

CONCEPT PAPER RESPONSE FORM

A. To be completed by the proposing author:

Provisional Paper Title:	The interpersonal origins of unbelief
Proposing Author:	Professor Jamin Halberstadt & Associate Professor Jesse Bering, Victoria Alogna, Evan Balkcom, & Samantha Smith.
Other Contributors:	Reverend Dr. Jonathan Jong
Potential Journals:	PLOS One, Psychological Science, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion
Intended Submission Date	

Please keep one copy for your records and return one to the proposing author

B. To be completed by potential co-authors:

Approved Not Approved Let's discuss, I have concerns

Comments:

Please check your contribution(s) for authorship:

- Conceptualising and designing the longitudinal study
- Conceptualising and collecting one or more variables
- Data collection
- Conceptualizing and designing this specific paper project
- Statistical analyses
- Writing
- Reviewing manuscript drafts
- Final approval before submission for publication
- Acknowledgment only, I will not be a co-author

Signature: _____

Date: _____

CONCEPT PAPER TEMPLATE

Provisional Paper Title:	The interpersonal origins of unbelief
Proposing Author:	Prof Jamin Halberstadt, Associate Prof Jesse Bering, Victoria Alogna, Evan Balkcom, & Samantha Smith
Author's Phone, Fax or E-mail:	jhalbers@psy.otago.ac.nz
Date:	27/03/2018
P.I. Sponsor (if the proposing author is a student or colleague of an original PI)	Prof Richie Poulton
Objective of the study:	
<p>To statistically model the developmental origins of religious disbelief and its downstream effects on coping behaviors, in three parts.</p> <p>This application relates to Part 1, which aims to investigate the extent to which interpersonal differences such as introversion, social anxiety, family environment, and ritual aversion predict variation in religious belief/disbelief in adulthood.</p> <p>The second and third parts will be submitted as separate concept papers.</p>	
Data analysis methods:	
<p>Path analysis and/or structural equation modelling, with relevant individual difference variables (e.g., IQ, personality, family environment) treated as pseudo-independent measures and religiosity at ages 26 and 32 treated as dependent measures.</p>	
Variables needed at which ages:	
<p>Moo's Family Environment Scale, all items for all subscales (AGES 7, 9, & 15)</p> <p>Eysenck Personality Inventory, all items (AGE 3)</p> <p>School Behavior and Adjustment, all items (AGES 5, 7, 9, 11, 13)</p> <p>Child Behavior Questionnaire, all items (AGES 7, 9, 11)</p> <p>Your Child's Behavior, all items (AGE 15)</p> <p>Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire, all items for all subscales (AGES 18, 26, 32)</p> <p>Values: Childs Priority Sort Items, all items (AGES 18, 32)</p> <p>WISC, all items for all subscales (AGES 7, 9, 11, 13)</p> <p>Religion, item 24 (A599; Importance of religion and religious beliefs) (AGE 21)</p> <p>Religion, items SS1-SS12 (AGE 26)</p> <p>Religion and Spirituality, items REL1-REL10 (AGE 32)</p> <p>Life Skills: Spirituality, all items (AGE 32)</p>	
Significance of the study (for theory, research methods or clinical practice):	

Recent scientific interest in religion has tended to focus on the “puzzle of belief”: how people adhere to a nonscientific worldview in the face of significant financial and reproductive costs (Jong & Halberstadt, 2016; Sosis & Alcorta, 2003; Barrett, 2004). Some research suggests the answer is that humans are predisposed to become religious – biased towards reasoning in fatalistic terms (Bering, 2011; Barrett, 2012; Banerjee & Bloom, 2015; Heywood & Bering, 2014), for example, or perceiving agency where none exists (Barrett, 2004; Bering, 2011; Barrett, 2012; Banerjee & Bloom, 2015; Heywood & Bering, 2014; Guthrie, 1993; Barnes & Gibson, 2012). If people have supernatural beliefs by default, then the real puzzle is how and why some people reject those intuitions to become “unbelievers” (Johnson, 2012).

Resolving this puzzle, we believe, is the key to understanding the nature of unbelief. Thus, we will examine how unbelief emerges (e.g., its origins in childhood, and the individual and situational variables that predict it in adulthood), and how it is sustained in the face of cognitive inclinations to believe. We plan to statistically model the development of unbelief using childhood experiences, family background and environment, and psychometric data including IQ and personality. Our working hypothesis for Part 1 is that “lifelong” unbelief is more often due to interpersonal factors. Specifically, we suspect that a predictive factor in lifelong unbelief is an early childhood failure to assimilate behavioral norms in the domain of religion. Those children for whom the “bizarre” unpredictable faith-based behaviors of adult authority figures (e.g., ritual, prayer, displays of heightened affect, etc.) invoke confusion and/or fear develop an emotional aversion to the social manifestations of belief (e.g., religious gatherings). Over time, this reaction may or may not be subjected to critical analysis in which the person intellectualizes their feelings through say, scientific reasoning. But the roots of their unbelief lay in their innate personality differences (introversion/social anxiety) and aversion to ritual activities.

References:

- Jong, J., & Halberstadt, J. (2016). *Death anxiety and religious belief: An existential psychology of religion*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.
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- Bering, J. M. (2011). *The belief instinct: The psychology of souls, destiny, and the meaning of life*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Barrett, J. L. (2012). *Born believers: The science of children’s religious belief*. New York, NY: Free Press.
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- Barnes, K., & Gibson, N. J. (2012). *Supernatural agency: Individual difference predictors and*

situational correlates. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 23 (1), 42 – 62.

Johnson, D. (2012). What are atheists for? Hypotheses on the functions of non-belief in the evolution of religion. *Religion, Brain, & Behavior*, 2 (1), 48 – 99.

Data Security Agreement (customize as necessary)

A

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Proposing Author	Professor Jamin Halberstadt & Associate Professor Jesse Bering, Victoria Alogna, Evan Balkcom, & Samantha Smith.
Today's Date	27/03/2018

Please keep one copy for your records and return one to the PI Sponsor

Please initial your agreement

My project is covered by Dunedin Study's IRB approval *OR* I have /will obtain IRB approval from my home institution.

I will treat all data as "restricted" and store in a secure fashion.

I will not share the data with anyone, including students or other collaborators not specifically listed on this concept paper.

I will not post data online or submit the data file to a journal for them to post.
Some journals are now requesting the data file as part of the manuscript submission process. Data from the Dunedin Study cannot be shared because the Study Members have not given informed consent for unrestricted open access. Speak to Richie Poulton, DMHDRU Director for strategies for dealing with data sharing requests from Journals.

Before submitting my paper to a journal, I will submit my draft manuscript and scripts for data checking, and my draft manuscript for co-author mock review, allowing three weeks.

I will submit analysis scripts and new variable documentation to DMHDRU data manager after manuscript gets accepted for publication.

I will return all data files to the PI responsible and/or DMHDRU Data Manager after the project is complete. The data remains the property of the Study and cannot be used for further analyses without express, written permission.

Signature:

Jamin Halberstadt



Jesse Bering



Victoria Alogna



Evan Balkcom



Samantha Smith



