

Abstract Submitted  
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**Modeling the decline of religion**<sup>1</sup> RICHARD WIENER, Research Corporation for Science Advancement and Department of Physics, University of Arizona, HALEY YAPLE, DANIEL ABRAMS, Department of Engineering Sciences and Applied Mathematics, Northwestern University — People claiming no religious affiliation constitute the fastest growing “religious” minority in many countries throughout the world.<sup>2</sup> Here we use a minimal model of competition between social groups<sup>3</sup> to explain historical data on the growth of religious non-affiliation in 85 regions around the world. We also describe numerical experiments that support the validity of the model. According to the model, for societies in which the perceived utility of not adhering is greater than the utility of adhering, religion will be driven toward extinction.

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<sup>2</sup>Zuckerman, P. “Atheism: Contemporary rates and patterns,” in Cambridge Companion to Atheism, University of Cambridge Press, 2007.

<sup>3</sup>Abrams, D. M. and Strogatz, S.H. Modelling the dynamics of language death. Nature 424(6951), 900 (2003).

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