Intellectual Humility and Reactions to Opinions about Religious Beliefs

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Intellectual humility, a recognition of the fallibility of one’s own views and an openness to changing those views when warranted, is a construct with roots in philosophy that is only now beginning to receive attention from psychological scientists. We focus on intellectual humility in the domain of religious belief and conduct an initial test of the hypothesis that the influence of religious beliefs on evaluations of written opinions about religious matters is moderated by intellectual humility. We find that our ad hoc measure of intellectual humility in the religious domain is best characterized in terms of four correlated dimensions, allowing for focused tests of our hypothesis. We find some support for the hypothesis. Individuals with strong religious beliefs who are low in intellectual humility in the religion domain, regardless of dimension, react more strongly than their high humility counterparts to written opinions regarding religious beliefs—both opinions that support and contradict their own beliefs. Ancillary analyses show a moderate curvilinear relation between strength of religious beliefs and intellectual humility in the religion domain, with lower humility accompanying stronger views in favor of and against religious beliefs.

Many would argue that religion exists to inculcate virtue in humankind—that the Creator of all bestowed on humankind certain truths that have then been passed down and passed around for the betterment of our species and the world at large (for examples, see Descartes, 1985; Tao Te Ching 2:38, as translated by Lin, 2006). According to this view, not only does religion serve as a source of virtue, it is the primary source of any and all virtues that can or should be sought after, be they honesty, industry, thrift, or humility—the focus of the present study.

In contrast, thinkers in many ages and locations have taken umbrage at the assertion that religious institutions act as repositories and dispensers of virtue (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 2:1; Cottingham, 1994; Hitchens, 2007). If such a thing were true, this logic argues, then certainly religious groups—being thus devoted to the increase of virtue—would not instigate religious wars and conflicts; nor would they provide rallying points for such organizations as the Ku Klux Klan, Al Qaeda, or the Gush Emunim Underground. Much ink has been spilled in such arguments without resolution, and in recent times—quite likely to reduce the decibel level of the discussion as much as to contribute to the conversation—research scientists have begun to employ empirical methods to ascertain whether virtuous behavior is indeed found in greater measure among those that profess religion than among those who do not. For example, a study of Turkish Muslims found that religiosity was positively associated with forgiveness and negatively related to a desire for revenge, two of the many possible aspects of virtuous comportment (Ayten, 2012). Other research has shown that in some—but not all—cases religiosity can lead people to behave more altruistically (for a review, see Galen, 2012). Religiosity thus seems to be associated with virtue in a broad sense. How does it interact with humility?
Humility is a virtue that is espoused by virtually every major religion of the world (for example, Bhagavad Gita 13:7–8; Matthew 18:4; New Testament KJV; Qur’an 23:1–2). Yet the examples mentioned earlier do not convey the ideal image of religious adherents acting in humble ways; they instead provide strong arguments against that ideal by showing religionists forcing other peoples to adopt their own beliefs under threat of death. Such episodes might instead lead us to believe that humility is one virtue that is found less in religious than in nonreligious people. Perhaps a more constructive question is not whether religion leads to humility (or the lack thereof), but rather whether unnecessary interpersonal conflicts are caused by the interaction of deeply held beliefs and a lack of humility about those beliefs. From this view, religious dogma, in and of itself, is not responsible for the violent behavior of certain religious people against those who disagree with them. Rather, it is the combination of this religious belief with low levels of humility about those beliefs that causes conflict. Treating these constructs as orthogonal, one could imagine religious people who lack humility reacting with intolerance and retaliation toward those who disagree with them, whereas those who believe just as strongly but hold their views humbly could treat disbelievers with peace and respect.

Before such a question can be addressed empirically, the abstract construct of humility must be defined, both conceptually and operationally. This task has proved surprisingly difficult and elusive as yet. Various definitions of the humility construct have been put forth; one researcher defines humility as a willingness to admit to our own imperfections along with a respect for others and lack of narcissism (Emmons, 2000). Another states that humility cannot be identified in oneself but exists only as identified in us by others, specifically by the presence of apparent self-honesty and an orientation towards service to others (Worthington, 2008). Most of the definitions of humility that we found suffered from circumscriptions: they discuss what humility is not without necessarily nailing down what humility itself is. Tangney (2000) offers the clearest set of criteria: an ability to see the self and one’s place in the world clearly, with low self-focus, openness, an appreciation for the value of all things, and a willingness to admit mistakes. This definition shows humility to be a multi-faceted construct, each component of which must be present in conjunction with the others in order to be considered humility. A clear self-appraisal, for instance, is not judged to be humble when paired with a self-absorbed disposition or angry responses to criticism.

Our focus in the present research is a specific form of humility, intellectual humility, about which the primary scholarship to date has been contributed by philosophers (e.g., Roberts & Wood, 2003). Intellectual humility, though subject to no small amount of definitional debate itself, is generally understood to be the mindset and actions associated with treating one’s own views (i.e., beliefs, opinions, positions) as fallible and an openness to changing or reinterpreting those views when faced with superior information (Samuelson, Church, Jarvinen, & Paulus, 2012). Certain advocates of religion as a catalyst of human improvement have begun to recognize the need for increased intellectual humility in the discussion of religion even as they acknowledge the difficulty of creating an empirical framework for studying intellectual humility (Howard, 2003). The present research is motivated in part by the need for empirical research on the antecedents and consequences of intellectual humility with regard to religious beliefs.

Our specific question is how intellectual humility and religiosity interact to affect people’s attitudes and behaviors. Previous research has shed some light on the relations between religiosity and humility, if not their combined consequences. Some studies have measured personality using the HEXACO models alongside measures of religiosity in both primarily Christian and primarily Muslim contexts. These studies have found that the strongest correlate of religiosity is honesty-humility—defined as sincerity, fairness, greed-avoidance, and modesty (Aghababaei, 2012; Lee, Ogunfowora, & Ashton, 2005). Thus, humility in this definition seems to be positively associated with religious belief. Furthermore, HEXACO honesty-humility is negatively correlated with vengeful acts and intentions (Lee & Ashton, 2012), suggesting that this aspect of intellectual humility might prevent religious violence. Although a lack of humility is hardly the only reason for aggressive religious acts, this research suggests that it may be one component of religion-based conflicts. As shown below, however, other research suggests that religiosity may hinder rather than encourage intellectual humility. A secondary focus of the present research is the form of the empirical relation between intellectual humility and religious beliefs.

Open-mindedness, a concept that has seen more empirical study than intellectual humility, might be thought of as the openness component of intellectual humility, or at the very least correlated with it. Here
we find that certain kinds of religious thought, most notably fundamentalism or rigid adherence to religious dogma, are negatively correlated with openness, whereas an antireligious attitude is correlated with open-mindedness (Heiser, 2005; Proctor & McCord, 2009; Thompson, 1974). It bears noting that fundamentalism and religious rigidity, though certainly representative of some types of religious belief, do not represent the whole domain of religiosity any more than open-mindedness represents the entire concept of intellectual humility. Thus, the disparate findings between the studies on openness and those on the honesty-humility trait may reflect differences between these components of intellectual humility or the different components of religiosity measured in each study. Yet a dearth of published empirical work exists in the realm of intellectual humility, and there is even less research focusing on intellectual humility within the domain of religion and religious thought, leaving the resolutions of such questions unknown (Howard, 2003).

A particularly important missing element of study is the consequences of intellectual humility in the religious domain. Lack of religious intellectual humility has the potential to create widespread pain and conflict, as historical events demonstrate. Religious terrorism and other such extreme examples are only one potential outcome of a lack of intellectual humility. Most consequences are likely to be of the quotidian variety; those that accrue as people of different faiths interact in daily life. In a country with religious beliefs as varied as those of the United States, citizens are frequently confronted by people whose religious beliefs differ from their own. Does intellectual humility help lubricate those potentially contentious interactions? Does it make people less distrustful of teachings that contradict their own dogmas?

The question of primary interest in the current research is: How do intellectually humble people as compared to their less humble peers react to expressions of religious beliefs that agree or disagree with their own beliefs? A secondary, more exploratory, question concerns the relation between intellectual humility in the domain of religion and the strength of religious beliefs. We address these questions using data from an experimental study of adults in the U.S. We assess religious beliefs and intellectual humility in the domain of religion, after which we confront participants with an op-ed article that either argues in favor of or against a core religious belief. We then measure participant’s reactions to the article and its author.

Method

Participants

We recruited 202 participants (118 female) from the United States using Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (Mturk; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Only those prospective participants new to Mturk or with a record of having done “acceptable work” on at least 95% of prior Mturk tasks were able to see the online solicitation for participants. Participants had an average age of 34 years (SD = 12.1) and ranged widely in religious belief, with 45% identifying as Christian, 36% as either atheist or agnostic, 5% as Buddhist, 4% as Muslim, and 2% as Jewish. Regardless of professed religious belief, participants tended to be somewhat low in religiosity, with 50% identifying as “not at all religious” and 12% as “very religious”; however, when asked about their spirituality, respondents spread out in nearly equal proportions on a four-point scale from not at all spiritual to very spiritual. Participants were fairly well-educated, as well, with 42% having completed an undergraduate degree or higher, and 88% having at least attended some type of college or university. Five participants were excluded from analyses due to failure to follow instructions, resulting in a final N of 197. Participants received $0.50 in Amazon store credit for completing the study.

Measures and Materials

Religious beliefs. We asked a series of questions about the extent to which participants endorsed basic religious beliefs.1 Examples are: “Do you believe that hell is a real place?”, “Do you believe the universe was created by a divine being?” and “Do you believe that religious teachings should be followed strictly?” Responses were provided on four- or five-point scales ranging from strong endorsement of that statement to strong endorsement of an opposing viewpoint, which were standardized and combined to create a composite score of religious belief ($\alpha = .90$). High scores on this composite item indicated a strong belief in religious teachings and low scores indicated a strong belief against religious teachings. Though care was taken to craft items that would be applicable across religious

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1The complete list of questions as well as items used to measure intellectual humility in the domain of religion are available, by request, from the first author.
backgrounds, we recognize that a subset of these items might be less applicable to participants from traditions other than the Abrahamic religions. However, excluding such participants from our primary analyses produced no change in our results, indicating that either these participants were sufficiently versed in Abrahamic traditions to formulate an appropriate response or else that there were too few such people ($N = 11$) to have a noticeable impact on the outcome of the analyses. Given our focus on extremity of religious belief or non-belief, as opposed to participants’ positions on specific beliefs, the impact of this potential validity concern on our results is likely minimal.

Although we used our ad hoc measure of religious beliefs for all hypothesis tests, we also asked participants to complete the Brief Multimodal Measure of Religiosity and Spirituality (BMMRS; Fetzer Institute & National Institute on Aging Working Group, 1999). We chose not to use scores on this measure for hypothesis tests because, like other commonly-used measures of religiosity, it arrays respondents along a unipolar dimension that ranges from strong belief to an absence of belief. Our response format allowed participants to indicate that they strongly favored the belief captured by each statement, but also allowed them to report strong opposition to those beliefs. Thus, our measure allowed for extremity of opinion in both directions. It should be noted that, despite this extension of the lower pole of the dimension to include opposition to specific religious beliefs, scores on our measure correlated strongly with aggregate BMMRS scores, $r = .85$.

**Domain-specific intellectual humility.** Given the lack of a measure of domain-specific intellectual humility that could be adapted for present purposes, we wrote a series of statements about religious beliefs that, in our view, expressed either intellectual humility or its opposite to be rated by participants. Our goal was not to produce a formal measure for use beyond our study but rather to produce a credible operationalization of the construct for tests of our hypotheses. We generated a total of 23 such statements (examples provided below). Participants indicated the self-descriptiveness of the statements on five-point scales anchored by *not at all true of me* and *extremely true of me*. The statements that were included were based on previous pre-testing of intellectual humility measures and reflected a range of possible components of intellectual humility. For example, the items encompassed both thoughts and behaviors, and included both intrapsychic (“I am certain that my religious or spiritual beliefs are more accurate than all other beliefs”) and interpersonal items (“I am willing to engage in religious discussions with people who have different religious or spiritual beliefs than I do”). We used exploratory factor analysis to determine whether scores could be generated reflecting one or more facets of intellectual humility in the domain of religious beliefs.

An initial principal axis factoring produced a value of .87 for the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, well above the recommended cutoff of .60. The scree plot resulting from this analysis clearly pointed to four factors. Oblique rotation produced a clear pattern with the exception of four statements that did not load above criterion on any of the factors. These statements were dropped and the set was refactored. The scree plot again pointed to four factors, and a comparison with three- and five-factor solutions confirmed our decision to move forward with four correlated factors.

In order to describe the content of the factors and facilitate presentation of the results, we gave the factors working labels. **Awareness of fallibility of beliefs** comprises five statements, the highest loading reading, “When it comes to religious or spiritual beliefs, mine are more accurate than others” (reverse scored). Four statements loaded on **discretion in asserting beliefs**; an example is “Even when I have a strong religious or spiritual belief, I don’t need everyone to know it.” An additional four statements defined **comfort keeping beliefs private**, as reflected in the statement, “It’s important to share my religious or spiritual views with others regardless of whether they agree with me” (reverse scored). The remaining statements loaded on a factor we labeled **respect for others’ beliefs**; the highest loading statement read, “I listen to others’ religious or spiritual beliefs without disagreeing even when I think I am right.” We created composites representing each factor. Alphas ranged from .89 for awareness of fallibility to .71 for respect for others’ beliefs. As shown in Table 1, the correlations between these composites were moderate with the exception of those involving respect for others’ beliefs, which were low to moderate. These composites served as our operational definition of intellectual humility in the domain of religion for the purpose of hypothesis testing. Referring back to the definition of humility mentioned earlier (Tangney, 2000), these factors correspond well with a willingness to admit mistakes, appreciation for the value of others, low self-focus, and openness, respectively.
Modified newspaper articles. Participants were asked to read one of two modified op-ed articles about attending religious services. This particular subject was chosen in order to tap a religious issue that does not have political or public policy implications (which many other religious opinion issues, such as abortion or creationism vs. evolution, explicitly do). The articles (one in favor of the issue and one opposed) both originated from the same existing New York Times op-ed article (Luhrmann, 2013) but were extensively modified for topic, length, and style. The original article was in favor of religious attendance; the anti-attendance article was created from the same article by reversing key phrases and supporting evidence to craft an argument in the opposing direction that was equivalent in persuasive strength and style to the pro-attendance article. For example, the article favoring attendance began, “One of the most striking scientific discoveries about religion in recent years is that going to a church, synagogue, or mosque weekly can be good for your health.” The article arguing against attendance referred to religious attendance as being “bad for your health.” One of the arguments in the pro-attendance article read, “Worshipping in a group teaches us about ourselves and the world around us, and can help find us a peace that heals us, body and soul.” This argument was modified in the article arguing against attendance to read “Worshipping in a group prevents us from learning about ourselves and the world around us, and can prevent finding us a peace that heals us, body and soul.”

Reactions to opinion. After reading one of the op-ed articles, participants responded to a series of statements about the article (e.g., “Please rate the article you just read.”) followed by a scale ranging from very low quality to very high quality) and its author (e.g., “How would you rate the author of this article on the following characteristics?” followed by nine adjectives— intelligent, competent, knowledgeable, etc.). Based on the results of exploratory factor analysis, we created composite scores of article (α = .93) and author (α = .95) rating. As shown in Table 1, the correlation between these two composites was strong.

### Procedure

The survey, formatted and presented using Qualtrics Survey Software, was self-administered on the Web and completed by participants at a location of their choosing. A series of screens presented questions related to religious beliefs and practices (some unrelated to the current study), after which participants were notified that they would next “read and evaluate an op-ed article from a popular US magazine.” After reading the article, they responded to a series of statements and questions about the article and its author. The average time to completion was 23 minutes.

### Results

We used multiple regression analysis to evaluate the effect of the variables of interest on ratings of the article and its author. Predictor variables included condition (article for or against attendance), the religious beliefs composite, intellectual humility in the domain of religion, and the two- and three-way interactions of these variables. Correlations and descriptive statistics for all variables in the models are provided in Table 1. Given the number of predictors when interaction terms were included, we ran separate models for each of the four domain-specific intellectual humility factors. Although the article and author ratings compos-
ites were highly correlated, because of their conceptual distinctiveness, we analyzed them separately. The result is eight moderated multiple regression models.

The overall tests of the models were highly significant (all $p$s < .001), with values of $R^2$ ranging from .21 for the model including the awareness of fallibility factor and predicting author rating, to .34 for the model including the discretion in asserting beliefs factor and predicting article rating. For each dimension of intellectual humility, the model for article rating was more predictive (mean $R^2 = .33$) than the model for author rating (mean $R^2 = .23$).

Effects Not Involving Intellectual Humility

There was a significant effect of condition. Participants who read the article favoring attendance rated both the article ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.33$) and the author ($M = 5.27$, $SD = 1.01$) more positively than participants who read the article against attendance ($M_{article} = 3.33$, $SD = 1.55$; $M_{author} = 4.1$, $SD = 1.42$; $t$s > 5.0, $p$s < .001). There were no effects on article or author ratings for religious beliefs.

There was a significant interaction effect of condition and religious beliefs on article ratings, $ts > 3.4$, $p$s < .001. The pattern is illustrated Figure 1 using data from the model including the awareness of fallibility dimension of intellectual humility. Simple effects tests show no effect of condition at one standard deviation below the mean, but a strong effect of condition at one standard deviation above the mean on religious beliefs. People with strong religious beliefs liked the article favoring attendance and disliked the article against attendance more than people with anti-religious beliefs.

This general pattern was evident for ratings of the author, but the effect was nonsignificant in two of the models and weak in the other two.

Effects Involving Intellectual Humility

Although none of the dimensions of intellectual humility significantly predicted article or author ratings, three of the dimensions contributed to significant interaction effects.

The discretion in asserting beliefs dimension moderated the effect of condition on article ratings, $t = -2.42$, $p = .017$. The pattern underlying this effect is shown in Figure 2. The effect of condition was significantly weaker for individuals higher on the discretion dimension than for individuals lower on this dimension.

The model including the comfort keeping beliefs private dimension of intellectual humility produced a significant three-way interaction, $t = -2.49$, $p = .014$. The pattern is shown in Figure 3. Mirroring the pat-

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**FIGURE 1**
Mean Ratings of the Article as a Function of Condition and Religious Beliefs

![Graph showing mean ratings of the article with a significant interaction effect of condition and religious beliefs. The graph displays two bars for each condition (against attendance and favoring attendance) for low and high religious beliefs. The bar heights indicate higher ratings for articles favoring attendance compared to those against attendance, with a clear distinction between low and high religious beliefs.]
tern in Figure 1 for individuals with anti-religious beliefs, there was no effect for condition regardless of standing on intellectual humility. For individuals with strong religious beliefs, the condition effect was significant but stronger for individuals low in the comfort keeping beliefs private dimension of intellectual humility. Particularly striking is the estimated mean article rating in excess of 6.0 on a 1-to-7 scale for individuals with strong religious beliefs and low intellectual humility on this dimension who read the article favoring attendance.

The lone effect involving intellectual humility for ratings of the author of the article was for the respect for others’ beliefs dimension, for which the Religious Beliefs × Intellectual Humility effect was significant, $t = 2.17, p = .031$. The pattern giving rise to this effect is shown in Figure 4. Simple slopes analysis revealed no effect for religious beliefs on ratings of the author at one standard deviation above the mean on respect for others’ beliefs. At one standard deviation below the mean on this dimension, there was a negative effect of religious beliefs driven by a uniquely low rating of the author by individuals with strong religious beliefs.

Ancillary Analyses and Findings

Although the focus of our analyses was the effect of a challenge to one’s religious beliefs as a function of intellectual humility, we also examined the relations between the intellectual humility dimensions and religious beliefs. The zero-order correlations are shown on line 5 in Table 1. With the exception of the respect for others’ beliefs dimension, which is not related to religious beliefs, the correlations are negative and in the moderate to strong range. That is, for three of the dimensions, as intellectual humility increases, strength of religious beliefs decreases. This relation is particularly strong for the comfort keeping beliefs private dimension, the inverse of which is sharing one’s religious beliefs with others in hopes of changing their beliefs.

The zero-order $r$s suggest that intellectual humility decreases with increasing religious beliefs; however, prior research suggests that extremity of beliefs in either direction might be associated with lower intellectual humility (Toner, Leary, Asher, & Jongman-Sereno, in press; Toner & Leary, 2013). Our measure of religious belief allowed for testing of this pattern because low scores indicated strong beliefs against religious teachings (rather than just an absence of religious belief). To evaluate this possibility, we examined the relations between the four dimensions of intellectual humility and the quadratic component of religious beliefs (controlling for the linear component). The curvilinear relation was significant for all dimensions, ranging from $sr = .26$ for awareness of fallibility to $sr = .04$ for respect
FIGURE 3
Mean Ratings of the Article as a Function of Condition, Religious Beliefs, and Intellectual Humility Dimension, Comfort Keeping Beliefs Private

FIGURE 4
Mean Ratings of the Author as a Function of Religious Beliefs and Intellectual Humility Dimension, Respect for Others’ Beliefs
for others’ beliefs. The patterns, shown in Figure 5, suggest that, as one moves toward greater extremity of religious beliefs (the Y axis) in either direction, intellectual humility goes down. Furthermore, the finding that this pattern was strongest for the awareness of fallibility component of intellectual humility matches the previous research, which measured a similar construct (feelings of superiority about one’s beliefs).

Discussion
The current study is the first, to our knowledge, to examine the influence of intellectual humility in the domain of religion on reactions to information in support of or opposed to religious beliefs. The study also provided initial data on features that characterize intellectual humility in this domain. Specifically, based on our ad hoc measure of intellectual humility, intellectual humility regarding religious beliefs is characterized, at least in part, by an awareness of the fallibility of one’s religious beliefs, discretion in asserting those beliefs, comfort keeping one’s religious beliefs private, and respect for others’ religious beliefs. Although these dimensions likely do not fully capture the intellectual humility construct in this domain, they offer a useful working characterization with an emphasis on evidence of intellectual humility primarily in interpersonal settings. We anticipate building on this initial analysis to develop a measure that could be used routinely in studies of intellectual humility in the domain of religion.
Not all of the dimensions of intellectual humility identified through factor analyses of our items interacted with religious belief to affect thoughts and behavior. Notably, only the three dimensions pertaining to the interaction of the person with others affected ratings of the article and its author. Awareness of the fallibility of beliefs, the lone intrapsychic form of intellectual humility captured by our items, was not predictive of ratings. This lack of significant finding differs from research being conducted in other domains, which has shown that people who feel highly superior about their beliefs denigrate contradictory information sources, including articles and authors (Toner & Leary, 2013). Perhaps there is something unique about a lack of awareness about the fallibility of one’s religious beliefs that can bring personal satisfaction without a need to disparage others. If that is true, then religious intellectual humility only becomes important from an interpersonal standpoint when there are others with differing opinions.

As hypothesized, there appear to be aspects of intellectual humility that act in tandem with strong religious belief to hamper our ability to be even-handed in judgment. The three-way interaction among condition, comfort keeping beliefs private, and religious belief showed that highly religious people have more extreme reactions (positive for arguments they agree with and negative for those they disagree with) to the articles than their low-religiosity peers, and that having a low level of comfort in keeping one’s own beliefs led to the most extreme difference in ratings. This finding suggests that deficits in at least one component of intellectual humility (manifesting as a desire to convince others) works to create more polarized opinions in religious people. Thus, the aspect of intellectual humility that is seemingly most lacking in many religious leaders and media pundits—whose livelihood depends on sharing their beliefs with others—is also the component most likely to create polarization.

The hypothesis that a combination of strong religious beliefs and low intellectual humility leads to ill treatment of non-believers was most closely supported by findings involving the respecting others’ beliefs factor. People were most unflattering about the author when they held strong religious beliefs and when they were intolerant of competing views. Giving a low rating to an anonymous author on a Likert scale is not nearly as serious as engaging in religious violence, but this finding offers support for the idea that even in the relatively unemotional task of completing an online survey, religious intolerance contributes to interpersonal strife.

Regardless of religious beliefs, people who were more willing to offend others (i.e., low in the discretion in asserting beliefs component of intellectual humility), tended to rate the pro-attendance article more positively than the low-attendance article, whereas participants high in discretion showed less of this preference. Given an overall preference in our sample for the pro-attendance article, this finding could reflect the fact that those who are indiscriment in sharing their opinions in a religious context are also more willing to offend others whose writing they find subpar.

It must be noted as a caveat to our findings that the opinion articles were not perceived as being equally convincing or well written. Regardless of belief, our participants found the pro-religious-attendance article more compelling than the anti-attendance one. This is no great surprise, given that the original article from which both op-eds were crafted was indeed pro-attendance in nature. This difficulty could be avoided in future studies by having participants generate their own arguments that could either be matched or mismatched to their personal convictions.

A compelling pattern emerged from our data as a result of ancillary analyses examining the strength and form of the relation between religious beliefs and the dimensions of intellectual humility captured by our items. Although there was a general tendency toward lower intellectual humility with stronger religious beliefs, this linear pattern was overshadowed for some dimensions by a curvilinear pattern indicating lower intellectual humility both for individuals with strong religious beliefs and individuals with strong anti-religious beliefs. This pattern suggests that individuals high in intellectual humility, at least in the domain of religion, are less prone to stake out strong positions. The strength and consistency of this pattern (see also Toner et al., in press) suggests that future research on intellectual humility should routinely consider quadratic effects along with the standard consideration of linear effects.

Future research could also examine the effects of intellectual humility for different traditions and forms of religiosity. For example, certain religions might be more prone to high intellectual humility than others. Buddhism, for instance, with its prominent and persistent teachings about minimizing self-focus, might produce adherents who are more open-minded than adherents of other faiths (Bollinger & Hill, 2012; Wiebe, 2008). The sample sizes of various faiths within the present study were insufficient to test this hypothesis and others like it, but they merit further examination.
It is our opinion that intellectual humility is a subject that deserves much more empirical study. Given how many questions of public policy are intricately linked to issues of religion, we believe that the domain of religion should receive an equal focus in such work alongside such other important domains as politics, finance, and interpersonal relationships. If religion is to have greater success in fulfilling its stated purpose of conferring the noble virtues to humankind, intellectual humility needs to be a part of the discussion, and rigorous and continued study of its effects should be communicated—first in the pages of scientific journals, if need be, but of a certainty culminating on the altars of worship.

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