

Religious and Nonreligious Men's Discourses on Issues Relevant to Women

by

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Abstract

Feminist scholars and academics have long postulated a link between religious belief and negative attitudes toward women. Recent psychological research lends limited support to this idea, with quantitative and qualitative studies converging on a link between Abrahamic religiosity and negative attitudes toward women. Guided by a social constructionist framework, the goal of this study was to test this relationship by exploring how such attitudes are mutually constructed in conversation. To help achieve this, a discourse analysis was conducted on the conversations of eight pairs of religious and nonreligious men, with ten topics particularly relevant to women provided by the researcher. Comparisons of their discourses revealed the two nonreligious pairs to present women in the most consistently positive light, with only the Shi'ite men found to employ similarly positive presentations. The significance of these findings are discussed as they relate to treatment programs, religious communities, and past and future research.

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Dedication

For Amanda, Mom, and Dad. You are the most beautiful, brilliant, hard-working, and supportive people that I know.

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Religious and Nonreligious Men's Discourses on Issues Relevant to Women

The relationship between religion and the rights and status of women has long been a topic of interest in academic and religious circles. The patriarchal nature of most religions, and the subjugation of women that seems to inevitably stem from this, has led some to go so far as to claim that “[p]atriarchy is itself the prevailing religion of the entire planet... And the symbolic message of all the sects of the religion which is patriarchy is this: Women are the dreaded anomie” (Daly, 1978, p. 39). Although there is evidence suggesting that religion is unrelated to the treatment of women (e.g., Brinkerhoff, Grandin, & Lupri, 1992) and other evidence indicating that it is associated with decreased hostility toward women (e.g., Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 2006), an extensive literature suggests that Daly’s (1978) assertion may hold true for a broad range of religious traditions. In addition, despite some evidence that both men and women of certain religious backgrounds are equally likely to accept hostility toward women (e.g., Brinkerhoff et al., 1992; Ellison, Bartowski, & Anderson, 1999; Nayak, Byrne, Martin, & Abraham, 2003), most research suggests that religious belief is associated with hostility toward women on the part of some groups of men, but not women.

If religiosity is related to negative attitudes toward women, researchers and clinicians promoting the beneficial effects of religion and spirituality may need to reassess their claims. Of particular interest is the treatment of people convicted of domestic violence and/or sexual assault with faith-based healing (e.g., Armour, Sage, Rubin, & Windsor, 2005; Feasey, Williams, & Clark, 2005) and with programs resting upon spirituality as a ‘universal good’ around which treatment should be oriented (e.g., Ward, 2002). With men making up the majority of the perpetrators of these crimes and

women the majority of the victims (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2009), a focus on religion in the treatment of these offenders may actually encourage the attitudes and behaviours that contributed to the original crimes.

Although a case will be made against the claim that religious belief is a universal good, religion will not be painted as a universal evil. Studies of the link between religious belief and hostility toward women are plagued by numerous methodological limitations including, but not limited to: failure to explore the effects of participant gender; exclusive reliance upon survey measures; use of heterogeneous undergraduate samples as control groups; failure to compare religious with nonreligious groups; use of cross-cultural samples without exploring regional effects; and failure to differentiate by participant religion. As such, the findings of past studies, whether positive, negative, or null, must not be treated as definitive evidence either for or against the relationship between religious belief and hostility toward women.

Beyond such methodological issues, few researchers have examined why religious belief may or may not be related to people's evaluations and treatment of women. With little consensus in the literature pertaining to the direction and existence of this relationship (partially owing to the aforementioned issues), this is not surprising. Without such a consensus, it is difficult for researchers to do more than offer loosely defined theoretical explanations for the effects they observe. Given this, few researchers have postulated hypotheses attempting to reconcile the inconsistent and apparently discordant findings of research into the link between religion and the treatment of women. A review of the literature will demonstrate that, when methodological issues are resolved and when findings are placed in the context of broader research on the

psychology of religion, little of this apparent discord remains and the relationship between religious belief and hostility toward women receives solid support.

As will be demonstrated in the review of the literature, the religions most commonly associated with negative attitudes toward women are Christianity, Islam, and Orthodox Judaism. With no consensus in the literature on the relationship between specific denominations and attitudes toward women, denominational differences within these religions will be explored (e.g., Catholic and Protestant; Shi'ite and Sunni). To help prevent the issue of comparing degree of orthodoxy rather than religious affiliation, the Orthodox Jewish participants in this study were drawn exclusively from the moderate Modern Orthodox branch. Similar to the other religious groups, differences within Modern Orthodox Judaism will be explored with the use of two distinct groups: the centrist Orthodox Union movement and the more right-wing Young Israel community.

As the majority of studies into this relationship have focused solely upon marginal quantitative differences in large populations, the use of qualitative methods may help to shed light on many of the above issues. This will be achieved with the use of discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), which draws upon a social constructionist framework (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2003) to explain how certain phenomena are constructed through discourse. Although examples of discourse can be found in areas as diverse as visual media (e.g., visual arts, television, advertising), written texts (ranging from pamphlets to scientific journal articles), and even the architecture of cityscapes (Wood & Kroger, 2000), the current study will focus primarily upon conversation as discourse. In particular, the current study aims to explore how men construct their attitudes toward women through conversations (guided by the researcher), with a focus

on an array of topics that are particularly relevant to women (e.g., affirmative action, abortion, menstruation, menopause).

Though none of these topics is expected to elicit comprehensive constructions of women on its own, the use of a number of such topics is intended to evoke a variety of discourses about women. Similarly, while such issues will not solely or necessarily result in discussions about women, these tangential discussions will either be explored as they relate to women or ignored to preserve the focus of this study. To help avoid unrepresentative presentations of these men's attitudes toward women, discourses prominent throughout discussions of various topics will be of greater interest than those limited to specific topics. As such, analysis of these discussions will not be centered on men's responses to specific issues, but on the overall portrayal of women arising from the discourses employed in response to these issues.

With this in mind, four major goals guide this study. First, a review of the literature will be conducted. This review will counterbalance the field's feminist origins with both empirical and theological responses through to the present day. It will be shown that, despite the recent wave of research interest in the relationship between religion and the status of women, disputes in the literature have yet to be resolved. To help illustrate the importance of this recent flourish in scientific interest, a select group of treatments and therapies based upon the tenuous findings of past research will be presented and critiqued. Second, it will be shown, through a comparison both with past studies and quantitative methods in general, that discourse analysis is a particularly useful tool for this area of research. Through these comparisons, discourse analysis will be

presented not only as a means of guiding future research, but also as a method that both accommodates and provides possible explanations for conflicting research findings.

Third, a discourse analytic study will be conducted, with pairs of men from Islamic, Christian, Orthodox Jewish, and nonreligious backgrounds guided by the researcher through conversations about issues relevant to women. These men's discourses will be compared with those of men from other backgrounds (religious or nonreligious), the same background, and with examples at various points throughout their own conversation. It is expected that this process will reveal the relationship between religion and attitudes toward women to be much more complicated than suggested by prior research, and often for reasons unrelated to the direction and/or existence of this relationship (i.e., due to qualitative factors, such as the pervasiveness of an essentialist view of gender differences within one's community and one's views on issues of gender inequality). Finally, the results of this study will be compared with those of prior research, with the implications for the aforementioned treatments and therapies outlined to highlight the need for more thorough analyses, both quantitative and qualitative.

Religion and Attitudes Toward Women

Although Mary Daly (1978) may seem to present an extreme position, her view of religion as demonizing the feminine has considerable support, both historically and in the present day. Such examples include both the extreme and cultural, such as the Hindu practice of *sati* (bride burning), the Catholic Church-supported witch hunts of medieval Europe, and the severe restrictions placed on the freedom of women in countries ruled by Shari'a law (e.g., Saudi Arabia). They also include the subversive and scriptural, such as the *mitzvah*, recited daily by Orthodox Jewish men, thanking God for not having made

them female (i.e., *baruch atah...shelo asani isha*; Ross, 2004), the Biblical teaching not allowing “a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man...for it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve” (1 Timothy, 2:12-13, The New American Standard Bible), and verse 4:34 from the Qur’an (E.H Palmer), which says of women: “those whose perverseness ye fear, admonish them and remove them into bedchambers and beat them.”

Though many Biblical, Talmudic, and Qur’anic scholars have, often successfully, argued that such passages do not necessarily represent institutional misogyny (e.g., Barlas, 2002; Greenberg, 1981; Pierce, Groothuis, & Fee, 2004), taking cultural and scriptural examples together helps to present a vivid picture of what Daly (1973) referred to as the “universe of sexist suppositions” (p. 5) against which women should rally. Daly goes on to point out that, although the question of the accuracy of such scriptures is important, it has little bearing on the current state of women and religion. As long as people continue to use religion to justify the subordination of women, the more pressing questions for both feminist theorists (such as Mary Daly) and the current study are: why do such views persist, and how can they be remedied?

Proposed answers to the second question range from a complete abolition of religion (e.g., Gaylor, 1997) to a reworking and reinterpretation of traditions and scripture (e.g., Greenberg, 1981). Some, however, have suggested that there is nothing inherent to such traditions that promotes inequality between men and women and, as such, there is no need to alter even the most conservative and literal interpretations (e.g., Pierce et al., 2004). Such critics, drawing on evidence suggesting beneficial aspects of religious belief, locate the problem neither in the traditions nor in the scriptures that serve as their foundations. Instead they suggest that, on the whole, most major religions promote the

positive treatment of women; the problem, they note, arises when people fail to take in the general message, choosing instead to focus on the "bits and pieces" of religious belief (e.g., Ingersoll, 2003).

The latter view seems to be the one shared by most researchers studying the relationship between religion and the treatment of women. Whether this is a reflection of researchers' personal beliefs or their reluctance to create controversy by potentially overstepping their bounds, few researchers suggest either reforming religions or abandoning them altogether. Instead, those who find religion to have positive effects promote actively endorsing people's religious beliefs, in an unadulterated form, as a protective factor against hostility toward women (e.g., Emmons, 1999; Ward, 2002), while those who fail to find a positive link either restrict their inferences or remain silent on the issue (e.g., Brinkerhoff et al., 1992; Cunradi, Caetano, & Shafer, 2002). Such silence and passivity on the part of researchers finding a negative association between religious belief and attitudes toward women may have been part of the reason why Daly (1973) identified psychology as religion's heir in the role of maintaining gender inequality. Although this imbalance is far from ideal, it is difficult to imagine an alternative given the potential personal, professional, and societal repercussions of using one's research to promote irreligiosity as a remedy to the subordination of women.

Such a call for change, however, may be unnecessary. Using domestic violence as a behavioural estimate of attitudes toward women, there seems to be a significant amount of evidence suggesting that religious belief protects against negative attitudes toward women. Fergusson, Horwood, Kershaw, and Shannon (1986), for example, found that, when controlling for a number of other factors (e.g., education level, length of

marriage, socioeconomic status), those who reported no church attendance were two times more likely to report domestic violence than those who reported monthly church attendance. Although Cunradi et al. (2002) found that this relationship was rendered nonsignificant after controlling for alcohol problems, psychosocial factors (e.g., approval of marital aggression), and sociodemographic variables (e.g., race, age), Ellison and Anderson (2001) found support for Fergusson et al., with partner reports of male-perpetrated domestic violence 45.7% less likely among weekly church attendees than nonattendees. Further, contrary to Cunradi et al.'s (2002) finding, this relationship persisted after controlling for variability in drug and alcohol use, social support, and personality factors (i.e., self-esteem and depression).

Some critics have argued that social desirability may affect self-reports of both religious attendance (Presser & Stinson, 1998) and domestic violence (Dobash & Dobash, 1998), thus calling into question the results of the above studies. By comparing people's self-reports with those of their partners, however, a number of researchers (e.g., Ellison & Anderson, 2001; Ellison et al., 1999) have revealed that such arguments may not be valid, as there is often little variability when comparing self-reports both within couples and between men and women. Further evidence for the validity of the beneficial relation between religion and partner abuse comes from comparisons of people's self-reports with those of religious authorities. In interviews with Christian, Muslim, and Jewish religious leaders, Ware, Levitt, and Bayer (2003) found that, regardless of faith or denomination, religious leaders reported very low estimates of domestic violence in their congregations, attributed by the leaders to their respective faiths' condemnation of hostility toward women. Comparing such findings to perpetrator and victim reports of

domestic violence reveals a similar pattern, with Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz (2006) reporting lack of religious affiliation to be associated with higher rates of male-perpetrated domestic violence against female partners (compared with religious respondents).

Although the attitude-behaviour relation is complicated, there appears to be an enduring relationship between negative attitudes toward women and domestic violence across studies (Pease & Flood, 2008). In view of this, it would seem reasonable to assume that the relationship between religion and attitudes toward women is similar to that between religion and domestic violence. This, however, does not appear to be the case. As mentioned above, Cunradi et al. (2002) found that the relationship between self-reported attendance at religious services and domestic violence disappeared after a number of factors were controlled, including an attitudinal measure (i.e., approval of marital aggression). Although Ellison and Anderson (2001) found evidence to the contrary, their failure to control for differences in attitudes toward women limits the strength of their conclusion.

Further, some of the same researchers who reported a negative relationship between attendance at religious rites and domestic violence found null or mixed results in other studies. For example, although Ellison et al. (1999) found that more frequent attendance at religious services was associated with less domestic violence, they found the reverse relationship among religiously conservative men. As religious conservatism is related to frequency of attendance at religious services regardless of denomination (Hertel & Hughes, 1987), these results seem contradictory. As another example, in a follow-up to their interviews of religious leaders, Levitt and Ware (2006) found that

Jewish, Christian, and Islamic leaders acknowledged that certain aspects of their faiths, such as teachings of the superior status of men over women, could be and are used to justify violence and hostility toward women.

Beyond the problems associated with self-report data, Pease and Flood (2008) noted that such discrepant findings may reflect researchers' inattention to context. Focusing on the religious community and locating the issue in marriage practices (e.g., contracts, social pressure to marry) and beliefs (e.g., good wives should be obedient) specific to Islam, Hassounch-Phillips (2001) found that both perpetrators and survivors of partner abuse used religious explanations to justify their abuse experiences. Although such justifications were described as culturally specific, Giesbrecht and Sevcik (2000) found similar results in an Evangelical Christian community. They also identified aspects of both the religion and the church community that potentially supported and/or enabled abuse. Similarly, in a study by Knickmeyer, Levitt, Horne, and Bayer (2004), Christian women who had experienced domestic violence reported feeling alienated and, at times, rejected by both their communities and religious leaders following their disclosure of these experiences. Further demonstrating the apparent universality of such experiences within Abrahamic¹ religious communities, Adelman (2000) reported similar experiences on the part of both Palestinian and Jewish female survivors of domestic abuse in Israel. While attempting to separate from their abusers, these women experienced little support and often further abuse from religious courts and communities, leading Adelman (2000, p. 1224) to give the name "divorce-related domestic violence" to such experiences.

¹ My use of religious labels, such as Abrahamic, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim, is not intended to blur any distinctions within these groups. I use such terms for convenience only, as I realize that no label can adequately reflect the diverse histories and beliefs of these communities and their adherents.

Although it may reflect a bias toward Abrahamic religions in Western research, studies reporting similar findings among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities are common. As mentioned above, attention to context may help resolve some of the apparent discrepancies in the literature. Specifically, studies reporting that religious belief reduces domestic abuse rely almost entirely on self-reports, placing participants in hypothetical situations far removed from actual instances of hostility toward women. In contrast, studies that provide more context, whether by exploring factors beyond superficial indicators of religiosity (e.g., denominational composition of couples from the same religious background and degree of religious conservatism; Ellison et al., 1999) or by focusing on those with first-hand encounters with religious people's attitudes toward women in the wake of their experiences of domestic abuse (e.g., Adelman, 2000; Knickmeyer et al., 2004), paint a different picture, one where religion has, at best, no relation to people's attitudes toward women.

An additional explanation of the discrepancies in the literature suggests that discussions of religion's effects on attitudes toward women may be misguided in the implied direction of this relationship. In their study of 400 societies, Stover and Hope (1984) found a bidirectional relationship between attitudes toward women and monotheistic religion. With evidence for both religion shaping attitudes toward women and attitudes toward women shaping religion, and with general differences in the methods used to elicit responses, it may be the case that not all of these studies were exploring the same phenomenon. Studies relying on self-reports and hypothetical examples may have primed people to respond in a manner appropriate for their religion,

thus studying how religion affects general attitudes toward women and promoting a positive relation between religion and attitudes toward women.

In contrast, studies using specific, real-life examples and behavioural measures (e.g., the responses of others to experiences of domestic violence) may have been dealing with a more complicated, and possibly more realistic, relationship. As noted by Levitt and Ware (2006), even religious leaders could not offer a universally appropriate response to domestic violence. Torn between conflicting religious teachings of empathy for the suffering and pressure to uphold traditional family values, their responses were shaped according to the situation. In other words, there is sufficient ambiguity in religious teachings to allow for one's religious beliefs to be shaped according to one's attitudes toward women, a vivid example of the problems that may arise from ignoring a religion's general teachings while focussing on its "bits and pieces" (Ingersoll, 2003).

Viewing the relationship between religion and attitudes toward women as both context-dependent and bidirectional led Pease and Flood (2008) to recommend a social constructionist approach to the subject. At its most extreme, social constructionism suggests that all things, no matter how concrete or 'real' they may seem, are constructed socially (Burr, 2003). Although this may seem like an untenable and somewhat absurd belief, Wetherell and Potter (1992) have pointed out that this is not the case; as an example, it may be difficult to deny the reality of a plane crash and the deaths of all of its passengers, but the causes of and responses to the crash, as well as the meanings of the deaths of the passengers, are all socially constructed. Viewing attitudes as socially constructed, as opposed to internal and enduring, a clearer picture of the literature emerges. By examining specific, socially situated responses to domestic violence (e.g.,

Adelman, 2000; Giesbrecht & Sevcik, 2000; Hassouneh-Phillips, 2001; Knickmeyer et al., 2004), rather than self-reported general attitudes toward women (e.g., Ellison and Anderson, 2001; Fergusson et al., 1986), researchers may have tapped into more accurate indicators of people's attitudes toward women.

Why the religion-attitudes toward women relation matters. Disputes about the nature of the relation between religion and attitudes toward women may appear relatively minor, especially if the discrepant findings simply reflect the fact that researchers are exploring different phenomena. However, looking at the prevalence of faith-based healing for people convicted of crimes against women (e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault) makes the potential gravity of such disputes apparent. Programs such as Bridges to Life (Armour et al., 2005) and the Sycamore Tree (Feasey et al., 2005) rest on the assumptions that follow from findings suggesting that religion reduces rates of domestic violence. Although such faith-based programs have been shown to increase offenders' empathy for the victims of such violence, evaluations of their effects on recidivism are absent from the literature. This, however, may simply reflect the relatively recent appearance of research in this area.

Other research suggests a negative relationship between religious belief and criminal behaviour more generally. Stark (2002) and Miller and Stark (2002) have linked irreligiosity to risk-taking behaviours. Using the 1995-1997 World Values Survey, with data representing 54 nations and covering a broad range of religious beliefs, as well as the 1972-98 American General Social Survey and National Jewish Population Survey, their major aim was to assess and explain the universality of gender differences in religiosity, with a focus on cross-cultural and interfaith differences. Pointing out that

criminality is more prevalent among males than females, and irreligiousness more common among males than females within Islam, Christianity, and Orthodox Judaism, these authors suggested that Abrahamic religions, with their promise of eternal suffering for the wicked, may deter criminality. Similarly, Baier and Wright (2001) found that all 60 of the studies in their meta-analysis reported a negative relationship between religion and crime. However, Baier and Wright (2001) also noted that the largest correlations in their meta-analysis came from a handful of the least reliable, least representative studies with the smallest sample sizes. In addition, these authors failed to explore denominational differences in this relation. Without knowing how specific religions are related to criminality, and given that much of the evidence for the overall negative effect came from a few small studies, it is difficult to draw any strong conclusions about religion's deterrent effect on crime based on this evidence.

Guided by Burkett's (1980) type of crime hypothesis, which states that religious institutions deter nonvictim crimes (e.g., gambling, drug use), but not victim crimes (e.g., murder, theft, property crimes), Fernander, Wilson, Staton, and Leukefeld (2005) explored the relations between religion, spirituality, and crime using data from a sample of 661 male offenders. In line with Burkett's (1980) hypothesis, religion (and the extent to which the offender claimed his behaviours were influenced by religion) appeared to deter drug crimes while facilitating both violent and property crimes. Although Baier and Wright (2001) found evidence for a negative relation between religiosity and criminality, their failure to explore the type of crime may have contributed to this finding. Conceivably, religious men may only appear to engage in less criminal behaviour than irreligious men because they are more likely to perpetrate crimes of violence against

women, crimes that are rarely reported (e.g., Johnson, 2006, reported that only 36% of women reported experiences of domestic violence and less than 10% reported sexual assault). This, coupled with the findings of Fernander et al. (2005) and data showing that less than 20% of all police-reported crimes are victim crimes (Wallace, 2009), seems to indicate a bias in the literature against crimes against women; with a focus on a type of crime uncommon in the literature, the link between religion and such crimes ends up lost in the use of aggregate crime statistics (i.e., majority nonvictim crimes). Although religion may deter both nonvictim crimes and crimes against men, the link between religion and victim crimes together with the association observed between religion and hostility toward women suggests that religious belief may not deter crimes perpetrated against women.

This, however, is just what is assumed in faith-based offender rehabilitation programs. Whether by failing to be sensitive to the type of crime, as is the case with faith-based offender rehabilitation programs, or by focusing specifically on male perpetrators of crimes against women, as is the case of the Good Lives Model, these programs show an apparent disregard for the literature. In addition, research supporting the effectiveness of such programs is scarce, with what little support exists coming from research using measures unrelated to those typically used to assess the effectiveness of offender rehabilitation programs (Andrews & Dowden, 2009). As an example, Armour, Cambraia Windsor, Aguilar, and Taub (2008) claimed that the use of a faith-based restorative justice program (Bridges to Life) had been successful with a mixed group of Christian and non-Christian offenders. However, the outcome measures were problematic in that, aside from empathy, most were measures of faith (e.g., forgiveness of

self and others by God, daily spiritual exercises, quality of relationships with others from a Christian perspective) rather than criminality. Further, looking at these effects by religious affiliation actually reveals that nonreligious participants were not affected by the program on any of the measures used. Although the authors acknowledge both of these issues, they take such findings as evidence for matching offenders to appropriate faith-based rehabilitation programs. Reaching this conclusion despite acknowledging that their measures failed to assess constructs central to offender rehabilitation provides a potent illustration of the often questionable research used to support such programs.

Given the focus of the above study on Christianity and explicitly faith-based offender rehabilitation programs, it is possible that offender treatment programs working with a broader, more inclusive definition of religion may have a greater effect and produce more valid and reliable results. Ward's (2002) Good Lives Model of offender rehabilitation, originally designed for sexual offenders but since adapted for male perpetrators of domestic violence (Langlands, Ward, & Gilchrist, 2009), includes spirituality, vaguely defined as the search for meaning and purpose in life, among its ten primary human goods. Defining these goals as fundamental to a fulfilling life, the Good Lives Model demands that all ten be satisfied for offender rehabilitation to be successful.

Despite being broadly defined and thus not particular to any faith or denomination, spirituality is included in this list solely based on the research of Emmons (1999), who did not use such an inclusive definition of spirituality. Acknowledging that his primary concern was with "religious spirituality" (p. 94), Emmons worked openly within a Christian framework, relying on Biblical evidence to support many of his claims and using the terms 'religion' and 'spirituality' interchangeably. Despite this reliance

upon Biblical authority, one study was presented demonstrating a significant link between a measure of spiritual strivings and multiple measures of well-being, thus supporting his claim that (Christian) spirituality be viewed as a primary human good. Although an overall effect was observed, this was attributable almost entirely to female participants. Moreover, while all six of the measures of well-being were strongly related to females' spirituality, only two (i.e., Satisfaction with Life and Dyadic Adjustment Scale scores) were related to males' spirituality, and even these two were only marginally significant.

In addition, the relation of the constructs central to the Good Lives Model (GLM), such as well-being, to offender rehabilitation has yet to be established (Andrews & Dowden, 2009). There is also evidence suggesting that offenders themselves view spiritual concerns as irrelevant to their incarceration, rehabilitation, and goals upon release (Sellen, McMurrin, Theodosi, Cox, & Klinger, 2009). With this in mind, and in view of evidence for the relation of religion with both violence against and negative attitudes toward women, the use of such programs may be more destructive than beneficial. As demonstrated by the use of such limited, female-specific benefits to justify the inclusion of spirituality in a model centered on the rehabilitation of (primarily) male offenders who committed crimes against (primarily) female victims, discrepancies in the literature pertaining to the relation between religion and attitudes toward women cannot be taken lightly.

Abrahamic religion and attitudes toward women. Focusing on those studies in which attention was focused on the fluid and socially constructed nature of attitudes, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam consistently emerge as associated with negative attitudes

toward women. Although this may reflect a bias on the part of Western researchers, Stover and Hope (1984) point out that these three religions rest on similar assumptions that are particularly relevant to attitudes toward women: all three are monotheistic, have powerful, patriarchal male gods, and have histories overwhelmingly dominated by male figures. In addition, all three share a common origin in their respective sacred histories: the patriarch Abraham, with his sons, is identified as a major founding father in all three religions.

Some researchers have noted that a similar relationship exists between attitudes toward women and other, non-Abrahamic religions (e.g., Bullough, Shelton, & Slavin, 1988; Carmody, 1989), thus suggesting that religion more generally may be associated with hostility toward women. Miller and Stark (2002) put this idea to the test using data from the 1995-97 World Values Surveys, the 1972-98 American General Social Survey, and the National Jewish Population Survey, with gender differences in religiosity and traditional gender role attitudes used as indicators of participants' attitudes toward women. Although not a direct measure, traditional gender role attitudes have been linked to stronger endorsement of rape myths (Burt, 1980) and greater acceptance of sexual violence and violence toward women more generally (Mayerson & Taylor, 1987). In contrast with what would be expected if negative attitudes toward women were related to religion in general, Miller and Stark found that Islam, Christianity, and Orthodox Judaism were associated with the most traditional gender role attitudes, thereby providing cross-national support for Stover and Hope's (1984) interpretation of the similarities among these religions. A strong, significant difference was found in the gender role attitudes of Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews, however, with non-Orthodox Jews having much more

progressive gender role attitudes, on average, than otherwise found among the Abrahamic religions.

This example is one of many in a diverse and extensive literature demonstrating the same general findings: regardless of the research methods used or the culture in which the study was conducted, Christianity, Islam, and Orthodox Judaism are consistently found to be the most strongly associated with negative attitudes toward women. Ayyub (2000) studied this relationship in South Asian Muslim communities in the United States, finding religion commonly used to justify both negative attitudes and actions toward women. She points out that the Qur'an contains numerous passages denouncing negative treatment and views of women, but identifies one anomalous verse condoning violence toward women as commonly being used to justify negative attitudes toward women (sura 4:34, quoted above). This finding lends support to Pease and Flood's (2008) social constructionist view of the relationship between religion and attitudes toward women, demonstrating how religious belief can be selectively shaped to fit the situation at hand. Further, this effect was found to spread beyond the individual level in that very few Islamic centres in the United States offered any services to women. Based on these findings, and drawing on personal experience, Ayyub (2000, p. 242) concluded that, in Islam, "one verse...has created an atmosphere that tolerates and supports violence toward women," thereby providing another example of the problems that arise from ignoring a religion's general message for a focus on its specific teachings.

To help address an apparent dearth of cross-cultural, cross-religious research into the relation between religion and attitudes toward women, Hunsberger, Owusu, and Duck (1999) explored differences in this relation among Canadians and Ghanaians. Although

Ghanaians were generally found to be more supportive of sexist attitudes toward women, comparisons of subsamples revealed findings similar to those of Ayyub (2000). With large numbers of both Christian and Muslim participants in the Ghanaian sample, Hunsberger et al. (1999) found that the relationship between religiosity and sexist attitudes toward women was stronger among Muslims than Christians, regardless of which subsamples were compared (i.e., Ghanaian Muslim vs. Ghanaian Christian or Canadian Christian).

Without a nonreligious comparison group, however, such findings say little about the treatment of women within Christian contexts. Researchers such as Brinkerhoff et al. (1992) and Ellison et al. (1999) have construed previous findings of the link between Christian religiosity and negative attitudes toward women as arising solely from the more traditional gender role attitudes common to Protestant (but not Catholic) samples. In addition, these researchers have found that sexist attitudes and behaviours are not unique to men in Protestant communities, with both Protestant women and Protestant men scoring higher than people from other Christian denominations on measures of domestic violence. Glick, Lameiras, and Rodriguez Castro (2002), in a study of sexist attitudes among Spanish Catholic women and men, challenged these findings. Similar to studies of Protestant samples, these researchers found that religiosity was related to sexist attitudes regardless of participant gender. However, the relation between religiosity and sexist attitudes was much stronger among Catholic men than Catholic women.

Given findings showing that both Abrahamic religiosity (Hunsberger et al., 1999) and traditional gender role attitudes (Burt, 1980; Mayerson & Taylor, 1987) are associated with negative attitudes toward women, Miller and Stark (2002) posed an

interesting question testing this relationship. Comparing samples from the United States, where Abrahamic religions prevail and gender role socialization is relatively egalitarian, and Japan, a nation dominated by non-Abrahamic religions with pervasive traditional gender role socialization, these researchers explored whether gender role socialization or Abrahamic religiosity would emerge as having a stronger relationship to gender differences in religiosity. Although significant gender differences were found in the Japanese sample on two of the five measures (i.e., belief in an afterlife and belief in the supernatural), strong, significant gender differences were obtained on all five in the American sample. Such differences in men's and women's roles within the context of Abrahamic religion are not surprising given the above review of the literature. It seems that, despite the effects of gender role socialization, traditional gender role attitudes within religious contexts are determined by whether or not Abrahamic religions dominate a country's religious landscape. Given the link between traditional gender role attitudes and negative attitudes toward women, these findings lend support to the link between Abrahamic religiosity and negative attitudes toward women.

Compared with Muslims and Christians, there is relatively little research on the relationship between religion and attitudes toward women among Orthodox Jews (Ringel & Bina, 2007). However, what research does exist demonstrates a relationship similar to that found in research with other Abrahamic religions, and is attributed to a gender essentialist, patriarchal culture intolerant of anything but strict adherence to unchanging, eternal religious teachings and norms. Among these are numerous rules limiting the religious and secular roles of women and teachings of male propriety and authority over wife and family; as stated by one rabbi, men may "use Orthodoxy as a cloak" (Ringel &

Bina, 2007, p.281) to justify their hostility toward women. Although the majority of Orthodox Jewish teachings do not condone negative attitudes or violence toward women, a distinction is made between 'bad' and 'good' women and the abuse of rebellious, disobedient, and "religiously undesirable" (Steinmetz & Haj-Yahia, 2006, p.257) women is tolerated.

Despite finding that Jews in general were the most liberal of the American religious groups studied, Davis and Robinson (1996) concluded that Orthodox Jews were more likely than adherents to other, non-orthodox faiths to both rally against issues relevant to the rights of women (e.g., abortion, women in the workplace) and to harbour negative attitudes about such issues. In a similar vein, Izraeli and Tabory (1988) found that degree of religious orthodoxy was negatively associated with the perceived importance of various issues relevant to women (e.g., discrimination in promotion, prohibitions against abortion, gender inequality) in a sample of Israeli Jews. Further, these relations were less pronounced among females than males, though three of the four relations were significantly related to the religious orthodoxy of both men and women. The one gender-specific nonsignificant relation involved the perceived importance of violence against women, which was negatively related to the religious orthodoxy of males but not females. A regression analysis supported these results, with both gender and the degree of religious orthodoxy predicting attitudes toward issues relevant to women.

Despite having established the link between religiosity and negative attitudes toward women among Muslims, Christians, and Orthodox Jews, even studies that have taken into account both the bidirectional and contextual nature of this relationship have

failed to explore how such attitudes and religious beliefs are mutually constructed. As noted by multiple authors (e.g., Flood & Pease, 2009; Miller & Stark, 2002; Nayak et al., 2003), this field of study is relatively new and, as a result, little is known about these relations and how best to approach their study. In addition, no research has examined why such relationships exist. Relying on theory, most researchers seem satisfied with explaining these relationships in broad terms, often providing a single explanation for all Abrahamic religions (e.g., Miller & Stark, 2002) and applying findings for one Abrahamic faith to all others (e.g., Ringel & Bina, 2007). Although the *how* of such relationships may be similar for these three groups, making such an assumption for the *why* is unwarranted given the lack of research exploring qualitative differences. As evidenced by the review of faith- and spirituality-based offender rehabilitation programs, such differences are not minor; a man who grounds his negative attitudes toward women's issues in essentialist religious teachings of their inferiority is not the same as one who does so using the social role of women within a religious community as protectors of the sanctity of family. Despite having potentially serious implications for the effectiveness of treatment, this distinction has gone without much notice in both the offender rehabilitation and general literature.

Religious men's discourses about women. Discourse analytic methods, with their focus on the social construction of phenomena, are ideal for exploring such differences. Cohesive and often somewhat socially isolated, religious communities draw heavily on talk (e.g., conversations, sermons) and religious texts in the formation of their attitudes. Viewing talk and texts as action (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), discourse analysis provides a unique perspective on the relationship between religion and attitudes toward

women. As opposed to looking solely at what religious people and texts say as being indicative of pervasive, unchanging attitudes within a religion, the discourse analytic perspective explores how people and texts actively construct these attitudes through what is said about them. In addition, discourse analysis makes no effort to control or suppress the fluid and context-dependent nature of these relationships, instead using variability both within and across people to provide a fuller and more complete understanding of how such attitudes are constructed (Wood & Kroger, 2000).

Given the limited literature on the relation between religion and attitudes toward women, it is not surprising that few qualitative studies, and even fewer discourse analytic ones, have been conducted. However, the few studies using discourse analysis have produced findings similar to those using quantitative and other qualitative methods. In a study exploring male rhetoric justifying violence toward women, Adams, Towns, and Gavey (1995) found a number of discourses similar to those common to the Abrahamic religions. Among these were men's entitlement to and power over women, men as rulers of the family, the ignorance of women in their misguided quest for equality, and women's duty to preserve the family at all costs (often phrased in terms of the rights of the children). Although these discourses are related in that they all constrict the freedom, roles, and abilities of women, and they are all theoretically related to the teachings of Abrahamic religions, these discourses also demonstrate the variety of ways negative attitudes toward women can be constructed.

Similar discourses were found in a debate between men's and women's rights groups on domestic violence legislation in Ontario (Girard, 2009). Among those used by the men's rights groups to oppose the legislation, discourses of male entitlement, the

ineptitude of women in nondomestic spheres, and women's manipulative and untrustworthy nature constructed an image of men and women similar to those found in Abrahamic religions. The similarity between these discourses and the essentialist religious explanations offered for the link between Abrahamic religiosity and negative attitudes toward women again highlights the social construction of these issues. Regardless of whether such constructions in the political realm are drawn from religious teachings or religious beliefs are shaped by such political constructions, it is apparent that numerous discourses justifying negative attitudes toward women are prevalent in both secular and religious spheres.

In an example of the intersection of the secular and religious spheres, Lillian (2007) explored sexist discourse as hate speech in the writings of William Gairdner, an influential and popular right-wing political commentator. Drawing on Christian values, Gairdner constructs both feminists and women in general in a manner similar to that found in the aforementioned studies. Women are again presented as untrustworthy, manipulative, irrational, and incapable of dealing with nondomestic responsibilities, and Gairdner provides no exceptions for his essentialist views. Used throughout as a synecdoche for women in general, the women's rights movement is blamed for bringing about many prevalent social ills due to having denied men and women their 'natural' roles. By opposing men as the sole dictators of both secular and domestic issues, strictly male-headed nuclear families, and women as submissive domestic servants, the women's rights movement is presented as standing in contrast to the good, natural, Christian order. Despite acknowledging that the majority of the social issues mentioned are perpetrated by men, Gairdner depicts women's destruction of the family as the origin of the majority of

today's social ills. Although the link between Christianity and negative attitudes toward women in Gairdner's writings may be dismissed as representing the opinions of only one man, his best-selling books and the influence commanded by his opinions are evidence of the prevalence of such views.

Similar discourses were found in a study of Catholic discourses on abortion (Salminen-Karlsson, 2005). Again, essentialist interpretations of the roles and duties of men and women were found in official Catholic publications on women and the family, with the near absence of men from such documents highlighting the construction of women as essentially linked to domestic roles within Abrahamic traditions. Forgiveness and atonement for abortion, though permitted and available, were presented as possible only through confession to a Catholic priest. That responsibility for abortions was not presented as shared between both men and women again demonstrates the construction of women as sinful within Abrahamic religion; that forgiveness and atonement were offered only through an exclusively male priesthood provides further evidence for religious constructions of women's need for male authority in both social and personal matters. Finally, an emphasis is placed on the psychological antecedents to and consequences of abortion, with women presented as irrational, driven by emotion, and incapable of making the 'right' decision without (male) assistance, and abortion, by denying woman her 'natural' role as mother, presented as having an inevitably detrimental psychological impact. With Lillian's (2007) presentation of sexist discourse as hate speech, such examples provide evidence for a link between Christianity and hostility toward women.

As would be expected on the basis of the above review, similar constructions of women can be found in the discourse analytic literature exploring attitudes toward

women in Islam. Demonstrating the flexibility of discourse analysis, al-Ali (2006) explored constructions of women and masculine power in Muslim wedding invitations. The format of these invitations is both dictated and dominated by religion. Given the above review of the literature, it is not surprising that women are usually absent from such invitations. The inclusion of the full names of the groom and the fathers of both bride and groom is standard, whereas the bride and mothers are mentioned only in kinship terms relative to the father, if at all (i.e., "the daughter of..." or "...and wife"); as stated by the author, such discourses construct a view that "a woman is not an independent entity having an independent authority" (al-Ali, 2006, p.709). Ascribed to essentialist religious views of a woman's role as being limited to the domestic sphere, the absence of women from these invitations limits the extent to which women can be viewed as holding positions equal to those of men. Playing on the Abrahamic portrayal of women as irrational, helpless, and fundamentally misguided without male authority, the absence of women from these invitations is further justified by claims that their inclusion in the social sphere would inevitably bring about marital transgressions. That such discourses exist in so mundane a medium as wedding invitations provides potent evidence of the pervasiveness of negative constructions of women in the Abrahamic faiths.

Another factor potentially contributing to such negative views of women within Islam is the perceived inauthenticity of women's religious convictions, particularly in Muslim communities within majority non-Muslim nations (Archer, 2001). In line with the discourses identified in the above studies, such inauthenticity was attributed to the greater susceptibility of women to endorsing secular views (despite evidence to the

contrary; e.g., Archer, 1998, as cited by Archer, 2001). In these discourses, young Muslim men presented themselves as the defenders of both Muslim womanhood and Muslim culture in general. The inability of women both to evaluate rationally and to protect themselves adequately from the influences of secular society again raises issues of the perceived necessity of male authority. With women constructed as naive, inauthentic, and potentially destructive to Muslim culture, threats of violence against women were presented as a viable option for Muslim men to maintain control and preserve their culture; indeed, one went so far as to threaten the lives of his sisters if they were to dress inappropriately. The threat of secular values was constructed by the men in this study as arising primarily from issues relevant to women, with patriarchy viewed as central to Islam and feminism presented as a secular notion antithetical to Muslim culture. Although some of the young men acknowledged that double-standards related to the control of the sexuality and behaviour of Muslim women were unfair, they drew on tradition and culture to justify their role in upholding such gender inequalities. Based on this, it appears as though Abrahamic religion is used not only in the construction of negative attitudes toward women, but also to justify such negative attitudes toward women.

Although very few discourse analytic studies have examined the relations between Orthodox Judaism and constructions of women, Fader's (2008) exploration of gendered language instruction in a religious school illustrates how language is used to construct gendered identities. While young men are provided a formal education in Yiddish, with a focus on the ability to read, understand, and interpret the Torah, the education of young women focuses on rote repetition of prayers and pronunciation over

understanding. As is often the case in discourse analysis, much of the construction of women in this example occurs through what is absent (Wood & Kroger, 2000). Playing on the Abrahamic construction of women as irrational and inept, these young women were neither encouraged nor provided the necessary tools to rationally interpret religious teachings. Support for this extended to the standard school curriculum and parables told by the teacher, both of which were infused with clear, incontestable moral distinctions between 'good' and 'bad' Jewish womanhood. Despite providing an opportunity for instruction, female students' questions about the content of both Yiddish and secular lessons were either ignored or glossed over by the teacher. Whether due to the perceived irrationality of women or their perceived incapability of benefitting from an education, the focus on orderliness, submission to authority, and rewards for unthinking absorption over interpretation is a gendered one. Attributed by the author to the school's primary role as creating marriageable, rather than educated, Jewish women, the potentially serious implications of the institutionalization of negative constructions of women within Orthodox Judaism are apparent from this example.

Method

Participants

After obtaining permission from religious and nonreligious authorities (see Appendix A), flyers calling for participants for a study exploring men's conversations about issues relevant to women were posted in places of worship and regular social gatherings, as well as on the Humanist Association of Ottawa website (see Appendix B). In lieu of individual remuneration, participants were entered into a draw for one of three \$100 cash prizes.

After contacting the researcher to express interest, potential participants were sent a brief description of the study and information regarding the researcher's rationale and what their participation would entail (see Appendix C). On agreeing to participate, participants were given the opportunity to either select a pseudonym or have one assigned to them by the researcher. Following this, participants were partnered with men matched on religious/nonreligious orientation and a time and date for the study were agreed upon by both participants and the researcher. After confirming their participation, no participants dropped out prior to the study, and none refused to respond to any of the topics or questions posed.

As there is evidence that people are less hesitant to express controversial opinions among unacquainted than acquainted people (e.g., Morgan, 1998), efforts were made to have all pairs consist of previously unacquainted men. Two such pairs were used to represent each group (i.e., Christian, Modern Orthodox Jewish, Muslim, and nonreligious), with pairs matched on denominational differences within the religious groups (i.e., one pair each Catholic and Protestant, Sunni and Shi'ite, and Orthodox

Union and Young Israel), as there is no consensus in the literature on denominational differences within these religions (e.g., compare Brinkerhoff et al., 1992, with Miller & Stark, 2002). Aside from religious orientation and lack of acquaintance between participants, no other participant characteristics were taken into account in the formation of pairs. Though demographic information (e.g., age, marital status, ethnicity) was collected (Appendix D), exploration of demographic differences in the relationship between religion and attitudes toward women was not conducted due to a lack of evidence suggesting the importance of such factors in this relationship.

Overall, the 16-man sample was well-educated, with all participants having completed at least some university. These men represented a diverse range of ethnicities and income levels. Though participant ages ranged from 21 to 69 years, this was a young sample with a median age of 29.5 years. Nine of the 16 men were single at the time of the study, with the remainder representing a range of marital statuses. The following presentation of the demographic composition of the pairs provides an introduction to the participants, by broad religious grouping.

Christian. The Catholic pair consisted of Joshua, a married, 36 year-old network analyst who identified as being of mixed ethnicity, and Robert, a retired, single, 57 year-old Anglo-Saxon Caucasian who identified as sharing both Catholic and Agnostic beliefs.

Making up the Protestant pair was Ivan, a married, 50 year-old, Chinese-Canadian student who formerly worked as an engineer, and Dan, a single, 29 year-old Caucasian graduate student.

Muslim. The Shi'ite men in this study were Ali, a single, 21 year-old, African-Canadian employed part-time as a sales associate and design assistant, and Hassan, a single, 32 year-old Middle Eastern (Iranian) part-time ESL teacher.

The Sunni pair consisted of Tariq, a divorced, 28 year-old chemical processor who described his ethnicity as diverse, and Omar, a single, 24 year-old business associate who self-identified as Arab.

Modern Orthodox Jewish.² Representing the Orthodox Union community were Noah, a married, 48 year-old physician who described his ethnicity as Canadian, and Gabe, a 25 year-old freelance software developer who self-identified as Canadian Jewish (German) and was engaged at the time of the study.

Due to the limited size of the Ottawa Young Israel community and a lack of response to the call for participants, snowball sampling was used in that the only respondent who agreed to participate suggested a fellow member of the community. As a result, the pair representing the Young Israel community was the only one in this study consisting of previously acquainted men. Ron, a married, 26 year-old graduate student and kosher food supervisor who described his ethnicity as Jewish, recruited and was paired with Eli, a single, 24 year-old who identified his ethnicity as White and was between jobs at the time of the study.

Nonreligious. The first nonreligious pair consisted of Paul, a married, 69 year-old retiree and volunteer worker who self-identified as a WASP, and Marcus, a single, 51 year-old, Caucasian/Canadian European human resources administrative clerk. With

² Modern Orthodox Judaism is a moderate Orthodox community, defined by stricter adherence to Jewish law than Reform Judaism but greater respect for secular studies and modern lifestyles than traditional Orthodox Judaism (Weisberg & Kern, 2009). This community was chosen to help avoid conflating degree of Orthodoxy with religious affiliation in between-group comparisons.

both men identifying their nonreligious views as either Humanist (Paul) or Secular Humanist (Marcus), these men will be referred to as the Secular Humanist pair.

The second nonreligious pair consisted of Nathan, a single, 30 year-old, White/European who was employed part-time, and Vincent, a single, 29 year-old, Caucasian research and teaching assistant. As both of these men self-identified as Atheist, this term will be used to refer to this pair.

Measures and Procedure

Taking Pease and Flood's (2008) recommendation that a social constructionist approach to this subject be taken, a critical discourse analytic (CDA) approach was used, focusing on how social inequality was constructed and perpetuated through these men's discourse (Wood & Kroger, 2000). To help explore variations in why certain constructions of women pervade, a series of topics relevant to women was presented to the pairs of religious and nonreligious men. First, pairs were told that the nature of the study was to explore men's attitudes toward a number of issues particularly relevant to women, and written informed consent was received from each participant (see Appendix E). Audio recording began only after participants consented both to participate in the study and to have their conversations audiotaped.

After being introduced to the format of the study and having the researcher's minimal role in the conversations emphasized, the men were given the opportunity to ask questions either to each other or to the researcher. Following the presentation of the study's format and opening questions and remarks, the men were presented with their first discussion topic, then with a series of open-ended questions on that topic (see

Appendix F). After either all questions were covered or conversation on the topic was exhausted, the men were presented with the next topic.

These topics were, in order of presentation: shared domestic roles and responsibilities, menstruation, women in the workplace, women's sexuality, affirmative action, abortion, women in positions of religious authority, abuse of women, menopause, and divorce. Though efforts were made to preserve this presentation order, the natural flow of conversation was given precedence over experimental control whenever these two issues were in conflict.

Five general sets of questions were created to generate discussion on each topic, and these were: What are your thoughts on (topic)?; How do you think (topic) has affected/affects society?; Do you think that your views on (topic) are common? Why do you think that this is the case?; Do you think that people should be provided more education on (topic)? Why or why not?; and: Can you think of an example of how (topic) has affected your family or personal life? If so, how has (topic) affected you and/or your family?

Out of interest for participant commitments, efforts were made to limit each session to 120 minutes. With the agreement of both men, the Sunni pair's 143 minute discussion was the only one to exceed this limit. All other sessions were between 70 and 120 minutes, with the mean and median times both being approximately 110 minutes.

To help maintain this time limit while covering all topics, some guiding questions were omitted from some of the discussions. Similarly, guiding questions were not presented to participants wherever such questions were answered in their responses to others. As all participants spontaneously provided personal examples in their answers to

other guiding questions, this question was not presented to any pair but the Shi'ite men, and then only due to an absence of personal examples provided in the discussion of shared domestic roles and responsibilities.

Though there was some variation among the topics and pairs, limited discussion arose when the participants were asked whether or not they thought their views were common, with very little said about women and issues relevant to women. This question was therefore omitted wherever discussions were likely to exceed 120 minutes. A similar pattern emerged in conversations about menopause, with this topic eliciting little discussion unique to that which emerged from other topics. Though all topics were presented to four of the pairs, menopause was omitted from the discussions of the Sunni, Catholic, and Orthodox Union pairs due to time constraints, and from the Young Israel men's discussion due to a family emergency.

Following their conversations, all participants were given the opportunity to present any closing questions or remarks either to each other or to the researcher. Men were then debriefed on the purpose and aims of the study and provided with researcher contact information (see Appendix G). All participants were contacted by email the day after the study to allow them the opportunity to present any comments, questions, or concerns that they were either unwilling or unable to voice in the presence of the other participant. After all the data were collected, participants were again contacted by email to inform them of the outcome of the draw, record which participants were interested in receiving a copy of the results, and to allow a second opportunity to voice any concerns that may have arisen since their participation.

Transcription method. A method based on the recommendations of Edwards (2003) was used to transcribe all audio recordings. As the focus of this study was on discourses used across conversations rather than pronunciation and particular features of speech, a generally orthographic transcription method was used. Exceptions to this were allowed to retain the informal feel of conversations, though such exceptions were primarily limited to gerund forms (e.g., “gonna” instead of “going to,” “sayin” instead of “saying”).

Nonverbal sounds were written in varying length to reflect the speaker's emphasis on such sounds (e.g., “Hm” vs. “Hmmm”). Words and phrases that could not be heard were marked by “<inaudible>,” while those that could not be understood or heard clearly were marked by “<unintelligible>.” Wherever personal or identifying information was revealed, this was replaced with generic terms in brace brackets (e.g., {company name}).

Pauses were indicated by the use of commas and periods, with commas representing short pauses (< 1 second) and periods representing longer pauses (> 1 second). Pauses longer than three seconds were noted by indicating the length of the pause, to the nearest second, in angle brackets (e.g., <17 seconds>). A pause in one speaker's turn followed by the start of the second speaker's speech was treated as the start of a new turn, whether or not the first speaker's turn was completed.

Nonconversational attributes of speech, such as laughter and noises made by participants, were noted in square brackets (e.g., [snaps fingers]). Laughter separate from speech ([laughs]) was differentiated from laughter occurring during speech, with the latter indicated by the use of “[laughing]” before the speech through which the participant laughed.

Question marks were used to note a rising intonation, with words and phrases marked by a rising intonation treated either as questions or statements about which the participant was unsure. Exclamation points were used to indicate particular emphasis on a word or statement, with the exclamation point appearing after the word or statement being emphasized. Parentheses were used to mark overlapping conversation and interruptions. Where overlapping speech occurred, the initial speaker's speech was transcribed until the end of his turn, with the interrupting speech noted as an entire turn in parentheses. If multiple instances of overlapping speech occurred during one speaker's turn, these were noted in order after the initial speaker's turn. For example:

Dan: And (at the same time.) to, to add to that too, after the fact too, there's a lot of people, I mean I don't know the stats or, whatever, any real stories but, I mean a decent amount of people will have it done, and that's a traumatic experience, (you know there's, a lot) of emotional things and, yeah, regret, (just to think about it afterwards,

(Ivan: Sh, should you being doing these activities?)

(Ivan: Oh yeah, there's, I know some that regret)

Ivan: They real, they realize afterwards, I just murdered somebody) and (and I could've and and, you know, adopted it?

Dan: Yeah, and it's. it's not) as cut and dry as being like, [snaps fingers], go into the clinic, bam, you know maybe for some people it is

Analytical strategy. To arrive at a set of discourses meeting the criteria of validity outlined by Potter and Wetherell (1987), the analytic process was conducted in multiple stages. Primary analysis involved searching through transcripts and noting

every discussion or statement involving women, men, gender and sexuality, issues particularly relevant to women or men, and analogues to such issues (e.g., discussions of different forms of discrimination). This allowed me to identify statements directly about women, statements about women through analogues (e.g., discussing racism when asked about equal opportunity employment for women), and statements about women through discussions of men (e.g., being impressed with men in domestic roles). Multiple sweeps of all transcripts were conducted until no new discussions fitting into the above categories were noted.

These statements were then analyzed for patterns in the presentation of women. The first step of this phase involved sorting each pair's statements into broader discourses wherever such patterns emerged (e.g., essentialist discourse, the irrationality of women). The second step involved applying discourses identified through the first step to the conversations of all pairs, with a focus on examples, counterexamples, and the absence of such discourses. Discourses identified within each pair were then compared to the participants' explicit presentation of women, a major test of validity in discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In addition to serving as a test of the validity of the researcher's interpretations, this comparison helps to prevent assigning greater weight to the researcher's interpretations than those of the participants (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001). Thus, the third step involved making comparisons between participants within pairs, comparing the results of my analysis to the participants' explicitly expressed attitudes, and removing discourses that were irrelevant to or did not fit with the men's explicit presentation of women. Though rare, discourses used by only one member of a pair and/or discrepant with those of the other member were noted.

A further criterion of validity identified by Potter and Wetherell, the fourth step involved identifying new problems arising from discrepant discourses. The search for such discrepant discourses was conducted both within the statements of individual men and between the men within pairs. With few notable discrepancies arising between the men within each pair, the identification of new problems occurred primarily at the pair level. As an example, essentialist discourse was often prominent despite a substantial amount of strictly egalitarian presentations of women. Mediating discourses allowing for the coexistence of such discrepancies were treated as helping to solve such problems (e.g., tradition presented as overriding the necessity of increasing the status of women in the above example). In the absence of such mediating discourses, the more prominent of a discrepant pair was noted. The fifth step of this analysis involved reanalyzing the identified discourses and removing discourses irrelevant to the men's presentations of women.

Potter and Wetherell's (1987) criteria of validity for discourse analytic research are subsumed under Wood and Kroger's (2000) broader issue of warrantability. Aside from the validity of the analytic claims, the warrantability of these analyses is demonstrated through the trustworthiness and soundness of the research. As a demonstration of the trustworthiness of the current study, the process of analysis is openly and clearly described here, and all notes and transcripts will be made available on request. Detailed later in this report is the last step of my analysis, which involves comparing the final set of discourses identified within each pair both to those of other pairs and to other discourses prominent in the discussions of that pair. As a demonstration of the soundness of these analyses, identified discourses are grounded in

textual examples in the results that follow. As such, the soundness, trustworthiness, and validity of the analyses and conclusions are open to assessment by the reader.

Results

In total, nine major discourses were identified in this study. While other discourses were identified at various stages of analysis, these were removed for a variety of reasons. Reasons for removal include inconsistency or rarity of use within pairs, lack of significance in participant discussions, and similarity to more prominent or consistently used discourses. All but three of the nine major discourses were present in some form in the discussions of all religious and nonreligious pairs, with only one major discourse employed by fewer than half of the pairs. Table 1 summarizes the presence or absence of the nine discourses in the discussions of the various religious and nonreligious pairs.

Defending, Reinterpreting, or Abandoning Tradition

A perceived conflict between tradition and the need for increasing the status of women was present in the discussions of all but the Sunni pair. The resolution of this conflict was a discourse of defending, abandoning, or reinterpreting religious traditions that may limit the status of women. Whether the men presented their own views or those of society as standing at odds with these religious traditions, their responses to this conflict varied. Table 2 summarizes how the different religious and nonreligious pairs resolved this conflict, with brief notes justifying their chosen resolution where applicable.

The Catholic men's discussions revealed a discourse presenting a conflict between religious tradition and the need to increase the status of women. These men viewed their religious traditions as standing in the way of change benefitting women, change that they viewed as necessary. For example Robert said, "I'm very... pessimistic that there's... chance, of... change in the Catholic Church... that's the way it's always

Table 1

Presence, Marked With an 'X,' of Discourses By Conversation Pair

	Catholic	Protestant	Sunni	Shi'ite	Orthodox Union	Young Israel	Atheist	Secular Humanist
Defending, Reinterpreting, or Abandoning Tradition	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Need to Increase Status of Women	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Women = Men	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Essentialist	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Prisoners of Biology	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Women as Irrational/Manipulative	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Justifying Maltreatment of Women			X		X			
Prisoners of Society	X	X	X	X			X	X
Comparisons and Voice of the Other	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Table 2

Resolution of the Conflict Between Religious Tradition and the Need to Increase the Status of Women, With Notes

	Defend, Reinterpret, or Abandon Tradition	Notes
Catholic	Defend	Distance personal from religious views, if necessary
Protestant	Reinterpret	
Sunni	No Conflict	Religious tradition unflawed
Shi'ite	Reinterpret	Traditional religiosity associated with inequality
Young Israel	Defend	Traditions flawed, but necessary
Orthodox Union	Defend	Change is part of Jewish tradition
Atheist	Abandon	
Secular	Abandon	
Humanist		

gonna be... they really should be doing cause... the Catholic Church [laughing] desperately needs, the participation of, of uh, of women.” In their discussions, however, these men presented the official stance of the Church as inflexible, with such inflexibility depicted as a defining feature of the religion. As Joshua put it, “change isn’t... a part of the church, and I have to accept that... if I’m... that strongly opposed, because I do have to respect... the tradition... even though I might not agree with it.”

As such, these men defended the traditions of the Catholic Church regardless of their personal views, dissociating themselves from the views of the Catholic Church when disagreements arose. This dissociation is exemplified by Joshua, who said “I’m... traditionally, a Catholic... mentally, I have to step out of, some of the teachings or some of my own family’s, ways just to... be able to have a better, viewpoint on... life.”

Possibly arising from the inflexible hierarchy of the Church, this separation between personal and religious views was a necessity for the Catholic men. Viewing distortions of Catholic tradition as destroying the essence of Catholicism, these men chose defence of tradition over loss of Catholic identity. Despite presenting a need to distance himself from Catholic teachings, Joshua defended Catholic tradition by saying, “when does tradition become a part of it and when does, equal rights become a part of it?... Is the Catholic Church still the Catholic Church, if, there’s a female, Pope... when do you cross the line.”

The Protestant men also recognized the potential for conflict, though they presented some religious traditions as arising from the misinterpretation of scripture. As stated by Dan in his discussion of the domestic roles of men and women, “a lot of, our laws and views have, stemmed from... old school, Judaeo-Christian traditions... I don’t

think the Christian teaching... is necessarily one of a hierarchy, like it's more of an interrelationship that's gotten misconstrued as some sort of hierarchy.”

Despite defending and personally holding some traditional views, the Protestant men were unique in presenting the average follower as having the power to change the religion by criticizing its teachings and traditions. As such, these men differed from the Catholic pair in their presentation of change as necessary regardless of tradition and scripture. In this regard Ivan asserted, “Biblical stuff, really pisses me off cause they just set up rules and... not a whole lot of explanation... 2000 years ago, those rules made sense... now, you can actually make an informed decision, you can make your own decision.”

Like the Catholic men, the Shi'ite pair presented changes increasing the rights and status of women as antithetical to the religion. As Ali put it, “women in the religion cannot hold, a priest's, place, um just because of certain like, certain ceremonies just include men, and not women.” Nevertheless, they also regarded such change as necessary for religious and social progress. While discussing women in positions of religious authority, for example, Hassan said “some Islamic countries... this is what people really need to have or, what they're, seeking... it, opens up, uh, a road to, to reform, religious reform.”

Though the three differed in their views, both Christian pairs and the Shi'ite men shared discourses of the conflict between religious tradition and the need for change. Unique to the Shi'ite men among these three pairs, however, were discourses equating religiosity with women's inequality. Simply stated by Ali, “the more religious the

family, the more, the wife is going to stay home and not work, and not contribute to the family.”

The Orthodox Union pair was the only other pair that equated religiosity with women's inequality. Adding to the views of the Shi'ite men, the Orthodox Union men presented this relation as potentially harmful to women. As Noah explained:

When you have a, society like a religious society... where there are very, clearly defined roles?... I think there is the potential that, abuse, could happen, and I think, that, having those, the those family structures, I I think that there's, there is potential that, if those, those roles could be misconstrued as a, you know like, 'I'm more powerful than you' or, 'this is my role that's your role' and so I think that, lends itself to, to abuse happening.

While the Orthodox Union pair recognized change in their religion over time, they did not share the Protestant men's view of religious traditions as being malleable. Instead, both Jewish pairs used discourses similar to those of the Catholic men, contrasting the need to accept unmoveable tradition with the need for changes benefitting women. As stated by Gabe:

There's this attitude that, you know you can uh, do both? And it's, you're see, we're seeing an awful lot with women?, But, I think there're certain, things that won't, uh, ever change because there're strict rules that, would have to actually be broken?

Where these pairs differed was in the Orthodox Union men's presentation of change as fundamental rather than antithetical to the religion. In fact, Noah viewed this flexibility as one of the strengths of the religion: “part of the, beauty of Judaism... Judaism, is able to, stay relevant for the times.” Though some traditions were presented as unmoveable and in conflict with women's rights, religious tradition was not always

presented as standing in the way of increasing women's rights and status. As Gabe said, "Talmud says... you're supposed to love your wife treat her with respect... Torah, has lots of rules... respecting the family... just as many rules telling you that you're not supposed to do that."

Both Jewish pairs defended some traditions regardless of their personal views. Gabe, for example, presented this contradictory stance toward tradition as common among Jewish people when he said, "I see the value of the tradition... I'm not necessarily going to follow it myself... that happens a lot with the, Judaism... you see the value of something but, you're not actually going to follow it."

Like the Orthodox Union pair, the Young Israel men defended tradition regardless of their personal views. Whether or not they believed that traditions affecting women's status arose from Jewish law, the Young Israel pair presented such traditions as part of the faith. According to Ron, for example, "we hold that women can't be rabbis, I don't know if this is uh, a Biblical thing... either way it's, the tradition... it's the way the religion functions... I don't think there's any validity, to, to changing... those rules."

Like the Catholic men, both Jewish pairs presented religion as a choice. Indeed, both Jewish pairs suggested that those fundamentally opposed to traditions detracting from women's equality would have more luck finding a synagogue befitting their views than they would changing the views of the Modern Orthodox community. As Gabe put it, "if uh... you have very strong objection to uh, those aspects then you go to a Conservative synagogue there's gonna be, a male rabbi leading the service... if you choose... an Orthodox synagogue." Similarly, Ron noted that:

I know, I mean at least one person, one family, who left the Conservative synagogue because they hired a woman ra, uh, cantor, and uh, went to a

more, an Orthodox, synagogue... it does affect people, especially people who are... straddling the line between you know, changing and preserving, Judaism.

Discourses presenting this conflict between religious tradition and the need to increase women's status were not found in the discussions of the Sunni men and the two nonreligious pairs. The Sunni men presented no need to change religious and secular traditions. To the contrary, they defended traditional gender roles and responsibilities by presenting perceived inequalities as providing equality or special status in different realms. Omar put it this way: "when you go over to, Middle Eastern societies... people kind of... recognize that women are different, and their roles are very different, and everybody agreed on those two roles... everybody was compensated equally." The Orthodox Union men also defended traditional gender roles and responsibilities, as evidenced by Gabe who said, "it still, tends to follow a traditional, the man goes out at work, and the woman stays at home... on a, biological sense I think that's sometimes easier?" Despite this similarity, the Sunni men were unique in their positive presentation of the restricted roles available to women. In this regard Omar said:

The roles are very different and people recognize it, most, women will actually feel kinda special, because all of a sudden they're being treated differently and all of a sudden they're... this, special kinda thing... they don't even get that anymore, over here, because they kind of gave that up when they decided to, be treated equally.

The two nonreligious pairs viewed this issue in terms opposite to those of the Sunni men, with Nathan from the Atheist pair treating religious traditions as "useless superstition at best and, harmful at worst." Both nonreligious pairs regarded tradition as

unnecessary and preventing changes beneficial to both women and society, as illustrated in the following quotes from Nathan and Paul:

Nathan: If the religion allows women into, positions of religious authority... the religion is more likely to be accepting of things like, gay rights or... women's issues like abortion... certainly more likely to be more liberal and more accepting of just . anything.

Paul: They're having more trial runs... fewer failures... women, are starting careers, they're getting married later in life... don't get too many 18, 19 year old brides anymore... because of that... divorces are, reducing.

Need to Increase the Status of Women

Arising in the discussions of all religious and nonreligious pairs were discourses related to the need to increase the status of women. Views of the necessity of such increases generally differed whether increases in the status of women were presented as ongoing or having already occurred. Past gains in the status of women were presented as necessary, with all but the Sunni and Young Israel men presenting such gains as having almost exclusively beneficial effects on society. While these two exceptions shared the generally positive presentations of past increases in the status of women, the Sunni and Young Israel men significantly qualified their positive views with the potentially negative side-effects of changes in the status of women. As summarized in Table 3, ongoing gains in the status of women led to a variety of responses from the various pairs. While the Shi'ite, Atheist, and both Jewish pairs had similar views of past and ongoing changes, all other pairs presented varying support for increases in the status of women depending on whether such changes were perceived as ongoing or having already occurred.

RELIGIOUS AND NONRELIGIOUS MEN'S DISCOURSES

Table 3

Perceived Necessity of Past Gains and Ongoing Changes in the Status of Women

	Past Gains	Ongoing Changes
Catholic	Necessary	Necessary despite negative side-effects
Protestant	Necessary	Unnecessary; may harm status of men
Sunni	Necessary for the benefit of children only	Unnecessary
Shi'ite	Necessary	Necessary
Young Israel	Mixed	Mixed; extremely positive or extremely negative
Orthodox Union	Necessary	Necessary; any disagreement stems from personal, not religious, views
Atheist	Necessary	Necessary
Secular	Necessary	Unnecessary; may harm status of men
Humanist		

The Catholic men's discourses on the necessity of the women's rights movement were similar to those regarding the discrepancy between upholding and challenging tradition. These men's views on ongoing changes benefitting women presented such issues as necessary despite the potential negative impact they might have. For example, Joshua said the following when discussing women in positions of religious authority:

Globally if, people decide to choose somethin different, I mean it's gonna be, the downfall, whatever church, because people, I think are becoming more moderate... and more and more, people jump to the other side, and you get more extreme so, you know I just, you lose that comfortable middle.

In the examples below, a distinction is made between presentations of past and ongoing changes benefitting women. Those viewed as having already been accomplished, such as the freedom for women to work outside of the home, were presented as obvious and necessary. Joshua, while talking about his wife, said, "her mother worked, cause sh . they had a large family... the only way you could feed all the kids weres . both parents worked." Ongoing changes, such as affirmative action programs, were presented as either, in Joshua's words on affirmative action, "a necessary, almost evil," or as less obviously necessary, as expressed by Robert:

I've personally been sort of uh, uncomfortable... with that, and uh, how to measure . you know the, effectiveness of it... where I worked most of my life uh, I just didn't see a lack of women... I find it hard to, conceive, myself that there's a, great need for that.

Despite presenting religious reform as both necessary and acceptable, the Protestant men did not fully extend these views into the secular sphere. Though past gains in the women's rights movement were generally presented in a manner similar to

that of the Catholic men, the Protestant men differed in their unrestrained criticism of ongoing programs and policies intended to increase women's status. Ivan, for example asserted that affirmative action has "caused more negative than than, good... I think it's caused more negative emotion than, than positive."

Though both pairs presented the increasing rights and status of women as potentially encroaching on those of men, the Protestant pair did not see any need to defend such movements. Like Ivan, these men described changes benefitting women as detracting from the interactions between men and women and their relative rights and status. Though such exclusively negative presentations were limited to ongoing changes, some past gains of the women's rights movement were supported, albeit reluctantly, despite being presented as morally irresponsible. Regarding abortion, for example, Dan said, "I support mothers being able to choose what's best for them absolutely, but not at the expense of somebody else." However, he also said, "a lot of the times abortion's like... I can have sex now because... I can get an abortion... this is a human life that you're just [snaps fingers]... it doesn't mean anything anymore."

While the Orthodox Union men shared the Christian men's criticism of ongoing changes benefitting women, they differed from the Protestant men by not using morality and perceived general views to support their opposition to change. Instead, Judaism was presented as either amenable to such change or irrelevant to their positions, with any negative views on social change presented as arising either from personal issues or from the perceived effects of such change on the family. Describing negative views regarding women's sexuality as stemming from personal issues, Noah said, "it's obviously had... like a lot of effect on the society, whether it's positive or negative I guess'd depend on

your, on where you're coming from." And regarding negative views as resulting from the effects of change on the family, Gabe commented:

The change in roles has made things, more, complicated in some ways? It's, you used to, grow up knowing like you know, either you're gonna stay home take care of the kids or go out and work... now you have like both parents working... so I think it's, m, sometimes made things a little more complicated but, not necessarily for the worse.

Like the Protestant pair, the Sunni men's views on change affecting the rights and status of women differed depending on whether such change occurred in religious or secular spheres. With views opposite those of the Protestant men, the Sunni pair presented change in the religious sphere as unnecessary, with Omar defending religious traditions limiting the status of women by saying, "I don't see it as, bad just because it's a traditional view... I kind of appreciate the value of the traditions... I believe that they were there over the thousands of years, and for a good reason."

While the Protestant men supported change mainly in the religious sphere, the Sunni men did so only in the secular sphere, and even there it was limited. Issues such as ensuring that women are healthy and well-educated were presented as undeniably positive, though solely for the effect that this would have on a woman's family and children. As Omar explained:

Women are the school of, of, of a nation, or of, of society, they, they raise their kids, and uh, which is why women are, are very, critical, for any society... you need to give em rights, you need to... make sure they're highly educated and to make sure they're highly healthy... because, um, they are the ones who usually spend the most time with their kids.

Using religious and moral justifications for any disagreement, other changes were criticized in a manner similar to that of the Protestant men. For example, Tariq saw the increasing visibility of women's sexuality as leading to sexual irresponsibility, "the clothes they wear nowadays... I mean obviously we're, we're oversexed, so it leads to issues, like uh . like uh abortion." Similarly, Omar presented the changing roles of women as having a far-reaching impact, "without, someone doing, the hou, the house duties, uh which is the traditional role of the women... the social structure can collapse."

This mixed view of changes in the rights and status of women was also present in the discourses of the Young Israel men. Though similar to the Protestant men in their unrestrained opposition to or support for such change, an absence of ambiguous views on change was unique to the Young Israel pair. For these men, change was presented either in extremely positive or extremely negative terms regardless of whether such change was in religious or secular spheres. For example, Eli presented the availability of abortion as wholly negative, saying "sexuality is no longer, deemed a private, dare I say significant act?... Therefore, it, does not carry, consequence and the consequences are not necessarily appreciated, until... somebody's pregnant." On the positive side, Ron viewed the increasing visibility of women's sexuality as having broad societal benefits: "more visibility especially about, rape victims, uh, less shame attached to being a victim... it's not the fault of the uh, of the victim, these sorts of things need to be, known, uh, and they're becoming well they are known."

With both men often unclear on how Jewish law related to these issues, such extreme presentations may have been a way for these men to avoid personal conflict due to uncertainty as to how their personal views related to the official Young Israel stance.

Such uncertainty is apparent this anecdote from Ron: “carrying the Torah, to the the women’s side, in a synagogue, that became a, big issue, within my synagogue... and the rabbi wouldn’t allow it, but... a similar congregation... did allow it.” Arising from their extreme view of issues relevant to women, these men often shared the Christian pairs’ presentation of women’s rights potentially encroaching on those of men, as in Eli’s discussion of men being disadvantaged by affirmative action policies: “in theory it is something that sounds very nice but if they were at a disadvantage, you know if they were being passed up for a job, would they be as supportive, of it?”

This fear of women’s rights eclipsing men’s appeared most prominently in the discussions of the Secular Humanist pair. Sharing with the Young Israel men a presentation of the women’s rights movement as having outlasted its necessity, the Secular Humanist pair differed by not supporting this discourse with claims of the decreasing severity of women’s rights issues, as when Ron said, “in some ways there has been a saturation point... feminist causes, are becoming, more and more specific... less dire, things are being addressed.”

Instead, the Secular Humanist men presented their fears as having been realized, with men now demonized and men’s rights often ignored in favour of those of women, as in Paul’s discussion of male and female school teachers:

Now things've gone too far for example uh, primary school teachers . uhh, very few men are going into that because of the possibility of getting accused of child molestation... men are scared stiff of getting into that... there’s very few men going into that now... that’s wrong... can’t blame that on affirmative action... I think it's, uh . um society looking at men in a very suspicious, like, ‘you're all rapists!’ kind of thing.

As such, these men presented the women's rights movement as a positive only where inequalities favouring men were viewed as still in place, exemplified by Marcus' discussion of the gender wage gap:

The sort of female dominated clerical PSAC group, would make, say 30% less on average, so . that was the, like you said the equal work for equal value they're they're both clerks and so on and they, um . they both need, somewhat the same level of education.

Differing from all other pairs, the Atheist and Shi'ite men shared a nonthreatening presentation of the increasing rights and status of women. All other pairs shared a view of increasing women's rights possibly encroaching on the rights of men. The Atheist and Shi'ite men were unique in presenting the women's rights movement as a necessity due to its past and ongoing positive impact on society, with no distinction between their presentation of past and current changes. For example, Hassan presented affirmative action programs as an undeniable necessity, saying, "men and women should have equal opportunity... they're having it here in Canada, as opposed to many places in the world." Similarly, Vincent presented affirmative action as having solely positive effects: "it gave, what it did is kind of competition... if you have more people applying for the same job because you allow women to apply you know, the job will, you know like the best of the best."

Women Equal to Men

Regardless of whether or not they presented men and women as having equal status, all religious and nonreligious pairs had varying views on the relative abilities of men and women. While most groups differentiated between men's and women's abilities in traditionally feminine and masculine roles, the Protestant, Atheist, and Orthodox

Union pairs made no such distinctions. Aside from these three pairs, women were generally presented as being at most equal to men in traditionally masculine roles, such as physical and intellectual abilities, and equal to or better than men in traditionally feminine roles, such as child-rearing and domestic abilities. The various religious and nonreligious pairs' positions on the relative abilities of men and women are summarized in Table 4.

Following from their view of the effects of the women's rights movement on the rights and status of men, the Catholic pair presented women as being uniquely skilled in traditionally feminine roles, as in Joshua's wish that, "I'd like to see, more women in my field... they, bring another dynamic... it's nice to have different angles on that, different people skills." In traditionally masculine roles, however, women were presented as being at most equal to men, as in Joshua's comment on his cousin in the military being "as good as anyone else on the field... I'd trust her as much as I trust any guy."

Sharing these mixed views were the Protestant men, with discourses presenting women as strictly equal with men much more prominent in their discussions. Related to their views on the increasing rights and status of women as potentially encroaching on those of men, the Protestant pair focused less on presentations of women as uniquely skilled and more on strict equality than the Catholic pair. For example, Ivan remarked:

Women who are married or or even single... an offspring isn't there, they were... just as much motivated... going to work, and making, uhh, something out of their degree was, definitely their goal... as ambitious and as gung ho as... anyone else.

Table 4

Abilities of Women in Traditionally Masculine and Feminine Roles, Relative to Those of Men

	Masculine Roles	Feminine Roles
Catholic	At most equal	Uniquely skilled; better than men
Protestant	At most equal	At most equal
Sunni	Less than equal	Uniquely skilled; better than men
Shi'ite	Equal	Equal or better
Young Israel	Equal	Equal or better
Orthodox Union	Equal or better	Equal or better; biologically fitting for women
Atheist	Equal or better	Equal or better
Secular	Equal or better, with	Equal or better
Humanist	physical limitations	

Similarly limiting women to equality when discussing freedom of sexual expression, Dan saw no problem with “a woman, being able to enjoy sex just as, much as a man can... why should there be a discrepancy... between how a woman can enjoy sex.”

Though both limited women in traditionally male roles to equality with neither presenting women as potentially being more skilled, the Protestant men alone saw this strict equality as stretching to areas beyond the traditionally masculine. Unique among the religious pairs, a focus on the collaboration between men and women was presented as extending to all aspects of life by the Protestant men. For example, Dan took issue with abortion being presented as an issue unique to women, saying, “it's not just, a women issue... there's two people involved whenever this has to happen [laughs].” In a less serious vein, Ivan discussed his collaboration with his wife in the domestic sphere by saying:

My wife and I I think are very compatible in in, the level of . what's the word, slovenliness? That we [laughing], tolerate like like, we're not clean freaks and . I, I tend to be a little neater than she does, she tolerates more, crap lying around than I do, but, we're s, I don't get, like we don't get, on each other's cases.

Similar to the Catholic men, the Shi'ite pair focused less on limiting women to equality in traditionally masculine spheres and more on women's unique abilities and attributes in traditionally feminine spheres. Though the two pairs were similar, the Shi'ite men focused more on women's unique skills and abilities in their discussions of men's and women's roles, as when Hassan said, “I don't wanna be biased but I think women are, in, in, many things they're more, um... let's say, exact than men are they're more careful than men.”

Related to their lack of fear over women's rights eclipsing those of men, the Shi'ite men further differed from the Catholic in not presenting the increasing rights and freedoms of women relative to those of men. While the Catholic men hedged their support for women's increasing status based on comparisons to that of men, the Shi'ite men presented no threat of women's rights eclipsing those of men through an absence of such comparisons. For example, though Ali presented violence against women by saying, "it's not just, again, women... I don't agree why there should be a violence, a violent relationship," Joshua presented the same issue with men in mind: "society's, to me has become more, acceptive, of women, calling out for help than men are... some guys just don't feel that... they can actually, use that support."

The Shi'ite men shared with both Jewish pairs a view of traditional and nontraditional roles for women as not being mutually exclusive. While both the Shi'ite and Young Israel pairs presented the ideal woman as one who holds both domestic and career roles, the Young Israel men differed in their negative presentation of the working woman ideal. For example, Hassan said, "I've always liked my mom, to work, too but, she's always been a stay-at-home mom she's never had a business," while Ron presented the same issue by saying, "early feminists, believed in women being allowed to work... if, they couldn't do anything else if they couldn't get a husband and raise kids but, it wasn't the ideal."

While the Shi'ite and Young Israel men were similar in their view of the ideal women being one who holds both traditional and nontraditional roles, the Orthodox Union men differed in their presentation of traditionally feminine roles as not particularly

fitting for women. This flexibility in masculine and feminine roles is apparent in the following from Noah:

Even if the woman, is not in a traditional, like job, they're still doing a lot of, stuff out of the house where they're volunteering or they're helping out with their husband's work or, and and vice versa I mean I know, you know couples where the woman's, goes out and does the work, but ev, but even so the man's still, you know he's also, he's not just staying at home with the kids.

Despite this, a view similar to that of the Catholic men prevailed in discussions of men's and women's skills and abilities. Though women were presented as either uniquely skilled in traditionally feminine roles or at most equal to men, both pairs of Jewish men were less concerned with strictly egalitarian views than the Protestant pair. For example, Gabe justified the traditional division of labour by saying, "it still, tends to follow a traditional, the man goes out at work, and the woman stays at home... on a, biological sense I think that's sometimes easier?"

Both nonreligious pairs expressed views similar to those of the Protestant men on the collaboration between men and women. Both positive and negative aspects of social and domestic life were presented by these men as arising from collaboration between the sexes. For example, Vincent presented abortion as being the responsibility of both women and men, saying, "if it's a couple and, for some reason they decide that, you know together that they don't, want it... this is why, we have abortions." Paul presented a similar collaboration as being the ideal in the division of domestic roles:

I mean it . intuitively seems like the way to go and, and it seems like the, uh... sort of like the golden rule if you'd like and, and that, that's the way it

should be and each couple's gotta . work it out on their own... you gotta work it out and, and get a situation that everyone is comfortable with.

Unlike the religious pairs, however, these men did not limit such abilities to equality with men. Though discourses presenting women as being 'as good as' men were common, those suggesting that women could be better than men were unique in their presence among the two nonreligious pairs. Nathan, when discussing the negative impact of violence against women, expressed this view by saying, "we've lost another person that could be contributing like maybe this woman could be, you know a better scientist than Newton or, better poet than Keats," while Paul saw no need for limiting women in positions of religious authority, "I don't see why, women shouldn't be, at least as good."

Relative to men in both domestic and nondomestic spheres, women were presented as varying anywhere from being worse to better than men. Despite similarities between the two pairs, the Atheist men saw no limitations on the skills and abilities of women, as when Vincent described a need for female firefighters by saying, "it doesn't matter if it's a woman or a man cause, you know I'm sure that there's stronger, women sometimes than men." The Secular Humanist pair, however, limited these varying presentations due to the physical limitations of women, as in the following quote from Paul:

Because of nature, uh, women need time off for . child birth and kid raising and stuff it tends to affect their careers... might not be quote fair but that's the way it is and, uh, it wouldn't be fair to, uh, say 'well OK we'll count your 4 years off as 4 years experience' because it's not . uh, in, in the workplace, so it does put them at some disadvantage.

Essentialist

Discourses related to the existence of essential differences between men and women dominated the discussions of the Sunni and Protestant pairs. While not as prominent in the discussions of other pairs, discourses supporting or refuting the existence of essential differences between the sexes were common in the discussions of all religious and nonreligious pairs. With the exception of the Sunni and Atheist pairs, support for or refutation of the existence of essential differences was not absolute. Whether presented as existing with exceptions or affecting only a limited range of abilities under specific circumstances, these generally nuanced presentations of essential differences were associated with a variety of effects and underlying causes. The stance of the different pairs, and any related notes, are summarized in Table 5.

Similar to their views on tradition and change in the rights and status of women, the Sunni men presented women solely as being uniquely skilled, with traditionally feminine roles befitting those unique skills. As such, only the Sunni men failed to present any arguments for the equality of the skills and abilities of men and women. To the contrary, they presented the two sexes as essentially different, with Omar presenting such differences in an entirely positive light:

I think what gives vigour is diversity that's, a secret of life, that's how life actually lasted, all of those years on this planet, so without s, without men playing a different role than women like, you know uh, when we, historically, someone went out and hunted, and the other one would like, protect the cave or whatever, you know?... As long as it's different, I think it makes sense.

While such essentialist discourses were also present in the discussions of the Secular Humanist pair, as outlined above, the Sunni men did not limit these discourses to

Table 5

Views on the Existence of Essential Differences Between Women and Men, With Notes

	Essential Differences	Notes
Catholic	Mixed	No issues particularly relevant or unique to women
Protestant	Yes, with exceptions	Differences create equal though different roles; need for collaboration between men and women
Sunni	Yes	Differences create equal though different roles; women's rights movement denies natural roles
Shi'ite	Mixed	Women's traditional roles unequal to men's
Young Israel	Mixed	Differences create equal though different roles
Orthodox Union	Yes, with exceptions	Differences create need for collaboration
Atheist	No	No issues particularly relevant or unique to women
Secular Humanist	Mixed	No issues particularly relevant or unique to women; differences used to argue against social inequalities

physical differences. Instead, such essentialist discourses were used to demonstrate and justify clearly demarcated roles for men and women. Both Omar and Tariq presented such essential differences as arising from evolutionary, genetic, social, psychological, and physical pressures, with men and women depicted as fundamentally different in all aspects:

Omar: They are the ones who usually spend the most time with their kids, uh and usually kids are, genetically in a way, because like the whole thing about mammals, they are so related, like, the link between a mother and her child's a lot stronger than the mother and, than the child and their father.

Tariq: It's something that's, that's they're made, to recognize, that they're women, you know, and I think every society does it, whether it's to, you know genetically their hair grows, much faster... that's gonna happen obviously, you know they're meant to enhance, enhance their beauty, as women.

Though the use of essentialist presentations of men and women was the prominent discourse in the discussions of the Sunni men, they did not present these differences as being tied to roles and responsibilities of more or less importance. A woman's fundamental commitment to her children and family was presented as being of equal importance to a man's role as provider, as explained by Omar:

If women stay home, they're n n, to me that's still work, uh it could be, work that's even more important, in the long run, but you also need to balance the long run and the short run, so someone needs to do the stuff that, are required for short term survival, without, uh affecting, the things that are important for long term prosperity.

Presenting a woman's power in the home as providing her with power over the future of society through her children, the Sunni men presented barriers to these natural roles as the cause of social degradation. This is evident in Tariq's discussion of the effect that a mother's employment may have on her child:

'I bore the child, but I still wanna work' so, you have that freedom and that's when now it comes into, your role as a wife, you still a wife but you still wanna work that's that's, that's fine, that's one of the good, if, you know, maybe detrimental to the child's, upbringing.

Arising from this was a presentation of both men and women as desiring and naturally gravitating toward differential treatment. As is apparent in the following quote from Omar, both social institutions and the women's rights movement were presented as alienating people from this natural tendency:

The roles are very different and people recognize it, most, women will actually feel kinda special, because all of a sudden they're being treated differently and all of a sudden they're... this, special kinda thing... they don't even get that anymore, over here, because they kind of gave that up when they decided to, be treated equally.

Discourses presenting women as being essentially tied to the family were common to both Muslim pairs. With all four Muslim men being born outside of Canada, the traditional roles of women were presented as being fundamental to the preservation of religion, as when Omar said "if you wanna pass religion through generations you really wanna get women on... they're the ones who... they embrace the religion and, they pretty much determine the religion of their offspring." Similarly, Ali presented the loss of language and culture as being tied to an absence of women in traditional roles:

Both of the people work but then like, other stuff suffers like, children for example?... Have to go to daycare... language that's been spoken at home for example is lost... at home it's a different language so then there's a communication barrier between parents and children.

Despite the importance of a woman's traditional roles, however, the Shi'ite men did not view traditionally feminine roles as being equal to those of men. Though both Shi'ite men were products of families with stay-at-home mothers, these men expressed concern over women either limiting themselves or being limited to such roles, as in the following from Hassan:

My mom is a stay-at-home mom, and, um . she's always been there for us, so whenever I came home, the food was ready, like, we, we could feel that, OK we're home now... what would the negative part be?, Um, I've always liked my mom, to work, too but, she's always been a stay-at-home mom she's never had a business.

While the ideal family for the Sunni men involved a male provider and female homemaker, the Shi'ite men presented the ideal family as one in which both husband and wife work, with the wife also taking on domestic responsibilities. Ali expressed this view by saying, "my mom is a stay-at-home mom, but she still, she still has a business from home, so she's still contributing to the family, which is, her main job is to take care of the house."

Both the Shi'ite and Young Israel pairs presented women as unique from men though both also denied the existence of essential differences between men and women. Using these conflicting presentations, both pairs presented a necessity for the increased rights and status of women while simultaneously denying the existence of issues particularly relevant to women. For example, though Hassan said "we shouldn't say

'having women at, at the workplaces' there is no difference between men and women," he also presented women as possessing skills unique from those of men, "what women can do men can't do, and it's just natural right? And so introducing that into a workplace like, that just eliminates a barrier." Similarly, Ron first presented then refuted a view of menstruation being inaccessible to men in the following pair of quotes:

It has such an impact o, on mood and and uh, I don't know I you know just the sense of selfhood... there's sort of a, a sense that, you don't experience, this, like uh, as a man I don't experience this, and therefore I can't understand it, and you know, it's, going to affect, moods it's going to affect uh, you know the way girls, live.

Women have this sort of this, this sense that men don't experience this, and they can't understand what a woman's life is like, but then I get really cranky when I'm hungry and, you know, maybe that's a male equivalent.

Though they did not share the Shi'ite and Young Israel view of the ideal family, the presentation of women's issues as neither unique nor particularly relevant to women was also found in the discussions of the Catholic men. For example, Joshua responded to a question about abuse against women by saying, "yeah, I think it happens to, anybody no matter, what their background is, be it guy or girl or, boy or female, abuse is always gonna happen."

In addition, similarly contradictory discourses on the existence of essential differences between the sexes were employed by the Catholic men, as in the below exchange. Here, Robert presents affirmative action as unnecessary and not unique to women despite suggesting that women are emotionally different from men by equating them with 'team players' or 'heart people':

Robert: Wouldn't it be better to have an affirmative action, based not only, not on . gender and, racial origin but, actual skill sets

Joshua: Yeah

Robert: We need a . I don't wanna say team player that's used too much uh . we need a real heart person.

Though the use of essentialist discourses was more prominent in the discussions of the Protestant men, they did not deny the existence of issues particularly relevant to women. Related to their focus on collaboration, the Protestant men presented the essential differences between men and women as creating a necessity for the input of both sexes in both traditional and nontraditional roles. Ivan, who previously held a managerial role in an engineering company, supported such collaboration in his hiring policies:

I actually made an effort to, to hire uh, women... we needed a lot of collaboration, and cooperation... and, I tended to find that women were, better at communications, uh and . and worked better in a team, work basis, than, than guys do guys, you, they tend to be a little more adversarial and, and . you know end up pissing off your. the people you needed to work with.

Similar to the Sunni pair, the Protestant men presented these essential differences as resulting in equal though different roles for men and women. Dan supported this view by comparing women's roles in intellectual and labour-based positions:

There's obviously different areas and I think, the general trend that, you know our, society has gone in terms of industrialization and stuff is, it's changed a lot less, physical work and more, you know mind team work communication aspects and stuff... some of the jobs that I have had like

some of the construction jobs, you know just, maybe physical ability would be a hindrance.

Equating academic and career life with masculinity and family life with femininity, the Protestant men viewed traditional roles as potentially limiting both sexes. While essential differences were used to portray men and women as particularly suited to traditional roles, these men did not deny the existence of exceptions to this pattern. This is demonstrated in the following exchange between Ivan and Dan:

Ivan: Now I do know of a couple of women that that found . bringing up their kid the most, boring thing that they could [laughs]

Dan: [Laughs]

Ivan: They found themselves ever doing like, there's one lady two houses over and . you know she's, she's just itching for male . intellectual conversation.

Similar to the Orthodox Union pair, the Protestant men did not present either role as being exclusive to either gender, nor did they present such roles as being mutually exclusive. As such, a view of men and women helping one another in both traditional and nontraditional roles was common to both pairs despite their use of essentialist discourses. The following example from Dan demonstrates this presentation of the need for collaboration between men and women:

My dad worked outside, my mom didn't, she was, a stay-at-home mom... when I was a, teenager my mom went back to school and became a teacher... then . my dad had to compensate for that [laughing] and it was a little bit of a shock at first I believe, but now, I mean they, they have their own roles too she's, working full time, he's, working full time too but he's got a, a flexible schedule... so he does all the housecleaning, you know, she still does most of the cooking but that's cause, he's not very good at it.

Sharing the Sunni view of equal though different roles and abilities, the Young Israel men presented the traditional roles of men and women as being of equal importance. Presenting the home as being at least equally important in Judaism as the synagogue, the essentialist discourses employed by these men were used to deflect attention away from inequalities in the religious sphere. While positions of religious authority were presented as being fundamentally off limits to women, a woman's authority over her children presented a view similar to that of the Sunni men on the greater social impact of women in traditional roles. This view is demonstrated in the following exchange between Ron and Eli:

Eli: Women have a, significant amount of, uh, power and... we can speak of as if there's a, kind of a chasm of separation between well, you know the, the men of the, Great Assembly say this but ultimately, if, and certainly in *Halakh* in terms of Jewish law if the, population does not accept a particular ruling it doesn't become *Halakha*... the men with significant power, can decree, but if the, next, if the people, who are taught by the women, don't accept that...

Ron: If you talk about the way if things are done today... no one in the Orthodox community, would accept, a ruling, the uh, that a woman made.

Despite differing in their use of essentialist discourses arising from physical differences between men and women, both nonreligious pairs shared with most of the religious men the view that women's issues are neither unique nor particularly relevant to women. For example, Vincent presented affirmative action as unnecessary by saying, "they'll know if you're, a man or a woman but, they should be able to keep it, educated... overlook these aspects and, to put everything aside and the same with their religion and

the same with everything else.” In a similar vein, Marcus responded to questions about abuse toward women in a manner similar to Joshua, saying: “from a woman to a man too, or a man to a woman, or parents to their kids... they’re dumb and they’re no good and they’re stupid... that’s abusive too.”

Using physical limitations to highlight potentially sexist policies, the Secular Humanist men were the only pair employing essentialist discourses who did not use them in arguments either for the traditional division of labour or to present this division as providing equality. In contrast with the use of essentialist differences by the religious pairs, the Secular Humanist men used essential physical differences between men and women to argue against inequalities. Such discussions ranged from inequalities favouring men to those favouring women. For example, Paul presented men and women as potentially equally abusive, with the abuse of men by female partners unfairly ignored due to a focus on physical abuse:

There's an unequal situation here again because . men are physically stronger on the whole so they get accused of . uh . violence and stuff and, that may be the case but, uh, women can be . having gone through a marriage breakup, uh, at least equally nasty but in different ways.

Prisoners of Biology

Whether or not they supported the existence of essential differences between men and women, all but the Young Israel men presented uniquely female physiological functions, such as menstruation and menopause, as having some effects unique to women. The Catholic pair and both nonreligious pairs did not present uniquely female physiological functions as necessarily affecting the behaviours and abilities of women, with such effects occurring only among certain women and under certain circumstances.

In contrast, the Protestant, Orthodox Union, and both Muslim pairs presented women as prisoners of biology, with uniquely female physiological functions having an unavoidable effect on mood and behaviour. The manner in which this discourse was employed by the various religious and nonreligious pairs is summarized in Table 6.

Following from this focus on physical differences, the Secular Humanist pair viewed female physiological functions as the only issue unique or particularly relevant to women. Both nonreligious pairs presented female physiological functions as potentially problematic only in extreme cases, as explained by Vincent:

There's you know like, documented, you know, mood changes you know like, it's not like what you see in your friend or your girlfriend you know like, these things are documented it's it's it's, a hormonal response is very strong.

Despite this shared presentation, the Secular Humanist men differed from the Atheists in their focus on the potentially positive aspects of these functions, as when Marcus said, "I think... after menopause my mother would seemed happier . I think, I think my . my, my mother was probably relieved not to have periods anymore [laughs]."

Both the Atheist and Young Israel pairs suggested the existence of male equivalents to female physiological functions. This was previously noted in Ron's suggestion that his hunger-related crankiness is analogous to perceived menstrual mood changes, and Vincent suggested the existence of a similar male physiological function by saying, "it's a natural, function it's, you know, women menstruate, men, I dunno, I'm sure we have our own, you know, sort of physiological, um, things." The Young Israel pair further discounted the uniqueness of female physiological functions, and presentations of women as prisoners of biology, by presenting them as no different from any other

Table 6

Uniqueness of Female Physiological Functions, With Their Perceived Effects and Notes

	Uniqueness	Effects/Notes
Catholic	Mixed	Physiological differences may affect women's abilities, but not necessarily
Protestant	Yes	Positive and negative aspects to uniquely female physiological functions
Sunni	Yes	Religious restrictions on menstruating women justified, not necessarily harmful to status of women
Shi'ite	Yes	Female physiological functions affect mood, work performance, and productivity
Young Israel	No	Family purity laws negatively affect status of women
Orthodox Union	Yes	Family purity laws negatively affect status of women
Atheist	Mixed	Female physiological functions constitute the only issue unique to women, with some analogues in men; negative effects only in extreme cases
Secular Humanist	Mixed	Female physiological functions constitute the only issue unique to women; negative effects in extreme cases; positive effects in some cases

regularly occurring physiological function. For example, Eli said, "it's, never really something that I, really thought about any differently than any other kinda male, or human, biological function, you know . yeah and I don't see it as a gender issue."

Though they did not suggest analogues in men, the Orthodox Union men were similar to the Young Israel pair in not equating female physiological functions with any essential differences between men and women. Instead, both Jewish pairs converged on their presentation of Jewish family purity laws related to female physiological functions as having a potentially negative impact on the rights and status of women. For example, though Noah expressed understanding of the origins of the family purity laws by saying, "I can see why, the feeling would be that if there's, that if there's blood that there's some, idea that there is an impurity as well... so I can see how that all evolved," Ron acknowledged how these laws may negatively affect the status of women by saying:

There's all sorts of laws related to menstruation, you know it's a, distancing, physically distancing for a certain period of time, um, so that, I mean Jewish society that's, really has a, has a major, impact... critics will say this really, makes it impossible to be intimate, uh in a Jewish relationship.

While the nonreligious pairs linked female physiological functions to negative physical and mental health in severe circumstances, this link was absent in the discussions of the Jewish and Sunni men. Religious traditions related to uniquely female physiological functions were common between the Jewish and Sunni men, with traditions similar to those of the Jewish family purity laws presented by the Sunni men. Though similar traditions exist in their respective faiths, the Sunni men differed from the two Jewish pairs in their defence of such traditions. The following exchange between Omar

and Tariq both demonstrates justification for such traditions and reinterprets a potentially negative view of women:

Omar: I think it's menstruation that, where you really have to shower... if you're going to the mosque, and a lot of people are praying, you don't wanna have like blood just kinda goin everywhere right, cause, diseases again, and uh, spread, so um, that's probably the logic behind that...

Tariq: In mosque I mean I've men, I've heard em mention it a couple of times, and you read about it obviously, I think the word, I I was using, evil but the right word is dirty, anything that comes from the body, dirty.

Again framing the issue in terms of productivity, the Shi'ite men presented female physiological functions as affecting a woman's mood and performance at work. Coupled with their presentation of women in traditional roles as not contributing to the family or society, the discourses employed by the Shi'ite men essentially link womanhood with a lack of productivity, as in the following exchange:

Ali: If an individual is going through, this, the the period stage, maybe it's like, they don't feel productive on that particular day

Hassan: Mmm

Ali: But, but then that particular day's productivity is important, in the long run, you know what I mean? So maybe it affects in the long term?

Though the Protestant men were similar to the Secular Humanists in presenting both the positive and negative aspects of such functions, the negative aspects of the Protestant discussions were not relegated to extremes, as in Ivan's discussion of teen

pregnancy: “now women are the ones that if they do get pregnant, in their teens you know they're, they've got a much harder decision to deal with.” Instead, the Protestant men expressed sympathy and pity for the physiological burdens faced by all women, simultaneously presenting the perceived irrationality accompanying female physiological functions in a humorous light. Dan, for example, expressed sympathy for menstruating women by saying, “I mean it's, it's a natural part, of life, you know it just, different, women girls have, different effects, I feel bad for em, for real [laughs],” then went on to say:

If somebody's irritable... that time of the month just, stay clear but it's... not a status changing thing... not like 'oh!, she's having her period and she's all grumpy and hormonal and whatever'... she's less of a, of a person compared to, men or, women who, aren't, on their periods... it's more of a, a joke, it's a running like, cycle [laughs]... don't talk to her, next 2 days [laughs], unless you want your head ripped off.

With women physiologically linked to irrationality, the Protestant men thus presented irrationality as a fundamental aspect of womanhood. Such irrationality was used to support their negative views on social changes benefitting women, with the Protestant men presenting the increasing freedoms afforded to women as resulting in greater sexual and social irresponsibility. For example, Dan distanced himself both from sexually promiscuous women and a society accepting of such women, saying:

A lot of people have absolutely no problems, you know living, around women who don't, I guess, maybe have or ignore the emotional aspects, you know that, I, feel are, so important, and that's, the way, I mean these are the things that I've, I've thought about so I want to, try to incorporate it, just in my own view too, I don't wanna exploit that, I don't want it to lose its, you know, the emotional aspects.

Women as Irrational or Manipulative

Whether or not arising from uniquely female physiological functions, women were presented as either irrational or manipulative by all of the religious and nonreligious pairs. Aside from the Secular Humanist and Orthodox Union men, who presented women exclusively as manipulative, a presentation of women as being irrational was common to all pairs. With underlying causes ranging from essential differences to conflicting social and situational pressures, the perceived irrational or manipulative nature of women was linked to a variety of causes and effects, summarized in Table 7.

This link to female irrationality was also found in the discussions of the Catholic men in realms beyond those associated with physiological functions. By focusing on the irrationality of women in undesirable circumstances, these men viewed women as contributing to their own victimization and preventing others from helping them to escape such circumstances. Joshua, for example, could not understand why some female victims of domestic abuse are unable to seek help, saying:

Women get, abused, um, you hope, with education and everything and, resources that, women have the, common sense to pick up a phone and, get help, get support, get out of, bad situations but, and time and time again we see, scenarios that play out that you, wonder why someone didn't leave a bad situation... but, no matter how much, support and how much you, put out there, some people just make bad choices.

Despite their involvement in their own victimization, women in such circumstances were presented as admirable for their perseverance. Tied to an inability to cope with adversity, many of the ills of modern society were presented as arising from a lack of such persevering female role models by the Catholic men. This is demonstrated in the following exchange between Robert and Joshua:

Table 7

Presentation of Women as Irrational, Manipulative, or Both, With Notes

	Irrational or Manipulative	Notes
Catholic	Irrational	May affect ability to seek help or leave harmful situations; perseverance idealized despite being presented as irrational
Protestant	Irrational	Irrationality used to justify limited status of women; perceived irrationality is sometimes a rational response to conflicting social pressures
Sunni	Both	Women are essentially irrational and manipulative
Shi'ite	Irrational	Irrationality only linked to female physiological functions
Young Israel	Irrational	Irrationality only linked to female physiological functions; perceived irrationality is rational response to conflicting social pressures
Orthodox Union	Manipulative	Traditional Jewish restrictions on women justified, may protect both men and women (from themselves)
Atheist	Irrational	When benefitting from or responding to sexist policy
Secular Humanist	Manipulative	When benefitting from sexist policies

Robert: Yeah . in the past uh, you know, we . we just, sucked it up you know?

Joshua: Yeah

Robert: But not anymore, people tend to uh not, put up with, stuff, you know . and, divorce rates are higher.

While both nonreligious pairs linked women with irrationality, discourses presenting such a link were limited to discussions of sexist policies and beliefs. Whether through the use of anecdotes or the female voice, both pairs of men used the irrational arguments of women to highlight the irrationality of sexist policies. Paul, for example, used such irrational arguments to attack outdated sexist policies that limited the rights of women, saying:

With my first wife, she started a small business and uh . because I was in a salaried occupation, uh, my, co-sign on, on loan documents was . mandatory to get, to get loans for, for the business... later on she, completely twisted around and said that I was being controlling!, cause I took all this financial control over stuff... I thought I was helping you to achieve your goals . 'oh you're controlling me!'... I wasn't attempting to control her at all but that's the way she, saw it or the way she chose to, to see it, the way she portrayed it.

Focusing instead on double-standards favouring women over men, Nathan employed the manipulative nature of women to highlight current sexist policies:

My uncle recently... just, divorced his first wife... the big thing... he had to pay them all this child support... she was only required to let him see the kids... every second weekend if it was convenient for her to do so... she, moved to Alberta and he tried to challenge it... pointing out that she was in violation of a court order... judge basically just, looked at the case... didn't

bother hearing any of the arguments just doubled his child support and sent him home.

Though the Sunni men also employed anecdotes and the female voice to present women as irrational, they did not limit this irrationality to presentations of inequalities. Instead, women were presented as fundamentally both irrational and manipulative. This presentation of women is demonstrated in the following discussion between Tariq and Omar:

Tariq: But if the woman wants and the guy doesn't, and then, you know, through the process she doesn't take her pill, accidentally

Omar: Yeah, you know my, girlfriend's parents actually got divorced over, like, something like that

Tariq: Yeah?

Omar: Because the, mom, they had 3 kids, and then the mother, didn't wanna have a 4th kid, but the father, they were having issues, and the father uh, always felt like she was happier when she was pregnant, so he insisted, and he got her pregnant, and then she went and got an abortion, but then she went through like, she started feeling really guilty?, And she started getting these dreams of, the baby visiting her and like she went, crazy, basically, like she started feeling remorse, like very strong remorse, and they got a divorce because she pretty much lost her mind.

Neither the Young Israel nor the Shi'ite pair employed discourses equating irrationality with womanhood beyond the perceived impact on mental health of female physiological functions. Although the Young Israel men made no link between womanhood and irrationality, the Orthodox Union men again demonstrated similarities to

the Sunni pair. Presentations of women being essentially irrational and manipulative were found throughout the discussions of both pairs, as when Gabe said, "well it's I think that, as I said, you know, the young girls, know what it means to dress provocatively if you know they're driving, the men crazy."

The Orthodox Union men, however, were unique in using the discourse equating women with manipulation to justify religious restrictions on the rights and status of women. Despite acknowledging that such an argument is unfair to women, the Orthodox Union men presented Jewish restrictions on women as helping to control the behaviours of both men and women. For example, Gabe linked women's dress to the negative behaviours of men, saying: "I think, women, you know, dressing more pro, vocatively being more open about their sexuality, has en, encouraged men to uh, you know, sort of like the green light for us to get even, dumber?" Similarly placing the responsibility on women, Noah presented Jewish law as helping to remedy such social problems by restricting women's dress:

Some of the ideas are, that they're maybe to kinda be protected from themselves so, you know the women are have to be the ones that, that, that hide behind the skirts and the sleeves and the, and the *sheitels*.

In contrast with the Orthodox Union pair, the Young Israel men presented the apparently irrational or manipulative behaviours of women as rational responses to the conflicting pressures of secular and religious institutions. As Eli explained:

Woman has more right to be open with her uh, sexuality then, why and, wha, you know?, The same people who are, the same society that's telling her she should be open and proud of this, is now gonna be turning around saying but, you can't do this, she would justifiably say well it's, that would be an illogical thing.

A similar view was presented by the Protestant men, who held that women are unfairly burdened with confusing and conflicting social pressures. While discussing the sexuality of women, Dan explained that women are condemned whether or not they live up to society's expectations:

It's out there, it's in your face it's exploded, but once somebody actually does that in real life... they get . you know slut, whore, you know that's what, they're called, and meanwhile this is what we see on the music videos... somebody dresses like that or, dances like that in a bar or something... and then we call her slut and meanwhile this is what . we want to see.

Justifying Maltreatment of Women

Unique to the Orthodox Union and Sunni pairs was a discourse justifying the abuse or poor treatment of women. While none of the men in this study presented such behaviours as desirable under any circumstances, these two pairs presented the maltreatment of women as more or less unacceptable depending on the type of and justifications for abuse. This information, along with other notes associated with the Orthodox Union and Sunni pairs' presentations of the acceptability of religious or situational justifications for abuse, is summarized in Table 8.

As mentioned above, the Orthodox Union men presented Jewish law as protecting men and women by restricting the behaviours of women. Though they defended such traditions whether or not they agreed with them, these men acknowledged that certain aspects of Judaism may be used to justify negative treatment of women. As Noah explained when discussing traditional roles for men and women in the Torah:

Table 8

Accepted Justifications for the Maltreatment of Women, With Notes

	Justification	Notes
Catholic	None	
Protestant	None	
Sunni	Situational	Men and women contribute to men's abuse of women
Shi'ite	None	
Young Israel	None	
Orthodox Union	Religious and Situational	Men alone responsible for men's abuse of women; secular institutions involved in religious justifications
Atheist	None	
Secular	None	
Humanist		

There is potential that, if those, those roles could be misconstrued as a, you know like, 'I'm more powerful than you or, this is my role that's your role' and so I think that, lends itself to, to abuse happening.

Though these men presented certain Jewish teachings on the roles and status of men and women as being open to misinterpretation, they did not view abuse as necessarily arising from such misinterpretations. Citing the universality of abuse in religious and secular spheres, these men placed secular institutions at the heart of the negative treatment of women. This is demonstrated in the following discussion between Gabe and Noah about abuse and marriage:

Gabe: Yeah, I just wouldn't think that it's a, religion specific thing it's, uh you know abuse does exist for sure but uh, I think, it, exists in, you know, secular (marriage

Noah: I, I) totally agree with you, I totally agree with you

Gabe: So um . I agree that, religious families it's harder to, reach because it's uh, bit of a more closed society so education's more, of a complicated issue?

Noah: Right

Gabe: But uh, I don't think, you have to focus on it because, you know, of, I I don't think that, the religion creates the power dynamic which is, more likely to cause abuse? I think, that, [laughing] marriage creates the dynamic.

Despite this, these men distinguished between men with no justifications for their negative treatment of women and those employing religious justifications. Though neither position was tolerated by the Orthodox Union men, they presented these as two separate types of abuse. Using the voice of the men involved, these men presented

religiously justified maltreatment of women as arising from honest misunderstandings of religious teachings, while those without such religious justifications were presented in a more fundamentally negative light. As Noah explained:

If you can justify it if you can say 'well I'm angry, and, but it's OK for me to be angry because it says this and this,' right I think that's very different to being angry because, you had a bad day at work and then you say 'well I, I was angry at you I shouldn't be I'm sorry I won't do it again.'

The only other men to present male-perpetrated negative treatment of women as more or less acceptable depending on the circumstances was the Sunni pair. Though these men dismissed religious justifications for abuse, they did differentiate between abusive men and those who occasionally lash out at women due to adverse circumstances. For example, Omar said:

A lot of these things happen, because, the husband probably doesn't have a lot of money or, or he's struggling to find a job and, he's stressed, and then he comes home, and he gets into a fight with his wife, and then he beats her.

Despite making a distinction between regularly abusive men and those reacting to adverse circumstances, the Sunni pair presented neither situation as acceptable. Though the Orthodox Union pair shared such a presentation, the Sunni men differed in their focus on the involvement of both parties in the development of an abusive relationship. Tariq presents the faulty logic of both sides of an abusive situation below:

It wasn't necessarily that, every day wake up, beat, because some people, beat their wives because, they come home drunk, senseless, she stays because 'oh I was drunk,' and 'I did something to piss him off, it was justified,' but there's men who just come home, there's no dinner?, You

know, simple stuff like that you know like 'why are you lookin at that guy.'

Prisoners of Society

Aside from the two Modern Orthodox pairs, all of the men in this study consistently employed discourses either blaming men or society in general for the unequal status of men and women. While they did not focus on blame for social inequalities, these two pairs shared limited presentations of men being responsible for ensuring the fair and equal treatment of women. The Protestant and Orthodox Union men differed from all other pairs by supporting their views with personal examples of how they had defended women against inequalities. With the exception of these two pairs, however, all calls for an increase in the social freedoms of women were hypothetical and noncommittal. The focus of blame for the unequal social status of men and women, and the responsibility for defending women against such inequalities, is summarized in Table 9.

Sunni discourses around the burdens of womanhood presented women as facing life's struggles alone, with men and a society favouring men over women to blame. As previously mentioned, essentialist discourses linking women with familial and domestic responsibilities were prominent in the discussions of the Sunni men. Despite this, these men often presented women as prisoners of society unwillingly limited to these roles. In the following example, Omar sympathizes with the difficult situation faced by pregnant women who are abandoned by their partners:

Most people who have abortions like the, the guy will just walk out on the woman right, so, and say 'no I have nothing to do with this it's, all your

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Table 9

Focus of Blame for Inequalities Facing Women, With Responsibility for Remedying These Inequalities and Notes

	Blame	Party Responsible for Remedying Inequalities/Notes
Catholic	Men	Men, because of female irrationality
Protestant	Society (mostly) and Men	Men (mostly) and women; active support for/defence of women
Sunni	Men (mostly) and Society	Men and women (mostly); women alone in dealing with burdens
Shi'ite	Society (mostly) and Men	Women; Passive support for/defence of women; women alone in dealing with burdens
Young Israel	None	Men (mostly); women, by being assertive; women's assertiveness desired by neither men nor women
Orthodox Union	None	Men essential to defending women; active support for/defence of women
Atheist	Universal	Women alone need to defend themselves
Secular Humanist	Society	Men and women need to defend women

fault' and run away, and in that case, the woman is left with that child, the burden of that child all on our her own.

Though these men were the most adamant in defence of the traditional division of labour, women were often viewed as having no choice as to whether or not to fulfill their domestic roles and responsibilities. As such, both men and women were implicated by the Sunni men in supporting and defending the rights of women. As Tariq explained:

When it comes to issues about, workplace, um... uh, rights and so on, I think they're completely entitled to, and, but in terms of, making very vocal, yeah you should because if, you don't, who will?, Right if the women don't, it's not as if men will say 'no I, tsk, let's give more of this' I mean you have to you have to stand up for yourself.

Sharing this view of women as being alone in working through their burdens were the Shi'ite men. Despite their shared views, the Shi'ite men were less active in expressing a need to support and defend women, instead offering no solution to the problems facing women. Though much of the blame for such problems was placed on men, these men differed from the Sunni pair in their focus on society's involvement. In the following example, Ali presents women who have been abused as inevitably feeling alone in their recovery:

Abuse of women, women who has been abused, are, having a hard time with everything right?, Trust issues... they have a hard time trusting people, they have a hard time, uh, they're just . it results in different things, in a depression eventually there right? Because they're so lonely, you know, results in different things and so that's why it just goes to downfall.

Though none of the other pairs viewed women as facing such burdens alone, discourses presenting women as being in need of support and defence were found

throughout. For example, Ivan denounced society for being overly critical of the sexuality of young women, saying, "if they're sexually promiscuous they're called sluts in high school that, sticks with them for the rest of their life, when, they might just be, sexually active." Less condemnatory of men than society, the Protestant men were otherwise similar to the Sunni pair in presenting themselves as actively involved in defending women. In the following anecdote, Dan describes his response to a married friend's view of the role of a husband:

I have, friends, you know who, if there's a dispute, in their family like what should we do?, You know, they are, the decision rests with the man... and that's still extremely pronounced, like... this, this, the man's role... and I shake my head I'm like 'how can you, do that?, Where do you get off saying that your, opinion and you know what your, which comes, biased as, I'll get that out cause, any more, is any better than your wife?'

The Secular Humanist pair was also hesitant to demonize men and presented both women and men as being involved in supporting and defending the rights of women.

This is demonstrated by the following exchange between Paul and Marcus:

Marcus: If people to make . nasty remarks and stuff it could be psychologically harmful for, for a girl

Paul: Yeah . that's ignorance on their part though

Marcus: Yeah

Paul: And girls should just brush that off and say . 'you ignorant turkey!' [laughs]

While all of the other pairs limited blame to certain groups or institutions, the Atheist pair blamed religious and secular men, women, and traditions for the inequalities facing women. Using the voice of myriad others, the unequal status of men and women

was presented as a universal problem for which no institution or sex alone is to blame.

For example, Vincent presented men as being responsible for limiting women's opportunities for advancement in their careers:

In these like higher up positions like you know like lawyer, like, positions or like high, corporations or whatever it's more like a, frat boy kinda, uh, sort of atmosphere... it's unfortunate that being a man, you know gets you more money or gets you the job despite the fact that, like I said a woman might do it just as well if not better.

In contrast with Vincent's secular man example, Nathan uses a religious woman in the following anecdote to demonstrate that blame for the unequal right and status of women is universal:

Mother Teresa's now apparently gonna be, canonized though, she was . a woman in, in a position of, religious authority, and, she was about as conservative as they can get... when she had her Nobel, Peace acceptan, or Nobel Peace Prize um . speech, called abortion and contraception the biggest threat to humanity and world peace, out there.

Like the Secular Humanist pair, these men also presented women as responsible for defending themselves. Whether the outcome was positive or negative, the Atheist men framed all issues as choices and defended a woman's right to make her own decisions. However, these men presented women alone as having the choice to leave or remain in potentially harmful situations wherever such a choice was available. As Nathan put it:

I think, yeah ultimately if she's gonna choose to stay in the religion, then . then, you know whether or not they choose to accept women religious leaders that's up to the religion and, yeah . as long, as long as she has the option to leave the religion.

In contrast with the Atheist pair, the Catholic men presented women as prisoners of society, with men responsible for the maltreatment of women, for defending women from male-perpetrated maltreatment, and for bringing an end to any social inequalities supporting this imbalance. As Joshua said:

Society doesn't place, the man's rights in the scenario that, that high over the woman's rights and that's, obviously we don't have to go through 9 months of, carrying a baby and, chances are in the end even when the baby's born, um, there's a chunk of fathers who won't even, be there to support the child or, take care of the child in the upbringing so, um, we kinda, did that to ourselves in one sense that, it's, pretty much has to be the woman's choice and, uh, not ours.

Female irrationality arose in presentations of men as the defenders of women, with women presented as passive victims to male-perpetrated inequalities and involved in their own victimization due to this passivity. As Joshua explained:

Like women, they said they can s, they can spot, criminals'll go after certain people by the way they walk, um, you know? And, generally if, a person's walking where they're kinda little bit of a hunch, and timid, obviously they want the, the target that's, um, easier to deal with, than the target that might be a little bit confident, and might put up a fight.

Though discourses related to defending and supporting women were not prominent in the discussions of the two Jewish pairs, men were viewed as essential to ensuring equal treatment for men and women. When discussing Jewish restrictions on a woman's dress, Noah said:

I'll say for women to be able to, express themselves and to, sh, you know if they've been, to, to dress in a way that they feel comfortable and... I probably wouldn't want my wife to be out there, you know like dressing really provocatively to try and, like really flirt her sexuality but on the

other hand if, you know she wants to wear, you know something that's a little more . sexual then... I wouldn't have a major problem with that.

While the Young Israel pair presented the increasing assertiveness of women as helping to prevent and defend against male-perpetrated maltreatment, discourses used by this pair presented neither women nor men as desiring increased female assertiveness. This contradictory stance is demonstrated by Ron, who first said, “in terms of the assertive, the woman being assertive in sexuality, that's wrapped up in having their own identity... I think that's a good thing,” which he followed with:

Men, are, at least a lot of the, the guys I know, are not attracted, to women who, who, make the first mo move in a relationship, they don't want, a woman to do that, uh and a lot of wo, I mean even fewer women, want to do that, want to be the one, to assert themselves in a relationship.

Comparisons and the Voice of the Other

To help present their views and those of their respective communities as more or less beneficial to women, all of the pairs in this study employed comparisons to other groups or the voice of an anonymous other. With points of comparison varying from different cultures and religious groups to other periods of time, such comparisons were used to both defend and critique personal and religious views. As such, much of the attitudes toward women expressed by the men in this study were formed from comparisons with those of other times, places, and people. The manner in which this discourse of comparison was used by the various religious and nonreligious pairs, along with their preferred comparison group(s), is summarized in Table 10.

Comparisons to an impersonal other appeared in the discussions of all of the pairs in this study. Both nonreligious pairs used anecdotes and the voice of an impersonal

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Table 10

Groups With Which Personal and Religious Views Were Compared, With Notes

	Comparison Group	Notes
Catholic	Islam, Protestantism	Positive comparisons to Islam; ambivalent to Protestantism
Protestant	Islam, Middle East, Other Protestant Denominations	Islam and Middle East used to present extreme negative; positive and negative comparisons to other Protestant denominations
Sunni	Middle East, Christianity, Birth Country	Personal, Muslim views positively compared with Middle Eastern cultures; positive comparisons with Christianity; status of women, morality in birth country superior to Canada
Shi'ite	Islam, Middle East, Birth Country	Personal views positively compared with strict Muslims, Middle Eastern cultures; status of women in Canada superior to birth country
Young Israel	Catholic, Past, General Other	Catholics more conservative; past times less conservative, though not ideal; Jewish views generally archaic/very conservative
Orthodox Union	Past, Other Cultures, Jewish Denominations	All comparisons either neutral statements of facts or positive presentations of OU Judaism
Atheist	Religious Other	Religions and adherents detrimental to status of women
Secular Humanist	Religious Other	Religions and adherents detrimental to status of women

religious other to present religious people's attitudes toward and treatment of women as irrational at best and harmful at worst. By arguing with this idealized religious other, these men presented religions and their adherents as an entirely detrimental influence on the rights and status of women. When discussing abortion, Nathan said:

George Tiller... he's performed all these, you know late-term abortions, and... the 4th assassination attempt on him that actually succeeded, and, they're, back to the pro-lifers are all 'oh we, we absolutely abhor this violence, but, it's good that they got rid of him!' . yeah, you absolutely abhor it, sure... they won't come out and, directly advocate it, but, they, they'll get as close as they can to the line.

Paul similarly used a hypothetical conversation with an anti-abortionist to present religious people as both hypocritical and a detrimental influence on the status of women:

I just say to the Catholic, I say, 'OK, put your money where your mouth is! If you're advocating against abortion are you prepared to adopt, one?' . 'Oh! no, I wouldn't go that far' I said 'well . in that case you're morally dishonest! Unless you're prepared to . take that child, you've no business to say that somebody else has, to bring it to term and, has to keep it!'

This demonization of religions and their adherents was also found in the discussions of the two Christian pairs. The Catholic men primarily compared their views positively to those of Muslim others, as in the following anecdote from Joshua:

I have, a seven year relationship with, a girl that was Muslim so, and uh moderate European, but uhm, you know there's still, you know that, that's . segregation I guess you'd, say, and, for me, even comin from a Catholic background, I, kind of, felt m, a little, defensive.

Not all of the Catholic men's comparisons to other religions presented the Catholic Church in such a positive light. For example, flight to Protestantism was

presented as an option for Catholics strongly opposed to the limited status of women in the Church. As Joshua put it:

When do you cross the line between Protestant and Catholic?, Protestants are a little more moderate, um, I think United Church, even, some branches of Anglican Church have, women which, you know I, personally think is great, I think it's great, but, some sense there's, you know, if the Catholic Church, did the same route, and said 'OK well, we have divorces now too, we have this this,' is it, still the Catholic Church?, The Catholic Church was always, you were Protestant you had divorces and you believed in this, and then you're a Catholic you believe in all this other stu, you know?

The Protestant men, however, compared their views both positively and negatively to those of other religious communities, time periods, and places. For example, Muslim and Middle Eastern examples were used to present these men as not only allowing, but actively endorsing extremely negative treatment of women. This is demonstrated in the following exchange between Dan and Ivan:

Dan: In the Middle Eastern societies where . at least all the dudes think it's OK . in countries that . it's acceptable in a decent number of places.

Ivan: Yeah and that just, that just, that just horrifies me you know that . you know half your society is is is, is oppressed like that it's... something, something not right there.

Due to the variety of Protestant churches, the majority of comparisons made by the Protestant men in this study were to other Protestant groups. These men used discourses presenting maltreatment of women within Protestant groups as arising from differences between religious communities and different interpretations of scripture.

Following from this mixed view of Protestantism, these men compared the views of their churches with others both positively, as when Ivan said, "but mine's had, two women pastors, one of them just set up the downtown, church and she's a woman pastor she's leading that church," and negatively, as when Dan said:

Yeah, even, even at that church it's, you know, all guys in suits, you know, no no, women in church leadership positions... it just blows my mind at a church like that it's fairly, it's fairly, community oriented... fairly new, very new actually, and . yeah, still no women in office.

Both Muslim pairs made comparisons similar to those of the Christian pairs, presenting Muslim and Middle Eastern men as the most accepting of negative views toward and treatment of women. When discussing the sexuality of women, Hassan said:

Maybe we're not, excellent examples if, you are, considering the, the cultural and religious background... I know that people who are, who practice religion and they are really really hard on this issue that would say, 'no, absolutely no' and, they would say that Canada is, a, the sexuality of women has affected ne, on uh, on the society negatively, yeah.

In a similar vein, Omar contrasted the laws of Saudi Arabia with Muslim teachings, saying:

In a country where, uh like in Saudi they'd have to dress up and cover up and that kinda stuff which sometimes, you'll say that, 'OK what if the woman doesn't wanna do that, they're forced to do that'... they impose that and they enforce it, also in Islam, as a religion you're not supposed to enf, force anything like the Prophet used to say that, uh forcing religion, is uh, like, wrong, like you, you should never actually force someone to do anything.

Though the Shi'ite men limited their religious comparisons to these, the Sunni men contrasted the views of Islam with those of Christianity. Christian traditions were presented as more fundamentally opposed to equal rights and status for women. As Omar explained:

In Islam, women, have more rights, than Christianity's ever given, women, people over here don't know that, but culturally, culturally Muslim countries, are, often more traditional, they have their own, cultures they have their own, um, it's, like when, when you look at like, Afghanistan or Iran or you look at Saudi or you go to Pakistan, it's not Islam that's actually, creating all these cases of like women oppression it's actually the culture, that's been there, for years and years, Islam actually has helped reduce that.

The Sunni men acknowledged that Islamic views may be interpreted in such a way as to justify inequalities against women. However, such misinterpretation was written off as arising from cultures fundamentally opposed to the female-positive aspects of Islam, as in the above quote from Omar. Similarly, Tariq distanced his own views from those of Muslim extremists in the following example:

The girl, I think was datin, uh, a guy who was, I can't, I can't remember what the situation was, I don't know if it was, because uh he was Sunni and she was from a different uh, Muslim group... and the father didn't approve of it, at all, I think she, kept on with the relationship, and I think eventually got married uh, I think what happened was that the the brother or somethin like that killed both of em, you know, yeah, I think that's extreme.

Comparisons to their home countries revealed further differences between the two Muslim pairs. The Shi'ite men presented the status of women in Canada as a great improvement over that of their own countries, with women in their home countries

presented as needing similar religious and social progress. This is demonstrated in the following exchange between Hassan and Ali:

Hassan: Canada people can openly talk about the, divorce, you know, it wouldn't affect their job, it wouldn't affect their performance, it wouldn't affect uh, people's view towards them, but, like again in my society people wo, women would keep it to themselves?, They try not, to talk about the fact that they're divorced, sometimes they really hide it from, from others... but here no it's, yeah!, they, they openly talk about the fact that they're single mom, they're divorced

Ali: Mmhmm

Hassan: Yeah . and that's something I really like about Canada

Ali: Exactly, yeah me too . I 100% agree with that.

In contrast, the Sunni men viewed the greater rights and freedoms available to women in Canadian society as contributing to social and moral degradation. For example, Tariq said:

I think also, if it's in a religion, people will follow it, but if it's very open, you know, I'm not sayin North America's evil but, it's very much open, I mean I was in camps and you get 12 year olds lookin at, 13 year olds, when I was 12, all I was thinkin about was playin soccer.

These men`s home countries were presented in ideal terms, with women desiring the differential treatment no longer available to or socially acceptable for Canadian women. As explained by Omar:

People don't see it, as necessarily like, inferior, but, just different you know and uh, women sometimes like over here, they're, you, if you treat women differently, you, you're called a sexist, right but if you go to a,

different culture where they treat women differently, the woman herself will feel kinda special just being there.

The comparisons made by the Orthodox Union men were primarily limited to past times and other places. These comparisons either presented today's Orthodox Union community positively or were neutral, objective statements of the facts. For example, Noah said:

The religion it is constantly evolving, like I mean it's, basically it's, if you look now compared to, 200 years ago, I mean I think, certainly, I mean I'm talking about Orthodox circles I think the roles of women, is definitely become a lot more, important.

Though not many comparisons to other religions were made, the Orthodox Union men contrasted their own views positively against those of extreme communities. In a manner similar to the Sunni pair, these men distinguished between cultural and religious views. As Gabe explained:

Africas Middle Easts, uh that area, where, um, you know you really do have, the women covered head to toe in burqas walking 3 feet behind the men and everything, but, I think that's more a societal, view of women rather than a religious view of women... cause you see those same religions here in North America and the women are treated with respect and going out and getting jobs and going to university.

Though the Young Israel pair also focused on past times, they made it clear that people in the past were not necessarily more religious or moral than today. As Ron said, "go even further back I mean people were far looser, people all uh, you know men could get away with all kinds of affairs and that was to, considered totally normal, you know, two or three hundred years ago." In a similar vein, Eli did not present Jewish views as

becoming more liberal with time, saying, "there perhaps might be some reason to think that perhaps we're uh, getting more, a little more conservative than it used to be, on this that you know, quote unquote authentic or, what Judaism, had been in the past."

These men also made primarily positive comparisons to other religious groups, with the Catholic Church used to present a view of the Young Israel stance as more accepting of and amenable to changes in the rights and status of women. For example, Eli had the following to say about Jewish attitudes related to the sexuality of women:

I'm much more of a puritan than I would say, Judaism... it says it should be private but it doesn't say it's disgusting, you know it's not the stereotypical vision, you know version of what people think of when they think of the Catholic Church, whether accurate or not I I don't know but when people think of the Catholic Church they see it as, shaming people you know and that they see it as this disgusting thing.

Like the Protestant pair, the Young Israel men admitted that they had issues with the status of women in their community. These men presented some of the views of their community as archaic and anomalous among religious and nonreligious communities. As Ron said:

I don't know whether, you can call tribal societies but African religions uh, have laws about uh, menstrual purity and... like a lot of these different, religions... there's never been any real, at least that I'm aware of any, kind of sense of, menstruation as religious issue, um, in society at large, and uh, no I kind, I I wonder if that's, an anomaly in terms of, you know different religions.

Discussion

As attitudes change over time (Krosnick, 1988) and with context (Jetten & Iyer, 2010), and because religious beliefs live in discourses, whether they be in texts, sermons, or talk within the community, there is no better medium than conversation to use to study the relation between religious belief and attitudes toward women. Consistent with this, these findings indicate that, regardless of the direction of the relationship, religious belief does indeed appear to be related to men's attitudes toward women.

Nevertheless, men's immediate responses to most of the discussion topics in this study could lead to the view that religious belief has no relation to attitudes toward women. Whether religious or nonreligious, all of the men in this study expressed a need for couples to share domestic roles and responsibilities, presented menstruation and menopause as natural bodily functions, and described women as a natural part of the modern workplace and the abuse of women as unacceptable. That such presentations of women were universal among religious and nonreligious men suggests that Daly's (1978) view of most major religions as being tools of the oppression of women may be inaccurate.

Despite such similarities in men's immediate responses, however, all of the discussion topics elicited varying presentations of women from the different pairs whether or not such consensus was present. Whether this is due to a difference between personally held and socially preferred views or men's failure to fully internalize the views related to their responses, this provides support for Pease and Flood's (2008) call for greater attention to context in this area of study. In the present study, the use of discourse analysis allowed for such attention to context and, as a result, revealed the

existence of different attitudes toward women between religious and nonreligious pairs despite the similarity of men's responses to the discussion topics.

As expected, the attitudes of all pairs of men were defined by a mixture of similar and shared discourses. Though some were unique to specific pairs of men, solely religious discourses were not found in this study. Similarly, the only discourse unique to and shared by both pairs of nonreligious men was that presenting women as potentially better than men in traditionally male spheres. With all men drawing from a collective pool of discourses, their attitudes toward women varied not in the specific discourses employed, but in the overall pattern. As such, all pairs of men exhibited both positive and negative attitudes toward women, with no pair of men emerging as having solely positive or negative attitudes, as was suggested by the discrepancies in past research (e.g., Brinkerhoff et al., 1992; Miller & Stark, 2002; Straus et al., 2006).

As all of the pairs varied between positive and negative presentations of women, it is difficult to claim that any religious or nonreligious community is absolutely linked to either positive or negative attitudes toward women. Comparisons between the pairs, however, reveal the most consistently positive attitudes expressed in the discussions of the Atheist pair. Aside from limited examples of women's irrational behaviour and a wariness to present any issues as particularly relevant or unique to women, these men's presentation of women was almost exclusively positive and egalitarian. With an absence of essentialist discourse and a focus on presentations of women being at least equal to men, the discussions of the Atheist men seemed to equate a lack of religious beliefs with positive attitudes toward women, supporting Gaylor's (1997) call for the abolition of religion.

Although the Secular Humanist men presented women in a similarly positive light, their use of essentialist discourses, albeit limited, and their presentations of the women's rights movement as detracting from the rights and status of men suggested somewhat more negative attitudes. As the Secular Humanist pair was the eldest pair in the study, these limited negative attitudes may have been more a reflection of generational differences than differences in group identifications (Parks & Robertson, 2008). Such negative views aside, the discussions of the two pairs of nonreligious men in this study revealed a link between nonreligious views and generally positive attitudes toward women.

Aside from the nonreligious pairs, the discourses prominent in the discussions of the various pairs did not warrant treating them according to their broader religious groupings (i.e., Christian, Muslim, and Modern Orthodox Jewish). Though the views of the two Modern Orthodox pairs were the most similar within any of these broad groupings, the greatest similarities between pairs were across religious boundaries, specifically between the Sunni and Orthodox Union pairs and the Shi'ite and Atheist pairs. Similarly, the greatest differences among the religious pairs occurred within these broader groupings, with the Sunni and Shi'ite men presenting nearly opposite attitudes toward women.

The link between Shi'a Islam and positive attitudes toward women appeared the strongest of the religious pairs. Despite their defence of the traditional gendered division of labour, essentialist presentations of men and women, denial of issues uniquely or particularly affecting women, and limited view of women's contributions to society, these men presented women in a generally positive light. Presenting the sexual and

social freedoms afforded to Canadian women as having few negative side-effects with no perceived threat of such freedoms encroaching on those of men, the Shi'ite men's attitudes toward women were more similar to those of the Atheist pair than the Sunni pair.

In contrast with the Shi'ite men, the Sunni men focused almost exclusively on essential differences between the sexes. Though they expressed some sympathy for the plight of women, these men described restrictions placed on the rights and status of women as being for the betterment of society. Whether blamed on the essential nature of women or social changes arising from the women's movement, the Sunni men presented women as the cause of problems both within the family (e.g., divorce; child neglect and abandonment) and society more generally (e.g., moral degradation and irresponsible sexuality). Despite such views, these men presented women in traditional roles in absolutely positive terms, with a woman's domestic and familial roles depicted as being at least equally as important as traditionally male roles. However, given the link between the endorsement of traditional gender roles and negative attitudes toward women (e.g., Burt, 1980; Mayerson & Taylor, 1987), such positive presentations of women in traditional roles should not be taken as a sign of positive attitudes toward women. As pointed out by Glick and Fiske (2001), such positive presentations of women who adhere to the traditional division of labour is akin to benevolent sexism, which may be as damaging to gender equality as outright hostility toward women.

With few differences between the two Muslim pairs on such factors as age, education level, employment status, and background, there is little reason to attribute the drastic differences between the Sunni and Shi'ite men to anything but religion.

Considering the status of the Prophet's daughter, Fatima, in Shi'a Islam, these differences may be rooted in the different histories of these communities. Though both Sunni and Shi'a Islam recognize the importance of Fatima, her ties to the Prophet's lineage in Shi'a but not Sunni Islam have granted Fatima saint-like status to Shi'ite Muslims. With no comparable veneration of female figures in Sunni Islam, the differences in attitudes toward women between Sunni and Shi'ite men in this study may reflect the status of women in the histories of these communities (Sered, 1991). Such differences between the Shi'ite and Sunni men's presentations of women shed light on Hunsberger et al.'s (1999) finding that Ghanaian Muslims have more negative attitudes toward women than Ghanaian and Canadian Christians. Although the authors did not indicate whether their Muslim sample was Shi'ite or Sunni, the fact that Ghanaian Muslims are predominantly Sunni (Owusu, 2005) suggests that these authors may have inappropriately used Sunni men to represent Muslims in general.

Though all of the religious pairs presented women in both positive and negative terms, the balance between the two was much more level in the Christian and Modern Orthodox Jewish pairs than the Muslim pairs. As a result, none of these pairs were as clearly defined by positive or negative attitudes toward women as the two Muslim pairs. The more balanced presentation of women among the Christian than Muslim pairs is consistent with the mixed findings of studies examining the relation between religiosity and attitudes toward women among Catholics and Protestants (e.g., Glick et al., 2002, Ellison et al., 1999). Though research on this relation among Orthodox Jews is scarce, the mixture of positive and negative presentations of women observed in this study lends support to Davis and Robinson's (1996) finding that Orthodox Jews are more likely to

actively rally against some women's rights issues despite belonging to the most liberal of the major North American religious groups.

Following from these mixed findings, the Young Israel pair emerged as having the most nuanced attitudes toward women. Employing discourses similar to those of all religious and nonreligious pairs, these men often expressed genuine support for both sides of arguments related to the rights and status of women. Viewing past times and other cultural and religious groups as having attitudes toward women both more positive and more negative than their own, these men's views appeared to arise from myriad sources. As this was the only pair of previously acquainted men in this study, such nuanced views may have been a product of their relationship. Though Morgan (1998) suggests that people are more likely to express controversial views with strangers than acquaintances, knowledge of the focus on religion in this study may have led the unacquainted pairs to employ a more limited set of discourses to respond in a religiously or socially desirable manner. In contrast, the preexisting relationship between the Young Israel men may have provided them greater freedom to employ disparate and contradictory discourses, often leading these men to challenge personal and religious views in the course of their conversation.

The two Modern Orthodox pairs shared a view of there being no room for change to Jewish traditions despite change and both traditional and nontraditional views being fundamental to Judaism. Possibly due to these mixed views on Judaism, contradictory attitudes toward women arose in their discussions. While the coexistence of extreme and often contradictory discourses was a defining feature of the Young Israel men, the Orthodox Union pair focused primarily on both the positive and negative influence of

tradition in determining their attitudes toward women. Though different in their discourses on women and their presentation of issues relevant to women, the two Modern Orthodox pairs had similarly positive attitudes toward women.

The Catholic men were unique in their reluctance to present any extreme views. Despite their focus on the need for strong female role models, these men presented women as essentially irrational and manipulative. As a result, the Catholic men's attitudes toward women were similar to those of the two Modern Orthodox pairs: mixed though generally positive. Such mixed and moderate presentations of women may have arisen from this pair's ambivalent relationship with Catholicism, with Robert self-identifying as both Catholic and Agnostic and Joshua stating that he sometimes feels the need to "step out of, some of the teachings...to have a better, viewpoint."

Such a relationship to religious belief is similar to Batson's (1976) quest orientation to religion. Differentiated from those with extrinsic (i.e., religion as means) and intrinsic (i.e., religion as end) orientations to religion (Allport, 1966), people holding a quest orientation view religion as a lifelong process of questioning, challenging, and reinterpreting their beliefs in light of life's developments. With such adaptable and constantly changing views, it may not be surprising that those viewing religion as a quest are less likely to hold prejudiced views (Batson, Naifeh, & Pate, 1978). Though no pair in this study could be exclusively defined as having a certain religious orientation, the two whose views most closely resembled Batson's (1976) presentation of quest religiosity were the Shi'ite and Catholic pairs. In line with the link between quest religiosity and reduced prejudice, these two pairs expressed the most positive attitudes toward women. Similarly, links have been made between extrinsic religiosity and

stereotypical views (e.g., Allport, 1966; Allport & Ross, 1967). With the use of religion to justify negative presentations of women most common among the Sunni men, their apparently extrinsic religious orientation may have contributed to this pair arising as having the least positive attitudes toward women.

The most rigid attitudes toward women were expressed by the Protestant men, who relied on extreme, dualistic presentations of change in the rights and status of women similar to those of the Young Israel pair. Their essentialist presentations of men and women rivalled those of the Sunni men, though their use of strictly egalitarian presentations of men and women and a view of all aspects of life as requiring both male and female input helped to balance these views. Despite their balanced presentation and outward support for some aspects of the women's rights movement, the Protestant men's discourses on women revealed their attitudes to be among the most negative of the religious pairs. This link between Protestantism and negative attitudes toward women presents a serious challenge to researchers suggesting Protestant spirituality as a treatment for domestic violence (e.g., Feasey et al., 2005; Langlands et al., 2009).

Taken together, these results do not seem out of place in a literature characterized by inconsistent presentations of the relationship between religious belief and attitudes toward women. As is apparent from this study, no religion or religious community promotes negative attitudes toward or treatment of women. Though critical of some traditions within their respective communities, the religious men presented their religions' teachings on the roles of women in a generally positive light. Whether or not the religions themselves are related to negative attitudes toward women, none of these men presented their respective religions as supporting such attitudes.

While past studies have conflated nonpracticing religious men with nonreligious men, the use of men who actively identify with nonreligious communities in this study highlights a common error. Comparing practicing and nonpracticing religious men, much of the research examining the relation between religiosity and attitudes toward women has falsely presented religious belief as a positive influence on attitudes toward women (e.g., Ellison & Anderson, 2001; Straus et al., 2006). The emergence of consistent, almost exclusively positive attitudes toward women from the discussions of the nonreligious men in this study reveals that this conflation is not a minor issue. Comparisons to the religious men further highlight these errors, with all religious pairs found to present women in much less positive terms than the nonreligious men.

Implications for Research, Treatment, and Religious Communities

In light of these findings, greater representation of actively nonreligious participants in this area of research is a necessity. That an actively nonreligious orientation was associated with more positive attitudes toward women suggests that the Good Lives Model (Ward, 2002) and other programs incorporating Abrahamic religiosity in the rehabilitation of men who commit crimes against women may do more harm than good. In addition to potentially promoting beliefs supporting negative attitudes toward women in religious men, such programs both present nonreligious men's beliefs as less valid and may negatively impact their attitudes toward women by promoting spirituality as a universal good despite a lack of evidence (Andrews & Dowden, 2009). While such treatment programs may be beneficial to men sharing the religious views promoted (e.g., Armour et al., 2008), the findings of this study suggest that there is little reason to expect similar benefits among nonreligious or other religious groups. Whether or not the

research eventually supports such programs, the findings of this study suggest that the promotion of spirituality over an actively nonreligious orientation may be both reckless and irresponsible.

Beyond applications in offender treatment programs, these findings suggest a need for religious leaders to explicitly address issues particularly relevant to women. Although the Abrahamic religious leaders studied by Ware et al. (2004) reported low rates of domestic violence, leaders from the same communities acknowledged that aspects of their faiths could be used to justify hostility toward women (Levitt & Ware, 2006). This use of religion to justify hostility was a common theme among the religious pairs in this study, with many of the men acknowledging that some religious teachings could be conducive to abuse. As Adelman (2000) has suggested, women are often further victimized by their religious communities when attempting to separate from abusive partners, which may help to explain the low incidence of domestic violence reported by the religious leaders in Ware et al. (2004). To promote an environment more conducive to disclosure without such backlash, there is a need for religious leaders to publicly address the use of religion to justify hostility toward women.

Like the religious leaders in Levitt and Ware (2006), the religious men in this study expressed uncertainty as to what the religiously appropriate response was to many of the topics due to ambiguities in religious teachings on issues relevant to women. Similarly, many of the religious men acknowledged that they had never given much thought to some of the topics of discussion prior to this study. Given the link between attitudes toward women and domestic violence (Pease & Flood, 2008) and the negative presentations of women common to most of the religious pairs, it is apparent that issues

particularly relevant to women need to be addressed by religious leaders to help prevent hostility toward women.

Because the maltreatment of women cannot be stopped by religious leaders alone, women affiliating with Abrahamic religious communities might usefully become more involved in increasing the visibility of such issues. Though many of the men in this study presented the highest positions of religious authority as being inaccessible to women, all of the men acknowledged other positions of authority available to women (e.g., president of a synagogue, teacher at a religious school). Coupled with most men being unopposed to or expressing a need for more women in positions of religious authority, the fact that some of the men had never really thought about some of the topics of discussion suggests a need for greater visibility of women in religious communities. Similarly, women in positions of religious authority need to be more vocal on issues particularly relevant to women for, as Tariq stated, “the problem is that if you're not, then, they'll just be overlooked.”

Strengths of This Study

As mentioned in the Method section, efforts were made to meet the criteria of validity (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) and warrantability (Wood & Kroger, 2000) for discourse analysis. Though not yet addressed, two additional criteria of validity proposed by Potter and Wetherell (1987) are fruitfulness and coherence. Given the discrepant findings within and between religious groups, and the suggestion of a strong relation between an actively nonreligious orientation and positive attitudes toward women, the need for further investigation is warranted. As such, the results of this study can be treated as fruitful due to a novel interpretation of the relation between irreligiousness and

attitudes toward women and the many avenues suggested for future research outlined below.

Given that the findings of this study lend coherence to some of the discrepancies in the literature, these findings can be treated as meeting all four of Potter and Wetherell's (1987) criteria for validity. Examples include the need for greater attention to denomination, as suggested above for the findings of Hunsberger et al.'s (1999) research, and exclusive use of either nonpracticing or actively nonreligious men as a comparison group, which may help to resolve some of the discrepancies in comparisons between religious and nonreligious men (e.g., compare Ellison & Anderson, 2001 with Ellison et al., 1999). Where such novel interpretations of apparently discrepant findings were not present, the findings of this study accommodated both sides of arguments in the relation between religious belief and attitudes toward women (e.g., among Catholic and Protestant men).

Though the ability to make such claims is limited, these findings can also be treated as meeting Goodman's (2008) criteria for generalizability of discursive research. For example, the use of essentialist discourses in this study serves a similar purpose as the use of existing prejudice to justify further prejudice in Goodman's (2008) study. Such discourses were used in a variety of conversations (e.g., on domestic roles and responsibilities, abortion, and women's sexuality) by religious and nonreligious men alike. Across topics, such discourses were successful in accomplishing the same goals, with essentialist presentations of women (e.g., due to physiology or irrationality) used to justify essentialist attitudes, traditional roles, and restrictions placed on women. Finally, opposition to the successful and generally used essentialist discourses arose in the

antiessentialist and strictly egalitarian discourses employed by some of the men (e.g., the Protestant and Atheist pairs). While such generalizability of discourses was present in this study, further research into the relation between religious belief and attitudes toward women is needed before claims of generalizability can be made with confidence.

Limitations of This Study

Despite the strengths of this study, there are numerous issues and limitations to the findings. Though the use of community samples was intended to produce discourses representative of both the communities of interest and the Canadian population in general, the demographic composition of some of the pairs is potentially problematic. With the small samples used to represent the various groups, it is possible that some of the findings are more a product of demographic than religious differences. As already mentioned, discrepancies between the two nonreligious pairs may have arisen from generational differences rather than differences in nonreligious affiliation. Similar limitations based on age may have led to the differences between the two Modern Orthodox pairs, with the Young Israel men much younger than the Orthodox Union pair.

To properly reflect Canada's large immigrant population, country of birth was not a factor in participation in this study. Though participants born outside of Canada were not exclusive to the two Muslim pairs, these were the only pairs composed entirely of men who immigrated to Canada. As such, differences between the Muslim and other pairs may have arisen more from cultural than religious differences. Though the great disparity between the two Muslim pairs may suggest otherwise, comparison of these findings to a study using exclusively Canadian-born participants may be warranted to rule out the effect of country of birth.

Although the use of small samples is not viewed as problematic in discourse analysis, these demographic differences between pairs suggests the need for larger samples to help avoid such issues. Similarly, the fact that the Young Israel pair was the only one composed of previously acquainted men may limit the representativeness of the discourses employed by this pair. Given the limited size of Ottawa's Jewish population, it may be beneficial to study the relationship between Modern Orthodox Judaism and attitudes toward women in a centre with a larger Jewish population in order to avoid both potential issues of representativeness and the need for snowball sampling.

The use of the findings involving the nonreligious pairs to highlight the potentially damaging conflation of nonpracticing religious men with actively nonreligious men presents another issue. Without nonpracticing religious comparisons, the ability to criticize this potential issue in the literature based on the findings of this study is limited.

Finally, an issue arising within many pairs was the dominance of one man's voice in many of the discussions. Though the Modern Orthodox, Atheist, Protestant, and Shi'ite pairs' discussions were marked by an even balance between the two men, the discussions of the other three pairs were dominated by one man (i.e., Paul, Omar, and Joshua in the Secular Humanist, Sunni, and Catholic pairs, respectively). While the voice of both men arose in the discussions of all pairs, the fact that the majority of the utterances of three of the pairs was the product of a single voice suggests that the discourses employed by these pairs may be more a reflection of one man's views than those of an entire community. Again, the use of larger sample sizes is suggested to

remedy this issue in future research, possibly with men arranged in both pairs and larger groups to help prevent the dominance of one man's voice.

Future Research

As already mentioned, there is a need for future research using larger sample sizes and paying greater attention to the denominational composition of the groups of interest. Comparisons between actively nonreligious and nonpracticing religious groups are necessary to properly assess past research comparing religious and nonreligious men's attitudes toward women. Also of interest to past findings and research based on these findings is exploration of the effectiveness of treatment programs employing religion and spirituality. Similarly, the effect of spirituality on offender rehabilitation may be best explored by comparing the effectiveness of Ward's (2002) Good Lives Model with and without the use of spirituality as a universal good.

Though the review of the literature indicates a greater link between the Abrahamic religions and negative attitudes toward women than other, non-Abrahamic religions, the limited scope of such research suggests the need for more in-depth analysis of the relation between religious belief and attitudes toward women more generally. As suggested by the demographic limitations of using participants born outside of Canada to represent the Muslim pairs, more cross-cultural research is needed to explore whether culture or religious belief is more closely related to attitudes toward women. Though this question was examined by Miller and Stark (2002) and Hunsberger et al. (1999), more cross-cultural comparisons using a broader range of religious groups are necessary before any conclusions can be made on the relative impact of culture and religious belief on attitudes toward women.

The relation between religious orientation and attitudes toward women, though mentioned above, was not properly explored in this study. As there is ample evidence to suggest that the link between religious belief and stereotypical attitudes differs depending on one's orientation to religion (e.g., Allport & Ross, 1967; Batson et al., 1978), greater attention to religious orientation would be useful in future research. Given the small sample sizes employed in the current study, the impact of religious orientation may have been disproportionately great in some of the between-pair comparisons. As such, the use of measures of religious orientation in future research may help to rule out the possibility that the findings of this study arose from a conflation of religious orientation with religious affiliation.

As suggested by Archer (2001), religious identities and the impact of religious affiliation may vary depending on the majority or minority status of the religious community. In line with the greater need for cross-cultural research, exploration of the relationship between a religion's minority or majority status and its adherents' attitudes toward women would be effective in helping to support or criticize the generalizability of this predominantly North American and European area of research. For example, comparisons of these findings to those of similar studies in majority Jewish and Muslim countries may help to support the religious belief-attitudes toward women relationship that arose in this study. Following from the need to explore non-Abrahamic religions, comparisons would be needed between similar studies involving men from non-Abrahamic religions where these religions constitute either a majority or a minority.

The findings of Brinkerhoff et al. (1992) and Glick et al. (2002) suggest that the relationship between religious belief and negative attitudes toward women may extend to

both men and women within some religious communities. Whether or not this is the case, the inclusion of women in studies of this relationship is necessary to arrive at a more complete representation of the link between religious belief and attitudes toward women. Comparing all-male, all-female, and mixed pairs in a study similar to this one would be helpful in differentiating between discourses prominent in certain religious groups and those unique to certain genders within these groups. In addition, as negative presentations of men were common in many of the pairs in this study, it may be helpful to extend such explorations of attitudes toward women to attitudes toward men. With negative presentations of both women and men prominent in some discussions (e.g., those of the Catholic men), it may be the case that a limited focus on attitudes toward women may be tapping into only one side of a gender-blind, somewhat misanthropic view of humanity in general.

Finally, all of these suggestions may be applied to the exploration of the relation between religious belief and attitudes toward men and women among adherents to goddess-centred religions. Exploration of analogues to goddess worship within the Abrahamic religions (e.g., Catholic cults of the Virgin) and true goddess worship in both non-Abrahamic polytheistic religions (e.g., of Lakshmi or Kali in Hinduism) and neopagan goddess-centred movements (e.g., the Druids and Wiccans) would be helpful in shedding light on the relationship between religious belief and negative attitudes toward women. If further research identifies this relationship as unique to the Abrahamic religions, a case for the link between monotheistic, patriarchal religious belief and negative attitudes toward women may be made. If such a relationship extends to polytheistic religion but not goddess worship within either Abrahamic or non-Abrahamic

religions, it may simply be that this relationship is unique among religions with a male godhead. If, however, this relationship extends to both matriarchal and patriarchal religions, a broader case for the negative link between religious belief and attitudes toward women may be warranted.

Conclusion

A relatively recent area of psychological research, the relationship between religious belief and attitudes toward women is more complicated than suggested by feminist theorists and the findings of past studies. With contradictory presentations of women common to religious and nonreligious groups, affiliating any religious or nonreligious group with binary, positive or negative attitudes is inappropriate. As a result, the exclusive reliance upon quantitative methods does not seem appropriate to this area of research. Though such methods are vital to studies on the relationship between religious belief and attitudes toward women, a complete picture of this relationship cannot be produced without the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The existence of both positive and negative presentations of women among all religious and nonreligious pairs in this study suggests a need for more education on and awareness of issues particularly relevant to women. Despite such contrasting presentations and between-group differences, the findings of this study suggest that identifying any religious or nonreligious group with negative attitudes toward women may not be warranted. With positive presentations of women prominent among all pairs in this study, it may be more appropriate to present this relationship as one of more or less positive attitudes.

Due to the limitations of this study and the scant research into this relationship, much more research is needed before any definitive claims may be made. Similarly, greater attention needs to be paid to researchers and treatment programs suggesting religion and spirituality as universally beneficial pursuits. Though past research presents some religious groups as being more or less associated with negative attitudes toward

women, there is a need for a more critical stance toward religious belief in general.

Whether due to the authority of the researchers presenting the positives of religious belief or the potential backlash associated with criticisms of religious belief in general, the near absence of voices in the literature challenging the universally positive presentation of religious belief is problematic. Though this may simply be a product of this being a relatively recent area of psychological research, research exploring both the positive and negative aspects of religious belief is necessary to arrive at a fuller, more accurate picture of the relationship between religious belief and attitudes toward women.

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Appendix A

Permission to Leave/Post Sheets Describing Study

**Permission to Leave/Post Sheets Describing Study**

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Matt Murdoch. I am a graduate student in the Psychology Department at Carleton University and, for my MA thesis, I am studying the relations between people's religious beliefs and their attitudes toward women. In my thesis research, I am having pairs of men with the same religious background discuss various issues relevant to women, such as affirmative action, menstruation, and abortion. All conversations will be held at a private location on the Carleton University campus, and all of the men who participate will be entered into a draw for one of three \$100 cash prizes.

In order to obtain participants, I am distributing a one page sheet with a brief description of my study and my contact information. I would be grateful if you would help me with my research by giving me permission to post and/or leave copies of this information sheet on your premises.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee for Psychological Research. To satisfy the requirement of this committee, I need your signature to indicate that you have given me permission to leave and/or post the sheet describing my study on your premises.

If you have any questions I can be reached at (613) 520-2600 ext. 2679 or mmurdoch@connect.carleton.ca. My faculty advisor is Dr. Connie M. Kristiansen, who can be reached at (613) 520-2600 ext. 2674.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Matt Murdoch, MA Candidate

Permission to Leave/Post Sheets Describing Study

Having been informed of the nature of the study regarding "Religious and Nonreligious Men's Discourses on Issues Relevant to Women," I grant Matt Murdoch from the Department of Psychology at Carleton University to leave adverts calling for men to take part in his research.

Location: _____

Print name here: _____ Position : _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Call for Participants



This study has been approved by the Carleton University Ethics Committee for Psychological Research

Seeking participants for a 1 to 2 hour study exploring men's conversations about issues relevant to women.

All participants will be entered into a draw for 1 of 3 \$100 cash prizes.

If you are male and at least 18 years old, or if you have any questions, please contact:

mmurdoch@connect.carleton.ca

(613) 520-2600 ext. 2679

<u>mmurdoch@connect.carleton.ca</u> (613) 520-2600 ext. 2679

Appendix C

Initial Contact Script

RELIGIOUS AND NONRELIGIOUS MEN'S DISCOURSES

Hello (name),

I would like to thank you for your interest in this study, which I'm doing as part of the requirements for my MA thesis. The study is about the relationship between people's religious beliefs and their attitudes toward women. To date, the findings of research in this area are unclear and even contradictory. I believe that some of this confusion arises because researchers have had research participants complete questionnaires, created by researchers, that limit how participants can answer questions. In contrast, I have designed my study in a way that lets research participants freely express their attitudes and opinions, and I hope this will allow for a clearer, more realistic picture of the relationship between people's religious beliefs and their attitudes toward women.

Briefly, your participation will consist of a one to 1.5 hour conversation with another man from a religious community similar to (or, if possible, the same as) your own. I will be present for these conversations, and I will ask you to discuss a list of topics relevant to women, such as the abuse of women, menopause, and divorce. Aside from asking questions to help guide your conversations and serving as a moderator (in the unlikely event that these conversations become heated or uncomfortable), I will keep my input to a minimum in an effort to avoid affecting your responses.

With your permission, I will be recording these conversations in order to analyze them for the main 'discourses,' or ways of linguistically constructing and talking about issues. These recordings will be kept strictly confidential, and all of the tapes will be destroyed once they have been typed-up. In addition, your real name will not be used in the study, the transcripts, or in any reports. Instead, you'll be referred to by a pseudonym, so I'll be the only person who knows your real name.

To show my appreciation for your participation, you will be entered into a draw for one of three \$100 cash prizes. Because there will be a total of 16 men participating in this study, the odds of winning will be about 1 in 5. Once all the data have been collected, I'll contact you to tell you about the outcome of the draw. This will also give me the opportunity to ask if you'd like to receive a copy of the final report, which I'll send to you upon completion.

I want to stress that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you can stop participating at any point without any repercussions.

If, after reading this, you are still interested in participating, please respond with your contact information, and I will try to organize a date and time for this study that best fits your schedule. Also, if there is a name that you would like to be called throughout the study, please let me know. If not, I will assign you one and tell you what it is.

Thank you once again for your interest. If you have any questions, please feel welcome to contact me at mmurdoch@connect.carleton.ca, or at (613) 520-2600 ext. 2679.

Appendix D

Demographics Questionnaire

RELIGIOUS AND NONRELIGIOUS MEN'S DISCOURSES

Demographics Questionnaire

Age: _____

Marital Status: Single Married/With Partner Widower
 Divorced/Separated Other (please specify): _____

Ethnicity: How would you describe your ethnicity? _____

Education: Please select the highest level of education that you have obtained:

Some High School (or less)	High School Diploma (or equivalent)
Some College/Trade School	Completed College/Trade School
Some University	Bachelor's Degree (one or more)
Graduate Degree	Prefer not to specify

Annual Income: Under \$25,000 \$25,000 - \$50,000 \$50,000 – \$75,000
 \$75,000 - \$100,000 Over \$100,000 Prefer not to specify

Employment: Please state your employment status and profession (if applicable):

Religion: If religious, please state the religious community of which you are a member (e.g., Christian – Methodist; Jewish – Orthodox Union; Muslim – Ismaili).

If nonreligious, please state how you would describe your beliefs (e.g., Agnostic, Atheist, Secular Humanist).

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form

RELIGIOUS AND NONRELIGIOUS MEN'S DISCOURSES

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee for Psychological Research

Informed Consent:

Religious and Nonreligious Men's Discourses on Issues Relevant to Women

Investigators: Matt Murdoch, MA Student, Psychology Dept., Carleton University
Connie Kristiansen, PhD, Faculty Advisor, Psychology Dept., Carleton University

The purpose of this consent form is to ensure that you understand the purpose of this study and the nature of your involvement. This consent form must provide you with sufficient information so as to allow you to determine whether you wish to participate. Please ask the researcher if you have any questions or are in need of clarification.

This study is being conducted by Matt Murdoch as part of the requirements for the MA degree in Psychology under the supervision of Dr. Connie Kristiansen, both of whom are at the Department of Psychology at Carleton University in Ottawa. In this study you will be asked to take part in a one to two hour conversation with another man of the same (or similar) religious or nonreligious community. All conversations will be held at a private location on the Carleton University campus, and all of the men who participate will be entered into a draw for one of three \$100 cash prizes. Conversations will focus on a number of issues relevant to women (e.g., affirmative action, menstruation, abortion), with topics and guiding questions presented by the researcher. Although the researcher will serve as guide and moderator (if necessary), the purpose of this study is to understand how men's conversations about these issues are related to their religious affiliation and, as such, the researcher's input will be minimal.

Due to the controversial and sensitive nature of some of the topics to be discussed, this study may be upsetting and somewhat uncomfortable for some people. Although a number of measures will be taken to minimize any discomfort experienced by participants, it is important that you understand that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to respond to any questions and may stop participating at any time, for any reason, without any effect on your entry into the draw.

You should also know that everything you say will be kept entirely confidential, and all information that you provide will be used for research purposes only. In order to

preserve your anonymity, a pseudonym will be used both in conversations and in any report of the results.

Should you require any further information regarding the study, please do not hesitate to contact Matt Murdoch at (613) 520-2600 ext. 2679 or mmurdoch@connect.carleton.ca, or Dr. Connie Kristiansen at (613) 520-2600 ext. 2674 or ckristia@connect.carleton.ca. If you have any ethical concerns regarding the study, please contact Dr. Monique Sénéchal (Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Committee for Psychological Research) at (613) 520-2600 ext. 1155. If you have any questions or comments about any other aspect of the study, you are welcome to contact Dr. Janet Mantler (Chair, Department of Psychology, Carleton University) at (613) 520-2600 ext. 4173.

Consent: My signature below indicates that I have read and fully understood the above statement and freely consent to participate in this study.

_____ Participant's Name	_____ Participant's Signature	_____ Date
_____ Witness' Name	_____ Witness' Signature	_____ Date

Consent to Audio Tape:

I hereby consent to the audio recording of this conversation. I understand that it is being recorded for accuracy purposes only and that the recording will be destroyed upon completion of this study.

_____ Participant's Name	_____ Participant's Signature	_____ Date
_____ Witness' Name	_____ Witness' Signature	_____ Date

Appendix F

Conversation Schedule

Conversation Schedule

Consent: Review and Sign

Introductions (with pseudonyms)

- Review format of study: stress minimal input of researcher
- Any questions or comments before we begin?

Conversation Topics (with guiding questions)

1. Shared Domestic Roles and Responsibilities

- a. What are your thoughts on men and women equally sharing domestic roles and responsibilities (e.g., housework, child care, home repair)?
- b. How do you think that the sharing of domestic roles and responsibilities has affected or affects society?
- c. Do you think that your views on shared domestic roles and responsibilities are common? Why do you think that this is the case?
- d. Do you think that people should be provided more education on sharing domestic roles and responsibilities? Why or why not?
- e. Can you think of an example of how men and women equally sharing domestic roles and responsibilities has affected your family or personal life? If so, how?

2. Menstruation

- a. What are your thoughts on menstruation?
- b. How do you think that the issue of menstruation has affected or affects society?
- c. Do you think that your views on menstruation are common? Why do you think that this is the case?
- d. Do you think that people should be provided more education on menstruation? Why or why not?
- e. Can you think of an example of how menstruation has affected your family or personal life? If so, how?

3. Women in the Workplace

- a. What are your thoughts on having women in the workplace?
- b. How do you think that having women in the workplace has affected or affects society?

- c. Do you think that your views on having women in the workplace are common? Why do you think that this is the case?
 - d. Do you think that people should be provided more education on having women at the workplace? Why or why not?
 - e. Can you think of an example of how having women in the workplace has affected your family or personal life? If so, how?
- 4. Women's Sexuality**
- a. What are your thoughts on women's sexuality?
 - b. How do you think that the issue of women's sexuality has affected or affects society?
 - c. Do you think that your views on women's sexuality are common? Why do you think that this is the case?
 - d. Do you think that people should be provided more education on women's sexuality? Why or why not?
 - e. Can you think of an example of how women's sexuality has affected your family or personal life? If so, how?
- 5. Affirmative Action**
- a. What are your thoughts on affirmative action (i.e., equal opportunity employment for women)?
 - b. How do you think that affirmative action has affected or affects society?
 - c. Do you think that your views on affirmative action are common? Why do you think that this is the case?
 - d. Do you think that people should be provided more education on affirmative action? Why or why not?
 - e. Can you think of an example of how affirmative action has affected your family or personal life? If so, how?
- 6. Abortion**
- a. What are your thoughts on abortion?
 - b. How do you think that abortion has affected or affects society?
 - c. Do you think that your views on abortion are common? Why do you think that this is the case?
 - d. Do you think that people should be provided more education on abortion? Why or why not?

- e. Can you think of an example of how abortion has affected your family or personal life? If so, how?

7. Women in Positions of Religious Authority

- a. What are your thoughts on women holding positions of religious authority?
- b. How do you think that having women in positions of religious authority has affected or affects society?
- c. Do you think that your views on women holding positions of religious authority are common? Why do you think that this is the case?
- d. Do you think that people should be provided more education on women in positions of religious authority? Why or why not?
- e. Can you think of an example of how women holding positions of religious authority has affected your family or personal life? If so, how?

8. Abuse of Women

- a. What are your thoughts on the abuse of women?
- b. How do you think that the abuse of women has affected or affects society?
- c. Do you think that your views on the abuse of women are common? Why do you think that this is the case?
- d. Do you think that people should be provided more education on the abuse of women? Why or why not?
- e. Can you think of an example of how the abuse of women has affected your family or personal life? If so, how?

9. Menopause

- a. What are your thoughts on menopause?
- b. How do you think that the issue of menopause has affected or affects society?
- c. Do you think that your views on menopause are common? Why do you think that this is the case?
- d. Do you think that people should be provided more education on menopause? Why or why not?
- e. Can you think of an example of how menopause has affected your family or personal life? If so, how?

10. Divorce

- a. What are your thoughts on divorce?

- b. How do you think that divorce has affected or affects society?
- c. Do you think that your views on divorce are common? Why do you think that this is the case?
- d. Do you think that people should be provided more education on divorce? Why or why not?
- e. Can you think of an example of how divorce has affected your family or personal life? If so, how?

Wrap-Up

- Is there anything else that either of you would like to talk about that we didn't cover?
- Are there any topics or questions that either of you would like to go back to and talk about?
- Do either of you have any final questions or comments, either for each other or for myself?

Debriefing: Verbal and Written

Appendix G

Debriefing Form

Debriefing: Religious and Nonreligious Men's Discourses on Issues Relevant to Women

The relation between religious belief and attitudes toward women is understudied and unclear, with researchers often employing inappropriate methods and making inappropriate conclusions on the basis of their findings. As such, there are numerous goals driving the current study. By allowing men's attitudes toward women to arise from discussions of issues particularly relevant to women, this study does not limit the expression of one's attitudes to the same extent as written psychological measures. In addition, the conversational method provides men the opportunity to qualify and clarify their views over the course of conversation, thus providing a fuller and, it is hoped, truer picture of men's attitudes toward women than is afforded by traditional measures. As past studies have relied on non-practicing religious men to represent nonreligious groups, the inclusion of actively nonreligious men in this study is intended to allow for more realistic between group comparisons, simultaneously giving voice to a population that is commonly overlooked in such studies.

Finally, the use of religion and spirituality in the treatment of men convicted of violent crimes against women is growing, despite there being no consensus in the research on the relation between religious belief and attitudes toward women. By focusing solely on studies suggesting a positive relation between religious belief and attitudes toward women (as opposed to those that find this relation to be negative or nonexistent), some treatment programs may unintentionally cause more harm than good. Although this study is by no means intended to resolve this issue, it is hoped that the information gathered from your discussions will, at the very least, convince others that much more research is needed before any definitive conclusions may be reached.

RELIGIOUS AND NONRELIGIOUS MEN'S DISCOURSES

Should you require any further information regarding the study, please feel free to contact Matt Murdoch at (613) 897-3474 or mmurdoch@connect.carleton.ca, or Dr. Connie Kristiansen at (613) 520-2600 ext. 2674 or ckristia@connect.carleton.ca. If you have any ethical concerns regarding the study, please contact Dr. Monique Sénéchal (Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Committee for Psychological Research) at (613) 520-2600 ext. 1155. If you have any questions or comments about any other aspect of the study, you are welcome to contact Dr. Janet Mantler (Chair, Department of Psychology, Carleton University) at (613) 520-2600 ext. 4173.

Following completion of the study, you will be contacted by the researcher by e-mail to review the above information, to inform you of the outcome of the draw and, if you wish, to provide you with a copy of the results at a later date. Although some people may find participation in this study to be uncomfortable and potentially upsetting, it must be stressed that the researcher is not qualified to provide adequate counselling. If you feel the need to talk with someone about any immediate issues that may have arisen from your participation in this study, please do not hesitate to contact the Ottawa Distress Centre. This service provides confidential, 24-hour support and assistance by staff trained to deal with sensitive issues, and may be contacted at (613) 238-3311.

Thank you for your participation and contribution to this research.

Sincerely,

Matt Murdoch