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American mental models of scientific versus theological prestige: a freelist analysis

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ABSTRACT

In much public discourse, "Christianity" and "Science" are conceptualized as incompatible belief systems that make competing ontological claims. From this perspective, scientists and theologians are rival knowledge specialists. Prestige is one of the ways we evaluate who we should trust, but we do not know whether the prestige of scientists and theologians is conceptualized similarly, and whether they really are seen as rival knowledge specialists by the bulk of the US population. To investigate this question, we use a free listing methodology to explore public attitudes toward prestigious academic theologians and physicists in a US sample. We find that for all participants, prestige in physics is overwhelmingly associated with forms of intelligence necessary to unravel complex questions about the nature of reality. By contrast, the prestige even of academic theologians is more strongly associated with piety, virtue, and charisma than it is with raw intelligence. They appear to be seen as social models rather than ontological experts. Furthermore, we find that while both religious and nonreligious individuals share a unified representation for prestigious physicists, this is not the case with prestigious theologians: virtue is more salient in Christian evaluations of theological prestige, while charisma is more salient for the nonreligious.

1. Introduction

Particularly in the United States, where Biblical literalism is a salient cultural force, science and religion are popularly conceptualized as being in conflict or at least being incompatible (McPhetres et al., 2020). Such accounts assume that Christianity and science are directly comparable even if they are contradictory: they are both systems of ontological propositions about the nature of "what is" (e.g., Larsen, 2012; Tylor, 1871/1958). Thus, for instance, the "new atheists" conclude that religious beliefs constitute a form of failed science (Dawkins, 2007; LeDrew, 2016).

Recent psychological work on the ostensible human tendency to defer to prestigious authorities when faced with incomprehensible information tends to echo some of these intellectualist assumptions about religion. For instance, one recent large-scale cross-cultural study concluded that there is an "Einstein Effect"—that is, people in general (including religious people) grant more source credibility to scientists than spiritual authorities when evaluating unintelligible esoteric utterances (Hoogeveen et al., 2022). In other words, scientists are deferred to in the same way as religious epistemological

authorities, only more so. However, a problem with such work is that we do not know how the prestige of the scientific or religious experts used in such experiments is conceptualized by participants, and whether they really can be treated as interchangeable intellectual competitors in this way.

Research on prestige bias more broadly has drawn on insights from evolutionary and cognitive sciences, suggesting that prestige is a uniquely cultural form of social rank where status is given to those that possess knowledge and skills that are valued within the community (Cheng, 2020; Jiménes & Mesoudi, 2019). Unlike other forms of social status, such as dominance, prestige has been associated with the transmission of valuable cultural knowledge through biased learning; individuals preferentially pay attention to and learn from those that are prestigious, and this differential attention may act as a signal of prestige for other observers (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). Though this idea seems simple enough, and while there has been much follow-up work on prestige defined in this way, the past two decades of research on prestige biased learning have shown that the picture is much more complex (Jiménes & Mesoudi, 2019). One of these complexities relates to the fact that we often do not know what characteristics lead to prestige because knowledge and skills are less clear in some domains than others.

Throughout the literature, work on the differences between domains of prestige remains somewhat muddled. The original theory suggests that prestige should be domain specific (you learn gardening from prestigious gardeners, not prestigious hunters), but that there will likely be some cross-domain contamination (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). This contamination would explain why people are willing to buy underwear advertised by a famous actor, despite clothing not being their domain of expertise. Though some work supports this claim to a limited degree (Arnocky et al., 2018; Henrich & Broesch, 2011; Jackson & Darrow, 2005), the one existing experiment suggests that prestige biased learning is domain specific, with participants (in this case children) not generalizing learning to other domains of knowledge (Chudek et al., 2012). Jiménes and Mesoudi (2019) suggest that there may be some more general characteristics beyond knowledge and skill that make some people, such as certain celebrities, prestigious across multiple domains as a solution to this tension. Indeed, much of the current literature looking at the traits of prestigious people, rather than their specific skills, has focused on prestigious leaders broadly defined and thus has not differentiated these traits across domains (Cheng et al., 2013; Cheng & Tracy, 2014). Such traits commonly include kindness, humility, generosity, and prosociality (Cheng, 2020), or more generally things that would promote group cohesion and make a good leader (Henrich et al., 2015).

Here we attempt to investigate whether scientific and theological prestige in the context of the contemporary United States—far from being interchangeable—in fact rest on contrasting foundations, potentially producing quite different intuitions about who and what to believe, and under what circumstances. To investigate this possibility, the current exploratory study examines the underlying attributes thought to be required to obtain prestige within the domains of Christian theology and physics respectively. It does so within the tightly circumscribed domain of the academy, to render the specialists as comparable as possible. It furthermore compares the mental models of the attributes required to obtain prestige held by US Christians and nonreligious individuals, in order to gain some insight into how the prestige of these ostensible epistemological "opponents" might be conceptualized in a country often taken to represent the apotheosis of religious-scientific polarization. After presenting the results, we consider what they may mean for the types of stances people in US society adopt toward religious and scientific authorities, and whether these results may say anything about religious and scientific authority more broadly construed.

2. Methods

2.1. Sample

Our sample consisted of 38 US Christians (20 Protestants, 7 Catholics, and 11 nondenominational; Mean age = 36.8, SD = 13.63, 72.5% female) and 39 US nonreligious (17 agnostic, 14 atheists and 6

"nones"; Mean age = 29.5, SD = 9.32, 67.5% female) recruited via Prolific Academic. While this is a small sample, it is considered adequate for freelist analysis (Manoharan & de Munck, 2015; Romney & D'Andrade, 1964). While it would also have been desirable to have a larger sample to make fine-grained discriminations between denominations of Christians and different types of nonreligious individuals, this was not possible within the budgetary constraints of the present study.

2.2. Freelist task

First, participants were asked "What characteristics do you think a person needs to become prestigious in the field of physics?" and "What characteristics do you think a person needs to become prestigious in the field of Christian theology?" Participants were prompted to provide "the first five things that came to mind." The questions were asked in counterbalanced order. The resulting associations were then standardized for vocabulary by the lead researcher so that salience scores could be calculated for particular terms. For example, the terms "reason," "rationality," and "logical thought" might all be categorized together as "rationality." These standardized associations were then scored for salience using the AnthroTools R package (Purzycki & Jamieson-Lane, 2017). Salience scores are reached by calculating item frequency across lists multiplied by their proximity to the top within lists, and then standardised so that they range from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 1. For instance, if an item occurs regularly across lists and tends to occur near the top of lists, it will receive a high salience score indicating that it is central to the associational domain in question. First, overall attribute salience was calculated for physicists and theologians. Next, attribute salience was calculated separately for Christian participants and nonreligious participants.

2.3. Attribute Likert task

Finally, participants were given a list of predetermined "personal qualities" and asked how important these were to attaining high prestige in the worlds of Christian theology and physics respectively. These were: intelligence, persuasiveness, popularity, competence, experience, confidence, integrity, knowledge, charisma, influence, wisdom, generosity, courage, humility, loyalty, respect, honesty. They were asked to rate how necessary these attributes were on Likert scales ranging from 0 (not at all important) to 5 (very important).

Finally, participants were asked their age, gender, religious affiliation, and belief in God.

3. Results

3.1. Overall attribute salience for physicists and theologians

In order from most to least salient, the attributes deemed necessary to obtain prestige in the domain of physics were: intelligence (0.58), education (0.24), mathematical ability (0.19), dedication (0.19), thoroughness (0.13), knowledge (0.12), rationality (0.11), and curiosity (0.11). The attributes deemed necessary to obtain prestige in the domain of Christian theology were: piety (0.28), charisma (0.23), knowledge (0.22), kindness (0.19), virtue (0.15), intelligence (0.15), education (0.14), and a scholarly disposition (0.13). See Figure 1.

3.2. Physicists: attribute salience for nones vs Christians

Next, the salience of various attributes to obtaining prestige in the domain of physics was calculated separately for the nonreligious and for Christians. For the nonreligious, the most salient attributes were: intelligence (0.61), education (0.25), dedication (0.20), mathematical ability (0.19), thoroughness (0.17), innovativeness (0.12), a hardworking disposition (0.12), and rationality (0.11). For Christians, the most salient attributes were: intelligence (0.61), education (0.25), mathematical
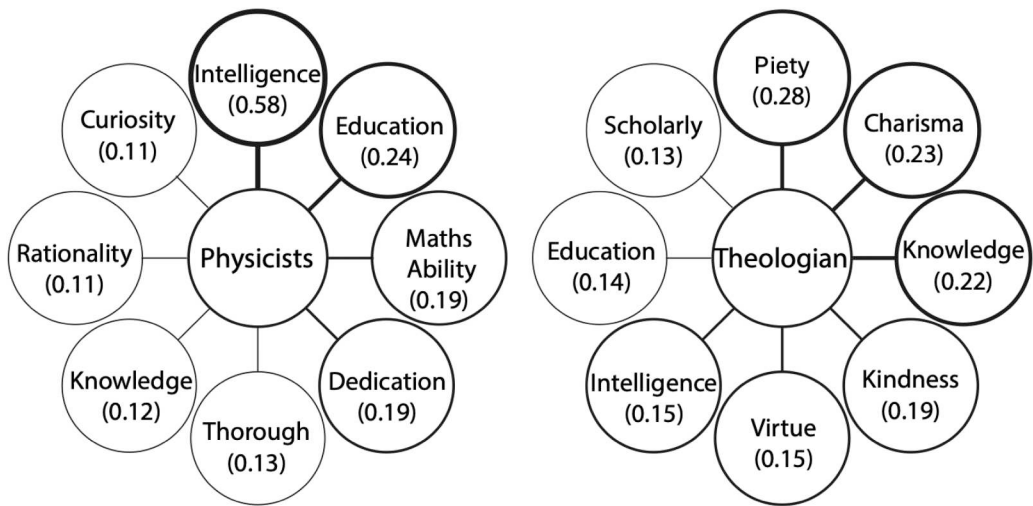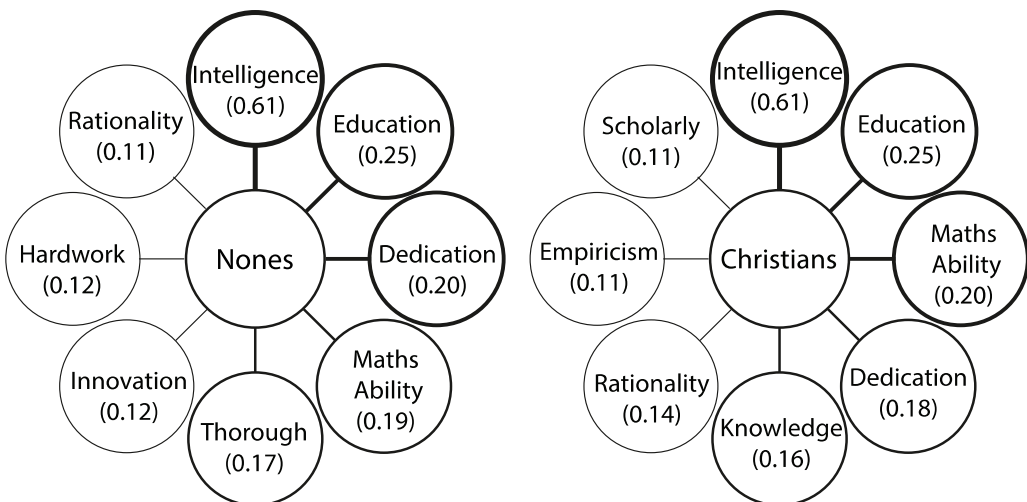
Figure 1. Attributes deemed necessary to obtain prestige in the domains of physics and Christian theology respectively. Line thickness of the circles is scaled in proportion to the salience score (here and in the Figures below).

ability (0.20), dedication (0.18), knowledge (0.16), rationality (0.14), empiricism (0.11), and a scholarly disposition (0.11). See Figure 2.

3.3. Theologians: attribute salience for nones vs Christians

Next, the salience of various attributes to obtaining prestige in the domain of physics was calculated separately for the nonreligious and for Christians. For the nonreligious, the most salient attributes were: charisma (0.30), piety (0.21), knowledge (0.20), intelligence (0.19), education (0.18), virtue (0.13), kindness (0.11), deviousness (0.10). For Christians, the most salient attributes were: piety (0.34), kindness (0.27), knowledge (0.25), virtue (0.18), charisma (0.17), familiarity with the Bible (0.16), honesty (0.15), and dedication (0.13). See Figure 3.

Figure 2. Attributes deemed necessary by the nonreligious and Christians respectively to obtain prestige in physics.
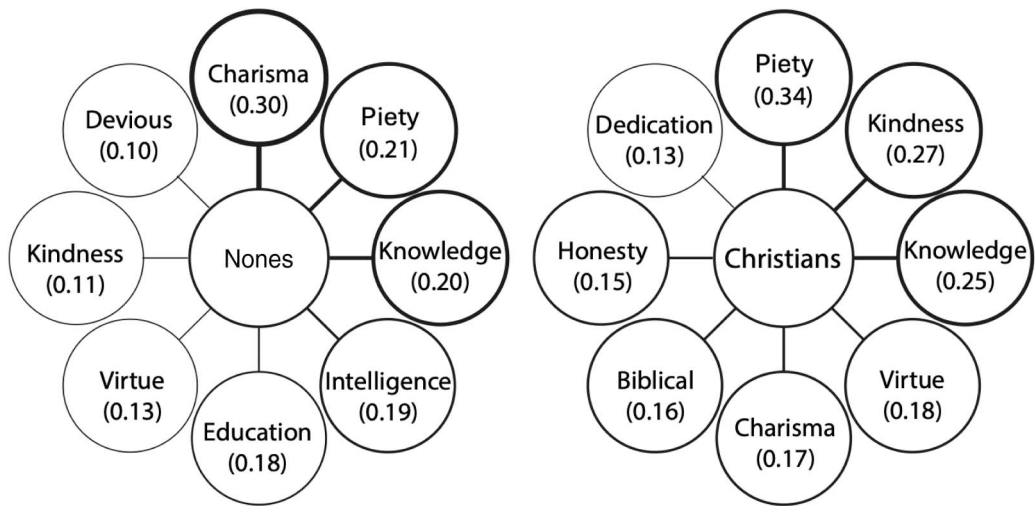
Figure 3. Attributes deemed necessary by the nonreligious and Christians respectively to obtain prestige in Christian theology.

3.4. Inferential statistics on freelist items

To look at whether these attributions were statistically different, we focused on a few key terms and the frequency with which these items appeared in the lists. Since several of these items did not appear in any of the freelists about the physicist (Table 1), we were not able to compare ratings of the physicist and theologian on all items.

Models were run as Bayesian Poisson regressions. These models include 95% credibility intervals, which are the Bayesian equivalent for p-values. We can say we have made a reliable estimate for Poisson regressions when the credibility interval does not cross 1. Effects are shown as Incidence Rate Ratios (IRR), and can be interpreted as the number of items in one category compared to another (e.g., an effect of 1.5 would mean there are 1.5 items in the relevant category for every 1 in the comparison category). Numbers below 1 are negative effects (i.e., less than one item appearing in one category when compared with another). Using multilevel models to account for repeated measurement, we compared physicists to theologians on intelligence, kindness, and virtue. The latter two should be interpreted with caution due to the extremely low rate in incidences for physicists. We found that across the groups, physicists were seen as more intelligent, and theologians as more kind and virtuous (Table 2). The data also suggested that theologians were seen as having more charisma and piety, but because these attributes were absent from the physicist freelists, we were unable to run comparative statistical analyses.

When we looked at between-group effects (none and Christian), we found sizable differences in instances for several items, but most credibility intervals contained 1, reducing our confidence that these effects are different across targets. When the physicist was the target, for every one time intelligence appeared in the Christian lists, it appeared 1.28 times in the no religion lists ($IRR = 1.28$, 95% $CI\ 0.77–2.09$). When the theologian was the target, for every one time intelligence appeared in the Christian lists, it appeared 1.13 in the no religion lists ($IRR = 1.13$, 95%$CI\ 0.49–2.59$). This same

Table 1. Mean rate with which each target term appeared in freelists.

Condition	Group	Intelligence	Kindness	Charisma	Virtue	Piety
Physicist	Christian	0.66	0	0	0	0
Physicist	None	0.87	0.03	0	0.05	0
Theologian	Christian	0.21	0.51	0.41	0.38	0.51
Theologian	None	0.24	0.26	0.61	0.31	0.37

Table 2. Predicting differences in rates of intelligence, kindness and virtue in freelists for theologians and physicists (Poisson regression). Sigma squared = variance, tau00 = variance of cluster means, ICC = intra-class correlation (degree to which two randomly drawn observations within a cluster are correlated).

Predictors	Intelligence		Kindness		Virtue	
	IRR	CI (95%)	IRR	CI (95%)	IRR	CI (95%)
Intercept	0.65	0.44–0.93	0.01	0.00–0.05	0.02	0.00–0.07
Theologian (vs Physicist)	0.28	0.16–0.48	39.23	7.19–712.84	15.98	4.36–104.28
None (vs Christian)	1.27	0.81–2.02	0.55	0.21–1.33	0.95	0.44–2.05
Random Effects						
σ^2	0.01		0.12		0.03	
τ_{00}	0.56		0.16		0.18	
ICC	0.02		0.43		0.17	
N	78		78		78	
Observations	155		155		155	

ratio was 1.45 for charisma ($IRR = 1.45$, $95\%CI$ 0.87–2.36), 0.84 for virtue ($IRR = 0.84$, $95\%CI$ 0.42–1.71), and 0.75 for piety ($IRR = 0.75$, $95\%CI$ 0.43–1.27). Only kindness ratings for the theologian had a reliable effect, with nones listing this 0.56 times for every one time it was listed by Christians ($IRR = 0.56$, $95\%CI$ 0.31–0.99).

3.5. Perceived attributes of prestige: predetermined Likert task

The potential scores for the predetermined attributes ranged from 0 (not at all important) to 5 (very important). They have been broken down by group (nonreligious versus Christians). Scores can be inspected in Figure 4 and Table 3.

Perceived attributes of prestigious physicists and theologians

— Nones: Physicists — Nones: Theologians — Christians: Physicists — Christians: Theologians
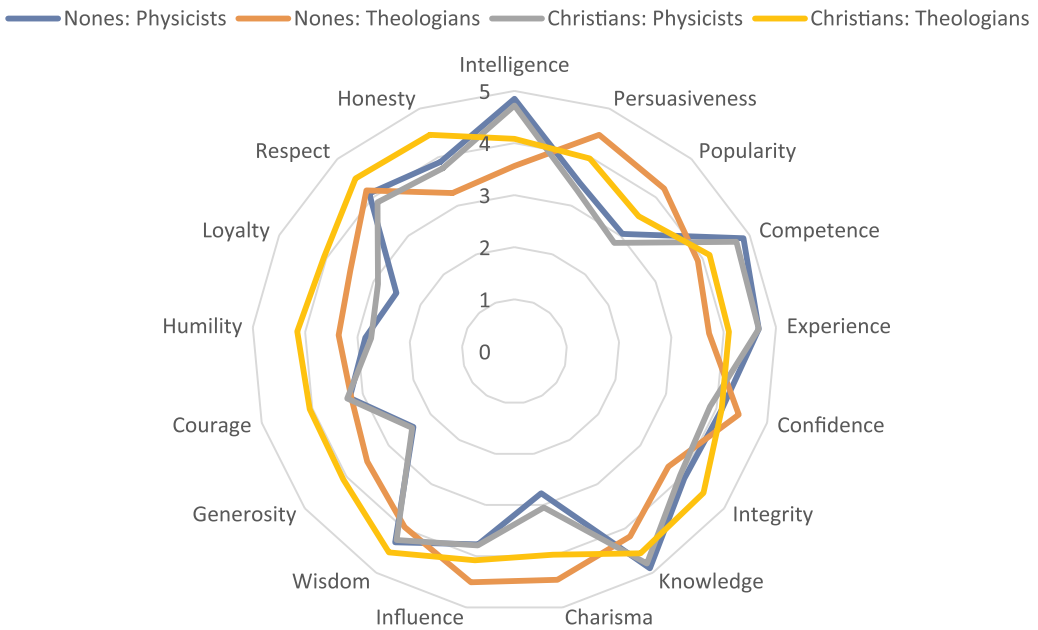
Figure 4. This radar chart compares both participant groups on how they view prestigious physicists and theologians. The closer the line comes to touching the external edge, the more highly that particular attribute was ranked. We can see that nones and Christians show near identical evaluations of the attributes necessary for prestige in physics but that their evaluations for theologians diverge.

Table 3. Likert scores for the perceived importance of various attributes to acquiring prestige in the domains of physics and Christian theology. The closer to 5, the more essential the attribute is deemed to be.

Nones: Physicists	Christians: Physicists	Nones: Theologians	Christians: Theologians
Knowledge (4.90)	Knowledge (4.79)	Influence (4.51)	Knowledge (4.56)
Competence (4.87)	Competence (4.72)	Charisma (4.46)	Wisdom (4.54)
Intelligence (4.85)	Intelligence (4.72)	Persuasiveness (4.46)	Integrity (4.51)
Experience (4.67)	Experience (4.67)	Confidence (4.44)	Respect (4.49)
Wisdom (4.31)	Wisdom (4.26)	Popularity (4.23)	Honesty (4.46)
Confidence (4.10)	Integrity (3.95)	Knowledge (4.18)	Competence (4.15)
Respect (4.10)	Confidence (3.87)	Respect (4.18)	Humility (4.15)
Integrity (4.05)	Respect (3.87)	Wisdom (3.97)	Experience (4.10)
Honesty (3.90)	Influence (3.79)	Competence (3.90)	Confidence (4.10)
Influence (3.77)	Honesty (3.77)	Experience (3.72)	Intelligence (4.08)
Persuasiveness (3.46)	Persuasiveness (3.31)	Integrity (3.67)	Influence (4.08)
Courage (3.26)	Courage (3.31)	Intelligence (3.56)	Generosity (4.08)
Popularity (3.05)	Charisma (3.05)	Generosity (3.51)	Courage (4.05)
Humility (2.85)	Loyalty (2.90)	Loyalty (3.49)	Loyalty (4.05)
Charisma (2.77)	Popularity (2.82)	Humility (3.36)	Charisma (3.97)
Loyalty (2.51)	Humility (2.74)	Honesty (3.26)	Persuasiveness (3.97)
Generosity (2.41)	Generosity (2.44)	Courage (3.23)	Popularity (3.51)

The attributes deemed necessary to obtain prestige in physics are near identical for Christian and nonreligious participants (Figure 4). These attributes differ from those perceived necessary for obtaining prestige in theology. Firstly, there is a tendency to place less emphasis for theologians on what might be termed intellectual factors (intelligence, competence, and so on). Secondly, there appears also to be a tendency to place greater emphasis on what might be termed moral factors (honesty, humility, courage, and so forth) and interpersonal factors (charisma, persuasiveness, popularity, and so forth) in the attainment of theological prestige. Finally, we can see that there is a divergence between the nonreligious and Christians, whereby the nonreligious ascribe somewhat greater weight than Christians to "amoral" interpersonal factors such as influence, charisma, persuasiveness, popularity, and confidence, and somewhat less weight to moral factors. These ratings are listed in order of highest to lowest perceived importance in Table 3.

4. Discussion

4.1. Overall attribute salience for physicists and theologians

The freelist attributions show that there are distinctive mental models of prestige in the domains of physics and Christian theology. Physicists are highly associated with intelligence, and most further associations relate in some way to the capacity to do intellectual work, such as being educated or having a range of dispositions amenable to detached intellectual endeavor such as rationality,

curiosity, thoroughness and so forth. Notably, there are also no associations outside of this intellectual frame, or what could be framed as the skills of a physicist. The physicist is not granted any particular moral or interpersonal characteristics. It is difficult to say whether these are simply not part of the mental model, or whether they are deemed absent or underdeveloped in the typical physicist (i.e., the physicist's intellectualism goes along with a certain coldness or disregard for social niceties and norms). Either way, there is no evidence at least among the most salient associations that the physicist is conceptualized negatively. The popular conception of the prestigious physicist is, essentially, a hyper-intellectual "brain on a stick" (see also Evans, 2018).

The prestige of the theologian is assessed very differently. Virtues of one form or another are far more central to how the prestigious theologian is conceptualized. None of these reaches as high a level of salience as intelligence for the physicist. Intelligence, education, and a scholarly disposition are viewed as important, but these come behind piety, kindness, knowledge, and virtue. These characteristics map more closely to the traits of prestige seen in the current literature (e.g., Cheng, 2020). Charisma, the ability to sway others through force of character, is more salient than any intellectual prowess. To a certain degree this may relate to greater ambiguity about what exactly might constitute "theological prestige." While the professor is a clear apex of the physicist model, the prestigious theologian may also have been taken to be a minister or preacher, i.e., someone who is practically rather than primarily intellectually involved with theology. It is possible that if the academic origins of the theologian were given added emphasis in the current design, the result might look somewhat more like the physicist.

4.2. Physicists: attribute salience for nones vs Christians

The most interesting finding here is the lack of distinction between how the physicist is conceptualized by the Christian and nonreligious participants: both cleave equally to the hyper-intellectualized model. Contra accounts suggesting US Christians are anti-scientific or opposed to scientific authority, the current data suggest that these individuals at least share the same mental model of physicist prestige as their nonreligious counterparts. While data from members of fundamentalist subcultures locked in opposition to the scientific worldview might look different, in general the current data suggest that at least when it comes to individuals on Prolific's database, there is a general model of physicists that is shared broadly irrespective of religious affiliation or commitment. This can account to some extent for Hoogeven et al.'s (2022) "Einstein Effect."

4.3. Theologians: attribute salience for nones vs Christians

Here, we see more of a difference between the two groups emerging. For Christians, the acquisition of prestige in the realm of Christian theology is weighted toward moralized characteristics such as piety, virtue, and kindness, with knowledge and charisma seeming to play secondary roles. While many of these associations remain the same for the nonreligious, it is particularly worth noting the elevated salience of charisma for this group, as well as the emergence of deviousness at the outer edge of top associations (and subgroup comparisons suggested that deviousness was particularly salient for those describing themselves as atheist).

This gives us some fairly straightforward insight into how the prestige of out-group intellectual figures can be essentially "disarmed" of its potential effects on the plausibility of knowledge claims: prestige is based in the ability to cause others to follow. The prestige has effectively become a second order social effect, where prestige is acquired by paying attention to the behavior of others toward the prestigious individual (Henrich & Gil-White, 2001). For those with a presumably more oppositional stance toward the authority in question, this is coupled with associations of manipulative intentions (deviousness). Nevertheless, the nonreligious still share many of the moral associations with theologians that are held by Christians. This suggests a somewhat divided view within this broad and varied subpopulation. The high salience of charisma and deviousness in nonreligious

evaluations of theologians may also have a very culturally specific source, namely crossover from secular Americans' negative associations with "prestigious" televangelists and megachurch demagogues.

4.4. Perceived attributes of prestige Likert task

The Likert task offers some degree of corroboration for the mental models of physics versus theological prestige suggested by the freelists. The degree of similarity between Christian and nonreligious participants on the attributes required for prestige in physics is striking: both seem to have almost exactly the same opinions about what is necessary to obtain prestige in physics. The task corroborates the finding that theological prestige is viewed as involving moral and interpersonal attributes to a greater degree than physics prestige, and the finding that while both group share this perception the nonreligious skew toward the "amoral" interpersonal factors (i.e., charisma, persuasiveness and so on) while Christians skew toward the moral factors (generosity, courage, humility and so forth). The authors did not think to include *negative* factors such as deviousness or cold-heartedness in this list; future work should consider examining the degree to which such factors may be implicated in "seeing through" or "disarming" the prestige of antagonistic intellectual figures.

5. General discussion

The prestige of scientific and religious experts is conceptualized differently by the general population of the United States, even within the highly circumscribed domain of the academy. The data presented here suggest that intelligence is less central, and moral characteristics and charisma are more central, to the prestige of Christian intellectual experts than experts in physics. This perspective is held both by religious and nonreligious individuals. It is worth noting that this is compatible with current sociological evidence. While religion is a complex polythetic category rather than a natural kind, contemporary sociologists note that religion for most of the US population relates more to such factors as the regulation of social relationships and the maintenance of cohesive groups than to explaining "what is" (Evans, 2018). In this sense, they are more like the prestigious leaders that have been the focus of previous research (Cheng, 2020; Henrich et al., 2015).

Some may argue that this reflects something of a universal tendency. Anthropologists have argued that religion seeks to explain puzzling events and processes in the world in terms of social relationships rather than in terms of physical causation (e.g., Evans-Pritchard, 1937; Whitehouse, 2011). These differences of explanatory strategy may stem from the fundamentally different ways in which we imitate the behavior of others. There is a growing body of psychological evidence that from an early stage of development humans, uniquely among other primates, naturally distinguish between two kinds of social learning opportunity (Whitehouse, 2021). One kind focuses on instrumental learning—that is, the opportunity to acquire technically useful skills that alter the state of world in desirable ways via physical cause and effect. The other kind focuses on ritual learning—that is, the opportunity to acquire socially useful skills that enable us to cooperate with others as part of cultural groups. These contrasting forms of social learning have been associated with distinct psychological orientations or "stances" on modeled behavior: an instrumental stance oriented to the efficient achievement of end-goals and ritual stance oriented to affiliation with the community (Jagiello et al., 2022; Whitehouse, 2011). Arguably, the reason why young earth creationism persists despite evidence to the contrary from earth sciences and evolutionary theory is that religious and scientific belief systems are non-overlapping magisteria (Gould, 1997; Harrison, 2015), dominated by ritual and instrumental stances respectively. However, it would be hasty to draw this universal conclusion, as other strands of evidence indicate that religious authorities in the historical past and in many contemporary non-western contexts are frequently consulted

about practical matters in an instrumental manner similar to scientists (Hong, 2022; Horton, 1960). It may be the case that the divergence between scientific and theological prestige detected above reflects the outcome of a process whereby religion has become restricted to a moral role in specific societies. It is by no means certain that we would see the same distinction in non-Abrahamic contexts, or even whether the discrepancy would be as pronounced in Judaism, Islam, or some Christian denominations such as Catholicism.

The similarity of the views of the prestigious physicist across groups also makes sense here. Even in the United States, a country which seems to have the world's most polarized public relationship between religion and science (McPhetres et al., 2020), the best evidence suggests this conflict is in fact limited to particular theories rather than science as a whole (evolution, for instance) (Baker, 2012; Evans, 2011, 2018; Guhin, 2016), and is also relegated to minority subcultures (Biblical literalists, for instance) (Ecklund, 2018; Evans & Feng, 2013). If there is more general conflict, sociologists suggest it tends to be based on perceived tensions between scientists' "amoral" projects and popular moral values (Kirby, 2014; Rutjens & Heine, 2016), not intellectual opposition to an epistemological scheme that contradicts religious truth claims. If we had used an evolutionary biologist rather than a physicist, we may have seen more hostility in the evaluations of the religious (e.g., Ecklund, 2018; Evans, 2018). Future work should investigate whether the differences we have found here generalize across Christian denominations, given that some are more anti-science than others; whether the differences apply to both more and less devout religious believers; whether the findings generalize to other countries; and what might follow from these inferences (for instance, how do people respond to a scientist who weighs in on a social issue, or a religious leader who opines on scientific matters?).

From this we can infer that when assessing incomprehensible claims lacking any obvious moral salience, most contemporary Americans—be they religious or nonreligious—will assign greater credibility to the claim if it issues from prestigious scientific authorities rather than religious ones. This is because scientists are the acknowledged experts on "what is" at a purely detached and mechanistic level, not religious authorities. Responses might change, however, in the case of incomprehensible or unjustifiable claims that are more relevant to reasoning about moral matters and human relationships. In these instances, people may incline more toward deference to religious knowledge specialists in assessing such claims. Although this prediction may hold for members of the general public who do not have precisely articulated world views, it may not apply in the case of committed minorities who perceive science and religion to be at odds at the level of overall ontological scheme (e.g., New Atheists or Biblical literalists). Such questions should be investigated in future research into this important topic.

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