



# Religious affiliation and hiring discrimination in New England: A field experiment

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## Abstract

This article describes a field experiment in which we sent fictitious resumes to advertised job openings in New England, in the Northeast region of the United States. We randomly altered the resumes to indicate affiliation in one of seven religious groups or a control group. Resumes that mentioned any religious affiliation received about one-quarter fewer phone calls than did the control group but there were no significant difference in e-mails received. Muslim applicants received one-third fewer responses from employers, either as phone calls or e-mails, than did the control group. There was also evidence of discrimination against atheists, Catholics and pagans. These findings are consistent with theoretical models of secularization and cultural distaste theory.

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## 1. Introduction

Substantial socioeconomic inequalities exist among religious groups in the United States (Davidson, 2008; Smith & Faris, 2005). Various explanations have been put forth for this inequality, but somewhat overlooked has been the impact of religious discrimination—in education, the workplace, and other institutional contexts. Certainly, discrimination based on religion has received far less scholarly attention than discrimination along other dimensions such as gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation.

This study explores religious discrimination in the workplace. It reports the results of a large-scale field experiment conducted in New England, in the Northeast region of the United States, that examines discrimination in the “first contact” stage of the hiring process. In this study, we test how employers’ responses to job applications vary by information in the application that indicates participation in one of eight separate groups. Seven groups are defined by religious beliefs (or lack thereof)—atheism, Catholicism, evangelical Christianity, Judaism, Islam, paganism, and a fictitious religious group. The eighth is a control group, in which no mention of religion is made.

### 1.1. Religious stratification in the United States

Religion is a prominent dimension of social stratification in the United States. Religious groups vary widely in

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income, wealth, education and other measures of socioeconomic status (SES) (Burstein, 2007; Davidson, 2008; Keister, 2008; McFarland, Wright, & Weakliem, 2011; Smith & Faris, 2005). Research in this area has found SES differences between religious traditions and denominations as well as nearly every other aspect of religion, including congregations (Reimer, 2007), subcongregations (Reimer, 2007), theology (Darnell & Sherkat, 1997), worship style (Edwards, 2009), church practice (McCloud, 2007), and church attendance (Regnerus, 2003).

Some explanations for the link between religion and SES point to the effect of religion on social and economic standing. The best-known example of this approach is Weber's study of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) which maps the economic implications of Calvinist theology. According to Weber, Calvinism provided the economic capital and underlying values for the development of capitalism, and it motivated adherents to seek greater income and wealth.

Scholars have identified other mechanisms through which religion influences socioeconomic status. These mechanisms include educational aspirations (Stryker, 1981), social values (Lenski, 1961), sheltered enclaves (Sherkat & Ellison, 1999), internal locus of control (Muller & Ellison, 2001), family formation (Keister, 2008), gender roles (Sherkat, 2000), social capital (Muller & Ellison, 2001), and human capital (Lehrer, 2004).

In contrast, other studies identify an effect of socioeconomic status on religion (Niebuhr, 1929; Park & Reimer, 2002), and still other studies link the two via spurious correlation, such as by race and community composition (see Reimer, 2007; Smith & Faris, 2005).

### 1.2. *Religious discrimination in the workplace*

In this article, we call attention to another means through which religion can alter socioeconomic status—by eliciting discrimination; in particular, we examine religious discrimination in the job application process.

From 1992 to 2010, the number of religious-based discrimination complaints filed by employees with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission grew from 1388 to 3790 (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2011). In addition, there is a widely held perception that the workplace is increasingly inhospitable to religious diversity, and that some religious groups are targeted with discriminatory treatment or outright hostility at work. In particular, media accounts of religious discrimination at work against Muslims have

increased significantly since 9/11 (Greenhouse, 2010; Pledger, 2011; Walzer, 2010).

Academic studies have given relatively little attention to the role of discrimination in creating socioeconomic inequality among religious groups. This inattention is all the more striking when compared to the plethora of discrimination studies based on other characteristics, such as race and ethnicity (e.g., Pager & Shepherd, 2008), gender (e.g., Correll, Benard, & Paik, 2007), age (e.g., Bendick, Brown, & Wall, 1999), and sexuality (e.g., Bailey, Wallace, & Wright, 2013; Tilcsik, 2011).

Several previous studies have used field experiments to examine religious discrimination in hiring decisions. Internationally, Drydakis (2010) studied employment-based religious discrimination in Athens, Greece. He applied for jobs using fictional resumes that randomly assigned affiliation to Greece's majority religion (Greek Orthodox) or one of its three largest minority religions (Pentecostal, evangelical, and Jehovah's witnesses). He found that the religious minorities were offered fewer interviews, especially to lower-prestige jobs. Jehovah's Witnesses, in particular, faced the most discrimination. In another study, Banerjee, Bertrand, Datta, and Mullainathan (2009) investigated hiring discrimination by caste and religion for jobs in the software industry in India. They found some evidence of discrimination by caste, but no evidence that employers discriminated against the minority Muslim applicants.

In the United States, Jolson (1974) created three resumes that were identical in all regards except that one resume described a job applicant who was a white Protestant, the second a black Protestant, and the third a white Jew. These resumes were sent to employers who advertised job openings and employer responses were used to measure discrimination. Jolson found evidence for racial, but not religious, discrimination. For sales positions, black applicants received only a quarter as many positive responses as did white applicants. More recently, King and Ahmad (2010) conducted an in-person audit in which confederates applied for retail jobs. For one manipulation, sometimes the confederates wore traditional Muslim attire and sometimes they did not. In a second manipulation, they sometimes acted "warmly" and other times they did not (the latter being viewed as "stereotype-consistent"). The two manipulations produced no significant difference in job offers, but there was an interaction effect between them. Employers gave shorter, more negative interactions when the confederate was dressed in Muslim attire and was not acting warmly.

This article builds upon this previous work by expanding both the empirical and theoretical examination of religious discrimination in the workplace.

### 1.3. Religion in New England

We situate our study in New England, a region in the Northeast United States known for political and social liberalism and distinctive religious characteristics. New Englanders express the lowest levels of religiosity in the country on several indicators: rates of weekly church attendance (28.4%, versus 45.7% in the South and 39.2% in the U.S. as a whole), percentage who say religion is very important in their lives (40.9%, versus 65.8% in the South and 56.2% in the U.S.), percent who are absolutely certain in their belief in God (58.1%, versus 78.3% in the South and 71.3% in the U.S.), and belief that the Bible is the literal word of God (18.0%, versus 42.5% in the South and 32.5% in the U.S.). Also, the percentage of New Englanders who are unaffiliated with a church—including atheists and agnostics—is comparatively high (20.9% versus 13.1% in the South and 16.2% in the U.S.) (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2008a).

New Englanders are also distinctive in their religious affiliation. Catholics are heavily represented compared to the rest of the country (42.0% versus 17.5% in the South and 24.3% in the U.S.), Protestants are under-represented (32.7% versus 65.1% in the South and 54.1% in the U.S.) and among these the socially conservative evangelical Protestants are also under-represented (11.0%, versus 36.0% in the South and 25.9% in the U.S.). Also, while less than 3% of New England citizens are Jewish, Jews constitute a larger share of the population than the nation as a whole and they are influential in the civic, political, and economic spheres of New England.

The notoriously taciturn New Englanders are not typically prone to flamboyant expressions of religious fervor. For example, when pressed to reveal his own religious preferences during the 2004 presidential campaign, former Vermont governor Howard Dean awkwardly confided: “I’m a New Englander, so I’m not used to wearing religion on my sleeve and being open about it” (Walsh, 2004). Thus, on the whole New Englanders are not as passionate in the practice of their religion as people in other regions and are more tolerant of religious differences. Thus, New England provides a stiff test of our search for religious discrimination in hiring.

### 1.4. Theoretical models

Given the relative paucity of studies on this topic, there are no well-established theoretical explanations specifically for religious discrimination. As such, we derive our theoretical expectations from two general

theories of religion (secularization and religious stratification) and two of discrimination (intergroup contact and cultural distaste). The first theory, secularization theory, holds that Americans make religious-based value judgments, and there is a general societal trend toward the privatization of religion (e.g., Luckmann, 1967). From this privatization, social norms have developed that religious adherence and expression should be restricted to its “proper” sphere, i.e., that of private life; conversely, religion should be kept out of public spheres such as politics, law, and the workplace (Carter, 1994). Expressions of religious faith in the public arena can be viewed as deviant and evoke a negative reaction. This may occur when employees overtly express religious beliefs in the workplace, especially prospective employees, whose self-presentations are under close scrutiny.

The relatively low levels of religiosity found in New England might mediate the effects of secularization in one of two ways. On the one hand, New Englanders might increase discrimination for public expressions of religion that run counter to the secular ethos of this region. On the other hand, perhaps this secular ethos breeds tolerance, even indifference, toward those with strong religious beliefs. In this case, the lack of widespread strong religious beliefs would attenuate discrimination against religious groups that are not in the majority, and while discrimination may still exist, it would not be as strong as it would be in other regions of the country. The potential for regional effects in religious discrimination point to the need to test for it in different geographic areas, an idea we develop further in the discussion section.

**Hypothesis 1.** Based on secularization theory, job applicants who mention any religious affiliation will receive more discrimination from employers than those who do not.

A second theoretical model is based in Davidson and Pyle’s model of religious stratification (Davidson, 2008; see also Pyle & Davidson, 2003). They identify the conditions in which religious stratification arises. It occurs when religious groups view themselves as better than others (i.e., ethnocentrism), compete over scarce resources (competition), and have stronger organizational bases (differential power). Religious groups with more power can pass laws, develop ideologies, and create customs that preserve their social advantage.

In their study of Colonial America, Pyle and Davidson (2003; Davidson, 2008) found that religions in the upper

strata of society, specifically Anglicans, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians, maintained their social position by supporting same-faith political candidates, hiring same-faith teachers and educational administrators, and giving preference to same-faith students. In addition, they showed bias in the job market: they “hired people who shared their religious affiliation” (Davidson, 2008, p. 376).<sup>1</sup>

Religious stratification theory essentially focuses on the social standing of religious groups. Among the groups that we study, Jews have both income and education levels substantially above the average general population. Atheists tend to be above average on both. Catholics and Muslims are near-average, and evangelical Christians and pagans are significantly below average<sup>2</sup> (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2008a).

**Hypothesis 2a.** Based on religious stratification theory, job applicants who identify as evangelicals and pagans should receive the most hiring discrimination, followed by Muslims and Catholics, followed by atheists, and Jews should receive the least discrimination of all.

A third theoretical perspective, taken from the racial and ethnic discrimination literature, is Allport’s (1954) intergroup contact theory, which holds that prejudice is rooted in stereotypes based on limited information about other groups. This theory holds that racial prejudice diminishes with positive interactions between groups, for such interactions break down misunderstandings and stereotypes between groups (Pettigrew, 1998). Positive interactions occur most frequently when people are of similar social status, share a common goal, and local authorities support positive intergroup relations. While we have no information about the employers’ actual contacts with members of other religions, we assume that, all else being equal, that their opportunities to do have such contact are positively related to the size of the religious group and that more frequent contact between religious groups provides more opportunities for positive interactions. Intergroup contact, in turn, is influenced by group size because there are often fewer opportunities to interact with members of smaller groups.

<sup>1</sup> Davidson and Pyle’s model arrives at similar conclusions as group threat theory (Blalock, 1967; Blumer, 1958) which holds that group prejudice occurs when majority groups feel superior, when they feel entitled to privileges and advantages, and believe that subordinate groups are seeking to challenge their prerogatives.

<sup>2</sup> The Pew Study reports income and education for all New Age religions, which include Pagans, Wicca, and other New Age groups.

As noted above, New England is the most heavily Catholic region of the country with this group constituting more than 40% of the population. Atheists and agnostics are also over-represented in New England with almost 17% of the population. Evangelical Protestants constitute about 11% of the population, but this is quite low compared to other regions of the country. Jews constitute only about 3% of the population in New England. Finally, Muslims and pagans are numerically small (less than 1%) and, of course, members of the fictitious group are 0%.

**Hypothesis 2b.** Based on contact theory, job applicants who identify as members of fictitious religious groups should receive the most discrimination, followed by pagans and Muslims, followed by Jews, followed by evangelical Christians, followed by atheists, and Catholics should receive the least discrimination of all.

A fourth theoretical perspective, also derived from the racial and ethnic discrimination literature, is cultural distaste theory. Cultural distaste theory argues that minority groups present challenges to the identities, cultural practices, and worldviews of majority groups, and majority groups are characterized as having rigid, parochial, or ethnocentric outlooks on life (Dixon & Rosenbaum, 2004; Espenshade & Hempstead, 1996; Vallas, Zimmerman, & Davis, 2009). A variant of this theory known as symbolic racism theory (Sears, 1988) identifies culturally determined attitudes of minority groups as subordinate and inferior. These negative views toward minorities develop historically, become culturally embedded, and are transmitted from generation to generation via socialization. They are relatively durable and not easily overcome by contact with minorities, and they can produce discriminatory behavior.

Cultural distaste theory is consistent with several theories in social psychology. First, group preferences theory contends that people come to prefer one group over another through various intrapsychic mechanisms (Pager, 2007). This may occur through at least two mechanisms: either aversive prejudice whereby persistent avoidance of interaction with certain racial groups leads to lack of understanding (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986) or statistical discrimination whereby economic actors use group-level information to fill in for difficult-to-evaluate or otherwise unknown characteristics of an individual (Arrow, 1972; Phelps, 1972). While various studies have sought to distinguish these two mechanisms (e.g., Ayers & Siegelman, 1995), they typically result in stereotypical thinking about a group.

Similarly, expectation states theory holds that status beliefs guide our daily interactions. These beliefs associate group membership with different levels of status, competence, and social skills, and people in groups are evaluated on the basis of the status beliefs associated with their group (Berger, Conner, & Fisek, 1974; Ridgeway, Backor, Li, Tinkler, & Erickson, 2009).

Across the U.S., public perceptions of Muslims are particularly negative as 40–50% of Americans associate the words “fanatical” and “violent” with the Muslim religion (Wuthnow, 2004), and Muslim men are associated with violence and Muslim women with being oppressed (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2007). These anti-Muslim ideas and actions have been labeled “Islamophobia” (Shyrock, 2010). The events of 9/11 produced a considerable backlash against Muslims in America (Peek, 2010), which generated increasingly negative media coverage of them (Cimino, 2005; Rowatt, Franklin, & Cotton, 2005). Muslims report concerns about profiling, intolerance, and long-term discrimination (Cainkar, 2002). Because of their proximity to New England, the events of 9/11 have special resonance for citizens in that region.

Other groups receive varying levels of social disapproval from Americans. A 2008 *USA Today/Gallup Poll* asked Americans how they viewed various religious groups and found that 47% of the respondents had a “somewhat” or “very” negative view of atheists, 39% had negative views of Muslims, 25% of evangelicals, 11% of Catholics, and 6% of Jews (Wright, 2010). Similarly, a 2007 survey by the Pew Research Center found that 57% of Americans had a “very” or “mostly” unfavorable opinion of atheists, 46% had unfavorable opinions of Muslims, 24% of evangelicals, 14% of Catholics, and 8% of Jews (Wright, 2010).

These national studies are instructive, but we would expect New Englanders to vary somewhat from national patterns. Because Catholics are the culturally dominant religion in New England, they will likely garner more favorable views in the public arena. Atheists and agnostics are also fairly prevalent so the animus against them might be tempered in New England. Also, Jews are over-represented in New England, have historically received public favor from the Northeast Protestant establishment, and have had a disproportionate impact on public life. While the pressure of anti-Semitism still exists (Terris, 2004), we might expect Jews to be more highly regarded in New England than elsewhere in the country.

**Hypothesis 2c.** Based on cultural distaste theory, job applicants who identify as Muslims should receive the

most discrimination, followed by atheists and pagans, followed by evangelical Christians, followed by Jews, and Catholics should receive the least discrimination of all.

## 2. Data and methods

We conducted our field experiment by submitting resumes to jobs advertised within 150 miles of Hartford, Connecticut. While this geographical range covered much of New England, it also included parts of eastern New York. We collected our data from July through October 2009, a time of high national and regional unemployment. In Connecticut, unemployment ranged from 8.5% in July to 9% in October—about one percentage point below the national average (Connecticut Department of Labor, 2011).

### 2.1. Experimental design

We submitted 6400 job applications to 1600 jobs advertised on a popular jobs-listing website. In response to each job posting, we sent four applications. Each application contained a resume from a different job applicant, and we randomly assigned each resume to one of seven experimental conditions—religious identification as atheist, Catholic, evangelical Christian, Jewish, pagan, Muslim, or a fictitious religion we called “Wallonian,”<sup>3</sup> and an eighth group that was a control group with no religious identification. We systematically randomized the combinations of experimental conditions via the resumes we sent to employers.

This type of field experiment, termed a correspondence test, has many strengths (Wallace et al., 2012). This method gives researchers complete control of how job applicants present themselves to employers (Pager, 2007). It implicitly controls for other job-relevant characteristics such as applicants’ race, education, age, and residence. It is relatively inexpensive to administer, and the prevalence of job search websites makes it straightforward to conduct. The low cost of this method allows for larger sample sizes which in turn permit more experimental conditions while still maintaining sufficient statistical power. This method also enables the

<sup>3</sup> We borrowed the name “Wallonian” from the work of Hartley and Mintz (1946) who used it as a fictitious ethnic identity in testing for ethnic prejudice. Using a fictitious religion allows us to test for anti-religious bias independent of the actual characteristics of a particular religion. Wallonia is actually a region in southern Belgium with no apparent religious connotation.

study of broader geographical areas since it does not require in-person interactions.

Correspondence tests also have limitations. Importantly, they can be used only to study those characteristics suitably identifiable in materials sent to employers. They do not provide the kind of rich description of social context or nuance in response that is possible in in-person audit studies. Also, they usually give no information about who actually responds to the correspondence. They are less well-suited for jobs at the very bottom or very top of the labor market for these types of positions often require personal contact to initiate (Pager, 2007).

Since this type of correspondence test examines the “first contact” stage of the hiring process, it does not gauge discrimination in the later stages of promotion, firing, or integration in workplace culture. Previous studies, however, suggest that substantial discrimination occurs in the first contact of the hiring process. At this point employers have relatively little information about job applicants, so they may be unduly influenced by general status characteristics such as race and gender (Pager, 2007).

An issue in correspondence tests regards the strength of the experimental manipulation. If the manipulation is too overt, it may compromise the realism of the experiment; if it is too subtle, it may not be noticed at all by employers. If anything, our manipulation of religious identity errs on the side of being too subtle, for it is embedded in the resume among other affiliations and experiences. Employers may not read resumes carefully; instead, they might just briefly scan resumes for information such as name and education and use these as heuristics in deciding how to respond (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004). To the extent that employers do not notice the experimental manipulation, our findings will actually underestimate the true magnitude of religious discrimination.

## 2.2. *Creating the resumes*

We created a series of resumes for fictional recent graduates of flagship state universities located in the region. The resumes signaled the applicant’s religious affiliation by listing involvement in a campus religious organization. Each resume listed participation in either the “Student \_\_\_\_\_ Alliance,” the “University \_\_\_\_\_ Association,” or the “University \_\_\_\_\_ Student Group,” and the blanks were filled in with the name of a religiously defined group, i.e., “atheist,” “Catholic,” “evangelical Christian,” “Jewish,” “pagan,” “Muslim,”

or “Wallonian.”<sup>4</sup> In the case of the control group, the blank was deleted, so the group was listed as the “Student Alliance,” “University Association,” or the “University Student Group.” This type of correspondence test can be used to communicate many different personal characteristics, such as family status, political identification, disability and veteran status, and previous studies have already used it to signal sexual identity (Bailey et al., 2013; Tilcsik, 2011).

Using resumes from recent graduates offers several advantages. Since recent graduates usually lack extensive work histories, they routinely list involvement in extracurricular activities and other volunteer experiences as part of their work qualifications (e.g., Leape & Vacca, 1995). Also, they apply for a wide range of jobs with relatively minimal qualifications. Since they offer employers their educational qualifications—rather than experience in a specific industry or occupation—the same resumes can be sent to many types of jobs. This would not be the case with older applicants who need to describe relevant post-education work history.

Because we sent four resumes to each employer at the same time, we could not make them identical. As such we created four resume templates with roughly equal qualifications, but with different specifics. The resumes described the fictional applicants as residing in four different Connecticut communities near Hartford with similar socioeconomic characteristics. The applicants had recently graduated from one of four flagship state universities located in New England. Each template described a job candidate with relatively strong academic credentials, including majors or minors in business-related fields. Two of the templates described a student who had graduated from college in 2008 and then worked for a year, and the other two graduated in 2009. Each applicant had a high GPA, of 3.7 or better, had made the Dean’s list, and had participated in various campus activities and organizations. Each had the type of employment history that is typical of college students, with intermittent summer or academic year jobs as bank teller, restaurant wait staff, or intern. We also varied the font, style, and graphical formatting among the resume templates in order to disguise any connection among them.

The differences among the resume templates would have no bearing upon the validity of our findings because we first systematically rotated the four names—two male

<sup>4</sup> In the case of the Wallonians, we used the label “Wallonian Religious Student Association” to make sure it was recognized as a religious identity.

(Michael Cichon and Joseph Merak) and two female (Ana Marie Morin and Sara Korvel)—among the four templates to create 16 separate identities (i.e., name-resume template combinations).<sup>5</sup> We then rotated each of the eight religious affiliations among the 16 identities to create 128 distinctive resumes. As such, each of the four resume templates had 32 variations, four possible names by eight possible religious affiliations. This procedure assured that religious identity was independent of the resume templates and names of applicants.

We sent four resumes to each employer, and we randomly selected which four of the eight religions to include in each foursome. In this way, we guaranteed that there is no systematic grouping of religions in the resumes that employers received, in case this would introduce bias.

Once we created the resumes, we asked three human resource officers to review them. They judged the resumes as realistic and added that the applicants would be competitive for entry-level positions in their own organizations.<sup>6</sup>

There is a tension in creating the applicant's qualifications in this type of study. On one hand, if applicants are under-qualified, they might receive too few responses for adequate statistical testing of treatment effects. On the other hand, if applicants are over-qualified, the qualifications might override employers' reticence in hiring that type of person (e.g., Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Heckman, 1998). Since we conducted this field experiment during a time of high unemployment, we viewed insufficient employer response to be the greater danger, and so we created relatively strong resumes.

### 2.3. Applying for jobs

We identified suitable job openings on a popular nationwide employment website. This website allows applicants to select jobs using various filters, and we chose jobs that were within 150 miles of Hartford, Connecticut. We identified jobs that would be suitable for recent college graduates. These included jobs in banking, clerical, customer service, finance, government, hospitality, insurance, media, purchasing, telecommunications, retail, social services, real estate, shipping, and warehousing. In selecting jobs, we attempted to sample

proportionally relative to the number of jobs listed in each category. However, we were frequently limited by the number of jobs listed at any given time, so our sample ultimately took the form of a theoretically guided convenience sample.<sup>7</sup>

Our use of a commercial website allowed us to identify a sufficiently large sample of jobs to accommodate multiple experimental treatments. It also allowed us to study jobs located throughout the New England region. However, the companies that used this website did not constitute a random sample of all employment opportunities. This website is used by businesses of all sizes, but it is our impression that it attracts a disproportionate number of medium- to large-sized companies. Presumably, companies of this size are more likely to have standardized hiring procedures, and this standardization might forestall discrimination, at least at the initial stages of hiring. Possibly a study with more small businesses and sole proprietorships would find even higher levels of religious discrimination.

We applied for those jobs that required only the submission of a resume. All told, we sent four resumes each to 1600 employers for a total of 6400 resumes sent, and to our knowledge, no employers were aware that the four resumes they received were part of a research study.

### 2.4. Recording responses

Employers could respond to the job applications by calling or sending an e-mail or both. To record phone calls, we acquired eight separate voicemail boxes and assigned one to each of the seven experimental treatments and the control group. This allowed us to know with certainty the experimental group of the applicant being called. All eight phone numbers had the same area code and exchange. We used the same default answering message in each voicemail box. To record e-mails, we created separate e-mail accounts for each of the seven treatments and the control group. Each account was with the same popular e-mail host, and the addresses were similar, seemingly random combinations of numbers and

<sup>5</sup> We chose these names after examining a list of hundreds of names found in the general population, and we selected names that we thought were not readily identifiable with a particular religion or ethnicity.

<sup>6</sup> When asked, all three human resource experts said they noticed the religious affiliation embedded in the resumes, indicating that the religious manipulation was noticeable.

<sup>7</sup> We initially intended to analyze employer response by type of job and industry; however, this proved infeasible. Some of the job advertisements were sufficiently ambiguous that we could not identify the exact nature of the position being advertised. Several of the advertising companies were large and spanned multiple industries, and the advertisement did not specify the job opening. Some of the advertisements were conducted by third-party personnel firms on behalf of unnamed companies. Finally, several of the phone calls received from employers did not identify themselves, so we were unable to link these contacts to specific job postings.

letters. This minimized the potential of inadvertently giving some treatments more attractive sounding e-mail addresses than others.

We created three outcome variables. Two of them measure how often employers respond, and the other measures the strength of employers' preference for the applicant. The first outcome variable measures whether or not an application received at least one response from the employer, and, if so, whether this response was in the form of a phone call, e-mail, or both. The second outcome variable simply summed up the total number of phone calls and e-mails received from an employer.

The third outcome variable is an "employer preference index." We assume that employers will contact their preferred applicant earlier and more often than other applicants, and we measure this preference with a 10-point index. This index assigns 10 points to each employer, and it divides these points up among the four applications sent to that employer based on the number and timing of the employer responses. For example, if an employer responded equally often and on the same day to all four applications, each would get an equal share of the points—2.5 points each. However, if the employer responds to only one of the applications, it would receive all 10 points, and the other three applicants would receive none. Incorporating the timing of responses, if an employer responded to one application on one day, and then to another application on a later day, the first application would receive 6.7 points and the second 3.3 points. We summarize the coding scheme for the employer preference index in the [Appendix](#).

In addition to these outcome variables, we also created a variable to identify "rote" responses. We defined a rote response as happening when an employer responded to all four applicants one time, on the same day, and in the same way (i.e., by e-mail or phone call). We use this variable to address a potential weakness of correspondence tests. As [Pager \(2007, p. 130\)](#) points out, some companies have policies to respond to all job applications regardless of their actual interest in the applicant. These automatic-response policies obscure discrimination that occurs in the initial stages of hiring, and so to include them potentially underestimates true levels of discrimination.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, we report two sets of

<sup>8</sup> Rote responses lend themselves to two possible interpretations. They could reflect an employer policy of automatically responding to all applicants, but they could also signal equal, but limited, interest in each applicant. Almost three-quarters of the rote responses were received by e-mail rather than phone (68 e-mails vs. 24 calls), which might be consistent with the first interpretation, for automatic-response policies would be implemented more easily using e-mails.

analyses—with and without rote responses.<sup>9</sup> Altogether, 100 applications (sent to 25 companies) received rote responses.

In our analyses, we created multivariate models estimating the outcome variable as a function of the seven religious treatments (i.e., atheist, Catholic, evangelical Christian, Jewish, pagan, Muslim, and Wallonian) with the control group as the reference category. The statistical procedure used varies according to the nature of the dependent variables. First, we used logistic regression models to analyze the dichotomous variables of whether employers made a contact or not, whether they made contact by email or not, and whether they made contact by phone or not. Second, we used Poisson models to analyze the count variables of how many total contacts were made, how many email contacts were made, and how many phone contacts were. Third, we used OLS regression to analyze the continuous measure of the employer preference index. For ease of interpretation, we show means in the tables instead of model coefficients. This allows for direct comparison of the size of the effects across groups and with the control group.<sup>10</sup>

Out of 6400 resumes we sent out, 486 generated at least one response with a total of 803 responses altogether. However, 32 of those responses were dropped from the analysis because we could not identify the responding company; this reduced the analysis to 6,368 total cases, with 771 responses from 194 responding employers. Of these 771 responses, 100 were classified as rote responses.

Because each employer received four resumes, the responses are not independent and identically distributed. Therefore, we use cluster adjusted robust standard errors to account for clustering within employers. We use Stata's `vce (robust)` estimation command with employer as the clustering variable to adjust for the potential effect of within-cluster correlation ([Froot, 1989; Rogers, 1993](#)). Because our hypotheses are directional, we use one-tailed tests of significance.

<sup>9</sup> Our ability to identify rote responses in this manner is a fortuitous by-product of our design whereby we sent four applications in response to each job posting. Had we sent fewer applications per job, it would have been much more difficult to identify rote responses.

<sup>10</sup> We use binary logistic regression instead of multinomial logistic regression because we are interested in the predictors of each outcome (i.e., e-mail, phone, and e-mail or phone) compared to all other outcomes, not the prediction of e-mail only vs. email and phone combined, for example. Furthermore, these outcomes do not meet the assumption of independence of irrelevant alternatives that multinomial logit equations rely upon ([Cheng & Long, 2007](#)).



Table 1  
Employer responses to resumes by religious treatment ( $N=6368$ ).

Religion	Received at least one contact			Total number of contacts		
	(1) Phone call or e-mail	(2) E-mail	(3) Phone call	(4) Phone call or e-mail	(5) E-mail	(6) Phone call
Control <sup>a</sup>	8.5%	4.3%	5.5%	.140	.064	.075
Atheist	7.5%	4.0%	4.5%	.121	.065	.056 <sup>†</sup>
Catholic	7.8%	4.9%	3.9%*	.121	.071	.050*
Evangelical	7.2%	4.2%	4.1% <sup>†</sup>	.119	.060	.060
Jewish	7.8%	3.9%	4.8%	.115 <sup>†</sup>	.051	.064
Muslim	6.5%*	3.9%	3.4%**	.094**	.050	.044**
Pagan	7.4%	4.9%	4.0%*	.129	.074	.055 <sup>†</sup>
Wallonian	8.2%	4.5%	4.8%	.125	.061	.064
All 7 religions <sup>b</sup>	7.5%	4.3%	4.2%*	.118 <sup>†</sup>	.062	.056*

Note: For ease of interpretation, cell entries present means instead of model coefficients. Equations predicting at least one contact used logistic regression, equations predicting number of contacts used Poisson regression.

<sup>a</sup> Significance levels are estimated by regressing the outcome variable on each of the seven religious treatment groups (with the control group as the reference category).

<sup>b</sup> Significance levels estimated by regressing the outcome variable on a single dummy variable indicating all of the religious treatment groups combined (with the control group as a reference category).

\*\*  $p < .01$ , one-tailed tests.

\*  $p < .05$ , one-tailed tests.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ , one-tailed tests.

### 3. Results

In Table 1, we show employer responses by religious treatment. Columns 1–3 show the results of logistic regression analyses of whether applications received at least one contact by e-mail or phone, one contact by e-mail only, and one contact by phone only. For ease of interpretation, we express these effects as percentages of each group receiving a contact. Columns 4–6 show the results of Poisson regression analyses of the number of contacts received by e-mail or phone, number of contacts by e-mail only, and number of contacts by phone only. For ease of interpretation, we express these effects as mean number of contacts received by each group. In each column, we also show the relevant percentages or means for the control group to facilitate comparison of specific religious treatments to the control group.

As shown in Table 1, of all the applications that we sent, 7.5% received at least one response, whether by phone or e-mail, with 4.3% receiving at least one e-mail and 4.2% receiving at least one phone call. In terms of the number of contacts, each application received an average of .118 contacts, with about half (.062) coming from e-mails and half (.056) from phone calls.

The results in Table 1 produce evidence to support the secularization hypothesis. The applications mentioning any of the seven religious identifications were about 24% less likely to receive a phone call than the control

group (4.2% vs. 5.5%,  $p = .021$ , one-tailed test).<sup>11</sup> They also received about 25% fewer total phone calls than the control group (.056 vs. .075,  $p = .023$ ). The applications from religious identifiers also received fewer e-mail responses and total responses, but these differences were not statistically significant.

Compared to the control group, applications from Muslims were 38% less likely to receive a phone call (3.4% vs. 5.5%,  $p = .010$ ), and they received 41% fewer overall phone calls (.044 vs. .075,  $p = .009$ ). Muslim applications were 24% less likely to receive at least one contact by either email or phone (6.5% vs. 8.5%,  $p = .039$ ), and they received 33% fewer total contacts than did those from the control group (.094 vs. .140,  $p = .009$ ).

Several other religious groups also received discriminatory treatment. Catholics were 29% less likely to receive a phone call (3.9% vs. 5.5%,  $p = .045$ ) and received 33% fewer phone calls (.050 vs. .075,  $p = .043$ ). Pagans were 27% less likely to receive a phone call (4.0% vs. 5.5%,  $p = .045$ ) and—at less conventional significance levels—received 27% fewer phone calls (.055

<sup>11</sup> We present percentages and rates to facilitate interpretation of the observed treatment effects. This presentation is consistent with other correspondence studies as it allows us to compare directly the probabilities of various treatment groups to be contacted by employers. The regression coefficients are available upon request.

Table 2

Employer responses to resumes by religious treatment, rote responses coded as non-response ( $N = 6368$ ).

Religion	Received at least one contact			Total number of contacts		
	(1) Phone call or e-mail	(2) E-mail	(3) Phone call	(4) Phone call or e-mail	(5) E-mail	(6) Phone call
Control <sup>a</sup>	7.1%	3.5%	4.9%	.126	.056	.069
Atheist	6.2%	3.5%	3.7% <sup>†</sup>	.108	.060	.049 <sup>†</sup>
Catholic	6.1%	3.6%	3.5% <sup>†</sup>	.105	.059	.046 <sup>†</sup>
Evangelical	5.6% <sup>†</sup>	3.1%	3.6% <sup>†</sup>	.102	.049	.055
Jewish	6.1%	3.3%	3.8% <sup>†</sup>	.099 <sup>†</sup>	.045	.055
Muslim	4.5%**	2.6%	2.6%**	.074**	.038 <sup>†</sup>	.036**
Pagan	6.0%	3.9%	3.6% <sup>†</sup>	.115	.064	.051
Wallonian	6.5%	3.5%	4.1%	.109	.051	.058
All 7 religions <sup>b</sup>	5.9%*	3.4%	3.6%*	.102*	.052	.050*

Note: For ease of interpretation, cell entries present means instead of model coefficients. Equations predicting at least one contact used logistic regression, equations predicting number of contacts used Poisson regression.

<sup>a</sup> Significance levels are estimated by regressing the outcome variable on each of the seven religious treatment groups (with the control group as the reference category).

<sup>b</sup> Significance levels estimated by regressing the outcome variable on a single dummy variable indicating all of the religious treatment groups combined (with the control group as a reference category).

\*\*  $p < .01$ , one-tailed tests.

\*  $p < .05$ , one-tailed tests.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$ , one-tailed tests.

vs.  $.075$ ,  $p = .088$ ). There were no significant differences in the receipt of e-mails for any group.

In Table 2, we replicate the analyses in Table 1 but reclassify rote responses as non-responses. These results reveal similar patterns of discrimination, but with rote responses removed, as expected, we found even stronger support for the secularization hypothesis. Applications mentioning a religion are now almost 27% less likely to be called (3.6% vs. 4.9%,  $p = .015$ ), and they received almost 28% fewer total calls (.050 vs. .069,  $p = .025$ ). Also, applications from religious identifiers were also 17% less likely to receive any contact from an employer (5.9% vs. 7.1%,  $p = .034$ ), and they received 19% fewer overall contacts (.102 vs. .126,  $p = .049$ ).

In the analyses that treat rote responses as non-responses, Muslims, once again, received the fewest contacts from employers. Compared to the control group, Muslim applicants were 47% less likely to receive a phone contact (2.6% vs. 4.9%,  $p = .005$ ), and they received 48% fewer total phone calls (.036 vs. .069,  $p = .006$ ). Overall, they were 37% less likely to be contacted by any means (4.5% vs. 7.1%,  $p = .006$ ), and they received 41% fewer total contacts (.074 vs. .126,  $p = .003$ ). In addition, at marginally significant levels, Muslims received 32% fewer e-mails (.038 vs. .056,  $p = .062$ ).

At less conventional significance levels, Catholics (3.5% vs. 4.9%,  $p = .062$ ), pagans (3.6% vs. 4.9%,

$p = .071$ ), evangelicals (3.6% vs. 4.9%,  $p = .078$ ), atheists (3.7% vs. 4.9%,  $p = .088$ ), and Jews (3.8% vs. 4.9%,  $p = .095$ ) were less likely to receive a phone call. At similar levels of significance, applications from Catholics (.046 vs. .069,  $p = .051$ ) and atheists (.049 vs. .069,  $p = .063$ ) elicited fewer overall phone calls.

Table 3 examines the strength of employer preference. Here we analyze e-mail and phone contacts combined, and we treat rote responses as non-responses. Recall that the employer preference index ranges from 0 to 10, and it reflects employers preference for applications based on the timing and exclusivity of their responses. The average score on the employer preference index for all applications was 2.51 (not shown). As shown, applications that mentioned a religious affiliation received employer preference scores that were, on average, 19% lower than the control group (2.44 vs. 3.02,  $p = .069$ ). Among the seven religious groups, only Muslims received employer preference scores that were lower than the control group, by 38% (1.86 vs. 3.02,  $p = .008$ ).

#### 4. Discussion

In this study we sent 6400 resumes to employers throughout New England. These resumes ostensibly came from recent graduates of flagship state universities located in the region, and they listed involvement in various student organizations including religiously defined

Table 3  
Strength of employer response to job applicants by religious treatment, rote responses treated as non-responses ( $N = 676$ ).

Religion	Employer preference index
Control <sup>a</sup>	3.02
Atheist	2.73
Catholic	2.62
Evangelical	2.41
Jewish	2.48
Muslim	1.86**
Pagan	2.50
Wallonian	2.44
All 7 religions <sup>b</sup>	2.44

Note: For ease of interpretation, cell entries present means instead of model coefficients. The equation used OLS regression.

<sup>a</sup> Significance levels are estimated by regressing the employer preference index on each of the seven religious treatment groups (with the control group as the reference category).

<sup>b</sup> Significance level is estimated by regressing the employer preference index on a single dummy variable indicating all of the religious treatment groups combined (with the control group as a reference category)

\*\*  $p < .01$ , one-tailed tests.

organizations. Each resume was assigned to one of seven experimental treatment groups—an atheist, Catholic, evangelical Christian, Jewish, Muslim, pagan, or Wallonian (a fictitious religion) student organization—or a non-religious student organization as the control group. We measured how frequently employers responded by phone call or e-mail.

We found that any mention of religion on a resume was potentially detrimental to job applicants, for relative to the control group, these resumes received significantly fewer phone calls from employers, fewer overall contacts, and lower ratings on the employer preference index. These results provide strong support for secularization theory. Interestingly, this anti-religious bias appears to extend, at least in part, to atheists as well. As such, a statement of overt religiously related belief, rather than just involvement in an established religion, potentially disadvantages job applicants.

This pattern of findings suggests a reinterpretation of the concept of secularization. Traditionally, secularization has been understood as an overall disengagement from established religion, ranging from the declining influence of religious organizations to individuals rejecting the teachings of formal religions (e.g., Roberts & Yamane, 2012). However, we find systematic discrimination against religious expression, and while discrimination levels vary widely by religious group, in no case did religious affiliation significantly advantage a job applicant.

This suggests that secularization has developed a normative aspect—consistent with the privatization of religion thesis—prescribing when and where it is “acceptable” to express one’s religiousness. At least in the job application process, the cultural norm appears to be that people should refrain from religious disclosure. This type of disclosure is “out-of-place” in the job application setting. While beyond the scope of this study, this normative proscription likely applies to other secular institutions as well. As such, secularization implies not just independence from religion but rather normatively enforced separation from it—even to the point of religious discrimination. In this sense, out-of-place religious expression has perhaps come to be defined as deviant. Future research could attempt to specify when, where, and how religious expression is viewed as unacceptable.

Among the specific religions, Muslims received the most job discrimination. The mere addition of the word “Muslim” to a job application dropped the total number of employer contacts by 33–41%, depending on the coding of rote responses. Muslims also experienced weaker employer preference—scoring lowest on the employer preference index. There is a growing literature that holds that Muslims face discrimination in many aspects of life, including housing applications and day-to-day interactions (e.g., Disha, Cavendish, & King, 2011; Sheridan, 2006). To this regrettable list, we add job discrimination. The study and discussion of Islamophobia is already salient in Europe (e.g., Ahmed & Hammarstedt, 2008), which has a larger Muslim population than the United States, but our findings suggest that the United States is headed in that direction as it confronts the very real discrimination that exists against Muslims.

We note the potential overlap between religious and ethnic discrimination. The Muslim resumes used in this study made no Muslim or Arab cultural reference such as having an “Arab-sounding” name or other tell-tale signs. Nonetheless, some employers may have made cultural assumptions based on the applicant’s religion. As such, Muslims, as well as other religious-ethnic groups, might face discrimination both for their religion and ethnicity (Kalkan, Layman, & Uslander, 2009). This is especially relevant with Muslims, for the racialization of Muslims has resulted in a Muslim identity being associated with being a foreigner or of Arab/Middle-Eastern descent (Tehrani, 2008). Presumably employer response rates for Muslims would drop even further with explicit cultural references to, for example, Arab ethnicity.

Atheists, Catholics and pagans also showed some evidence of job discrimination. While atheist job applicants were discriminated against, it was at lower levels than the Muslims despite national surveys showing that

Americans have more distasteful attitudes toward atheists than Muslims—viewing them as “others” in American society (Edgell, Gerteis, & Hartmann, 2006). Our findings might be the result of conducting the study in New England, a region of the country where atheism is fairly prevalent, religious views are less passionate, and the condemnation of atheism is substantially lower than the rest of the nation.

The discrimination observed against Catholics does not fit well with national surveys which find that Catholics are held in reasonably high regard, and this is similarly true in New England where Catholics are the largest religious group. As a post hoc explanation, perhaps the negative publicity created by the Catholic priest sex scandals as well as the divisiveness of the ongoing abortion debate has created more negative attitudes toward Catholics. If so, then the backlash against Catholics might be stronger in New England where Catholics are most prevalent.

Since pagans constitute less than .3% of the population in New England, most people would base their perceptions of pagans on cultural portrayals rather than direct experiences. Given the cultural and theological distance between paganism and traditional Judeo-Christian religions, it is not surprising that they received some discrimination.

Evangelical Christians, Jews, and Wallonians showed little-to-no evidence of receiving discrimination in the job application process. The lack of discrimination against evangelical Christians is perhaps at odds with national surveys which show that attitudes toward them are ambivalent. Nationwide, Americans’ attitudes toward evangelicals are less negative than toward atheists and Muslims, but less positive than toward Jews and Catholics. Again, however, attitudes toward evangelicals are likely tempered by the religious tolerance of New Englanders which results in reduced discrimination against this group.

The lack of discrimination against Jews in our study fits with the highly positive opinions expressed about Jews in national surveys; however, it does not fit with the traditional assumption of anti-Semitism. Jews in New England are likely treated more favorably than other places in the country because they are more populous and have gained acceptance by the Northeast Protestant establishment. Also, Jews may receive less religious discrimination in the labor market because employers assume that, because of their typically higher education and occupational aspirations, they make better employees.

The fictitious Wallonian religion was the only group to display no evidence of discrimination. This counters

Hartley and Mintz’s (1946) finding that college students ranked the fictitious Wallonian ethnic group low among 30 different nationalities. This finding suggests that, when confronted with a lack of cultural information about a religious group, New Englanders do not fill in the blanks with negative stereotypes. To some extent, it undermines the argument made by some that religious discrimination stems from a lack of knowledge about a group. It also provides strong evidence that the secularism of New Englanders perhaps leads them to be less, rather than more, judgmental toward religious identifiers compared to other regions of the country.

Intriguingly, we found that levels of discrimination vary substantially by the method by which employers contacted job applicants. While there was significant discrimination with in-person contacts, there was none with e-mail contacts—even when we removed the rote responses. This may be due to the fact that many employers who respond by e-mail tend to respond in a more perfunctory manner and pay less attention to the content of the resumes at this first contact stage of the hiring process. But this tendency to discriminate more by phone is also consistent with the cultural distaste perspective on discrimination, for it shows a reluctance to deal personally with someone who is religiously different or, at minimum, is violating cultural norms against overt displays of religion.

We examined three additional theories to explain the pattern of religious discrimination among different religious groups. These theories share the premise that marginalized religious groups will be targeted for discrimination, but they disagree over the basis of marginalization. The religious stratification model received mixed support. As predicted, Jews received little discrimination, and pagans received discrimination. But this theory did not predict the high levels received by Muslims, who have average levels of socioeconomic status. Perhaps groups continue to have conflict over resources, as assumed in this model, but the nature of the contested resources has changed. Rather than material resources, religious groups might now have conflict over cultural and symbolic resources, as described in Hunter’s (1991) analysis of culture wars. If so, then the relative metric for determining the potential threat of another group is not their level of economic resources but rather their cultural similarity.

Contact theory was not supported by our findings, for there was no particular association between group size and discrimination. For example, Catholic applicants, representing the largest of the groups, were recipients of substantial discrimination. In contrast, Jewish applicants, from a small religious group,

received little discrimination and the fictional Wallonians received none; whereas applicants from other small groups, such as Muslims and Pagans, did receive discriminatory treatment from employers.

Overall, cultural distaste theory received the strongest support from our findings. As expected from this perspective and particularly from the proximity of New Englanders to the events of 9/11, Muslims received the highest levels of discrimination. Also, atheists—who are routinely rated negatively in nationwide surveys—received higher levels of religious discrimination, and Jews—who are rated positively—received almost no discrimination. Also, the lack of religious animus toward the Wallonians, a group with no cultural baggage, reinforces the validity of the cultural distaste theory. There were some deviations from the expectations derived from this theory, namely the lower-than-expected levels of discrimination against evangelicals and the higher-than-expected levels against Catholics.

It is instructive to compare our current study of hiring discrimination in the New England with a similar study we conducted in the American South (Wallace, Wright & Hyde, *forthcoming*). Compared to the rest of the country, the South is more politically and socially conservative and Southern religious culture is strongly influenced by the prevalence of evangelical Christianity which constitutes the largest group in the region; on the other hand, Catholics are a relatively small percentage and are often culturally marginalized by evangelicals. Also, in contrast to New Englanders, citizens of the South express higher levels of religiosity than other regions of the country by every indicator. Southerners attend church more frequently, view religion as more important in their lives, are more likely to pray and believe that their prayers are answered, and are more certain that there is a God than citizens in any other region of the country (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2008b).

Our Southern study was identical in almost every detail with the current study in New England, but there were important differences in the findings. First, in the South there was evidence of rather strong discrimination against every religious group *except* Jews. We attributed this exemption for Jews to the strong historical, cultural, and theological connection between evangelical Christians—the dominant religious group in the South—and Jews in the South (Schmier, 1989). Second, in the South, even the Wallonians were victims of discrimination; in fact, this fictitious group was reviled almost as much as Muslims and atheists. We interpret this to mean that Southerners are less tolerant of religious deviance than New Englanders. Third, we found

consistent evidence that Southerners discriminated both by e-mail and by phone which suggests that Southern employers who responded by email either scrutinized the applications more closely or discriminated more. Overall, the pattern of religious discrimination in the South is much more pronounced than in New England which suggests that religious discrimination in hiring is most prevalent in regions of the country where religion is most passionately enacted. Thus, while the specific contours of religious discrimination are very different in these two regions, both studies demonstrate support for secularization theory and cultural distaste theory.

While our study sheds light on processes of discrimination in the workplace, we are mindful of some limitations. Our sample was derived from a popular employment website which is used by large, national employers. This may have affected the extent and nature of discrimination. Because larger employers are more visible and subject to equal employment opportunity laws, they may be more cautious about discriminating, particularly early in the hiring process. These large, institutionalized employers might institute more routinized bureaucratic procedures for responding to applications that allow less latitude for unfair treatment. This, in turn, might result in less religious discrimination early in the hiring process. However, it is possible that stronger evidence of discrimination would emerge in subsequent phases of the process such as when the first personal contact occurs, whether by phone or in-person. Or, it might be easier to find first contact hiring discrimination if more small employers were included in the analysis. These would be fruitful lines of research in the future.

Also, our study, like many existing experimental studies of discrimination, focuses on a single attribute of prospective employees such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or religion. However, in real-world hiring processes, these attributes are presented together as employers evaluate job applicants. As such, the challenge for future research is to devise studies that analyze multiple characteristics simultaneously; for example, the effect of religion by gender or by ethnicity.<sup>12</sup>

Another limitation is that we have no information about who actually read and reacted to the resumes. Knowledge of the characteristics of the person reading the resumes would allow for greater elaboration of the role religion plays in the hiring process. From a practical perspective, it would also be useful to know if the person responding to an application is actually in charge of hiring or if they are simply subordinates processing

<sup>12</sup> We thank an anonymous reviewer for making this suggestion.

the applications according to bureaucratic instructions from supervisors.

One promising solution to this limitation is provided by Pager and Quillian (2005) who followed up their audit study of race, criminal records, and hiring discrimination with a survey of employers. Their survey revealed that the relationship between employers' attitudes and behaviors regarding discrimination was relatively weak. This method might also be extended to incorporate demographic and social characteristics of employers (including their religiosity and religious preference).

Despite these limitations, our research offers the most comprehensive study of religious discrimination in the hiring process to date. We hope that future researchers will carry on this line of inquiry through replication and by extending the research to other religious affiliations and regions of the country. In addition, future research should explore other aspects of religious discrimination on the job such as differential work assignments, discipline, promotion opportunities, and benefits. In this way, we hope to shed more light on processes of religious discrimination and suggest remedies for this growing problem in the workplace.

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### Appendix. Measuring strength of employer response with the employer preference index

Pattern of employer responses	Points assigned to job applications A–D			
	A	B	C	D
Respondent A alone	10			
A & B	5	5		
A & B & C	3.33	3.33	3.33	
A & B & C & D	2.50	2.50	2.50	2.50
A, then B	6.67	3.33		
A, then B, then C	5.33	3.33	1.33	
A, then B, then C, then D	4	3	2	1
A, then B & C	5	2.50	2.50	
A, then B & C & D	4	2	2	2
A, then B, then C & D	4	3	1.50	1.50
A, then B & C, then D	4	2.50	2.50	1
A & B, then C	4	4	2	

### Appendix (Continued)

Pattern of employer responses	Points assigned to job applications A–D			
	A	B	C	D
A & B, then C, then D	3.50	3.50	2	1
A & B, then C & D	3	3	2	2
A & B & C, then D	3	3	3	1

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