing are aspects of social life that are heavily interweaved with the norms of religion, and as this growing segment of the population grows in size and reaches maturity in age the ability of America's religions to accommodate these identities may

prove important to their integration into American society. Similarly, the degree to which such individuals find their identities and family backgrounds welcomed by America's religious groups may have significant implications for the religious landscape of the 21st century, as the changing fortunes of these religious traditions will depend heavily upon the practices and identities of emerging generations. The future of American religion and interracialism cannot be wholly separated.

Future research on religion and interracial marriage would depend on variety of conditions. As I have highlighted several times, there is a lack of data appropriate for exploring questions related to the intersections of these two topics. This could be remedied by better surveys, which would be costly and necessitate data collection on a considerable scale. Qualitative studies would complement survey research on the topic very well, and I would venture to say that the research questions of this project oblige detailed sociological research at the level of personal interaction. These types of studies are costly in their own way as well, but the kind of detail that could be gleaned from in-depth interviews with interracially married couples regarding the ways that religion intersected their relationship history and their experiences in America's religious landscape would be invaluable in helping assess the validity and scope of the research presented here.

The story of religion and race in the United States is complex, and findings of this project are not unique in light of this reality. Religion does have the capacity to provide the undergirding for the boundaries that exist between racial and ethnic groups, and in particular the ideologies of dominant groups that would seek to make those boundaries strict. Yet religion has also offered social contexts and structures that weaken those

boundaries, creating opportunity for the type of social integration that lies at the heart of most ideals of race and ethnic relations. The dichotomy that exists in this history can certainly be seen in the findings of this project, and any social changes occurring in the future will only make the topic more relevant as a barometer for race and religion research.

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