A global warming issue

The existence and prominence of global warming is often hotly contested by politicians through news and media outlets. While some might argue that it is nonexistent, some think that the issue is very real and should be taken a lot more seriously than it currently is. So when it comes to whether or not someone believes in global warming we thought it would be interesting to analyze how religious and political affiliation affected people's views on global warming. Generally we tend to see those who identify with left-wing ideologies lean more towards addressing the prominence of global warming and the affects it has on the earth, while many identifying conservatives oppose the idea of global warming and some even consider it a myth.

Studies have revealed that women are more likely to have more knowledge on issues pertaining to global warming and climate change than men. (McCright 84) So with the knowledge that we gained from external sources we could propose a hypothesis that would accurately incorporate various aspects surrounding the belief of the existence of global warming in American society. Pope Francis released an encyclical containing information addressing the effect of global warming and climate change on the environment. (Kiley) Upon the release of this information these deep ideological divides only got deeper, continuing to widen the gap separating those who do and do not believe in the presence of global warming.

For our survey research design project we decided to see if religious affiliation would have any different effect on whether or not an individual believed in global warming as a prominent issue towards the environment rather than just focusing on political ideologies. We believed that after collecting data from qualtrics that those who identified as religions such as

christianity, which typically are associated with more conservative views, would be less likely to believe in global warming.

For the survey we designed in attempt to collect data we focused on questions that would help us gain insight to how religious affiliation, political ideologies and belief in the existence of global warming correlated with one another. Specifically we began our survey by focusing on basic demographics and then we proceeded to divulge into information from the participants about their religious affiliations and how prominent religion was in their life in terms of attending religious services and participating in things such as prayer or meditation. We then addressed the question of whether the survey participant believed in global warming and how much they believed that it should be addressed more often due to its prominent effects on the environment and human population.

The questions we used in our survey attempted to encapsulate the basic demographics of the survey participant to get general background information that we could use to attribute to analyzing their response. At times some of the questions we used seem slightly redundant providing us with a lot of responses that pointed us in the same direction that could have been eliminated or condensed into a finer selection of questions that properly addressed the most important questions that would provide us with the most relevant and beneficial data to our survey results.

One issue that I think we encountered with our question design was that we were too vague with the options for religious affiliation options. We had a plethora of people select the option ' other' which was unclear and made it

difficult to categorize these people seeing as ' other' could be other less popular religious views or other forms of christianity that we did not specifically list in the survey options for the questions concerning religious affiliation. It was difficult to categorize these responses under ' other' unless someone specifically wrote in a response that they identified as such as ' spiritual, but not religious'. Since the survey predominantly was focusing on religious affiliation and the correlation with belief in global warming the questions could have been better executed in order to produce the most helpful and clear responses. This also could have made the analysis of the data easier.

When it came to analyzing our survey sample the results revealed that over 75% of our respondents were female and 80% of our respondents were between the ages of 18-24. Majority of our respondents also identified as white and as a member of the democratic party. As we distributed our survey, naturally it reached out to college students at The University of North Carolina most prominently due to the fact that the places we advertised it and posted were on platforms such as Facebook and UNC class listservs which are dominated by the UNC student body. This sample is obviously not very representative as the population as a whole seeing as our survey was dominated by females aged 18-24. There were some outliers in the demographic results, but for the most part there was not much variety in the survey sample. If we were sampling just the population of UNC then the sample would be accurate but we had hoped to focus on a more broad variety of respondents that would give us more of an idea of what those who identify as conservative thought about the existence of global warming.

In terms of analyzing the data we discovered slight correlation between the views on global warming and political affiliation. Most of the people who did identify as practicing christianity still considered themselves to be democratic here at UNC so this factor may have skewed our data. While the majority of people who responded that they did not believe in global warming were also of christian faith we could conclude that there was some correlation but with a wider survey sample that included more demographics we could better get an idea of how religious affiliation really affects opinions on global warming.

We did however find correlation between those who pray or meditate and their belief in global warming. Those who engage in religious affiliated activities on a weekly basis are more likely to believe that global warming is not happening. In addition to this we also discovered that those who engage in prayer and meditation frequently are more likely to base their political opinions on their religious beliefs. From these results we can see a general correlation between the basic aspects of religious affiliation and belief in global warming. Of course with r-correlations we can delve deeper into the correlation between the two variables and develop a better idea of how the two variables are related.

So from the results we obtained from the survey respondents we can deduce that there is correlation between those who frequently engage in religious activities like prayer and attending church. While the results may not be the best at exemplifying specific correlations due to the majority of UNC student respondents being female, democratic and between the ages of 18-24, but

we can still assume that the correlation that we did obtain from the survey when applied to a wider survey sample would remain accurate and still heed the same correlation. Majority of our respondents were also female and those who responded that they did believe global warming is occurring and is problematic were mostly female as well. This reaffirms the study that women are more knowledgeable when it comes to global warming awareness.

In order to obtain these results we ran several r-correlation tests across several variables that we proposed in the survey content. We picked the variables that we thought would give us the best results when their correlation was analyzed in the r-correlation tests. The variables we focused on were religious affiliation and belief in global warming. Our ideal end results would reveal that those who are more religious in terms of practicing faith and going to religious events would be more likely to believe that global warming was not occurring. After running the r-correlations we could affirm that our hypothesis was accurate in determining that religious affiliation did in a way correlate with beliefs on global warming. Luckily the qualtrics site we used to conduct the survey neatly organized the information we collected which made it easier to analyze when it came to executing the r-correlation action.

From the data gathered from the survey respondents we can generally deduce that those who who frequently (one or more times a week) engage in religious activities such as prayer, meditation or going to church are much more likely to hold the belief that global warming is not happening or is not a

threat to the human population. While the UNC population showed an outlier of a lot of the christian respondents being left-wing oriented, we can assume that the more republican respondents we have the more likely it is for them to believe that global warming is not occurring.

While we did not receive the specific results we had hoped for with such strong correlation there was some evident correlation that we came across when we began to analyze our results. Generally, we already know that people who identify with more conservative ideologies are more likely to put off the idea that global warming is occurring. So when we brought the religious aspect into the mix we thought it might give us a stronger sense of just exactly how conservatism affects people's views on global warming. While overall our specific hypothesis of those who identify as christian are more likely to not believe in global warming did not show the specific correlation we had hoped for, there was still some correlation that was applicable to those who frequently engage in religious practice and attend religious events.

Specifically we found that those who attend religious events and practice religious things like meditation and prayer on a weekly basis are much more likely to not believe in the existence of global warming. While this is not specifically religiously correlated, the majority of respondents who did identify themselves as of christian faith were also the ones who responded that they frequent religious events and practice frequently.

When we produced a cross-tabulation of religious views and belief in global warming our p-value output was 0. 58. While this does not represent perfect

correlation we can deduce that since the p-value was between 0 to 1 the two variables tend to increase/decrease together. So while the overall variables tended to fluctuate together they still did not give us perfect correlation. However, when we ran cross-tabulations comparing the belief in global warming to the variables of those who frequently attend religious events (excluding funerals and weddings) and meditate or pray and we found perfect correlation amongst these factors. We also found perfect correlation in a cross-tabulation of those whose religious beliefs play a role in their political ideologies and how often they engage in religious related activities.

We took this one step further and cross-tabulated the same two variables about religious practice mentioned in the paragraph above with the variable of if the respondents thought citizens should be more aware and to put forth a better effort of addressing the effects of global warming. We found a p-value of 0. 43 with this cross-tabulation which again shows that the two variables do tend to increase and decrease with one another but it does not provide us with perfect correlation. The data we received tends to lean towards showing some correlation between religious views, political ideology and belief in global warming.

The biggest form of correlation we found was definitely between how often people attend religious events and mediate and whether or not their religious beliefs had any effect when it came to forging their political ideologies. So while the correlation between religious views and belief in global warming was not as precise as we would have liked, the correlation we did find allowed us to make some connections between religious views

and global warming awareness/belief. Since we did not achieve perfect correlation on the variables we had hoped for it is questionable how connected religious views and global warming are when compared to one another. So our proposed hypothesis was not entirely validated, but from the results from the correlation that we did gather we can assume with perhaps a wider more diverse survey sample our data could have been much different and shown more correlations between the provided variables than it did.

Generally speaking, with the correlation we did find from our respondents and research we can gather that there is correlation between religious views and global warming. Again, the data that we collected might be more accurate and in depth if we had of had a better survey sample that included more respondents than just those who attended The University of North Carolina where the demographic of the student body is primarily democratic and female. The lack of male response and those who identify as conservative could have been crucial to us in terms of producing better results and finding correlation between the two variables. While we did have some male and conservative respondents due to the overwhelming female, democratic demographic our results catered towards those ideologies and demographics.

I believe that the most important thing we learned from the survey we conducted is that while something may seem to have obvious correlation that may not always be the case. In our case, one would assume that those who identify as conservative would generally be associated with practicing a

christian-based faith and therefore be less likely to believe in topics such as the occurrence of global warming. But from the data we collected from our respondents in the survey we found that this was not exactly true. Since the majority of the respondents on our survey attended the University of North Carolina the bulk of our respondents were female and democratic but still of practicing christian-faith. So after collecting these results we had to look at the variables and correlation from a different perspective.

We then began to think that some people identify as christian but do not avidly practice the religion. So then when we looked at the correlation between those who avidly practice things like meditation and prayer and attend religious services such as church we could see a bit more correlation in these aspects of being religious versus one's belief in global warming. So from these statistics that provided us with perfect correlation we can assume that those who are more diligently religious and practice their faith in various different forms on an almost daily basis are much less likely to believe in the occurrence of global warming.

I think that it was also important for us to not be disheartened when we did not receive the results we wanted in regard to our initial hypothesis that aimed at comparing religious beliefs to belief in global warming because when we collected and analyzed all our final data the situation was a bit more complex that we had originally thought. Since we had obviously never engaged in an activity like this that involved research survey design it was a little hard to grasp the concept of exactly what we were working towards. So it took a little bit of analytical thinking to make a different hypothesis that

was more specific but still catered towards our original question. So when we broke down the statistics gathered from the religious views portion of the survey that in depth asked the respondents about how often they engaged in religious activities such as meditation and prayer and also how often they frequented events such as church service or mass we found a bit more correlation that helped us attribute our statistics back to our hypothesis.

Also, as basic as it might sound, I think our group learned a lot about research survey design in terms of how to compose specific questions to get the most beneficial and accurate responses from the people who took the survey. One problem I think we struggled with that the questions that we used on the survey, especially on the religious views portion. We did not list as many religious views as I think would have been helpful for our results and a lot of the answers we got were ' other' which contained a wide variety of responses that ranged from christian faith views to atheistic views. So after we ran this survey and analyzed the final results and correlation I think in retrospect we could have altered our questions to receive a better understanding of just exactly what our outcomes results were from the survey. While our results were skewed by the respondent demographic and also poor question planning I think we could have gotten much more conclusive results if we had altered the questions and worked at receiving a larger survey sample of the general population.

Obviously from this project I learned a lot about what goes into conducting surveys and receiving results back from your respondents. What I once thought was a simple task where you literally just ask someone questions

turned into a much more complex algorithm to receive precise and calculated results. It was very interesting to be able to conduct our surveys online with programs such as qualtrics and R, because prior to this class I had no idea how to use those programs. They were very helpful in calculating p-values and identifying correlation between the variables supplied in the survey.

Obviously our results were not too surprising to us seeing that most would assume that those who are of christian faith and avidly practice the religion are less likely to believe in the occurrence of global warming. However, our results were not as simple and straightforward as we thought they would be, but as we delved further into the variables we had conducted in our survey we could find some correlation that backed up the hypothesis that we were attempting to test via the survey. It was interesting to see that while the two generic topics of religious views and belief in global warming did not have perfect correlation we could see perfect correlation in other aspects surrounding various factors that went into an individual's religious beliefs such as how dependent their political opinions were on their religious preference and also how often they engaged in faith-based activities such as prayer, meditation and attending religious services.

I think it was very important for us to think outside of the box on this project because if we had of just stopped after we did not receive the precise results we wanted on our main two variables we could not have found the correlation between the other smaller variables that went into the bigger ones. It turns out that once we delved further into the variables we found a

lot more interesting data anyways than we would if we had just stopped at the base level of variables. I think this project was also interesting due to the upcoming election in 2016 and how applicable the skills we have been learning in this class are to real world situations. The entire political world can often be confusing and misconstrued through media and other biased platforms but through this project we learned how to formulate our own questions that are relevant to politcal ideologies and factors that go into what shapes an individual's political ideology.