ABSTRACT

THESIS: The Effects of Familial Bonds and Peer Group Perceptions on Religious Identification: A Study of Interfaith Children

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The research used data from the first wave of the National Survey of Youth and Religion 2003 to examine how children of interfaith couples navigate their own religious identity. The analyses explored how family and peer bonds influence the religious identification of interfaith children and how family dynamics and peer attitudes influence religious doubt. Results indicate that parental religious attendance was a significant predictor for the religious identification of interfaith children. Interfaith children were more likely to associate themselves with the faith of the parent which attended services most often. The religious structure of the family was not found to be a significant predictor of religious doubt, with both same and interfaith children reporting similar levels. However, the quality of the parent-child relationship, parental religious attendance, peer influence, and the gender of the child were found to be key indicators of religious doubt.