

Religion and Politics at Iowa State University:
Results from the 2016 Cyclone Religion and Politics
Survey

A Project of POL S 370: Religion and Politics
Under the Direction of Professor Amy Erica Smith

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

By Lissandra Villa and Amy Erica Smith

The college years constitute a period in which many new adults learn new political attitudes, develop habits of democratic tolerance and debate, and learn what it means to exercise citizenship. As participants in a major university community in the first state to hold primary elections in the 2016 presidential race, ISU students had unusual access to presidential candidates in late 2015 and early 2016. How did students respond to those candidates? Whom did they like and dislike? And more generally, what do ISU students think about major public issues, such as religious tolerance and discrimination?

During the spring semester of 2016, the students of Political Science 370 (Religion and Politics), under the direction of Dr. Amy Erica Smith, sent a survey out to all Iowa State University students. The purpose of the Cyclone Religion and Politics Survey was to understand how topics discussed in the course—for example, religious tolerance, separation of church and state, voting behavior, and conflict—affected students’ own lives. Since a study like this has not previously been conducted at such a level of specificity, this research helped narrow the conversation to a more relevant level of discussion for the ISU community.

The results demonstrate what the political and religious landscape looked like at Iowa State that spring. This is valuable information because it can give insight into how religion shapes the way ISU students approach politics, which is particularly useful to know in an election year.

Out of approximately 36,000 students at the university, 1,193 responses were collected anonymously from students that chose to participate.¹ (See the Appendix for the questionnaire.) The results throughout this study are weighted to make the sample equivalent to the ISU student population in terms of gender, race, and academic rank. Still, other biases may be present in the data. In particular, students who responded to the survey are likely to be somewhat more interested in both religion and politics than other ISU students. Nonetheless, there is no reason to suspect that respondents were more or less liberal or conservative, or more or less religious, than non-respondents.

The remainder of this chapter describes ISU students’ core religious and political preferences. In Chapters 2 through 9, student teams report results from questions on topics of particular interest to them. These chapters deal with topics such as parents’ role in influencing students’ beliefs; students’ experiences of discrimination; and attitudes toward evolution, public prayer, free speech, and diverse religious groups.

Positions on the Political Spectrum

One of the initial questions students received was:

¹ Informal inquiries indicate that many ISU students—perhaps half—did not receive the mass mailing, which came from ConstantContact.com and was eliminated by many spam filters. ISU students also receive many emailed requests for help with research each day, and some students deliberately remove themselves from the contact list.

How would you describe your position on the political spectrum? Very conservative, Somewhat conservative, Neither liberal nor conservative, Somewhat liberal, or Very liberal?

Figure 1 shows that 45.4 percent of respondents identified as “liberal” or “very liberal,” compared to 33.1 percent as “conservative” or “very conservative.” “Liberal” and “conservative” students were nearly evenly balanced. The more noticeable difference is at the extremes: 19.1 percent of students responded as “very liberal,” compared to only 8.4 percent of students who responded as “very conservative.” Just under a quarter of students (21.5 percent) reported they were “neither.”

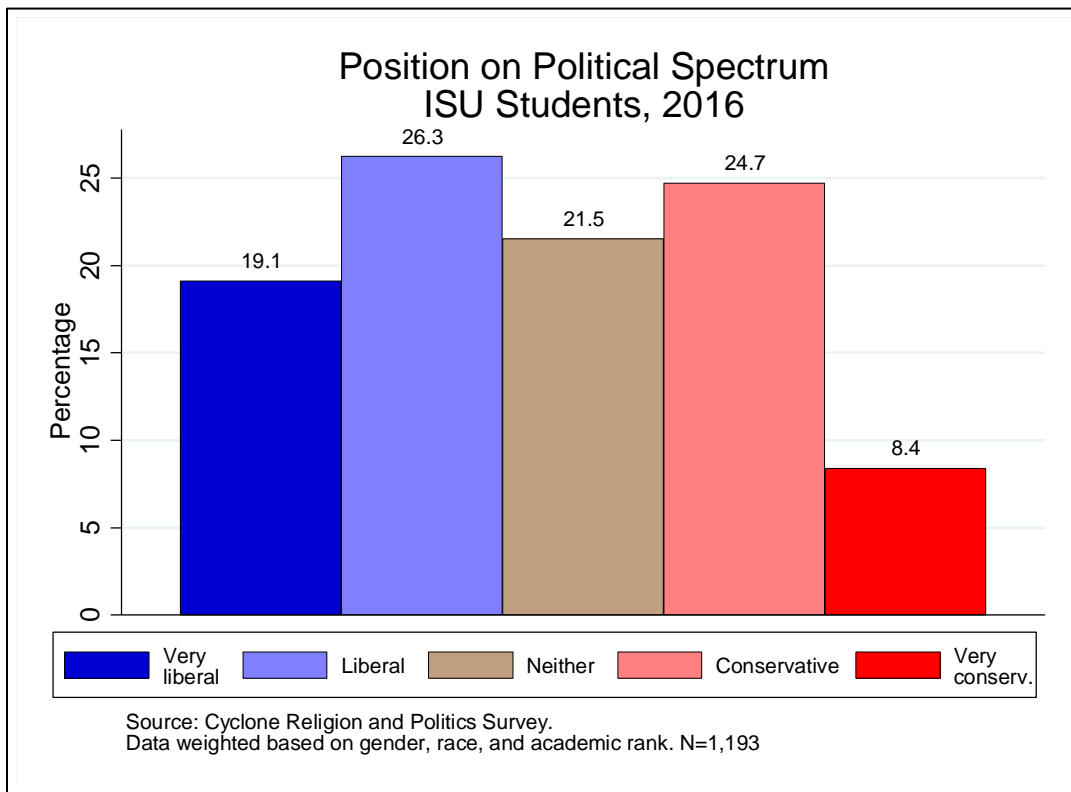


Figure 1. ISU Students' Positions on the Political Spectrum

Party Preferences

The survey also asked about party preferences, using a standard set of four questions. The first question, administered to all respondents, read:

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or a member of some other party? [Respondents saying some other party were given the option to enter the party.]

Respondents who said they were Republican or Democrat then received a question asking:

Would you call yourself a strong (Democrat/Republican) or a not very strong (Democrat/Republican)?

And respondents who said they were independent or a member of some other party received the following question:

Do you generally consider yourself closer to the Republicans or the Democrats?

Figure 2 shows that a little over half of respondents identified as a Republican or a Democrat in response to the first question: 32.0% as “strong” or “not very strong” Democrats, and 25.4% as “strong” or “not very strong” Republicans. Of those who initially said they were “Independent” or a “member of some other party,” nearly all reported that they generally considered themselves closer to one of the two major parties. Thus, just under a quarter of respondents said they lean toward the Democrats (24.6 percent), and 16.8 percent said they were leaning Republican.

Students’ positions on the political spectrum were not necessarily aligned with their party preferences. Nearly a quarter of students who responded (21.5 percent) reported they were neither liberal nor conservative, yet only 1.3 percent of students refused to identify a party to which they were closer.

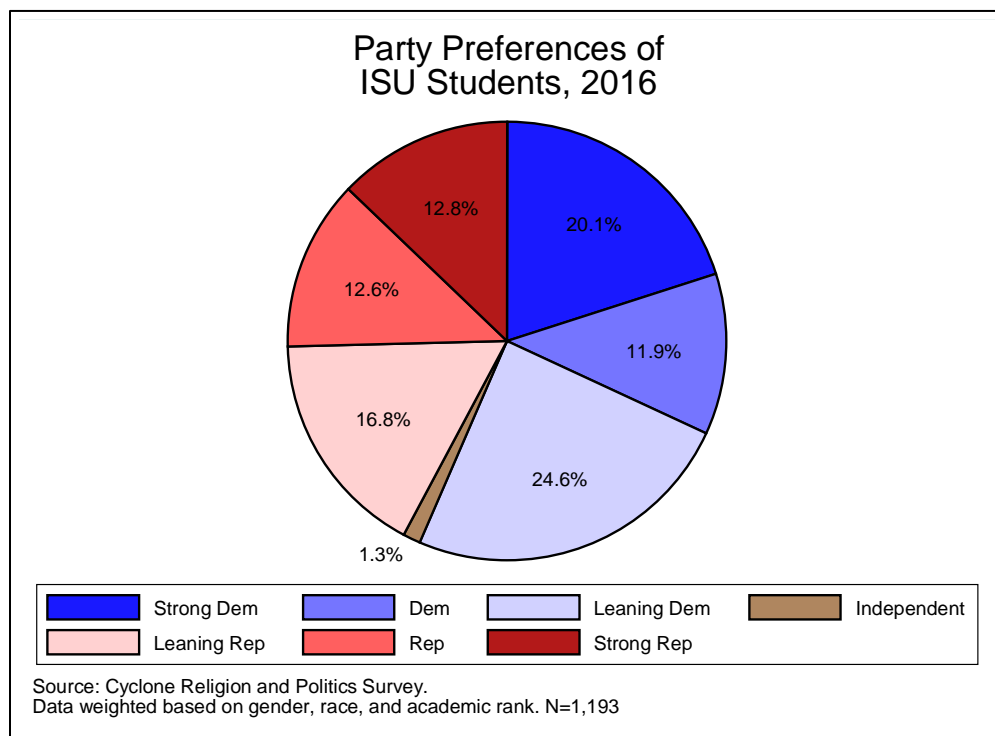


Figure 2. ISU Students' Party Preferences

Participation in Caucuses/Primaries (Only Among ISU Students Who Are Citizens)

All students who reported that they were citizens and eligible to vote (1,100 respondents) were

asked:

During the 2016 campaign, have you voted in a primary election or caucus in any state, or will you participate in an upcoming primary or caucus?

Engagement in caucuses and primaries was moderate, with a little over half of students reporting participation: 32.3 percent in a Democratic caucus/primary, and 23.4 percent in a Republican caucus/primary. Students identifying as Republicans were somewhat less engaged: 52.0 percent of Republicans and 59.4 percent of Democrats said they had participated or would participate in a caucus or primary.

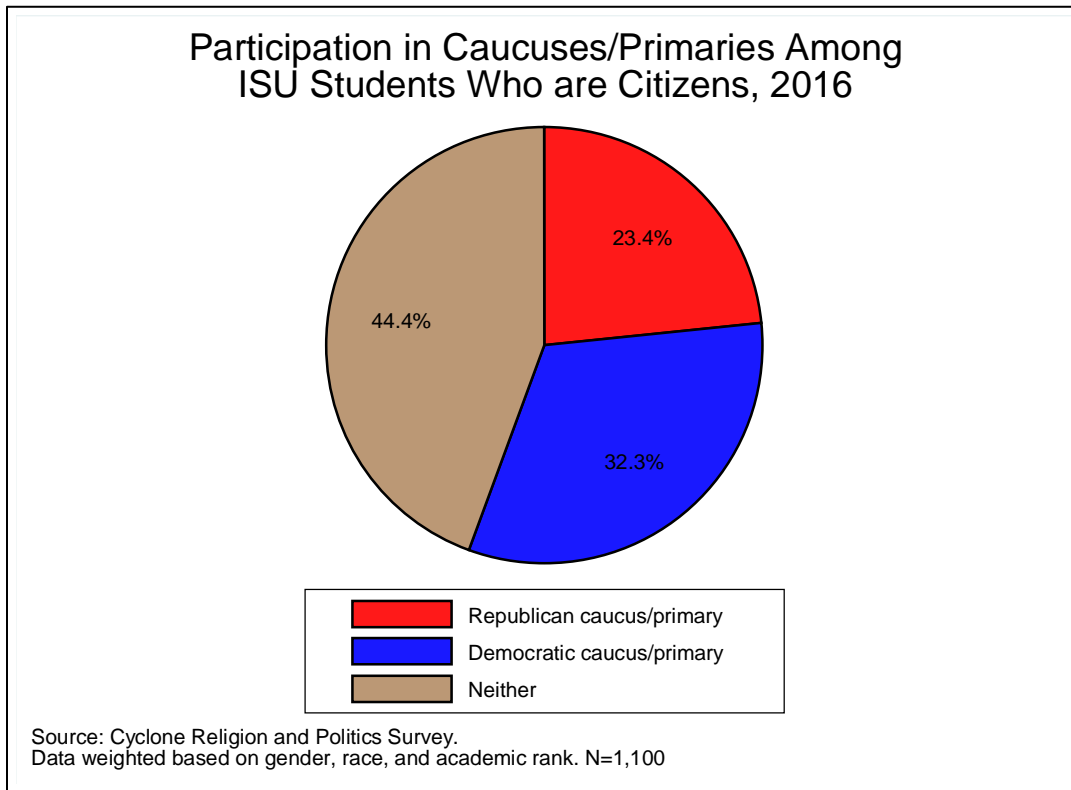


Figure 3. Participation in Caucuses or Primaries

Preferred Candidates

All respondents were asked:

Which of the following candidates did you/will you support? Donald Trump, Ted Cruz, John Kasich, Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders?

Figure 4 shows that Bernie Sanders supporters came in with the highest percentage of responses at 33.2 percent, and “undecided/none” as the closest contender at 28.9 percent of responses. Ted Cruz was the next-closest candidate with a significant drop in support at 12.8 percent. Hillary Clinton followed closely, with 11.1 percent of the student responses. John Kasich took 8.9

percent of the responses and Donald Trump came in last at 5.1 percent. This survey was sent out more than a month after the Iowa caucuses, which Ted Cruz and Hillary Clinton won.

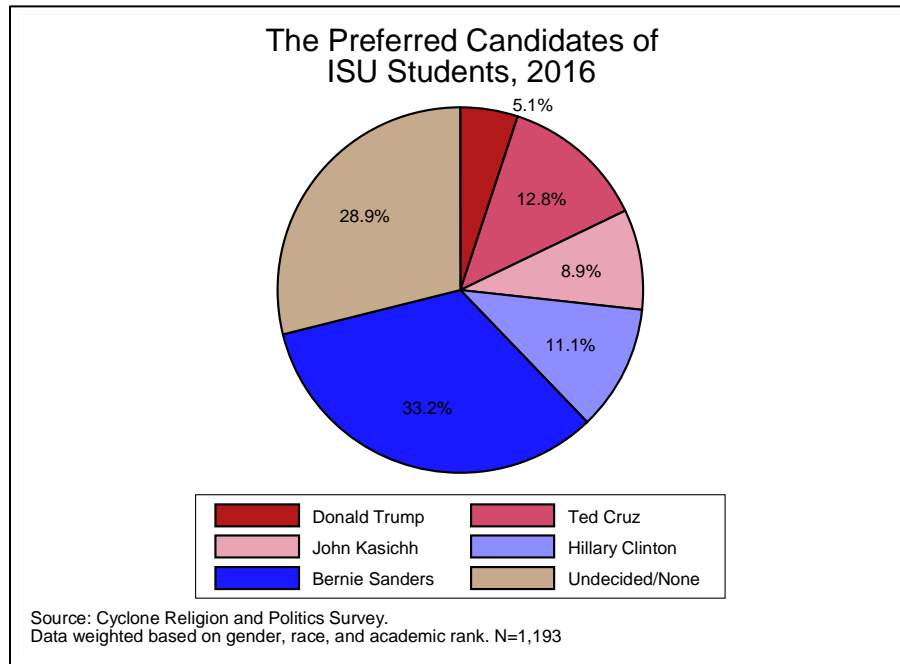


Figure 4. ISU Students' Preferred Candidates

Self-Reported Likelihood of Voting in November

Finally, students were asked:

How likely is it that you will vote in the upcoming general election for president in November?

Figure 5 shows that a majority (69.5 percent) of students reported they are “very likely” to vote in the general election, even though nearly half of students reported not having participated in either party’s caucus/primary. Just about one-in-ten said it was “very” or “somewhat unlikely” that they would vote in November.

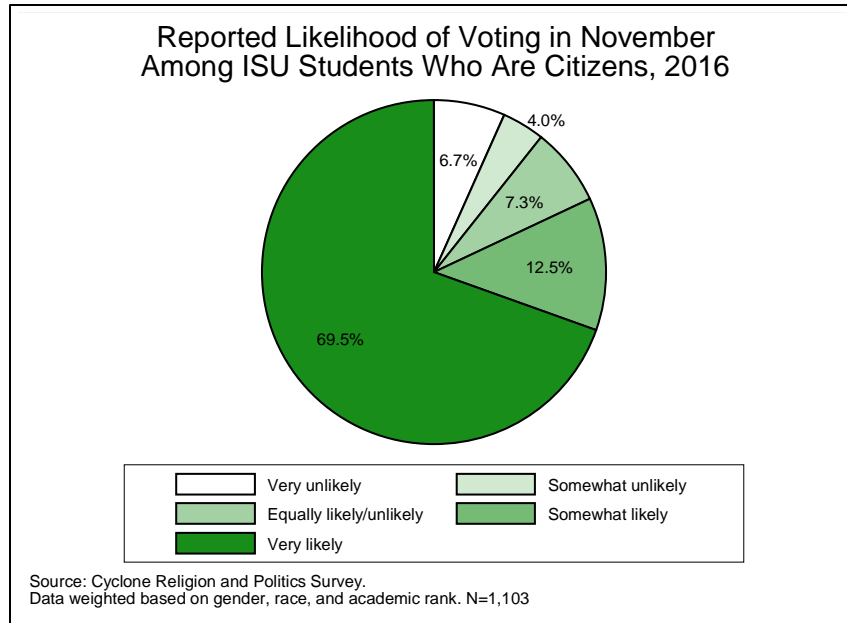


Figure 5. Self-Reported Likelihood of Voting in General Election

Religious Affiliations

Students were also asked about their religious preferences or beliefs. The first question referred to religious affiliations, and asked simply:

| What is your religious preference?

Figure 6 shows that overall, 56.1 percent of respondents identified as Christian, and 39.2 percent as non-religious. Looking at specific categories, the largest portion of responses was from the 25.6 percent of students who reported being atheist or agnostic. The second, third, fourth and fifth most selected religions were Catholicism at 19.5 percent, “another type of Christian” at 18.5 percent, Protestantism at 18.1 percent and “nothing in particular” at 13.6 percent.

The other response options were Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and “some other religion.” Those options combined constituted religious preferences for less than five percent of survey respondents.

Students with these minority religious preferences may have been more likely to be international students, and thus ineligible to participate as non-citizens.

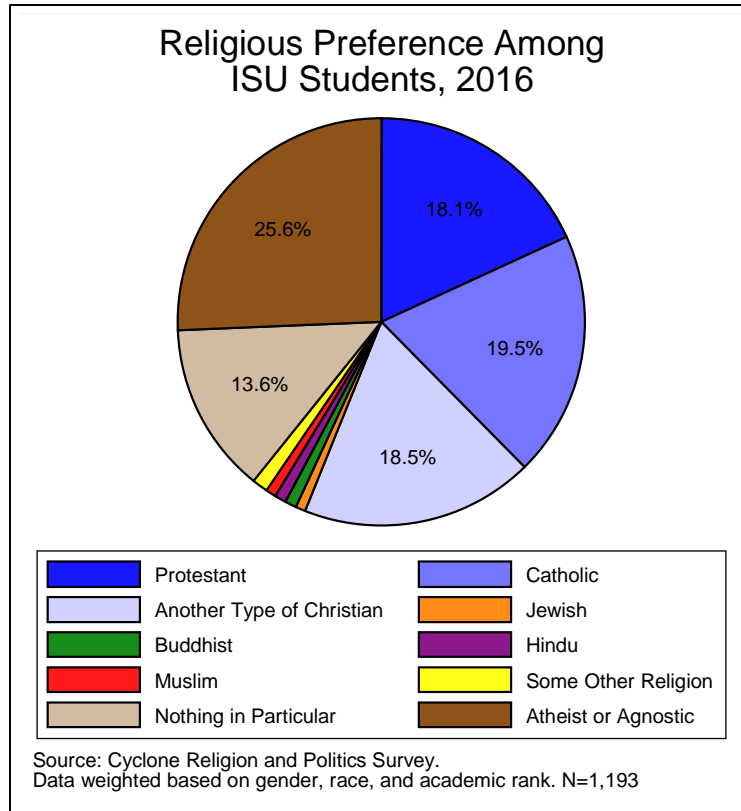


Figure 6. Religious Affiliation

Figure 7 breaks out religious preference by political party. Those who say they identify with a political party are grouped together with “leaners”—those who say they are “independent” or “a member of another party,” but identify a party to which they are closer. Religious preferences differ greatly between the two groups. Among Republicans, 82.8 percent identify as Christian, and only 15.8 percent as non-religious. Among Democrats, only 36.4 percent identify as Christian, and 56.9 percent as non-religious. Those of non-Christian religions are also much more likely to identify as Democrats than as Republicans. While 6.9 percent of Democrats claim a non-Christian religion, only 1.4 percent of Republicans do so.

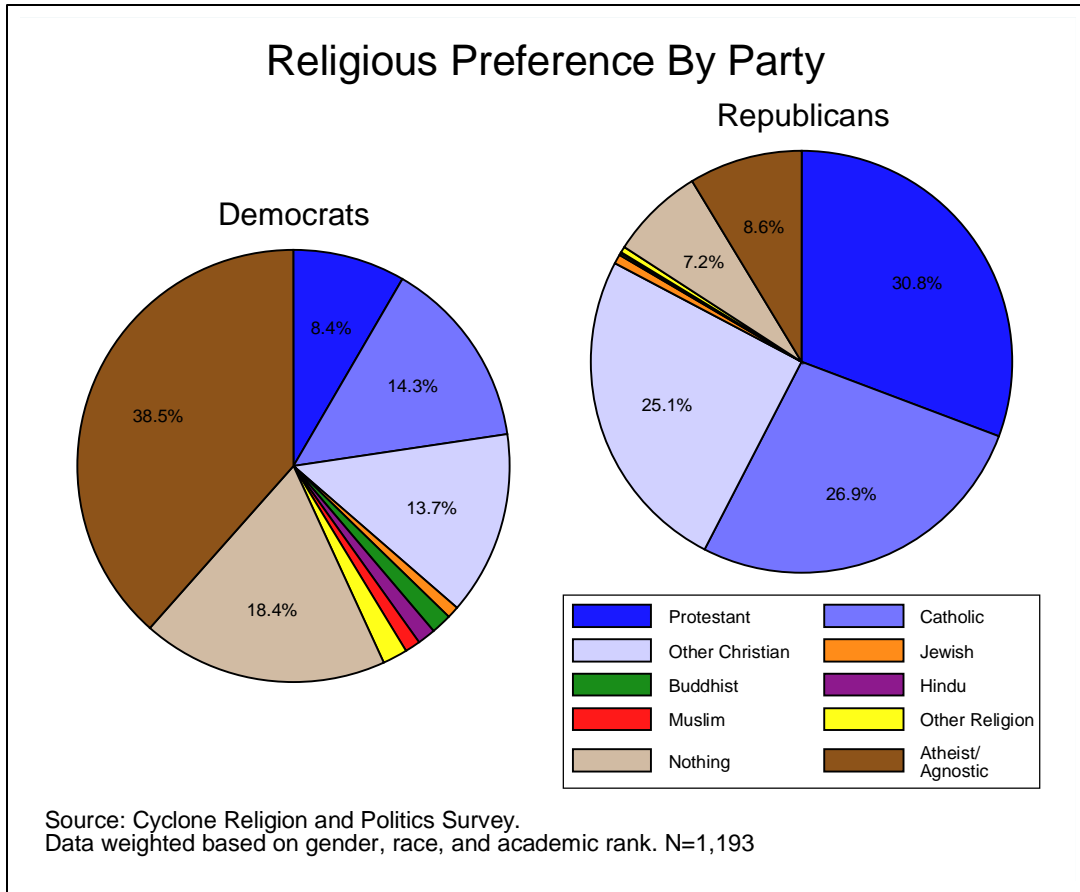


Figure 7. Religious Affiliation, by Political Party

Frequency of Religious Attendance

Next, the survey asked:

| How often do you attend religious services?

Figure 8 shows that students reported attending religious services rather infrequently. A combined 25.5 percent of respondents said they attended services more than once a week or once a week, at 9.7 percent and 15.8 percent respectively. Meanwhile, 63.9 percent said they attend service just “a few times a year” (21.3 percent) or “rarely” (19.5 percent) or never (22.9 percent).

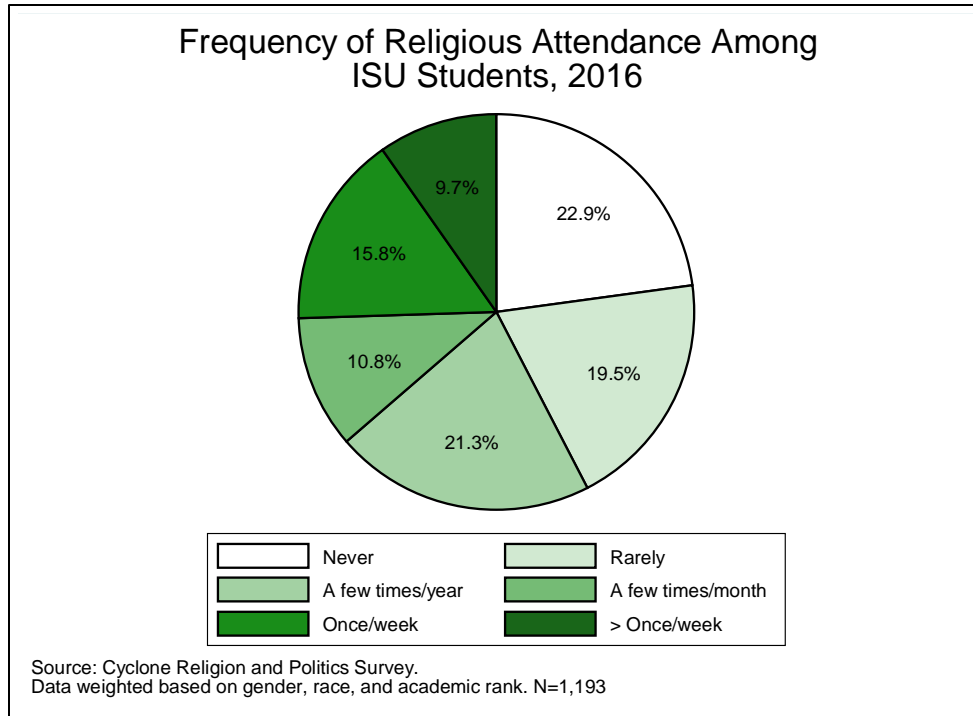


Figure 8. Frequency of Religious Attendance

Interpretation of Holy Texts/Scriptures

Students were also asked about how they interpreted sacred religious texts:

Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the holy scripture of your religion, if any?

Scripture is an ancient book recorded by men.

Scripture is the inspired word of God.

Scripture is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally.

Figure 9 indicates that more than a third of respondents (39.2 percent) said holy texts were the “inspired word of God.” That option’s closest contender, “no religion,” came in at 26.1 percent. In third place was “ancient book recorded by men,” which took 25.6 percent. Only 9.1 percent of students interpreted them as the “actual word of God,” to be taken literally.

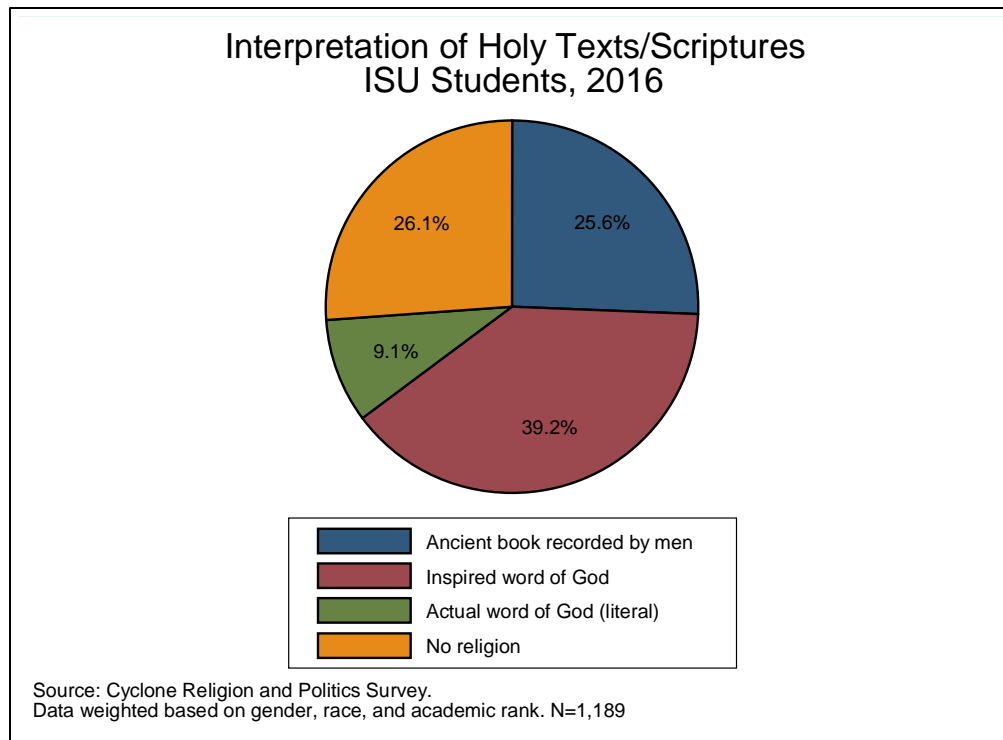


Figure 9. Interpretation of Holy Texts/Scriptures

About the Authors

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CHAPTER TWO: Perceptions of the Impact of Religion on Political Beliefs

By Kelsey Labuda, Elli Rigolle, Joshua Swagler, David Wynstra, and James Zegler

This chapter will explore trends in students' self-reported levels of religious influence on partisan identification as well as students' perceptions of how much religion influences the partisan identifications of their peers. The following two questions were asked of Iowa State University students:

Do you believe that religious beliefs affect which party your peers identify with? If so, to what degree?

- A. Yes, strongly
- B. Yes, somewhat
- C. No

Do you believe your own religious beliefs affect which party you personally identify with? If so, do what degree?

- A. Yes, strongly
- B. Yes, somewhat
- C. No
- D. I am not religious

The group's research question probed the surveyed Iowa State students to report whether they believe their fellow students' religious beliefs affect their partisan identification; the group also asked Iowa State students whether they believed their own religious convictions influenced their partisan identification, and, if yes, to what degree. By asking both of these questions in the survey, the group had the chance to see if there is any discrepancy between the respondents' self-reported responses and degree to which they feel their peers' partisan identification is affected by their religious identification.

The presence of a discrepancy between responses to the two questions has revealed valuable information regarding the interaction of religion and politics at Iowa State University. This information is valuable in that it provides insight into how Iowa State students take religion into account when aligning with a particular political party and to what degree they believe their peers do the same. Had the group found that students reported a relatively similar level of influence for themselves and their peers, they might have been able to conclude that Iowa State students have a realistic view, as depicted by the average self-reported levels of religious influence from the survey data, of how religious identification influences partisan identification. Had the group found that students self-report high levels of religious influence on their partisan identification, but believed that their peers are significantly less likely to be politically influenced by their religious beliefs, they might have inferred that students hold a righteous view (assuming they believe religion should have political ramifications and that their position is superior to strict secularists) of their own partisan identification while condemning the secularization of their peers. However, since the survey results indicate that respondents self-report significantly lower levels of religious influence on partisan identification, one could possibly infer that students hold a cynical view (assuming they dislike the mixing of religion and politics and believe their more

strict separationist view to be superior to the accommodationist view) of the degree to which their peers are politically influenced by their religious beliefs. The fact that this discrepancy was found between self-reported responses and respondents' views on the religious influence their peers takes into account when registering with a particular party is telling in and of itself.

The first conclusion confirms that ISU students self-report lower levels of religious influence on their partisan identification than they attribute to their peers. Figure 10 gives a side-by-side comparison of respondents' answers to the two questions, showing that students self-report religious beliefs as having less of an impact on their political affiliation (a total of 56.3% reporting either no religious impact on partisan identification or reporting no religion) than the impact they perceive their peers to experience (only 15.4% of respondents reporting that religion has no impact on their peers' party choice).

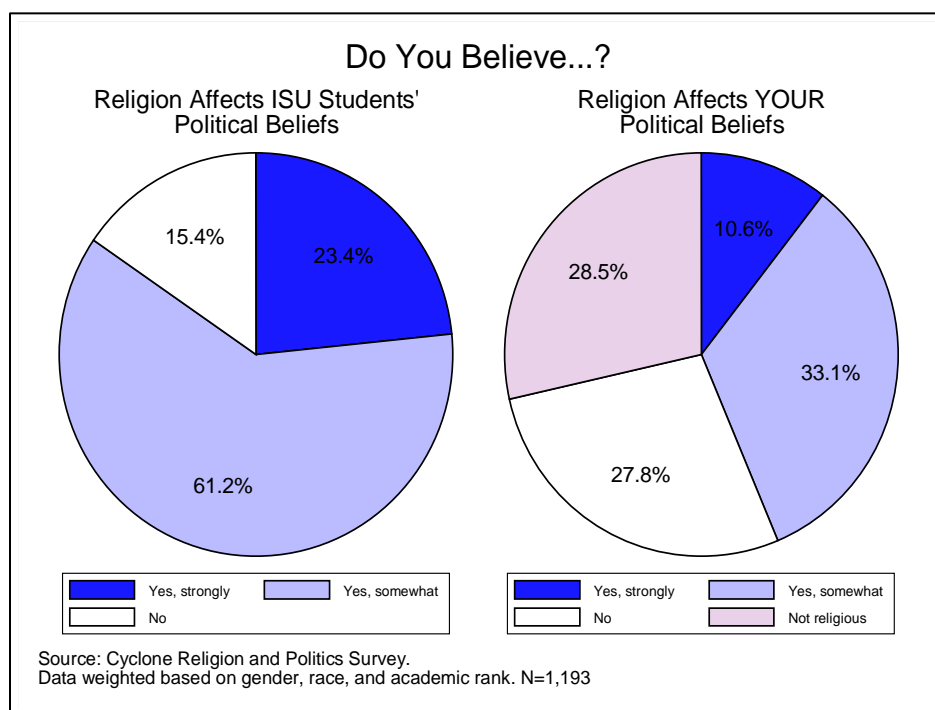


Figure 10. Religion's Impact on Political Beliefs

Secondly, ISU students who identify as Democrats are less likely to report religious influence on their partisan identification than their Republican counterparts. Roughly 30% of respondents identifying as strong Democrats, Democrats, and Independents leaning Democrat report religious influence on partisan identification. Conversely, the stronger the Republican, the higher the percentage reporting religious influence on partisan identification (approximately 50% of leaning Republicans, 60% of Republicans, and 75% of strong Republicans). Independents present a curious trend, with close to 60% reporting religious influence on partisan identification, similar to those identifying as Republicans; however, since the confidence interval ranges from about 35%-85%, one cannot with confidence make strong inferences about this group.

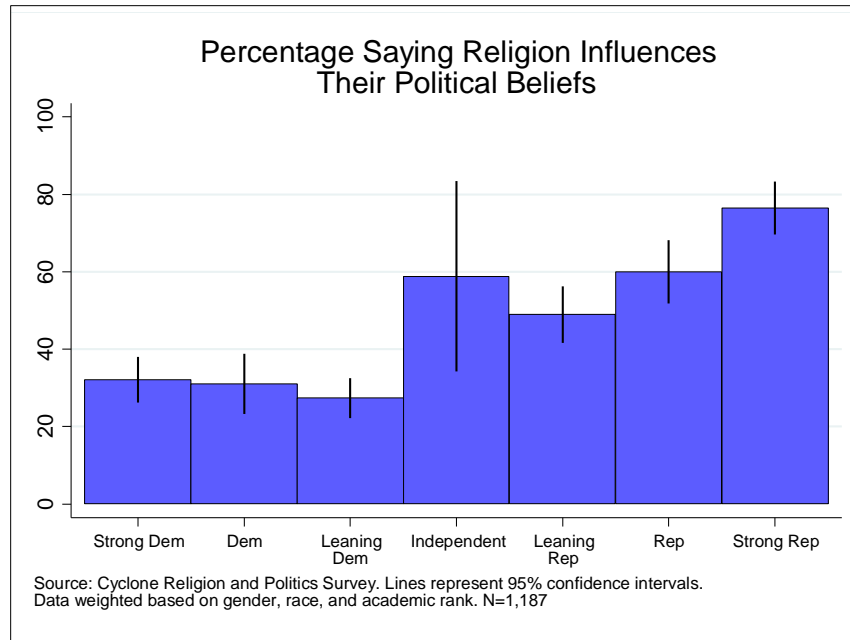


Figure 11. Religion's Impact on Political Beliefs, by Party Affiliation

When examining the survey questions by religious identity, one can identify yet other trends. Figure 12 shows religious influence on political affiliation by religious identification, including categories for Catholic, Protestant or other types of Christian, Other Religion (Non-Christian) and None. At approximately 65%, ISU students identifying as Protestant or other Christians report higher levels of religious influence on their partisan identification than do Catholics (approximately 60%), other non-Christian religions (approximately 40%) and 'nones' (approximately 15%).

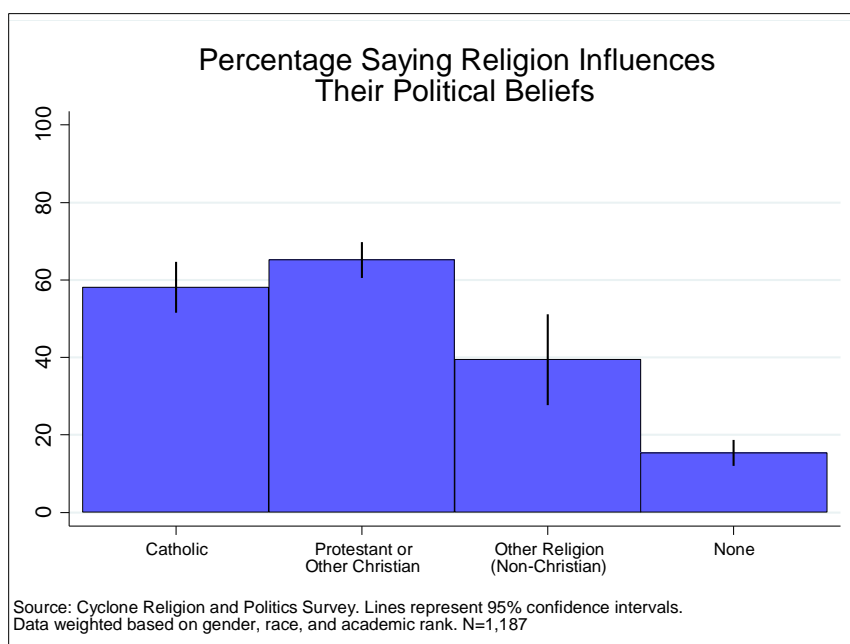


Figure 12. Religion's Impact on Political Beliefs, by Religious Affiliation

White, Evangelical Protestants report higher levels of religious influence on partisan identification. Figure 13 shows the breakdown of those identifying as non-Catholic Christians and their respective reported religious influence on partisan identification. The group concluded that white Evangelicals have the highest levels of reported religious influence on partisan identification, at just over 80%. It is important to note that because of the small number of racial minorities surveyed, the confidence interval for their data in Figure 4 is much wider than the confidence intervals of white non-Catholic Christian categories. However, one can most definitely conclude that white Evangelicals report higher levels of religious influence on partisan identification than their white counterparts in the Mainline and other Christian denominations. In sum, among those ISU students who identify as non-Catholic Christians, white Evangelicals report levels higher than other denominations and racial minorities of their religious beliefs affecting their partisan identification.

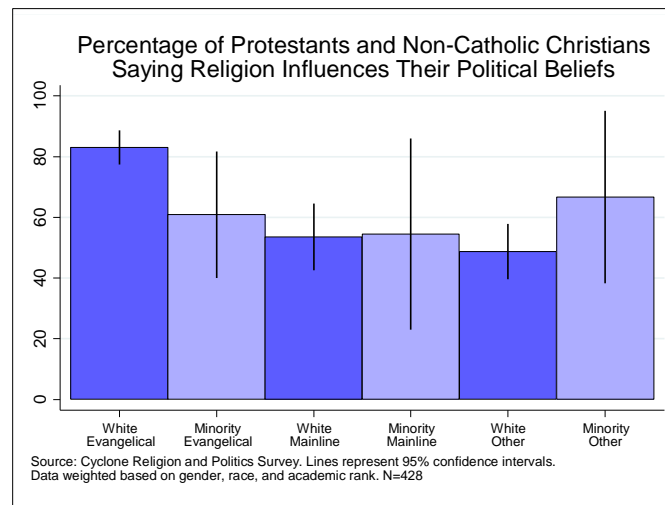


Figure 13. Religion's Impact on Political Beliefs, by Race and Religion

Further studies should be conducted on ISU racial minorities and the levels of religious influence they experience on their partisan identification. By further examining racial minorities at ISU, future researchers might have a better idea about how and why religion influences these groups to a different degree. It would also be interesting to clarify where politically Independent students fall since the sample size was too small to draw meaningful conclusions from the data. Perhaps the most interesting conclusion drawn from the survey questions was the discrepancy between students' self-reported levels of religious influence on their own partisan identification and the levels of religious influence they perceived their peers to take into account when choosing their political parties. One could cautiously infer from this discrepancy that students at Iowa State University are cynical about the role religion play in politics, since self-reported levels of religious influence on partisan identification are much lower than the levels reported for peers. Or one could infer that the media over-emphasizes the role of religion in politics, creating a false perception that students' peers take religion into account more than they actually do. Further surveys would have to be conducted to tease out why the discrepancy exists and what role the media may play in these perceptions.

About the Authors

Elli Rigolle is a senior, majoring in Political Science and French and will be continuing her education by pursuing a Master's degree at American University in International Peace and Conflict Resolution.

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David Wynstra is a junior, majoring in History with a minor in Political Science.

CHAPTER THREE: Perceptions of the Impact of Religion on Political Beliefs

By Daniel Fitzgerald, Nathaniel Overberg, Tori Pavillard, Aaron Schleisman, and Jacob Swegle

This group sought to understand if today's youth really is the least affected by religiosity within the political realm. The purpose was to gain more insight into the minds of today's college students concerning their beliefs on the relationship between the political system and religion. By asking these questions it was hoped that insight would be gathered into if and how much young people's political views are influenced by their religious views and vice versa.

The importance of a candidate's religion and separation between church and state

The following questions were asked to gain insights on the students' values.

| **How important is the separation of religion and government to you?**

| **How important is a candidate's religious practice or beliefs to you?**

Figure 14 shows how college students feel about the importance of the separation of church and state as well as their views on the importance of a candidate's religiosity. The average perceived importance of separation of church and state to college students is more than double the average perceived importance of a candidate's religious views.

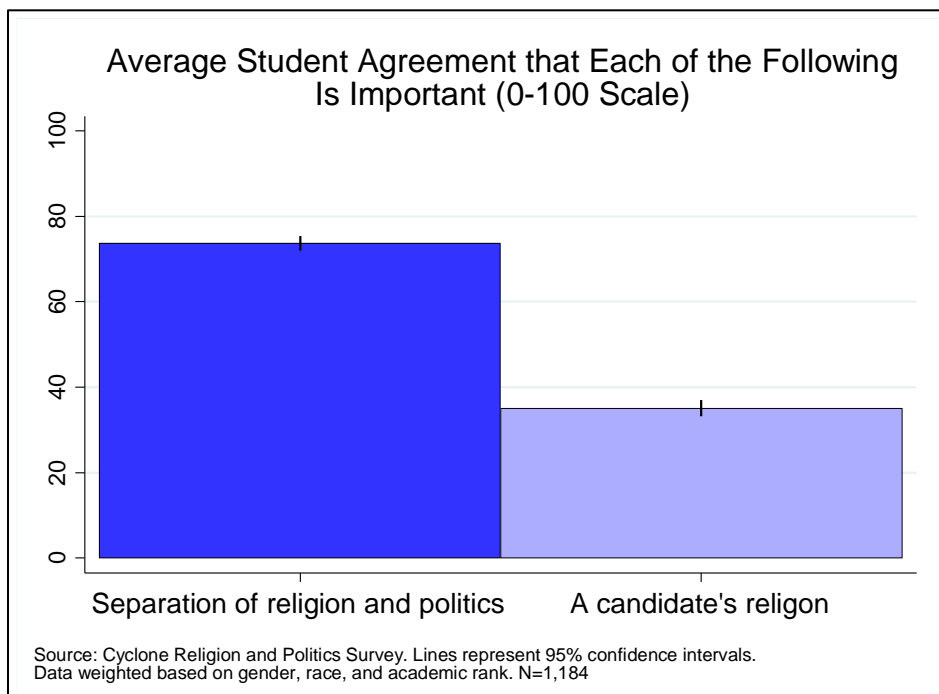


Figure 14. Average Student Agreement that Separation of Religion and Politics and a Candidate's Religion are Important

Figure 15 shows a more detailed analysis of the average importance of separation of church and state to Iowa State students, by political affiliation. The results show that views regarding a

separation of church and state are favored heavily by the left side of the political spectrum with strong Democrats rating the importance as a 90, or extremely important, on a 0-100 scale. However, the majority of Republicans also favor a separation of church and state with strong Republicans averaging at roughly 55, which falls between slightly important and moderately important.

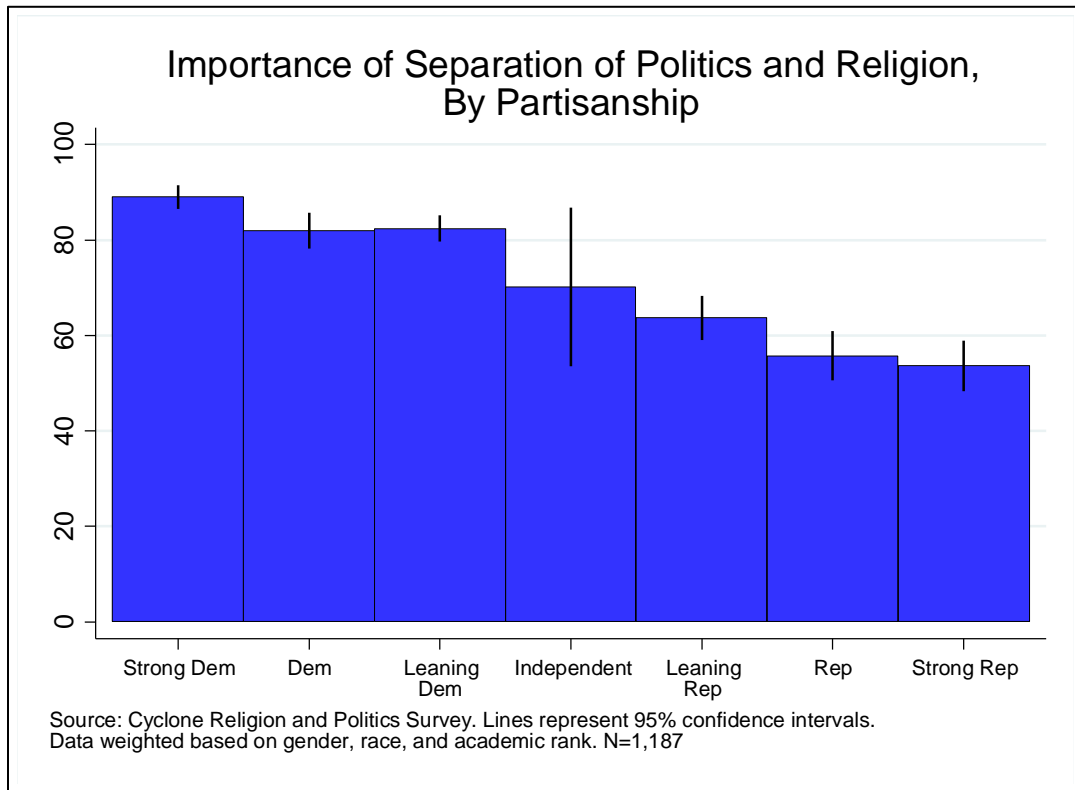


Figure 15. Importance of Separation of Politics and Religion, by Partisanship

Figure 16 shows a more detailed analysis of the data received on the importance of the separation of church and state in regards to religious attendance. Unsurprisingly, the separation of church and state is more important to those who do not or rarely attend a church service. Groups who never attend and rarely attend church on average found a separation of church and state to be somewhere between moderately important and extremely important. Meanwhile, students who attended religious services once a week or more found the separation of church and state to be somewhere between moderately important and slightly important with a slightly bigger 95% confidence interval.

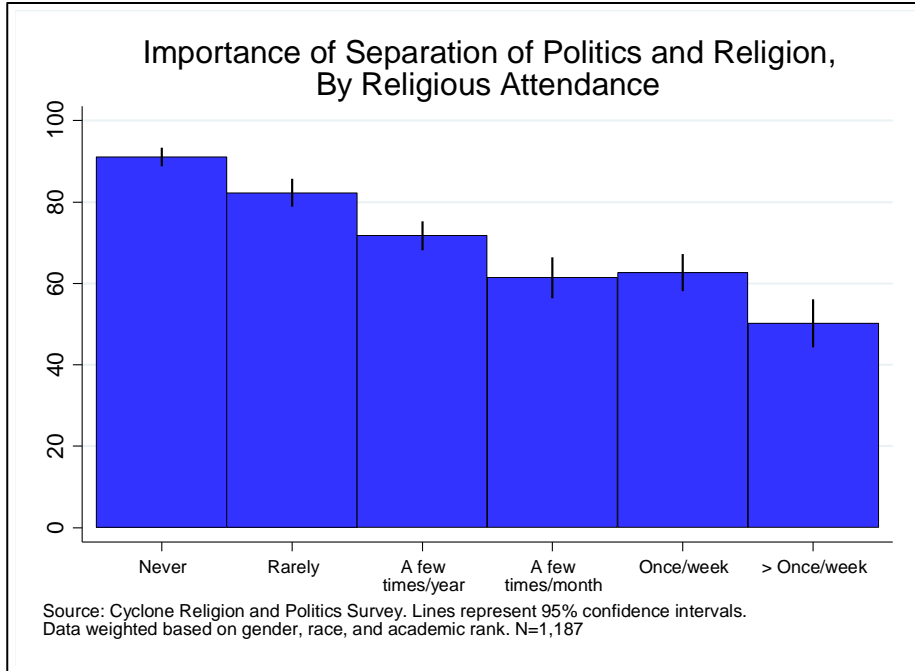


Figure 16. Importance of Separation of Politics and Religion, by Religious Attendance

Figure 17 presents more specific details on the importance of a candidate’s religion. The graph is divided by political affiliation and shows that being more conservative comes with a higher chance of valuing the importance of a candidate’s religious views. On average, strong Republicans find the importance of a candidate’s religion on the lower side of moderately important, while strong Democrats on average found a candidate’s religion between not at all important and slightly important.

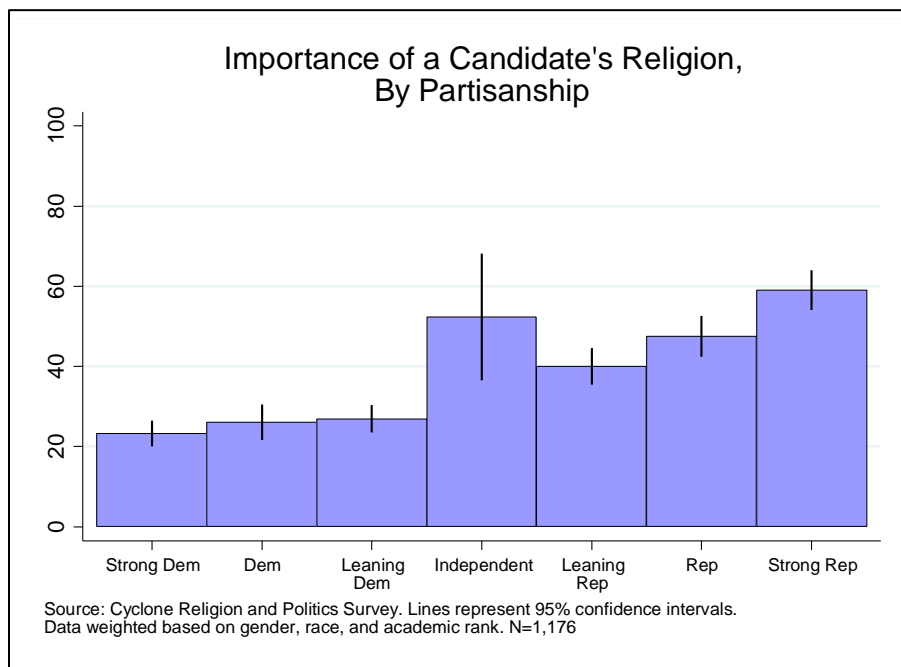


Figure 17. Importance of a Candidate’s Religion, by Partisanship

Figure 18 shows that while students who attend religious services once a week or more found the separation of church and state moderately important, they tend view a candidate's religion as slightly more important, averaging around 60 on the 0-100 scale. On average, students who rarely or never attend church find a candidate's religion to be between not at all important and slightly important.

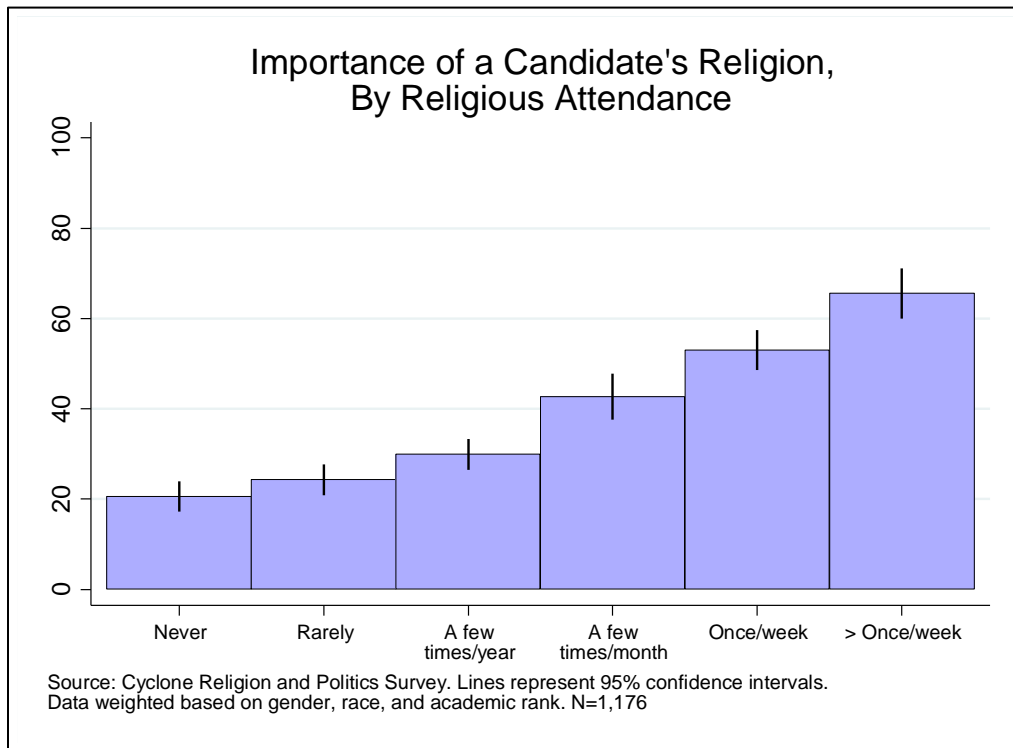


Figure 18. Importance of a Candidate's Religion, by Religious Attendance

How Policies Affect Voting

This section focuses on how moral or religious beliefs affect how students vote. The following questions were asked to gain insight in how students would vote in regards to differences in positions on homosexuality and abortion.

If your party's candidate doesn't agree with your beliefs on homosexuality would you still vote for them?

If your party's candidate doesn't agree with your beliefs on abortion would you still vote for them?

Figure 19 shows the percent of people who said they would not vote for their party's candidate if they disagreed on a specific topic. The graph shows that roughly 40% of students said they would not vote for their party's candidate if they disagreed on homosexuality. Roughly 50% of students said they would not vote for their party's candidate if they disagree on abortion.

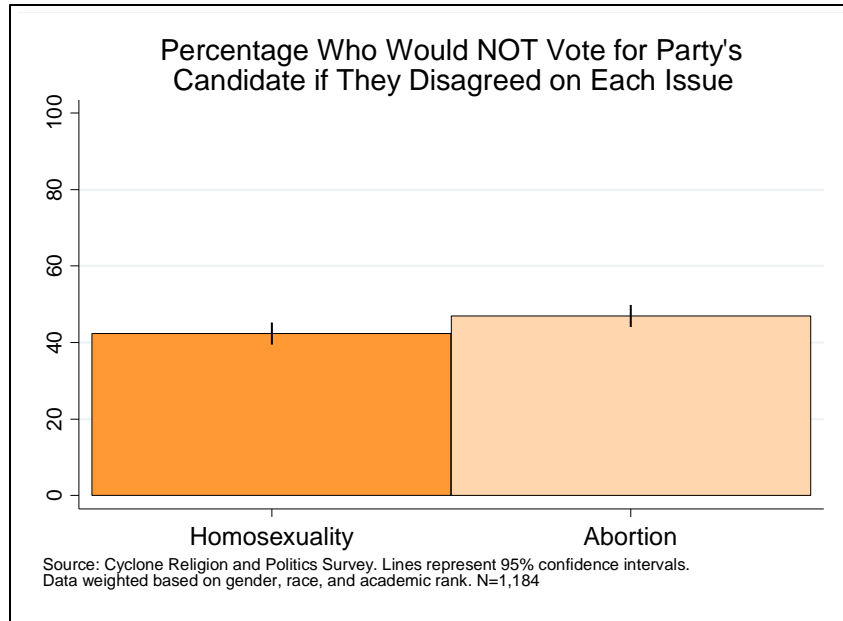


Figure 19. Percentage Who Would NOT Vote for Party’s Candidate if They Disagree on Each Issue

Figure 20 shows the percentage of students who would not vote for their party's candidate if they disagreed on homosexuality, by partisanship. Roughly 70% of strong Democrats would not vote for their party's candidate if they disagreed on homosexuality while only less than 20% of strong Republicans would not vote for their party’s candidate under those circumstances. There is a continually decreasing slope from Strong Democrat to Strong Republican, with Independents being at about 30%.

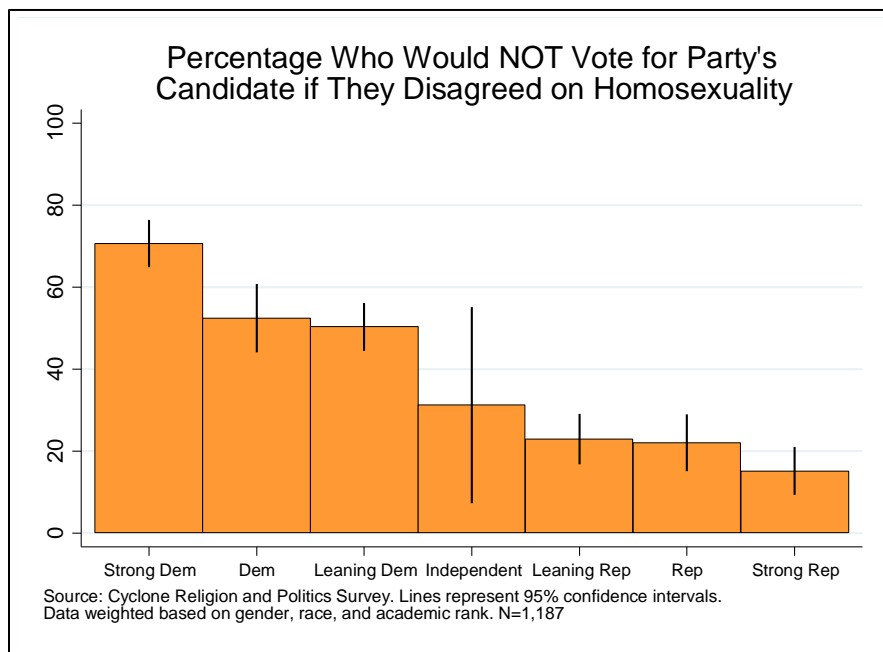


Figure 20. Percentage Who Would NOT Vote for Party’s Candidate if They Disagree on Homosexuality by Partisanship

Figure 21 is similar to Figure 20, with the key difference being that it is split up by religious attendance instead of by partisanship. There is a downward slope along the continuum of religiosity. About 60% of those in the “Never” column would not vote for their party’s candidate if they disagreed on homosexuality, while roughly 25% of those in the “Once a week” report the same.

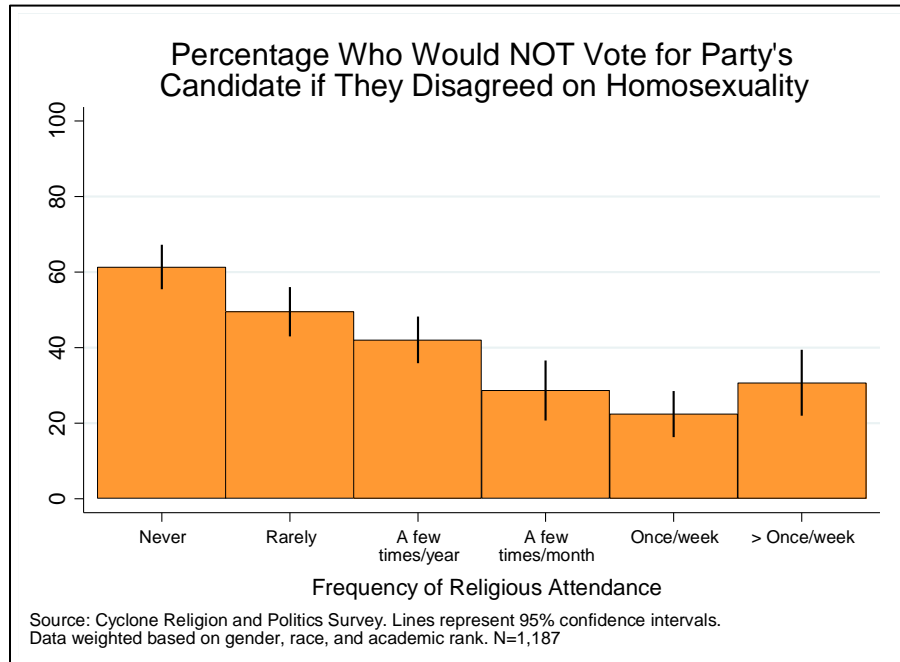


Figure 21. Percentage Who Would NOT Vote for Party’s Candidate if They Disagree on Homosexuality by Religious Attendance

Figure 22 shows the breakdown by partisanship of percentages of students who said they would not vote for their party's candidate if they disagreed on the issue of abortion. Roughly 65% of students who identify as Strong Democratic would not vote for their party's candidate if they disagreed on abortion. Among students who identify as Strong Republicans, roughly 50% would not vote for their party's candidate if there was disagreement on the issue of abortion.

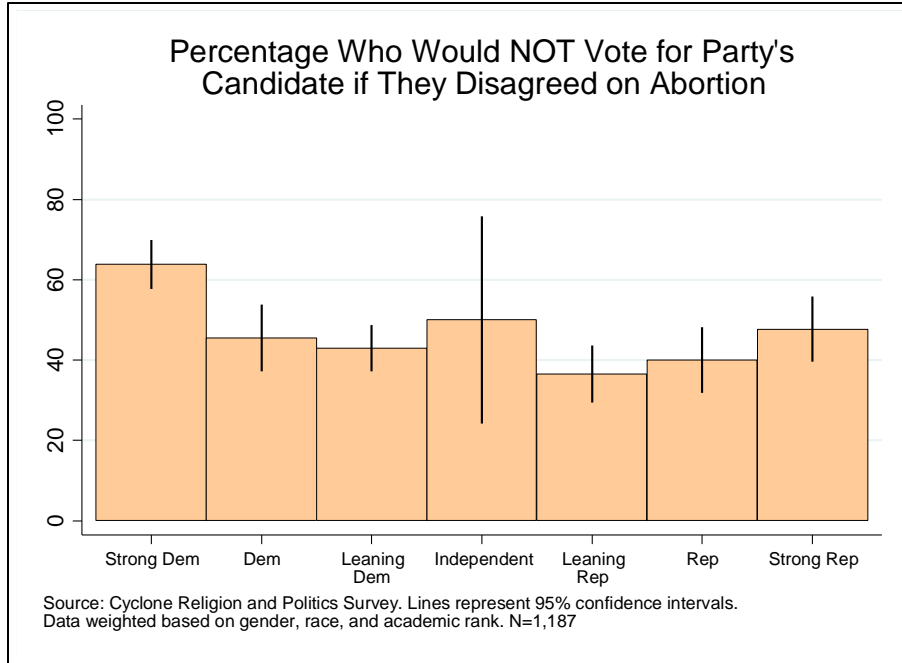


Figure 22. Percentage Who Would NOT Vote for Party’s Candidate if They Disagree on Abortion, by Partisanship

Figure 23 is similar to Figure 22, but is broken down by religious attendance. The percentage of students who would not vote for their candidate is almost equal between the “never attend” group and the “more than once a week” group. These two groups are most likely to refuse to vote for a candidate with whom they disagree.

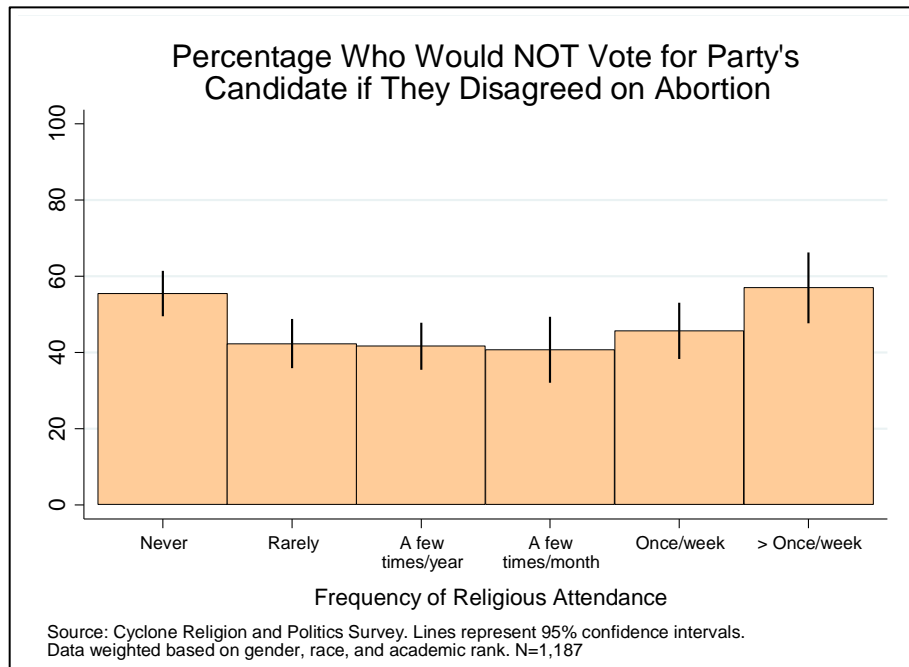


Figure 23. Percentage Who Would NOT Vote for Party’s Candidate if They Disagree on Abortion, by Religious Attendance

This part of the survey helped identify how religion affects political views among Iowa State students. Religion has some impact on policy opinions, but students considered a candidate's religion only slightly important. Even though the results show religion and politics do involve and impact political views among college students, on average students viewed the separation of church and state as extremely important.

About the Authors

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CHAPTER FOUR: Parents' Influence on Students' Religious and Political Views

By Amy Boozell, Gina Christofaro, Zachary Hunter, Aaron Sorenson, and Sydney Steinauer

The research question asked is whether parents' political and religious affiliations affect their children's political and religious affiliation. The study explored the political affiliations of students and their parents and compares the similarities and differences between them. It also asks if students are the same religion as their parents and the level of importance students have toward religion compared to their parents. Lastly, the study compares the similarities between children and their parents in terms of politics and religion with the frequency of discussion between children and parents. The results of the study suggest children are affected significantly by their parents' beliefs.

The objective of this study was to find how much of a role parents play in the political and religious decisions that people make. This could be used to predict future behaviors of people and to explain the changes that occur within religious and political groups.

Political Party Preferences

**The next questions are about your parent/guardian who is most politically aware or active. Generally speaking, which political party do they associate with most?
Democrat, Independent, Republican**

According to the study, students were much more likely to associate with the Democratic Party than their parents. Approximately 90% of students with a Democrat parent are also Democrats, while only approximately 65% of students with a Republican parent are Republicans. The rest of the students reported associating with the opposite party or as independents. While both of these are of majority agreement, the difference between parties is still pertinent to the matter at hand. Looking at students with parents who are Independent, approximately half of them are Democrat, with only about 30% Independent, and the rest Republican. These large amounts of Democrats show that students at Iowa State are more likely to be Democrats than their parents.

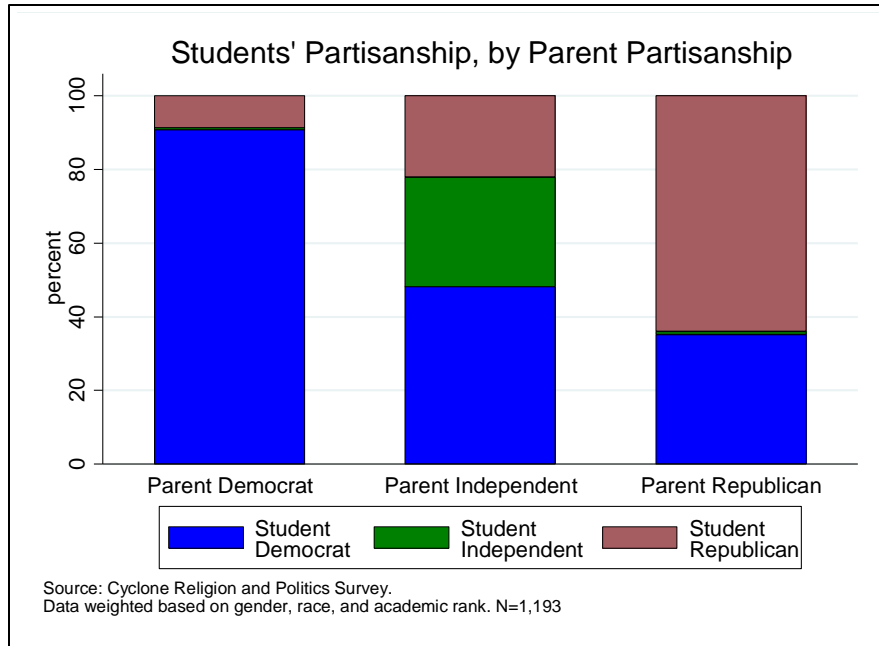


Figure 24. Students' and Parents' Partisanship

Religious Affiliations

What is their religious preference? Protestant, Catholic, Another type of Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Some other religion, Nothing in Particular, Atheist or Agnostic

A student's religious preference is affected by his or her parents' beliefs. The study showed that 85% of students who have a religion share the same religion as their parents. Only 15% of students with a religion have one that is different than their parents'.

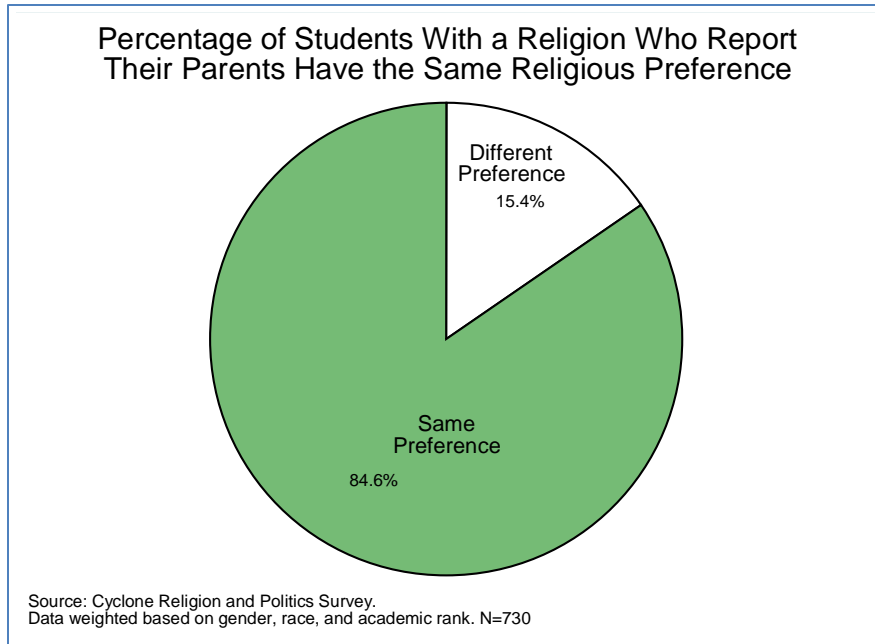


Figure 25. Commonality of Parents' and Students' Religions

Students who do not have a religion generally have parents who do have a religion. Only 30.5% of students who do not have a religion have parents who also do not have a religion, while 69.5% of students who do not have a religion have parents who do have a religion. This suggests that even when raised in a religious home, some students will not choose the same religion as their parents and some will choose to not have a religion at all.

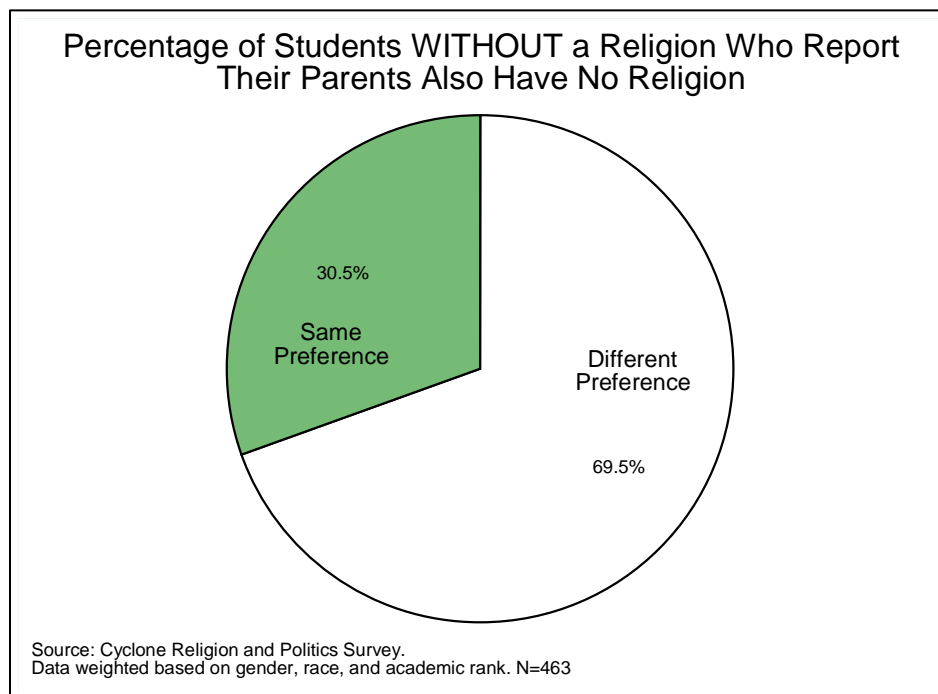


Figure 26. Commonality of Parents' and Students' Religions, Among Non-Religious Students

Importance of Religion

How important is religion in their daily life? Not important, somewhat important, very important, extremely important

The results of the study also show children tend to be less religious than their parents. The data shows 80% of students who do not feel that religion is very important to their parents are in agreement. The next highest match amongst the students and their parents is that about 50% of parents who are reported to hold religion as extremely important have children that feel the same. The results also show that if parents hold religion to any level of importance, about 50% of their children will see religion as less important than their parents do. Alternatively, for parents that hold religion to a level of importance other than extremely important, about 20% of children hold religion as more important than their parents do.

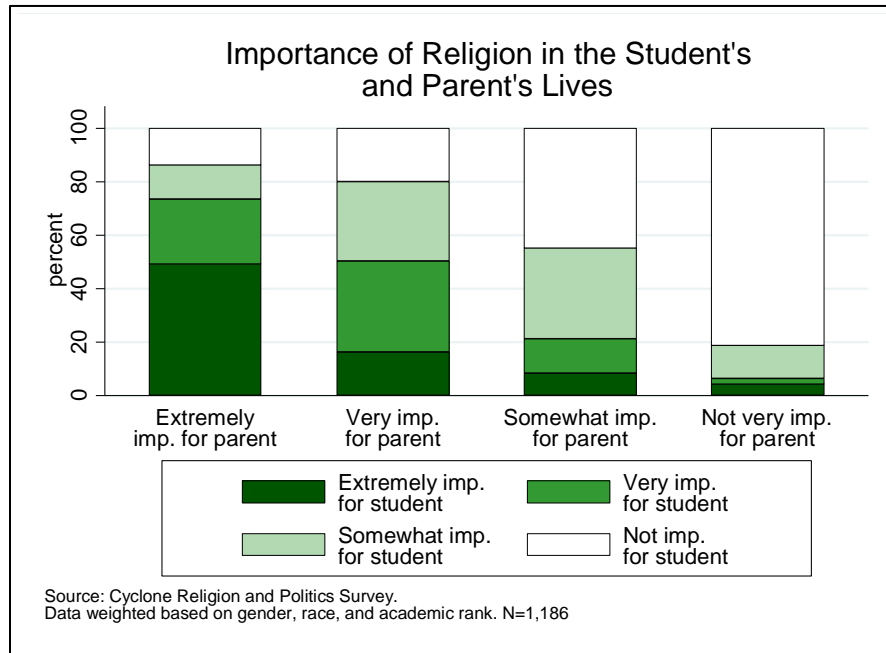


Figure 27. Religious Importance for Parents and Students

The results seen in Figure 27 show the proportions of students that identify with certain levels of religiosity as well as the levels of religiosity of their parents. The study shows 40.4% of students aren't religious, while only 17.4% of parents aren't religious. While 42% of parents hold religion as somewhat important, only 25.1% of students do so. For very important and extremely important, the proportions of children and parents remain similar, however the percentage of parents in each level is slightly higher than the percentage of students.

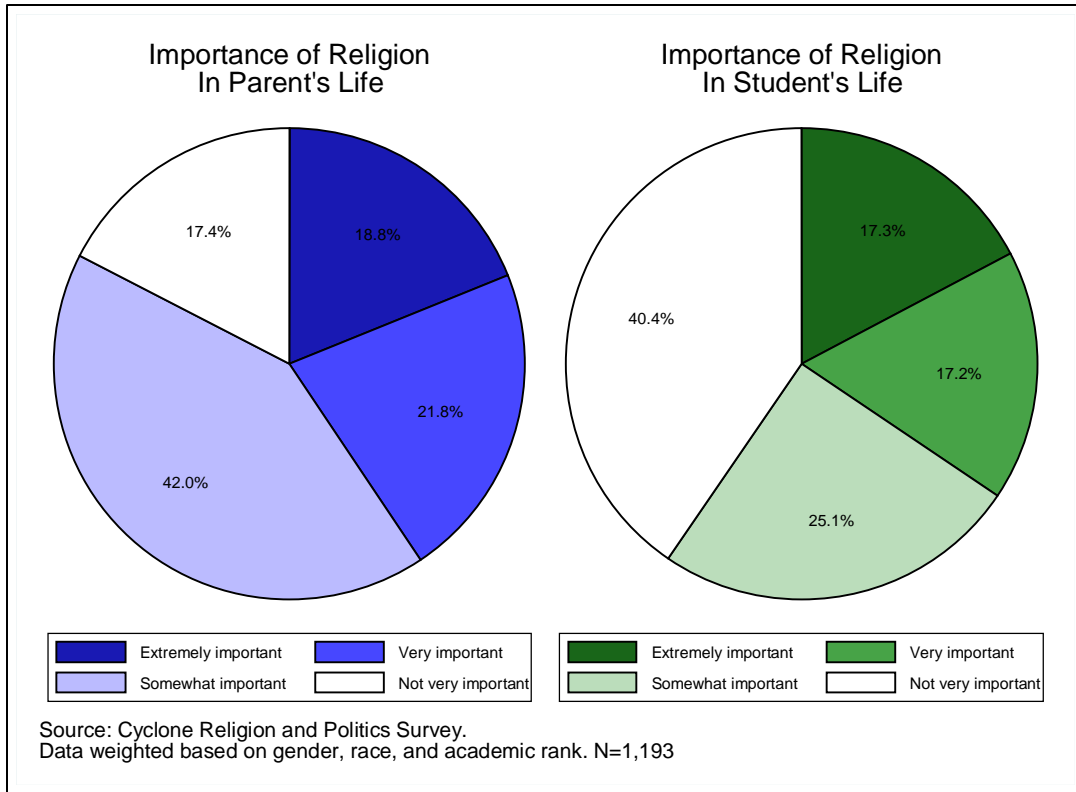


Figure 28. Difference in Religious Importance between Parents and Students

Discussion of Politics and Religion

**How frequently do your parents/guardians talk about:
 Religion? Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very often
 Politics? Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very often**

Looking at the percentages of students reporting the same political party as their parents by the frequency of political discussion in the household, there was a general increase in political agreement as the discussion increased. Students whom have parents who never discuss politics with them share political parties with their parents anywhere from 50% to 80% of the time. On the other side, parents who discuss politics with their children very often pass on their political preference 75% to 90% of the time.

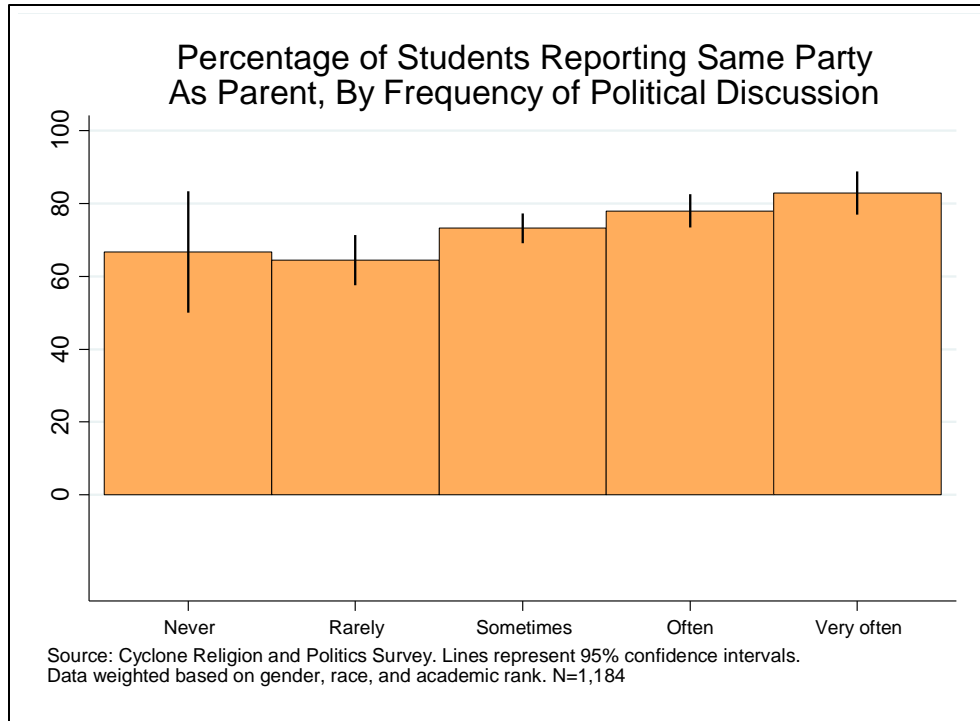


Figure 29. Parent and Student Party Affiliation

The study showed much greater variation in the percentage of students reporting the same religion as their parents. At first glance the percentage of students sharing their parent's religion appears to increase as frequency of religious discussion increases. Statistically, students who have parents who discuss religion with them at least sometimes are more likely to share the same religious preference as their parents. On the other hand, students who have parents who discuss religion with them rarely or never are more likely to report a different religious preference than their parents. It is possible that this could mostly be the high percentage of students with religious parents who do not have a religion themselves.

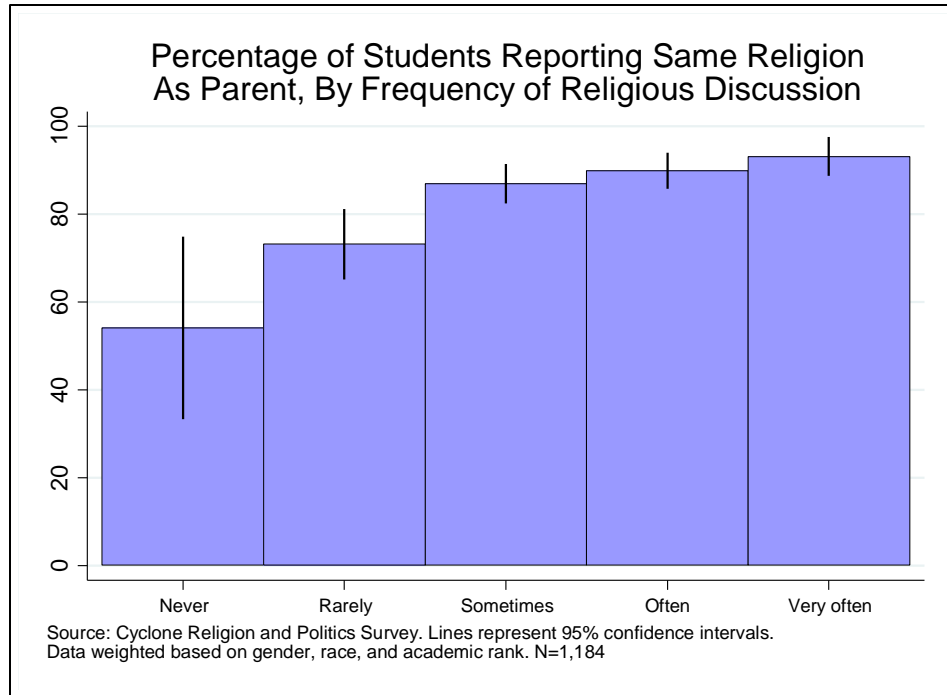


Figure 30. Parent and Student Religious Affiliation

The following graph shows the frequencies of parents discussing religion and politics with their children. Approximately 35% of students have parents who discuss religion with them often or very often. About 30% of the parents discuss religion sometimes, and around 35% rarely or never discuss religion with their children. For politics, on the other hand, more than 40% of students have parents who discuss it with them often or very often. About 40% of students have parents who discuss politics with them sometimes, and only around 20% of students reported that their parents rarely or never discuss politics with them. The hypothesis that parents of the students answering the survey would probably discuss religion with them more than politics was rejected with this data. Instead the information suggests parents of the students at Iowa State actually discuss politics with their children more than they discuss religion. This could be due to the high amount of non-religious students, or to the fact that religion is often a role in a person's life starting at birth. Religion could be only practiced and not discussed in most religious families.

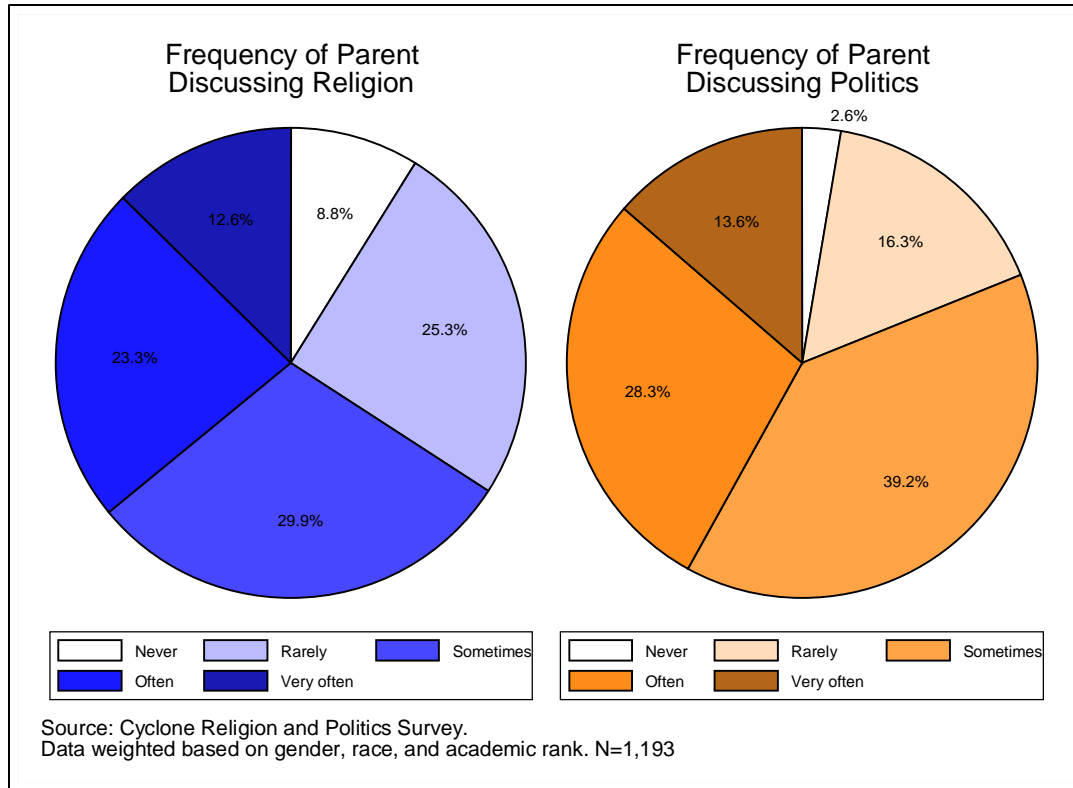


Figure 31. Religious and Political Discussion between Parents and Students

About the Authors

Amy Boozell is non-traditional senior at Iowa State University majoring in political science.

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CHAPTER FIVE: Attitudes Regarding Evolution and Intelligent Design

By Annie Goldsworthy

This portion of the survey focuses on students' views on evolution at Iowa State. Do the students believe in the concept of evolution? Where did their views come from? Were they derived from their education? From the data collected it is clear that most Iowa State University students believe in evolution, and believe evolution should be taught in schools as well.

Students appeared to be torn in regard to their views on intelligent design being reintroduced into the public school system. While a plurality said “no,” the second most common response category was “not sure,” and a quarter said intelligent design should be reintroduced into the public school system.

The self-reported source of belief or lack of belief in evolution suggests politics played little to no role in the source of belief or lack of belief in evolution. However, Democrats had the overall highest belief in evolution. Strong Republicans had the lowest, at roughly 50 percent belief in evolution. Independents were rather low on the scale as well, with roughly 55 percent believing in evolution. No political affiliation category dropped below 50 percent in regard to belief in evolution. Students that did not affiliate with one religion, or had no religion at all, were the highest category in percent that believed in evolution, sitting at roughly 98 percent. Catholics and Other Religions (Non-Christian) were close in belief percentages, while Protestant or other Christian(s) were the lowest in percentage that believed in evolution.

Over time, the United States Supreme Court has been responsible for making key changes to laws in regards to what can and cannot be taught in the public school system. During the 1920's anti-evolution laws were filed in 20 states and enacted in five of them; in 1968 the Supreme Court ruled that such laws were unconstitutional and were therefore abolished. Creationists regrouped and decided to rebrand their beliefs and “creation science.”

After changing the name the idea was totally rejected by scientists, saying they had no scientific evidence of their theory of creation, and for that reason it was impossible to be viewed or accepted as a ramification of science. But they did not give up the fight; they proposed law after law, insisting on the importance of having teachers explain intelligent design as an alternative to evolution. In *Edwards v. Aguillard* (1987), the U.S. Supreme Court held that creationism is a religious doctrine and cannot be taught in public school biology classes.

The data from this survey was very simple and straight to the point. The evident suggests a majority of the students at Iowa State University believe in the concept of evolution.

Beliefs about Evolution

Three of the questions students received were:

| **Do you believe in the concept of evolution?**

**Do you think that intelligent design should be reintroduced into public schools?
Do you think that evolution should be taught in public schools?**

Figure 32 shows that 77.4 percent of students believe in the concept of evolution, 11.4 percent do not believe, and 11.1 percent are not sure. Looking at the question of whether evolution should be taught, a majority said yes, but 18.3% did not know or were unsure. The question about teaching intelligent design elicited a bigger variance in responses, with 42.4 percent saying no, 25.4 percent saying yes, and 32.2 percent saying they are not sure.

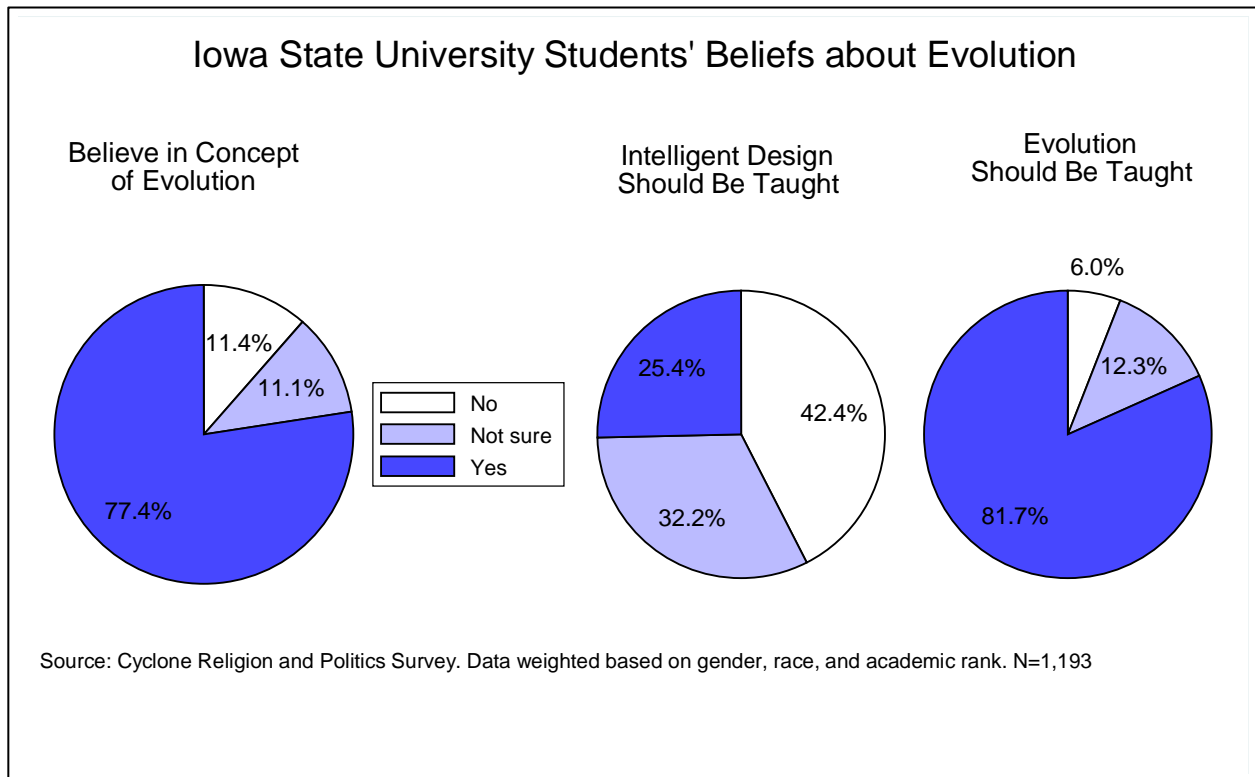


Figure 32. ISU Students' Beliefs about Evolution

Sources of and Factors Associated with Belief in Evolution

The survey also asked about the source of the student's belief or lack of belief in evolution.

Which of the following is the MOST IMPORTANT source of your belief, or lack of belief, in evolution?

Figure 33 shows that more than half of the respondents identified "education" as their most important source of belief in regards to evolution, at 71.7 percent. "Religion" and "Not sure/other" were close with 15.4 percent and 12.4 percent. "Politics" was a small percentage, sitting at 0.5 percent.

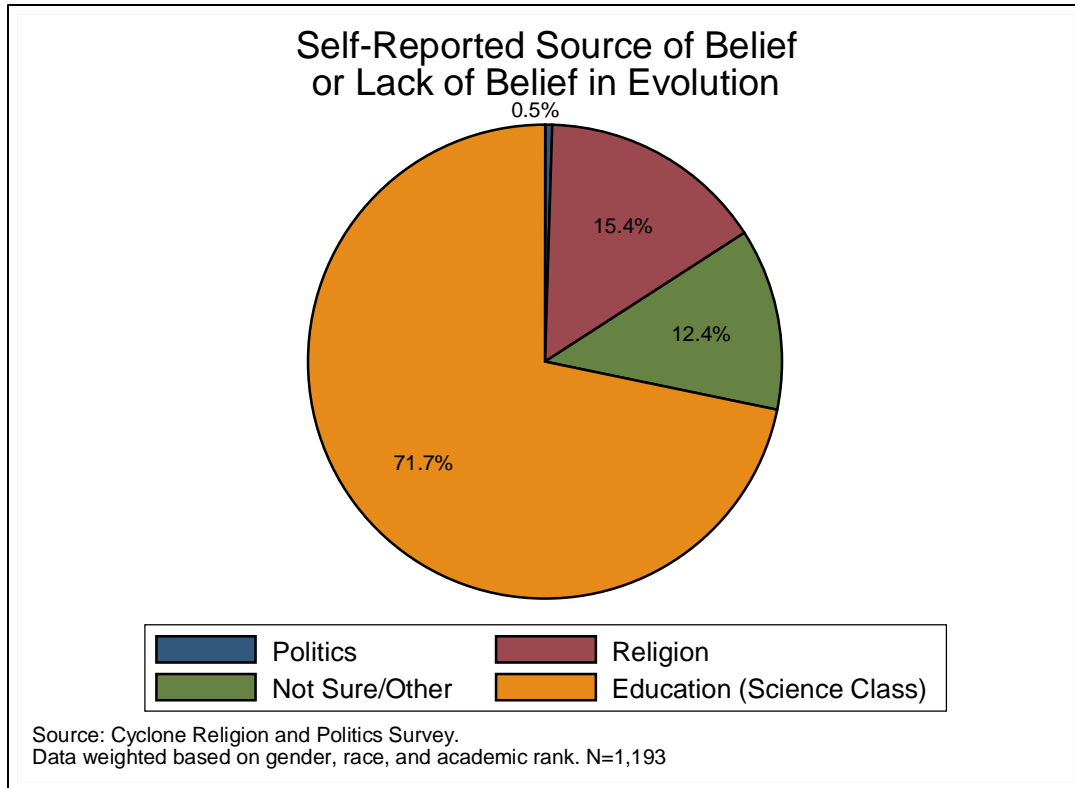


Figure 33. ISU Students' Source of Belief or Lack of Belief in Evolution

However, political views are correlated with beliefs on evolution. Figure 34 shows that about 95 percent of strong Democrats believe in evolution, and Democrats consistently have the highest belief in evolution. Strong Republicans have the lowest belief in evolution, with about 50 percent believing in the concept of evolution. Independents are in the middle at roughly 55 percent. Thus, there is a roughly 45 percent difference between strong Democrats and strong Republicans in belief in evolution.

Figure 35 shows that those who say they have no religious affiliation are the strongest believers in the concept of evolution. Roughly 98 percent of “Nones” do believe in evolution. Roughly 80 percent and 78 percent of Catholics and those of other (non-Christian) religions believe in evolution. Protestants and other Christian are the lowest, with roughly 55 percent belief in evolution.

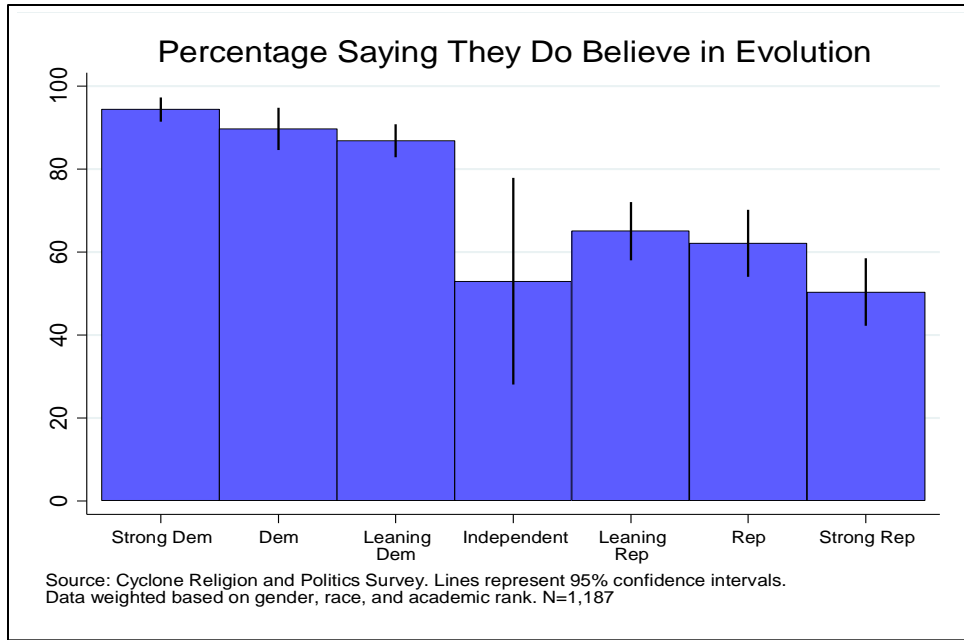


Figure 34. Percentage Saying They Believe in Evolution, by Political Party

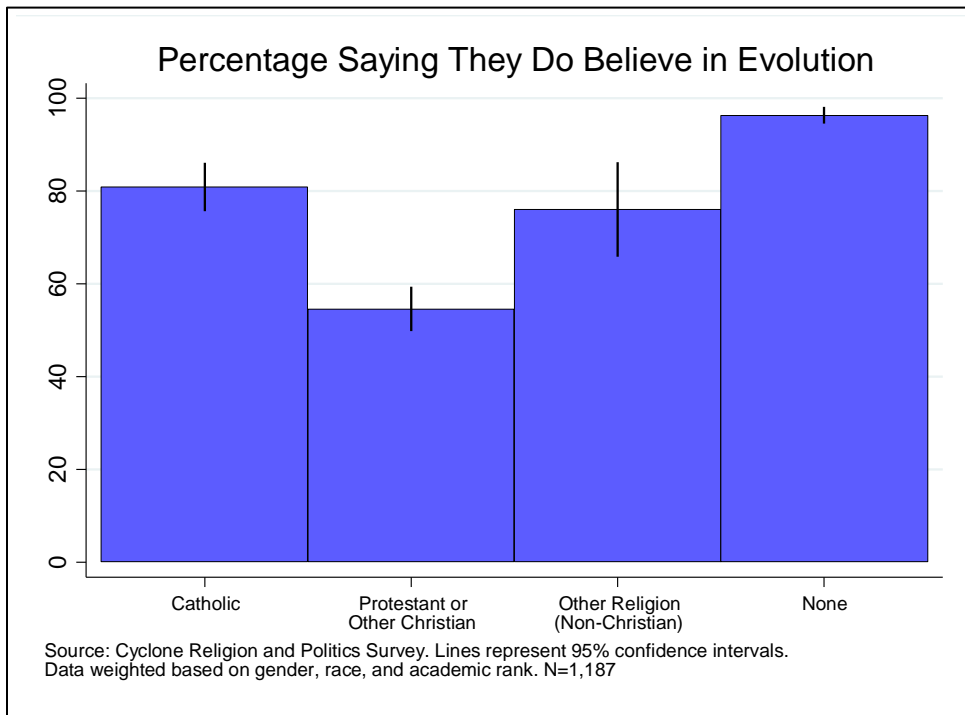


Figure 35. Percentage Saying They Do Believe in Evolution, by Religion

About the Author

Annie Goldsworthy is currently a sophomore at Iowa State University. She is a full time student working towards acquiring a degree in criminal justice with a minor in political science and business. She hopes to continue onto law school to follow in family footsteps.

CHAPTER SIX: Attitudes Regarding School Prayer

By Kayla Krull, Page Stanberry, and Mickey Sundermann

The next portion of the study was influenced by governmental and public reactions to school prayer. The study investigated opinions on school prayer. While it appears ISU students from the Midwest are slightly more accepting of school prayer than those from the rest of the United States, more than more than 52% of students at Iowa State agreed school officials should be able to lead a voluntary prayer. Of surveyed respondents, only 24.5 percent would feel uncomfortable not joining in voluntary prayers led by authority figures. Implications for campus life may not be huge, but student opinions are indicative of where the state may be headed, and whether Iowa, and to some extent the country, is becoming more or less accepting of religion playing an active role in public life (explained later in the chapter).

Listed below are Supreme Court decisions that relate to school prayer.

- *Engel v. Vitale* (1962): Any prayer organized by public schools, regardless of denominations, is unconstitutional.
- *Murray v. Curlett* (1963): Court finds forcing a child to participate in Bible reading and prayer unconstitutional.
- *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971): Established the Lemon test. It helps decipher if governmental actions violate the First Amendment and disregards the separation of church and state. 1) The action must have a secular purpose; 2) its primary purpose must not promote religion in any way; and 3) there must be no excessive entanglement between government and religion.

While school authorities cannot organize school prayer, students still reach out for places to pray on campus openly and safely. For example, in April, an article entitled “ISU Students Seek Location to Practice Religion” exemplified the need for students to speak out (Franklin 2016). Yu Hui Lui, a graduate student from Malaysia practicing Buddhism, explained that having a place to pray helps students feel more comfortable in a new country. He created the student organization Buddhism for Peace to help students who want a place or community to pray with.

Students were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements.

It bothers me when I see other people praying in public spaces (such as bowing head, kneeling on ground, hands folded, etc.).

School officials should be able to lead prayer on school grounds if student participation is voluntary.

My university community is open to school prayer.

I am open to school prayer.

Figure 36 presents responses to these four statements. Most respondents strongly disagree that public prayer bothers them, and very few respondents say that public prayer *does* bother them.

Also, 70.9 percent of respondents either don't care or agree/strongly agree that school officials should be able to lead voluntary prayer, and 49.8 percent neither agree nor disagree that Iowa State is open to school prayer. Responses with respect to students' personal openness to school prayer were varied.

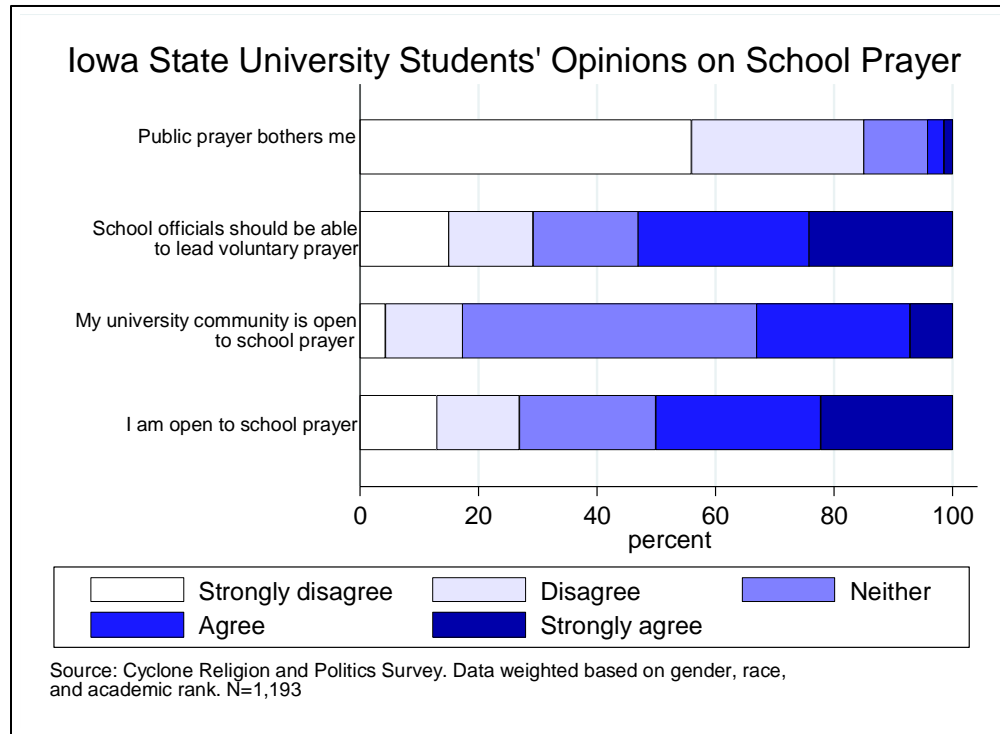


Figure 36. Opinions on School Prayer

The survey also investigated whether students would feel uncomfortable not joining a prayer in a group setting involving an authority figure. About 47 percent of students would be comfortable not joining a group prayer, while only 24.5 percent would feel uncomfortable not joining in a public prayer. The final 28.7 percent responded they had never experienced this. In discussing the data, this group discovered a flaw in the question. Having “never experienced this” could mean the student has experienced public prayer but has always voluntarily joined in, or that the student has never experienced public prayer.

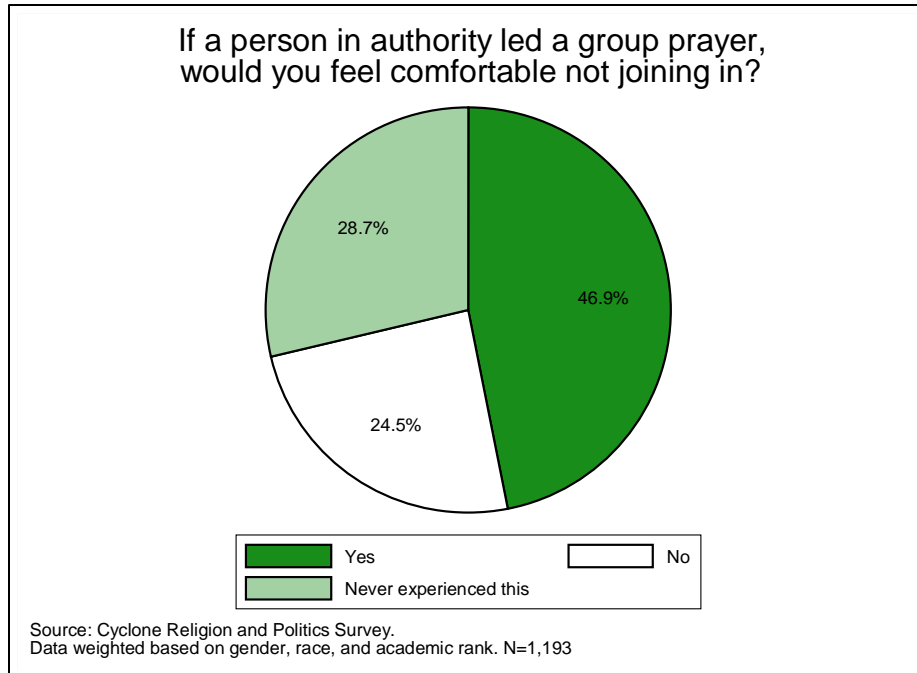


Figure 37. Comfort not Joining in Group Prayer

Figure 38 shows that students with a religion are somewhat more likely to say they would feel comfortable *not* joining in a group prayer than are students who say they do not have a religion.

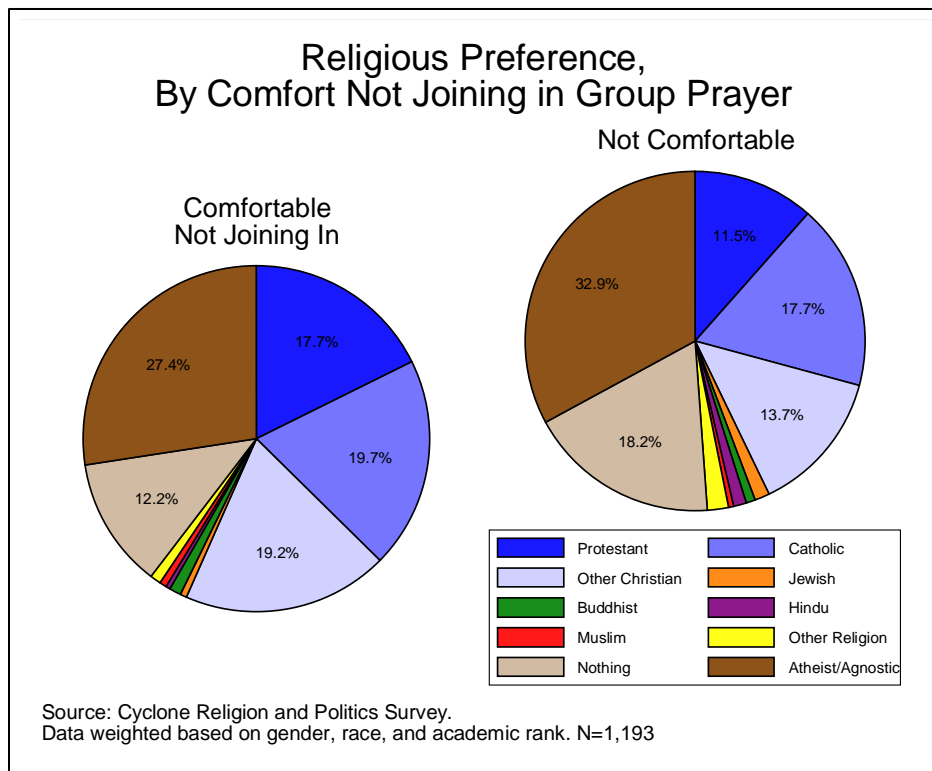


Figure 38. Comfort not Joining in Group Prayer and Religious Affiliation

These questions were analyzed based on regions in which student grew up. Figures 39 and 40 indicate that the Midwest and outside the U.S. are more accepting of school prayer than other regions within the United States. The West and Northeast are less supportive. Figure 39 shows that people in the Southeast and Northeast are more comfortable not joining in with school prayer. People in the West, Southeast, and outside of the US are less likely to feel comfortable not joining in group prayer.

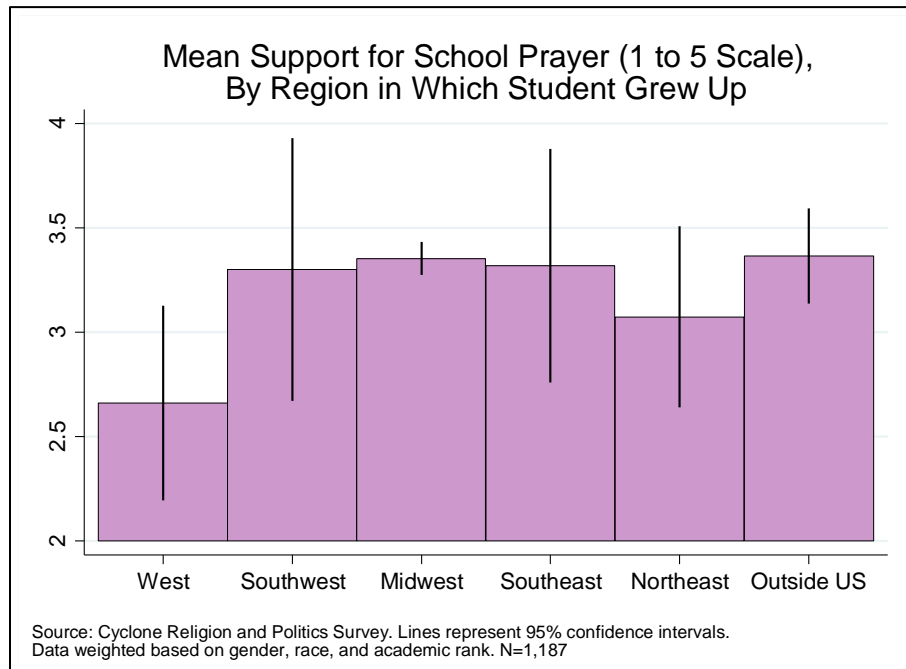


Figure 39. Support for School Prayer, by Region

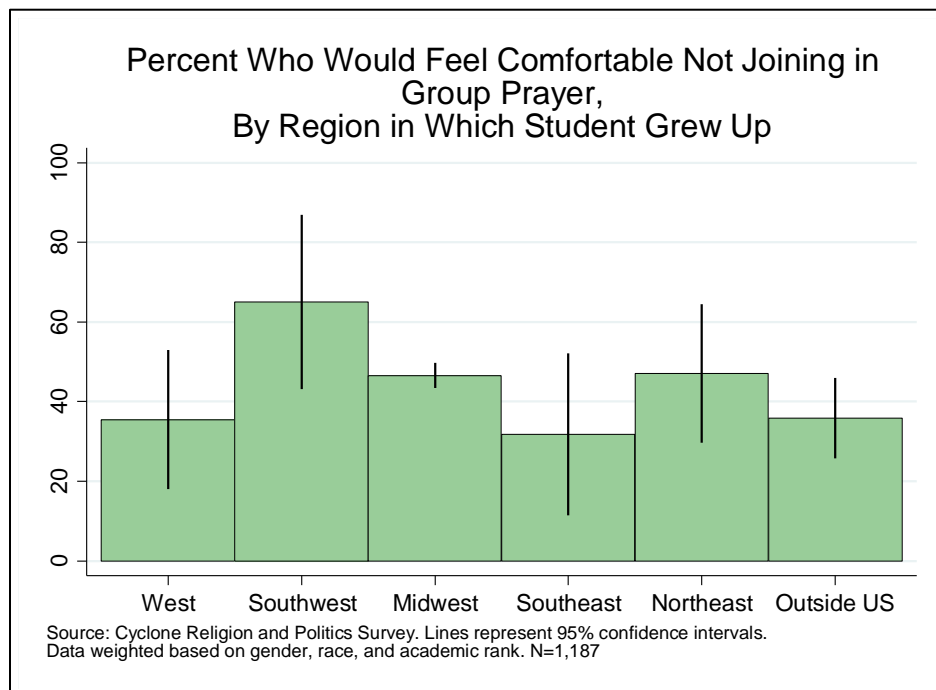


Figure 40. Comfort not Joining in Group Prayer, by Region

Work Cited

Franklin, Vanessa. "ISU Students Seek Location to Practice Religion." *Iowa State Daily*. N.p., 5 Apr. 2016. Web. 27 Apr. 2016.

About the Authors

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Page Stanberry is a sophomore from Chaska Minnesota studying Advertising and Religious Studies.

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CHAPTER SEVEN: Discrimination Based on Political and Religious Views

By Jenna Reeves, Michaela Ramm, Tony Scaglione, and Roman Wagner

This research project sought to determine whether Iowa State students perceive discrimination based on their religious and/or political views, on-campus or off-campus.

The results indicate there is a portion of students on Iowa State's campus who feel discriminated against based on their religious and/or political views. Of those who answered the survey, 40% felt that they had been discriminated against for their political views; more than 20% of students felt they had been discriminated against for their religious views; and about 20% felt they had been discriminated against for other reasons, which were unspecified. These reasons could be based on gender, sexuality and social class.

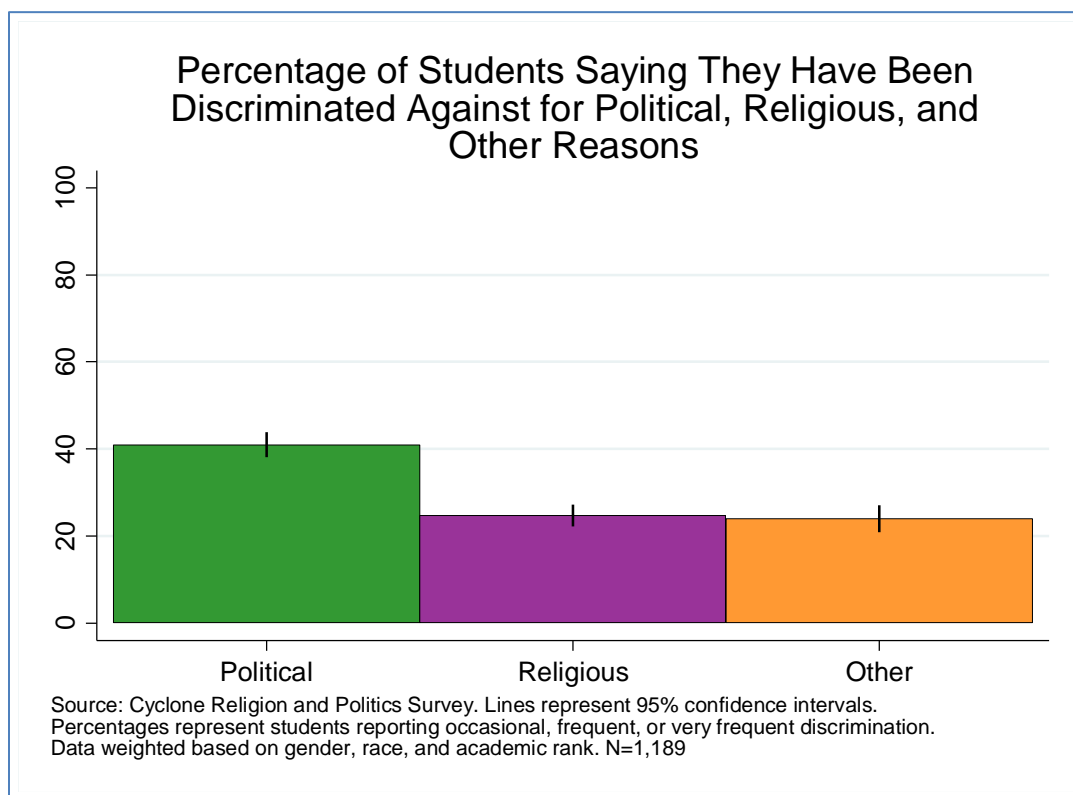


Figure 41. Perception of Political, Religious, and Other Discrimination

Those on the far ends of the political spectrum felt the most discrimination based on their political views. About 45% of those who identified as strong Democrats felt they had been discriminated against, while just under 40% of those who identified as Democratic or leaning toward Democratic reported feeling discriminated against. On the other end of the spectrum, those identifying as strong Republicans felt the most discrimination, at about 60%. Other students who identified as Republican also felt more discrimination than those who identified as more Democratic; about 45% of Republican and over 35% of leaning Republican students felt discrimination. The percentage of Independents who felt discriminated against for their political views was about 30%; however, the 95% confidence interval for this group was large.

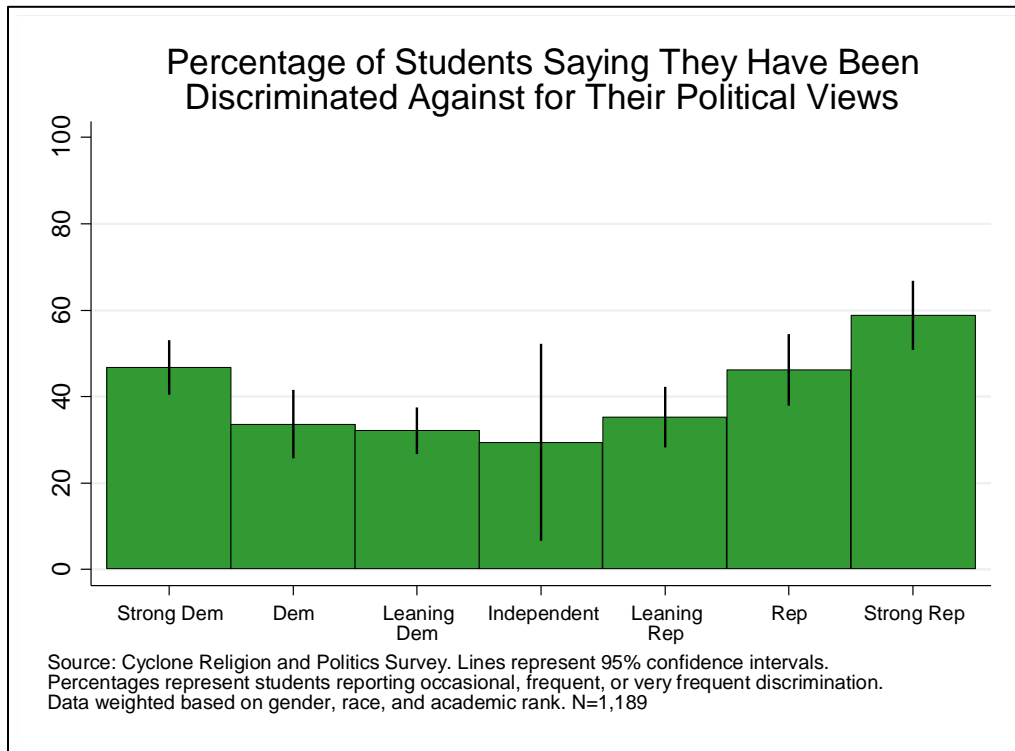


Figure 42. Perception of Political Discrimination, by Party Affiliation

The survey also looked at the political views of students who felt they had been discriminated against for their religious views. Those identifying on the Republican side of the spectrum felt more religious discrimination than those on the Democratic side of the spectrum.

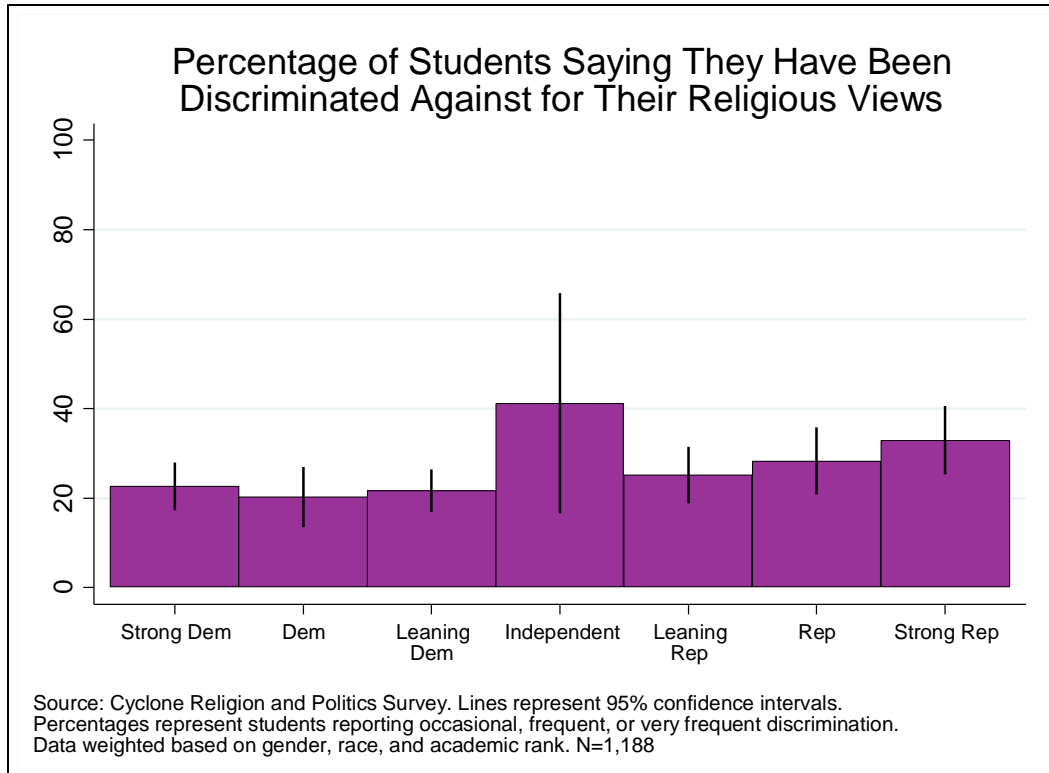


Figure 43. Perception of Religious Discrimination, by Party Affiliation

About 20% of strong Democrats, Democrats and leaning Democrats felt discrimination based on their religious views. About 20% of leaning Republicans felt discriminated against, while about 25% of Republicans and about 30% of strong Republicans felt this way as well. Most interestingly, the percentage of those who identified as Independents who felt discriminated against for their religious views was at 40%. However, it should be noted the 95% confidence interval for Independents was very large.

The survey also examined perceptions of religious discrimination, by the frequency of religious attendance. Those who attend a form of worship service more than once a week reported the most discrimination, at about 45%. About 25% of those who attend some religious service once a week or a few times a month reported religious discrimination. Those who stated they never attend a religious service also reported 25%. Those who attend a few times a year reported about 20%, as well as those who stated they rarely frequent a religious service.

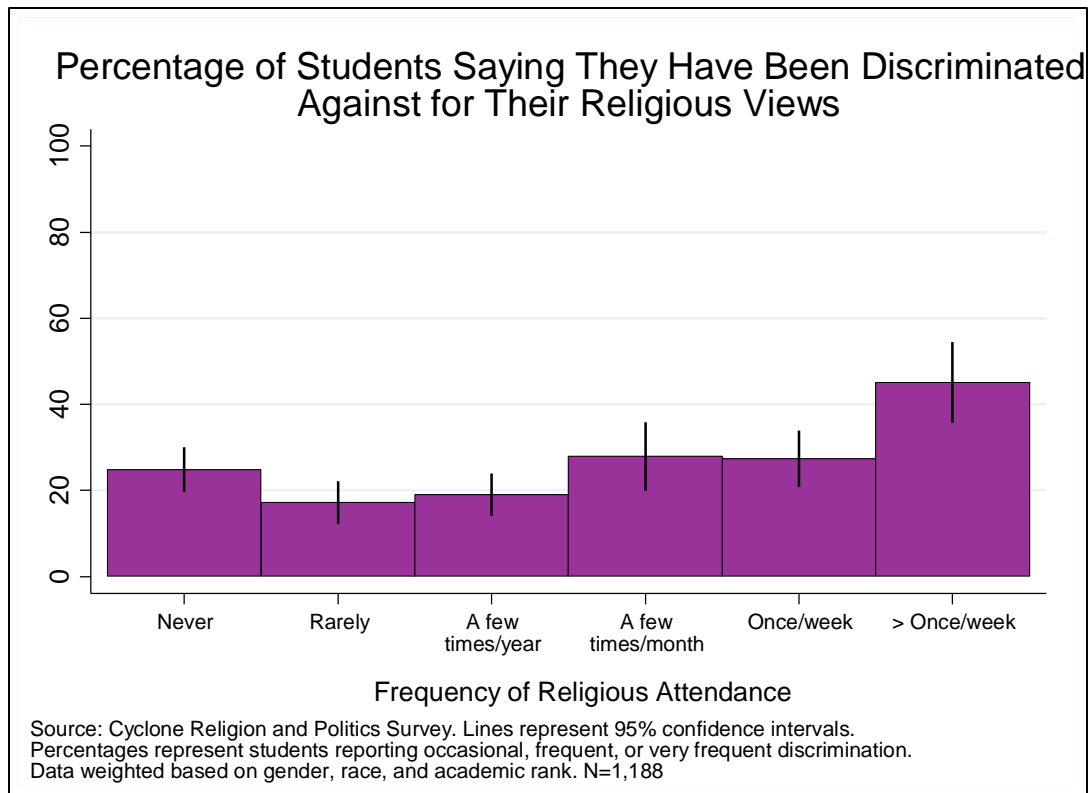


Figure 44. Perception of Religious Discrimination, by Frequency of Religious Attendance

A specific location of these politically and/or religiously motivated instances, and whether they took place on- or off-campus, was also gauged within the survey. The questions asked survey-takers to state where they may have felt discriminated against — whether for political views, religious views, or for another reason. They specified the origins of where they felt this way, and the results showed that the discrimination did not take place in a specific location.

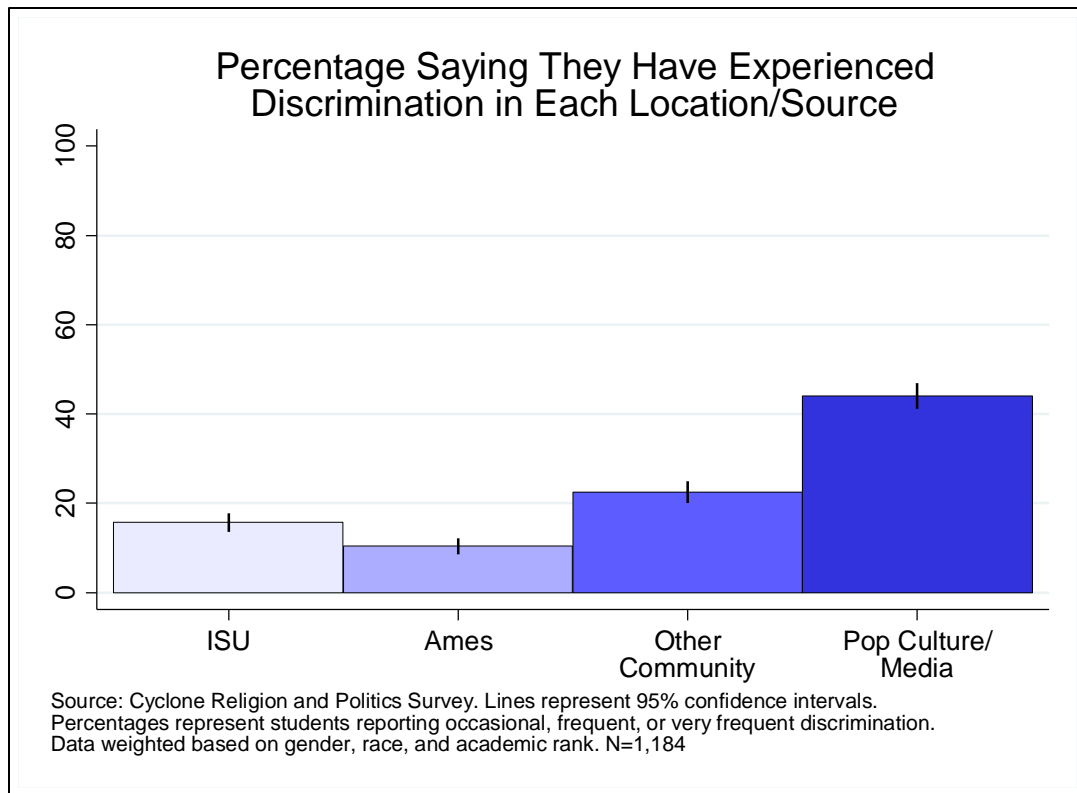


Figure 45. Location of Perceived Discrimination

Among pop culture/media, the Iowa State community, the Ames community and another community, the results showed the source of discrimination came most often from pop culture and/or the media. About 45% of survey takers said they have experienced discrimination from this source—surpassing the other results by at least 20%. The percentage of those citing another community besides ISU and Ames as the location of the discrimination they have felt stands at about 25%. Behind that was Iowa State, which was reported at more than 15%; Ames was the smallest percentage, at about 10%. Therefore, the information suggests the most common instances students at Iowa State experience are within the media, which could be a nation-wide issue and not something specific to Iowa State. The fact that other communities also have a higher percentage than ISU and Ames communities suggests it is a wide-ranging issue that takes place outside of the local community.

The study also hoped to determine whether students felt that discrimination is a problem on campus in general, regardless of their personal experiences with discrimination.

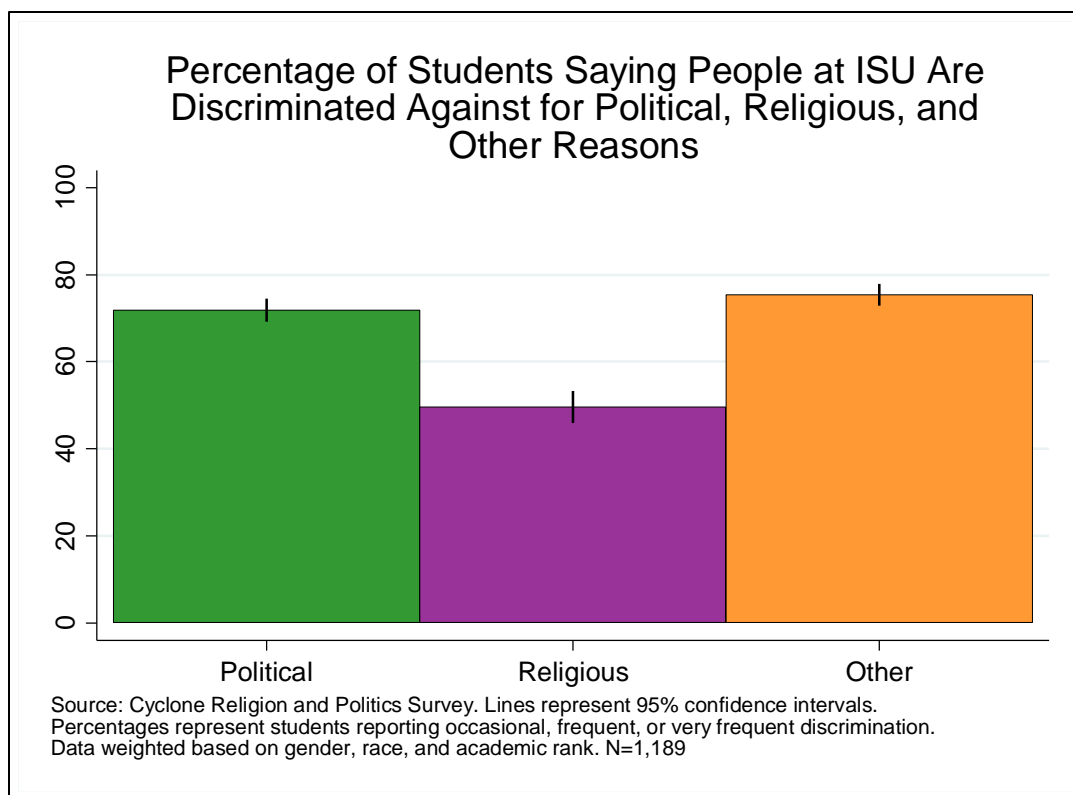


Figure 46. Perception that People at ISU are Discriminated Against for Political, Religious, and Other Reasons

Perceived discrimination based on political views was most common, at about 70%, while the percentage of students perceiving religiously based discrimination was about 50%. The highest percentage for what students thought was an issue on campus in terms of discrimination was for the “other” reason; this was reported at almost 80%. Due to the broad range of topics these reasons could cover, it was difficult to gauge specifically what type of discrimination those who answered the survey are feeling—which could range from sexism to racism, etc.

In conclusion, the study found there are instances of discrimination felt on Iowa State’s campus based on the religious and political viewpoints of others. However, these instances originate more commonly from popular culture and/or the media and other communities, than they are at Iowa State and Ames. The study finds these moments of discrimination still happen; these are felt more acutely by students based on their political stances, especially by those who leaned toward the Republican side of the political spectrum. Students also feel discrimination based on religious beliefs, but discrimination is most often felt by those who have very strong views and who frequently attend religious services.

About the Authors

Michaela Ramm is a graduating senior in journalism and mass communications.

Jenna Reeves, Tony Scaglione, Roman Wagner are juniors in journalism and mass communications.

CHAPTER EIGHT: Safe Spaces within the University Campus

By Andrew Marshall, Josh Wick, Eric Grieser and Seth Schroeder

This study was created in an attempt to take a closer look at ‘Safe Spaces’ in regards to the Iowa State University campus. Safe spaces are a relatively new idea and concept, so not much research has been done on them and there was a lot of room for study. A safe space can be defined as a place on campus that students can go to and express themselves and their beliefs without having to fear repercussions. Safe spaces are generally associated with minorities in religion, race and sexuality.

These safe spaces are much different than what is known around the ISU campus as the ‘Free Speech Zone.’ While people are free to express themselves there, it is much different from a safe space as safe spaces are sought out for their comfort and security. This led to a question on the Free Speech Zone being included as well. It is crucial to know what people think of controversial speech itself as much as what they think of the avoidance of it.

The research devised in this study was intended to look deeper into who felt the need to use safe spaces, the number of people who felt they needed to utilize safe spaces, and the general thoughts and opinions on Iowa State’s Free Speech Zone located in front of the library on the Iowa State campus.

The survey questions used are as follows:

Looking at the past year and considering your interactions with Iowa State University, including administration, Faculty/Staff, and fellow peers, do you feel you have been discriminated against?

This question was intended to uncover how people feel like they are being treated on campus; in order for retention and performance to remain high students need to feel like they are included².

Looking at the past year and considering your interactions with Iowa State University, including administration, Faculty/Staff, and fellow peers; Do you feel that you would benefit from a safe space on campus? (*Safe Space being defined as, "a place where anyone can relax and be able to fully express, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, or physical or mental ability."*)

This question defined what a safe space could encompass and asked if people would actually use such facilities.

Looking at the past year and considering the people that utilize the Free Speech Zone outside the Library on campus; Do you feel it is a necessary feature for the University?

² <https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/mei/MEI.pdf>

The last question sought to find out how people felt about the space formerly referred to as the “Free Speech Zone.” Sometimes talking about “Safe Spaces” elicited a critical response delving deeper into the “Free Speech Zone,” would be an interesting topic as well.

So firstly, would a safe space be used by students? About half of students surveyed reported they would never use a safe space on campus. Even among those who felt they may use a safe space, most foresee themselves being occasional users at most. This doesn’t suggest a pressing need to increase infrastructure on campus as there are several places that can meet the current demand. With areas on campus including the Margaret Sloss Women's House, LGBT Student Services, Multicultural Student Affairs, as well as access to multiple religious institutions, students seem to feel they have numerous services they can use.

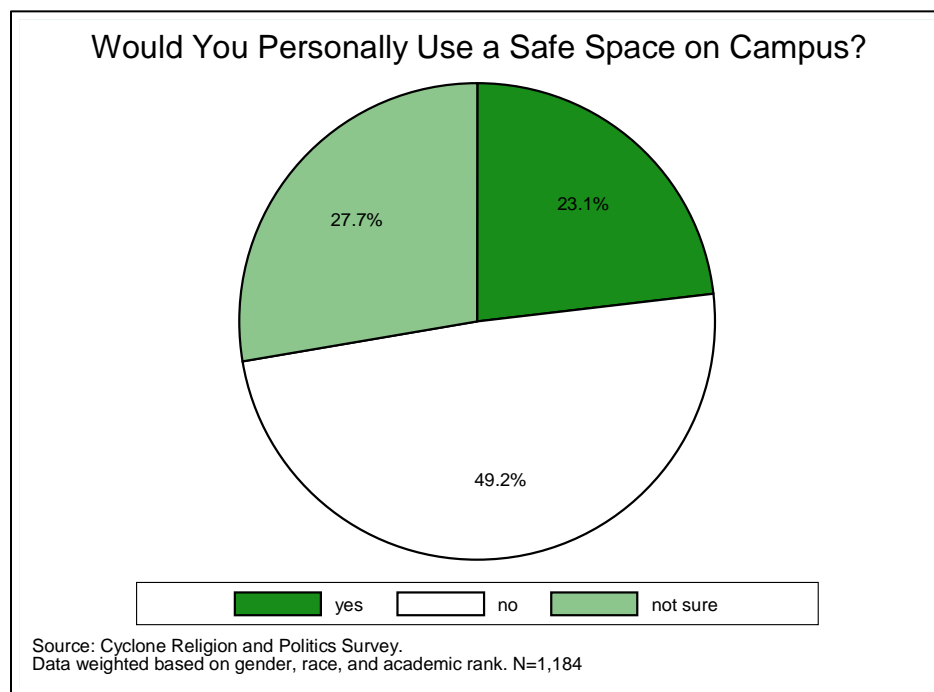


Figure 47. Interest in Using a Safe Space on the ISU Campus

However, among the group of students that would use some form of safe space a clear pattern emerges; they are more likely to be a member of a minority group on campus. The data shows that if a student is non-white, non-male, non-Christian, or even non-conservative they are more likely to want to have a safe space. Figure 17 shows non-gender binary students have the largest desire for a safe space on campus, registering about a 100% increase over male students.

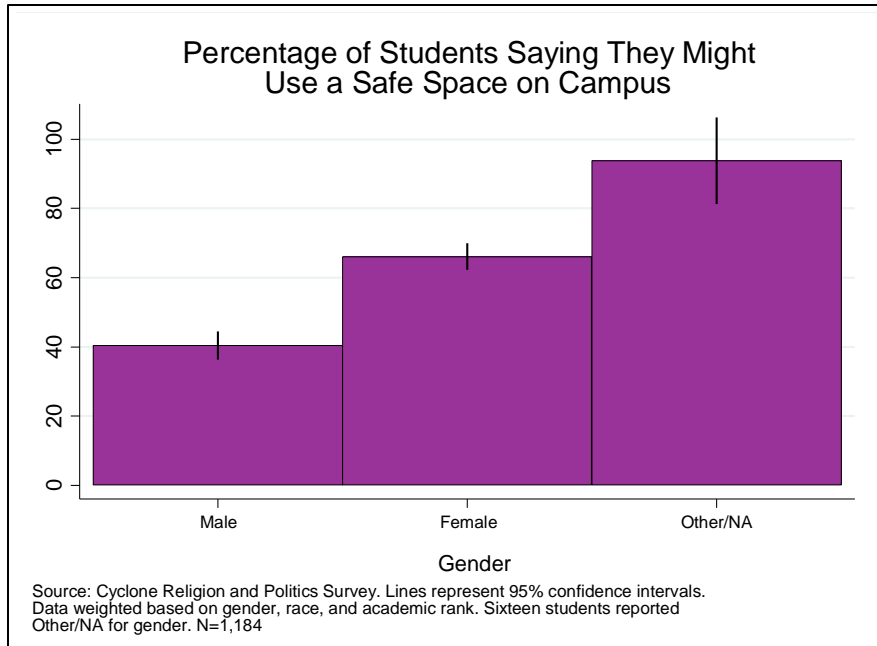


Figure 48. Gender and Interest in Using a Safe Space on Campus

Further inspection continues to reveal how much of a discrepancy there is between white male and female students, and the rest of the student population. Figure 18 details the racial breakdown of students expressing possible safe space use with South and East Asians making up the largest group expressing interest in their own space. Lastly Figure 19 notes students' attitudes toward a safe space on campus, by political affiliation. Attitudes toward safe spaces become less positive as students go from liberal to conservative. Interestingly the responses of independent students are significantly lower than those of their left- or right- leaning peers.

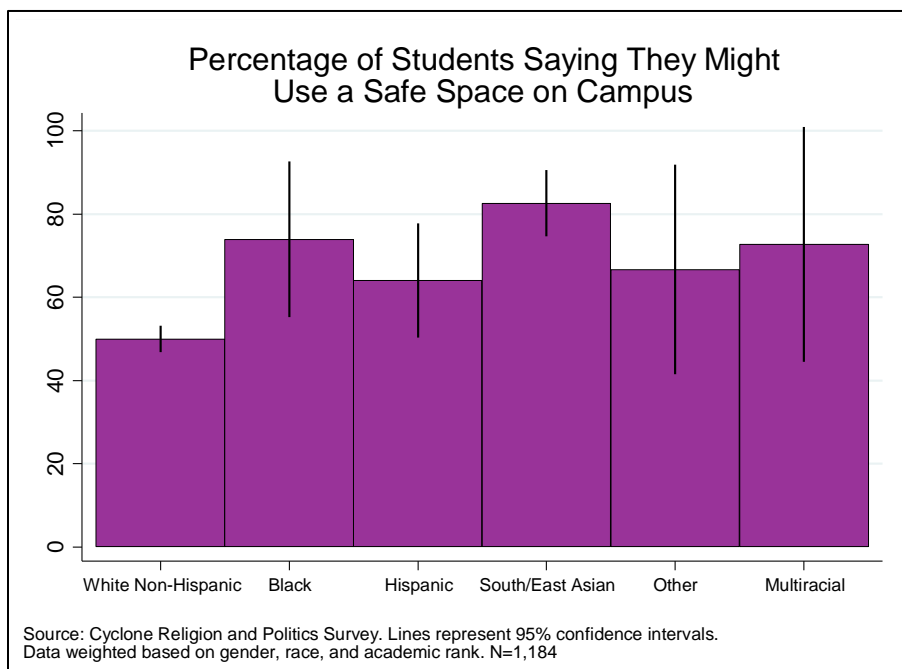


Figure 49. Interest in a Safe Space, by Race/Ethnicity

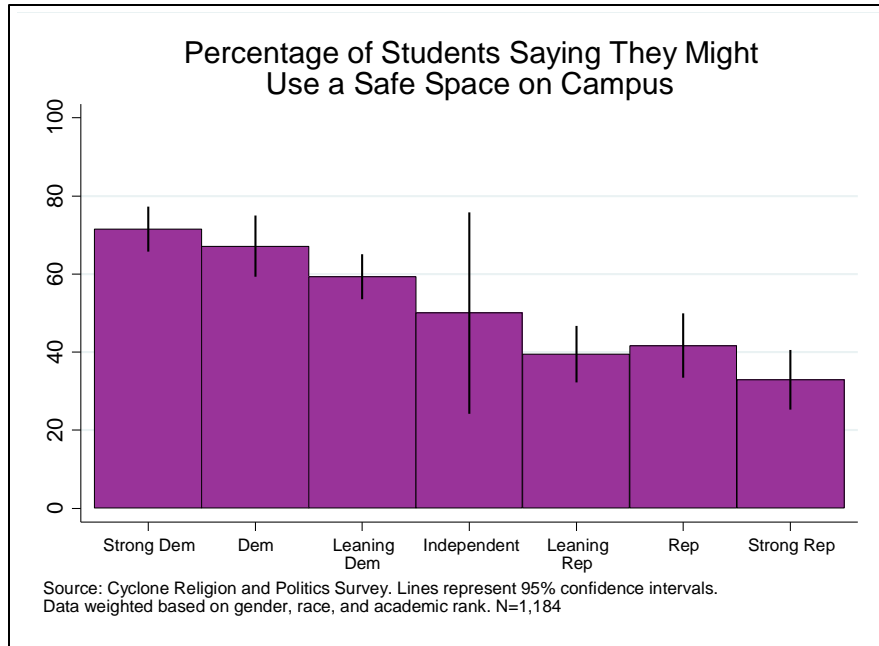


Figure 50. Interest in a Safe Space, by Political Party

A final note with regards to religiosity: The data support the possibility that religiosity has no bearing on whether or not a student will use a safe space. All groups were within 10% of each other for likelihood of use with similar confidence ratings resulting in no noticeable trend. However, adherents of non-Christian religions were more likely to express interest in using a safe space.

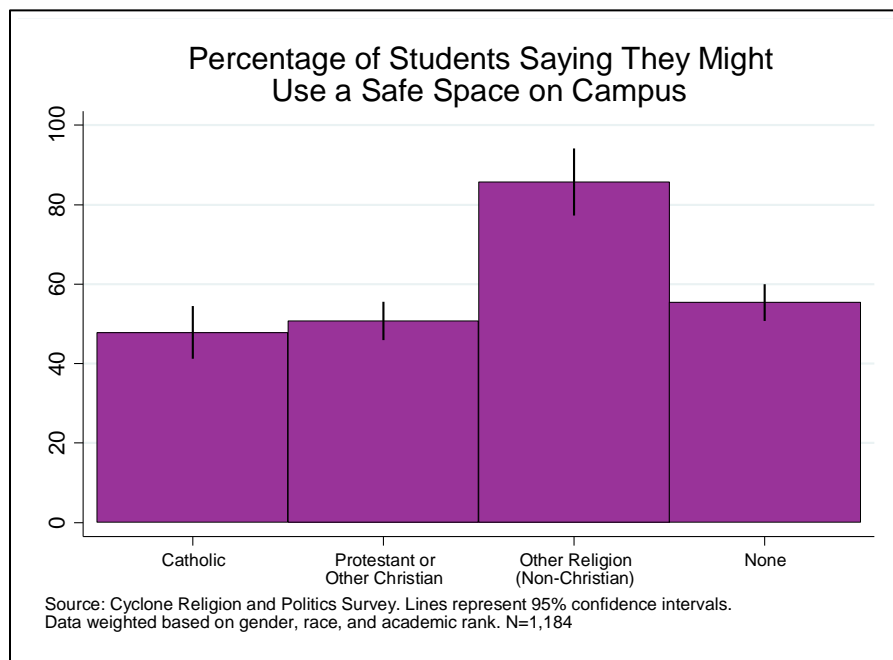


Figure 51. Interest in a Safe Space, by Religious Affiliation

On the question, “Thinking about the past year and the people that utilize the Free Speech Zone outside the library on campus, do you feel it is a necessary feature for the University?” about one-third of respondents said no.

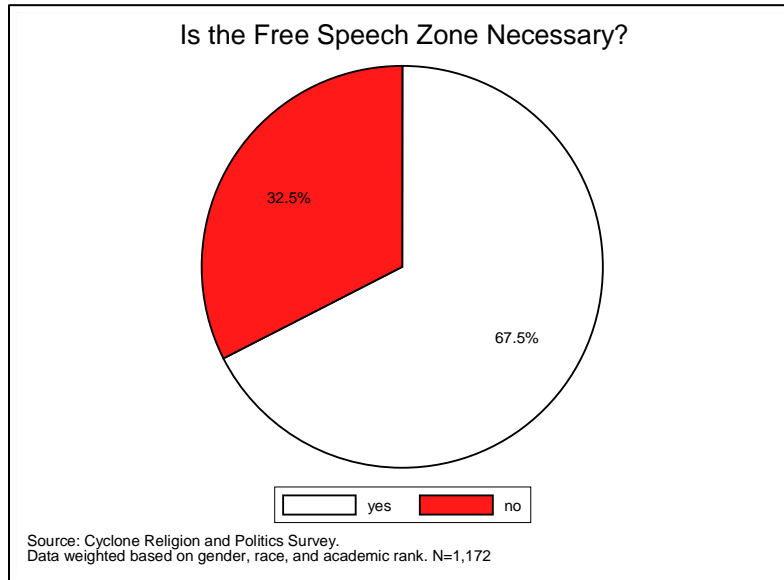


Figure 52. Perception the Free Speech Zone is Unnecessary

The survey further asked those who said it was not necessary why they felt that way. Respondents gave a multitude of reasons. Forty percent said it promoted unproductive conflict, seventeen percent said the speakers made them uncomfortable, and almost thirty-eight percent gave their own answer. The people that said it was necessary also gave a variety of answers; some of the more interesting answers are shown below.

Why it is necessary:

- “I need to know where to avoid”
- “It keeps the crazies confined to one place”
- “Free speech is an essential right to all in America. Frankly, people should be allowed to speak freely anywhere on university grounds.”
- “Verbal argument is how social progress is made.”

Why it's not necessary:

- “The safe space is a joke”
- “IT IS JUST ANNOYING!”
- “Free speech should be everywhere”
- “It is a waste of time, no one cares what is going on except for the people who strongly disagree with the speaker yet no debate happens only childish yelling”
- “All people do is b---- about their problems.”

This suggests that both sides essentially want the same thing but have different ideas on how to get there. The side that saw them as necessary appeared to view the Free Speech Zones in a more positive light and seemed to believe that open debate was healthy for Iowa State’s campus. The opposite side however, appeared to be under the impression that the Free Speech Zone

accomplished very little and that it implied free speech isn't everywhere on campus. Campus rules on the Free Speech Zone have undergone changes in the last few years. Cole Staudt, the Student Government President Elect, was quoted saying "A lot of people come to me complaining that they *need* free speech on campus and I'm always happy to tell them the same thing: You already have it."

One interesting trend seen from the results was that Democrats were generally more in favor of the Free Speech Zone than Republican, but neither were as favorable as the Independents group; almost 15% above the nearest group.

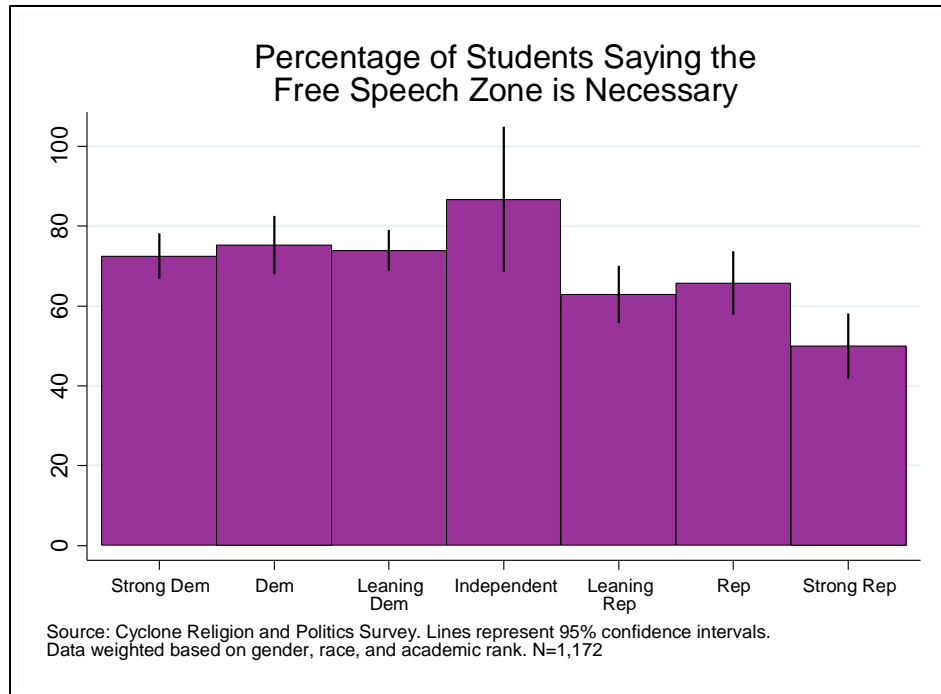


Figure 53. Support for a Free Speech Zone, by Political Affiliation

Overall, the majority of campus seemed to be very in favor of free speech and what they deemed as healthy conflict among students, but had very different views of where and when it should happen. Republicans appeared to believe that open debate should be happening everywhere on campus, all the time, whereas Democrats were a bit more selective. They seemed to be under the mindset that certain areas were better for debate and that not every student needs to take part in it if they don't wish. Both sides would probably agree that unhealthy conflict hurts our campus but have taken different sides in what they deem as unhealthy or unproductive debate. In order for Iowa State's campus to have healthy debate and promote free speech, students and faculty must first educate themselves as to the rules of how and where said debate can occur. Luckily, the answer is everywhere and it's something everyone can take part in if they please. Some students just want to walk to class and get an education without any distractions and that is their prerogative, others seek knowledge from The Free Speech Zone and Iowa State has provided the tools for both to do so without being judged.

CHAPTER NINE: Views toward Religious Groups

By Jonathan Becker, Ryan Biggs, Alexis Cozad, Brian Gillenwater, Zach Kolar, and Amy Seibert

This section of the report focuses specifically on how religious beliefs and political affiliations affect perceptions of other religions. Participants were asked a range of questions to quantify how they perceived various religious groups. Terms like “warmth” and “pro-America” were used to simplify what is often a complex and highly situational reaction.

This group came up with the following questions to answer the above hypotheses:

Please rank your personal feelings toward each of the following groups. (0 - 100 Scale)

Non--Religious (Atheists, Agnostics)

Muslims

Sikhs

Jews (Orthodox, Reform)

Eastern Religions (Hindus, Buddhists, Jains)

Christians (Catholics, Evangelicals, Protestants)

Rank your personal feelings on how much each of these groups is American. (0 - 100 Scale)

Non--Religious (Atheists, Agnostics)

Muslims

Sikhs

Jews (Orthodox, Reform)

Eastern Religions (Hindus, Buddhists, Jains)

Christians (Catholics, Evangelicals, Protestants)

Do you believe there is one true religion? (Answers: Yes, No, Unsure)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: (0 - 100 Scale)

Religion is inherently peaceful.

Teachings of some religions promote violence.

Should federal laws treat religions differently from each other? (Answers: Yes, No, Unsure)

To determine the feelings that the student body had towards religions, students were asked on a warmth scale from 0 to 100 what their perception was of various religious groups, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism. An average warmth chart is shown in Figure 54. Feelings are warmest toward Christianity, with a degree of approximately 68 on a 0-100. However, warmth towards Christianity differed by the religious affiliations of respondents; Christians are most warm toward Christians, but those without a religion and those

of non-Christian religions are less warm toward Christianity than toward any other group. Feelings are least warm toward Sikhism, Islam, and the non-religious, but again responses vary by the respondent's affiliation. The non-religious tended to be warm toward the non-religious, and non-Christian respondents tended to be warm toward Sikhism and Islam.

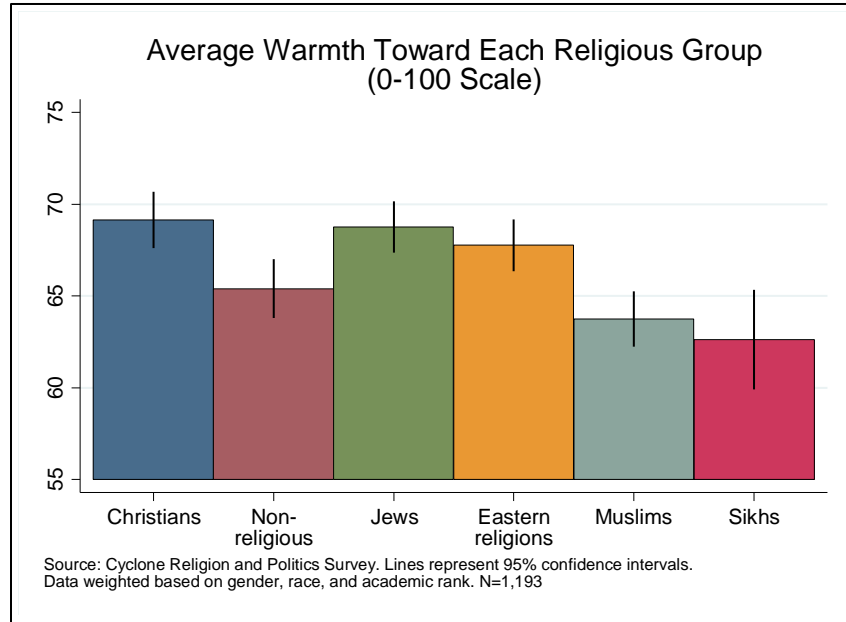


Figure 54. Average Warmth toward Religious Groups

Perceptions of whether these groups were pro- or anti-American were additionally analyzed in Figure 55. Results are similar to those for average warmth, except that Judaism and the non-religious are found to be more pro-American than eastern religions.

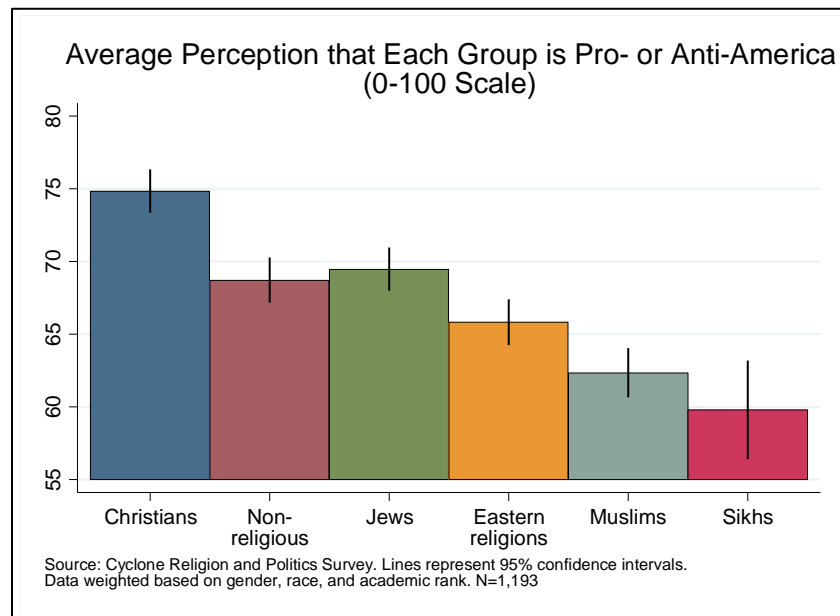


Figure 55. Perceptions each Religious Group is Pro- or Anti-America

Figures 56, 57, and 58 present perceptions of each religious group as pro- or anti-America, by the respondent's party affiliation. Figure 56 indicates that non-Christian groups are more strongly perceived to be anti-American by Republicans than by Democrats, by a significant margin. This is depicted through a difference from approximately 73 to 56 degrees between those who are strong Democrats to those who are strong Republicans, in the perception that these groups are pro-American. However, Democrats and Republicans have similar perceptions of Christians as pro-American. Figure 58 presents the average difference in ratings of Christians and non-Christians, by party. Figure 58 also points towards the tendency of all parties, even strong Democrats, to choose the dominant religion, Christianity.

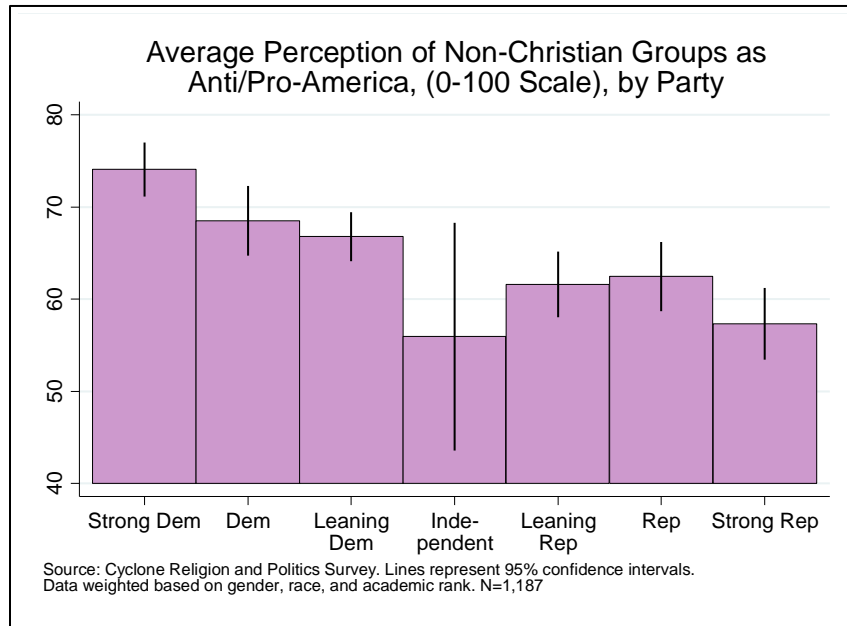


Figure 56. Average Perceptions of Non-Christians as Pro- or Anti-America, by Party

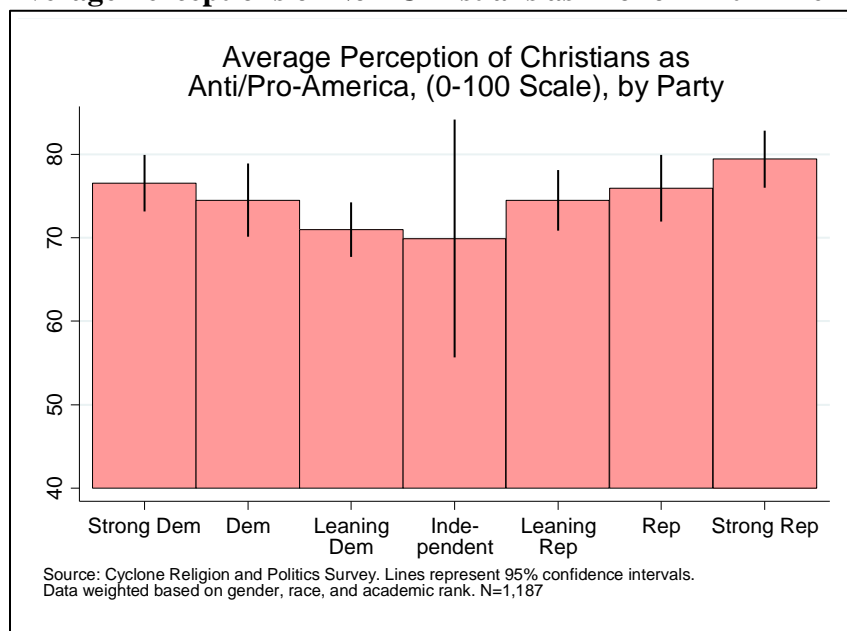


Figure 57. Average Perceptions of Christians as Pro- or Anti-America, by Party

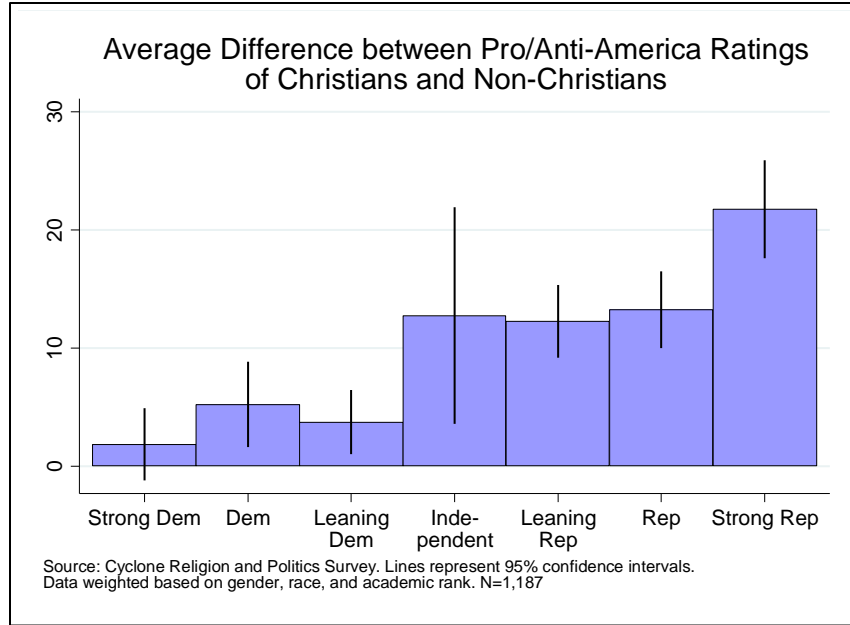


Figure 58. Average Differences in Ratings of Christians and Non-Christians, by Party

Next, students were asked “Is there is one true religion?” Figure 59 shows the responses from students who indicated that they had a religion, and among all students. Among the entire student body 26% said there is one true religion. The 2011 Faith Matters survey, which covered the entire United States, only had 13% of respondents agree with the statement that “one religion was true and others are not.” It is striking that the ISU student body had a higher percentage of respondents saying there is one true religion, given the larger than average amount of “nones” on campus.

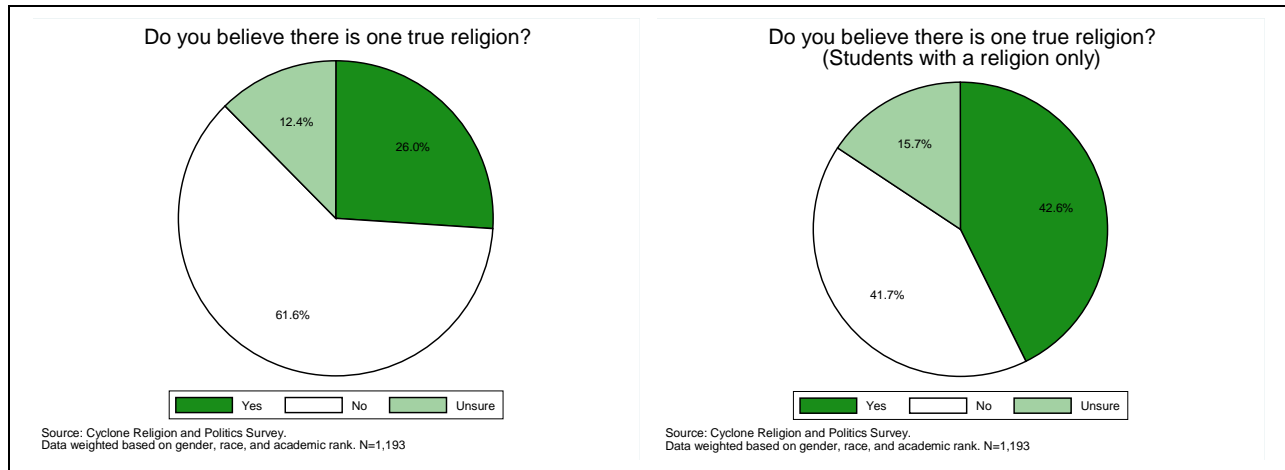


Figure 59. Belief in One True Religion

The group then examined whether the belief that there is one true religion leads to a negative perception of religious groups besides one’s own. Figure 60 indicates that among Christians, there is an approximately twenty point difference in warmth toward Christian and non-Christian groups among students who believe there is a true religion. This difference decreases to less than 10 points among Christian students who answered that there is no true religion.

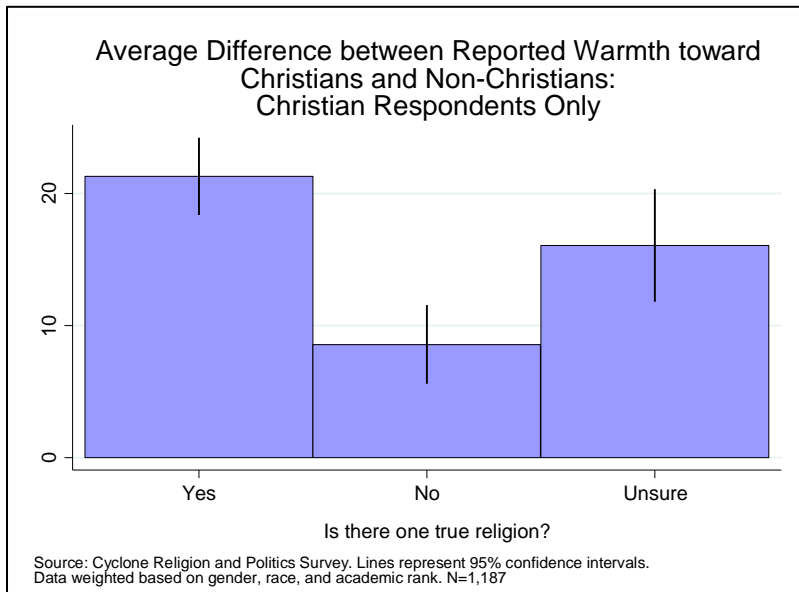


Figure 60. Warmth toward Christians and non-Christians, by Belief in One True Religion (Christian Respondents Only)

The study then examined perceptions of religion as inherently peaceful, or as causing violence. Average responses on both questions were neutral. This indicates that among the students who filled out this survey, the belief is that religion can be both peaceful and some religious teachings can promote violence.

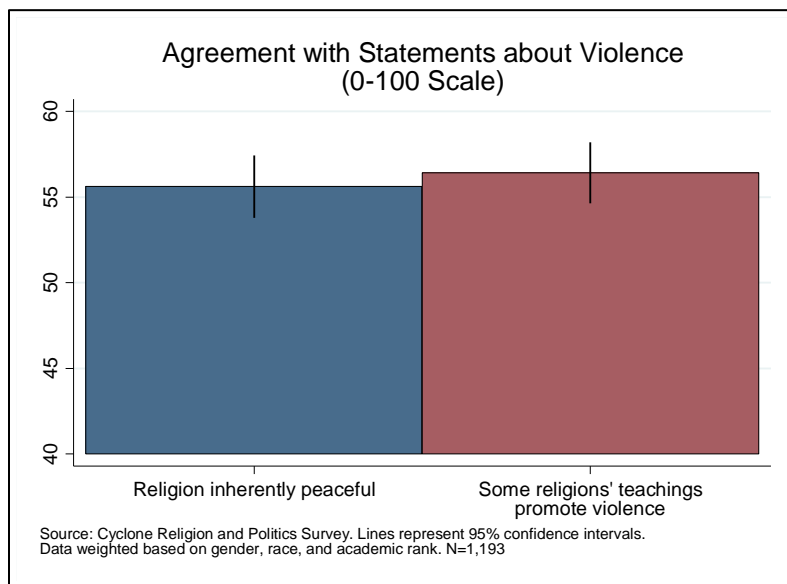


Figure 61. Average Agreement with Statements about Violence

When individuals were asked “do teachings of some religions promote violence,” responses varied by religiosity. The extremely religious and the not-at-all-religious are more likely to notice violence in other religious groups.

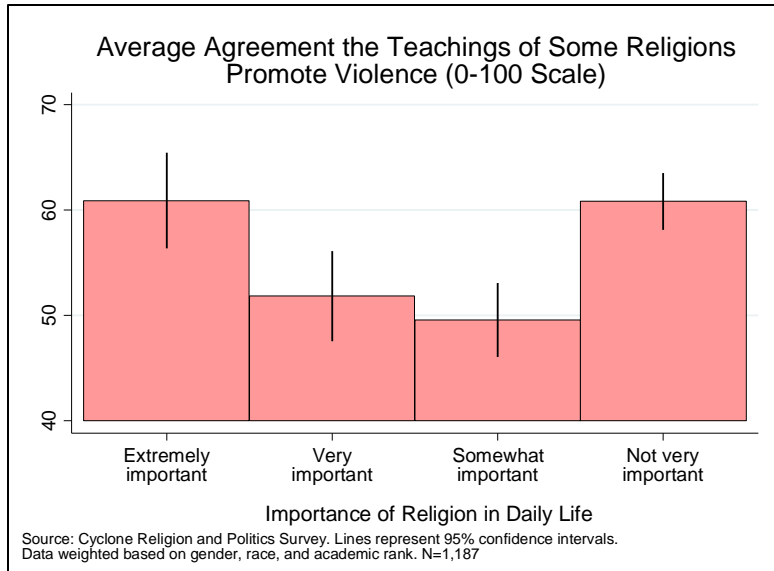


Figure 62. Average Agreement the Teachings of Some Religions Promote Violence, by Religiosity

When students were asked whether federal laws should be different for all religions, the great majority said no, they should not be treated differently. The first graph of Figure 63 presents results from all respondents, and the second only from religious people, but results are very similar. Additionally, about 5 percent said that yes, federal government should treat religions differently and 13-15 percent stated that they were unsure.

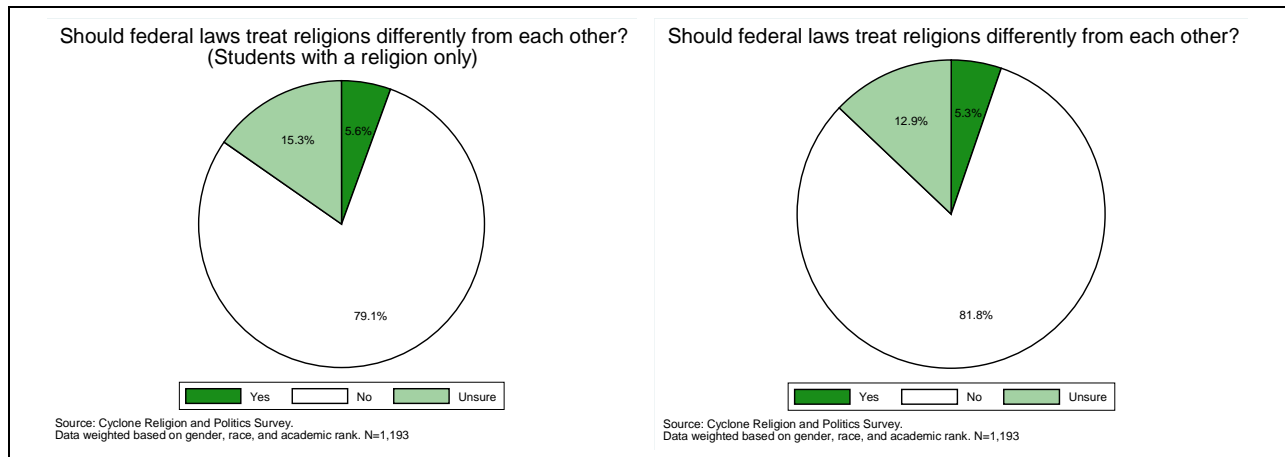


Figure 63. Belief Religions Should Be Treated Differently in Law

Democrats were more likely to believe federal laws should treat all religions the same than Republicans. Figure 64 indicates there is roughly a 20 percent difference between the strong Democrats and the strong Republicans.

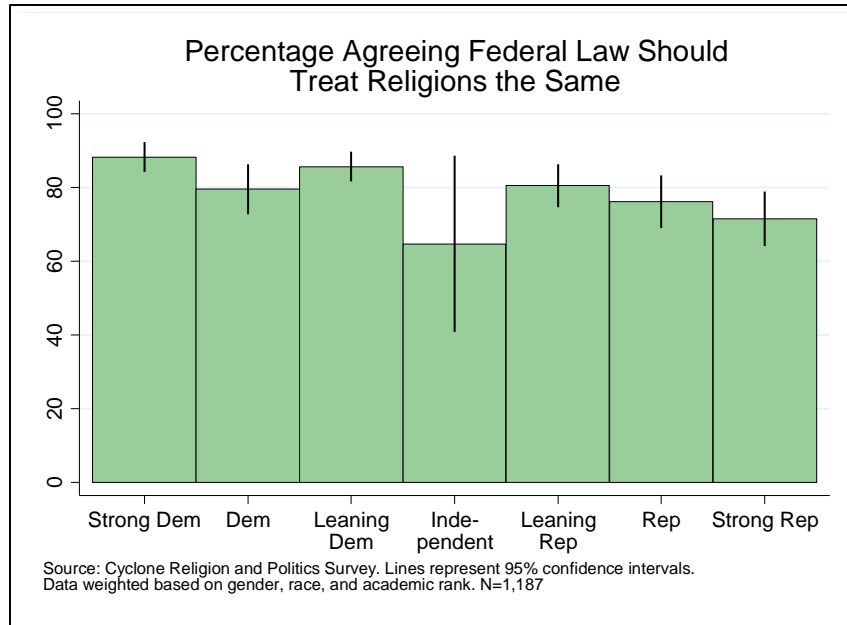


Figure 64. Belief all Religions Should Be Treated the Same in Law, by Party

About the Authors

Jonathan Becker is currently a junior at Iowa State University working on his four Bachelor's of Arts and Sciences in Philosophy, Political Science, Economics, and Religious Studies. His goals are to be accepted into Harvard University's joint-degree program in Law and Business Administration, to work for his Ph.D. in Philosophy at Cambridge University. He hopes to teach Law at George Washington University or Oxford University while working as CEO of his own-start up business: Significance.

Ryan Biggs is currently a senior at Iowa State University working on his Bachelor's in Industrial Design with a concentration in Design for Sustainability. His plans after graduation are to return to work in recreational boating design.

Alexis Cozad is currently a junior at Iowa State University working on her Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and Spanish. After graduation she plans on moving to Omaha to become a police officer for the Omaha Police Department.

Brian Gillenwater is currently a senior at Iowa State University in computer engineer at Iowa State University of Science and Technology. He chose computer engineering based on my passion for technology. After graduation he will be working at PWC as a network security consultant.

Zach Kolar is currently a senior at Iowa State University finishing his Bachelor's of Science in Electrical Engineering. He will be graduating with a focus in Power. After graduating he will be working at Exelon Nuclear Power Plant in Cordova, Illinois.

Amy Seibert is currently a senior at Iowa State University finishing her Bachelor's of Science in Computer Engineering and a minor in Bioengineering. After graduation she will be working as a Software Engineer at Minnetronix, Inc in St. Paul, Minnesota.

CHAPTER TEN: Perception of Islam at Iowa State University

By Ryan David, Jared Douglas, Jacob Robinson, and Thanasy Telios

This group chose to evaluate responses related to perceptions of Islam. Generally speaking, how do students perceive Islam in America, and are there underlying tones of Islamophobia? Survey findings showed a connection between unfavorable views of Islam and support for right-of-center candidates. Across the board the findings showed that the majority have warm feelings toward Islam. The study showed there were more politically left-of-center survey takers. The study showed an interesting outcome with the Independent cohort having the highest unfavorability towards Islam.

Besides the question on warmth toward Islam presented in the previous chapter, this group added three additional survey questions:

Do you think Islam is inherently violent compared to other religions? Yes, unsure, or no?

According to the Pew Research Center, Islam will be the fastest growing major religion globally by 2050. Do you perceive this as: very negative, somewhat negative, neutral, somewhat positive, or very positive?

Do you believe that Islamophobia (discrimination of Islam/Muslims) is playing a significant role in the current election campaign? Yes, unsure, or no?

Figure 63 details the first findings. Respondents with the greatest negative feelings towards Islam also favored Donald Trump as a presidential candidate. Ted Cruz was also highly favored by those with strong negative feelings toward Islam. Conversely, respondents who favored candidates such as Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton had the greatest positive feelings toward Islam. These findings suggest respondents who favor a conservative candidate are likely to have a greater sense of Islamophobia, whereas those who prefer more liberal candidates have an opposing stance on Islamophobia.

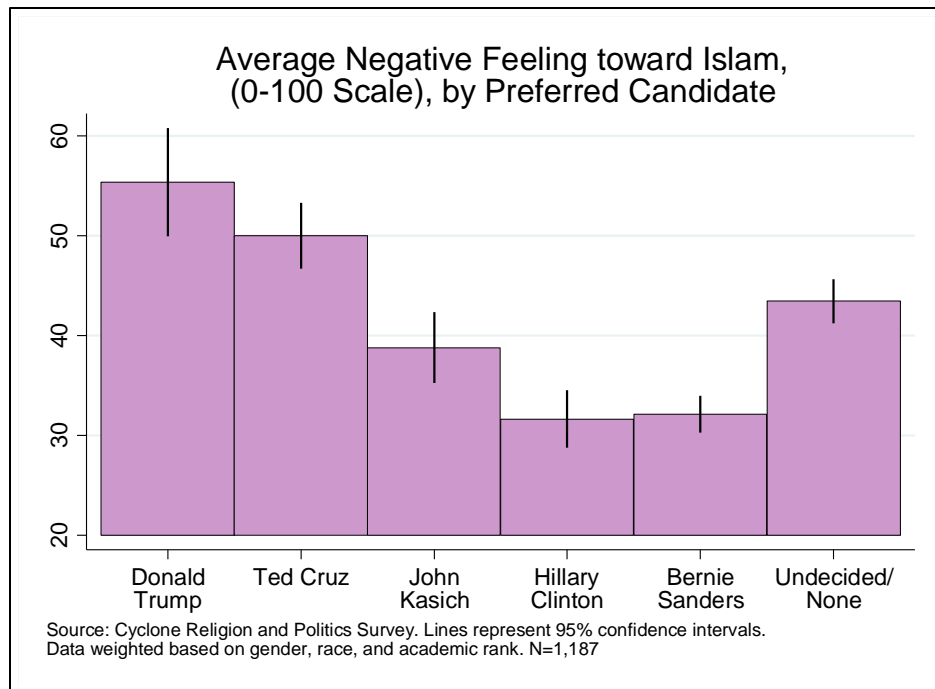


Figure 65. Negative Feeling toward Islam, by Preferred Candidate

The correlation between political ideology and Islamophobia is further demonstrated when comparing a respondents' feelings toward Islam and their party affiliation. The findings are demonstrated in Figure 64. Negative feelings are higher among those associated with the Republican Party. Again, respondents with more liberal views that supported the Democratic party had the least negative feelings toward Islam.

Interestingly, negative feelings toward Islam are highest among respondents who identify as Independent. Even on the lowest end of the 95 percent confidence interval, Independents hold some of the most negative feelings toward Islam. Of the 1,187 respondents, only 17 chose to identify as Independents without identifying a party to which they leaned. Of these 17 individuals, two are Kasich supporters, one is a Cruz supporter, one is a Sanders supporter, and the other 13 respondents support no candidates. While 17 respondents is a very small sample size, and any conclusions may be circumstantial, it appears to support the belief that those responding as Independent are more likely to be apolitical. Those who are apolitical are in turn less politically informed and therefore may be more likely to hold views based on fear and misinformation, both of which are large contributors to Islamophobia.

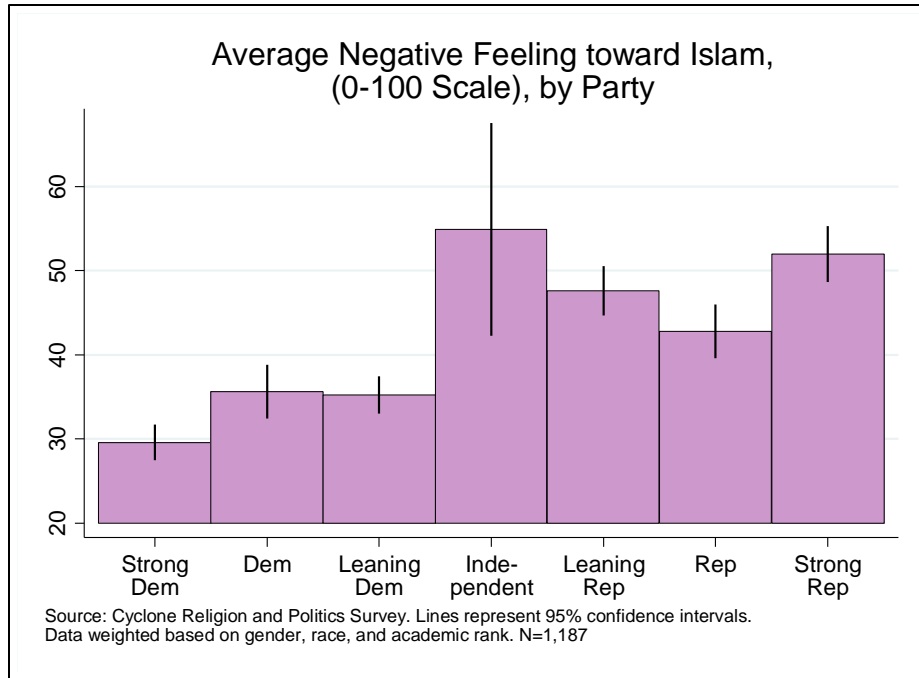


Figure 66. Negative Feelings toward Islam, by Party

Over half of respondents believe that Islam is not inherently violent compared to other religions. Figure 65 shows that only 16.3 percent of respondents believe that Islam was more violent, while 17.7 percent were unsure.

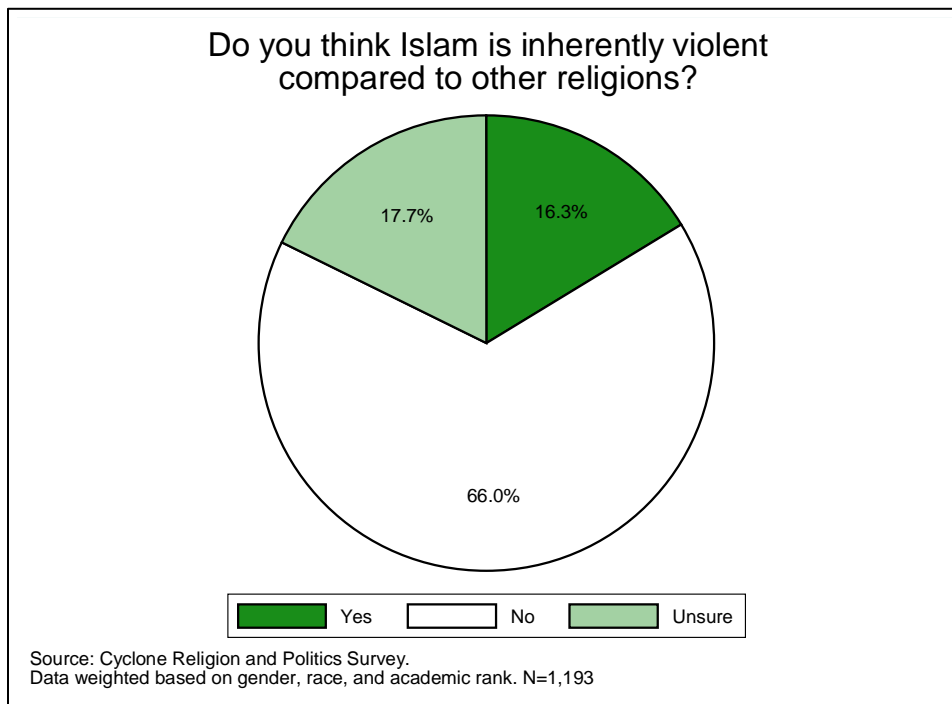


Figure 67. Opinions on Whether Islam is Inherently Violent

A study from the Pew Research Center determined that Islam will be the fastest-growing religion by 2050. Given the controversial remarks that have been made toward Islam during the 2016 Republican presidential primary, respondents were asked on a scale from very negative to very positive how they perceived Islam's rapid growth. Figure 66 shows that sixty percent of respondents said that they had a neutral stance regarding the rapid growth of Islam globally. Just over 10 percent of students have very negative attitudes about Islam's growth, compared to the 5 percent that hold very positive attitudes. About 22 percent have somewhat negative attitudes regarding Islam's rapid growth, compared to the 8 percent that have somewhat positive feelings about this projected change.

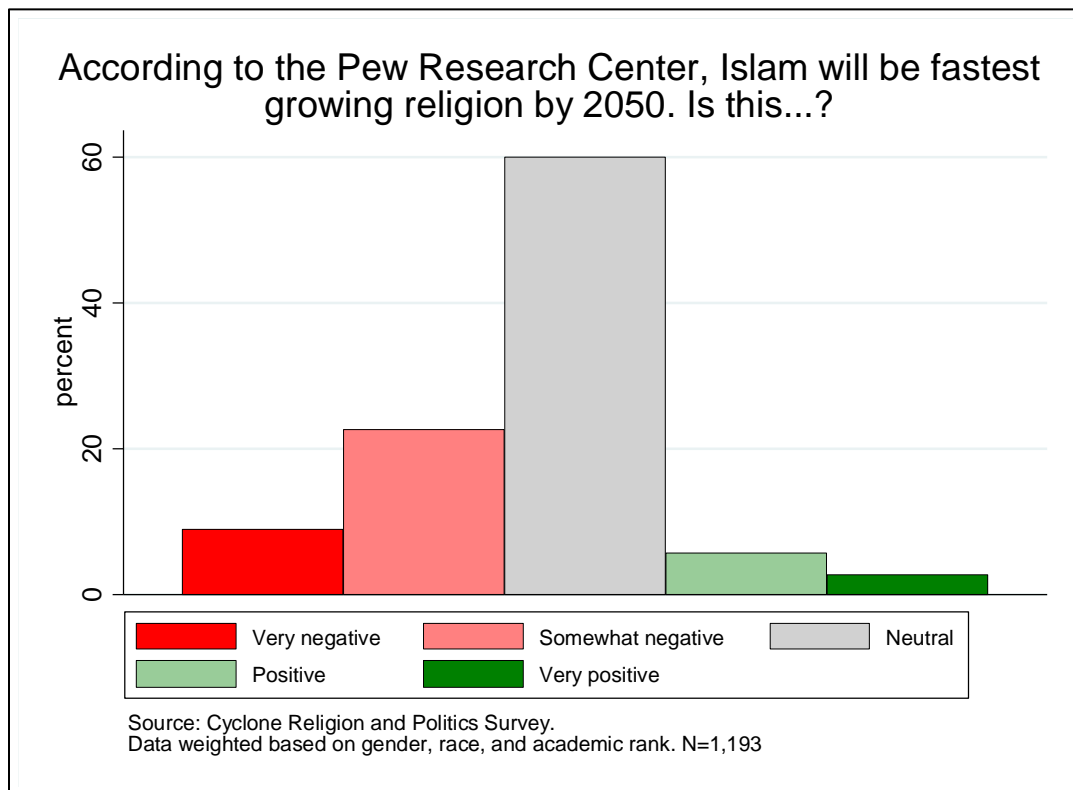


Figure 68. Feelings toward Islam as the Fastest Growing Religion

There are more negative attitudes than positive ones, possibly because the majority of respondents who did not exhibit Islamophobia do not see the growth as either positive or negative. The individuals that see the changes as somewhat negative or very negative are more alarmed than those who do not fear Islam's rapid growth.

In conclusion, respondents that support Democratic candidates or have more liberal preferences have more positive feelings toward Islam than those who are more conservative and prefer Republican candidates. This is not an indication of high levels of Islamophobia among survey-takers, but a higher level of Islamophobia among conservative students than liberal students at Iowa State. Overall, there are more students who were unsure or neutral in their feelings toward Islam than negative or positive.

About the Authors

Ryan Davis graduated from Iowa State University on May 6, 2016 with a BA in Political Science. During his time at Iowa State, he was an intern with a 2016 presidential campaign and was an active member in student organizations. Davis plans on continuing his education and running for public office in the future. In his spare time, he enjoys playing guitar, being politically active and spending time with his friends and family.

Thanasy Telios graduated from Iowa State University on May 6, 2016 with a BA in Political Science and Meteorology. Interned with an NBC affiliated television station and a 2016 presidential campaign internship. joining Iowa Storming Chasing Network this summer and plans on being a broadcast meteorologist in the future. He is interested in running for a public elected office someday.

Jacob Robinson graduated from Iowa State University on May 6, 2016 with a BA in Political Science. While at Iowa State, he studied biblical archeology and public policy. He is going to Arizona State University in order to pursue an MPA, in order to begin his path to City Management.

Jared Douglas is a student at Iowa State University, working to attain his BA in Political Science. His interests are in the area of pre-law and public administration. He will continue his education after graduating in May of 2017.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Introduction

Cyclone Religion and Politics Survey

Thank you for agreeing to take this survey! This is being conducted as a class project for POL S 370, Religion and Politics, under the direction of Professor Amy Erica Smith. The results will be used to inform the Iowa State community and decision-makers about what Iowa State students think about important issues today.

Please feel free not to answer any question, or to leave any question blank. Your responses to this survey are entirely anonymous, and we will never be able to identify you. The data will only be analyzed in the aggregate, and they will be stored in a secure server through Iowa State.

You must be an Iowa State University student to take this survey. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes of your time. At the end of the survey, you will go to a separate form where you will be able to enter your email address for a drawing for one of five \$20 Amazon gift certificates. Please note that you must enter an @iastate.edu email address to win, and each email address will be entered only once.

If you have any concerns or questions about the survey, please feel free to contact Dr. Amy Erica Smith at aesmith2@iastate.edu or Lissandra Villa at lvilla@iastate.edu.

Do you consent to participate? If you do not consent, please do not click the button below, and close this tab/window in your browser.

Yes

What is your gender?



Male

Other/NA

Female

What is your race/ethnicity? PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

White non-Hispanic/European

Hispanic/Latin American

Middle Eastern

Asian American/Asian non-American

Black/African American/African

Other

Where did you grow up?

Where did you grow up outside the United States?

What is your current year at the university? Please report the actual years you have spent in higher education.

What is your religious preference?

Please check ALL OF THE FOLLOWING that describe your religious preference.

Fundamentalist

Pentecostal

- Evangelical/Born Again
- Mainline
- Liberal Protestant

- Other
- None of these describe me

Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the holy scripture of your religion, if any?

- Scripture is an ancient book recorded by men
- Scripture is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally
- Scripture is the inspired word of God
- I do not have a religion

How often do you attend religious services?

 ▼

How important is religion in your daily life?

Extremely important



Very important



Somewhat important



Not at all important



How would you describe your position on the political spectrum?

Very conservative



Somewhat conservative



Neither liberal nor conservative



Somewhat liberal



Very liberal



Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or a member of some other party?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent (not affiliated with any party)
- Member of some other party

Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican?

Strong Republican

Not very strong Republican

Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat?

Strong Democrat

Not very strong Democrat

Do you generally consider yourself closer to the Republicans or the Democrats?

Republicans

Democrats

Are you a US citizen?

Yes

No

Are you eligible to vote in the United States?

Yes

No

Don't know

During the 2016 campaign, have you voted in a primary election or caucus in any state, or will you participate in an upcoming primary or caucus?

- Republican Caucus/Primary
- Democratic Caucus/Primary
- Neither

Which of the following candidates did you/will you support? (If you switched candidates during the caucus, choose the one you supported most strongly.)

Which of the following candidates did you/will you support?

Which Presidential candidate are you most likely to vote for in the upcoming election?

How likely is it that you will vote in the upcoming general election for president in November?

Group 3 (Parental Socialization)

The next questions are about your parent/guardian who is most politically aware or active. Generally speaking, which political party do they associate with most?

To what extent are they involved in politics?

What is their religious preference?

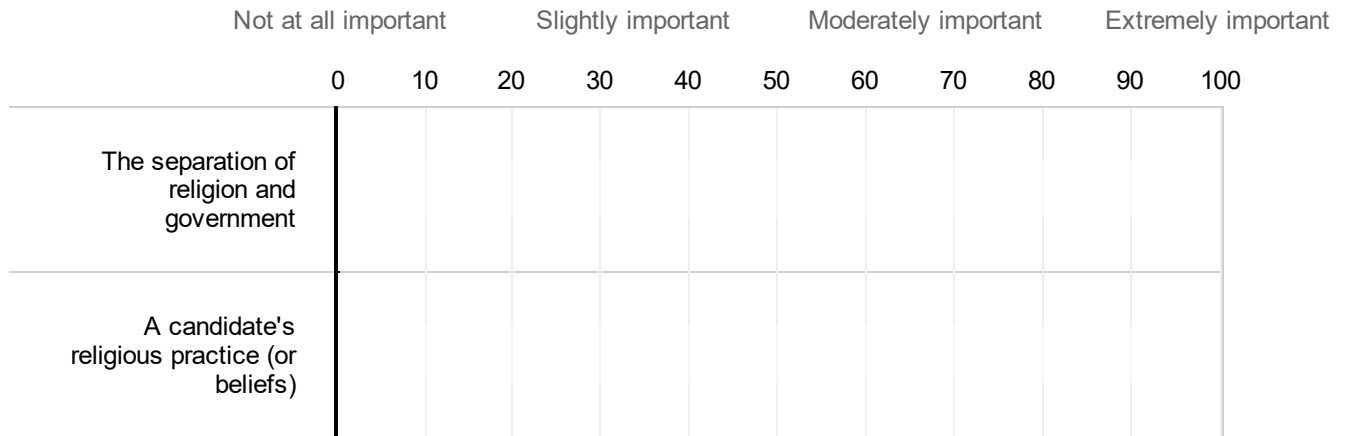
How important is religion in their daily life?

How frequently do your parents/guardians talk about:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Religion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Politics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Groups 4 and 6 (Voting Behavior)

How important are the following to you?



How likely are you to vote for a candidate that doesn't share your religion?



Probabliliy

If your party's candidate didn't share your religious beliefs but the opposing party's did, would you still vote for your party's candidate?

- Yes Maybe
- No

If your party's candidate doesn't agree with your belief on homosexuality would you still vote for them?

- Yes Maybe
- No

If your party's candidate doesn't agree with your belief on abortion would you still vote for them?

- Yes Maybe
- No

Do you believe that religious beliefs affect which party your peers' identify with? If so, to what degree?

- Yes, strongly No
- Yes, somewhat

Do you believe your own religious beliefs affect which party you personally identify with? If so, to what degree?

- Yes, strongly No
- Yes, somewhat I am not religious.

Group 5 (Evolution)

Do you believe in the concept of evolution?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Which of the following is the MOST IMPORTANT source of your belief, or lack of belief, in evolution?

- Education (science class)
- Politics
- Religion
- Other
- Not Sure

Do you think that intelligent design should be reintroduced into public schools?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Do you think that evolution should be taught in public schools?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Group 8 (Public Prayer)

The next set of questions is about school prayer. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
It bothers me when I see other people praying in public spaces (such as bowing head, kneeling on ground, hands folded, etc.).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School officials should be able to lead prayer on school grounds if student	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

participation is voluntary.

My university community is open to school prayer.

I am open to school prayer.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If a person in a position of authority led a prayer, would you feel comfortable if you did NOT join in?

Yes

No

I have never experienced this

Groups 1 and 2 (Discrimination)

The next questions are about your experiences in the past year. Have you felt discriminated against **for any of these reasons?**

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
For your religious views	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For your political views	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Another reason <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the past year, have you felt discriminated against **in any of the following settings?**

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
In interactions with Iowa State University, including administration, faculty/staff, and fellow peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the larger Ames/Central Iowa community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In some other community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In popular culture/social media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Thinking about **other people** at Iowa State University, do you think discrimination occurs **for any of these reasons?**

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
For people's religious views	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

For people's political views

Another reason

Do you feel that you personally would benefit from a **safe space** on campus? (*Safe Space is defined as, "a place where anyone can relax and be able to fully express, without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe on account of biological sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, or physical or mental ability."*)

Yes

Not Sure

No

How frequently would you utilize a safe space on campus?

Never

Rarely

Occasionally

Frequently

Very Frequently

Thinking about the past year and the people that utilize the Free Speech Zone outside the library on campus, do you feel it is a necessary feature for the University?

Yes

No

Do you feel it is necessary because...

It is a place for people to exercise their rights.

If conflict does occur it's generally fun/exciting.

I generally agree the speakers.

Other

Do you feel it is not necessary because...

It leads to unproductive conflict.

I generally disagree with what the speakers say or do.

The speakers generally make me feel uncomfortable/unsafe.

Other

Groups 7 and 9 (Warmth toward Groups and Islam)

The last set of questions is about your feelings towards different groups. Please rank your personal feelings toward each of the following groups.

	Cold	Neutral			Warm
	0	25	50	75	100
Non-Religious (Atheists, Agnostics)					
Muslims					
Sikhs					
Jews (Orthodox, Reform)					
Eastern Religions (Hindus, Buddhists, Jains)					
Christians (Catholics, Evangelicals, Protestants)					

Rank your personal feelings on how much each of these groups is American.

	Anti-America	Neutral			Pro-America
	0	25	50	75	100
Non-Religious (Atheists, Agnostics)					
Muslims					
Sikhs					

Jews (Orthodox, Reform)				
Eastern Religions (Hindus, Buddhists, Jains)				
Christians (Catholics, Evangelicals, Protestants)				

Do you believe there is one true religion?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree			Agree		Strongly agree	
	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Religion is inherently peaceful.											
Teachings of some religions promote violence.											



Do you think Islam is inherently violent compared to other religions?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

According to the Pew Research Center, Islam will be the fastest growing major religion globally by 2050. Do you perceive this as:

Very negative

Somewhat negative

Neutral

Somewhat positive

Very positive

Do you believe that Islamophobia (discrimination against Islam/Muslims) is playing a significant role in the current election campaign?

Yes

Unsure

No

Should federal laws treat religions differently from each other?

Yes

Unsure

No

Thank you for completing this survey! To register for the drawing for one of five \$20 Amazon gift certificates, please click on the link below, and you will taken to a separate page where you can enter your email address. Recall that you must have an @iastate.edu email address to enter, and that each email address will be entered only once.