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Introduction

- Research indicates internal Locus of Control (LoC) is negatively related to religiosity but external LoC is positively related to religiosity.¹
- However, it is not clear how LoC and religiosity relate in terms of frequency and type of prayers in which people engage, and if there are similar patterns across disparate religious affiliations.
 - E.g., individuals with lower LoC might utilize prayers of supplication/partitioning (i.e., asking God for something) and prayers of confession more often than individuals with higher levels of LoC.

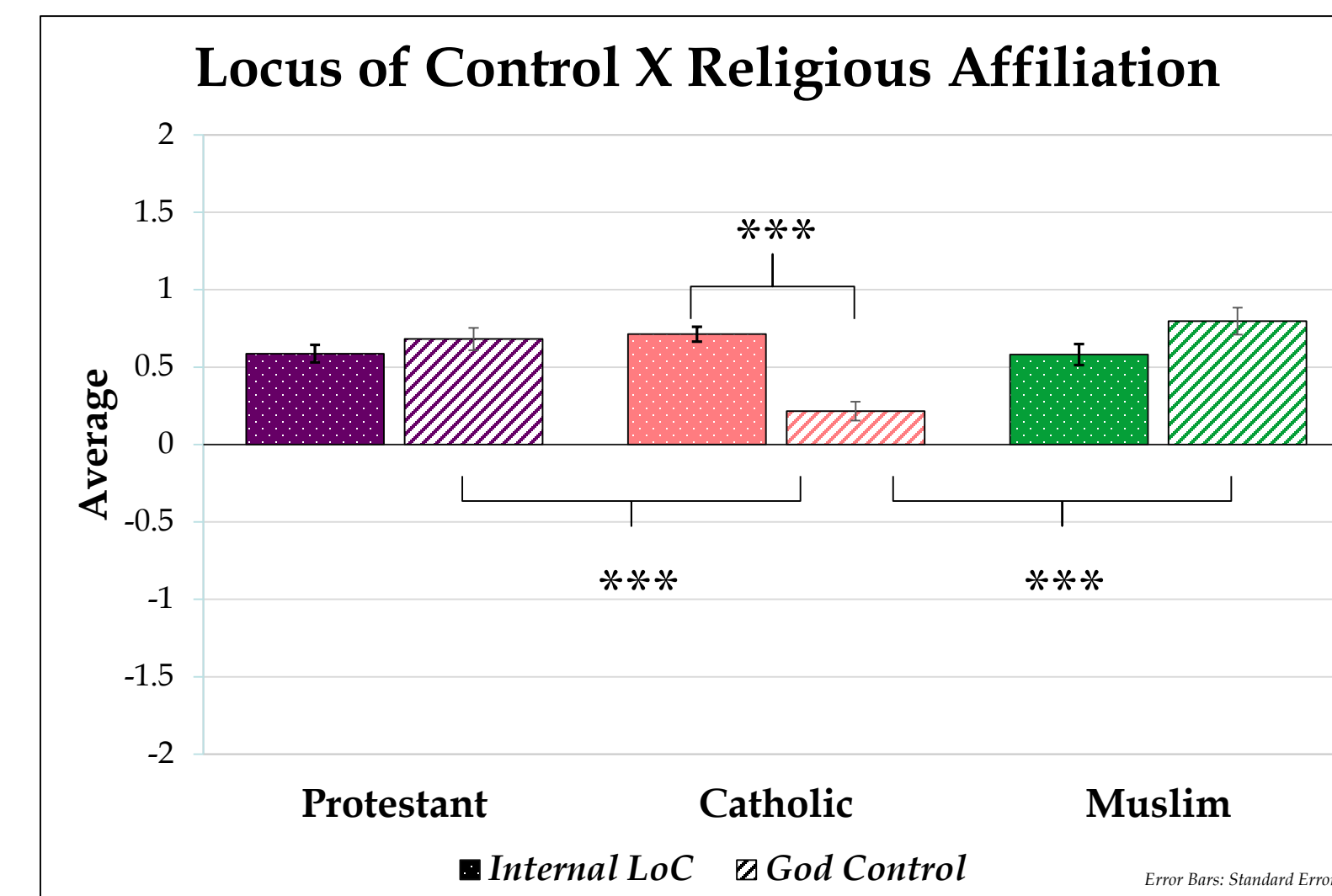
Participants

- **Undergraduate Students from Three Religious Affiliations (N = 316):**
 - **Protestant Christian** (n = 101; M_{age} = 19.46, SD_{age} = 2.41; 60.4% female)
 - **Roman Catholic** (n = 144; M_{age} = 19.06, SD_{age} = 1.12; 77.1% female)
 - **Muslim** (n_{preliminary} = 71; M_{age} = 18.97, SD_{age} = 1.22; 62% female)

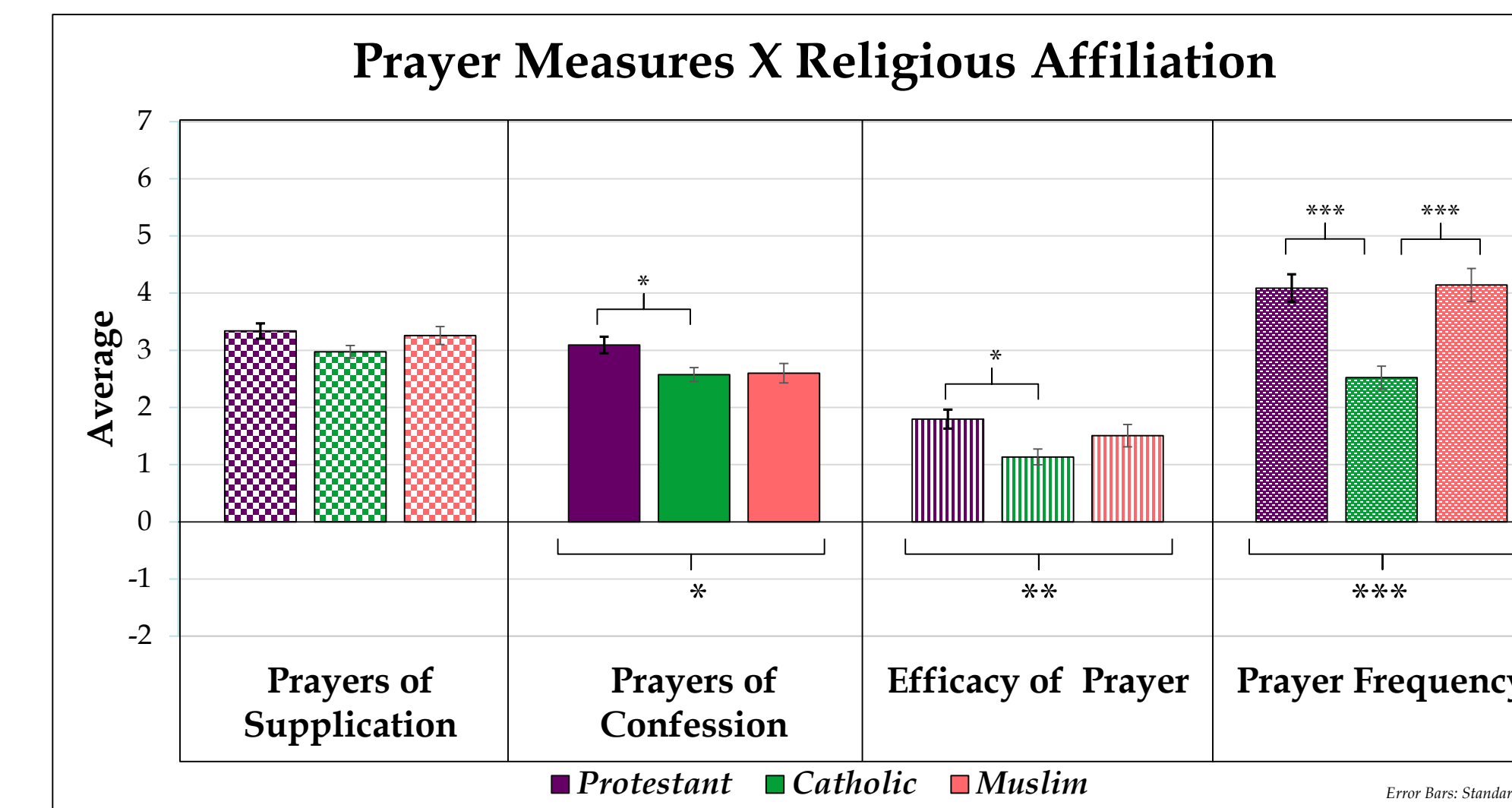
Materials & Procedure

- **Internal Locus of Control (LoC)**²
 - 8 questions about how much control participants viewed themselves as having in a variety of situations.
 - Items on a 5-point Likert scale [-2] *Definitely No* to [+2] *Definitely Yes* and averaged ($\alpha_{Protestant} = .702$; $\alpha_{Catholic} = .526$; $\alpha_{Muslim} = .737$)
- **God/Allah Control**³
 - 8 questions about how much control participants viewed God as having
 - Items on a 5-point Likert scales [-2] *Definitely No* to [+2] *Definitely Yes* and averaged ($\alpha_{Protestant} = .809$; $\alpha_{Catholic} = .808$; $\alpha_{Muslim} = .849$)
- **Prayers of Supplication/Petition**⁴
 - 3 questions about how frequently participants made requests in prayer
 - Items on a 6-point Likert scales [0] *Never* to [5] *All of the Time* and averaged ($\alpha_{Protestant} = .998$; $\alpha_{Catholic} = .732$; $\alpha_{Muslim} = .875$)
- **Prayers of Confession**⁴
 - 3 questions about how frequently participants repented in prayer
 - Items on a 6-point Likert scales [0] *Never* to [5] *All of the Time* and averaged ($\alpha_{Protestant} = .998$; $\alpha_{Catholic} = .859$; $\alpha_{Muslim} = .833$)
- **Belief in the Efficacy of Prayer**⁴
 - 2 questions on if participants thought prayers had an effect on their own lives and an effect on other people's lives.
 - Items on 7-point Likert scales [-3] *Strongly Disagree* to [+3] *Strongly Agree* and averaged
- **Prayer Frequency**⁴
 - Participants asked how many days a week they prayed on average (0 to 7)

Results



• LoC X Religious Affiliation: $F(2, 313) = 16.681, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .096$



• Supplication: $F(2, 313) = 2.464, p = .087, \eta_p^2 = .016$
 • Confession: $F(2, 313) = 4.314, p = .014, \eta_p^2 = .027$
 • Efficacy: $F(2, 313) = 4.805, p = .009, \eta_p^2 = .030$
 • Frequency: $F(2, 313) = 16.758, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .097$

Protestant							
	Internal LoC	God Control	Prayers of Supplication	Prayers of Confession	Belief in Efficacy of Prayer	Prayer Frequency	M (SD)
Internal LoC	--						.587 (.636)
God Control	$r(99) = -.166\ddagger$	--					.681 (.735)
Prayers of Supplication	$r(99) = -.181\ddagger$	$r(99) = .554^{***}$	--				3.337 (1.341)
Prayers of Confession	$r(99) = -.208^*$	$r(99) = .552^{***}$	$r(99) = .678^{***}$	--			3.092 (1.436)
Belief in Efficacy of Prayer	$r(99) = -.167\ddagger$	$r(99) = .539^{***}$	$r(99) = .471^{***}$	$r(99) = .435^{***}$	--		1.797 (1.643)
Prayer Frequency	$r(99) = -.173\ddagger$	$r(99) = .400^{***}$	$r(99) = .438^{***}$	$r(99) = .398^{***}$	$r(99) = .499^{***}$	--	4.089 (2.498)

Catholic							
	Internal LoC	God Control	Prayers of Supplication	Prayers of Confession	Belief in Efficacy of Prayer	Prayer Frequency	M (SD)
Internal LoC	--						.713 (.487)
God Control	$r(142) = -.070$	--					.216 (.710)
Prayers of Supplication	$r(142) = -.198^*$	$r(142) = .311^{***}$	--				2.975 (1.329)
Prayers of Confession	$r(142) = -.166^*$	$r(142) = .176^*$	$r(142) = .654^{***}$	--			2.578 (1.445)
Belief in Efficacy of Prayer	$r(142) = -.130$	$r(142) = .534^{***}$	$r(142) = .467^{***}$	$r(142) = .445^{***}$	--		1.135 (1.616)
Prayer Frequency	$r(142) = -.159\ddagger$	$r(142) = .362^{***}$	$r(142) = .337^{***}$	$r(142) = .263^{**}$	$r(142) = .537^{***}$	--	2.521 (2.250)

Muslim							
	Internal LoC	Allah Control	Prayers of Supplication	Prayers of Confession	Belief in Efficacy of Prayer	Prayer Frequency	M (SD)
Internal LoC	--						.581 (.651)
Allah Control	$r(69) = -.189$	--					.796 (.770)
Prayers of Supplication	$r(69) = -.228\ddagger$	$r(69) = .218\ddagger$	--				3.258 (1.336)
Prayers of Confession	$r(69) = -.031$	$r(69) = .241^*$	$r(69) = .670^{**}$	--			2.601 (1.410)
Belief in Efficacy of Prayer	$r(68) = -.252^*$	$r(68) = .235^*$	$r(68) = .510^{***}$	$r(68) = .260^{***}$	--		1.507 (1.774)
Prayer Frequency	$r(69) = -.134$	$r(69) = .292^*$	$r(69) = .402^{**}$	$r(69) = .350^{**}$	$r(69) = .596^{***}$	--	4.141 (2.680)

Summary of Results & Discussion

- **Preliminary Analyses:**
 - There were significant differences of internal LoC, views of God control, frequency of prayers of confession, the efficacy of prayer, and the average frequency of prayer between groups.
- **Primary Analyses:**
 - **Internal LoC**
 - There was a small, negative correlation between internal LoC and prayers of supplication and confession for Catholics, and a small, negative correlation between internal LoC and prayers of confession for Protestants. Thus, as Catholics and Protestants made more confessions to God, they reported feeling less control over their own lives.
 - Internal LoC not significantly related to measures on efficacy and frequency of prayer, apart from a small, negative correlation between internal LoC and prayer efficacy for Muslims.
 - **God Control**
 - A strong, positive correlation between views of God's control and prayers of supplication and confession for all groups. As participants reported more requests for God to intervene in specific life events and repented more frequently, they also judged God as having more control over their lives.
 - Positive relation of God control to frequency of prayer and belief in the efficacy of prayers for all three religious groups.
- These results indicate participation in the religious practice of prayer (specifically making requests or confession to God) might result in a higher attribution of control to the agent toward whom those practices are directed (God). However, prayers of supplication and confession vary by religious group in their relation to a decreased sense of one's own control.
- As such, views that God has control might not necessarily replace one's own sense of agency across religious affiliations.

References

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- 4) Laird, S. P., Snyder, C. R., Rapoff, M. A., & Green, S. (2004). Measuring private prayer: Development, validation, and clinical application of the Multidimensional Prayer Inventory. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 14, 251-272.

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