

NSYR Co-investigator's Article Published in *Social Forces*

Researchers with the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR), based at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) announce the publication of “Intergenerational Religious Dynamics and Adolescent Delinquency” in the June 2004 issue of *Social Forces*. Findings in the article argue that a full understanding of how religion influences adolescents’ lives should go beyond examining how individual-level religious characteristics shape their behavior, by also considering the religious characteristics of those *around* them and how they interact with one another. In other words, it is important to consider the religious nature of the *contexts* in which adolescents live, and the religious characteristics of those with whom they interact.

More specifically, the article found that the more religious mothers and their adolescent children are, the less often the children are delinquent; however, the effect of one’s religiosity depends on the other. They defined delinquency to include 14 activities such as burglarized, borrowed a car without the owner’s permission, sold drugs and shoplifted. When either a mother or child is very religious and the other is not, the child is more likely to be delinquent than if mother and child are similarly religious (or similarly non-religious). Thus, religion can be cohesive when shared among family members, but when unshared, higher adolescent delinquency is more likely to result.

The article is written by Dr. Lisa D. Peace and Dr. Dana L. Haynie. Pearce, co-investigator with the NSYR, is assistant professor of Sociology and a faculty fellow in the Carolina Population Center, both at UNC-CH. Dr. Haynie is assistant professor of Sociology at The Ohio State University. The research is based on data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health is a nationally representative school-based study of adolescents in grades seven to 12. Add Health, as the study is commonly called, is designed to explore health-related behaviors and the causes of these behaviors. Nearly 12,000 respondents were interviewed twice in their homes, with an approximate one-year interval between interviews. An identical number of parents also were interviewed. The first wave of interviews took place in 1995, the second wave in 1996.

Social Forces is an international journal of social research highlighting sociological inquiry but also exploring realms shared with social psychology, anthropology, political science, history, and economics. It is associated with the Southern Sociological Society, with the assistance of the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The National Study of Youth and Religion is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. The purpose of the project is to research the shape and influence of religion and spirituality in the lives of U.S. adolescents; to identify effective practices in the religious, moral and social formation of the lives of youth; to describe the extent to which youth participate in and benefit from the programs and opportunities that religious communities are offering to their youth; and to foster an informed national discussion about the influence of religion in youth's lives to encourage sustained reflection about and rethinking of our cultural and institutional practices with regard to youth and religion.