January 2015

Development And Validation Of The Scale Of Atheist Microaggressions (SAM)

Louis Anthony Pagano

DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE SCALE OF ATHEIST MICROAGGRESSIONS (SAM)

by

Louis A. Pagano, Jr. Capt, USAFR, BSC
Bachelor of Arts, DePauw University, 2008
Master of Science in Education, Indiana University, 2010
Specialist Degree in Education, Indiana University, 2011

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Grand Forks, North Dakota
August
2015

This dissertation, submitted by Louis A. Pagano, Jr. in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

Kara Wettersten, Ph.D., Chairperson

Rachel Navarro, Ph.D.

Sarah Edwards, Ph.D.

Heather Terrell, Ph.D.

Mark Askelson, Ph.D.

This dissertation is being submitted by the appointed advisory committee as having met all of the requirements of the School of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota and is hereby approved.

Dr. Wayne Swisher
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

Date

PERMISSION

Title	Development And Validation of the Scale of Atheist Microaggressions (SAM)
Department	Counseling Psychology
Degree	Doctor of Philosophy

In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a graduate degree from the University of North Dakota, I agree that the library of this University shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor who supervised my dissertation work or, in her absence, by the Chairperson of the department or the dean of the School of Graduate Studies. It is understood that any copying or publication or other use of this dissertation or part thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of North Dakota in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my dissertation.

Louis A. Pagano, Jr.
August 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the members of my advisory committee for their guidance and support during my time in the doctoral program at the University of North Dakota.

ABSTRACT

Atheists in the United States are a gradually growing population representing an increasingly important percentage of the population (Pew Research Survey, 2012). The United States, a largely religious country, and its citizens cultivate many negative positions and principles towards Atheists that progress into discriminatory actions of varying degrees. To date there have been limited attempts to assess how Atheists experience and perceive discrimination in a generally religious country that does not trust Atheists or feel that they fit with the paradigms of what it means to be an American. The purpose of this dissertation project was to create an instrument to support in this process of understanding Atheist discrimination employing the scholarship surrounding Microaggressions (e.g., Sue, 2010a; Sue, 2010b) and associated forms of contemporary racism (e.g., Gaerner & Dovidio, 2005). Herein scale construction procedures, scale descriptors and properties, implications of its use and its limitations are discussed.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Literature Overview

Individuals that do not identify with a religion are a growing phenomenon in the United States. For the first time in the history of the United States, a recent survey estimated Protestant Christians as representing less than 50% of the population, approximately 48%. Those that do not identify with a religion is approaching, according to the same estimate, 20% (Pew Research Survey, 2012). However, previous surveys still place the majority of Americans, approximately 78%, with some denomination of Christianity (Gallup, 2009). This means that the non-religious are becoming a significantly sized minority in the United States.

The profile of non-religious now incorporates more than 13 million Atheist and Agnostic identifying individuals (almost 6%) as well as virtually 33 million people who report they have no specific religious membership, which is approximately 14%. Atheists are estimated to make up approximately 2.0% of the world population and about 2.4% of the United States (Gallup, 2009; Pew Research Survey, 2012). Zuckerman (2007) reports that non-religion by some estimates make up almost half a billion of the world's population—representing the fourth largest religious group in the world, trailing behind Christians, Muslims, and Hindus.

Unfortunately, when majority and minority dynamics are at play, the minority group is sometimes disenfranchised and discriminated against. This is true for a specific

section of the non-religious—Atheists. Many individuals have been shown to harbor discriminatory beliefs towards Atheists. For example, Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann (2006) found that after surveying over 2,000 Americans Atheists were considered to be the least fitting with their "vision of American Society." The authors argue that although tolerance and diversity are slowly improving in the United States, those considerations are not always extended to Atheists and the non-religious.

A more novel way of examining prejudice and discrimination is utilizing the theory of Microaggressions. Microaggressions are subtle indignities and acts of discrimination that are perpetrated by a majority member towards a minority member. Microaggressions are so subtle and covert sometimes that the message of discrimination is not expressed or even necessarily received consciously (Sue et al., 2007; Sue, 2010a; 2010b). Microaggressions were originally studied in the context of contemporary forms of racism and bigotry, involuntarily and unknowingly expressed, used to perpetuate the racial status quo (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez & Wills, 1977). The theory of Microaggressions has been used mostly to study the discriminatory experiences of racial and ethnic minorities to date. Studies include both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Before expanding on how the theory of Microaggressions can be applied appropriately to a non-religious minority—Atheists, it is first important to review how Microaggressions are applied to other minorities.

The Study of Microaggressions

Microaggressions were originally conceptualized as a reaction to contemporary forms of racism. Racial oppression has moved away from explicit and overt forms of bigotry. For example, those that study microaggressions may examine professions of

equality and objectivity for all racial and ethnic minorities belying, perhaps unconsciously, discriminatory beliefs leading to subtle discriminatory actions (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2004; Kovel, 1970). Before Microaggressions took center stage in discussion of contemporary racism there were three previous conceptualizations of contemporary racism: *Aversive racism, Symbolic racism,* and *Color-Blind racism.*

Contemporary forms of racism. Aversive racism occurs when a majority, be it a group or individual, distances themselves from a minority individual or group. In this sense, those apart of a majority feel aversive and avoidant of those that are different, valuing the security, comfort and simplicity of being around those within the same group (Blank, 2004). It is the silently held, but powerfully impactful discriminatory beliefs that promote the avoidance of the uncomfortable and possibly painful feelings that result from contact with a minority individual or group (Dovidio&Gaertner, 2005). Contact and avoidance between White and Black individuals were manipulated in a study by Dovidio and Gaertner (1981) whereby they examined the phenomenon of racial minorities in supervisory positions having their supervision questioned more often. They found that White supervisors were more willing to help Black subordinates than White subordinates. The authors believe this interaction was found because helping Black individuals in a subordinate position is congruent with inherent power dynamic within society—that White's are superior in more demanding positions and that Black individuals need White assistance to get anything done.

Symbolic racism is the second form of contemporary racism that preceded the current study of Microaggressions and is perhaps the most clearly related to the dynamic of trust as a facet of Atheist prejudice (Edgell, et al., 2006). Symbolic racism occurs when a

minority group rebels, challenges or contradicts the majority's ideals and principles (Sears, 1988). For example White individual's value of individualism and self-reliance contradict with traditional cultures of other racial and ethnic minorities that have immigrated to the United States. Symbolic racism has been shown to be a significant contributor and predictor of how some native-born Americans increasingly oppose legal immigration, costs for college and citizenship for U.S born children of immigrants (Berg, 2013).

Finally, color-blind racism describes the idea that if skin color is not seen, observed or taken into account then actions, rationales and behaviors based upon this idea could not be described as racist or prejudiced (D'Souza, 1996). Bonilla-Silva (2003a) writes that the structure of our post-civil rights country promotes this idea through the disowning of discrimination, the extension of liberal principles to mostly all matters of race (e.g., opposing affirmative action based upon the ideal of equal opportunity), the naturalization of racial matters (i.e., the belief that current segregation and inequalities is natural) and the cultural explanation of minorities standing (very similar to symbolic racism). The part of avoidance discussed earlier and these components in the context of aversive racism perpetuates this idea of color-blind racism by allowing majority members to distance themselves from the experiences and narratives of the minority (Bonilla-Silva, 2003b).

Taxonomy of microaggressions. The original taxonomy of microaggressions were proposed by Sue, et al. (2007), they are *Microassaults, Microinsults* and *Microinvalidations.* Microassaults are least subtle form of microaggression, often pronounced or behaved explicitly. The goal of perpetrating microassaults is often to hurt and degrade the intended recipient of the microaggression. Examples might be using racial epithets or specific racially motivated actions such as unmistakably following an individual of color in a

department store. Microinsults generally communicate insensitivity and insult towards the intended target. An example might be a White individual asking a well-dressed person of color at a hotel to take his or her baggage, assuming this person is a bell-hop.

Finally, microinvalidations express the nullification and exclusion of other's thoughts, feelings or experiences. Much like microinsults, microinvalidations are generally subtle and take place unnoticed. Taking a color-blind is an example of this form of microaggressions as it invalidates individuals 'experiences as a racial or ethnic minority. Sue et al. (2007) report that microinsults and microinvalidations are generally the prime focus of microaggression research because of their shrewd and insidious nature.

Microaggression theory has since expanded to investigating the experiences of other minorities through qualitative and quantitative studies. For example, Balsam, Molina, Beadnell, Simoni and Walters (2011) created a scale that measures LGBT people of color's experience of microaggressions as it relates to forms of racism and heterosexism resulting in a psychometrically sound instrument. Keller and Galgay (2010) summarized the experiences of discrimination that individuals with disabilities experience through a microaggressions lens. They were able to take qualitative data obtained through interviewing individuals with disabilities and fit a majority of them into the framework of microaggressions proposed by Sue et al. (2007) thus promoting the need for multicultural theory to better encompass disability as an aspect of diversity.

Recently, religion and non-religion have been considered as aspects of diversity susceptible to microaggressions. Nadal, Issa, Griffin, Hamt and Lyons (2010) wrote that identifying as a religious minority (e.g., Muslim, Jewish, Hindi, or Atheist) also comes with the chance of discrimination as the power dynamics seen between Whites and racial

minorities is somewhat analogous to the dynamics seen between Christians and non-Christians in America or even Religious people and non-religious people. Nadal et al. proposed 6 hypothetical themes based on previous microaggression literature as well as the work done so far on the discrimination that religious minorities face. Those themes are "*Endorsing Religious Stereotypes, Exoticization, Pathology of Different Religious Groups, Assumption of One's Own Religious Identity as the norm, Assumption of Religious Homogeneity and Denial of Religious Prejudice" (p. 300-304).* Microaggressions from the theme of *Endorsing Religious Stereotypes* occur when religiously biased statements against minority groups or individuals are perpetrated that perpetuate a stereotype. The theme of *Exoticization* describes microaggressions that imply religious minority individuals and their beliefs are weird, bizarre or imported. *Pathology of Different Religious Groups* is the theme that describes when religious majority individuals describe members of a religious minority and their religious beliefs as abnormal or even deviant. When individuals commit microaggression in the theme of *Assumption of one's own Religious Identity as the Norm* they are making the assumption that everyone adheres to the same religion or set of religious beliefs. The theme *Assumption of Religious Homogeneity* describes microaggressions that illustrate the belief of all individuals from a religious minority group, think and act the same. The final theme, *Denial of Religious Prejudice* occurs when individuals espouse egalitarian ideals about different religious groups, but likely lack insight into their own inherent religious biases. Biases may surface as unintentional behaviors or slights that the perpetrator is not aware of when operating within this theme.

Cumulative Effects of Microaggressions

Sue (2010a; 2010b) and Sue, et al. (2007) have hypothesized that the real harm of racial and ethnic microagressions occur because of their cumulative impact over time. A single microaggression perpetrated, something subtle that is not obviously committed or received necessarily, will have less of an impact that a lifetime of microaggressions received, unchallenged by a society inherently biased and prejudiced toward certain groups of people. Previous research has demonstrated the harmful impacts of discrimination and racism on the minds and bodies of other minority groups and individuals.

One important study completed over a period of 13 years (Jackson, Brown, Williams, Torres, Sellers, & Brown, 1995) found that for African American men and women that exposure to racism was strongly associated with both direct and cumulative effects to mental and physical health. Williams, Yu, Jackson, and Anderson (1997), studying over one thousand, ethnically and racially diverse participants, also found similar evidence for the association of race-related stress with both poorer mental and physical health outcomes. This may not be surprising given the documented pattern of increased mortality and disease in African Americans (Krieger, 1987).Williams et al. provide rationales for further understanding the positively correlated lowered social economic class with race related stress, access to healthcare and education as they relate to racial and ethnic identification.

More recently, microaggressions have been applied to many diverse populations. Ong, Burrow, Fuller-Rowell, Thomas and Sue (2013) found that over 14 consecutive days, Asian Americans' experience of different forms of microaggressions was predictive of increased somantic symptoms and negative affect. Another interesting article foud that

perceived racism by African American pregnant women during their life, including childhood, negatively predicted the birth weight of their newborns, in addition the effects of medical and sociodemographic factors accounted for (Dominguez, Dunkel-Schetter, Glynn, Hobel, & Sandman, 2008). These two articles provide evidence for both the short and long term effects of cumulative microaggressions.

Diener, Tay and Meyers (2011) investigated why developed countries with high amounts of religious freedom actually have more people leave religion despite a lot of evidence of religion being associated with subjective well-being. Over two lengthy studies involving participants from all of the world, they found that Atheists in the U.S experience less well-being confirming some of Edgell et al's findings. Diener et al., found that low SES and a high amount of religiosity of the country one lives in predicts the non-religious not enjoying as much social support, feeling respecting and finding meaning in their lives. The slight positive association of subjective well-being with religiosity varies Diener et al. report, based on a number of factors including SES and other markers of overall life quality. In the case of the U.S, they believe that the moderate religiosity of the U.S generally leads to lower subjective well-being in the non-religious, especially in states with high poverty rates, which translates into higher significance of religion.

Discrimination towards Atheists and Atheism

The discrimination and prejudiced beliefs about Atheists and Atheism are not the same as the beliefs held towards racial and ethnic minorities however modern forms of racism and current societal expressions of discrimination that study racial and ethnic minorities can be used in a parallel fashion to examine the discrimination Atheists experience. It has been found that there are a number of factors that can predict who

holds discriminatory beliefs towards Atheists. Edgell et al. (2006) found that Women, African Americans and the elderly are more likely to reject atheists whereas those with higher levels of education and whose fathers had more education are more accepting of Atheists as belonging in American society. Other significant factors they found that predict the lack of public acceptance of Atheists are religious involvement, identifying as a social conservative, identifying as Protestant, believing in the inerrancy of the bible, believing that God controls the development and passage of our lives, and that laws should be based on God's law.

This high degree of fundamentalism has been shown to predict discriminatory beliefs towards Atheists. Galen, Smith, Knapp and Wyngarden (2011) investigated the extent to which religious fundamentalism affects impressions made on both religious and non-religious individuals. This was a reaction to widely held beliefs that religion and a belief in God is a requirement for individuals to have strong morals (e.g., children cannot grow into moral adults without the guidance of religion and direction of God (Farkas, Johnson &Foleno, 2001)). Their results showed that an assessment of a target's social characteristics (affiliation with religion) and a desire to associate with those that are similar to you can be affected by the perceiver's religious identification. They found that those that are rated as high in religious fundamentalism prefer to affiliate with other religiously fundamental individuals whereas those that are rated as low on religious fundamentalism tend to show less of a preference with the exception of associated with non-religious individuals. Perhaps more surprisingly is that highly religious individuals were shown to base their attributions of morality based upon the target's professed religiosity regardless if

other aspects of the non-religious target were manipulated (explicitly non-religious clothing worn or not).

Those living in communities with a lower SES and more diversity are more likely to reject Atheists as belonging to American society as well. Edgell et al. (2006) believe this because in small communities, trust and acceptance are far greater concerns. Exploring the concept and importance of trust as a factor of Atheist prejudice, Gervais, Shariff and Norenzayann (2011) examined the factors of Atheist prejudice though multiple experiences. Respondents that identified God as very important in their lives in their first study were shown to rate Atheists as more distrustful than another marginalized group in the U.S, gay men. In their second study Atheists and rapists were found to be immorally equivalent when presented as options amongst Christians and Muslims for participants to choose as a described individual that commits a selfish deed in a vignette. Atheists were also found to be less trustworthy than Jewish and feminist hypothetical vignette characters as well.

Purpose of Study

As it has been demonstrated that the growing population of Atheists in the United States and around the world experience unique forms of discrimination, the importance of being able to quantitatively measure their experiences is of paramount significance. The purpose of this study is to collect a confirmatory, validation sample for the pilot version of the Scale of Atheist Microaggressions (SAM: Pagano, McCullagh, Fuller, & Williams, 2012). The validation sample was utilized during a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to provide evidence for the pilot scale's factor structure. The pilot scale of the SAM was constructed following the process outlined by DeVellis (2003) and additionally

informed by other best practices in scale construction (e.g., Bradburn et al., 2004; Worthington &Whittaker, 2006). Prior to this dissertation project the scale went through an exploratory factor analysis (EFA), informed by Kahn's (2006) work on scale construction in counseling psychology. The scale utilized microaggressions theory to inform its structure. Specifically, the SAM's construction hypothesized the presence of the six themes presented by Nadal et al. (2010) adapted to fit Atheists and Atheism. See chapter III for more detailed information regarding the construction of the SAM.

After performing the EFA, four of the six hypothesized themes were represented in the data—Pathology of Atheist Individuals, Assumption of Religious Identity as Normal, Endorsing of Atheist Stereotypes, and Denial of Atheist Prejudice. Utilizing a principal axis factoring and oblique (specifically promax) rotation, the four factors yielded a total explained variance value of 56.63% for the pilot SAM. It was established that the four factors had both theoretical and statistical independence while demonstrating sufficient levels of internal consistency. Overall, the pilot version of the SAM had a Cronbach's alpha of .90 (please see chapter III for more details).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Microaggressions are indirect, slights, indignities and insults that serve to demean and marginalize minority-identifying individuals. There is a standard taxonomy of microaggressions that has been utilized for examining the discriminatory experiences of racial and ethnic minorities. This taxonomy has now been applied to other minorities such as LGBT identifying individuals and persons with disabilities. The purpose of this project is to develop a scale that measures the experiences of non-religious minorities, specifically Atheists, utilizing the microaggressions framework. This literature review will examine the history and study of microaggressions as well as research on how and why Atheists are discriminated against. For the sake of this project Atheism is defined as a definitive proclamation that no god or gods exist (Baker & Smith, 2009). Finally, proposed hypotheses steeped in literature about the construction and nature of the proposed scale of Atheist microaggressions is provided. Also reviewed are related scales that are able to serve as models for scale development.

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are the subtle, often discreet, insults and ignominies performed by groups or individuals in the majority against minority individuals and groups (see Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, & Esquilin, 2007). The study of microaggressions was born out of a necessity related to the context of contemporary forms of racism. Understanding the development and conceptualization of Atheist

Microaggressions requires an understanding of the progression of racial oppressions and development of racial microaggressions.

Contemporary Forms of Racism

Microaggressions are a form of contemporary discrimination and oppression, originally conceptualized to better understand contemporary, racial oppression. Racial oppression has grown from more overt forms of bigotry and discrimination to more subtle forms of marginalization and oppression. Contemporary racism (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2004; Kovel, 1970) is a form of racism that occurs when individuals may consciously know that all people are equal and should be treated as such under the word of the law but will at times unconsciously harbor discriminatory beliefs and perpetrate bigoted actions that they may not be aware of. That same form of discrimination has been shown to be prevalent for Atheists as well (Edgell et al., 2006; Jones, 2007).

Aversive racism. Aversive racism is a form of contemporary racism that is not often perpetrated directly or overtly, it is rather a result of the unconscious concealment of negative values and feelings towards the minority while outwardly expressing egalitarian ideals (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). As a result of these negative feelings towards the minority, the majority may avoid interactions with minority members, finding comfort in their own racial or ethnic group. Therefore aversive racists will rarely make outright, discriminatory decisions in public and deny racially motivated behavior. Mostly importantly they are not willing to violate the egalitarian image they value presenting to the world. As they still hold discriminatory beliefs they may be more likely to take advantage of situations in which they can rationalize or justify discriminatory decisions (see Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; 2005). These situations may likely occur when the standards for

appropriate social behavior are ambiguous or when there is little to no threat to their egalitarian values (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004).

Dovidio and Gaertner (1981), in one of the first studies examining aversive racism, found that the competence of racial minorities is often questioned when they are in supervisory position over White individuals. White individuals would do this in order to challenge the apparent reversal of a conventional African American-White relationship with the African American in a subordinate position. In this study they found that White individuals in supervisory positions showed a greater willingness to help individuals in subordinate positions, who were African American than those who White. This allowed the White supervisors to continue engaging and perpetrating the traditional relationship of Whites being able to assist African Americans due to their superior position, while still appearing helpful and supportive.

In another study, Kuntsman and Plant (2008) discovered that in very grave emergencies White participants came to the aide of African American victims significantly slower and even slightly less often. White participants were even shown to interpret what might have been considered a race-neutral, serious emergency, as less serious. This is significant because if White participants were able to interpret serious emergencies as less serious they were effectively lowering their pro-social responsibility to provide assistance to African Americans. This finding speaks to the theory of aversive racism because not being responsible to provide assistance makes it much easier to avoid contact with someone outside of your racial and ethnic group. The findings of this study build on earlier work by advocating that when aversion is high, White people may infer the situation

to justify not providing assistance and alleviate any tension experienced from not helping an African American.

Additionally, it has been proposed that "in-group/out-group" thinking may be at the source of how this form of prejudice manifests (Allport, 1979). At a very young age we are taught that we belong to various social groups, including political parties, families, gender, and of course, racial and ethnic groups. He argued that we are rewarded for automatic membership in the group, and actively cohering to the group in order to preserve group foundations and boundaries, especially White individuals. The out-group is anyone that is not included when the majority in-group's use of "we" does not apply. From this perspective discrimination by aversive racists, are actions that allow White people to respond favorably to their own racial in-group while excluding African Americans (see Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005; Gaertner et al., 1997). The in-group/out-group paradigm has also been used to study Atheists as a nonreligious, out-group (Gervais, 2011; Hunter, 2001).

A common component to modern and aversive forms of racism Kliener (1988) argued is how conversation within the majority occurs. He wrote that conversation about unmentionable topics like religion, politics and especially race is generally held between friends or at the very least, "safe" individuals (located within an in-group). These individuals or group can be presumed to hold similar beliefs. By limiting the audience to which individuals articulate their racist and discriminatory beliefs they do not risk exposing their "pseudo-argument" to scrutiny, argument, and other social pressures. He defined "pseudo-argument" as discourse veiling invalidating and minimizing statements of minority experiences. In this way, the articulation and discourse within the in-group that

often perpetuates racism is effectively masked and disguised as non-racist and even classless from the in-group or majority perspective. Part of the power that the majority (White individuals, in Kliener's example) has is that they keep their conversations one sided, they control negative influence against it and the minority's voice is effectively dismissed or silenced. Control for negative influence protects the in-group mentality, membership and boundaries.

Symbolic racism. Another form of contemporary racial oppression that has been argued to have replaced "old fashioned" racism is symbolic racism. Symbolic racism is a source of resistance found in a post-segregation society. As a result of segregation ending White people, especially Northern Whites, for the first time felt the effect of more racially liberal government laws. Subsequently many White Americans expressed symbolic racism because of their belief that African Americans challenged the very "symbols" or societal values they held such as obedience and discipline (Sears, 1988). Examples of this may be reactions to African Americans rebelling against the White ideals of rugged individualism, subservience and self-reliance—all traditional and conservative American principles that are valued differently by African Americans. White groups not appreciating the different ways that African American value speech and self-expression for example provide a foundation for symbolic racism. African American and other minority cultural values are thereby pathologized. It is in this way that moral and value based disagreements, instead of racial or ethnic ones may be more likely to activate symbolic racism. This theme of "pathologizing cultural values," viewing non-majority, non-White cultural values deviant or less deserving of respect and consideration is also explored in the theory of Microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007).

Attitudinal predispositions towards minorities can be provoked or activated by political symbols (Sears, 1993) and as such symbolic racism has been studied more thoroughly in the realm of politics and government proceedings (Sears, 1988; Sears, Van Laar, Carrillo & Kosterman, 1997). In 1981, common political beliefs that revolved around issues of race held by the White majority were that the country's African American population was receiving more government assistance than they deserved. This upset many Whites because it challenged their egalitarian values (Kinder & Sears, 1981). Racial attitudes have been also shown to affect other political beliefs such as taxes, crime rates, as well as other civil rights issues such as busing and undocumented immigrants (Berg, 2009; Krysa, 2000; Sears, Hensler & Speer, 1979; Sears, 2001).

Ford, Maxwell and Sheilds (2010) examined the election environment in two southern states (Georgia & Arkansas) during the election of then senator, Barack Obama. These two states were chosen due to their historical and socio-political background, a "unique opportunity to examine the influence of race, and symbolic racism" (p. 287) they wrote. According to the U.S 2010 Census, both Arkansas and Georgia are predominately White states making up approximately 77% and 60% of the total population respectively. Despite Arkansas's surprising history with electing Democratic officials and Georgia's favorable Democratic-leaning during the primaries, the two states gave their votes to Senator John McCain. Ford et al. hypothesized that Barack Obama lost those states due to his race which activated attitudes and behaviors associated with symbolic racism. Their study, which examined samples of individuals from both Georgia and Arkansas, found that those who endorsed John McCain for presidency scored significantly higher on an assessment of symbolic racism, than Obama supporters. Support of George W. Bush in

the previous election and high levels of symbolic racism also negatively predicted support for Obama's candidacy. This study showed that symbolic racism might be a strong factor for southern voters. From a symbolic racism standpoint, voters may have believed that the election of the country's first African American president could challenge traditional, White-American values.

Color-Blind racism. Another facet of contemporary racism is referred to as "color-blind racism." Color-blindness occurs when racial and ethnic minorities' experiences of racism and discrimination are invalidated and disregarded (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). Racial and ethnic minorities' experiences of oppression in many cases may for example be considered an overreaction. If individuals in a society cannot see race or is blind to skin color then the maintenance of racial disparities in society is allowed to continue because they have been rendered invisible. In this sense maintaining a color-blind attitude allows for privileged groups and individuals to espouse values of fairness and equality while acting unconscious but firmly implanted racial and ethnic biases (Murrell, Dietz-Uhler, Dovidio, Gaertner & Drout, 1994; Sears et al., 1979). Color-blind racism like symbolic racism is similarly operationalized in cultural practices (e.g., African American people lack a drive towards learning and accomplishment).

Having so entrenched itself in privilege, Doane (2003) argued, White people, their culture and their values cannot be studied independently from contemporary forms of racism. Historical events and changes lend support to color-blind racism through means of affording generally White individuals the ability to negate, misrepresent and dismiss the significance of race and racism (Neville, Spanierman, & Doan, 2006). Within the history of immigration in the United States we can begin to see just one of many reasons why color-

blind racism may have developed. As the influx of European immigrants came to the United States in the middle of the 19th century it was often to the benefit of many individuals and families to assimilate in to Protestant, White, Anglo-Saxon culture quickly (Doane, 2003). Gallagher (2010) writes that the influx of European Whites did not comfortably fit into the racial categories in America reserved for African Americans and Asian immigrants, so a "white washing" of ethnic lines occurred to reduce the confusion of how to identify the new immigrants. Prior to this religion and language (e.g., Catholicism and Italian) were often used interchangeably as both ethnic and racial indicators. As many different White European cultures incorporated into American culture, Carr (1997) argues that White ethnic identity slowly became a choice. Being able to flexibly turn on and off ones ethnicity for White individuals, like claiming Irish heritage at Notre Dame football game or Italian heritage while at an Italian restaurant is a very powerful tool that allows the White majority to maintain power in society.

By defining race only as cultural representations as was done with some European immigrants (Gallagher, 2003; 2010) Whites today are potentially able to see race and ethnicity as little more than a nonthreatening cultural indication that has been distanced from forms of institutional and established oppression. Gallagher writes that color-blind racism partially operates from the myth that America is a meritocracy, which many Whites connect to their ethnic immigrant past. The belief might be that because my White European, minority ancestors were able to triumph over adversity so should other minorities. The myth that the United States is a meritocracy is also a theme in the study of microaggressions (see Sue et al., 2007) that will be elaborated on later.

Gallahger (2003) asserts that the color-blind ideology operates on the belief that racial minorities can achieve greater success by relieving themselves from any differential treatment or privileges. By overcoming the hardships of being European Immigrants, Gallagher argues race was reduced as a hindrance to success in this country, which in turn became one of many reasons that the color-blind ideology may have developed in the United States. Religion has been cited to be just as flexible of an identity.This flexibility allows individuals to pick and choose from an overwhelming amount of denominations that are difficult to pinpoint and measure (Alwin, Felson, Walker & Tufiş, 2006; French, 2003; Sullivan, 2009), allowing religion to maintain a considerable amount of power and influence in the United States.

Color-blindness, according to Bonilla-Silva (2003) occurs when the majority group (Whites) operates within "racial scripts" (p. 131) the perpetuate the status quo, allowing the majority group to maintain benefits and systemic rewards afforded to the confrontation of minorities' fighting to subvert that same status quo. Additionally, Bonilla-Silva stated that while there are no more systemic, governmental and environmental policies directly related to race such as water fountains in courtrooms clearly labeled "WHITES only" and segregated school systems there are White realtors, carefully steering African American individuals and families away from traditionally White neighborhoods. A colorblind society is not a perfect place where race has no significance, but a place where race and ethnicity are not discussed. Whites are able to be viewed as individuals and not profiled as belonging to a group. A colorblind attitude makes it nearly impossible for non-majority members to gain any momentum in fights for their political and social equality

because it allows individuals to ignore the inequalities due to what cannot be changed—skin color.

The study of color-blind racism also critically examines the use of language and argument according to Bonilla-Silva (2002). Discussion between White individuals and groups about race and racism has become a "rhetorical maze" (p. 42) to be navigated, outlined and explored. Some examples he cited greatly revolve around themes explored by the theory of microaggressions. These examples are the tendency of White, majority individuals to deny that they are not racial beings (not acknowledging the privilege of their White skin) and are incapable of being racist because of egalitarian views they promote or by virtue of having an African American friend or a bi-racial relative. He also shared other examples of White individuals stammering, giving lengthy pauses, and other evidences of being uncomfortable about discussing race. Bonilla-Silva examines this discomfort as support for racial inequality still being an important issue, despite the otherwise "color-blind" ideologies that many Whites seem to strong support. Race is very emotional and complicated issue he wrote and the incoherence, contradictions and repetitions seen in conversations about race are a result of the incongruence of discussing race "in a world that insists race does not matter…" (p. 62).

As discussed earlier, ethnic minority success can lead an assumption that race is no longer an obstruction to success and a contemporary example of color-blind racism can be found by examining the two most recent United States Presidential elections. Bonilla-Silva and Dietrich (2011) argue that the election of Barack Obama allowed "the tentacles of color-blind racism [to] reach even deeper into the crevices of the American polity" (p. 109). They argue that having a single non-White, African American man in a very powerful

position in world politics does not mitigate the disparate racial and ethnic inequalities still present in the United States. Drawing from a symbolic racism framework as well, they wrote that Obama's ability to claim the traditional American, philosophical symbols of hard work, determinism, social status elevation, may have only served increased White's buy-in to the misconception that the United States is an equal and open nation with equivalent opportunities for all. Obama's meritocratic rise to the presidency encourages others to discount or invalidate the experiences of racism and inequality that other racial and ethnic minorities encounter.

Original Taxonomy of Microaggressions

Microaggressions are defined by Sue et. al (2007) as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (p. 271). The concept of microaggressions incorporates three factors: microinsults, microassualts, and microinvalidations. A microinsult is a statement or interaction that expresses discourtesy and inattentiveness in such a way to disgrace a person's identity or beliefs. A microassault is often conscious and more unambiguous. It is intended to cause hurt to the marginalized person or group. A microinvalidationis a message that overwhelms or disaffirms the experiences, thoughts and feelings of marginalized individuals and groups (Sue, 2010). Nadal et al. (2010) proposed taxonomy of themes to describe religious minority microaggressions that will be adapted to fit Atheists.

The cumulative effect of the day to day experiences of microaggressions has been hypothesized to cause ill health (Sue et al., 2007). Covert, subtle racism in the form of microaggressions and internalized oppression have all been connected to poor mental and

physical health (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2012). Psychotic and mood disorders, as well as heart disease have been connected to the experience of discrimination (Burke, Davis, Otte & Mohr, 2005; Smith, Ben-Shlomo, Beswick, Yarnell, Lightman & Elwood, 2005). The experience of discrimination can also lead to increased rates of suicidal ideation (Hwang & Goto, 2009).

The microaggression literature initially focused on the study of racial microaggressions against racial and ethnic minorities in the framework of assessing the quality multicultural counseling in mental health settings (Sue et. al, 2007). It surfaced from the injurious impression of contemporary forms racism: aversive racism, symbolic racism, and color-blind racism. Traditional racism is very overt and violent whereas the concept of aversive racism (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986) is based on the idea that judgment of minorities is characterized by a persistent avoidance of contact with that group due to underlying negative feelings towards minorities. Symbolic racism occurs when a minority group challenges the "symbols" of tradition and values held by the racial majority (Sears, 1988). Color-blind racism (D'Souza, 1996) occurs when individuals and groups are blind to the significances of race, making it difficult to effectually tackle racial inequities. The field of Microaggressions is one of the primary vehicles to portray and spread pro-majority, anti-minority beliefs and behaviors. Microaggressions for racial, ethnic and religious minorities can be perpetrated verbally, behaviorally (non-verbally), and environmentally. An impediment still not crossed in the fields of multiculturalism and diversity is one that relates to not only religious minorities (e.g., Muslims) but also the irreligious or non-religious, specifically Atheists.

The study of microaggressions came from a desire to acknowledge and establish uncounsciously held, involuntarily expressed beliefs as a major channel to perpetuate racism. Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalez and Wills (1977) wrote "the chief vehicle for proracist behaviors are microaggressions. These are subtle, stunning, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges which are 'put-downs' of African Americans by offenders"(p 65). The accumulative psychological and health effects of every day, innocuous racist transgressions on non-White, non-western oriented individuals have also been of paramount concern as racism and bigotry is still pervasive and divisive in America (see Sue, 2010a). Microaggressions theory utilized and built upon the recognizably modern, symbolic and aversive forms of racism to establish its case for formalizing a coherent and tangible theory with which to examine a plethora of race, gender, sexual orientation concerns. Microaggressions were originally studied in the context or race and ethnicity, derogatory and negative statements towards African Americans perpetrated by Whites.

Sue (2007; 2010a; 2010b) indicated that researchers of microaggressions give prominent attention to analysis of the vibrant interaction between perpetrator and victim. Research catalogs everyday manifestations of racist beliefs. This involves unfolding concealed racist messages and investigating both the internal and external consequential significances. Multidimensional scales are commonly utilized to measure and deconstruct a breadth of related phenomenon (such as behaviors and attitudes), each dimension acting as a single scale in and of itself (Clark & Watson, 1995; Devellis, 2003). Commonly seen in scales utilizing the theory of Microaggressions is the use of a taxonomy created by Sue et al. (2007). Originally intended for race and ethnicity, the broad taxonomy that further

defines and expresses the reality of oppressed minorities is comprised of "*microassualts, microinsults, and microinvalidations*."

Microassault. A microassault is a communication perpetrated by a majority group or individual that is more often conscious and explicit (Sue et al., 2007). A microassault is generally intended to cause hurt in the minority individual or group. Microassualts can also be used to bully, frighten and make individuals or groups feel unwelcome and unsafe. Common, everyday examples of microassaults that many are familiar with through popular media and interpersonal experiences are inappropriate jokes. These jokes serve the purpose of making minority members feel less than those in the upper echelons of society. Racial, gender, and sexual orientation epithets, sometimes encountered in the context of a joke would also be considered forms of microassaults. Microassaults are most likely to be considered older forms of racism. They may be perpetrated more often when perpetrators feel some sense of anonymity, are in a safe environment (much like an in-group) or when our barriers to privately held beliefs are broken down for some reason (Sue, 2010; Sue & Capodilupo, 2008).

Microinsult. A microinsult is a communication that expresses discourtesy and inattentiveness from a majority person or group in such a way to demean a minority individual or group's identity or beliefs (Sue et al., 2007). Microinsults may represent the most subtle and unconscious forms of microaggressions. As the broad term microinsult is broken down there are additional themes within that have been identified in the literature from studies on race and ethnicity (see Sue, et al., 2007). They are "*Ascription of Intelligence, Second Class Citizen, Pathologizing Cultural Values and Communication Styles, and Assumption of Criminal Status*."

Ascription of intelligence. The theme "Ascription of Intelligence" is a form of microinsult that occurs when a majority individual credits a minority individual or group with some level intelligence group based solely based on the race or ethnicity of the individual (Sue et al., 2007). A common message in this theme may imply that non-White individuals and groups are not as intelligent. Another message in this theme is a contrasting one where minority individuals are assumed to be intelligent (e.g., Asians are intelligent and good at math). These types of microinsult are an unfortunate part of the history of psychology. Eurocentric intelligence assessments for example provided support for the intellectual superiority Whites for decades. It was widely proclaimed that African Americans and other non-Whites occupy the bottom rung of the intelligence quotient ladder. Psychology's scientific racists fought hard to provide statistical evidence to prevent racial integration in public schools (Boake, 2002; Cohen, 2002).

That example is all too common for Asian Americans and Asian immigrants, as they are often referred to as the "model minority" (Taylor & Stern, 1987; Dharma, 20011). Asian Americans and immigrants were given the title of "model minority" in part because it justified the privilege and power enjoyed by White Americans by offering other racial and ethnic minorities a rebuttal to complaints about unfair and racist politics and institutions (Osajima, 2005). Even though Asian immigrants were initially presented as good, moral people that value hard work and education, because they were used in direct comparison and pitted in competition against African Americans and Latinos/as they would never reach equal footing with White Americans (Osajima, 2005). White Americans were and still are above competing with racial and ethnic minorities, an untouchable hegemony. Religious adherents, especially those identified as conservative or traditional,

have also been said to enjoy the privilege of being untouchable by virtue of majority status and silent, unquestionable power in many facets of various cultures around the world (Benavides & Daly, 1989; Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2004).

Second class citizen. The theme "Second Class Citizen" is a microinsult that contains the unconscious message that a minority individual or group is either less significant or deserving of fair consideration in both commonplace and significant situations (Sue et al., 2007). This theme of microinsult often occurs when minority individuals are given discrepant treatment (e.g., a racial minority being ignored by a customer service representative in order to first serve a White customer). Messages from this theme might imply that people of color are inferior and are to serve Whites or be in a subordinate role or that majority members are more valued; ***Pathologizing cultural values and communication styles.*** The theme "Pathologizing Cultural Values and Communication Styles" is a theme of microinsult that expresses that belief that the values and communication styles of racial and ethnic minority groups and individuals are deviant or not valued (Sue et al., 2007). This theme of microinsult is closely related to symbolic racism (Sears, 1988). The main message form this theme of microinsult is that White culture and expressions of it are preferred. A common example is when someone asks an African American person to be quiet and to stop being so loud when they speak; ***Assumption of criminal status.*** The theme "Assumption of Criminal Status" is a type of microinsult that is perpetrated by majority individuals and groups when it is assumed that minority groups and individuals are criminal or dangerous to others based on their race or ethnicity (Sue et al., 2007). Common occurrences of this theme are White women clutching their purse when an African American walks by and a store employee following

and watching carefully, a person of color as that person shops. The message that these occurrences imply are that non-White minorities are going to steal and that they don't belong because they are dangerous**.**

Microinvalidations. Microinvalidations are communications from a majority person or group that suppresses or disaffirms the experiences, thoughts and feelings of minority groups and individuals (Sue et al., 2007). As with Microinsults, within the concept of Microinvalidation there are additional, specific themes commonly identified with racial and ethnic minority microaggressions (see Sue et al., 2007). It is believed that this broad type of microaggression may be the most damaging, albeit subtle, according to Sue (2010) as they deny the very reality of minorities. They are *"Alien in One's Own Land, Color Blindness, Myth of Meritocracy, and Denial of Individual Racism*." This kind of microaggression is most closely linked to the ideas of Color-Blindness (see Bonilla-Silva, 2002 for examples) and is even the name of one of the themes.

Alien in one's own land. "Alien in One's Own Land" is a form of microinvalidation perpetrated a majority individual or group that implies that a minority individual or group is less patriotic or more foreign (Sue et al., 2007). This specific form of microinvalidation is based on the minority individual or group's race or ethnicity. A common experience for Latino/Americans is to be told to "go back to Mexico" if they disagree with an American policy the implied message being that they may owe fidelity to a different country*; Color Blindness.* "Color Blindness" is a type of microinvalidation occurs when an individual or group, presumably of the majority, does not acknowledge race or ethnicity (Sue et al., 2007). This theme of microinvalidation implies that race, ethnicity and culture are not significant elements in the lives of groups and individuals.

This theme of microinsult invalidates and denies individual and group ethnic and racial experiences. Color blind attitudes deny marginalized individuals and groups as a "cultural being" (Sue, 2010, p. 32). A common experience of color blindness might be hiring practices at a business or admissions to a graduate program.

Myth of meritocracy. The "Myth of Meritocracy" is a form of microinvalidation that is perpetrated by majority individuals and groups when they communicate that minority individuals and groups owe their successes in life solely to their race or ethnicity. The implied message is that certain people are given unfair benefits to success because of their minority status or identification. A common experience of minorities may be to hear that there is a level playing field for social, occupational and political achievement. This fissure in many individuals understanding of how the system actually works and what they believe to be true has been under scrutiny as it relates to the philosophy of the American Dream (McNamee & Miller, 2009)*; **Denial of individual racism.*** The theme of "Denial of Individual Racism" is executed when an individual denies holding racist or discriminatory views but can still be found engaging in racist behavior, or playing a role in the continuation of racism. A common statement aligned with this theme may be that "I treat everyone equally." The message implied here may be that this individual is free from bias and incapable of committing racist acts, thus denying the reality of very many minorities.

Environmental Microaggressions. Most scales utilizing the theory of Microaggressions utilize the above listed taxonomy and variations of the taxonomy. These scales oftentimes have verbalized statements or physical behaviors as the most common forms of microaggressions that minorities are asked to identify or endorse. Less identified

in microaggression scales are environmental microaggressions. They occur when various cultural settings--vocational, educational, or political are steeped in marginalization and prejudice (Sue, 2010a; 2010b). Environmental microaggressions may be perpetrated visually, such as having a Christian cross on the door of a manager work, implying that other forms of religious and spiritual beliefs may not be valued in the work environment. Environmental microaggressions may also be expressed as a climate or philosophy of an organization, workplace, or educational system (Sue et al., 2007).

A recent example of an environmental microaggression towards women and the poor, posited by Sue and Rivera (2011) relates to the federal budget and the debate surrounding Planned Parenthood funding. They write that the political rhetoric used during the debate, really the very fact that there was a debate about funding women's health at all, implied that women are "lesser beings and reduces their self-determination concerning health issues." They write that the neglect of women's health is worsened when political ideology is used to motivate defunding services that traditionally help marginalized populations like women and the poor. When an environmental microaggression occurs at the national level and is heavily publicized the entire cultural landscape that places value on minority individuals and groups is altered. When the message of providing healthcare to women and the poor is portrayed as sapping valuable federal resources it becomes internalized inside for the majority in power. This leads to those that have internalized the message to treat marginalized individuals and groups with discrimination.

The majority of the research conducted on microaggressions toward other minority groups was initiated with analogous taxonomies. Research has shown that the

subtle forms of discrimination and marginalization studied in the literature of racial and ethnic minorities can serve as a model to examine other minorities. This research led to qualitative investigation of the proposed theories that have since been validated. Research on microaggressions has since been expanded to address other marginalized populations outside of race and ethnicity such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (Nadal, Issa, et al., 2011); women (Capodilupo et al., 2010); and people with disabilities (Keller & Galgay, 2010). Research has even been conducted to explore the experience of multiple, minority-identifying individuals with intersecting identities such as race and sexual orientation (Balsam, Molina, Beadnell, Simoni & Walters, 2011). Religious minority microaggressions are now being considered a worthwhile pursuit within the field of multiculturalism.

Religious Minority Microaggressions

The study of religious minority microaggressions is relatively new compared to the study of racial and ethnic minority microaggressions. A religious microaggression is defined as "any subtle behavioral and verbal exchange (both conscious and unconscious) that sends a denigrating message to an individual(s) of various religious groups" (Nadal, Issa, Griffin, Hamit & Lyons, 2010, p. 297). Nadal et al. developed six additional microaggression themes proposed that address the experiences of religious minorities that addresses microaggressions perpetrated by religious majority members towards religious minority members. The themes are "*Endorsing Religious Stereotypes, Exoticization, Pathology of Different Religious Groups, Assumption of One's Own Religious Identity as the norm, Assumption of Religious Homogeneity and Denial of Religious Prejudice" (p. 300-304).*

Endorsing Religious Stereotypes. This theme of microaggression occurs when religious majority groups or individuals verbally, behaviorally or environmentally endorse and perpetuate religiously biased statements against religious minority groups or individuals. An example might be calling a Mormon a polygamist. Messages from this theme of microaggression may imply that religious minorities do not deserve to be learned about and that they are inferior to other religions (Nadal et al., 2010).

Exoticization. This theme of minority microaggression happens when members of the religious majority believe that members of a religious minority are imported, bizarre or strange. Minority religions may even be viewed as a trendy or as a fad. Examples of this theme may involve a soon to be married couple adopting the religious ceremonies of a religion to which they do not belong because they saw it in a movie. This kind of microaggression sends the message that some religions are not to be taken as seriously and that it can be played with like an ornament or decoration (Nadal et al., 2010).

Pathology of Different Religious Groups. The "Pathology of Different Religious Groups" is a theme of microaggressions that refers to the belief held by religious majority members that there is something wrong, abnormal, and potentially deviant with individuals of a different religious group. Examples of this theme may involve not taking into consideration the religious holidays and traditions of minority religions when creating academic, social and work calendars. The implied message is that your religion is not valued. Microaggressions within this theme may also eventually lead to religious minorities being mistreated and punished (Nadal et al., 2010); **Assumption of one's own Religious Identity as the Norm**. The "Assumption of one's own Religious Identity as the Norm" is a theme of microaggression that describes the assumption those apart of the religious

majority may make in which they presume that everyone belongs or adheres to the same religion. A common example of this theme would be someone wishing everyone a "Merry Christmas" without knowing if specific individuals or groups are Christian. The implied message in this category is that everyone must belong to the same religion. This theme plays on the lack of insight that comes with identifying as a majority, in-group member. It is difficult for individuals in the in-group to imagine different possibilities, as they cannot always see outside of the reality of their own group (Nadal et al., 2010).

Assumption of Religious Homogeneity. The theme "Assumption of Religious Homogeneity" is illustrated when religious majority individuals and groups believe everyone that identifies with a certain religion or spiritual belief system behaves and thinks similarly. An example might be asking why a female Hindu is not wearing a Bindi all of the time. The implied message in this theme of microaggression is that everyone in the same group must look and dress the same. Another example would be assuming all Atheists do not have morals (Edgell et al., 2006; Nadal et al., 2012); **Denial of Religious Prejudice.** The microaggression theme of "Denial of Religious Prejudice" is relatable to the concept of racial or ethnic colorblindness. This form of religious microaggression occurs when religious majority groups and individuals deny the existence of their own religious biases or they lack insight regarding their religious biases. An example of this may be an individual staring at a female Muslim that is wearing a Hijab. While the individual may advocate treating everyone equally this individuals staring suggests otherwise.

Physical and Psychological Effects of Microaggressions

The lack of quantitative research examining the theory of microaggressions and its role in perpetuating physical and psychological ill health is a major critique to contend with

(Lau & Williams, 2010). The majority of the literature utilizing this theory has largely been qualitative. There are many quantitative studies however that look at internalized oppression and the experience of racist events more broadly that are demonstrably linked to the experience of microaggressions. Explaining and exploring the mental and physical health effects of discrimination is not only an important social justice issue to pursue, but also requisite process to strengthen the theory of Microaggressions. Scales that measure racial, ethnic and religious minority experiences of oppression and discrimination are crucial to this endeavor. A scale that measures Atheist's experiences of Microaggressions could also aid in measuring the mental and physical well-being of Atheists.

Sue et al. (2007) argue that the cumulative effects of microaggressions have a substantial effect on the physical and mental health of marginalized groups. Over time microaggressions can erode the body and the mind of minority identifying individuals. Everyday stress from stigma and racism when compiled, can have a deleterious effect on the immune and endocrine system (Karlsen & Nazroo, 2000). If we apply this knowledge to minorities that experience stressors in multiple, subversive ways we can understand some of the physical and mental health disparities found. Race, in addition to social class, has been one of the leading, studied factors when power, privilege, living conditions, material resources and access to healthcare in the U.S are examined (Williams, 2006). Multiple forms of racism, including the subtler, aversive and symbolic forms in addition to environmental forms have been detrimentally linked racial and ethnic minority health.

There have been a number of studies that attempt to elucidate the connection between racism and its negative impact on the health of ethnic minorities. Harrell, Hall, and Taliaferro (2003) stated that laboratory studies are the most prevalent way of

examining the impact of racism on the physiology of racial and ethnic minorities. Though laboratory studies are the most common the contribution of several other important survey research designs utilized by psychologists cannot be ignored in the context of measuring the harmful effects of racism. Many different kinds of research methodologies have demonstrated that the recall of racist and discriminatory events or simply the exposure to referents to racist events lead to negative health impacts. Harrell et al. described four research designs common to studying the physiological effects of racism. They are: *self-report correlational, basic psychophysiology, moderated psychophysiology and mediated psychophysiology*.

Self-report correlational is the research method that is most commonly used to measure the harmful impact of discriminatory experiences that minorities undergo. These experiences are then correlated wither alterations in physiological arousal. Basic psychophysiological studies create situations in which cause and effect statements about the physiological impact of racism can be made by creating stressful experiences of artificial racial events. Moderated psychophysiological studies utilize personality measures to assess individual differences in physiological reactions to racist events. Finally mediated psychophysiological studies would involve administering drugs that would serve as neural blocks as simulated, racially stressful events occur. Harrell et al. (2003) reported that no studies of this kind had been conducted on the effects of racism. Survey study results have at times led to inconsistent results Harrel et al. (2003) and Okazaki (2009) cite, with some results reporting strong positive associations and others revealing no associations. Harrell et al. recommend grounding and refining measures of racism in modern theories of racism (including Microaggression theory) to refine the measures and further clarify the relation

of racism and health. They suggest that measures also be tested for social desirability that is making sure that individuals are not influenced by the survey to deny or embellish discriminatory events.

Racial discrimination has been connected with worsening mental health in multiple racial and ethnic minorities, including but not limited to African Americans (see Carter, 2007), two-spirit American Indians and Alaskan Natives (Chae & Walters, 2009), Asian Americans (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal & Torino, 2009), and Latinos (Gee et al, 2006). A meta-analysis has further demonstrated the connection between perceived discrimination and both mental and physical health (Pascoe & Smart-Richman, 2012). It was found that the perception of discrimination is connected to intensified physiological stress responses, more adverse psychological stress reactions, more frequent participation in harmful behaviors, and diminished participation in healthy behaviors. Not only does the wear and tear of stigmatization and discrimination prejudiced minorities experience everyday affect the severity of illness, it has been found to increase the rate at which they become ill as well (McEwen, 2006). The increased levels of chronic stress encountered by minorities may also elevate the amount of cortisol in the body to harmful levels which may in turn lead to the development of mood disorders like depression, psychosis, and even heart disease (Burke, Davis, Otte & Mohr, 2005; Smith, Ben-Shlomo, Beswick, Yarnell, Lightman & Elwood, 2005; Walker & Diforio, 1997).

Minorities that internalize oppression, therefore buying into some of the harmful messages of systemic and personal experiences of discrimination are more likely to experience negative health effects according to Chae, Nuru-Jeter, and Adler (2012). They demonstrated that internalized, perceived anti-African American bias (higher levels of

internalized oppression) combined with high levels of perceived racial discrimination (not either alone) put African American, midlife men at higher risk for hypertension. They found that together, those two factors are important to consider when both risk and protective factors for racial minorities are examined. Another significant finding is that individuals with a more pro-African American bias can serve as a protective factor or buffer against the negative impacts of racial discrimination.

Mulia and Zemore (2012) found that exposure to racial stigma and unfair treatment correlates with alcohol dependence through means of depressive symptoms. Vulnerability to alcohol dependence and depression were found to be the same among White, African Americans and Latinos, however Whites did not develop as high of a rate of alcoholism and depressive symptoms they found because they were not exposed to as great of an amount of social adversity. Individually perceived racism and prejudice have been shown to have an adverse effect on mental health of African American, and Mexican American adolescents as well (Gee, Ryan & Laflamme, 2006). In school environments microaggressions have been shown to cause anguish in racial and ethnic minority college students.

In order to provide a healthy, productive college environment Solórzano (2000) argues the overall, racial climate of university campuses must be assessed as more and more ethnic and racial minorities are able to attend top-tier universities. Utilizing a focus group research design for their study, racial microaggressions perceived by African American, undergraduate students were examined. He found that there were prominent themes of feeling invisible and ignored due to invalidating microaggressions. Faculty reportedly stereotyped African American students to the point of inducing great, self-

doubt. These events were reported to provoke strong feelings of stress, "being drained," emotionally uncomfortable, and feeling persecuted. This lead to African American students dropping classes and abruptly changing majors.

A study of 36 African American male students from universities around the United States identified strongly with what Smith, Allen and Danley (2007) would refer to as "racial battle fatigue" (p. 552). They proposed that the racial battle fatigue concept can serve as a framework to understand the experiences of African American students in traditional White institutions of higher learning. Focus group interviews were conducted with the students that focused on examining the psychological health of the students in the context of racial microaggressions and its cumulative effects. Using the constant comparison method two major themes emerged: (1) anti-African American male stereotyping and marginality and (2) hypersurveillance and control. African American males described themselves as being perceived as an outsider and not belonging or fitting the description of very negative, African American male stereotypes. An assumption of criminality was a common microaggression experienced by the men interviewed and their peers groups. The psychological effects of these experiences were noted to be ones of shock, resentment, frustration, anxiety, desperateness and fear. These emotions are also physiological reactions to the experience of racial microaggressions the authors note, all a part of a style of coping that African American, male students are forced to used.

Similar experiences were found to have happened to Chinese-American undergraduate students as well (Yosso, Smith, Ceja & Soloranzo, 2009) with a similar research design. Common emotional states reported by the students involved feeling unintelligent in the classroom, guilty for not participating in racist humor, self-doubt, and

alienation. The accumulation of the microaggressions, predominantly microinsults, the authors report, have led to the students feeling as if they are trespassers. Looking specifically at both Asian-American and Latinos populations Hwang and Goto (2009) wanted to explore emic and etic differences in trait and state anxiety, suicidal ideation, and depressive symptoms as responses to discrimination Latinos and Asian American college students face in their day to day lives.

Their results showed that generally less education was significantly and positively associated with increased psychological distress. Both groups, Latinos and Asian Americans experienced rates of suicidal ideation, but there were no significant differences between the two groups. Asian Americans were shown to experience significantly higher risk for trait anxiety. Those at significantly higher risk for depression were women and those exposed to more discrimination. These results are important because the two groups were indicating that a variety of discriminatory events were occurring at least "once in a while" or "sometimes." Discrimination is an authentic and real experience for these, very visible minority groups that have clear consequences. Understanding discrimination from the perspective of Asian-Americans, for examples, is very important because it is sometimes wrongfully assumed that they do not experience discrimination due to their "model minority" status (Wang, Siy & Cheryan, 2011).

Latino's have also been shown to be affected by the frequency and level of stress caused by discriminatory events. Huynh, Devos, & Dunbar (2012) gathered 168 Latino/a undergraduate students and asked them to rate the frequency and stressfulness of racist events. They were then asked to complete an inventory of depressive symptoms. Their results demonstrated that low stress event, frequency predicts psychological distress,

whereas frequency does not predict the distress associated with high stress events. This article's results are significant because real discriminatory experiences of low stress events, as Sue predicted, can and do build up over time—greater frequency leads to higher distress. Highly stressful events however, lead to psychological distress regardless of the frequency of the events they found. The evidence from this study also suggests that individuals who experience racially discriminatory event, even if they consider it "low-stress" may not necessarily have an awareness of the harmful effects of these seemingly day to day events, giving evidence to the subtle, unconscious experiencing of microaggressions.

Lower SES has also predicted vulnerability to depressive mood disorders and substance use through means of disparaging treatment steeped in contemporary forms of racism (Mulia & Zemore, 2012). Racial and ethnic minorities have not enjoyed the increase in weekly wage and salary income that Whites have traditionally enjoyed in the last two decades. The lower financial security and success that racial and ethnic minorities face also impact their ability to access health care. Racial and ethnic minorities, specifically African American and Hispanic populations, have been found to suffer lower birth rates and overall, higher death rates for many minority populations when compared to their White counterparts (Geronimus, Bound, Waidmann, Hillemeir & Burns, 1996; Levin et al., 2001; MacDorman, Kirmeyer, MacDorman & Kirmeyer, 2009).

Socioeconomic status is very much connected to subversive, culturally entrenched forms of racism that has the potential to affect access to medical care, mental health, and employment. In this way access to health care and equal wages can be conceptualized as an environmental microaggression. Behavioral and psychological factors are a large part of

the reason racial and ethnic minorities experience poorer mental and physical health, which affects their ability to access and utilize health and social services (Williams, Lavizzo-Mourey & Warren, 1994). The worsening socio-economic situation for many minorities is directly associated with their worsening mental and physical health (Williams & Collins, 1995; Williams, Yu, Jackson & Anderson, 1997) and racism is the central force that perpetuates the seen discrimination, prejudice and differential out-group treatment of racial and ethnic minorities.

It has been identified through various psychological, sociological, religious and spiritual, academic sources that Atheists are a unique group of individuals with their own values and concerns that are infrequently addressed in academia and society. It is anticipated that the study of microaggressions will prove to be a valuable heuristic in examining discriminatory attitudes and beliefs towards Atheists. Therefore utilizing the theory of Microaggressions as a means to guide scale development, the deleterious effects of discriminatory beliefs held towards irreligious and nonreligious minorities like Atheists will be made concrete. Overt as well as subtle, behavioral, verbal and environmental microaggressions will be represented on the final scale.

Atheists and Atheism

The purpose of this scale development project is to provide a scale by which to measure prejudice and discrimination towards Atheists. Atheists are growing minority (Gallup, 2010), and a unique, marginalized group deserving of attention utilizing a specific lens through which to examine their distinctive needs. Recent investigated Atheist demographics, quality of life and worldview. This information can be used to develop scale

items that are appropriate to their intended audience, provide implications for future use of the scale, and the impact it such a scale might have.

Demographics of Atheists

The number of Americans with no traditional religious identity began to surge in the 1970s, reaching about 11% by the year 1990. After some vacillations over the preceding 20 years, 16% of Americans now have no religious identity or chose not to answer the question about religious affliation (Gallup, 2010). While some measures report 78% of Americans identify with Christianity, specifically Protestantism, in America today (Gallup, 2009), Atheists make up approximately .4% of the general United States population and 2.0% of the world's population. Estimates of as much as 500-900 million non-believers are estimated to cohabitate with their religious counterparts worldwide (Zuckerman, 2005).

Many people acknowledge a desire to leave their religion behind and approximately 13% of religiously affiliated Americans wish to do so. Only approximately 40% of those that consider leaving their religion actually do so according to the 2006 Portraits of American Life, a panel study on religion in the United States. If everyone that actually wanted to leave their religion acted on their desire that would be a considerable number of religiously unaffiliated. Utilizing data from this panel study, Vargas (2011) investigated how the variables of age, race, education, gender, marital status, parental status, political orientation and household income predicted leaving a religious affiliation. A divergent view from traditional, conservative political beliefs and conservative religious thought was found to be associated with leaving religion. Religious skepticism too, is significantly associated with leaving ones religion. Surprisingly, life stressors do not have a uniform

directional effect on disaffiliating from ones religion. It was found that being younger, White and male increases the chances of disaffiliating from ones religion as well (Vargas, 2011). Merino (2012) examined individuals raised without religion in recent birth cohorts and found that not only were there more individuals raised without religion than previous cohorts, but that they are staying unaffiliated more so than previous cohorts. These individuals raised with no religion were found to be more distrusting of organized religion, more secular in their thinking, politically liberal and married to a religiously unaffiliated spouse as well, if they chose to marry at all.

In 2012, the most recent Pew Research survey on religious identification found a .8% increase in those identifying as Atheists from 2007 until 2012 and an increase from 15.3% to 19.6% in those choosing not to identify with a religion (Pew Research Center, 2012). While Atheism is still a minority, the majority of American adults were not Protestant Christian. Protestant Christians, the previous majority only claimed about 48% of the population. This marks the first time in Pew Research Center surveys and in the history of the United States that the Protestant share of the population has dipped significantly below 50 percent. In 2007, 38% of people who reported they seldom or never attend religious services designated themselves as religiously unaffiliated. In 2012, we see yet again, a move away from religion as 49% of infrequent attenders taken from the total sample of 2,942 abjure any religious affiliation. That is a change of 11% from 2007. As the United States slowly moves away from identification with traditional religion towards non-religious and secular identification, understanding the needs and untold experiences of our non-religious minorities, specifically Atheists, is important. If psychology and other disciplines do not begin to address this increasingly significant minority, the United States

may run the risk of alienating and pushing away a growing and remarkable portion of its citizens.

Concerns with Contemporary Studies of Religion and Spirituality

Although not a popular minority, as it will be demonstrated, Atheists have arguably been present in American society since its inception. Unfortunately the plethora of research conducted on religion, spirituality and belonging in society has not adequately studied Atheists and Atheism. In general the study of religiosity, related topics and measures used to study them are not necessarily apt to addressing Atheism (Bullivant, 2008; Hwang, Hammer & Cragun, 2011). Utilizing surveys to measure religious identities, let alone non-religious or irreligious identities, is a difficult issue (Alwin, Felson, Walker & Tufiş, 2006).

For example, a common relationship discussed when researching religion in psychology and sociology is the protective factors of religion for mental health and social well-being (Ellison & Levin, 1998; Koenig, 2008; Seybold & Hill, 2001). These studies did not consider exploring what protective factors Atheists may have in their design thereby implying that non-belief is not a healthy lifestyle. It has been shown that societies with higher rates of secularism and "organic Atheism," that is Atheism which is not forced upon a society by its government (state Atheism in Albania post World War II for example), is positively correlated with multiple measures of progressive human development, lower infant mortality rates, lower poverty rates and gender equality (CIA World Fact Book, 2004; Zuckerman, 2006).

The above studies also suggest that it is easier for religious identifying individuals to derive meaning and purpose from their live due to their religious identification and

faith. A recent study showed that when compared to a representative sample of religious individuals and religious "nones," Atheists show poorer degrees of meaningfulness (subjectively experienced meaningfulness derived from experiences of transcendence and self-actualization) compared to religious individuals ($p < .001$) and those that do not identify with a religion ("religious nones") ($p = .022$). They do not undergo crises ofmeaningany more often than religious individuals and nones(Schnell & Keenan, 2011). Successive cluster analyses showed that the differences in ways individuals identify with Atheism, specifically ones level of commitment to their Atheist identity, should be considered. They found that individuals that are more committed to their Atheist identity and are able to self-actualize, or achieve ones full potential and demonstrate no crises in meaning making.

According to Schnell and Keenan (2011) Atheists in general demonstrated generally high levels of well-being and social affiliation relative to the religious sample and those that did not identify with a religion. They found that individuals that are not strongly committed to their Atheism however experience more frequently crises of meaning and have low amounts of meaningfulness. They also found that Atheists in their sample demonstrate strong commitments to individualism, knowledge, comfort, insight and freedom. One could argue if academia were to focus on the benefits of that are afforded to Atheists and secular countries (as suggested by Whitley, 2010) a great stride in the study of coping skills, health and psychological well-being could be made and added to the benefits shown to be associated with religious involvement and identification.

There is a need for more studies about the potential benefits of secularism and Atheism as the field of religion and spirituality as a whole has been neglectful of affirming

secular individuals (Hwang et al., 2011; Sherkat, 2008). It is argued that the religious and spiritual literature that supports the relationship between religiosity and positive mental health may be spurious, connecting studies with problems of construct validity, sampling difficulty and problematical analyses (Hwang et al., 2011). Meta-analytic work cites a very unclear relationship between the religion, mental and physical health according to Hackney and Sanders (2003). They cite some studies finding positive, moderate relationships between religion and well-being and others finding no relationship or a negative relationship.

Others assert that it is not religion in and of itself that serves as a protective factor, instead it is the component parts that make up religion that form the protective factors. Examples include the social connectivity and sense of belongingness bound by common ideals that are offered to individuals in a religious group (Parganment, 2002) or the sense of control it offers its adherents in dangerous and critical circumstances (Pargament, 2001). Recognizing these benefits that religions offer their members Scheitle and Adamczyk (2010) hypothesized that individuals that stay in more fundamental and sectarian (e.g., Mormons from The Church of Latter Day Saints and African American Protestants) will report higher levels of general health and secondly, individuals who leave or switch from sectarian religions will face poorer levels of general health. They believed that because of the high expectations of conformity and participation expected sectarian individuals will most likely engage in less unhealthy activities, have access to more resources (such as pastoral counseling and financial support for healthcare) and be supported in a large group that shares the same worldview.

Their results provide their first hypothesis, that individuals who stay in sectarian religions have higher levels of general health, being significantly more likely to describe their health as "excellent" (Scheitle & Adamczyk, 2010). Their expectation that those who leave or switch to another religion from a sectarian groups will report poorer health is also substantiated. Interestingly while highly sectarian religions were shown to retain more members (Sectarian religions retaining 64.3% compared to only 57.6% retention for mainline protestants), a high percentage of those that do switch affiliations end up identifying as having no religious affiliation (12.8%). Those that were raised without religious affiliation show a low retention rate, as 47% of those raised unaffiliated in their study identify with a religion later in life. Those who are raised unaffiliated and remain so still report that their health is "good." What this means for the study of Atheists and Atheism is that affiliating with religion may be a very good way to disseminate healthy and pro-social behaviors as well as promote feelings of belonging. Atheists if initially raised in religion, having some of the requisite health and interpersonal skills, may not feel the need for the religious narrative in their lives anymore as the narrative itself does not seems to be the critical part to a healthy life and subsequently leave religion.

Unfortunately, in relation to the groups that form surrounding religion, ones that are measured as highly fundamental have been shown to form hurtful and bigoted groups that espouse hatred towards LGBT populations, Atheists, and Jews (Altmeyer, 2003; Altmeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Hunsberger, 1996; Hunsberger, 2010). While organized religion certainly does aid in bringing people together under a common belief and cause, religion and a belief in a deity is not required to benefit from belonging to a group and feeling connected. Non-religion has been associated with higher indexes of health in

various secular societies in the world and serve as an excellent example of how large groups, entire countries can benefit (Zuckerman, 2005; 2006). These findings have not been fully appreciated, explored and implemented in the improvement of general health in countries that are striving to keep up to standards or health and well-being.

How religious and secular individuals view and utilize different kinds of coping skills is new to the field of religion and spirituality. Krägeloh, Chai, Shepherd and Billington (2010) hypothesized that the use of religious specific coping skills (turning to religion for example) compared to other coping skills is mediated by one's level of religiosity and spirituality. They found that individuals with higher levels of spirituality, religious coping was most associated with active coping strategies, not maladaptive ones, while the opposite was found for those with low levels of spirituality. Those with low levels of spirituality had their religious coping skills loaded with maladaptive ones, most often associated with "self-distraction, denial and behavioral disengagement" (p.11). Another common type of coping skill religious individuals used is church attendance, a factor also used to measure levels of spirituality. Used as a measure of religious behavior, this facet of religiosity is inherently problematic for many reasons.

The first reason and perhaps the least complex is that only healthy and able-bodied individuals are able to attend religious services and participate in these surveys. The more complicated issue that is important to consider is the the phenomenon of many Atheist and agnostic individuals still attending religious services just to maintain peace in the home or within a larger family unit (Hwang et al., 2011). Utilizing data from the 1988-2000 General Social Surveys, Sherkat (2008) examined the relationship between different types of beliefs about God in two different ways, the first being identification with a religious

group and participation in religious organizations. Secondly, he also examined different developmental and demographic factors on many different beliefs about god including Atheism, Agnosticism, belief in a higher power, but not a personal god, and the spectrum of doubt that plays out in belief.

Results of demographics show that only 4.4% chose the more doubtful response of sometimes believing in God. More than 8% reported that they don't believe in a God but do believe in a higher power, 4% of which identified as Agnostic and 2.5% identified as Atheists. The denominations with the highest rating of certainty about God's existence are Baptists, Sectarians, and Mormons. Liberal Protestants, Jews, and those with no religious affiliation are more likely to report Agnosticism, just fewer than 5% and 23% respectively. Atheists however are fairly rare; with about 14% of respondents that identify with religious affiliation endorse Atheism. Least likely to endorse Atheism are Moderate Protestants, Lutherans, Baptists and Catholics. Respondents that believed in solely a higher power and not a personal god were less likely to attend religious activities and participate in their organizations, with Agnostics attending church even less. Interestingly, Atheists were found to attend church with more regularity than agnostics (Sherkat, 2008).

Hwang et al. (2011) argue that the literature in the field of religion and spirituality is one of convenience, that it most generally utilizes Jewish and Christian samples, as they are the predominant religions in many countries. The research is however not presented as "Jewish and Christian" studies, it is placed in the umbrella definition of religion and spirituality, implying that other religions and the non-religious are not as deserving of attention. The authors point out that some religions do not have regular religious service attendance in their set of beliefs like Hindus or Buddhists. When participants are primarily

limited to Jewish and Christian faiths, they write that they should be portrayed accordingly. Sherkat (2008) also identifies that studies of religion and spirituality are oftentimes binary as well, forcing the hand of participants to choose between belief and non-belief, thus playing into misconception of religious belief being stable throughout ones life and not a fluid experience that can wax and wane throughout ones lifetime.

Hwang et al. (2011) assert that there is too much connection given between spirituality and factors of well-being such as peacefulness and harmony as well as an identified lack of Atheist control samples in many studies. Many measures in the field of religion and spirituality are used to measure levels of religiosity or spirituality, very few measures exists that measure the level of secularity. Placing all individuals who identify as "none" as Atheists reject the multiple interpretations and lived experiences of Atheists. They reported that there needs to be a more standard taxonomy of the various levels of non- religion and secularity to assist in recognizing Atheists as a "separate and unique class of individuals" (p. 616).

Atheists and others that may identify as nonbelievers such as humanists or free thinkers are neglected portions of society with regards to multiculturalism and diversity (Bullivant, 2008; Edgell, 2006; Streib, & Klein 2012). D'Andrea and Sprenger (2007) report performing a literature search in an effort to find articles that would assist counselors in determining interventions and treatment modalities for Atheists. Unfortunately they found nothing substantive. They believe that Atheists may not be getting attention because of the controversy it may draw in the current sociopolitical system of the United States, where it is not acceptable to discuss what is still considered taboo—not having religion and not believing in a god or gods. Goodman (2009) proceeds with this idea and proposes that

due to stigmatization of Atheists as "immoral, evil, or god hating" (p. 55) they as a group and as individuals are marginalized and disregarded to the point of invisibility.

Discrimination and Marginalization of Atheists

Atheists are not unfamiliar with discriminatory beliefs held against them similar to many other minority groups. With the majority of the world believing in some sort of religion it is important to acknowledge the discrimination built into the cannons of religious scripture, considered to be the main sources of revealed knowledge. The Christian Bible has passages about how the faithless and the unbelievers should be viewed and treated: "*The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts*" (Psalm 10:4, KJV) and *"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: there is none that doeth good"* (Psalm 53:1, KJV). The Quran too encourages negative views about Atheists and those that do not share their monotheistic view of the universe, "*Indeed, they who disbelieved among the People of the Scripture and the polytheists will be in the fire of Hell, abiding eternally therein. Those are the worst of creatures"* (Surat Al-Bayyinah 98:6, Sahih International). Apart of the Islamic hadith (a system of scriptures used at times to supplement the Quran and provide guidance in manners of jurisprudence) states, *"The Prophet said, "Whoever possesses the following three qualities will have the sweetness (delight) of faith: The one to whom Allah (swt) and His Apostle becomes dearer than anything else, who loves a person and he loves him only for Allah's (swt) sake, who hates to revert to Atheism (disbelief) as he hates to be thrown into the fire"* (Sahih Bukhari, 1:2:15).

Saying and reading the words "Atheist" may bring about negative reactions to many people. This label is a potentially multi-layered words, with different and intersecting meanings (Bullivant, 2008). An Atheist defined as one who does not believe in the

existence of a god or gods, was only defined as such by 51.2% from a survey administered to over 700 Oxford University students, a university known for its more secular minded students. To gain a total of 75%, the additional caveat would be a qualification of conviction, being a "hardcore" or an "out and out" Atheist (p. 366). To contrast and clarify as "Atheist" is sometimes confused with "Agnostic," traditionally Agnostic, means, one who believes that it is impossible to confirm or deny the existence of a higher power, but colloquially has become defined as "someone who can't make up their mind" (Bullivant, 2008, p. 366).

Other definitions of Atheism, such as "positive" Atheism, the aggressive and more public stance on their disbelief in god and "negative" atheism, a passive more discreet absence of belief in god are also ways individuals describe and view Atheists (Martin, 2007). Results imply the image of Atheists incorporates both notions of combativeness and abnormality; something that one needs to come out with. Not only does identifying as an Atheist automatically trigger assumptions and judgments, even being described as an individual that simply does not believe in god without an Atheist label can activate anti-Atheist prejudice and bias with equal effect (Swan & Heesacker, 2012). *For the sake of this project Atheism is defined as a definitive proclamation that no god or gods exist (Baker & Smith, 2009).*

Atheists as "Others" in society. Saad (2009) writes that if the movie *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967) were to be reproduced today, the outrageous guest will no longer be a highly accomplished, educated, and sophisticated African American man but a highly accomplished, educated, and sophisticated [A]theist."According to Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann (2006) when they surveyed over 2,000 Americans as a part of the American Mosaic Project, Atheists were both more likely than any other religious or LGBT minority

to be considered as not congruent with their "vision of American Society" and most likely to be disapproved of if their child wanted to marry one. Although religious tolerance and diversity may be increasing in America, it is clear that it is not always extended to those that identify as Atheists or non-religious.

Women, African Americans and the elderly are more likely to reject Atheists, whereas those with higher levels of education, and whose fathers had more education, are more accepting of Atheists as belonging in American society. Significant factors they found, that predict the lack of public acceptance of Atheists are religious involvement, identifying as a social conservative, identifying as Protestant, believing in the inerrancy of the bible, believing that God controls the development and passage of our lives, and that laws should be based on God's law. Those living in communities with a lower SES and more diversity are also more likely to reject Atheists as belonging to American society as well (Edgell et al., 2006).

The high degree of fundamentalism that predicted the lack of acceptance of Atheists and Atheism in Edgell et al.'s (2006) study has additional empirical support as well. Galen, Smith, Knapp, and Wyngarden (2011) conducted three experiments where highly fundamental religious individuals and low fundamental individuals rated videotaped interviews of a student that was identified as religious or non-religious in three different ways: their presented demographics (identifying as Christian or identifying as a religious "none"), reason for participating in a Habitat for Humanity event and the logo on an article of clothing worn (a reformed Christian or pro-evolution symbol). An overall favorable impression formed when the high fundamentals viewed the student with the Christian identity. The high fundamentals reported wanting to spend more time with the

reformed Christian compared to the non-religious student. Low fundamentals did not show the difference between the religious and non-religious conditions. Highly fundamental participants rated the student from the religious condition higher than the student from the other, non-religious condition on goodness and morality as well, whereas the low fundamentals rated the different conditions similarly (Galen et al., 2011).

An example of Atheist discrimination and stigmatization within the last decade that speak to the concept of Atheists as not belonging in American or being viewed as an out-group is an Eagle Scout from Port Orchard, Washington being asked to leave the Boy Scouts of America in 2002, a private organization, because he was deemed an unfit member as an Atheist (Associated Press, 2009). In 2004, an Atheist of Hardesty, Oklahoma, was kicked off of her high school basketball team after she refused to recite a prayer before a game (Stossel, 2007). Recently in 2012, a young cadet at West Point dropped out of the prestigious academy due to the unconstitutional proselytization and discrimination against the non-religious he witnessed and was subjected to regularly. He has since been heavily criticized for his defamation of the United States military's training (Page, 2012).

The former West Point cadet is not alone in his experience, other Atheists in higher education as well as in the broader society are also seen as "evil, god hating, and immoral" (Goodman & Meuller, 2009, p. 55), forcing them to stay invisible and hide their identity. In education there is an acknowledged dearth of diversity education related to Atheists and other nonbelievers according (D'Andrea & Sprenger, 2007; Harper, 2007; Liddell, & Stedman, 2011). Goodman and Mueller write there that there is an absence of support and understanding from both the students and faculty. They argue that until

educators acknowledge the nonbelievers perspective and challenge misconceptions about them, Atheist students will continue to remain marginalized and stigmatized in higher education.

Trust as a central factor of atheist discrimination. Baker and Smith (2009) report that in regards to attitudes about politically and often religiously charged topics in the United States such as abortion, gay marriage and embryonic stem cell research, Atheists, Agnostics and unchurched believers (those that believe in a god, but have had an overall low rate of religious attendance) are more likely to go against the grain in contemporary America. Atran and Henrich (2010) argue that rivalry among diverse societies and establishments with dissimilar faith-based beliefs and practices has gradually linked religion with both within-group prosociatlity and between-group hostility through various evolutionary mechanisms. This plays on a belief that we can bond diverse groups of people into a unitary, constant and unalterable people—god's people. Their argument is steeped in the concept of in-group and out-group thinking and selection (Allport, 1979) as a means with which to promulgate discriminatory beliefs and further prejudiced behaviors.

Small, fundamental comnunities are believed to value trust and acceptance more so than larger communities, and that may explain some of the predictors of anti-Atheist prejudice (Edgell et al., 2006; Altmeyer, 2003). Trust has been shown to be a factor that Atheists have to deal with and makes up a portion of their psychological distress (Weber et al., 2011). In the broad context of humanity and our species trust has been argued to function as a way to meet selective adaptive pressures in the context of human evolution (Henrich & Henrich, 2007). Charles Darwin (1874) writes, "[An] advancement in the standard of morality and an increase in the number of well-endowed men . . . who, from

possessing in a high degree the spirit of patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage, and sympathy, were always ready to give aid to each other and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over other tribes…[S]elfish and contentious people will not cohere, and without coherence nothing can be effected" (p. 166).

Demonstrating trust may look like engaging in risky, religious behaviors that are a detriment to individual or group survivability and well-being. These behaviors may serve as an indicator for trust and devotion to one's group. Devoting one's self to a religious war in which there is an elevated chance of death, as is with all war, is historical and contemporary example in many cultures. Another example would be throwing babies from atop a tower onto a sheet held 50 feet below by a group of men, a 500-year tradition practiced by Muslims and Hindus in the district of Solapur, Maharstra West India in order to bring the children good luck and health. Fasting is additional, common illustration of demonstrating commitment to a cause or community seen in multiple religions including eastern orthodoxy, Greek Catholicism, and Islam—all potentially harming ones chances at reproduction and survival.

Regarding reproduction, more recent scholarly work has focused more on the roles of reproductive values and practice as predictors of religiosity. Weeden and Kurzban (2013), after reviewing previous work on the relationship between within-group cooperation, found that the relationship is often modest and not too predictive of facets of religiosity. More limiting reproductive values were significant predictors of higher levels of religiosity in multiple regions around the world, with the extent of the relationship being small in less affluent regions and large in more affluent ones. Their results contradict the more prominent belief that religiosity has a essential relationship with cooperative morals

and values. It would appear that countries and individuals' associations with religious groups are more closely allied with reproductive tactics.

Trust has been identified as an important factor in reliant, social relationships to reduce perceived vulnerability (Cottrell, Neuburg & Li, 2007). It is hypothesized that because Atheists do not believe in any deities watching over them that they are more likely to commit crimes, be less trust worthy and generally make more morally questionable decisions (Norenzayan & Shariff, 2008). Religious individuals may hold discriminatory beliefs towards Atheists because they are not concerned with supernatural punishment (a reality for religious individuals), and may free-ride in a system that allows their presence. A lack of trust for Atheists in this sense may have co-currently evolved with group cooperation in homo-sapiens expressed in the rules, traditions and expectations of religions (Johnson & Krueger, 2004).

Religious individuals on the contrary are believed to be more trustworthy. For example individuals that are subtly acknowledged as believing in God as opposed to neutral, secular individuals are more likely to be given and trusted with money (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007). However, a religious individual being more pro-social in general is a pervasive misbelief according to Galen (2012). He writes in a meta-analytic work that a well-documented stereotype is that not only are religiously affiliated, attired and described individuals automatically more trusted, but they are pronounced more likeable and intelligent as well. Religious individuals have been shown to more often, only be pro-social and giving towards other religious individuals, persons presumed to be a part of their in-group. The opposite of this is true for Atheists, he writes that they have consistently been found to be rated as less likable and less trustworthy. These results are at times spurious,

Galen writes, as the literature does not separate religious versus secular recipients of charitable giving, citing that as families grow in commitment to their religion their giving becomes more focused on their specific religious group, thus providing more evidence for the assertion that religion is used as a pro-social, in-group specific boundary to establish and maintain trust.

Gervais, Shariff and Norenzayann (2011) examined through a sociofunctional and cultural evolutionary lens the effect that trust has on the prejudice that many hold towards Atheists, looking to expand the work of Edgell et al., (2006). Their first study was comprised of 351 Americans, with a varying array of religious identification 67% Christian, 1% Jewish, 3% Atheist, 4% Agnostic, 17% identifying with no religion and 9% identifying as "other", 49 out of the 351 participants, about 14% indicating that they did not believe in God. Their sample of participants rated Atheists and gay men, another marginalized population often seen as menacing to majority religious values and morality, on a "feeling thermometer" to measure levels of prejudice, the same instrument used in Edgell et al. (2006).

Then a "distrust" and a "disgust" thermometer were completed afterwards to measure how disgusting and distrustful the participants found Atheists and gay men. Replicating the results of Edgell et al. (2006), Atheists were rated as being less favorable of a group than gay men in general. Atheists were found to be significantly more distrustful than gay men, but gay men were significantly found to evoke more disgust. This shows that trust is a big component of Atheist prejudice whereas disgust exemplifies anti-gay prejudice. Looking at specific items in demographic information taken from the sample

the rating about the "importance of God in your life" predicted both feelings of distrust towards Atheists and disgust towards gay men.

Their second study compared Atheists with other groups including Muslims, another marginalized, often denigrated religious group in North America. They presented 105 students at a Canadian university (chosen for their high number of non-religious students) with a description of an untrustworthy person. This person was purported to have committed selfish deeds and the study manipulated what group he may belong to, for example, was it more probably that the man was a teacher or a teacher as well as a Christian, Muslim, rapist or Atheist. Those four other options were offered independent of one another to the participants, evenly broken into 4 groups. It was predicted that the participants would commit a conjunction fallacy--a logical fallacy that occurs when it is presumed that particular conditions are more likely than a solitary, general one. As hypothesized, participants were significantly more likely to report that the man in the vignette was a teacher and an Atheist or rapist more so than a Christian or Muslim. There was no significant difference between the rapist and Atheist groups. *This means that the selfish, fraudulent acts committed in the vignette were only seen as representative of Atheists and rapists, not religious individuals.* Atheists were viewed as morally equivalent to rapists in this study.

In the third study, the conjunction fallacy was again found when both the variable of distrust was used to describe the vignette character when having the option to denote him an Atheist. This result was not replicated when the group could denote him a homosexual. The option of denoting the character as unpleasant was equally rare for both homosexuals and Atheists, further supporting that distrust is a significant factor contributing to anti-Atheist prejudice. The fourth study repeated the results with the

additional options of the character being Jewish or a Feminist. Participants were significantly more likely to commit the conjunction error for an untrustworthy Atheist character than for a Jewish or feminist character.

Reducing distrust. It has been found that increasing general awareness and the perception that Atheists are more prevalent reduces distrust by religious individuals. Gervais (2011) hypothesized that Atheist prevalence would be associated with reduced anti-Atheist prejudice and tested his hypothesis in a series of studies. In the first study anti-Atheist prejudice was assessed in 54 different countries with a rich diversity of religious, economic and political experiences. It was assumed that anti-Atheist prejudice would be lower in countries with higher proportions of Atheists. As hypothesized, he reports that Atheist prevalence was in fact negatively related to anti-Atheist prejudice generally speaking. When controlling specifically for levels of socioeconomic development and type of culture (individualistic and collective) independently, in both cases prevalence of Atheists was negatively related to the presence of anti-Atheist prejudice.

It has been demonstrated that reminders of secular authority can also attenuate anti-Atheist distrust in certain situations, not only anti-Atheist but also distrust towards out-group members in general (Gervais & Norenzayan, 2012). Undergraduate students took measures on their attitudes towards Atheists, perceived Atheist prevalence, a measure of their strength of belief in God and their belief in a dangerous world (Gervais, 2011). Controlling for the belief in a dangerous world and belief of God, perceived Atheist prevalence significantly predicted anti Atheist prejudice. Prejudice was diminished when participants believed Atheists to be more prevalent. The same results held when vignettes were presented with different prevalence rates of Atheists. If participants were led to

believe that Atheists were more common, distrust was lessened. In general however, information and reminders about Atheist prevalence did not significantly increase the degree to which participants felt generally positive or warmly toward Atheists, just more trusting of them.

Summary

Throughout history frequent definitions for Atheism have been offered (Cliteur, 2009), these definitions span from having slightly positive undertones (McGarth, 2004) to highly negative insinuations and consequences. (Johnson, 1996). The common theme is that there is no belief in or rejection of all gods from all religions. The amount of individuals who identify as Atheist has been growing at a substantial rate (Zuckerman, 2007; Pew Research Center, 2012). Notwithstanding the current increase of individuals identifying as Atheist and the increased academic attention towards the topic, the majority of American society still maintains prejudiced and inequitable beliefs about them.

Some maintain that Atheists tend to be defamed in society as being "evil, god hating, and immoral" (Goodman & Mueller, 2009, p. 55), consequently making them stay invisible and disguise their identity. Others assert that the growth in numbers and attention that Atheists have harvested have made it more tolerable to recognize their belief in a more public fashion (Goodstein, 2009). Notwithstanding, scientific research on and about Atheists is increasing. Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann (2006) found that amongst American respondents, Atheists were rated as the minority group that was least expected to share the participant's concept of America and were also rated as the group that would be condemned of the most if they were marrying a participant's child.

A principal theme behind these partialities towards Atheists is distrust and wariness towards a group that has no belief in a supernatural and mystical agent capable of witnessing and punishing moral wrongdoings (Norenzayan & Shariff, 2008). These studies are some of the first vastly essential studies that have disseminated into academia that bring to light both the more subtle *and* overt aggression Atheists encounter in society today. While Atheism could be conceivable delineated as a form or type of religion because it has to do with the belief in and of a deity, the fields traditional stance of no deity does set it outside what would be mainstream religion. Hwang, Hammer and Cragun (2011) more specifically address these methodological concerns about the fields of religion and spirituality.

This paper has demonstrated thus far that Atheists are not perceived well, that they are tolerated at best. Atheists and other non-religious minorities have not been researched to the extent of other religious minorities, let alone racial and ethnic minorities. To remedy this lack of information one way the field of psychology can begin to investigate the experiences of Atheists is to create a scale to measure their day-to-day experiences of discrimination. While measures of microaggressions do exist for other minorities, no measures that look at microaggressions perpetrated towards Atheists exist.

Measuring Microaggressions

It has been demonstrated that Atheists are not perceived well for multiple reasons by multiple populations. These discriminatory beliefs are just now being studied in comparison to other types of minorities. The effects of these discriminatory beliefs and how they impact Atheists have yet to be studied. Researchers studying discriminatory beliefs and unconsciously perpetrated insults through the theory of Microaggressions have

produced psychometrically sound scales that can serve as exemplars for studying the experiences of Atheists. Examining current inventories that address microaggressions and race related stress such as the Racial & Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS, Nadal, 2011) and the Inventory of Microaggressions towards African American Individuals (IMABI, Mercer, Zeigler-Hill, Wallace & Hayes, 2011) it is apparent that the use of the established taxonomy of Microaggressions are generally appropriate for studying minority's experience of discrimination and oppression. The construction of these inventories and others is similar in their methodological design and the scales are valuable sources with which to cross-validate the creation of this scale.

Racial and Ethnic Minority Scale

The REMS was originally based on the original microaggression taxonomy presented by Sue et al. (2007) as well as previous literature on racial and ethnic minorities. Initial exploratory factor analysis utilized a racially diverse sample totaling 443 participants. With evidence of sampling adequacy, orthogonal rotation proceeded with principal axis extraction revealing 6 factors which when rotated accounted for 57.82% of the variance. All factors were significantly correlated with one another ($r = .219\text{-}.589$, $p < .01$). Overall scale internal consistency was at .928 with all factors having coefficient's alphas over .80.

Confirmatory factory analysis, reliability and validity studies ensued with a new sample Nadal (2011) found that for the REMS, the confirmatory one-factor analysis indicated that the overall model was a good fit and significant, χ^2 (945, N=2620) 1400.74, $p < .001$, [CFI] = .60, [RMSEA] = .07. Some weakness of the REMS scale validation process would be that in the exploratory principal components analysis, the pre-rotated model specified that the entire scale accounts for only about 27% of the total variance, with a

single component accounting for the biggest proportion of the variance. Also, the authors' assertion that the model fit during the confirmatory factor analysis was "good" is perhaps a little too optimistic. For example, the lower bound cutoff to be considered for "good or acceptable fit" for the CFI is generally measured to be at or exceeding .90. For "excellent fit", a value of .95 or higher is the oft accepted standard (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Inventory of Microaggressions towards Black Individuals

The IMABI is largely based on the original taxonomy of Sue et al.'s (2007) taxonomy of racial microaggressions and additional measures of self-esteem, affective presentation and stress for example were also included in order to address the relation of perceived microaggressions on overall health. Weaknesses of this scale validation process included not utilizing focus groups of individuals to generate and revise the item pool, and exploratory factor analysis, IRT and CFA analysis was used on the same group of participants. With 385 participants initial exploratory factor analysis revealed four factors with eigenvalues above 1.0 and a parallel analysis suggested that the first two were unlikely to have occurred by chance. Given that the first two factors were highly correlated (*r*=.*79*), the presence of cross loadings after orthogonal rotation and the first factor explaining the majority of the scale variance, they concluded that scale unidimensionality was partially supported. An internal consistency reliability estimate revealed a coefficient alpha of .94.

During confirmatory factor analysis Mercer et al. (2011) report that while the chi-square was statistically significant for the one-factor model, $\chi^2(945, N = 385) = 1978.74$, $p < .001$, approximate fit indices suggested the model fit the data satisfactorily: CFI = .99, TLI = .99, RMSEA = .05. In general the factors of the IMABI were able to reflect a high

level of endorsement for its items instead of true differences in content. The unidimensionality of the IMABI was endorsed by the results of the CFI, TLI, RMSEA and the large amount of variance explained by one of two highly correlated factors. The IMABI was reported to generally be a reliable measure of microaggressions, specifically focused more on microinsults and microinvalidations towards African American individuals. It was deemed an appropriate way to measure some of the emotional stressors experienced by this minority population. It was found to be correlated with other related measures that attend to race related stress and especially global perceptions of life and emotional stress (Mercer et al, 2011). The amount of total variance accounted for was not clearly presented. Similar to the REMS, another identified limitation is that the very nature of self-report is subjective and difficult to consistently and appropriately assess.

Hammer, Cragun, and Smith (2012)

Broadly speaking there are multiple scales that support the theoretical significance of the Microaggressions modal as a viable lens to address minority experiences and more than sufficient evidence that there is a pervasive view of Atheists that is discriminatory and marginalizing, thus lending support for the a proposed scale of microaggressions scale for Atheists. To date, there is but one attempt at adapting scales to addresses specifically, the demeaning and haranguing day-to-day experiences of Atheists. Acknowledging the lack of quantitative information about the types and frequency of discrimination experienced by Atheists Hammer, Cragun, Hwang and Smith (2012) were the first to explore this dearth in the literature through a mixed method study with 796, self-identified Atheists in the United States.

Without utilizing confirmed taxonomies and themes of microaggressions as a means with which to understand and conceptualize Atheist discrimination and marginalization, the authors wanted to measure perceived discrimination, level of association with the Atheist worldview, level of outness with various social and family circles, and strictness of family expectations about religion during participant upbringing. The authors also gave respondents the opportunity to provide an open, unrestricted response about additional stressors they have experienced as a result of their Atheism. With the exception of the last, open-ended question the authors developed their questions by adapting scale items from GLBT stress, African American identity, and GLBT outness inventories.

Results showed that of the 29 different forms of discrimination, the average participant endorsed experiencing about 10 of them. The most common forms of discrimination most frequently reported were witnessing anti-Atheist comments in newspapers or television, being expected to participate in religious prayers against one's will, being told one's Atheism is sinful, wrong or immoral, being asked to attend religious services or participate in religious activities against one's will and being treated differently because of one's Atheism.

Results from the open ended, narratives revealed 6 inter-related themes: "assumed religiosity, lack of a secular support structure, lack of a church and state separation, negative effects on family, unreciprocated tolerance and anticipatory stress." There was small, but significant support for their first hypothesis, that individuals identifying more closely with their Atheism perceiving more discrimination ($r = .19, p < .001$). Similar results were found with their second hypothesis—that more out Atheists would report

experiencing more discrimination ($r = .17, p < .001$). They found that 41% of their participants experienced some sort of discrimination, almost double that of those that did not identify with a religion in previous studies. Greater level of outness, the report, was able to predict a strong, positive relationship between strictness of family religious expectations and social ostracism. Anti-Atheist hate crimes such as property damage or physical assault were reported in 14% of the participants.

Summary

Though the exploration of microaggressions has had growing attention the microaggression body of literature may still be in its youth. Of particular concern is the qualitative nature in which most microaggression research is conducted. The majority of the research that attempts to assess the experiences of marginalized groups uses consensual qualitative research (CQR) or other qualitative methods. The qualitative studies that have functioned as the underpinning on which microaggression research rests have been key in congealing the construct of racial and ethnic microaggressions. However, because the contemporary research on microaggressions is qualitative in their focus and character, they provide little in the way of either explicatory power or generalizability.

It is in this framework that more quantitative methodologies to measuring microaggressions began making a presence in the field of multicultural research. The Racial and Ethnic Microaggression scale (REMS, Nadal, 2011) was one of the first scales that measured microaggressions experienced by racial and ethnic minorities. Other similar measures have been published as well, for example the IMABI (Mercer et al, 2011) developed to specifically address microaggressions experienced by African American individuals.

Still these two diverse inventories are just a subsection of a grander body of work growing in quantitative approaches towards evaluating microaggressions, these scales, which were all developed in 2011, feature the innovation of this region of research. The foremost strength of these established scales is that they have begun to satisfy a need that was beforehand unmet in the study of microaggressions. These scales afford academics the ability to gather experimental data that assesses types and themes of microaggressions, and the bearing of these microaggressions on marginalized individuals and groups.

Summary of Literature Review

According to one estimate there is more than half a billion Atheists in the world, thus making Atheists the fourth largest religious group in the world, trailing only Christians, Muslims, and Hindus (Zuckerman, 2007). According to a recent Pew Research Survey, individuals identifying as Atheists has grown .8% from 2007-2012 and fewer than half of Americans identify as Protestant Christians. This is the first time in Pew Research Center surveys that the Protestant portion of the American population has gone below 50%. Unfortunately it has been shown that Atheists are discriminated against disproportionately in a variety of ways (Baker & Smith, 2009; Swan & Heesacker, 2012).

A central theme behind prejudices towards Atheists is distrust towards a group that has no belief in a supernatural agent capable of witnessing and punishing moral transgressions (Norenzayan & Shariff, 2008). According to Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann (2006) Atheists were both more likely than any other religious or sexual minority to be considered as not congruent with their "vision of American Society" and most likely to be disapproved of if their child wanted to marry one. A recent laboratory study found that Atheists were deemed more immorally untrustworthy than Christians, Muslims,

homosexuals, Jewish people, and feminists. Furthermore the study found that only rapists were distrusted to the same degree, as Atheists were (Gervais, Shariff, & Norenzayan, 2010).

Goodman and Mueller (2009) takes the idea one step further and postulates that due to the stigma of Atheist as "immoral, evil, or god hating" (p. 55) they as a group and as individuals are marginalized to the point of invisibility. Atheism is generally not viewed to be its own construct and has a tendency to be lumped into the category or field of spiritualism and religion. Atheists are not studied as much or given the same consideration in psychology as other populations are. One of the reasons given for this apparent lack is the tendency for researchers to gravitate towards topics more mainstream and "politically correct" (D'Andrea & Sprenger, 2007, p. 150). The subject of Atheism, when it is researched, appears to have more to do with a lack of religiosity rather than the actual stance of Atheism.

When studying various minority populations Microaggressions have been shown to be a valued, contemporary lens for analyzing and reviewing more nuanced understandings of racism, bias, and discrimination. Microaggressions are subtle, often unconscious indignities perpetrated by the majority group towards a minority. Microaggressions are important to study because of their detrimental effect on physical and mental well-being. It has been hypothesized that it is the cumulative effects of discrimination that will erode minority individuals in a society where microaggressions are perpetrated (see Sue, 2010a). Microaggressions, racism and internalized oppression have been shown to intensify the experience of negative psychological states (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2012), heart disease (Smith et al., 2005) and physical pain (Chae & Walters, 2009).

The field of Microaggressions has produced numerous taxonomies and themes to study and understand the discriminatory experiences of Women, African American, disabled, and GLBT populations to name a few (Capodilupo et al., 2010; Keller & Galgay, 2010; Sue & Caopdiluppo, 2008). Many taxonomies rely on the original taxonomy and set of themes proposed by Sue et al. (2007) which contains *Microassault, Microinsult, and Microinvalidation.* Amongst racial and ethnic minority studies utilizing the theory of Microaggressions, religious microaggressions are now becoming an established part of this innovative academic field. To date, the field of microaggressions has only just begun exploring how a microaggressions lens could be utilized to understand the experiences of religious minorities, first clearly proposed by Nadal (2008).

Through the development and eventual validation of a scale that measures Atheist's experiences of microaggressions psychology may be able to begin addressing the inequities that Atheists face in a largely religious society. Stark (1999) suggests one possible reason that Atheism is studied within the context of religion and one could argue not in the context of microaggressions, because Atheism is possibly viewed as merely the opposite of faith and not in itself a true and independent stance on faith or spirituality. This in of itself may be conceived as a microinvalidation, one that puts Atheism and religion on the same level, thus disregarding and making invisible some of the discriminations that Atheists and the non-religious experience.

Various scales have been created that rely on the theory of Microaggressions (Balsam, et al., 2011; Mercer, 2010; 2011) and can serve as comparative models for developing scales to measure Atheist's experiences of microaggressions. Nadal et al. (2010) proposed 6 themes that comprise a taxonomy of religious microaggressions that provide a

useful hierarchy through which to conceptualize potential, Atheist-specific microaggressions. Nadal's taxonomy has already shown promise qualitatively in his study of Muslim-American experiences (Nadal et al, 2012). American Atheists that both currently live in the United States and those abroad (United States Citizens) will be recruited for this study because America is one of the only first world countries where religion is such a penetrating and present force in politics, government, and many communities. If individuals that were living more secular countries such as Sweden or France with higher proportions of Atheists were allowed to respond along with Americans, external validity could be impacted significantly. Even though there may be many individuals that do not believe in any higher power, gods, daemons, angels, spirits or otherwise such as Secular Humanists for example, individuals that identify as specifically Atheists were only used because of the unique connotations and values associated with the word (Bullivant, 2008; Swan & Heesacker, 2012).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to develop an instrument to assess the types and frequency of microaggressions that Atheists experience as survey methodologies are a common design utilized for measuring different forms of discrimination. Scale development will also address the theoretical underpinnings proposed and see if they are substantiated. It is hypothesized that combining the theory of Microaggressions and scale development procedures will create a sound instrument able to assist in investigating the effects of discrimination on Atheists in and of its self and though pairing it with other measures of psychological and physiological distress.

The scale will be constructed utilizing the 6 themed framework laid out by Nadal et al. (2010) for religious minorities adapted for specific use with Atheists. The following related dimensions are hypothesized to coalesce under the concept of Atheist microaggressions, defined as any slights, indignities or putdowns perpetrated by an individual or group towards an Atheist or Atheists. Those six dimensions are: Endorsing Atheist Stereotypes, Pathology of Atheist Individuals, Exoticization, Assumption of One's Own Religious Identity as Normal, Assumption of Atheist homogeneity, and Denial of Religious Prejudice towards Atheists. These dimensions will be clearly defined in the third chapter along with scale construction procedures.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

First, it is hypothesized that the pilot version of the SAM will be a 6-factor scale measuring 6 separate, but related constructs. The constructs will measure Atheist microaggressions, each factor representing a theme of Atheist microaggressions based upon the work of Nadal et al. (2010) originally proposed to measure religious minority microaggressions. The dissertation project will provide evidence of acceptable fit for the factor structure obtained during exploratory factor analysis during confirmatory factor analysis through examination of fit indices (Hu & Bentler, 1999) and appropriate use of modification indices (see Hatcher, 1994).

Hypothesis Two

A scale used to measure social desirability independent of psychopathology created by Crowne and Marlowe (1960) was used to measure if the SAM elicited socially desirable responses. It was predicted that the scale would serve as a measure of discriminant validity.

It was predicted that there would be no significant correlations between both the pilot and dissertation versions of the SAM and this scale, -.20 <r <.20.

Hypothesis Three

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) is a measure of global life satisfaction and would serve as a measure of divergent validity. It was predicted that individuals endorsing more frequent and upsetting experiences of microaggressions would report lower life satisfaction. It was specifically predicted that there would be a small, negative correlation between $r = -.40$ and $r = -.20$.

Hypothesis Four

The perceived stress scale (PSS; Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983) is a measure of general stress and will be administered as a measure of convergent validity. It is anticipated that this scale would have a small, positive relationship with the dissertation SAM at $.20 < r < .40$.

Hypothesis Five

The ego identity process questionnaire (EIPQ; Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, & Geisinger, 1995) will be administered as a measure of convergent validity. It is expected that this scale will have a small, positive relationship with the dissertation SAM and years identifying as an Atheist at $.20 < r < .40$.

Hypothesis Six

It is hypothesized that the SAM will demonstrate a strong internal consistency, as evidenced by an alpha coefficient of .80 or higher but not exceeding .90 for both the pilot and dissertation scales.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to develop a scale that measures Atheist's experiences of microaggressions. This chapter is outlined in two sections; the first describes the methods and procedures in the pilot study. The second section describes the methods and procedures used in the procurement and evaluation of the validation sample for the dissertation. In regard to the first section, the purpose of the pilot procedures were to provide initial information about the factor structure, scale reliability and validity, and item strength in regard to the newly created scale. DeVellis's (2003) scale construction procedures were followed to create the pilot measure, including determining clearly what is to be measured, generating an item pool, determining the format for measurement, having item pool reviewed by experts, considering the inclusion of validation items, administering items to a development sample, evaluating the items, and optimizing scale length. The first section of this chapter describes the methods, includes participants, measures and procedures, used in the pilot process.

The second section of this chapter describes the methods involved in the dissertation project. The dissertation project will involve obtaining and evaluating a validation sample in order test (through confirmatory factor analysis, reliability analysis, and construct validity analysis) the psychometric properties and viability of the SAM. Confirmatory Factor Analysis will follow the procedures recommended by Hatcher (1994) and be further informed by suggested best practices in analysis conduction and reporting

procedures as outlined in Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow and King (2006) and Jackson, Gillaspy and Purc Stephenson (2009). These procedures are constructing the confirmatory factor model, identifying residual terms for endogenous variables, identifying all parameters to be estimated, verifying that the model is overidentified, reviewing the chi square test, reviewing the non-normed fit index and the comparative fit index, reviewing significance tests for factor loadings, reviewing the residual matrix and normalized residual matrix and finally modifying the measurement model if need be with the use of modification indices. Construct validity for the validation sample will be evaluated utilizing the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985), the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983), the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (EIPQ; Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, & Geisinger, 1995) and the Social Desirability Rating Scale (SDRS; Marlowe & Crowne, 1966) and confirmatory factor analysis. Reliability analyses will also be conducted.

Pilot Methods

Pilot Participants

Respondent Recruitment and Data Collection. For purposes of conducting an initial test of the psychometric properties of the SAM, the scale was distributed online to various social media websites, pages and blogs to find respondents. A benefit of this sampling method is the ability to draw Atheists from diverse geographic locations. By in large online sampling has been shown to be an adequate way to collect externally valid responses from populations that are small and otherwise potentially difficult to contact for participation (Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, & John, 2004). The intended population was adults (18 and older) in America that identify specifically as Atheists.

Over 6,000 individuals attempted to take the SAM, however only 1,142 were able to identify as Atheist Americans over the age of 18. Six of the participants of the 1,142 did not complete one or more of the measures in the study and were subsequently deleted from the data pool. Due to having more than enough respondents, the sample of 1,136 was randomly split into half, utilizing only 1 half of that data for the EFA. That half utilized totaled 577 respondents.

Pilot Demographics

Gender. The 577 respondents consisted of 404 males, 166 females, and 7 transgendered individuals, making up 70%, 28.8% and 1.2% of the total respectively; **Race and ethnicity.** The respondents were .9% (N = 5) African American/Black, 1.2% (N = 7) Asian American/Asian/Pacific Islander, 85.8% (N = 495) Caucasian American/White, 1.9% (N = 11) foreign nationals, 5.5% (32) Hispanic/Latino Americans, .2% (N = 1) Middle Eastern American, .3% (N = 2) Native American/American Indian, and 4.2% (N = 24) Mixed Race/Bi-racial; **Sexual orientation.** Heterosexual respondents made up the majority of the sample at 499 (86.5%) whereas gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals made up 3.1%, 1.6%, and 8.8% respectively; **Marital status.** Over half of the participants were single at 57.4% (N = 331), 33.6% (N = 194) of the participants were married, 8.7% (N = 50) were divorced and .3% (N = 2) were widowed. A majority of the participants were childless (70.9%); **Personal Income.** Regarding income, 165 respondents or 28.6% made under $15,000, 16.5% (N = 95) made between $15-$25,000, 15.8% (N = 91) made between $26-40,000, 17.2% (N = 99) made between $40-60,000, 11.8% (68) made between $60-90,000, 3.8% (N = 22) made between $90-120,000, 3.1% (N = 18) made between $120-150,000, and 3.3% (N = 19) made above $150,000; **Education.** College goers made

up the majority of the sample with 37.3% (N = 215) having some college, 11.6% (N = 67) having a 2-year degree and 24.6% (N = 142) having a 4- year degree. Masters degrees were held by 11.1% (N = 64) and 4% (N = 22) of the sample had doctorates (Ph.D's) or professional degrees (J.D for example); **Location.** Every state in the US was represented, with at least 1 respondent. California was the most representative state with 12.8% (N = 74) respondents residing there. Texas was the second most representative state with 7.3% (N = 42) of the total sample and Florida was third with 5.9% (N = 34). Washington state and New York were tied for the fourth most representative state each with 5.5% (N = 32) of the total sample residing there. Table 1 provides more detail of the demographic information.

Table 1

Pilot Respondent Demographics

	N	*%*
Age		
18-20	91	15.8
21-23	67	11.6
24-29	121	21.0
30-34	111	19.2
35-44	108	18.7
45-54	51	8.8
55-64	14	2.4
65 and over	14	2.4
Total	577	100
Gender		
Female	166	28.8
Male	404	70.0
Transgender	7	1.2
Total	577	100

Table 1 continued

	N	%
Ethnicity		
African American	5	.9
Asian American/Asian/Pacific Islander	7	1.2
Caucasian American/White	495	85.6
Foreign National	11	1.9
Hispanic/Latino American	32	5.5
Middle Eastern American	1	.2
Native American/American Indian	2	.3
Mixed Race/Bi-Racial	24	4.2
Total	577	100
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	499	86.5
Gay	18	3.1
Lesbian	9	1.6
Bisexual	51	8.8
Total	577	100
Marital Status		
Single	331	57.4
Married	194	33.6
Divorced	50	8.7
Widowed	2	100
Total	577	100
Personal Income		
Under 15,000	165	28.6
15,000-25,000	95	16.5
26-40,000	91	15.8
40-60,000	99	17.2
60-90,000	68	11.8
90-120,000	22	3.8
120-150,000	18	3.1
150,000+	19	3.3
Total	577	100

Table 1 continued

	N	%
Highest Level of Education		
Less than High School	5	.9
High School/GED	61	10.6
Some College	215	37.3
2-year College Degree	67	11.6
4-year College Degree	142	24.6
Masters Degree	64	11.1
Doctoral Degree	12	2.1
Professional Degree (e.g., M.D & J.D)	11	1.9
Total	577	100
50 States, D.C and Puerto Rico Location		
Alabama	3	.2
Alaska	1	3.5
Arizona	20	1.4
Arkansas	8	12.8
California	74	1.9
Colorado	11	.3
Connecticut	2	.2
Delaware	1	.5
District of Columbia	3	5.9
Florida	34	2.4
Georgia	14	.2
Hawaii	1	.2
Idaho	1	2.6
Illinois	15	1.9
Indiana	11	.9
Iowa	5	1.2
Kansas	7	.9
Kentucky	5	1.2
Louisiana	7	.2
Maine	1	1.2
Maryland	7	.3
Massachusetts	2	2.6
Michigan	15	2.6

Table 1 continued

	N	%
Minnesota	15	.7
Mississippi	4	1.6
Missouri	9	.2
Montana	1	.2
Nebraska	1	1.0
Nevada	6	.2
New Hampshire	1	2.1
New Jersey	12	.9
New Mexico	5	5.5
New York	32	3.1
North Carolina	18	.5
North Dakota	3	4.3
Ohio	25	1.0
Oklahoma	6	3.6
Oregon	21	3.6
Pennsylvania	21	.5
Rhode Island	3	1.2
South Carolina	7	.3
Tennessee	12	2.1
Texas	42	7.3
Utah	7	1.2
Vermont	1	.2
Virginia	16	2.8
Washington	32	5.5
West Virginia	6	1.0
Wisconsin	16	2.8
Wyoming	1	.2
I do not reside in the United States	4	.7
Total	577	100

Pilot Measures

In addition to completing the Scale of Atheist Microaggressions (SAM) evaluated in this study, participants also completed a demographics questionnaire, the Right Wing Authoritarianism Scale, the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale, and the Satisfaction with life Scale.

The scale of atheist microaggressions (SAM; Pagano, McCullagh, Austin, Fuller & Grant, 2012). The SAM is a 65-item scale developed to measure Atheists experiences of microaggressions. The SAM was developed utilizing the guidelines of scale development set out by DeVellis (2003). Item development was also guided by DeVellis in addition to Bradburn et al. (2004). The initial 113 items of the SAM were evaluated and reviewed by expert reviewers in order to ensure content and construct validity in addition to item clarity. The feedback from the expert reviewers led to the adjustment of many items and the exclusion of 48 items. The resulting 65 items were used in this research. Individuals responded to items of the SAM using a 5-point Likert-type scale that asked them to recall events and situations that may have occurred to them (1= This has never happened to me; 5= This event happened and I was extremely upset). There are no reversed scored items on the SAM and the SAM was developed so that higher total scores on the SAM are more indicative of stress as a result of experiencing microaggressions. Descriptions of the hypothesized scale dimensions are listed below.

Atheist microaggressions. Generally speaking are subtle, often unconscious slights and put-downs perpetrated by those in the majority (often religious identifying individuals) towards a minority (Atheists) (Pagano, McCullagh, Austin, Fuller & William., 2012; Sue et

al., 2007). These microaggressions may be verbal, non-verbal (behavioral), or environmental affronts experienced by those that identify as Atheists. Additionally, it is believed that Microaggressions towards Atheists and Atheism may at times, be more often perpetrated consciously with an intention to upset, demean or disgrace. This type or category of microaggression is the one under which the subsequent themes of Atheist microaggressions are encompassed.

*Endorsing atheist stereotypes***.** This occurs when a perpetrator stereotypes Atheists through religiously biased statements and behaviors (Nadal et al., 2010). This dimension implies that Atheists are inferior and do not deserve to be learned about. This dimension is differentiated from the "Pathology of Different Religious Groups" dimension in that items may speak about Atheists or Atheism more broadly. Examples of microaggressions in this dimension, may ask questions of Atheists about their attitudes or experiences (e.g., "Someone has asked me if I worship the devil?"), rather than telling individuals directly who and what they are and what they believe (e.g., "I have heard someone say Atheists are devil worshipers."), which would be more appropriate for the dimension "Pathology of Different Religious Groups." Individuals who perpetrate items in this dimension may be acting more unconsciously and may not be aware of the harmful effects of such questions and statements. Thematic stereotypes from the literature on Atheists and Atheism revolve around: not believing in anything, amorality and immorality, conduct problems/criminality, being unhappy, being associated with the sociopolitical left, being evil, being angry or militant and being anti-religion (Edgell, et al., 2006; Gervais et al., 2011).

*Pathology of atheist individuals***.** This dimension usually exemplifies a more conscious

belief and expression that there is something wrong or abnormal with someone who identifies as an Atheist (Nadal et al., 2010). This may mean that dominant culture values steeped in religion are the norm and that those who do not have religious beliefs are not respected or honored. This dimension implies that there is a right way and a wrong way to behave and believe. Beliefs grounded in this dimension may lead to behaviors, statements and questions in which Atheists may be punished, negatively judged or mistreated. This dimension is differentiated from "Endorsing Atheist Stereotypes" because the alleged amorality is a more often directly stated, possibly action oriented, overt attack. According to Nadal et al., (2010) microaggressions in this dimension may be similar to those experienced by racial minorities (Sue, 2010).

*Exoticization***.** Microaggressions in this dimension may be similar to those experienced by racial minorities (Nadal et al., 2010). Those perpetrating the microaggression believe and act as if Atheists are "foreign" or "bizarre" (Park, 2008). Another example of this category is when identifying as an Atheist is viewed as trendy or as a fad. The message conveyed may be that Atheists are strange or different because they do not hold the religious beliefs of the dominant society. Other messages implied by items in this dimensions may be that "I have the right to ask you whatever I want," and "Your belief system is exotic, and aspects of it can be used as a trend." It can occur when parts of Atheism are culturally appropriated in a way that implies it is something to be played with instead of something to be treated with respect and dignity.

Assumption of one's own religious identity as normal. This dimension of microaggression implies a belief that others belong to the same religion or that everyone identifies with a religion. Microaggressions from this dimension imply that Atheists are inferior or not as

important. For example, because in the United States the majority of people identify with a religion, individuals may be able to forget that not everyone worships a deity (Nadal, 2008). Examples of implied messages are that everyone should believe in a higher power or engage with religious traditions, a lack of religion is immoral, and Atheist beliefs do not matter. The use of specific language (i.e. "In God we Trust" or "I will pray for you.") may convey assumptions of one's own religion as being the norm (Nadal et al, 2010).

*Assumption of atheist homogeneity***.** This dimension is characterized by the belief that Atheists all look, act and behave the same. This dimension is one in which Atheists are thought to belong to a homogeneous group (Nadal et al., 2010; Sue et al., 2007). This type of microaggression assumes that there are certain, current and past, universal life experiences descriptive of Atheists. Beliefs in this dimension may place expectations on how Atheists should act, think, and appear. An example of this type of microaggression is asking an individual to be a "spokesperson" for all Atheists. This implies that Atheists are interchangeable or non-descript. The message is that there is no individuality or uniqueness to a persons' expression or development of Atheism.

*Denial of religious prejudice towards atheists***.** This dimension is characterized by religious individuals lacking awareness of their religious biases. They may say "I don't see you for your Atheism and beliefs" or "we're all the same" (Nadal et al, 2010). These types of statements may take away from a non-religious identity. Statements in this category may invalidate the reality of an individual in which Atheism is a salient part of their lives. Implied messages in this dimension include "Your religious identity doesn't matter," and "I cannot be prejudiced." Other themes may include likening Atheism to religion or putting religion and Atheism on equal standing, thereby not acknowledging religious

privilege. This dimension has its roots in racial "color blindness" (Sue, 2009).

Demographics questionnaire. General demographics information about the respondents was collected through the administration of a demographics questionnaire. Respondents were asked to respond to demographics related information in order to identify their age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, income, education and location in the U.S.

Marlowe-Crowne social desirability scale (MCSD; Marlowe & Crowne, 1966). A scale used to measure social desirability independent of psychopathology created by Marlowe and Crowne (1960) was used as a measure of discriminant validity. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS, Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) is a measure of global life satisfaction and will be utilized as a measure of convergent validity. The SWLS scale was correlated with the Marlowe-Crowne Measure of social desirability at .02, suggesting it did not evoke a socially desirable response set. Internal consistency for the Marlowe-Crowne scale was found to be at .88. This scale was normed on American, college-aged students.

Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is an 18 item self-report scale for use in evaluation research to assess aspects of subjective satisfaction with life of adults. The SWLS evaluates an individual's level of satisfaction with his or her current life in the following four domains: Living Situation, Social Relationships, Employment/Work, and Self and Present Life. The SWLS was found to have a coefficient alpha of .86, considered to be a high and respectable measure of internal consistency. The SWLS has been normed on multiple, diverse American populations including substance abusers to individuals with

disabilities. There is also normative data from different countries from around the world (see Pavot & Diener, 1993). Blais, Vallerand, Pelletier and Briere (1989) found that the SWLS has evidence for its construct validity having a ($r = -.72$, $p = .00$) between the SWLS and the Beck Depression Inventory.

Pilot Scale Construction Procedures

The Scale of Atheist Microaggressions (SAM) was initially a 65-item scale developed to measure Atheists experiences of microaggressions. The SAM was developed by Pagano, McCullagh, Austin, Fuller, and Williams (2012) utilizing the 8 steps of scale development set out by DeVellis (2003). The first step consisted of clearly determining the construct to be measured—Atheist Microaggressions. Considerable time was spent reviewing and revising the taxonomy of Nadal et al. (2010) to make it fit for an Atheist population, resulting in 6 hypothesized dimensions. The dimensions are described in more detail previously in the methods section. During the 2nd step of scale construction an item pool was developed, driven by theory. Item construction was informed by generally accepted, best practices in psychometrics and scale development (Bradburn et al, 2004; Develis, 2003; Worthington &Whittaker, 2006).

Correspondingly a team of four graduate students from the same counseling psychology program and a fifth from the experimental psychology program participated in initial item construction. Guidance and support from three faculty members from both the counseling and clinical psychology were provided (Pagano et al., 2012). Team members were diverse in their own religious and non-religious identification, representing Atheism, Christianity and Agnosticism. The team consisted of 4 males and 1 female, four identified as White and one identified as bi-racial.

Pagano et al. (2012) created 113 items based upon the religious minority taxonomy of microaggressions created by Nadal et al. (2010) that were further adapted to specifically meet the needs of an Atheist population. As in the taxonomy, there were six themes initially created which later served as scale dimensions (see scale description, methods section). Sufficient attention was given so that each theme had close to equal amounts of items representing each theme so content validity could be maximized (Allen & Yen, 1979; Devellis, 2003). The initial item pool resulted in 113 items, which was approximately three times the amount of items Pagano et al. hypothesized the final scale to contain. After the initial dimensions were created along with their associated items, the four other graduate students were brought together in a team to provide informed feedback about both dimension and item construction. Subsequently both the description of the constructs and item wordings were appropriately changed to enhance content validity and readability.

In line with Devillis' (2003) third step of scale construction, the format for measurement was determined. Consistent with other microaggression and race related stress scales such as the Daily Racial Microaggression (DRM) Scale (Mercer, Zeigler-Hill, Wallace & Hayes, 2010) and the Index of Race-Related Stress (IRRS) (Utsey & Ponterotto, 1996), the respondents responded to the items using a 5 point likert scale (Likert, 1932) recalling on events and situations that may have occurred to them (1 = This has never happened to me; 2= This has happened to me but it did not upset me… ; 5 = This event happened and I was extremely upset). There are no reversed scored items on the SAM and the SAM was developed so that higher total scores on the SAM are more indicative of stress as a result of experiencing microaggressions.

The fourth step of the scale's construction (DeVellis, 2003) was to have it evaluated by experts. The 113 initial items of the SAM were evaluated and reviewed by expert reviewers in order to ensure content and construct validity in addition to item clarity. The feedback from the expert reviewers led to the adjustment and exclusion. Five academics were solicited to provide expert feedback on the items and scale dimensions in order to improve content and construct validity (Allen & Yen, 1979; Devellis, 2003; Hardesty & Bearden, 2004). The academics were all considered to be authorities on either microaggression theory or discriminatory beliefs about Atheists. The experts first reviewed the pool of items for inclusive language, clarity, and phrasing. They were then instructed to sort items into dimension areas based on definitions provided to them. They were also offered two additional categories to provide feedback. One option allowed them to denote items that did not fit into any one of the 6 dimensions, but was still an Atheist microaggression and a second option to denote that an item did not fit into any of the 6 dimensions *and* was not an Atheist microaggression.

The first expert reviewer was Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi, Ph.D., an Israeli professor of psychology at the University of Haifa, Israel. In 1970 Beit-Hallahmi received a PhD in clinical psychology from Michigan State University. He is a renowned author of the combined fields of psychology and religion. He has authored and co-authored numerous books such as *Psychoanalysis and Religion: A Bibliography (1982), Prolegomena to the Psychological Study of Religion (1989), The Annotated Dictionary of Modern Religious Movements (1994),* and *The Psychology of Religious Behaviour, Belief and Experience (1997).* He was one of two individuals asked to serve as an external advisor to the APA taskforce on Deceptive and Indirect

Techniques of Persuasion and Control, which investigated such phenomenon as brainwashing and cults.

The second reviewer was Ryan Cragun, Ph.D. an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Tampa who specializes in the sociological study of religion, focusing on Mormonism, the nonreligious and secularization. His research has been published in a range of journals, including: *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *Sociology of Religion*, *Nova Religio*, and *Journal of Contemporary Religion*. The third reviewer was Will Gervais, Ph.D, an assistant professor of social psychology at the University of Kentucky. Broadly, he studies how evolution and culture shape peoples beliefs about the world including why do some people turn to gods, why others do not believe and why are Atheists disliked.

The fourth reviewer was Christina Capodiluppo, Ph.D., an adjunct professor of psychology at the University of Hartford. She currently researches microaggressions, focusing on gender and sexual orientation microaggressions. She has published with D.W. Sue, Ph.D. and Kevin Nadal, Ph.D. The fifth reviewer David Rivera, Ph.D, an assistant professor of psychology at William Paterson University. He is co-author of the Microaggressions in Everyday Life blog with D.W. Sue, Ph.D., a part of Psychology Today.com. He has received multiple recognitions for his work, including national honors from the American Psychological Association and the American College Counseling Association.

The five experts sorted the original 113 items into 49 items that had at least four out of five experts sort the items into the same scale dimensions. Four of those 49 items were eliminated for redundancy and poor wording. There were 35 items that were sorted by three out of the five experts into the same dimension that were again reviewed by the

research team Pagano et al., (2012) for inclusion for the pilot test and EFA. Twenty items of those 35 were retained. The 20 that were kept were theoretically representative of specific dimensions and were able to help build the required minimum of items to include a dimension in the instrument for the pilot test and EFA (Devellis, 2003). The final scale length for the pilot test and EFA after the expert review was 65 items.

The fifth step of scale construction (DeVellis, 2003) was to consider the inclusion of validation items. While no validation items were included directly into the scale, the Marlowe-Crowne (1960) social desirability scale was separately used as a measure of discriminant validity to ensure that the SAM did not inspire any socially desirable responses. The sixth step (DeVellis, 2003) was to administer the scale to a development sample, which was done with 577 individuals, which far exceeds the minimum of 200 recommended by DeVellis (2010). The seventh step in scale construction (DeVellis, 2003) involved item evaluation (e.g., evaluating item-scale correlations, item variance) and factor analysis. The information from the seventh step informed the eighth and final step of optimizing the scale length. Optimizing the scale length involved eliminating poorly performing items based on information obtained from the seventh step. More detail about the seventh and eight steps follows the methods section.

Pilot Results

The purpose of the pilot portion of this scale development project was to initiate and test initial psychometrics on a scale the measures Atheists experiences of microaggressions. The initial development of the Scale of Atheist Microaggressions (SAM) is discussed in length. Scale items were developed and experts subsequently reviewed the items. Specific analyses were conducted to evaluate the psychometric

performance of the items, and factor analyses were conducted in order to explore the factor structure of the initial scale. Scale reliability was also assessed and in order to establish convergent and discriminant validity, the Right Wing Authoritarianism Scale (RWA; Altemeyer, 1981; 1988), the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) and the Social Desirability Rating Scale (SDRS; Marlowe & Crowne, 196) were used.

Item Analysis

The first task of item analysis is to investigate the intercorrelation between the items, whether or not individual items are representative of the entire scale (Devellis, 2003). The 65-items of the SAM were analyzed with the purpose of evaluating their performance within the SAM. Initial item analysis of the 65 items revealed a range of item to total correlations between .174 and .725. Items that were the most highly correlated with one another (item to total correlation above .6) were chosen to investigate how they loaded and hung together. Higher item to total correlation values suggest scale homogeneity (Clark & Watson, 2003). As a result of this selection process, 7 items were chosen. Subsequently 4 more items were added with an item to total correlation above .5 in an attempt to represent the *a priori* hypothesis of 6 factors for a total of 11 items. As suggested by Devellis (2003), no items with correlations below .30 were considered and every effort was made to only utilize items with item to total correlations above .40, which DeVellis considers acceptable. See Table 2 for item information on item means, standard deviations and item to total correlations (I-Tr).

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Guidelines for conducting factor analysis. The purpose of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is to reveal how many latent variables are contained within a set of items, condensing information into a smaller number of variables when possible and to account for the latent variables that caused the most variation in the set of items as a larger whole (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Kahn, 2006). The first step is to perform an extraction. There are multiple ways to conduct the extraction of the factors, the two most common being Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) and Principal Component Analysis (PCA). PCA has commonly been criticized for not accurately obtaining parameters that reflect latent constructs or factors and produce deceptive results (Gorsuch, 1997; Widaman, 1993; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). PAF was utilized for this scale development project specifically because it has been cited as being able to more accurately produce factor loadings not unlike population values and assumes error, whereas PCA does not (Gorsuch, 1983).

PAF is considered to be the most appropriate extraction method when developing new scales as its primary goal is to understand structure and latent factors (Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). With PAF Kahn (2006) reports that it is most common to utilize the squared multiple correlation as the initial estimate of communality to best take advantage of the shared variance that researchers desire to understand. Shared variance should be separated from both unique and error variance in order to appropriately extract the factors, which PFA allows for, while PCA keeps shared an unique variance together.

In order to make sense of the data and utilize factor analysis to its fullest, rotation takes place after extraction as a means to arithmetically organize a set of factors in simplest

form (Bryant & Yarnold, 1995). The two ways of rotating data utilize oblique and orthogonal rotations. Simply put, oblique rotations assume correlated factors while orthogonal assumes un-correlated factors. The most common forms of oblique and orthogonal rotation are Promax and Varimax, respectively. It has been demonstrated that both forms of rotation will sometimes give only modestly different accounts of factor structure and that choosing which rotation to use can be guided by the theory guiding scale construction. However it is important to keep in mind that it is the rotation that provides the simplest structure that is to be utilized. It is indicated to utilize Promax (oblique) first to see how the factors come out and items load. If the factors are correlated it will be demonstrated in the rotation as would uncorrelated factors. Benefits to utilizing Varimax (orthogonal) rotation are that it offers a simpler and easier to interpret factor structure (Kahn, 2006; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006).

After extraction and factor rotation, when considering the number of factors to retain it is common to utilize Kaiser's criterion--a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0 or higher (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Kaiser, 1960; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Kahn (2006) reports that this is most often only appropriate to the use of PCA and not PFA, though it is still commonly done. The number of factors retained has typically been decided by whether or not factors cross and eigenvalue of 1.0. An eigenvalue represents the extent of information or variance captured by a factor. Utilizing the Scree Test (Catell, 1966) may be another way to addressing the potential problem of having eigenvalues only slightly above or slightly below 1.0. It utilizes the relative values in place of the absolute values. This method looks at the magnitude of eigenvalues across successive factors, examining the drop in information, referred to as the "elbow." Factors beneath the elbow on a plot will

be eliminated and those above will be maintained. Kahn (2006) recommends utilizing the scree plot to determine the number of factors retained when PAF is the method of extraction. Devellis (2008) however warns that utilizing the scree plot can be difficult if the elbow is not clear and it is gradual. Given that deciding on how many factors to retain can be confusing having factors meet multiple standards and criteria is most appropriate (see Gorsuch, 1983; Tinsley & Tinsely, 1987).

When examining how individual items load to or hang together within a particular factor Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) suggest a minimum loading value of .32. The precise factor extraction method depends on a variety of factors such as data distribution and multivariate normality for example (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Items that load weakly, that is below .35 in a principal factor analysis or below .40 in a principal components analysis are commonly considered first for removal as they may suggest only a modest correlation with other items (Clark & Watson, 1995). Factors with fewer than three items are generally considered too weak and unstable whereas factors with at least 5 or more items that have a strong loading value of .50 or better constitute a stable and unyielding factor (Clark & Watson, 1995; Hatcher, 1994).

Pilot factor analysis. Worthington and Whittaker (2006) recommend that an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) be conducted before conducting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Therefore an EFA was conducted on the 65-items that resulted from the expert review utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0.0. The SAM underwent principal axis factoring with exclusion of cases listwise as a means of identifying potential factor solutions. Table 2 provides detail of the initial item level results of this analysis.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) was measured at .955 which surpasses the minimum value of .50 suggested proceeding with factor analysis. A Bartlett's Test of Sphereicity revealed a χ^2 of 18677.05 (*df= 2080, p>.000*) also providing evidence for sampling adequacy and proceeding with factor analysis (Norman & Streiner, 2007). In order to discern the number of factors to retain, as recommended by DeVellis (2003) three criterion were utilized: (1) analysis of the scree plot, (2) interpretation of the total variance explained, and (3) individual factor loadings of .30 or higher. To increase the standard of item loadings, the suggested loading of .32 as suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) was implemented. Total variance explained by the 65 items indicated 12 components with eigenvalues of 1.00 or higher, with the first factor (initial eigenvalue of 19.576) explaining 30.117% of the variance. Together the first three factors explained 39.865% of the total variance. The rest of the initial 12 factors explained and additional 28.123% of the variance for a total of 67.988% cumulative variance. The initial scree plot revealed an elbow that suggested the presence of two factors. Due to the proposed final structure having 4 factors (which will be explained further on), initial item loadings for the first three factors are presented (see Table 2).

The initial, un-rotated factor matrix of the initial 65 items revealed an array of quality, high factor loadings and negative, low factor loadings. Therefore the 11 items identified previously based upon item analysis (see previous section) were submitted to a promax (oblique) rotation with a Kappa value of 4. The items were rotated obliquely because there is sufficient support from the theory of microaggression that the themes of religious minority microaggressions and the proposed Atheist microaggression themes are related as a coherent taxonomy (Nadal et al., 2010; Sue, 2010a; Sue 2010b). Recent scales

utilizing the theory of Microaggressions have also utilized oblique rotations (see for example Nadal, 2011), further providing support for the chosen rotation and consensus in the field that microaggression themes are psychometrically correlated.

Table 2

Item Analysis and Initial Item Loadings (Principle Factor Analysis)

		F1	F2	F3	I-T*r*	M	SD
1.	Someone has placed religious holiday decorations in a public place I frequent.	.367	.351	.078	.363	2.51	.750
2.	Someone has been surprised about one of my beliefs because they assumed an Atheist would not believe that.	.521	.021	-.036	.514	2.44	1.042
3.	Someone assumed that I am an Atheist because I was traumatized.	.423	-.167	.107	.411	2.09	1.384
4.	Someone believes that I can speak for all Atheists.	.506	-.198	-.003	.493	2.04	1.184
5.	I have noticed that there is a strong emphasis on the religious identification of political candidates in the United States.	.383	.292	-.114	.380	4.38	.807
6.	Someone has asked me what church I attend without first asking if I identify as a religious individual.	.515	.117	.113	.503	2.34	1.031

Table 2 continued

	F1	F2	F3	I-T*r*	M	SD
7. I have been asked what keeps me from doing bad things because I am an Atheist.	.665	-.073	-.215	.651	2.96	1.392
8. Someone has found it bizarre or strange that I do not believe in a higher power.	.564	.289	-.187	.545	2.83	1.040
9. I have heard someone say that Atheist's cannot lead fulfilling lives.	.668	-.119	-.274	.650	3.22	1.400
10. I discovered that I was not elected to a leadership position because I am an Atheist.	.205	-.001	.114	.205	1.24	.878
11. Someone has said to me that Atheists think they are better than everyone.	.581	-.141	-.151	.562	2.37	1.329
12. I have heard someone say that Atheists are self-centered.	.645	-.221	-.177	.628	2.42	1.393
13. Someone has been surprised that I am spiritual because they believed all Atheists were not.	.275	-.026	.063	.270	1.45	.871
14. I have been told that I do not act like an Atheist.	.444	-.051	.160	.432	1.71	1.009

Table 2 continued

	F1	F2	F3	I-T*r*	M	SD
15. Someone questioned my beliefs as an Atheist, but was unwilling to question their own beliefs.	.581	.132	-.228	.569	3.42	1.247
16. I have been asked why Atheists are intolerant.	.669	-.267	-.090	.654	2.42	1.475
17. Someone told me my life is without purpose because I am an Atheist.	.728	-.167	-.253	.706	2.92	1.503
18. Someone told me they were surprised that I do not believe in a higher power.	.538	.186	-.075	.520	2.33	.914
19. Someone has wished me a "Merry Christmas."	.177	.390	.060	.174	2.12	.429
20. Someone told me that they could relate to my experiences of Atheist discrimination even though they are not an Atheist.	.384	-.131	.153	.377	1.36	.737
21. I have not been included in a social group because I am an Atheist.	.419	.011	.218	.415	1.70	1.155
22. Someone has told me they do not judge individuals in terms of their religious beliefs.	.197	.024	.054	.194	1.87	.638

Table 2 continued

	F1	F2	F3	I-T*r*	M	SD
23. I have been asked why Atheists are angry.	.615	-.204	-.092	.599	2.01	1.187
24. Someone has likened Atheism to religion.	.547	.063	-.281	.533	3.14	1.303
25. Someone was surprised that I am an Atheist and a nice person.	.641	-.023	-.015	.622	2.38	1.219
26. I have been told that I am bringing dishonor to my family because I am an Atheist.	.489	-.135	.243	.479	1.74	1.346
27. I have been told that I complain too much about things related to my Atheist beliefs.	.533	-.016	.034	.526	1.89	1.295
28. Someone told me I am not a good neighbor because I am an Atheist.	.197	-.086	.250	.194	1.08	.452
29. Someone has told me I should be ashamed of myself for being an Atheist.	.591	-.122	.153	.581	2.06	1.449
30. I have heard people say that Atheists are immoral.	.646	-.058	-.363	.627	3.41	1.358
31. I have been told that my life is without meaning because I am an Atheist.	.747	-.102	-.256	.725	2.82	1.503

Table 2 continued

	F1	F2	F3	I-T*r*	M	SD
32. I have been told that I am going to hell because I am an Atheist.	.579	.025	-.097	.564	2.74	1.316
33. Someone expressed surprise that I do not believe in God.	.440	.230	.036	.424	2.26	.758
34. I have heard someone say that Atheists are not willing to accept other's viewpoints.	.646	-.135	-.123	.628	2.67	1.313
35. Someone has included a blessing or prayer in a social gathering (like a business meeting, ceremony, or dinner for example) I have participated in.	.403	.563	.033	.394	3.08	1.071
36. I have been told that I must not care for others because I am an Atheist.	.694	-.216	.014	.678	2.26	1.500
37. I have been asked if being an Atheist means I am anti-religion.	.532	-.041	.164	.517	1.86	.834
38. I have been asked if I have had a bad experience with the church because I am an Atheist.	.548	-.068	.216	.535	1.90	1.017
39. Someone has called me selfish because I am an Atheist.	.632	-.187	.068	.622	1.88	1.299

Table 2 continued

	F1	F2	F3	I-T*r*	M	SD
40. I have been told that that my negative experiences do not compare to the negative experiences religious individuals endure.	.576	-.195	.121	.565	2.00	1.434
41. Someone assumed that my interests and hobbies were strange because I am an Atheist.	.514	-.046	.324	.502	1.41	.901
42. My experiences as an Atheist have been dismissed as an overreaction.	.587	-.025	.107	.579	2.15	1.380
43. I have been asked if I believe in witchcraft because I am an Atheist.	.467	.032	.250	.460	1.63	1.079
44. I have been told by someone that because they have an Atheist friend, they are not anti-Atheist.	.489	-.111	.312	.480	1.41	.779
45. I have been told that I am bringing dishonor to my community because I am an Atheist.	.422	-.189	.310	.414	1.35	.973
46. Someone has questioned my values because I am an Atheist.	.742	-.065	-.195	.725	2.90	1.418
47. I have noticed that "In God We Trust" is written on all American Currency.	.424	.524	-.110	.412	3.59	1.067

Table 2 continued

	F1	F2	F3	I-T*r*	M	SD
48. I have been asked what purpose in life I have as an Atheist.	.690	-.091	-.142	.675	2.36	1.264
49. Someone told me that I am not trustworthy because I am an Atheist.	.580	-.204	.232	.571	1.89	1.475
50. I have been told to express thanks to God for an event.	.560	.427	.002	.552	3.21	1.305
51. Someone asked me an incessant amount of questions about my Atheist beliefs.	.466	.041	.189	.455	1.87	.965
52. I have heard someone say that Atheists are arrogant.	.649	-.212	-.128	.632	2.40	1.295
53. Someone has called me "Un-American" for being an Atheist.	.635	-.177	.071	.626	2.45	1.669
54. Someone has offered to pray for me.	.429	.462	.014	.420	2.98	1.145
55. I have heard people say that Atheists are without morals.	.682	-.020	-.323	.664	3.35	1.374
56. I have been asked if I hate religion because I am an Atheist.	.627	-.112	.175	.609	1.99	.969
57. Someone told me that Atheists are all the same.	.556	-.221	.146	.541	1.99	1.343

Table 2 continued

	F1	F2	F3	I-T*r*	M	SD
58. Someone expressed disbelief that I do not believe in God.	.546	.195	.077	.531	2.49	1.203
59. I have been told that discrimination against Atheists does not compare to the war on religion.	.686	-.128	.085	.675	2.47	1.642
60. I have been asked to pray for someone.	.445	.602	.093	.433	2.69	1.109
61. Someone has said "God bless you" or "Bless you" to me after I have sneezed.	.245	.421	.226	.240	2.21	.611
62. Someone has told me not to complain about religion.	.637	.024	.080	.629	2.50	1.465
63. Someone has said to me that they do not have a problem with me being an Atheist, but their behaviors suggest otherwise.	.615	-.001	.134	.607	2.42	1.358
64. I have noticed the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance of the United States.	.436	.527	-.071	.424	3.73	1.082
65. I have been asked to pray for a cause.	.458	.591	.102	.442	2.75	1.139

From the 11 items rotated two factors were revealed. Those 11 items were largely made up of items sorted into the Endorsing Atheist Stereotypes (factor 1) and Denial of

Atheist Prejudice (factor 2). In order to attempt to produce a third factor items 1, 50 and 18 were added, which created the third factor, representing the Assumption of Religious Identity as Normal dimension (factor 3). Those three items rose the scales overall reliability coefficient as well. Item 31 was removed and 17 was added in its place due to similar item content and same expert sorted dimension. Item 31 reads " I have been told that my life is without meaning because I am an Atheist" and item 17 reads, "Someone told me my life is without purpose because I am an Atheist." Item 17 loaded to the factor more clearly with better cross loadings. Items 31 and 17 were sorted to different dimensions as a result of the expert panel results, Endorsing Atheist Stereotypes and Pathology of Atheist Individuals, respectively. Pagano et al. (2012) however were supportive of their interchangeability due to very similar item content and discussion of the two dimensions potentially being able to collapse into one another. As a result, 20 loaded more clearly with the intended factor.

Item 6 was added to increase the total of items in factor three in an attempt to have an equal number of items per factor. Item 33 was added to equal the number of items per factor in factor 1. It loaded clearly onto factor 1 and even slightly improved overall scale reliability. Item 35 was also added to factor 3 in order to make equal the number of items per factor. Reliability was subsequently unaffected. Item 44, the last item added, was added to equal the number of items per factor in factor 2. At this point in development, there were 18 items total, 6 items per dimension. Items 15 and 23 however still had problematic cross loadings with less than .15 separating the factors onto which they loaded. Item 15 was removed because its loading was the poorest and as a result item 23's

loading was slightly improved and the amount of cumulative variance was also increased. This resulted in a final scale length of 20 items.

Factor structure. Promax rotation, with a principal axis factoring extraction of the 20 items revealed that there were again, there were four factors with initial eigenvalues above 1.0. All items had factor loadings above .32 for their respective dimensions (see Table 4). The pattern matrix over the structure matrix was looked to primarily as it demonstrated a simpler structure with which to conceptualize the data, a strength that has been argued to separate the two matrices (Hatcher, 1994). The pattern matrix has been reported to be more helpful when the factors are already known (Gorsuch, 1983) as is the case with our *a priori* hypothesis on factor structure modeled after the Nadal et al. (2010) proposed taxonomy. Our initial hypothesis of finding 6 factors was not supported. Item to total correlations were all above .40 with the exception of two items—33 and 35. The range of item to total correlations was from .34 to .66. The factor structure is only minimally substantiated by the scree plot demonstrating an elbow approximately at 2 factors, possibly 3 factors. All four of the factors were positively correlated with one another (see Table 3).

Table 3

Factor Correlation Matrix (Principal Axis Factoring) and Consistency

		1.	2.	3.	α
1.	Endorsing Atheist Stereotypes (F1; items 11, 12, 16, 17, 23 & 34)	-			.86
2.	Assumption of Religious Identity as Normal (F2; items 6, 18, 33, 35, & 50)	.52	-		.74
3.	Denial of Atheist Prejudice (F3; items 40, 42, 44, 59, 62 & 63)	.71	.56	-	.81
4.	Pathology Of Atheist Individuals (F4; items 26, 29, 45)	.59	.43	.62	.71

The four factors are *Endorsing Atheist Stereotypes* (F1 items 11, 12, 16, 17, 23 & 34) explaining 36.16% of the variance, *Denial of Atheist Prejudice* (F2 items 40, 42, 59, 62 & 63) explaining 8.60% of the variance, *Assumption of Religious Identity as Normal* (F3 items 1, 6, 18, 33, 35, & 50) explaining 6.47% of the variance, and *Pathology of Atheist Individuals* (F4 items 26, 29, & 45) explaining 5.41% of the variance. The items in each factor were fittingly sorted as such by the experts prior to factor analysis. See Table 4 for item loadings.

Table 4

SAM Items Final EFA (Pattern Matrix, Promax Rotation, Principal Axis Factoring)

Items	F1	F2	F3	F4
11. Someone has said to me that Atheists think they are better than everyone.	**.79**	.02	-.09	-.04
12. I have heard someone say that Atheists are self-centered.	**.78**	-.02	-.04	.01
16. I have been asked why Atheists are intolerant.	**.68**	-.11	.17	.02
17. Someone told me my life is without purpose because I am an Atheist.	**.52**	.05	.12	.13
23. I have been asked why Atheists are angry.	**.49**	-.05	.32	-.08
34. I have heard someone say that Atheists are not willing to accept others' viewpoints.	**.62**	.02	.15	-.09
40. I have been told that that my negative experiences as an Atheist do not compare to the negative experiences of religious individuals.	.08	-.1	**.68**	-.00
42. My experiences as an Atheist have been dismissed as an overreaction.	-.02	.12	**.50**	.08
59. I have been told that discrimination against Atheists does not compare to the war on religion.	.10	-.01	**.73**	-.00
62. Someone has told me not to complain about religion.	.09	.15	**.53**	-.01
63. Someone has said to me that they do not have a problem with me being an Atheist, but their behaviors suggest otherwise.	.02	.16	**.42**	.14
1. Someone has placed religious holiday decorations in a public place I frequent.	-.15	**.51**	.21	-.09

Table 4 continued

Items	F1	F2	F3	F4
6. Someone has asked me what church I attend without first asking if I identify as a religious individual.	.05	**.43**	.09	.09
18. Someone has acted confused when I told them I do not believe in a higher power.	.31	**.48**	-.18	.07
33. Someone expressed surprise that I do not believe in God.	.22	**.47**	-.16	.02
35. Someone has included a blessing or prayer in a social gathering (like a business meeting, ceremony).	-.17	**.79**	.03	-.10
50. I have been told to express thanks to God for an event.	.04	**.61**	.06	-.01
26. I have been told that I am bringing dishonor to my family because I am an Atheist.	-.09	-.03	-.03	**.87**
29. Someone has told me I should be ashamed of myself for being an Atheist.	.06	.09	.06	**.55**
45. I have been told that I am bringing dishonor to my community because I am an Atheist.	-.00	-.12	.07	**.62**

Measures of Validity for Pilot Study

Discriminant validity with the Crowne-Marlowe (1960) scale of social desirability and right wing authoritarianism scale. It was hypothesized that Crowne-Marlowe (1960) scale of social desirability would not correlate with the pilot version of the SAM. This hypothesis was supported. Social desirability was not correlated with the SAM, yielding non-significant results utilizing a correlation analysis revealing a Pearson's correlation coefficient of $r = .04$, $p = .37$ (two tail).

Divergent validity with satisfaction with life scale. It was hypothesized that the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) would have a moderate, negative correlation with the pilot version of the SAM scale between the values $r = -.4$and $r = -.2$. This hypothesis was not substantiated. The correlation analysis revealed a negative correlation $r = -.05$, $p = .097$ (one tail) however the results were not

significant at either the .01 or .05 level. Reasons as to why this hypothesis was not supported will be elaborated upon in chapter 5.

Reliability

Internal consistency. It was hypothesized that the pilot version of the SAM would demonstrate strong internal consistency, as evidenced by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .80 or higher. Results of the initial reliability analysis of the original, unrotated 65 items was strong, as evidenced by a coefficient alpha of .96. After individual item analysis, consideration of factor loadings, subsequent removal of 48 items, and factor rotation, another reliability analysis was conducted. The 20-item final scale's reliability analysis revealed a coefficient alpha of .90, considered to be a very strong indicator of internal consistency.

Dissertation Methods

Procedures

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is the next logical step in scale construction to explore the psychometric properties of the SAM. The purpose of a CFA is to see if the theoretical structure obtained in the EFA will be the same across a new sample of respondents (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Ford, McCallum & Tait, 1986). CFA is a refining measure to improve construct validity and identify method effects. The CFA allows for clear predictions about which factors exist, how they relate to the variables and how they relate to one another (Gorsuch, 1997). CFA is a confirmatory technique and best practices indicate that the planning of the analysis is driven by theory, including theoretical relationships among both the observed and unobserved variables (Schreiber, et al., 2006). The first step to developing measures with confirmatory factor analysis (Hatcher, 1994) is

to construct the basic confirmatory factor model (or program figure) comprised of the factors (or latent variables) found in the EFA. Coefficients will be set to 1 between error terms and observed variables as well as between observed variables and latent variables. The reason the paths are fixed at a specific value is so that the model is encouraged to minimize the number of parameters estimated (Schreiber et al., 2006).

The second step (Hatcher, 1994) is to identify residual terms of endogenous variables (a variable that is predicted to be causally affected by other variables in the model). Next, the third step requires that all parameters to be measured are clearly identified including item factor loadings, covariances between factors, and variances for exogenous variables (constructs influenced only by variables that are outside the confirmatory factor model). The final and fourth step in constructing the required model is verifying that the model is overidentified--for example, verifying that the number of data points in the analysis is larger than the number of parameters to be estimated (thus the large sample sized required).

Once the factor model has been developed the model is then tested to see if it fits the data obtained from the new validation sample (Hatcher, 1994). Ideally the model delivers a good fit, which is evaluated by reviewing overall goodness of fit indices and assessment of fit indices. The first index Hatcher recommends to review is the chi-square test. If the factor model is a good fit it will have a small chi-square value and a large *p* value ideally above .05 and nearer to 1.00. An additional recommendation for this first step is to observe the ratio between the degrees of freedom (*df*) and the chi-square value, requiring a ratio of less than two. Hatcher warns that models evaluated with the chi-square test often provide a chi-square statistic that is significant even if the model does show goodness of fit

with other models due to large validation sample sizes. The second step (Hatcher, 1994) is to review non-normed and comparative fit indices such as the CFI (Bentler, 1990) and the NNFI (Bentler & Bonett, 1980) for example.

Third, Hatcher recommends that significance tests for factor loadings be reviewed where a non-significant factor loading indicates that the involved indicator variable (measured scale item) is not adequately measuring the factor. If indicator variables are non-significant, this may require the item to be removed from the model or moved to another factor. Finally, the residual and normalized residual matrices will be reviewed for matrix entries of zero or near zero values for model goodness of fit. From there the measurement model can be revised based upon modification indices if the earlier consulted indices denote a poor fit of model to data (Hatcher, 1994).

Jackson, Gillaspy and Purc Stephenson (2009) recommend the consideration of additional models of fit that are theoretically plausible and identify conceivable comparable models to be considered for confirmatory factor analysis. Therefore in addition to the 3-factor model found in the pilot EFA other potential factor solutions including a single factor, forced rotation of the items with the 6 hypothesized dimensions serving as content areas instead of latent factors will be explored for psychometric viability during the CFA procedures. Best practices for evaluating confirmatory factor models indicate including additional, multiple indices of fitness not discussed at length in Hatcher (1994) to ensure the factor model fits the observed data from the new sample (Jackson, et al., 2009). These may include but are not limited to the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA, Steiger & Lind, 1980) and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI, Tucker & Lewis, 1973). This additional information will be utilized to assess the confirmatory factor model along

with the information obtained from the chi-square goodness of fit test and Comparative Fit Index (Bentler, 1990).

Dissertation Participant Demographics

Consistent with general practices in scale development (DeVellis, 2003), a minimum sample size of 200 is required for continued factor analysis and a sample of 300 is desirable. Participants were be recruited using similar methods as in the pilot procedures—online sampling. Various online social media sites and blogs were utilized to collect a diverse sample of American Atheists. The SAM was administered on Qualtrics through the University of North Dakota's subscription.A new sample was collected using similar recruitment procedures used in the pilot study. Special efforts to improve respondent recruitment procedures were implemented so that a more diverse sample of individuals was sampled. For example, instead of listing the survey participation link on websites and blogs for Atheists generally, specific female Atheist or African American Atheist blogs and websites were contacted for participation.

Consistent with recommended sample size requirements (e.g., DeVellis, 2003; Jackson, 2001), 378 respondents were used during the CFA procedure as a validation sample. **Gender.** The 378 respondents consisted of 184 males (48.7%) and 191 females (50.5%). Fortunately having almost equal percentages of males and females we have enough data to calculate an independent samples T-test to see if there is a mean difference for total SAM scores between males and females. Male SAM scores (*M = 47.12, SD = 14.49)* were not significantly different than Female SAM scores (*M = 49.30, SD = 14.44), t (373) = -1.46, p = .15*. This result suggests that gender does not impact stress experienced as a result of Atheist microaggressions as measured by the SAM. ; **Race.** The respondents

were 89.7% Caucasian/White. A Fisher's *r to z* transformation was completed to explore differences between the White and non-white participants. Perceived stress was correlated with the SAM for White participants, $r\ (332) = .115\ p < .05$ (two tailed) but not for the non white participants, $r\ (46) = .261$. The difference between these correlations is not statistically significant at the .05 or .01 level, Z = . 935. ; **Sexual Orientation.** Heterosexual respondents made up the majority of the sample aa 322 (85.2%) ; **Education.** College goers made up the majority of the sample with 31.0% (N = 117) having some college, and 30.7% (N = 116) having a 4-year degree . Masters degrees were held by 12.4% (N = 47) and 6.4% (N = 24) of the sample had doctorates or professional degrees. See table 5 for more detailed demographic information.

Table 5

Dissertation Respondent Demographics

	N	%
Age	21	5.6
18-20		
21-23	27	7.1
24-29	59	15.6
30-34	66	17.5
35-44	110	29.1
45-54	55	14.6
55-64	30	7.9
65 and over	10	2.6
Total	378	100.0
Gender		
Female	184	48.7
Male	191	50.5
Transgender	3	.8
Total	378	100.0

Table 5 continued

	N	*%*
Ethnicity		
African American	5	1.3
Asian American/Asian/Pacific Islander	2	.5
Caucasian American/White	332	87.8
Foreign National	1	.3
Hispanic/Latino American	14	3.7
Middle Eastern American	1	.3
Native American/American Indian	2	.5
Mixed Race/Bi-Racial	21	5.6
Total	378	100
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	322	85.2
Gay	14	3.7
Lesbian	5	1.3
Bisexual	37	9.8
Total	378	100
Marital Status		
Single	148	39.2
Married	173	45.8
Divorced	52	13.8
Widowed	5	1.3
Total	378	100
Income		
Under 15,000	73	19.3
15,000-25,000	66	17.5
26-40,000	66	17.5
40-60,000	58	15.3
60-90,000	59	15.6
90-120,000	31	8.2
120-150,000	16	4.2
150,000+	9	2.4
Total	378	100

Table 5 continued

	N	*%*
How many children do you have?		
0	192	50.8
1	61	16.1
2	84	22.2
3	31	8.2
4	7	1.9
5	3	.8
Total	378	100
Are you currently enrolled in school (e.g., college, graduate school, professional school)?		
Yes	107	28.3
No	271	71.7
Total	378	100
Highest Level of Education		
Less than High School	5	1.3
High School/GED	23	6.1
Some College	117	31.0
2-year College Degree	46	12.2
4-year College Degree	116	30.7
Masters Degree	47	12.4
Doctoral Degree (e.g., Ph.D.)	20	5.3
Professional Degree (e.g., M.D & J.D)	4	1.1
Total	378	100
50 States, D.C and Puerto Rico Location		
Alabama	5	1.3
Alaska	1	.3
Arizona	10	2.6
Arkansas	4	1.1
California	38	10.1
Colorado	21	5.6
Connecticut	1	.3
Delaware	1	.3

Table 5 continued

	N	*%*
District of Columbia	20	5.3
Florida	13	3.4
Georgia	2	.05
Hawaii	4	1.1
Idaho	10	2.6
Illinois	12	3.2
Indiana	4	1.1
Iowa	4	1.1
Kansas	11	2.9
Kentucky	2	.05
Louisiana	5	1.3
Maine	3	.08
Maryland	10	2.6
Massachusetts	7	1.9
Michigan	8	2.1
Minnesota	18	4.8
Mississippi	14	3.7
Missouri	1	.3
Montana	2	.5
Nebraska	3	.8
Nevada	8	2.1
New Hampshire	1	.3
New Jersey	15	4.0
New Mexico	6	1.6
New York	1	.3
North Carolina	9	2.4
North Dakota	3	.8
Ohio	10	2.6
Oklahoma	11	2.9
Oregon	4	1.1
Pennsylvania	8	2.1
Rhode Island	20	5.3
South Carolina	4	1.1
Tennessee	2	.5
Texas	11	2.9

Table 5 continued

	N	*%*
Utah	20	5.3
Vermont	5	1.3
Virginia	3	.8
Washington	2	.5
West Virginia	1	.3
Wisconsin	5	1.3
Wyoming	1	.3
I do not reside in the United States	10	2.6
Total	378	100
How long have you identified as an Atheist? (in years)		
1	30	7.9
10	44	11.6
11	6	1.6
12	9	2.4
13	1	.3
14	2	.5
15	16	4.2
16	5	1.3
17	9	2.4
18	5	1.3
19	2	.5
2	24	6.3
20	26	6.9
21	2	.5
23	6	1.6
24	3	.8
25	9	2.4
26	2	.5
27	4	1.1
28	2	.5
3	19	5.0
30	17	4.5
31	2	.5

Table 5 continued

	N	*%*
32	2	.5
33	3	.8
34	2	.5
35	7	1.9
36	2	.5
37	1	.3
38	3	.8
4	25	6.6
40	12	3.2
41	1	.3
42	1	.3
43	1	.3
44	1	.3
45	3	.8
46	1	.3
48	2	.5
49	1	.3
5	24	6.3
50	4	1.1
52	2	.5
55	1	.3
58	1	.3
6	9	2.4
60	1	.3
67	1	.3
7	12	3.2
8	8	2.1
9	2	.5
Total	378	100.0

Convergent and Divergent Validity on the Revised Scale

The measures of convergent and divergent validity used in the EFA will be again used to improve construct validity of the SAM. The hypothesized correlation values from

the pilot will remain the same for the dissertation project. Two additional scales were added to the dissertation procedures to evaluate the construct validity of the SAM. These two scales are reviewed below.

Reliability of the Dissertation Scale

Reliability will again be assessed utilizing coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951) as a measure of internal consistency. Coefficient alphas for the entire, revised scale and its factors will be obtained. It is hypothesized that all coefficient alphas obtained will be between .80 and .90.

Measures

Scale of atheist microaggressions (Pagano, McCullagh, Austin, Fuller, Grant, 2012). The reliability and validity information regarding this scale is listed above in the pilot scale results section.

Demographics questionnaire. General demographics information about the respondents was collected through the administration of a demographics questionnaire. Respondents were asked to respond to demographics related information in order to identify their age, number of years identifying as an Athiest, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, number of children, income, education and location in the U.S. The validation sample demographics are listed above in Table 5.

Marlowe-Crowne social desirability scale (MCSD; Marlowe & Crowne, 1960). See above for reliability and validity information regarding this scale. It is expected that this scale will serve as a measure of discriminant validity. Specifically it is hypothesized that the MCSD will show a low, non-significant correlation with the SAM.

Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). See above for reliability and validity information regarding this scale. It is expected that this scale will serve as a measure of divergent validity. Specifically it is hypothesized that the SWLS will have a small, negative correlation with the SAM at $-.40 < r < -.20$.

The perceived stress scale (PSS; Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983). This scale will be administered as a measure of convergent validity. It has a high measure of internal consistency ranging from .84 to .86, normed using a sample of American, college adults. It has a test-retest correlation of .85. This is a general measure of stress experienced in one's life that is more extensive than the SWLS. It is anticipated that this scales would have a small, positive relationship with the dissertation SAM at $.20 < r < .40$.

The ego identity process questionnaire (EIPQ; Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, & Geisinger, 1995). This scale will be administered as a measure of convergent validity. It is hypothesized that individuals with a more developed ego identity will be more aware of microaggressions that might be subtly offensive or outside the awareness of other Atheists individuals with a less developed ego identity. The internal consistency estimates for the two subscales were both .80 and .86. The test-retest reliability was for the two subscales was .90 and .76, both significant at $p < .01$. This scale was normed on American, college-aged students. It is expected that this scale will have a small, positive relationship with the dissertation SAM and years identifying as an Atheist at $.2 < r < .4$.

CHAPTER IV

DISSERTATION RESULTS

This chapter outlines the results of the dissertation project including an examination of factor structure utilizing information obtained from standard regression weights, use of modification indices and fit indices. Reliability and validity of the dissertation version of the SAM is also explored. The statistical procedures conducted for the results section of this dissertation project were done utilizing Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0.0.0 and SPSS AMOS version 21.0.0 (build 1178) obtained through the University of North Dakota's subscriptions. Fortunately the large sample size allows for a greater degree of confidence regarding the parameter estimates of the model and its stability (Marsh, Balla, McDonald, 1988; Schrieber, et al., 2006).

Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Factor Structure

Factor loadings. As recommended by Brown (2006), the minimally acceptable *standardized* loading sizes (sometimes referred to as regression weights) for items in a CFA are considered to be .40 or higher. Loading sizes indicate how much the latent variable is expressed by the individual item or indicator variable. Loading size is one piece of evidence that the hypothesized, theoretical model maps well onto the confirmatory sample. Table 5 lists the initial standard regression weights and squared multiple correlation weights (the extent that a factor can explain the variance in a manifest variable) for the SAM obtained during the CFA prior to modification. A maximum likelihood

method was utilized to estimate the parameters. A Bollen-Stine bootstrap (Bollen & Stine, 1992) was added as well in order to account for the skewed nature of the data. The data demonstrated a distribution with a skewness of .56 (SE=.13) and kurtosis of .37 (SE=.25). The squared multiple correlation (R^2) is the communality estimate for an indicator variable. The communality measures the percent of variance in a given indicator variable explained by its factor and may be construed as the reliability of the indicator. Hooper, Coughlan, and Mullen (2008) recommend a minimum squared multiple correlation value of .20. This ensures that items will be relatively error free with regards to the percent of variance in a given indicator variable explained by its latent variable (factor). Squared multiple correlations can be considered as the reliability of the indicator (item).

Table 6

*4 Factor Unmodified Model**

			Standardized Regression Weights**	Squared Multiple Correlations (R^2)
EAS	<---	AthMicro	.82	.66
DAP	<---	AthMicro	.97	.95
ARIN	<---	AthMicro	.58	.34
PAI	<---	AthMicro	.67	.45
Sam11	<---	EAS	.64	.42
Sam12	<---	EAS	.71	.50
Sam16	<---	EAS	.74	.55
Sam17	<---	EAS	.66	.43
Sam23	<---	EAS	.67	.45
Sam34	<---	EAS	.69	.48

Table 6 continued

			Standardized Regression Weights**	Squared Multiple Correlations (R^2)
Sam40	<---	DAP	.75	.56
Sam42	<---	DAP	.73	.54
Sam59	<---	DAP	.75	.56
Sam62	<---	DAP	.65	.43
Sam63	<---	DAP	.56	.32
Sam6	<---	ARIN	.60	.36
Sam18rw	<---	ARIN	.61	.38
Sam33	<---	ARIN	.65	.42
Sam35	<---	ARIN	.59	.35
Sam50	<---	ARIN	.57	.33
Sam1	<---	ARIN	.44	.19
Sam26	<---	PAI	.65	.42
Sam29	<---	PAI	.89	.78
Sam45	<---	PAI	.65	.43

EAS = Endorsing Atheist Stereotypes, DAP = Denial of Atheist Prejudice, ARIN = Assumption of Religious Identity as Normal, PAI = Pathology of Atheist Individuals

*Before covariation of error variables through use of modification indices.

**Each factor's ability to predict their respective items regression weights is significantly different from zero at the .001 level (two-tailed).

Best Practices for fit indices. Fit indices are statistical estimates that act as a second piece of evidence to determine how well the hypothesized model works with the confirmatory sample (Bentler & Bonnett, 1980) . There are multiple types of fit indices that are used to evaluate a model. ***Absolute fit indices*** (Steiger & Line, 1980) presume that the best fitting model has a fit of zero. The measure of fit then determines how far the model is from perfect fit *without* use of an alternative model (Sun, 2005). Absolute fit measures suppose that the best fitting model has a fit of zero, so such measures of fit indicate how far the model is from perfect fit. Consequently, larger values suggest worse fit between the model and the data. The most common example of an absolute fit index the χ^2, which should be non-significant to prove a significant fit. This statistic, as a measure of model fit, is often considered unsatisfactory in providing evidence for fit (Hatcher, 1996). It is very difficult to reduce the χ^2 to non-significant levels as it is sensitive to sample size (i.e., larger samples leading to more *significant* values (a type I error) and smaller samples too likely to accept poor models (a type II error). It is presented in a ratio over the *df* often as a matter of tradition with values at or below 2.0 as evidence of good fit. Another common absolute fit index is the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). The Root Mean Square Analysis (RMSEA: Steiger, 1990) is an index that rewards larger sample sizes and less complex (i.e., less variables) models. The RMSEA is unique as it assumes a non-central distribution of the chi-square (normally considered centrally distributed with some other absolute fit indices). ***Relative fit indices*** compare the hypothesized model *with* a baseline model effectively comparing the chi-square statistics of the two models. A common example is the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), sometimes known as the *Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)* (Sun, 2005). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI: Bentler, 1990) is another

relative fit index that, like the RMSEA, assumes a non-central chi-square distribution when testing the model. The CFI is an incremental fit index where a value of zero signifies the worst model fit to the data and a value of 1 indicates the best possible model fit to the data. ***Parsimony fit indices*** (Mulaik, James, Van Alstine, Bennett, Lind, & Stilwell, 1989) are models that favor appropriately, simpler models. As Kenny and McCoach (2003) write, such indices as the CFI and TLI favor complex models and it is important to have contrasting fit indices. Two common measures of parsimony are the Parsimony adjusted CFI (or PCFI) and the Parsimony adjusted NFI (or PNFI). Table 6 provides a summary of fit indices and their suggested cutoffs (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008).

Schrieber, et al. (2006) report that the most popular fit indices are the TLI, CFI, and RMSEA with suggested cut offs of RMSEA < .06, TLI, > .95, CFI >. 95 (as informed by Hu and Bentler, 1999) suggesting excellent fit. Those three indices are also congruent with Jackson, et al.'s (2009) suggested indices in order to detect model misspecification and lack of dependence on sample size. Additionally, a measure of parsimony (e.g., PNFI or PGFI) is suggested for inclusion to measure model fit. Hu and Bentler (1999) suggest a two-index presentation strategy that relies on the use of the (SRMR) paired with the TLI (or NNFI), RMSEA or CFI. They suggest a cutoff for the SRMR of .09 or lower. There has been substantial deliberation in recent years about the practice of utilizing hard cut-off standards for model fit (e.g., Vernon & Eysenck, 2007,).

Following these recommendations the fit indices for the unmodified model are: *TLI = .84, CFI = .86, RMSEA = .08 (90% CI =.07-.09), PCFI= .75, SRMR = .07* and *PNFI = .71*. The chi squared information is as follows: a $\chi^2 = 561.83$, *df =166,* χ^2*/ df = 3.39, p = .000*. In order to be thorough for this dissertation project, the above fit indices

cover both sample and population based discrepancy assumptions involved at both the absolute and relative level of the model (Sun, 2005), providing a breadth of information appropriate for analysis. Table 6 provides a summary of fit indices and their suggested cutoffs (Hooper et al., 2008).

Table 7

Fit Indices Common to Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Hooper et al., 2008)

Fit Index	Acceptable Threshold Levels	Description
Chi-Square $\chi 2$	• Low $\chi 2$ relative to degrees of freedom with an insignificant p-value ($p > 0.05$)	• Presented alone, not a good index of fit, but still traditionally presented.
Relative $\chi 2$ ($\chi 2$/df)	• 2:1 (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2007) ; 3:1 (Kline, 2005)	• Adjusts for sample size.
RMSEA	• Values less than 0.07 (Steiger, 2007) represent acceptable fit. • Values less than 0.03 represent excellent fit.	• Has a known distribution. Favors parsimony.
SRMR	• SRMR less than 0.08 (Hu and Bentler, 1999)	• Standardized version of the RMR. • Easier to interpret due to its standardized nature.
TLI (NNFI)	• Values greater than 0.95, suggesting excellent fit, greater than .90 suggesting an acceptable fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).	• Non-normed, values can fall outside the 0-1 range. Favors parsimony. • Performs well in simulation studies(Sharma et al, 2005; McDonald and Marsh, 1990)
CFI	• Values greater than 0.95, suggesting excellent fit, greater than .90 suggesting a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).	• Normed, 0-1 range.
PCFI	• Values greater than 0.95, suggesting excellent fit, greater than .90 suggesting a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).	• Measure of Parsimony based on the CFI.
PNFI	• Values greater than 0.95, suggesting excellent fit, greater than .90 suggesting a good fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).	• Measure of Parsimony based on the NFI.

Best practices for model modifications. Because confirmatory models are based on hypothesized theoretical relations among observed and latent variables, reduced fit of a model (as indicated by fit indices) may be seen by some as evidence that the confirmatory model is not plausible or is poorly comprehended. *However,* others may view poor fit of a hypothesized model to a confirmatory model as evidence of specification errors (systematic statistical correlations) in the model—meaning there may be a discrepancy between a theoretically plausible model hypothesized and the true model in the population. Covarying error terms allows for us to account for the specification errors without implying a causal relationship (Whittaker, 2012). The specification errors could be attributed to a number of influences, including similar item stems and item content. Items within the same factor are theoretically related, logically alike and similar by virtue of their shared latent construct, but they do not have any causal ties to one another (Whittaker, 2012). Several authors (Jackson, et al., 2009; MacCallum, Rozonowski, & Necowitz, 1992; Schrieber, et al., 2006) have cited concerns about modifying models without justifiable, theory driven reasons, citing this practice as capitalization on chance. When modifying the CFA model it is important to report the modification test used, why it was used and whether or not the modification makes theoretical sense for the model, otherwise the chance of making a Type 1 error increases with each modification (Schrieber, et al., 2006).

For this project, in order to maintain theoretical justification and to be congruent with best practices, only error variances *within* factors were correlated based upon the size of the modification index (abbreviated MI in AMOS), which is a univariate version of the Lagrange multiplier (Hatcher, 1996). The univariate version of the Lagrange multiplier has been shown to perform equally well in modification procedures when compared to the

multivariate version (Hutchison, 1993). Utilizing the MI, improvement in fit is measured by a reduction in the chi-square value and requires *no* missing data in the model. MIs with large values, specifically larger than a chi square value of 3.84, *df =1*, at an alpha level of .05 are able to be examined for covariation (Whittaker, 2012). This corresponds to an MI value of 10 on AMOS (Muthén & Muthén, 2007).

Following Whittaker's (2012) recommendation, in conjunction with MI, the expected parameter change value (EPC) was also considered. The EPC is the estimated change in the new path coefficient when the model is altered. It is the estimated coefficient when adding bi-directional correlation arrows (freeing up variables to *covary*). The EPC value is, in effect, the regression coefficient for the added arrow in the model. Since there is limited information on official cutoff values for MIs, it is ideal to have both a significant and large MI and EPC when considering the addition of new parameters (Whittaker, 2012). EPC absolute values have been previously recommended for model modification (e.g., Luijben & Boomsma, 1988).

Whittaker recommends that if either the MI or EPC are not significant *and* large, to not freely estimate the parameter. Like the MI, a large and unstandardized EPC (greater than .10 or .20 for a standardized EPC, statistically significant at $p < .05$ level or higher) provides evidence for allowing variables to freely covary. *All EPC's produced by AMOS are unstandardized.* The large size of the current dissertation sample (N = 378) attenuates some the risk inherent in modifying the model utilizing MI's and EPC's (Brown, 2006; MacCullum, et al., 1992; Whittaker, 2012). A large sample size does this because it increases the chances that we have more statistical power to appropriately detect

specification errors in a theoretically *plausible* model (as opposed to an ill-fitting model to the population).

Results of error covariation. Best practices in error covariation suggest that each pair of error variances to be covaried be presented in a step-by-step fashion. After each pair is presented, the resulting change in relevant fit indices will be presented so that progressive improvement of the scale can be observed. Following this, the final standard regression weights and squared multiple correlation weights will be presented for the modified model.

1. The first error variances that were contenders for covariation belonged to Sam18rw and Sam33, both in the Assumption of Religious Identity as Normal factor. The MI value for those two terms was 120.73 and the EPC was .24, clearly strong candidates for covariation. The results of this covariation are as follows: $\chi^2 = 404.22$, *df =165,* $\chi^2/df = 2.45$, *p = .000. TLI = .90, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .06 (90% CI = .05-.07), PCFI= .80, SRMR = .06* and *PNFI = .75.*
2. The 2nd pair of error terms to consider for covariation belonged to Sam11 and Sam12 with an MI of 28.202 and an EPC of .192. Their covariation resulted in the following changes: $\chi^2 = 373.20$, *df = 164 =,* $\chi^2/df = 2.28$, *p = .000. TLI = .92, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .06 (90% CI = .06-.07), PCFI = .80, SRMR = .06* and *PNFI = .76.*
3. The third pair considered for covariation belonged toSam35 and Sam1 with an MI of 19.22 and an EPC of .17, resulting in the following changes: $\chi^2 = 346.82$, *df = 163,* $\chi^2/df = 2.12$, *p = .000. TLI = .93, CFI = .94,*

RMSEA = .05 (90% CI = .05-.06), PCFI = .80, SRMR = .05 and *PNFI = .76*.

4. The fourth pair considered for covariation belonged to Sam62 and Sam63 with an MI of 13.73 and an EPC of .24, resulting in the final scale properties: $\chi^2 = 332.23$, *df = 162 =,* $\chi^2/df = 2.05$, *p = .000. TLI = .93, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .05 (90% CI = .05-.06), PCFI = .80, SRMR = .05* and *PNFI = .76*.

No other MI's and EPC's for additional model modifications meet Whittaker's (2012) suggested standards. Table 7 contains the final values for fit indices after model modification through use of error covariation. For comparison, the other model derived from the EFA which contains 3 factors is presented alongside having underwent the same model modification procedures.

Table 8

Fit Indices Post Model Modification for 4 and 3 Factor Models

	CMIN/DF	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	TLI	PCFI	PNFI
4 Factor	2.05, p = .000	.94	.05	.05	.93	.80	.76
3 Factor	2.44, p = .000	.94	.06	.08	.92	.75	.72

Table 8 contains the standard regression weights and squared multiple correlation weights for the modified model.

Table 9

**4 Factor Modified Model*

			Standardized Regression Weights**	Squared Multiple Correlations (R^2)
EAS	<---	AthMicro	.84	.70
DAP	<---	AthMicro	.98	.95
ARIN	<---	AthMicro	.62	.34
PAI	<---	AthMicro	.67	.45
Sam11	<---	EAS	.60	.36
Sam12	<---	EAS	.67	.45
Sam16	<---	EAS	.74	.55
Sam17	<---	EAS	.66	.44
Sam23	<---	EAS	.68	.47
Sam34	<---	EAS	.69	.48
Sam40	<---	DAP	.75	.56
Sam42	<---	DAP	.74	.54
Sam59	<---	DAP	.77	.56
Sam62	<---	DAP	.65	.43
Sam63	<---	DAP	.60	.31
Sam6	<---	ARIN	.58	.34
Sam18rw	<---	ARIN	.44	.20
Sam33	<---	ARIN	.49	.24
Sam35	<---	ARIN	.61	.37
Sam50	<---	ARIN	.67	.45

Table 9 continued

			Standardized Regression Weights**	Squared Multiple Correlations (R^2)
Sam1	<---	ARIN	.44	.20
Sam26	<---	PAI	.65	.42
Sam29	<---	PAI	.88	.78
Sam45	<---	PAI	.65	.43

*EAS = Endorsing Atheist Stereotypes, DAP = Denial of Atheist Prejudice, ARIN = Assumption of Religious Identity as Normal, PAI = Pathology of Atheist Individuals

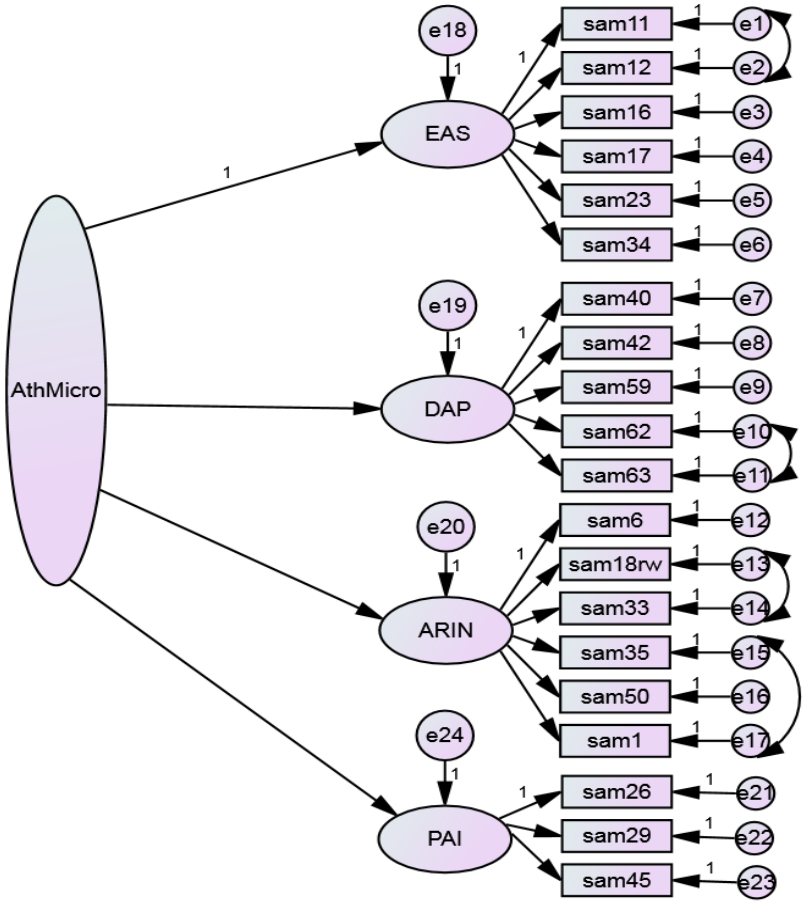
**Each factor's ability to predict their respective items regression weights is significantly different from zero at the .001 level (two-tailed).

After model modification there were three items (all apart of the Assumption of Religious Identity as Normal factor) that performed adequately with regard to their standard regression weight, but had low squared multiple correlation weights—items 18rw, 33, and 1. With the exception of item 1, which demonstrated mild improvement after modification, the other items' squared multiple correlation weights were reduced. Given that all of these items were a part of error covariation pairs, these results are not surprising. With regard to the structure of the scale, it is justifiable to keep these items because they are required to maintain the factor structure observed in the exploratory factor analysis.

Theoretically, it is important to have these items as they make up almost half of the items in a factor that has increasingly strong support for its presence in the lives of religious minorities (Cragun et al., 2012; Hammer et al., 2011; Nadal, 2008; Nadal et al., 2010; Nadal et al., 2012). These items express the institutional pervasiveness of religion in

public and secular environments (Sam1) as well as the bewilderment and disbelief when an individual discloses their Atheist Identification (Sam18rw; 33). Particularly for Sam18rw and Sam33, their retention is important because recent research has shown that a large amount of discrimination Atheists experience is directly tied to self-identifying as an Atheist (see Cragun, 2012). See Figure 1 for the post-modification model.

Figure 1. Post modification model



Hypothesis Two: Discriminant Validity

A scale used to measure social desirability independent of psychopathology created by Crowne and Marlowe (1960) was used to measure if the SAM elicited socially desirable responses. It was predicted that the scale would serve as a measure of discriminant validity. It was predicted that there would be no significant correlations between both the pilot and dissertation versions of the SAM and this scale, $-.2 < r < .2$. Social desirability was not correlated with the SAM, yielding non-significant results utilizing a correlation analysis revealing a Pearson's correlation coefficient of $r = -.03$, $p = .57$*(two tail)*. These results do corroborate the hypothesis.

Hypothesis Three: Divergent Validity

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) is a measure of global life satisfaction and would serve as a measure of divergent validity. It was predicted that individuals endorsing more frequent and upsetting experiences of microaggressions would report lower life satisfaction. It was specifically predicted that there would be a small, negative correlation between $r = -.4$ and $r = -.2$. The correlation analysis revealed a negative correlation $r = -.11$, $p = .04$ *(two tail)* significant at the .05 level. This is an improvement over the non-significant, less negatively correlated results from the SAM's pilot scale data, however the results do not corroborate the hypothesis.

Hypothesis Four: Convergent Validity

The perceived stress scale (PSS; Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983) is a measure of general stress and was administered as a measure of convergent validity. It is anticipated that this scale would have a small, positive relationship with the dissertation SAM at $.20 < r < .40$. The correlation analysis revealed a positive correlation between the PSS and the SAM with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of $r = .13$, $p = .01$ *(two tail)*

significant at the .05 level. These results do not corroborate the hypothesis.

Hypothesis Five: Convergent Validity

The ego identity process questionnaire (EIPQ; Balistreri, Busch-Rossnagel, & Geisinger, 1995) was administered as a measure of convergent validity. It was expected that this scale would have a small, positive relationship with the SAM and years identifying as an Atheist at $.20 < r < .40$. Ego Identity was positively correlated with the SAM with a Pearson's correlation coefficient of $r = .17$, $p = .00$ *(two tail)* significant at the .01 level. Ego Identity was positively correlated (non-significant) with years identified as an Atheist $r = .03$, $p = .51$ *(two tail)*. The results do not corroborate the hypothesis.

Hypothesis Six: Internal Consistency

It is hypothesized that the SAM would demonstrate a strong internal consistency, as evidenced by an alpha coefficient of .80 or higher but not exceeding .90 for both the pilot and dissertation scales. Consistent with the pilot version of the SAM, the dissertation project had an internal consistency of .90 as well. This result does corroborate the hypothesis.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Interpretations, implications, and limitations of the Scale of Atheist Microaggressions' (SAM) construction are considered herein. The purpose of the SAM's construction was to create a psychometrically sound instrument to measure the effects of small, often subtle forms of discrimination (i.e., microaggressions) that Atheist's experience. This is an important endeavor for research and multiculturalism as Atheists and other non-religious groups are a growing minority within the United States, a country in which religion plays an important part in numerous facets of society.

Factor Structure and Internal Consistency of Scale

Nadal et al. (2010) proposed six types of microaggressions that may be relevant to religious and non-religious minorities. These six types of microaggressions served as the theoretical framework from which the items of the SAM were developed. The factor structure found in the exploratory factor analysis (EFA), informed by Nadal et al.'s work, fit the confirmatory sample satisfactorily. This is evidenced by three sources of information: standardized regressions weights, squared multiple correlations and theory. The factor structure examined during this study by means of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is partially supported by relevant literature on contemporary forms of discrimination—specifically microaggressions (Sue et al., 2007). The theory of microaggressions was applied to discrimination that Atheists may face, informed by the suggested taxonomy of microaggressions that religious and non-religious minorities may

face by Nadal et al. (2010) as recent research has shown that Atheists experience forms of discrimination that are unique to their particular non-religious identification (e.g., Edgell et al., 2006; Hammer et al., 2012).

To date, their proposed taxonomy has only been studied qualitatively with Muslim-Americans (Nadal, Griffin, Hamit, Leon, Tobio, & Rivera, 2012), where it was found that two of the original six where not as prominent for Muslim Americans, Assumption of Religious Homogeneity and Denial of Religious Prejudice. Similar to that study, this project did not generate all six proposed factors. During the scale construction procedure enough items were generated by Pagano et al. (2013) for each factor so that each one had an opportunity to persist throughout the expert review of the items and the EFA, both of which function as not only a way to improve construct and content validity, but also as an item reduction procedure.

Nadal et al. (2012) wrote that the remaining two types of microaggressions were not present in their final results because they were not as prominent of a concern for their sample as the two new ones generated. Similarly, some of the hypothesized factors for the SAM may not have persisted through expert review and the EFA because they are not as relevant to Atheists as other forms of microaggressions are. For example, the factor of *Exoticization* (instances where people view other religions as stylish, foreign, or mysterious) is not a concern for many Atheists like it might be for Muslim American women that wear a hijab. There is less support from the literature on forms of Atheist discrimination for this particular form of hypothesized microaggression—the central theme of Atheist discrimination according to recent research (e.g., Gervais, Shariff & Norenzayann, 2011) being trust.

All of the items of the SAM in the modified model load to their respective factors according to the suggested cutoffs proposed by Brown (2006). All of the items are considered acceptably reliable according to their squared multiple correlation values (Hooper et al., 2008). Regarding model fit, there are individuals and groups that study psychometrics and structural equation modeling that would accept the SAM's modified model only with great caution due to the model modification that took place (e.g., MacCallum, Roznowski, & Necowitz, 1992). They may claim that the final model after modification benefited form a capitalization on chance. However, as has been explained, there are also others who would also argue that poor fit of a hypothesized model to a confirmatory model as evidence of specification errors in the model—meaning there may be a discrepancy between a theoretically plausible model hypothesized and the true model in the population (e.g., Whittaker, 2012). Efforts to utilize best practices took place during model modification to maintain statistical *and* theoretical justification of the modifications (Hatcher, 1994).

When comparing the practice of assessing model fit of the SAM to other scales that measure frequency and severity of microaggressions experienced, the SAM contends well amongst them. The REMS (Nadal et al., 2011) reported the following fit indices: χ^2 (945, N=2620) 1400.74, $p < .001$, CFI = .60, RMSEA = .07. The IMABI (Mercer et al., 2011) considerably strong values for their fit indices: χ^2 (945, N =385) = 1978.74, $p < .001$, CFI = .99, TLI = .99, RMSEA = .05. Balsam et al. (2011) did not conduct a confirmatory factor analysis on their instrument and therefore no information regarding model fit can be ascertained at this time. Much to their disadvantage, none of these other instruments

reported measures of parsimony, therefore direct comparisons between them and the SAM's performance cannot be made.

Regarding internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) the SAM across both the EFA and the CFA demonstrated an appropriately high level of internal consistency without being overly redundant. An adequate level of internal consistency was also reflected in the factors or sub-scales of the SAM as well. This indicates that the scale overall has both statistical and theoretical independence within a framework that is addressing the same underlying construct—forms of Atheist Microaggressions. Though the use of Cronbach's alpha as a measure of reliability for scales has been debated over time (see Sijtsma, 2008 for detailed discussion of the limitations of Cronbach's alpha), it is still one of the most widely reported and utilized measures of internal consistency.

Construct and Content Validity

Validity in scale construction is important as it differentiates psychology as a science from other, nonscientific methodologies to the exploration and investigation of human behavior. Having a scale with strong evidence for its validity in various domains allows its users to have confidence that it is accurately assessing what it is supposed to measure, therefore having strong utility in both applied and research domains. It was predicted that the SAM would have a small negative correlation with the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985) and small positive correlations with the Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen et al., 1983) and Ego Identity Process Questionnaire (Balistreri et al., 1995). The SAM did not at either point of the scale construction project (during the EFA or CFA) provide sufficient evidence for the hypotheses made regarding both convergent and

divergent validity (forms of construct validity). The SAM did, however, demonstrate divergent validity through assessment of whether or not it elicits a socially desirable response set.

Compared to other instruments' validity, the SAM performs adequately. To its disadvantage, the SAM did not have any other measures of Atheist discrimination or religious minority stress to pair itself with in order to assess construct validity like other measures did. For example, the Racial and Ethnic Minority Scale (Nadal et al., 2011) had strong, positive correlations with the Racism and Life Experience Scale-Brief Version (between $r = .40$-$.70$ for the whole scale and sub-scales), a short measure that assesses levels of perceived racism for racial minorities and the accompanying stress. The Inventory of Microaggressions Against Black Individuals (IMABI; Mercer et al., 2011), like the REMS, has reported strong correlations with other measures of racism to evaluate its construct validity. While it did perform well with these other measures (e.g., $r = .84$ with the Index of Race Related Stress) its correlations with other instruments measuring general stress and more clinically significant psychological problems were more moderate (between $r = .30$ and .40). No other, non-race or ethnicity based measures were used to assess its validity. Balsam et al.'s (2011) instrument and its subscales only achieved lower levels of correlation (between $r = .05$ and .25) with measures of construct validity that examine depression and general stress.

One reason for the lower than expected correlations with measures to establish the validity of the SAM may have to do with its limited length and item content. For example, the author received an email from a participant that criticized the scale for not having enough items that addressed the microaggressions potentially experienced by those that

are not public or "out" about their Atheism for fear of being ostracized, banished from *or even physically harmed* by family and community. This individuals concern speaks specifically to the SAM's content validity, that is, an instruments ability to represent all of the aspects of a particular construct. Through item and scale development procedures, the author attempted to have the SAM represent all of the proposed non-religious *microaggression* factors authored by Nadal et al. (2011).

Physical harm coming to someone however may not be appropriate to investigate through a microaggressions lens, even when conceptualizing it as a microassault. Physical harm coming to someone is perhaps too blatant a form of discrimination and animosity that may be better addressed in a different structured or semi-structured assessment that is not focused on the more subtle forms of discrimination. There is some early data from Hammer et al. (2012) that supports the continued investigation of hate crimes as defined by the FBI (e.g., being physically threatened or actually assaulted because of one's identification as an Atheist). They reported that 14% of their all-Atheist sample (n = 817) experienced some form of hate crime *at least* once in their lifetime.

Microaggressions, by their definition, are oftentimes subtle, slights and snubs and may be outside of the conscious awareness of both the perpetrator as well as the victim (Sue et al., 2007). This also implies that the stress potentially encountered from experiencing a microaggression may not be within the immediate awareness of the individual as well. The potential serious mental and physical health problems associated with exposure to Microaggressions occur within the context of individuals' cumulative exposure over time (Sue, 2010a; 2010b). This means that, while significant for some in

certain situations, the effect of a single microaggression towards an individual is deemphasized in favor of the cumulative effect of the exposure.

Regarding the validity of the SAM, this suggests that obtaining the high levels of stress and awareness that would validate the instrument with other measures of stress and well-being may not be obtained very easily. This assertion is corroborated by the item-level and scale-level information that demonstrated positive skew (i.e., generally, the respondents did not find the examples of microaggressions on the SAM very upsetting). Outcome measures that address more construct-specific forms of stress and well-being (e.g., depression, self-esteem, anxiety) may also be helpful in assessing the level of perceived discrimination and stress in individuals that have a lot of privilege. As Operario and Fiske (2001) recommend, with an awareness of privilege comes an awareness of disadvantage, therefore assessing levels of White individuals' awareness of their own privilege is important in understanding perceived stress and associated reactions.

There are numerous forms of discrimination that minority individuals and groups can experience that range from small, verbal slights to large, effusive and aggressive behavioral acts. Discrimination can also be rooted in institutions that systemically block minorities from obtaining equal rights and maintain group level inequalities. Developing a single scale to measure all forms of discrimination is not always a necessarily feasible or wise. The more factors present (representing distinct forms of discrimination) in a scale, especially when they are related, make for an increasingly complicated scale construction project that may not yield a psychometrically sound instrument. Having multiple forms of discrimination on a single instrument is not only difficult to create, but would tax the time and energy of the respondents with what would likely be a larger number of items. The

development of the SAM attempted to retain as many factors as supported by theory and psychometric data while taking into consideration the amount of effort respondents had put forth to complete the SAM and its measures of construct validity.

To its benefit, the SAM was able to broadly address its construct validity to an extent through detailed and thorough scale constructions procedures as informed by DeVellis (2003). The SAM was grounded in scientific *and* theoretical literature regarding contemporary forms of discrimination (most specifically Microaggressions). This is critical, Clark and Watson (1995) say, because the most accurate and efficient measures are those with recognized construct validity that are expressions of constructs in an articulated theory that are sustained by empirical data. In addition to being grounded in theory and consistent with DeVellis, five academics were solicited to provide expert feedback on the items and scale dimensions in order to improve content and construct validity (Allen & Yen, 1979; Hardesty & Bearden, 2004). The academics were all considered to be authorities on either microaggression theory or discriminatory behaviors and beliefs about Atheists.

Another important area to discuss is the application of the theory of Microaggressions to Atheists, a generally understudied population that is comprised of generally privileged individuals—White males. The theory and study of Microaggressions up until the last few years have focused almost exclusively on racial and ethnic minorities. It was not until recently that this theory has been applied to sexual identity minorities, individuals with disabilities and religious minorities. Regarding the validity of the SAM, it is important to consider a number of factors related to the privileged identities (e.g., White, Cisgender) of this study's respondents. First the respondents may have been more resilient

to stress due to having less discrimination perpetrated against them, possibly having more mental and emotional reserves as well as access mental health services (see Cook, Zuvekas, Carson, Wayne, Versper & McGuire, 2014) to cope with.

Race based discrimination has been linked with a deterioration in mental health in multiple racial and ethnic minorities, including to African Americans (see Carter, 2007), two-spirit American Indians and Alaskan Natives (Chae & Walters, 2009), Asian Americans (Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal & Torino, 2009), and Latinos (Gee et al, 2006). Meta-analysis has further demonstrated the connection between perceived discrimination and both mental and physical health (e.g., Pascoe & Smart-Richman, 2012). Second, because microaggressions are subtle and White individuals do not experience the same levels of discrimination and powerlessness in society, the White majority in both of the samples may not be used to observing and processing microaggressions perpetrated towards portions of their identity in their everyday lives.

Regarding this second validity issue, it is important to consider socialization processes and the personal as well as group level racial awareness of White individuals. One way individuals and groups become aware of their race is, unfortunately, by having their race disparaged or discriminated against. A recent study reported that many White individuals believe that they are now subject to new, generalized anti-White bias in America (Norton & Sommers, 2011). The study's White participants believed that the anti-White bias is more prevalent than the anti-Black bias. The authors write that these results indicate that "not only do Whites think more progress has been made toward equality than Blacks, but Whites also believe that progress is linked to a new inequality—at their expense" (p. 217). However, the title and dynamic of racism is not generally applied

to White individuals experiences, the authors reported, once a critical eye is directed towards relevant literature on power in society and racial identity development.

For example, Ridely (2005) writes that racism is not the same as racial prejudice; racism always contains harmful behavior, whereas racial prejudice only encompasses negative attitudes, opinions and intentions. Therefore, racism is more behavioral and racial prejudice is dispositional he concluded. Most importantly, he asserts that true racism requires power to implement. Specifically, this power is used to deny access and opportunities or privileges to members of one racial group while allowing members of another group to enjoy said opportunities. Models of White racial identity development (see Rowe, Bennett & Atkinson, 1994) also support this notion that White individuals do not experience the same oppressive environments as those experienced by other minority groups. We can see that this is largely the case as White individuals tend to outperform ethnic and racial minorities in a number of critically important socio-economic factors such as: employment, income, access to healthcare, and staying out of the criminal justice system (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Krueger, Rothestein, & Turner, 2001; Tonry, 2010, Williams & Rucker, 2000).

Models of White racial identity development further support the idea that White individuals are privileged in such a way that allows them to remain ignorant of their privilege. For example, Scott and Robinson's Key model (Scott & Robinson, 2001) details that those early in their racial development may tend to deny, overlook or minimize issues and interactions surrounding race, which is allied with the study of colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2003a) and forms of microinvalidations (Sue et al., 2007). This form of ethnocentrism, they report, is consistent with the "no-contact" type, similar to the study of

aversive racism (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004). The authors also acknowledge that those operating in this type may tend to ignore and minimize other privileged aspects of their identity as well, such as gender.

Operario and Fiske (2001) investigated the extent to which ethnic identity and group identification affects perceptions of discrimination in both a White and Minority group (comprised of Asian, Black, and Latino identified individuals) in one study. They did not list the gender or religious demographics of their participants. The concept of personal/group discrimination discrepancy (see Taylor, Wright, Porter, 1994) served as the study's theoretical foundation. The concept states that members of stigmatized groups acknowledge that their group is subject to discrimination but deny that it affects them personally to the same extent.

Operario and Fiske found that ethnic identity did not moderate the personal-group discrepancy among Whites, in other words, low and high-ethnic identified White participants reported non-significantly different amounts of personal versus group discrimination. Minority group members however, perceived more prejudice than do their White counter parts at the personal *and* group discrimination level overall. The level of ethnic identification moderated the discrepancy phenomena for minorities only at the personal level (i.e., higher ethnic identity equals more perceived *personal* discrimination) but not for White participants. What this means for the dissertation project is that generally speaking, White individuals may not perceive as much discrimination in their lives, as Operario and Fiske (2001) discuss, due to their amount of privilege in society. However, taking into account the amount of perceived discrimination by the ethnic minority group with consideration to their level of identification with a stigmatized portion of their

identity (ethnicity), those with higher identification with a stigmatized portion of their identity may perceive more discrimination.

For their study examining the role of ethnic identity in perception of discrimination, Operario and Fiske (2001) delved further into their data by investigating the extent to which level of ethnic identity interacts with perception of prejudice in high-ambiguous discriminatory experiences (i.e., subtle forms of discrimination akin to microaggressions) and low-ambiguous conditions (more obviously discriminatory). Their sample was comprised of Black, Latino and Asian individuals, again with no mention of their religious or gender identification. Interestingly, they found that those who scored highly on ethnic identity were significantly more reactive to the subtle forms of discrimination. This supports the theory and research around surrounding microaggressions that "…[t]he internal conflict between explicit and implicit messages creates an exceptionally stressful situation because it fosters confusion between the overt message and one's experiential reality" (Sue, 2010b p. 88).

There is other research that supports the role of identification with perceived discrimination and stress. For example, different aspects of ethnic identity have been shown to affect the amount of perceived discrimination and depression as well as self-esteem in Asian Americans (Greene, Way, Pahl, 2006; Lee, 2005). There is early research that supports these phenomena with Atheists as well. Atheists who more strongly identified with their atheism, who are "out" about their Atheist identity to more people, and who grew up with harsher familial religious expectations reported experiencing and perceiving more frequent discrimination (Hammer et al., 2012).

As Hammer et al. acknowledge, this concept of being more public with one's identity and its affect on discrimination has been studied more extensively with LGBT populations. Previous research provides evidence that a larger degree of outness leads to more frequent victimization (e.g., D'Augelli, Pilkington, & Hershberger, 2002; Waldo, Hesson-McInnis, & D'Augelli, 1998), However it is not uncommon for both out and closeted LGBT individuals to report similar levels of victimization (Gortmaker & Brown, 2006). This is related to the concept of "passing" which is when an individual actively attempts to hide a stigmatized portion of their identity in order to maintain congruence with the majority. While some believe it is permissible to pass and conceal a stigmatized identity in certain situations and environments (e.g., Anderson & Holliday, 2005), there is evidence that this process is associated with depressive symptoms (Lewis, Derlega, Griffin & Krowinski, 2003) and higher overall psychological distress (Morris, Waldo & Rothblum, 2001).

There has also been some limited research into the interaction of Islamic identity, perceived discrimination and well-being for Muslims. Jasperse, Ward and Jose (2012) found that individuals who strongly identified psychologically with Islam reported significantly diminished life satisfaction and a higher presence of psychological symptoms under conditions of high amounts of perceived discrimination. Jasperse et al. also reported mixed results about outward and behavioral forms of Islamic identification with women's use of the hijab. She reported that though women often reported feeling more connected to Allah (swt) and to their culture while wearing it, quantitatively women wearing the hijab reported experiencing more discrimination. Wearing the hijab also did

not moderate the effect between perceived religious discrimination and psychological well-being.

There is some limited support of the research on level of identity and identity development's applicability to the dissertation project's largely White male samples. More specifically, one measure of convergent validity looking at ego identity demonstrated a small but significant, positive correlation with the SAM. Those results suggest that those who have a more fully developed identity (incorporating their non-religious beliefs) were more likely to perceive discrimination and find it stressful. Future research on discrimination towards Atheists, or largely White groups of non-religious or non-traditionally religious individuals may benefit from exploring a number of additional areas including the level of identity development specific to the particular portion of their identity that is disparaged. The level of openness or outness with one's Atheist identity also likely affects their perception of discrimination and stress from that perceived discrimination.

Implications

Research Implications

As Atheists are a relatively understudied population, the effects of exposure to forms of discrimination like microaggressions are largely unknown. This dissertation project is an attempt to create a measure to study the effects of microaggressions on Atheists. The SAM is a theoretically grounded and data driven instrument that has demonstrated a consistently high level of internal consistency over two large samples. The factors of the SAM have evidence to support both its theoretical *and* statistical independence. The utilization of the SAM is congruent with the growing body of literature

studying contemporary forms of discrimination (i.e., microaggressions). The most salient implication for the use of the SAM in the research domain is pairing its use with other scales of well-being and health, much like researchers studying the impact of racism on physical health outcomes have done. The continued use of the SAM and similar scales is important because religious and non-religious beliefs continue to have a powerful impact on political, social and economic issues in the United States. The impact of religion can be observed in many domains of life for the millions of religious adherents in the United States, therefore studying how the Atheist population experiences a largely religious country and world is important.

Microaggressions have a significant effect on racial and ethnic minorities' feelings about many aspects of their lives, including themselves, their community, and their academic experiences, to name a few. It is hypothesized that the study of microaggressions perpetrated towards Atheists will show similar effects. The SAM can serve as one useful tool to investigate this claim and inform the development of new scales that measure how Atheists experience discrimination. Research that utilizes the SAM in conjunction with general outcomes of mental health and well-being might be a first step in testing this hypothesis. Specifically it would be hypothesized that as SAM scores increase measures of mental health and well-being would be lower. If corroborated, the results can inform policy and legislation to promote equality in the United States for non-religious populations.

Furthermore, this scale could explore the development of group specific norms with consideration to specific different demographic variables that may impact individuals' experiences of discrimination differently. A study to further investigate the impact of

group specific norms, namely region of the country, would be an exciting place to start. Recent research has shown that there are significant differences in discrimination with regards to regional variation. Reported discrimination for individuals identifying as Atheist or Agnostic is significantly higher for those living in the East South Central region (Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama) of the United States for example when compared to other regions (Cragun, Kosmin, Keysar, Hammer, & Nielsen, 2012). Rural communities too are also more likely to foster more hostile attitudes and environments towards Atheists (Hammer et al., 2012).

Another demographic variable to investigate that has received recent attention is being in the military. In 2007, a U.S. Army soldier, Jeremy Hall, was threatened with military disciplinary actions by a commanding officer for trying to hold a meeting of Atheists and non-Christians in Iraq. He reported physical harassment, ostracization and even death threats by his peers and higher-ranking non-commissioned officers after revealing his Atheist identification (MSNBC, 2007). Today, there are some mixed reports about the levels and types of discrimination Atheists and non-religious individuals face in the military.

Cragun et al. (2012) found in their study of Atheist discrimination that very little perceived discrimination was found in the military. Participants were more likely to perceived discrimination at substantially higher rates socially and in the family context. Reported discrimination, they report, was lowest in circumstances where it is possible take up legal action against those who discriminate. The authors suggested that Americans are becoming more cognizant of the possible legal consequences for discriminating in specific contexts. These results are important because they imply that social interactions that may

contain subtle forms of discrimination in language and behaviors (i.e., microaggressions) may be the driving force of discrimination experienced in the military context. At The Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute's Biennial Equal Opportunity/Equal Employment Opportunity (EO/EEO) Research Symposium in 2001, it was reported that despite only a little over 2% of self-identifying soldiers (approximately 28,000 uniformed victims) reporting religious discrimination, potentially all non-religious soldiers are discriminated against because so few dare to identify. Because non-religious minorities are generally small, they may be more susceptible to discrimination and suffer it quietly in silence the report asserts (Preiss, 2001).

To conduct these studies, researchers could utilize the SAM to measure levels of discrimination experienced in that region of the country and in the military. Results from this study could alter the factor structure of the SAM and if given the opportunity to give qualitative responses about other forms of discrimination, could present new and more relevant items to that demographic group. This new information on group norms and experiences would allow researchers to more fully understand the breadth and diversity of possible discrimination experienced. Following this, pairing the new norms and data with other measures of physical and psychological health could lead to research that has the potential to create more far-reaching effects in larger systems such as workplace environments or government structures.

Specific forms of research. A particular type of research that could be completed is the self-report correlational study (Harrell et al., 2003). It is one of the most common forms of research conducted when examining the effects of discrimination on health outcomes. Self-report correlational studies would allow the SAM and related scales

to provide correlational statements about relationships among events, personality and physiological activation. For survey and correlational studies, social desirability should be measured, much like what was done in the development of the SAM. Harrell et al. (2003) additionally recommend including measures of neuroticism as well when evaluating discrimination's impact on health as those with high levels of neuroticism may exaggerate reports of discriminatory and negative life events. Further development of the SAM for different group may benefit from including measures of neuroticism as a safeguard to preserve construct and content validity.

In the context of the two examples of specific demographic variables (regional differences and being in the military) it is expected that discrimination of Atheists would increase in those environments. Specifically, more subtle form of discrimination like microaggressions may be more present in the military where only egregious and explicitly obvious forms of discrimination are forbidden. In different regions of the country, the bible belt and the deep south for example, where individuals and groups are not beholden to the Uniform Code of Military Justice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, it would be expected that more blatant forms of discrimination or perhaps microassaults would be present. Therefore, total scores on the SAM would likely be higher in military environments than in rural, southern regions of the country. Measures correlated with the SAM that measure life satisfaction and general stress would also like show poorer outcomes than studies looking at urban, non-military environment along the coastal regions. Expressed discrimination in these environments (as measured by the SAM and similar instruments) would likely correspond to decreases in work satisfaction and overall-life satisfaction in the military and rural, southern regions of the country respectively.

Societal implications: Secularism and pluralism. Continuing to demonstrate the ill effects of discrimination suffered by those with non- religious beliefs can help a society move towards the position that religious and non-religious beliefs are becoming an increasingly important facet of multiculturalism, as discussed in the writings of Pate and Bondi (1992) and Burke, Hackney, Hudson, Miranti, Watts, and Epp (1999). Diverse religious beliefs coming under the auspices of studying privilege and oppression may also impact society's value of secularism and pluralism. Secularism, according to the National Secular Society, is defined as a separation of the state from religious establishments and additionally that people of different religious and spiritual beliefs (including those with no religious or spiritual beliefs) are equal in the eyes of the law. Pluralism is generally defined as a patchwork of various beliefs that is inclusive of all differences in religion and non-religion (Roof, 2001), that develops "under conditions of civic peace and under conditions where people interact with each other" (Matthews, 2008 p. 152-153). The value of secularism and pluralism may be considered because as society becomes more and more diverse, laws and government policies cannot afford to have biases toward favoring one religion or set of beliefs over another.

The United States has a history of incorporating Christian values into its laws and policies (see Banner, 1998; King, 2000). Currently, religious polemics still have a dominating presence in the discourse about many issues relevant to the study of multiculturalism including, gay marriage, Muslim workplace rights, and Atheist rights in the military. Secularism and Pluralism informed by a foundation of sound scientific literature, is a political and cultural tool that may better equip the United States to protect and honor an increasingly diverse society fairly and democratically.

The next steps in research to further develop this hypothesis should continue to explore the effects of secularism and pluralism on outcome variables that are valued as indicators of societal wealth, success and health. Such variables could be correlated with measures like the SAM or other measures that directly explore how non-religious individuals experience their environment and distally explore a society's acceptance of secularism and pluralism. There is already much evidence that many countries with higher levels of secularism, for example, perform better than the more religious countries in various standard measures of societal well-being (for extensive review see Inglehart & Norris, 2004 and Zuckerman, 2008).

Pervious research has demonstrated that cultures with more secular governments have better purchasing power per capita (Rees, 2009; Verwij, Ester & Nauta, 1997), higher life expectancy (Inglehart & Norris; Rees, 2009), improved social welfare (Gill & Lundsgaarde, 2004; Hollinger, Haller, & Valle-Hollinger, 2007[an exception being the United States]), and better formal education for all citizens (Braun, 2012). Emphasizing pluralism, with a strong shared foundation, has the potential to make meaning out of cultural conflicts and come to stable policy decisions as well as social practices (Stout, 2001). Indeed, as Shweder (2000) writes, valuing cultural pluralism is one of the surest ways to fight discrimination and prejudice in the form of ethnocentrism and religiously confined paradigms.

Both concepts come with its supporters and dissenters. Though secularists often boast about the inclusion of all minorities into the political framework, it is at the risk of removing individuals from their culturally bound, "identity forming contexts" (Habermas, 2008 p. 24). Secularism runs the risk of suppressing genuine, historical and culturally

significant expressions of religion that are not intended to be solely limited to ones private home. Secularism, if imposed in an authoritarian manner, risks disinfecting religious pasts and sterilizing future religious and faith based traditions of expression.

If on the other hand, pluralism is valued and pursued, Yinger (1967) warns that its cost may be anomie as religious norms, which govern relationships with other groups, advocate and ban particular actions in the larger society. If each diverse group is allowed to compete for political and societal ground Yinger writes, controversy will not rise from a conflict of religious values, but from an aspiration on the part of the individual communities to sustain themselves and to preserve their advantages. He writes that this in turn may support a maladaptive cycle of interaction that increasingly weakens the structures essential for intergroup dialogue, or weaken the effectiveness of culturally permitted methods to share goals. Similarly, Hunter (2009) warns that a realistic cost of pluralism is different groups using politics and litigation to attain sponsorship of the state, its assets and its "coercive power" (p. 1314). Habermas (2008) too adds that advocating too strongly for pluralism may lead to small, self-isolated groups, each adhering to different norms that will arise in contest to the formation of a population dedicated to supporting a cohesive nation.

Even though pluralism and secularism are attempting to achieve the similar goal of having a liberal society that allows autonomous citizens to coexist in a civilized manner (Habermans, 2008), they are sometimes presented in a false dichotomy, that a society must value one or the either. The conflict between religion and secularism, two hegemonic poles trying to secure a foundational placement in American public culture, place the progress of modern societies in a frenzy (Hunter, 2009). Acknowledging the diversity in both religious

groups and secular groups, Hunter claims that both purely secular and purely religious based societies are untenable realities. Others too have identified the false dichotomy of secularism versus pluralistic religious influence (e.g., Starrett, 2010).

Instead of deciding between one or the other, it is hypothesized here and in other sources that *advocating for both secularism and pluralism* working together in tandem have the best potential to build foundations of modern, democratic societies that are supportive and respectful of diversity. In other words, in order for societies that value, pursue and accept its own pluralism to flourish, a foundation of secularism is needed. Yinger (1967) writes for example that pluralistic societies that do not have an appropriate amount of secularism may be incapable of developing the mutual tolerance that religious diversity requires. He asserts that "if every question of life is a religious question, there is too little shared neutral ground on which to stand" (p. 27). He advocates for having segments of shared secular participation in monetary, governmental and educational interests, which will solidify a foundation for mutual respect in religious matters. Pennings (2010) argues as Yinger has, for a common core of values that underlies pluralistic intentions at the group and societal level. Specifically, Pennings asks his readers to consider a foundation of responsibility, interconnectedness and cultural renewal.

Secularism can serve as a guard to *protect* diverse groups interests equally in a pluralistic society, serve as the groundwork for fruitful multicultural dialogue and provide the language for governmental policies and change. Habermas (2008) discusses the importance of a secular "language" to assist a society that values its own pluralistic diversity. In other words, norms that can be legally implemented need to be constructed and "publicly justified" in a dialect that all the citizens are able to comprehend. He

continues to write that "[t]he idea of "separation of church and state" calls for a filter between these two spheres—a filter through which only "translated," i.e., secular, contributions may pass from the confused din of voices in the public sphere into the formal agendas of state institutions" (p.28).

These results and philosophic treatises demonstrate the great potential value secularity and pluralism has for a global society. As participants in our global society, the political identity of free persons in the United States may be negatively impacted if it is continued to be driven by a majority of privileged individuals, including those of a privileged religious identity (i.e., Protestant and Catholic Christians [most often male, see Center for American Women and Politics, 2014]). The United States and other countries would benefit from supposing a *secular* governmental system that makes room for *pluralistic* values and equal rights for religious and non-religious alike. Instruments such as the SAM can serve as a measure of outcome in testing such hypotheses.

Clinical Implications

The SAM is not intended to be utilized for clinical practice, but studies related to microaggressions against atheists (including the SAM) could impact clinical psychology indirectly. These studies could assist in increasing the knowledge and consciousness of clinicians regarding issues Atheists might face. The SAM has the potential to help explore the unique stressors facing this population and document outcome based psychosocial or health effects of such experiences. These studies may inform clinician researchers about the harmful relationships and experiences that some of their clients may be wishing to explore and process in session. For example, research utilizing the SAM and other similar instruments could be utilized to explore some of the interpersonal, epistemological, and

philosophical experiences of Atheists. These experiences could then be utilized to help develop models of identity development and inform possible needs and responses to clinical experiences much like the Cass model for Gay/Lesbian Identity development has done (Cass, 1984).

Clinicians need to be conscious of the numerous types of microaggressions that occur in the lives of their clients as well as the manner in which their clients handle such experiences. Studies that utilize the SAM to explore how different groups of Atheists (e.g., southern Atheists, military Atheists) experience and cope different types of microaggressions in different quantities can assist clinicians in this way. Inspecting these microaggressions can later assist clinicians to conceptualize the presenting problems of those they work with, whilst planning for the most applicable and effectual ways to cope with and address microaggressions when they occur. Studies like this can explore climates that may be potentially harmful to Atheist or non-religious students. Therefore teachers and administrators, not just clinicians, must be conscious of the ways that microaggressions may transpire in all professional environments.

As Hammer et al. (2012) noted, there are few quantitative accounts of positive interpersonal experiences had by Atheists. It is my hope that the SAM can be used to initiate and explore the creation of positive and inclusive interpersonal environments for Atheists. For example, if policies at a school were initiated that aimed to reduce stigma against non-religious or Atheist students, one would expect that scores on the SAM and similar instruments would go down. Related to this, the SAM can also be utilized to quantitatively investigate protective factors that alleviate the negative impact of microaggressions and other forms of discrimination that Atheists may face by correlating

itself with measures of coping styles and behaviors (for example, the Multidimensional Coping Inventory by Endler and Parker [1990]). As protective factors against Atheist discrimination are increasingly seen one would expect lower scores on measures like the SAM.

Limitations

Sampling Methods

The SAM scale, while novel in its application of microaggression theory on an understudied population (Atheists), it is not without its limitations. The first limitation to discuss is the sampling method. A draw back and limitation to online sampling would be that it may only grasp individuals that have access to computers, the internet and the knowledge with which to use them. The integrity of the data from both samples is unfamiliar to the researcher because respondents were not supervised, and there were no requirements to follow up with participants. It also may only draw from Atheists that are out and open about their irreligious identification as online blogs and forums require identification with their topics and are increasingly non-anonymous (e.g., online newspaper commentary connected with Facebook accounts to encourage accountability for ideas posted and shared) (Ruch, 2011). Fortunately, there is some research that suggests that online sampling is just as adequate if not preferred in some situations (see Birnbaum, 2004).

Another drawback is that because the study requires respondents to self-report their experiences with microaggressions, it is challenging to gauge the true amount that the participants may or may not have experienced. Unlike other measures that assess the amount of discrimination experienced, the SAM only addresses this in a limited fashion.

Future development of the scale and similar instruments can reproduce other scales measuring experiences with discrimination and attend more so to the quantity and frequency at which microaggressions are experienced.

Sample Demographics.

Related to this, the individuals sampled for pilot study participation were largely homogeneous. The pilot sample was largely White, single, heterosexual, male and between the ages of 18 and 34. Both the sampling method and the sample itself raise concerns for the data's external validity. While our pilot sample demographics are consistent with other samples of Atheists in the United States (Zuckerman, 2005), our concern is that the sampling technique may limit participation of Atheists who identify as racial, ethnic, sexual identity, or gender minorities.

Fortunately, the dissertation sample collected to additionally validate the instrument was more diverse with regards to gender and age. Moreover, the second sample collected also provided information regarding current student status, years identifying as an Atheist, and level of ego identity. One study suggests that a large amount of individuals in the United States who are Atheists "by belief" do not self-identity as Atheists (Cragun et al., 2012), possibly due to the stigma associated with the specific word, "Atheist." Consequently, these demographically substantial individuals that do not identify as Atheists were not represented in either of the samples. More thorough population sampling will be required to assess and understand the experiences of non-identified Atheists. Further development of this scale would benefit from more rigorous recruitment methods to include more demographically varied respondent samples.

Scale Variance

The scale explains a moderate amount of cumulative variance, 56.64% and 58.29% obtained from the pilot and dissertation samples respectively. Hatcher (1994) writes that ideally, a scale should explain 70%-80% of the cumulative variance. Given the cumulative variance and after review of the item means and standard deviations, it would appear that the items describing microaggression experiences are experienced as minimally stressful for many of the respondents. As a scale's variance is directly related to its explanatory power, rewriting some of the items may not only be beneficial to increasing cumulative variance but also in producing items more representative of the microaggressions Atheists find most stressful. The consideration of conceptualizing additional dimensions to write items might be productive as well. For example, writing items that express the distress about "coming out" as an Atheist to friends and family or items that describe events where Atheists have felt they have been forced to attend religious ceremonies and events could be helpful. Utilizing pilot or focus groups to answer open ended questions about stressful experiences related to their Atheist identity would also likely produce good information for further scale development. It should be noted however that even though the SAM's percentage of variance may not be high when compared to psychometric ideals, that 70%-80% threshold is rarely achieved and the SAM performs satisfactorily in the milieu of similar scales.

When reviewing other scales that utilize the theory of microaggressions for scale construction it is clear that though the SAM's level of variance is not as high as the established ideals for explained variance (Hatcher, 1994). However, its performance in this area is still acceptable in comparison to similar instruments. For example, the Racial and

Ethnic Minority Scale (REMS: Nadal et al., 2011), a 6-factor 45-item instrument, only explains approximately 27% and 58% of the total variance, pre and post rotation during the exploratory factor analysis phase respectively. It should be noted that the REMS utilized principal components analysis as well, which takes into account both shared and unique variance—therefore presenting a raised level of variance that does not present an accurate level of the variance specific to the latent construct(s). Variance for the REMS during the confirmatory factor analysis phase was not reported. The LGBT People of Color Microaggressions scale (Balsam et al., 2011), a 3-factor 18-item self-report measure only has a reported 59% level of variance accounted for. Unfortunately, a limitation of that instrument is that a confirmatory study was not completed, so no further information about the scale's variance with a new sample was reported. The Instrument of Microaggressions against Black People (IMABI; Mercer et al., 2011) does not clearly report its level of variance accounted for, but the eigenvalues for the factors are reported.

Data Parameters

The data obtained from the validation sample were parametric but non-normal. The data demonstrated a positive skew indicating that many of the respondents responded to the SAM likert scale in such a way that they were indicating that the microaggressions represented in the items were more often minimally stressful instead of moderately or extremely stressful. Unfortunately, attempts at correcting for the skewed data utilizing more robust bootstrapping procedures during statistical analysis unfortunately did not improve model fit. Consistent with the comment made previously, a limitation of the SAM is that appears to not be representative of the more upsetting microaggressions that Atheists may face in their day-to-day experiences. There is some difficulty in comparing

the SAM to other similar scales in regards to data normality. Neither the REMS (Nadal et al., 2011) nor the LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale (Balsam et al., 2011) report on the distribution of any of their data sets. The development article on the IMABI (Mercer et al., 2011) only reported "approximately normal distributions" (p. 465) without data regarding item or scale-level skewness or kurtosis.

Scale response options. An issue not only relevant to the data parameters, but also to the construct validity of the scale is the scale's response set. Specifically, it is measuring two different constructs—one that measures the extent to which an Atheist microaggression is stressful and the other being an acknowledgement if the specific Atheist microaggression happened or not. Though this is a response set similar to other scales based in the theory of Microaggressions it is problematic. Future use of this scale may explore different ways for respondents to reply to the scale. Additionally, the scale could be narrowed down further by eliminating all items that have a tendency to elicit the response that, "This has never happened to me." This will likely aid in normalizing the data and improve checks towards its validity.

Conclusion

Atheists in the United States are a steadily growing population representing an increasingly significant portion of the population (Pew Research Survey, 2012). The United States, a largely religious country, fosters many negative attitudes and beliefs towards this particular portion of non-religious individuals that develop into discriminatory actions. To date there have been few attempts to measure how Atheists experience discrimination in a largely religious country that does not trust Atheists or feel that they fit with the ideals of the United States. The purpose of this dissertation project was to create a scale to assist in

this process of understanding Atheist discrimination utilizing the scholarship surrounding Microaggressions (e.g., Sue, 2010a; Sue, 2010b) and related theories and forms of contemporary racism (e.g., Gaerner & Dovidio, 2005). The SAM demonstrates strong psychometric promise as a useful scale in exploring the experiences and implications of discrimination towards Atheists.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM

As part of my dissertation, I am trying investigate the degree to which Atheist identifying individuals experience discrimination in their day-to-day lives. My hope is that the project can provide some answers as to what can help our society reduce the discrimination and marginalization of non-religious identifying groups.

My project is internet-based and can be taken completely anonymously. It should not take more than 15 minutes to complete. Participants can take pauses from the study and come back later to finish if they need more time (within 1 week after beginning the survey). As such, participants can close the browser and go back to the study by clicking on the link again (and their answers will be saved).

This is a continuation of previous work related to the same project. As such, it is important that a new sample is collected so that the results can be better generalized. If you have taken this survey (UND IRB-201210-088) already, please do not take it a second time as it can impact the quality and final results of this study.

In terms of who can participate, I am looking for men and women 18 years or older who live in the United States who specifically identify as Atheists. There are no anticipated, direct risks or benefits to participants.

The study can be accessed by going to this link:
https://und.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_081RwSIXtZAcYcZ

I can be reached for questions at louis.pagano@my.und.edu. This project has been approved by the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board, project number IRB-201210-088.

Please continue with the survey if you understand and agree with the information above. By continuing on you are giving your consent to participate in the project.

APPENDIX B

DEBRIEFING FORM

Dear Participant:

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your participation will greatly help us in our understanding of the views and experiences of Atheists. This study was designed to create an assessment instrument to measure the extent to which Atheists experience derogatory and stereotypic views perpetrated by those in a religious majority. After the information from your responses (as well as other responses from other participants) has been gathered, we will be doing a statistical and factor analysis of the data.

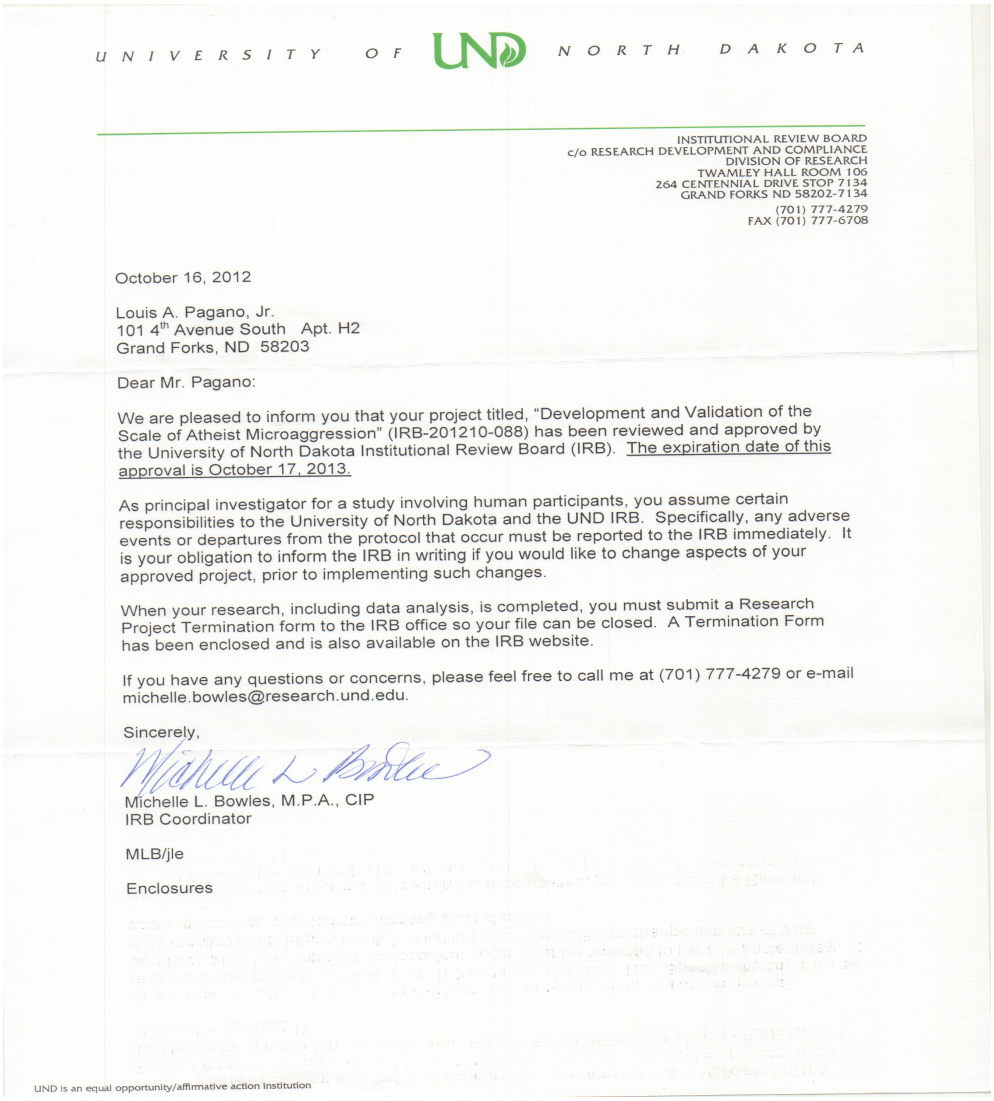
We feel it is important to state that no information from your participation will be connected to the survey. All answers will be kept anonymous, and all outcomes of the study will be reported in aggregate form only, ensuring that individuals cannot be identified as participants in the study. Your responses will remain anonymous such that only researchers will have access to your data on the survey website server. Identification codes, rather than names, will also be used to assure your anonymity. We don't expect you to experience any negative effects from participating in this study. There are also no direct benefits to you for participating. We do hope the findings will contribute to improved understanding of the views of Atheists and other non-religious minorities.

This study is being conducted by student researchers from the Department of Counseling Psychology and Community Services at the University of North Dakota. If you have questions for the student researcher, feel free to contact Louis Pagano, the principal investigator. If you have any other questions or concerns about the study, please call the Office of Research and Program Development at the University of North Dakota at (701) 777-4279. Please print a copy of this form for yourself if you want it for your own records.

A list of mental health resources local to the university as well as national and international hotlines are also provided in this section if you feel the need to talk about any troubling feelings or stress you may have experienced as a result of taking this survey.

APPENDIX C

IRB APPROVAL PAGE



UNIVERSITY OF UND NORTH DAKOTA

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
c/o RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT AND COMPLIANCE
DIVISION OF RESEARCH
TWAMLEY HALL ROOM 106
264 CENTENNIAL DRIVE STOP 7134
GRAND FORKS ND 58202-7134
(701) 777-4279
FAX (701) 777-6708

October 16, 2012

Louis A. Pagano, Jr.
101 4th Avenue South Apt. H2
Grand Forks, ND 58203

Dear Mr. Pagano:

We are pleased to inform you that your project titled, "Development and Validation of the Scale of Atheist Microaggression" (IRB-201210-088) has been reviewed and approved by the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board (IRB). The expiration date of this approval is October 17, 2013.

As principal investigator for a study involving human participants, you assume certain responsibilities to the University of North Dakota and the UND IRB. Specifically, any adverse events or departures from the protocol that occur must be reported to the IRB immediately. It is your obligation to inform the IRB in writing if you would like to change aspects of your approved project, prior to implementing such changes.

When your research, including data analysis, is completed, you must submit a Research Project Termination form to the IRB office so your file can be closed. A Termination Form has been enclosed and is also available on the IRB website.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at (701) 777-4279 or e-mail michelle.bowles@research.und.edu.

Sincerely,

Michelle L. Bowles, M.P.A., CIP
IRB Coordinator

MLB/jle

Enclosures

UND is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution

APPENDIX D

THE PERCEIVED STRESS SCALE (COHEN, KAMARCK & MERMELSTEIN, 1993

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate how often you felt or thought a certain way. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and you should treat each one as a separate question. The best approach is to answer each question fairly quickly. That is, don't try to count up the number of times you felt a particular way, but rather indicate the alternative that seems like a reasonable estimate.

For each question choose from the following alternatives:

0. never 1. almost never 2. sometimes 3. fairly often 4. very often

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?
2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?
4 In the last month, how often have you dealt successfully with irritating life hassles?
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?
6. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
7. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?
8. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?
9. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?
10. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?
11. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control?
12. In the last month, how often have you found yourself thinking about things that you have to accomplish?
13. In the last month, how often have you been able to control the way you spend your time?
14. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

4, 5, 6, 7, 9 , 10, 13 Scored in the reverse direction.

APPENDIX E

MARLOWE-CROWNE SOCIAL DESIRABILITY SCALE (MARLOWE & CROWNE, 1966)

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you personally.

1. Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.
2. I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.
3. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.
4. I have never intensely disliked anyone.
5. On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.
6. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
7. I am always careful about my manner of dress.
8. My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.
9. If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.
10. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.
11. I like to gossip at times.
12. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.
13. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.
14. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.
15. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.
16. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.
17. I always try to practice what I preach.
18. I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud mouthed, obnoxious people.
19. I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget.
20. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.
21. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.
22. At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.
23. There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.
24. I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.
25. I never resent being asked to return a favor.
26. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.
27. I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.
28. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.
29. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.
30. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.
31. I have never felt that I was punished without cause.
32. I sometimes think when people have a misfortune they only got what they deserved.
33. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.

APPENDIX F

THE EGO IDENTITY PROCESS QUESTIONNAIRE (BALISTRERI, BUSCH-ROSSNAGEL, & GEISINGER, 1995)

Listed below are a number of statements describing adolescent behavior. Please indicate how you feel about each statement. Example: Politics are very important in my life.

Write a 1 if you strongly disagree.
Write a 2 if you disagree.
Write a 3 if you slightly disagree.
Write a 4 if you slightly agree.
Write a 5 if you agree.
Write a 6 if you strongly agree.

1. I have definitely decided on the occupation that I want to pursue.
2. I don't expect to change my political principles and ideals.
3. I have considered adopting different kinds of religious belief.
4. There has never been a need to question my values.
5. I am very confident about what kinds of friends are best for me.
6. My ideas about men's and women's roles have never changed as I became older.
7. I will always vote for the same political party.
8. I have firmly held views concerning my role in my family.
9. I have engaged in several discussions concerning behaviors involved in dating relationships
10. I have considered different political views thoughtfully.
11. I have never questioned my views concerning what kind of friend is best for me.
12. My values are likely to change in the future.
13. When I talk to people about religion, I make sure to voice my opinion.
14. I am not sure about what type of dating relationship is best for me.
15. I have not felt the need to reflect upon the importance I place on my family.
16. Regarding religion, my beliefs are likely to change in the near future.
17. I have definite views regarding the ways in which men and women should behave.
18. I have tried to learn about different occupational fields to find the best one for me.
19. I have undergone several experiences that made me change my view on men's and women's roles.
20. I have consistently re-examined many different values in order to find the ones which are best for me.
21. I think what I look for in a friend could change in the future.
22. I have questioned what kind of date is right for me.
23. I am unlikely to alter my vocational goals.
24. I have evaluated many ways in which I fit into my family structure.

25. My ideas about men's and women's roles will never change.
26. I have never questioned my political beliefs.
27. I have had many experiences that led me to review the qualities that I would like my friends to have.
28. I have discussed religious matters with a number of people who believe differently than I do.
29. I am not sure that the values I hold are right for me.
30. I have never questioned my occupational aspirations.
31. The extent to which I value my family is likely to change in the future.
32. My beliefs about dating are firmly held.

APPENDIX G

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE
(SWLS; DIENER, EMMONS, LARSEN & GRIFFIN, 1985)

Below are five statements that you may agree or disagree with. Using the 1 - 7 scale below, indicate your agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item. Please be open and honest in your responding.

- 7 - Strongly agree
- 6 - Agree
- 5 - Slightly agree
- 4 - Neither agree nor disagree
- 3 - Slightly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 1 - Strongly disagree

____ In most ways my life is close to my ideal.
____ The conditions of my life are excellent.
____ I am satisfied with my life.
____ So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.
____ If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

APPENDIX H

DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF THE SCALE OF ATHEIST MICROAGGRESSIONS

Endorsing Atheist Stereotypes
11. Someone has said to me that Atheists think they are better than everyone.
12. I have heard someone say that Atheists are self-centered.
16. I have been asked why Atheists are intolerant.
17. Someone told me my life is without purpose because I am an Atheist.
23. I have been asked why Atheists are angry.
34. I have heard someone say that Atheists are not willing to accept others' viewpoints.

Denial of Atheist Prejudice
40. I have been told that that my negative experiences as an Atheist do not compare to the negative experiences of religious individuals.
42. My experiences as an Atheist have been dismissed as an overreaction.
59. I have been told that discrimination against Atheists does not compare to the war on religion.
62. Someone has told me not to complain about religion.
63. Someone has said to me that they do not have a problem with me being an Atheist, but their behaviors suggest otherwise.

Assumption of Religious Identity as Normal
1. Someone has placed religious holiday decorations in a public place I frequent.
6. Someone has asked me what church I attend without first asking if I identify as a religious individual.
18rw: Someone has acted confused when I told them I do not believe in God.
33. Someone expressed surprise that I do not believe in God.
35. Someone has included a blessing or prayer in a social gathering (like a business meeting or ceremony).
50. I have been told to express thanks to God for an event.

Pathology of Atheist Individuals
26. I have been told that I am bringing dishonor to my family because I am an Atheist.
29. Someone has told me I should be ashamed of myself for being an Atheist.
45. I have been told that I am bringing dishonor to my community because I am an Atheist.

Scoring is obtained by summing responses raw scores.

Respondent Directions: This is a scale to assess experiences of Atheists. Below are some situations that you may have encountered. Please indicate with the response options below whether or not these situations have occurred to you and how upsetting the situations were. Please answer honestly about your reactions to these situations.

- This has never happened to me.
- This event happened but I was not upset
- This event happened and I was slightly upset
- This event happened and I was moderately upset
- This event happened and I was extremely upset.

REFERENCES

Allen, M. J., & Yen, W. M. (1979). *Introduction to measurement theory*: Brooks/Cole Monterey, CA.

Allport, G. W. (1979). *The nature of prejudice*. New York: Perseus Books.

Altemeyer, B (1981). Right-wing authoritarianism. Winnipeg. University of Manitoba Press

Altemeyer, B. (1988). *Enemies of freedom: Understanding right-wing authoritarianism*: Jossey-Bass.

Altemeyer, B. (2003). Why do religious fundamentalists tend to be prejudiced? *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 13*(1), 17-28.

Altemeyer, B., & Hunsberger, B. (1992). Authoritarianism, religious fundamentalism, quest, and prejudice. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *2*(2), 113-133.

Alwin, D. F., Felson, J. L., Walker, E. T., & Tufiş, P. A. (2006). Measuring religious identities in surveys. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 70*(4), 530-564.

Anderson, S. C., & Holliday, M. (2005). Normative passing in the lesbian community: An exploratory study. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*,*17*(3), 25-38.

Associated Press (2009, February 11). Atheist eagle scout faces expulsion. CBSNews.com Retrieved Dec 11 from http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-201_162-527684.html.

Baker, J. O. B., & Smith, B. (2009). None too simple: Examining issues of religious nonbelief and nonbelonging in the united states. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 48*(4), 719-733.

Balistreri, E., Busch-Rossnagel, N. A., & Geisinger, K. F. (1995). Development and preliminary validation of the Ego Identity Process Questionnaire. *Journal of Adolescence*, *18*(2), 179-192.

Balsam, K. F., Molina, Y., Beadnell, B., Simoni, J., & Walters, K. (2011). Measuring multiple minority stress: The LGBT People of Color Microaggressions Scale. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 17*(2), 163-174.

Banner, S. (1998). When Christianity Was Part of the Common Law. *Law and History Review*, *16*(01), 27-62.

Barro, R., & McCleary, R.M. (2003). Religion and economic growth across countries. *American Sociological Review*, 68, 760-781.

Beit, Hallahmi, B. (2007). *Atheists: A psychological profile.* In Martin, M. (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to atheism* (pp. 300-317). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Benavides, G., & Daly, M. W. (1989). *Religion and Political Power*: SUNY Press.

Bentler, P. M. (1990). Comparative fit indexes in structural models. *Psychological bulletin*, *107*(2), 238.

Bentler, P. M., & Bonett, D. G. (1980). Significance tests and goodness of fit in the analysis of covariance structures. *Psychological bulletin*, *88*(3), 588.

Berg, J. A. (2013). Opposition to Pro-Immigrant Public Policy: Symbolic Racism and Group Threat. *Sociological Inquiry*, *83*(1), 1-31.

Berg, J. A. (2009). White Public Opinion toward Undocumented Immigrants: Threat and Interpersonal Environment. *Sociological Perspectives, 52*(1), 39-58.

Birnbaum, M. H. (2004). Human research and data collection via the internet. Annual Review of Psychology, 55, 803-832.

Boake, C. (2002). From the Binet-Simon to the Wechsler-Bellevue: Tracing the history of intelligence testing. *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology, 24*(3), 383-405.

Bollen, K. A., & Stine, R. A. (1992). Bootstrapping goodness-of-fit measures in structural equation models. *Sociological Methods & Research*, *21*(2), 205-229.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2002). The linguistics of color- blind racism: How to talk nasty about blacks without sounding "racist". *Critical Sociology, 28*(1-2), 41-64.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003a). Color-Blind Racism. In P. S. Rothenberg (Ed.), *Race, class, and gender in the United States: An integrated study* (6th ed.). New York: Worth Publishers.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003b). Racial attitudes or racial ideology? An alternative paradigm for examining actors' racial views. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, *8*(1), 63-82.

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2010). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States*. Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Pub Incorporated.

Bonilla-Silva, E., & Dietrich, D. (2011). The sweet enchantment of color-blind racism in obamerica. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 634*(1), 190-206.

Bradburn, N., Sudman, S., & Wansink, B. (2004). *Asking questions: the definitive guide to questionnaire design: for market research, political polls, and social and health questionnaires*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Brantley, J. P., Bodenlos, J. S., Cowles, M., Whitehead, D., Ancona, M., & Jones, G. N. (2007). Development and Validation of the Weekly Stress Inventory-Short Form. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, *29*(1), 54-59.

Brown, T. A. (2006). *Confirmatory factor analysis for applied research*. Guilford Press.

Bryant, F. B., & Yarnold, P. R. (1995). Principal-components analysis and exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. In Grimm, L.G., Yarold, P.R. (Eds.), *Reading and understanding multivariate statistics* (pp. 99-136). Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

Bullivant, S. (2008). Research note: Sociology and the study of atheism. *Journal of Contemporary Religion, 23*(3), 363-368.

Burdette, A. M., Ellison, C. G., & Hill, T. D. (2005). Conservative Protestantism and Tolerance toward Homosexuals: An Examination of Potential Mechanisms*. *Sociological Inquiry*, *75*(2), 177-196.

Burke, H. M., Davis, M. C., Otte, C., & Mohr, D. C. (2005). Depression and cortisol responses to psychological stress: a meta-analysis. *Psychoneuroendocrinology, 30*(9), 846-856.

Burke, M. T., Hackney, H., Hudson, P., Miranti, J., Watts, G. A., & Epp, L. (1999). Spirituality, religion, and CACREP curriculum standards. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *77*(3), 251-257.

Burrow, A. L., & Ong, A. D. (2010). Racial identity as a moderator of daily exposure and reactivity to racial discrimination. *Self & Identity, 9*(4), 383-402.

Campbell, D. T., & Fiske, D. W. (1959). Convergent and discriminant validation by the multitrait-multimethod matrix. *Psychological Bulletin, 56*(2), 81.

Capodilupo, C. M., Nadal, K. L., Corman, L., Hamit, S., Lyons, O., & Weinberg, A. (2010). The manifestation of gender microaggressions. In D. Sue (Ed.), *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact* (pp. 193-216). Hoboken: Wiley.

Carter, R. T. (2007). Racism and psychological and emotional injury: Recognizing and assessing race-based traumatic stress. *The Counseling Psychologist, 35*(1), 13-105.

Carr, L. G. (1997). *"Colorblind" Racism*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Cass, V. C. (1984). Homosexual identity formation: Testing a theoretical model.*Journal of Sex Research*, *20*(2), 143-167.

Cattell, R. B. (1966). The scree test for the number of factors. *Multivariate behavioral research, 1*(2), 245-276.

Center for American Women and Politics. *Women in the u.s. congress 2014* [Fact sheet]. Retrieved from http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/levels_of_office/documents/cong.pdf

Chae, D. H., Nuru-Jeter, A. M., & Adler, N. E. (2012). Implicit racial bias as a moderator of the association between racial discrimination and hypertension: A study of midlife african american men. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 74*(9), 961-964.

Chae, D. H., & Walters, K. L. (2009). Racial discrimination and racial identity attitudes in relation to self-rated health and physical pain and impairment among two-spirit American Indians/Alaska Natives. *American Journal of Public Health, 99*(S1), S144.

Clark, L. A., & Watson, D. (1995). Constructing validity: Basic issues in objective scale development. *Psychological assessment, 7*(3), 309.

Cohen, M. N. (2002). An anthropologist looks at" race" and IQ testing. In J. M. Fish (Ed.), *Race and intelligence: Separating science from myth* (pp. 201-223). New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). A global measure of perceived stress. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 385-396.

Cook, B. L., Zuvekas, S. H., Carson, N., Wayne, G. F., Vesper, A., & McGuire, T. G. (2014). Assessing racial/ethnic disparities in treatment across episodes of mental health care. *Health services research*, *49*(1), 206-229.

Costello, A. B., & Osborne, J. W. (2005). Best practices in exploratory factor analysis: Four recommendations for getting the most from your analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation, 10*(7), 1-9.

Cottrell, C. A., Neuberg, S. L., & Li, N. P. (2007). What do people desire in others? A sociofunctional perspective on the importance of different valued characteristics. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*(2), 208.

Cragun, R. T., Kosmin, B., Keysar, A., Hammer, J. H., & Nielsen, M. (2012). On the receiving end: Discrimination toward the non-religious in the United States. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, *27*(1), 105-127.

Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika, 16*(3), 297-334.

Crowne, D. P., & Marlowe, D. (1960). A new scale of social desirability independent of psychopathology. *Journal of Consulting Psychology; Journal of Consulting Psychology, 24*(4), 349.

D'Andrea, L. M., & Sprenger, J. (2007). Atheism and nonspirituality as diversity issues in counseling. *Counseling & Values, 51*(2), 149.

Darwin, C. (1874). *The descent of man*. London: Murray.

Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of personality assessment, 49*(1), 71-75.

D'Souza, D. (1996). *The end of racism: Principles for a multiracial society*. New York: Free Press Paperbacks.

DeVellis, R. F. (2003) Scale Development: Theory and Application. *Vol. 26*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dharma, T. (2011). The Model Minority: Asian-American Youth and the Harmful Perpetuation of a Cultural Myth. *Student Pulse, 3*(09).

Doane, A., & Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). *White Out: The Continuing Significance of Racism*: Routledge.

Dominguez, T. P., Dunkel-Schetter, C., Glynn, L. M., Hobel, C., & Sandman, C. A. (2008). Racial differences in birth outcomes: the role of general, pregnancy, and racism stress. *Health psychology*, *27*(2), 194.

Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (2000). Aversive racism and selection decisions: 1989 and 1999. *Psychological Science, 11*(4), 315-319.

Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (2004). Aversive racism. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), Advances in experimental social psychology (Vol. 36, pp. 1–51). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (1981). The effects of race, status, and ability on helping behavior. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 192-203.

Duckitt, J., Wagner, C., Du Plessis, I., & Birum, I. (2002). The psychological bases of ideology and prejudice: Testing a dual process model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 83*(1), 75.

Edgell, P., Gerteis, J., & Hartmann, D. (2006). Atheists as "other": Moral boundaries and cultural membership in american society. *American Sociological Review, 71*(2), 211-234.

Ellison, C. G., & Levin, J. S. (1998). The religion-health connection: Evidence, theory, and future directions. *Health Education & Behavior, 25*(6), 700-720.

Fairchild, E. E., & Blumenfeld, W. J. (2007). Traversing Boundaries: Dialogues on Christian Privilege, Religious Oppression, and Religious Pluralism among Believers and Non-Believers. *College Student Affairs Journal*, *26*(2), 177-185.

Farkas, S., Johnson, J., & Foleno, T. (2001). *For Goodness' Sake: Why So Many Want Religion To Play a Greater Role in American Life*. New York: Public Agenda.

Fiske, S. T. (1998). Stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske & G. Lindzey (Eds.), *The Handbook Of Social Psychology* (4th ed., pp. 357-411). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Ford, P. K., Maxwell, A., & Shields, T. (2010). What's the matter with arkansas? Symbolic racism and 2008 presidential candidate support. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 40*(2), 286-302.

Ford, J. K., MacCallum, R. C., & Tait, M. (1986). The application of exploratory factor analysis in applied psychology: A critical review and analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, *39*(2), 291-314.

French, R. (2003). Shopping for religion: The change in everyday religious practice and its importance to the law. *Buff. L. Rev., 51*, 127.

Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (1986). The aversive form of racism. In J. F. Dovidio & S. L. Gaertner (Eds.), *Prejudice, Discrimination and Racism: Theory and Research* (pp. 66-89). Orlando: Academic Press.

Gaertner, S. L., Dovidio, J. F., & Johnson, G. (1982). Race of victim, nonresponsive bystanders, and helping behavior. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 117*(1), 69-77.

Gaertner, S. L., & Dovidio, J. F. (2005). Understanding and addressing contemporary racism: From aversive racism to the common ingroup identity model. *Journal of Social Issues, 61*(3), 615-639.

Galen, L. W., Smith, C. M., Knapp, N., & Wyngarden, N. (2011). Perceptions of religious and nonreligious targets: Exploring the effects of perceivers' religious fundamentalism. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 41*(9), 2123-2143.

Galen, L. W. (2012). Does religious belief promote prosociality? A critical examination. *Psychological Bulletin, 138*(5), 876.

Gallagher, C. A. (2003). Color-blind privilege: The social and political functions of erasing the color line in post race America. *Race, Gender and Class*, *10*(4), 22-37.

Gallagher, C. A. (2010). In-between racial status, mobility, and the promise of assimilation: Irish, italians yesterday, latinos and asians today. In K. O. Korgen (Ed.), *Multiracial Americans and Social Class*. New York: Routledge.

Gallup (2009). This christmas, 78% of americans identify as christian. Princeton: Gallup.

Gallup (2010). In U.S., Increasing Number Have No Religious Identity. Princeton: Gallup.

Gay, D. A., & Ellison, C. G. (1993). Religious subcultures and political tolerance: Do denominations still matter?. *Review of Religious Research*, 311-332.

Gee, G. C. (2002). A multilevel analysis of the relationship between institutional and individual racial discrimination and health status. *American Journal of Public Health, 92*(4).

Gee, G. C., Ryan, A., Laflamme, D. J., & Holt, J. (2006). Self-reported discrimination and mental health status among African descendants, Mexican Americans, and other Latinos in the New Hampshire REACH 2010 Initiative: the added dimension of immigration. *American Journal of Public Health, 96*(10).

Geronimus, A. T., Bound, J., Waidmann, T. A., Hillemeier, M. M., & Burns, P. B. (1996). Excess mortality among blacks and whites in the United States. *New England journal of medicine, 335*(21), 1552-1558.

Gervais, W. M. (2011). Finding the faithless: Perceived atheist prevalence reduces anti-atheist prejudice. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 37*(4), 543.

Gervais, W. M., & Norenzayan, A. (2012). Reminders of secular authority reduce believers' distrust of atheists. *Psychological science*, *23*(5), 483-491.

Gervais, W. M., Shariff, A. F., & Norenzayan, A. (2011). Do you believe in atheists? Distrust is central to anti-atheist prejudice. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

Gill, A., & Lundsgaarde, E. (2004). State welfare spending and religiosity: A cross-national analysis. *Rationality and Society*, 16, 399-436.

Goodman, K. M., & Mueller, J. A. (2009). Invisible, marginalized, and stigmatized: Understanding and addressing the needs of Atheist students. *New Directions for Student Services, 2009*(125), 55-63.

Gortmaker, V. J., & Brown, R. D. (2006). Out of the college closet: Differences in perceptions and experiences among out and closeted lesbian and gay students. *College Student Journal*, *40*(3).

Gorsuch, R. (1983). *Factor Analysis* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Gorsuch, R. L. (1997). Exploratory factor analysis: Its role in item analysis. *Journal of personality assessment, 68*(3), 532.

Grasmick, H. G., Davenport, E., Chamlin, M. B., & Bursik, R. J. (1992). Protestant fundamentalism and the retributive doctrine of punishment. *Criminology*, *30*(1), 21-46.

Greene, M. L., Way, N., & Pahl, K. (2006). Trajectories of perceived adult and peer discrimination among Black, Latino, and Asian American adolescents: patterns and psychological correlates. *Developmental psychology*, *42*(2), 218.

Habermas, J. (2008). Notes on Post‐Secular Society. *New perspectives quarterly*, *25*(4), 17-29.

Hackney, C. H., & Sanders, G. S. (2003). Religiosity and mental health: A Meta–Analysis of recent studies. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *42*(1), 43-55.

Hardesty, D. M., & Bearden, W. O. (2004). The use of expert judges in scale development: Implications for improving face validity of measures of unobservable constructs. *Journal of Business Research, 57*(2), 98-107.

Harper, M. (2007). The stereotyping of nonreligious people by religious students: Contents and subtypes. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 46*(4), 539-552.

Hatcher, L. (1994). *A step-by-step approach to using the SAS system for factor analysis and structural equation modeling*. Sas Institute.

Hammer, J. H., Cragun, R. T., Hwang, K., & Smith, J. M. (2012). Forms, frequency, and correlates of perceived anti-atheist discrimination. *Secularism and Nonreligion*, *1*, 43-67.

Hartmann, D., Winchester, D., Edgell, P., & Gerteis, J. (2011). How americans understand raical and religious differences: A test of parallel items from a national survey. *The Sociological Quarterly, 52*(3), 323-345.

Harrell, J. P., Hall, S., & Taliaferro, J. (2003). Physiological responses to racism and discrimination: an assessment of the evidence. *American Journal of Public Health*, *93*(2).

Helms, J. E., Henze, K. T., Sass, T. L., & Mifsud, V. A. (2006). Treating cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients as data in counseling research. *The Counseling Psychologist, 34*(5), 630-660.

Henrich, N., & Henrich, J. P. (2007). *Why humans cooperate: A cultural and evolutionary explanation*: Oxford University Press.

Hollinger, F., Haller, M., & Valle-Hollinger, A. (2007). Christian religion, society and the state in the modern world. *Innovation*, 20, 133-157.

Hooper, D., Coughlan, J., & Mullen, M. (2008). Evaluating Model Fit: A Synthesis of the Structural Equation Modelling Literature. In *7th European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies: Ecrm 2008* (p. 195). Academic Conferences Limited.

Horning, S. M., Davis, H. P., Stirrat, M., & Cornwell, R. E. (2011). Atheistic, agnostic, and religious older adults on well-being and coping behaviors. *Journal of Aging Studies, 25*(2),

Hunsberger, B. (1996). Religious fundamentalism, right-wing authoritarianism, and hostility toward homosexuals in non-christian religious groups. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 6*(1), 39-49.

Hunsberger, B. (2010). Religion and prejudice: The role of religious fundamentalism, quest, and right-wing authoritarianism. *Journal of Social Issues*, *51*(2), 113-129.

Hunter, J. A. (2001). Self-esteem and in-group bias among members of a religious social category. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 141*(3), 401-411.

Hunter, J. (2009). The culture war and the sacred/secular divide: The problem of pluralism and weak hegemony. Social Research, 76(4), 1307-1322.

Hutchinson, S. R. (1993). Univariate and multivariate specification search indices in covariance structure modeling. *The Journal of experimental education*, *61*(2), 171-181.

Hwang, W.C., & Goto, S. (2009). The impact of perceived racial discrimination on the mental health of Asian American and Latino college students. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, S*(1), 15-28.

Hwang, K., Hammer, J., & Cragun, R. (2011). Extending religion-health research to secular minorities: Issues and concerns. *Journal of Religion and Health, 50*(3), 608-622.

Inglehart, R., & Norris, P. (2004). Sacred and secular: Religion and politics worldwide. *Cambridge/Mass.*

Jackson, D. L. (2001). Sample size and number of parameter estimates in maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis: A Monte Carlo investigation. *Structural Equation Modeling*, *8*(2), 205-223.

Jackson, J. S., Brown, T. N., Williams, D. R., Torres, M., Sellers, S. L., & Brown, K. (1995). Racism and the physical and mental health status of African Americans: a thirteen year national panel study. *Ethnicity & disease*, *6*(1-2), 132-147.

Jasperse, M., Ward, C., & Jose, P. E. (2012). Identity, Perceived Religious Discrimination, and Psychological Well‐Being in Muslim Immigrant Women.*Applied Psychology*, *61*(2), 250-271.

Johnson, D. D. P., & Krueger, O. (2004). The good of wrath: Supernatural punishment. *Political Theology, 5*, 159-176.

Johnson, M. K., Rowatt, W. C., & LaBouff, J. P. (2011). Religiosity and prejudice revisited: In-group favoritism, out-group derogation, or both? *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*.

Kahn, J. H. (2006). Factor analysis in counseling psychology research, training, and practice. *The Counseling Psychologist, 34*(5), 684-718.

Kaplan, S. A., Madden, V. P., Mijanovich, T., & Purcaro, E. (2012). The perception of stress and its impact on health in poor communities. *Journal of Community Health*, 1-8.

Karlsen, S., & Nazroo, J. Y. (2002). Relation between racial discrimination, social class, and health among ethnic minority groups. *Journal Information*,*92*(4).

Keller, R. M., & Galgay, C. E. (2010). Microaggressive experiences of people with disabilities. In D. W. Sue (Ed.), *Microaggressions and Marginality: Manifestation, Dynamics and Impact.* Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Kenny, D. A., , & McCoach, D. B. (2003). Effect of the number of variables on measures of fit in structural equation modeling. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 10, 333-3511.

Kinder, D. R., & Sears, D. O. (1981). Prejudice and politics: Symbolic racism versus racial threats to the good life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 40*(3), 414.

King, A. J. (2000). Sunday Law in the Nineteenth Century. *Alb. L. Rev.*, *64*, 675.

Koenig, H. G. (2008). Religion and mental health: what should psychiatrists do? *Psychiatric Bulletin, 32*(6), 201-203.

Krägeloh, C., Chai, P., Shepherd, D., & Billington, R. (2010). How Religious Coping is Used Relative to Other Coping Strategies Depends on the Individual's Level of Religiosity and Spirituality. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 1-15.

Krieger, N. (1987). Shades of difference: Theoretical underpinnings of the medical controversy on black/white differences in the United States, 1830–1870. International Journal of Health Services, 17, 259–278.

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2009). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*: Pine Forge Press.

Krysan, M. (2000). Prejudice, politics, and public opinion: Understanding the sources of racial policy attitudes. *Annual Review of Sociology, 26*, 135-168.

Lau, M. Y., & Williams, C. D. (2010). Microaggression Research: Methodological Review and Recommendations. In D. W. Sue (Ed.), *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Lee, R. M. (2005). Resilience Against Discrimination: Ethnic Identity and Other-Group Orientation as Protective Factors for Korean Americans. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *52*(1), 36.

Levine, R. S., Foster, J. E., Fullilove, R. E., Fullilove, M. T., Briggs, N. C., Hull, P. C., . . . Hennekens, C. H. (2001). Black-white inequalities in mortality and life expectancy, 1933-1999: Implications for healthy people 2010. *Public health reports, 116*(5), 474.

Liddell, E. R. A., & Stedman, C. D. (2011). Nontheistic students on campus: Understanding and accommodating atheists, agnostics, humanists and others. *Journal of College and Character, 12*(3), 7.

Likert, R. (1932). A technique for the measurement of attitudes. *Archives of Psychology, 140*(140), 1-55.

Luijben, T. C., & Boomsma, A. (1988, January). Statistical guidance for model modification in covariance structure analysis. In *Compstat* (pp. 335-340).

MacCallum, R. (1986). Specification searches in covariance structure modeling. *Psychological Bulletin*, *100*(1), 107.

MacCallum, R. C., Roznowski, M., & Necowitz, L. B. (1992). Model modifications in covariance structure analysis: the problem of capitalization on chance. *Psychological bulletin*, *111*(3), 490.

MacDorman, M. F., Kirmeyer, S., MacDorman, M., & Kirmeyer, S. (2009). Fetal and perinatal mortality, United States, 2005. *National Vital Statistics Report, 57*(8), 1-19.

Marsh, H. W., Balla, J. R., & McDonald, R. P. (1988). Goodness-of-fit indexes in confirmatory factor analysis: The effect of sample size. *Psychological bulletin*,*103*(3), 391.

Martin, M. (2007). *The Cambridge companion to atheism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Matthews, C.T. (2008) An interview with peter berger. The Hedgehog Review: Critical Reflections on Contermporary Culture, 8(1), 151-162

McConahay, J. B. (1986). Modern racism, ambivalence, and the modern racism scale. Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, Sl L. (Ed). Prejudice, discrimination, and racism. San Diego: Academic Press.

McDonald, R. P., & Marsh, H. W. (1990). Choosing a multivariate model: Noncentrality and goodness of fit. *Psychological Bulletin*, *107*(2), 247.

McNamee, S. J., & Miller, R. K. (2009). *The meritocracy myth*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Micklethwait, J., & Wooldridge, A. (2004). *The right nation: Conservative power in America*. New York: Penguin Press

Mercer, S. H., Zeigler-Hill, V., Wallace, M., & Hayes, D. M. M. (2011). Development and initial validation of the inventory of microaggressions against black individuals. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 58*(4), 457.

Mercer, S. H., Zeigler-Hill, V., Wallace, M., Hayes, D. (2010). Development and preliminary investigation of the Daily Racial Microaggressions Scale. Poster presentation at Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research on Adolescence, Philadelphia, PA.

Morris, J. F., Waldo, C. R., & Rothblum, E. D. (2001). A model of predictors and outcomes of outness among lesbian and bisexual women. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *71*(1), 61-71.

MSNBC (2007, September 22). Military probes atheist GI's harassment claims. Retrieved from http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/20922106/%29

Mulaik, S. A., James, L. R., Van Alstine, J., Bennett, N., Lind, S., & Stilwell, C. D. (1989). Evaluation of goodness-of-fit indices for structural equation models. *Psychological Bulletin*, *105*(3), 430.

Mulia, N., & Zemore, S. E. (2012). Social adversity, stress, and alcohol problems: Are racial/ethnic minorities and the poor more vulnerable? *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, 73*(4), 570.

Murrell, A. J., Dietz-Uhler, B. L., Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L., & Drout, C. (1994). Aversive racism and resistance to affirmative action: Perceptions of justice are not necessarily color blind. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 15*(1 & 2), 71-86.

Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. O. (2007). Mplus. *Statistical analysis with latent variables. Version*, *3*.

Nadal, K. L., Griffin, K. E., Hamit, S., Leon, J., Tobio, M., & Rivera, D. P. (2012). Subtle and overt forms of islamophobia: Microaggressions toward Muslim Americans. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, *6*(2).

Nadal, K., Issa, M., Griffin, K., Hamit, S., & Lyons, O. (2010). Religious microaggressions in the United States: Mental health implications for religious minority groups. In D. W. Sue (Ed.), *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact* (pp. 287-310). Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Nadal, K. L., Issa, M., Leon, J., Meterko, V., Wideman, M., & Wong, Y. (2011). Sexual orientation microaggressions: "Death by a thousand cuts" for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 8*, 234-259.

Nadal, K. L. (2008). Preventing racial, ethnic, gender, sexual minority, disability, and religious microaggressions: Recommendations for promoting positive mental health. *Prevention in Counseling Psychology: Theory, Reasearch Practice and Training, 2*(1).

Nadal, K. L. (2011). The racial and ethnic microaggressions scale (REMS): Construction, reliability, and validity. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*.

Neville, H., Spanierman, L., & Doan, B. T. (2006). Exploring the association between color-blind racial ideology and multicultural counseling competencies. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 12*(2), 275.

Nisbet, M. C. (2005). The competition for worldviews: Values, information, and public support for stem cell research. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *17*(1), 90-112.

Norenzayan, A., & Shariff, A. F. (2008). The origin and evolution of religious prosociality. *science, 322*(5898), 58.

Norman, G. R., & Streiner, D. L. (2007). *Biostatistics: the bare essentials*. Shelton: Peoples Medical Publishing House.

Norton, M. I., & Sommers, S. R. (2011). Whites see racism as a zero-sum game that they are now losing. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *6*(3), 215-218.

Okazaki, S. (2009). Impact of racism on ethnic minority mental health. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *4*(1), 103-107.

Olson, J., & Beal, H. (2010). *The ethnic dimension in American history*: New York: Wiley-Blackwell.

Ong, A. D., Burrow, A. L., Fuller-Rowell, T. E., Ja, N. M., & Sue, D. W. (2013). Racial microaggressions and daily well-being among Asian Americans. *Journal of counseling psychology*, *60*(2), 188.

Onfray, M. (2011). *Atheist manifesto: the case against Christianity, Judaism, and Islam*. New York: Arcade Publishing.

Operario, D., & Fiske, S. T. (2001). Ethnic identity moderates perceptions of prejudice: Judgments of personal versus group discrimination and subtle versus blatant bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *27*(5), 550-561.

Osajima, K. (2005). Asian Americans as the model minority: An analysis of the popular press image in the 1960s and 1980s. In K. A. Ono (Ed.), *A companion to Asian American studies* (pp. 215-225). Boston: Blackwell.

Pagano, L.A., McCullagh, J.A., Austin, A., Fuller, L. & Williams, D.G. (2012). Initial development and validation of the scale of atheist microaggressions. *Unpublished Manuscript*. University of North Dakota.

Page, B. (2012). Why I don't want to be a west point graduate. Retrieved December 11 2012, from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/blake-page/west-point-religious-freedom_b_2232279.html.

Pargament, K. I. (2001). *The psychology of religion and coping: Theory, research, practice*. Guilford Press.

Pascoe, E. A., & Smart-Richman, L. (2009). Perceived discrimination and health: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin; Psychological Bulletin, 135*(4), 531.

Pate, R. H., & Bondi, A. M. (1992). Religious beliefs and practice: An integral aspect of multicultural awareness. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, *32*(2), 108-115

Pavot, W., & Diener, E. (1993). Review of the satisfaction with life scale. *Psychological Assessment*, *5*(2), 164.

Pennings, R. (2010, May). *Public religion in a privatized society: The role of Christianity in a secular society*. Presentation given on the behalf of the Association for Reformed Political Action. Ottawa, Ont.

Pew Research Center (2012). Nones on the rise: One-in-five adults have no religious affiliation (Data file). Retrieved from http://www.pewforum.org/Unaffiliated/nones-on-the-rise.aspx

Pierce, C. M., Carew, J. V., Pierce-Gonzalez, D., & Wills, D. (1977). An experiment in racism TV commercials. *Education and Urban Society, 10*(1), 61-87.

Preiss, R. A. (2001, December). Religious Diversity in the Armed Forces: A Growing Equal Opportunity Challenge. In *4th Biennial EO/EEO Research Symposium* (p. 385).

Religious Adherents (2010). Retrieved November 14, 2011, from Association of Religion Data Archives http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_234_2.asp#S_1

Roof, W. C. (2001). *Spiritual marketplace: Baby boomers and the remaking of American religion*. Princeton University Press.

Rowe, W., Bennett, S. K., & Atkinson, D. R. (1994). White Racial Identity Models A Critique and Alternative Proposal. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *22*(1), 129-146.

Ridley, C. R. (2005). *Overcoming unintentional racism in counseling and therapy: A practitioner's guide to intentional intervention* (Vol. 5). Sage.

Ruch, A. (2011). Zoning laws: Facebook and google+. *M/C, 14*(5).

Russell, B. (1957). *Why I am not a Christian, and other essays on religion and related subjects*. New York: Touchstone.

Saad, G. (2009). Atheists are the most mistrusted group: They are evil and immoral. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved December 11 2012, from http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/homo-consumericus/200908/atheists-are-the-most-mistrusted-group-they-are-evil-and-immoral

Schlosser, L. Z. (2003). Christian privilege: Breaking a sacred taboo. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, *31*(1), 44-51.

Schnell, T., & Keenan, W. J. F. (2011). Meaning-making in an atheist world. *Archive for the Psychology of Religion, 33*(1), 55-78.

Schreiber, J. B., Nora, A., Stage, F. K., Barlow, E. A., & King, J. (2006). Reporting structural equation modeling and confirmatory factor analysis results: A review.*The Journal of Educational Research*, *99*(6), 323-338.

Scott, D. A., & Robinson, T. L. (2001). White male identity development: The key model. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *79*(4), 415-421.

Sears, D. O. (1993). Symbolic politics: a socio-psychological theory. In S. Lyengar & W. J. McGuire (Eds.), *Explorations in political psychology*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Sears, D.O. (1988). Symbolic Racism. In Katz, P.A. & Taylor, D.A. (Eds). Eliminating racism: Profiles in controversy (53-84). New York: Plenum Press.

Sears, D. O., Hensler, C. P., & Speer, L. K. (1979). Whites' opposition to "Busing": Self-Interest or symbolic politics? *The American Political Science Review*, 369-384.

Seybold, K. S., & Hill, P. C. (2001). The role of religion and spirituality in mental and physical health. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 10*(1), 21-24.

Sharma, S., Mukherjee, S., Kumar, A., & Dillon, W. R. (2005). A simulation study to investigate the use of cutoff values for assessing model fit in covariance structure models. *Journal of Business Research*, *58*(7), 935-943.

Sherkat, D. E. (2002). Sexuality and religious commitment in the United States: An empirical examination. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *41*(2), 313-323.

Sherkat, D. E. (2008). Beyond belief: Atheism, agnosticism, and theistic certainty in the United States. *Sociological Spectrum, 28*(5), 438-459.

Shweder, R. A. (2000). Moral maps, "first world" conceits, and the new evangelists in L.E Harrison & S.P. Hungtin (Eds.), *Culture matters: How values shape human progress*, (158-176). New York: Basic Books.

Sijtsma, K. (2009). On the use, the misuse, and the very limited usefulness of Cronbach's alpha. *Psychometrika*, *74*(1), 107-120.

Smith-Stoner, M. (2007). End-of-life preferences for atheists. *Journal of palliative medicine, 10*(4), 923-928.

Smith, G. D., Ben-Shlomo, Y., Beswick, A., Yarnell, J., Lightman, S., & Elwood, P. (2005). Cortisol, testosterone, and coronary heart disease prospective evidence from the Caerphilly Study. *Circulation, 112*(3), 332-340.

Smith, W. A., Allen, W. R., & Danley, L. L. (2007). "Assume the position... you fit the description": Psychosocial experiences and racial battle fatigue among african american male college students. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *51*(4), 551-578.

Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 60-73.

Speight, S. L. (2007). Internalized racism. *The Counseling Psychologist, 35*(1), 126-134.

Starrett, G. (2010). The varieties of secular experience. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *52*(03), 626-651.

Steiger, J. H., & Lind, J. M. (1980, June). *Statistically based tests for the number of common factors.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Psychometric Society, Iowa City, IA.

Steiger, J.H. (1990*).* Structural model evaluation and modification: An interval estimation approach. *Multivariate Behavioral Research, 25, 173-180.*

Stossel, J. (2007). The black sheep of hardesty. Retrieved December 11 2012, from http://abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=3164811&page=1#.UMdyo5Pjnxp

Stout, J. (2001). *Ethics after Babel: The languages of morals and their discontents*. Princeton University Press.

Streib, H., & Klein, C. (2012). Atheists, agnostics, and apostates. *APA Handbook of Psychology, Religion and Spirituality*.

Sue, D. W. (2010a). *Microaggressions and marginality: Manifestation, dynamics, and impact.* Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Sue, D. W. (2010b). *Microaggressions in everyday life: Race, gender, and sexual orientation.* Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Sue, D. W., Bucceri, J., Lin, A. I., Nadal, K. L., & Torino, G. C. (2007). Racial Microaggressions and the Asian American Experience. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *13*(1), 72-81.

Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist, 62*(4), 271.

Sue, D. W., & Rivera, D. (2011). The federal budget debate: An environmental microaggression? *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: A new view on racism, sexism, and heterosexism.* Retrieved Sep 23 2012, from http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201105/the-federal-budget-debate-environmental-microaggression

Sullivan, A. (2009). Church-shopping: Why do Americans change faiths. *Time*. Retrieved September 28, 2012, from http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1894361,00.html

Sun, J. (2005). Assessing Goodness of Fit in Confirmatory Factor Analysis. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*. 37(4), 240-256.

Swan, L. K., & Heesacker, M. (2012). Anti-atheist bias in the united states: Testing two critical assumptions. *Secularism and Nonreligion, 1*(0), 32-42.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2001). *Using multivariate statistics* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Taylor, C. R., & Stern, B. B. (1997). Asian-americans: Television advertising and the" model minority" stereotype. *Journal of Advertising*, 47-61.

Taylor, D. M., Wright, S. C., & Porter, L. E. (1994). Dimensions of perceived discrimination: The personal/group discrimination discrepancy. In *The psychology of prejudice: The Ontario symposium* (Vol. 7, pp. 233-255).

Tinsley, H. E., & Tinsley, D. J. (1987). Uses of factor analysis in counseling psychology research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 34*(4), 414.

Tonry, M. (2010). The social, psychological, and political causes of racial disparities in the American criminal justice system. *Crime and justice*, *39*(1), 273-312.

Torres, L., Driscoll, M. W., & Burrow, A. L. (2010). Racial microaggressions and psychological functioning among highly achieving African-Americans: A mixed-methods approach. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 29*(10), 1074-1099.

Tucker, L. R., & Lewis, C. (1973). A reliability coefficient for maximum likelihood factor analysis. *Psychometrika, 38,* 1–10.

Utsey, S. O., & Ponterotto, J. G. (1996). Development and validation of the index of Race-related stress (IRRS). *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 43*(4), 490-501.

Vargas, N. (2011). Retrospective Accounts of Religious Disaffiliation in the United States: Stressors, Skepticism, and Political Factors. *Sociology of Religion*.

Vernon, P. A., & Eysenck, S. B. G. (2007). Structural equation modeling [Special issue]. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *42*(5), 811-898.

Verweij, J., Ester, P., & Nauta, R. (1997). Secularization as an economic and cultural phenomenon: A cross-national analysis. *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion*, 36, 309-324.

Waldo, C. R., Hesson-McInnis, M. S., & D'Augelli, A. R. (1998). Antecedents and consequences of victimization of lesbian, gay, and bisexual young people: A structural model comparing rural university and urban samples. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *26*(2), 307-334.

Walker, E. F., & Diforio, D. (1997). Schizophrenia: a neural diathesis-stress model. *Psychological review, 104*(4), 667.

Weber, S., Pargament, K., Kunik, M., Lomax, J., & Stanley, M. (2011). Psychological distress among religious nonbelievers: A systematic review. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 1-15.

Weeden, J., & Kurzban, R. (2013). What predicts religiosity? A multinational analysis of reproductive and cooperative morals. *Evolution and Human Behavior*,*34*(6), 440-445.

Williams, D. R. (2006). Race, socioeconomic status, and health the added effects of racism and discrimination. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 896*(1), 173-188.

Williams, D. R., & Collins, C. (1995). U.S socioeconomic and racial differences in health: patterns and explanations. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 349-386.

Williams, D. R., Yu, Y., Jackson, J. S., & Anderson, N. B. (1997). Racial differences in physical and mental health, socio-economic status, stress and discrimination. *Journal of Health Psychology, 2*(3), 335-351.

Williams, D. R., Lavizzo-Mourey, R., & Warren, R. C. (1994). The concept of race and health status in America. *Public health reports, 109*(1), 26.

Whitley, R. (2010). Atheism and Mental Health. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry, 18*(3), 190-194.

Whittaker, T. A. (2012). Using the Modification Index and Standardized Expected Parameter Change for Model Modification. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, *80*(1), 26-44.

Worthington, R. L., & Whittaker, T. A. (2006). Scale development research: A content analysis and recommendations for best practices. *The Counseling Psychologist, 34*(6), 806-838.

Yinger, J. (1967). Pluralism, religion, and secularism. Journal For The Scientific Study Of Religion, 6(1), 17-28.

Yosso, T. J., Smith, W. A., Ceja, M., & Soloranzo, D. G. (2009). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate for Latina/o undergraduates. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(4), 659-691.

Wang, J., Siy, J. O., & Cheryan, S. (2011). Racial discrimination and mental health among asian american youth. . In F. T. L. Leong, L. Juan, D. B. Qin & H. E. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Asian American and Pacific Islander Children and Mental Health [Two Volumes]* (Vol. 1, pp. 219).

Wood, J. M., Tataryn, D. J., & Gorsuch, R. L. (1996). Effects of under- and overextraction on principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation. *Psychological Methods, 1*(4), 354-365.

Widaman, K. F. (1993). Common factor analysis versus principal component analysis: Differential bias in representing model parameters? *Multivariate behavioral research, 28*(3), 263-311.

Williams, D. R., & Rucker, T. D. (2000). Understanding and addressing racial disparities in health care. *Health care financing review*, *21*(4), 75-90.

Zuckerman, P. (2005). *Atheism: Contemporary rates and patterns*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Zuckerman, P. (2006). Is faith good for us? *Free Inquiry 26*(5), 35-38.

Zuckerman, P. (2008). *Society without God: What the least religious nations can tell us about contentment*. NYU Press.