

Moral Cosmology, Religion, and Adult Values for Children

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We hypothesize that the religiously orthodox, who are theologically communitarian/authoritarian in seeing individuals as subsumed by a larger community of believers and as subject to timeless divine law, are more likely to value obedience in children over autonomy than are theological modernists, who are theologically individualistic in seeing individuals, not a deity, as the ultimate arbiters of right and wrong. We hypothesize further that differences in moral cosmology (orthodoxy vs. modernism) within faith traditions are more important for the values adults seek to instill in children than are differences between traditions. Through analyses of national data from the 1998 General Social Survey, we find strong confirmation of both hypotheses. Moral cosmology is the single-most important factor in valuations of obedience and autonomy in children. While evangelical Protestants differ from Catholics, mainline Protestants, and those with no religion in their values for children, moral cosmology is associated with differences in values for children within each of the faith traditions, including evangelical Protestants. We conclude that intra-faith differences in moral cosmology are key in explaining values for children, but have not completely supplanted interfaith differences.

From the late 1950s to the early 1990s, Catholics and Protestants as a whole converged in the relative importance they placed upon obedience and autonomy as values to instill in children (Alwin 1984, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1996a, 1996b). This convergence led Duane Alwin, who had documented the trend, to ask whether differences *within* these faith traditions had become more important, even as differences *between* them had diminished. Alwin (1986:436) examined differences in values for children within Protestants between fundamentalists and nonfundamentalists and within both Protestants and Catholics in levels of participation in religious services and instruction, and found “greater variation within major denominational categories than between them” by the early 1980s. While variation within faith traditions in adult values for children has been recognized since Alwin’s pathbreaking work, how and why intra-faith differences relate to such values has received less attention.

Analyses of the American religious landscape by Robert Wuthnow (1988, 1989; Wuthnow and Lawson 1994) and James Davison Hunter (1991, 1994) have reached much the same conclusion regarding the predominance of intra-faith differences in values: that an increasingly uncertain moral climate, government intervention into such issues as abortion, school prayer, reproductive rights and sexuality, and rising levels of education have given rise to differences between religious conservatives and religious liberals (Wuthnow) or between religiously orthodox and moral progressive cosmologies (Hunter) that have now supplanted divisions between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in moral-political agendas. In this article, we extend these theories of religious change into the arena of adult values for children. We analyze national data from the General Social Survey for 1998 to explore whether differences within faith traditions based on moral cosmology are today as important as the differences among the major faith traditions that have received much greater scholarly attention and theorizing. We find that differences in moral cosmology (orthodoxy vs. modernism) are the single-most important factor today in adult valuations of

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obedience and autonomy in children—more important than differences between Catholics, mainline Protestants, evangelical Protestants, Jews, and those with no religion, and more important than education or occupation—two key variables in Melvin Kohn's (1959) classic work on class and conformity.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Early research by Robert and Helen Lynd (1929) on the values Americans hope to instill in children focused on class, foreshadowing Kohn's (1959) important work on the connection between class and the values adults seek in children. Kohn and later researchers found that working-class parents were more likely than middle-class parents to value conformity in their children and less likely to value self-direction or autonomy (Alwin 1984, 1986, 1989, 1990; Ellison and Sherkat 1993a; Kohn 1963, 1969, 1976; Kohn and Schooler 1969; Kohn and Slomczynski 1990; Spade 1991; but see Wright and Wright 1976). Kohn and Schooler (1969) found that education and occupational conditions were largely responsible for the link between class and conformity. Parents with high education and jobs that required self-directed work valued autonomy and self-direction in their children, while those with less education and jobs that required strict conformity to rules and authority valued obedience. Lillian Rubin's (1976:126–28) in-depth interviews with working-class and middle-class married couples in San Francisco in the early 1970s suggested a practical reason for the connection between class and conformity: parents seek to instill in their children, through socialization and schooling, those values that they, themselves, have found most necessary and useful in their own occupational lives. Thus working-class parents, who must obey others on their jobs, raise their children to be obedient, and middle-class parents, who are allowed considerable creativity and spontaneity in doing their jobs, value these traits in their children (see also Kohn and Schooler 1969; Kohn and Slomczynski 1990).

Gerhard Lenski (1961) introduced the "Religious Factor" into the study of values for children by highlighting differences in such values between Protestants and Catholics. The Detroit-area Catholics that Lenski studied in 1958 were more likely than white Protestants to prefer that children learn obedience and less likely to prefer that they think for themselves.¹ Later, Alwin (1984, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1996a, 1996b) documented a convergence of Protestants and Catholics through the early 1990s. As we noted above, Alwin (1986) also found substantial variation in values within both Protestants and Catholics, with Protestant fundamentalists valuing obedience more than nonfundamentalists, and with Catholics and Protestants who participated frequently in religious services and instruction valuing obedience more than those who did not. Research by Christopher Ellison and Darren Sherkat (1993a), based on the 1988 General Social Survey (GSS), found that conservative Protestants valued obedience in children more than did mainline Protestants but were no different from mainline Protestants in the value attached to autonomy, again pointing to the existence of differences within the broad faith tradition of Protestantism. More recently, we found that growing differences between mainline and evangelical Protestants help to explain the overall shift in adult values for children from 1986 to 2002, with high-attending evangelicals increasingly valuing obedience over autonomy (Starks and Robinson 2005).

While recent research is consistent with Wuthnow's and Hunter's basic argument that intra-faith divisions rooted in moral cosmology are becoming more important than divisions between faith traditions, this argument has not yet been tested with regard to adult values for children. In this article, we analyze a national sample of Americans gathered in 1998 to consider how faith tradition, intra-faith religious differences in moral cosmology, and class are now linked to values regarding ideal traits for children. We ask: Do intra-faith religious differences in moral cosmology overshadow differences between faith traditions in explaining the values adults seek to instill in children?

Moral Cosmology, Individualism, and Communitarianism

Arguing that the symbolic boundaries of American religion have been redrawn since World War II, Wuthnow (1988, 1989; Wuthnow and Lawson 1994:35) saw a climate of moral uncertainty, coupled with increasing government intervention into issues of family and sexuality, and growing educational differences within faith traditions as having given rise to conflict between religious liberals and religious conservatives. He also stressed the emergence since World War II of religious organizations that are nondenominational in nature, which he termed “special purpose groups.” He highlighted the importance of such groups in institutionalizing intra-denominational conflict and in linking such conflict to U.S. politics. Thus, groups such as the Moral Majority, the Christian Coalition, Focus on the Family, and the Family Research Council have arisen to combat what “religious conservatives” see as government intrusion into the family and to advance their own “Christian family” agenda (see Wilcox 2004). On the other side, groups such as People for the American Way, Bread for the World, and Americans for the Separation of Church and State have staked out the positions of “religious liberals.”

Making a similar distinction, Hunter (1991:49) argued that the religious divide today is between those who hold two “fundamentally different conceptions of moral authority,” or what we prefer to call moral cosmologies. The *modernist*² cosmology views individuals as having to make moral decisions in the context of their times, sees religious texts and teachings as human creations that should be considered in cultural context along with other moral precepts, and sees individuals as largely independent from God in determining their fates. *Religious orthodoxy*, on the other hand, views God as the ultimate judge of good and evil, regards sacred texts (and church teachings derived from these) as divinely revealed and hence inerrant and timeless, and sees God as watching over, affecting, and judging people’s daily lives. Modernism and orthodoxy, as conceptualized by Hunter, are broad moral cosmologies that are generalizable across *all* faith traditions, rather than agreement or disagreement with the specific tenets of faith traditions or denominations (e.g., the existence of the devil, hell, heaven, etc.). Hunter (1991, 1994), like Wuthnow (1988, 1989), argued that the conflict is no longer between faith traditions but within them, and differences in cosmology have replaced those between faith traditions as the basis of a “culture war” of conflicting political-moral agendas.

In a series of articles, Nancy Davis and Robert Robinson (1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1997) argued that there is not a “war” in the United States based on moral cosmologies within faith traditions, but rather a continuum of belief between orthodoxy and modernism, with most Americans falling somewhere in the middle. Modernism and orthodoxy are ideal types, representing polar extremes, and Davis and Robinson’s (1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2005, 2006) moral cosmology theory posits that where people are located on this continuum affects their positions on cultural and economic issues. They argued that the theological modernist moral cosmology, with its contextualized and individually determined moral standards, is theologically individualistic (1999b, 2001; see also Kniss 1997:263). The modernist cosmology combines support for individual choice and freedom with an expectation of individual responsibility, inclining its adherents toward cultural individualism or libertarianism, in which individuals are allowed to make their own choices on abortion, sexuality, gender, and family matters and to *laissez faire* economic individualism or inegalitarianism, whereby individuals are held responsible for their economic fortunes, and the solution to poverty is greater effort by the poor themselves rather than government efforts to improve their lot.

The religiously orthodox cosmology, in contrast to modernism, is theologically communitarian in that it regards individuals as subsumed by a larger community of like-minded believers who are all subject to the laws and greater plan of God.³ Timeless moral standards are seen as having been laid down once and for all by God—standards that the community must uphold and that everyone is obliged to obey. Individual obedience to higher authority, not individual rights, is emphasized. In contrast to the modernist emphasis on individual responsibility, the orthodox

cosmology stresses that it is the community's responsibility to watch over community members, giving it both a strict or controlling side and a caring one, and inclining its adherents toward cultural communitarianism or authoritarianism, in which the community must enforce divinely mandated moral standards on abortion, sexuality, family and gender, and economic communitarianism or egalitarianism, in which the community must look out for the poor and needy.

Recognizing the theological individualism of modernism and communitarianism of orthodoxy helps explain the apparent paradox, uncovered in analyses of the United States, 21 European countries, Israel, and seven Muslim-majority countries, that modernists are more culturally liberal but more economically conservative than the orthodox (Davis and Robinson 1996a, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2006). This research has documented that in many countries where the Abrahamic faith traditions of Protestantism, Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Judaism, and Islam are dominant, modernists, as theological individualists relative to the orthodox, are more culturally individualistic or libertarian than the religiously orthodox in supporting individual freedom of choice on abortion, sexuality, gender roles, etc. and more economically individualistic or inegalitarian than the orthodox in seeing the poor and unemployed themselves rather than government or private charity as the solution to poverty and unemployment.⁴ Because political parties are arrayed along a conventional left-right continuum in most countries, they rarely combine cultural and economic platforms in ways that allow the orthodox and modernists to vote without compromising on either their economic or cultural beliefs.

In the changing moral climate that Wuthnow (1988, 1989; Wuthnow and Lawson 1994) has described, we expect the individualistic orientation of theological modernists and the corresponding communitarian/authoritarian orientation of the orthodox to provide different standards of desirability when making decisions regarding child rearing—leading modernists to value autonomy in children and the orthodox to value obedience, regardless of their faith tradition. We argue that both modernists and the religiously orthodox want to prepare children for a changing world, but in entirely different ways. Modernists, who feel that individuals must decide for themselves what is right and wrong depending on the circumstances, should encourage independent thinking and flexibility in children as a means of facing a chaotic world, while the orthodox, who feel that individuals must hold fast to God-given, absolute standards in the face of change, should encourage obedience in children. Thus, we hypothesize that *within all faith traditions, modernists are more likely than the religiously orthodox to value autonomy and less likely to value obedience as an ideal trait to instill in children.*

Moral Cosmology and Faith Tradition

Differences in moral cosmology are one sense in which conservative Protestants are distinct from mainline Protestants. For example, Steensland et al. (2000:293) mention that mainline Protestant denominations “have typically emphasized an accommodating stance toward modernity.” Nonetheless, Sutton and Chaves (2004) found that denominational schisms and mergers over the last century arose mainly out of organizational processes (attempts to achieve organizational consolidation) rather than over theological divisions. And even after such splits and combinations, tensions often continue to arise in the new denominations based in part on moral cosmology and/or positions on issues of gay clergy, the use of gender-neutral god language, stem cell research, etc. While there undoubtedly is some sorting of Protestants into conservative and mainline denominations on the basis of their moral cosmologies, it is by no means perfect. We thus expect that differences in moral cosmology affect values for children even within conservative Protestant and mainline Protestant denominations.

Over the past decade, a substantial body of research on values for children and child-rearing practices has highlighted differences between conservative and mainline Protestants (Bartkowski and Ellison 1995; Bartkowski and Wilcox 2000; Ellison and Sherkat 1993a, 1993b; Wilcox 1998, 2004). Such research has found that the parenting *practices* of conservative Protestants are not

solely authoritarian, but combine elements of authoritarian and authoritative (strict but caring) parenting strategies. Concerning adult *values* for children—the focus of our work, Ellison and Sherkat (1993a) found that conservative Protestants view obedience more favorably as a value to instill in children than do mainline Protestants, but are no different in their valuation of autonomy. They discuss conservative Protestants as a unique interpretive community in which child-rearing views are developed through a complex cognitive causal process whereby a “fundamentalist” (literal) interpretation of the Bible supports a view of human nature as evil, which leads to a punitive attitude toward sinners, which in turn supports greater valuation of obedience. Insofar as a literal interpretation of scripture is an aspect of religious orthodoxy, Ellison and Sherkat’s findings provide support for the notion that differences in moral cosmology underlie differences between conservative and mainline Protestants in adult values for children, although our argument linking modernism, as theological individualism, to autonomy, and religious orthodoxy, as theological communitarianism, to obedience leads us to expect differences not only in obedience but also in autonomy. We also expect that differences in moral cosmology cross-cut *all* faith traditions/denominations, including both conservative and mainline Protestantism.

As Alwin (1986) recognized, American Catholics have not been insulated from internal differentiation and politicization (see also Wuthnow and Lawson 1994:36; Starks 2005). Weaver (1986, 1995, 1999) has investigated the contemporary emergence of conservative and liberal groups within the Catholic Church. She argues that conservative Catholics believe in an “objective moral order,” while liberal Catholics are open to a moral reality that is much more chaotic and fluid, a distinction that mirrors Hunter’s (1991) conceptions of orthodoxy and modernism (Weaver 1999:14–15; see also, Kennedy 1988; Pogorelc and Davidson 2000).

In view of the differences that are posited to exist within faith traditions, we test whether, as Wuthnow (1988, 1989) and Hunter (1991) suggested (and as Alwin’s (1986); analyses hinted at in the early 1980s), *differences within faith traditions in moral cosmology are more important for the values adults seek to instill in children than are denominational differences or those between faith traditions*. Since conservative and mainline Protestants differ not only in moral cosmology but also in denomination, we investigate denominational divisions within Protestantism using a typology that separates Protestants into evangelical and mainline Protestants (Steenland et al. 2000). Still, *even within denominations, including evangelical Protestantism, we expect that intra-faith differences in moral cosmology will have strong and significant effects on adult values for children*.

DATA AND METHODS

Data

To investigate inter- and intra-faith differences in values for children, we analyze data from the 1998 GSS conducted by the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago. The 1998 GSS is well suited to our purposes since it includes a special module on religion and has a battery of religious orientation questions, some of which can be used to measure the orthodoxy/modernist continuum, and also includes Lenski’s (1961) original questions on values for children. The original sample size for the 1998 GSS is 2,832. The split-ballot design for both the religious orientation questions and the questions on values for children yields a smaller sample of about 800 cases. List-wise deletion is used for handling missing data results in an initial sample of 668 cases.⁵ In this sample, there are too few Jewish respondents ($N = 9$) and too little variation among them in values for children (all nine chose autonomy before obedience), so they are dropped from our analysis. The working sample includes both parents and nonparents. We repeated all of our analyses, limiting the sample to (1) those who have ever had children and (2) those who currently have children in their household, with no substantive changes in the results although some coefficients fail significance tests due to the smaller sample sizes (details available

upon request). Since our arguments are about broad religious-based value differences among all adults, and since all individuals develop value judgments regarding children and interact with children (to varying degrees) regardless of whether they are parents, we analyze the larger sample of both parents and nonparents.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in our analyses, *Obedience*, is derived from a set of questions first asked by Lenski (1961) in 1958:

If you had to choose, which thing on this list would you pick as the most important for a child to learn to prepare him or her for life?

The five character traits, which are then ranked by the respondent from first to fifth, include “to think for himself or herself,” “to obey,” “to be well liked or popular,” “to work hard,” and “to help others when they need help.” For our purposes here, the two most relevant responses are “to think for himself or herself” and “to obey.” To choose thinking for oneself first indicates a preference for autonomy and self-direction, whereas choosing obey first indicates a preference for obedience or conformity. The relative ranking of these two options is the key dependent variable for this study, as it was for Lenski’s and Alwin’s studies.⁶ Further details on how we handle this variable statistically are given below.

While values are clearly implicated in child-rearing behaviors/practices, the link between values and child-rearing behaviors is a complicated one. Similar behavior can at times be motivated by different values (e.g., two parents ground their child for participating in a school-skip day, but one stresses that the child disobeyed the rules while the other stresses that the child, in following peer pressure, did not think for himself or herself). Likewise, different behavior can at times be motivated by the same value (e.g., spanking vs. time out as alternative means of teaching obedience). Thus, the focus of our work here is on *values* rather than *behavior*. Still, research by Luster, Rhoades, and Haas (1989) on 65 mother-infant dyads found strong correlations between the value mothers attached to self-direction versus conformity and their behavior toward their child. Similarly, Alwin (2001) found a correspondence between the relative valuing of obedience and autonomy and orientations toward punishment and caring.

Independent Variables

We use a three-item index to measure *religious orthodoxy/theological modernism* (see Appendix A). The items contrast the absolute, timeless moral standards and God-centered universe of the orthodox with the contextualized ethics and individually-centered universe of modernists. Note that, in accord with Hunter’s (1991) conceptualization of orthodoxy/modernism but in contrast to most operationalizations of orthodoxy as “doctrinal” orthodoxy or the ratification of a *specific* set of religious beliefs about God, the divinity of Christ, the devil, heaven, hell, etc. (e.g., Ester and Halman 1994; Lenski 1961; Stark and Glock 1968), our measure applies to members of all of the major faith traditions in America. We use one of the items (the first below) that Davis and Robinson (1999b) used to create their orthodoxy/modernism index in the 1991 ISSP data and two new items (the second and third). This index is identical to that used by Ryle and Robinson (2006) in their study of moral cosmology and feelings of community.

The first item in our index of moral cosmology measures belief in the divine inspiration and literal truth of the Bible. In believing that the Bible is inerrant and should be taken literally, word for word, respondents clearly prioritize divine truths, standards, and laws, and limit individual interpretive authority, whereas the opposite is true when they believe that the Bible is simply a book of fables and moral tales. While some might argue that the responses to this item are

categorical, we have ordered them as shown in Appendix A, as did Davis and Robinson (1996a, 1999b). Inclusion of the responses to this item as dummy variables in our models showed that the categories are indeed ordered as our coding assumes. Religiously orthodox Roman Catholics may rely on church teachings or papal encyclicals as a source of moral authority instead of, or in addition to, scripture (Alexander 1985; Arnold 1990; Coleman 1992), and this is captured by the third item in the index. Nonetheless, in response to the question on the Bible, 19 percent of Catholics in our subsample agreed with the statement that “The Bible is the actual word of God and it is to be taken literally, word for word,” and the index had higher reliability for Catholics with the item on Bible beliefs included than without it. Moreover, we show below that our measure of orthodoxy/modernism explains adult values for children equally well within each of the faith traditions, e.g., Catholicism as well as mainline Protestantism and evangelical Protestantism.

The second item, “I believe in a God who watches over me,” indicates the extent to which respondents see themselves as being directed, supported, or protected by God in their daily lives. Those who disagree with this item see themselves as being largely on their own in making their fates and perhaps, therefore, less accountable to God’s authority on a day-to-day basis for their actions. The item is comparable to Davis and Robinson’s (1999b) item: “There is a God who concerns Himself personally with every human being.”

The third item is whether to be a good Christian or Jew people must “follow faithfully the teachings of their church or synagogue.” This item captures the belief in adherence to church doctrine that characterizes the religiously orthodox as opposed to the more individualized and contextualized use of religious/moral precepts (perhaps even borrowing from other denominations or faith traditions) that characterizes theological modernists. Each of the three items is coded from 1 to 10, with high scores indicating modernism.

In an exploratory factor analysis, all three items load highly on a single factor with an eigenvalue of 1.24.⁷ Cronbach’s alpha, an indicator of reliability, is 0.71. As a further check on the three items, we included each of them individually in models explaining adult values for children. Each of the items had a strong and significant effect in the expected direction on these values (details available on request). Having verified that no single item is driving the index, we combine the three items and standardize the index so that it has a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1, with positive values indicating greater-than-average modernism and negative values indicating greater-than-average orthodoxy. Prior to transformation, this index ranged from 3 to 30, with a midpoint of 16.5. Our respondents averaged 11.8 on the index, with a standard deviation of 6.9. Thus, the average respondent was more orthodox than modernist, with 109 respondents scoring as 3 or most orthodox, and 14 respondents as 30 or most modernist. The standardized index ranges from -1.3 to 2.6.

To measure faith tradition, we use a typology developed by Steensland et al. (2000) that includes categories for *Catholic*, *Jew*, *Other Religion*, and *No Religion* and makes the important distinction of Protestants into *mainline Protestant*, *Black Protestant*, and *Evangelical Protestant* (reference category). Evangelical Protestant generally subsumes both fundamentalist and evangelical churches, while mainline Protestant subsumes both mainline and liberal churches (see Steensland et al. 2000 for details). Distinguishing evangelical Protestants from other faith traditions allows us to examine: (1) the distinctiveness of evangelical Protestants in their values for children; (2) whether orthodoxy/modernism is partially (or wholly) responsible for any difference in values between evangelical Protestants and mainline Protestants; and (3) whether orthodoxy/modernism has effects on values even within both evangelical Protestants and mainline Protestants.

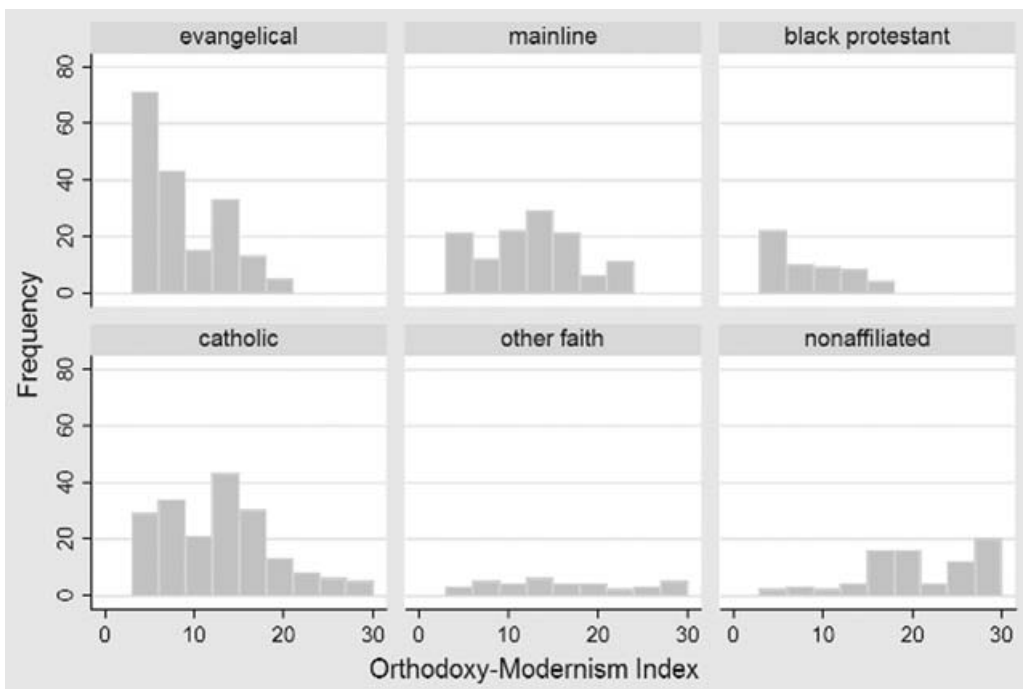
Black Protestant is determined by membership in historically black denominations. Since not all members of such denominations are black and since not all blacks are members of such denominations, we also include race as a control variable so that we can distinguish the effect of race from that of membership in a specific religious denomination.⁸ While Steensland et al. (2000:297–78) classified non- and no denominational Protestants who attend church at least once a month as

evangelical Protestants, we have not reassigned the small number of such people (2 percent to 5 percent by their estimation). Because we control for church attendance and conduct supplemental analyses testing whether church attendance intensifies the effect of evangelical membership, we do not wish to confound faith tradition with church attendance by using attendance in classifying respondents into religious categories.

Note that controlling for faith tradition should substantially reduce the effect of orthodoxy/modernism on values for children both because the splits within Protestant denominations (i.e., between mainline and evangelical) in some cases reflect cosmological differences that may have been responsible for the schisms within Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, etc., and because the distinction between individuals giving a religious preference and those giving none may overlap to some extent with that between orthodoxy and modernism.

While we expect that people with no religious affiliation will tend to be more modernist in their theological orientation than those with an affiliation, there is no reason why such people (some of whom may have been brought up in a religious community or may currently be considering joining a religious community) could not hold an orthodox cosmology even though they are not currently a member of a religious community. Thus, we do not limit our sample to those who indicate a religious affiliation or to believers but instead include those with no affiliation in our models. This makes for an especially rigorous test of the effect of moral cosmology on values. Histograms showing variation in moral cosmology within each of the categories in Steensland et al.'s (2000) typology are given in Figure 1. These show that, as Davis and Robinson (1996a, 1999b, 2001, 2006) found in their cross-national analyses, the distribution of orthodoxy/modernism within a given faith tradition or denomination may be skewed toward either pole or may be approximately normal. Nonetheless, as they demonstrated and as we show below, differences between, for example, highly orthodox individuals and those whose cosmology is in the middle are associated with differences in values and beliefs.

FIGURE 1
MORAL COSMOLOGY BY RELIGIOUS TRADITION



We include frequency of *Church Attendance*, coded from 0 (never attends) to 8 (attends several times a week), which Alwin (1986) found to have a large effect on preferences for obedience over autonomy. Since we theorize that differences in moral cosmology are the paramount source of intra-faith differences in such values and since it is not clear why attendance should affect valuation of obedience across faiths, we expect the effect of religious attendance to be less important once we control for moral cosmology. We also conduct supplemental analyses in which we interact attendance and evangelical Protestant affiliation to test whether church attendance intensifies the effect of religious membership (see Brooks 2002; Starks and Robinson 2005).

In addition to measures of various aspects of religion, we include indicators of class or socioeconomic standing. Kohn and Schooler's (1969) research has indicated that education is one of the most important determinants of values for children; thus we include *Education*, measured as years of schooling and then standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. This standardization allows us to easily compare the relative magnitudes of the effects of education and orthodoxy/modernism (also standardized) on the valuation of autonomy versus obedience. We also include *Occupational Prestige* and *Self-Employment* as indicators of socioeconomic standing and class.⁹ Occupational prestige is standardized from units assigned by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) to a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. Self-employment is measured as a dummy variable (1 = self-employed, 0 = else). Kohn (1976) argued that occupational status or prestige does not capture one of his key indicators of class, occupational self-direction. Unfortunately, the 1998 GSS data do not allow operationalization of this variable.¹⁰ Among our measures of class or social standing, self-employment may come closest to capturing self-direction since the self-employed should have a higher degree of self-direction than people employed by others, which includes workers who are allowed considerable self-direction and those who are not allowed this.

Control variables include *Age* (in years) and *Age Squared*, which allows for a curvilinear relationship between age and values for children, as well as a dummy variable for sex (*Female* = 1, *Male* = 0) and multiple dummies for race (*Black*, *Hispanic*, *Asian*, and *Other Race* with non-Hispanic white as the base category).

Statistical Models

Following Wuthnow (1988:219) and Hunter (1991:46), we assume that the cosmologies of orthodoxy and modernism are overarching moral frameworks from which individuals derive more specific values—including those about traits to be emphasized in children. Similarly, we assume that faith tradition provides a broad theological orientation that affects values, including those on how children should be raised.¹¹ While it is possible that for some adults, a change in their values for children (e.g., a shift toward believing that autonomy in children is more important) results in a change in their moral cosmology or in denominational switching, we assume that it is more likely that a change in moral cosmology or faith tradition (e.g., a shift toward a more individualistic theological stance or a change from an evangelical Protestant church to a mainline Protestant one) results in a change in values for children. Nonetheless, since we are analyzing closely connected religious/moral beliefs and values for children and using cross-sectional data, we do not stress the causal nature of the linkages between these.

While Alwin and Krosnick (1985) have argued persuasively that ranking provides a better measure of respondents' values than ratings since most value choices involve choosing from intrinsically well-regarded alternatives, statistical analyses of ranked data are complicated. Because respondents are asked to choose the values that will best prepare children for life from the most important (which we recode as 5) to the least (1), the outcomes are linearly dependent upon one another (Jackson and Alwin 1980). Given any four of the rankings, the fifth ranking can be determined. Variables with this property are termed *ipsative* measures. The statistical problems with ipsativity can be seen in a correlation matrix where, due to the linear dependency of ranked items,

the average of the intercorrelations is negative (Alwin and Krosnick 1985). This measurement issue makes analyzing ranked data difficult. While the most straightforward approach is to examine only the relative ranking of “think for self” versus “obey” by transforming all of the rankings into a single binary variable indicating whether autonomy was ranked above obedience, this wastes information and does not allow us to examine whether the contrast between obedience and autonomy actually is the most important for understanding religious differences, since only this specific value contrast can be examined.

Fortunately, Allison and Christakis (1994:223) showed that a conditional logit model (the exploded logit model) is statistically appropriate for ranked data, can be easily estimated using a proportional hazards model, and can be interpreted similarly to a standard multinomial logit model. Thus, we initially conducted our analyses in SAS using the PHREG estimation program. Allison and Christakis (1994) also showed that the exploded logit model is equivalent to a fixed-effects multinomial logit model (conditional on which values have already been chosen) when there are no ties in ranking. Since our data contained no ties in ranking, we replicated our initial results using the CLOGIT estimation program in STATA.

For our purposes, the model estimates a five-round ranking process where each ranking round can be viewed as a single multinomial logit in which the respondent chooses the most desired value from the set of remaining values. Thus, the model allows “obey” to be chosen as the base category and then compared with “think for self” (as well as each of the other values) as relative choices at each level of the ranking process. As in multinomial logit, the model is estimated using maximum likelihood and all four contrasts are calculated simultaneously. The equation for a single round of the exploded logit model is:

$$\Pr(y = j | x_i) = \frac{\exp(\beta_j \mathbf{x}_i)}{\sum_{k=1}^J \delta_{ijk} \exp(\beta_k \mathbf{x}_i)}, \quad (1)$$

where i refers to individuals, j refers to the value choice of interest, k refers to all value choices, and δ_{ijk} is an indicator for whether a value has already been chosen. In order to identify the model, the β vector where $j = \text{“obey”}$ is constrained to zero. As a consequence, the odds of choosing “think for self” versus “obey” can be calculated thus:

$$\frac{\Pr(y = \text{thinkself} | \mathbf{x}_i)}{\Pr(y = \text{obey} | \mathbf{x}_i)} = \frac{\frac{\exp(\beta_{\text{thinkself}} \mathbf{x}_i)}{\sum_{k=1}^J \delta_{ijk} \exp(\beta_k \mathbf{x}_i)}}{\frac{1}{\sum_{k=1}^J \delta_{ijk} \exp(\beta_k \mathbf{x}_i)}} = \exp(\beta_{\text{thinkself}} \mathbf{x}_i). \quad (2)$$

RESULTS

We begin by estimating a model that includes moral cosmology (with modernism as high), detailed faith tradition (with evangelical Protestant as the reference category), church attendance, and sociodemographic characteristics as determinants of choosing “think for self,” “work hard,” “help others,” and “be popular” as opposed to “obey” (see Table 1). Since the difference in values for children that we are seeking to understand involves the choice between autonomy and obedience, we focus in this section on the odds ratios, given in the first column, corresponding to the relative choice of “think for self” as compared to “obey” in each ranking round. An asterisk next to the odds ratio indicates a significant preference for autonomy over obedience with regard to that independent variable.

We hypothesized that, regardless of their faith tradition, modernists, as theological individualists relative to the orthodox, will stress thinking for oneself over obedience as a desirable

TABLE 1
EFFECTS OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES SHOWN AS ODDS RATIOS BASED ON
EXPLODED LOGIT MODEL OF GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY, 1998, $N = 659$

Variables	Think for Self Versus Obey	Work Hard Versus Obey	Help Others Versus Obey	Be Popular Versus Obey
Moral cosmology				
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism scale (standardized)</i>	2.25**	1.59**	1.55**	1.50**
Religious participation				
<i>Church attendance</i>	0.95	0.97	0.99	0.95
Faith traditions				
<i>Mainline protestant (vs. evangelical)</i>	1.95**	1.41	1.96**	1.28
<i>Black protestant</i>	1.42	0.72	1.02	1.28
<i>Catholic</i>	2.21**	1.91**	1.47	2.18**
<i>Other faith tradition</i>	2.27	1.75	2.93**	1.57*
<i>No religious affiliation</i>	2.14*	1.47	2.07*	2.13*
Socioeconomic and demographic variables				
<i>Education (standardized)</i>	1.89**	1.23*	1.24*	1.01
<i>Prestige (standardized)</i>	1.23*	1.24*	1.10	1.03
<i>Self-employed</i>	0.99	1.03	1.01	0.74
<i>Female</i>	1.73**	1.00	1.31	0.62**
<i>Age</i>	1.07*	1.04	1.03	1.03
<i>Age squared</i>	1.00*	1.00	1.00	1.00
<i>Black (vs. nonhispanic white)</i>	0.44*	0.84	0.48*	0.67
<i>Hispanic</i>	0.82	1.14	0.91	1.34
<i>Asian</i>	0.13**	1.40	0.62	0.77
<i>Other race</i>	1.11	1.37	1.49	1.43
<i>Constant</i>	0.63	1.17	0.94	0.08*
<i>-2 Ln</i>			4495.95	

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

trait for children. This hypothesis receives strong confirmation in Table 1, where modernists are significantly more likely than the orthodox to value autonomy over obedience. From the standardized coefficients (not shown), moral cosmology is, in fact, the single-most important factor in values for children—more important than education, one of the key elements of class identified by Kohn and Schooler (1969), or faith tradition, the critical variable in Lenski's (1961) analyses. A one standard deviation increase in modernist orientation is associated with a 125 percent (2.25 – 1) increase in the odds of choosing autonomy over obedience as seen in row 1, column 1, of Table 1. The argument of Wuthnow (1988, 1989) and Hunter (1991, 1994) that divisions within faith traditions based on moral cosmology are now of paramount importance in determining values in America is supported by this strong modernism effect.

Nonetheless, within-faith divisions have not completely supplanted denominational differences. There are important differences between evangelical Protestant denominations and others in values for children, even controlling for moral cosmology. As Ellison and Sherkat (1993a) and others have argued, conservative (evangelical) Protestants are distinctive in their values for children when compared to mainline Protestants and Catholics, as well as to those with no religious affiliation. The odds of mainline Protestants choosing “think for self” over “obey” are 95 percent higher than those of similarly situated evangelicals. For Catholics, the odds are 121 percent higher, and for individuals with no religious affiliation, the odds are 114 percent higher. Members of black Protestant churches do not differ significantly from evangelical Protestants in

their values for children, probably reflecting the fact that most predominantly black churches are in the evangelical tradition (Steensland et al. 2000:294). Through analyses not shown in Table 1, we find that including orthodoxy/modernism in our model substantially reduces the difference between evangelical and mainline Protestants, illustrating the consequence of cosmological differences between evangelicals and mainline Protestants that we highlighted in Figure 1. Nonetheless, denominational differences do not disappear after controlling for moral cosmology.

To test whether the effect of moral cosmology on values for children is similar across faith traditions, we include interaction terms of modernism by mainline Protestant, modernism by black Protestant, modernism by Catholic, modernism by other faith tradition, and modernism by no religious affiliation (with the main effect of modernism representing its effect for evangelical Protestants). The results of these analyses are shown in Table 2. The individual interactions are not significant and Wald tests revealed no significant differences between any of the religious groups in the effect of moral cosmology on valuation of autonomy versus obedience. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis that moral cosmology has similar effects on this value contrast across all religious traditions, a finding in accord with Davis and Robinson's (1996a, 1999b, 2001, 2006) finding that cosmology has consistent effects on political attitudes across countries with religious regimes that are predominantly Protestant, Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, and Muslim.

Because exponentiation of interaction coefficients (as found in Table 2, rows 3–7) merely provides the relative change in the odds based on the main effect, such odds ratios are not intuitively interpretable. As a result, we recalculate the odds ratios in Table 3 to show how a standard deviation change in modernism would affect individuals within each religious group. Consequently, the asterisks in Table 3 indicate whether the effect of moral cosmology is significantly different from zero for members of that particular religious group. With the exception of black Protestants, we find that a more modernist outlook is associated with a significantly greater valuation of autonomy over obedience for all groups.

As a further test of differences between faith traditions, we ran separate models for mainline Protestants, evangelical Protestants, and Catholics (not shown) and tested for slope differences in the effect of orthodoxy/modernism on the valuation of autonomy over obedience. (Unfortunately, there were too few cases ($N = 53$) to run a separate model for black Protestants.) Moral cosmology had a significant effect on values within each of these three faith traditions, and using a difference of slopes test, we found no significant difference between these traditions in the effect of orthodoxy/modernism on values for children (results available upon request). Thus, our analyses indicate that the effects of moral cosmology on values for children are not limited to or unique to any specific religious tradition.

Alwin (1986) found church attendance to be positively associated with valuation of obedience in his analyses for the 1980s, but we expected that moral cosmology might help explain some of this effect. With moral cosmology controlled, we find no effect of church attendance in any of our models, with one exception. In the separate regression model for evangelical Protestants mentioned (but not shown) above, we found that higher attendance is significantly related to increased valuation of obedience for evangelicals. This is consistent with an earlier analysis of trends in the valuation of autonomy and obedience from 1986 to 2002, where we found that high-attending evangelicals increasingly value obedience over autonomy (Starks and Robinson 2005). However, in additional analyses of all respondents, we found that an interaction of evangelical by attendance, while in the correct direction, just fails to be significant ($p < 0.06$; details available on request). Thus, we cannot unequivocally confirm the tendency for evangelicals who attend church more frequently to be distinctive in their values for children in our cross-sectional analyses for 1998.

The significant effect of education in Table 1 corroborates Kohn and Schooler's (1969) finding of a strong linkage between "class" (measured as education and occupational self-direction) and values for children. A one standard deviation increase in education is associated with an 89 percent increase in the odds of choosing autonomy over obedience (note that this is considerably smaller

TABLE 2
EFFECTS OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES (WITH INTERACTIONS) SHOWN AS
ODDS RATIOS BASED ON EXPLODED LOGIT MODEL OF GENERAL SOCIAL
SURVEY, 1998, $N = 659$

Variables	Think for Self Versus Obey	Work Hard Versus Obey	Help Others Versus Obey	Be Popular Versus Obey
Moral cosmology				
Orthodoxy-modernism scale (standardized)	2.41**	1.96**	1.67*	1.68
Interactions				
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism mainline</i>	0.88	0.75	0.88	1.38
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism black protestant</i>	0.60	0.96	1.25	0.73
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism Catholic</i>	0.95	0.72	0.98	0.86
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism other faith tradition</i>	1.07	0.85	0.85	1.60
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism no faith tradition</i>	0.92	0.72	0.71	0.58
Religious participation				
<i>Church attendance</i>	0.95	0.97	0.99	0.96
Faith traditions				
<i>Mainline protestant (vs. evangelical)</i>	1.82*	1.22	1.84*	1.09
<i>Black protestant</i>	1.05	0.72	1.22	1.02
<i>Catholic</i>	2.12**	1.68*	1.41	2.09*
<i>Other faith tradition</i>	1.96	1.46	2.90*	0.85
<i>No religious affiliation</i>	2.14	1.50	2.80*	3.68**
Socioeconomic and demographic variables				
<i>Education (standardized)</i>	1.90**	1.22*	1.23*	0.98
<i>Prestige (standardized)</i>	1.22*	1.25*	1.11	1.06
<i>Self-employed</i>	1.00	1.01	1.00	0.72
<i>Female</i>	1.72**	0.98	1.29	0.60**
<i>Age</i>	1.07*	1.04	1.03	1.03
<i>Age squared</i>	1.00*	1.00	1.00	1.00
<i>Black (vs. non-Hispanic white)</i>	0.44*	0.80	0.45*	0.68
<i>Hispanic</i>	0.84	1.14	0.90	1.29
<i>Asian</i>	0.13**	1.37	0.58	0.71
<i>Other race</i>	1.08	1.32	1.47	1.30
<i>Constant</i>	0.67	1.38	0.99	0.10*
<i>-2 Ln</i>			4478.34	

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

than the 125 percent increase expected for a standard deviation increase in orthodoxy/modernism). Occupational prestige, which Kohn (1976) argued is not a measure of occupational self-direction, also affects values for children, with a standard deviation increase in occupational prestige associated with a 23 percent increase in the odds of choosing autonomy over obedience. Surprisingly, self-employment, which should capture some differences in occupational self-direction, has no effect on values for children.

Although we made no specific predictions as to gender, age, or race effects on values for children, we find that women are more likely than men to value independence over obedience. Women's odds of choosing autonomy over obedience are 73 percent higher than men's. Asian Americans and blacks are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to value obedience over autonomy. The relationship between age and values for children is curvilinear. In our earlier analyses of

TABLE 3
EFFECTS OF MORAL COSMOLOGY WITHIN EACH GROUP CALCULATED AS ODDS RATIOS FROM TABLE 2

Variables	Think for Self	Work Hard	Help Others	Be Popular
	Versus Obey	Versus Obey	Versus Obey	Versus Obey
Moral cosmology				
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism index (evangelicals)</i>	2.41**	1.96**	1.67*	1.68
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism index (mainline)</i>	2.12**	1.47	1.47	2.31**
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism index (black Protestant)</i>	1.44	1.88	2.09	1.22
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism index (Catholic)</i>	2.29**	1.41	1.64**	1.44
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism index (other faith tradition)</i>	2.56**	1.68	1.41	2.69*
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism index (no faith tradition)</i>	2.23**	1.42	1.19	0.98

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

TABLE 4
EFFECTS OF SELECTED INDEPENDENT VARIABLES SHOWN AS ODDS RATIOS BASED ON EXPLODED LOGIT MODEL OF GENERAL SOCIAL SURVEY, 1998, $N = 659$ (NOTE: REFERENCE CATEGORY CHANGED TO "THINK FOR SELF")

Variables	Obey	Work Hard	Help Others	Be Popular
	Versus Think for Self	Versus Think for Self	Versus Think for Self	Versus Think for Self
Moral cosmology				
<i>Orthodoxy-modernism scale (standardized)</i>	0.44**	0.71**	0.69**	0.67*
Faith traditions				
<i>Mainline Protestant (vs. evangelical)</i>	0.51**	0.72	1.00	0.65
<i>Black Protestant</i>	0.70	0.51	0.72	0.90
<i>Catholic</i>	0.45**	0.87	0.67*	0.99
<i>Other faith tradition</i>	0.44	0.77	1.29	0.69
<i>No religious affiliation</i>	0.47*	0.69	0.97	1.00
$-2 Ln$		4495.95		

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$.

the GSS data for 1986 to 2002, we found a rise-and-fall pattern for cohorts in the valuation of autonomy, which peaked with the cohort that reached young adulthood during the 1960s and early 1970s, when social movements of young people questioning parental, school, and government authority were rampant (Starks and Robinson 2005).

Examining the Centrality of Obedience Versus Autonomy

While differences in moral cosmology and, to a lesser extent, faith tradition clearly lead to significant differences in the odds of choosing autonomy over obedience, one might still wonder whether these effects are mainly due to differences in the valuation of obedience, rather than to differences in the valuation of both obedience and autonomy (cf. Ellison and Sherkat 1993a). To answer this question, we must examine the relative ordering, not only of obedience and

autonomy vis-à-vis each other, but also of each of these vis-à-vis the three other value choices (i.e., “work hard,” “help others,” and “be popular”). If modernists both value obedience less than the orthodox and value autonomy more (in comparison to other value choices), then we should see that modernists are more likely than the orthodox to choose all of the other value choices over obedience *and* are more likely to choose autonomy over all of the other value choices.

In Table 1, we can see that modernists are significantly more likely than the orthodox to choose all of the other value choices—but especially autonomy—over obedience. To check whether modernists are also more likely than the orthodox to choose autonomy over all the other value choices, we show selected odds ratios in Table 4 for a model with all of the same variables included as in Table 1. Now, however, instead of displaying “obey” as the base category for comparison, we show “think for self” as the base category (the two models are mathematically identical, but changing the reference category allows us to quickly illustrate different contrasts and tests of significance). In Table 4, we can see that modernists are also significantly more likely than the orthodox to choose autonomy over all of the other value choices, but especially over obedience. We conclude that modernists differ significantly from the orthodox with regard to both obedience *and* autonomy, and that the contrast of obedience versus autonomy is of central importance in understanding cosmological differences in values.

Do evangelicals and mainline Protestants differ in their valuation of both obedience *and* autonomy? Similar to the above, if mainline Protestants both value obedience less than evangelicals and value autonomy more (in comparison to other value choices), then mainline Protestants should be more likely than evangelicals to choose all of the other value choices over obedience *and* more likely to choose autonomy over all of the other value choices. While this is not the case, we still find that obedience and autonomy are relatively central to understanding value differences between evangelical and mainline Protestants. In Table 1, we can see that mainline Protestants value helping others, in addition to autonomy, over obedience. In Table 4, however, mainline Protestants significantly differ from evangelical Protestants in valuing autonomy over obedience but not over the other three value choices. We conclude that the values for children differentiating mainline from evangelical Protestants are obedience on the one hand (with evangelicals emphasizing this value relatively more) and autonomy and helping others on the other (with mainline Protestants emphasizing these two values relatively more). Again, the contrast between obedience and autonomy seems central to understanding differences between evangelical and mainline Protestants in values for children in 1998.

DISCUSSION

Our finding that moral cosmology strongly affects valuation of autonomy in children over obedience within the major faith traditions and denominations of the United States is in accord with Davis and Robinson’s (1996a, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2006) finding that cosmological differences between the orthodox and modernists affect cultural and economic attitudes in many countries where Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, and Protestantism predominate. While Wuthnow (1988, 1989) and Hunter (1991, 1994) have documented the rise of cosmological differences in the United States, differences between the orthodox/fundamentalists/religious traditionalists and modernists/religious liberals have arisen throughout the world within all of the Abrahamic faith traditions. Davis and Robinson (2006:169) note that beginning in the decades around the turn of the 20th century, differentiation between the orthodox and modernist cosmologies occurred within Catholicism when the “modernist” movement nearly caused a schism in the church; within Judaism with the development of the Reform movement; within Islam with the rise of Islamic “modernism”; and within Protestantism when fundamentalist churches split from mainline churches. Thus, the value differences between the orthodox and modernists that we have found in the United States are part of a larger differentiation of these cosmologies within all of the Abrahamic faith traditions.

Moreover, our finding that the effect of cosmology on values for children is similar within each of the faith traditions in the United States is in accord with Davis and Robinson's (1996a, 1999a, 1999b, 2001, 2006) finding that a general pattern linking cosmology to cultural and economic beliefs holds in many countries, regardless of the specific religion of the Book that predominates: modernists, who are theologically individualistic, are more liberal on cultural issues of abortion, sexuality, family, and gender than the theologically communitarian orthodox, but are more conservative on economic issues of caring for the poor, equalizing incomes, and nationalizing businesses to provide for the common good. This pattern, which they found in 18 nations, holds despite the fact that Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Islam, Judaism, and Protestantism differ in key respects in their theological tenets and are sometimes ambiguous or internally inconsistent on cultural and/or economic matters. Davis and Robinson (2006) conclude that it is not adherence or nonadherence to the religious doctrines of these faith traditions that is responsible for the effects of moral cosmology, but rather the theological individualism—with its emphasis on individual freedom and individual responsibility—of modernists of all religions of the Book, and the theological communitarianism—with its controlling and its caring sides—of their orthodox counterparts. In this article, we have shown that these cosmological differences are key to differences in how Americans value independence and obedience.

CONCLUSIONS

Through analyses of national data from the 1998 GSS, we identified a religious factor that is today more important than other religious, demographic, and socioeconomic factors in understanding Americans' values for children. Building on Alwin's (1986) finding of differences within Catholics and Protestants in their valuation of autonomy, and following Wuthnow's (1988, 1989) and Hunter's (1991, 1994) arguments that the American religious landscape is now dominated by differences within the major faith traditions, we explored differences between theological modernists, who see individuals and not a deity as the ultimate arbiters of moral authority and hold to a largely individually directed universe, and the religiously orthodox, who view the Bible and church as ultimate sources of moral authority and who see individuals as subject to God's will and judgment. We hypothesized that modernists, as theological individualists, are more likely than the theologically communitarian religiously orthodox to value autonomy in children and less likely to value obedience to authority. Supporting Wuthnow's and Hunter's claims regarding the restructuring of American religion, we found that moral cosmology is the single-most important factor in the adult values for children, with theological modernists, as expected, being more likely than the religiously orthodox to stress thinking for oneself over obedience.

At the same time, our analyses call into question the idea that divisions within faith traditions based on moral cosmology have completely replaced denominational divisions as the basis of differentiation in values. We find, instead, that, controlling for orthodoxy/modernism, evangelical Protestants differ significantly from Catholics, mainline Protestants, and those who report no religious affiliation, pointing to the distinctiveness of conservative Protestants with regard to their greater valuation of obedience in children. This distinctiveness with regard to parental values was recognized earlier by Ellison and Sherkat (1993a) and probably helps to sustain their unique parenting practices (Bartkowski and Ellison 1995; Bartkowski and Wilcox 2000; Ellison and Sherkat 1993a, 1993b; Wilcox 1998, 2004). Orthodoxy/modernism and denomination, or faith tradition, are independently associated with differences in adult values for children. Moral cosmology differentiates individuals within each of the major denominational groups (including evangelical Protestants) in their values for children, while among individuals holding similar moral cosmologies, there are differences between evangelical Protestants and other denominational groups in the values they seek in children. Moral cosmology is more important than faith tradition in differentiating these values, but it is incorrect to say that moral cosmology has replaced denominational differences in the American religious landscape.

In addition to uncovering important linkages between religion and the values that Americans would like to see taught to children, we were also able to confirm the continued importance of “class” as a factor in conformity, if class is assumed to encompass education. Well-educated people are significantly more likely than less-educated people to value autonomy and to de-emphasize obedience to authority, as Kohn and Schooler (1969) found in analyses of NORC data for 1964 and as Kohn and others have replicated since. In addition, occupational prestige, though not a measure of occupational self-direction, is associated with valuing autonomy over obedience. On the other hand, self-employment, which should better capture occupational self-direction, is not a significant factor in values for children.

We conclude that differences within faith traditions in moral cosmology are of paramount importance in understanding the traits that Americans hope to foster in children. As a religious corollary to Rubin’s (1976) finding that adults pragmatically seek to inculcate values that they have found useful in their work lives, our findings suggest that Americans hope to instill in children those moral/cosmological values that they, themselves, have found most necessary and useful in their own religious lives. Orthodox religionists have learned the importance of obedience to an absolute, timeless moral order in coping with the changing moral climate and values of modern society. Modernists, in contrast, have learned the value of independent, contextualized thinking in coming to terms with a fluid and chaotic world. As we have seen, Americans adhering to each of these moral cosmologies seek to instill in children the values and traits that have served them well in making moral choices in the complex and ambiguous situations they confront daily.

NOTES

1. Lenski (1961) used the terms autonomy and heteronomy, which correspond to Kohn’s (1959) distinction between self-direction and conformity. We use these terms interchangeably in this article.
2. Davis and Robinson (1999b, 2001, 2005, 2006) use modernist for this cosmology in preference to Hunter’s (1991) progressive, which has political connotations that they have found to be incorrect for economic issues.
3. The communitarianism of the orthodox is corroborated by Ryle and Robinson’s (2006) finding for Americans that orthodoxy is the single-most important factor promoting feelings of community across a wide range of sources of community (their neighbors, friends, fellow congregants, co-workers or fellow students, and ethnic group members).
4. The cultural and economic individualism of modernists has its precedent in classical European liberalism, which combined freedom of speech, thought, religion, etc. with *laissez faire* economic policies.
5. Using multivariate comparisons of missing to nonmissing cases, we found few significant differences. Missing cases tend to be older and somewhat more likely to choose “obey” over “work hard” as a value to instill.
6. Kohn and Schooler’s (1969) measure is somewhat different, though comparable in its ranked nature and in its evaluation of elements of conformity versus self-direction.
7. The loadings for the three items are as follows: 0.67 for BIBLE, 0.65 for GODWATCH, and 0.61 for FOLLOW.
8. Since there is a high degree of collinearity between the two measures (0.73), we limit our discussion of the race results. We reran all of our analyses excluding the race dummies, with no change in the substantive results (details available on request).
9. Additional models were run in which family income was included as a measure of class, but it was not significant and further reduced the overall sample size due to missing data (results available upon request). As such, it was dropped from the analyses shown.
10. Robinson and Kelley (1979) argued that the GSS variables WKSUP (having supervisors) and WKSUB (having subordinates) are good indicators of class relations, and have effects, independent of education, occupational prestige, and income, on subjective class and political attitudes. These variables, especially WKSUP, might have captured Kohn’s concept of self-direction, but due to the split-ballot design of GSS, they are only available for a small subsample of the respondents analyzed here, thus we do not include them in our models.
11. We use the GSS variable RELIG (current faith tradition) rather than RELIG16 (“religion in which you were raised”) in our analyses. While the use of faith tradition as a child would more definitively address the question of causal order, it would not have allowed for an examination of interactions of faith tradition with moral cosmology or church attendance because these are measured currently and not when the respondent was growing up.

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