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Complex Religion: Intersections of Religion and Inequality

Editor
Melissa J. Wilde

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Editorial

Editorial: "Complex Religion: Intersections of Religion and Inequality"

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Abstract
What is complex religion and how does it relate to social inclusion? Complex religion is a theory which posits that religion intersects with inequality, especially class, race, ethnicity and gender. The nine articles in this volume examine a wide array of ways that religion intersects with inequality, and how, as a result, it can create barriers to social inclusion. The issue begins with three articles that examine the role of religion and its intersection with race and racialization processes. It then moves to three articles that examine religion's intersection with socioeconomic inequality. The issue closes with three studies of how religion's relationship with the state creates and maintains various status hierarchies, even as some religious movements seek to combat inequality. Together, these articles enrichen our understanding of the complex task before anyone seeking to think about the role of religion in social inclusion.

Keywords
class; complex religion; gender; inequality; intersectionality; Islam; race; racialization; religion

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue "Complex Religion: Intersections of Religion and Inequality", edited by Melissa J. Wilde (University of Pennsylvania, USA).

1. Introduction

What is complex religion and how does it relate to social inclusion? Complex religion is a theoretical stance that comes with corresponding methodical decisions. At its most basic level, the theory argues that religion intersects with inequality, especially class, race, ethnicity and gender (Wilde & Glassman, 2016; Wilde & Tevington, 2017). Because some of these intersections are quite robust, complex religion theory argues that religion should almost always be examined in interaction with these social structures (Wilde, 2017). The term complex religion builds on theories of complex inequality, which argue that social stratification is multidimensional (Choo & Ferree, 2010; McCall, 2001). Complex religion extends these theories to include religious group membership among the social structures that matter for inequality, as it also brings inequality into focus for researchers who are mainly interested in religion.

The nine articles in this volume examine a wide array of ways that religion intersects with inequality, and how, as a result, it can create barriers to social inclusion. These articles examine religion both in the US and abroad. They examine its relationship with common measures of inequality, such as socioeconomic resources and educational attainment (Wilde, Tevington, & Shen, 2018). They examine how those structures relate to decisions about how to help fellow church members who are in need (Glassman, 2018), how to engage in political activism (Sager, 2018), and even when to marry (Tevington, 2018). The articles in this volume examine how "reasonable accommodation" of religious differences can result in living well—or poorly—together (Barras, Selby, & Beaman, 2018). They do so by examining tensions between native-born African-American Muslims and their wealthier, immigrant religious brothers and sisters—in the mosque (Prickett, 2018) and in religious schools (Guhin, 2018). They do so by examining the relationship between education and employment among Muslims in Sweden (Lindemann, & Stolz, 2018). The articles in this volume even examine how religion can reproduce inequality behind prison walls (Ellis, 2018).

I have grouped these articles by the type of social inequality—of social inclusion and exclusion—each one is

focused on. The issue begins with three articles that examine the role of religion and its intersection with race and racialization processes. It then moves to three articles that examine religion's intersection with socioeconomic inequality. The issue closes with three studies of how religion's relationship with the state creates and maintains various status hierarchies, even as some religious movements seek to combat inequality. This is not to say, however, that any one of these articles examines only one way that religion intersects with other social structures. Almost all of them acknowledge the multiple, competing, and thoroughly complex ways that religious intersects with various other structures of inequality or social life, even as they focus, as they must, mainly on one of these.

Together, these articles enrichen our understanding of the complex task before anyone seeking to think about the role of religion in social inclusion.

2. Intersections of Religion and Race: Islam and Racialization

Sociologists have long acknowledged that religion plays a crucial role in racialization processes. In the words of theorists of racialization processes, religion is a critical dimension upon which race is "culturally figured and represented, the manner in which race comes to be meaningful as a descriptor of group or individual identity, social issues, and experience" (Winant, 1998, p. 756). As Catholicism and Judaism were racialized a century ago in the US (see Wilde & Danielsen, 2015), today the key racialization process that is occurring vis a vis religion in the US and other industrialized countries has to do with Islam. To that end, we are treated with three articles in this volume that examine various disadvantages faced by Muslims in the US and in Europe.

By engaging the growing body of literature on the racialization of Muslim immigrants and exploring his own data from an ethnographic study of an immigrant Muslim high school, Jeffrey Guhin argues that "American Islam is only sociologically intelligible through its intersections with other salient identities especially…race and ethnicity" (Guhin, 2018, p. 87).

Pamela Pricket's study of an African-American mosque in South Central Los Angles also examines how American Islam intersects with race, particularly in her nuanced account of the tensions that exist between the African-American members and Arab immigrant Muslim neighbors. Pricket explicitly connects these tensions to the divergent class locations of the two groups, pointing out vividly how those differences are felt when the wealthier Muslims bring her respondents gifts of charity during Ramadan. She thus concludes that "the ways in which American Muslims experience stigma and inequality varies depending on how their religious identification intersects with other dimensions of social stratification (Pricket, 2018, p. 98)."

Anaïd Lindemann and Jörg Stolz find that both the most and least educated Muslims in Sweden experience disproportionately greater unemployment. Acknowledging that it is difficult to distinguish between ethnic and religious discrimination in their case, they conclude that solutions to the Muslim employment gap are not simple. Given that Swedish Muslims with the greatest amounts of human capital experience comparable rates of unemployment as those with the least, their research provides a useful caution to policy makers.

3. Intersections of Religion and Class Inequality

Although the study of religion and inequality was marginalized for years because of assumptions that religious inequality was "smaller than [it] used to be and…getting smaller all of the time" (Pyle & Davidson, 2014, p. 195), there has been a revival of studies of both the causes and consequences of religious inequality. My article with Patricia Tevington and Wensong Shen describes the current state of religious inequality in the United States in order to make one important point: religious inequality remains. It is profound and robust (Wilde et al., 2018).

Lindsay Glassman's article examines how economic inequality is managed within a tightknit religious group that rejects almost all modern forms of economic advancement, including higher education, health insurance, mortgages and credit cards. She finds that members at Full Truth Church are able to help fellow members, but to do anonymously, by using the Church's resources. In doing so, members are able to thank God for various godsends, and not individuals who are likely better off financially.

By probing reactions to her Evangelical respondents' early marriages, Patricia Tevington finds that while all Evangelicals receive social sanctioning for early marriage, those from middle class backgrounds experience greater stigma, especially from their families, than those from working class or poor backgrounds.

4. Intersections of Religion and the State

From theories that argue that state regulation or support of religion creates lazy monopolies (Finke & Stark, 1992) to studies of how state regulation interacts with other factors like religious diversity (Wilde, 2007; Wilde, Geraty, Nelson, & Bowman, 2010), religion's relationship with the state has been an important part of the sociology of religion for a long time. Three articles in this issue examine the complexities that emerge from various forms of that relationship, even in societies where disestablishment is par for the course.

Amelie Barras, Jennifer Selby and Lori Beaman show how Canada's mandate of "reasonable accommodation" does little to unseat the power and privilege enjoyed by religious majorities, but seems to, at the same time, cause much religious conflict and especially anti-Muslim sentiment. As such, their article is a powerful example of how religion is "intertwined both with other social cate-

gories such as ethnicity and class and with social inequality" (Barras et al., 2018, p. 163).

Sometimes, religious institutions can try to change what they see as unfair systems. Rebecca Sager's article examines when and how religious institutions get involved in political organizing to combat inequality. She demonstrates that religious institutions that want to engage in such work often have to work around members who prefer to not get entangled in political disputes (Sager, 2018).

Finally, Rachel Ellis' ethnographic study of religion in a women's prison, highlights how race, class, ethnicity and gender all intersect with the messages female prisoners receive from religious volunteers. She profoundly points out the contradiction between Conservative Protestant messages about finding "Godly men," and the reality of the marriage markets that female prisoners will return to if—and when—they are released. As she puts it so eloquently: "The environment in which adherents "do religion" exists within a broader landscape of stratification" (Ellis, 2018, p. 183).

5. Conclusion

In sum, the articles in this thematic issue examine many aspects of religion's intersection with inequality—whether race and racialization processes, class and economic differences, or attempts to administer or change some aspect of state laws as they relate to religion. That said, although the variety, depth and insightfulness of the articles presented in this issue are impressive, in some sense, they represent only the very beginning of the possible theoretical and empirical rewards that can come from employing an intersectional approach to the study of religion. I close this introduction hoping that these articles will spark many more.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Melissa J. Wilde (PhD in Sociology, 2002, from UC Berkeley) is an Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. Most of her research has focused on religious change, including: the cultural and organizational factors behind Vatican II; the demographic factors that explain why American Protestantism has gone from being majority Mainline to majority conservative; and how race and class intersected with American religious groups to explain early stances on birth control. Lately, her research has become focused on how certain qualities of the American religious field, especially inequality, haven't changed, and how those enduring features of American religion can help us understand religious views of sex, poverty, and even politics today.

Part I.

Intersections of Religion and Race: Islam and Racialization

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Article

Colorblind Islam: The Racial Hinges of Immigrant Muslims in the United States

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Abstract
Islam is increasingly theorized as a "racialized" category in the United States, yet these accounts can too often emphasize a top-down approach of racial identification and obfuscate the importance of the African-American Muslim experience. Using Maghbouleh's (2017) concept of "racial hinges", the author synthesizes previous work and provides evidence from his own ethnographic research to describe how immigrant Muslims in the United States leverage different racial "strategies of action" (Swidler, 1986), including white acculturation and black appropriation. In the conclusion, the author suggests a third strategy: brown solidarity.

Keywords
complex religion; ethnicity; immigration; Islam; race

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Complex Religion: Intersections of Religion and Inequality", edited by Melissa J. Wilde (University of Pennsylvania, USA).

1. Introduction

It is increasingly common to theorize the "racialization" of American Muslims (Bayoumi, 2015; Cainkar, 2009; Carr & Haynes, 2015; Galonnier, 2015; Garner & Selod, 2015; Ibrahim, 2008; Selod, 2015; Selod & Embrick, 2013). Yet theories of the racialization of American Muslims can often run into two problems. First, these arguments tend not to refer to all American Muslims, which are a diverse and heterogeneous category (GhaneaBassiri, 2010; Hussain, 2016), but rather to immigrant Muslims. Second, these theories also emphasize a top-down process of racialization, occluding the ways that immigrant Muslims are able to leverage certain kinds of racial ambiguity. This article builds upon Neda Maghbouleh's (2017) concept of "racial hinges" to describe how immigrant Muslims in the United States deal with these ambiguities, navigating their relationships among Muslims ethnicities and with African Americans and whites. In doing so, I build on Melissa Wilde's concept of "complex religion" (Wilde, 2017; Wilde & Glassman, 2016; Wilde & Tevington, 2017) to argue that American Islam is only sociologically intelligible through its intersections with other salient identities especially, for the purposes of this article, race and ethnicity. Taking Wilde's challenge to render more complex our understandings of religion, I argue that not only should scholars acknowledge how Islam in America is racialized but they should also show the complicated ways in which immigration and ethnicity intersect with these racialization processes.

In her study of Iranian Americans—many though not all of whom are Muslim—Maghbouleh gets right at this complexity, describing "racial hinges" as the processes through which racial liminality "opens or closes the door to whiteness as necessary" (Maghbouleh, 2017, p. 5). In describing these hinges, Maghbouleh demonstrates how, "for liminal racial groups, whiteness is fickle and volatile" even for those, like Iranians and other immigrants from the Middle East, who are considered "white" by United States law and might consider themselves white as well (Maghbouleh, 2017, p. 13). The state and broader cultural processes are important here, but analysis of these processes can too often be exclusively top-down (Maghbouleh, 2017, p. 170).

Maghbouleh shows how the racial experience of immigrant Muslims is not only about the security state

and media representations depicting Muslims as racialized others (Jamal, 2008), developing the term "racial hinge" to describe how Iranian Americans can manipulate (or at least attempt to manipulate) their ambiguous relationship to whiteness. As such, Maghbouleh's study of racial hinges and racial loopholes helps her to understand how Iranian Americans navigate "the limits of whiteness" and also the capacity to "forge new racial identities…becoming brown by choice and by force" (Maghbouleh, 2017, p. 172). In this article, I expand upon the concept to describe how immigrant American Muslims can manipulate their relationship to whiteness and black identity. It is important to acknowledge that such agentic possibilities are not necessarily normatively positive ones, and greater racial freedom can sometimes lead to more capacity to leverage strategies of racial domination.

By describing Muslims as at once racialized and capable of creative manipulation of racial categories, I challenge an "analytical groupism" (Brubaker, Loveman, & Stamatov, 2004, p. 31) that can sometimes occur in studies of racialized Islam. Analytical groupism refers to a tendency among both laypeople and academics to take groups for granted as the most appropriate way to understand the world, an insight somewhat paralleled by Wilde's concept of "complex religion". The concept of American Muslim "racialization" can sometimes fall into this groupist tendency, especially when assuming that immigrant Muslims' top-down racialized category is the most salient means through which to understand them. As will be discussed below, this is not to deny that immigrant Muslims are racialized or that such a category is both politically and empirically important. It is simply to say that immigrant Muslims' relationship to race is more complex than their racialization by the security state and popular culture, and that it is also a relationship marked by agentic manipulation of various racial strategies of action. Race, like any social category, is always a social accomplishment, and immigrant Muslims have access to various, contextually motivated "strategies of action" (Swidler, 1986) through which to enact those accomplishments; they are able to do so in a way that African American Muslims are not.

To be clear, immigrant Muslims' access to a variety of often contradictory racial and ethnic discourses is by no means a net advantage: indeed, it is often the result of white supremacy, decades of colonial intervention in immigrants' countries of origin, and both explicit and implicit bias. Institutionalized Islamophobia (Kundnani, 2014) compels Muslims to perform a "good Muslim" status (Mamdani, 2005) even for those potential "liberal" allies who claim to be religiously neutral. Yet, because of many immigrant Muslims' status as "brown" (Silva, 2010, 2016) rather than "black" in the United States racial order (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2015), as well as their potential ability to shift between ethnic, racial, and religious registers (in a way that African Americans cannot), immigrant Muslims are able to engage political and cultural problems through often contradictory approaches to race, ethnicity, and religion. To be clear, to say Muslim Americans are "brown" is not necessarily to argue many of them self-identify as brown; it is simply to argue that, as Silva, Maghbouleh and other theorists of the "brown" identity have postulated, to be "brown" gives immigrant Muslims a racial (and not simply ethnic) identity that is nonetheless outside of the typical black/white binary.

For the purposes of this article, I describe "immigrant Muslims" as those 76% of American Muslims who are either immigrants or children of immigrants (Pew, 2017). Histories of American Islam (e.g., GhaneaBassiri, 2010; Husain 2017) often situate such immigrant Muslims—many of whom came after changes in U.S. immigration law in 1965—as separate from indigenous American Islam, which is predominantly composed of black Muslims who have been in the United States much longer. According to Pew (2017), 20% of Muslim American adults self-identify as black, of whom only 11% are foreign born. Of those black Muslims born in the United States, over half have families that have been in the United States for at least three generations (Pew, 2017).

In what follows, I will provide a brief methods section, a literature review of debates about the best way to categorize Islam in the United States, and finally, a theoretical synthesis that combines some of my own empirical work with other research on American Islam. I provide two examples of immigrant Muslims' racial strategies of action: (1) white/colorblind acculturation, and (2) black appropriation, suggesting in the conclusion that brown solidarity could also be an important third form.

2. Methods

This article is primarily a theoretical synthesis of earlier secondary literature, reframing previous work on the racialization of Islam. However, to further develop my argument, I also draw from fieldwork at one of the schools I studied as part of a broader comparative ethnographic study of two Sunni Muslim and two Evangelical Christian high schools. I spent a semester and a half at Al Amal high school, a Muslim K-12 school in the New York City area. There were about 200 students total in the school, and most of the student body was Arab and South Asian, with some students of African ancestry. In the calendar year of 2011, I spent around two days a week at Al Amal, observing classes, teaching an SAT class, and talking to community members. I will be vague about some numbers and identifying characteristics to preserve confidentiality, and I have used pseudonyms for people and the school itself.

3. Islam Between Religion and Racialization

3.1. What Kind of Category is Islam?

Many social scientists have recently begun to describe Islam in manners similar to how one would describe a race

or ethnicity (Motyl, 2011). They echo a tendency in both laypeople's "categories of practice" and social scientists' "categories of analysis" in considering religion as functionally (if not substantially) similar to other categories of difference, such as ethnicity, language, race, and region of origin (Brubaker, 2013, pp. 4–5). As Rogers Brubaker describes, the journal *Ethnic and Racial Studies* published only 15 articles on religion before 1990 and, between that time and the publication of his article in early 2013, it had 88 articles on religion, 50% of which were about Islam (Brubaker, 2013, p. 2). Yet simply because Islam is being studied as a category with parallels to race does not necessarily mean Islam is racialized. What makes Islam racialized, rather, is the way that it takes on characteristics often used to describe races, both via more commonly studied top-down racialization processes (media, government) and less studied bottom-up processes in which immigrant Muslims themselves take advantage of "racial hinges" to navigate ambiguous racial situations.

Questions about Islam and race must therefore center how Islam is both presented and experienced as a category, and an important insight of studies of black Islam as compared to immigrant Islam is that this category is both presented and experienced in radically distinct ways for different groups of American Muslims (Grewal, 2013; Karim, 2008; Khabeer, 2016). As such, questions about the relationship between race and immigrant Islam are necessarily related to (though still separate from) questions about the relationship between immigrant and African American Muslims and the experience of ethnicities often associated with Islam, such as Arabs and South Asians (Love, 2017). While I will further discuss the analytic challenge of African American Muslims for accounts of Muslim racialization below, it is worth examining here the relationship between ethnicities often associated with Islam (such as Arabs) and Islam as itself a racialized category.

Accounts of what it means to be Arab in America narrate a "model minority" status that was cut short by international events, "a general proximity to whiteness and a sense of acceptance within white middle-class America up until the late 1980s and early 1990s, the period in which the United States was consolidating its growing imperial interests in the Middle East and North Africa" (Naber, 2012, p. 26). In Jamal and Naber's 2008 edited volume, *Race and Arab Americans before and after 9/11*, various scholars describe how the experience of Arabs after 2001 has been a particularly difficult one (see also Bayoumi, 2009, 2015; Cainkar, 2009; Peek, 2011), though that difficulty is inexplicable without acknowledging the link between being Arab and being Muslim. Indeed, despite the volume being a book about Arab Americans, the phrases "Arabs and Muslims" or "Muslims and Arabs" show up 19 times, and in six of the 12 chapters.

Such a linkage is not necessarily because Arabs are Muslim (only 25% of Arab Americans are Muslim) or because American Muslims are Arab; the numbers are more difficult to determine here, but Pew says 41% of American Muslims identify as white, which would include Arab, Persian, and "Middle Eastern" identities (Pew, 2017). Rather, it is because anyone perceived as "brown" can sometimes be assumed to be Muslim and, therefore, a threat of Islamist terrorism (Silva, 2016), a finding consistently discovered in work on both Muslim Americans and those assumed to be Muslim Americans (Bayoumi, 2009; Mahalingam, 2012). For example, in his interviews with Egyptian Americans, Zopf (2017) found that even his respondents who identified as white were often not recognized as white by other Americans, a finding paralleled by Maghbouleh in her study of Iranian Americans.

Yet the fact that many Arab Americans are not Muslim provides a window into the relationship between race and Islam in the United States. In her study of racial and ethnic identity among Muslim and Christian Arabs in central Texas, Read (2008) found that "one-third of Christian respondents report that other people consider them 'white', compared to only 5.2% of Muslims". She goes on that only "a small fraction" of Muslims feel "they pass as 'white' Americans" (Read, 2008, pp. 312–313). In this case, the term Arab American is understood as a racial rather than an ethic category in that it is seen as oppositional to rather than potentially coexistent with being white. I found this in my own work as well. At Al Amal, I met a blonde Palestinian-American Muslim teacher, Dafir, who said he enjoyed surprising "white people" when they found out he was an Arab. I asked him if he considered himself white. "No", he said proudly, "I'm Arab".

For Dafir, as well as for many of Read's (and Maghbouleh's) respondents, Arab or Iranian are racial categories and not simply ethnic ones. Furthermore, this Arab racial category seems to be tied to Islam, meaning that it is not just culture but a kind of religious culture—rather than simply phenotype—that can racialize. Of course, to argue that race is much more than skin color is a very old insight in the sociology of race (Du Bois, 2015; Omi & Winant, 2014), but it is helpful to make sense of how a religion like Islam can become racialized.

It was striking to me how often Dafir and others at Al Amal (both teachers and students) conflated to be Arab and to be Muslim, which I would later learn is a common criticism from both non-Arab immigrant Muslims and African American Muslims (Bilici, 2012; Jackson, 2005). This tendency to conflate Arab and Muslim can happen among the broader, non-Muslim public as well. Bayoumi describes his 2009 book, *How does it feel to be a problem?*, as mostly a study of Muslims Arabs, yet he nonetheless acknowledges throughout the ways that being Arab and being Muslim are racialized, and in similar ways relative to the whims of a broader security apparatus.

Similarly, Cainkar's 2009 book, *Homeland insecurity*, is subtitled: "The Arab American and Muslim American Experience After 9/11". Cainkar argues that Arab identity has become racialized to the degree that Arabs are seen as having certain traits (e.g., violent, hateful) that are biological and essential:

> When similar social constructions about an inherent tendency to violence were nearly seamlessly extended to Muslims, Arabs and Muslims came to be viewed by many Americans in an undifferentiated way…that was associated with a certain phenotype, mode of dress, written script, type of name, set of religious beliefs and attitudes towards women, and specific countries of origin. (Cainkar, 2009, p. 109)

Bayoumi likewise argues that "Arabs and Muslims" are "two overlapping categories, but in the world of American perceptions [they are] essentially the same thing" (Bayoumi, 2009, p. 190). These are racial theories because they are about categories understood to be essential and unalterable.

Those "American perceptions" to which Bayoumi refers are a longstanding habit of Islamophobia and the essentialization of Muslims as fundamentally dangerous and violent in entertainment and news media (Bail, 2014; Hussain, 2010; Marzouki, 2017; Saeed, 2007) as well as in government discourse and policy decisions (Cainkar, 2009; Peek, 2011). Cainkar describes how special registration programs "give concrete meaning to essentialized, undifferentiated representations of Arabs and Muslims" (Cainkar, 2009, p. 58). Likewise, Bayoumi describes how "through special registration [of Muslims], the [United States] government, in effect, turned a religion, namely Islam, into a race" (Bayoumi, 2015, p. 51). Special registration programs required "adult males from twenty-four Muslim-majority countries…to register their whereabouts in the country" (Bayoumi, 2015, p. 186), thereby leveraging state power to maintain an overriding suspicion of Muslims as essentially violent and worthy of suspicion.

Yet to say that Islam is racialized is not quite the same as to say that Islam is a race. As Morning (2009) defines it, race does not refer to any biological reality, but rather to a sociological grouping of certain individuals believed to share a common genealogical descent marked by certain shared phenotypical traits. Morning thereby distinguishes race from ethnicity, which, in the American context, is viewed as optional and symbolic, capable of being chosen and rejected, "with the knowledge that such identification will have little if any repercussions for major life outcomes" (Morning, 2008, p. 242; see also Gans, 1979; Waters, 2001). In contrast, "racial identity is usually portrayed as involuntary—it is imposed by others—and it is immutable, regardless of individual behavioral choices….This externally enforced affiliation has profound and far-reaching effects on life outcomes" (Morning, 2008, p. 242). As Morning finds regarding South Asian racial self-identifications (Morning, 2001), racial identity is often a function of other socioeconomic factors rather than simply reproducing parents' identity, a process demonstrated even in reference to the seemingly intractable black-white binary (Roth, 2005; Saperstein & Penner, 2012). Islam is complicated here: it fits the elements of Morning's definition that list race as involuntary, immutable, and having real effects on the life course—at least in terms of how Islam is often perceived. Yet Islam is not—at least it is usually not—considered a part of an immutable biology. The use of the term racialized seems a helpful middle way, showing how Islam might not be a *race* but that the experience of Islam in the United States has various parallels with racial categories.

Yet there are some important complications to the work described above. First, and perhaps most importantly, the description of Muslims as racialized tends to emphasize post-1965 "immigrant" Islam over indigenous Islam, which is generally African-American. To be clear, none of the authors mentioned above ignores African American Islam: both Cainkar and Bayoumi, for example, are careful to acknowledge the critical role of African Americans in Muslim American history and the complicated relationship between immigrant Muslims and African-American Muslims in the United States. Yet because much of their focus is on Arab experiences of marginalization, their emphasis tends to be on the experiences of "immigrant" Muslims rather than on other groups.

The second complication follows from the first. In describing the processes of "racialization" Muslim Americans experience, these authors identify the source of racial identification outside of the Muslims themselves, generally in cultural processes (popular discourse, news, entertainment media) and state policies (immigration laws, special registration). To the extent the authors talk about how people navigate their racial identity themselves, it is generally as a means of explaining what it means to be Arab or an Arab Muslim rather than what it means to be Muslim more generically, or even simply an immigrant Muslim, at least within a racial context.

3.2. How a Racialized Religion Fits into the Ethnic Paradigm

Definitions of Islam often understand it as a religion: Esposito's (2016) standard textbook calls Islam one of the world's religions in the very first page of the introduction. Yet it not as obvious as it might appear what is religious and what is not. In fact, the deconstruction of the category of religion has been an important conversation within religious studies (Masuzawa, 2005), anthropology (Asad, 1993), and sociology (Guhin, 2014), all of them suggesting that calling something religious is just as much a political and normative movement of power as it is a description of a certain element of social life. Nonetheless, today in the United States, even if some conservative Christians describe Islam as unworthy of the category of religion, it is generally the case that Islam is considered a religion, at least in so far as mosques are given the tax-exemptions provided to churches and Muslims are ensured (though not always ensured) certain religious privileges in state institutions that parallel other religious privileges.

Yet Islam, it seems, is more than just a religion. That Islam works as a category relatively separate from (though perhaps replaceable for) someone's ethnicity is sociologically relevant, as it can describe various social processes, including how second generation Muslim immigrants develop strategies of negotiation for engaging their parents' ethnic identity. In Naber's (2005) study of second generation Arab-American Muslims, she shows how an "ideological framework" of "Muslim first/Arab second" allows her respondents to form an identity category that gives them space to negotiate cultural and gender expectations with immigrant parents. Furthermore, her "research participants tended to argue that 'while Arab culture is based on racism, Islam is based on racial equality'" (Naber, 2005, p. 490). There are two important pieces here: first, that "Muslim" is even capable of replacing a category like Arab implies that "Muslim" is coming to function as an ethno-racial category, and second, as will be described in more detail below, the "colorblindness" of Islam can be used to obfuscate and reify a kind of immigrant Muslim privilege (Naber, 2005, p. 491).

Naber is not the only one to describe how second-generation immigrant Muslims are forming a "Muslim-first, ethnicity-second" ideological commitment. "America's Muslim student movement", Abdo (2006) writes:

> [H]as gone a long way toward creating a multicultural Islam among second-generation Muslims. Students from diverse ethnic backgrounds join the Muslim Students' Association and encounter, often for the first time, Muslims outside their own ethnic groups. (Abdo, 2006, p. 196).

Bilici (2012) also describes how many second-generation American Muslims prize the American Muslim community for the opportunity it provides to live a "free" Islam unfettered by the constraining and often conservative cultures in majority Muslim countries, and, sometimes, from immigrant parents. Such a commitment to a Muslim-first, ethnicity second ideology seems counterintuitive given how many mosques have one dominant ethnicity (Bagby, 2012; Karim, 2008). Yet Muslims are more than their mosques, and high schools (like the ones I studied), Muslim Students' Associations, and other forms of Muslim cultural work provide opportunities to create an American ummah (Arabic for community of all Muslims) not necessarily linked to any one ethnicity. In his account of American Islam, Bilici (2012) shows how cultural and political expressions ranging from Muslim stand-up comedy to Muslim political activism provide opportunities to create a different kind of emergent American Muslim identity, one not necessarily tethered to ethnic origins.

I also found this second-generation Islam-first commitment in my own work. A South Asian female student at Al Amal, Sara, complained to me that the school was more ethnically conscious than her previous one, which she described as more "Muslim": "Here it's more of a culture", she told me:

> There's a lot of Arabs here and over there it was so mixed, it was mostly children of converts, so people weren't always asking where are you from. Like when I got here, people would always ask me where are you from? And I was like, Um, New York?

Sara wants to be simply a Muslim from New York, in the way that many second-generation Muslims emphasize their Islam over their cultural backgrounds. Indeed, many second-generation Muslims told me how their parents' Islam was more "culture" than "religion": as Bilici describes, it's in America that Islam can be truly pure. As described above, there is a liminal kind of freedom in Sara's recognition that an Islam beyond ethnic or racial identity is possible, and it presents various strategies of action, some of them "racial hinges" towards either a colorblind ideology of racial indifference or, potentially, the kind of "brown" solidarity I will discuss in the conclusion, a solidarity that both extends beyond but still recognizes ethnic and racial identities and marginalizations. Yet all of this moves a bit beyond what Sara wanted, which was simply to have the freedom to be a New York Muslim without any ethnicity necessarily attached to it. Yet this is a racial hinge as well, given how hard it would be for a black Muslims to ever stop being seen as black (Jackson, 2005, 2009).

Sara's desire for an integration into a broader "Muslim" identity category is theoretically important for another reason: it challenges contemporary theories of ethnic assimilation. Debates about segmented assimilation (Zhou, 1997) often focus on Latin American and East Asian immigrants and to which segment of the society they will assimilate, usually not describing the role of religion in those processes (see Warner, 2007). Except for certain conservative critiques (Huntington, 2004), there is much less concern about Latin American religion, which is usually Catholic or Protestant. Similarly, except for concern about Islam, South Asian and East Asian religions are usually not considered especially important either (Warner, 2007), except perhaps as a means of connecting to the country of origin rather than as a means of non-national or non-ethnic solidarity, as was once the fear with Catholics and Jews and is now the fear about Muslims. As such, the middle way of "selective acculturation" does not quite capture the experience of second generation Muslim Americans to the extent they seek the kind of Muslim second generation described above. In Portes and Rumbaut's (2016) telling, selective acculturation "means the acquisition of English fluency and American cultural ways *along with* preservation of certain key elements of the immigrant culture, of which language is paramount" (Portes & Rumbaut, 2016, p. 350, italics in original). Yet for many second generation American Muslims, to the extent that language matters, is not necessarily the language of their parents, but Arabic, the language of the Qur'an. For example, Grewal (2013)

shows how a variety of second generation Muslims and Muslim converts travel to the Middle East partially for religious instruction, but also to learn the sacred language of Islam. Similarly, in Muslim Students' Associations and Muslim organizations across the country, there is a normative commitment to gaining fluency in Arabic for the most devout of Muslims, and many learn at least a few Arabic phrases to better describe religious ideas and commitments (prayer becomes salah, religion becomes din, etc.) Additionally, the very devout might seek to memorize the Qur'an in Arabic (becoming a hafiz or hafiza), a vital goal for many Muslims around the world, especially young people.

Both Islam and the language (but not the ethnicity) of Arabic become important common sources of identity for second-generation immigrants from various countries, a kind of selective acculturation distinct from those usually examined by sociologists of immigration. As a result, immigrant Muslims again gain access to a kind of racial liminality in that they are able to claim that their religious identity supersedes either ethnic or racial identity. Contemporary Islamophobia might make such a claim more or less difficult, but even the possibility of making it manifests a kind of racial hinge often unavailable to black Muslims, who are much less able to find an identity that supersedes race. The desire for an American ummah, therefore, runs the risk of forming a kind of "colorblind Islam". However, this is not to be cynical: it is entirely possible to create an American ummah that is still sensitive to racial inequality, as I will describe in the next section.

4. Immigrant Muslims' Racial Strategies of Action

In their study of white Evangelicals' racial attitudes and behaviors, Emerson and Smith (2000) import Swidler's (1986) concept of the cultural toolkit to explain the specific "strategies of action" that white Christians use to engage problems of racial inequality. My use of the toolkit concept here is slightly different and has more in common with studies of race as an ongoing social accomplishment rather than a taken-for-granted social fact (Brubaker, 2016, p. 145; Emirbayer & Desmond, 2015; Roth, 2012, pp. 151–175). This is not to deny that race is a powerful social construct in American life with real weight on people's lives regardless of their particular social performances. As described above, the racialization of American Islam has serious material and symbolic effects.

However, it remains important to recognize that race, like any other identity, is also a social accomplishment, one which requires the participation of various interactants. People are socialized into particular scripts regarding how race and ethnicity are to be understood as appropriately authentic or inauthentic (Lu & Fine, 1995) and they allow for certain performances while not allowing other, at once creating and maintaining "sumptuary codes" that "enforce social classification…consist[ing] of rules, written or unwritten, that establish unequal rank and make it immediately visible" (Fields & Fields, 2012, p. 33). Such codes are most clear in the United States regarding the relationship between whites and African Americans, making the situations of "brown" Americans interstitially complex, especially for those who are immigrants or the children of immigrants (Sanchez & Romero, 2010). Maghbouleh's (2017) concept of the racial hinge helps to show how liminal positions within identity categories allow for a greater breadth of social accomplishments. Based on my own fieldwork and on the other work on American Muslims to which I refer in this article, I describe two such strategies: white/colorblind acculturation and black appropriation, suggesting in the conclusion that brown solidarity might be a third.

4.1. White/Colorblind Acculturation

Al Amal's senior graduation ceremony was conducted offsite in a large ballroom a few miles from the school, with 40 or so seniors all sitting in robes in the front row, their families gathered behind them. The commencement speaker, a professor from a nearby university, urged the graduates and their families: "As Muslim Americans, we have to represent ourselves…we have to do what the Italians, Irish, and African-Americans all did before us, we have to challenge those stereotypes…for some people when you say Muslim, it means terrorist, and we have to challenge this". Note how the speaker conflates race, ethnicity, and religion, all at once, providing a narrative of progress through which Muslims—whatever they are—will eventually become American. Note as well how the struggles of African Americans are narrated in the past tense and in parallel with the integration efforts of white ethnics, thereby no longer requiring present solidarity, a move paralleled by many white Americans. Immigrant Muslims' use of racial hinges is clear here: in this reading, whites' racial distinction of Muslims as "other" is a door immigrant Muslims can move through, something they can turn with effort and work (even if they run the risk of the door being turned back upon them by people assuming they are terrorists).

While 9/11 challenged American Muslims' attempts at full assimilation, it is by no means a lost goal. As the above quote demonstrates, many Muslim immigrants seek to assimilate broadly with the rest of the United States. That does not necessarily mean they want to become white as much as it means that they want to become American (Bilici, 2012), viewing American identity as something that can be, with some effort, reconciled with the Muslim faith. Of course, it remains an open question whether such American aspirations are necessarily white. Both Muslim schools I studied seemed well described by Portes, Fernandez-Kelly and Haller's (2005) description of immigrants' aspirations towards "the enviable lifestyles of the mostly white upper middle class" (Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller's, 2005, p. 1004), yet the whiteness of this middle class might be an incidental

rather than an essential characteristic. The real challenge is proving the degree to which they are a part of America.

As Grewal (2013) describes, this need to defend Americanness is not a problem for indigenous black Muslims, who are clearly American, even if America's racial codes assign them a secondary social status. African Americans have the 'social citizenship" Muslim immigrant communities lack, and these communities hope they can gain that citizenship while being able to enjoy racial privileges African Americans cannot (Grewal, 2013, pp. 10–11). But does gaining such social citizenship require acknowledging the problem of cross-racial solidarity? In my fieldwork and in some of the studies described here, certain immigrant Muslims seek an American identity that is not necessarily white but is certainly colorblind, that is, able to "see past" race. These immigrant Muslims with a colorblind ideology (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) resent the ways that their identities are racialized and marked as different. The colorblind ideology, according to Manning, Hartmann, and Gerteis (2015), consists of three "core dimensions": abstract liberalism, minimization of racism, and cultural racism. That emphasis on colorblindness is a common theme across the global ummah (or community of Muslims), and, as noted by Naber (2005, 2012) above, it is sometimes an accompaniment to an ideological commitment to putting "Muslim" before an ethnic identity. Muslims cannot be racists, the idea goes, because all Muslims are united in their faith. To the extent American Muslim immigrants want to transcend race—including their own racial identities—it can also mean they obfuscate or ignore the racial politics that affect other Americans, including black Muslims.

That commitment to a colorblind ideology showed up regularly at Al Amal while I was there, and it can be found in a variety of immigrant Muslim organizations in the United States. As the Al Amal vice principal told me once while we were chatting about school discipline: "When you look at this school…look at their skin colors. They have different ethnicities, different languages, different culture and backgrounds. And they know that I will not judge them based on this, they will not be judged by their face or background. They will be judged by their deeds". In the assistant principal's comment, we see at least two of the three characteristics of colorblindness: a focus on abstract liberalism (equal procedures that treat each individual autonomously) and a minimization of racism. This focus on colorblindness therefore reifies a kind of whiteness, so even if it does not necessarily encourage a "whitening" of immigrant Muslims, it does hold open the possibility of immigrant Muslim white privilege. Even if those immigrant Muslims may not identify as white, and even if they are not able to leverage a colorblind ideology in the face of a security state and popular media that racializes them, the argument that race does not matter seeks a movement towards a kind of Muslim white privilege, or at least a Muslim ethnicity in which racial identity is able to be looked past because it is no longer recognized as essential, a "racial hinge" unavailable for African Americans (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Omi & Winant, 2014).

This focus on colorblindness (and potential white aspiration) extends across the American Muslim sphere. In her dissertation on Zatyuna College, the first Muslim institution of higher education in the United States, Maryam Kashani (2014) shows how the faculty and student body of Zaytuna—the majority from immigrant Muslim families—often attempt to see past this colorblindness, ensuring that African American Islam is recognized as an important elements of American Islam and describing the hard challenges of structural racism as experienced by (and sometimes maintained by) American Muslims (Beydoun, 2018). The university was founded by a white convert, an African American convert, and a Palestinian American (Kashani, 2014, p. 12), and its lesson plans often seek to acknowledge and reconcile real racial differences in American Islam, rather than simply papering them over as so many different colors of skin in the mosque. Yet such work is noteworthy precisely because it is not necessarily common. Indeed, the popularity of the white convert founder Hamza Yusuf (and the growing success of other white converts) can be interpreted as an implicit wish for cultural assimilation, as Kashani (2014) describes: "As a symbolic figure for a type of American Islam, Yusuf embodied the possibilities for other Muslims to assimilate, whether they were from Pakistan, Syria, Indonesia, or Afghanistan…signify[ing] aspirations of whiteness and cultural citizenship in an American landscape of racial inequality and subjugation" (Kashani, 2014, pp. 114–115; see also Grewal, 2013, pp. 159–169, 305–313; Tourage, 2013). A second-generation effort to create an "American Islam" that moves beyond ethnic differences between Muslim immigrant groups can, ironically, reproduce a white colorblind ideology through ignoring or at least downplaying what Sherman Jackson (2009) calls "the problem of black suffering". To be clear, this is not to argue that all immigrant Muslims seek such a colorblind ideology or that an American ummah is necessarily colorblind. Indeed, the key argument of this article is that immigrant Muslims' racial hinges give them access to a variety of racial strategies of action, and the degree to which these are used by any one individual or group—as well as how often they are used—are separate empirical questions.

4.2. Black Appropriation

American Muslims go back to the country's precolonial roots, with African slaves keeping their Muslim heritage as best they could despite slave-owners' attempts to strip them of their pasts (GhaneaBassiri, 2010; Hussain, 2016). Black communities were instrumental in the development of various forms of American Islam (Grewal, 2013, pp. 79–124), forms which have been in an uneasy tension with the growing number of immigrant Muslims in the United States since changes in immigration laws in 1965 (Jackson, 2005, pp. 131–169). One reason for this

tension is the question of whether the uneasy solidarity between African-American Muslims and immigrant Muslim can overcome racial inequalities, as well as some immigrants' support for (or at least silence regarding) the white supremacy that keeps those inequalities alive.

In my time at Al Amal, I regularly heard an Arab boy, a junior, use the n-word with other students. I asked him once if he knew any black people, and he said no. He was a brown-skinned Arab, one of many at Al Amal who, like many in America, loves hip hop music and identifies with certain elements of black culture, especially a key element of much of the male student experience at Al Amal: basketball (O'Brien, 2017; see also Warikoo, 2011). Blackness, for these students, was associated with pleasure, and they felt, as do white people in a colorblind society (Rodriquez, 2006), that they could sample that pleasure without any moral problem or obligation. Blackness, for them, was also associated with African American identity (which was not represented at their school) rather than simple phenotype. I accompanied some boys to the school's storage area, where they had to clean out some boxes of textbooks. They were looking at old pictures of students and saw an African-American student. "Remember him?" asks one. Another said: "Oh yeah, he was black, so we were all like, 'yo, can you play [basketball]?' and he was like, 'yeah I can play' and then we saw him playing and like, he was terrible!" They all laughed. "We were like, 'finally, a black guy, and he can't even play basketball!'" They laughed again. Apparently, they did not make assumptions about the black students from Egypt and sub-Saharan African then at the school.

Like many American whites, these immigrant Muslims felt they could appropriate black culture in their own experience, even judging the qualities of African American Muslims based on how they lived up to certain racialized expectations. Yet immigrant Muslim appropriation is not quite the same as white appropriation: as I have described above, immigrant Muslims are also racialized, and are sometimes referred to as "the new blacks" (Bayoumi, 2015, pp. 185–209). Yet such solidarity is not necessarily equally shared, and there are ways that black and Latino Muslims, for example, can feel as though immigrant Muslims can use their experience of racialized marginalization as a pass for the ability to appropriate black culture (Khabeer, 2016). This is another racial strategy of action at least potentially available to American immigrant Muslims, a "racial hinge" through which they can experiment with black identity in a way seemingly unavailable to whites.

Khabeer's (2016) book, *Muslim cool: Race, religion, and hip hop in the United States*, analyzes the role of black culture in developing a kind of "Muslim Cool", allowing for cross-ethnic solidarities and artistic creation in the service of anti-racism. Yet too often, she argues, immigrant Muslims love black culture but not black people, appropriating and instrumentalizing black traditions without recognizing the centrality of the black experience to broader Islamic history and to contemporary American Islam (see also Jackson, 2005; Rouse, 2004). Khabeer's broader argument is an insistence that such appropriation is not the only way in which immigrant Muslims can approach native black Muslims and black culture (see also O'Brien, 2017). Indeed, "Muslim cool" is, for Khabeer, both an aesthetic and normative goal of cross-racial solidarity within the ummah.

Yet to the extent that immigrant Muslims' relationship to African Americans is one of appropriation rather than solidarity, it is because of the colorblind ideology described above, a sense in which black culture can be at once appropriated and enjoyed yet simultaneously used as a means of explaining inequality. That culture explains inequality is important, as it allows for a "racism without racists" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Manning, Hartmann, & Gerteis, 2015), insisting that it is not necessarily anything racial but rather cultural that explains (and justifies) inequalities.

In a conversation I had with Dafir, the Palestinian teacher at Al Amal, he distinguished between recent African immigrants and African Americans:

> African Americans, a lot of them, they're disrespectful, and they don't work hard. Africans, they come here to work. But with African Americans, they don't have to work and so they don't. And when they see people who are working, they judge them. They don't know the value of a dollar.

I asked him where Arabs fell in his racial categorization and for him, the difference came down to immigration status, giving me a particular form of the segmented assimilation argument: "Arabs born and raised there, they're like Africans. Arabs born and raised here, they're no different from African Americans". What to make of Dafir's claims? There's obviously racism here, yet what does the racism accomplish? It allows Dafir to situate himself as a moral and racial arbiter, and to manifest a level of humility: after all, he is also an Arab "born and raised here". In this story, African Americans become the opposite of the (implicit) goal of assimilation, a process best exemplified by hard-working immigrants like Dafir's parents. The story manages to show loyalty, racial distinction, and humility all at once, all uttered in a seemingly colorblind rhetoric: after all, Dafir might say (though I did not ask him about it), if Africans and African Americans can be so different, surely this is not about race. As Dafir made clear above, he is not white, and neither does he want to be. Yet he also does not want to be like African-Americans. His position of racial liminality allows him access to these racial hinges, able to make pronouncements that, in making them, situate his identity as racially liminal, neither white nor African-American yet able to talk expertly—at least in his mind—about both.

Jackson (2005, 2009) describes how immigrant Muslims situated themselves in opposition to African Americans from their first days in the United States, thereby maintaining white supremacy and anti-black racism even

if they did not explicitly assimilate into the white majority (see also Beydoun, 2018, pp. 162–173; Prickett, 2015). Even 9/11, Jackson argues, has not really changed the situation (Jackson, 2005, p. 95). Importantly, a gradual shift towards an "American Islam" that is more than simply an accumulation of various ethnic forms does not solve this problem as it maintains the "ethnicity paradigm" Omi and Winant (2014) describe, making black simply one ethnicity among others and thereby occluding the differences between racist structures and ethnic distinctions. Yet such misrecognition can go even further. In Atiya Husain's (2017) study of white and black Muslims, an African-American man named Malik told her: "Muslims don't understand black folks". "But doesn't 'Muslims' include black folks?" the author asked. "You know what I mean", he responded, "It's the same for me". (Husain, 2017, p. 10). Husain's respondent shows how a colorblind ideological commitment to immigrant assimilation to America (if not necessarily whiteness) can occlude not only the black Muslim experience, but Muslim "black folks" themselves. It is through such occlusion that appropriation becomes possible. Yet more importantly for this article's argument, is through such occlusion that actors like Dafir are able to take advantage of this specific racial hinge, a capacity to "see past" race and in so doing situate their Muslim experience as the central concern of Islam in America and their racial experience as the way to understand how Islam is racialized. One of the many tragedies of Islam in America is how often scholars of American Islam themselves reify these occlusions of black Islam.

5. Conclusion

It is increasingly common to argue that Islam has become a "racialized" category in the United States, yet too often these accounts can emphasize a top-down process of government and media framing. Additionally, arguments about the "racialization" of Islam can de-emphasize the long-standing existence of black Muslims. In contrast, I have here suggested how immigrant Muslims' racial experiences are ambiguous, providing them with "racial hinges" through which they can negotiate their relationship to various racial and ethnic identities. These negotiations are situational, relational, and contingent; as Husain argues: "the meanings of Muslimness, blackness, and whiteness emerge through interaction with one another, specifically in the interaction of different identities (race and religion) within the same person" (Husain, 2017, p. 14).

Immigrant Muslims' "racial hinges" (Maghbouleh, 2017) allow some of them to maintain a kind of colorblind definition of true Islam, providing them with the capacity to strive for some of the benefits of whiteness, even if they do not necessarily gain them, and even if they do not necessarily claim to strive for whiteness itself, but rather its reification in the form of colorblindness. Immigrant Muslims can also appropriate black culture or seek greater relationships of solidarity with African Americans, especially African American Muslims.

While the term is still debated, "brown" is an increasingly common way of referring to immigrant Muslims' racial identity, and perhaps "brown solidarity and anti-racism" is another racial strategy of action immigrant Muslims might take (Silva, 2010). Even black and white Muslims, in the moments they are recognized as Muslim, can become "brown" (Husain, 2017, p. 14). However, while theorists might describe Muslims as "brown", the degree to which most immigrant Muslims would agree to such a classification is a separate question, as is the degree to which black Americans would find the identity a helpful means of solidarity. Yet what makes a "brown" identity attractive to some is the degree to which it acknowledges immigrant Muslims' position in an American "racial order" (Emirbayer & Desmond, 2015), giving up on both a colorblind ideology and an easy appropriation of black (and Latino) identity. In this sense, "brown identity" should not replace the problems of others' suffering (Jackson, 2009; Silva, 2016, p. 155) but rather seek to unite them together, paralleling Khabeer's (2016) account of "Muslim Cool" in which young people who identify themselves as black, brown, or something else can come together to create art, work for justice, and struggle to build an anti-racist ummah.

There remains much to understand in how the racialization of Islam works at the micro-level and how it relates to the experience of other racial identities. Future scholars might also examine the question of brown identity and the degree to which it is understood by immigrant Muslims themselves as a meaningful description. Further studies might also take up the question of how immigrant Muslims relate to other racial, ethnic, and religious groups, including East Asians, Latinos, non-Muslim South Asians, non-Muslim Middle Easterners, and sub-Saharan African immigrants, both Muslim and not. Doing so might provide a means of understanding how classifications of Islam function at the micro-level. These studies would also help develop Wilde's conception of "complex religion" as differences in race, ethnicity, and immigrant status potentially lead to significant differences in life outcomes and other measures of inequality (Wilde & Tevington, 2017, pp. 7–8).

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Article

Complexity Beyond Intersections: Race, Class, and Neighborhood Disadvantage among African American Muslims

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Abstract
This study uses the case of African American Muslims to examine the intersection of religious inequality with other forms of disadvantage. It draws on more than six years of ethnographic and historical research in an African American Muslim community in a poor neighborhood in Los Angeles, comparing the experiences of community members with existing research on first- and second-generation Muslim immigrants. It addresses the three most prominent axes of difference between African American and immigrant Muslims—race/ethnicity, class, and neighborhood disadvantage—to explicate the ways in which religion may compound existing inequalities, or in some cases create new forms of difference. It also shows how identifying as native-born Americans allows African American Muslims to claim religion as a cultural advantage in certain situations. Religion is complex not only when different forms of inequality intersect but when these intersections create a different way of understanding what religion means for people of faith.

Keywords
African Americans; American Islam; inequality; Muslim immigrants

Issue
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1. Introduction

In the US, as in parts of Western Europe, Islam has acquired an undesirable public status as a foreign and "anti-Western" faith, with this discursive 'othering' becoming more amplified since September 11th (Byng, 2010; Charrad, 2011; Mahmood, 2005). According to polls, a majority of Americans seem to hold a more negative view of Islam than any other faith tradition in the US, and Muslims now are one of the most discriminated minority groups (Kishi, 2017; Pew Research Center, 2017a). Followers of the faith face an increasing threat of being victim to religious discrimination and hate-motivated violence (Considine, 2017). This is particularly true in cases where the outward expression of a Muslim identity makes believers more visible, as with veiling (Perry, 2014). Even Americans who do not identify with Islam but present themselves in some way that suggests they could be Muslim have become victims of anti-Muslim violence (Disha, Cavendish, & King, 2011). Collectively, this research suggests that the category 'Muslim' has become increasingly stigmatized in the US and represents, as such, a mechanism by which social inequality can be reproduced (Lamont, Beljean, & Clair, 2014). However, the ways in which American Muslims experience stigma and inequality varies depending on how their religious identification intersects with other dimensions of social stratification.

Much recent research on the stigmatization and racialization of American Muslims focuses on the experiences of first- and second-generation immigrant Muslims (Abdullah, 2010; O'Brien, 2011; Selod, 2015). Putting this work in conversation with the small but rich literature on African American Islam enables us to get a fuller portrait of how religion intersects with other layers of difference and marginalization. Until the 1970s, blacks dominated the Muslim American population and "the Muslim presence in the US was synonymous with the modern African-American experience" (Meer & Modood, 2015, p. 532;

see also Jackson, 2004). Though their proportion of the total Muslim population in the US has decreased as the number of foreign-born Muslims has increased, more than one in five American Muslims identifies as native-born black. Islam is, and for a long time has been, the second largest black religion (Jackson, 2005). Greater attention to the experiences of African American Muslims, who face stigmatization on multiple fronts, allows us to incorporate a longer history of marginalization into theoretical frameworks of inequality and Islam (Bilici, 2012)

In this article, I draw on more than six years of ethnographic and historical research in an African American Muslim community in a low-income neighborhood in Los Angeles to examine the interplay of religion, stigma, and social inequality. I situate my ethnographic findings in conversation with existing research on first- and second-generation Muslim immigrants, and in doing so identify three prominent axes of difference in the lived experiences between the populations—race/ethnicity, class, and neighborhood disadvantage. I then examine how African American Muslims in this study navigate their stigmatization and discrimination to explain the ways in which religion may compound existing inequalities, or in some cases create new forms of difference. At the same time, this study finds that religion offers a tool that believers use to combat inequality. I show how African American Muslims claim their native-born status as a cultural advantage over other Muslims, framing religious authority as one that can be heightened by nativist interpretations of Americanness. By changing their conceptions of religion to accommodate an intersection of felt differences, believers in this study demonstrate an ability to reconstruct religion in new ways. This article thus makes a distinct contribution to the study of 'complex religion' (Wilde, 2017; Wilde & Glassman, 2016; Wilde & Tevington, 2017) by highlighting that religious stigma intersecting with other forms of inequality transforms the very nature of religious experience.

2. Literature Background

Though relatively small in proportion to other religious populations in the US, Muslim Americans are exceptionally diverse. Of the estimated two to seven million Muslims in the US, the three largest subgroups are South Asian (35%), Arab or Middle Eastern (25%), and African American (20%).[1] The remaining proportion includes first- and second-generation immigrants from Africa and other parts of Asia, as well as some Latinos. According to Smith (2010, p. 29), "America today is home to the most heterogeneous Muslim community at any time or place in the history of the world".

Believers and scholars point to the diversity of American Islam as evidence of the potential for a colorblind ummah, a community of believers (Karim, 2008). Indeed, the believers I studied clung to the idea that Islam is a religion without race, telling me that there are no pictures or images of the Prophet Muhammad and therefore he cannot be identified as white, or black. As a male member explained to me, without an image of the Prophet to idolize there can be no one race that "holds it over another". In framing Islam as an alternative to Christianity, African American Muslims engage the faith in a way that enables them to feel they can overcome what Rouse (2004) has called the "emotional wounds" of centuries of social, cultural, and scientific negation.

However, three-fourths of all mosques in the US remain dominated by one ethnic group (Bagby, 2012a). In most cases, the dominant group is either South Asian, Arab, or African American. This suggests that despite adopting a doctrine that espouses racial equality, the Muslim American community is deeply segregated by race and ethnicity when coming together to worship (Leonard, 2003; Schmidt, 2004). Of the mosques that are evenly mixed, the most common combination is Arab and South Asian (Bagby, 2012a). African Americans tend to worship separately, often in segregated urban areas. Their mosques have fewer resources than immigrant-led ones (Bagby, 2012b), which may explain why the number of African American Muslim communities has declined over the past decade even as the number of mosques in the US continues to grow (Bagby, 2012a). Karim (2008) argues that in the American Muslim community, color lines run not between white and black but between African American and "immigrant", the term used both by scholars of American Islam and African American Muslim respondents to describe foreign-born Muslim Americans and their offspring.

"Immigrant" Muslims in general experience more social mobility than African American Muslims. Research shows that Arab and South Asian Muslims achieve higher occupational statuses and greater educational attainment than their African American religious sisters and brothers (Leonard, 2003; Wilde & Tevington, 2017). They also indicate a preference for wealthier neighborhoods physically removed from inner city areas (Karim, 2008), using their higher incomes to align themselves with whites over blacks. Even African immigrants tend to fare better than their black counterparts, according to Abdullah (2010). In his study of Muslims in Harlem, Abdullah (2010, p. 130) writes that many African Muslims are middle-class when they arrive in the US and as such are "already endowed with a higher socioeconomic status". This suggests that there is something more complex at play than race alone (Wilde, 2017).

African American Muslims not only earn less than immigrant Muslims, they also are more likely to live in areas where poverty rates are higher and the threat of being

[1] Some studies put African Americans at 30 to 40%, South Asians between 25 to 30%, and Arabs at 12 to 30% of the Muslim American population (Abdullah, 2010; Bilici, 2012; Leonard, 2003). However, the sources from which these scholars draw their figures are nearly 20 years old. More recent surveys (e.g., Pew Research Center, 2017b) suggest that the percentage of African American Muslims has decreased relative to other ethnic subpopulations, which is consistent with my ethnographic findings.

victim to violent crime is greater (Karim, 2008; Wilson, 2009). From an abundant literature on urban poverty we know that living in such a neighborhood reduces nearly every measure for quality of life tested and opportunities for social mobility are greatly constrained (Sampson, 2012; Sharkey, 2013). Residents of poor neighborhoods suffer material hardship due to geographic and economic inequalities, as well as the stigmatization of being attached with an undesirable neighborhood (Sampson & Raudenbush, 2004; Wacquant, 2008). African American Muslims must therefore navigate religious difference amidst trenchant racial and class inequalities, creating an opportunity to study the complex ways in which religious stigma intersects with other aspects of inequality. A central argument of this article is that race or neighborhood disadvantage alone are not as consequential as the intersection of multiple structural inequalities. The greater chance that African Muslims in less advantaged neighborhoods have to be embedded in an "ethnic safety net" that protects and possibly bolsters their socioeconomic status (Abdullah, 2010) indicates there is something qualitatively distinct about the way African American Muslims experience the intersection of race, class, and neighborhood inequalities that warrants further study.

3. Setting and Methods

"Masjid al-Quran" (MAQ) is one of the oldest Muslim communities in California.[2] Composed of approximately 100 regularly attending members, with greater numbers on large Islamic holidays like Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, the MAQ community has deep roots in South Central. South Central is a dense pocket of land south and southwest of the downtown business district of Los Angeles. According to US census data, nearly all (98%) residents are people of color. Latinos comprise a majority at roughly two-thirds, but the area continues to have a sizeable proportion of African Americans (Sides, 2012). South Central is important for its long history as the primary black space in the city (Hunt & Ramón, 2010), but an area well known around the world as one of deep disadvantage. Residents face higher rates of unemployment and under-employment, greater dependence on government assistance, substandard housing options, overcrowded and low-performing schools, and a greater chance of being victim to violent crime when compared to other parts of the city and county (Martinez, 2016; Ong, Firestine, Pfeiffer, Poon, & Tran, 2008). The majority of MAQ members live in greater South Los Angeles and many in the immediate neighborhood.

From May 2008 to August 2013, I participated in and observed a variety of religious and social activities at MAQ. I also worked on several planning committees and logged hundreds of hours volunteering at community events. For 13 months of the study, I lived four blocks from the mosque. During this time, I spent two to five nights per week at MAQ, making my visits nightly during Ramadan. As the study progressed, I spent increasing amounts of time with believers outside the mosque setting as well. I have continued to visit since 2013, making concerted effort to attend in the fasting month.

All data were analyzed using an abductive approach (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). Abductive analysis involves an iterative process of working with data in connection with diverse literatures (Tavory & Timmermans, 2014). I was interested in understanding the everyday experiences of African American Muslims, with particular attention to those living in a disadvantaged urban context. When reading my data in light of the existing literature on American Islam, I was repeatedly struck with how different the problems believers expressed were from those reported by respondents in studies of South Asian and Arab Muslim Americans. For example, when I asked believers at MAQ to explain how their lives were different post-9/11, they said little had changed. They compared this to what they perceive as a greater sense of mistrust and discrimination by Americans towards "immigrant" Muslims, a conclusion with support in the literature on American Islam. Naber (2008) argues that Arab Americans went from "invisible citizens" to highly visible after the terrorist attacks in 2001, and Peek (2005) found that religion became a more salient source of identification among young second-generation Muslim Americans in the aftermath of the event. Yet, while September 11th was not a significant turning point for believers at MAQ, their transition from the Nation of Islam to Sunni Islam proved pivotal and stands as an important point of departure with other Muslim Americans.

4. Complex Religion: Difference Compounding Inequality

Based on the everyday lives of African American Muslims in South Central, I examine four areas in which the interaction between inequality and religion manifests into a distinct lived religious experience, starting with the history of the MAQ community and believers' collective past in the Nation of Islam. This history is important for understanding the differences believers feel within the ummah and their need to reframe Islam as a tool for combating racial inequality.

4.1. A History of Difference and Disadvantage

When the MAQ community formed in the 1950s, believers followed the teachings of Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad. After Muhammad's death in 1975, the community transitioned from the race-specific ideologies of the Nation to more mainstream interpretations of Sunni Islam under the leadership of Muhammad's son, Imam W. D. Mohammed. Believers at MAQ see their roots in the Nation as evidence of a long tradition of Muslim worship in the US, drawing on this history for religious authority. However, their perspective differs from

[2] Names of specific places and people have been changed to protect participants' confidentiality.

many dominant public and scholarly interpretations. In his presidential address to the Association for the Sociology of Religion, Williams (2010) argues that there was no 'American Islam' until post-1965 immigrants and their offspring brought Islam into greater "visibility, consciousness, and legitimacy" (p. 128). He describes earlier versions, like the Nation, as "locked within racially segregated African American communities" and therefore outside the American public sphere (Williams, 2010, p. 130). But this may be too strong, because white Americans did not ignore the Nation of Islam. Instead, they framed it as a protest movement intent on causing violence in America's inner cities, using this claim to justify a campaign of violence and repression of the movement's followers that garnered larger public support (Lincoln, 1961/1994; Sides, 2003). According to Lincoln, blacks had "open admiration" for the militant stance that Black Muslims took in their refusal to acquiesce to white oppression. The appeal of the Nation to residents living in impoverished urban areas caused fear among politicians and law enforcement agencies, who worried that it was just a matter of lighting a fuse (Lincoln, 1961/1994).

The ways in which earlier formations of African American Muslim community life have been framed to see the Nation as isolated and, by law enforcement, as a problem needing to be solved, creates difficulties for former followers even today. Believers think most Americans continue to hold an inaccurate portrait of the Nation in their minds, including other Muslims. The perception that their religious counterparts look down on them for coming to Islam through the Nation creates tensions between MAQ and other Muslims that compounds structural differences. So, even as believers try to position Islam as a colorblind religion in which no race can be superior, they complained that Arabs and Arab-Americans themselves violate this ideal by seeking to assert cultural dominance over other Muslims. For a while Sister Mariam attended a Saudi-funded mosque in another part of Los Angeles, but she stopped going after some of the sisters there pulled her aside to say she needed to have her ankles covered, showing me where her skirt hit about three inches above the ankles. Mariam lamented: "How you gonna tell me what to do?! In *my* country?"

Believers expressed frustration that immigrants assume African Americans know less about the religion as a result of their histories as "converts". They complained that immigrants want to correct their stances during prayer, which I observed once when a Moroccan sister told a line of sisters they should line up a certain way. All of the women in the prayer line were second-generation Muslims and, though younger than the woman giving directions, had grown up practicing Islam. Contributing to these layers of ethnic tension were believers' feelings that Arab Muslims look down at African American Muslims for their limited knowledge of the Arabic language (see also Karim, 2008, p. 41), a difference reinforced by the community's need to import Arabic speakers during Ramadan to lead Qur'anic recitation. Experiences led believers to see themselves fighting misconceptions about their faith on two levels: the misconception held by many Americans that they are still members of the Nation of Islam and therefore hate whites, and the misconception that they know less about Islam than immigrant Muslims. As one sister said: "I'm tired of it….What do they think? We just came to the religion yesterday?" These findings are consistent with research in other African American Muslim communities, where respondents complain that immigrant Muslims act as though they have "a monopoly on understanding Islam, viewing African American Islam as a 'secondhand' version, despite the efforts of individuals like Imam W.D. to promote orthodox learning and scholarship in the community" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 209).

Though they feel stigmatized and marginalized as a result of their past in the Nation, believers at MAQ continue to frame the movement as one that focused on racial pride and self-empowerment. Under the Nation, MAQ established a number of brick and mortar businesses, including fish and soul food restaurants, grocery stores, and bakeries. Further raising their profile were the designated Fruit of Islam (FOI) "soldiers" who patrolled neighborhood streets to promote social order and monitor local activities. Said Imam Khalid of this time: "We lived in the neighborhood and for the most part we prevented violence, not start it". These memories evoke pride among members, even today. Believers take what they perceive as a source of difference and potential stigma within Islam—their community's origins in the Nation of Islam—and try to argue that they are better positioned to teach America about Islam given they are the original "indigenous" Muslims in America. When Imam W. D. Mohammed died in September 2008, the head imam at MAQ called a special meeting. Imam Khalid said he wanted to calm fears that African American Muslims no longer had a national voice and their concerns would be subsumed by immigrant Muslims. Khalid told the crowd of mournful believers, "Our leadership is indigenous Muslims and will remain indigenous". He said that if immigrant Muslims do not know this, "they can go out and learn themselves". Khalid encouraged believers to see themselves as leaders of Islam, following their own cultural traditions in dress and food: "I can eat me some cornbread, collard greens, and chicken and that's halal".

Khalid's words fit in a larger narrative that positions African American Muslims as model Muslim American citizens. Believers repeatedly stressed to me that as "indigenous" Muslims they knew how to separate faith from culture. One brother, Omar, explained that as native-born Americans, African Americans are better able to show how to be American and Muslim "in moderation". Omar explained this edict of balance applies to everything, even something seen as conventionally haram (forbidden), like alcohol. He referenced parts of the Qur'an that say there are some good things alcohol does for body, such as aiding in digestion, but that there are bad things about it and those bad things outweigh the good. So, he concluded, it is best not to drink alcohol. Omar's

words convey a particular kind of logic for finding ways to be Muslim in US society without seeing it as a set of extreme rules. Believers and leaders at MAQ referenced this way of working out a balanced religious approach in light of dominant US culture as distinct from the ways they perceive immigrant Muslims as holding on to "their culture" once in the US. Believers at MAQ thus claim their native-born status as a cultural advantage.

Believers at MAQ also expressed frustration at African American Muslims who copied styles of dress and gender segregation they associated with Arab culture, such as the long tunic men wear in the Middle East that some African American Muslim men have started wearing. One brother mocked the masculinity of these men, saying they looked like they were wearing dresses. Another African American-led mosque in South Central was considered the "young people's mosque" and some believers at MAQ considered its stricter segregation between men and women during worship services and social events as evidence they were too influenced by immigrant Muslims. In that community, women were more likely to wear a style of hijab traditionally seen as Arab, compared with the West African-influenced head coverings worn at MAQ (see also Karim, 2008). The practice of polygamy also contributed to perceptions among MAQ members that some African Americans had been culturally corrupted by the influence of foreign interpretations of Islam. But in countering what they perceived as religious discrimination within the Muslim community with ethnocentric and gender discriminatory framings, believers reinforced ethnic differences that can contribute to the 'othering' of fellow Muslims.

4.2. Race and Family Life

In addition to facing discrimination as former members of the Nation of Islam, believers at MAQ experienced stigmatization and marginalization within their own families. Most African American Muslims are converts to Islam, having come to Islam as former Christians. Meanwhile, the vast majority of their family members remain Christian and, like three-quarters of African Americans overall, consider religion important (Pattillo-McCoy, 1998; Pew Research Center, 2014). Women and men members of MAQ have regular, ongoing social connections with Christian family members. In some cases, they live under the same roofs, forced to work out differences in the course of everyday life. As one Muslim respondent told me, African Americans must "represent Islam" to their families, and they feel a tremendous pressure to represent it well. Their families look at that one person and measure all of Islam. Members of the mosque act as family faith ambassadors, performing cultural work to explain and (sometimes) justify their Islamic beliefs and practices to people unfamiliar with the minority religion. This creates a pressure not found in existing research on Muslim Americans who are first- or second-generation immigrants born into Islam.

To understand how this plays out in everyday life, take the example of eating halal. Pork is present in many soul food dishes consumed by African Americans, but everyone I spoke to at MAQ avoided eating anything with pork or pork byproducts (ex., gelatin). As such, mosque members were limited in what they could eat at large family functions, finding their Christian family members resistant to accommodate recipe changes. One respondent, a middle-aged salesman, said that it took his aunt "maybe 10 or 15 years to really, to be conscious of it [putting pork in food]". And she was "the first one that really was conscientious about what she cooked". It was not until his aunt was willing to accept her nephew's dietary choices and to adjust her behavior that tolerance over food could occur.

African American Muslims have to navigate religious difference within their larger race community. Karim (2008, p. 85) explains:

> The main difference between whites and African Americans is that the latter often identify with the Black Power images of Islam because of the Nation….Otherwise, they take in the same popular images that portray Islam as a threatening religion.

In spite of this, believers at MAQ openly expressed hope that their kin would someday find Islam too. This suggests that they saw their faith as a source of advantage and pride. Since they have to navigate religious difference and seek accommodation within their families, African American Muslims have few places besides the Muslim community to feel culturally safe as religious minorities. This can then amplify both the importance of a desire for equality in Islam as well as the sense of injustice at feeling discriminated against by other Muslims.

4.3. In the Neighborhood

Compounding differences believers feel with their family members and fellow immigrant Muslim believers are the differences the MAQ community experiences with neighbors. When the mosque opened, the neighborhood was more than 80% black, but in the time since, members have become an ethnic minority in the neighborhood. Latinos now outnumber blacks in the neighborhood nine to one. This changed urban landscape privileges other language, clothing, and food preferences, and such change creates a new religious ecology favoring Spanish-speaking Catholic and Pentecostal congregations. It is part of a process of urban change I have examined elsewhere (Prickett, 2014) and others have called the "Latin Americanization" of South Central (Sides, 2012). For the purposes of this article, the demographic change in the neighborhood is important because it heightens the difference that members of MAQ feel in the course of everyday life. It also has created new difficulties for the community by making it harder to recruit members, cutting into their ability to raise funds to grow. The organization

has struggled to meet basic operating costs as a result of limited funds.

Put together with the patterns of interaction members experience with family and "immigrant" Muslims and what you have is a situation that could be overwhelming, making members of MAQ turn away from religion in search of constructing an identity that brings them closer with their families or US society. But they do not do this. I found that believers turned closer to Islam both to make sense of their changing social world and for strength to persevere. It also made them want to protect the mosque as a safe space for African American Muslims, sometimes at the expense of building bridges across ethnic divides. The head imam declared in a public lecture: "This is where we feel most comfortable—in communities populated by African Americans". His comments reinforced to believers a sense that racial segregation within the Muslim American community was logical and legitimated in the context of difference in which members must live. This has the unintended consequence of making MAQ inward-focused, and it comes to define the fourth and final section of my analyses in which I examine how these intersecting discriminations affect the religious experience for believers.

4.4. Responding through Religion

Examples from my research and those of other scholars studying African American Muslim communities, illustrate a more general point about religion and inequality. Many religious traditions teach tolerance and brotherly love, but they also exist within systems of racial categorization that place some categories squarely above others (Emerson, 2010). This is why we see Arab Americans often selecting "white" as their race on surveys and why South Asian Americans readily admit in interview studies to a preference for white neighborhoods and schools (Leonard, 2003; Karim, 2008). Both populations try to situate themselves within or next to a category that is privileged, seeking to align themselves by race or class, not religion. These categorical cleavages contribute to ethnic tensions that stand in stark contrast to the ideal of a colorblind ummah.

Believers at MAQ turn inwards to religion as they try to shut out the various, overlapping forms of discrimination they face. The way in which the religious experience changes as believers respond to a nexus of disadvantage from neighborhood, racial, and class differences is most visible during the annual fasting month of Ramadan. Because the mosque is well-known in the larger LA Muslim community as being located in a neighborhood with extreme poverty, MAQ became a place for Muslim charity during Ramadan, with donors sponsoring nightly dinners (iftar) and bringing used clothing and goods. Donors most often came from other, wealthier parts of the city or Southern California region, giving money or bringing food for iftar on behalf of another mosque or wealthy family. But there was little contact between the sponsors and MAQ members, because sponsors rarely stayed to eat and if they did they often left soon after dinner, not making prayer at MAQ. What interactions I observed were tenser than those between members and African American visitors, with believers ignoring the immigrant guests or vice versa. Because of my researcher status, visitors to MAQ often felt freer to share with me their opinions about MAQ and its neighborhood. One woman, who visited each year to sponsor dinner, told me that her father had helped "build" the MAQ community but he left because the concerns of African American Muslims were different. Given that conversations between the woman and members of MAQ never went deeper than superficial conversation, I am not sure she would have been able to know what the concerns of the community were despite her annual tradition of trying to help. Nor did believers at MAQ make much effort to reach out to ask her concerns.

A similar pattern occurs when African American Muslims go into religious spaces dominated by foreign-born Muslims and their offspring. Rather than bridging social divides, these interactions seem to reinforce differences between the populations. In Karim's (2008) study of Muslim women in Chicago and Atlanta, an African American sister says: "Sometimes African Americans feel left out, or if they try to interact with people of other communities, they feel that they are not getting the type of response that they would like" (Karim, 2008, p. 55). Rouse (2004, p. 210), an African American researcher who studied Muslim women converts, recounts visiting the home of "a fabulously wealthy Pakistani family" and feeling too much of an outsider to stay, because of her race and what she perceived as the South Asian women's lack of interest in getting to know her.

African Americans historically and systematically have been cut out of the American dream, denied equal opportunities for education and work (Billingsley, 1999). Few older members of MAQ have acquired diplomas, with the head imam at MAQ reinforcing in khutbahs (sermons) that one did not need to acquire degrees to be educated. Believers also emphasized being self-taught. One sister said: "My father had a 3rd grade education but you never would have known meeting him". At the same time, education is a primary path to social mobility in contemporary US society. So, because many members lived in a neighborhood where educational resources are lacking and most residents do not have an opportunity to go to college, people in the MAQ community were less likely to achieve the socioeconomic advantages that their non-black religious brethren saw as of utmost concern for their children. When differences within a religious community align with structural inequalities in US society, it may reinforce and even perpetuate disadvantages. Such is what we see when members of MAQ feel they are looked down upon by South Asian and Arab American Muslims and fight back with disparaging remarks about other Muslims that deepen divides rather than bridge them (Prickett, 2015). Here too believers turn to religion

as a tool to try to elevate their social standing by positioning their participation in the mosque as evidence of pious worth.

5. Conclusion

From a growing body of work on the stigmatization of Muslim Americans, we know that believers are finding creative ways to respond to suspicion and concern. O'Brien (2011) has shown how Muslim American youth engage in "stigma management rehearsals" to learn how to respond in interactions where they will be targeted as different for their religious identification. This work makes clear that non-dominant faith groups must work around a lack of religious accommodation. Resilience in the face of structural disadvantage and racial discrimination is one more way to "do religion" (Avishai, 2008). This complicates the religious experience because it shows how the pious can organize their lives in a way that incorporates inequality, rather than deny it.

While all Muslim Americans may experience stigma, African American Muslims have found their marginalization in the US compounded by race, class, and neighborhood inequalities. Members of MAQ face stigma on multiple fronts—on the streets of South Central, in their homes shared with non-Muslim family, and within the American ummah—and have thus had to work out an internal system of meaning-making to respond to their stigmatization. It seems reasonable to conclude that their efforts to frame African American Muslims as better suited to lead a 'balanced' portrayal of Islam to the American public is a form of stigma management. Knowing they experience multiple layers of disadvantage as ethnoracial minority residents of a low-income stigmatized neighborhood, they change what religion means and how it can work for them to account for the interaction of religion and inequality. Foreign-born Muslims may also feel different compared to their mostly white and Asian neighbors, and they also may identify with moderate interpretations of Islam. However, as previous work has demonstrated, immigrant Muslims do so in a context defined by greater socioeconomic advantage. They may be more able to circumvent certain stigmas by highlighting their job, education, and housing successes. By contrast, African American Muslims in this study have fewer opportunities to achieve mainstream markers of success. The multiple, intersecting forces of difference they face alter their understandings of—and experiences within—Islam, and religion becomes the framework for organizing a response to the complexities of social inequality.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Part II.

Intersections of Religion and Class Inequality

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Article

Religious Inequality in America

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Abstract
Sociology has largely ignored class differences between American religious groups under the assumption that those differences "are smaller than they used to be and are getting smaller all of the time" (Pyle & Davidson, 2014, p. 195). This article demonstrates that profound class differences remain amongst American religious groups. These differences are as large as—or larger than—commonly examined forms of inequality such as the gender pay gap and the race achievement gap. Using the most popular categorization of American religious groups, we find that regardless of the particular measure examined (years of education, income, socioeconomic index score, and proportion of members with at least a bachelor's degree) Jews and Mainline Protestants are at the top of the socioeconomic ladder and Evangelical Protestants, both black and white, are at the bottom. Furthermore, religious group significantly predicts both years of education and the overall socioeconomic standing of respondents by itself with basic controls. Likewise, both socioeconomic indicators and education significantly predict the likelihood of being in a specific religious tradition on their own with basic controls. Some religious groups, namely Evangelical Protestants at the low end and Jews and the high end, are relatively educationally homogeneous. Others, such as Catholics, Mainline Protestants and the nonreligious are much more educationally heterogeneous. In sum, religious inequality remains in America, it is robust, and it appears to be quite durable.

Keywords
class; education; inequality; race; religious tradition; social class

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Complex Religion: Intersections of Religion and Inequality", edited by Melissa J. Wilde (University of Pennsylvania, USA).

1. Introduction

Until very recently, religious inequality has not been a commonly acknowledged nor researched phenomenon. Indeed, especially in regression analyses, researchers typically treat religion and class as independent factors. This article demonstrates that profound class differences remain between American religious groups that are both substantively and statistically significant. These differences are as large or larger than commonly examined forms of inequality, and appear to be just as durable (Tilly, 1999). We therefore argue that researchers should examine religion in interaction with class, rather than controlling for it, in most analyses.

This article examines current differences in both education and socioeconomic indicators for the religious categories typically used by survey researchers (RelTrad), using two of the best datasets available: the General Social Survey (GSS) and the Pew Religious Landscape Survey. We first demonstrate that, regardless of the measure or dataset, powerful class differences remain, with Jews and Mainline Protestants at the top of the socioeconomic ladder and Evangelical Protestants, both black and white, at the bottom.

These differences are as substantial as forms of inequality long acknowledged and studied by sociologists, such as the gender pay gap or the race achievement gap. For example, women today make approximately

80 cents for every dollar that men make (Blau & Kahn, 2006, 2016; Graf, Brown, & Patten, 2017; Proctor, Semega, & Kollar, 2016). In comparison, white Evangelical Protestants make only 73 cents for every dollar made by Mainline Protestants. In terms of education, white Evangelical Protestants have half the proportion of bachelor's degrees as white Mainline Protestants and a quarter of the BAs of white Jews. This is comparable to or larger than many measures of racial inequality, including the percentage of bachelor's degree by race (Kao & Thompson, 2003; Snyder & Dillow, 2015) and estimates of differences in standardized test scores (Fryer & Levitt, 2004; Hedges & Nowell, 1999; Kao & Thompson, 2003).

To be clear, we are not implying here that the mechanisms behind religious inequality are necessarily the same as gender or racial inequality, which have long been attributed to discrimination (as well as other causes such as gender socialization and the ways in which race and class intersect). Our point here is merely that because these other forms of inequality are accepted as significant, we know more about both their causes and their consequences. In comparison, we know very little about the causes or consequences of religious inequality today. This is the case despite the fact that religious inequality is robust, so much so that both education and socioeconomic indicators significantly predict religious group membership, and religious group membership also significantly predicts both measures of class.

In reporting these findings, we are not trying to make a causal argument. Instead, we simply aim to convince sociologists that religion intersects with inequality in complex ways and that those interactions should be examined in analyses. This argument, and the findings that support it, are a result of our engagement with a growing body of work that employs theories of "complex religion" (Wilde, 2017; Wilde & Glassman, 2016; Wilde & Tevington, 2017).

2. Complex Religion and the Current State of Research on Religious Inequality

Theories of complex religion stress that religion is a core social structure that deeply overlaps with inequality in crucial ways (Wilde, 2017; Wilde & Glassman, 2016; Wilde & Tevington, 2017). This basic insight draws on theories of "complex inequality" which argue that inequality is complex and multidimensional (McCall, 2001). Researchers in this school urge others to examine inequalities of gender, race, or class as a combination of factors that interact with each other (Choo & Ferree, 2010). Stressing the "multiple, overlapping, conflicting, and changing structures of inequality" (McCall, 2001, p. 14), these theorists argue that specific contexts of structural disadvantage lead to different outcomes and experiences. Complex religion extends this argument to religion, urging researchers to consider religion a core social structure that is highly correlated with inequality.

That religion intersects with inequality is neither a new or revolutionary claim. Classical sociologists saw the study of religion and class as core to the sociological enterprise (Baltzell, 1964; Cantril, 1943; Greeley, 1978; Niebhur, 1929; Pope, 1948; Weber, 2003). Some scholars have examined socioeconomic differences between religious traditions and denominations (Baltzell, 1964; Cantril, 1943; Davidson & Pyle, 2011; Greeley, 1972; Niebhur, 1929; Pope, 1948; Pyle, 2006; Pyle & Davidson, 2012, 2014; Schwadel, 2016; Sherkat, 2012; Smith & Faris, 2005) while others have focused on stratification within these traditions (Demerath, 1965; Eagle, 2012; Reimer, 2007; Schwadel, 2009; Yancey & Kim, 2008). This article examines both types of inequality.

Although once a common topic of classic sociological studies, the connection between socioeconomic inequality and religious traditions has waned until very recently (Keister & Sherkat, 2014). Perhaps because it went largely uninvestigated for decades, most researchers are under the impression that religious differences "are smaller than they used to be and getting smaller all of the time" (Pyle & Davidson, 2014, p. 195). However, a growing body of research suggests that, in one way or another, significant class differences remain between American religious groups.

With a few exceptions (notably, Davidson & Pyle, 2011; Pyle & Davidson, 2014; Sherkat, 2012; Shi, Massengill, & Boddie, 2012; Smith & Faris, 2005), very little contemporary scholarship intentionally examines the full spectrum of religious inequality. In this article, our goal is to establish that religious inequality remains in America, and that it is, perhaps surprisingly, incredibly robust. As we focus on establishing the depth and strength of religious inequality in America today, we are focusing on class, although, of course, religion intersects with aspects of inequality other than class, especially race and gender (Wilde & Danielsen, 2014). We leave claims about how religion intersects with race or gender for future analyses where they are the focus (although we do include both race and gender in this analysis).

2.1. What We Know about the State of Religious Inequality

Although religious inequality has not been explicitly studied by many sociologists, it is possible to piece together some clear patterns and predictions from previous studies. Originally the subject of much early sociological thought (Weber, 2003), most accept that the differences between Catholics and Mainline Protestants have waned, but this is the case only if one does that not include recent cohorts of Catholic immigrants in the comparison (Keister, 2007).

By far the most well-documented (although, we would argue, largely ignored in terms of its implications both theoretically and methodologically) aspect of religious inequality today has to do with the lower class-

standing of white Evangelical Protestants (Beyerlein, 2004; Darnell & Sherkat, 1997; Fitzgerald & Glass, 2008, 2014; Keister, 2008, 2012; Lehrer & Chen, 2014; Massengill, 2008; McConkey, 2001; Sherkat, 1991). Typically, Evangelicals'—also known as Conservative Protestants—lower class-standing is examined in comparison to Mainline Protestants, the group that historically made up the "Protestant Establishment" (Baltzell, 1964), sometimes referred to as the "gatekeepers" of American society (Coe & Davidson, 2014; Davidson & Pyle, 2011). Recent research demonstrates that Mainline Protestants have retained their class advantages and have been joined by Jews at the top of religious economic ladder (Keister, 2003, 2012; Sherkat, 2012).

Racial discrimination has also shaped religious inequality in the U.S. Black Protestants, who are generally seen to be theologically closest to Evangelicals (Greeley & Hout, 2006), are largely even worse off than white Evangelicals. Because having a separate Black Protestant category makes interacting religious group with race problematic and because fully 25% of African Americans are not Black Protestants, we leave any claims about intersections of racial inequality and religion to other research (see Wilde, Pilgrim, & Shen, 2017)—especially given recent developments about how to better group African American religious groups (Shelton & Cobb, 2017).

Finally, in terms of the major religious groups covered by RelTrad, we would be remiss to not discuss those with no religion, often referred to as "Nones". Nonreligious Americans now constitute about 20% of the American population (Hout & Fischer, 2014; Massengill, 2014). Our analyses presented below demonstrate that Nones are as varied in class background as Mainline Protestants and Catholics, a finding that—to the best of our knowledge—has not been commonly observed in the literature.

2.2. Causes of Religious Inequality

Like other researchers interested in religion and inequality who explicitly eschew causal claims (Keister & Sherkat, 2014, p.3), we are not making any causal claims about the differences we find here by employing the complex religion approach. We do not argue that these differences result from people choosing their religious affiliation based on their social class, even though there is some evidence of this (Hout & Wilde, 2004; Schwadel, 2011; Sherkat, 1991; Solt, 2014; Wuthnow, 1988). We also do not argue that some religious subcultures encourage or discourage wealth accumulation (Keister, 2008, 2011) or class mobility, even though there is some evidence of this (Darnell & Sherkat, 1997; Fitzgerald & Glass, 2008, 2014; Glass & Jacobs, 2005; Lehrer, 2004; Scheitle & Smith, 2012; Sherkat, 2010, 2011).

While all of these are likely mechanisms behind some of the differences between American religious groups, the relatively large class differences we report here are likely mostly a result of the process of social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1984; Pyle & Davidson, 2014) set in place long ago by variations in immigration and settlement patterns over the course of American history. These immigration patterns have interacted with race, ethnicity, and variations in economic opportunity in different geographic areas in ways that disadvantage some group groups while reproducing the advantage of others (Ellis, 2015; Orsi, 2002).

For example, at the turn of the twentieth century, many elite Americans were deeply concerned with poor, uneducated Catholic and Jewish immigrants' flooding the shores of the U.S. (Wilde & Danielsen, 2014). Today, white Catholics have assimilated into the U.S. and achieved middle class white status (Greeley, 1978). Jews have done even better, surpassing the educational attainment of the most highly educated Mainline Protestants. A key part of both groups' mobility was access to higher education (Keister, 2007), something that was likely less accessible for religious groups that settled in less urban areas outside of the Northeast, such as Evangelical Protestants (Finke & Stark, 2005). New, more recent waves of immigrant Catholics continue to change the religious, ethnic, and class landscape. Latino immigrants, who constitute the majority of those of "other" ethnicities in the Catholic category (Pew Research Center, 2015) are much less educated and have less wealth (Keister & Borelli, 2014).

Not all recent immigrants have low levels of education, however. Because of changes to immigration laws, recent immigrants from other areas of the world (who are mostly of non-Christian faiths) are among the most educated of Americans today (Amin & Sherkat, 2014; Cadge & Ecklund, 2007; Read & Eagle, 2014). For example, 85% of American Hindus have at least a bachelor's degree or more—more than double the percentage of Mainline Protestants and four times that of Evangelicals (see Table 2).

Our main point in this part is that, regardless of the initial causes and subsequent mechanisms associated with it, religious inequality remains. It is large, and if classical sociologists were right in their assessments more than a century ago, it is durable.

3. Data and Methods

For our analysis, we use both the GSS and the Pew 2014 Religious Landscape Survey. The GSS, conducted regularly since 1972, is a full probability interview study that measures both attitudinal and social characteristics of the U.S. (NORC at the University of Chicago, 2016). With a sample of approximately 1500 respondents per year, it is necessary to pool many years of the GSS together to get a large enough sample for advanced statistical analysis. Although we do this and control for year in an attempt to capture changes in the sample over time (1990–2016), we also replicate all of our analyses with a larger and more contemporary dataset to capture population changes that might not be adequately examined

by just controlling for year—the Pew 2014 Religious Landscape Survey.

The 2014 Religious Landscape Survey is a telephone survey of more than 35,0000 respondents across the U.S., which probes on issues of religious identification, social and political attitudes, and demographic measures (Pew Research Center, 2015). We only present the tables from the GSS in the text but discuss differences between the GSS and Pew data when relevant. The Pew tables are available in the Annex at the end of this article.

We use the religious classification scheme, RelTrad (Steensland et al., 2000) which has been most commonly used by researchers, with nearly 900 publications utilizing this categorization (Stetzer & Burge, 2016). On the basis of denominational affiliation, RelTrad sorts individuals into one of seven major religious traditions: Jewish, Mainline Protestant, Other religion, Nonaffiliated, Catholic, Evangelical Protestant, and Black Protestant.

While this study is focused on class differences, as we stated above, we do not restrict it to whites, and therefore include controls for gender and race in our models. We also include controls for: year, urban residence, Southern residence, and religious service attendance.

Year is measured by the GSS variable "year". Gender is captured by a dummy variable (using GSS variable "sex"), where female is defined as 1 and male is defined as 0. Urban residence was measured using the GSS variable "res16", which asks respondents what type of place they were living at age 16. We recoded this as a dummy variable, where "1" included categories of "50,0000–250,000", "big city-suburb", and "city greater than 250,000" and 0 included the categories "county, nonfarm", "farm", and "town less than 50,0000". Southern residence is measured using GSS variable ("reg16"), which asks respondents where they were living at age 16. We define it as a dummy variable, where Southern residence is "1" and includes residence in the categories of "South Atlantic", "East South Central", and "West South Central" and "0" for all other areas. Finally, religious service attendance is captured by the GSS variable "attend', which asks respondents how often they attend religious services. We recoded this as a dummy variable, where "1" captured high attenders (once a month or more) and "0" captured low attenders (several times a year or less).

We use four different measures of class in this study. Our first, and simplest measure is of the total number of years of education respondents report (GSS variable "educ"). Our second measure, "percent BA", is an aggregate score that we created of the percentage of members in each religious group with at least a bachelor's degree. Our third measure is the mean household income per capita of members in each religious group (in constant 2,000 U.S. dollars). Our fourth measure (GSS measure "sei10", which we will simply refer to as "SEI" henceforth) is a composite score that incorporates education, income and occupational prestige, thus providing an avenue to examine status as part of social class standing (Campbell & Parker, 1983; Duncan, 1961; Haug, 1977; Hout, Smith, & Marsden, 2016). Descriptive statistics for all of the variables we use in our models can be found below in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of variables.

	Mean Proportion	SD	Min	Max	Observations
Religious Tradition					35499
Evangelical	0.258				9164
Mainline	0.168				5970
Black Protestant	0.085				3003
Catholic	0.253				8987
Jewish	0.020				708
Other Faith	0.061				2159
No Religion	0.155				5508
Education	13.364	3.032	0	20	37476
SEI	45.836	22.462	9	99.9	36007
Race					37573
White	0.781				29329
Black	0.142				5351
Other	0.077				2893
Attendance	3.631	2.753	0	8	37108
Age	46.770	17.338	18	89	37463
Year	2002.973	7.722	1990	2016	37573
Female	0.558	0.497	0	1	37573
South	0.311	0.463	0	1	37573
Urban	0.449	0.497	0	1	35999

Note: Data from GSS 1990–2016.

3.1. Methods

The analysis that follows seeks to map the amount and contours of religious inequality today. We begin by examining basic cross-tabulations of a variety of measures of inequality (including income, mean year of schooling, proportion of members with at least a bachelor's degree, as well as examining each group's SEI to get a picture of the overall amount of inequality between groups). We then move to regression, first using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analyses to predict individual's years of education and SEI via religious group membership.

After finding that religion is a robust predictor of Americans' class backgrounds, we then turn to using education and socioeconomic background to predict religious affiliation. Because religion is a nominal variable with more than two categories, we use Multinomial Logistic Regression in our next models, with Mainline Protestants as our reference category. After demonstrating that the relationship between class and religion is robust via these series of regression analyses as well, we then close by examining the amount of heterogeneity within each group. We do so by examining Gini-coefficients for the educational attainment and socioeconomic status of each of our religious groups.

4. Findings

Our first, most basic, but at the same time perhaps most important findings, are presented on Table 2, which presents data from the GSS.

Table 2. Variations in class by religious denominations, GSS 1990–2016 (ages 25–65).[1]

	N	Mean Income (a)	Mean SEI (b)	Mean Year of Schooling (c)	% BA or More (d)
Jewish	**482**	**42.68**	**61.38**	**16.10**	**68.46**
Conservative Jewish	107	42.49	61.59	16.36	74.77
Reform Jewish	216	48.77	62.58	16.21	72.22
Other Jewish	98	39.89	57.41	15.77	60.20
Orthodox Jewish	38	22.40	59.56	15.55	57.89
Mainline Protestant	**4,024**	**29.12**	**51.07**	**14.33**	**38.52**
Quaker	29	33.48	59.56	15.10	55.17
Presbyterian-merged	104	30.26	56.84	14.95	53.85
Episcopal	500	35.91	56.87	15.36	52.00
Congregationalist (e)	98	27.08	56.97	14.70	50.00
Disciples of Christ	42	24.09	54.39	14.67	47.62
PCUSA (f)	372	30.55	53.17	14.68	45.97
United Church of Christ	59	33.47	54.03	14.51	42.37
Presbyterian-don't know which	239	30.48	50.43	14.07	36.82
United Methodist*	1,396	28.38	50.53	14.26	37.46
ECLA (g)	537	26.89	49.38	14.20	34.08
Methodist-don't know which*	222	24.48	46.21	13.42	24.77
American Baptist in the U.S.	69	21.80	38.34	12.94	17.39
Other Religion	**1,693**	**23.75**	**49.80**	**14.33**	**37.86**
Hindu	76	30.89	70.30	16.55	85.53
Unitarian Universalist	84	38.43	61.91	16.26	69.05
Buddhist	135	32.36	56.72	15.19	58.52
Orthodox Christian	80	25.12	51.10	15.00	52.50
Other Eastern	31	31.68	59.34	14.67	45.16
Muslim	117	17.94	48.84	14.18	38.46
Other Faith	550	23.86	49.27	14.43	36.36
Mormon	312	19.49	47.36	14.14	28.53
Jehovah's Witness	209	15.43	36.67	11.79	5.26
No Religion	**4,243**	**26.26**	**48.14**	**14.00**	**33.44**
Catholic	**6,668**	**24.78**	**46.43**	**13.48**	**28.99**
White Catholics	5,335	26.93	48.35	13.81	31.60
Other Catholics	1,037	15.54	37.96	11.86	17.65

[1] This table provides detailed information about all denominations with at least 25 respondents within the GSS pooled data (1990–2016).

Table 2. Variations in class by religious denominations, GSS 1990–2016 (ages 25–65). (Cont.)

	N	Mean Income (a)	Mean SEI (b)	Mean Year of Schooling (c)	% BA or More (d)
Evangelical Protestant	**6,828**	**21.36**	**44.28**	**13.17**	**21.32**
Other Presbyterian	90	28.80	52.65	14.81	46.67
Lutheran-MO Synod	339	26.56	50.29	14.17	32.74
Nondenominational (h)	1,118	23.74	48.29	14.04	32.65
Christian Reform	44	21.50	45.70	13.91	31.82
Other Lutheran	79	26.62	47.74	13.61	30.38
Independent	30	20.48	49.19	13.97	30.00
Evangelist (i)	74	16.12	45.34	12.77	28.38
Brethren (j)	26	19.65	46.17	12.69	26.92
Christian, Central Christian	207	20.00	46.68	13.36	26.09
Other Methodist*	47	24.80	47.78	13.72	25.53
Lutheran-don't know which	292	27.73	45.87	13.52	25.00
Church of Christ	265	22.85	44.85	13.35	21.51
7th Day Adventist	99	18.47	43.36	13.08	20.20
Lutheran-WI synod	91	22.73	45.83	13.44	19.78
Nazarene	76	24.16	42.74	13.41	19.74
Other Baptist*	307	20.61	45.17	13.20	19.22
Southern Baptist*	1,655	22.02	44.27	13.06	19.15
Assembly of God	149	19.33	45.13	12.87	16.78
American Baptist Association*	191	22.62	40.09	12.68	15.71
Other Fundamentalist	26	20.12	40.73	12.15	15.38
Churches of God (k)	103	15.48	40.36	12.17	13.59
Freewill Baptist	63	15.34	39.96	12.67	11.11
Baptist- Don't know which*	936	18.86	38.77	12.29	10.68
Pentecostal	520	15.40	38.79	12.20	9.42
Pentecostal Holiness (l)	33	12.43	39.59	12.12	9.09
Black Protestant	**2,310**	**16.53**	**37.81**	**12.82**	**14.29**
African Methodist Episcopal Zion	47	16.65	42.82	13.49	27.66
National Baptist Convention in America	103	23.05	40.12	13.58	22.33
National Baptist Convention in the USA	60	20.84	42.88	13.52	21.67
African Methodist Episcopal	105	18.01	41.44	13.22	20.00
Southern Baptist+	512	17.71	39.24	13.01	16.21
Other Baptist+	94	17.34	38.28	12.51	15.96
Baptist- Don't know which+	863	15.68	37.32	12.80	13.33
Apostolic Faith	25	21.48	40.03	12.24	12.00
American Baptist Association+	174	13.64	35.79	12.47	11.49
American Baptists in the U.S.+	118	14.05	33.25	12.31	8.47
Church of God in Christ	25	11.51	33.94	12.88	8.00
Missionary Baptist+	31	16.38	35.93	12.48	3.23
Methodist- Don't know which+	39	15.27	33.24	12.56	2.56
Holiness (m)	62	11.62	28.85	11.28	1.61

Notes: (a) Household income per capita in 1,000 dollars, adjusted to 2,000 constant dollars; (b) GSS variable "sei10"; (c) GSS variable "Educ"; (d) using GSS variable "Degree", values are combined for respondents with a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree; (e) GSS category "Congregationalist, 1st Congregationalist"; (f) PCUSA includes "Presbyterian Church in U.S". and "United Presbyterian Church in U.S" categories; (g) ECLA includes "Lutheran Church in America", "American Lutheran", and "Evangelical Lutheran" categories; (h) included only if respondents attended church more than once a month (ATTEND < 4); (i) GSS category "Evangelical; Evangelist"; (j) GSS category "Brethren Church; Brethren"; (k) GSS category "Churches of God (except with Christ and Holiness)"; (l) GSS category "Pentecostal Holiness; Holiness Pentecostal"; (m) GSS category "Holiness; Church of Holiness"; *Included only if race is not black; +Included only if race is black.

Through simple cross-tabulations of individuals by religious tradition, Table 2 demonstrates that profound socioeconomic differences remain between American religious groups.

Whether we examine mean year of schooling, mean income, the percent with BAs, or mean SEI score, the picture remains the same with small variations.

By far the most important differences exist between the two categories of white Protestants on Table 2. Mainline Protestants have almost twice the percentage of people with BAs as Evangelical Protestants. The other measures tell the same story. With a mean SEI of 51 and an average household income that is nearly one-third larger than Evangelicals, Mainline Protestants are doing very well economically.

Also doing well are those of other religions and no religion, with SEI scores almost equivalent to Mainline Protestants, although those of other faiths have incomes that are much lower—approaching that of Evangelicals. Catholics are generally doing better than Evangelicals, but not as well as the other groups in our analysis.

Figure 1 illustrates this overall pattern by the percentage of each group that has a bachelor's degree or more. This simple picture clearly illustrates the major educational differences that remain among American religious groups. Jews remain the most highly educated group by far, while Black Protestants have the lowest proportion of members with bachelor's degrees or more.

In addition, Figure 1 also demonstrates that members of "Other religions" such as Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims, are generally quite highly educated. This is most likely a result of more recent immigration and an artifact of American immigration laws, which select the highly educated from many areas of the world. Figure 1 also demonstrates the relatively highly educated nature of those who profess no religion, an ever-growing proportion of the population (Hout & Fischer, 2002, 2014; Sherkat, 2014). The percentage of Nones who have a bachelor's degree is almost equal to that of Mainline Protestants. Finally, Figure 1 also demonstrates that Catholics remain less educated than Mainline Protestants,[2] something expected because of recent Latino immigration, but are more educated that white Evangelical Protestants.

4.1. Predicting Class by Religion

Cross-tabulations, although useful, do not allow us to examine more complex relationships. Thus, we turn to Table 3, which uses religion to predict years of education and SEI via Ordinary Least Squares regression techniques with standard controls. Table 3 demonstrates that the class and educational differences between religious traditions are both substantively and statistically significant. When compared to Mainline Protestants, every group except Jews and those of other religions is significantly worse off.

First, Model 1 demonstrates the significant educational disadvantage that white Evangelical Protestants experience relative to white Mainline Protestants (our reference category)—with 1.2 fewer years of education predicted. White Evangelical Protestants are the only white group that is predicted to have barely more than one year of education post high school. Model 2 demonstrates that the picture is largely the same for SEI. Predicted probabilities of both models are presented pictorially in Figures 2 and 3.

The predicted probabilities demonstrate that similar proportions of Mainline Protestants, those of no religion, and those from other religious have about two years of higher education. Evangelicals and Catholics peak a full year earlier.

Figure 3, which presents the predicted percentage of members of each religious group with various SEI scores, presents the most complete picture of economic advantage and disadvantage, with the overall class advantage of Mainline Protestants coming into view more clearly. Second only to Jews in SEI, almost 70% of Mainline Protestants have a predicted SEI between 45-50. In comparison, nearly three-quarters of Evangelicals have a predicted SEI of 40 or below.

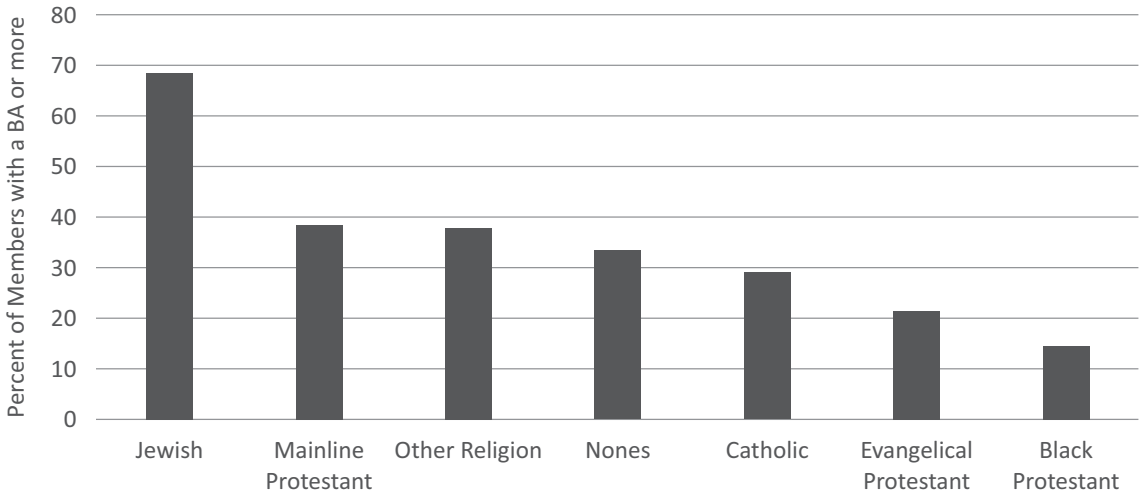

Figure 1. Variations in education by religious group, GSS 1990–2016.

[2] This gap has lessened in the Pew data, which is to be expected as it is more contemporary data.

Table 3. Effects of religion on years of education and SEI, GSS 1990–2016.

	Model 1 Education	**Model 2** SEI
Mainline Protestant	Reference	Reference
Evangelical	−1.306***	−6.884***
	(.050)	(.387)
Black Protestant	−.937***	−6.661***
	(.088)	(.690)
Catholic	−1.043***	−5.275***
	(.050)	(.388)
Jewish	1.332***	8.296***
	(.118)	(.909)
Other Religion	−.171*	−1.055
	(.075)	(.582)
No Religion	−.205***	−.708
	(.060)	(.462)
White	Reference	Reference
Black	−1.015***	−7.847***
	(.065)	(.507)
Other Race	−1.128***	−4.306***
	(.061)	(.481)
Attendance	.150***	.892***
	(.006)	(.050)
Age	−.026***	.056***
	(.001)	(.007)
Year	.035***	.117***
	(.002)	(.016)
Female	−.154***	−3.272***
	(.032)	(.246)
South	−.421***	−1.365***
	(.036)	(.282)
Urban	.823***	4.978***
	(.033)	(.251)
R^2 (%)	10.98	6.77
N	33544	32201

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001.

4.2. Predicting Religion by Class

As we noted earlier, the point of this article is not to make a causal argument but rather to demonstrate the interrelated nature of class and religion in the U.S. Thus, our next set of analyses switches our dependent and independent variables and use SEI and education to predict religious group membership using Multinomial Logistic Regression. These analyses are presented on Tables 4 and 5 and illustrated by Figures 4 and 5.

Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate that the probability of being in a particular religious group changes significantly as our indicators of class background rise, whether we use a simple measure of education or the more complex measure of SEI. Of course, these predictions are dependent to some extent on the relative proportion of each group in the GSS (see Table 1 for the relative proportions). However, the point here is that these religious groups are not evenly distributed across socioeconomic groups.

Individuals with low SEIs (less than a high school education and low occupational prestige and income) are twice as likely to be Evangelical Protestant as Mainline Protestant and four times as likely to be Evangelical than to be Jewish or some other religion. At the other end of the class spectrum, individuals with a high SEI (more than a college degree and a high occupational prestige and income) are 50% more likely to be Mainline Protestant than Evangelical Protestant or Catholic.

4.3. Educational Homogeneity

Finally, just as there is more socioeconomic inequality between some groups than others, some groups are more heterogeneous class-wise than others.

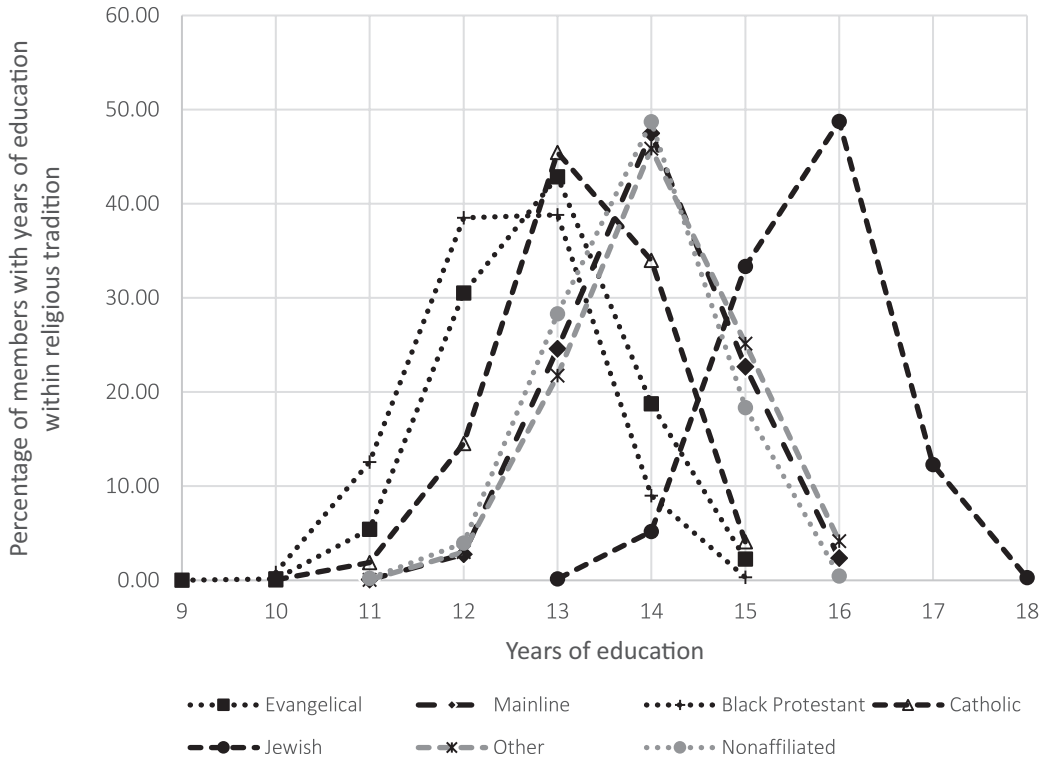

Figure 2. Predicted percentage of members with education level by religious tradition, GSS 1990–2016.

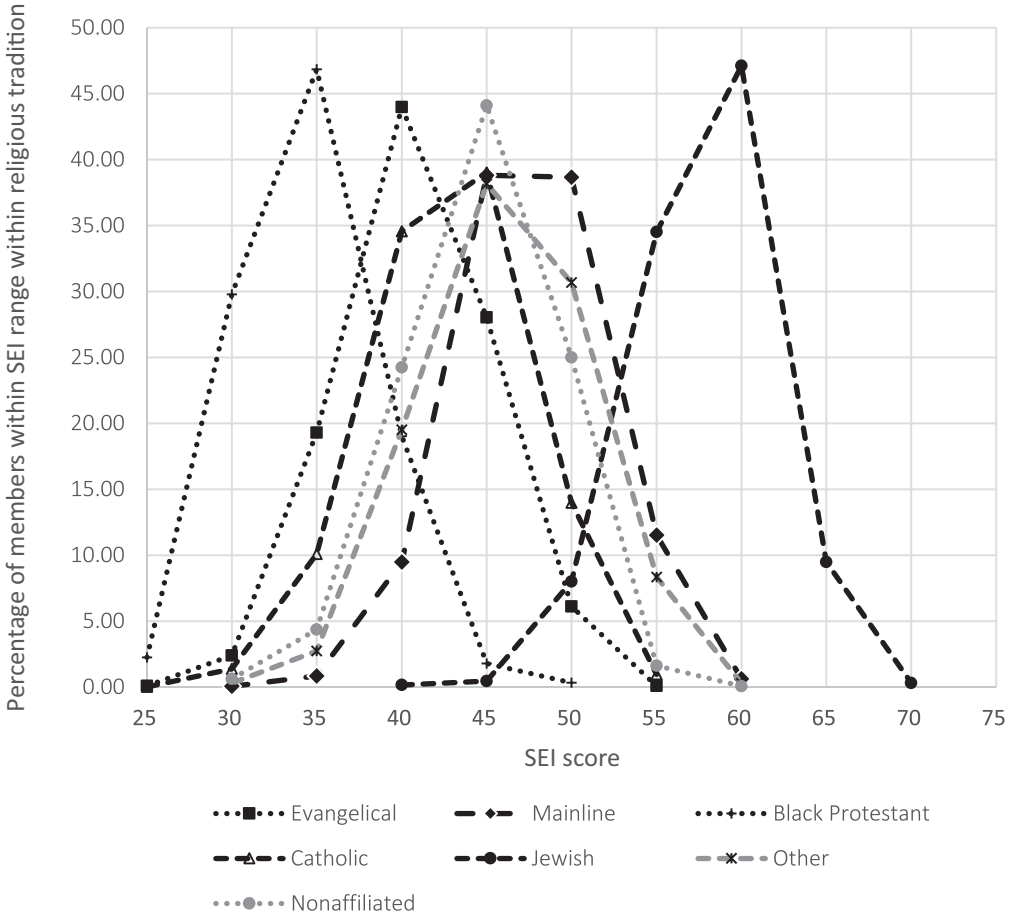

Figure 3. Predicted percentage of members' SEI score by religious tradition, GSS 1990-2016.

Table 4. The likelihood of religious group membership by education.

	Evangelical	Black Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	Other Religion	No Religion
Education	0.847***	0.874***	0.876***	1.192***	0.975***	1.003
	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.006)	(0.018)	(0.009)	(0.008)
White	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Black	1.054	397.759***	0.842**	0.492**	2.873***	3.642***
	(0.085)	(48.591)	(0.074)	(0.138)	(0.285)	(0.336)
Other Race	1.802***	6.913***	5.238***	0.513*	9.120***	3.085***
	(0.203)	(1.941)	(0.542)	(0.181)	(1.041)	(0.357)
Attendance	1.205***	1.024*	1.073***	0.846***	1.046***	0.506***
	(0.008)	(0.014)	(0.007)	(0.015)	(0.011)	(0.007)
Age	0.977***	0.987***	0.977***	1.002	0.971***	0.957***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Year	1.029***	1.002	1.028***	1.004	1.024***	1.068***
	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Female	0.885***	1.043	0.863***	0.953	0.863***	0.646***
	(0.032)	(0.070)	(0.031)	(0.080)	(0.046)	(0.028)
South	1.970***	2.054***	0.416***	0.524***	0.528***	0.701***
	(0.075)	(0.144)	(0.018)	(0.060)	(0.035)	(0.036)
Urban	0.972	1.152**	1.776***	6.858***	1.606***	1.541***
	(0.037)	(0.081)	(0.066)	(0.722)	(0.087)	(0.069)

Notes: Number of observations is 33544. Pseudo R-squared is .2433. Standard errors in parentheses. * < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001.

Table 5. The likelihood of religious group membership by SEI.

	Evangelical	Black Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	Other Religion	No Religion
SEI	0.985***	0.986***	0.989***	1.017***	0.998*	1.002
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
White	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Black	1.123	416.589***	0.867	0.502**	2.874***	3.748***
	(0.093)	(52.366)	(0.078)	(0.141)	(0.295)	(0.357)
Other Race	2.071***	7.150***	5.693***	0.452**	9.214***	3.182***
	(0.239)	(2.117)	(0.607)	(0.178)	(1.088)	(0.380)
Attendance	1.194***	1.015	1.065***	0.852***	1.040***	0.507***
	(0.008)	(0.015)	(0.007)	(0.015)	(0.011)	(0.007)
Age	0.982***	0.990***	0.981***	0.999	0.973***	0.958***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Year	1.025***	0.998	1.024***	1.007	1.022***	1.068***
	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Female	0.854***	1.034	0.841***	0.944	0.859***	0.646***
	(0.031)	(0.071)	(0.031)	(0.081)	(0.047)	(0.029)
South	2.094***	2.178***	0.433***	0.493***	0.544***	0.699***
	(0.080)	(0.157)	(0.019)	(0.058)	(0.037)	(0.036)
Urban	0.920**	1.142*	1.703***	7.425***	1.618***	1.539***
	(0.035)	(0.082)	(0.063)	(0.801)	(0.089)	(0.070)

Notes: Number of observations is 32201. Pseudo R-squared is .2367. Standard errors in parentheses. * < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001.

Table 6 presents Gini-coefficients for the educational attainment and socioeconomic status of each of our religious groups. A Gini-coefficient is a measure of inequality in the distribution of a variable. Its value ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 is perfect equality and 1 is perfect inequality (Beckfield, 2006; Firebaugh, 1999). Both Ginis provide interesting, and somewhat different, perspectives on religious inequality.

The education Gini, which Figure 6 helps to visualize, demonstrates that Jews and Evangelical Protestants are quite distinct educationally, both being more homogeneous than the other groups. The median is represented by the horizontal line cutting through the center of most of the boxes, with the exception of the Evangelical box (for which the median overlaps with the bottom quartile). The dots represent the presence of outliers, or re-

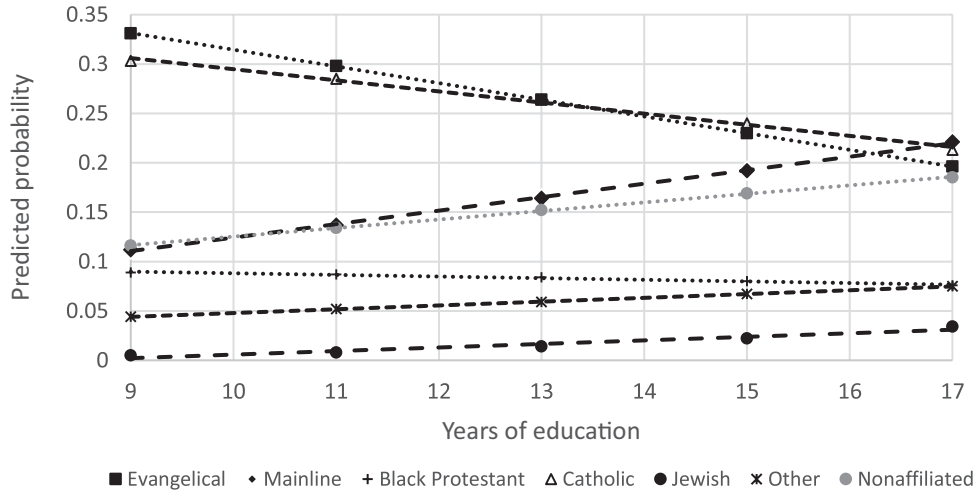

Figure 4. The likelihood of being a particular religious group by years of education, GSS 1990–2016.

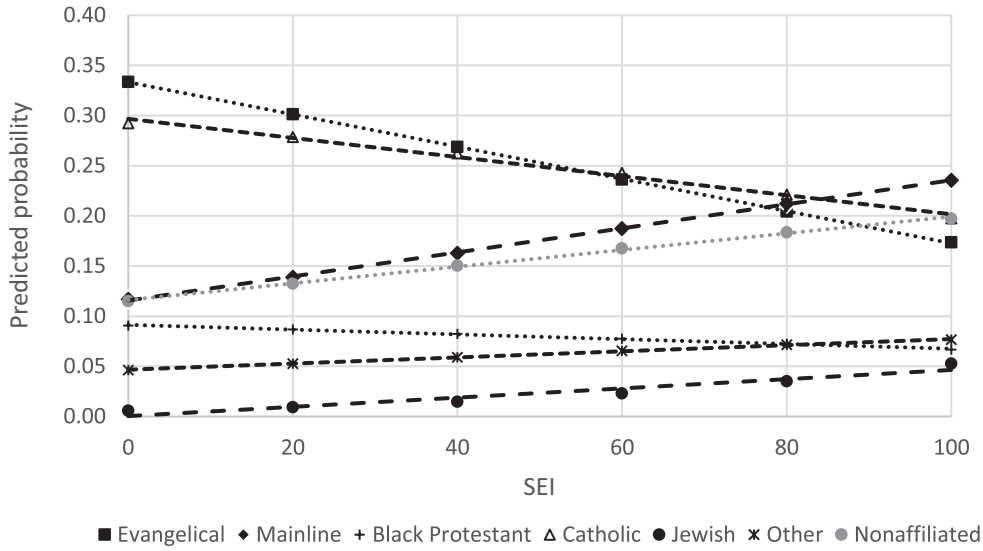

Figure 5. The likelihood of being a particular religious group by socioeconomic background, GSS 1990–2016.

Table 6. Education and SEI Gini-coefficients.

	Education	SEI
Evangelical	0.116	0.274
Mainline	0.110	0.257
Black Protestant	0.114	0.297
Catholic	0.125	0.281
Jewish	0.097	0.203
Other Faith	0.121	0.275
No Religion	0.116	0.280

Notes: Data from GSS 1990–2016. Weights are used.

spondents who are more than 1.5 times the interquartile range in either direction. The first quartile for Jews is higher than the medians for the other religious traditions, which demonstrates that most Jews are highly educated. Among Evangelical Protestants, the first quartile and median are the same (12 years). This means at least 25% of Evangelical Protestants in our sample have 12 years of education, which makes the distribution of years of education for Evangelical Protestants quite dense.

Catholics, Mainline Protestants and the nonreligious are much more educationally heterogeneous, but less so than people of other faiths who are the most widely dispersed educationally. This is the case even though those of other faiths have the second highest years of education on average, suggesting a fairly educationally diverse group.

The picture is the same when socioeconomic heterogeneity is examined in Figure 7, except that Mainline

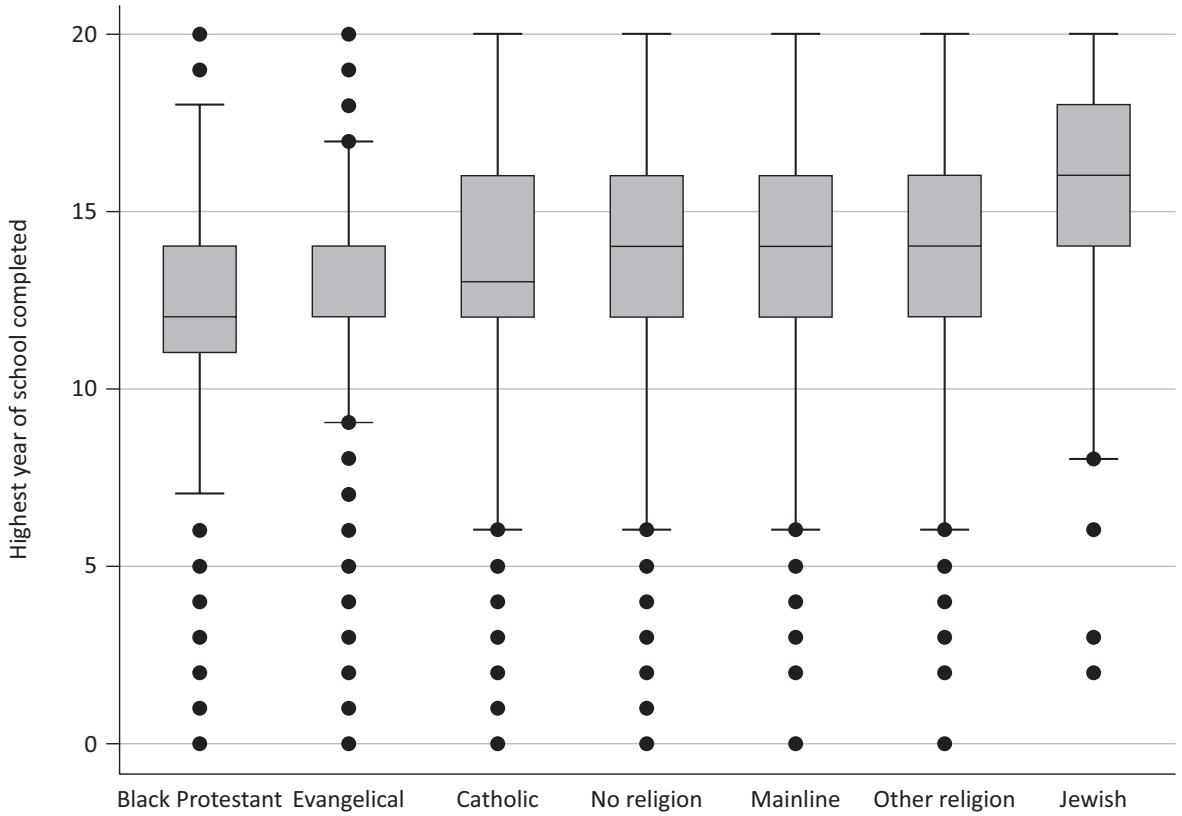

Figure 6. Educational heterogeneity by religious tradition.

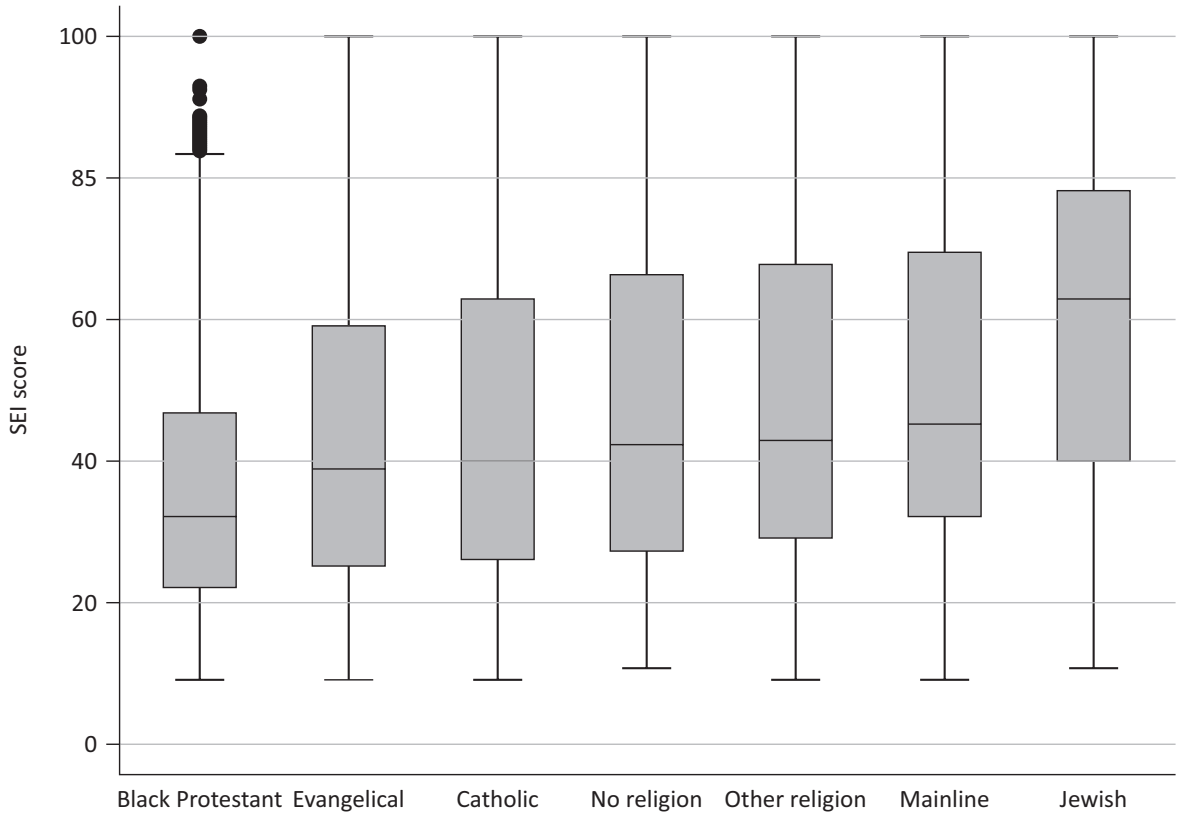

Figure 7. Socioeconomic heterogeneity by religious tradition.

Protestants emerge as more clearly advantaged socioeconomically with the second highest SEI and a moderate standard deviation, which means most Mainline Protestants are also high SEI. People of other faiths, on average, have the third highest SEI, yet they are the most widely dispersed socioeconomically, again suggesting a wide diversity of socioeconomic backgrounds among this group.

5. Conclusion

Religious inequality remains strong in the U.S. Originally, the "gatekeepers" of American society (Davidson & Pyle, 2011), Mainline Protestants remain at the top of the socioeconomic ladder, with almost 40% of them having a bachelor's degree or more on average (see Table 2). Even so, the legacy of the different histories and settlement patterns of Mainline Protestant denominations can still be seen. For example, more than 50% of members from groups that would have been considered part of the Protestant establishment (Baltzell, 1964)—Congregationalist, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Quakers—have a bachelor's degree or more. However, some groups in the Mainline Protestant category as operationalized by RelTrad, groups that were arguably not a part of Mainline Protestantism historically, such as the American Baptists in the U.S., have lower percentages of highly educated members. As a result, the educational Gini on Table 6 and Figure 6 demonstrate that Mainline Protestants as operationalized by RelTrad are one of the most educationally heterogeneous groups today.

Despite the fact that the Mainline Protestant category is quite heterogenous, however, there are two additional important points to note. Socioeconomically, it appears Mainline Protestants are doing better than more recent immigrants who have been selected for their educational credentials, such as those from other religions. Secondly, they remain educationally and socioeconomically quite distinct from Evangelicals. Evangelical Protestants have only half the proportion of members with bachelor's degrees as Mainline Protestants. Evangelical Protestants' lower educational attainment is also a result of greater educational homogeneity, as illustrated by Figure 6.

Jews have surpassed even the most educated Mainline Protestants, with 68% of Jews having a bachelor's degree or more (see Table 2), a proportion that is surpassed only by the 85% American Hindus with a college degree or more. However, one should not fail to forget that groups such as Unitarian Universalist, who are today not included within Mainline Protestantism because of their "unorthodox" beliefs, were part of the Protestant Establishment. Today, 69% of Unitarian Universalists have a bachelor's degree or more—more than Jews on average.

Those of no religion are also fairly well educated, having 1.5 times the proportion of college degrees as Evangelical Protestants.

The analyses presented in this article also demonstrate that Catholics have indeed entered the middle class (see Table 2), with almost 30% of them having bachelor's degrees or more overall. However, this is not the case for all Catholics, as Latino Catholics remain at an educational disadvantage relative to the descendants of earlier Roman Catholic immigrants. This ethnic and historical diversity makes American Catholics one of the most heterogeneous religious groups in the U.S. today—with a lower median but similar distribution to Mainline Protestants, Nones, and those of other religions.

Finally, Black Protestants remain at the greatest educational and economic disadvantage of all American religious groups, having less than half the proportion of bachelor's degrees as Catholics or those of no religion.

Given the significant differences in the class backgrounds of American religious groups that we have presented here, we argue that researchers should not treat measures of class such as socioeconomic background and education as if they are independent from religion in statistical analyses. Instead we recommend that researchers examine religion in interaction with measures of class in analyses whenever possible. Doing so will allow religion's intersections with other social structures to show through in all its complexity.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Melissa J. Wilde (Ph.D. in Sociology, 2002, from UC Berkeley) is an Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania. Most of her research has focused on religious change, including: the cultural and organizational factors behind Vatican II; the demographic factors that explain why American Protestantism has gone from being majority Mainline to majority conservative; and how race and class intersected with American religious groups to explain early stances on birth control. Lately, her research has become focused on how certain qualities of the American religious field, especially inequality, haven't changed, and how those enduring features of American religion can help us understand religious views of sex, poverty, and even politics today.

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Annex

The Pew data confirms the findings laid out in our paper. Table A1 shows the descriptive statistics for our variables using the Pew 2014 Religious Landscape data. Please note that SEI is not available in the Pew data and is thus not included.

Table A1. Descriptives of variables, Pew data.

	Mean / Proportion	SD	Min	Max	Observations
Religious tradition (a)					34848
Evangelical	0.255				8896
Mainline	0.148				5144
Black Protestant	0.065				2271
Catholic	0.201				7304
Jewish	0.019				650
Other Faith	0.074				2579
Nonaffiliated	0.230				8005
Education	13.543	2.373	8	18	34868
Race					34549
White	0.662				22862
Black	0.116				4002
Other	0.223				7686
Attendance	3.561	1.635	1	6	34854
Age Range	5.972	3.555	1	15	34345
Female	0.515	0.500	0	1	35071
South	0.371	0.483	0	1	35071
Urban	0.373	0.484	0	1	35071

Notes: Data from Pew 2014 Religious Landscape Study. All descriptives use the weight provided by Pew in their dataset. Age range starts from age 24 or below with 1 increase as an increment of 5 years. For simplicity, the observations for each category of RelTrad and race are rounded to integers; (a) The Pew Religious Landscape data is grouped into religious traditions with the same logic as Steensland et al. (2000), with a few exceptions. Notably, the Pew data breaks out some large religious groups to stand on their own in their classification scheme. In order to maintain consistency across the data, we recoded the Pew RelTrad variable as follows: Mormons, Orthodox Christians, Jehovah's Witness, Other Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Other World Religions were coded as "Other Faith". The category of "don't know/refused" was dropped from the analysis.

Table A2 presents comparable crosstabulations for the religious traditions and mean income and proportion of members with bachelor's degrees using the 2014 Pew Religious Landscape data. The overall picture is the same: Jews and Mainline Protestants have a larger proportion of members with bachelor's degrees and higher mean income compared to Evangelicals and Black Protestants. One notable difference in the Pew data is that those of "Other Religions" have a higher proportion of members with bachelor's degrees than Mainline Protestants, which is reversed in the GSS data.

Table A2. Variations in class and demography by religious denominations, Pew data (ages 25–64).

	N*	Mean Income	Percent with BA or more
Jewish	361	120.77	68.38
Mainline Protestant	2940	78.41	36.60
Other Religion	1647	69.22	43.95
No Religion	5032	66.75	34.06
Catholic	4535	66.75	30.14
Evangelical Protestant	5594	61.68	24.03
Black Protestant	1493	41.07	16.57

Note: * These counts were generated using the provided weight and were rounded to the nearest integer.

Table A3 uses religion to predict years of education via Ordinary Least Squares regression techniques with standard controls using the Pew Religious Landscape data. Compared to Mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, Black Protestants, and Catholics are less educated. As was the case in the GSS data set, Jews are significantly more educated than Mainline Protestants. There is no statistically significant difference found between Mainline Protestants and those of no religion or other religions using the Pew data.

Table A3. Effects of religion on years of education, Pew dataset.

	Education
Mainline Protestant	Reference
Evangelical	−0.798***
	(0.042)
Black Protestant	−0.775***
	(0.085)
Catholic	−0.529***
	(0.043)
Jewish	1.025***
	(0.090)
Other Religion	0.330***
	(0.058)
Nonaffiliated	0.070
	(0.046)
White	Reference
Black	−0.753***
	(.062)
Other Race	−1.100***
	(.036)
Attendance	0.121***
	(0.010)
Age	0.000
	(.004)
Female	−0.175***
	(.026)
South	0.029
	(.028)
Urban	0.605***
	(0.028)
R^2 (%)	7.77
N	33531

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001.

Finally, Table A4 demonstrates that religious groups are not evenly distributed across educational groups, using the Pew data set. Again, these predictions are dependent to some extent on the relative proportion of each group in the Pew Religious Landscape data (see Table A1 for the relative proportions). However, the point here is that these religious groups are not evenly distributed across socioeconomic groups. The overall picture displayed here is very similar to that found using the GSS dataset, with some gains and losses of statistical significance.

Table A4. The likelihood of religious group membership by education, Pew data.

	Evangelical	Black Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	Other Religion	Nonaffiliated
Education	0.868***	0.850***	0.914***	1.222***	1.056***	1.032***
	(0.006)	(0.013)	(0.007)	(0.022)	(0.011)	(0.009)
White	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference	Reference
Black	1.758***	1,143.118***	1.138	0.415***	3.486***	4.674***
	(0.172)	(203.604)	(0.129)	(0.138)	(0.404)	(0.493)
Other Race	1.552***	14.026***	3.803***	0.621***	3.697***	2.112***
	(0.092)	(2.829)	(0.214)	(0.102)	(0.252)	(0.132)
Attendance	1.463***	1.180***	1.102***	0.788***	1.061***	0.373***
	(0.018)	(0.033)	(0.014)	(0.021)	(0.018)	(0.006)
Age	0.941***	0.988	0.982***	0.994	0.891***	0.839***
	(0.005)	(0.011)	(0.005)	(0.011)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Year	0.882***	0.989	0.897***	0.886	0.801***	0.697***
	(0.032)	(0.074)	(0.033)	(0.068)	(0.039)	(0.028)
Female	1.426***	1.275***	0.608***	0.727***	0.600***	0.751***
	(0.052)	(0.099)	(0.024)	(0.062)	(0.032)	(0.032)
South	0.864***	0.865*	1.744***	5.304***	1.177***	1.188***
	(0.035)	(0.068)	(0.069)	(0.441)	(0.062)	(0.051)

Notes: Number of observations is 33531; pseudo R-squared is .2226; the reference category of religion is Mainline Protestant; standard errors in parentheses; * < .05, ** < .01, *** < .001.

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Article

"You Help Them Out and God Gets the Glory": Social Class and Inequality in a Fundamentalist Christian Church

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Abstract
Members of Full Truth Calvary Church (a pseudonym) say that they trust God for their material needs by relying on Him to send jobs, homes, and even occasional windfalls of cash. In doing so, they reject steps that might help them get ahead, such as higher education, credit cards, mortgages, or negotiations for higher pay. Members frame their circumstances—which would typically mark them as working class or poor—as indicators of faith. Using over three years of ethnographic and interview data, I explore how this fundamentalist religious community manages socioeconomic risk and inequality with a discourse of reliance on God. I present three key findings. First, I show how Full Truth teachings connect financial practices to faith, framing how members handle money as an important part of their Christian identity. Next, I show how those teachings mitigate inequality by discouraging educational or economic advancement that would place members outside of church community norms. Finally, I show how members with greater means give to their poorer brethren anonymously in an effort to keep the focus on God as the ultimate provider. Though members remain aware of inequity between families, these gifts ideally ease disparities without creating relationships of debt or resentment. My findings contribute to sociological understandings of how religious communities make meaning out of socioeconomic inequality.

Keywords
congregations; fundamentalism; inequality; religion; social class

Issue
This article is part of the issue "Complex Religion: Intersections of Religion and Inequality", edited by Melissa J. Wilde (University of Pennsylvania, USA).

1. Introduction

Americans are in the midst of a national conversation about social class and inequality. From voting patterns to educational opportunity, sociologists have a tremendous amount to offer the discussion about how class differences occur and what they mean for an increasingly stratified society. What the large, often quantitative sociological studies that address these issues cannot tell us, however, is how inequality plays out in day to day life. What does it mean to be richer or poorer in one's community? What is the larger significance of helping a friend in need, or receiving help from a relative? Religious communities offer a valuable microcosm of such issues, providing a tightly knit social group in which to observe and analyze the steps that individuals take to manage inequality. Using ethnographic and interview data from over three years at Full Truth Calvary Church (a pseudonym), I show how church members in one fundamentalist Christian community operationalize religious beliefs to mitigate internal inequality and to manage existing disparities without exacerbating social divisions.

Below, I illustrate existing socioeconomic divisions within the Full Truth community and how members manage them. I present three key findings. After illustrating existing socioeconomic divisions within the community, I first show how Full Truth teachings link financial practices to faith by arguing that to truly trust God one must avoid typical financial practices, choosing instead to pray for things like a job, a place to live, and enough money to feed one's family. These alternative practices become a key way that members identify as good Christians. Next,

I demonstrate that trusting God for finances means that members discourage steps that might help them get ahead, such as higher education, home mortgages, professional networking, or credit cards. By making a religious virtue of modest aspirations, Full Truth members avoid the gains that might create greater inequality in their ranks. Finally, I show that when members do fall on hard times, they rely on anonymous gifts from other congregants, who hide their identity so that the recipient can thank only God for the help. Members thus speak in the language of having received an "answer to prayer", even while acknowledging that a friend or family member has provided assistance. Such anonymous giving eases disparities within the church without creating relationships of debt or resentment. I conclude by briefly considering the ways in which this management of internal disparities may promote solidarity among members experiencing the larger hardships of living as working class Americans and make religious meaning out of the challenges they face.

2. Background

A large body of literature examines inequality between Christian denominations in the United States (Demerath, 1965; Niebuhr, 1929; Smith & Faris, 2005; Wilde & Glassman, 2016), with studies finding that income (Keister, 2003; McConkey, 2001) and education (Beyerlein, 2004; Darnell & Sherkat, 1997; Massengill, 2011) are typically highest among Mainline Protestants and Jews, and lowest among Conservative Protestants. Much of the literature on social disparities in the religious context also addresses racial inequality, including studies on the presence of, and attitudes towards, racial inequality and denominational segregation (Cobb, Perry, & Dougherty, 2015; Edgell & Tranby, 2007; Emerson & Smith, 2000; Emerson, Smith, & Sikkink, 1999; Perry, 2013).

A smaller body of research examines inequality within congregations, with past work suggesting that voluntary organizations, including religious groups, are largely homogenous (Emerson & Smith, 2000; McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). However, while studies have found that socioeconomic diversity—measured by both income and education—is uncommon, it far outpaces racial diversity[1] (Dougherty, 2003; Reimer, 2007; Schwadel, 2009; Schwadel & Dougherty, 2010). Looking at the Christian context, Schwadel (2009) shows that socioeconomic diversity is more likely to occur in churches with higher proportions of high-income and college-educated members, as well as in churches with stable memberships. Conversely, churches with more low-income members or those without a college education are more likely to be homogeneous, as are congregations that are newly founded and/or growing in membership. Largely because of these latter attributes, conservative Protestant churches are especially likely to be socioeconomically homogeneous, a characteristic that is born out in this study.[2]

How churches address inequality within their own community is another question. Wuthnow (2003) finds that the religiously involved are slightly more likely be friends with members of historically disadvantaged groups, including racial minorities or those using government assistance programs. This finding is important in light of past research showing that inter-status relationships create less social distance and more social benefits between groups (Yancey, 1999). However, these findings are largely a product of who is already a member of the congregation—Wuthnow (2003) finds that mainline Protestants and Jews, who are typically high status, are least likely to have friends from disadvantaged backgrounds—meaning that those befriending lower status members may be of only somewhat higher status themselves, and suggesting that religious membership does not automatically push members to reach beyond their own social class. More broadly, disadvantaged members are at risk for feeling alienated from their brethren. For example, Sullivan (2012) finds that some of the most disadvantaged women leave faith communities despite their continued personal religiosity, feeling unwelcome in congregations whose members are judgmental of their lives as single mothers or welfare recipients. And while Schwadel (2002) finds that lower status church members may gain skills of civic engagement and political participation from their higher status compatriots, positions of leadership remain highly stratified, limiting the benefits of cross-status relationships.

Most existing scholarship looking at religion and charitable activities focus on religious members' involvement with recipients outside of the congregation. In his comprehensive study of congregations, Chaves (2004, p. 48) finds that, though 57% of religious groups engage in some kind of social service, most do so in discrete, direct interventions like food or clothing donation, or by partnering with larger secular organizations, like Habitat for Humanity. These services are rarely targeted at members within the church's own community. Chaves shows that churches located in poor neighborhoods, but with a largely middle-class membership, are most likely to offer social services. Churches with poorer membership

[1] For example, recent findings show that just 7–8% of religious communities are multi-racial, meaning that no one racial group comprises more than 80% of the congregation (Emerson, 2000; Emerson & Woo, 2010; DeYoung, Emerson, & Yancey, 2004). Certain factors do increase the likelihood of racial diversity, however: Urban congregations are more likely to be racially diverse than those in rural areas (Dougherty, 2003; Dougherty & Huyser, 2008; Emerson & Woo, 2010), and Catholic parishes, which draw from neighborhood catchment areas, are more racially inclusive than their more segregated Protestant counterparts (Dougherty, 2003; Dudley & Roozen, 2001; Schwadel, 2009). Congregational attributes influence racial integration, including the presence of diverse leadership, small group meetings, charismatic worship style, intentional diversity outreach, and proximity to integrated neighborhoods (Dougherty & Huyser, 2008; Emerson & Kim, 2003).

[2] Interestingly, some find that churches with higher racial and ethnic diversity are simultaneously more likely to be socioeconomically homogeneous, with a shared (usually high) class status bridging racial divisions (Ammerman & Farnsley, 1997; Dougherty, 2003). Others, however, dispute this finding, suggesting that racial diversity can be linked to socioeconomic diversity (Yancey & Kim, 2008).

are less likely to offer services, regardless of the socioeconomic circumstances of the surrounding area. Overall, studies find that religious individuals are significantly more likely to volunteer and donate money to charitable causes than those who do not identify as religious (Brooks, 2003; Gittell & Tebaldi, 2006; Havens, O'Herlihy, & Schervish, 2006), and that religiosity, rather than denominational affiliation, matters most for giving (Regnerus, Smith, & Sikkink, 1998).

When thinking about inequality within congregations, it is also helpful to consider what religious institutions teach about the spiritual meaning of wealth, and the proper use of money among the faithful. Perhaps the most famous theory about the connection between religion and economic behavior is Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930/2002), which links Calvinists' quest for positive signs of their predestination with profit accumulation and prudent investment. Today, scholars continue to find that the values of Protestantism—particularly a personal relationship with God—encourage individualistic perspectives on economic pursuits and success (Barker & Carman, 2000; Chusmir & Koberg, 1988; Schaltegger & Torgler, 2010). Relatedly, proponents of the "prosperity gospel" argue that God will provide health or wealth to those who pray for it (Schieman & Jung, 2012). Though, as Souders (2011) has pointed out, prosperity theology purports to give believers greater agency in their own success by aligning religious effort with financial effort, it differs from the Protestant Ethic in stressing faith and prayer over labor as the key mechanism behind economic gains.

Ultimately, though sociologists of religion have examined racial and socio-economic stratification between denominations, and even between congregations, we know little about inequality within congregations. Furthermore, while past work has looked at the propensity of religious individuals to give money to people outside their congregations, little work addresses how communities handle internal inequality, nor how the presence (or absence) of material wealth fits with religious doctrine at the congregational level.

3. Methods and Setting

The following study is based on over three years of ethnographic observations at Full Truth Calvary Church, supplemented with interviews and analysis of church literature. Between March 2014 and May 2017, I attended one to two church services per week (of three total), and developed relationships with seven extended families. Within those families, I spoke with about fifteen people frequently, and spoke occasionally with an additional eighteen. Services lasted about an hour and a half, and I spent time before and after the service chatting with congregants. I also spent time with members outside of church services for social outings like miniature golf, carol singing, and Christian music concerts, as well as at events like bridal showers, Christmas parties, and women's fellowship nights. In total, I spent more than three hundred hours with church members and came to consider many members friends.

In addition to ethnographic observations, I conducted ten formal interviews with church members and eight formal interviews with former church members. Of the members I spoke with, seven were women, three of whom were married. All were white, and between the ages of nineteen and sixty. Of the three male church members I interviewed, two were married and one was widowed. One male respondent was black and the other two were white, and all were between the ages of forty and sixty-eight. In addition to those members, I spoke with five women and three men who have left Full Truth. The women were all white, and between the ages of thirty-seven and sixty-six. All but one were married. The men were all married and between the ages of forty-one and forty-nine.

I recruited interview participants through the social network that I developed at the church, striving to represent a diverse sample of adult congregants. I found that despite close relationships with a number of members, most were very hesitant to participate in formal interviews. Many claimed that there was "nothing special" about their experience, and despite assurances that all experiences were interesting and worthy of an interview, I suspect that most continued to be uncomfortable because of broader concerns about privacy and publicity.[3] Ultimately, only one-third of members I asked agreed to be interviewed. Fortunately, however, the ten people who did agree to be interviewed represented a diverse cross-section of the congregation. Several of my earliest interviews were with members introduced to me by the pastor, and I considered them institutionally sanctioned as exemplary congregants: friendly, articulate, secure in their faith, and, as I later learned, members of the wealthier and more socially prominent families. I received referrals to three other members from my initial participants, and these new respondents widened the age range and number of families with whom I spoke, but kept me still within what I would consider the core church community. The remaining participants, however, were drawn from my own relationships with church members, who were much less centrally located in the social life of the church. This is not to say that they were marginalized, but I was grateful to get the perspective of members who were not connected to those recommended to me by church leaders.

I decided to interview former church members about a year into my ethnography at Full Truth. I sought out former members to provide a different perspective on life in the church and to better understand why members decide to stay or leave the community over time. I also hoped that former members would share their thoughts

[3] This group has received past media coverage for their medical beliefs, which some members perceived as negative. These experiences added to an already insular attitude among members to create an intense desire for privacy.

on inequality in the church community, and that they might be more candid than current members, whom I found to be reticent on questions of socioeconomic disparity. Though all former members were critical of the church in some respects, most were not angry or bitter about their experiences there, and all continued to be in at least limited contact with family members who remain in the church.[4] However, I avoided publicizing my contact with former members while among current members, as one current member told me that she suspected people would begin to "shut me out" if they knew I was speaking with former members, fearing that my goal had been to publish harmful things about the group all along. This was of course not my intention, but I was sensitive to how my interest in speaking with former members could be perceived and kept that interest private from all but a few close, discreet contacts at the church. I ultimately recruited three former members who attended family gatherings thrown by current church members (and at which I was present), and all others through snowball sampling from those initial three former members.

Finally, I reviewed approximately one-hundred church pamphlets from the 1990s through the present. Pamphlets were summaries of recent sermons that were mailed to members every other week throughout the year. I received these pamphlets at my home, and also collected older pamphlets from a display at church, and from members who were willing to share older pamphlets stored in their homes. These pamphlets were helpful as distillations of church teachings and as succinct reminders of recent themes that members heard in services.

I coded all fieldnotes and interview transcripts using Atlas TI software. I developed a code scheme for employment and financial data, focusing on members' beliefs about money, God's role in material well-being, employment history, and charitable giving. Coding was an iterative process, in which I used early interviews and observations to hone my codes, and revisited early data to apply later insights. I went through a similar process for church pamphlets, but chose to code them by hand.

Before presenting my findings, it is important to briefly describe Full Truth to provide context for my data. Full Truth Calvary Church was founded in 1925 by a man named Julius Burke. Mr. Burke started the church as a separatist faction of another non-denominational Christian church called First Christ Chapel. His small congregation was located in a working-class neighborhood of a major city, close to First Christ Chapel.

From the start, Full Truth was a strongly fundamentalist congregation, part of the conservative Christian movement that emerged in the 1920s in opposition to increasingly scientific worldviews. Leaders relied, as Marsden (1991) has argued all fundamentalist churches do, on the forces of modernity to serve as a foil for their teachings. For example, by framing modern society as morally relativistic, Full Truth leaders emphasized a literal, unchanging interpretation of Biblical morality.[5] Decrying changes in education and government assistance policies, Pastor Burke insisted that members trust God for the material and financial elements of their well-being.

Today, Full Truth Calvary Church retains most of its original, defining beliefs. Melvin Burke, a grandson to Julius, is the current pastor, and continues to preach the message of trusting God that his grandfather stressed nearly a century ago. Members continue to stress personal faith and Biblical literalism over proselytizing. Though the congregation has moved its operations to different buildings over the years, it remains in the working class, urban neighborhood of its founding. Full Truth has about five-hundred members, including children, and the congregation is overwhelmingly white. The community is split relatively evenly between men and women, with the oldest members in their mid-eighties.

However, in important ways, Melvin's leadership signals a new direction for the church: he prides himself on comfort with technology, texting rapidly and posting photos on social media platforms like Instagram. Furthermore, while most church members continue to avoid television and secular music as they did in the twentieth century, many note that Pastor Burke is more accepting of modern entertainment than were previous generations of leadership. Though members have always worn typical modern clothing, older members feel that the norms of modesty are in some cases loosening among the younger generation.

Children attend a church-run school, which extends from kindergarten through tenth grade, after which point youth are legally permitted to leave school. Most graduate from the church school (though they do not receive a state-sanctioned high school diploma), and begin the process of praying for a job, which I describe below. Typical jobs for young men include construction, plumbing, or short-haul truck driving, while young women often work in food service or retail until they marry and begin having children.

As a matter of trusting God for healing, all forms of modern medicine remain strongly discouraged, including methods of contraception. As a result, families at Full Truth are quite large—most families have at least seven children, with twelve, or even sixteen children not uncommon. In addition to restrictions on contraceptives and pharmaceutical drugs, church members also refuse seatbelts (insisting that one should trust in God for pro-

[4] Full Truth members vary in how much they will communicate with family and friends who leave the church. Some stay in frequent contact, continuing their previous relationships. Most keep in more limited contact, by, for example, remaining connected on social media but speaking only at holidays and birthdays, if at all. A few people told me that they had completely severed relationships with former members, but even these members typically continued to be aware of the welfare of their ex-friends and family members through others' contact with them.

[5] I characterize Full Truth Calvary Church as a fundamentalist group because they combine an emphasis on Biblical literalism with an aversion to proselytizing. While evangelicals might share their literalist Biblical teachings, Full Truth members differ in their de-emphasis on spreading the gospel. Instead, members feel that they must make themselves as perfect as possible to be ready for God and the Second Coming of Christ.

tection in the case of a crash), as well as prescription eyeglasses and dentistry, though members do practice oral hygiene.

In contrast to many conservative Christian congregations, Full Truth services do not feature a charismatic leader, emotional music, or group prayer. Instead, the tone of sermons is reserved, and only the pastor and assistant pastor speak (except for one prayer at each service, which is led by one of a handful of respected older men in the community). Outside of church, members tell me that they pray, typically apart from even their own families, except for mealtimes or prayers with small children. Youth receive their own Bibles around age thirteen and are encouraged to read and pray alone in the morning and evening. Thus, members' choice to trust in God for things like good health and financial well-being is largely a private one, though the close-knit nature of the community means that members are aware of each others' choices and circumstances.

4. Findings

I find that members of Full Truth Calvary Church draw on religious beliefs to mitigate inequality within the community. Members' insistence on trusting God for financial stability means that they discourage higher education, salary negotiation, loans, or other tactics that many Americans use to get ahead. Though some members are more financially successful than others, the wealth gap remains in check as a matter of religious principle. Furthermore, I find that members use anonymous gifts to one another in the form of cash, food, and goods, to help those in need while encouraging the recipient to thank God instead of an individual. The practice of anonymous giving is another strategy that reflects religious belief—as members feel that their faith in God has been rewarded through the gift—while preventing relationships defined by debt or a division between the "haves" and "have-nots" of the community.

4.1. Inequality at Full Truth Calvary Church

Members of Full Truth Calvary Church are predominantly working class, with some older or single members slipping towards poverty. Though respondents uniformly refused to give me specific income numbers during interviews, I was able to gather clues about members' earnings from informal conversation and observations. Most lived similarly in small rowhomes with three or four bedrooms and one bathroom. With families so large, it was common for there to be one boys' room and one girls' room, sometimes with several triple-stacked bunkbeds in each. Single adults lived with either parents or siblings, often in duplex apartments. Everywhere that I visited, I found that homes were well cared for, with lots of family photos on the walls, overstuffed sofas, and gleaming table tops. Surroundings were never opulent, but members' proficiency in home repair work meant that they were able to maintain houses well, often earning the appreciation of landlords only too happy to have someone else keep up the property. Though members did not negotiate for lower rent as a result of these repairs, several told me that their landlords had not raised the rent in many years, a decision that they attributed to God's providence.

Inequities stemmed from members' occupations, with carpentry and cabinet-making being the most lucrative. Several families shared businesses between brothers or cousins, often extending work to younger relatives (typically, but not always, young men) as they got older. Notably, education was not a source of disparity, as almost all members attended the church school, but certainly members of the business-owning families were more likely to receive valuable training. Members with fewer direct connections to these families were visibly poorer in subtle but important ways. For example, though all church members wore their "Sunday best" to services, I noticed a handful of people who wore the same dress or suit every time, while others rotated through colorful styles that I recognized from inexpensive chain stores like Target. Similarly, some members drove freshly painted vans with the name of family businesses emblazoned on the side, while others used vehicles pocked by rust. Again, the differences were not extreme—no one appeared to be driving a car that was even new, let alone an expensive brand—but members of families with thriving businesses stood out as living more comfortably than some of their brethren.

Inequality was not something that current members acknowledged to me, and it took me over a year to understand that disparities in wealth translated to social distinctions more broadly. An ex-member and mother of nine, Casey Miller, was the first to spell out the hierarchy of families for me:

> There's a pecking order, and the Schroders and Hoffmans are it [at the top]. The Millers and Scotts are kind of—well, hold on, [there are] the Harold Scotts, Becky Schroder Scotts, and Gretchen Miller Scotts, they're right below the Schroders and the Hoffmans. And then you have the Ecklunds and the Millers, and then below them are the Reids and the Pattersons and the Browns.

I was frankly surprised to hear such a clear hierarchy articulated by Casey, largely because I had not perceived marked social distinctions at the family level. Certainly, I had noted that some individuals were more or less popular, appeared to have more or less money, or seemed more or less integrated into the church leadership (for example, a handful of more prominent men rotated in leading a prayer at each service, the only time anyone spoke during services except for the pastors). But Casey could describe the status of each family in detail, down to the branches represented by individual people who had married into certain prominent families from other promi-

nent families (i.e., the "Becky Schroder Scotts"). She declared that the Schroders in particular were "always able to keep clean" despite a number of community scandals, including an instance of one son who was known to be having relationships with men while married to his wife. She noted that her new church, an evangelical Christian congregation in her neighborhood, felt less marked by social distinctions, and contrasted her positive experiences there with her time at Full Truth: "Where we came from, there were a lot of strings attached. You could fit in with the Schroders, as long as you didn't mind them calling the shots and them paying the bills". As Casey described it, the Schroders' greater wealth was directly connected to their ability to influence church life.

Though no current members described the social hierarchy to me in such stark terms, many gave me detailed family tree information in the way Casey had, complete with information about intermarriages several generations before. One young woman, however, a lifelong member of Full Truth named Hannah Scott, quietly confided in me one day about her social anxiety around her upcoming wedding to a man from a less popular family. In my fieldnotes, I recorded our exchange while we stood chatting in the parking lot outside the church after one Wednesday evening service:

> I ask Hannah what her new last name will be, and I notice that she looks a little surprised that I don't know Kevin's [her fiancé's] last name. Her eyebrows go up just slightly, though not unkindly. "Patterson", she says. "Hannah Patterson". "That sounds great", I say. Hannah looks off at the chatting crowd, quiet for moment. Then she says: "You know, it's silly, but I had to make peace with having that name. Growing up—I think this is the case in any group—but with our [church] group, in school, the Pattersons were a family that would get teased a lot. You know, kids can be cruel". I ask what they would get teased about, and she shakes her head, "Nothing, really, there wasn't a specific reason. It was like, 'They have cooties!' and stuff like that. But I realized that I had to get over that, because I still had it in the back of my head. You can see God's grace right there, because He took away those feelings, and I know now that it really doesn't matter".

Though Hannah did not describe it in these terms, I knew that the Pattersons were not one of the families with higher incomes, their own businesses, or marital connections to church leaders. Patterson men were not among those who led a prayer during each service. In Hannah's telling, these distinctions in status were visible to her as early as the school playground, where children seemed to understand that some families were deemed less worthy of respect. Though I knew Hannah's fiancé as a kind and friendly man, I came to see that he was indeed not part of the inner circle of young men from families like the Schroders, Hoffmans, and Scotts. Hannah felt that her faith had enabled her to move past her concerns about social stigma and now feels that it "really doesn't matter". Indeed, as I show below, religious beliefs directly ameliorate inequality in this community, lessening tensions that might otherwise threaten a small, tight-knit congregation.

4.2. Faith in God the Provider: Financial Choices as Religious Practice

Members of Full Truth Calvary Church emphasize that true Christians must trust God for all aspects of their well-being, including health[6] and material needs. They argue that God provided for people in the Bible because they had faith in Him to do so. Thus, to rely on financial safety measures, such as savings accounts, retirement plans, or insurance policies, places trust in human institutions rather than God. Furthermore, to take steps that improve one's own financial position—through, for example, higher education or aggressive salesmanship—is a sign of insufficient faith. A church pamphlet outlined the message succinctly:

> A genuine surrender to God is a total commitment to trust Him….If we are committed to doing God's will in finances, we will *not* purchase anything on credit, and will *not* hint to anyone that we need anything. A total surrender like that will place God at our side and enable us to access His huge financial resources.

Another pamphlet said similarly:

> God controls all financial resources in Heaven and He wants to supply every financial need for those trusting Him on earth….When we present our needs to God in prayer (and keep that between us and Him only), He promises to supply every need from His resources in Heaven. We should not knowingly place ourselves in debt by borrowing money, making purchases on time-payment plans, or using credit cards for things that cost more than the cash we have at that present time.

Trusting in God means relying on Him for ongoing care, so the accumulation of savings or a financial safety net are viewed as placing trust elsewhere. Members are also discouraged from letting others know of their needs, suggesting that requests for help signal insufficient faith. Notably, keeping one's money trouble private also lessens the social strain of asking friends and family for loans, particularly when those one would ask might be facing tight budgets themselves.

One result of abiding by the Biblical injunction to "not lay up treasure on earth" (Matthew 6:19) is that members do not own property, choosing instead to rent for years on end. Many families have rented the same modest homes for over thirty years, making improve-

[6] I have documented members' health practices and their relationship to religious belief elsewhere; please refer to Glassman (2018).

ments to the property while paying their rent diligently. Furthermore, because members will not accept government assistance of any kind, church-owned businesses have been granted exemption from paying social security taxes, with the recognition that members will not accept social security payments later in life. The result, however, is that members can amass little in the way of wealth.

Full Truth members also refuse insurance because it provides a financial safety net that members believe should be provided by God. Avoiding health, dental, or renters' insurance is their prerogative, but car insurance is a somewhat trickier issue, as it is required to drive legally. Wilson Schroder, a 68-year-old cabinet maker, father of thirteen, and grandfather to over forty, explained how church leaders developed a workaround that allows members to have insurance without violating their beliefs:

> The situation [with] cars came down in 1974, when [the government] came up with this compulsory no-fault insurance law, which said everybody had to have insurance. Leaders of the church made a deal with a rental company where you take the title to them, sell them a car for $50 and they'll insure your car and you just keep on driving....Melvin [the pastor] feels that if I go into a car rental, they're buying the insurance and I'm not buying it. It's a technical difference.

The technicality of who provides insurance in this case allows members to obey the government while adhering to their beliefs. Though the end result is that they drive with insurance like anyone else, the practice reveals how members' concerted effort to avoid financial protection can have religious meaning even when they ultimately follow social (and legal) norms.

Trusting God to provide for one's financial well-being means not only avoiding certain behaviors, but consciously replacing them with prayer. At Full Truth, members insist that one ask only God for material things or services, including a raise in pay, new appliances, or a difficult home repair.

Perhaps the most important way that God assists members financially is with the provision of a job. Members insist that actively seeking a job demonstrates one's lack of faith in God to provide employment, and smacks of the "self-life" or "self-efforts". Finding a job must be God's will. Jim Miller, a father of nine young children, explained his thinking on finding a job as we talked after Sunday morning service one sunny summer day:

> Well, with a job, when we finish school we'll usually pray about it and ask God what we should do. And then the first job that comes up, we usually take it because we see that as a sign that God has sent that job. And if the job doesn't work out, really, or if we don't like it, we don't just quit; we pray about it and try to make it better. It's a little different than how most people do it, but we really feel that it's right.

Thus, anyone in need of a job is taught to pray about it, and to know that the first job to be offered is a gift from God. Rather than weighing the pros and cons of the offer, members insist that the job should always be accepted. If it turns out to be a poor fit, members note that something at the job was likely intended to be a lesson from God. For example, Lewis Huber, a 64-year-old widower with two sons, described the process that he underwent to find a job after he graduated from the Full Truth school:

> First was getting a job after I got out of school, and humbling myself and being willing to accept what God had for me to accept, and not accepting anything that wouldn't be obtained in a way that I know is pleasing to Him. Even though I really wanted to do some kind of electronics work, it didn't work out for me. I mean, I was actually told of a place where they were hiring people to do that type of work, but it wasn't a direct offer. We believe in word of mouth. In other words, the Lord inspires someone to bring to your attention that a job is available at such and such a place, a person needs somebody to come work. Not just going by signs on buildings or that sort of thing.

Lewis described a particularly strict form of job hunting, in which members feel that something must be directly offered. Among younger members, I found a more lax attitude towards job applications, with several young people telling me that they were willing to apply for a job if there was a "help wanted" sign in the window. In either case, however, Full Truth members understand the process of finding a job as an exercise in faith.

4.3. Evening the Playing Field: How Religious Practices Mitigate Inequality

Though Full Truth members are encouraged to work hard, church teachings discourage members from advancing too much, either professionally or financially, arguing that workers should be content with what they have. In effect, these teachings mitigate inequality directly and indirectly. Some, like Wilson Schroder, the prominent church member noted above, simply avoid expanding an otherwise successful business, choosing instead to keep it family-run. He explained how his cabinet business has remained successful since the 2008 financial crash:

> [After 2008], one by one cabinet shops were closing up, but our business always stayed busy and we're very thankful for it. We didn't feel that it was anything that we were directly responsible for, but we felt that the Lord provided the work for us….We stay humble; we give God all the glory for any success we have, and it's the way we think we should do it…. And yeah, it's worked out well. We run a nice sized shop up there; we have no interest in expanding the business. It provides a very nice living for us, and everything has worked out well.

Though I later learned that Wilson's business has been lucrative (which I discuss further in the next section), he downplayed its success, framing the shop's continued work in religious terms.

For others, church teachings more directly influenced their work trajectory. Lewis told me about how his initial interest in electronics repair was altered by his future at Full Truth:

> I had gotten a job someplace that did repair work with televisions, and they did work for other things like radios and all that, which were fine. But I realized that our church completely objected to television, and I was working somewhere that did television repair work. So, since I knew I wanted to get baptized and accept the teachings, be accepted in as a member, I said, "They're probably not gonna want somebody if they know the occupation I'm in, if this is something I know they're against, and it's against God and the way we should live". I thought that they would not be willing to baptize me. And I had learned enough to know that baptism was required by God to enter heaven. So I decided to leave that job.

Though he had attended Full Truth all his life, when Lewis contemplated becoming a full-fledged adult member through baptism, he understood that his employment could be seen as "against God". Lewis decided to leave the job because it required that he work with televisions, which church leaders prohibited at the time (members today generally still reject television, though most watch Christian movies and PG fare on iPads or computers). An important side effect of his choice, however, was that he left work with presumably higher earning potential and opportunities for advancement. Instead, Lewis went on to tell me about how he repaired radios for a time, before finding that the work was too inconsistent. Eventually, he went to work as a local truck driver, an unskilled position that didn't make use of the training he had received in electronics repair.

Another way that Full Truth members contribute to socioeconomic equality is the practice of bringing family and friends into their workplaces, facilitating "word of mouth" and other seemingly spontaneous job offers. For example, Kathleen Scott, a 40-year-old single woman working as an office manager, recounted how she found her current job after years of taking care of the cooking and cleaning at home while her younger siblings worked:

> I kept feeling this restless feeling, like I was ready for a change. But I was like, "God, you know what's ahead, so I'm just giving it to you; just show me what you want me to do next". So then it came to Christmas time, and where I work now, my other two sisters were already working there—Janie and Hannah—and Hannah invited me to come to their Christmas party. So I went, and then the president of the company came over and met me, and it was all well and good, and then the party was over, Christmas was gone. And then it comes to March, and Hannah came home from work one day and…says that her boss came up to her at work and said, "Is your sister Kathleen working now?" and she's like, "No, she's not", and he's like, "Because this position is opening up"….He's like, "I met your sister back at that Christmas party and I think she seemed like someone who could do the job". So it was just like God orchestrated all that all along. So I went in for my interview and then right away they're like, "You're hired!" [laughing quietly as if still in disbelief].

Note that Kathleen defined her job as orchestrated by God, even though her sisters introduced her to their boss and then facilitated her interview when he mentioned a position opening. However, framing the story in these terms reinforces members' belief that God provides for their well-being and de-emphasizes the role of family members in securing employment. As such, Kathleen did not feel beholden to her sisters, but rather was grateful to God for answering her prayer.

Leah Schroder, a twenty-year-old woman living with her parents and six younger siblings, recounted a similar story. Her grandfather is Wilson, quoted above, and he helped her find work in his cabinet business:

> When I graduated, I didn't have a job for about two years. Last May, that's when I first started working. And at first they needed the small things done [at the cabinet business], whether it was vacuum up the floor or get the bathrooms cleaned. And then eventually it was like, "Well, you could try doing this if you want", and then I would get it. So it'd be like, "Well, if you could do that, then maybe you could do this or that". So, gradually, they pretty much will teach me anything that they think I could do. I felt like that was God as well, because for the longest time…I wanted to have a little bit more of a schedule. And I just started praying that God would send me something—and that's when I started going in a couple days to do it, and then it started to be full-time.

Leah viewed her job as coming from God, even though her grandfather's company hired her for odd jobs, and then full-time work. From one perspective, such apparent nepotism would seem to create the potential for inequality between families, as some, like Wilson's, are more successful than others. The point is not that there is no inequality between Full Truth families, but that their beliefs provide a narrative that both mitigates its occurrence and lends meaning to the process of finding and keeping a job. Regardless of their family's position, members frame employment as part of one's relationship with God, which de-emphasizes the role of social connections in wealth, and dampens potential tensions over inequalities within the community.

Church leaders commented directly on faith in the workplace, encouraging diligence but also warning

against measures that might advance members' position or pay. The effect was that members learned to check their aspirations, stymying inequality in the congregation. My fieldnotes captured a typical message about employment, written after one summer Wednesday night service:

> Pastor Burke says that we "should always remember that we're working for God" ….Worldly workers will try to "get away" with anything they can—"take unscheduled breaks, take as much time off as they can", whereas members should "only take the scheduled breaks", and work hard for all of your hours, even if worldly workers "take personal calls" or "search for personal things on the internet". Burke also says that worldly workers will always go for more responsibility if it means higher pay, but that members shouldn't do that: "As Christians, we should be seeking to pray at every step of the way—if we're offered more responsibility we should pray about it and decide if that's what God wants us to do". He continues: "If Jesus asked you to do something you would work diligently….You would give it your all, and that's how we should treat our jobs".

Pastor Burke framed work as serving God, which is in many ways an extension of members' beliefs: if the job is God-given then one can logically serve God by performing it well. Such a mindset gives religious meaning to jobs that might otherwise be tiring or dull. However, church teachings also discourage members from accumulating too much wealth or responsibility, encouraging them to think instead in terms of God's will. Indeed, trusting God for work means that church leaders are against labor unions. My fieldnotes summarized a message from one sermon:

> Pastor Burke says that while labor unions do help workers get fair wages, they are the worst form of "using human means" to improve a situation rather than "God's way". Thus, unions are not to be joined because they represent "human efforts" in supplying oneself and one's family with material things rather than relying on God.

By refusing to participate in unions, members not only reject the potential for higher pay, but also avoid membership in institutions that might compete with the church for their time and money. Furthermore, members do not face the internal divisions of those working for a union vs. non-union shop—which could contribute to inequality in the community—while maintaining their loyalty to religious leaders over secular union representatives.

Finally, it is important to mention that in addition to leaders' commentary on finances, they have also arranged the church space to discourage visible inequity. While most congregations publicly pass a collection plate—tacitly encouraging congregants to contribute as much as possible out of either shame or pride—donations at Full Truth are submitted at the believers' discretion in a locked box at the back of the church, which is shielded on both sides by privacy screens. Several members told me that it is typical to tithe 10% of one's income, and it is likely that the Pastor is aware of those who are paying more or less than the designated amount. However, members cannot know what amount others have donated, or whether they have donated at all. The absence of a public tithing ritual is notable for the way it diminishes public displays of means between members.

4.4. Managing Inequality: Religious Meaning and Charitable Giving

Of course, Full Truth members are not perfectly equal, and at any given time some are experiencing hardship. In addition to financial support from employment, members rely on God to provide extra help in times of need. This assistance, though believed to be orchestrated by God, is physically performed by members who may provide childcare, eldercare, home repairs, furniture, groceries, or money to a believer in need. Whenever possible, members strive to remain anonymous in these instances of assistance as a way to highlight the role of God in the matter. Perhaps more importantly, anonymous giving prevents the development of debt relationships between members and lessens inequality without developing a hierarchy of "haves" and "have nots".

Alice Ecklund, a single woman in her late thirties who works in food service, summarized Full Truth teachings on the matter:

> When you know someone needs something you're gonna do everything you can to make sure you help them out and God gets the glory. That's what's important to all of us, that it's not us glorified but God. We don't want to say thank you because how can we say thank you to the one who gave us our ultimate gift [of salvation]? That is what's important. We all feel that way, I hope. I mean, everybody that I know feels that way.

She went on to describe a recent example of how she helped a couple who needed furniture when they found a new home to rent. Her story demonstrates the lengths to which members will go to hide their role in the gift, and how shared beliefs about giving operate to obscure the sender:

> For Lana and Bill Graf, when they moved into that home over there, they didn't have money for furniture, [so] I went to a furniture store over here that was going out of business and paid [for] a whole new living room set…and I put a note in the offering box. What you do is you put a note in the offering box. Say, for instance, I put a note in there addressed to my friend

> Rosemary: "Rosemary, I bought furniture for Lana and Bill, paid in full, but they're gonna need a confirmation on a phone number". You know, because your first impulse when you get a delivery like that is to reject it….So you'd write a note to someone in church [and] they would be your backup person so they get the note and they know that someone blessed this other person anonymously.

Importantly, the friend, Rosemary, who received Alice's note in the offering box understood what was happening. When the pastor opened the offering box, he saw a note addressed to Rosemary and passed it on to her, who was then able to help execute the gift without knowing who sent it. In this case, Lana and Bill saw on the delivery slip to call Rosemary, who could then confirm that the furniture was from a Full Truth member, while telling them truthfully that she did not know who had sent it. Members who receive gifts anonymously are unable to thank any one person, or, perhaps more importantly, to begin thinking more highly of that person than others. Anonymity thus serves to strengthen faith by encouraging members to view God as the source of all gifts because He has "put it on the heart of", or inspired, a person to assist.

Kathleen, the woman described above who went to work with her sisters, explained what it's like to be on the receiving end of this anonymous help. She recounted a dark time about twenty years ago, after both of her parents passed away within a month of one another. Kathleen, just twenty-two at the time, faced both grief and the daunting prospect of raising most of her nine siblings. At Christmas, only a few months after her parents' deaths, an aunt invited all ten siblings to stay for the week. Unbeknownst to them, while they visited their aunt other members collaborated to re-carpet Kathleen's family home as a gift:

> *Kathleen:* We ended up staying [at my aunt's house] for over a week, and while we were gone somebody put new carpets in our whole house.
>
> *Interviewer:* You still don't know who?
>
> *Kathleen:* No! Because like, if they're in the church, they would do it anonymously so God gets all the glory. So we were just told, "Well, somebody wants to put new carpets in your house so you can just stay [with your aunt] for however much longer".

Kathleen echoed Alice's description of how members offer help anonymously so that the recipients thank God. The carpet was a gift intended to brighten their home in the wake of tragedy. Though it might seem more logical that members would provide money, Kathleen noted that several siblings were already employed, and had been largely supporting the family as their parents fell ill. Kathleen remembered the gift of new carpets fondly as a time that she felt embraced and cared for by what she termed her "church family".

Others, however, did recount the experience of receiving cash when they needed it. Suzanne Graf, a sixty-year-old mother and grandmother, told me about one such time:

> I wanted a new window because the other two windows were not even sealed around them, they were very old. I had mentioned to my husband, "Wouldn't it be nice to have a new window?" So we talked about it, and everybody knew mom wanted a window….[But] I'm not a nagging wife, I'm not the type…I just said, "I'm not gonna say anything, I'm just gonna ask the Lord". And I just said, "Lord, you know we need a new window"…and I prayed a couple months and I said, "If it's your will, would you send us a new window?" And [one day] there was an envelope on my seat at church with $1,000 in it that said: "For your new window". And I said to my husband, "Why would they send it to me and not you?" You know? But I was the one who was praying for it, I was the one who was asking for it.

Suzanne interpreted the gift as from God because it was given to her rather than her husband, who, she told me, made all their financial decisions. Because she had been praying for the window, she framed the money as an answer to prayer, despite what seems to have been widespread knowledge that she wanted a new window.

Members also believe that gifts are at least partially the direct result of their own faith. In that way, members can feel that their gifts have been "earned" by their trust in God rather than received through charity. Jeremy Schroder, age forty-three and father of seven, explained:

> The Bible tells you that if you tithe, you'll be blessed 100 times [over]. So you've heard how the Bible says to give to those who ask. Well, every Sunday we get the same guy on the corner [asking for money]….So every time I've given the guy 5 bucks have I gotten $500? No. But it's there. And if you had perfect faith, you would be getting $500 back. Because He tells you that….But certainly there's been many times, like I said, just recently I went by my friend—I call him my friend, on the corner—and I think I gave him 5 bucks or whatever, and when I got to church, there was an envelope for me and it had $400 in it….Now you could say, "Well, someone did that"—[and] you're right. But someone had to be inspired to leave it to me first.

Jeremy went on to explain that he had been praying for money to be able to take his family on a vacation. He understood the $400 to be a gift from God in answer to prayer, even though he acknowledged the role of a church member in providing it for him. With that money, Jeremy's family was able to join others from Full Truth on their annual trip to a local beach, mitigating what might

otherwise have been an experience of financial hardship and inequality vis-à-vis other church families.

As the above quotes illustrate, members are aware that the gifts they receive come from other members—all stressed to me that they do not believe that things have miraculously appeared from God. However, they strongly feel that God has inspired that person to give the gift. Some also detailed to me how they can be an instrument of God in providing help to others. Alice, who earlier recounted the process of anonymously gifting living room furniture, also described how she has operated as a go-between for others seeking to help an elderly female church member:

> Miss Brenda, she works one day a week; she doesn't have money to pay for groceries. There's been times that people have dropped groceries off at my house to give to her. And I know there's also times that she's come home from work and found groceries sitting on her porch….One time I went there and she didn't have toilet paper, and I know that there's certain people who would help other people in church so I sent them a text message….I know her schedule so I know when she's gonna be coming home….The other day someone called me and said: "Alice, do you know when Miss Brenda's gonna be home?" I was like, "I just dropped her off". "Good, thank you, I was worried about when she would get home". I knew it was some situation like that and they knew I wasn't gonna say anything 'cause they've used me before as their go-between between people. A lot of people have used me in those situations.

Alice made two points that are worth highlighting. First, she was aware that she is a popular "go-between" specifically because she is discreet about the identity of the gift-giver. She would not tell me who in the congregation frequently gives to others; and her brow furrowed as she told me that she has been entrusted with that information and should not share it without permission. Clearly, members pay more than lip service to the idea that giving within the congregation should remain anonymous, and the level of secrecy speaks to how seriously members take not only their commitment to "give God the glory" but also to avoid relationships of giver and recipient. Secondly, however, Alice noted that there are "certain people who would help", suggesting both that inequality exists and that some people, at least, are aware of it. This is hardly surprising, given that members are tightly bound by shared social groups, workplaces, and neighborhoods. Notably, though, Alice inferred that knowledge of inequality is used at least partially to promote giving to those in need.

5. Conclusion

Full Truth teachings give religious meaning to financial practices. In some ways, they operate as an equalizer, discouraging educational or economic advancement that would place members outside church community norms. Church teachings also encourage members to provide one another with important—and anonymous—material assistance that mitigates the financial risk faced by working class families. Though believers speak of thanking only God for this support, many are acutely aware of the social effort that has gone into obscuring the identity of those offering help. While such steps would seem to be "human efforts" rather than God's work, members understand the very process of obscuring one's identity as letting God's will shine through.

It is important to reiterate that though there is relatively little socioeconomic inequality within the church community, Full Truth members do experience the challenges of their working-class position relative to the rest of society. Members keep tight budgets, cooking at home, buying second-hand goods, and swapping items (often by posting them on the social media platform Instagram and waiting for a church member to comment that they want the item). They live in small homes and take modest vacations to local destinations. However, members' religious beliefs also allow them to avoid some of the most common high cost components of American life, such as health insurance and home mortgages. By emphasizing the religious importance of trusting God for their health and wealth, members both ensure their social class location and explain it in spiritual terms.

Thinking more broadly about social disparities and religious belief, this study suggests that faith can play a significant role in both the creation and amelioration of inequality. Though Full Truth members are unusual in the strictness of their beliefs concerning the relationship between God and financial well-being, faith in God to care for congregants' needs is a common theme in many conservative Protestant communities. Though this faith may ease members' financial worries by lending religious meaning to their situation, it does not ultimately help them get ahead. Looking at how this community handles social inequality through a religious framework suggests that we would do well to examine the hidden scripts that inform inequality in other settings, both religious and secular. In particular, the use of community (i.e., religious) values to mitigate tensions in socially meaningful ways may be a template for exploring the management of inequality in other contexts.

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

"You're Throwing Your Life Away": Sanctioning of Early Marital Timelines by Religion and Social Class

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Abstract
In the midst of a shifting economic and cultural landscape, many young adults spend their twenties focused on individual achievement and self-actualization while delaying entrance into social roles such as marriage. Yet religion, particularly Evangelical Protestantism, places a high value on marriage as the legitimate context for sexuality and childbearing—which encourages earlier unions. This article, based on interviews with 87 dating, engaged, and married Evangelical young adults (aged 18 to 29), describes the social reaction to respondents' marital timelines, which are typically at younger ages than their secular peers. Two sources of strong disapproval emerge. First, secular influences from outside of these respondents' religious communities are almost unilaterally critical of early marriage plans. Second, even within religious communities, Evangelicals from middle class cultural milieus may face additional disapproval if their family formation plans are interpreted as compromising their educational goals. This article offers important insight on the intersecting roles of religion and social class in shaping the trajectories of young adults.

Keywords
Evangelical Protestantism; marriage; religion; social class; young adults

Issue
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1. Introduction

Despite the changes in the demographic landscape of family life in the United States, marriage continues to be both held in high esteem and practiced widely. Embedded in these aspirations are understandings of the appropriate age, time, and sequence for the transition into marriage. Relatively little research has documented the stigma that comes from diverging from conventional adult pathways, such as in the case of early marriage.

Drawing on interviews with 87 partnered Evangelical young adults, I find that most of my respondents marry or plan to marry at younger ages compared to their nonreligious peers. This early transition to marriage is met with overt censoring from two sources. First, nonreligious communities—especially the secular peers of Evangelical young adults—react with surprise and derision to marriage in the late teens or early twenties. Second, middle class influences—even within Evangelical communities—encourage the delay of marriage until the successful completion of a bachelor's degree.

This article demonstrates that the social class and religious backgrounds of young adults generate strong social sanctions regarding marital timelines. While there is a larger cultural imperative to "wait" for marriage until later in adulthood, religious norms can inspire early unions among Evangelical Protestants. This encouragement is complicated by middle class sensibilities regarding the importance of educational credentials.

2. Literature Review

Three bodies of literature are crucial to mapping out the messages that young adults receive and adopt about the appropriate timing of marriage. First, I review the research on youth and emerging adulthood more broadly, which proposes a life stage that prioritizes identity exploration prior to the adoption of stable adult roles, such as

marriage. Second, I describe cultural attitudes surrounding marriage and the proper baselines for entry into the union. Finally, I review research on early marriage, its predictors, and its consequences.

2.1. Changes in the Transition to Adulthood

Adolescence has long been acknowledged by developmental psychologists as a period of trying on roles, exploring identity, and rebelling against authority before becoming incorporated into adult society (Erikson, 1998). Historically, the achievement of the sociological milestones of adulthood—finishing one's education, leaving the parental home, establishing financial independence, marrying, and becoming a parent—were accomplished following adolescence, typically by the early twenties and roughly in the aforementioned sequence (Settersten, Furstenberg, & Rumbaut, 2005). In the past several decades, the transition between adolescence and adulthood has become extended and complicated.

Reflecting on the increasingly vocal and rebellious young adults in college and in the hippie generation, Erikson (1970) postulated that these youth were engaging in a prolonged identity exploration and rejection of role fulfillment in adulthood. Other researchers describe the time period of the twenties as "post-adolescence", which is characterized by social independence but continued economic dependence (Richter, 1994). To varying extents, young adults during this period may be rejecting historic notions of adult status (Maguire, Ball, & MacRae, 2001).

Some scholars see this as not just a lengthening of a transition but the unveiling of a fundamentally distinct life stage. Developmental psychologist Jeffrey Arnett (1998, 2006) characterizes the time between adolescence and full adulthood as a phase in and of itself. "Emerging adulthood", according to Arnett (2006), is a unique period in the life course where those in their late teens through their late twenties are in unsettled positions. The distinctive features of this life stage are fivefold: emerging adults feel "in-between" adolescence and adulthood, they are focused on themselves, they lack stability and are highly mobile in educational, career, and romantic pursuits, they engage in identity exploration, and they are focused on the existence of options and possibilities (Arnett, 1998, 2006).

Some psychologists object to the notion of emerging adulthood as a generalizable stage (Arnett, Kloep, Hendry, & Tanner, 2010). Moreover, sociologists have taken issue with Arnett's characterization of emerging adulthood as universally applicable among young people in the developed world. In particular, the notion of young adults who take a decade to engage in highly individualistic and largely unencumbered explorations presumes a level of privilege only available to middle class persons (Berzin & De Marco, 2010; Côté, 2014; Furstenberg, 2008; Silva, 2016; Swartz, 2008).[1]

Nevertheless, emerging adulthood seems to characterize at least a substantial portion of the young adult population in the United States. Given the emphasis on individual achievement and identity exploration, it is not surprising that romantic relationships during this life stage are typically less committed than they might have been in generations past. Researchers find that emerging adults are generally more preoccupied with career advancement than romantic relationships (Ranta, Dietrich, & Salmela-Aro, 2014). Likewise, while romantic relationships still occur in young adulthood, traditional dating competes with more casual sexual arrangements, such as the hook-up culture (Bogle, 2008; Claxton & van Dulmen, 2013). These types of arrangements affect future family formation outcomes, with noncommitted sexual relationships in late adolescence being predictive of cohabitation but not marriage (Raley, Crissey, & Muller, 2007).

2.2. Attitudes towards Marriage

Like adulthood, the institution of marriage has undergone tremendous change in in the last half-century. In the midst of a changing schedule of adulthood, a transformed economy, and new cultural and sexual norms, marriage has seen an overall decline, a delay in its entry, and a widening of class and racial gaps (Cherlin, 2010a). Attitudes have also shifted to allow for more flexibility and personal autonomy in family arrangements (Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001).

Despite these changes, the institution of marriage is far from extinct. While the share of married adults in the United States has declined significantly, it is still half of the adult (aged 18 and older) population (Cohn, Passel, Wang, & Livingston, 2011). Studies find that the majority of both young men and young women desire to marry and have children (Erchull, Liss, Axelson, Staebell, & Askari, 2010; Kaufman, 2005), and most women are, indeed, projected to marry at least once in their lifetime (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001). Finally, most never-married adults would still like to marry (Pew Research Center, 2014).

Even among populations where marriage is less common, marriage is held as an ideal. For instance, Edin and Kefalas (2005) document that their respondents, who were poor, urban, unwed mothers, held off on marriage not out of a disdain for the institution but because they did not believe they had achieved the necessary criteria for marriage readiness. Likewise, Smock, Manning, and Porter's (2005) cohabiting respondents reported plans to get married but were hampered by financial insecurity.

Indeed, to understand young adults plans' for family formation, the notion of barriers to marriage is key. Andrew Cherlin (2010b) argues that marriage is now understood as an individual achievement or accomplishment. Rather than a functional economic arrangement (Becker, 1993), marriage signals to the rest of the world that an individual has acquired a number of important baselines

[1] See Arnett (2016) for a response to these criticisms.

to attract a spouse and settle down into a stable adult relationship (Cherlin, 2010b).

Research on young adults confirms that most conceptualize marriage as something to be prepared for and ultimately achieved. Carroll et al. (2009) report that emerging adults consider the process of becoming "marriage ready" to be a largely personal transition that is distinct from—and typically occurs after—subjective adulthood is achieved. Willoughby and Hall (2015) describe three marital paradigms among young adults: the enthusiasts, the delayers, and the hesitants. The majority of respondents in their sample were "hesitant" towards marriage. That is, while they held a high opinion of marriage, they intended to wait until an appropriate age and baselines had been met. In contrast, the remainder of respondents were enthusiasts—who embraced the institution of marriage and were more likely to anticipate a younger age at marriage and support traditional gender roles—or were delayers—who expressed lower opinions about marriage and higher desires to delay or avoid marriage entirely. Likewise, Kefalas and colleagues identified two attitudes towards marriage among their qualitative sample of young adults (Kefalas, Furstenberg, Carr, & Napolitano, 2011). "Marriage planners" dominated their sample and were described as having a high respect for marriage but a belief that it must be realized only after various milestones had been met. In contrast, a minority of "marriage naturalists" considered marriage to be simply an expected next step in a relationship.

Yet, this research is largely restricted to the opinions of young adults themselves, while overlooking how families, peer groups, and social networks respond to these unions.[2] The appropriate baselines and timelines for marriage vary within different communities and taboo unions are likely subject to negative social response. This study offers important insight on how young adults weigh influences about the appropriate timing of marriage, particularly among those that marry at younger ages than the norm.

2.3. Early Marriage in the United States

While marriage rates have been on the decline in the United States, this is largely attributable to an overall delay in marriage (Pew Research Center, 2014). The median age at marriage in the United States in 2011 was 29 for men and 27 for women—a significant jump from ages 23 and 20, respectively, in 1960 (Copen, Daniels, Vespa, & Mosher, 2012). Emerging adults are marrying towards the end of their emerging adulthood, as a whole.

Yet, a not insignificant number of young adults marry still at relatively young ages. Specifically, 24% of young women and 16% of young men marry before age 23 (Uecker & Stokes, 2008). Early marriage is predicted by a number of factors. It is more likely to occur in the Southern part of the United States and in rural areas (Kefalas et al., 2011; McLaughlin, Lichter, & Johnston, 1993; Uecker & Stokes, 2008). Additionally, while less likely to marry overall, young adults from lower social class backgrounds are more likely to tie the knot at relatively younger ages than their more privileged peers (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; Uecker & Stokes, 2008).

Marriage is increasingly the domain of the advantaged, such that women with bachelor's degree are now more likely to marry than their peers with less education (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001). However, while marital unions and childbearing occur at later ages for educated men and women (Martin, 2004), childbearing is often not postponed (and occurs outside of marriage) for those without a college degree (Hymowitz, Carroll, Wilcox, & Kaye, 2013). On the other hand, the causal arrow can also point the opposite direction—women who enter into marriage and childbearing at early ages see decreased educational attainment (Fitzgerald & Glass, 2008; Glass & Fitzgerald, 2012). In addition, early marriage is associated with a higher risk of divorce (Booth & Edwards, 1985; Lehrer, 2008; Raley & Bumpass, 2003), although marriage past the mid-twenties is associated with less divorce but also lower quality and satisfaction (Glenn, Uecker, & Love, 2010).

Age at marriage is also strongly predicted by both religious affiliation and individual religiosity. Religious traditions such as Evangelical Protestantism and Mormonism produce higher proportions of early married young adults than traditions such as Catholicism and Judaism (Rendon, Xu, Denton, & Bartkowski, 2014; Uecker, 2014; Xu, Hudspeth, & Bartkowski, 2005). This may be attributed to the messages embedded in these communities about the importance of sexual purity, traditional gender norms, and childbearing. In addition, individual piety is also related to early marriage. Young adults who attend religious services frequently and express higher religious commitment are more likely to marry rather than cohabitate (Thornton, 1985; Thornton, Axinn, & Hill, 1992) and are more likely to marry young (Uecker, 2014).

The work reviewed above provides a strong overview of the landscape of early marriage. What the literature is lacking is a more complete understanding of the context of early marriages and the experiences of young adults during this transition. Whether these unions are met with approval, disapproval, or neutrality from outside persons is essential for understanding the experiences of these early marriages as well as the of the reasoning behind marriage timelines.

Indeed, while marriage is still normative for the middle class, the baselines to marriage have been extended. Educational homogeneity has increased in marriage (Kalmijn, 1991) and both men and women are expected to be financial contributors to their union (Sweeney, 2002). Thus, wedding before socially-classed milestones have been reached may be met with resistance. Likewise, though religion continues to influence marriage markets for young adults (McClendon, 2016), affiliation with institutional religion declines dur-

[2] For an exception to this see Willoughby, Carroll, Vitas, & Hill (2011).

ing young adulthood (Smith & Snell, 2009). Following distinctive marriage pathways may set highly religious young adults apart from their peers and invite criticism.

3. Methodology and Data

This article draws on research conducted for a larger project, which explored the family and relationship pathways of Evangelical young adults. This project sought to explore how social class and religion inform understandings of romantic relationships and decisions about marriage. In the present article, I focus on the following research question: how does the social context of Evangelical young adults encourage or discourage early union formation?

I interviewed 87 partnered and religiously active Evangelicals aged 18 to 29. About half of the sample was already married (42 respondents), typically having wed before they turned 25. The remainder of the sample was mostly composed of respondents who were engaged to be married or were actively planning marriage with their current dating partner.

Because I was interested in the messages that religious individuals received, I focused on a particular religious tradition—Evangelical Protestantism (Steensland et al., 2000)—and only analyzed respondents who were themselves religiously active. Thus, I recruited from religious environments. I attended churches and bible studies and solicited contacts through pastors, ministry groups, and snowball sampling of prior respondents.

Respondents were recruited as individuals, but I always tried to interview both partners in a couple. As a result, 60 respondents also have their partner in the sample. In other words, of the 87 respondents, there are 30 complete couples represented and an additional 27 respondents who were part of a couple but whose partner was not able to be interviewed.

The majority of the sample hails from a middle class background (56 out of 87 respondents)—understood as having at least one parent with a bachelor's degree and professional or supervisory job (Lareau, 2011)—while the remainder hail from working class roots (31 out of 87 respondents). Most respondents were white, although 5 respondents identified as black, 5 as Latino, 2 as Asian, and 2 as biracial.

With a few exceptions, interviews were conducted in person and one-on-one with a respondent. The interviews were semi-structured, with questions probing respondents' family backgrounds, relationship trajectories, and religious beliefs. Most interviews were between 60 to 90 minutes in length and respondents received $20 stipends in thanks for their time. The interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed verbatim. After each interview, I wrote detailed field notes describing what transpired during the meeting and the overall interaction with the respondent.

Transcripts and field notes were coded thematically using the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti. After reading through the transcripts, I generated an initial code list that captured emergent themes in the interviews. After completing this analysis, I generated additional codes to draw out more specific themes and divergences. For example, the code "outside reaction to relationships" captured any and all discussion of opinions about the respondent's romantic relationship. This theme was further developed in the second round of coding, where I added a code entitled "pressure not to marry", which specifically focused on stigma surrounding early marriage timelines.

Interviewing only currently partnered young adults limited the ability to analyze the effect of negative sanctioning on relationship outcomes. In other words, I did not have access to respondents' whose relationships were disrupted by censoring. By and large, my respondents were already married or were reportedly on track to marry at early ages. That these respondents still reported negative feedback on their marital trajectories suggests that these findings are perhaps conservative, if higher rates of censoring led to the dissolution of unions not captured in the sample.

4. Findings

There were two distinct sources of stigma that respondents who married early or were on track to marry early faced. Most respondents reported some degree of resistance from nonreligious influences. In this case, marriage was understood as conflicting with a larger cultural understanding of emerging adulthood, which prioritizes self-discovery, exploration, and choice.

Secondly, respondents from middle class cultural milieus faced additional pushback for their early marriage plans if they had not yet acquired important cultural baselines, particularly a bachelor's degree. Importantly, this pushback occurred even among co-religionists, who did not disapprove of early marriage in and of itself but considered it foolish to advance to this stage without first acquiring a college degree.

4.1. Secular Emerging Adulthood Narratives and Early Marriage

The first source of sanctioning towards early marriage emerged among the secular world. That is, early marriage conflicted with widely held understandings of the purposes and pursuits of early adulthood, which were often distinct from religious priorities. In this case, respondents faced surprise, skepticism, or criticism at the pacing of their romantic relationships from those outside their religious communities. This pushback was typically articulated by non-Evangelical peers of respondents. To a lesser degree, some respondents faced similar stigma in more public spaces, where persons unacquainted with respondents were taken aback by their young ages and engaged or married status.

Romantic relationships in respondents' religious communities followed distinctive courtship norms.

While churches and couples might differ on the specifics, most considered casual dating to be inappropriate—relationships were intended to be intentional, exclusive, and committed. Sexual purity was also highly prized and so relationships were encouraged to be chaste. The combination of these emphases meant that dating relationships were typically described by respondents as "serious" and assumed to be pre-marital in nature. In turn, relationships progressed relatively quickly and culminated in marriage at young ages, usually in the late teens or early twenties.

It was common for Evangelical respondents to explain that there were people in their lives that had gotten married young—such as siblings, friends, or acquaintances at church or at school. However, these norms stand out against the larger culture, where the age at marriage is rising (Copen et al., 2012) and traditional dating competes with casual sexual arrangements (Claxton & van Dulmen, 2013). This was particularly the case when respondents described the "pace" of their romantic relationships to their secular peers. That they were participating in exclusive, often nonsexual and non-cohabiting relationships, prior to marriage was unusual—especially in the urban Northeast, where this study was conducted.[3] This relationship norm meant that respondents also married much earlier than their secular peers. Oftentimes, this was exemplified by respondents comparing the trajectories of different groups of their friends.

Matthew,[4] a 24-year-old middle class white man who had married the previous year, described how his secular friends from high school followed a different marital timeline compared to his Evangelical friends. Matthew said:

> [Compared to] high school friends, [I married] early. Most of them, they have a significant other, marriage isn't a conversation they talk about….But [my wife] had one friend who got married [at] 23 and one got married two weeks ago. So they're our only two married friends from high school….College friends, of my friends, no—like, one of them is married now, one is getting married next year. But it wasn't weird that we got married, lots of people did coming out of a Christian college, but my friends didn't. And then current friends, because we're friends with a lot of people from our church and we're friends with a lot of people who are [parachurch organization] volunteers for us and stuff, most of our friends are married.

Robin, a 26-year-old middle class white woman who married at 21, encountered strong opposition from nonreligious friends who were following a different trajectory than her. In particular, she noted her (nominally Catholic) best friend's distress when Robin shared the news of her upcoming nuptials. She explained:

> [My best friend] just took it really hard. Like, 'You're throwing your life away'. Like, 'Why are you doing this? There's so many more fish in the sea'. 'I like [your fiancé] but you're so young. Like, you don't have to get married right now'. Everybody else in our small little [Evangelical] subculture thought it was totally normal.

This diverging of pathways between religious and secular peers was described by other respondents as well. Rebecca, a 20-year-old white woman and community college student, had been married for about half a year when I interviewed her. The daughter of a pastor, Rebecca shared that she "fell away" from her faith in high school. She recommitted religiously after graduation and subsequently met her husband. After a brief courtship, the couple became engaged. Although people at her church also married young, Rebecca describes feeling distinct from most of her peers, who were following a very different path during this time in their lives. She explained:

> Most of the people that I graduated with, they went to public universities and are still continuing their education. And I think in our generation, just the mindset of when you get married is totally different for most people. Most people don't want to get married young and they want to experience different things before they get married.

But, as mentioned earlier, not only did Evangelicals get married younger—they also approached relationships differently. Relationships were considered precursors to marriage—such that dating was intentional, and marriage was discussed as a possibility early on in the relationship (if not before). These distinct relationship norms could be jarring for those outside of the Evangelical subculture.

Luke, a 20-year-old white man, described feeling like an object of curiosity. A college student at a state university, Luke had purchased an engagement ring but not yet proposed to his long-time girlfriend. The couple had met in youth group during high school and became romantically involved a few years later. Their faith was a major source of bonding—they prayed on the phone, read scripture together, and attended church every Sunday. But many of Luke's peers were not religious and could not identify with the pace and priorities of Luke's relationship. Asked if he ever felt pressure to not get married quite so soon, Luke commented: "My roommates, I'm sure, think it's weird because they're not in steady relationships. It doesn't bother me".

Kelly, a 22-year-old white college student, wore a small engagement ring on her left hand. She and her fiancé, also a college student, had met on a mission trip abroad and quickly entered into a serious relationship

[3] Early marriage is much more common in the South and in relatively rural areas (McLaughlin et al., 1993; Uecker & Stokes, 2008). Qualitative work on early marriage in a rural setting notes that this was "natural" and was not stigmatized (Kefalas et al., 2011).
[4] All names are pseudonyms.

when they returned to the States. While Kelly was on her Christian college campus and was surrounded by co-religionists, her relationship status as engaged was not necessarily abnormal. But she was startled to see how very differently she approached relationships compared to her less religious confidants. She explained:

> I have three really close friends, none of them are Christians…and so for them there's a little bit of this, like, 'You're so young, you have so much life. Like, what if you wanted to travel somewhere?' And even like explaining to them—even before we were engaged at all—being in a committed relationship, what [it] that was like—that was so bizarre to them.

These norms could also be jarring for Evangelicals who were relatively new to the subculture. Autumn, a 19-year-old white woman, had converted to Evangelical Christianity during high school and went on to attend a Christian college. When her boyfriend of a few months told Autumn that he loved her and wanted to marry her, she was taken aback. When she shared the seriousness of her new relationship with friends from home—who were not Evangelical—they considered it inappropriate for someone her age to be considering marriage. Autumn recalled:

> My Christian friends at school…they're very much like, 'It's whenever you feel ready to get married, it doesn't matter how young or old you are'. But these past few weeks when I've been home and seeing old friends they're like, 'What? You're only 19. You should live your life!' And some of them are 24 or 25 years old but they don't see life the same way….They think that being in a six-month relationship, that's too committed.

Vincent, a 22-year-old white man, was also a relatively new Evangelical Christian. When we met, Vincent had just proposed to his girlfriend. While his closest friend was supportive of his marriage plans, Vincent describes many who disparaged his decision. He said:

> Then you have our peers. People who aren't really close to us that sit there and be like, 'You got time to wait, man'. Then there's people who are like, 'Oh man, you're getting married. Like the old ball and chain'. We got mixed reviews from a lot of people.

Outside of peer groups, respondents also sometimes faced scrutiny of their marriage decisions from acquaintances or from complete strangers. Sometimes, people in occupational settings and in public judged them to be "too young" and felt free to comment on the incompatibility of their age and marital status. This seemed to happen particularly among women, perhaps because the visible signs of engagement and marriage (such as engagement rings).

For instance, Isobel was a 21-year-old Latina woman. She and her fiancé planned to marry in the upcoming summer. Isobel had received several notable instances of pushback at her workplace. She shared how a recent coworker was "weird" after he saw her engagement ring. Isobel explained:

> At my job, there's this man that just got hired, and so I went up to him to go over a report or something and he saw my ring…and then he was like, 'If you don't mind me asking, why are you marrying so young?' It was so awkward.

Valerie, a 23-year-old white woman, also faced skepticism and implicit disapproval from coworkers. A recent college graduate, Valerie's new coworkers were perplexed by her marital status. She recounted: "But I can remember, like, coworkers or whatever being like, 'Oh, you're getting married? Like, you're engaged? How old are you?' I would get that question a lot".

Isobel and Valerie had passing knowledge of the persons who expressed surprise over their early marriages. Other women recounted absolute strangers in public spaces who noted their astonishment or explicit disapproval. Maya, a 23-year-old white woman, had been married two weeks when we met for an interview. Holding a master's degree from a Christian college, Maya was surrounded by many peers who wed shortly after graduation. While Maya's immediate social circle was supportive, she faced occasional pushback. The day after we met, Maya went to the Social Security office to change her last name. I received a text from Maya. She reported: "The lady from the Social Security office said I'm too young to be married! LOL".

Monica encountered more intense scrutiny. Married at 20, Monica described how she faced strong disapproval from strangers while celebrating her bachelorette party with some girlfriends. Because she was sporting a celebratory sash, people approached and asked if it was her birthday. When Monica responded that she was getting married, people were aghast. Monica recalled: "I mean, even just that night I got so many looks and comments, because [getting married at twenty is] not when people get married in society. Today it's in your thirties. So definitely got some looks".

Evangelicals who marry early or advance towards the altar at younger ages face considerable scrutiny and disapproval, most vocally from their secular friends. To a lesser degree, this disapproval is echoed by acquaintances or even in public settings by strangers. Marrying in the late teens or even the early twenties is not only statistically unusual but appears to be judged as mismatched with a larger script about emerging adulthood—as a life stage of exploration, freedom, and mobility.

4.2. Middle Class Sensibilities and Early Marriage

Respondents from both working- and middle-class backgrounds recounted secular disapproval of their early marital timelines. However, respondents in middle class cul-

tural milieus faced additional stigmatization when their marriage-pathways conflicted with educational trajectories. In these cases, it was not their age or life stage, per se, that was the source of sanctioning but rather the ordering of these milestones. In particular, middle class sensibilities dictated the importance of achieving an educational foundation in the form of a bachelor's degree prior to marriage.

In practice, Evangelical romantic relationships were typically assumed to be headed towards marriage. This was supported by most religious peers and family members. In most cases, this would result in relatively early marital unions—or at least earlier than the secular norm. In fact, the handful of respondents who did not date during college expressed discomfort that they were not progressing on the appropriate timeline. Their families expected them to enter serious relationships and marry shortly after a bachelor's degree was acquired. Edward, a 25-year-old white man who only began a romantic relationship after graduating from college, described the model relationship pathway that was expected of him. He explained: "My older brother started dating freshman year of college. And so just that precedent was set, and he married very young. Like, he graduated from college in March 2012 when he was 21 and got married two months later".

Indeed, many other Evangelical young adults seemed to have internalized the bachelor's degree as an important baseline for marriage readiness. Paul, a 24-year-old white man, was a college graduate while his fiancé was finishing her senior year. Though Paul was already stably employed and had completed his education, he considered it unsuitable to tie the knot prior to his fiancé's college graduation. Thus, while Paul proposed while his fiancé was still a student, he had long ago decided that their wedding would be delayed until after she achieved this educational milestone. He stated:

> I kind of made a goal where like if they're in school, I wasn't going to marry them, or they were going to wait 'til college is over. That was something I even said for myself, like I'm not going to get married when I'm in school.

The strength of this norm was perhaps most overtly expressed among the handful of respondents who broached the topic of getting married while still in college. In most cases, families were accepting of Evangelical young adults' personal decision to marry—but objected to the timeline when it conflicted with college graduation. It is important to note that these negative reactions occurred even within religious settings. Evangelical family members, and sometimes even religious schools, still preferred young adults to wait until after college graduation to tie the knot.

Casey, a 22-year-old white man proposed to his college girlfriend, Monica (described above) when both were aged 20. Before asking his future wife out on a date, Casey met her father to ask for permission. As the relationship continued, Casey routinely spoke with his future father-in-law about the pace of their relationship and his plans for the future. When the couple began struggling to avoid sexual temptation, Casey decided they should get married sooner than later. Although Monica's father liked and approved of Casey, he was not pleased at the prospect of marriage in the midst of an undergraduate education. Casey explained:

> Over the next four or five months he and I talked quite a bit. I kind of let him know, 'Hey, we would like to get married soon. Much sooner rather than later'. At first, he wasn't as excited about that. [He said,] 'Well, you know, why don't you wait two or three more years until you're both done with school?'

In the end, Casey was able to persuade his father-in-law and the couple wed in college. Others, however, postponed their wedding plans due to their family's disapproval. Caroline, a 23-year-old white woman, married her beau shortly after both had graduated from college. However, this was later than the couple initially hoped for. Chuckling, Caroline reflected on the intense scolding they would have received had they married while still in college. She said: "We had talked briefly about getting married before he finished or eloping my senior year. We did not elope my senior year. Would've been really maddening for both of our families".

Liam, a 25-year-old white man, likewise explained that his Evangelical family was supportive of his early marriage (at age 23)—but only because he had a bachelor's degree already. In retrospect, Liam is a bit frustrated by this. He explained,

> My parents were all on board and excited [with my marriage], but I think it helped that I had graduated by that time….I don't know. This is going beyond the bounds of question, but we got married young. I've turned into a bit of a defender of people getting married young….I think there's some kind of gut reactions that people have against people getting married before finishing college and those reasons are never fully explained. And when examined, they're not as thorough as people tend to think they are.

In addition, some respondents faced pushback from middle class influences outside their immediate families. In particular, some respondents reported strong reactions towards their marital timelines within educational settings.

Jamielynn, a 26-year-old white woman, married her husband when she was 20. While Jamielynn's husband, who was two years older than her, was a recent college graduate at the time of their wedding, Jamielynn was still attending classes at a local community college. Earlier in the interview, she had reported her classmates' surprise when her purity ring was replaced by an engage-

ment ring. But beyond the bewilderment of her peers, Jamielynn faced additional scrutiny by a college professor. She recounted the story, saying:

> I had an art teacher at that season, this was actually the harshest and most critical conversation I had….After that class, he pulled me into the hallway and reprimanded me, like, pretty hardcore. It was like, 'You cannot be focusing on marriage right now. You are in college. You're an artist and you need to take that seriously'. I was a student in one of his classes. And he took it very personally and seriously. I remember just being really wowed by his passion for reprimanding me. I could tell he felt so dignified in what he was saying, like, 'I'm going to do this girl a favor and break off her engagement', that seemed to be his goal.

Jamielynn's experience with her professor occurred at a local community college. But this disapproval in educational settings was not confined to secular environments. Kenneth, a 22-year-old black male, married when he was 20 years old. He and his wife had met at Bible college, where Kenneth was pursuing a four-year degree. Even within this religious institution, Kenneth faced pushback at the prospect of marrying while still a college student. He said:

> I felt pressure not to get married....I had an advisor, like an academic advisor, kind of like [say], 'Oh, you should focus on school', and all that stuff. Stuff like that, people say. I dunno. Not pressure but there was like a suggestion [of] getting married later kind of stuff.

In contrast, young adults who were not in middle class cultural environments did not face the same kind of skepticism about meeting various milestones prior to marriage. Patrick, a 26-year-old black man, wed his wife when both were 18. Patrick, a former truck driver and now Uber driver, excitedly shared his good news with anyone who would listen. In contrast, his wife kept their marriage a secret for near half a year before telling her family. Patrick was frustrated by this but understood his wife's reasoning. He explained:

> She didn't want our relationship to be known until she was ready. She had wanted to keep us on the low-low as much as possible 'cause her dad and her mom was like, 'Finish school first, then get a boyfriend or whatever'. So, we tried to keep our relationship discrete. I'd say her sophomore year we finally told everybody that we [were] married or whatever.

Patrick did not attend college and his marriage was not perceived as impeding his progress. When he told his grandmother and other family members, he explained they were "happy about it" while his middle class in-laws were furious.

Likewise, Ben, a 28-year-old white upwardly mobile man who married at 24, can scarcely remember how his parents reacted to his young marriage because it was relatively commonplace within his family. After explaining that his parents had married at age 19 themselves, Ben said: "I don't really remember the reaction….The idea of getting married young, normal, not a problem—[My brother] got married at 24, my older brother".

While marriage is prized by their religious community, many Evangelicals still ascribe importance to acquiring middle class baselines prior to marriage. In particular, a bachelor's degree is considered an important milestone for marriage-readiness. Evangelical young adults typically describe wanting to wait until after college graduation to marry their significant others—and may face considerable pushback if they advance their relationship before earning a degree.

5. Conclusion

Evangelical young adults are in a bind. On the one hand, their religious background highly values marriage and family life. This stands in opposition to the wider secular narrative, which sees emerging adulthood as a period of exploration, freedom, and self-discovery. In addition, middle class cultural sensibilities idealize marriage but still presume baselines, particularly the acquisition of a bachelor's degree, prior to marriage.

Breaking these norms can bring exclusion and criticism to young adults who marry at young ages. The strong censoring of early marriage among respondents in this article may be of concern for the outcomes of young couples. Notably, perceived disapproval of romantic pairings lends itself to relationship dissolution (Felmlee, 2001; Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992) or negative health outcomes for one or both partners (Blair & Holmberg, 2008). This disapproval is perhaps related to the higher rates of dissolution among early marriages (Booth & Edwards, 1985; Lehrer, 1998; Raley & Bumpass, 2003).

Although early married young adults are a minority, they are not an insignificant portion of the young adult population in the United States. While they likely differ from other young people in the trajectory of their romantic relationships, this article underscores the importance of the social context of couples' relationships. Notably, marriage is conceptualized not just by individuals themselves but also by the larger community. Young adults who diverge from secular relationship norms and middle-class trajectories are greeted with disapproval. Although most of my respondents were already married or were poised to be married at early ages, it is certainly possible that negative sanctioning disrupts or otherwise delays other unions.

Prior research indicates that the religious messages transmitted to young adults can help to reproduce the typically lower social class status of Evangelical Protestants, particularly through depressing the educational

attainment of women (Fitzgerald & Glass, 2008; Glass & Jacobs, 2005; Glass, Sutton, & Fitzgerald, 2015). My findings suggest that middle class Evangelicals are actually discouraged from marrying prior to receiving a bachelor's degree. This particular messaging—wherein marriage is promoted early enough to be distinct but still adheres to some degree of middle class norms so as not to be countercultural—may be an example of Evangelicals' successful subcultural identity (Smith, 1998).

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Conflict of Interests

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Article

The Muslim Employment Gap, Human Capital, and Ethno-Religious Penalties: Evidence from Switzerland

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Abstract
In Europe, Muslims are more likely to be unemployed than non-Muslims. Many studies try to explain this employment gap by human capital and contextual factors on the one hand, and by ethno-religious penalties (discrimination due to religious affiliation, religiosity, or migration factors) on the other. In these studies, it is normally assumed that human capital mediates the effect of Muslim affiliation, and that controlling for human capital will therefore reduce the odds for Muslims of being unemployed. We replicate the well-known study by Connor and Koenig (2015) along these lines, using the most recent and representative Swiss data from 2014 (N = 16,487). Our key result is that that the effect of Muslim affiliation on unemployment is not mediated, but actually moderated by human capital. We find a powerful interaction in that Muslims both with a very low and a very high level of education are disproportionally often unemployed. This is important because it means that raising the human capital of Muslims will not automatically lessen, but may instead actually widen, the employment gap. We discuss possible theoretical mechanisms that might explain this finding.

Keywords
discrimination; employment penalties; ethno-religious penalties; integration; Islamophobia; labor market; migration; Muslims; religious minority; religious penalties; unemployment; xenophobia

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1. Introduction

Many recent studies have provided evidence that Muslims face difficulties in entering and succeeding in the labor market in European countries. This has been shown in specific national contexts (Adida, Laitin, & Vafort, 2010; Cheung, 2014; Khattab, 2009; Khattab & Modood, 2015; Kohler, 2012; Lindley, 2002) and in cross-national perspectives (Connor & Koenig, 2013, 2015; Heath, Rothon, & Kilpi, 2008; Tubergen, Maas, & Flap, 2004).

Several studies try to explain this employment gap by human capital and contextual factors on the one hand, and to ethno-religious penalties (discrimination, prejudice) on the other. In these studies, it is normally assumed that human capital mediates the effect of Muslim affiliation, and that controlling for human capital will reduce the odds for Muslims of being unemployed. The central idea is that Muslims in Western European countries show higher unemployment partly because of a lack of human capital. Controlling for human capital and other individual and contextual factors should, it is thought, reduce the odds of unemployment for Muslims—and any differences that remain must be accounted for by other mechanisms, such as migratory factors and factors of religiosity; in short, “ethno-religious penalties”. Ethno-religious penalties can be defined as barriers or obstacles that an individual meets when trying to reach a position; these barriers or obstacles are

created or come into effect because of the ethnic or religious background of the individual (cf., Heath & Martin, 2013).

In this study, we engage with this literature by asking exactly the same questions for a country in which extensive research on the Muslim employment gap has not yet been carried out: Switzerland. To gain a focus, we replicate the methodology of the well-known study by Connor and Koenig (2015). Specifically, we also test the implicit assumption made by Connor and Koenig (2015) that human capital mediates the influence of Muslim affiliation on unemployment.

Our key question in this article is therefore: how great is the Muslim employment gap in Switzerland, and to what extent can it be attributed to human capital, migratory factors, religiosity, and a hostile societal context?

Our most central result is that the "mediation-assumption" made by the literature does not hold for the Swiss data. In our data, the effect of Muslim/non-Muslim affiliation on unemployment is not linearly mediated by human capital variables. In fact, we find a powerful *interaction* in that Muslims both with a very low and a very high level of education are disproportionally often unemployed. This is important because it means that raising the human capital of Muslims will not automatically lessen, but may instead actually widen, the employment gap. We discuss possible theoretical mechanisms that might explain this finding.

We use the most recent and representative data on Switzerland from the 2014 Language, Religion and Culture Survey provided by the Federal Office of Statistics (Flaugergues, 2016; Mayer, 2011) with N = 16,487. This is a high-quality data set that includes good measures for our different mechanisms.

Switzerland, with its multicultural and federalist history, is an interesting country to investigate with regard to the Muslim employment gap for two reasons. First, Muslims are the largest non-Christian religious minority, and the question of the presence of Muslims is one of the most salient themes in public discourse. Switzerland has experienced a growing religious diversity for the past sixty years; it has changed from being an almost exclusively Christian society (mainly Catholics and Protestants) to a pluralist society, including more than 20% "no religious affiliation" and an increasing number of minority religions, among which Muslims are the largest with more than 5% in 2014 (Baumann & Stolz, 2009; Flaugergues, 2016). Second, the Swiss population in different cantons has voted on specific issues related to migration and religion, allowing us to construct a measure of the degree of out-group hostility in the cantons and to test its effect on the Muslim employment gap. Switzerland is a so-called "direct democracy", where people are called to vote on substantive issues on the national, cantonal, and local level at numerous times throughout the year. These direct democratic instruments can, depending on how these minorities are perceived as out-groups and their proportion in the region of residence, lead to structural discrimination against them (Green, Fasel, & Sarrasin, 2010; Vatter & Danaci, 2010).

We see a twofold contribution of our article. On the one hand, we investigate the Muslim employment gap in Switzerland, a country where this question has not yet been extensively studied. On the other, we challenge former research by showing that, for the Swiss case, a central assumption of many studies—namely, the mediating effect of human capital—does not hold. If our finding carries over to other contexts, it may mean that conclusions concerning the Muslim gap must be revised in many countries.

The plan of our article is standard. We present the state of the art in Section 2, and the theoretical framework in Section 3. Section 4 is concerned with the method used, Section 5 presents the results, and Section 6 concludes.

2. State of the Art

Heath et al. (2008) provide an overview of recent studies on the educational and labor market outcomes for second-generation minorities in ten Western European countries. What strikes the reader is the consistency of one result that arises from all the studies: Muslims are, regardless of ethnicity, always the most penalized group. This consistent Muslim penalty has been addressed from both national and cross-national perspectives.

A prominent example of a national study is Heath and Martin (2013), who also tackle the difficult "identification problem" (i.e., disentangling ethnicity from religious belonging) in Great Britain. Their results show a "consistent pattern for Muslim men and women to in which they experience greater labour market penalties than other members of their co-ethnic groups who belong to other (or no) religions" (Heath & Martin, 2013, p. 1024). The Swiss case has not yet received much attention in the sociological literature on ethno-religious penalties, with the exception of Kohler (2012), who points to a double discrimination for Muslim immigrants in Switzerland (being immigrant and being Muslim) that persists for the second generation. Two other works have provided evidence of discrimination in Switzerland against Turks and ex-Yugoslavs (Fibbi, Kaya, & Piguet, 2003), and against immigrants in general (Golder & Straubhaar, 1999), but without specifying the effect of religious belonging.

The most prominent example of a cross-national study is the research by Connor and Koenig (2015). Their paper aims to determine whether first- and second-generation Muslims in 17 Western European countries (including Switzerland) face barriers when entering the labour market. They use ESS data, pooled across countries and survey rounds (2002–2012). In their mediation analysis, they estimate logistic regression models predicting employment. Their null model enters Muslim/non-Muslim religious affiliation (and controls). They then estimate different models, with "variable sets, which capture potential individual-level mechanisms un-

derlying employment penalties. In this way, explained variance for the Muslim gap can be determined as each variable set is introduced" (Connor & Koenig, 2015, p. 194). They present an overall model as well as a model for the first and second generation. Their results show a significant employment gap (6% unemployment for non-Muslims, against 18% for Muslims). According to their models, 13% of this gap can be explained by variables capturing human capital; 1% by variables of religiosity; and 21% by variables measuring migration factors (Connor & Koenig, 2015, p. 196). Even after controlling for human capital factors, migratory variables and socio-demographic characteristics, some variance between Muslims and non-Muslims remains unexplained, which they use as a proxy for possible ethno-religious discrimination processes.

An important claim of this study is that the different variables representing the mechanisms are "mediating" variables. This means that Muslim/non-Muslim religious affiliation acts on unemployment "through" the intermediate variables specified by the mechanisms. It is the methodology of this study that we take as a model to analyse the Swiss case.

3. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

3.1. Symbolic Boundaries and Social Closure

A first explanation for the Muslim employment gap focuses on symbolic boundaries and social closure. According to this explanation, a majoritarian non-Muslim society may engage in social closure and either consciously or unconsciously exclude Muslims from employment positions. Such social closure is often found concerning religious boundaries or attributes that are highly salient or "bright" in the respective society (Alba, 2005; Lamont & Molnár, 2002). In Switzerland, religion can be seen as a bright symbolic boundary since Islam is officially distinguished from a presumed "autochthonous culture": a ban on building minarets is inscribed in the Constitution (Mayer, 2011; Rayner & Voutat, 2014), and the state regulates the religious market, privileging the Catholic and Reformed Churches. Several studies have highlighted how being a Muslim in Switzerland constitutes a marker of "otherness", especially in media discourses (Behloul, 2009; Lindemann & Stolz, 2014). Fibbi et al. (2003) have empirically tested the exclusion of second-generation individuals from majority Muslim countries in Switzerland. Through a thorough testing method (consisting of sending fictitious resumes and analysing the rate of invitation to a job interview), they demonstrate that Albanians from ex-Yugoslavia and Turks in German-speaking Switzerland are respectively 59% and 30% less likely to be called back than Swiss people without a migratory background (Fibbi et al., 2003).

Of course, just because we find a Muslim employment gap, we cannot immediately conclude that social closure and discrimination are in operation, as the employment disparities could be explained by other mechanisms. In the following, we therefore present a series of alternative explanations that might each account at least in part for the employment differences between Muslims and the non-Muslim population.

3.2. Human Capital

Being a Muslim might lead to higher unemployment because of a lack of human capital. As Connor and Koenig (2015, p. 192) suggest, "[m]ost Muslim immigrants entering Europe have come from a lower socio-economic class background compared to the European population as a whole and sometimes to the other immigrant groups". This explanation can apply to the Swiss case too, since the majority of Muslims have a migratory background. Furthermore, this fact leads to a situation in which the second generation of Muslim immigrants grows up in households with lower socio-economic status and less human capital than the surrounding society. The link between human capital and unemployment that underlies this argument is well established in the literature. We define "human capital" as the educational, linguistic, and social resources of an individual (cf., Bourdieu, 1986). This theory suggests that factors such as educational level, job training, language abilities, parental socio-economic characteristics, and the density of social networks should explain most of the variation of professional performance between individuals, be it in terms of access to the labour market, earnings, or occupational achievement (Becker, 1964, 1994). The relationship finds empirical support in recent studies. For example, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a report showing that:

> In all OECD countries [including Switzerland], people with high qualifications have the highest employment rates, and in most countries, they also have the lowest risk of being unemployed. At the same time, people with the lowest educational qualifications are at greater risk of being unemployed or out of the labour market. (Valle, Normandeau, & González, 2015)

Note that the human capital account could at least in principle explain all or part of the Muslim employment gap without recourse to any discrimination or "ethno-religious penalties". This is not the case for the following mechanisms, however.

3.3. Religiosity

Higher Muslim unemployment could also be caused by a religiosity mechanism. On this account, employers would discriminate not so much against Muslims as such, but only or particularly highly religious Muslims. Employers might think that highly religious Muslims could have an excessive cultural distance from general society, which could be harmful to their organization either in its inter-

nal functioning or in the interaction of the organization with the public, clients, or markets. Well-known examples are schools and stores that refrain from employing veiled women (for a literature review of experiments, see Weichselbaumer, 2016). Highly religious Muslims may also be stereotyped as "fanatics" or even associated with Islamic terrorism (Ettinger & Imhof, 2011; Gianni, Giugni, & Michel, 2015). Highly religious individuals could presumably be singled out by dress, appearance (e.g., veil, beard) or information otherwise obtained (e.g., in job interviews). It is empirically difficult to distinguish such social closure on the basis of religiosity on the one hand, and ethnicity on the other, but the distinction can and should be made at least analytically.

3.4. Migration Background

Another complex of factors affecting Muslim affiliation and higher unemployment are those of migration. Muslims in Switzerland are overwhelmingly either first- or second-generation immigrants (Flaugergues, 2016), and migration background is a well-known factor influencing unemployment in Switzerland (Fibbi et al., 2003; Golder & Straubhaar, 1999; Kohler, 2012). Just like religion, this factor can be seen as a bright boundary in Switzerland, partly because of the strict nationality law in Switzerland, which is based on the idea of jus sanguinis (Castles & Miller, 2003). In the light of such bright boundaries, migrants, and especially those working in manual labour, may have more difficulty gaining employment when competing with individuals without such a background. As a disruptive life event, migration can also indirectly affect unemployment probability by influencing human capital: through migration, individuals lose their social networks, are confronted in many cases with a new language, and may see their educational qualifications not recognized in the receiving country (Cheung, 2014).

Compared to the first generation of immigrants, the second generation can expect to see their situation improve because of the human capital (education, linguistic abilities, and social networks) that they have acquired in the country (Cheung, 2014, pp. 143–144). Other than this human capital hypothesis, we could expect that employers do not see individuals of the second generation as "culturally distant" because of their socialization in the autochthonous context. In terms of origins (nationality at birth), we can intuitively expect that non-European origins are perceived as culturally more distant than European origins. Consequently, employers could favour Europeans at the expense of non-Europeans. Also, acquiring Swiss nationality may be seen as an indicator of "integration" and may help when competing for employment.

3.5. Hostile Context

Finally, a xenophobic context would supposedly impact on the unemployment chances of individuals from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Studies using questionnaires have demonstrated that xenophobia and/or Islamophobia is present in Switzerland (for an in-depth theoretical discussion of these concepts and results, see Gianni et al., 2015; Helbling, 2008; Stolz, 2005). The most recent study points to the fact that non-Swiss Muslims feel discriminated amongst, with 21% of Turks, 31% of North Africans, and 15% of ex-Yugoslavians in the sample having had a feeling that they were discriminated against on the basis of their religion in the past 12 months (Gianni et al., 2015). Hostility towards immigrants and Muslims is reflected in the political context of Switzerland, where the campaigns and results of elections are useful indicators: support for the "anti-minaret" and "anti-mass-immigration" initiatives, in 2009 and 2014 respectively, by a majority of Swiss citizens are two of its clearest expressions. Both initiatives focused strongly (or, with the first initiative, exclusively) on the alleged threat that Muslims posed to Switzerland, Swiss democracy, and Swiss culture. Interestingly, supporters of the 2014 initiative linked mass migration with the existence of a (supposedly) ever-growing Muslim population. Here, the borders between Islamophobia and xenophobia are blurred. Cantons differed very markedly in their support or rejection of these initiatives. For example, the support given to the anti-minaret initiative by the rural canton of Thurgau was 67.7%, while the figure for the canton of Geneva was 40.3%. We capitalize on this important inter-cantonal variation and use the results of these elections to measure the degree of hostility towards Muslims/immigrants in each canton.

3.6. Accounting for the Muslim Employment Gap and Ethno-Religious Penalties

Our strategy will first be to ascertain whether there is in fact a Muslim employment gap in Switzerland. If there is, we will investigate how much of this gap can be "accounted for" when controlling for human capital, religiosity, migration background, and hostility of context. Any significant remaining differences that cannot be explained by human capital can be seen as forms of "ethno-religious penalties" and can be further unpacked with the other factors.

4. Methodology

4.1. Sample and Population

To analyse mechanisms accounting for Muslim/non-Muslim unemployment disparities, we use the most recent and representative data currently available for Switzerland: the 2014 Language, Religion and Culture Survey. Gathered by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO), this dataset used telephone-based interviews and, in a second stage, written questionnaires in all cantons of Switzerland. The response rate was 46.6%. It is a sample of 16,487 permanent residents aged 15 and above. As our study focuses on the labour market, we selected only

work-active individuals: permanent residents aged 16 (age when employment begins) to 64 (age of retirement), excluding also those individuals not able to work and those working full-time in the household. Since we analyse differences between Muslims and non-Muslims, we also excluded people who had not answered the question on their religious affiliation. We use weights provided by the FSO to calibrate socio-demographic variables.

We end up with a sample of 11,012 individuals, composed of 694 Muslims and 10,318 non-Muslims (namely, all other religious affiliations and those without a religious affiliation). In other words, our sample is made up of 6.3% of Muslims in the active population, which is slightly more than the 5% of the Muslim population in the general resident population (Flaugergues, 2016). Because some variables lack data, the logistic regressions are run with a slightly lower N = 10,916 (Muslims n = 682; non-Muslims n = 10,234). Fortunately, only 12 Muslims had to be excluded for the reason of missing data.

We define as "Muslim" any individual who identifies himself or herself with Islam or with any specific denomination considered Islamic by the FSO, such as Sunnism, Shiism, Alevism, and Sufism (Flaugergues, 2016). Non-Muslims are therefore all individuals who identify themselves with other religions or who say that they have no religious affiliation or are atheist/agnostic. Individuals who did not answer the question were excluded from our sample.

4.2. Variables and Operationalization

Our dependent variable is unemployment, translated into a binary variable "employed/unemployed", where employed is the reference modality. The definition of "unemployed" in our data is based on the definition provided by the International Labor Office (OIL), according to which an unemployed individual is a person who is available to work but currently not working and who has been looking for a job for the last four weeks (Walter et al., 2016). Muslim affiliation was measured by self-identification.

As in the methodology used by Connor and Koenig (2015), the different mechanisms accounting for unemployment differences between Muslims and non-Muslims are captured by sets of mediating variables:

Human capital was measured by three variables. Education is a four-step variable distinguishing between completed compulsory schooling, non-compulsory schooling (apprenticeship, post-16 education), higher professional education, and university education (including the *Hochschulen*, HEP, HES). A dichotomous variable measures whether the interviewer detected no linguistic difficulties or some (small or significant) linguistic difficulties in the respondent's answers. Another dichotomous variable captures whether the respondent engages in some or no voluntary activity (i.e., indicator of social network as part of human capital) (Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2013).

Religiosity was measured by an additive scale composed of frequency of attendance at religious services and frequency of prayer (Cronbach's $\alpha = .661$). This measure represents a theoretical and methodological challenge, like any research dealing with religiosity (Cutting & Walsh, 2007). Tests have been made to make sure biases are not introduced for Muslim women (not compelled to attend religious services) and are discussed in the analyses.

Migration background was captured with three variables. A three-step variable distinguishes autochthonous individuals from first-generation and second-generation immigrants. According to the definitions of the FSO, autochthonous individuals are Swiss-born with at least one parent born in Switzerland, and naturalized individuals with both parents born in Switzerland (Flaugergues, 2016). We define second generation as individuals born in Switzerland or those who arrived before the age of 12 (attended primary school in Switzerland); and first generation as non-Swiss, foreign-born individuals or those who arrived after the age of 11. A dichotomous variable distinguishes between individuals of European and non-European origin. We define "European" in geographical terms (Europe as a continent) based on the classification of the FSO, and not in political terms (part of the European Union). Our data did not allow for a more precise inclusion of ethnicity/nationality in the models because of collinearity problems, i.e., a too strong overlap between variables of ethnicity and religion. A dichotomous variable distinguishes between individuals of Swiss nationality (be this by birth or "naturalization") and non-Swiss nationality.

Hostility of cantonal context was measured by adding two variables: the percentage of support in a canton for the anti-minaret referendum of 2009, and for the mass-immigration referendum of 2012. The two variables are strongly correlated (Cronbach's $\alpha = .960$).

We also controlled for individual level variables of age (a continuous variable), sex (female/male), and marital status (married/not married), as well as for two additional contextual factors: the rate of unemployment in the canton and a dichotomous variable distinguishing between individuals living in an urban or rural area.

4.3. Analytical Strategy

Following the analytical strategy of Connor and Koenig (2015), we explain the Muslim employment gap with a series of logistic regressions predicting employment.[1] A first model only enters the Muslim/non-Muslim variable (including controls) and represents the baseline model. Every one of the following models introduces one set of mediating variables representing a specific mechanism. Comparing the baseline model with every one of the following models concerning the size of the effect of Muslim affiliation on unemployment gives us a measure of how much of the gap can be explained by the respective mechanism.

[1] We did not use multi-level modelling (with cantons as higher level) because of insufficient numbers of Muslims in several cantons.

We checked for the multicollinearity assumption and did not include some variables in the models or rework them: we do not control for linguistic region as this variable is highly correlated with the percentage of unemployment.

We present seven models: model 1 only includes the religious-affiliation variable and controls; model 2 enters human capital variables; model 3 tests religiosity; model 4 concerns migration variables; model 5 tests hostility of cantonal context; model 6 is a full model without interactions; finally, model 7 adds an educational interaction. For each model, we indicate the odd's ratios exp(β) and their degree of significance ($p < .05$). We also indicate a measure for the difference of β-coefficient of the Muslim affiliation of the respective model to that of the baseline model—this is interpreted as the percentage of the Muslim employment gap that can be accounted for by the mediating variables of the specified mechanism.

5. Findings

5.1. Descriptive Results

As the descriptive statistics show below (Table 1), Muslims (8.9%) are more likely to be unemployed than non-Muslims (3.5%). This represents a significant employment gap between Muslims and non-Muslims in Switzerland.

Other differences can be found between the two groups (Table 1). Muslims are more likely than non-Muslims to be male and young, and they mostly live in urban areas; Muslims are significantly less likely to have entered post-school education and they are five times more likely to have linguistic difficulties than non-Muslims. It is a very new immigrant population since the majority are from the first generation (born elsewhere and arrived after the age of 11). Most have European origins, while a third have Swiss nationality in 2014. Interestingly, and quite contrary to public expectations, they do not differ in terms of intensity of religiosity. Regarding perception of discrimination, while 8% of non-Muslims say that they have felt discriminated against during the last 12 months, 16% of the Muslim respondents mention such feelings. This variable is not taken into account in the explicative analysis of unemployment, but it gives us a hint at the situation of Muslims in Switzerland.

These findings replicate what other scholars have found about Muslims in Switzerland (Gianni et al., 2015; Gianni, Purdie, Lathion, & Jenny, 2010). The question is, however, whether these differences also help to explain the Muslim employment gap. To answer this question, we now present the results of the logistic regressions predicting unemployment.

5.2. Explanatory Results

The results of mediating models in Table 2 present the logged odds (exp(β)) and their significance levels. All models control for age, gender, marital status, unemployment in the canton, and urban area. Our first model only introduces the dichotomous variable Muslim/non-Muslim affiliation (together with the controls) and acts as a baseline model. It shows that, for the Swiss case, Muslims are 2.434 times more likely to be unemployed. This represents the "baseline Muslim employment gap".

Table 1. Variable means and percentages by group.

	Muslims	**Non-Muslims**
Unemployed	**0.089***	**0.035***
Women	0.379*	0.478*
Age	34*	41*
Married	0.622*	0.495*
% of unemployment in canton	0.032	0.031
Lives in a city	0.591*	0.467*
Compulsory schooling	0.328*	0.127*
Non-compulsory schooling	0.544*	0.476*
Post-school education	0.128*	0.397*
At least one voluntary commitment	0.419*	0.534*
Minor or significant linguistic difficulties	0.331*	0.079*
Religiosity (1 to 7 scale)	2.56	2.66
— Autochthonous	0.052*	0.639*
— 1st generation (arrived after 11)	0.598*	0.265*
— 2nd generation (arrived before 12 or born in Switzerland)	0.350*	0.096*
European origin (nationality at birth)	0.788*	0.947*
Swiss passport	0.377*	0.730*
% of support in canton for anti-minaret campaign	0.567	0.573
% of support in canton for anti-mass-migration campaign	0.493*	0.501*
Felt discriminated against during the last 12 months	0.186*	0.079*

Notes: Sample limited to individuals in the labour force; * Cramer V of $p < 0.05$.

Table 2. Logistic regression with exp(β) coefficients predicting unemployment.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Symbolic boundaries:							
Muslim affiliation							
Muslim (ref: non-Muslim)	2.434***	1.734***	2.336***	1.652*	2.448***	1.373*	3.756**
Human capital							
• Compulsory schooling (ref: HE/university)		1.838***				1.683**	1.615**
• Non-compulsory schooling (ref: HE/university)		1.641***				1.680***	1.938***
• Professional education (ref: HE/university)		0.696				0.746	0.840
• Linguistic difficulties (ref: none)		1.951***				1.486 **	1.535**
• Voluntary commitment (ref: no commitment)		0.771*				0.775*	0.774*
Religiosity							
Religiosity			1.143**			1.112**	1.112**
Migratory background							
• First generation (ref: autochthonous)				1.654**		1.530**	1.535*
• Second generation (ref: autochthonous)				1.674**		1.588**	1.635**
• Citizenship (ref: non-Swiss)				0.865		.947	.928
• Non-European origin (ref: European origin)				1.981***		0.550**	0.568***
Hostile context							
Hostility of canton					1.017*	1.018*	1.018*
Human Capital Interaction							
• Compulsory schooling X Muslim							0.550
• Non-compulsory schooling X Muslim							0.207***
• Professional education X Muslim							0.000
Constant	0.025***	0.011***	0.019***	0.029***	0.121***	0.006***	0.004***
Muslim/non-Muslim difference explained variance(1)	—	38.0%	4.7%	43.6	− 0.6%	64.4%	—

Notes: Total N = 10,916 (Muslims n = 682; non-Muslims n = 10,234). Models control also for age, gender, marital status, unemployment in the canton and urban area. * = p < 0.05: ** = p < 0.01; *** = p < 0.001. (1) Calculated as (β(Baseline model) − β(this model)/(β(Baseline model) for the Muslim affiliation coefficient.

In Model 2, we enter our mediating human capital variables of education, linguistic difficulties, and voluntary commitment. Doing so reduces the exp(β) coefficient: Muslims are in this model only 1.734 more likely to be unemployed than non-Muslims. Another way of saying this is that we can account for 38% of the employment gap by introducing human capital variables. It is interesting to see that both linguistic difficulties and lack of formal education are about more or less equally important in explaining some of the employment gap (although we will show in later models that the link to formal education is actually a complex one).

Model 3 shows that religiosity has only very little explanatory power. We can account only for 4.7% of the unemployment differences. This result is very much in line with previous findings by Connor and Koenig (2015, p. 196). Our religiosity measure included frequency of attendance at religious services, and, since mosque attendance is not compulsory for women, one might suspect that our results may be biased. To check for this possibility, we ran our model separately for men and women. The results are very similar for both groups, with an exp(β) coefficient for religiosity of 1.161** and of 1.130** respectively. We conclude that there does not seem to be bias caused by our religiosity measure.

In Model 4, migratory variables are introduced, accounting for 43.6% of the employment gap. Three points seem to be important here. First, there is no significant

difference in the mediating effect of the generation variable. This is surprising since one could have expected that members of the group of second-generation immigrants might have more resources leading to less unemployment. Second, and surprisingly, citizenship has no significant mediating effect. Third, a very strong mediating effect can be found in the European/non-European distinction. Non-Europeans face higher employment barriers. Clearly, non-European origin is an important disadvantage on the Swiss labour market and it raises the question of intersectionality between origins and religious affiliation in the experience of discrimination.[2] We can note, however, that, even when we control for their European or non-European origin, Muslims still remain 1.652 times more likely to be unemployed than non-Muslims, which points to specific religious discrimination.

Model 5 enters hostility of cantonal context. The effect is barely significant and controlling for this variable does not reduce the odds of Muslim unemployment but increases it slightly. The effect is very small and should be interpreted with care.

Model 6 includes all sets of variables (except interactions) and shows that their mediating influence accounts for 64.4% of the unemployment differences given by the baseline model.

Model 7 introduces an interaction between education and Muslim affiliation. This interaction is strong and highly significant. Introducing an interaction (or "moderating effect") means that we cannot interpret the coefficients in the same way as we did in the previous models. Muslim affiliation no longer has a common overall effect on unemployment, but different effects depending on educational achievement. Thus, Muslims with a university degree (the reference in the education group) are 3.756 times more likely to be unemployed than non-Muslims in general. Compared to this group, Muslims who have had post-compulsory schooling are unemployed significantly less often.

The effect can be seen in Figure 1. We see that both Muslims with compulsory education and Muslims with university education have a significantly higher probability of being unemployed than Muslims with non-compulsory education and professional education (although, because of small N, the latter effect does not turn out to be significant). Formal education clearly diminishes the probability of being unemployed when going from compulsory to non-compulsory and professional education—but it then raises the unemployment probability again when going to university education. This is an interesting finding, since the literature expects education to lower the probabilities of unemployment.

We can only speculate as to possible reasons for this finding. Individuals with a university degree often have an education that is less clearly geared to a profession

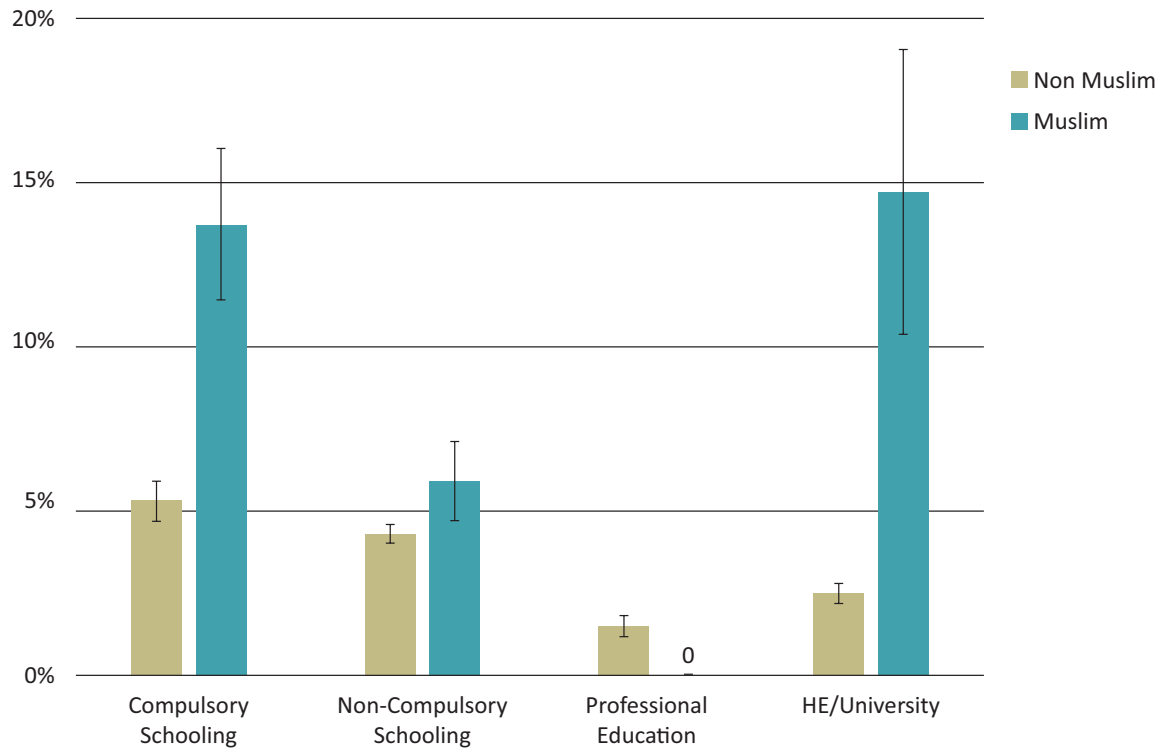

Figure 1. Probability of being unemployed for Muslims compared to non-Muslims for different levels of education.

[2] According to intersectional approaches, one cannot use analytical categories such as gender, race, and class independently, in the sense that they produce overlapping structures of inequalities (Browne & Misra, 2003). The same can be said about religious affiliation and ethnicity: they work as "'simultaneous and linked' social identities" (Wilde & Glassman, 2016), and it is not always possible to distinguish discrimination mechanisms based on one or the other.

than individuals who have a qualification from a post-school training institution; they may also lack social networks, which are useful to access the labour market after university. In such a situation, the ethno-religious penalty may become important when competing with non-Muslim individuals for highly attractive jobs.

We must remember, however, that, for the majority of Muslims in Switzerland, formal education works in the expected direction. Most Muslims in Switzerland have either compulsory (32.8%) or non-compulsory (54.4%) education, and, for them, the well-known education-leads-to-employment mechanism works. It is only for a smaller group of Muslims (12.8%) with university or professional education that the reverse mechanism seems to operate.

6. Conclusions

In this article, we have investigated whether (1) a Muslim employment gap exists in Switzerland, and (2) to what extent this gap may be attributed to human capital, migratory factors, religiosity, and a hostile societal context.

A number of results confirm what former research in other countries or cross-country research has shown: namely, that there is indeed a significant Muslim employment gap in Switzerland. Without controls, Muslims have a probability of being unemployed of 8.9%, while non-Muslims only have a probability of 3.5%. In terms of odds and controlling for socio-demographic variables (without education), Muslims are 2.4 times more likely to be unemployed than non-Muslims. Other findings that confirm previous research are that human capital factors and migration factors are indeed important and explain much of the variance of the employment gap; and that religiosity is only a very minor factor and does not explain much of the employment gap. We find, like much of the literature, that the second generation of Muslims do not fare significantly better in terms of employment than the first generation.

Three findings are surprising and contribute to the state of the art in a novel way.

First, we find that citizenship does not explain any variance of the employment gap. Swiss citizenship is difficult to obtain; the criteria are strict and obtaining Swiss citizenship means for immigrants an important investment in terms of time, energy, and money. Facilitating naturalization is often proposed as a means of integrating immigrants further. It is therefore remarkable that we do not find any significant effect arising from citizenship. One explanation might be that citizenship is so difficult to obtain that it cannot be a good indicator of integration.

Second, we have used an original measure: the hostility to migrants and Muslims in a cantonal context. We find a statistically significant effect, but only a small effect that does not reduce the Muslim affiliation coefficient, but rather increases it. Substantively, this can be explained by the fact that we find unemployed Muslims more often in cantons with less out-group hostility. The reason is simply that in the very rural cantons with the highest levels of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant attitudes, there are hardly any Muslims.

Our most important new finding is clearly that the effect of Muslim affiliation on unemployment is not mediated, but actually moderated by human capital. We find a powerful interaction in that Muslims with both a very low and a very high level of education are disproportionally often unemployed.

The finding is important because it means that raising the human capital of Muslims will not automatically lessen, but may actually widen, the employment gap. It seems worthwhile exploring this phenomenon further, be it with additional quantitative or qualitative methods. It would also be very interesting to see whether the finding can be generalized to other contexts. If it holds and is found to be a generalizable phenomenon, then we will have to think differently about the relationship of human capital and Muslim employment opportunities.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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Part III.

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Article

Rethinking Canadian Discourses of "Reasonable Accommodation"

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Abstract
This paper maps the repercussions of the use of reasonable accommodation, a recent framework referenced inside and outside Canadian courtrooms to respond to religiously framed differences. Drawing on three cases from Ontario and Quebec, we trace how the notion of reasonable accommodation—now invoked by the media and in public discourse—has moved beyond its initial legal moorings. After outlining the cases, we critique the framework with attention to its tendency to create theological arbitrators who assess reasonableness, and for how it rigidifies 'our values' in hierarchical ways. We propose an alternative model that focuses on navigation and negotiation and that emphasizes belonging, inclusion and lived religion.

Keywords
Canada; lived religion; media; navigation; negotiation; reasonable accommodation

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1. Introduction

Recourse to the notion of Reasonable Accommodation (RA) has been gaining momentum since 2007 in Canada: RA has become the dominant framework used to discuss cases of religious differences (see, Beaman, 2012; Barras, 2016; Selby, Barras, & Beaman, 2018). RA was initially limited to the field of human rights in employment situations and referenced in legal decisions. It was conceived to ensure that 'neutral' rules and laws could be adapted if they discriminated against individuals who, because of their age, religion, health, etc., did not correspond to the average individual for whom the rule was designed. Following the Supreme Court of Canada's emphasis of RA in its 'Multani decision' in 2006, the notion became part of public parlance. That decision stipulated that the request by a Sikh student to wear his kirpan at a Montreal public elementary school should be 'reasonably accommodated'.[1] This judgment sparked strong reactions, especially in the province of Quebec, where "much of it focused on the idea that there was simply 'too much' accommodation happening" (Beaman, 2012, p. 3). The Quebec government struck a commission in 2007 to examine how to deal with increasing social diversity. It became known as the Bouchard–Taylor commission, so named after its commissioners, sociologist Gérald Bouchard and philosopher Charles Taylor. Although their resulting report emphasized the legal nature of RA, it also significantly contributed to the perpetuation of RA as a framework for the management of difference in civil society. It became acceptable for concerned citizens, politicians and the media to evaluate whether specific religious practices are 'reasonable', and whether they are compatible with 'Canadian values'.

Concern with "'too much' accommodation" (Beaman, 2012, p. 3) is not limited to the province of Quebec.

[1] For more information on this case see Multani v. Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys (2006).

In conceptualizing our analysis, we chose two cases from the province of Ontario, in part to interrogate the common idea that the ways that questions around diversity are framed in Quebec differ significantly from the rest of Canada. While there are specificities in how Quebec manages religious diversity,[2] the use of the RA framework ultimately transcends provincial boundaries. If, in its ideal form, multiculturalism purports to position everyone as equal, RA differs in that one group dispenses an accommodation. This approach also differs in that multiculturalism is a policy (instituted in 1988), an ideology and a descriptor of demographic realities in Canada's larger urban centres, while RA can be described more as a technology of governance. Throughout our analysis, following Wilde and Tevington's (2017) notion of 'complex religion', we are guided by the conceptualization of religion as necessarily understood as being intertwined both with other social categories such as ethnicity and class and with social inequality.

We argue that the public use of RA further shifts everyday interactions that begin as 'non-events' into 'events'. There has been little scholarly or media emphasis on 'non-events', likely because they are neither memorable or noteworthy. By 'non-events', we mean those interactions that characterize everyday life between people who do not necessarily share common identities or backgrounds. Such interactions increasingly characterize late modern Western democracies, which some have argued have entered an era of "super" diversity (Knott, 2015; Meintel, 2016; Vertovec, 2017). Historians especially have worked on how particular moments of interaction become 'events' (Sewell, 1996). Political scientists have also pointed to the social construction of particular interactions as 'events', emphasizing how language can work to transform strings of occurrences into teleologically meaningful 'events' (Basta, 2017, p. 23; Wagner-Pacifici, 2017).

This article examines three Canadian cases that, with the introduction of this framework of RA, transitioned from 'non-events' to 'events'. Each involves religion and the negotiation of its practice: a sugar shack case in Quebec in 2007, about the negotiation of Muslim prayer and dietary needs (hereafter referred to as the Sugar Shack case), a student's request on religious grounds at York University in Ontario in 2014, for exemption from group work with women (the YorkU case), and debates at a public school board in the Greater Toronto Area, Ontario, in 2017, around the form and presence of Muslim prayer in public schools (the Peel School Board case). Significantly, even if the Sugar Shack case, for one, cannot be legally qualified as RA because there was no strict violation of equality rights, we show how it became framed as such in public discourse by those against the Muslim group's participation.

After briefly sketching the three cases, we argue that, despite its promises of equality, the RA framework disadvantages minorities because it opens debate about the parameters of 'reason', which triggers normative power structures. In turn, we see a hardening of 'our values' vis-à-vis minorities, and a rigidifying of Islam in particular. Both processes activate an 'us' versus 'them' structure. In the last section, inspired by our study in *Beyond Accommodation* (Selby et al., 2018) and the work of James Tully, we seek to shed light on the processes of navigation and negotiation of difference woven through these three cases. We argue that focusing on processes rather than on outcomes reveals frameworks of inclusion, belonging, and lived religion.

2. The Three Cases

Religion shapes and is shaped by the media (Campbell, 2010; Lövheim, 2012). Media analysis can reveal a great deal about how social actors frame their own actions and those of others. Our aim here is not to produce an exhaustive quantitative media analysis. Rather, drawing on editorials and articles published in *Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Toronto Star*, *La Presse*, regional media coverage when available, press releases, recorded statements from public meetings, and publicly available school board minutes, we seek to reconstruct these cases' timelines and prevalent discourses.

2.1. Prayer at a Quebecois Sugar Shack

On 11 March 2007, about 260 Muslims from the Centre Communautaire Astrolabe [the Astrolabe Community Centre] visited the Au Sous Bois Cabane à Sucre [the "Under the Woods" Sugar Shack] in Mont-Saint-Grégoire, 48 kilometers southeast of Montreal, Quebec. The group had reserved a private dining room, had pre-arranged for pork products to be removed from dishes, and had provided substitute halal sausages and salami. During their visit, the group also planned to make maple taffy, visit the on-site petting zoo and go on a sleigh ride. It was the fourth year the organization had visited this sugar shack.

March 11th was a beautiful and sunny Sunday and the sugar shack was busy. When the group members had finished their meals and began to move chairs to create a prayer space, as had previously been negotiated, the sugar shack's management suggested that the group use the dance floor in a common area instead, so that other patrons could move more quickly into the dining area. At the time, there were 15 to 30 patrons waiting for a table. Traditional French–Canadian music played and some children danced while they waited. The group agreed to pray in the dance floor area (Astrolabe, 2007b). To facilitate prayer time for approximately 40 people in the group, the music was temporarily turned off and patrons were asked by the management to stop dancing.

Unbeknownst to the Astrolabe group, a Quebecois country singer, Sylvain Boily, who was waiting in the dance area with about 20 members of his extended family, was offended by the temporary switch of the

[2] See Bouchard and Taylor (2008) and Kaell (2017).

dance floor into prayer space. Boily took his complaint to the *Journal de Montréal*, which published three articles about his experience one week later, marking the beginning of a media storm (Nadeau, 2007a, 2007b; Roy, 2007). One article featured an interview with Boily in which he expressed his negative reaction and a response by the President of Astrolabe about why the dance floor was cleared. For Boily, "it [was] a *Quebecois* sugar shack" where "*they* thought they were allowed to do anything" (Roy, 2007, our translation and emphasis).

The story gained momentum when proprietors of other sugar shacks were quoted expressing discontent with the "unreasonable accommodations" that had been accorded to the Astrolabe group. Under pressure from over one hundred hate phone messages, the Au Sous Bois sugar shack reversed their previous arrangements with Astrolabe, indicating that they would no longer negotiate similar types of arrangements (Baillargeon, 2007).

Articles in the *Journal de Montréal* and others (e.g., CTV, 2007; LCN, 2007), framed the incident as one of RA, despite the fact that Astrolabe had made efforts in their press-releases and communications with reporters to explain that the agreement was a private financial transaction (Astrolabe, 2007a). The group noted that in perpetuating this inaccurate information the *Journal de Montréal* trespassed journalistic ethics (Astrolabe, 2007a).[3]

For this Muslim association, visiting the shack as a group was part of its overall mission to "foster positive integration" (Astrolabe, 2007b, p. 7). However, once the *Journal de Montréal* published an article based on a conversation with Boily, their 'non-event' visit became an event.

2.2. A Gender-based Religious Request at York University

On 20 September 2013, a sociology undergraduate student who was registered in a second-year online course sent an email to his professor, Paul Grayson, requesting exemption from a group project on the grounds that "due to my firm religious beliefs…it will not be possible for me to meet in public with a group of women" (cited in Grayson, 2013). While an online course, Grayson's syllabus stipulated that students must meet for a focus group assignment. Grayson believed that the student's request should be denied but sought advice from the Dean's office and the university's Centre for Human Rights prior to responding to the student.

The Faculty of Arts and Professional Studies at York University replied to Grayson that the student's request for RA must be granted, based on the province's Human Rights Code that stipulates a "duty to accommodate" if the religious accommodation does not cause "undue hardship" to others (as cited in Moon, 2014; OHRC, 2015). The faculty representatives also considered what they saw as a comparable accommodation granted by Grayson to another student who could not participate in the same group project due to physical distance. Grayson, however, strongly opposed the decision of the Dean's office, stipulating that, in a secular institution, women's rights must supersede religious ones.

Prior to responding to the student, Grayson sought to determine the theological legitimacy of the request and consulted with York University colleagues specializing in Judaism and Islam who, he says, both indicated that "there is absolutely no justification for not interacting with females in public space", (Grayson, 2013, p. 7). When, in addition, Grayson received his department's support to deny the request, he ignored the administration's advice and emailed the student to inform him of his decision to deny the request. In his response, the student thanked Grayson for how he managed his request and wrote that he respected his decision (Grayson, 2013, p. 6). The university, however, did not rescind its order to accommodate.

Dissatisfied with York's official position on the matter, Grayson contacted an editor at *University Affairs* (UA), a weekly online Canadian university community news magazine, to enquire about publishing his version of the case. The magazine's chief editor was initially hesitant due to UA's editorial practice to not "publish exposés" (cited in Charbonneau, 2014), but decided to publish Grayson's piece without naming him or York University. Hours after the article was published online, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* reported on the issue, identifying both professor and institution (Bradshaw, 2014; Slaughter, 2014). From there, multiple media sources in and beyond Canada (e.g., Aliénor, 2014) reported and commented on the request and responses. Most of the subsequent publications condemned York University's "unreasonable" decision (Ottawa Citizen, 2014a; Teitel, 2014).

The YorkU case made headlines for approximately three months after the request was denied by Grayson. Prior to appearing in UA and other media, it had been a university specific issue. However, Canadian politicians (see, Hopper, 2014) and the first headlines to report the story framed it as one with wider national ideological implications regarding the parameters of "reasonable accommodation", the secular nature of the university, and the rights of women.

The student involved did not publicly comment on it or provide his version of events (Grayson shared a portion of his original email with us), so we do not know whether he considered his request a demand for RA as those who received his inquiry assumed. It appears, however, that the matter was resolved in a manner acceptable to the student.

2.3. The Ontario Peel District School Board and Muslim Prayer

In September 2016, the Peel District School Board (PDSB) replaced a policy that allowed Muslim students to write and share their own sermons for at-school Friday prayers. Until the policy change, the high school students' weekly

[3] The Bouchard–Taylor Report came to a similar conclusion in its analysis of the Au Sous Bois sugar shack controversy (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008, p. 57).

jummah prayer and closing sermon had been supervised by a school staff member (Smee, 2017). The new decision meant that, in consultation with the Peel Faith Leaders' Group,[4] the Board developed six pre-written sermons, from which the students could choose (Boisvert, 2016). Despite a climate of increasing Islamophobia and surveillance in Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2017), the board explained that the new policy was a procedural change aimed at ensuring consistency across the division (Peel Board, 2017b, p. 133).

In October 2016, at a public meeting following the updated policy, Muslim students and parents voiced their unhappiness with the new policy. One student noted it was "policing religion" (cited in Boisvert, 2016). Others expressed concern with the board's lack of transparency, that Muslim students were made to feel stigmatized, and that freedoms of speech and religiosity were unduly restricted (Alphonso, 2017). A month later, the Board decided to suspend the new policy. In a surprising turn, after conducting community consultations and seeking legal advice, the Board officially reverted to the previous policy (where students could write their own sermons) in January 2017. Nevertheless, the tide had shifted: the debate had become an event. Protesters, carrying anti-Islamic signs, attended and uttered racially charged comments (Fraser, 2017). The question changed from being about whether the board should change its regulations around Muslim prayer to whether the district should allow Friday prayer or any kind of religiosity in public schools (see, Goffin, 2017). Tensions peaked in a March 2017 board meeting when a protester ripped pages out of a Qur'an (Spencer, 2017c).

In response to this pronounced escalation in the debate, the Ontario Minister of Education and the Minister of Children and Youth released a joint statement in support of providing Friday prayer space for public school students (Sarrouh, 2017). The Peel Board noted that accommodation of Friday prayer was a procedural matter and that, under the Ontario Human Rights Code, was not open to public debate (Peel Board, 2017a). The board also published a two-page "Fact Sheet on Religious Accommodation" (Peel Board, 2017c) that referenced the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Code and statements to re-establish the right of visible religiosity in public schools.

In sum, while until the first policy change weekly communal prayer at school had been treated like all other extra-curricular activities, the initial change in regulation exposed Muslim students to public scrutiny (Smee, 2017). The procedural question took many turns that emphasized public debate about prayer in school more generally.

3. Discussion

The invocation of RA as a response has numerous implications, including the promotion of a theological adjudication, authorized by the usage of the legal notion of 'sincerity of belief';[5] and a juxtapositioning of 'our values' against 'the other', triggered in part by the appropriation of the legal notion of "undue hardship".[6]

3.1. Granting Theological Authority

Determining what is 'reasonable' encourages individuals assessing religion-based requests to become religious arbitrators in ways that other kinds of requests do not. The question requires those in positions of authority to determine what is legitimate and necessary to the religion to which requesters belong and determine the precepts of said religion(s). This theological impulse also emboldens commentators to express an opinion on the sincerity of the requester. Religion is assumed to be a stable and rigid category.

The York case illustrates these dynamics. The professor, the administration, the media and the broader public all framed the student's question as a request for RA, which in turn authorized them to evaluate the student's request on the basis of its reasonableness, the sincerity of the requester and the degree of hardship the request might cause (Moon, 2014). Recall that Grayson consulted with scholars of Islam and Judaism at York University—who he 'theologically collapses' and calls "Muslim and Jewish scholars" rather than "scholars who study Islam and Judaism" (Grayson, 2013)—to evaluate whether the student's request was theologically reasonable. He clearly felt that to assess the reasonableness of the claim he needed to 'know' the normative requirements of the faith of his student. The language of RA granted him the authority to determine which practices were 'reasonable'. In so doing, he became trapped in a dualistic reading of religion (either it is reasonable or it is not), as though there were one way to be properly Muslim or Jewish. This determination counters the research of scholars of lived religion (McGuire, 2008), which emphasizes the flexibility and variability of religious practice.

Grayson (2013) was not the only self-appointed theological arbiter: religious leaders interviewed by the media, like in the *Ottawa Citizen*, were asked to provide a yes-or-no answer to whether the University should accommodate the student. Commentators not only speculated about the student's religion and level of practice—determining that he was most likely a conservative and practicing Muslim, or maybe a Jew—but they also con-

[4] The Peel Faith Leader Group included a few imams and the Equity Staff of the Board (Peel Board, 2017b, p. 132). When the Board chose to conduct additional consultations, it met with a wide range of social actors, including students (Peel Board, 2017b, pp. 132–134).

[5] For more on how the notion of 'sincerity of belief' has been used by Canadian courts, see Beaman (2012) and Maclure (2011).

[6] The legal concept of undue hardship, whereby employers are legally required to accommodate as long as they do not suffer undue hardship (see, Woehrling, 1998), creeps into public debates. Requests for accommodation are often assessed vis-à-vis the challenge or hardship they pose to 'our values'. While institutions are legally required to provide evidence of this undue hardship and not base their claims on speculations, these provisions are rarely considered in public debates.

sidered it their responsibility to evaluate the content of these traditions. One pastor concluded that the young man sought to advance "his brand of Islam, which would deprive women of their dignity" (Rev. Counsell, cited in Ottawa Citizen, 2014b). A Baha'i scholar assumed that the York request was based on "Sharia law" and warned of a "slippery slope" (Mclean, cited in Ottawa Citizen, 2014b). Emma Teitel (2014) of *Maclean's* magazine similarly presumed that the student must be either an Orthodox Jew or an Orthodox Muslim, and concluded that his "accommodation request" was outside the precepts of these religions. These responses significantly delimit the parameters of what is a 'reasonable religion' in a Western liberal context (cf., Berger, 2012). They are also vulnerable to sensationalism, as well as Orientalist and Islamophobic commentary.

Despite that the religious affiliations of the members of Astrolabe in the Sugar Shack case and of the students in the PDSB case were obvious, commentators nevertheless opined about Islam, and did so in a fixed and often inaccurate manner. In the Sugar Shack case, Astrolabe members were inaccurately described as having requested the menu to be changed for all patrons in the restaurant, not only for their group, and as having asked patrons in the dance room to exit while they prayed (Astrolabe, 2007b; see also, Nadeau, 2007a). Reporters also consulted religious experts to explain why Muslims do not eat pork, again relying on a static understanding of Islam (see, Baillargeon, 2007).

In the Peel case, Muslim practices were described as patriarchal and as too often requiring special treatment (see, Bush in Peel Board, 2017a). When the debates shifted to thinking about the place of prayer in public schools more generally some statements became overtly Islamophobic. In one instance, Islam was associated with hatred and "poison" (Spencer, 2017a), and in another, a former Mississauga mayoral candidate distributed flyers during a board meeting stating that the Qur'an should be "banned as hate literature" (Johnston, cited in Spencer, 2017b). In determining the 'reasonability' of religious beliefs and practices, the RA framework enabled what we see as a neo-colonialist power dynamic that it emboldens the accommodator to freely judge the '(un)reasonability' of religious belief and engage in theological judgments.

3.2. Rigidifying 'Our Values' and 'Islam'

In addition to the evaluation of the content of religion, assessing the 'reasonability' of RA also triggers determination of the request's compatibility with fixed societal values. Built on inherent power asymmetries (Barras, 2016; Beaman, 2012; Berger, 2012; Selby et al., 2018), the RA framework requires a determination of whether a request fits within the benchmark of 'our values', which in turn are constructed as stable, easily definable, ahistorical and unchanging.

In the wake of the country singer's account in the *Journal de Montréal* about the Astrolabe group, subsequent news stories emphasized the responses of other sugar shack owners as to whether the dietary and space negotiation were part of a shared Quebecois tradition. One article entitled '*Our traditions* need to be respected' (our emphasis) opened with the President of the Association of Sugar Shack Owners, who responded "Unacceptable" when asked to assess the RAs taking place in Quebecois sugar shacks (Nadeau, 2007b). The president stated: "Pork is part of the sugar shack experience and it is not normal to deprive Quebecois [of it]". "Our traditions" or 'the Quebecois values' are recurrently formulated as under threat. For the owner of the *Ancestral* cabin, sugar shacks "represent our origins". Another cabin owner stressed the importance of eating pork to honour Quebec's history: "All the meals are made with lard. I'm not about to cook my beans [mes fèves] with olive oil" (cited in Baillargeon, 2007). A similar expectation of 'reasonability' was echoed by the President of the Agricultural Producers' Union: "In the sugar shack, people have to have *the reasonable expectation to eat pork*" (Laurent Pellerin, cited in Baillargeon, 2007, emphasis added). Menu control here is a mechanism to protect the boundaries of 'our' identity from a 'foreign', or, as one cabin owner put it, an "olive-oil-using" threat. It is no accident that identity politics become heated in relation to food, a linchpin for many groups in delimiting shared identity (see, Brown, 2016). The requests of vegetarians, vegans and other allergens are notably omitted from this lens.

As evident with Professor Grayson's concern for "a public secular university with a commitment to equality" (Grayson, 2013, p. 3), public schools and universities are also commonly conceived as spaces that embed and promote national values, and as institutions within which to educate future citizens. Public schools were often identified in the PDSB debate as secular institutions with the mission of cultivating and protecting Canadian values from the 'intrusion' of religion (see, for instance, Banerjee delegation in Peel Board, 2017a, para. 14). More specifically, Muslim prayers were framed as synonymous with gender segregation, antonymic to the mission of public schools.

It is noteworthy that in the Peel case participating parties came from a more diverse number of self-identified backgrounds than in the Sugar Shack case where the 'us' appeared to represent pure laine ("old stock") Quebeckers (see Bouchard & Taylor, 2008, p. 202). Some PDSB protesters contested the accommodation of Muslim prayer on the grounds that it infringed on Canadian Christian culture (McGillivray, 2017), while others, who identified as having South-Asian origins or representing Hindu groups, argued that the presence of Muslim prayer was incompatible with the secular nature of schools (Hassan, 2017). We see, therefore, how the boundaries of the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy vary in function of context.

Nonetheless, despite this variability, the 'us–them' structure is systematically built on a hierarchy of val-

ues, where gender equality, 'mutual respect' and 'tolerance' are associated with Canadian-ness, and Islam is not. These 'Canadian values' are understood as accomplished rather than ideals. They become the benchmark against which to evaluate the '(un)reasonability' of religious requests. The YorkU case exemplifies this hierarchy, as gender equality was identified as *the* Canadian value, symbolizing progress to be ferociously defended against 'archaic' practices. Few commentators emerged who countered this position. The then Canadian Conservative Federal Minister of Justice, Peter MacKay, commented on the student's request, linking it with the Canadian mission to Afghanistan and its enabling of "millions of girls" to attend public schools (MacKay, cited in the Canadian Press, 2014; see also, Hopper, 2014). Other politicians also commented on the case as a way to position themselves on Canada's progress, stressing that: "We live in a country seeking gender equality....This is Canada, pure and simple" (Judy Sgro, Liberal MP, cited in Hopper, 2014). Again, the voice of the student, the complexity of the affair, and the fact that some media comments might feed into a growing Islamophobic climate in Canada, are inaudible in this dichotomous framing. Making gender equality a Canadian value par excellence also conveys the idea that gender violations are foreign to Canadian modern life, failing to recognize the pervasive discrimination against women in contemporary Canadian society (see, Beaman, 2014; for a more general discussion see also, Aune, Lövheim, Giorgi, Toldy, & Utrianinen, 2017).

Likewise, secularity in both the PDSB and the YorkU cases is assumed to be about the exclusion of religion from public institutions. There is no discussion about the paradoxes—and perhaps even impossibility—of this claim in Canadian institutions, where Christianity remains deeply embedded (Barras, Selby, & Beaman, 2016).

4. Processes of Negotiating Differences

How then to move away from the problematic RA framework? To explore how parties involved in our three cases negotiated difference amongst themselves in ways that can be considered as 'non-events', we turn to the work of James Tully, which we read alongside the navigation and negotiation framework we develop in *Beyond Accommodation* (Selby et al., 2018).[7] We see navigation reflecting the internal juggle of how individuals aim to enact and live religious ideals, and negotiation entailing external interaction with others.

Tully has written extensively on the negotiation of difference, and he invites us to examine the "activity of disclosure and acknowledgement [of difference] on its own terms" (Tully, 2000, pp. 479–480). Examining process[8] or, as Tully puts it, "the activity of acknowledgement", enables us to reveal dynamics woven in our three cases that are otherwise overlooked when the focus is on determining the 'reasonability' of a request (see also, Tully, 2000, p. 471). Turning our attention to processes of navigation and negotiation enables us to uncover how individuals in these cases draw on notions of inclusion and belonging. If 'events' tend to be narrated around the results of cases, we examine the multiplicity of 'non-events' lodged (and typically ignored) in these interactions. Our navigation/negotiation framework emphasizes how processes of interaction influence the construction of identities (including religious identity) and reveals their flexibility and lived dimensions. The recognition of difference might not always be deemed successful, but constitutive interactions are significant. They are part of the story of Canadian diversity.

4.1. Astrolabe: Belonging at The Sugar Shack

Astrolabe's contract with the Au Sous Bois sugar shack owner is not unique. Karim (fictious name), a 30-year-old gregarious young man who participated in the study presented in *Beyond Accommodation*, similarly described how an association to which he belonged organized a popular annual outing to the same sugar shack with similar negotiations regarding food. Karim explained that theirs was an ordinary transaction between a client and business owner: "They [the owners of the sugar shack] were super cool about it, yeah. They were, they were a great sugar shack to go to".

After 2008, however, in reaction to the media frenzy around the Astrolabe controversy, the Au Sous Bois sugar shack owners refused to engage in dietary negotiations again. In telling us the story, Karim appeared to hold no rancor and was even empathetic to the owners' plight. He noted: "It's, I mean, understandable. You know?" In this case, the public debate shifted the terms of his group's previously positively experienced interaction so that their request to bring their own meat became unreasonable, or in his words, "a headache". In a negotiation-style narrative, the Astrolabe group explained that the outing to the sugar shack aimed to foster a sense of common belonging or, as they say, "positive integration" for their children, who could partake in and contribute to a Quebecois event (Astrolabe, 2007b). Because menus are no longer adapted, they can presumably no longer attend.

Astrolabe thus proposed an understanding of belonging that differed from the dominant media narratives. For them, belonging—living well together—was not about complying with set values (Beaman, 2016, p. 4). Rather, it was about the process of being able to engage and craft these common values and experiences together (see, Selby et al., 2018). To do so, their religious differences needed to be recognized and under-

[7] Research for that project took place in 2012–2013. We completed 90 qualitative interviews with self-identified Muslims in Montreal (Quebec) and St. John's (Newfoundland and Labrador).

[8] For more on process see Quaquebeke, Henrich and Eckloff (2007).

stood and the power dynamics of the encounter acknowledged to make this recognition relational (Tully, 2000, p. 476). These measures do not aim to heighten identity politics, but to enable contribution and ultimately build a shared experience. We see Astrolabe's approach as promoting a more inclusive and promising understanding of living well together.

4.2. Thinking about Inclusion Through Prayer in Peel District Schools

There are similar moments in the Peel board prayer saga that have been ignored by scholars, the media and the public: by all accounts, the initial arrangement that was put in place two decades earlier was working well. It is worth reflecting on when the debate shifted. Early on (prior to January 2017), debate focused on how Muslim students thought that the regulation changes were a violation of their religious freedom. Perhaps for this reason, the discussion received little attention. Only one media account described students' experiences of prayer in schools, including the reasons why it is an important aspect in their development as young adults (see Alam, as cited in Galloway, 2017). This account illuminated the processes of navigation with which praying students engaged and recognized their religious difference.

In an interview on a national radio program, Zoya Alam, a lawyer advising the students and a former Muslim student in the Peel region, provided insight on her own experiences of Friday prayer at school that speak to this erasure:

> I would go [to weekly prayer at school] and it was a time to balance my teenage life with balancing my faith. It was also a time for me to be social, to meet with my friends. There would also be a sermon, and that sermon would be about things, you know, [like] how to manage stress….It was really important that a religious student was able to give that sermon because that way it was more relatable to me….Navigating teenage life and also your faith. (Galloway, 2017)

Alam explained the value of having another student give the sermon, which she felt better related to her life and challenges, rather than relying on pre-written administration-approved sermons. For her, Friday prayer at school was about her relationship with her faith, but also with her friends (Galloway, 2017). She said that one sermon about "charity and giving back" helped her decide to work in legal aid. Alam's comments highlight her processes of cultivating multiple identities and senses of belonging.

Notably, the Peel controversy might have been avoided if the board had consulted students when it first considered changing the regulations. Stories grounded in everyday experiences like Alam's could have better informed their initial decision. In a common reflex by secular boards evaluating religious requests, the board consulted a small number of imams, a move that tends to privilege gatekeepers in gendered and class-blind ways (Phillips, 2007; Selby, 2013). When the school board meetings became a mediatized event, the board attempted to redress the situation by listening to students. They tried, at this point, to privilege what Byrne (2014, pp. 60, 65) calls "active inclusion" by consulting students in all the stages of their discussions.[9] In part, these discussions led them to revoke their policies, which Alam appreciatively noted (see Alam, cited in Galloway, 2017). The board stated that their goal was not to determine whether prayer in school was reasonable, but to cultivate processes of greater equality. This commitment to inclusion is apparent in its circulated documents that emphasize a climate for students to "feel safe and welcomed" and in its public acknowledgment that public debate was at times Islamophobic (Peel Board, 2017c). The Board eventually recognized the power asymmetries and hateful nature of the controversy, which we see as a necessary step to foster a climate of active inclusion.

These efforts also reflect a different perspective from which Canadian diversity can be negotiated. Granted, they are subtler and less essentialist stories than the dichotomous and negative portrayals that dominated. Focusing on the processes of negotiation provides insight on how a public institution attempted (whether or not it was successful) to redress its initial lack of inclusivity. We also note the care taken by board members to pick up the pieces of a Qur'an ripped in a public meeting and to bring them to local imams for advice (see, Hussain, 2017), an act which was underreported. Considering these overlooked aspects help us map better procedures as other public institutions, including school and university boards, municipal councils, hospitals are called to navigate and negotiate diverse situations.

4.3. York University and Lived Religion

Lastly, because the York University case was framed as pitting religious freedom against women's rights, the student's processes of navigation and negotiation were entirely ignored. This omission is partly because he chose to remain anonymous and partly because, as we have discussed, many aspects of his identity were assumed, including that he believed in 'archaic' beliefs opposed to 'Canadian values'. Conceptualizing the student's internal navigation sheds light on how he actively crafted a compromise with which he was comfortable. His choice of an online course speaks to how he tried to balance what he saw as being required by his faith with his studies. This navigation did not involve negotiation until he realized that the group component was mandatory. His email to Grayson explained: "One of the main reasons

[9] Byrne (2014) distinguishes between active and passive inclusion. The passive type "merely opens the door" without modifying the established structure (Byrne, 2014, p. 60). The active model seeks to change the system to "broaden access to enable maximum participation" (Byrne, 2014, p. 60).

that I have chosen Internet courses to complete my BA is due to my firm religious beliefs" (cited in Ottawa Citizen, 2014a). We describe numerous examples of similar internal navigation in *Beyond Accommodation* (Selby et al., 2018). For instance, one young participant, who was a physiotherapy student, shared how choosing this profession was the result of a long thought process where she understood that her desire to help others overrode her prohibition of touching men. She also found comfort in knowing that "ultimately, I want to work with geriatrics. I want to work with older people, the older clientele. So, touching and that stuff, that's not an issue". This complex give-and-take with oneself is overlooked if the focus is only on the external verbal request for accommodation.

Moreover, focusing on the student's navigation also makes us cognizant that he ultimately modified his initial position, and accepted Professor Grayson's decision. We contend that this shift illustrates the creativity of many believers (whether or not they are conservative) in balancing their religious practices with their everyday realities. We make this point not to condone the student's request, but to signal that religious practices are more flexible than how his beliefs were portrayed.[10]

5. Conclusion

Over the past decade, the language of RA has migrated outside Canadian courtrooms and has become widely used to manage religious differences. In this paper we have outlined some of the consequences of RA for religious minorities. We posit that it maintains inequalities, disables compromise, encourages theological adjudication and establishes a benchmark of 'our values', which is rigid and assumes difference where very often there may be none. We are concerned that RA has become normalized to the point that it is increasingly difficult for an alternative imaginary to gain traction. We have illuminated some of the features of such an alternative model.

These three cases gained considerable media attention and became 'events', despite the fact that they had been successfully negotiated. We have shown the dangers of determining the 'reasonability' of requests and how the framework also encourages a solidification of 'our values' to gauge whether a request is acceptable. These dynamics are triggered by how the language of RA is structured. Because the RA framework has traveled from the legal field into public discourse, it has triggered the public re-appropriation of other legal concepts such as the notions of sincerity of belief and undue hardship. Assessors find themselves in a position of significant power. They can feel entitled to evaluate the sincerity of the requester and her belief with little concern for the potential flexibility of her religiosity. Potential undue hardship lodged in her request invokes 'Canadian values', regardless of whether there is actual evidence of hardship. Thus, the ways these 'events' are framed by the media and other commentators tend to project a problematic image of diversity, in which an undefined 'us' needs to be protected against a threatening 'other' and her differences.

Guided by the work of scholars who note the socially constructed dimension of 'events', we content that the RA response can be denaturalized. Our re-examination of these three cases reveals other lenses invoked by interlocutors themselves that more aptly allow for consideration of successful processes of navigation and negotiation that were largely ignored. Rarely did media accounts focus on the perspectives of individuals trying to craft a place for their religiosity. Being aware and acknowledging these erasures speak to the power asymmetries lodged in the RA model and to consider the perspectives of those in less powerful positions. Considering their perspectives requires that we pay attention to processes. Granted, everyday narratives of process will inevitably be less dramatic than a plotline that assesses and affirms 'reasonability'. They do, however, offer a more organic chronicle: stories about entrenched power relations, give and take, interactions, recognition and failed recognition, and most importantly, how difference can successfully be worked out. We contend that these alternative narratives offer a more inspiring and accurate starting point around which to narrate diversity.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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[10] Lived religion is also visible in both the Peel Prayer debate, especially in Alam's comments, and in the Sugar Shack case.

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Article

Systems over Service: Changing Systems of Inequality through Congregational Political Engagement

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Abstract
The role of religious groups in changing inequality has usually been a bottom up approach. Whether it was serving meals to the needy or sheltering the homeless, the vast majority of religious groups have addressed problems of inequality, not by addressing the causes of hunger and homelessness, but rather by offering assistance to those already in need. Rarely have religious groups become engaged in explicitly political activities that challenge structures that create large scale inequality. In this article, I examine the first state level efforts by LA Voice, a congregation-based community group that has worked to ameliorate inequality through political organizing with churches in largely poor minority communities throughout Los Angeles. Drawing on extensive qualitative data from field research and interviews during their first campaign season in 2012, I examine how these religious groups organized around a controversial political issue—an important move away from their traditional community-based organizing—and how their understandings of faith informed this work. Specifically, LA Voice helped pass a state-level initiative that directly challenged systems of inequality; Proposition 30, which raised taxes on the wealthy to fund public education. This political work highlighted long known internal struggles between congregation members who fought these actions and those who recognized the need in their communities and enthusiastically took up this work. This article ends with a discussion of how these early efforts resulted in further engagement by other member congregations.

Keywords
congregations; inequality; politics; religion

Issue
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1. Introduction

The role of religious groups when it comes to income inequality has always been a complicated one (Wilde & Glassman, 2016). While in some cases religious groups have made efforts to help reduce inequality through a variety of political initiatives dealing with immigration (Yukich, 2013), healthcare (Wood, 2002), and labor rights (Fisher, 1989), this work is not the norm. Most of the time religious groups have focused on aiding people in need, rather than fixing the underlying reasons *why* people are in need (Chaves, 2004). Even though some religious groups have made efforts to limit inequalities, religion itself can be often perceived as supporting systems that enable economic and racial inequalities to thrive (Wilde & Danielson, 2014; Wilde & Glassman, 2016). Therefore, few religious groups are interested in challenging these very systems. This means that whether it is serving meals to the needy or sheltering the homeless, most religious groups have addressed problems of inequality not by addressing the causes of hunger and homelessness, but rather by offering assistance to people harmed by systems of inequality (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001).

In this article, I examine how one organization, LA Voice, a congregation-based community organizing group, attempted to change this trend by creating large scale political change through political organizing around

a statewide ballot initiative. Specifically, in 2012 six LA Voice member congregations began high intensity political organizing requiring large numbers of congregational volunteers around Proposition 30, a state-wide ballot initiative that aimed to address issues of inequality by increasing funds for public education through a tax increase largely on the wealthy. Drawing on qualitative data from field research and interviews with LA Voice and their member congregations between 2012–2015, I examine how these six congregations organized around this issue, a significant departure from their traditional community-based organizing.

In 2012, four Catholic congregations, along with one protestant and one Jewish group that participated at a lower intensity, engaged in extensive high demand political organizing for Proposition 30, volunteering thousands of hours phone-banking, doing voter registration and getting out the vote efforts. In this article, I examine how these congregations became engaged; focusing on the role of religious and lay leadership in shaping the political engagement of their congregations, how their religious views connected with political activism, and how these congregations successfully worked around unwilling members. These early efforts later resulted in expanded political work at many more LA Voice member congregations, as well as new impactful policies for California.

2. Previous Research

Congregations and religious groups have a long history of helping the poor. Whether it's Catholic Charities assisting the homeless, or Lutheran Social Services establishing education programs for underserved communities, religious groups in the United States have long carried the mantle to aid those in need (Chaves, 2004; Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001). While these religious groups offer aid to the needy, they rarely engage in the types of political activities that would change the systems that create such staggering need in the first place (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001; for recent exceptions see: Yukich, 2013; Wood, 2002; Wood & Fulton, 2015). In the present section I address why this may be occurring.

2.1. Congregations and the Politics of Inequality

So why do religious congregations tend to shy away from the type of political work that changes the systems of inequality? First, it is a far greater challenge to change systems of inequality than it is to offer food or shelter. Most congregations offer some sort of assistance to the poor- whether it is through soup kitchens or homeless outreach—but very few execute the types of political activism necessary to sway the need for these efforts. In their work on religion and social services, Chaves and Tsitsos found that 58% of congregations, containing 78% of attendees offer some kind of social service (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001, p. 668); however, most do not engage in political outreach. In his 2004 book on congregations, Mark Chaves found that few congregations engage in any kind of political work, with 58% of congregations not engaging in any type of political activity (Chaves, 2004, p. 108); of those that do, only 9% of congregations engage in voter registration or a meeting about a policy, and fewer (about 4%) engage in the type of continuous long-term high intensity political work that is required to make significant political impacts (Chaves, 2004). Thus, while the majority of congregations are willing to do some kind of activity to help serve the poor, very few are doing the type of work LA Voice's congregations were engaged with—namely, large scale systematic political work to make sure there are fewer poor people to begin with.

There are several reasons for this focus. First, doing the type of community-based outreach necessary to change social systems requires a significant amount of time, energy, and expertise, something most congregations simply do not possess (Chaves, 2004; Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001). Most congregations are small in size, with many having only part-time or no professional staff at all and lack the resources or know how to do the kind of work that would be required to address political systems that create inequality (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001). Additionally, other research has shown that many religious actors and congregation members prefer not to have politics as part of their congregations and act on their own (Wuthnow, 2002). One other problem for congregations becoming involved in politics around systems of inequality is that religious actors often view poverty as an individual problem (Emmerson, Smith, & Sikkink, 1999; Hunt, 2002), which makes organizing around systems of inequality particularly challenging (Wilde & Glassman, 2016). The congregations in this study had to figure out a way to deal with these issues.

Finally, while we do know important information about congregational political activity around inequality, especially in the local arena (Wood, 2002; Wood & Fulton, 2015), there is still a lot to be learned about congregations and their political work (Wilde & Glassman, 2016). What we do know is that many congregations are involved in at least some nominal level of politics (Chaves, 2004), can be the backbone of social movements (Pattillo-McCoy, 1998), are often strongly engaged in community organizing and local politics (Lichterman, 2008; Wood, 2002), and vary greatly in the types of political activities they are involved with (Chaves & Beyerlein, 2003). For example, we know that conservative Christian churches are more likely to distribute conservative Christian voter pamphlets and that Catholic churches are more likely to march or protest, likely about abortion (Chaves & Beyerlein, 2003), but also around immigration (Yukich, 2013) or workers' rights (Fisher, 1989). Additionally, we know that, historically, black churches have been strongly engaged in civil rights movements offering important resources such as leadership, meeting spaces and engaged members (Pattillo-McCoy, 1998). Finally, we also know that congregations have interacted in politics in a num-

ber of ways, based not only on their religious beliefs, but because of their place in the racial and class hierarchy (Wilde & Glassman, 2016). For instance, white Protestant congregations in the 1930s and '40s were the loci for birth control reform based both on their belief in the social gospel and fears of racial suicide, or fears that white Protestants were being overrun by religious minorities from southern and eastern Europe (Wilde & Danielson, 2014). This means that the type and reasons for political activism in congregations are varied, and not always simply because of their underlying theology.

While we know a great deal about religious organizing in politics, there is still much we do not know about congregations and political organizing including how congregations become involved in political campaigns around issues of inequality, how they negotiate class and racial tensions that become apparent in this work, or if their work might impact other congregations in a similar network. Since only 4% of congregations take on this high level of engagement, understanding the LA Voice congregations and their engagement offers a chance to better understand this rare work. Additionally, while we do not know how much political activity is related to systematic issues of inequality; we do know that since conservative churches almost always get involved in conservative causes (Chaves & Beyerlein, 2003), we can then infer that the chances of congregations becoming involved in changing political systems that produce inequality is very small. Understanding how the LA Voice congregations actively engaged in these issues helps shed some light on these questions.

3. Data and Methods

From April 2012 to March 2015, field research and in-depth interviews with key informants were conducted during two political campaigns with LA Voice. In this article, I focus on the first of these campaigns, Proposition 30. LA Voice is part of the PICO National Network (originally the People Improving Communities through Organizing), a faith-based community-organizing group founded in 1972. Since 1972, PICO has grown to over 150 affiliates in fifty cities throughout the United States; LA Voice is one of these affiliates that works on its own organizing efforts in conjunction with PICO's state and federal offices. In 2012, LA Voice had nineteen (19) member congregations from a variety of theological and racial-ethnic backgrounds. During this time, much of LA Voice's organizing efforts were conducted in conjunction with PICO's state office—PICO California. Fieldnotes were taken at LA Voice events, but the work being done on these initiatives was often a tandem effort by both LA Voice and PICO California.

The first phase of data collection occurred in 2012, during LA Voice's organizing around Proposition 30. Field research was conducted at various events including strategy meetings, organizing meetings, and canvassing for voters. Sixteen (16) in-depth interviews were then conducted with participating ministers, congregation-based organizers, and secular organizers. Questions were asked about their organizing, congregational engagement, religious beliefs, and organizing history. This article analyzes these data about congregational organizing for Proposition 30.

4. Changing Inequality through Congregational Political Engagement

Until their foray into electoral politics in 2012, LA Voice congregations had worked on community organizing campaigns. This meant that LA Voice congregation worked on local issues that were important to member congregations such as ensuring there was a grocery store in an undeserved neighborhood, affordable housing near member congregations, lobbying city council members for better wages, or working with police to get rid of a drug house in the neighborhood. Their move into doing state level politics that included issues such as voter registration, informing voters about Proposition 30, and getting out the vote during the election, were significant departures from their usual brand of organizing, which relied on long-term, community-focused campaigns rather than state-wide, short-term high intensity voter drives. While PICO California had long been involved in state level political outreach, this work involved attempting to influence individual legislators to pass specific bills, not working to pass state level voter initiatives (Wood, 2002). While this earlier political work by PICO California relied on local level affiliates like LA Voice to do supportive local work (Wood, 2002), local level affiliates were not specifically involved in doing the type of higher level politics until Proposition 30. This meant that, for both PICO and LA Voice, helping to pass Proposition 30 was a very different way to create political change.

So how did these congregations work to change the politics of inequality in California? I argue that the answer is twofold. First, the congregations were able to harness resources outside of their own organizations. LA Voice and PICO helped member congregations by partnering with experienced politically active secular groups at both the state and local level, leveraging resources and giving them access to knowledge and technology that that they would not have had otherwise (Tarrow, 2011).[1] These resources, including phone banking equipment, voter lists, and training on getting out the vote; these were shared with congregations allowing them to leverage their most important resources, congregation members as volunteers. This meant that the issues often encountered by congregations, such as lack of knowledge or technology (Chaves & Tsitsos, 2001), were overcome because the LA Voice congregations were able to rely on external resources to meet these needs.

Second, while LA Voice had to harness outside resources for some of their work, similar to previous work

[1] I expand on these relationships more deeply in a separate work with two co-authors (Fulton, Sager, & Wood, 2015).

by religious groups in political activism (Pattillo-McCoy, 1998; Wood, 2002; Yukich, 2013), they were able to rely on internal resources for much of their political engagement. So how did these congregations engage in the fight for Proposition 30? What were the actions they took? In this article I argue that there were three ways the congregations became involved in the fight for Proposition 30. First, their religious leadership brought ideas about political organizing into congregations. Second, to engage willing congregation members, religious and lay leaders had to make the connections between their members religious beliefs, personal struggles and the political goal of the proposition. Finally, because of class tensions that became apparent during Proposition 30, religious leaders then used a targeted approach when bringing in these political battles to the congregation. Through this work they were successfully able to do significant amounts of voter outreach and show other LA Voice congregations that this kind of political engagement was not only meaningful, but made a large scale difference.

4.1. Religious Leaders and Congregational Engagement

Research shows that leaders of a congregation have significant power and are often key to successful political or community engagement in congregations (Carroll, 2006). The leaders of these LA Voice congregations were key organizers in the political engagement of congregations around Proposition 30. As one lay leader, Michelle, succinctly noted:

> It really takes the clergy, the pastoral leader of that parish or congregation to push that forward and be really present in the beginning…and encouraging them to take a look at this with an action plan that's more baby steps, as opposed to trying to see the whole elephant.

In other words, the religious leader was key to the congregation seeing the role they could play in the election, even if at the beginning it appeared daunting. Religious leaders who truly believed in the initiative were able to harness the power of their congregation to successfully work on the initiative. Bianca, one of the lay leaders at a different congregation, described how the priest at her congregation made the push for Proposition 30 something he regularly discussed during his sermons:

> Father John was very instrumental, I believe, in making announcements and making sure that the congregation, both in Spanish and in English and Tagalog, knew the importance of this proposition, and…that whatever propaganda was being put out there to divert the reality of this from the people, they would know what to expect. So he has always been very instrumental in something that he feels a passion for.

The leadership pushed the idea of being involved in the campaign because they truly believed in it and were willing to counter myths or other falsehoods.

The religious leaders of these congregations saw the initiative as part of their mission. Father James, one of the priests I spoke with discussed bringing up these political issues from the pulpit as "conversions" and that he saw his role as much more than a person who gives a sermon every Sunday:

> I think my role is to tell stories and help people see the real dignity of people despite their finances because I actually think that most people really do want to do the right thing, and if you just help people to see the dignity of human beings….I'm allowing those stories to help convert them. And by conversion I mean just soften their hearts, make them want to help in some way. I think that's part of my role. I think the Jesuits, if we're doing our jobs right, we should have our foot in a lot of different doors. We should have one foot with the poor and one foot with the rich. We should have one foot in politics and one foot in religion. We should have one foot at city hall and one foot at Skid Row. I think that's what we should be doing, and I think people look to us to do that.

The commitment by religious leaders to bringing this issue to their congregations cannot be overstated. It was not just bringing up these issues in mass, but also allowing organizers from LA Voice to come into the church and make announcements and get recruits. As Bianca explained:

> Father John made the announcements at the mass, which is really great whenever something like this happens. He made the announcements that we were going to have our first meeting, and he explained what it was about. He had a mass welcoming LA Voice. From there we had our meeting. The first time we probably had over 150 to 200 people.

Without allowing organizers to come into churches and without the continuous push from the pulpit, the congregations would not have expanded their role as something more than a congregation that helps the poor in their own community, rather than a congregation that works so that the system creates fewer poor people.

Religious leaders not only spoke from the pulpit, but they also brought Proposition 30 to the forefront in what are called one on ones, or individual meetings with congregation members. Father James, whose congregation is in a poor neighborhood in east LA, described the intense process of these one on ones and how they helped to build a sense of activism within the congregation because they owned the issues that they were going to work on over time.

> The first thing we did was a one-on-one campaign. I think we did three hundred, one-to-ones. Three hundred conversations with people. We wrote the results of them on these stars. The questions were something like, 'What's your dream? What do you think needs to be done in this community?' We wrote the results of that in brief one- or two-word answers on these gold stars made out of paper, and then we had a big piece of blue paper on the front of the church by the altar, and we taped them to that, like, 'These are our stars that are going to lead us to some new place'.

This direct involvement was especially important in getting volunteers out. In one of the organizing meetings I attended the organizers noted that when the religious leaders became involved in campaigning it helped motivate the whole church. Quoting Bianca: "It was really fun. We made these events [voter drives] into community days and we all went out with priest to campaign. After that people wanted to do it again". At one of the Catholic congregations, I made several trips through the neighborhood to register voters, but it was when I went with the congregation's nun that the best results were achieved. When she would walk with us, people would come out of their houses and say "hello"; otherwise we did not get such a friendly reception. By becoming engaged at the pulpit and in the streets, religious leaders were instrumental in creating congregation-wide engagement.

4.2. Framing Religious Values as Political Values

It was not just *who* discussed these issues, but *how* they discussed them. Telling the congregation that they had to be involved in politics or moving too soon into a political discussion, was not going to work. Previous work on religion and political engagement has shown that connecting religious beliefs with political actions helps bolster congregation engagement (Yukich, 2013). This means that for work on an issue such as Proposition 30, politics needed to be introduced as part of the religious underpinnings of the church—in other words, you have to start with the values, then move onto the politics. One of the organizers of the Jewish group working on Proposition 30, Adam, discussed how he saw this happen in other congregations that were also working on Proposition 30:

> You can't start with politics. You have to start with values and justice. The pastor at Our Lady (name removed) has become a huge leader on a bunch of issues and is apolitical to conservative. He's not motivated by those things, but he is motivated by values and the stories that people have.

In other words, the politics were secondary to the religious values. The values were how the leaders connected their congregations to this new type of political work. Eric, pastor in one of the most conservative churches in the group, described how he took the religious symbolism around him and the religious stories in churches to help parishioners make these connections.

> It's nice to see a sentimental poster of Jesus bouncing children on his knee, and the caption reads, 'Let the little children come unto me, and don't forbid them, for such is the kingdom of heaven', that's a beautiful image, but when we want to say, 'OK, not making the little children suffer means giving them adequate education and safe neighborhoods and healthy food, this is what it means to step up for the little children', I try to explain it to them in theological terms that they'll understand.

By explaining the religious underpinnings of working on Proposition 30, the religious leaders could create space for their congregants to see why they should become involved in this work. One of the LA Voice leaders, Richard, noted that being religious and having a certain set of values would lead to more "openness" to the kinds of teachings about these political initiatives. Creating this openness by bringing in politics was something that Father James noted that many congregation members desired:

> I love talking about this stuff at Sunday masses, including it in the homily and the liturgy. That's what I bring, I can drive the point home pretty well through the course of the liturgy....I can help people have a more spiritual reasoning behind why they would do something like vote for Prop. 30 or work for Prop. 30 or work for social justice. You could almost feel people in the room go, 'Ah!' like a sigh of relief when I said, 'The minute that Jesus puts this child in front of us, we become political. We have to realize that Jesus was being political and calling on us to be political, too'. At one mass, someone was like, 'Oh, finally someone said the truth!' So I think it's that that I can bring.

This move to bringing in discussion of a specific proposition that addressed inequality and the pain members were feeling into multiple sermons, was in many ways a radical move, but for some church members it was also a welcome move. In one of the organizing meetings I attended, a young Latino woman who belonged to one of the churches organizing for Proposition 30 told the story about how she had to stay at community college for much longer than she had planned because there were not enough classes being offered: "I couldn't register for the classes I needed. There was only one class and I had to fight with 30 other students for one spot; it really sucks to have to keep fighting". This means that the push by clergy for the congregation to fight for Proposition 30 matched the needs of many members of the congregation. Through their sermons, they created a space where the stories of congregation members were welcomed. As one religious leader noted: "We just kept telling stories and doing one-to-ones in our congregation, finding out

where people's pain was at…" By finding out where their pain was at, they could then talk about how the issues they were working on could at least help resolve some of the pain they were feeling. By becoming involved in political projects that matched their religious goals and congregations needs, these congregations became powerful political organizations.

4.3. Overcoming Congregational Obstacles

All the congregations that became involved in Proposition 30 faced pushback from wealthier and more politically conservative congregants. While these congregations had been involved in previous local level efforts to help their communities, Proposition 30 was about raising taxes on the wealthy, including members of the congregations. This meant there were some wealthier congregation members that felt threatened by this political work, creating challenges for organizers (Wilde & Glassman, 2016). Similar to what Yukich (2013) found in her work on the New Sanctuary Movement, in some ways this meant that organizers actually had to work for change on two fronts: the political and the religious one. As one LA Voice organizer, Sherrie, noted: "With the low income congregations it just made sense, but when we were talking to more middleclass communities it was more challenging". While congregation members may say they want to help the poor, this does not mean they want to make changes to the system that benefits them in order to do so (Wilde & Glassman, 2016). To deal with these members, religious leaders developed strategies to go around them or counter their objections. Sister Marie, one of the religious leaders I spoke with, discussed how she would not talk about this issue at a certain mass, since she knew there would be people who would object:

> I have a section of the community that are Republican and wealthy. They were not in favor of it, and for that reason I didn't talk about it much from the pulpit at the 10 o'clock mass, because that's the mass that most of my Republicans go to. We did it outside the church, asked people to be part of it and participate.

For the religious leaders, pushback from congregation members was sometimes a challenge. People would come up to them after church and complain about the politics, but because they were dedicated they would brush these criticisms to the side or work to convince them that this was the right move. Michelle explained:

> We also had the challenge of—and I can speak for some of the clergy leaders—because at one of our forums we discovered that we do have some pretty affluent, wealthy parishioners who preferred another proposition, or preferred neither of these, neither Prop. 30 or Prop. 38. They would test us. But eventually we saw that the true identity of the congregation in terms of the community and in terms of community leaders. After those final pushes, I think those who were against it before were in line with us.

To overcome these objections, Father John discussed how he tailored his sermons depending on his audience, so he knew he was reaching the people who would want to be involved, while not reaching the people who would push back.

> My sermons talked about Prop. 30. I made it a very big focal point in Spanish, at our 5 o'clock youth mass. The reason I went specifically with them is because they are the ones that are voting….I found out parishioners in English were much more receptive to being involved in sustainable issues, land use, circulation, they were much more involved proactively in trying to better the city. So you've got to pick and choose how you do your fights.

Knowing your audience took an engaged religious leader. Pastor Eric discussed his interaction with getting his church board to agree to become involved. While the board eventually agreed with him to become involved in Proposition 30, it was not easy because of their concern that it would divide the congregation, a reasonable concern given the nature of the debate:

> The board was a little hesitant. We voted as a church board to be involved up to a certain point and then we went back and they said, 'OK, let's be involved all the way'….The risk is that it splits people, divides the church along political lines….And when we had those conversations, I would say, 'I agree, I agree, I agree, but right now, if we don't pass this measure, the kids are going to have a shorter school year next year and teachers are going to be let go and the classrooms are going to get bigger and community colleges are going to get even harder to book classes in. This is what's going to happen starting in January'.

Engaged religious leaders targeted the right audiences within the churches, avoided potentially contentious audiences, and then worked to convince those who were not on board. These various strategies meant that while the path to being politically active was sometimes challenging, the churches that did become engaged were willing to continue this involvement in the next election for Proposition 47, a state wide criminal justice reform initiative.

4.4. Congregational Political Success

In their campaign to pass Proposition 30, LA Voice congregations had truly impressive results: they had 9,290 conversations with voters, identified 7,242 supporters of Proposition 30, and got 5,149 voters turned out to vote "yes" for the initiative—a 71% response rate from contacted voters. Through phone-banking, door knocking,

and thousands of volunteer hours, they got a significant number of voters to the polls to help pass Proposition 30. Father John, who was very engaged, discussed how his congregation worked hard over the summer and fall to help turn out voters:

> Education here has been poor historically…so we started doing campaigning that summer, started doing some telephone-banking with a new group we just formed. We worked around the clock. We had adults, high school students involved, and we had leaders of our youth ministry. It was really a roundabout effort. We probably worked on close to seven hundred voters that became active. We went through the inactive list. By the time election day hit, seven hundred voters went from inactive to active. It was amazing in the city itself. I think in a municipal election, less than 4,000 people vote.

In a town where only 4,000 people vote, one congregation turned out 700 new voters, or an almost 20% increase in the number of active voters. This meant that, in the end, Proposition 30 passed with 55.37% of the vote. Soon after, community colleges began adding more classes (Rivera, 2012).

One other result was also clear for these congregations; the victories that they had helped create in 2012 made these congregations feel efficacious and therefore more willing to engage in future political activism. After the Proposition 30 win the congregations had the self-perception that they could alter the political realities through their own organizing in a world that often seemed so hopeless. They saw vulnerabilities in the system and took advantage of the political opportunities that were presented (Meyer, 2004). As Father James noted:

> It was the first time we did it. And I have to say, I'm really grateful we did it. I felt better as a person that we got involved in this instead of just sitting at the sidelines and watching other people be involved. I felt like we were truly putting our faith into action.

Religious leader Sister Marie, who became strongly involved in her churches work, remembered how excited she was when she saw how many people had come out to vote, something that greatly surprised her and made her realize how important it was that the church becomes involved in politics; for her, you could not separate the two.

> The lines were out the door, and a lot of them were our parishioners, Hispanic, in line...it made a huge difference. And walking the streets and saying hi to people and meeting them was great. I enjoyed it, and I think the people did, too, even the people in their homes, seeing the church take a stand on something. And we've taught that politics is part of the church, we've talked about this with them, that politics is not separate from the church, that you are asked to be a citizen and therefore you need to be an educated citizen and know what's right.

The challenges they had faced felt surmountable and the end result was a sense that they could make even greater change: "We've already showed that it can work", Bianca said, "I really do believe that since Prop. 30 passed we've got one foot in the door". The organizers I spoke with felt that the challenge, for the most part, was getting people to realize that they could make a difference and seeing others make a difference. As Sherrie, an organizer, put it: "So a lot of people have to become very brave and take some risks, and then learn that they're actually okay". This bravery was contagious and spread to other network congregations.

After the 2012 election, six additional congregations became involved in the fight for Proposition 47 in 2014, a statewide ballot initiative which aimed to limit the number of people in prison—another way that systematic inequality is perpetuated—by limiting the number of crimes that could be charged as felonies. It passed by 59.61%. An additional three other congregations became active in the 2016 elections and campaigned on several ballot initiatives aimed at tackling affordable housing and public transportation, both of which passed. All of these congregations in the LA Voice network are planning on continuing this state-level political engagement in 2018.

5. Conclusion

The congregations in this study became engaged in a type of political organizing that was very new to them. To take on passing a state-level initiative that would increase taxes on the wealthy, including members of their own congregations, required an intense amount of work by the LA Voice organizers, resources from PICO, LA Voice and other secular organizations, strongly involved and committed clergy, and work within their own congregations to negotiate opposition. Through telling stories, maneuvering around potential problems in the congregations, and linking the pain of the parishioners with the political change, the congregations in this study became politically savvy organizations that were able to make a difference in challenging a system that often perpetuates inequality. LA Voice organizer Sherrie noted that by getting congregations to think about systems versus service, these congregations were now able to start changing the realities of what life looked like for their members and society at large:

> Congregations who are deeply worried about homelessness, for example, can talk about homelessness till they're blue in the face, but if they're never talking about mental healthcare and affordable housing we're just going to be feeding people for the rest of our lives….And so I think congregations need to not be

afraid to engage in those bigger system level changes and to know that that's really all part of transforming the world.

The fight to alter systematic inequality was something congregations and their leaders began to view as no longer optional—their religion called them into action and helped direct their work. By shifting understandings of what a church could and could not do when it comes to politics, the politically active congregations within the LA Voice network, created a new understanding within their congregations about what was possible for them to accomplish when it came to systematic political change. This model of religious political success then spread to other member congregations and to new initiatives that challenged inequality. If congregations take up political issues which address systems that perpetuate inequality they can create broader political changes.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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Article

"It's Not Equality": How Race, Class, and Gender Construct the Normative Religious Self among Female Prisoners

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Abstract
Prior sociological research has demonstrated that religious selves are gendered. Using the case of female inmates—some of the most disadvantaged Americans—this article shows that dominant messages constructing the religious self are not only gendered, but also deeply intertwined with race and class. Data from 12 months of ethnographic fieldwork on religion inside a U.S. state women's prison reveal that religious volunteers—predominately middle-class African American women—preached feminine submissiveness and finding a "man of God" to marry to embody religious ideals. However, these messages were largely out of sync with the realities of working class and poor incarcerated women, especially given their temporary isolation from the marriage market and the marital prospects in the socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods to which many would return. These findings suggest that scholars must pay attention to how race, class, and gender define dominant discourses around the religious self and consider the implications for stratification for those who fail to fulfill this dominant ideology.

Keywords
class; gender; prison; race; religion; religious self; stratification

Issue
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1. Introduction

Prior sociological research has shown that religious selves are gendered (Avishai, 2008; Cadge, 2004; Rao, 2015; Schnabel, 2017a; Shahar, 2015). Using the case of female inmates—some of the most disadvantaged Americans—this article shows that religious selves are not only gendered, but also deeply intertwined with race and class. Data from a 12-month ethnography on religion inside a U.S. state women's prison reveal that religious volunteers—predominately middle-class African American women—preached feminine submissiveness and finding a "man of God" to marry to embody religious ideals. However, these messages were largely out of sync with the realities of working class and poor incarcerated women, especially given their temporary isolation from the marriage market and the marital prospects in the socioeconomically disadvantaged neighborhoods to which many inmates would return.

This article contributes to scholarship on the construction of religious selves in three ways. First, to understand how individuals define their religious selves requires an intersectional approach involving race, class, and gender. Second, context matters in interrogating how religious leaders shape discourses around the construction of religious selves. Finally, top-down expectations around religious selves could reinforce stratification, as they involve embodying ideals that may be out of reach for the least advantaged adherents. Overall, scholars must pay attention to how race, class, and gender define dominant discourses around the religious self and must consider the implications for inequality for those who fail to fulfill this ideology.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Doing Gender and the Construction of the Religious Selves

Sociological research on religion in the past decade has convincingly demonstrated that "doing religion" inextricably intertwined with "doing gender" (Avishai, 2008; Cadge, 2004; Rao, 2015; Schnabel, 2017b; Shahar, 2015). "Doing religion", as defined by Avishai (2008, pp 413, 409), is a "semi-conscious, self-authoring project" in which individuals "search for authentic religious subjecthood". That is to say, in much the same way that gender is constructed and performed in everyday life through interaction and embodiment (Butler, 1990; West & Zimmerman, 1987), an individual's "religious self" is constructed and performed in a manner consistent with gender norms. Constructing one's religious self is a bottom-up project (Avishai, 2008) that occurs within the context of available, top-down gendered religious scripts (Davidman, 1991; Ingersoll, 2003; Mahmood, 2004; Rao, 2015; Sumerau & Cragun, 2014).

Scholarship on the gendered religious self emphasizes its implications for gender inequality. Research on women in conservative religions (Avishai, 2016; Burke, 2012; Rao, 2015) grapples with whether women's participation in conservative religions resists or reinforces patriarchal ideology. A smaller body of research has considered the gendered religious self among men (Bartkowski, 2004; Heath, 2003; Rao, 2015; Smilde, 2007; Sumerau, 2012). Some scholars caution that conservative religions sacralize gender differences that promote feminine subordination (Chong, 2006; Sumerau & Cragun, 2014; Sumerau, Cragun, & Mathers, 2016). From this perspective, women's engagement in conservative religions reinforces inequality, whether advertently or inadvertently. Others argue that gender-specific religious engagement is an active and empowered choice (Avishai, 2008; Casselberry, 2017; Mahmood, 2004; Nyhagen, 2017; Ozorak, 1996; Prickett, 2015; Shahar, 2015; Yanay-Ventura, 2016). From this perspective, women's decisions around clothing, body rituals, and daily practices demonstrate agentic religious engagement rather than submission to men's rules. Both perspectives agree that negotiation of these issues is part and parcel of the embodiment of a gendered religious self (Ecklund, 2003; Ellis, 2017b; Mahmood, 2004; Zion-Waldoks, 2015).

Missing from this scholarship is a thorough consideration of the role of race and class in shaping the gendered religious self. As Avishai, Jafar and Rinaldo (2015) comment in an introduction to their special issue on gender research in religion:

> We suggest that gender and religion scholarship would benefit from theoretical perspectives that build on current theories in the sociology of gender, including conceptualizing gender and sexuality…as profoundly relational and intersecting with other categories such as race and class. (Avishai, Jafar, & Rinaldo, 2015, p. 13)

Just as those studying women in conservative religions debate whether women's participation in conservative religious practices reflects patriarchy given the broader context of gender inequality, we should interrogate whether the performance of the religious self reflects, resists, or reinforces broader structural inequality around race, class, and gender.

2.2. Why Intersectionality Matters for the Religious Self

An intersectional approach to the religious self would examine how individuals construct their religious selves where key identities overlap, especially regarding race, class, and gender (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; McCall, 2001; Spelman, 1988; West & Fenstermaker, 2002). While many studies have considered the relationships between religion and race (Chatters, Taylor, & Lincoln, 1999; Mattis, 2002), class (Keister, 2003, 2008, 2011; McCloud, 2007; Pyle, 2006; Smith & Faris, 2005; Tevington, in press), and religion and gender (Fowler, Hertzke, Olson, & Den Dulk, 2013; Green, 2007; Kaufmann & Petrocik, 1999; Roth & Kroll, 2007; Stark, 2002), far fewer have considered the intersections of these dimensions—what Wilde and Glassman (2016) call "complex religion". An intersectional approach to religion is important because "one cannot study religion independently of race and class in the US" (Wilde & Glassman, 2016, p. 409) because "religion has been and continues to be a place of stark segregation by race, ethnicity, and class" (Wilde & Glassman, 2016, p. 408). We know that the gendered religious self shapes political attitudes (Baker & Whitehead, 2016; Schnabel, 2017b), career decisions (Leamaster & Subramaniam, 2016), dating and marriage attitudes (Irby, 2014; Rao, 2015), sartorial choices (Bartkowski & Ghazal-Read, 2003; Rao, 2015), and family relationships (Bulanda, 2011). Similarly, the intersectional religious self is likely to shape important individual-level outcomes related to politics, family, work, and the presentation of self.

Intersectionality is more than a simple additive calculation of the effects of race, class, and gender on religious behavior (cf. McCall, 2001; Singh, 2015), but rather, its "raison d'être lies in its attentiveness to power relations and social inequalities" (Collins, 2015, p. 1). A central aim of intersectionality is to elucidate the "interlocking" oppressions of sexism, racism, and classism (Crenshaw, 1991; Spelman, 1988). A handful of studies measure how ethnicity, class, and gender shape level of religious participation (Karim, 2008; Schnabel, 2015), or how racial identification is shaped by religion, class and gender (Davenport, 2016; Karim, 2008). Fewer interrogate how these variables shape the "power relations" and "social inequalities" that Collins (2015) called for. While scholars have started to chip away at the ways religion interacts with race, class, and gender, we have yet to interrogate

how these intersections come to bear on intersectionality's primary project of understanding inequality.

The few existing studies on intersectionality, religion, and inequality tell us a great deal about how individuals draw upon competing identities to shape their religious selves. We know, for instance, the ways black Muslim women buffer themselves against oppression by carving out space for meaningful religious engagement (Prickett, 2015) and seeking solace in their religious community (Byng, 1998). Likewise, we understand that individuals shape their religious selves by drawing upon normative ideals, as in the case of Muslim women in Pakistan who signaled their educational attainment to mark themselves as "good" Muslims (Khurshid, 2015). However, like the literature on gendered religious selves, these scholars examine bottom-up ways individuals define themselves based on intersecting identities. While crucial, we must also directly interrogate the contexts in which individuals make decisions on how to do religion.

This article frames the discussion to ask how top-down religious messages shape the normative ways individuals construct and embody religious selves. The intersectional religious self is not constructed in a vacuum. The environment in which adherents "do religion" exists within a broader landscape of stratification and depends in large part upon the religious lessons they absorb. I find that religious teachers rely on their perceptions and expectations around race, class, and gender when describing the "ideal" religious self. These expectations could reinforce stratification, since the normative religious self embodies ideals that may be out of reach for disadvantaged adherents. This finding helps move literature on gendered religious selves closer to an intersectional approach, examining how race and class interact alongside gender to construct the religious self.

3. Methods

I spent twelve months conducting ethnographic fieldwork inside a state women's prison that I call Mapleside Prison (all names are pseudonyms) from April 2014 to May 2015. Mapleside Prison represents a typical U.S. state women's prison, housing about 1,000 women of all security levels, from minimum to maximum. The population comprises even proportions of black and white women, with a lower share of Latina women.[1] Ages range from 18 to over 80; average age is 36. Average length of stay is around 3.5 years; stays range from seven months to life. The largest shares of women are convicted of drug offenses and murder; the next most common offenses are larceny and assault.

I visited Mapleside two to four days per week. My field notes chronicled what I witnessed, along with quotes taken down verbatim in my notebook in real time, totaling nearly 900 single-spaced pages. I coded field notes using the software Nvivo based on emergent themes. At Mapleside, I gained research access to observe activities in the "Main Hall", the building that housed the gym, dining hall, classrooms, computer lab, volunteer coordinator's office, religious library, and chaplain's office. I observed a range of everyday activities, from watching inmates eat lunch to teasing each other in the hallway, to writing essays for college courses in the computer lab. I spent one to seven hours per week doing office work for Chaplain Harper, the full-time chaplain on staff, herself a black Baptist in her mid-50s. I helped with photocopying, filing, mailing letters, making phone calls, taking messages, and even sitting in as an outside volunteer at religious activities, which some prison staff called "babysitting". My office work allowed me to witness Chaplain Harper counseling inmates, managing volunteers, organizing programs, and processing paperwork. These activities made me a familiar face, which granted me access to almost every room in the Main Hall. Because I could position myself in a variety of rooms and corridors, I witnessed countless interactions between inmates, both in front of and beyond the surveillance of prison guards, who are called corrections officers ("officers", from here on).

Beyond informal observations, I conducted formal observations of programs in the Main Hall. Religious programs are a key aspect of prison life for women (Ellis, 2017a). I observed scriptural studies and worship services for a range of faith traditions, including Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Sunni Muslim groups.[2] Outside prison, religious institutions are among the most racially segregated institutions in the U.S., and Sunday morning "the most segregated hour" (Dougherty, 2003; Emerson & Kim, 2003; Emerson & Smith, 2001; Hadaway, Hackett, & Miller, 1984). At Mapleside, religious programs varied in their degree of racial composition. The Sunni Muslim group of about 50 was entirely comprised of black inmates; the Jewish group of about 15 was entirely comprised of white inmates. Among the Catholic group of about 70—of whom approximately 19 attended weekly—on average, 71% were white, 18% were black, 12% were Hispanic or Latina, and less than 1% were Asian. Of the 260 Protestant inmates who attended worship services each Sunday, on average, 70% were black, 29% were white, and 1% were Hispanic or Latina. The Protestants were somewhat more racially integrated than similar churches outside prison walls.

A large share of my observations, and the primary focus of this article, zoomed in on the largest religious group at Mapleside Prison—the Protestants—who comprised 63% of the inmate population. This group was an official umbrella affiliation for Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal, Pentecostal, Apostolic, and nondenominational Christians.[3] The Protestant group held a

[1] Absolute numbers withheld to protect the identity of the prison.

[2] Smaller religious groups, such as Nation of Islam, Wicca, Lutheran, and Jehovah's Witness, held meetings beyond my access.

[3] The largest religious group at Mapleside was officially referred to as the "Protestants". Every inmate, upon arrival to prison, fills out a religious preference form, which allows her to attend religious studies and worship services for that group. She may select only one affiliation. Religious affiliation may be changed every 60 days. Those who checked the "Protestant" box comprised 63% of the inmate population (about 630 out of 1,000 inmates). This

single worship service for an average of 260 inmates each week, with separate Bible studies for each denomination within the umbrella. I observed Sunday church services, Bible studies, and religious self-help programs nearly every day of the week. Additionally, I conducted observations on major holidays, including Good Friday, Easter, Pentecost, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

I was prohibited from bringing a tape recorder inside the facility, and private one-on-one interviews were logistically difficult. Nevertheless, thanks to significant coordination by officers, I ultimately conducted formal interviews with 18 inmates. Finally, I accessed public court records to verify conviction and sentence length for the inmates described in this manuscript.

4. Findings

Incarcerated women represent some of the most disadvantaged Americans with respect to race, class, and gender. This case study presents a unique opportunity to consider how religious leaders construct an "ideal" religious self with respect to multiple dimensions of inequality. Religious leaders who volunteered at Mapleside modeled femininity and preached that inmates should embody feminine submissiveness to live up to religious ideals. Furthermore, they preached that inmates should seek a "man of God" to marry post-release. Both the manifestation of femininity and the expectation of marrying a "man of God" aligned with normative assumptions around race, gender, and social class that were out of reach for many incarcerated women, at least while in prison. These findings suggest that constructions of the ideal religious self are defined in potentially problematic ways by those privileged enough to control the narrative.

4.1. Modeling Femininity

"It's so distracting to me, the things they wear", Chanel sighed. Chanel is an early 40s black inmate serving time for a financial crime, and is one of the many women at Mapleside who regularly commented on volunteers' appearances. That Wednesday afternoon, Chanel and Ja, an early 20s black inmate serving a couple years for drug distribution, sat together in the back of a classroom in the Main Hall. Rather than pay attention to Bible study, they compared notes on volunteers' outfits at the Easter Sunday worship service a few days prior. They noticed every detail: "I love the pencil skirt", Ja remarked about Elder Desirée, a black Baptist volunteer in her early 40s who had paired her skirt with a hot pink blouse and matching hot pink high heels. Chanel agreed. Ja noticed the gold Rolex watch on one volunteer's wrist, and Chanel remembered that Chaplain Harper was wearing red heels. Ja chimed in: "It was like a two-inch heel". Chanel and Ja sized up every detail of religious leaders' fashion choices. Like many inmates I spoke to, they noticed that the majority of volunteers were black women with well-tailored wardrobes.

At any given religious program, most volunteers conformed to a curated, highly feminine, business-professional style. They routinely wore polished pantsuits or fitted dresses. Volunteers paired their outfits with pointy high heels ranging from shiny pumps to strappy leopard print slingbacks. One volunteer even wore a light blue ball gown and a tiara to the Christmas evening service at Mapleside, conjuring a Cinderella-like impression. Volunteers' hair was often dyed and pressed, worn straight without a single hair out of place, in intricately-styled braids and up-dos. Their nails were almost always professionally polished, and their faces perfectly covered in glossy makeup. Most volunteers wore sparkling jewelry. I spotted dangling earrings, ruby rings, and chunky beaded necklaces. Reverend Mona, a Pentecostal volunteer, showed up wearing a rotation of glitzy, colorful eyeglasses, rarely repeating a debut. "I love my adornment", she confessed during a Ministry class she was teaching, "I love my matching earrings and necklaces". When Reverend Mona and other volunteers entered the room, a waft of floral perfume followed; their confident, feminine presence was all the more apparent as they stood poised and smiled warmly.

Perfume was contraband for prisoners. In fact, prisoners could not easily mirror volunteers' feminine style at all. They were restricted to prison-issued tan sweats, with tan t-shirts for the hot summer months and thicker khaki jackets in the cold winter months. Most outerwear, including sweatshirts and sweatpants, were stamped with large, white "D.O.C." lettering. Lexi, a 40-year-old Jewish inmate, despaired: "I miss clothes. I'm so sick of beige". In fact, other colors were so rare that when Estrella, a Pentecostal inmate in her 30s, donned magenta winter gloves before braving the frigid walk back to her housing unit, she giggled: "I love 'em, they're not beige!" As for accessories, inmates were permitted a watch, a wedding band, and small stud earrings. Inmates could wear a necklace only if it was religious; many wore a small cross or crucifix around their necks. The women at Mapleside could customize their hair by braiding it, straightening it, or curling it, but they were permitted only one hairclip at a time. "You got to get creative in here", said Una, an early 40s black Protestant inmate, while showing off her eyeglass frames. Una had painted what were previously black frames using teal nail polish topped with a layer of glitter, making them colorful and sparkly. Inmates did what they could to express their style, but given the constraints of the prison rules, the divide was stark between volunteers' feminine, professional-looking style and inmates' casual tan uniforms.

The divide between prisoners' and volunteers' backgrounds did not stop at feminine clothing. Prisoners na-

group is difficult to categorize more precisely because it encompassed a wide range of denominational affiliations, contingent on which outside churches sent volunteer preachers to Mapleside.

tionwide come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and lower educational attainment (Heckman & LaFontaine, 2010; Pettit & Western, 2004; Western & Pettit, 2005). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics' most recent report, 42% of all female prisoners have not completed high school or a GED (Harlow, 2003). Compared to 58% of American women with some college, only 31% of women prisoners have some college or more (Ewert & Wildhagen, 2011). Although no official statistics on social class at Mapleside are available, my observations suggested that Mapleside was a relatively typical women's prison in these demographic respects. Many inmates were working class or poor single mothers; a majority had completed some or all of high school but no college. This stood in clear contrast to most volunteers, who presented as middle-class women, many of whom routinely mentioned the graduate degrees they had earned, and some even disclosed their six-figure incomes.

Why do these stark differences between inmates and religious volunteers matter? Inmates did not have access, both due to economic disadvantage and prison regulations, to the same expressions of femininity available to religious volunteers. These mismatches around social class and gender expression are a starting point in understanding how the ideal religious self constructed by volunteers was out of reach for most incarcerated women. These incongruities between inmates and volunteers became even more noteworthy in light of the lessons of feminine submission that volunteers preached.

4.2. Preaching Feminine Submission

Despite the profound issues of race and class in the prison setting, religious volunteers rarely mentioned these aspects of stratification (Ellis, 2017a). Instead, a majority of their preaching focused on love, gender traditionalism in marriage, and feminine submission. "God set up the order in this world, for men to have dominion", Reverend Mona explained one afternoon at her weekly Ministry class to a group of some of Mapleside's most devout inmates. Attending Reverend Mona's class was voluntary, and generally the 25 or so inmate students eagerly attended to learn how to minister. That day, like every day, Reverend Mona was dressed to the nines. She wore a skirt suit and dangling pearl earrings with a matching pearl necklace. Her hair was perfectly coiffed into a tightly braided top knot.

A happily married Pentecostal minister, Reverend Mona repeatedly promoted gender traditionalism in her lessons. She once professed that she disparaged gender equality in her own marriage because "God set a natural order. First, it's man, then woman, then family. You're not partners—it's not equality". Reverend Mona argued that this "natural order" of the family ultimately benefited women: "I like that, because if something goes wrong in a marriage, God goes after the husband first". Lacking responsibility meant lacking blame. She continued: "I'm happy with it that way. I'm glad the bills are in my husband's name. If there's a problem? Talk to him". With this, Reverend Mona cheerfully pointed her finger at the air next to her, conjuring the image of a responsible husband by her side.

These messages of gender traditionalism are not out of the ordinary for conservative Christians (Perry & Whitehead, 2016; Pevey, Williams, & Ellison, 1996), although generally less common among black Protestants (Glass & Jacobs, 2005; Glass & Nath, 2006). Feminine submissiveness comes with the territory. "Remember, you're *his* helpmeet", Reverend Mona warned. Men's authority as head of household was part of the "natural order", but there were limits. As Miss J, a Pentecostal preacher, warned: "If your husband [is] telling you to trick [sell sex], that's not God's plan. If your husband [is] beating you, that's not God's plan for you". Implicit in these words of caution were some assumptions Miss J made about inmates' male partners. Miss J, who has been married for over three decades, anticipated that some inmates' husbands might be physically violent or try to prostitute their wives. This further demonstrates they ways religious leaders relied on their perceptions of inmates' social backgrounds to craft their messages.

Carla's story illustrates the gravity of these messages well. Carla is a late 40s black inmate serving five years for theft. She underwent a religious transformation while in prison, and began attending AME Bible study every week. "I'm totally dependent on God now", Carla said. "Before, my life has been about money, property, and prestige. Now, I pray to God to allow me to become the woman he intended". Religious messages around being a "good" Christian woman rubbed off on Carla, and she planned to prioritize her womanhood over her financial goals once released.

Not limited to Christian groups, Muslim volunteers likewise promoted submission. Similarities among religious messages may be expected given the Protestantization of the prison chapel (Dubler, 2013). Sister McMillan, a mid-50s black volunteer dressed in a flowing black *khimar*, instructed to her class of Muslim inmates: "Guard your voice. Some men might fall for a woman just by hearing her voice. Remember to talk low". Similarly, when the more seasoned inmates shared their wisdom with newer converts to Islam, they repeated the same sorts of messages. Ronnie, a 25-year-old black Muslim inmate serving seven years for assault, explained: "I just look down slightly. [At] not just a Muslim man but any man….That was one of those things that was hard for me at first". Maya, a mid-40s black inmate serving a 25 year sentence for attempted murder, who spearheaded Muslim activities at Mapleside, chimed in: "If you look back at him, that's showing interest….Women are responsible for their own modesty. It's our responsibility not to send the wrong message". Feminine submissiveness was a surprisingly common topic in a setting that housed only women.

To fully submit, maintaining idealized feminine characteristics was key. At Reverend Mona's weekly Ministry

class, during a lesson about the Book of Esther in which Esther makes preparations to meet with the king, Reverend Mona took the opportunity to explain: "There is a way to prepare your body for a man to enter you. It involves fasting, a certain amount of oils, and a certain amount of bathing. I don't care if you been with 19 men, that will make it feel like he is entering a virgin". Henrietta, a mid-50s black Christian inmate sitting in the back row, cackled: "Say what oil it was again?" The other women in the classroom laughed. Reverend Mona gently replied: "It was the oils that Jesus Christ used to anoint himself: myrrh, frankincense, and certain kinds of bath salts". While a Ministry class could focus on any number of religious topics, Reverend Mona chose to emphasize the importance of becoming sexually desirable to men. Moreover, she made assumptions about inmates' sexual experiences, disparaging "19 men" as a marker of promiscuity she believed was a realistic estimate for at least some of the inmates present. Reverend Mona continued: "And if you feel like a virgin every time, he is going to give you everything you ask for". This received several audible "Amens" from the group of inmates. By suggesting that inmates strategically prepare their bodies to "feel like a virgin", Reverend Mona was making assumptions about inmates' sexual identities and sexual histories. Furthermore, the enticement that a man would "give you everything you ask for" suggested that inmates should expect to be subordinate to men and could look forward to men's paternalistic generosity in return.

4.3. Finding a "Man of God"

To be submissive was to be a proper woman, according to the religious volunteers. As such, it followed that inmates were encouraged to look for a "man of God" to marry after they were released from prison. After all, Reverend Mona insisted, "God never meant for women to be making decisions by themselves". After a beat, she continued: "We can, but look at Eve". Demeaning women's ability to make sound decisions, Reverend Mona encouraged inmates to seek guidance from men post-release. "[W]hen you go out, seek…someone who gives wisdom", she suggested. The dominant religious messages at Mapleside encouraged inmates to be feminine through submissiveness to a man, but he must be a man "of God".

In a similar message, during his sermon one night at a Sunday night worship service, Pastor O'Neill, one of the rare male volunteers, preached that female inmates should try to find a male romantic partner at church after they are released. "When you get out [of prison], you can come to my church and find a *real* man", Pastor O'Neill grinned, poking fun at the gender identity of the inmates present. "Your church [at Mapleside] is 60% women and 40%—" at this, Pastor O'Neill cut himself off and scrunched his face, shrugging. Pastor O'Neill was referring to the male-presenting inmates in the room, of which there were a substantial proportion.[4] Some inmates began to cheer and laugh, finding levity in Pastor O'Neill's mockery. Femininity and submissiveness to a male partner were entirely out of sync for the lesbian and male-presenting inmates at Mapleside. However, according to these top-down normative messages, meeting a male romantic partner at church was ideal.

Many inmates reported that they adopted the ideals of the volunteer ministers and planned to start a relationship with a "man of God" post-release. Coretta, a mid-40s black inmate serving 40 years for murder, frequently attended Miss J's Wednesday night classes. She said she would seek "a man of God….I'm looking for a real man who will be the head of the house and all that". This was especially poignant given that Coretta's co-conspirator in the murder charge was her former boyfriend.

In fact, it is not uncommon for women who are incarcerated for violent crimes to be charged as co-defendants alongside their male romantic partners who masterminded the crime (Jones, 2008). Bev, an early 30s white inmate, pointed out this sad irony. "For my co-defendant—my boyfriend—God was the furthest thing from him. He thought God was dumb. That's why I'm here". The notion of finding an upstanding, god-fearing man seemed particularly appealing for a population used to men leading them down dark paths.

The desire to avoid men of ill-repute was so strong that Felicia, an ebullient early 30s black inmate who participated in a number of Protestant programs, shared that she planned to avoid dating men who were, in her view, not "real" Christians. "I know I want to be celibate when I go home—go out [date] for real, like walks in the park, go out dancing", Felicia proclaimed. "I got this other friend who say he a Christian, but he don't get it….I know he's not good for me". Felicia was skeptical of her male friend's advances because she doubted his religiosity. The desire to find a "man of God" ran so deep that inmates like Felicia were prepared to reject the advances of interested men, even after years in prison, deprived of heterosexual intimacy.

In the same vein, Maya, the mid-40s black Muslim inmate serving a 25-year sentence, believed it wise to follow the guidance of a "man of God". She stated: "People criticize that Muslim women just have to do what men say. But they don't understand that if you're with a man of God, he will only say that you have to do something if it will help you". A "man of God", in Maya's view, is benevolent and worthy of her submission. Ronnie, the 25-year-old black Muslim inmate serving seven years for assault, likewise explained: "I want to be more on my *din* [religion], and I want a man who on *his din*". Given how important religion was for many inmates at Mapleside, they actively sought men equally committed to religion.

[4] Identifying as a "boi" was relatively common at Mapleside. As one inmate told me: "You'll have women that come in, and when they first get here, they're looking for nail polish—they're feminine. Then all of a sudden, before you know it, they look like a boy". This may be related to the high rates of inmate romantic relationships behind bars (e.g., Owen, 1998; Severance, 2005).

During my observations, only one inmate openly questioned the advice to seek a man of God to marry. Iris, a black Protestant inmate in her early 50s, did not subscribe to the idea that she needed to find a partner who was already religious. "They say you should marry a Christian", Iris began, "but you could be with someone who learns by observing you". Iris hoped that her newfound religiosity would rub off on her partner.

For inmates like Iris who had stable male partners at home, women's emotional labor was required to maintain the relationship. Religious volunteers cautioned that inmates should avoid alienating these men with their newfound religiosity. "When you go home all 'God, God, God', remember those people who have been waiting for you", Miss J explained. "They'll notice that you've changed. Don't leave 'em behind". Loved ones should come along for the spiritual ride, but women should be prepared to help ease that transition. Ideally, existing male partners of female inmates would become men of God, but women's emotional labor would need to be part of that process.

Overall, religious messages encouraged female inmates to "do religion" by engaging in feminine submissiveness to a male head of household. As Reverend Mona taught: "The foundation of ministry is love". Of all possible topics to discuss related to religion for prisoners (cf. Dubler, 2013; Johnson, 2017), volunteers chose to emphasize the ways to embody femininity and submission as core lessons of spiritual growth. However, as the next section demonstrates, these messages were loaded not only with gender traditionalist values, but also normative raced and classed expectations that were structurally unavailable to most incarcerated women.

4.4. Out of Sync: Race, Class, Gender, and the Normative Religious Self

The expectation to find a "man of God" to whom to be submissive reveals the ways in which middle-class volunteers' messages were out of sync with the socioeconomic disadvantage of incarcerated women. First and foremost, incarcerated women were temporarily isolated from the marriage market by virtue of being imprisoned. Although most volunteers were married, inmates' access to "men of God" while in prison was decidedly limited. Given this constraint, preachers' decision to emphasize feminine submission and finding of man of God out of all possible religious teachings is even more conspicuous.

Another difficulty in finding a "man of God" to marry relates to the fact that men are generally less religious than women, attending church significantly less often (Chatters et al., 1999; Roth & Kroll, 2007; Schnabel, 2015). Inmates were well aware of this sex ratio imbalance. At the Protestant Youth Bible study one week, while screening a video of a church service at a well-known local Baptist church, Gabriel, the early 40s black inmate leading the class commented audibly on the video: "I don't know why, but I like to see men shout". June, a younger inmate, chimed in: "That's what I like to see—black men in church". For Gabriel and June, seeing black men in church was desirable and noteworthy.

Furthermore, once released, formerly incarcerated women's chances of finding a husband might be restricted by their socioeconomic disadvantage. The shortage of "marriageable" men in poor, black communities in particular—to which many incarcerated women will return—makes this expectation even more challenging (Sawhill & Venator, 2001; Wilson, 1987, 1996). Prior research has shown that marriage has declined among the working class and poor (Anderson, 1999; Cherlin, 2010; Edin & Kefalas, 2005), who view marriage as desirable, but struggle to attain the financial stability they deem necessary prior to marrying (Edin & Kefalas, 2005; Edin & Nelson, 2013; Smock, Manning, & Porter, 2005; Sweeney, 2002). This may be especially true for women of color given the role of work in widening the marriage gap among African Americans (Wilson, 1987, 1996). Due to their economic vulnerability post-release and challenges in finding employment (Loeffler, 2013; Pager, 2003; Ramakers, Nieuwbeerta, Dirkzwager, & Van Wilson, 2014; Western, 2002), former prisoners are not well-positioned to attain their desired financial stability before marriage. On top of financial barriers, women who have been incarcerated face an even greater social stigma than formerly incarcerated men (Roberts, 2004), which could lead to lower marriageability (Apel, 2016; Baćak & Kennedy, 2015).

Despite being isolated from the opportunity to meet new men while incarcerated, Sunni inmates gained a significant advantage over Protestant inmates in successfully finding a "man of God": they had matchmakers. A *wadi* (matchmaker) was a Muslim elder to whom a Muslim inmate could write to request he find her a suitable partner. Muslim inmates saw this as a realistic resource to draw on. Maya, the older, more erudite Muslim inmate, advised Ronnie that she could tell her matchmaker exactly what she was looking for, even physically:

> You can't wake up every morning next to someone who you think is a monster. The sex isn't going to be good and you're not going to be happy. You can absolutely tell him [the matchmaker]. That's the *wadi*'s job, to find out exactly what you want.

Ronnie giggled, giddy with this new information: "Okay, so I can tell him I want a tall, dark man?" Maya smiled demurely. A month prior, while incarcerated, Maya wed a Muslim man thanks to a *wadi*. For Muslim inmates, a matchmaker could facilitate finding a "man of God" to marry.

Absent this liaison in the Protestant community, Protestant inmates would have a much more difficult time finding a religious partner. Given contemporary prerequisites for marriage and the relatively lower proportion of religious men, this middle-class religious message that encouraged inmates to find a "man of God" to marry

post-release were largely out of sync with attainable realities, at least in the immediately foreseeable future. This disparity highlights the ways class, race, and gender are woven together to construct an ideal religious self that may be hard to attain among a population of inmates disadvantaged in all three categories.

5. Conclusion

At Mapleside Prison, religious leaders promoted femininity and submission in a gender traditionalist family structure. These messages are consistent with prior research on women's prisons that shows how rules, regulations, and rehabilitative programs encourage female offenders to embody conventional norms around gender and sexuality (Haney, 2010; McCorkel, 2013). This article shows how class and race come to bear on gendered religious messages in prison, promoting distinctly middle-class expectations for marriage post-release that are largely unattainable for most disadvantaged inmates.

The contributions of this article are threefold. First, studies of gendered religious selves must take variables like race and class into account when assessing the ways religion is practiced and performed. Given that gender, race, and class overlap in multiplicative ways (Singh, 2015), understanding the ways religious selves are performed requires interrogating these overlaps. "Doing religion" is linked not only with "doing gender", but also within the constraints of the social constructions of race and class.

Second, this article suggests that studies of the construction of gendered religious selves must consider the broader context of top-down definitions of the religious self. Religious selves are not defined in a vacuum. While individuals actively decide how to practice their faith (Avishai, 2008; Davidman, 2014; Rao, 2015), they do so in a context substantially shaped by top-down views from religious authorities (Ellis, 2015, 2017b; Moon, 2004, 2005). This means closely considering how religious leaders draw upon their race, class, and gender positions when constructing notions of an ideal religious self.

Finally, religious selves do not play out in a neutral landscape. When religious subjects "do religion", they do so within the broader environment of stratification. Social positions with respect to race, class, and gender form an intersectional religious self that could ultimately reinforce stratification by upholding normative beliefs that further disadvantage non-normative groups. Top-down constructions of the "ideal" religious self could reinforce stratification, as they involve embodying expectations that may be out of reach for the most disadvantaged adherents.

Intersectionality matters in understanding how the religious self is constructed. Dominant discourses around the religious self play an active role in how laypersons "do religion", as evidenced by the extent to which Mapleside inmates adopted the messages preached by religious volunteers. Dominant messages, however, rely on specific notions of ideal appearance and conduct that are shaped by privileged positions with respect to race, class, and gender. The very same institutions that perpetuate inequality through segregated pews and constraining doctrine also define religious selves in ways that maintain inequality by promoting ideals that may be out of reach for the least advantaged congregants.

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