

Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research

David Yamane *Editor*

Handbook of Religion and Society

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Editor

Handbook of Religion and Society

 Springer

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Abstract

This introduction briefly surveys the history and current state of the sociology of religion, and highlights the contributions of the chapters of the Springer Handbook of Religion and Society to the field. Beginning with the classical theories of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber and continuing through the secularization paradigm and its challengers (Warner's new paradigm, rational choice theory, the strong program identified by Smilde and May), this introduction arrives at sociology of religion's current stage of post-paradigmatic growth. Facing scholarly pressure toward recognizing the diversity and complexity of religion in the contemporary world, contributors to this handbook push the field beyond the limitations of all existing approaches: beyond Christianity, beyond congregations, beyond beliefs, beyond borders, beyond modernity, and even beyond religion. Collectively, these chapters represent the best thinking in the field across a broad range of topics and offer numerous suggestions for future research in the sociology of religion.

Sociology emerged as a discipline because of a felt need to understand and control the revolutionary social changes taking place in nineteenth century Europe (Yamane [Forthcoming](#)). Although these developments were driven by industrial capitalism, they were not simply economic. They also entailed “a new relationship between

[people], ... a new rhythm of life, a new society, a new historical era” (Hobsbawm 1999, p. 43). The changing place of religion in this new society was an important concern of the classical theorists. Because social science flows inside of schools and traditions (Alexander 1987), the sociology of religion developed within the intellectual perspectives they established. The field continues to develop as scholars engage in dialogue with existing schools of thought, with each other, and with the evolving social world.

Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber all sought to understand the radical break between

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pre-modern and modern society. Each in their own way, these classical theorists considered the implications of modernization for religion. Marx saw society becoming religion-free as the subjective illusion of religion would disappear with the objective conditions of oppression. Durkheim saw the transition somewhat differently, agreeing that previous incarnations of religion were dying out, but maintaining that a new type of religion based on individualism was destined to be reborn in modern society. Weber's perspective on modern society is much less unidimensional than Marx's or Durkheim's, but centers on the process of rationalization. Rationalization entails a growing divide between religion and other spheres of society, both at the intellectual and institutional level (Gorski and Ates 2008). Intellectually, rationalization leads to a "disenchantment of the world" wherein people increasingly look to reason rather than "mysterious incalculable forces" to understand the world. Institutionally, politics, economics, art, and other "value-spheres" increasingly operate according to their own logics ("rationalities"), distinct from religion.

Marx, Durkheim, and Weber set the intellectual boundaries within which later sociological work flowed. Taken together, these classical theorists established a metanarrative for sociology: modernity as a secularizing force. At the same time, the transformations of religion they predicted represent different understandings of secularization. Those working in the Marxist tradition equated modernization with the (eventual) disappearance of religion, while those following Weber and Durkheim theorized various transformations but not necessarily the complete decline of religion. The latter group was dominant in the third quarter of the twentieth century, working within what has been called the "secularization paradigm" (Tschannen 1991). Among the most significant theorists of secularization are Robert Bellah, Peter Berger, Richard Fenn, David Martin, Thomas Luckmann, Talcott Parsons, and Bryan Wilson. Although "the paradigm is not completely represented in any one of the theories" of its carriers, "its core element – differentiation – is shared by them all" (Tschannen 1991, p. 403).

Differentiation here develops Weber's idea of different value-spheres emerging in society, each with its own rationality. In a differentiated society, the norms, values, and practices of the religious sphere have only an indirect influence on other spheres such as business, politics, leisure, and education (Wilson 1982).

Secularization as the societal-level transformation of the place of religion vis-à-vis other social institutions has a variety of consequences for individual-level religiosity. Generally, religion as a source of social integration and collective identity gives way to a more individualized approach to faith centered on personal autonomy. The taken-for-grantedness of pre-modern religion is supplanted by modernity's situation of unprecedented choice. Indeed, according to Berger (1980, p. 25), modernity universalizes heresy (choice) by creating "a new situation in which picking and choosing becomes an imperative." When religion becomes an individual choice, however, it loses its social significance. As Luckmann (1967) argued, religion does not disappear in modern society, but it does become "invisible" – that is, privatized.

Much more could be said about the complexity of the secularization paradigm, but highlighting the differentiation of other institutions from religion and the rise of personal autonomy for individuals relative to religion suggests a sort of bottom line understanding of secularization as a theory of religious change in modern society. The primary direction of this change is toward "the diminution in the social significance of ... religious institutions, actions, and consciousness" (Wilson 1982, p. 149).

At the same time secularization theory was being established as the dominant sociological approach, religion surged back into public and scholarly consciousness in ways that secularization theorists had not anticipated. Beginning in the 1960s, scholars noticed an increase in the prominence of nonconventional religious groups known as "new religious movements" (NRMs). Among the earliest studied were Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church (the "Moonies"), the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON, or "Hare Krishnas"), Divine Light

Mission, the Children of God, Jesus People, UFO cults, Scientology, and Soka Gakkai. Some speculated that these NRMs were part of a much broader cultural shift that included more diffuse phenomena like the human potential movement, astrology, and mysticism. In the 1970s, it appeared that an entire “New Age” movement was emerging as an alternative both to secular modernity and to the established churches of Christianity. Drawing a contrast to the expectations of secularization theory, these developments were characterized as a great awakening or consciousness reformation.

In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars were also confronted by the dramatic appearance of religion in the public sphere. The decisive moment was the 1979 revolution in Iran that established an Islamic republic under religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini. The murder of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero while saying mass in 1980 drew attention to Liberation Theology as a movement within the Catholic Church in Latin America. The Solidarity movement, founded in 1980 in Poland, received support and encouragement from the Catholic Church, especially Pope John Paul II (a former Archbishop of Kraków). The mobilization of conservative Christians in the United States by the Moral Majority, which was credited with helping Ronald Reagan win the presidency in 1980, enlivened interest in the politics of the “New Christian Right.” All of this forced a rediscovery of a connection between politics and religion globally, rather than the differentiation of religion from politics predicted by secularization theory.

Along with these cultural and political developments, sociologists of religion paid increasing attention to ever-more-available demographic data that did not seem to fit the dominant narrative of secularization. The religious movements least accommodated to secular modernity appeared to be the very ones that were growing the fastest. An explosion of Pentecostalism was observed not only in Latin America, Africa, and Asia in the 1970s and 1980s, but also in the U.S. Simultaneously, the more liberal churches of the American Protestant establishment were declining in membership while the more conser-

vative churches of evangelical Protestantism surged. Generally, access to more and better quality survey data also conveyed a strong sense that religion was alive and well, and confounded secularization theory’s expectations about what types of religion would be attractive to people in modern society.

The outburst of religion on the social scene globally challenged the dominant narrative of secularization, but no alternative paradigm existed to organize this flourishing diversity of studies. Near the end of the 1980s, Wuthnow (1988, p. 500) observed that the sociology of religion “has grown more rapidly in inductive empirical research and in subspecializations than it has in attempts to identify theoretically integrative concepts.” Not long after Wuthnow’s lament, several competing frameworks emerged to replace the “old paradigm” of secularization.

In 1993, R. Stephen Warner announced that a new paradigm was emerging in the sociology of religion. Unlike the old secularization paradigm, whose assumptions were inherited from the classical theorists’ focus on the European experience, this new paradigm centered on the seemingly very different religious history of the United States. The open market facilitated by the disestablishment of religion at the nation’s founding created a paradigmatic situation of competition, rather than the religious monopoly that stifled religion in Europe. As a result, the master function of religion in the United States is to create social space for cultural pluralism, like that seen in the new religious movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Warner (1993) also made three corollary observations. First, religious organizational forms in the U.S. are malleable and decentralized. This encourages innovation such as storefront startups, seeker churches, and megachurches, as well as special purpose religious groups, such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Promise Keepers, and Habitat for Humanity. Second, religion is not privatized and individualized but instead remains a source of individual and group empowerment. Religious organizations provide both material and ideological resources for political mobilization, as seen in the Civil Rights movement, Clergy and Laity Concerned about

War, the New Christian Right, Sojourners, and many others. Third, religion in America exemplifies an energetic “new voluntarism” characterized by religious mobility (conversion, switching, apostasy), creative syncretism, religious seeking, and flowering spirituality. Under Warner’s new paradigm, the religious ferment of the preceding decades is viewed as normal rather than exceptional.

Another theoretical perspective codified in the late 1980s and early 1990s in opposition to the secularization paradigm was the religious economies model (Stark and Iannaccone 1992). Although it is sometimes considered part of Warner’s new paradigm, the rational choice assumptions built into the religious economies model are quite different than Warner’s. According to this model, a religious economy consists of all the religious activity going on in any society. Religious economies are like commercial economies in consisting of a market of current and potential “customers,” a set of “firms” seeking to serve that market, and religious “product lines” offered by various firms. Also like commercial economies, religious economies thrive when they are allowed to operate without government interference. Finke (1990) summarizes the logic of the model: Deregulation of religious economies leads to pluralism, pluralism to competition, competition to specialization of products (catering to a market niche) and aggressive recruitment, specialization and recruitment to higher demand, and higher demand to greater participation. Thus, as a “natural” consequence of the invisible hand of the market operating unencumbered by state regulation, “over time the diversity of the religious market will reflect the very diversity of the population itself” (Finke 1990, p. 622).

A third emerging paradigm is what Smilde and May (2010) have called the “strong program” in the sociology of religion. Unlike Warner’s new paradigm and the religious economies perspective, the strong program has not been pursued self-consciously. Rather, it emerged as a distinctive style of empirical research conducted by many scholars in the 1980s and 1990s and remains a prominent approach today. By strong

program, Smilde and May mean an approach that treats religion not as a dependent variable (something to be explained) but as an independent variable (something that has explanatory power itself). Since the early 1980s, published articles on religion in sociology journals that analyze religious processes as a primary causal variable have outnumbered those that see social processes as primary. Smilde and May also show an increasing tendency for the outcomes predicted by religion to be positive or pro-social. The central, causal role of religion in the strong program challenges the old secularization paradigm idea that religion will lose its social significance in modern society.

In the face of these challenges, some scholars in the 1990s attempted to formulate a new secularization paradigm. This “neosecularization” perspective refocuses the theory around its core concepts while jettisoning peripheral concerns and unsustainable claims (Yamane 1997). Chaves (1994, p. 750), for example, argues that secularization “is best understood not as the decline of religion, but as the declining scope of religious authority” at the societal, organizational, and individual levels of analysis. Similarly, Casanova (1994) reasserts the Weberian primacy of differentiation of secular spheres from religious norms as the core of secularization and rejects the Marxist idea that religion is destined to disappear in the course of societal modernization. He extends the theory by observing that the privatization of religion – the removal of religion from public life – is an historical option that plays out differently in different contexts. In some countries, such as France and Canada, religion is highly privatized. In other countries, like Poland and the United States, it plays a very public role. From the neosecularization perspective, secularization processes do not simply *constrain* religious activity in differentiated societal spheres; they also *enable* religious activity. Drawing on Chaves’ and Casanova’s insights, I call this dual nature of secularization the “double-movement” of secularization (Yamane et al. 2010). The first moment of this double-movement focuses not on the decline of religion, per se, but on the broad movement toward a decline in the scope of reli-

gious authority vis-a-vis secular authorities in the process of institutional differentiation. The second moment recognizes the re-emergence of religious organizations and individuals in other societal spheres, but under the secularized conditions established in the first moment.

By the turn of the twenty-first century, debates between proponents of these different alternatives to the secularization paradigm had run their course, and each was subject to its own criticism. The new paradigm was seen as too parochial in being elaborated by Warner explicitly as a theory of religion in the United States. The religious economies model was criticized for its rational choice assumptions and the failure of other scholars to document a connection between pluralism and religious vitality. The strong program over-represented Protestant Christianity in the U.S. and pro-religious outcomes. Neosecularization theory's focus on the growing independence of secular social spheres from religious authorities was faulted for its Western and Christo-centric biases (Bender et al. 2013; Gorski and Ates 2008; Smith 2008).

Today, the sociology of religion is in a stage of post-paradigmatic growth, with scholarly pressure toward recognizing the diversity and complexity of religion in the contemporary world. In various ways, scholars are attempting to push the field beyond the limitations of all existing approaches. These movements are well-reflected in the individual chapters in this volume:

- *Beyond Christianity*: According to Bender and colleagues (2013), too often in sociology religion means Christianity, and Christianity is equated with certain Protestant traditions. Here chapters on “Gender” by Orit Avishai, “Comparative Politics” by Jonathan Fox, and “Law and Social Control” by James Richardson push the field beyond its excessive to exclusive focus on (especially Protestant) Christianity.
- *Beyond Congregations*: Beginning with Durkheim, many sociologists have strongly distinguished between the sacred and profane, and found the sacred safely located in various “God boxes” (churches, synagogues, mosques, temples). Today, scholars are pushing beyond congregations to understand the ways in which religion is *a part of* rather than *apart from* everyday life. Giuseppe Giordan’s chapter on “Spirituality,” Kathleen Jenkins’ chapter on “Family,” and Kathleen Oberlin’s chapter on “Science” reflect this movement.
- *Beyond Beliefs*: Owing in part to its Christocentrism, sociologists have been overly concerned with the cognitive dimension of religion. As in sociology generally, greater emphasis has been placed recently on religious practices in addition to beliefs. This is evident in the chapters on “Work” by Jerry Park, Kevin Dougherty, and Mitchell Neubert, “Aging” by Neal Krause, and “Race and Ethnicity” by Todd Matthews, John Bartkowski, and Tyrone Chase.
- *Beyond Borders*: Bender et al. (2013) criticize the sociology of religion in the United States for parochialism, but scholars in every country tend to focus on phenomena within their national borders. Several chapters in this volume push beyond borders, especially “Digital Religion” by Christopher Helland, “Transnationalism” by Stephen Offutt and Grant Miller, and “International Migration” by Peter Kivisto.
- *Beyond Modernity*: The discipline of sociology was born of modernity, but global developments since the time of Marx, Durkheim, and Weber have challenged the idea that there is only one way of being modern. An emerging view is that there are “multiple modernities” with differing implications for religion, both between and within societies (Smith 2008). Although not necessarily explicitly stated, this idea is reflected in my chapter on “Sport,” Isak Svensson’s chapter on “Conflict and Peace,” and Victor Roudometof’s chapter on “Globalization.”
- *Beyond Religion*: Perhaps the ultimate movement beyond dominant approaches is the increasing recognition of the importance of religious “nones” (including atheists, agnostics, and the religiously unaffiliated) and “dones” (those who have left religion). What the growing (at least in some countries) num-

ber of nones and dones means for the future of religion is an open question that sociologists of religion will be grappling with for some time. Their existence, however, challenges scholars to treat no religion not as a residual category, but as a significant part of the religious dynamics of the contemporary world. Ryan Cragun's chapter on "Nonreligion and Atheism" in this volume provides an outstanding roadmap for those trying to grapple with this significant reality, and Matthew Loveland's chapter on "Identity" and Phil Schwadel's chapter on "Social Class" also pay significant attention to it.

Whether in the long run the sociology of religion will consolidate around one or a few paradigmatic approaches is uncertain. In the near term, it seems likely to continue to build on past insights while pushing beyond their particular blindneses. Collectively, these chapters represent the best thinking in the field across a broad range of topics. For example, anyone wanting to know the state of the art of scholarship on "Denominations, Congregations, and Special Purpose Groups" will benefit from reading Nancy Ammerman's chapter. Richard Petts and Scott Desmond meticulously review work on the role of religion in "Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood," as do John Hoffman, Stephen Bahr, and Michaela Huber on "Delinquency and Deviance." This volume also contains chapters which represent cutting edge thinking in their respective areas. The future of scholarship is fully represented in the chapter on "Health and Biological Functioning" by Terrence Hill, Matt Bradshaw, and Amy Burdette, on "Organizational Innovation" by Tricia Bruce and Josh Packard, and on "Sexuality" by Sarah-Jane Page and Heather Shipley.

Sociology as a discipline emerged in the nineteenth century during a period of dramatic social change, including religious change. The founders wanted to understand that change to help move society in a positive direction, with or without religion. We live today in the late modern era, an era that definitely includes religion. Therefore, sociologists of religion are uniquely situated to contribute to the sociological understanding, and

perhaps also the direction, of an ever changing social reality.

* * *

This project began originally as a second edition of Helen Rose Ebaugh's *Handbook of Religion and Social Institutions*, published by Springer in 2006. When Ebaugh was not able to work on the second edition, Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research Series Editor John DeLamater invited me to take on the project. I was happy to do so, because of all the many handbooks that have been published in recent years, Ebaugh's was the one I turned to most for information and insight. But as good as her handbook was, I knew that there were some important changes that needed to be made. When Springer saw the changes I proposed, they concluded that what would be produced would not be a simple updating of the previous text, but an entirely new volume.

Of the 26 chapters in this *Handbook of Religion and Society*, only seven are revisions of previous chapters by the same authors. Another seven chapters cover topics from the earlier handbook but with new authors. Twelve of the 26 chapters, therefore, cover topics that were not previously included. Many of these chapters are on topics that any contemporary social scientist studying religion should be familiar with, such as digital religion, spirituality, nonreligion and atheism, sexuality, and transnationalism. In addition to new topics, I also solicited a number of new authors for this volume. Only 10 of the 40 authors contributed to Ebaugh's earlier handbook. Of the 30 new authors, 14 are either female, international (non-United States), or both, representing my effort to diversity the contributors.

In approaching potential authors, I recognized that they knew their field best (certainly better than me) and so simply instructed them to provide a rich review of the current state of research on their topic and, if it was appropriate and possible, pay some attention to international issues as well as to race, class, sexuality, and gender differences. I also asked contributors to conclude their chapters not simply by summarizing their thoughts but (also) by offering their considered reflections on possible directions for future

research in the area. Authors have responded in a variety of ways. Some have posed questions to be answered (Ammerman) and some have highlighted empirical gaps to be filled (Hill, Bradshaw, and Burdette). Some have gone so far as to articulate alternative theoretical frameworks to guide future research (Avishai) or modeled the kind of research that is needed (Oberlin). All provide important guidance for those engaging in current and future studies of their respective topics. I am particularly pleased with this aspect of the *Handbook of Religion and Society*.

Acknowledgement I am grateful to all of the contributors to this volume, who produced amazing chapters on a very tight timeline. I am proud to have my name associated with their collective work. Thanks to John DeLamater for inviting me to join the project and for his close reading of the entire manuscript, and to the staff at Springer for facilitating the work. Thanks also to my colleague Lynn Neal, who has read and improved nearly everything I have written for as long as I can remember, and to my wife Sandy, who continues to support my scholarly efforts both directly and indirectly, with love and good humor, always.

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Part I

Religion and Social Institutions

Terrence D. Hill, Matt Bradshaw,
and Amy M. Burdette

Abstract

Numerous studies suggest that religious involvement tends to favor healthy biological functioning across the life course. The primary aim of this chapter is to review and explain these patterns. Toward this end, we develop several biopsychosocial models of religious involvement and biological functioning. These models incorporate pathways related to social resources, psychological resources, healthy behaviors, and various biological processes. We conclude that additional research is needed to establish associations with understudied biological outcomes (e.g., epigenetics, infant mortality, and telomeres), individual mechanisms, more elaborate causal models, and sub-group variations. It is also important for future studies to thoroughly explore the “dark side” of religion and to formally test alternative explanations, including health selection, personality selection, and genetic selection. Research along these lines would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how and why religious involvement might contribute to biological functioning across the life course.

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In 1847, Francis Galton defined the terms of the so-called “nature versus nurture” debate:

Nature is all that a man brings with himself into the world; nurture is every influence from without that affects him after his birth. The distinction is clear: the one produces the infant such as it actually is, including its latent faculties of growth of body and mind; the other affords the environment amid which the growth takes place, by which natural tendencies may be strengthened or thwarted, or wholly new ones implanted. Neither of the terms implies any theory; natural gifts may or may not be hereditary; nurture does not especially consist of food, clothing, education or tradition, but it includes all of these and similar influences whether known or unknown. (Galton 1847, p. 12)

For over a century, human scientists were divided along the lines of nature or nurture. The debate peaked in the twentieth century when biological scientists really began to study human development and behavior at the molecular level. During the 1960s and 1970s, the emergence of socio-environmental perspectives “pitted those who believed that we are determined only by our genes against those who believed we are determined only by our environment” (Nature Editorial Group 2012, p. 143).

Due to advances in the study of gene-environment interactions and epigenetics, biological scientists have moved beyond exclusive models of biological determinism to acknowledge that genetic processes and environmental conditions often depend on each other (Freese 2008; Landecker and Panofsky 2013). For the most part, sociologists have ignored developments in the biological sciences and have sustained a “nurture fortress” to defend against essentialist notions of biological determinism that are now obsolete. Biologists used to be the problem. Now sociologists are the problem. With few exceptions, sociologists “are still immured in their fortress, struggling to catch up with a debate that has shifted from nature-or-nurture to nature-and-nurture, or are unable to shake off their distrust of scientists, worrying that scientists will force them to play second fiddle in their own territory: the environment” (Nature Editorial Group 2012, p. 143).

In the twenty-first century, it is no longer tenable to endorse the perspectives of nature-only or nurture-only or nature “versus” nurture. These approaches are generally inadequate and incorrect (Bradshaw and Ellison 2009; Freese 2008; Landecker and Panofsky 2013). According to Landecker and Panofsky (2013, p. 353), the twenty-first century (and beyond) will be “a time of renegotiation and reconfiguring of the biological, the social, and their interrelation, and sociology has an important role to play in this process.”

With this in mind, the aim of our chapter is to chip away at the “nurture fortress” by providing an overview of research linking religious involvement and various indicators of health and

biological functioning across the life course, including gene-environment interplay, birth weight, preterm birth, infant mortality, allostatic load, disability, and adult mortality. In each section, we offer clear conceptual definitions and concise summaries of previous research. We conclude by highlighting several important avenues for future research in the sociological study of religion and biological functioning.

Gene-Environment Interplay

Genetic differences contribute to individual variation on virtually all aspects of mental health, physical health, and biological functioning. For example, twin, adoption, and molecular genetic studies have shown that genetic factors shape common affective disorders like depression (Caspi et al. 2003; Kendler 2001; Sullivan et al. 2000) and anxiety (Crowe et al. 1983; Finn and Smoller 2001). It is also well established that schizophrenia and other forms of severe psychopathology are strongly influenced by genetic factors (Gottesman 1991). A number of studies have found evidence for genetic effects on many forms of cancer (Benhamou and Sarasin 2005), blood pressure (Whitfield and McClearn 2005), lung capacity (McClearn et al. 1994; Whitfield et al. 1999), chronic pain (Zondervan et al. 2005), body mass (Johnson and Krueger 2005), physical strength (Carmelli and Reed 2000), eating disorders (Kendler 2001; Polivy and Herman 2002), vulnerability to substance abuse (Kreek et al. 2005), and birth outcomes like weight, length, and head circumference (Lunde et al. 2007). There is even some evidence to suggest that genetic influences shape physiological responses to stress (Gillespie et al. 2009), cortisol levels (Wüst et al. 2000), heart rate variability (Uusitalo et al. 2007), insulin and glucose levels (Snieder et al. 1999), and alcohol metabolism (Li et al. 2001).

While important, genetic factors are only one of many distinct influences on health and biological functioning. A growing number of studies have suggested that religious involvement also plays a role (Koenig et al. 2012). Although findings are

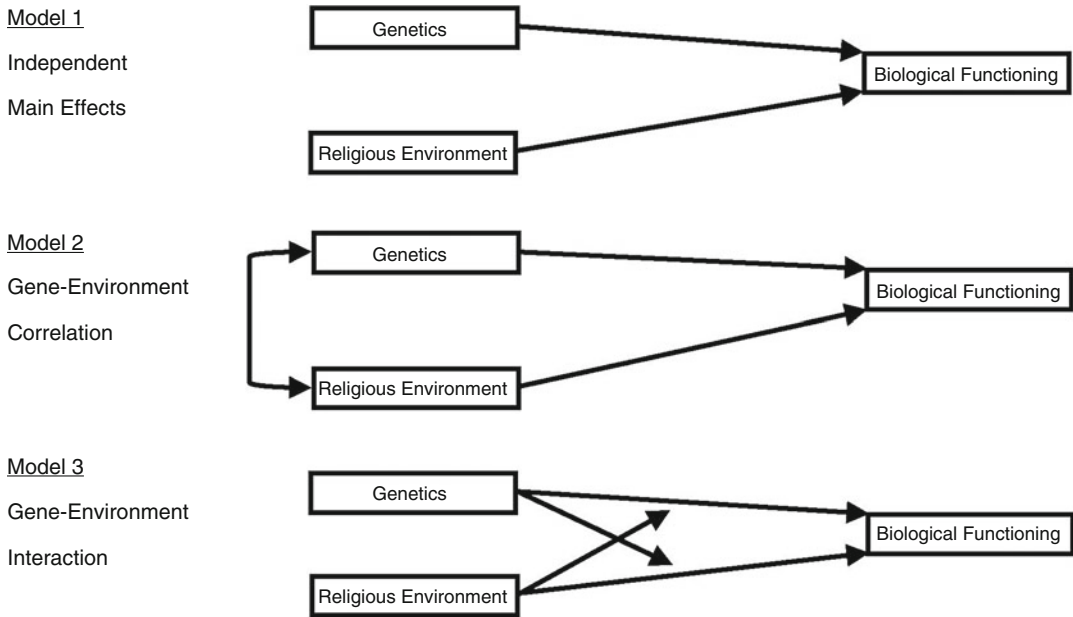


Fig. 2.1 Conceptual models of gene-religious environment interplay

not unequivocal, research has shown that multiple aspects of religious life (e.g., service attendance, prayer and meditation, feelings of attachment to God, and belief in an afterlife) have salutary effects on health and biological functioning (Koenig et al. 2012). Proposed explanations for these findings tend to center on religion’s ability to reduce exposure to social stressors, provide psychosocial resources that can be used to deal with stressors when they do occur, and to offer distinctive coping styles (Koenig et al. 2012; Pargament 1997) (see also Krause’s Chap. 14, on “Aging” in this volume).

For the most part, scholars have focused on either genetic influences or religious influences, and very little research has examined how these two factors might work together to shape health and biological functioning. Model 1 of Fig. 2.1 depicts the independent main effects of both genetic factors and environmental influences (which includes religious involvement). However, an emerging interdisciplinary paradigm strongly suggests that genetic and environmental influences may not work in completely independent ways (Caspi et al. 2003; Rutter et al. 2006; Shanahan and Hofer 2005). Instead, they may function

through gene-environment correlations (Model 2) and gene-environment interactions (Model 3).

Gene-environment correlations (rGE) occur when genetic factors and environmental influences like religious involvement are not independent, but are instead associated in some way. We have already reviewed evidence showing that genetic influences shape health and biological functioning. It turns out that religious involvement is also, to some extent, heritable. For example, studies show that genetic differences contribute to individual variations in religious service attendance, religious salience, biblical literalism, born-again experiences, fundamentalist orientations, religious coping, intrinsic and extrinsic religious motivations, and spirituality (Beer et al. 1998; Bouchard et al. 1999; Bradshaw and Ellison 2008; Kendler et al. 1997). In other words, genetic differences across individuals help us to understand why some individuals are more religious than others. Since religion and health are both influenced by genetic factors, it is conceivable that they are linked with each other through common genetic causes. This possibility has important implications for research on religion, health, and biological functioning.

According to previous research, rGE have three forms: passive, evocative, and active (Jaffee and Price 2007; Reiss et al. 2000; Scarr and McCartney 1983). Passive rGE occur when individuals share genes with people who also contribute to or are a part of their environments. For example, genetic liabilities for alcohol and drug misuse have been associated with decreased moral-religious emphases in families (Jang et al. 2001). In essence, genetic dispositions for substance misuse are correlated with, and subsequently contribute to, the religiosity of families (an environmental condition). This finding alone has serious implications for how we interpret common associations in the literature. In this particular example, we cannot fully understand the association between religion and substance abuse without also examining genetic influences.

In contrast to passive rGE, evocative rGE occur when our genetic makeup induces responses from others in our environments. For example, some individuals are genetically-predisposed toward aggressive or antisocial behavior, and such behavior has a tendency to “evoke” punitive environmental responses like punishment or avoidance (Jaffee et al. 2004). In the religious realm, individuals who suffer from health-related conditions that are genetically-influenced and stigmatized may experience negative responses in the social environment, which could discourage participation in organized religion. Of course individuals also possess desirable traits that are genetically-influenced, including, for example, charisma, passion for leadership, and empathy for others. These traits may evoke positive responses from individuals in a way that facilitates positive experiences within religious communities.

The final type—active rGE—occur when individuals actively seek out or construct environments that fit their genetic tendencies or motivations (Scarr and McCartney 1983). For instance, genetic factors clearly influence mental health, and individuals suffering from psychopathology routinely try to improve their condition through various coping mechanisms. It is quite common for people experiencing emotional pain to seek out comfort and support from church

members and divine others (Kirkpatrick 2005; Pargament 1997). Another example involves individuals who are genetically-predisposed toward social engagement and altruistic behavior. Such individuals may select themselves into frequent participation in religious organizations that provide social activities and opportunities for community service.

Genetic and environmental influences might also condition or moderate the effects of each other through gene-environment interactions (GxE). GxE are distinct from rGE. GxE are unique because they suggest that (1) genetic influences may be more or less pronounced depending upon environmental conditions, and that (2) environmental influences may be enhanced or attenuated depending on genetic differences across individuals (Boomsma et al. 1999; Caspi et al. 2003; Jaffee et al. 2005; Shanahan and Hofer 2005). The GxE concept is profoundly important to the study of religion, health, and biological functioning. It suggests that genetic influences may be moderated by religious involvement, and that the influence of religion may be stronger or weaker depending upon the genetic makeup of individuals.

There are several examples of GxE in the literature. Researchers have found that genetic influences on alcohol abuse are less important among religious adolescents (Button et al. 2010). We also know that a religious upbringing can moderate genetic influences on indicators of personality like disinhibition (Boomsma et al. 1999) and neuroticism (Willemsen and Boomsma 2007). There is even compelling evidence to suggest that religiosity can protect against genetic predispositions toward smoking initiation (Timberlake et al. 2006), delinquency (Beaver et al. 2009), sexual behavior (Halpern et al. 2007), and illicit drug use (Dew and Koenig 2014). GxE scholars argue that environmental conditions like religious involvement can (1) trigger genetic risk factors, (2) compensate for genetic vulnerabilities, (3) provide social control mechanisms that inhibit genetic tendencies, and (4) enhance desirable genetic predispositions (Shanahan and Hofer 2005).

The studies reviewed so far suggest that genetic effects vary across levels of religiosity, but it is also possible for the effects of religiosity to be moderated by genetic differences. For example, a recent experimental study showed that the link between religion and prosocial behavior may only exist among individuals who inherit certain variations of a dopamine-related gene (Sasaki et al. 2013). A follow-up experiment found that the association between religious priming (e.g., the presentation of religious word strings) and self-control was more pronounced among subjects who inherited a specific version of an oxytocin gene (Sasaki et al. 2015).

Low Birth Weight, Preterm Birth, and Infant Mortality

When babies are born weighing less than 2500 g (5 pounds, 8 ounces), they are considered to be low birth weight. The category of very low birth weight is used to describe those babies born weighing less than 1500 g (3 pounds, 4 ounces). In 2013, approximately 8% of all singleton (non-twin) births were classified as low birth weight, with 1.4% of newborns classified as very low birthweight (Martin et al. 2015). When babies are born before 37 weeks of gestation, they are labeled preterm. Nearly 70% of low birthweight babies are preterm births (March of Dimes 2014). Finally, infant mortality refers to the death of babies before their first birthdays. The infant mortality rate is an estimate of the number of infant deaths per 1000 live births. Currently, for every 1000 babies born in the United States, six will die within their first year.

Few studies consider whether the health benefits of religious involvement might extend across generations (from mother to child), as evidenced by favorable birth outcomes. Using data from the Mater-University of Queensland Study of Pregnancy, Najman et al. (1988) showed that regularly attending (weekly or monthly) affiliates of Christian sects (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and Seventh Day Adventists) and mainstream Christian groups (Protestants and Catholics) tend to exhibit lower rates of low birth

weight than so-called "lukewarm Christians," those who affiliate with mainstream Christian groups but attend religious services less than monthly. Although their work does not focus on religion per se, Reichman et al. (2008) used data from the U.S. Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing study to show that unmarried urban mothers who attend religious services at least once per week tend to exhibit lower rates of low birth weight than unmarried urban mothers who never attend religious services. Burdette and colleagues (2012) also used the Fragile Families data, but they focused specifically on religion and confirmed that maternal religious attendance can protect against low birth weight.

We could find only two studies focusing on religion and preterm birth or infant mortality. In their study of African American and white women in North Carolina, Dole and colleagues (2004) found no association between maternal church attendance and preterm birth. In a study of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS or Mormons) in Utah, Woolley et al. (1982) found that the risk of neonatal mortality was lower when christenings were performed by the baby's father (defined as high activity members) than when the christenings were performed by a nonrelative (defined as low activity members). They also reported that the risk of neonatal mortality was comparable for families with fathers who performed christenings and families of non-LDS respondents.

Why might religious attendance protect against negative birth outcomes like low birth weight and infant mortality? Previous research has identified several explanations that are at least theoretically viable (Burdette et al. 2012; Elsenbruch et al. 2007; Jesse et al. 2006; Jesse and Reed 2004; Magaña and Clark 1995; Mann et al. 2007; Najman et al. 1988; Page 2004; Page et al. 2009). Drawing on this body of research, Fig. 2.2 emphasizes explanations related to social resources (e.g., social support), psychological resources (e.g., control beliefs), mental health (e.g., depression), and health-related behavior (e.g., smoking).

Religious involvement could protect against negative birth outcomes by promoting social

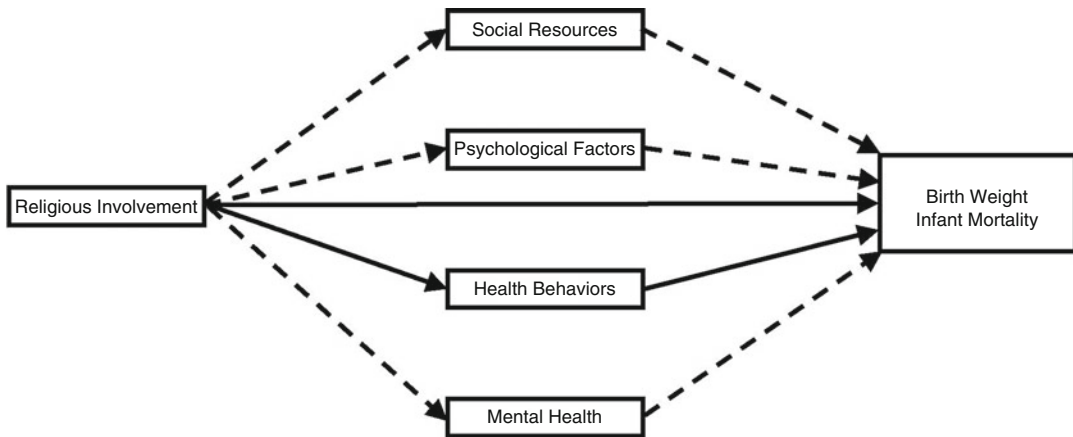


Fig. 2.2 Conceptual model linking religious involvement and birth outcomes *Solid lines indicate that the corresponding pathway has some empirical support. Dashed lines indicate limited empirical support or no empirical support

resources among expecting mothers (Magaña and Clark 1995; Najman et al. 1988). Several studies show that greater religious attendance is associated with higher levels of social integration and social support (Krause 2008; Rote et al. 2013). Krause (2008) explains that religious attendance is an interaction ritual that is characterized by repeated and patterned social contact. Over time, regular social interaction within the same religious community can expand social networks and foster greater contact with network members. Religious communities may also create generally supportive environments through religious socialization (e.g., by encouraging churchgoers to help the less fortunate or by sanctifying family relationships). Social support is extremely important to the health and wellbeing of expecting mothers (Glazier et al. 2004). There is even some evidence to suggest that social support is inversely associated with negative birth outcomes (Elsenbruch et al. 2007).

Religious involvement is also associated with higher levels of psychological resources, including, for example, self-control and personal control or mastery (Dillon and Wink 2007; McCullough and Willoughby 2009; Pascoe et al. 2016). Religious involvement is characterized by social control and self-regulation. Within the context of religious communities, there are social (and perceived divine) sanctions associated with

conformity to and deviance from established religious standards (e.g., behavioral and ritual standards and expectations). Religious involvement contributes to self-control by building generic self-regulatory strength over the life course (McCullough and Willoughby 2009). Because religion is, in many respects, a routine practice of constraint and restraint, religious adults are more likely to believe that they can control their emotions and behavior. A strong sense of divine control may also help to promote a sense of personal control or mastery over various aspects of life when adults trust that anything is possible through faith and a strong partnership with a divine figure (Pascoe et al. 2016). These processes are potentially important in light of research showing that higher levels of mastery are associated with lower levels of pregnancy-related anxiety and lower rates of low birth weight, being small for gestational age, and pre-term birth (Dunkel-Schetter 2009; Goldenberg et al. 1991; Rini et al. 1999).

Religion could also favor infant health by enhancing the mental health of expectant women (Jesse et al. 2006; Magaña and Clark 1995; Page 2004). Studies show that religious attendance is associated with better mental health across a range of indicators, including anger, depression, anxiety, and nonspecific psychological distress (Hill et al. 2011; Koenig et al. 2012). Koenig

et al. (2012) explain that religious involvement benefits mental health by promoting social resources (e.g., social support) and psychological resources (e.g., optimism and a sense of meaning and purpose). Research also suggests that poor mental health is a significant risk factor for several negative birth outcomes, including, for example, preterm birth, intrauterine growth retardation, and low birth weight (Dole et al. 2003; Rondó 2007; Rondó et al. 2003).

Finally, religious involvement may protect against low birth weight and infant mortality by encouraging positive health behaviors and discouraging unhealthy lifestyle choices (Jesse et al. 2006; Jesse and Reed 2004; Magaña and Clark 1995; Page 2004; Page et al. 2009). Studies show that religious attendance is associated with a wide range of healthy behaviors, including, for example, lower levels of smoking and drinking, higher levels of exercise, greater use of preventive health care services, and more rigid adherence to medication regimens (Hill et al. 2006; Hill et al. 2011; Koenig et al. 2012). Research concerning the health behaviors of pregnant and postpartum women confirms that regular religious attendance is associated with lower rates of alcohol use, cigarette use, and illicit drug use (Mann et al. 2007; Page et al. 2009).

There are several compelling explanations for why religious individuals might engage in so many healthy behaviors, including exposure to religious messages that discourage specific behaviors (e.g., specific biblical proscriptions against intoxication) and reinforce the religious significance of (a) the body (e.g., the idea that the body is a temple of God), (b) parent-child relationships (e.g., the idea that children are a gift from God), and (c) authority (e.g., the idea that existing authorities are appointed by God) (Mahoney et al. 2003; Page et al. 2009; Regnerus and Burdette 2006).

Specific religious doctrines and general sanctification processes are so important for health behaviors because they add religious and spiritual consequences to the regular pressures that mothers face when caring for their bodies and following the recommendations of health professionals. Religious attendance might also contrib-

ute to healthy behaviors by reducing motivations to behave in risky ways, for example, by satisfying the need for supportive social ties and reducing negative emotions and the likelihood of self-medication (Page et al. 2009).

Risky maternal health behaviors like cigarette smoking, poor diet, heavy alcohol use, and illicit drug use are important because they are associated with fetal growth restriction, preterm birth, and low birth weight (McCormick et al. 1990; Peacock et al. 1995; Valero de Bernabé et al. 2004). There is also evidence to suggest that prenatal care is associated with positive infant health outcomes (Alexander and Kotelchuck 2001). Cigarette smoking may be an especially important mechanism because it is one of the most common negative health practices and one of the most consistent predictors of low birth weight (Valero de Bernabé et al. 2004).

Given that few studies have examined the relationship between maternal religious involvement and birth outcomes, it should come as no surprise that only a few of the proposed theoretical linkages have been examined empirically. Nevertheless, Burdette et al. (2012) tested a number of mechanisms linking maternal church attendance and low birth weight, including mental health, cigarette use, alcohol use, illicit drug use, poor nutrition, and late prenatal care. Although lower rates of cigarette use partially mediate or explain the association between maternal religious attendance and low birth weight, the authors found no evidence to substantiate the mediating influence of the other proposed mechanisms.

Allostatic Load

For most people, acute or short-term stress is normally and efficiently managed by the stress response or allostatic systems of the human body. In the first major stage of the stress response (the sympathetic response), the hypothalamus (in the brain) signals the adrenal glands to release a stress hormone called adrenaline (or epinephrine) to ready the body for fight-or-flight. In the second major stage (the parasympathetic response), the

hypothalamus signals the adrenal glands to release another stress hormone called cortisol to switch off and compensate for the sympathetic response. When stress is acute or short-term, allostatic systems can efficiently manage the physiological consequences of stress. When stress is chronic or long-term, the result is allostatic load. According to Bruce McEwen (1998, p. 171), allostatic load is “the wear and tear that results from chronic overactivity or underactivity of allostatic systems.”

Allostatic load is typically measured by biomarkers or objective biological indicators (derived from independent assessments like blood, saliva, and urine, not self-reports) of physiological functioning (e.g., cardiovascular and immune functioning) that are known to predict health and mortality risks (Crimmins and Seeman 2001). The most common measures of allostatic load indicate “chronic overactivity or underactivity” of the autonomic nervous system (e.g., epinephrine), the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis (e.g., cortisol and DHEA), and the cardiovascular (e.g., blood pressure and heart rate), metabolic (e.g., glycosylated hemoglobin or blood glucose, body mass, and waist circumference), and immune systems (e.g., c-reactive protein, interleukin-6, white blood cells, and Epstein-Barr virus).

In general, research shows that various indicators of religious involvement are favorably associated with a number of biomarkers across autonomic nervous, HPA, cardiovascular, and immune systems (Seeman et al. 2003; Seybold 2007). More specifically, there is evidence that religious involvement is associated with lower levels of blood pressure (Das and Nairn 2016; Hill et al. 2014; Koenig et al. 1998; Krause et al. 2002; Maselko et al. 2007), c-reactive protein (Das and Nairn 2016; Ferraro and Kim 2014; Gillum et al. 2008; Hill et al. 2014; King et al. 2001, 2002), interleukin-6 (Koenig et al. 1997; Lutgendorf et al. 2004), white blood cells (King et al. 2001), Epstein-Barr virus (Das and Nairn 2016; Hill et al. 2014), epinephrine (Maselko et al. 2007), cortisol (Ironson et al. 2002), and overall allostatic load (Hill et al. 2014; Maselko et al. 2007). Evidence concerning the metabolic

system is weak and mixed. Some research suggests that religious involvement is unrelated to glycosylated hemoglobin (Das and Nairn 2016; Hill et al. 2014). Several other studies demonstrate that religious adults tend to weigh more, not less, than their less religious counterparts (Idler and Kasl 1997a; Kim et al. 2003; Oman and Reed 1998; Strawbridge et al. 1997).

We know very little about how religious involvement gets “under the skin” to contribute to favorable biomarker profiles. However, previous research has proposed (but not tested) several social (e.g., social integration and social support), psychological (e.g., meaning and control beliefs), behavioral (e.g., drinking and smoking), and biological (e.g., stress) mechanisms (Hill 2010; Hill et al. 2011; Koenig et al. 2012; Seybold 2007). Figure 2.3 presents our conceptual model of religious involvement and allostatic load. According to this model, religious involvement and religious meaning systems may help to buffer appraisals of stressful life conditions and, by extension, their physiological consequences. Instrumental support, the sense of control, and moderate drinking practices could help adults to avoid stressful life situations (both events and appraisals) and chronic activation of the physiological stress response. In the event of stressful life conditions (and the activation of sympathetic systems), religious beliefs and practices, supportive relationships, strong self-concepts, and healthy lifestyles may also favor healthy coping strategies (and efficient activation of parasympathetic systems and various growth responses).

Because stress, mental health, and unhealthy behaviors are reliably linked to religious involvement and the activation of nervous, HPA, cardiovascular, immune, and metabolic systems (McEwen 1998, 2002), these factors (among others) may function as general mechanisms across markers of allostatic systems. We should note that these mechanisms cannot explain the anomalous positive association between religious attendance and body mass (a marker of the metabolic system). Explanations for why religious adults tend to weigh more than less religious adults are not firmly established in the literature. However, there is some speculation that poor eating habits,

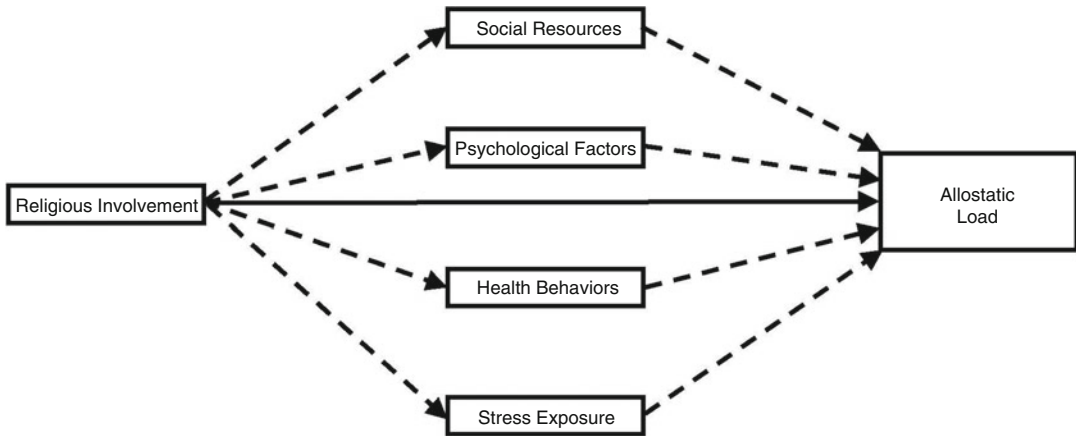


Fig. 2.3 Conceptual model linking religious involvement and allostatic load *Solid lines indicate that the corresponding pathway has some empirical support. Dashed lines indicate limited empirical support or no empirical support

lower rates of smoking, and the sedentary practice of religious media consumption may play a role (Cline and Ferraro 2006; Kim et al. 2003).

Physical Functioning and Mortality Risk in Adulthood

Physical functioning is a general term that refers to indicators of physical impairment (dysfunction in the physical body) and disability (the inability to perform basic roles). The most common indicators of physical functioning include activities of daily living (ADL), instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), and physical mobility. ADLs assess disability or dependence in functioning in bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring from bed to chair, continence, and feeding. IADLs assess disability or dependence in executive functioning in more complex tasks like using the telephone, shopping, preparing food, keeping house, doing one's laundry, traveling, taking one's medications, and handling one's finances. Measures of physical mobility assess physical impairment. For example, the Performance-Oriented Mobility Assessment evaluates performance tasks like standing balance, a timed walk at a normal pace (gait speed), and a timed test of rising from a chair and sitting down.

At this point, there is no consistent empirical evidence concerning the true nature of the association between religious involvement and physical functioning (Benjamins 2004; Fitchett et al. 2013; Powell et al. 2003). According to a recent study by Fitchett et al. (2013, p. 235), “considerable uncertainty remains about the exact influence of religious beliefs and practices on health outcomes in older adults, such as disability, which is a critical marker of overall physical health in late life.” Several studies show that higher levels of religious involvement are associated with lower rates of impairment in ADLs (Fitchett et al. 2013; Haley et al. 2001; Hayward and Krause 2013; Hybels et al. 2012, 2014; Idler and Kasl 1992, 1997b; Krause and Hayward 2012; Park et al. 2008), IADLs (Hybels et al. 2012, 2014; Park et al. 2008), and physical mobility (Benjamins 2004; Fitchett et al. 2013; Hill et al. 2016; Hybels et al. 2012, 2014). However, there is also considerable evidence to indicate that there is no association between religious involvement and physical functioning (Fitchett et al. 2013; Hybels et al. 2012; Idler and Kasl 1992, 1997b; Kelley-Moore and Ferraro 2001; Krause and Hayward 2012; Park et al. 2008; Son and Wilson 2011). Some research even suggests that religious involvement is associated with poorer physical functioning (Benjamins 2004; Haley et al. 2001;

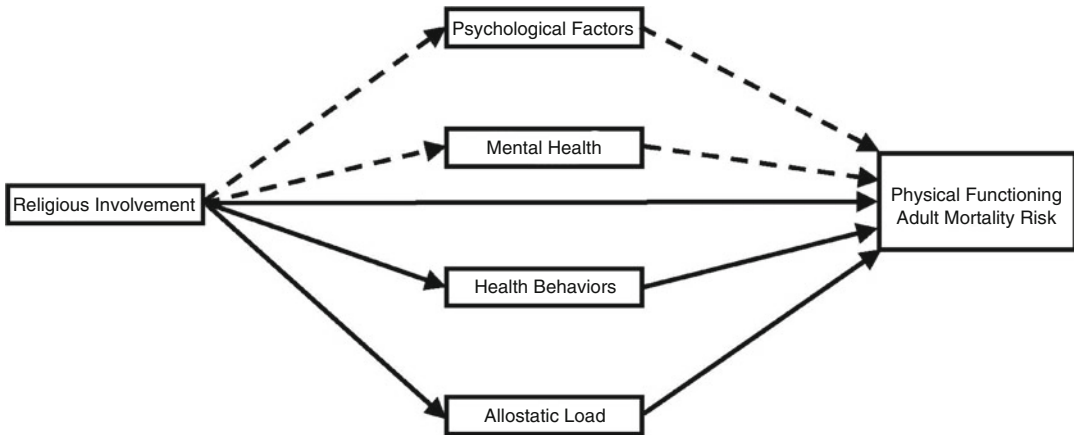


Fig. 2.4 Conceptual model linking religious involvement and physical functioning and adult mortality risk *Solid lines indicate that the corresponding pathway has some

empirical support. Dashed lines indicate limited empirical support or no empirical support

Hayward and Krause 2013; Idler and Kasl 1992; Kelley-Moore and Ferraro 2001; Krause and Hayward 2012).

Although several studies show that religious involvement can promote physical functioning, very few have formally tested any potential pathways. Nevertheless, previous research has identified several potential social (e.g., greater social ties and social support), psychological (e.g., greater meaning in life and better mental health), behavioral (e.g., lower levels of drinking and smoking), and biological (e.g., lower levels of stress and better immune function) mechanisms (Benamins 2004; Fitchett et al. 2013; Hayward and Krause 2013; Hybels et al. 2012, 2014; Idler and Kasl 1992, 1997b; Koenig et al. 2012; Krause and Hayward 2012; Son and Wilson 2011). Because these pathways are often associated with indicators of religious involvement and physical functioning, they are highlighted in Fig. 2.4.

Our review of the literature revealed that only a few studies have formally tested any of these processes. Interestingly enough, there is no empirical evidence of mediation for body mass, alcohol consumption, marital status, and contact with friends and children, social well-being, the provision of emotional support, optimism, fatalism, emotional well-being, depression, and psychological well-being (Idler and Kasl 1992, 1997b; Son and Wilson 2011). There is, however, some data to support the

partial mediating influence of physical activity, smoking, contact with family, leisure social activities, meaning in life, and immune function (Benamins 2004; Hybels et al. 2014; Idler and Kasl 1997b; Krause and Hayward 2012). Taken together, these results suggest that religious involvement may actually contribute to better physical functioning through a range of mechanisms.

The concept of adult mortality refers to life expectancy (how long we are expected to live), longevity (how long we actually live), or the timing of death (when we expire).

Several literature reviews and meta-analyses provide convincing evidence that religious involvement is associated with lower mortality risk (Chida et al. 2009; Koenig et al. 2012; McCullough, et al. 2000; Powell, Shahabi, and Thoresen 2003). This general pattern is consistent across outcomes, including all-cause mortality and mortality linked to circulatory diseases, respiratory diseases, infectious diseases, and other specific causes (Dupre et al. 2006; Ellison et al. 2000; Gillum et al. 2008; Helm et al. 2000; Hill et al. 2005; Hummer et al. 1999, 2010; Koenig et al. 1999; Krause 2006; Lutgendorf et al. 2004; Musick et al. 2004; Oman and Reed 1998; Oman et al. 2002; Rogers et al. 2010; Strawbridge et al. 1997).

Numerous articles, chapters, and books have addressed an array of potential pathways through which religious involvement might favor longevity

(e.g., George et al. 2002; Hill et al. 2005; Hill and Cobb 2011; Koenig et al. 2012; Oman et al. 2002). These pathways are very similar to those proposed for physical functioning. They include social resources (greater social ties and social support), mental health (fewer symptoms of psychological distress), health behaviors (lower levels of drinking and smoking), and other biological markers (better immune function).

Some research has confirmed the mediating influences of marital status, social connections, social activity, and the receipt and provision of social support (Ellison et al. 2000; Strawbridge et al. 1997), while others have shown no evidence of mediation for number of confidants, frequency of social contact, and perceived social support (Hill et al. 2005; Koenig et al. 1999; Musick et al. 2004). Although psychological resources are theoretically viable explanations for why religious involvement might favor longevity, we were unable to find any studies to support this class of mechanisms.

Some mortality studies have indicated that smoking (Dupre et al. 2006; Ellison et al. 2000; Hummer et al. 1999; Strawbridge et al. 1997), body mass—especially being underweight (Dupre et al. 2006; Hummer et al. 1999; Musick et al. 2004; Strawbridge et al. 1997), exercise (Musick et al. 2004; Strawbridge et al. 1997), and alcohol consumption (Strawbridge et al. 1997) are important mechanisms, while others have shown little to no mediating influence for smoking (Helm et al. 2000; Koenig et al. 1999), body mass (Helm et al. 2000; Koenig et al. 1999), and alcohol consumption (Dupre et al. 2006; Ellison et al. 2000; Hill et al. 2005; Hummer et al. 1999).

At least one study showed no evidence of mediation with separate adjustments for depression and cognitive impairment (Hill et al. 2005). Most studies enter health status variables in a block, so it is difficult to distinguish the mediating influences of mental and physical health. This group of studies provides little (Koenig et al. 1999; Oman et al. 2002) to no (Helm et al. 2000; Strawbridge et al. 1997) evidence to support depression and anxiety as mediators.

Finally, Lutgendorf et al. (2004) demonstrated that the inverse association between religious attendance and all-cause mortality risk in older

adults is fully mediated by lower levels of interleukin-6, a biomarker implicated in the development of heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, frailty, and functional limitations. Although Gillum et al. (2008) reported a similar pattern for c-reactive protein, these results are unclear because several potential mediators were entered simultaneously.

Directions for Future Research

Due to advances in the biological sciences, it is no longer reasonable to endorse the perspectives of nature-only or nurture-only or nature “versus” nurture. With this in mind, we explored the association between religious involvement and biological functioning across the life course. We defined essential biological concepts and processes. We reviewed religious variations in gene-environment interplay, birth weight, preterm birth, infant mortality, allostatic load, physical functioning, and adult mortality. We reported numerous studies showing that religious involvement tends to favor healthy biological functioning. We also described the central theoretical and empirical explanations for these variations through the development of several biopsychosocial models. These models incorporated pathways related to social resources, psychological resources, healthy behaviors, and various biological processes. In this final section, we discuss several promising directions for future research in the sociological study of religion and biological functioning.

Biological Outcomes

Although this chapter examined a wide range of biological outcomes and processes, numerous outcomes have been understudied or altogether ignored in the religion and biological functioning literature. With this in mind, we would like to highlight the need for research in the areas of epigenetics, infant mortality, and telomeres. Even though individuals inherit their genetic code at conception, environmental factors can actually

regulate the expression of genes (Meaney and Szyf 2005). According to noted biologist Steven Rose (1999, p. 877–878), “the expression of most genes is modified at several levels. It is affected by which other genes are present in the genome of the particular organism, by the cellular environment, the extracellular environment, and, in the case of multicellular organisms, by the extra-organismic environment.” To our knowledge, there is no empirical evidence to suggest that environmental signals related to religious involvement could actually produce epigenetic modifications to affect gene expression. Because religious involvement is associated with environmental factors like diet, exercise, stress, and social support, it is plausible that religious involvement could function to shape health and biological functioning through epigenetic processes. Infant mortality is such an important outcome. It is the ultimate gauge of the intergenerational transmission of biological functioning. Infant mortality is the most logical extension of studies showing an inverse association between maternal religious attendance and low birth weight (a major risk factor for infant mortality). Finally, telomeres are clusters of DNA and protein that serve as protective caps on the ends of chromosomes. Telomere length is an important biological marker of cellular aging that is distinct from chronological aging. The question is whether religious involvement is actually associated with telomere length. Because research suggests that life stress is associated with accelerated telomere shortening (Epel et al. 2004), religious involvement could theoretically slow the rate of cellular aging through typical stress-buffering processes.

Indirect Effects

Previous research is also generally limited by theoretical models that overemphasize the direct effects of religious involvement. Although studies often speculate as to why religious involvement might be associated with biological functioning, empirical support for these explanations is sorely lacking. We have noted limited

empirical support for several classes of potential mediators, especially in the area of allostatic load and related outcomes. It is vital for future research to prioritize the testing of unexplored and understudied mechanisms. While it is important to establish individual pathways, it is also time to focus more on developing and testing elaborate theoretical models with multiple mediators and complex causal chains.

Subgroup Variations

It is often unclear whether the association between religious involvement and biological functioning varies according to theoretically relevant subgroups. Under which social, psychological, and physiological conditions is religious involvement more or less protective? Are the indirect processes linking religious involvement and biological functioning invariant across groups, or do certain causal processes fit certain groups more or less (i.e., moderated mediation)? Although some studies consider subgroup variations in the effects of religious involvement, empirical explanations for these patterns are never formally tested (i.e., mediated moderation). Genetics research aside, it is also uncommon to see religious involvement framed as a moderator of the effects of other biological risk factors. Additional work is needed to confirm the observations of previous studies and to consider new and understudied subgroup variations. We will also need better theoretical explanations *a priori* and formal empirical tests of mediated moderation and moderated mediation.

The Dark Side

Although previous research tends to emphasize the salubrious role of religious involvement, we cannot ignore the possibility that religious involvement might also undermine biological functioning. For example, there is some evidence to suggest that religious struggles (wondering whether God has abandoned you, questioning God’s love, and attributing poor health conditions

to the devil) can actually elevate the mortality risk of elderly hospital patients (Pargament et al. 2001). Unfortunately, this “dark side” of religious involvement is generally understudied in the broader religion and health literature. The explanations for these processes are also not as thoroughly developed as explanations for the healthful consequences of religious involvement. More research is needed to explore and explain these processes in the context of biological functioning.

Alternative Explanations

In this chapter, we have suggested that religious involvement contributes to biological functioning. It is important to acknowledge that this is only one of many potential conceptual models. It is also possible to frame the association between religious involvement and biological functioning as an artifact of various alternative explanations, including health selection, personality selection, and genetic selection.

Mortality research aside, most studies of religious involvement and biological functioning are limited to cross-sectional data. Because cross-sectional studies are unable to establish the causal order of any observed associations, it is often unclear why religious people and their offspring appear healthier. We assume that religious involvement predicts health and functioning, but health and functioning might also predict religious involvement. For example, studies show that physical health problems, including broken hips, disability, cancer, and stroke, can undermine or limit public religious activities in old age (Benjamins et al. 2003; Kelley-Moore and Ferraro 2001). In the absence of longitudinal designs and adequate controls for baseline health status, certain indicators of religious involvement (especially indicators of public religious behaviors) can “select” healthier people into religious activities. This pattern can be seen in various mortality studies when associations with religious attendance are noticeably attenuated with comprehensive adjustments for baseline physical health and functioning (e.g., Ellison et al. 2000;

Hill et al. 2005; Hummer et al. 1999; Musick et al. 2004).

Research clearly demonstrates that a significant portion of the association between religion and health is produced by health selection processes. Researchers also argue that individuals with certain personality traits are selected into religious involvement. Some even view religious involvement as a strong indicator of personality. Personalities are patterned ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Studies show that religious involvement is reliably associated with several personality characteristics, including lower levels of psychoticism (risk-taking and lack of responsibility) and higher levels of agreeableness (friendly and helpful to others), conscientiousness (dependability and self-discipline), and cooperativeness (Koenig, King, and Carson 2012). Because studies of religion and health rarely (if ever) adjust for personality, there is little to no evidence for personality selection. Psychoticism could reasonably select individuals into risky lifestyle patterns and, as a consequence, out of religious institutions. Agreeableness could even draw individuals into religious communities through various social aspects of public religious activities. If any of these processes are at work, personality selection could account for at least some of the effects of religious involvement through social and behavioral mechanisms.

We have already noted that religious life is at least partially determined by genetic processes. For example, Bradshaw and Ellison’s (2008) analysis of data collected from a national sample of adult twin siblings indicates that genetic factors can explain between 19 and 65% of the variation in religious involvement. The authors examined several domains of religious involvement, including organizational involvement, personal religiosity and spirituality, conservative theologies, and transformations and commitment. While genetic factors explain 32% of the variation in religious attendance (the most commonly used indicator of religious involvement), they explain an impressive 65% of the variation in transformations and commitment (indicated by an item assessing whether the respondent has been born again and committed to Jesus Christ).

Bradshaw and Ellison (2008, p. 540) conclude that the association between religion and health “may be spurious due to the failure to control for important covariates, possibly including genetic confounders.” They speculate that genetic factors could influence religious involvement and health indirectly through personality (which also exhibits significant heritability). Of course genetic factors could also predispose individuals to poorer biological functioning, which could limit religious involvement through health selection.

A generation of research along these lines would effectively dismantle the “nurture fortress” by providing a more comprehensive understanding of how and why religious involvement might contribute to biological functioning across the life course.

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Abstract

This chapter provides an overview of research on the relationship between religion and work, occupations, and entrepreneurship. It begins with a review of Max Weber's well-known Protestant Work Ethic thesis and problematizes it using extant research from sociology, psychology, and business. The relationship of religion to workplace outcomes is complex, neither always positive nor always negative. We highlight various dimensions of religion and their implications from job satisfaction to work-life balance strategies. We review growing scholarship on the role of religious stratification in the workplace as well. We introduce new research examining the impact of religion on entrepreneurship and close with suggestions for future research.

Over a century ago, Max Weber ([1904] 1930) published *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. In it, he linked the origins of contemporary Western capitalism to Protestant Christian religiosity. The book stands as one of the most

well-known classical works in sociology. Yet, the study of the relationship between religion and work has not received sustained attention. That is changing. Scholarship is accumulating that finds persistent links among religion, work, and entrepreneurship, but not in the ways previously imagined. In the following, we present a brief summary of Weber's Protestant Ethic argument and review extant research from the past 20 years that incorporates greater conceptual and model specificity, research which greatly complicates Weber's original claims. This specificity not only considers the positive influence of religious beliefs and religious group involvement on work outcomes but also the "dark side" of religion that results in stratification and biased treatment in the workplace. Returning to Weber, we present contemporary

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research on religion and entrepreneurship. We conclude with recommendations for further investigation.

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism

Weber ([1904] 1930) outlined a relationship between the cultural ideology of Protestantism and nascent capitalist behavior to explain economic outcomes. A society composed of individuals and communities that espouse particular religious beliefs regarding salvation can have a direct influence on personal economic outcomes. As Weber argued, early English Puritans understood their relationship to God as one based on election, i.e., a supernatural deity chooses some for salvation. Such election could not be determined conclusively, thus creating an existential anxiety for the individual believer. For many, especially entrepreneurs, profitability in work became an indication of God's favor, and by extension perhaps, of God's election. In order for profitability to occur, other theological concepts helped Puritans to organize their habits of labor. Calling, in Weber's view, was a religious belief that God summoned individuals to specific tasks or labor. Belief in one's divine calling to a line of work formed part of the cultural script for work in these Protestant communities. If calling and proof of election served as motivations for industriousness, frugality and asceticism were the cultural mechanisms that made profitability a

material reality. Asceticism and frugality were virtues of abnegation: one attained greater holiness in the spiritual realm by withholding or refraining from enjoyment and pleasurable activity in the material realm. By delaying the consumption of rewards from one's labor, the worker's exercise of spiritual discipline reaps the reward of relative material abundance usually in the form of money. For the Puritan entrepreneur, this profit could then be reinvested in one's business, thus allowing for growth and improvements. For the non-entrepreneur, frugality allowed for the accumulation of savings which could then be spent on larger consumptive behavior such as the purchase of land. The relationship of these individual-level characteristics formed much of the basis for Weber's argument that the development of modern industrial capitalism was heavily influenced by Protestant beliefs put into economic action through the aggregation of millions of entrepreneurs and workers following this specific cultural script (see Fig. 3.1).

Weber envisioned that once this relationship between individual-level faith and broad economic processes took root, the particularities of soteriological beliefs and economic behavior would decouple. Capitalism as an economic practice could run on its own with a non-religious or secular motivation for continued productivity. "Where fulfillment of the calling cannot directly be related to the highest spiritual and cultural values, or when, on the other hand, it need not be felt simply as economic compulsion, the individual generally abandons the attempt to justify it,"

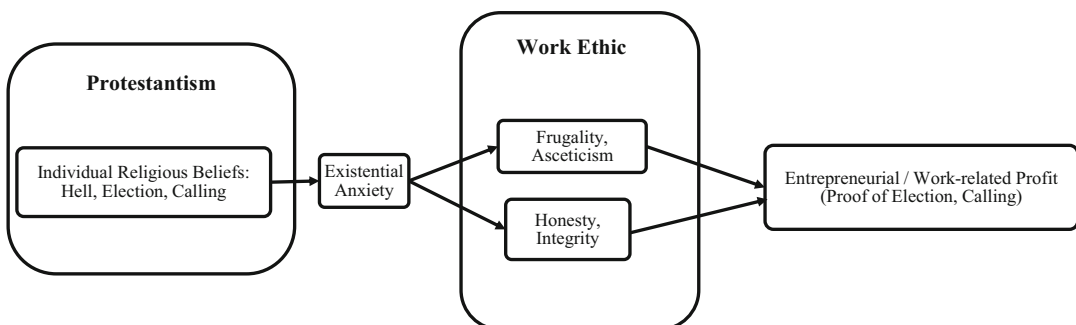


Fig. 3.1 Weber's protestant work ethic model (Individual level)

wrote Weber ([1904] 1930, p. 182). In other words the process of secularization would render religious beliefs unnecessary for profitability to occur. It is perhaps this last point that may explain the curious absence of research on the relationship between religion and work through much of the twentieth century. Scholars expected secularization to take place as Weber predicted, and religion's influence at every level of society from the individual to every major institution would vanish. Enough evidence emerged by the 1970s to suggest that such expectations fit the pattern for European Christianity. They did not, however, explain the growth of Evangelical and Pentecostal Christianity in the United States, Asia, or the Global South. Nor did they match the expansion of Islam in Asia and Europe. As a result, new theoretical explanations for religion's vitality emerged by the late 1990s (Casanova 1994; Warner 1993). The persistence of religious vitality also invited a new generation of theorizing as to the specific causal mechanisms at the macro, organizational, and individual levels of analysis. Only in the past decade and a half have a small number of scholars in sociology and business reconsidered the ways in which religion's persistence might still affect work and economic development. Advances in research methodologies enable a new generation of scholars to operationalize more carefully specific aspects of Weber's thesis and to test them in more rigorous ways.

Beyond the Protestant Ethic: Reconsidering Religiosity and Workplace Outcomes

Late twentieth century scholarship revealed important limitations to Weber's thesis. Most notably, evidence of religiously-based ethics bearing similar relationship to rational capitalism appear in Catholic monasteries preceding the Protestant Reformation and in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism prior to exposure to western colonization of Asia (Bellah 1957; Collins 1996; Giddens 1976). Moreover, Weber's unit of analysis, a case study of historical institutionalized religious ideology, has been replaced largely by

quantitative approaches using aggregate statistics based on social scientific surveys. This methodological shift changes the way social scientists understand the relationship between capitalism and religion. In Weber's view, linking institutional and ideological shifts at a macro-level are exemplified by a specific case study of one religious group. In contemporary social science these linkages are more often derived "up" from statistical analysis of responses to survey questions answered by a large sample of individuals that presumably represent a certain population. Contemporary studies, therefore, decompose institutionalized religion and its attendant belief system into measurable belief statements, behaviors and practices, and affiliations. These are collectively identified as individual religiosity which is understood as a multidimensional construct (Smidt et al. 2009). Recognizing multiple dimensions of religiosity helps illuminate different ways of "being religious" as well as alternative paths by which religion might influence work attitudes and practices.

Religious Belief

Essential to religion is the distinction between the sacred and the profane (Durkheim 1912). Religious beliefs draw these distinctions. Religious beliefs refer to statements that articulate core tenets of a meaning system. Religious adherents are expected to affirm doctrinal statements in order to be associated with a religion. For example, Muslims contend that Allah is the only god and Muhammad is his prophet; Christians emphasize the divinity of Jesus; and Hindus see themselves within a repeating cycle of birth, life, death, and rebirth, from which they strive to be liberated. While not everyone subscribes to religious beliefs, the notion of believing in some type of cosmic order is arguably a basic human characteristic (Smith 2003). Religion provides a meaning system that shapes individuals' general beliefs about themselves and the world, expectations, goals, actions, and emotions (Silberman 2005). Religious beliefs, especially, show a capacity to make work meaningful

for individuals (Davidson and Caddell 1994; Neal 2000; Wuthnow 1994). But they do more than alter how people think about their work. Beliefs can alter how people do their work (Chan-Serafin et al. 2013; Day 2005; Steffy 2013).

In keeping with Weber, the focus of this chapter is primarily on beliefs and behaviors within institutionalized religious groups. A parallel, and increasingly popular, line of research is spirituality in the workplace. Definitions of spirituality vary, but the general pattern in most of these studies connect spirituality to employee well-being, sense of meaning, and sense of community, all of which heighten productivity and performance (Day 2005; Karakas 2010). Understanding spirituality as private non-institutional metaphysical belief and practice may prove increasingly important as the segment of the American population defined as “unchurched believers” who eschew organized religion but not the idea of god or a sense of meaning grows (Hout and Fischer 2014) (see also Giordan’s Chap. 11, on “Spirituality” in this volume). That said, our focus rests on religion as an institution concerned with formal belief, practice and participation.

Calling

Some beliefs prove more relevant to work outcomes than others. In Weber’s original treatise, he noted the perception of work as a sacred calling. When individuals perceive divine significance in their work, it has the potential to shape their motivation and performance. Calling can be understood as a “transcendent summons” to “purposeful work” that contributes to a common good (Dik and Duffy 2009; Dik et al. 2012). Viewed in this way, calling is a concept applicable to multiple world religions (Dik et al. 2012). Research on calling reveals an assortment of positive work outcomes, including motivation, satisfaction, and commitment (Dik et al. 2012; Elangovan et al. 2010; Neubert and Halbesleben 2015). Furthermore, calling connects to identity (Hall and Chandler 2005). Work understood as calling becomes more than a job or career to meet financial needs, it is an expression of identity carried out for the good of self and others (Davidson and Caddell 1994). The salience of religious

beliefs in shaping identity has other implications. For example, when religion is central to a worker’s identity, employees are more prone to ethical behavior (Longenecker et al. 2004; Weaver and Agle 2002).

Other Work-Related Religious Beliefs

Building on the significance of calling, researchers have looked for other ways that individuals take their faith into the workplace. Psychologists of religion have developed a “sanctification” scale (Mahoney et al. 1999) which identifies a psychological process of ascribing behaviors with sacred value; this concept has recently been applied to work outcomes (Backus 2013; Carroll 2008). Miller (2006) developed a typology of faith-work integration based on his analysis of over 1000 American workers. He pointed to ethics, experience, enrichment, and evangelism as four integration strategies. At this point, Miller’s typology is more descriptive than predictive. Additional research is necessary to operationalize and test his typology. Lynn et al. (2009, 2010) also developed a Faith at Work Scale to measure faith-work integration. Their scale contains 15 items that show high internal reliability across multiple samples. Items in the scale include “I sense God’s presence while I work;” “I view my work as a mission from God;” and “I view my work as part of God’s plan to care for the needs of people.” Results from a web-panel of 216 employed adults found the Faith at Work scale positively related to satisfaction with life and organizational commitment, but unrelated to job satisfaction (Walker 2013). Surprisingly, the scale was positively associated with intent to leave one’s job and negatively associated with self-rated job performance. Further research with larger samples is needed to explore the positive and negative outcomes corresponding to faith-work integration beliefs (Chan-Serafin et al. 2013).

Other multi-item scales have been developed recently to tap beliefs about honoring God in work and Prosperity Gospel beliefs (Neubert et al. 2014). Honoring God beliefs stress that paid labor pleases God and that working hard is a form of gratitude to God. Prosperity beliefs capture the

notion that God rewards faithful believers with material prosperity. Both scales are significantly related to work behaviors, but not in the same way. Individuals who perceive their work as a way to honor God are more likely to engage in voluntary collaborative behaviors at work to help co-workers. The relationship stands even when controlling for demographic characteristics, psychological traits, and religious background. Conversely, Prosperity beliefs are negatively associated with helping behavior. While these new scales need additional testing to substantiate their utility, the early evidence is enlightening. In particular, the findings for Prosperity beliefs are an important extension of previous research. Prosperity beliefs are recognized as a source of hope and empowerment for individuals (Berger 1999), especially for those with lower social standing (Bowler 2013; Harrison 2005; Marti 2012). But the limited evidence on the economic outcomes of Prosperity beliefs suggests little actual uplift in terms of financial standing (Koch 2009; Schieman and Jung 2012).

Religion and Work-Family Strategies

The central dynamic faced by most workers is committing sufficient time both to their private lives and the life of the workplace. Alongside the considerations of religious belief on various work outcomes, a handful of studies examine the relationship of religion to work-family strategies, sometimes termed “work-life balance.” These largely center on the experience of religious women in the workforce owing to the higher rates of religiosity among women generally and the perceived normative expectations in conservative religious communities for a strict division of labor subordinating women to childcare and other domestic duties. The general focus is the effect of religion on decision-making with regard to time allocations to paid labor versus family care (Edgell 2005; Gallagher 2003; Konieczny 2013).

While some scholarship links patriarchal ideology to conservative Protestant women’s labor force participation, fine-grained studies suggest that the relationship is more complicated. For example, Read (2004) surveyed 500 Arab American religious women and found that religi-

osity suppressed these women’s labor force participation *only* when children are present in the home. Otherwise religiosity had no influence. Hall et al. (2012) studied perceptions of work as “sanctified by God” within a sample of 200 Christian (largely Protestant) working mothers with advanced educations. There they found that perceptions of work being “sanctified by God” were correlated with lower inter-role conflict and higher job satisfaction. Additionally, in an analysis of survey responses in the General Social Survey (1996 special module), Ammons and Edgell (2007, p. 818) discovered that women’s work trade-offs are affected more by work conditions, whereas men’s decisions are affected more by religion and family needs. From these studies we see that religion may have a limited time frame for reducing women’s paid labor participation, it can enhance the significance of paid labor for some, and it affects the decision-making process favoring more family time over work time for men more so than for women.

Taken together, scholarship has identified a few Christian religious belief measures that play some role in worker attitudes. Beliefs may enhance one’s job satisfaction and commitment to an organization as well as allow one to manage the stressors inherent in the workplace setting. Moreover, religious beliefs may also alter one’s investment in the workplace when determining time allocation toward one’s personal familial commitments over and against one’s paid labor.

Religious Group Involvement

Most of the studies regarding personal beliefs reviewed above take a psychological perspective and examine the impact that an individual’s beliefs have on attitudinal or behavioral outcomes. The question of where beliefs about work originate is another consideration. Sociologists contend that an individual’s beliefs are typically learned through socialization. Families, organizations, and institutions socialize individuals to believe and behave in specific ways (see Petts and Desmond’s Chap. 13, on “Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood” in this volume). Regarding

religion and work, parents may model for their children how their faith matters at work. Clergy may convey messages that connect faith to work. School teachers and media may present different ways that religion functions in public environments. The workplace itself, whether it be the vision of the CEO, role modeling of religious co-workers, or the rules regarding religious expression, may likewise generate and augment the beliefs one may have regarding the place of religion in one's work. In short, religious beliefs about work are produced through socialization in various contexts.

The central context for which most of the literature on religion and work focuses is the congregation. Religious beliefs are embodied and practiced in faith communities and the central function of congregations is to transmit religious culture (Chaves 2004). Durkheim (1912) drew attention to the codification of beliefs and practices into churches. In local religious gatherings, individuals learn religious beliefs, practice religious behaviors, and strengthen a religious identity.

Congregations are the dominant organizational form of religion in the United States (Warner 1994). Sixty percent of American adults claim an affiliation to a church, synagogue, temple, mosque, or other form of religious congregation (Chaves et al. 1999; Dougherty et al. 2007). Through congregations, individuals often belong to a larger network of like-minded religious communities termed denominations and even larger religious traditions that share theology, culture, and history. The major religious traditions of the contemporary United States are Catholic, Jewish, and several strands of Protestantism (African American, Evangelical, and Mainline) (Kellstedt and Green 1993; Steensland et al. 2000). Although Weber emphasized Protestantism and the rationalized work ethic it endorsed, numerous contemporary studies fail to find meaningful distinctions in work attitudes or actions by religious tradition (e.g. Chusmir and Koberg 1988; Longenecker et al. 2004; Lynn et al. 2010; Neubert and Halbesleben 2015; Park et al. 2014; Steffy 2013). Rather, the local congregation is the best nexus for investigation of religious affiliation and its relationship to work.

The beliefs and practices inside congregations have implications outside their doors (Putnam and Campbell 2010; Verba et al. 1995), and these implications span social services, politics, and the arts (Chaves 2004). In a national sample of 2667 respondents from 36 Catholic parishes, Welch et al. (1991) found that ethical behavior at work was enhanced in churches that had high levels of aggregate religiosity. Belonging to a Catholic parish in which the typical member read the Bible, watched or listened to religious programs outside of church, and prayed was associated with a lower likelihood of "unauthorized use of an employer's equipment for personal gain" (controlling for personal religiosity, age, gender, and race). Hence, when individuals are located in settings in which strong normative pressures exist for compliance, there is a high probability that they will comply with established norms.

So, what is it about congregations that impact adherents with regard to their work? Most of the research has focused on the most prominent public religious behavior found in western societies: religious service attendance. Attendance is a marker of religious commitment. The practice of faith through public rituals is formative to religious identity, and religious identity guides actions in other contexts (e.g. Weaver and Agle 2002). Attending religious services stands out as one of the most consistent religious correlates to civic and political engagement (Putnam and Campbell 2010; Smidt et al. 2008).

But the relationship of attendance to work is not as consistent. Lynn et al.'s (2010) study of business school alumni found church attendance significantly and positively related to the Faith at Work Scale. Business school graduates who attended services regularly were more likely to perceive their religious life and work life as forming a seamless whole. In a national random sample of U.S. adults, attendance was positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Neubert and Halbesleben 2015). Attendance was non-significant, however, after controlling for a respondent's sense of religious calling. In another study testing religious orthodoxy, attendance was not significant in predicting decision-making behaviors or workplace

deviance, and it was negatively related to two forms of motivation at work (Steffy 2013). The public practice of faith is certainly no guarantee of satisfied, productive workers. These findings suggest that work attitudes may relate more directly to religious beliefs than religious behaviors.

Other research has examined certain characteristics of the congregational context apart from attending worship services and found equally puzzling results. Pastoral influence and sermons have little measurable effect. Davidson and Caddell (1994) considered theology (Calvinist versus non-Calvinist), sermons, and pastoral influence on congregants' perceptions of work as a calling, job, or career. They analyzed a sample of 1869 church members from 31 middle-class congregations in Indiana. None of the congregational variables was significantly related to members' views of work. Lynn et al. (2010) cast similar doubt about the importance of sermons in shaping work. In their sample of business school alumni, neither sermons nor the influence of pastors and church leaders were significant predictors of faith-work integration. These studies rule out certain characteristics that serve as mechanisms for personal beliefs regarding faith and work, but as noted earlier, church attendance did have a significant, positive association with faith-work integration (Lynn et al. 2010). What then might explain this relationship?

A new line of research examines the promotion of faith-work integration beliefs within congregations. A 2010 national survey of 1022 working adults adapted the 15-item Faith at Work Scale of Lynn et al. (2009) by prefacing the specific items with the introduction: "Does your place of worship emphasize the following concerning your full-time employment?" Park et al. (2014) used this Congregational Faith at Work Scale to test the proposition that congregations can transmit what they term "workplace-bridging religious capital." Statistical findings demonstrated that congregations emphasizing faith-work integration beliefs were associated with higher levels of workplace commitment, job satisfaction, and entrepreneurial behavior—but only for respondents who attended the congregation

with some regularity. Once again, congregational attendance emerges as a key predictor of workplace outcomes. Being a member of a congregation where work is promoted as spiritually significant is not enough to alter attitudes. A member has to be engaged in the congregation for these beliefs and values to have an impact. Neubert and Dougherty (2013), using the same data set, found that individuals in congregations promoting faith-work integration beliefs were more likely to embrace ideals of the Protestant Ethic, help co-workers, and recognize opportunities for entrepreneurial action. Ongoing qualitative research reveals that it is more than worship services that make congregations an influential source on work. Neubert et al. (2012) interviewed over 200 working adults in 10 congregations across the United States and asked, "How does your congregation help those attending integrate their faith into work?" Responses largely fell into three categories: teaching, programs, and community support. In other words, congregational emphasis on faith integration at work becomes salient for those who participate in activities such as classes or programs that focus on this linkage. Awareness and access to these activities requires regular participation in the congregation which usually includes attending worship services.

Very few religious behaviors besides attendance show up in studies examining the relationship of religion to work. Religious behaviors such as prayer, scripture reading, and other personal and public ritual practices (apart from attendance) are part of religious life for adherents. These varied forms of religious involvement impact civic engagement in different ways (Driskell et al. 2008). It is likely they do for employment as well. In our review of the literature we found one study that presented a combined measure of prayer, scripture reading, and participation in other religious rituals which was related to employees' job performance in 28 Malaysian organizations (Osman-Gani et al. 2013). Spiritual beliefs were a stronger predictor of performance in the analysis. Based on the limited findings to date, we tentatively confirm Weber's observation that religiosity plays some part in providing workers and entrepreneurs with

certain advantages with respect to their attitude toward labor and some behavior in the workplace.

Religion, Occupational Stratification, and Discrimination

The paucity of research on the ways in which religiosity may promote desirable workplace outcomes overshadows the scholarship on what we might term religion's "dark side." Notably, Weber began his treatise on the Protestant Ethic precisely on the observation of apparent religious stratification in lucrative commercial and business enterprises by the early twentieth century. Protestants clearly dominated over Catholics in Western Europe. While Weber identified the emergence of Protestant-controlled nation-states as part of the explanation for this religious hierarchy in capitalism, he devoted more of his argument to the positive mechanisms within Protestantism to explain its apparent economic advantages. Left unexplored were the potential effects of multigenerational economic domination by members of a religious group. This variety of religious stratification has been a recent consideration as well. Davidson and Pyle (2011) argued that as early as the founding of the United States certain Protestant denominations not only had numerical dominance but also greater economic and political power over other religious and non-religious groups and individuals. Leveraging these advantages allowed these groups to maintain and extend their power, and suppress the ability of other groups to increase their aggregate socioeconomic status. Such suppression or discrimination along religious lines extended beyond Protestant communities toward growing Catholic and Jewish populations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Despite anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic sentiment, these targeted religious minority groups have risen in prominence while white Evangelical and African American Protestants remain near the bottom of the socioeconomic religious hierarchy at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Keister 2011).

Religion and Occupational Stratification

The key mechanisms for this socioeconomic hierarchy in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries appear to be educational attainment and occupational status. Sherkat (2012) found that sectarian Protestants (a subset of white Evangelicalism and African American Protestantism) occupy lower status and lower paying jobs proportionally more than other groups, while liberal Protestants and Jews disproportionately report professional and business occupations in contemporary surveys. He further observed that sectarian Protestants even in the highest paying fields earn less and experience less upward mobility than their counterparts. Sherkat traced some of this significant deficit to sectarian Protestant cultural opposition to advanced educational attainment and proscriptions relegating women's roles mainly to the household (see also Glass and Jacobs 2005; Rogers and Franzen 2014). The combined effect is fewer income earners per household, limited access into higher paying occupations, and likely lower pay in professional occupations. (For more on these dynamics of religion and social class inequality, see Schwadel's Chap. 18, on "Social Class" in this volume.)

Religious Discrimination in the Workplace

Sherkat (2012) raised another important possibility for these differences: outgroup stigma. Historical evidence abounds on anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic work-related discrimination (Jenkins 2003; Perry and Schweitzer 2002), but little of this has surfaced in the scholarly literature until very recently. Such discrimination is illegal today and individuals who identify themselves by religion (as well as by race, gender, and sexual orientation) are protected under federal law. Nevertheless individuals still experience bias in the hiring experience and in the workplace (Thomson 2015). By way of comparison, Sherkat (2012, p. 96) speculated:

Sectarian Christians tend to amplify their religious zeal in public places including the workplace, and this carries over into their dress, manner of speech, and presentation of self. All things equal, employers may see this constant deployment of cultural identities as a negative factor in the workplace. As a consequence, sectarians may be less likely to get high-paying jobs, and less likely to be promoted. It is possible that some of the income gap within occupations and attainment gaps by college degree are a function of discriminatory selection.

Sherkat's speculation has some support in a recent survey of American workers that finds white Evangelical Protestants are more likely than other religious groups to discuss religion in the workplace and share their religious faith with others. They also report the highest level of comfort in discussing religious matters (Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Dialogue 2013). Dialogue about religion in the workplace may result in lower performance reviews in evaluations, especially by those who do not share their faith (Chan-Serafin et al. 2013).

Hiring Biases

The broader point of biased treatment in the workplace based on religion has received some attention. In two audit studies, resumes of fictitious recent college graduates were sent to various business employers' solicitations in the South and Northeast regions of the United States. Resumes identifying the applicant as atheist, Muslim, or pagan (based on extracurricular activity) were less likely to receive a follow up call (Wallace et al. 2014; Wright et al. 2013). In these studies, fictitious applicants with Evangelical affiliations were no different from the control group of those with no religious extracurricular activity. In two separate field experiments, one in Washington, DC and one in the Midwest, female confederate job applicants in Muslim attire were treated more negatively than neutral-appearing confederates with the same script (Ghumman and Ryan 2013; King and Ahmad 2010). King and Ahmad (2010) further noted that Muslim-appearing confederates who performed according to the stereotype that Muslims are more interpersonally cold (Fiske et al. 2002) received more negative and shorter

interactions with employers compared to those who presented themselves as non-Muslim regardless of acting consistent to expected stereotype. A second experiment revealed that applicants with Muslim-sounding names and a Muslim-sounding professional affiliation without a corresponding "warm" affiliation (e.g., participating in a Big Brother or Big Sister Volunteer Program) were assessed more negatively in an experimental situation where undergraduates acted as human resource assessors (King and Ahmad 2010). With respect to Muslim Americans, in-person face-to-face experiments as well as those involving no other interaction but one's name and credentials support the larger point behind Sherkat's speculation: religious self-presentation can limit one's job prospects. Unknown in these studies is whether those at the selected businesses who interviewed confederate applicants or reviewed these resumes were personally religious, and whether such status played a role, however subtle, in the decision to callback certain applicants and not others.

The Paradox of Workplace Climate and Religious Commitment

Once hired, the workplace too may be a contested space for the expression of one's faith. By the turn of the twenty-first century, businesses were already indicating the need for greater accommodation for religious expression beyond time off for spiritual observance as U.S. workers' time in paid labor increased (Cash and Gray 2000). Laws require most businesses and places of work to make "reasonable accommodation" for religious beliefs and practices including: expression of religious observance and practice, grooming and dress code, and conscientious objections to work assigned that conflict with religious belief. Failure to do so could result in lawsuits alleging disparate treatment of workers with different religions, religious harassment, and/or failure to accommodate (Kelly 2008). Establishing religious discrimination is difficult because the burden falls on employees to demonstrate the sincerity of their religious beliefs, however unconventional those beliefs may be. In addition, the consequences for such discrimination must

be compelling. Implementation of religious accommodation at work varies considerably. Some research suggests that perceptions of those accommodations and the climate of the workplace have bearing on work outcomes. In the aforementioned Tanenbaum Center (2013) survey of U.S. employees, a third of respondents reported an absence of accommodation of their religious beliefs and practices. The rate increases for employees of religious minority groups. (Interestingly, the rate increases for atheists as well, who complain that their *lack of belief* is not accommodated when they are required to attend company meetings which include prayer or celebrations around religious holidays, e.g., Christmas.)

Moore (2008) developed and validated a four-item religious dissimilarity scale and examined its efficacy with a scale produced by King and Williamson (2005) on the perception of organizational workplace acceptance of religion expression (OWARE). Both perceived religious dissimilarity and OWARE were negatively associated with perceived workplace cohesion. Moore (2010) considered the independent effect of fundamentalist identity and found similar effects on perceived workplace cohesion. Both perceived dissimilarity and fundamentalism represent high identity boundaries with respect to religion. Thus, in settings where religion is a salient identifier and a diversity of faiths are present, it is likely that one's commitment to co-workers is diminished considerably.

Such effects are not limited to perceived cohesion in the workplace. Cunningham (2010) found that managers for whom religion was a salient feature of their identity and who perceived themselves as religiously dissimilar to their workplace colleagues reported lower job satisfaction. Likewise, in a comparison of workers in secular organizations in the U.S. and South Korea, contextual characteristics such as normative pressure to assimilate to company norms or perceived fear of negative repercussions of disclosing one's religious identity followed "distancing strategies" where workers played down their religious identity at work (Lyons et al. 2014). Organizational climates that pressure individuals to conceal their

religious identity result in higher turnover intentions, reduced job satisfaction, and lower levels of overall well-being (Lyons et al. 2014). These findings suggest that structural accommodation has a paradoxical impact with regard to religion. Those for whom religion matters a great deal benefit the most from accommodation efforts, and yet their faith commitment distances them from co-workers and the workplace overall, even as they grow in awareness of religious diversity around them.

With the exception of the Tanenbaum Center report, most studies utilize small samples and do not distinguish between religious groups of different sizes in specific workplaces. This is particularly important as nearly half of those surveyed in the Tanenbaum Center report work in moderate to highly diverse environments. Second, white Evangelical Protestants (one of the largest religious constituencies in the U.S.) perceive increasing discrimination not only against smaller religious groups but also against themselves. This amounts to a call for greater analytical coverage of workplace perceptions that account for the religious affiliation of employees as well as employers. Further research in the area of workplace religious bias could benefit from considering the application of concepts identified in racial bias research on microaggressions (Nadal et al. 2011; Sue et al. 2007). Given the findings from aforementioned audit studies and survey experiments, concepts such as microassault, microinvalidation, assumptions of criminality, and second class citizen treatment may yield insights about the potential perils of religion in the workplace.

Religion and Entrepreneurship

At the same time research reveals the shadows cast by religion in the workplace, another trend in current scholarship explores brighter outcomes. Harkening back to Weber, McClelland (1961) proposed that religious impulses contribute to an achievement motive that explains entrepreneurial action. Despite this fundamental assertion of its importance, research exploring the relevance of

religious or spiritual beliefs to entrepreneurial behavior has been limited (Audretsch et al. 2013; Tracey 2012). Practically, a better understanding of factors contributing to entrepreneurial behavior is important given its critical role in contributing to job creation and economic growth (Miller 2011).

Definitions and Previous Research

Entrepreneurial behavior relates to the discovery and exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities, inside or outside of an existing organization (Kuratko et al. 2005; Shane and Venkataraman 2000) and is essential for the establishment and survival of organizations (Brown and Eisenhardt 1995; McMullen and Shepherd 2006). At a national level, evidence of the links between religion and indicators of economic growth and productivity suggest it may be a key factor in creating an environment for entrepreneurial activity (e.g. Barro and McCleary 2003; Harrison 2011). For example, comparisons of modern countries with a dominant religious tradition show markedly different levels of economic development, with those influenced by Protestantism and Confucianism surpassing countries influenced by Buddhism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Islam (Harrison 2011).

In addition to religion having a collective effect on the environment for entrepreneurial behavior, it also holds potential for explaining individual behavior. The entrepreneurial behavior of individuals has been explained in part by differences in personality, competencies, and experiences (Obschonka et al. 2011; Schmitt-Rodermund 2004; Wooten et al. 1999). Those who engage in entrepreneurial behavior are said to think differently than those who are not entrepreneurial, but explaining how they think differently and what shapes their thinking is in need of further investigation (Busenitz and Barney 1997; Corbett and Hmieleski 2007; Farmer et al. 2011). Religion and spirituality are both likely to influence thinking about entrepreneurial behavior (Audretsch et al. 2013; Milliman et al. 2003; Zinnbauer and Pargament 2005).

In a review of 28 empirical studies related to spirituality and entrepreneurialism – including adherents from Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam from numerous contexts including Malaysia, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the UK and US among others – Balog and colleagues (2014) reported that six did not find any role of religion or spirituality in explaining entrepreneurial decisions, motivations, or outcomes. Two studies had evidence of negative effects of religion on entrepreneurial outcomes. One study noted that abiding by moral principles reduced profits. A second study found that extrinsic religious orientations were negatively related to other-centered values, which could reduce entrepreneurial outcomes like concern toward employees, customers, and suppliers. The remaining 20 studies had either qualitative or quantitative evidence of religion or spirituality being associated with entrepreneurial decisions, motivations, values, or outcomes. Examples include Woodrum's (1985) findings that Buddhist religious participation and familial religiosity among Japanese-American immigrants was positively related to self-employment; Ibrahim and Angelidis's (2005) findings that Christian based small businesses outperformed comparable secular businesses on measures of growth and productivity; and Kayed and Hassan's (2010) finding that Muslim entrepreneurs consider entrepreneurship to be a means to fulfill their duty to meet financial obligations and serve society. Apart from evidence based on religious affiliation's relationship to entrepreneurial outcomes, De Noble et al. (2007) found that intrinsic religious orientation was associated with students' intentions to engage in entrepreneurial activity, and qualitative research by Judge and Douglas (2013) showed that entrepreneurs' religious beliefs contribute to motivations to start businesses, insights to act innovatively, and resources to cope with the challenges.

Altogether, these largely positive relationships suggest that an entrepreneur's religion or spirituality contributes to the motivations to start new businesses or the means by which these new businesses operate across numerous faith

traditions and national contexts. Even so, religious tradition, national culture, and associated conditions may influence the role religion plays in influencing entrepreneurial behavior. Among entrepreneurs in the developing economies of Kenya and Indonesia, the spiritual capital (i.e., faith maturity) of micro-loan recipients was associated with greater innovation, higher sales, and more employees (Neubert et al. 2015). In these economies that lack formal protection of property rights and contract enforcement, whether an entrepreneur is trusted enough to buy from or work with, and whether the entrepreneur works hard and keeps his or her word, seems to be associated with the spiritual capital of the entrepreneur. Although Balog and colleagues (2014, p.23) concluded that “there is a rich connection between the personal values of religion and spirituality in life of the entrepreneur and the success of their venture,” there is a great deal left to be understood about how religion or spirituality influence the thinking and behavior of current and potential entrepreneurs.

Ongoing Research on Religion and Entrepreneurship

As part of a national, multi-phase, research study supported by the National Science Foundation, the authors of this chapter set out to better understand the relationship of religion to entrepreneurial behavior. Data from the 2010 Baylor Religion Survey (a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults) identified religious differences between entrepreneurs and those who are not entrepreneurs (Dougherty et al. 2013). The two groups did not differ significantly on measures of religious affiliation, religious service attendance, or even in belief in the existence of God. There were significant differences in entrepreneurs tending to pray more frequently, be more likely to see God as personal and responsive, and be more likely to attend a place of worship that encourages business activity. Although determining the explanations for these differences was beyond the scope of the study, it seems reasonable that entrepreneurs who engage in the uncertain work

of starting a new business may be prone to pray for guidance, believe that God will listen and respond, and seek affirmation or encouragement in congregations that share these beliefs.

Beyond guidance, coping, and affirmation, it has been suggested that religious faith also encourages risk taking. Although Judge and Douglas (2013) argue that entrepreneurship is a leap of faith, in another study from the 2010 Baylor Religion Survey, adults with extreme orthodox Christian beliefs were less likely to take risks within existing organizations (Ferguson et al. 2014). Rather than this being contrary to entrepreneurial behavior, orthodox beliefs may contribute to successful entrepreneurial behavior by moderating risk propensity and guiding individuals toward reasonable risk taking. This points to the need to consider both specific beliefs and specific outcomes in future research.

A subsequent phase of the research project probed the role of religious faith among entrepreneurs through a series of interviews. In a preliminary sample, interviews from 30 Christian entrepreneurs and business owners yielded a common theme of entrepreneurs starting businesses and running them in ways that express values central to their faith (Griebel et al. 2014). Two frequently mentioned reasons for starting a business or organization were to create more flexibility to accommodate work and family conflicts or to allow entrepreneurs to establish organizational norms and practices that help others. In this sense, entrepreneurship was a means to reduce the tension between faith beliefs and work role expectations that existed in other workplaces (recall previous discussion of religion and coping in the workplace).

Similar results emerged from interviews from a larger sample of more than 200 entrepreneurs in 10 Christian congregations across the United States. Structured interviews revealed that starting a new business allowed business owners to treat people consistent with the owners' values without the constraints of policies and performance expectations typical in larger organizations. This finding was particularly salient among 16 female Christian entrepreneurs who described the tension they regularly experienced in balanc-

ing work and family demands and how starting their business was viewed as a means to reduce this tension (Rogers 2014). For both men and women, religious beliefs and practices such as prayer also were indicated as significant sources of inspiration as well as strength for coping with the challenging circumstances entrepreneurs face.

Conclusion and Future Directions

We began this chapter with Max Weber’s seminal argument about the role of the Protestant Ethic in the rise of modern industrial capitalism. We summarized Weber’s individual-level model of the relationship between religion and work in Fig. 3.1. Research since Weber has suggested a much more complex relationship between religion and work at the individual level. Figure 3.2, therefore, summarizes some of the major relationships among various concepts that have advanced and complicated the original model.

In this chapter we have reviewed the burgeoning scholarship on work, occupations, and entrepreneurship as they relate to religion. Religion,

understood as belief and communal participation at the individual level varies in its impact on one’s disposition in the workplace. Participation in congregations also reveals mixed results which may be the result of blunt analytical instrumentation. Further religion can also stigmatize workers from the hiring process through the day-to-day interactions between employees. That said, there is more work to be done in this area. We have noted specific areas of future research throughout and conclude by highlighting two new and promising directions for future research.

Theorizing Faith Integration

Moving forward, future scholarship should consider theorizing that better captures the essential mechanisms that connect religion to paid labor and the development of profitable organizations. The introduction of the Faith at Work scale was an important advancement in our understanding of how religion can be conceptualized in such a way that it bears on workplace outcomes. Religion scholars have also called attention to the U.S. Protestant Christian bias in the assumptions

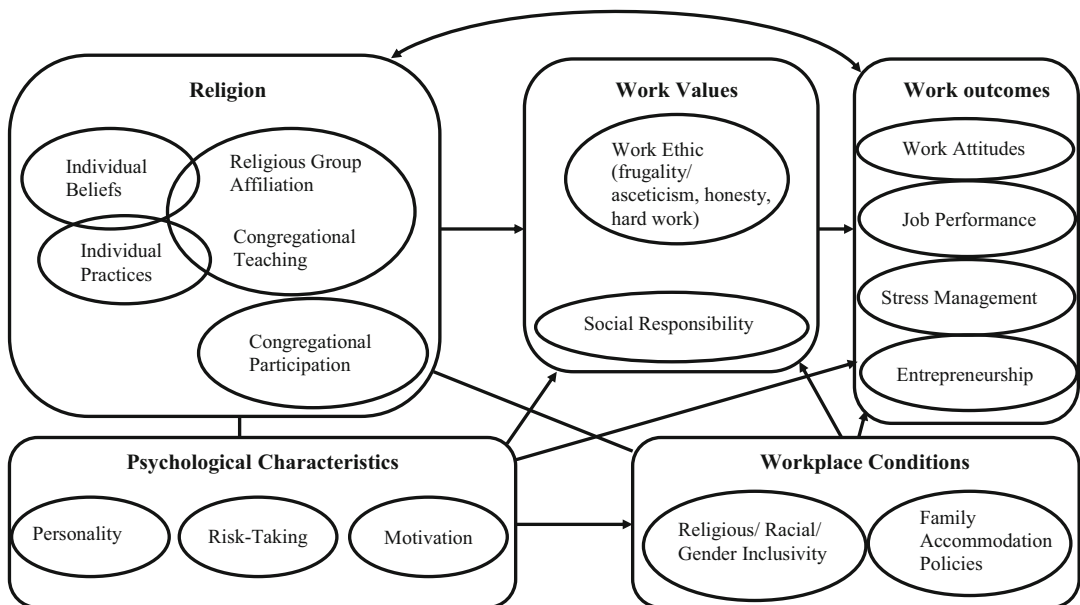


Fig. 3.2 Proposed relationships between religion and work (Individual level)

regarding the effects of religion on various outcomes (Bender et al. 2013). The Faith at Work scale has not yet been validated for other monotheistic and non-monotheistic employees. In addition to developing or modifying measures, subsequent research should incorporate existing theories from other areas of scholarly inquiry – such as race and ethnicity, stratification, and globalization – to establish new frameworks for understanding the intersection of religion and work.

Direction of Causation: Work Effects on Religion

A truism since Weber is that far less time is committed to religious activity than to work. Time allocation shapes individual outcomes. Viewed from this perspective, while the research on religion's effects on the workplace remains an important area of investigation, an intuitive relationship worth considering further suggest the exact opposite relationship. To take just one example, in his study of Catholic converts, Yamane (2014, p. 61) discusses the case of Stephen Smith whose immersion in his work – including frequent job changes and work-related moves – caused him to stop attending religious services. The sociological study of the effect of work on religion, therefore, might benefit from time-use studies that could pinpoint when and for whom a work-religion “time bind” exists and how it gets resolved in favor of work, or not.

A broader question is to what extent does workplace cultures, values, and behaviors affect individual faith and collective expression of religion outside of the workplace? Cadge and Konieczny (2014) make a compelling case that religion's presence in the institutional DNA of contemporary secular organizations, and in the beliefs and practices of the participants in those organizations, is often overlooked. That is to say, organizations deemed secular are perhaps still rooted in religious sensibilities and yet have transformed to meet an ever-diversifying pool of participants. This is clearly the case for many businesses that employ workers. They vary in the

degree to which the religious and spiritual sensibility of the CEO entrepreneur's faith is reflected in the values, vision, and practices of the organization. Moreover, the religious and spiritual preferences of the workers themselves can raise awareness of the importance of faith expression to managers or human resources departments. They in turn can augment policy in the workplace that supports religious expression regardless of background. In this way workplaces viewed as secular are perhaps quite friendly to religion such that one would not realize that the organization could be hostile to personal faith. As workplace organizations continue to accommodate the changing religious and secular landscape of their workers and clients/customers, these experiences can easily have some influence on the local congregations where some workers and entrepreneurs participate. Where contemporary scholars argue that religion matters for work, so too might work matter for faithful individuals and communities.

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Abstract

Science is frequently defined by the types of empirical methods and knowledge production practices employed, all with the goal to better understand the natural world. Nature is the “stuff” or subject of science. It is perceived as the domain of natural scientists since they receive extensive training to discover what exists “out there.” Yet social scientists have long been interested in the institution of science—how science is produced, practiced, and understood as an institution by the broader public. Throughout this chapter, I review general trends within social science literature centered on the interaction between religion and science. Rather than regard secularization as inevitable, I discuss how increasingly scholars are able empirically to trace the ways in which individuals (both the general public and those in the academy) interact with institutional sources of authority (both religious and scientific) in light of variation in beliefs, knowledge, and practices.

Science is frequently defined by the types of empirical methods and knowledge production practices employed, all with the goal to better understand the natural world. Nature is the “stuff” or subject of science. It is perceived as the domain of natural scientists since they receive extensive training to discover what exists “out there.” They acquire, examine, and generalize from the natural laws, organisms, and processes that govern the

world in order to advance scientific knowledge. Yet social scientists have long been interested in the institution of science—how science is produced, practiced, and understood as an institution by the broader public. As the well-known sociologist, Robert K. Merton (1973:175), argued, “socially patterned interests, motivations, and behavior established in one institutional sphere—say, that of religion or economy—are interdependent with the socially patterned interests, motivations, and behavior in other institutional spheres—say, that of science.” Moving beyond a history of great “men” and their ideas, in the mid-twentieth century Merton — along with other

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scholars who would later come to identify with Science and Technology Studies (STS) — sought to unpack the social structures upon which science was built and continues to sustain itself.

Initial research focused on the inner workings of the scientific community to explore scientific development (e.g., collaborative and social practices amongst scientists), and the pace of innovation as opposed to external factors such as the impact of the broader culture, economy, or political sphere. Only later in the 1960s and onward did science come to be regarded as a social problem—bound up in military efforts, health care crises, and overall technological advancement—in need of examination and sustained attention rather than as simply offering a set of solutions or blueprint for social progress. Fewer distinctions were made between nature and society; rather, increasingly scholars regarded both as subjects of inquiry for the social sciences.

Subsequent waves of STS scholarship throughout the latter half of the twentieth century represented a dramatic sea change in how science was treated in the broader social world. Rather than leave intact the notion of an autonomous natural world and its ability to confirm/disconfirm scientific efforts (and other social practices) towards truth, many STS scholars sought to investigate how a variety of social factors internal and external to the scientific community shaped both the *structure* and *content* of the scientific enterprise. Nature would come to be seen as contingent upon commitments, interests, and discourse among scientists and other actors tied to the institution of science—among them policymakers, legislators, and university administrators.

Yet, beyond work such as Merton's classic study of how the Puritan ethos fostered cultural values contributing to the rise of science in the eighteenth century, the discourse between religion and science has largely been neglected and under-theorized within STS (see Evans and Evans 2008 for an overview). It is primarily left as a project for the historically, theologically, or philosophically-minded, or those closely tied to primary and secondary science education. Social scientific approaches to the question of how religion and science are negotiated by both individ-

ual and institutions are most prominent among those who study religion, frequently sociologists. In part, this may relate to how the scientific pursuit is portrayed by mainstream institutions of science—thoroughly objective and secular—an assumption widely held among the public and the academy alike. Yet historical underpinnings of the Enlightenment and the larger scientific “revolution” involved both religious beliefs and empirical science. This contingency is now largely regarded as a historical artifact rather than as a consistently negotiated entanglement of authoritative beliefs and practices. In anticipation of the chapter that lies ahead, it is important to briefly trace how the perceptions of religion in relation to science shifted over time as much of these dynamics continue to inform contemporary scholarship.

The relationship between religion and science varies significantly across different societies and cultures; it is dependent upon both the development of the endemic religious tradition and the respective scientific paradigm within that context. Naturalistic science and Christianity were at one point inextricably bound to each other. From the medieval period through the seventeenth century, scientists and religious leaders alike defended a literal interpretation of the Bible which merged naturalistic explanations with a religiously-inspired framework (Browne 2003; Numbers 2003). Scholars such as Aquinas and Augustine promoted the view that reason and revelation were complementary rather than at odds, “and encouraged scholars to investigate biblical history using the practical knowledge of their day” (Browne 2003, p. 114). Gradually, religion became less vital as an explicit guide for the exploration of nature, even though religious worldviews continued to legitimate natural philosophy in the early modern period (Merton 1973; Shapin 1988; Livingstone 2003; Numbers 2003). Religious teachings were brought in to interpret phenomenon that were simply indecipherable from experimental and empirical perspectives (Browne 2003).

Eventually, natural philosophers took the lead in eliminating the supernatural from descriptive and empirical explanations of phenomena. By the nineteenth century, John Tyndall could assert that

naturalism was the only legitimate means by which to pursue a scientific agenda—an argument that still sparked enormous debate over the cultural authority of science versus religion (Gieryn 1983; Livingstone 2003). Plainly, for a certain domain of questions, science successfully established itself as the cultural authority without serious rival. Yet this rested on a working presumption of an inherent conflict between religion and science. With the rise of science and other markers of modernity, secularization was perceived as inevitable and the decline of religious authority (and religiosity of individuals) would be well underway by the twentieth century. Increasingly social scientists challenge this framing of the relationship between Christianity and science. As Lindberg and Numbers (2003, p. 5) suggest, “historical study does not reveal science and Christianity locked in deadly combat; nor does it disclose an interaction of unflinching support and mutual compatibility. The relationship between science and Christianity proves to be much more intricate and interesting than these traditional alternatives allow.” While this has been relatively widely accepted across history, philosophy, and theology, it was not fully acknowledged within more contemporary scholarship until recently (see Smith 2003 for a historical analysis concerning the push to secularize across the social sciences).

Throughout this chapter, I review general trends within social science literature centered on the interaction between religion and science. Rather than regard secularization as inevitable or constitutive of science, I discuss how scholars are increasingly able to empirically trace the ways in which individuals (both the general public and members of the academy) interact with institutional sources of authority (both religious and scientific) in light of variation in beliefs, knowledge, and practices.

Laypeople

Laypeople, or ordinary members of the public without specialized training in science, are a consistent focus for social scientists. Laypeople are

often envisioned as individuals with a mix of scientific knowledge and religious tradition—and even those who do not participate or believe in religion must still engage with a social world full of religious believers. Below I discuss the ways in which scholars examine: how laypeople’s knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of science are influenced by the demographic trends that pattern their lives; their views about science’s role in social life; their degree of trust in institutions of science; and their perspectives on the extent to which science and its practitioners should inform national or international policy decisions.

Demographic Trends

While one should be careful not to overstate the salience of any singular sociodemographic factor for explaining variation in perceptions of religion and science, recent scholarship points to those individuals belonging to historically marginalized racial, gender, and socioeconomic groups as more often associated with less favorable perceptions and lower levels of trust in science. For instance, in their examination of individuals’ perspectives of religion and science in the United States, O’Brien and Noy (2015) find that women were overrepresented in both what they call the “traditional” category (that is, viewing religion and science as often in conflict and favoring religious explanations) and the “post-secular” category (acknowledging both the significance of science in contemporary society as well as the impact of religion on individuals, even as its institutional source of authority declines across society). Both categories hold religion in favorable regard compared to the “modern” category, which explicitly favors science over religion. Additionally, documented that African-Americans and Latinos were more likely to fall into the “traditional” category than the “modern” category when compared to whites. Individuals with lower socioeconomic standing followed a similar pattern, leaving them to conclude, overall “more marginalized people belong to the traditional category” (O’Brien and Noy 2015, p. 104).

In addition to public perception, across time in the United States, non-whites, women, and those with lower family incomes have maintained consistently low levels of trust in the institution of science (Gauchat 2012). When it comes to the role of science in informing public policy, non-white respondents indicated less support (Gauchat 2015). Interestingly, however, for climate change, men are more likely than women to think scientists do not understand global warming and to want scientists to stay out of public debate involving science.

Living in the southern region of the United States also appears to broadly affect one's view of the interface between religion and science. Longest and Smith (2011) find emerging adults (approximately 18–23 years old) who lived in the South were more likely to agree with a perspective of conflict between religion and science than those in other regions; O'Brien and Noy (2015) find those in the "post-secular" category were more likely to live in the south. And, Gauchat (2012) reports Southerners indicated lower levels of trust in science, while Evans and Feng (2013) discovered that both those who live in rural areas nationwide or in the South overall are significantly less likely to believe that scientists understand global warming.

When examining whether or not a perceived epistemological conflict between religion and science prevented members of particular religious traditions from seeking out science education, Evans (2011) finds minimal difference between religious traditions. It does seem, however, that demographic factors such as age did have an impact, as older individuals obtained less scientific knowledge. This was measured by factual questions about science, by whether respondents claimed to know a lot about particular scientific issues (such as science and technology or global warming), and by how many college-level science courses they completed. Interestingly, Evans and Feng (2013) also found that older people were less likely to believe that scientists understand global warming. In terms of the salience of religion compared to science for informing laypeople's perspectives about social issues, O'Brien and Noy (2015) found the "post-

secular" perspective is more often held by older respondents. Finally, Gauchat's (2015) research suggests that age may have more of a non-linear effect on levels of trust in science, since trust initially declines as people get older and then increases later in life.

Despite the above findings, for many analyses the influence of some demographic factors on individuals' views either declined dramatically or dropped out entirely when researchers considered alternative explanatory factors (Gauchat 2011, 2015; Sherkat 2011). While some group demographics are associated with particular perceptions of the interplay between religion and science or to what extent an individual believes in the credibility of scientists and trusts science, the strongest patterns are tied to one's knowledge of science and education, religious tradition (identity, practice), and political identity.

Education

When broadly examining the public understanding of science (also referred to as PUS, an interdisciplinary subfield), a chief line of inquiry has been to examine laypersons' command of scientific knowledge in relation to their attitudes about science and technology. This has been pursued especially in areas of research which the public is directly affected by or engages with such as nuclear power, genetic medicine, stem cell research, genetically modified food, and climate science. In their international meta-analysis, Allum and colleagues (2008) examined 15 years of scholarship (from the early 1990s through mid-2000s) across Europe and North America (40 countries in total). They consistently found stronger evidence of a positive relationship between the general knowledge of science and overall positive attitudes about science. Similarly, individuals' with more specialized knowledge of a particular area of science (e.g., biology) were more likely to hold positive strong attitudes about genetically modified food compared to those with less knowledge of biology or genetics. This correlation held across various cultural contexts. The small cross-cultural differences that did remain, which the authors of a given study usually attributed to a country's level of economic

development, were typically driven by the percentage of youth in higher education, where an increased level of participation in higher education was associated with more positive attitudes and perceptions of science. Yet this well-trod area of scholarship too infrequently addresses religious affiliation or traditions when examining trends in scientific understanding or science education. Instead, the explanatory focus tends to emphasize general levels of education and other country-level factors such as cultural context.

Other patterns emerge related to education and scientific knowledge when religion is taken into account. Sherkat (2011) finds that while education level is most strongly associated with scientific literacy, religious affiliation (particularly fundamentalist and sectarian Christianity) is a greater influence than other demographic factors (such as gender, race, and income) on one's understanding of scientific ideas. Similarly, in an examination of attitudes about evolution, Baker (2013) finds that the impact of one's educational attainment hinges on their religious belief in biblical literalism. Those that uphold a literal view of the bible and have high levels of education are more likely to doubt or to not believe in evolution. When O'Brien and Noy (2015) examined trends across their groupings of individuals based upon their perspectives on religion and science, those classified as "post-secular" had lower levels of education. Evans (2011) documented those with lower levels of education have lower levels of scientific knowledge overall and Sherkat (2011) finds a similar pattern between educational level and scientific literacy. Similarly, when comparing those who viewed religion and science as incompatible, Baker (2012) finds those privileging science obtained higher levels of education than those who privileged religion.

When exploring the relationship between education and trust in science, the scholarship demonstrates that higher levels of education (years of schooling and highest degree obtained) were associated with greater levels of trust in science (Gauchat 2012). But other factors appear to matter as well for understanding the relationship between religion and science education. When Scheitle (2011) traced undergraduate students'

exposure to more sustained science education (natural science major/emphasis or not) from their first year in college to their 3 year, he finds that overall there was little evidence to support the idea that science education decreases religiosity. Using a nuanced, multifaceted measurement of science, Johnson et al. (2015) find that religiosity is also not strongly associated with one's interest in or knowledge of science, but it is negatively associated with one's confidence in science.

Religious Tradition

The influence of religious affiliation on one's desire to seek out scientific knowledge is also not as prominent as might be expected. Evans (2011) did not find the anticipated negative relationship between conservative Protestants (including African-American Protestants) and level of scientific knowledge acquired. Epistemological conflict did not restrict them from seeking out information. When presenting study subjects with a fictional scenario to examine how the participants would wrestle with scientific research due to the moral and ethical concerns the research findings raised, Evans (2012) unearthed how respondents rarely drew on religious language or reasoning. Those that did raise some concerns did so more in terms of skepticism of modernity rather than a belief in an inherent epistemological incompatibility between religious justification and scientific explanation.

Yet religious practice does appear to impact one's trust in science, as Gauchat (2012) indicates those who more regularly attended church maintained lower levels of trust in science. Again, religious beliefs frequently matter more than other sociodemographic factors. Those who viewed religion and science as incompatible and favored science were less likely to attend religious services, more likely to see the Bible as "history and legends," and three times more likely to identify as agnostic/atheist (Baker 2012, p. 347). Emerging adults who believe there is only one way to heaven (through Jesus) were more likely to agree that there is a conflict between religion and science (Longest and Smith 2011). Again, both of these studies reveal that the

individuals who identify with the religion-science incompatibility perspective are a small subgroup of the broader population. The majority in both studies did not perceive religion and science to be incompatible or conflicting. Nonetheless, it is important to unpack consistent patterns on the margins and future scholarship is well positioned to do so.

Political Identity

This relationship among religion, science, and education is further complicated by political affiliation. Recent work suggests that the effect of one's political ideology rests upon one's knowledge of science. Evans and Feng (2013) argued that the strongest predictor of an individual's belief that scientists do not understand global warming is that person's political ideology (conservatives more likely than liberals) and political party identification (Republicans and Independents more likely than Democrats). When studying general levels of trust in the institution of science or views on how scientists should influence public policy, individuals with lower levels of education and scientific literacy indicate less support for the use of science in informing public policy--confirming scholarship linking higher levels of knowledge and favorable attitudes toward science.

Interestingly, Gauchat (2015) highlighted an interaction between education and political involvement. Highly educated political conservatives, Gauchat discovered, indicated less support for the general use of science to inform public policy. Moreover, Gauchat (2012) finds that more highly educated political conservatives had higher levels of distrust toward and were more critical of science. Yet, overall this same group had lower levels of distrust for other institutions when compared to other political conservatives with less education. O'Brien and Noy (2015) also find support for this trend, as those characterized by a "post-secular" perspective (who frequently identify as politically conservative) with high levels of scientific literacy were associated with favorable views of science, except when a scientific theory was perceived to contradict their more conservative religious beliefs and on related controversial subjects (e.g., the Big Bang and human

evolution). This parallels Baker's (2013) work, mentioned earlier, which reveals a similarly nuanced relationship between educational attainment and views of the Bible. Those with high levels of education who also support biblical literalism are less likely to have a firm belief in evolution and are more likely to support teaching creationism in public schools.

Of course, laypeople's individual political identities must inevitably interact with various sources of institutional authority in public life. Much of the scholarship on laypersons' trust in institutional authority relies on the longitudinal General Social Survey data to determine the extent to which laypeople have confidence in the people running the central institutions or systems (e.g., politics, science, medicine) which govern much of their lives. Over time (1974–2010), Gauchat (2012) finds declining levels of confidence in the institution of science are similar to drops in levels of trust for political sources of institutional authority. But they are also distinct, as there are bumps in the trust accorded to political institutions, but not science, in the post-President Reagan and Bush eras. Specifically, Gauchat indicated that conservatives experienced the biggest, most consistent drop in their trust of science throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.

For intellectually engaged individuals (i.e., high levels of general education and scientific literacy), the institution of science and scientists particularly are the primary targets of their institutional distrust and their desire to restrict its influence on society. This contradicts a purely knowledge-attitudes model, which argues that higher levels of education attainment (and scientific literacy) encourage more trust in the institution of science and a belief in an increased influence of science in public policy.

Explanations for the Public's Multifaceted Engagement with Religion and Science

A number of patterns emerge that do not fit easily into existing models of explanation which prioritize one's command of scientific knowledge,

level of educational attainment, practice of religious tradition, and political affiliation. Recent scholarship suggests multiple sources of authority and belief systems are at work in shaping individuals' attitudes and perceptions. High levels of scientific literacy are associated only with favorable general attitudes about science, not attitudes about scientists' knowledge of particular scientific controversies or their influence on policy issues (e.g., stem cell or climate change). Gauchat (2012) indicates the amount of alienation—defined as social isolation and lack of confidence in institutions—matters almost as much as scientific literacy in the relationship model he presents in his analyses. Throughout these two models, however, conservative political ideology and church attendance only become strengthened in their effect on the two outcomes (general attitudes about science and specific attitudes about controversial science policy issues). Gauchat added that in accounting for public attitudes about science, it becomes increasingly important to also assess the cultural authority of science in the public sphere. In a different study focused on examining what science means to laypeople, Gauchat (2011) finds that the location of scientific activity (university laboratories), how it gets done (systematic methods), and the disposition of its practitioners (scientists as objective) increase the likelihood of laypeople maintaining favorable general attitudes toward science.

“Moral Competitors”

Regardless of the sources of authority, the distinction between scientists' expertise and scientists' ability to influence are frequently decoupled by members of the public. Politically, Gauchat (2011) indicated that being conservative is negatively correlated with favorable attitudes about scientists' understanding and ability to influence public policy. Gauchat (2011, p. 764) claims that “the public understands that science provides cultural knowledge and understanding vital to public policy decisions, but that this knowledge should not translate directly into political power.” Religiously, conservative Protestants are not less likely to believe in the veracity of the scientists'

claims but rather question their ability to address the problem, particularly through policy solutions related to longstanding controversies.

Evans (2011, p. 721) has argued that for scientific issues which have turned into social issues (e.g., global warming, stem cell research), the religious counterclaims hold sway over evangelicals and they have “opposed scientists' moral influence in public discussions.” These trends uphold predictions in the literature that religious fundamentalists would question both the expertise of scientists and their ability to intervene in public policy, whereas evangelicals would simply question scientists' ability or the dynamics of their intervention, not necessarily their expertise in and of itself (Evans and Feng 2013). In terms of policy claims, evangelicals may have issues with the perceived moral agenda of scientists, seeing scientists as “moral competitors” in these moments (Evans and Feng 2013, p. 596). This stems from an historical precedent of Protestants viewing themselves as in moral conflict with scientists in the public sphere, most notably over evolution, but increasingly over stem cell and human cloning as well, and this could reasonably be extended to many other scientific issues as they relate to public policy. Similarly, O'Brien and Noy (2015) indicated that only issues rooted in both religious and scientific sources of authority (abortion, embryonic stem cells) produce distinguishable and disparate attitudes among the public. In other words, a desire to restrict the influence of scientists only emerges when the issue has been politicized as a conflict between religious and scientific claims of authority.

Ultimately, scientific knowledge and level of education do not operate independently as factors driving laypeople's trust of science-related institutions or topics to the extent previously documented (and more frequently assumed) in the literature. Instead, explanations increasingly point to how these bases of knowledge are vital for determining how one may negotiate various sources of authority in the contemporary era. Ultimately, persistent divergences emerge when particular issues are portrayed as grounded in a moral debate.

Professionals

For the public, science's institutional culture is significant for how we come to understand and engage with scientific knowledge, but it is not deterministic. It is imperative to look at the individuals inhabiting these institutions (Hallett and Ventresca 2006) in order to understand to what extent scientists are part and parcel of science as an institution or are carving out their own pathways for navigating the thorny social issues that emerge from the nexus of religion and science. Conventional wisdom and previous scholarly literature from the early to mid-twentieth century both suggest that scientists' deep knowledge and use of science would increase the likelihood of them being less religious, viewing science as in conflict with religious traditions, and regarding religion as entirely removed from the practice of science. This was considered to be an inevitable result of secularization: science would march forward to govern how our society operates and our values as a nation would become less religious (Leuba 1916, Berger 1967). Empirically, the focus remained exclusively on individual scientists' religiosity.

Recent literature suggests a different dynamic, one in which scientists do exhibit some distinct patterns of religious beliefs despite overall expressing lower levels of individual religiosity. Yet many of the demographic (age, gender, race, occupational status) and disciplinary (natural versus social scientists, institutional type) patterns presumed to account for this difference between scientists and the lay public, or among scientists themselves, are not as relevant as believed. Instead, we have gained more insight into how scientists are actors within a larger institutional context; this awareness connects back to a formative body of work stemming from Merton and STS (as discussed earlier). Currently scholars contend that, while academics (including scientists) may be more likely to be irreligious (atheist/agnostic) than the general population, this does not capture the multifaceted ways in which many professionals navigate the institution of science. The explanatory key may lie as much in their perceptions of science as in their

education, scientific background, or level of expertise.

In this section, I look more closely at the academy as a professional enterprise and then examine the trends that emerge, tracing how different types of scientists (natural, social, and medical) navigate both individual and institutional aspects of religion and science.

Science Professionals and the Public

Given that a knowledge of and a familiarity with science has long been held to influence public perceptions of science, many invested in the institution of science dedicate great effort to popularizing science. As communication and journalism about science often relies on scientific experts to weigh in, the ability of key leaders to influence public discourse is palpable. But, few studies empirically examine the extent of the impact of these well-known scientists/science enthusiasts. How effective are public figures in altering cognitive boundaries—often assessed in relation to business, politics, and public health efforts—around the relationship between religion and science? In a survey experiment administered in the United States, Scheitle and Ecklund (2015) compare two public figures deeply tied to the institution of science and well known for their positions on religion and science. Francis Collins, a scientist who led the Human Genome Project and is now the director of the National Institute for Health, is known for his evangelical religious beliefs and his view that religion and science are compatible. Alternatively, Richard Dawkins, an evolutionary biologist who publishes prolifically and participates in public debates, is widely regarded as a popularizer of atheism vigorously advocating against the idea that religion and science are compatible. Scheitle and Ecklund asked participants if they had ever heard of Collins or Dawkins; only those unfamiliar with the scientist about whom they were asked were given a description of the scientist, their credentials, and their view of religion and science. If the participant had heard of their respective scientist they simply moved onto the next question without

receiving any descriptive statement (the experimental treatment).

Subsequently, those who were unfamiliar with their respective scientist were asked about whether religion and science were in conflict (and if they placed themselves on the religion or science side of the conflict), if religion and science were entirely independent from one another, or if religion and science were in collaboration with one another. In comparing those who received the description of a scientist (either Collins or Dawkins) and those who did not (since they indicated previously that they were familiar with the respective scientist), those who received the Collins treatment were significantly more likely to support a collaborative view of religion and science than those who had not received the Collins treatment. There was no difference for Dawkins. The authors conclude that perhaps public figures in science with unexpected views change public opinion more than those whose beliefs are perceived as expected. Collins' vocal public religiosity and prominence in science, coupled with his collaborative view of religion and science is less expected given the long touted conflict between the two sources of authority. Comparatively, Dawkins' positioning is better known among the general public (more of the general sample had heard of him compared to Collins), but his viewpoint was an expected position for a scientist to take. This confirms trends in science communication studies and other work focused on public figures' engagement with the public which suggests that we tend to listen to those who we perceive as similar to us. In other words, given the high levels of religiosity across individuals in the US, this is less surprising.

Nonetheless, this finding underscores broader trends among the public which play into the assumption that the institution of science is inherently secular and that scientists are perceived as overwhelmingly atheist with a general disregard for religion. Despite historical patterns that suggest otherwise, these perceptions have persisted strongly throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Examining the extent to which these assumptions are accurate has

prompted a recent resurgence in examining professionals themselves rather than the public exclusively. Why study professionals rather than focus on the lay public? While public opinion about science is a vital indicator of a country's religious, sociocultural, and political environment—not to mention its support of scientific advancement and development—this line of inquiry largely captures how those who do not regularly produce scientific knowledge consume and understand science. Alternatively, those tied to the institutional authority of science, both natural and social scientists, are in a position of knowledge production and influence. Consequently, their ability to intervene in broader national conversations about religion and science are arguably greater than the general public.

Disciplinary, Institutional, and Demographic Differences Among Scientists

The goal of secular inquiry has marked the contemporary institution of science since the 1800s. Yet this goal was the result of an active pursuit among scholars intent on disentangling science from its religious roots. In the case of Europe and the United States, this largely meant Protestantism. As a higher number of non-Protestants such as Catholics and Jews joined the academy, efforts to assimilate became stronger since a shared religious tradition no longer served as a singular foundation for the academy. In particular, Jewish science faculty became increasingly secular, which stemmed from their cultural and professional identities being separated from their religious practice (lower levels of religious beliefs and practice became more common), resulting in a further separation of their faith and scholarship (Beit-Hallahmi 2015, p. 115). Overall, scholars studying this historical shift of the early to mid-twentieth century continued to document the increasing gap in religiosity between scholars and the general public: scientists were less religious than the public.

Disciplinary Distinctions

By the mid-twentieth century, scholars sought to further unpack religious differences among scientists as well. For instance, influential work by Leuba (1916, 1934) highlighted how natural scientists tended to be more religious than social scientists despite their perceived stronger commitment to science and the scientific method. This finding was used to illustrate that a conflict between religious beliefs and a commitment to the scientific method was not inherent. Wuthnow (1985) suggested that perhaps social scientists' comparatively lower status in the academy (in part due to their distance from the institutional authority of science) accounted for this gap. Recent scholarship points to little evidence to support this disciplinary distinction. While there is an overall decline in religiosity within the academy throughout the twentieth century and leading into the twenty-first century, natural and social scientists are increasingly similar to one another in terms of their lower levels of religiosity when compared to broader trends among the general public (Ecklund and Scheitle 2007; Ecklund et al. 2008, 2011; Ecklund and Park 2009; Ecklund and Long 2011). There are a few exceptions such as those who focus more on research rather than applied fields such as medicine (Gross and Simmons 2009) or specifically biologists, who tend to have lower levels of religiosity than other scientists overall (Ecklund and Scheitle 2007; Stirrat and Cornwell 2013).

Institutional Differences

Institutional factors do appear to play a role in religious skepticism and overall levels of secularism. Gross and Simmons (2009) documented that faculty at elite research (doctoral granting) universities are less likely to hold religious beliefs than faculty at other types of institutions (e.g., community colleges, bachelor's degree granting institutions). Elite university faculty members are more likely to be atheist or agnostic and, overall, they have more doubts about God's existence. The institution's location also matters in terms of the region and population size. For example, living in the Northeast region is negatively associated with maintaining religious beliefs, and living

in a less densely populated area is associated with higher levels of religiosity (Gross and Simmons 2009, p. 123). Based on their in-depth analysis of faculty across a variety of institutional contexts, Gross and Simmons (2009, p. 124) conclude that "the hypothesis that the university is a secular institution because of the irreligious tendencies of the faculty does not withstand empirical scrutiny: it is a secular institution despite the fact that most of its key personnel are themselves religious believers." Increasingly, scholarship points to the need to not collapse the secularity of the institution itself with individuals' beliefs and perceptions.

Demographic Patterns

A scientist's gender, race, or age do not help explain differences in religiosity between the general population and scientists (Ecklund and Scheitle 2007; Ecklund and Park 2009). Instead, what does appear to matter is their marital status, whether or not they have children, and their childhood religious upbringing. If a scientist was married, had children, and grew up in a home where religion was deemed important, they were less likely to identify little truth in religion, or perceive a conflict between religion and science (Ecklund and Scheitle 2007; Ecklund and Park 2009). To that end, Ecklund et al. (2008) argued that perhaps, in part, the general decline in religiosity may be related to the decrease in the number of academics who have children, mirroring a trend within the general population. What is consistently underscored by these demographic patterns is that one's childhood upbringing and current family arrangement shaped scientists' view of religion and science. Exposure to science or a few common demographic characteristics (e.g., age, race, gender) do not explain the trend of scientists overall declining religiosity. If neither disciplinary nor demographic patterns account for why scientists differ from the broader public, and even amongst themselves, and if institutional differences only highlight some variation among institutions but not the academy as a whole, then what does account for the trend? Recent scholarship reveals a more nuanced dynamic of how scientists negotiate various sources of authority.

Institutional Negotiation

By and large, faculty are more religious than often believed. The perception that religion and science are inherently in conflict is a minority position among faculty and not widely held compared to the popular perceptions of academics as largely irreligious and antagonistic to religious traditions. Throughout discussions of academics' religiosity, in particular natural and social scientists as they are the most readily studied, the comparison group is consistently the general public. With this comparison in mind, a significantly larger proportion of scientists do indeed report lower religiosity. For instance, Ecklund and Scheitle's (2007) analysis of available General Social Survey data suggested 52% of scientists reported no religious affiliation in contrast to the 14% of the entire population. Yet Gross and Simmons (2009, p. 103) have argued that even though atheism and agnosticism are more readily indicated among faculty compared to the general population, "religious skepticism represents a minority position, even among professors teaching at elite research universities." Similarly, in examinations of how specifically religion and science are perceived in relation to one another, Stirrat and Cornwell (2013) discovered that while members of Great Britain's Royal Fellows (who are nominated based upon substantial, influential scientific work) indicated less belief in a personal god or the supernatural compared to the general public, there was also no consensus among Royal Fellows about the relationship between the two spheres of authority either.

If a sizeable minority of academics identify as agnostic or atheist (or overall have lower levels of religiosity) but few hold a conflict perspective, then how else do scientists navigate the nexus between religion and science? In light of the increasing role of (and identification with) spirituality in the United States, Ecklund and Long (2011) investigated whether or not this trend was emergent among scientists as well. They discovered the set of terms scientists used to describe spirituality included "individual, personal, and personally constructed" (Ecklund and Long 2011, p. 261). Frequently, the scientists in the

study regarded spirituality as an inquiry into truth and ethical considerations largely consistent with the practice of science, or what Ecklund and Long (2011, p. 258) identify as an "identity-consistent spirituality." Science is another way to find and construct meaning outside of the traditional confines of organized religion. Additionally, they found that while more than 60% of scientists in their study, which involved 275 in-depth interviews with randomly selected scientists from a larger study, were associated with either atheism or agnosticism, "About 22% of the scientists who are atheists still consider themselves spiritual and about 27% of the scientists who are agnostic also consider themselves spiritual" (Ecklund and Long 2011, p. 264). This idea of a spiritual atheist underscores the nuanced relationship scientists negotiate between religion, science, and spirituality.

Other forms of negotiation are tied to the context and content of scientists' work. Illustrative examples include medical practitioners and biologists. Cadge et al. (2009) examined the case of medicine, a more applied area of focus and one which recent work has suggested may be more religious overall than other areas of the academy. Through interviews with medical practitioners, comparing pediatric oncologists and pediatricians, the study finds less reliance on related religious professionals (e.g., hospital chaplains or other religious and spiritual leaders connected to the family) by pediatric oncologists to negotiate the interplay between religion and science in their practice. Instead, pediatric oncologists more than pediatricians demonstrated that they squarely situate issues related to religion and science in their day-to-day practice. They create and maintain relatively functional boundaries when it may impact their decisions, but they also allow for more porous boundaries when the affected family is faced with limited options, particularly at the end of life. Cadge et al. (2009, p. 702) concluded, "Physicians view religion and spirituality as a barrier when it impedes medical recommendations and as a bridge when it helps families answer questions medicine inherently cannot."

Moving from an applied context in which religion and science are negotiated day to day in

relation to medical practices, evidence suggests that within the academy the surrounding context matters as well. While there are not sizeable differences between natural and social scientists or across specific disciplines, biologists are an exception. This disciplinary group is less likely to be religious in both belief and practice, and is more likely to support conflict paradigms between religion and science. Scholars noting this trend often have pointed to the visibility of biology in social debates and activism about a range of issues from the role of evolutionary explanations for human origins to stem cell technology. Here, again, the context in which the professional is situated may shape their attitudes and perceptions; those engaged with biology are more likely to directly or indirectly be affected by these broader public debates.

Despite the majority of scholarly work indicating that a religious-scientific conflict is contextual, less is known in the literature about how scientists manage these occasions of conflict. To that end, Ecklund et al. (2011) interviewed over twenty elite scientists to unpack how they negotiate these institutional contexts. In terms of perceptions of how often religion and science are in conflict, an overwhelming majority of the scientists (70%) indicated it depended on the context. At times a conflict could exist and in other instances it may not. The remaining minority of scientists were split between indicating religion and science were never in conflict (15%) and always in conflict (15%). Ecklund, Sorrell, and Park pointed to three strategies they found scientists used to negotiate the interplay between religion and science. First, some science professionals simply redefined religion to focus more on individual spirituality rather than a more institutionally organized religious tradition. A second group reported that they explicitly integrated their religious tradition with their scientific pursuits, regarding their faith as separate in much of their inquiry but drawing upon it when wrestling with the unknown or with ethical considerations. Finally, many scientists relied upon “intentional talk” by which they actively discussed, rather than ignored or dismissed, debates surrounding religion and science (Ecklund et al. 2011, p. 553).

For instance, at the time of this set of interviews, debates around intelligent design were actively circulating among students in the classroom so they discussed what the argument entailed and how other academics responded to this challenge. Ultimately for Ecklund, Sorrell, and Park, these findings underscored how scientists are not simply constrained by secular institutional norms, but instead may actively negotiate their own religiosity/irreligiosity in light of various audiences such as students in the classroom, peers, and other institutional members. The institution of science does not exclusively pressure its practitioners to become less religious since many are religious or engage with religion in the context of science.

Religion, Science, and Place

While the focus of this chapter has been on how individuals’ beliefs, knowledge, and practices intersect with institutional structures based upon salient sources of authority (both religion and science), a developing area of research explicitly examines how laypeople and professionals engage in particular physical sites or places. For religion, churches are a central edifice for fellow believers and a point of entry to the community for organized religion. For science, the natural history museum has become a key public platform for the scientific establishment. Creationism is a particularly illustrative example for examining how one social movement draws on the general public and science professionals alike to present an alternative view of how religion and science may be negotiated as sources of authority. I examine this in a case study of how they *emplace* their efforts in the Creation Museum.

Despite the appearance of being both universal and transcendent, neither religion nor science has ever been a placeless activity (Livingstone 2003; Williams 2005). Scholars who study science and technology draw upon a longstanding interest in scientific knowledge, discovery practices, and the powerful institutions in which they occur—particularly where. Comparatively, those who study religion have often maintained a more

distinctly cultural approach in order to capture how meaning-making occurs and how this influences beliefs as well as actions across a wide variety of groups (Wuthnow 1990; Chaves 1994; Smith 1998; Williams 2007). Yet, while sites of knowledge production are central to the practice of science (and frequently examined), how a site becomes sacred and steeped with cultural authority is equally pressing in the analysis of how buildings are created and, in turn, how they come to shape our beliefs and behaviors (Gieryn 2002).

In order to further understand how religion and science, as sources of cultural authority, may be drawn together I focus on understanding how a social movement organization called Answers in Genesis (AiG) built the Creation Museum to challenge evolutionary science's monopoly over the natural history museum-form (see also Oberlin 2014). AiG offers a place, rather than solely rhetoric or debate, for adherents and curious visitors to engage their "side" of the perceived debate over cultural authority. In doing so, they move into the public sphere shifting the negotiations between science and religion onto a new terrain. But still, why challenge natural history museums and the physical structures associated with them (the museum-form)? What's at stake? Coupling a longstanding sociological interest in collectively shared beliefs and behaviors with a broader, multidisciplinary lens in mind, I foreground what place does for a religiously motivated social movement. In doing so, I connect scholars interested in the sites of scientific work and religious architecture to underscore how both scientific and religious sources of cultural authority were later tied to respective public institutions, namely the natural history museum and the church.

Scientific Sites

Science is produced and reproduced in a variety of sites—houses, labs, courtrooms, and museums. No matter where science occurs over time, however, these buildings "sit somewhere between agency and structure" (Gieryn 2002, p. 35). Buildings simultaneously shape the (re)produc-

tion of scientific knowledge and get structured by the values, interests, and powers that define scientific ambitions. Therefore, when science occurs in museums, a variety of consequential processes and patterns emerge. Collections that once displayed artifacts acquired from undisciplined "field work" became known as "curiosity cabinets," the predecessor to the museum-form, in which objects were presented in a disjointed and unsystematic manner (Findlen 1994). By the nineteenth century, a simultaneous push to professionalize the sciences and to standardize the display of these vast scholarly collections succeeded in creating a popular climate salutary for the advance of science (Yanni 1999). Traveling collections, constructed out of newly-produced scientific facts about nature and society, continued to gather cultural authority for what became increasingly regarded as secular science. Effectively, museums began to "do" science, along with laboratories, observatories, and field sites. Natural history museums took on legitimating and policing functions, and made the visible and publicly-accessible case for science as credible, useful, and authoritative (Conn 1998; Golinski 1998).

Physical characteristics of museums—such as the architectural design of the buildings, flow and organization of the exhibits, and the technology used to display content—all affect perceived credibility. The content and theories undergirding an exhibit often shaped the physical layout of the museum. Prior to the twentieth century, not only was the content of museums often regarded by patrons and scientists alike as a display of God's work, but the very form and structure of the museum physically reflected an intertwining of religion and science. One prominent example was Henry Acland's insertion of a portal sculpture where he erected an arch pointing toward God at the Oxford Museum in 1859 (Yanni 1999). However, by and large, Darwin's theory began to take hold in the late nineteenth century, as did the now familiar linear routes, which moved visitors sequentially from one room to the next. As Bennett (1995, p. 186) writes, "The museum visit thus functioned and was experienced as a form of organized walking through

evolutionary time.” Increasingly, the relationship between content and form became tightly coupled with evolutionary science and by the early twentieth century the form and content of a reputable natural history museum was firmly established.

Religious Sites

The question of what place does for science is well-established, but investigating place in relationship to religion is a nascent trend for social scientists. Sacred places are often physical sites or pilgrimage destinations; places that elicit reverence sometimes drawn from the natural environment in which they are embedded (Mazumdar and Mazumdar 2004). Yet built and natural environments are usually neglected by social scientists who study religion in favor of an emphasis on how religious beliefs and behaviors are tied to the everyday institutional life of religious traditions embedded within communities.

While place and the built environment have not long been an explicit focus for social scientists, recent lines of inquiry are promising. Williams’ (2005) forum on religion and place brought together scholars whose work on immigration, globalization, regional religious trends, and urban development began to address the multiple ways in which communities (ethnic, religious, cultural) and geography impact religious meaning and behaviors. In the most advanced and recent analysis directed toward meaning as it relates to religious identity and the concrete “stuff” of place, Williams (2011, p. 150) underscores just how salient this type of work promises to become:

Our religious identities come with places just as they come with bodies—even when we culturally create them or re-create them primarily through metaphor. Place is a dimension of the contexts in which religion is enacted and experienced. Investigating it systematically can only enrich our understanding of the dynamics of religion in the contemporary world.

Here, he broadens the notion of place within the sociology of religion to include a connection

between identities and bodies, along with located sites of importance. The question of how individuals’ bodies connect religion and place through their senses—whether it be sights, sounds, or smells—is a particularly instructive one. But, while this emphasis on geographically situated social/religious interactions between individuals (and their bodies) and between groups is vital, it is also arguably still emergent. Meanwhile, anthropologists, human geographers, architectural historians, and religious studies scholars have long wrestled with what it means to create or maintain a “sacred space,” particularly as it relates to buildings and the built environment.

In an edited volume reflecting a wide range of sacred spaces, Nelson’s (2006) *American Sanctuary: Understanding Sacred Spaces* reflects a rich multidisciplinary line of scholarship on religious architecture, particularly attuned to sites that are not often associated with worship. Nelson argues that places only become sacred through belief and practice rather than an inherent existence. No place’s sacred meaning is stable and often these places are linked to political, legal, and cultural identities. These historical discussions of architecture inform how to unpack analytically a given building’s structure, references, and the process by which the aforementioned translation takes shape.

One of the newest and arguably most prominent developments within religious architecture at the end of the twentieth is the evangelical megachurch. Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, these structures have been on the rise and reflect a longstanding evangelical commitment to reach as many people as possible and to congregate in large shared spaces as a symbol of commitment (Loveland 2003). Drawing from a long line of religious and cultural work on evangelical architecture, Kilde (2006) underscores how a connection to the populist evangelical movement’s approach—its layperson, broad-base support—is reiterated in choices of the built environment. With an emphasis on being contemporary, megachurches have become less “church-like” in order to reach and engage a broader audience. Eschewing the feelings and sights of yesteryear’s

traditional Protestant Christianity, many megachurch structures embody visual connections to contemporary commercial building trends—complete with landscaped campuses, earth-tone color schemes inside, large open multipurpose spaces, floor-to-ceiling windows, and extensive use of technology. Presumably, by drawing on the look and feel of commercial real estate, megachurches have become a fixed part of the American cultural landscape since they are not a “special destination” but instead yet another public building which happens to be infused with religious meaning (Kilde 2006, p. 236–238).

This ongoing negotiation of the boundaries of religious and scientific authority, as it is occurring in particular places, can be readily observed in the case of The Creation Museum, built in 2007 by Answering in Genesis (AiG) in Petersburg, Kentucky (a version of the following section appears in Oberlin 2014).

Case Study: The Creation Museum

When public visitors walk into the Creation Museum, they see a place organized like a museum and, in turn, are persuaded to act accordingly. Visitors wait in line (over 1.8 million as of June 2013), purchase extra options in addition to their general admission fee (which is \$29.95)—such as a film at the on-site planetarium (over one million tickets purchased)—and walk through exhibits (capacity at 4800) in a museum that is over 70,000 square feet and counting.

Creationism may be the best known challenger to the cultural authority of science within the U.S. and internationally (Gieryn 1983; Toumey 1994; Numbers 2006 [1992]). Other science-oriented social movements question the structure of federal government funding for research, the regulation of our bodies, food, and environment, or expansion of medical treatment options available, but generally they leave untouched the authority of science itself. Creationists have different ambitions as they challenge core theories like the evolutionary basis of human origins and the monopoly of secular scientific practitioners over such issues.

Characterizing the broader society as hostile to religion and science as highly secularized, creationists mobilize this perceived epistemic conflict to foster a self-conception of being embattled on all sides.

Within creationism, the Young Earth Creation movement is distinctive in that it draws upon both a literal interpretation of the Bible and Baconian (inductive) scientific methods to conclude that the earth is 6000 years old, with life starting in the year 4004 B.C. The Young Earth Creationist movement organization AiG depicts their claims in the Creation Museum, with a focus on visitor-centered experiences and interactive technology increasingly used across the broader museum landscape.

One prominent example of how they portray their claims as relegated to the margins is evident in the “Lucy” exhibit, in reference to the famous *Australopithecus* often used in discussions of human origins in secular museums. The exhibit involves a detailed account of how Lucy is depicted and interpreted by evolutionary scientists and paleo-artists. Resident creation scientist Dr. David Menton, a retired Professor of Anatomy with a PhD in Cell Biology from Brown University, describes how the fossil record suggests a knuckle-walking ape rather than an intermediate humanoid biped. To support his objections to dominant interpretations, the exhibit uses cutting-edge hologram technology to overlay known fossils associated with Lucy onto an ape-like figure—visually demonstrating the plausibility of Menton’s arguments.

In these type of exhibits, I argue, Young Earth Creationists target a longstanding mouthpiece of the scientific establishment—the natural history museum—as the place where the public engages both scientific institutions (and their symbols) along with scientific facts and theories. AiG’s adoption of the natural history museum-form positions their museum in a space long associated with authoritative scientific worldviews. The stark contrast between a church and a laboratory as distinctive places of culture-production architecturally and spatially masks the historically intertwined relationships between religion and science. By moving the young earth perspective

out of the church and into a museum, advocates expose in a physical, public site the tensions between these two sources of legitimation and belief—but not explicitly so. The Creation Museum cannot look like a church: its visual code must be read as a “museum” rather than as a sacred space in order to sustain the appearance that Young Earth Creationism is a legitimate rival to scientific evolutionary theories depicted in natural history museums. AiG preserves the authority of the museum-form itself and embeds in that place artifacts and interpretations which resist mainstream evolutionary scientific worldviews.

If one ties cultural authority (the likelihood that a claim will be accepted as true) and epistemic credibility to the institution of science, then the boundary-work between science and other ways of knowing becomes consequential (Weber 1978, p. 212; Gieryn 1983). For instance the “symbols of science,” such as natural history museums, are often at the heart of the intersection between science and the public. As Christopher Toumey (1994, p. 20) states, “The connection between the substantive meaning of science and the popular symbols of science was so weak [in the nineteenth and twentieth century] that the symbols could easily be borrowed, co-opted, or stolen for the benefit of ideologies, policies, and commodities that did not necessarily have anything to do with the substance of science.” Given the prominence of these symbols, the goal is not to evaluate the validity of creationist claims in and of themselves, but rather to analyze how the museum-form is extended as another “symbol of science” that gets deployed to secure cultural authority for those claims.

Now, science oriented museums are largely examined as places where the cultural authority of mainstream science is reproduced—not as places where scientific understandings and the cultural legitimacy granted to such knowledge are challenged (historically or contemporarily). This is not to suggest that scholars interested in museums have regarded them as uncontested institutions; volumes of scholarship demonstrate otherwise (see for a review Knell et al. 2007). But challenges are more focused on social history, not explicitly on science and its impacts. Exhibits

such as the Enola Gay (an aircraft used during WWII to drop an atomic bomb) at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C are well-known and subject to much scholarly and public attention. But these types of controversies are not as closely related to what is often presented and debated within natural history museums (Gieryn 1998). Largely, science-oriented museums have sought to avoid confrontation.

The Creation Museum evokes many of the “symbols of science” associated with the natural history museum-form: façade style, surrounding grounds, large main hall, numerous exhibits with objects and plaques offering fact-oriented descriptions and interpretations. Yet, its advocacy for dual sources of authority (science and religion) and its mission to evangelize the Christian faith is not relegated to the background. The current relevance of the Bible’s Old Testament and historical challenges to biblical authority in the classroom (notably, materialized in the 1925 Scopes Trial) are covered in detail within one exhibit. The Scopes Trial is portrayed as the beginning of a cultural crisis in America, which led to a range of societal ills such as abortion, divorce, and even racism. By coupling the presentation of fossil casts with technical videos covering the feasibility of a global flood in accordance with scripture, AiG is unabashedly displaying an alternative explanation of human and natural history. It highlights AiG’s belief in natural selection and the categorization of species into “kinds” as outlined in the Book of Genesis in the Bible, which Carl Linnaeus also believed. Carl Linnaeus, the Swedish botanist whose straightforward and consistent approach to classification persists, held firmly to such a natural theology. It formed the fundamental basis for why systematization and formal order through binomial classification was necessary for Linnaeus. This connection to Linnaeus is probably well-known among many creationists (including Old Earth Creationists), but it will come as a surprise to the contemporary mainstream public. The Creation Museum harkens back to late nineteenth century approaches to museums (and before), with explicit parallels drawn between biblical accounts and evidence from creation science. For instance, Charles Willson Peale

founded Peale's Museum in 1786, the first natural history museum in the United States, considered its visitors to have both scientific and religious commitments. And, like Linnaeus later in his life, creationists concede that natural selection via microevolution or change within species is not only possible, but probable.

Ultimately, this is not to suggest that the Creation Museum is an outdated exemplar of the past, attempting to adopt just enough of the look and feel of contemporary natural history museums standards to evoke its own "museumness." The Kentucky-based museum does indeed conform to many visitors' expectations about what constitutes a museum but, importantly for AiG, there are also features that evoke more explicit religious references as well. The argument that a built structure engenders multiple references is hardly novel. However, the Creation Museum places front and center what marked the earliest natural history museums: the Bible. AiG built the Creation Museum as a means to challenge evolutionary science's monopoly over the natural history museum-form. AiG offers a *place*, rather than a rhetorical theology or scientific debate, for adherents and curious visitors to engage their "side" of the perceived debate over cultural authority. In doing so, they move the public sphere of negotiations between science and religion onto a new terrain. These creationists draw credibility for their beliefs by housing them in a structure—a natural history museum—that carries its own legitimizing authority as a trustworthy repository of artifacts.

Future Directions

In this chapter I reviewed existing scholarship on the public understanding and perception of science in relation to religion, as well as the literature on individual scientists' religious beliefs and practices in terms of how they negotiate the relationship between religiosity (if any) and science. I also highlighted, using my own scholarship as an example, one promising avenue that research is taking to understand better the relationship between religion and science: place. In this final

section, I briefly highlight a couple of additional exciting lines of inquiry that remain to be explored more fully by scholars who study the relationship between religion and science as two sources of authority for beliefs, knowledge, and practices.

A long line of work underscores the demographic dimensions of how religious affiliation (whether measured by belief, self-identification, or practice) and engagement with science (whether measured by literacy, knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, or its societal role) relate to one another. Much of the work on the public understanding of science has sought to unearth the sociodemographic patterns—who's more or less likely to view religion and science as incompatible, to support public funding for scientific research, and to trust scientists to advise national policy decisions. Yet the role of one's command of scientific knowledge is less central than conventional literature would suggest. Those social scientists more attuned to religious practices and affiliations have highlighted this trend, complicating the religion-science incompatibility narrative so popular among the public (and among many corners of the academy that do not directly study the interface between religion and science). Now, these patterns are increasingly situated in a broader context of science (with particular attention paid to the types of scientific issues at stake).

Additionally the role of political affiliation for influencing one's view of the relationship between religion and science will continue to cull attention among researchers rather than a narrower, exclusive focus on education or other conventional sociodemographic traits such as race, age, or gender. To that end, the impact of concerted efforts among key stakeholders (e.g., social movement leaders, political lobbyists, and education reformers) appears to matter more than deep, longstanding perceived epistemological issues since the relationship between the general institutions of religion and science are not always in conflict. Instead, where and when certain types of knowledge claims are drawn into debates over authority is what primarily shapes the public's engagement with religion and science. Put another way, the potential for polarization

(stemming from cultural, political, or moral stakeholders) and the framing of the issues appears to be increasingly more relevant.

Research on science professionals (natural and social scientists) increasingly moves beyond the centrality of individual scientists' religiosity for determining how religion and science are perceived. Instead the focus is on how scientists engage with these sources of authority within the context of the academy (and often in light of the broader public context particularly with social controversies). This shifts the prevalent analysis since heretofore the scholarly emphasis was not attuned to how actively some academics navigate institutional structures or how they may view the interface between religion and science in alternative ways particularly engaging spirituality, for instance. Only recently did this trend come to light. Gradually, contemporary scholarship offers insight into just how scientists navigate the institution of science in relation to their religious worldviews (or lack thereof) and it remains a promising, emergent line of work for future social scientists.

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Abstract

This chapter reviews the existing state of research on the social scientific study of religion and sport, and suggests avenues for future development of the field. It begins by briefly examining the history of sport, showing how its development reflects a pattern of societal-level secularization. It then notes how societal-level secularization affords many opportunities for innovation at the organizational-level and vitality at the individual-level. But religious organizations seeking to engage the world of sports rarely challenge its fundamentally secular structure and purpose. The organizational pattern, therefore, is one of engagement through accommodation. At the individual-level, macro-level social changes create a particular social environment within which individuals negotiate their involvement in both religion and sport. In some cases individuals make connections between these two spheres and in some cases they experience conflict between them. This lack of a uniform relationship between religion and sport facilitates thinking more broadly about other ways in which religion and sport come together in contemporary society, specifically as civil religion and through sports fandom. The chapter concludes by suggesting some future directions for the study of religion and sport which seek to cast a wider net than has been used in the past.

When Webb Simpson won the 2012 U.S. Open – one of professional golf’s four major championships – he joined an illustrious group of golfers

who had played collegiately at Wake Forest University. However, unlike his fellow Wake Forest alumni and U.S. Open Champions, Arnold Palmer and Curtis Strange, Simpson (born in 1985) is a “digital native.” So it is not surprising that he maintains a regular presence on social media, including posting from his Twitter account @webbsimpson1. What may be surprising to some is that Simpson (a religion major in college)

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is well-known for his Twitter posts of Bible verses, quotes from religious thinkers, and other faith-related content. A quick sampling of his Tweets reveals statements such as:

- “Where sin runs deep, Grace is more.”
- “#Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance, the only thing it cannot be is moderately important” (C.S. Lewis).
- “Hebrews 4:14–16 is more than comforting to the Christian.”

In a *Golf Digest* magazine article, “The Soul of Pro Golf,” writer Max Adler (2012) observes that Simpson is not alone among professional golfers in making his Christian faith very public. Adler’s story begins with Simpson telling NBC Sports interviewer Bob Costas how much he prayed during the final holes of the 2012 U.S. Open, but Adler goes on to discuss a dozen other professional golfers for whom faith is central to their identity.

Of course, the public sharing of that faith is not embraced by all. A *Golf Digest* on-line survey of readers reported in Adler’s article asked people their “reaction when you hear a tour pro in an interview thanking God after winning a tournament.” The survey found:

- 40.8 % Completely fine with it. Tells me who this player really is.
- 23.4 % OK, but move on.
- 18.1 % It’s a little awkward.
- 17.7 % I’m offended by it. Doesn’t belong in a sports contest.

Although not a scientific survey, these results show the very different perspectives people have on the issue of religion in sports.

Golfers like Bubba Watson, who thanked his “Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ” after winning the prestigious Masters Tournament, are sometimes ridiculed for thinking that God has nothing better to do than to get involved in a mere sporting event. However, the theology that animates many athletes, including professional golfers, is more subtle than that. “The Lord couldn’t care less

whether I win or lose,” Adler quotes Watson as saying. “What matters to Him is how I play the game.” Professional basketball player Jeremy Lin also expresses both his faith and humility about its role in his activity when he says, “My audience is God. ... The right way to play is not for others and not for myself, but for God. I still don’t fully understand what that means; I struggle with these things every game, every day” (Brooks 2012).

Of course, public displays and declarations of religious faith by athletes are by no means restricted to professional golf, nor even new. After scoring a touchdown in 1977, Herb Lusk of the Philadelphia Eagles became the first player in the National Football League to kneel down in the end zone in prayer. Prior to that public display, religiosity was confined to the locker room. After Lusk, it was common. Any casual observer surveying the world of sport cannot help but notice similar scenes across the world of sports in recent years: With a gold cross dangling from his ear, Barry Bonds hits another home run; when he touches home plate, he points to the sky. U.S. soccer star Landon Donovan makes the sign of the cross prior to taking penalty kicks, as do countless baseball players before stepping into the batter’s box, American football kickers prior to attempting field goals, and basketball players before shooting free throws. Tennis players routinely look and point skyward after winning points, matches, and tournaments. After leading the St. Louis Rams to a Super Bowl victory, quarterback Kurt Warner was asked by an interviewer on national television, “Kurt, first things first. Tell me about the final touchdown pass to Isaac [Bruce].” Warner responded, “Well, first things first, I’ve got to thank my Lord and Savior up above. Thank you, Jesus!” Even in defeat, athletes sometimes take the opportunity to express their faith publicly. After getting injured in the first game of the season, Wake Forest University quarterback Riley Skinner thanked God for the opportunity to play college football (Yamane et al. 2010).

Like religion, sport is “one of the most popular and significant dimensions of human experience” (Alpert 2015, p. 3). In the United States,

26.3 % of adults report playing sports and 30.6 % attend sporting events (U.S. Census Bureau 2012, p. 763), which is similar to rates of regular attendance at religious services (Hadaway et al. 1993). On average in European Union countries, 40 % of adults aged 16 and over take part in sports or physical exercise at least once a week (Office for National Statistics 2014), a level of participation found also in Singapore (Singapore Sports Council 2011), for example. In China, sports participation rates increased from 15.5 % in 1996 to 28.2 % in 2007, following the country's successful bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games (Hong, et al. 2013, p. 190). By far the largest sporting event in the world, the Beijing Olympics would play host to nearly 11,000 athletes from 204 countries competing in 28 different sports. It might surprise many to learn that 169 nations participated in the FINA World Swimming Championships and over 3143 athletes participated in the ISSF Shooting World Championships in 2014, both of which exceeded the 88 countries and 2798 athletes competing in the Sochi Olympic Winter Games. High levels of participation in sport are also evident in spectatorship. Over 330 million people attended just the top 25 sporting events in 2014, which included soccer's World Cup, the Winter Olympics, English Premier League and German Bundesliga soccer, professional basketball and football in the United States, and Formula 1 auto racing (Sportcal 2015). Many times more participate in sports through various media. It was widely reported that a billion people worldwide watched the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics (Economist 2011).

The prevalence and importance of sport in the human experience means that virtually every issue of concern to social scientists can be studied in and through the world of sport: personality and character, socialization and culture, politics and economics, education and media, race, class, gender, sexuality, and, of course, religion. But religion is a relatively neglected dimension in the study of sport. To wit: a recent issue of the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* – commemorating the 50th anniversary of the

International Sociology of Sport Association – included 50 articles covering every conceivable aspect of the sociological study of sport *except* religion. In his survey of themes appearing in three major sociology of sport journals from 1984 through 2011, Dart (2014, p. 652) found “limited identification” of religion as a core concept in the sociology of sport. As a leading sociologist of sports writes, “Scholars who study religions are seldom interested in studying sports, and scholars who study sports are seldom interested in studying religions” (Coakley 2015, p. 513).

Given this situation, this chapter reviews the existing state of research on the social scientific study of religion and sport, and suggests avenues for future development of the field. I begin by briefly examining the history of sport, showing how its development reflects a pattern of societal-level secularization. I then note how societal-level secularization affords many opportunities for innovation at the organizational-level and vitality at the individual-level. For example, evangelical Christians (in America in particular) have been very adept at using sports organizations to advance religious ends, from the YMCA of yesterday to the sports ministries of today. But religious organizations seeking to engage the world of sports rarely challenge its fundamentally secular structure and purpose. The organizational pattern, therefore, is one of engagement through accommodation. At the individual-level, macro-level social changes create a particular social environment within which individuals negotiate their involvement in both religion and sport. In some cases individuals make connections between these two spheres and in some cases they experience conflict between them. This lack of a uniform relationship between religion and sport allows us to think more broadly about other ways in which religion and sport come together in contemporary society, specifically as civil religion and through sports fandom. Finally, I suggest some future directions for the study of religion and sport which seek to cast a wider net than has been used in the past.

The Secularization of Sport: History and Development

Having achieved paradigmatic status in the sociology of religion in the third quarter of the twentieth century (Tschannen 1991) – by the 1980s it was the “inherited model,” as Wilson (1985) characterized it – the secularization perspective has since been roundly criticized (see, for example, Roudometof’s Chap. 25, on “Globalization” in this volume). Evident religious vitality in the final decades of the twentieth century raised questions about the scope and even reality of secularization, especially in the United States. This led some scholars to call for the abandonment of the “old” secularization paradigm in favor of a “new paradigm” for the sociological study of religion, in American society at least (Warner 1993). The challenge issued to secularization theory led some to re-focus attention on the core tenets of the paradigm (Yamane 1997).

According to Tschannen (1991, p. 403), although the secularization paradigm “is not completely represented in any one of the theories” of its various carriers, “its core element – differentiation – is shared by them all.” Institutional differentiation highlights the fact that, in the course of modernization, “specialized institutions develop or arise to handle specific features or functions previously embodied in, or carried out by, one institution” (Wallis and Bruce 1991, p. 4). As a consequence, in a highly differentiated society, the norms, values, and practices of the religious sphere have only an indirect influence on other spheres such as business, politics, education, and leisure. In Casanova’s (1994, p. 37) excellent summary, “the core and central thesis of the theory of secularization is the conceptualization of the process of societal modernization as a process of institutional differentiation and emancipation of secular spheres – primarily the state, the economy, and science – from the religious sphere.” This process of secularization at the societal-level is evident in the historical development of sport, as well.

The vast amount of religious activity we see in and around sport today can obscure from view the long-term trend toward the secularization of

sport as a social institution. In fact, however, secularism is a key characteristic that distinguishes modern sport from ancient athletics (Guttman 1978). Secularism particularly concerns the changing purpose of modern sport. From the beginning of human history, people aimed to please the gods through ceremonies, dancing, and athletic activity. Originally, athletic competitions were fundamentally religious enterprises, meant to show special talents to the gods, express thanks to them, or implore them to take certain beneficent actions such as assuring the earth’s fertility (Guttman 1978, p. 18).

Examples abound. The Mayans and Aztecs erected stone ball courts next to their places of worship and often used stories of athletic competition to explain nature. They believed, for example, that the sun and moon were results of a game between the gods and a set of twin brothers during the creation of civilization. As a result of losing, the twin brothers lost their heads as a sacrifice, and this tradition continued, with one player from every game being sacrificed. The secular Olympic Games we know today were created as an exercise of devotion to the Greek god Zeus. Athletes had to swear on the highest deity that they had been training for at least 10 months and would abide by the rules of competition, and violations of this oath led to fines which were used to construct statues of Zeus. The original Olympics lasted 5 days, of which only 2 1/2 were used for competition; the entire first day was devoted to religious ceremonies. Today the Olympic Games are constitutionally secular. Native American tribes used sport to explain nature and please the gods. Southwest Apaches used unwed males in relay races in honor of the masculine sun and the feminine moon (Baker 2007). The evolution of Sumo wrestling in Japan provides another significant example of the secularization process (Coakley 2015, p. 521, Light and Kinnaird 2002).

In the Western world, athletics began to be approached more secularly by the Romans, and their principal purpose became not religious expression but entertainment. Roman athletes focused on fighting, as in gladiator contests, and Roman sport often pitted the members of the

lower classes against each other as entertainment for the elites. Victory usually allowed the competitor to survive and was therefore emphasized over simply participating (Guttman 1978). Modern sports, though less extreme, have taken a more Roman approach in their secularism. According to Kliever (2001, p. 43), this movement parallels the general pattern of societal-level secularization under which religion “has lost effective control over vast areas of cultural life that were once conducted under its watchful eye.” As with other institutional spheres – science and the arts, politics and economics, health care and social welfare – sport “operates under its own rules and pursues its own ends” (Kliever 2001, p. 43).

One significant line of thinking that connects the values of modern sports – such as success, self-discipline, and hard work – to religious values draws on Max Weber’s work on the role of religion in modern society, in particular his landmark essay on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Mathisen 2006; Weber [1904] 1958). Weber observed a relationship between the ascetic religious ethic of certain Protestant sects and the economic ethic of modern capitalism. This “elective affinity” between religious and secular ethics can be seen in the relationship between religion and sport as well. Much like Weber began *The Protestant Ethic* by observing a statistical correlation between Protestantism and the higher echelons of capitalist societies, Overman (1997, 2011) observes the international success of athletes from Protestant countries over those from Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist countries. Although one can speculate about the connection between theological beliefs in other world religions and involvement in sport, it is hard to disentangle socioeconomic and political factors that affect this. In *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Sport*, Overman (2011) highlights the connection between sport and the Protestant ethic of success, self-discipline, and hard work. The Protestant ethic, thus understood, may be especially conducive to participation in organized sporting competition rather than in free and expressive play (Coakley 2015, p. 514).

It is important to recall Weber’s argument that modern capitalism, once established, does not depend on the motivation produced by a religious ethic. Weber ([1904] 1958, p. 180) noted that “the essential elements of the attitude which was there called the spirit of capitalism are the same as what we have just shown to be the content of the Puritan worldly asceticism, only without the religious basis, which ... had died away.” The consequence of this loss of its religious basis was, for Weber ([1904] 1958, p. 181), profound:

The Puritan wanted to work in a calling; we are forced to do so. For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order. This order is now bound to the technical and economic conditions of machine production which to-day determine the lives of all the individuals who are born into its mechanism, not only those directly concerned with economic acquisition, with irresistible force. Perhaps it will so determine them until the last ton of fossilized coal is burnt. In Baxter’s view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the “saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment.” But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage.

To the extent that the spirit of modern sports is ever more instrumentally-rational, then, it is akin to the spirit of modern capitalism that Weber lamented. The ethos of modern sports, like modern capitalism itself, is the *secular* legacy of the Protestant ethic (Overman 1997).

Once sport loses its fundamentally religious character, it becomes a separate institutional sphere which can be a target of regulation by religious authorities. But as secularization proceeds, that regulation becomes less effective and hence less common. For example, citing sport as too “self-indulgent” and as an activity wherein most participants and spectators were more interested in drunkenness and sex than exercise, the Puritans banned athletic competition (Baker 2007, p. 15). Indeed, as Price (2001, p. 17) observes, “Before 1850 most Protestant groups condemned sports because sports diverted attention and consumed energy that could have been spent in the exercise of faith.” But in the 100 years that followed, there

was a sea change in that orientation. This change was driven in the United States in large part by the importance of sport in Christian colleges. With the rise of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, sport became inevitable (Putney 2001). Despite each college's early attempts to limit athletic activity, college students were hell-bent (so to speak) to use sport to determine superiority over rival schools. In the South, sporting events such as horse racing and cockfighting became popular social events. The farther south and west one went, the more lewd drunkenness would increase; in the mountains, no-holds-barred fighting was the sport of choice, and plenty of alcohol was present to entertain the crowds (Baker 2007).

In the end, secularization as institutional differentiation changes the overall relationship between sport and religion as social institutions in a way that diminishes the constitutionally religious nature of sport. As Price (2001) puts it, Sabbath prohibitions have given way to "Super Sunday" celebrations. An oft-cited line by sports commentator Frank Deford (1976) makes the same point well: "Sport owns Sunday now, and religion is content to lease a few minutes before the big games."

Organizations Engaging Sport in the Service of Religion

Contemporary critics of secularization theory, however, taught us that the more open environment created by the differentiation of religion from other social institutions provides a fertile soil in which religious organizations can more freely compete for attention and adherents (Stark and Finke 2000; Warner 1993; Yamane 2005). As this section demonstrates, various religious groups have attempted to create connections between sports participation and religion, articulating "muscular" versions of their theologies and organizing sports-based ministries to promote them. Evangelical Christians (in America in particular) have been very adept at using sports organizations to advance religious ends, from the YMCA of yesterday to the sports ministries of today. At the same time, the present reality is that

religious organizations seeking to engage the world of sports rarely challenge its fundamentally secular structure and purpose. The organizational pattern, therefore, is one of engagement through accommodation.

Varieties of Muscular Religion

The idea of "muscular Christianity," a Christian commitment to health and "manliness," can be found in sections of the New Testament, but the term was not coined until the mid-1800s. Indeed, many Puritans were suspicious of sport for moral reasons. Like dancing, playing games was considered sinful – as an idle waste of time that could be better spent working or worshipping. Eventually, even these Protestant sects came to embrace sport, in part through the ideology of muscular Christianity. Religious leaders who supported connecting religion and sport promoted the idea of the body as a temple as part of a framework in which the combination of a sound mind and body became essential in worship. The term "muscular Christianity" was coined by the press to describe the work of authors Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes. Their "adventure novels replete with high principles and manly Christian heroes" sparked a discovery of the social benefits of athleticism, and "chief among these was its ability to ameliorate English class differences" (Putney 2001, pp. 12–13). Muscular Christianity placed an emphasis on fellowship, honor, and service while teaching "English boys that one can be the best looking, best playing, and most popular, and still be humble" (William McKeever, quoted in Putney 2001, p. 15). Its main focus was to address the concerns of boys directly, not abstractly, so that they could apply religion to their lives. The idea did not catch on quickly in America, but over time it has become one of the most notable tools employed in Evangelical Protestant outreach ministries.

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was started in England with strict religious ideals. Appalled at city lifestyles, George Williams created the YMCA as a place where men could fellowship together. The YMCA's ini-

tial activities in England were Bible studies, Christian readings, and prayer; all amusements were prohibited. The YMCA was designed to educate and promote Christian responsibilities in a world of temptation and self-indulgence (Baker 2007, p. 47). Card playing, billiards, secular reading, and physical activity were forbidden by early English leaders, only to become a vital part of the American YMCAs.

In 1851, under the leadership of Captain Thomas Sullivan and the Reverend Lyman Beecher, Boston became the first city in the United States to open a YMCA. The Boston Association modeled its facilities after those of its English counterparts and emphasized the library and reading rooms where Bible classes could be held (Putney 2001, p. 65). By 1856, there were over 50 YMCAs in the United States, from Georgia to California (Baker 2007, p. 48). In time, U.S. YMCAs began recruiting young men from all walks of life and employing a more secular approach than that of their English counterparts. Cards, secular novels, and athletic competition began to bring young men into the building, where leaders could preach the Word. Whereas English YMCAs acted as safe havens for Christian young men, American YMCAs used popular activities to recruit and convert non-Christians. In 1860, the annual convention of the U.S. YMCA decided that gymnasiums should be built at all YMCA locations, and by 1890 more than half of the 400 YMCAs in the United States had on-site gyms (Baker 2007, p. 50), which were soon followed by bowling alleys, boxing rings, and swimming pools. Through use of these facilities, as well as camping trips and baseball leagues, the YMCA used sport and teamwork to expose young men to muscular Christianity and lead men to Christ.

It is difficult to underestimate the contribution to modern sport made by individuals associated with the YMCA. The term *bodybuilding* was first used in 1881 by Robert Roberts, a devout Baptist and gymnasium superintendent at the Boston YMCA, and William Morgan invented volleyball while serving as an instructor at the Holyoke, Massachusetts YMCA in 1895 (Young Men's Christian Association 2016). But the YMCA's

greatest contribution to sport came from James Naismith, a Presbyterian seminary graduate who was in residence at the YMCA Training School in Springfield, Massachusetts, when he developed the modern game of basketball in 1891 (Baker 2007, p. 61). The sport's popularity grew exponentially over the years, and it has become the most popular organized YMCA sport. It has also become one of the leading evangelical tools for other Christian organizations such as Athletes in Action.

Sport remains integral to YMCA programming today; the "Y" sponsors leagues for baseball, soccer, tennis, football, basketball, volleyball, and gymnastics. The prevalence of these secular activities marks a dramatic change in the means employed by YMCAs today as compared with those at the time of their founding. But what of the ends? Although the mission of the YMCA remains "to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all," there is little organized effort at the Y to proselytize today. According to Baker (2007, p. 55), "in 1888, most YMCA men agreed with Luther Gulick, who reminded them that the gymnasium should always be a means to the end 'of leading men to Christ.'" More than 100 years later, that end has long been lost at the YMCA as the organization has internally secularized.

Although muscular Protestant Christianity gets the lion's share of attention, there is evidence of similar connections between religion, sport, and masculine identity in other religious traditions. In a study of the sports rivalries between students at the Catholic Downside School and the Protestant Sherborne School in England, Chandler (2002) observed a distinctively Catholic form of muscular Christianity, which contrasts with the more familiar Protestant form. In both cases, the idea and practice of "becoming a man" is central to the purpose of sport participation, but the specific details of manliness vary between the religious traditions. The Protestant form of muscular Christianity placed heavy emphasis on character-building through control, temperance, and purity of the body. By contrast, the "Catholic way of playing," according to Chandler (2002,

p. 107), emphasized “the ‘fearsome’ and ‘fearless’ disciplining of the body and engendering of masculinity, suggestive of sacrifice, even transcendence.” Thus, sport served religion in inculcating particular Catholic (and masculine) identities among the participants, and religion also served sport in terms of motivating the players, becoming “a psychological ‘weapon’ for Catholic schools on the playing field” (Chandler 2002, p. 102). In short, the Catholic athlete *stands up* for his religion while athletics for the Protestant *stands in* for religion (Chandler 2002, p. 110).

The concept of a “muscular Islam” was advanced as early as the mid-1990s by Nauright (1997) in a study of rugby in South Africa. “Coloured” Muslim rugby players in Cape Town from the 1930s to the 1970s used the game as a symbolic opposition to the apartheid system. More recently, Farooq (2011) has examined the complex relationship between Islam, sport, and masculinity among Pakistani Muslims youth at an all-male Islamic school in England, Dar-ul-Islam. School sports, especially football (soccer), “provided strategic sites in, and through, which young males could embody ‘idealised’ Muslim masculinities and engender broader religious ideals” (Farooq 2011, p. 145; also Farooq and Parker 2009). The opportunity to develop a religious identity that sport participation afforded these young British Muslims was particularly important given the hostility toward Islam felt by many in “the West.” In her study, Farooq observes subtle differences in the way sports was put into the service of Islamic religion. For some, similar to the way that Protestant muscular Christianity stands in for religion, football was “valued as a heuristic tool through which they could engender idealized Islamic etiquette (discipline, self-control, rationality, and so on)” (Farooq 2011, p. 158). For others, similar to the way that Catholic muscular Christianity stands up for religion, football provided a social space within which they could embrace their religious identity and resist negative discourses of “Islamic peril.”

As already suggested by the location of muscular Protestant Christianity in the YMCA, and other forms of muscular religion in schools, these theologies connecting religion and sports are not

free floating. Indeed, conscious efforts have been made by religious people for some time to use sports-based ministries to foster new and ongoing conversion to the faith. A dominant form of this can again be seen in American evangelical Protestant Christianity, though as we will see, sports-based ministries are by no means limited to it.

Sports-Based Ministries

According to Willis and Wettan (1977, p. 193), by the 1920s in the United States “sport was not only accepted ... but enthusiastically supported as a modality for teaching moral behavior as well as a means whereby potential converts could be attracted to the church.” As the YMCA decreased its emphasis on sport as a method of bringing young men to Christ, therefore, other organizations arose to fill the void. Professional athletes began openly sharing their testimonies, a practice that opened the door for many prominent religious leaders to use famous athletes in their efforts to attract young people to meetings. The first of several evangelical sports organizations, Sports Ambassadors (SA), was established in 1952. SA took the use of athletes as spokespersons for Christ to the next level by organizing exhibition games in order to draw large crowds; during half-time, players would share their personal testimonies (Ladd and Mathisen 1999, 129).

As the popularity of sports grew on college campuses, so did the opportunities for ministry. The oldest of these is the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), which opened its doors in November 1954 in Norman, Oklahoma (Ladd and Mathisen 1999, p. 130). FCA was founded as a student-athlete Christian ministry and grew into an organization of summer camps and retreats designed to promote Christian ideals among high school and collegiate athletes. In one accounting, FCA sponsored events on 6272 junior high, high school, and college campuses, reaching than 313,000 students in 2010 (Dzikus et al. 2012, p. 271).

Similarly, Campus Crusade founder Bill Bright envisioned a more evangelical Christian

ministry that he hoped would travel the world and preach the Gospel through sport. Campus Crusades' mission of fielding teams to preach the gospel around the world became the focal point of their offspring group, Athletes in Action (AIA), founded in 1966 and intentionally positioned to the theological "right" of FCA. Today, AIA has a presence on nearly 100 U.S. college campuses and 35 professional sports teams. It fields summer teams in baseball, basketball, soccer, tennis, volleyball, wrestling, track and field, power lifting, and sports medicine to promote the Christian message and personal testimonies of Christian athletes all around the world.

A similar pattern of growth is evident in the United Kingdom. In 1975, the Christian Sportsmen's Outreach was founded and initial efforts were focused on connecting with professional athletes. The organization was renamed Christians in Sport in 1980 and shortly thereafter a salaried director was appointed and an office established. Three decades later, Christians in Sport continues to offer traditional outreach programs like youth sports camps. But it is also involved in connecting British churches to the 2015 Rugby World Cup, and provides an opportunity to tennis players across the country to call a special phone number and participate in a group prayer once a month. Of course, Christians in Sport is just one of what Parker and Weir (2012, p. 260) estimate to be 35 different Christian sports ministries in the U.K. These range from outreach ministries like Christian Surfers UK and Logos Golf Ministries, to Christian coaching ministries such as Ambassadors in Sport and Sports Pursuits, to Sports Chaplaincy UK. Many of these sports ministries, like Ambassadors in Sport and Verite Sport, are also active in the developing world.

Although these national and international paradenominational organizations are most visible, many sports ministries are more locally-organized. For example, Hoops4Him is a youth basketball league in Winston-Salem, North Carolina in which various local churches field teams. According to its website, the league exists "to provide an opportunity for students in the ... community to connect with a local church and to

grow in their physical, mental, and spiritual maturity" and "to glorify and exalt Jesus Christ in everything that we do and to encourage each other with the love of Christ" (Hoops4Him 2015). Whether Hoops4Him succeeds in realizing its aspirations is unknown, and few scholars have empirically assessed the extent to which religiously-based sports leagues do so. One exception is Dunn and Stevenson's (1998) study of a church-sponsored recreational hockey league in Canada which found that there was some success in realizing Christian values through rules prohibiting fighting or swearing on ice, beer in the locker room, and keeping overall league standings.

Sports-based ministries also exist as part of congregational life, both as ways of getting kids involved in productive activities and keeping them out of trouble and as vehicles for recruitment and retention of members of all ages. In "new paradigm" and "seeker-sensitive" churches, notably the megachurch variety, outreach strategies often include sports alongside other forms of entertainment. Softball leagues and handball tournaments exist alongside movie nights, marriage renewal weekends, and family camping retreats. Saddleback Community Church, the Southern California megachurch founded by Rick Warren, offers an extensive sports program, including: "hiking, motorcycle ministry, racquetball, weekend mixed golf, family sports, sailing, water sports (water-skiing, white-water rafting, scuba-diving, kayaking, surfing), fishing, running, bowling, winter sports, basketball, softball, and cycling" (Parker and Weir 2012, p. 259). These are sometimes called the "side doors" of recruitment by church-growth consultants, since they are ways of attracting people to the church other than the historically preferred "front door": the Sunday morning church service.

Stories abound, but a 2005 *New York Times Magazine* cover story on Radiant Church in the Phoenix exurb of Surprise, Arizona remains most telling even a decade later (Mahler 2005). Although it was not founded until 1997, in less than 10 years the church had grown to 5000 weekly attendees in a new 55,000 square foot church with five 50-inch plasma screen TVs, a

bookstore, café (including drive-through), Xboxes for the kids, and Krispy Kreme doughnuts at every service (the doughnut budget at the time was \$16,000 per year). Writer Jonathan Mahler profiled Brett Bergstrom and his wife Cristina, who were among the subset of congregants who were very connected to the church.

Brett's first encounter with the power of fellowship at Radiant came a few years ago on the church's basketball court. He and Cristina had just been to Sunday services at Radiant for the first time – their 9-year-old son had been going on Saturday nights with a friend for months – and Brett, who played basketball in college, noticed that the church held pickup games on Tuesday nights. Brett came back a couple of days later to play and blew out his Achilles' tendon. His 6-foot-7-inch, 280-pound frame toppled like a redwood. "One of the guys I was playing with asked me if I was a Christian," he told me one afternoon in the hot-tub dealership he owns and operates in Surprise. "When I said yes, they all got down on the floor and prayed with me until the ambulance came."

That those playing alongside him did not assume Brett was a Christian is suggestive of the "side door" nature of the pick-up basketball games at Radiant.

Of course, sports-based ministries are not fully owned-and-operated subsidiaries of Protestant Christianity. As a response to its status as an embattled religious minority in the United States, with a distinctive theological outlook, the Roman Catholic Church created any number of separate institutional structures to shelter and promote the faith and the faithful (Jenkins 2003). Like evangelical Protestants, Roman Catholics have also developed specific institutions that are meant to foster the connection between religion and sport. The Catholic Youth Organization is historically the largest and most significant (Byrne 2003). More recently, just prior to his death, Pope John Paul II called for Catholics to evangelize the world of sports and formed The Vatican's Office of Church and Sport to support this endeavor (Glatz 2004). Catholic Athletes for Christ (CAC) was founded as a response to Pope John Paul II's call, and is a clear analog to the evangelical Protestant Athletes in Action. According to its mission statement, CAC "serves Catholic athletes in the practice of their faith and

shares the Gospel in and through sports" (Catholic Athletes for Christ n.d.). Its summer 2015 e-newsletter, "Cathlete News," highlighted a Catholic Baseball Camp for boys and girls that included Mass and discussions of faith in addition to baseball instruction, as well as noting that Major League Baseball's Miami Marlins and Houston Astros became the 23rd and 24th teams (out of 30 total) to allow regularly scheduled Catholic Masses at their stadiums for players, coaches, and team officials.

Much less has been written about Buddhism and modern sport, perhaps because of interpretations of Buddhism as being passive and otherworldly (or at least moreso than other world religions). An exception is Yu's (2011) analysis of Fo Guang Shan, a Buddhist new religious movement headquartered in Taiwan and boasting Taiwan's largest monastery. The movement was founded by Master Shi Hsing Yun in 1967 as a form of "Humanistic Buddhism," with a particular emphasis on engagement with rather than detachment from daily life. According to Yu (2011, p. 30), Master Yun took up playing basketball while a monk in China, and through his love of the game decided to "promote the religion through basketball." When he founded his monastery in Taiwan, he included basketball courts and monks could frequently be seen playing in their robes. Yun later articulated a "Philosophy of Basketball Buddhism" which connected the practice of playing to various aspects of the Dharma including charity, control, improvement, and sagacity. His basic idea was that sporting activities could be as much a form of Buddhist practice as static meditation. From basketball, the Fo Guang Shan movement expanded to other sports including soccer and gymnastics, as well as founding the Three Good Sports Association in 2009, which aims "to promote nationwide sports competitions and purify the social climate, thus attracting youth to learn more about Buddhism via a variety of sports events" (Yu 2011, p. 36). Yu's case study of Fo Guang Shan is in many ways a study of Master Hsin Yun's appropriation of techniques for using sport to promote religion that were pioneered and perfected by evangelical Protestant sports ministries in the West.

As sociologist of religion Mark Chaves notes in the aforementioned *Golf Digest* magazine article, the visible religion in golf, as in American sport generally, is distinctively evangelical Protestant. Through their fellowship with one another and a strong theology rooted in muscular Christianity, evangelical Protestant golfers maintain a strong plausibility structure which supports them in their public expression of their faith. As Mathisen (2006, p. 299) observes, the founding of Sports Ambassadors meant that “an entirely new genre of religious organizational forms was created, with sport occupying an essential presence.” SA, FCA, and AIA are the “Big 3” Protestant sports ministries, but they are by no means alone. For example, Christianity on the various professional golf tours is supported not only by FCA Golf (fcagolf.org), but also the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour Christian Fellowship and the PGA Tour Players’ Bible Study. Attendance at “PGA tour chaplain” Larry Moody’s Wednesday night traveling fellowship ranges from a dozen to over 100, depending on the tournament (Roberts and Yamane 2016, pp. 385–86).

Unlike in the formative years of the YMCA, which used religion to legitimize sport, the roles are now reversed: these organizations use sport to legitimize religion. This suggests the increasing social significance of sport and the decreasing social significance of religion. These Christian sports ministries do not generally attempt to reform sport; rather, they work within the existing framework of the meaning, purpose, and organization of modern sport. They accommodate themselves to this secular reality. This process exemplifies what I have elsewhere called the “double movement of secularization”: Institutional secularization allows for the proliferation of religious activity at the organizational-level, but those religious organizations that seek to engage other social spheres must do so on the other spheres’ terms (Yamane 2005; Yamane et al. 2010).

As just highlighted at the organizational-level, the institutional differentiation of religion from sport does not mean that religion ceases to exist or to be relevant in sports. The same is true at the

individual-level. Macro-level social changes create a particular social environment within which individuals negotiate their involvement in both religion and sport. As the next section highlights, in some cases individuals make connections between these two spheres and in some cases they experience conflict between them.

Religion and Sport in Individual’s Lives: Connections and Conflicts

In modern society, religion as an integrative force and source of collective identity has given way to a more individualized approach to faith centered on personal autonomy, resulting in “both an enlarged arena of voluntary choice and an enhanced freedom from structural restraint” (Hammond 1992, pp. 10–11). According to Bellah (1964, p. 371), religious life in earlier times was a “one possibility thing”; in modern society, it becomes an “infinite possibility thing.” This description of the move from religious identities being “ascribed” to their being “achieved” reflects developments taking place in modern society generally. Not only is religious identity increasingly chosen, but so are family, ethnic, and other identities. According to Giddens, individuals have relatively clearly defined roles in societies based on tradition, but individuals have to establish their roles for themselves in societies in which modernity has taken root. “Modernity,” Giddens (1991, p. 20) writes, “is essentially a post-traditional order. The transformation of time and space, coupled with the disembedding mechanisms, propel social life away from the hold of preestablished precepts or practices.” Modernity creates a situation of unprecedented choice. Indeed, according to Peter Berger (1980, p. 14), because “modernity pluralizes,” it also universalizes *heresy*, or choice. He notes that the word *heresy* “comes from the Greek verb *hairein*, which means ‘to choose.’ A *haireisis* originally meant, quite simply, the taking of a choice” (Berger 1980, pp. 24–25). Therefore, Berger (1980, p. 25) concludes, “Modernity creates a new situation in which picking and choosing becomes an imperative” – a heretical imperative.

This is quite different than simplistic readings of secularization which equate it with the decline and/or disappearance of religion (Yamane 1997). Indeed, many scholars are turning away from the idea that “acids of modernity” dissolve religion, toward a view that there are “multiple modernities” with differing implications for religion, both between and within societies. Among sociologists of religion, Smith (2008, p. 1571) has articulated this view most clearly: “The essential idea behind the multiple modernities thesis is that ‘modernity’ and its features and forces can actually be received, developed, and expressed in significantly different ways ... by different communities living in single societies.” This suggests that, even in the absence of an institutional connection between religion and sport, there may be specific subgroups in society that do help individuals integrate religion and sport in their lives.

Smith’s subcultural identity theory helps predict the groups for whom a connection may be cultivated. This theory suggests that religion “survives and can thrive in pluralistic, modern society by embedding itself in subcultures that offer satisfying morally orienting collective identities which provide adherents with meaning and belonging” (Smith 1998, p. 118). Therefore, under certain circumstances, some religious groups can construct “*sacred umbrellas*” to shield members from the forces of secularization and promote religiosity. “In the pluralistic, modern world, people don’t need macro-encompassing sacred cosmoses to maintain their religious beliefs. They only need ‘sacred umbrellas,’ small, portable, accessible relational worlds – religious reference groups – ‘under’ which their beliefs can make complete sense” (Smith 1998, p. 106). In a world of choice, for some people it makes sense to choose traditional religion.

In a secularized society, therefore, people can choose *whether* to be religious and, if so, *how* they are religious. In sports, they can choose to make religion part of their identity as an athlete, or to make athletics part of their religious identity – or not. As the examples that opened this chapter suggest, many individuals do make visible their choices to connect religion and sport. Unfortunately, in both the sociology of religion

and the sociology of sport, efforts to systematize this relationship have lagged behind its visibility. Without question, there are a number of parallels between religion and sport at the individual level. Both evoke emotions and inculcate values. And we can easily find times and places in which individuals *use* religion in sport. For example, Coakley (2015) notes that religion can help athletes cope with uncertainty and give meaning to their activities or put them in perspective. But as the previous sections have suggested, we should be mindful of the ways in which sport can act as a secular competitor to religion. In this section, I consider both the connections and conflicts between religion and sport in individual’s lives.

Some who seek to understand the connection between religion and sports focus on the ameliorative or supportive role religion plays in the lives of athletes. For example, some studies suggest that it is common for athletes to seek comfort in a supreme being when facing challenges presented to them by their sport, especially injury (Hoffman 1992; Storch and Farber 2002). Religion can also be used by athletes to cope with or reduce the uncertainty inherent in sporting competition. By relating their sporting activities to their ultimate conditions of existence, athletes can also give higher meaning to competition or reduce the significance of sporting outcomes by seeing them in a broader context (Coakley 2015). Unfortunately, there is a scarcity of good data to use in systematically investigating the connection between religion and sport in the lives of individuals. Some smaller-scale studies suggest a link. For example, Storch and his colleagues (2004) compared 57 intercollegiate athletes and 169 non-athlete undergraduates at the University of Florida and found that athletes had higher levels of conventional religious faith.

But how generalizable are the findings of Storch and his colleagues? With data from UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute, I examined the religiosity of college athletes on a broader scale. Using multiple regression models that control for several other variables, I found that college athletes are *less* religious than college students in general (Yamane and Blake 2014). Some suggest that there is a value conflict

between sport and religion that could lead to these lower levels of religiosity. The parallels between “the Protestant ethic” and the ethos of modern sports notwithstanding (Overman 2011), there are also important differences between traditional religious values and the values of modern sports. As Hoffman (2010) has observed, the religious emphasis on humility, cooperation, and concern for the other is quite in conflict with the frequent emphasis in sports on self-aggrandizement, winning, and individual records. This is increasingly true even in team sports as media cover sports ever more extensively and intensively. Especially where “big time” college athletics are concerned, Adler and Adler (1991) have documented the development of what they call a “gloried self” among athletes, which is a far cry from the ascetic self-denial that characterized the early Protestant ethic. So too is the reality that a culture of random sexual “hook ups,” drinking, and partying exists strongly in the athlete subculture at many universities (Cherry et al. 2001, p. 29). Thus, although modern values like those of sports may have their roots in religious values, once established they come to exist independently, and once independent they can often turn against the values from which they grew, as we observed already in our discussion of Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic*.

Another argument for a conflict between religion and sport looks not to values but sees sport as a *secular competitor* to religion for people’s time and attention. Religion and sport, in this view, are part of a zero-sum game, since both require investments of time and energy. Indeed, the most visible manifestations of religion in sport – wearing religious symbols or making religious gestures – require no real religious commitment by the individuals in question. Generally, when push comes to shove for college athletes, sport wins out over religion. In their study of American teenagers, Smith and Denton (2005, p. 130) found that religion was not part of the structure of most U.S. adolescents’ daily lives, the bulk of which is given over to school, homework, clubs, friends, and sports. This is particularly true of athletes at higher levels of competition. Pilot interviews I conducted with

student-athletes at an NCAA Division I university suggested that a common point at which they became disengaged with religion was during middle or high school when their athletic competitions required them to travel and compete on weekends. When these student-athletes arrived at college, they found the required level of commitment to sport was even greater. Because athletes spend hours at practice, conditioning, traveling to games, and studying, they do not have free time to dedicate to religion (Cherry et al. 2001). For college athletes, sport is more akin to work than leisure, and therefore along with their classes it is part of their “mandatory” world. In contrast, religion is seen as “voluntary” – something that must be chosen, as Berger tells us; hence, it becomes optional – something that is often not chosen.

Although my analysis of athletes at U.S. colleges and universities finds them generally to be less religious than their fellow college students, one important exception emerges. Evangelical Protestant athletes are *more* religious than college students in general. This is not surprising given the preceding discussion of muscular Christianity in the United States, as well as the popularity of groups such as AIA and FCA on college campuses (Cherry et al. 2001, p. 27; Dzikus et al. 2012). The theology of muscular Christianity allows evangelical Protestants to sacralize sporting activities and also provides a framework that allows athletes to negotiate conflicts between sport and their religious beliefs (Coakley 2015, pp. 523–24). This theology gets activated by AIA and FCA ministers and groups that provide strong systems of social support for belief and practice – “plausibility structures” (Berger 1967) or “sacred umbrellas” (Smith 1998) – that are key to sustaining religiosity.

Of course, more systematic studies on more general populations are necessary in order to draw conclusions with certainty. For now, I would provisionally say that religion and sport in the lives of individuals are separate spheres of existence that connect at some times and for some people. But there appears to be no inherent connection between them today. The lack of a uniform relationship between religion and sport, however, allows us to think more broadly about

other ways in which religion and sport come together in contemporary society.

Sport as Religion? Contemporary Explorations

When people say “football (soccer) is the world’s religion” or “hockey is religion” in Canada or “college football is religion” in the southern United States, they do not usually mean so literally. Although the concept of “quasi-religion” seems to have fallen by the wayside in the social scientific study of religion, we can retain a sense of the concept if we think of ways that sports are *like* religion, even if they are not religion per se (Coakley 2015, p. 511). For example, the pioneering sociologist of sport, Harry Edwards, identified 13 ways that sport is like religion, including:

- “Sports also has its ‘saints’ – those departed souls who in their lives exemplified and made manifest the prescription of the dogma of the sport;”
- “Sport also has its ruling patriarchs, a prestigious group of coaches, managers, and sportsmen who exercise controlling influence over national sports organizations;”
- “Sport has its ‘gods’ – star and superstar athletes who, though powerless to alter their own situations, wield great influence and charisma over the masses of fans;”
- “Sport has its high councils, controlled or greatly influenced by patriarchs who make and interpret the rules of sports involvement;”
- “Sport has its scribes – the hundreds of sports reports, sports telecasters, and sports broadcasters whose primary duties are to record the ongoing history of sports and to disseminate its dogma;”
- “Sport has its ‘symbols of faith’ – trophies; game balls, the bats, gloves, baseballs, and so forth that ‘won’ this or that game; the clothing, shoes, headgear or socks of immortal personages of sports;”

- “Sport has its ‘seekers of the kingdom’ its true believers, devotees, and converts” (quoted in Higgs 1995, p. 18)

Although interesting, this analogical thinking about parallels between sport and religion does not constitute an analytical approach. Here I review two more developed theoretical approaches to understanding sport as religion: civil religion and sports fandom.

Civil Religion

Civil religion refers to the cultural beliefs, practices, and symbols that relate a nation to the ultimate conditions of its existence (Yamane 2006). The idea of civil religion can be traced to the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s ([1762] 1968) *The Social Contract*. Writing in the wake of the Protestant–Catholic religious wars, Rousseau maintained the need for “social sentiments,” outside of organized religion, “without which a man cannot be a good citizen or faithful subject.” The broader question motivating Rousseau concerned political legitimation without religious establishment. Emile Durkheim’s ([1912] 1995) work in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* was clearly influenced by his countryman’s concern for shared symbols and the obligations they articulate. Recognizing that “the former gods are growing old or dying,” Durkheim sought a more modern basis for the renewal of the collective sentiments that societies need if they are to stay together. He found that basis in the “hours of creative effervescence during which new ideals will once again spring forth and new formulas emerge to guide humanity for a time” (Durkheim [1912] 1995, p. 429). Civil religious ideals arise from national civil religious rituals.

Bellah’s (1967) essay, “Civil Religion in America,” brought the concept into contemporary sociology. Like Rousseau and Durkheim, Bellah sees legitimation as a problem faced by every nation, and he sees civil religion as one solution, under the right social conditions. Bellah

(1980) argues that in premodern societies the solution consisted either in a fusion of the religious and political realms (in the archaic period) or in a differentiation but not separation (in the historic and early modern periods). Civil religion proper comes into existence only in the modern period, when church and state are separated as well as structurally differentiated. That is, a civil religion that is differentiated from both church and state is possible only in a modern society.

Sport is often looked to as a sort of civil religion that can be used to legitimate the state and to create social solidarity. Whether it does so well is another issue. Although the United States hockey team's defeat of the Soviet team at the 1980 Winter Olympics was a moment of national effervescence that attached itself to the flag in an instance of national legitimation, such moments are few and far between (but see Butterworth 2008). Indeed, sport is more apt to create solidarity *within* groups than *across* groups in a society. For example, sport in Northern Ireland is religiously divided – e.g., the Gaelic Athletic Association promotes Catholic and Irish identity and Catholic professional soccer clubs are largely excluded from the Northern Irish League – and hence “has served as an instrument of religious difference, which has dissociated itself from its integrative possibilities, and thereby has ultimately become another religious battleground” (Cronin 2002, p. 9). Another example comes from the United States. According to St. John's (2005) account in *Rammer Jammer Yellow Hammer*, University of Alabama football is a religion among its fans (Mathisen 2006). But this fact creates divisive in-group-versus-out-group dynamics, as between University of Alabama fans and Auburn University fans. So, while sport may have the potential to create group solidarity, it does not generally serve the function of creating social solidarity writ large.

Although many examine the civil religious dimension of sport, then, it does not, according to any strict definition, appear to play this role in modern society. As Mathisen (2006, p. 291) puts it, “sport is also something like a civil religion, but not quite.” Even though it does not exemplify civil religion, the case of Alabama football does

raise another possibility which has been considered by sociologists of religion and sport. The group identification and in-group solidarity created by sports has led some to examine sports fandom as a religious phenomenon.

Sports Fandom as a Religious Phenomenon

The birth of secularization theory in Western Europe and its historical emphasis on the institutional and organizational levels of analysis – particularly as studied through traditional religious organizations (confessions, denominations, congregations) – produces many theoretical blind spots (Warner 1993). In particular, an overly organizational conception of religion runs the risk of overlooking newer forms of religiosity that are not centered on traditional religious groups and organizations. Luckmann (1967), for example, argued that as society has become increasingly complex, and as institutions have specialized their sphere of influence, traditional religions influence a decreasing range of human behavior and thinking. But the problems of meaning and belonging which were historically addressed by traditional religions remain; they are simply addressed in other ways. One way the problems of meaning and belonging may be addressed in modern societies is through fandoms of various sorts which promote the kind of self-transcendence that Luckmann saw as essential to religion. Jindra (1994), for example, highlights how fans of the television show “Star Trek” form a community of believers that sacralizes their experiences and opposes them to the “mundane” (non-Star Trek) world. Along these same lines, a few scholars have compared sports fandom to religion (Faulkner 2001).

Durkheim's ([1912] 1995) *Elementary Forms* is most commonly referenced when looking at sports fandom. In analyzing the totemic religion of the Australian Aborigines, Durkheim observes that it centers on veneration of sacred objects (totems). A group's totem is usually an animal or plant that represents the clan, and the totems appear in artwork, carvings, body paint, and

tattoos. Totems become sacred through a process based in the social reality that aboriginal life alternates between “two different phases”: the normal, “monotonous” reality of everyday work life and the heightened reality created when the population comes together in celebration (Durkheim [1912] 1995, pp. 216–17). “The very act of congregating,” Durkheim ([1912] 1995), pp. 217–18) explains, “is an exceptionally powerful stimulant.

Once the individuals are gathered together, a sort of electricity is generated from their closeness and quickly launches them to an extraordinary height of exaltation. Every emotion expressed resonates without interference in consciousnesses that are wide open to external impressions, each one echoing the others. The initial impulse is thereby amplified each time it is echoed, like an avalanche that grows as it goes along. And since passions so heated and so free from all control cannot help but spill over, from every side there are nothing but wild movements, shouts, downright howls, and deafening noises of all kinds that further intensify the state they are expressing.

This experience of “effervescence” gives a sense of sacredness to the totem and reinforces the participants’ connection to the totem and to one another.

In “The Elementary Forms of Sports Fandom,” Serazio (2013) applies this Durkheimian perspective to fans of professional baseball’s Philadelphia Phillies. In this case, the Phillies are a totem representing, in the first place, the residents of the city of Philadelphia. Symbols representing the totem, as Durkheim would expect, appear on murals and billboards, coffee mugs and key chains, clothing and bodies. They promote identity and belonging for the fans through identification with the totem (i.e., the team). The sacredness of the totem and the fans’ attachment to it are particularly high in moments of “collective effervescence,” like when the Phillies won the 2008 World Series. Smaller moments of effervescence are also evident throughout the season when fans gather at the stadium or local bars to watch games or otherwise participate in fan rituals. Serazio (2013, p. 318) concludes by suggesting that parallels to what he observed

with Phillies fandom are likely to be seen also among supporters of the New Zealand All Blacks rugby team, the Montreal Canadiens hockey team, or the soccer club Real Madrid.

Of course, the analysis of sports fandom as a religious phenomenon is not limited to hugely popular or successful franchises. Uszynski (2013) examines sports fandom as “neo-religious behavior within modern society” in a case study of Cleveland (Ohio) professional sports fans, including both interviews and ethnographic observation at a well-known Cleveland sports bar called Parkview NiteClub. Cleveland sports fans do not only see themselves as consuming sports as entertainment, but as forming a sense of self-understanding through identification with something bigger than themselves – a good example of the self-transcendence of which Luckmann (1967) wrote.

In an analysis of fans of the National Football League’s Pittsburgh Steelers, Cottingham (2012) extends the Durkheimian study of fandom by applying Randall Collins’s interaction ritual theory to understand in particular the role of emotions in creating fan solidarity. Collins (2004, pp. 58–59) himself saw sports fandom as “non-serious,” “situationally specific,” and “contrived” and hence not a location for generating strong community or social solidarity. Cottingham challenges Collins in her study, using Collins’ theory against him. Although she agrees that levels of emotion and solidarity vary between the stadium, tailgating, sports bars, and living rooms, she maintains that across these situations “fans congregate and draw emotional energy from symbols and rituals outside of the peak emotional experience of a game and in situations that are not specific to football or sports” (Cottingham 2012, p. 182).

Lest we falsely conclude that the religiousness of sports fandom is a strictly North American phenomenon, Antonowicz and Wrzesinski (2009) have studied the same with respect to fans of sports clubs in Poland. Writing in the U.K., Jones (2015) highlights the importance of “fannish tattooing” from a Durkheimian perspective. In *The Elementary Forms*, Durkheim ([1912] 1995), p. 234) observed, “Tattooing is the most direct

and expressive means by which the communion of minds can be affirmed.

The best way of testifying to oneself and others that one is part of the same group is to place the same distinctive mark on the body. Proof that such is indeed the *raison d'être* of the totemic image ... The purpose of the image is not to represent or evoke a particular object but to testify that a certain number of individuals share the same moral life.

According to Jones (2015), “Fannish tattoos help to construct a sacred fan identity. The sacred experience (as theorized by Émile Durkheim and his concept of the totem) is imbued with meaning through choices that set it aside from the mundane. Within the context of fannish tattoos, fan affect gains similar significance.” Getting a tattoo of the mascot or symbol of one’s favorite team is an obvious example, but Jones also gives the example of Brazilian soccer fans getting the same tattoos as their favorite players.

Adopting Durkheim’s and Luckmann’s functional understanding of religion allows us to cast a much wider net as we try to capture not just religion with a capital “R” but also all those groups and organizations, beliefs and practices that are like religion in the sense that they do for individuals what religion has often done in terms of providing meaning, belonging, and self-transcendence. In the final section of this chapter, I suggest some future directions for the study of religion and sport which also seek to cast a wider net than has been used in the past, especially by scholars (like myself) who work from the perspective of the secularization paradigm.

Future Directions: Decentering the Study of Religion and Sport

Religion and sport have both been marginalized in sociology, which is odd and unfortunate given the large number of people who regularly participate in religious and sporting activities. This dual marginalization perhaps helps to explain the relative inattention to the religion-sport nexus in the field. In this chapter, I have tried to suggest that examining this connection can be beneficial to both the sociology of sport and the sociology of

religion. Fortunately for interested scholars, there remains much room for growth and development. It will be particularly important as scholars consider future directions for the study of religion and sport to overcome some of the limitations of the existing research. Many of these limitations mirror those found in the sociology of religion in general.

In their programmatic critique of the sociology of religion, Bender and colleagues (2013) suggest several ways in which the field would benefit from a *de-centering* of current approaches. Based on that work, I consider various ways in which scholarship on religion and sport needs to move “beyond” some of the limitations that have characterized work in the field thus far.

1. *Beyond borders.* Bender, et al. (2013) criticize the sociology of religion in the United States for parochialism. As this chapter largely demonstrates, I am guilty as charged on this point. But scholars in every country tend to focus on phenomena within their national borders. This is true despite the common recognition of the reality of globalization and the fact that religious groups were probably the first trans-cultural or transnational institutions and religious individuals among the first migrants (see Chaps. 25, 26, and 27, by Roudometof, Offutt and Miller, and Kivisto in this volume). Nonetheless, the growing field of transnational studies highlights the flow of people, organizations, and resources across national borders. It emphasizes, for example, the ongoing connections people have with their communities of origin and how those origins continue to influence religious development in the new locale, so that it is impossible to understand what is happening religiously without having a transnational perspective (Levitt 2004). The study of both the globalization and glocalization of sport are not new (Giulianotti and Robertson 2004), but these works largely ignore religious dimensions of these processes. Future scholars must give more sustained attention to the role of sport in globalizing/glocalizing religion and of religion in globalizing/glocalizing sport.

2. *Beyond Christianity*. According to Bender, et al. (2013), too often in sociology religion means Christianity, and Christianity is equated with certain Protestant traditions. This is evident not only in the large number of studies across paradigms that focus on evangelical Protestantism in the United States, but in some cases in the very definition of religion. Without question this limitation is also evident in this chapter. Expanding the field's vision to include other world religions (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism) as well as other religious manifestations ("spiritual not religious"), challenges many of us to move beyond seeing religion as coherent systems of meaning focused on otherworldly ends. Studies of sports fandom begin to do this, but much more of this ground should be covered in the future.
3. *Beyond organizations*. Owing in part to its European and American parochialism and Christo-centrism, sociologists have been overly concerned with the formal organizational dimension of religion. Getting beyond an excessive focus on various "god boxes" allows sociologists to include more phenomena in their purview, especially ones that are not clearly marked as "religious." One future direction for this work, of course, is the study of lived religion (McGuire 2008). Lived religion, much like Luckmann's (1967) invisible religion, is a *part of* rather than *apart from* everyday life (Ammerman 2014). There is a parallel here to the study of sport, which has also focused heavily on its most organized forms. But for some, athletics itself can be a form of spiritual practice (Hoffman 1992), and their peak or flow experiences during performance (Jackson and Csikszentmihalyi 1999) may sensitize them to a spiritual dimension of life in general. Moreover, those who have studied "Eastern" religions like Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism in China highlight the myriad ways in which religious beliefs influence not organized sport per se but what Brownell (1995) calls "body culture."

This last de-centering of the study of religion and sport is certainly the most radical. Connecting

a very broad conception of what it means to be religious today – including what Hamberg (2009) has called "unchurched spirituality" – to a very broad conception of what it means to be involved in sport today – including "conceptions of the body, expressions of human movement, the integration of physical activity into everyday life, and participation in sports" (Coakley 2015:513) – requires social scientists studying religion and sport to be theoretically, methodologically, and empirically more nimble than we have been in the past.

Acknowledgments As the citations in the text suggest, this chapter is strongly informed by James A. Mathisen's chapter in Springer's 2005 *Handbook of Religion and Social Institutions* and by the chapter on religion in Jay Coakley's *Sports in Society*. I also draw frequently on a book chapter published previously with Charles Mellies and Teresa Blake ("Playing for Whom?") and my sociology of religion textbook, *Religion in Sociological Perspective*, co-authored with Keith Roberts.

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Abstract

In most contemporary societies the relationship between religion and education weighs heavily on the general relation of religion and society. Understanding the multifaceted relationship between religion and the social institution of education provides an important window on the place of religion in society. In attempting to shed light on these relationships, we consider in this review cultural conflict over educational institutions, and the influence of religion in educational attainment. We also review what is known about religious schools at the secondary and postsecondary level. The remaining sections consider the influence of education on religion, touching on issues of secularization, and reviewing cross-national studies of religion and education.

It is difficult to discuss the institutions of religion and education without considering the connection between state, religion, and family that is embedded in educational institutions. This tangled web—a meeting ground for lifeworld and system, in Habermas' (1984) terms—sets the stage for cultural conflict over and within schools. Struggles over educational institutions have in many ways defined the relationships between religious groups and U.S. public life, and each other. The orienta-

tion of mainline Protestantism to public life in the early to mid-twentieth century was reflected in their active support for a general Protestant ethos within the public schools (Handy 1967). Many conservative Protestants in the U.S. define the boundary between themselves and the broader culture through their interpretation of cultural conflict in the public schools (Sikkink and Smith 2000). In his well-known work on “culture wars,” Hunter (1991) argued that education was a crucial front in the battle between orthodox and progressive ways of knowing. Progressive views of truth, which see morality as unfolding rather than fixed, lie behind an emphasis in secular educational institutions on child-centered education. This perspective conflicts with traditional views of absolute morality (Hunter 2000; Nolan 1998).

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Historians of education have employed the cultural conflict frame to shed light on the education and religion nexus. Ravitch (1974) uncovered the central role of Catholic and Protestant conflict in the emergence of the public school sector as the sole government-funded educational institution on the primary and secondary level. The conflict shaped the relationship of Catholicism to dominant forms of American culture, contributing to nineteenth and twentieth century discrimination against Catholicism in public life. Jorgenson (1987) sees this in more stark terms, interpreting the establishment of the U.S. public school system as the imposition of Protestant cultural hegemony. Fearing immigrant pluralism and the influence of the Vatican, Protestant public schools were designed to marginalize Catholic voices in American public life (Jorgenson 1987). The common school movement pushed the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) in an isolationist direction, though the church later accommodated to some extent with the public school system (Esplin and Randall 2014).

That public schools would be a key site of cultural struggle linked to religious groups and ideologies was cemented in the expansion of public schools in the late nineteenth century, which was intimately related in the West and North to the organizational and cultural resources of evangelical Protestantism. Meyer and colleagues (1979) found evidence that the expansion of public schools depended in large part on a millennial theology of evangelical Protestantism, which included an emphasis on freedom of the individual from constraining forces of ignorance and the importance of education for achieving the good life. The progressive reforms often attributed to the influence of Dewey were also challenged by conservative activism, which tended to be rooted in conservative religion. Defending traditional Protestant beliefs, religious activists challenged the place of Darwinism, socialism, multiculturalism, and feminism in public schools and established a curriculum that inculcated love of country as well as support for traditional family and gender roles, capitalism, and the central place of religion in civic life (Laats 2015).

Ironically, cultural conflict within educational institutions was also closely connected with sec-

ularization in the U.S. through the twentieth century (Smith 2003b). The differentiation of religious and educational institutions in the U.S. was not only one of the most important social changes creating a more secular public sphere, but also played a central role in realigning the religious field toward a conservatives-liberal divide (Wuthnow 1988). It also shaped the nature and size of the religious secondary and postsecondary school sectors in the United States. Controversies over creation and evolution in public school science classes were driven in part by the development of a monopoly of scientific knowledge that placed religion and science in separate spheres (Gieryn et al. 1985). A further secularizing impetus was the shift in public schools from a Protestant ethos, which intimately linked moral development and the educational task, to a managerial organizational culture focused on efficiency and professionalism (Tyack 1974). This was no more evident than in the changes in the organization and culture of the National Education Association, which moved from strong support for public schools as nurturing moral character with the assistance of a general Protestant morality to vigorous defense of the neutral and professional character of public schools (Beyerlein 2003). Influenced by the Progressive movement, teaching practices reacted against the influence of general Protestantism (Thomas et al. 2003) and toward a therapeutic ethos dominated by frameworks from psychology (Hunter 2000).

Cultural battles within higher education that contributed to secularization in the college sector have been well charted (Burtchaell 1998; Reuben 1996). Marsden (1994) explains the movement from colleges that explicitly integrated the ethos and theology of a particular denomination to colleges and universities that embedded a general Protestant ethos, which later became superfluous to the practice of the university and was set aside in the middle of the twentieth century. In this process of differentiation between religious and higher education institutions, capitalist elites played a crucial role in providing the finances that severed the ties between sponsoring denominations and colleges and universities (Burtchaell 1998). This differentiation set the stage for insti-

tution building efforts of fundamentalists and later evangelicals to develop conservative Protestant or “Christian” colleges (Carpenter 1997).

Recent sociological work has asked whether fundamentalist and evangelical Protestant colleges would remain religiously distinctive in the face of secular models of higher education (Hunter 1987). This research provides some evidence that secularization is not an inevitable process (Smith et al. 1998). Schmalzbauer and Wheeler (1996) analyze 30 years of campus newspapers articles and other materials from six evangelical colleges to document the changing role of campus rules at these institutions. They argue that the weakening of campus rules does not necessarily lead to secularization. While the discourse resembled secular “*in loco parentis*” debates in some ways, the majority of the evidence revealed the use of religious arguments that were “grounded in the central doctrines of Reformation Protestant orthodoxy” (Schmalzbauer and Wheeler 1996, p. 241). Both secularizing and sacralizing dynamics were at work in evangelical Christian colleges in the late twentieth century. Some evidence suggests that religion in the twenty-first century remains vital on American campuses and is reemerging even in universities that are formally nonreligious (Jacobsen and Jacobsen 2012; Mayrl and Oeur 2009). The religious landscape for university students is relatively strong due to revitalization and expansion of evangelical and mainline Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish student groups and campus ministries, the growth of new immigrant and alternative religions, and the embrace of spirituality by student affairs professionals (Schmalzbauer 2013).

Religion and the Politics of Education

Nineteenth and early twentieth century conflicts over elementary and secondary schooling were shaped by religious divisions, most notably the effort of social-gospel Protestants to re-make immigrants in their own image (Glenn 1988; Reese 1982; Rippa 1988). Morality and values in

public schools remain an important part of the politics of education, and religion plays an important role in shaping this conflict (Gaddy et al. 1996; McCarthy 1996; Nord 1995; Page and Clelland 1978; Sargeant and West 1996). Conservative Protestant opposition to a “secular” public school system is believed to lie behind the growth of non-public schooling, such as Christian schools and home schooling (Apple 2000; Lines 1996).

Some have emphasized the role of conservative Protestantism in fomenting a culture war over the legitimacy of the public and secular role of public schools in our democracy (Apple 1996; Cookson 1994; Diamond 1998; Provenzo 1990; Spring 1998). The culture wars framework has been challenged (Davis and Robinson 1996; DiMaggio et al. 1996; Evans 1997; Jelen and Wilcox 1997; Williams 1997), though some conflicts over public schools may fit this framework, such as sex education (Davis and Robinson 1996). But in most of these political struggles over public schools, it is important to take a careful look at the relationship between specific religious traditions and public educational institutions to understand how religion shapes the politics of education.

Mainline Protestantism has been closely identified with the establishment of public schooling in its current form. Common notions of the public school mission, melding diversity into an American whole and preparing citizens for democracy, owes much to the mainline Protestant understanding of the relation of religion to public life. The mainline’s “quiet” approach to religion in public life is expressed in support for a school system in which schools are designed to be an expression of the collective identity of the community (Sikkink 1998a; Wuthnow and Evans 2002). Mainline religious identities avoid creating tension with the surrounding culture (Hoge et al. 1994; Smith et al. 1998; Stark and Bainbridge 1985), and are more likely to be comfortable with the value-neutrality and professionalism of today’s public schools. Catholics who attend religious services regularly also see no reason to construct a symbolic boundary between themselves and public schools. Estrangement of Catholics from the Protestant-dominated public

schools of the past seems to have disappeared among most Catholics today (Sikkink 1999), perhaps because Vatican II and Catholic social and educational mobility has changed the relationship between Catholics and American culture (Gleason 1995; Greeley 1977; see also Schwadel's chapter on "Social Class in this *Handbook*").

Some religious conservatives juxtapose family and church to the professionalized and "non-normative" culture that increasingly characterizes the public school system (Arons 1983; Meyer et al. 1994). Conservative religious traditions that construct strong symbolic boundaries with the professional and bureaucratic organization of public schools are more likely to see public schools as hostile to their moral and spiritual values (Sikkink 1999). Orientations to public schools, however, differ within the family of conservative Protestant religious traditions.

The fundamentalist Protestant religious movement arose during anti-modernist battles with liberal Protestants in the early twentieth century (Marsden 1980), which ended with fundamentalists setting up alternative institutions outside the "mainstream" (Carpenter 1997). This separatist history and the development of counter-cultural institutions lead to strong alienation from public schools and greater support for alternative schooling over public schooling among fundamentalists. Beginning in the 1940s, evangelical traditions opposed the separatist strategy of fundamentalists, and attempted to move conservative traditions into contact with the surrounding culture and society (Marsden 1987, 1991). Moreover, the post-World War II formative period for evangelical traditions was marked by a strong cultural link between nation, community, and school. With this genealogy, evangelical thought and practice emphasizes the importance of religious presence in public institutions (Glenn 1987). The evangelical sense of a custodial relationship of religion in relation to public life (Wacker 1984) creates a greater sense of obligation to public schools, despite a high degree of alienation from public schools (Sikkink 2003). Evangelicals, and especially evangelical women, tend to support public schooling over the religious alternatives (Sikkink 1999).

The charismatic movement grew in the 1960s and 1970s, emphasizing a strongly counter-cultural spiritual community of worship (Miller 1997; Neitz 1987). The movement was affected by the growing disillusionment with dominant institutions of American life, which was part of a long process that would weaken the historically tight link between community, nation, and public schools. Pentecostalism emerged during the first two decades of the twentieth century, in opposition to the rationalistic tendencies of conservative Protestant groups (Riesebrodt 1993). The lower-class, pietist origins of the pentecostal movement (Anderson 1979), as well as their emphasis on special spiritual experience, includes a strong sense of outsider status vis-à-vis the surrounding society and culture (Wacker 2001). The pentecostal and charismatic movements do not emphasize the evangelical custodial relationship between religion and public life. These traditions are less focused on a public presence for religion than on creating spiritual separation from the outside world. Sharing a similar counter-cultural bent, charismatics and pentecostals are highly alienated from and willing to abandon public schools (Sikkink 1999). These differences among conservative Protestants tend to mitigate the extent to which conservative Protestantism poses a united front in challenging public schools.

In the U.S., local and state-level public school conflicts over sex education, science curricula, and so on are often rooted in religion, and challenge the secular, professional, and bureaucratic basis of public school legitimacy (Apple and Oliver 1996; Bates 1993; Binder 2004). In some cases, these challenges are instances of the "de-privatization" of religion (Casanova 1994). These challenges from conservative religion are believed by some scholars to threaten the differentiation of religion, morality, and values in the public schools (Apple 2001; McCarthy 1996).

Among the early defining issues in the role of religion in the politics of education were school prayer, the teaching of evolution in the classroom, and textbook controversies. Conflict over school textbooks has been interpreted as an instance of the "politics of lifestyle concern" (Clelland and Page 1980; Page and Clelland

1978). Similar to Hunter's culture wars thesis, Page and Clelland rooted the conflict in differences in the normative ways of life of the traditionalist and modernist orientations. Other interpretations attempt to show the relation of religion to class conflict (Billings and Goldman 1979; Billings 1990). Sources of support for school prayer have also been linked to deeper cultural conflicts over lifestyles, rather than to conservative religious beliefs in the benefit of prayer or in a particular view of child socialization. The politics of school prayer represented a deeper conflict in which cultural fundamentalists sought to dramatize the need for a return to traditional values (Moen 1984). Later evidence showed that Americans were diverging on this issue, with conservative Protestants providing the main source of support for school prayer (Hoffmann and Miller 1997).

Evidence has shown that support for teaching creationism in the science classroom was strongly linked to biblical literalism, even while school prayer drew support from a variety of sources (Woodrum and Hoban 1992). Some have interpreted support for creationism as an expression of fundamentalist religious identities, which seeks through political action to "bring the world to God" (Apple 2001). In this view, the politics of school prayer and creationism represents the politics of authoritarian populism (Apple 1996; Provenzo 1990). While collective religious identities are important to the politics of education, these interpretations seem overly general, describing some fundamentalist leaders and groups at a particular time but not the whole of conservative Protestantism. It is not likely that school prayer or creationism provides the glue that holds together a tight-knit conservative Protestant political lobby, since only on issues of sexual morality do conservative Protestants show attitude constraint (Jelen 1990).

One of the important issues in the politics of education is school choice, and religious tradition plays a defining role in this debate (Cookson 1994; Hanus and Cookson 1996). Over time, school choice advocates who want to include religious schools in choice plans have attempted to shift the justification for school choice away

from the importance of morality to educational practice toward multiculturalism and family choice (Davies 1999). While more palatable in the current political culture, this reframing has the ironic effect of furthering the trend toward recognizing religious claims in the public sphere under the banner of individual rights.

At the individual level, religion has continued to shape commitment to the public school system in the U.S. and support for school choice. School board candidates that support school prayer, creationism in the classroom, and school vouchers are much more likely to be conservative Protestant, though this research shows the difficulty of sorting out religious from political conservatism, which is the strongest predictor of support for vouchers (Deckman 2002). Other research at the individual level shows that mainline Protestants remain among the strongest opponents of school choice, while conservative Protestants are the strongest proponents.

Conservative Protestants do not always operate as a monolithic bloc opposed to public school innovation. In the case of multiculturalism in the classroom, conservative Protestants are not more likely to oppose the teaching of respect for diverse races, religions, and cultures than are mainline Protestants. Charismatics are more supportive of diversity education than mainline Protestants. And those who see religious authority as a matter of the heart rather than as an external authority (such as the Bible or the church) support multiculturalism as a top priority for the education of children. Seeing one's faith as an expression of an authentic self creates support for multiculturalism in schools as a way in which diverse self-expressions are recognized and understood (Sikkink and Mihut 2000).

At the organizational level, Catholic schools and leaders have played a strong role in the school choice lobby (Van Vugt 1997). The commitment of Catholic schools to remain in the inner city, despite the financial difficulties and the change to a primarily non-Catholic clientele, has added a new dimension to the historic Catholic commitment to government funding of religious schools. In the Cleveland legal case in which the U.S. Supreme Court approved inclu-

sion of religious schools, 90% of students using the city voucher to attend the school of their choice were served by Catholic schools. Catholics who regularly attend services are strongly supportive of school vouchers, though this support is tempered somewhat by the traditional Catholic concern that government play an important role in achieving social equality—in this case, through the public schools. The strong defense that Catholics make for achieving public purposes through government support of faith-based institutions appears to lie behind their support for school vouchers (Sikkink 2002).

The question naturally arises, what are the religious characteristics of those who have their children in some form of alternative schooling, such as private school or homeschool? Alternative schooling choices are higher among the more highly religious, who seek value communities that are not found in many public schools. Both church-related schooling and home schooling are strongly associated with higher church attendance (Sikkink 1998b). Among church-going Protestants, the most likely candidates for alternative schooling are those identified with religious traditions that are most likely to be withdrawing into separate religious worlds: fundamentalists and charismatics.

The attraction of fundamentalists and charismatics to alternative schooling arrangements should not be taken to mean that they desire to use schooling to gain greater control over society through control of childhood socialization (Rose 1993). Many of the misunderstandings of the alternative school movement result from inattention to the differences between conservative Protestant religious traditions. Over the long run, fundamentalists and charismatics are not likely to have a sustained interest in political power. And evangelicals, enveloped in a religious movement most interested in a public role for religion (Regnerus and Smith 1998), are deeply divided on schooling choices for children. According to Sikkink (2003), evangelical religious identity is not significantly related to the choice of non-public schooling for children, since evangelicals favor a public school strategy that is consistent with their tradition of “engaged orthodoxy,” or a “witness” through presence in public schools.

Religious Schools

Private school enrollment in the United States has declined somewhat in the late 2000s, comprising about 4.5 million students (about 10% of all students) and 30,000 schools in 2011. About 80% of private school students attend a religious school. Of these, 30–35% are in evangelical Protestant schools, 43% Catholic schools, and about 20% “nonsectarian” schools. Over half of Catholic schools are in urban or suburban areas, while the comparable figure for evangelical Protestant schools is only 20–25%. A good deal of the decline of religious schools in the last decade has been in the Catholic sector (Snyder and Dillow 2015). Despite the evidence of a positive effect of Catholic schools on local communities, Catholic schools serving high poverty neighborhoods are under extreme fiscal pressures given the economic challenges faced by urban Catholic parishes which sponsor such schools (Brinig and Garnett 2014).

The growth of the evangelical Protestant elementary and secondary schools in the 1970s and 1980s contributed to the rise of the Christian Right in U.S. politics (see Guth et al. 1983). Cultural conflict involving religion and education has played a major role in the expansion of conservative religious primary and secondary schools in the U.S. in the 1970s and 1980s. The growth of conservative Protestant Christian schools coincided with the racial integration of public schools, leading many to claim that “segregationist academies” predominated in the early years of conservative Christian schooling (Nevin and Bills 1976). No doubt racial integration in public schools played a large role in spawning many Christian schools in the past, but the percentage of African Americans in today’s “Conservative Christian” schools compares favorably with other private school sectors: 11% versus 8% in the Catholic sector and 10% in the nonreligious private sector (Broughman and Swaim 2013). The larger issues for most evangelical Protestant schools were cultural. What has come to be known as the “Christian school” movement of the 1970s and 1980s was a response to the events and trends of the turbulent Sixties: the consolidation of a secular science curriculum after the

Soviet Union raced ahead in space exploration, the counter-culture and urban riots, and U.S. Supreme Court decisions banning school prayer and Bible reading in public schools. These changes contributed to the sense that the traditional social world, and especially the traditional family, championed by conservative Protestants was under siege (Bendroth 1999).

In this context, evangelical Protestant religious organizations were well-positioned—both in organizational and ideological strength—to respond with a bricks and mortar campaign. The new breed of Christian schools grew from roughly 2500 in 1972 to some 10,000 today. About 60% of conservative Christian schools existing in 1993 were founded between 1974 and 1983. In contrast, only 2% of Catholic schools were founded in that same time period (Bianchi 1982; McLaughlin and Broughman 1997).

As conservative Protestant religious schools have grown in number, scholarly interest has peaked as well. In one of the most widely cited works on Christian schools, Peshkin (1986) claims that fundamentalist schools fit the model of a “total institution” (as defined by Goffman 1961). The school Peshkin studied was founded and structured on an absolutist claim to ultimate truth, and placed rigid control on student’s lives. Although lauding the discipline and caring relationships he found between students and teachers, Peshkin expressed concern about the tension between the school’s culture and the broader values of a liberal democracy. Similarly, in her study of a Baptist school, Ammerman (1987) found religious influence permeating the school through very strict rules, including clothing and grooming restrictions, and expectations for positive attitudes and courteous and respectful behavior toward authority. Ammerman concluded that the students have little opportunity to try on different roles and identities during their adolescent years. Unlike Peshkin, Ammerman is clear that the fundamentalist school she studied would not necessarily be representative of all conservative Protestant schools.

Other studies show marked differences between evangelical and fundamentalist schools. Rose (1988) found that the pedagogy of fundamentalist schools often leaves little room for

teacher-student interaction and the exploration of ideas. On the other hand, evangelicals tend to shape Christian schools toward less tension with the outside world, greater emphasis on academic excellence, less rigid social control of students, and greater room for individual creativity and expression (Sikkink 2001). Some have seen these differences as at least partially rooted in social class (Rose 1988).

The most important qualitative book on conservative Protestant schools adds nuance to interpretations of conservative religious schools that overemphasize class and social control. Wagner (1990) frames conservative Protestant schools not as “total institutions” but as sites that meld dominant streams of American culture with elements of their conservative Protestant worldview. Wagner points out that many conservative Protestant schoolteachers rely heavily upon secular pedagogical techniques and materials, and students are hardly oblivious to or dismissive of “worldly” teenage lifestyles. Wagner concludes that these compromises are all part of a long process of adaptation that, in the face of competitive market pressures to maintain adequate enrollments, ensures the continued existence of these schools. Even further, Wagner argues that conservative Protestant schools generate a “generic” pan-conservative Christianity that tends to ignore historic doctrinal differences within conservative Protestantism (Wagner 1997). Under the influence of market pressures, conservative Protestant schools tend to broaden their theological umbrella in order to appeal to religious conservatives across several religious traditions, including Catholicism.

Effects of Religious Schools

While many of the studies of religion and education in the U.S. fit within the framework of cultural conflict, a surprising source of interest in religion and education emerged from developments in sociology of education toward understanding the correlates of effective schools. The first national study of school effectiveness, known as the “Coleman Report” after its author the sociologist James Coleman (1966), generated

a great deal of research on religion and education at the organizational level. In particular, interest in school effectiveness turned the literature toward the question of whether and how religious schools shape educational outcomes. That these studies focused on public and private school differences ensured that religion at the school level would be one point of contention (Baker et al. 1996).

The work of Andrew Greeley, James Coleman, and colleagues argued that, on average and after controlling for family background, Catholic schools are more academically effective than public schools. And Catholic schools have a larger effect for those who are more disadvantaged (dubbed the “common school” effect). In Catholic schools, academic achievement does not depend as strongly on family background characteristics as it does in the public sector. But the sources of the Catholic school advantage are not easily located in religion. This research claims that Catholic schools produce higher-achieving students because they place more students in academic programs, require more semesters of academic coursework, and assign more homework. Catholic schools are less “vocational” and more “academic” in orientation than most public schools (Coleman et al. 1981a; 1981b; 1982a, 1982b; Coleman and Hoffer 1983; Greeley 1982). This may explain why Catholic school graduates tend to have more years of education (Kim 2011).

Does religion play a role here? Most research has pointed to more general characteristics of religious schools. Greeley (1982) focused on black and Hispanic students’ academic achievement, showing that higher academic and disciplinary emphasis of Catholic schools contributes to the Catholic school effect. The Catholic school advantage was attributed to higher levels of discipline and academic demands. Public schools that have similar levels of discipline and academic demands as Catholic schools produce similar levels of achievement. Other research argues that religion does play an important role in academic effectiveness. A study of inner-city private (and primarily Catholic) elementary schools found that the effectiveness of these schools derived

from strong leadership, shared values of teachers and staff, an orderly and disciplined environment, and a clear school mission (Cibulka et al. 1982). At the organizational level, according to this research, religion shapes school effectiveness through shared values and mission, and social order (McCloskey 2008).

Coleman and Hoffer (1987) offer a more complete theoretical model of the Catholic school effect. Catholic schools, according to this model, benefit from the more cohesive community that they serve—and to some extent create. Catholic schools offer non-monetary resources in the form of social capital that the public schools do not. Parents of Catholic school students are more likely to know one another, which is likely to create intergenerational closure and facilitate information exchange and social control. Therefore, students with low human capital (minority and other disadvantaged students) benefit from the higher social capital of the Catholic school community. In this work, the effect of religion on school effectiveness is primarily through its effect on social capital.

The role of religion in explaining the Catholic school effect is most prominent in the seminal work by Bryk et al. (1993), who argued that the organizational makeup of Catholic schools engenders a “common school” ideal. Catholic schools create a communal organization, which is built on a high degree of shared values among teachers and students, as well as shared activities. This is made possible in part through a theology of subsidiarity, which ensures that Catholic school governance is decentralized. Religion also provides an inspirational ideology that animates the mission, common symbols, and assumptions that bind the school community. Religious commitments of school personnel infuse relationships in the schools with an ethic of caring and ensure that the best teachers are not only teaching the most advanced students. Furthermore, the number of academic courses required of all students equalizes student learning opportunities. The constrained academic structure of Catholic schools minimizes initial student differences while the comprehensive and highly differentiated public schools accentuate them. The com-

mitment to a common curriculum, according to Bryk and colleagues, is rooted in religious conceptions of persons as created in the image of God.

The strength of the Catholic school effect was challenged when more careful instrumental variables were included in statistical models predicting academic outcomes (Cohen-Zada and Elder 2009). Other studies attempting to account for unobserved selection bias imply that Catholic schools have negative effects on mathematics achievement and no effect on nonacademic behavioral outcomes (Elder and Jepsen 2014). The choice of private schools is determined by religion and religiosity (Cohen-Zada and Sander 2008; Sander and Cohen-Zada 2012); this raises questions of selection effects, though we note that school effects may be mediated through religiosity.

Coleman and Hoffer's thesis that the positive effect of religion is mediated by social capital has been questioned as well. One of the primary resources explaining Catholic schools' academic advantage was intergenerational social closure—defined as the extent to which parents know the parents of their children's friends. Morgan and Sorensen (1999) distinguish between Coleman's "norm-enforcing" school and what they call a "horizon-expanding" school, which is characterized by tight bonds between students and teachers, but not between parents and school. This network structure, according to Morgan and Sorensen, contrasts with a norm-reinforcing school, with its high levels of intergenerational social closure, in that horizon-expanding social capital does not constrain creativity and learning by the limited information and norms available in the family. Morgan and Sorensen find that intergenerational closure is *negatively* associated with mathematics test scores in the public sector, which provides evidence that horizon-expanding schools are best for student learning. The authors conclude, then, that the Catholic school effect cannot be explained by intergenerational social closure. The implication is that in many religious schools the norm-reinforcing character of social bonds limits academic success. If correct, religion is likely to hinder academic success in some

private schools because it does not allow students to bridge beyond their religious enclave.

Do other religious schools have some of the "religious" strengths and weaknesses of Catholic schools? We would expect so given claims that community in evangelical Protestant schools is marked by common values and mission, a high degree of trust, and dense and intergenerational social networks, and meaningful collective identities (Vryhof 2004). There is some evidence of academic achievement gains among Seventh Day Adventist students compared with national averages (Thayer and Kido 2012), and of a common school effect within the broader sector of religious schools. Jeynes (2007) found that the achievement gap between white and minority students, as well as between children of high and low socioeconomic status, is smaller in U.S. religious schools than in public schools. This may result from racial harmony, fewer drug problems, and a more demanding curriculum in religious schools (Jeynes 2007). But evangelical Protestant schools, which are assumed to follow fundamentalist models of an all-encompassing approach to socialization of students, may be limited by norm-reinforcing social capital.

Important work on immigrants also points away from intergenerational closure but toward the importance of religious organizations for educational achievement. Bankston and Zhou (2002) argue that family network closure does not explain variation in school achievement of children in immigrant families, but participation in immigrant religious institutions does improve school performance because it helps immigrants recover some of the social capital lost by migration. These results appear to be consistent with the Morgan and Sorensen (1999) argument that family social capital can be norm-reinforcing and may hinder educational success. However, in the case of immigrant students, participation in religious organizations, which Morgan and Sorensen may also see as sources of norm-reinforcing social capital, actually improves educational achievement.

In sum, the literature on school effectiveness has led to the claim that religion at the school level may have some impact on the nature of

relationships in the school, and has provided stronger evidence that religion provides a moral order and common mission that affects educational outcomes (Hill et al. 1990). Religion also shapes social networks within the school, but the evidence does not confirm whether the overall effect is positive or negative on educational outcomes.

While the effects of religious schools on educational achievement are mixed, one would expect that the social capital and normative environment of religious schools would affect student deviance. Existing studies use careful controls to deal with possible selection effects, and often use the more conservative strategy of determining whether religious schools affect *change* in deviance over time. While these studies are conservative tests, it is still surprising that the results are mixed at best. For example, Figlio and Ludwig (1999) found that attending private religious school decreases the likelihood of involvement in sexual activity, arrests, and the use of hard drugs, but does not affect alcohol, tobacco, or marijuana use. The positive effects are particularly strong for students in suburban, two-parent households (see also Sander 2001). Other work, however, found that the protective effect of religious schools does not apply to Catholic schools. After including a rich set of controls, including risk aversion of the student and parental supervision, Mocan et al. (2002) found that Catholic schools do not affect selling drugs, committing theft, robbery and burglary, having sex, engaging in gang-related fights, attempting suicide, and running away from home. The effect of religious schools on deviance appears to be limited to non-Catholic religious schools and to more extreme forms of teenage deviance. Moreover, at the individual level, any protective effect of religious school may vary across students. For example, Stewart et al. (2015) found that sexual minority youth reported more alcohol-related problems when in religious schools.

In addition to educational achievement and deviance, research on private schools has revived old questions about the effect of religious schools on the public good. Much of the debate on school choice has used the assump-

tion that private schools—specifically fundamentalist and evangelical private schools—are not fit to educate children for participation in a democratic society (Blacker 1998). Evangelical Protestant schools maintain a distinctive approach to citizenship rooted in evangelical history and beliefs, often resisting parts of the standard narrative of modernity, including secularism, relativism, and universalism, which may concern democratic theorists (Dill 2012). Regarding private schools in general, Wolf (2007) generally finds positive effects on citizenship skills, such as political tolerance, volunteering, political knowledge and participation, social capital, civic skills, and patriotism. This research tends to show important contributions of religious schools to democratic education as well, but there are some mixed results for evangelical Protestant schools.

Tolerance of social and political differences is one example. Godwin et al. (2001) find that students enrolled in evangelical schools are far more likely to identify groups that are vying for political equality as their least liked groups as compared with public school students. In addition, evangelical school students are far less likely to choose racist groups as their least liked group compared to public school students. However, once controls are added for selection into school sectors, the family effects were able to account for these differences in tolerance. The findings show that *non*-evangelical private school students support democratic norms more than public school students, and there is no difference between private and public schoolers on levels of political tolerance or perceived threat from their least-liked group. Private school students also report a higher incidence of interethnic friendship than public school students. A recent study finds that political tolerance among evangelical Protestant schoolers is not different than public school graduates (Cheng 2014). In sum, this research finds no evidence that evangelical schooling necessarily leads to decreased levels of tolerance.

Concerns about democratic skills generated by religious schools receive mixed support in other research. Campbell (2001) finds that students in

non-Catholic religious schools (primarily conservative Protestant schools) score higher in civic confidence but lower in political tolerance. On three other measures—community service, civic skills, and political knowledge—students in non-Catholic religious schools are no different than students in public school. Wolf et al. (2001) use a sample of college students in introductory courses on American government to examine political tolerance. They conclude that private school students (both religious and secular) score higher on their measures of political tolerance. The effect is even greater for those that spent most or all of their previous education in private schools. Godwin et al. (2004) examine support for democratic norms, political tolerance, moral reasoning and autonomy, duty to community, and acceptance of nontraditional lifestyles. They find that the experience of a “fundamentalist” school leads to positive change on each, with the exception of acceptance of nontraditional lifestyles. They conclude that fundamentalist Christian high schools do as well or better than public schools in promoting values important for citizens in a liberal democracy. Others use the case of Catholic schools to argue that religious schools can make a valuable contribution to citizenship education by creating a moral community, setting a moral example, arranging moral practices, and organizing moral conversations (Willems et al. 2010). Based on qualitative research, Feinberg (2006) argues that religious schools have important strengths in moral socialization, especially in forming students who are concerned about the good of others and their communities, but he worries that the pedagogical approach in more traditional Catholic and in some conservative Protestant schools works against an appreciation of the kind of critical thinking and dialogue with opposing views that is important for democratic participation.

Greene (1998) argues that private schools are racially integrated within the classroom and encourage more racially tolerant attitudes; they are more likely to promote friendship across racial and ethnic lines and less likely to have fighting in the school among racial or ethnic groups. However, Gill and colleagues (2001)

warn that Greene’s controls may not be sufficient to counter selection into the private sector, nor does he adjust for unobserved prior differences in values and attitudes. Campbell (2001) provides a better set of controls to address the selection problem. His results indicated that students in Catholic schools do better in all five domains he tests: community service, civic skills, civic confidence, political knowledge, and political tolerance. Overall, the extant literature on Catholic schools confirms Bryk’s (1993) claims that this religious school sector makes an important contribution to the common good.

In terms of civic engagement, most research finds a private school advantage, though the results are not entirely consistent. In some research, adult graduates of Catholic high schools are more likely to vote, though not more likely to volunteer than public school graduates (Dee 2005). Higher levels of adult civic engagement of private schoolers appear to be mediated through schooling background factors such as parent involvement in their child’s school, intergenerational social ties, the quality of student relationships with teachers, and the student levels of participation while in high school (Dill 2009). Young adult graduates of evangelical Protestant high schools, despite lower levels of trust in government, media, and school teachers and administrators and lesser involvement in disruptive political action, appear to be as likely as public schoolers to have taken a civics course, to support democratic principles, to sense an obligation to participate in public life, and to volunteer outside their congregation (Pennings et al. 2011, 2014). Interestingly, those educated in Protestant secondary schools are much more likely than those from the public sector to continue to volunteer into young adulthood, while those schooled at home or in private nonreligious settings are significantly less likely to do so. The Protestant school effects may be due to the role of habituated social practices and organizational continuity, especially through congregations, that links adolescent volunteering to emerging adult volunteering (Hill and den Dulk 2013).

Religion and Educational Achievement

Having considered the effect of religious schools on student outcomes, we now address a related but distinct question: How do individuals' religion and religiosity affect their educational success? Historically, religion has provided a crucial impetus to educational endeavors (Meyer et al. 1979). The emphasis on integrating religious and educational pursuits can be found in contemporary religious movements, including Calvinism and Catholicism. But there have also been religious movements that discouraged education as a worldly pursuit. The Amish provide the most well-known example today. And the fundamentalist movement in the twentieth century U.S. Protestantism certainly was suspicious of "modern" learning, such as evolution and higher criticism of the Bible (Marsden 1980). Some have claimed that fundamentalists are an important carrier of persistent cultural trends toward anti-intellectualism (Hofstadter 1963). But even here it is difficult to sort out the extent to which the fundamentalist emphasis was due to opposition to education per se or to the content of an increasingly secular education. Some evidence suggests the latter explanation. The effort that fundamentalist religious groups put into building religious colleges (Carpenter 1997; Marsden 1987) was not only an attempt to shield their children from the world, but also as a partial acknowledgement of the value of education. Other important movements within conservative Protestantism today may dampen educational aspirations and achievement. The Pentecostal and to some extent charismatic movements' emphasis on religious experience embeds an anti-intellectual bent that may lead to less emphasis on education (Wacker 2001). But one of the dominant players in the conservative Protestant camp, the evangelical movement that emerged in the 1940s, has been largely supportive of the importance of education.

Do empirical studies show any effect of religion on individual educational achievement? Lenski (1961) pioneered work in this area, finding that Catholics do poorly on educational out-

comes compared to Protestants. Lenski attributed this difference to Roman Catholic authoritarianism and anti-intellectualism, while Protestants were educationally advantaged by a religious emphasis on individualism. The post-Vatican II era, according to most research, has erased the Protestant-Catholic educational gap. Mueller (1980), for example, finds no clear advantage for Protestants or Catholics over time, and notes that the net influence of religious background on educational attainment has never been very large.

The world of Protestant-Catholic-Jew (Herberg 1960) has largely disappeared, but more careful measurement of religious differences have found that religion matters for educational success. Darnell and Sherkat (1997) find that youth who affiliated with conservative Protestant denominations and youth who held the view that the Bible is without errors had lower educational aspirations. Members of these conservative religious groups were also less likely to take college prep courses in high school. Having parents who believed that the Bible was without errors also predicted less enthusiasm for taking college prep courses in high school. Darnell and Sherkat attribute these findings to the fact that, in contrast to most Americans, conservative Protestants are likely to view the good life in terms that discount education relative to higher religious callings. Sherkat and Darnell (1999) similarly find that parents with conservative views of the Bible are more supportive of their sons' educational advancement, but have a greater negative impact on a daughter's likelihood of taking college prep courses when the daughter disagrees with the parents' conservative religious beliefs.

Lehrer (1999) also finds that when family background is held constant, religious differences are evident in years of schooling attained. Jews have the highest educational attainment and conservative Protestants have the lowest. Catholics and mainline Protestants are in the middle and appear to be very similar. (Though other analyses showed some lingering negative effects of being raised in a Catholic family, see Sikkink and Fischer 2004). According to Lehrer, the importance of human capital investment to Jewish families explains their higher levels of

educational achievement. The fundamentalist suspicion of the critical search for knowledge implied in the scientific method and the high cost and limited supply of acceptable religious educational institutions explains the lower levels of educational attainment within this group.

We note that these studies of educational attainment often lack accurate measures of conservative Protestants. Reliance on literal views of the Bible as the indicator of conservative Protestants tends to capture the more fundamentalist, Pentecostal, and less educated adherents of conservative Protestantism, which may account for some of the religion and educational achievement findings. Beyerlein (2004) shows how results can differ depending on how conservative Protestants are measured. He finds that self-identified evangelicals and fundamentalists do not differ from average Americans in emphasizing the importance of going to college. The source of lower educational aspirations among adult conservative Protestants, according to Beyerlein, is limited to Pentecostals. These discrepant findings point to the importance of avoiding the use of views of the Bible as the sole measure of religious difference in studies of educational aspirations and achievement.

Several other studies have discounted the effect of religious tradition on educational outcomes and focused on the general effect of religious participation. In an important study, Muller and Ellison (2001) examine the association between religious involvement, access to social capital within families, and academic progress. They then attempt to answer the question of whether the connection between religious involvement and academic progress is due to access to social capital. They find that religious participation is associated with higher levels of social capital in the family and community. Religious students report greater educational expectations from parents, more parent-child interaction, greater intergenerational closure, and stronger relations with academically oriented peers. They also find that religious involvement enhances academic effort and reward, and is slightly positively associated with self-concept and educational expectations. The effect of reli-

gious involvement on educational outcomes is largely but not entirely explained by family and community social capital. And the religion effect appears to be greatest both for the most able students and for those most at risk of failing. According to other research, much of the achievement gap in elementary and secondary school between whites and blacks is due to the religiosity differences; the gap disappears after accounting for whether the student was in an intact family and for the student's personal religious faith (Jeynes 2007).

Why would religiosity have these positive effects? Muller and Ellison (2001) suggest several possible explanations. First, religious involvement exposes adolescents to non-related adults who act as role models and provide guidance for the teenager. Second, the religiously active are more likely to take to heart messages from the religious community about respect for authority and the importance of good character and virtue. Third, time spent in religious institutions may simply crowd out time that could be spent in less productive pursuits that hinder a focus on education, such as drug use and other teenager deviance. Jordan and Nettles (2000) find some support for this argument, including that for 12th graders spending time in religious activities results in modest increases in school engagement, academic achievement, and perception of life chances. They argue that religious involvement provides a structured out-of-school activity that mitigates against the negative effects of "unstructured" activity, such as hanging out with friends, which does little for educational achievement.

Loury (2004) confirms the importance of religious involvement for educational attainment. He claims that past efforts at studying this link have been hindered by omitted-variable bias when models fail to take into account important family, community, and individual characteristics. Loury's study corrects for this problem by including the number of older siblings who attended college and the number who dropped out of high school (this controls for unobservable characteristics that are common among siblings). The study also controls for ability test scores and stu-

dent educational aspirations to account for unobservable individual characteristics. In the end, Loury finds that church attendance significantly increases years of schooling completed. Attending church weekly compared to not attending at all improves educational attainment by least 3 years of schooling.

The literature on religion and success in college is more limited. Using a sample from one Northeastern university, Zern (1989) found that past or present religiosity was unrelated to GPA in college. However, those students who were more religious than the atmosphere in which they grew up had significantly higher GPAs.

Keysar and Kosmin (1995) addressed the question of gender, religion, and educational attainment. After placing respondents on a continuum from religious conservative to liberal, they find that among younger women (aged 18–24), religious traditionalism was more strongly associated with getting married younger and having children, which indirectly reduces educational attainment. Among older women (aged 25–44) they found a stronger direct effect of religious traditionalism on educational attainment. They explain this finding by suggesting that religious identification for older women is more likely to reflect actual religious beliefs while for younger women it better reflects religious background and household of origin.

In sum, there is evidence that conservative Protestants have lower levels of educational attainment, while children from Jewish families tend to attain higher levels of education. Studies of educational attainment, family size, and religion illuminate the mechanisms through which religious tradition affects educational achievement. Research on family size suggests that the number of siblings in a family is negatively related to educational performance because parental resources are finite. Each additional child in a family dilutes the quantity of parental resources any one child receives (Downey 1995; Downey 2001; Steelman et al. 2002). In particular, parents' time, money, and energy are diluted as family size increases (Powell and Steelman 1993; Teachman 1987). A handful of studies find that religious traditions may affect the relation-

ship between family size and educational attainment. Some religious communities, Mormonism for example, appear to moderate the effect of sibship size on educational attainment of children (Downey and Neubauer 2001; Shavit and Pierce 1991). Conservative Protestant families also tend to lessen the negative impact of number of siblings on educational attainment, while family size is more detrimental than average for educational attainment in Jewish families (Sikkink and Fischer 2004). This study also showed that the negative relationship between Catholic upbringing and educational attainment is entirely explained by the larger size of Catholic families.

One explanation for these findings focuses on social capital differences across religious groups. While evangelical Protestant groups emphasize bonding social capital (tight networks that generate a strong sense of collective identity), mainline Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish groups are much more likely to build bridging social capital, which is less tightly bound internally and connects participants to those outside the group (Putnam 2000; Wuthnow 1999). Some have argued that this strong bonding social capital is effectively norm-reinforcing, reducing educational achievement for those in religious schools (Morgan and Sorensen 1999). But the strong bonding social capital of conservative religious groups helps to overcome the dilution of parent time and energy that negatively affects educational attainment. Though strong ties in conservative religious communities may be detrimental for civic participation and other social goods (Fiorina 1999; Wuthnow 1999), this social organization is helpful when it comes to providing the resources for children from large families to achieve high levels of education. Conservative Protestant organizations create for youth significant and trusted connections to adults outside the family. In particular, these conservative religious organizations are likely to embed youth in activities such as Sunday School and youth ministry groups that provide connections to adults and normative guidance for youth (Smith 2003a).

Another mechanism through which religion may alter the effect of family size on education is the relative emphasis placed on family and

children within different religious traditions. Religious groups that promote close family relationships may lessen the negative effects of sibship size. Theologically conservative parents tend to use more positive emotional work when relating with children (Wilcox 1998), and conservative Protestant fathers are more committed to and involved in their families (Wilcox 2004). The emphasis on family within this religious tradition may extend to heightened concern for spending time with each child. Parental involvement in families, in turn, is important for educational success.

How Education Shapes Religion

In much of the education and religion literature, the focus is on the influence of religion on education. But important research has also reversed the causal direction, pointing to the important role that education plays in shaping religion. Robert Wuthnow (1988) has pointed out the central importance of rising levels of education for dividing the religious field into liberal and conservative camps. Through the 1960s and 1970s, rising education levels led to differentiation within denominations over religious issues, such as the view of the Bible and Jesus Christ. Educational attainment shapes religious beliefs within congregations as well: holding to biblical literalism is less likely in congregations dominated by the highly educated (Stroope 2011). Some have argued that educational differences create social divides among evangelicals, even though the socially liberalizing effect of college does not apply consistently to evangelicals (Massengill 2011).

At the individual level, education has long been thought to influence religious commitment and belief. The differentiation of denominations and institutions of higher education was expressed in the level of religiosity of faculty. As early as 1916, Leuba showed that professors and scientists were less religious than the public. A large national study of faculty in 1969 showed that 20% of academics reported no religious ties whatsoever, while only 4% of other Americans

had no ties to religion (Steinberg 1974). Using the 1969 Carnegie-Ace faculty survey, Stark and Finke (2000) point out the general irreligiousness of the social sciences compared to the natural sciences. Wuthnow (1989) provides a macro-cultural explanation for this variation. The less “codified” disciplines, such as the social sciences and humanities, have a weaker claim to the status of being a well-developed science. To make up for this perceived cultural status deficit, these disciplines erect external boundaries with the (primarily religious) public in order to maintain the plausibility of their scientific orientations (Wuthnow 1989). This boundary maintenance in response to the position of the discipline in the scientific field results in corresponding lifestyles, values, and attitudes of the faculty which are decidedly secular. Thus, the conflict of religion and science in this framework is less rooted in irreconcilable epistemological differences than in the cultural necessity for disciplines to struggle for legitimacy in the scientific field (see also Oberlin’s chapter on “Science” in this volume).

Similar studies have focused on graduate students. In 1963, Stark used one of the earliest NORC surveys of arts and science graduate students and found that graduate students as a whole are much less religious than the general population (Stark 1963). Stark tentatively argued that this finding was due to selection effects, but Greeley (1963) suggests that educational experiences tend to lead to lower levels of religiosity. The 1958 NORC study also shows that religious apostasy (being raised in a religious tradition but no longer identifying with it) among college students was higher for those who attended elite colleges. Zelan (1968) argued that elite college students are socialized more completely into an identity that serves as a functional alternative to religion. In Greeley’s study, Catholic students are more successful than other religious groups in maintaining their religiosity regardless of higher education, while the experience of education has the greatest secularizing effect on those from Jewish families. This early work suggests, according to Greeley, that there is some value incompatibility between religion and science. Other early studies confirmed Stark’s findings,

though Campbell and Magill (1968) pointed to important differences depending on the denominational affiliation of Protestants.

The negative effect of experiences in educational institutions on religiosity is far from conclusive. Hunsberger (1978), using a cross-sectional study of 457 students at the University of Manitoba and a two and a half year longitudinal study of 212 Wilfrid Laurier University students, found little support for the theory that college liberalizes religious views, such as belief in God and Jesus Christ and frequency of prayer, though the extent of church attendance was negatively affected by college attendance. More recently, some have found that educational attainment was positively related to attendance at religious services, except for mainline Protestants, but negatively related to prayer, and traditional views of the Bible (McFarland et al. 2011). A multi-outcome study of education effects found increased skepticism toward supernatural beliefs, especially among students in elite universities, but a higher commitment to institutionalized religion (Hill 2011; Small and Bowman 2011). Higher education is associated with theological liberalism (Reimer 2010), but there is little evidence that students develop liberal religious beliefs in college (Mayrl and Uecker 2011). This varies depending on whether the student has the social networks to support minority religious views. The multiple social worlds available in college appear to support religious diversity (Mayrl and Uecker 2011). More recent research has also shown that the majority of professors, even at elite research institutions, are religious believers. The level of interest in spirituality and religion among university faculty calls into question the secularization argument of an inherent conflict between religion and science (Ecklund 2010; Gross and Simmons 2009; Schmalzbauer 2003). Consistent with this, there is no evidence that students who major in the natural sciences abandon their religious beliefs (Scheitle 2011).

Moreover, methodological questions plague existing research on the effect of education on religion at the individual level. Johnson (1997), for example, suggests that existing regression models, showing a slight negative effect of

increased education on maintaining religious beliefs, are inadequate. The regression techniques focus on changes in means, and therefore are not able to reveal whether education erodes religious belief for most people, or if it creates a “fissure” by pushing people to either end of the religious-secular spectrum. Using a categorical method on data from the General Social Survey, he finds that a combination of erosion and polarization makes the most sense of the data.

Other studies show that the education-religiosity relationship is not uniform across time and space. How education affects religion requires careful attention to historical and educational context. Hunter (1987) pointed to the secularizing effect of education on evangelical college students, but this has been countered by more recent evidence (Penning and Smidt 2002). Moberg and Hoge (1986), studying Catholic students across time, found that between 1961 and 1971 students became much more individualistic concerning religion and morals, doubts increased, and mass attendance dropped drastically (see also Moberg and McEnergy 1976). Between 1971 and 1982 there continued a trend away from traditional sexual morality, but the demand for intellectual autonomy was not as great and there was evidence of a move toward more traditional religious positions, such as regular reception of Communion and membership in Catholic organizations. They suggest that the 1960s provided a shock to Catholics with the combination of Vatican II, *Humanae Vitae*, and the Kennedy presidency. The 1970s were far quieter and the changes occurring among Catholic students were very similar to the changes occurring among secular students nationwide.

A similar study of undergraduate men at Dartmouth College and the University of Michigan found that major trends in values from the 1950s into the 1970s had reversed themselves by 1984 (Hoge et al. 1987). The percent with no religious preference was highest in 1974 and then dropped sharply. The percent expressing belief in a Divine God began to rise in 1979 and 1984. Traditional religion as a whole began increasing in 1979 and strengthened even more in 1984 (see also Hoge 1974; Hoge et al. 1981). Recent

research considers religious decline among the less educated. One study argued that religion is becoming deinstitutionalized among whites with only high school diplomas since declines in religious participation among young adults has been concentrated among those who do not attend college (Wilcox et al. 2012).

Overall, the literature does not find a singular negative effect of educational attainment on individual religion, contrary to standard accounts of modernity. Studies tend to show small positive effects of years of education on some forms of religiosity, such as attendance, but many find no effect on religious outcomes (Martin 2015, McKune and Hoffmann 2009, Scheitle and Smith 2012). But as research on this question has ballooned, it is clear that the results are not entirely consistent and vary by educational institution and religious tradition. For example, Schwadel (2011) strongly challenges the traditional view of secularization theorists that educational experiences negatively affect the religion of students, yet his findings reflect the ambiguity in this research area and the importance of accounting for differences across context and groups. This study found, on the one hand, that higher levels of educational attainment do not lead to disaffiliation or diminish belief in God or the afterlife or lead to disaffiliation; it also found that educational attainment positively affects religious participation, devotional activities, and the integration of religion in everyday life. On the other hand, education seems to shift religion in particular directions, since it is negatively related to exclusivist religious viewpoints and biblical literalism, and increases the likelihood of switching religious affiliations, particularly to a mainline Protestant denomination. And years in schooling leads to questioning of the role of religion in society. Moreover, Schwadel (2011) points out that these diverse effects vary across religious traditions. Other studies point to the impact of school context as well. The extent that the faculty is committed to secularism explains variation in religious outcomes (Hill 2011). When students are part of the majority religious tradition on campus, they experience less decline in religiosity (Small and Bowman 2011). And

students in more diverse college environments show on average higher religiosity (Martin 2015; Weddle-West et al. 2013).

There is also the interesting question of the effect of *religious* educational institutions on individual religious commitment and orientation. At the college level we know that the positive relationship between theological liberalism and higher education experiences depends on whether the college attended is religious or not (Reimer 2010). Students in mainline Protestant or Catholic colleges show stronger declines in religious commitment and involvement than those in state universities (Hill 2009).

Socialization and identity formation processes are central to the elementary and high school experiences, and would likely have effects on religion. Most of the work on longer term effects focuses on Catholic schools (Aristimuño 2007). In the 1960s, some evidence showed that exclusive attendance at Catholic schools led to moderate positive effects on religious orthodoxy, participation in sacraments, and knowledge of church doctrine. However, these effects seemed to boost those who entered from a fervent Catholic family, and do not affect other students (Greeley and Rossi 1966). Research after Vatican II seemed to show an increase in the Catholic school effect on religiosity. While Catholics on average decreased levels of religious practice post Vatican II, the drop was not nearly as severe among those who had attended Catholic school. "Catholic education [was] second only to religiousness of spouse in predicting religious behavior" (Greeley et al. 1976: 306). Catholic schooling seemed to affect the level of institutional support of the Catholic Church, especially in shaping positive attitudes toward the clergy (Greeley et al. 1976).

More recent findings have been mixed. One study, which compared those with a Catholic school education to other Catholics, found that Catholic school effects were limited to those with 12 or more years in Catholic education. Catholic school experience increased the likelihood that Catholics hold traditional beliefs and practices, agree with the church on social teachings and sexual ethics, and decreased the likelihood that

Catholics supported heterodox ideas, such as the ordination of women. Interestingly, Catholic education seems to result in greater knowledge and awareness of Vatican II, which is related to the likelihood that Catholics take up Vatican II emphases, such as the importance of service to humanity and working toward social justice (Davidson 1997). Significant years of Catholic education (9–12 years) has also been linked to stronger Catholic identity, belief in life after death, and increased giving to the Church, but is not related to church attendance (Sander 2001).

Findings on post-Vatican II Catholics again show moderate to strong effects on religiosity for those who attend significant years of Catholic education, and are stronger for those who also attended a Catholic college (D'Antonio 1995). What is particularly interesting in this research are the findings that show evidence of both religious school and general education effects. The findings suggest that those with all Catholic schooling have very high levels of commitment to the church, but non-traditional views on church authority. While Catholic schoolers have great confidence in church authority, they also are more likely than other Catholics to favor a democratic system within the church with greater authority given to the individual conscience. They were the most likely to stress lay participation in decisions concerning divorce, birth control, and the ordination of women. However, they were less inclined than other young Catholics to give authority to the individual on the abortion issue (D'Antonio 1996). The Catholic schools seem to have moderate liberalizing effects on young Catholics, while committing Catholic school students to the reforms of Vatican II (Ebaugh 1991).

Recent findings question Catholic school effects on religious outcomes. During the high school years, we know that Catholic schoolers attend religious services more frequently and value their faith more highly than public schoolers, while Protestant schoolers have a more salient faith and are more active in private religious activities (Uecker 2008). When considering young adults, however, results show that Catholic school religious outcomes are the same

or lower than public school graduates, while Protestant school graduates on average and net of important family background control variables score much more highly (Uecker 2009). A comprehensive study of religious outcomes among Americans aged 24–39 also did not find Catholic school effects on religious outcomes, even while evangelical Protestant school graduates showed strong commitment and involvement in congregations as well as high levels of charitable contributions to religious institutions (Pennings et al. 2011; Sikkink 2012).

Similar to the increased presence of religion on college campuses, teachers in public and religious schools emphasize the importance of including spirituality in the educational process (Revell 2008). Evidence shows that strong peer norms regarding religion at public secondary schools positively affect private and public religious behavior for individual students (Barrett et al. 2007). As evidence that socialization within religious schools may differ, research has shown that religious schools and religious teachers take disruptive behavior more seriously (Romi 2004). And evangelical Protestant schools appear to influence orientations toward family formation, since evangelical Protestant graduates tend to marry and have children at younger ages than public school graduates (Uecker and Hill 2014) and family patterns are related to religious involvement. In diverse ways and contexts, then, school climate and peer socialization shape religious outcomes for students.

International Perspectives

One of the leading questions in research outside the U.S. is whether higher education leads to forms of secularization. Most studies find limited evidence for this. In a large, multinational sample, years of education have a moderate, negative effect on religiosity, but this varies considerably across nations. Interestingly, this effect is stronger in more religious nations (Schwadel 2015). Identification with a religious tradition has a negative relation with years of education in Canada (Hungerman 2014). In contrast, longitudinal data

in the United Kingdom has shown a positive relationship between years of education and religious attendance (Brown and Taylor 2007). This is consistent with findings that faith expression in British universities is very diverse yet surprisingly widespread. Students were supportive of spirituality if not always of traditional religion. On the whole, based on qualitative and quantitative evidence, the university experience is hardly secularizing (Guest 2013). A privatizing effect is more noticeable in how universities approach the religion of their students. While universities have renewed efforts to support the diversity of faith expression, their approach tends to limit religion to a privatized religious expression.

A related concern in international research is the place of minority religions in government schools. Acculturation of minority religions in schools is a particularly difficult and pressing issue (Niens et al. 2013). Controversy over the role of religion in education in Canada has led some to call for a consideration of the pluralistic model of the Netherlands, which allows support for schools organized by religious and ethnic minorities (Sweet 1997).

The interest in religious schools outside the U.S. has grown considerably, particularly with regard to issues of religious schools, pluralism, and democracy. In Australia, an expansion of religious schooling has been enabled in part by the its unique context, including specific Constitutional provisions, neoliberal policies, and a growing movement of fundamentalist and evangelical Christianity, which have created a supportive environment for religious schools (Symes and Gulson 2008; Striepe and Clarke 2009). Key questions surround faith-based schooling in pluralistic society, and whether civic education is adequate in religious schools. Some have argued that there is potentially an inherent contradiction between the two, which may be rooted in the pedagogy in religious schools (King 2010). Pakistan has seen a growth of religious schools over the past three decades, and some evidence that Islamic schools can and do serve public purposes. There is little evidence here of a conflict between Islam and achieving a strong education in basic subjects, but due to constraints

of leadership, materials, and resources, that potential is not realized in most Islamic schools (Zia 2003). There is some evidence that Islamic schools are willing and able to teach about other religions, but the quality of the education is limited because of a lack of sound educational materials and limited engagement with issues of religious diversity (Panjwani 2014). A study of female graduates in religious schools in Bangladesh revealed a school effect toward more traditional attitudes on gender roles and marriage and family, but also a positive effect on attitudes consistent with democratic principles (Asadullah and Chaudhury 2010). Despite a sense of cultural alienation, Canadian graduates of evangelical Protestant high schools compared to public school graduates show relatively high levels of involvement in civic life and considerable charitable giving, even while they form families earlier, have more children, and are more active in their churches (Pennings et al. 2012).

There is also considerable interest in conceptualizing and testing the academic effects of religious schools cross-nationally (Hastie 2012). Based on a meta-analysis of an impressive number of studies, Jeynes (2004) found that the religious school advantage for academic outcomes appears to be larger in the U.S., but the effect of religiosity on academic outcomes is fairly similar. In Canada, Catholic schools provide a competitive environment that slightly improves academic test scores (Card et al. 2010). Other research has found that Catholic school effects on academic outcomes in Australia are less strong than previous research has shown (Cardak and Vecci 2013). But there is evidence that Catholic along with other private schools have positive effects on wages across the life course (Jha and Polidano 2013).

Future Directions

It would be surprising if cultural conflict linked to religion does not continue to be expressed in political struggle over public educational institutions. The increasing diversity and extent of school choice will ensure that religion plays a

large role in the politics of education. But this does not ensure a movement toward a universal school voucher program. Besides disagreement within conservative Protestantism and opposition from mainline Protestantism, voucher support among conservative Catholics and evangelical Protestants is often used effectively to cast doubt on the motives of voucher supporters. But there also is evidence that the social conditions that gave legitimacy to the civic purposes of public schools are giving way to notions of education as a private choice. The strength of the cultural frames of individualism and autonomous, private choice, particularly in a consumer capitalist society, are likely to play a much larger role in creating an increasingly strong public voice in support of a robust school choice program. How mainline Protestantism will respond to this shift provides an important topic for research in the politics of education.

Understanding the direction of religion and the politics of education depends on an account of religious differences within conservative Protestantism. The balance of power in the religious field between the pentecostal, charismatic, and evangelical movements will have some impact on conflicts over public schools and the relationship of religion and public institutions. While the pentecostal and charismatic movements are growing rapidly, the evangelical movement seems the dominant player in the conservative religious field. It is clear that religious conservatives are deeply divided on schooling issues; it is less clear how that division will affect schooling issues in the future. The strength of pentecostal and charismatic support for alternative schooling, which contrasts with evangelicals support for public schooling, is an important part of this division within the Protestant house. But note that the alternative schooling movement within evangelicalism itself is much younger than the traditional evangelical position of engagement as individuals in “secular” public institutions as “witnesses” to the world. The evangelical tradition of a custodial relation to public institutions—a tradition that lends legitimacy to many of the cultural and structural divides between “sacred” and “secular” within

public schools (Sikkink and Smith 2000)—faces the challenge that the alternative schooling movement, though small, is gaining more legitimacy among evangelicals. Combined with challenges from the charismatic movement, older expectations about the relationship of evangelical religion and public schooling may give way.

A dynamic area of research that is now being charted in education and religion involves central issues of sociology of education. Better measures of religion in existing longitudinal datasets will allow more careful understanding of the mechanisms through which religion shapes educational aspirations and achievement at the individual level. Several mechanisms have been suggested, such as adult role models, discipline, time substitution, and religious traditions, but the evidence is not conclusive. In particular, closer attention to the concept of social capital, and its relation to religion and educational success are necessary to understand the relation of religion and educational success.

Secularization through the effect of experiences in educational institutions seems less likely. Conservative religious groups are more experienced and organized in their quest to keep their children in the fold (Hammond and Hunter 1984; Smith and Sikkink 2003), and Catholic and mainline institutions are in some cases reasserting religious distinction. It appears that secularization at the organizational level will compete with sacralization. Still, much remains to be done to understand how religion and education interact within individuals and organizations. Longitudinal studies at the individual level are necessary to understand the effect of education on religion in an age when scientific certainty is less compelling and parachurch organizations within the universities are more mature.

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Stewart M. Hoover and Seung Soo Kim

Abstract

In this chapter we first explore the three primary domains into which scholars have divided the study of media and religion: producers of media content, media content itself, and media effects. We then examine ways in which scholars have attempted to move beyond the instrumentalist approach to media, especially by taking a more cultural approach to the study of media. This paradigm shift in media studies coincided with the shift toward a new paradigm for the sociological study of religion advocated by Warner (1993). We next explore the emerging and dynamic world of digital media, which has profoundly affected both the study and practice of religion. We conclude with thoughts on directions for future research at the intersection of religion and media.

To account for the place of media research within the broader social scientific study of religion requires some reflection on the history of the disciplines involved. In short, the social scientific study of religion and media has had a checkered history. A scholarly record has gradually developed but, at the same time, the project has tended until recently to lack the kind of theoretical *gravitas* that propels a substantive body of work forward. Such momentum began to develop in the

1990s, driven by a growing recognition of its importance, and by a growing cadre of (typically younger) scholars committed to answering its burning questions.

As a scholarly discipline, the field of mass communication studies has generally considered itself to be a social science, notwithstanding recent—and significant—cross-disciplinary developments. Many in the field trace its roots back to pragmatism and to the thought of John Dewey in particular, who saw social understanding and the re-invigorating of social communication as a central project of the social sciences (Peters 1999; Carey 1989). To Dewey, the social sciences were to be about helping the emerging mass societies of the industrial age imagine themselves in new and creative ways through

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new patterns and means of communication. Throughout most of the last century, however, communication theory and research (along with much of the social sciences) found itself drawn toward more instrumental and pragmatic ends and projects (Rowland 1983).

Paul Lazarsfeld, for example, one of the most prominent mid-century sociologists, made his Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University into a major venue for the study of mass communication. His emphasis, however, was on specific content and its effects, rather than a more holistic approach. Mass communication research became important and prominent, but there was a tradeoff involved. According to one of its other significant founders, Wilbur Schramm (1980), the field of mass communication was viewed rather casually and instrumentally by social scientists from other disciplines. Today we tend to see the early efforts of Lazarsfeld, Schramm, and others as leading the developing scholarship of mass communication research to see itself primarily as an *applied* science, directed at *policy* (Carey 2000; Delia 1987; Rowland 1983). Fundamental to this application is what we might call an “instrumental syllogism” which maintains that autonomous and rational actors in the various media industries produce self-evident media messages that have known, knowable, and predictable effects on audiences, readers, and listeners.

Many other social sciences also see the media as significant primarily in terms of its instrumental relations to known structures, movements, and practices in the social universe. This typically has been put in terms of the “effects” of media “on” one or more of these other phenomena. Extensive efforts have been devoted to studying the way the media affect voting, sexual and violent behavior in children and adolescents, health-related behaviors, mental and emotional well-being, and other social and psychological problems identified by scholars in public opinion, sociology, psychology, and mass communication.

Religion and mass mediated communication have shared a long-standing relationship, particularly in the American context. Historians have demonstrated convincingly that religious motivations, frameworks, and markets were at the heart

of American publishing and later electronic mass communication (Nord 2007; Underwood 2002). Religion was a vibrant sub-genre in the radio era (Hangen 2002) and continues to be today (Mitchell 1999; Hamaker 2011). However, media and religion really first attracted the attention of sociologists in the television era, when a few programs rose to prominence in the 1950s (Parker et al. 1955), but more importantly, with the advent of the phenomenon of televangelism in the mid-1970s.

The 1980s saw a virtual explosion of research and publication, with a range of studies focused on historical and institutional analysis (Hadden and Swann 1981; Horsfield 1984; Frankl 1987; Bruce 1990; some contributions to Schultz 1990), sociological studies of content and audiences (Hoover 1988; Abelman and Hoover 1990; Hoover 1990), considerations of political implications and effects (e.g. Hadden and Shupe 1988; Hadden 1991), and critical cultural analyses (eg. Schultze 1987; Peck 1993).

In this chapter we first explore the three primary domains into which scholars have divided the study of media and religion: producers of media content, media content itself, and media effects. We then examine ways in which scholars have attempted to move beyond the instrumentalist approach to media, especially by taking a more cultural approach to the study of media. This paradigm shift in media studies coincided with the shift toward a new paradigm for the sociological study of religion advocated by Warner (1993). We next explore the emerging and dynamic world of digital media, which has profoundly affected both the study and practice of religion (see also Helland’s chapter on “Digital Religion” in this volume). We conclude with thoughts on directions for future research at the intersection of religion and media.

Social Science Approaches to Media Studies

As reflected in the above literature, sociologists, psychologists, and mass communication scholars have tended to share a particular way of dividing

up the turf of mass communication and the instrumental syllogism into three distinct components or domains: (1) the institutions, structures, and professional cohorts responsible for producing media; (2) the content, “message systems,” or “texts” they produce; and (3) the effects of those messages on various audiences. These divisions are clearly rooted in some of the central concerns of sociology, including: structures, institutions, economies and power relations; socialization, social identity and solidarity; structural and role differentiation; relations between individuals and collectivities, and social change and social stability. Each of the three domains of the mass communication process has been the focus of attention within sociology of religion.

Producers of Media Content

In the area of media institutions, work in sociology of religion has tended to focus on studies of media *people*, especially media professionals and their conventions of professional practice (for an early example, see Hynds 1987). A significant discourse exists particularly around the question of whether journalists who cover religion are in some way professionally biased by their own religious commitments or lack thereof (see Silk 1995; Hoover 1998; Underwood 2002 for discussions of this issue). Significant differences of opinion exist among those who have studied this question. The “media elite” studies of Lichter et al. (1986) provide the most provocative analysis. They demonstrate that for the “elite” national media, at least, the newsroom staff differ significantly from the American population as a whole in terms of their religiosity.

One of the most important reasons for the complexity of understanding issues such as this is that the media are *cultural* as well as *social* entities (Carey 1989; Newcomb and Hirsch 1976; Winston 2009). It is one of the tenets of contemporary media theory that the media function within a cultural context that acts along with other factors to frame and determine the constraints within which members of the media

find themselves. This cultural environment is expressed and felt with reference to professional practice through such things as received, consensual ways of understanding and describing the world that the journalist writes and reports about. Silk (1995) calls these received descriptions and stereotypes “*topoi*” and argues that they are the common substance of journalistic accounts of all topics, not least religion. He maintains that they emerge not from the structural and ideological location of the journalist so much as from a wider set of consensual understandings that journalists share with their presumed audiences.

Media Content

In the second domain of traditional media research, studies of media content or media texts relevant to religion have tended to look at media *representations* of religion. Some content analyses have measured the relative presence or absence of religion in print (Buddenbaum 1986) or broadcast news coverage (Buddenbaum 1990). Others have shown systematic misrepresentations of religion in general (Medved 1993) or specific religions (Lichter et al. 1991; Hendershot 2004; Winston 2009). Such approaches often assume the instrumentalist paradigm, focusing on the implication that media representations would necessarily affect audience beliefs and attitudes about religion.

Media content can be looked at in other ways, though, some of which are more consistent with media scholarship’s pragmatist roots. Media scholar Horace Newcomb has proposed the idea that media culture be looked at not as an influencer of culture, or as a reflector of it alone, but as a “cultural forum” (Newcomb and Hirsch 1976), a place where important ideas and values are presented, discussed, and evaluated. From the perspective of the sociology of religion, Robert Wuthnow (1987) pursued such a line of analysis in a study of the television mini-series *The Holocaust*, arguing that it became just such a cultural forum through which moral symbols and languages were negotiated.

Effects of Mass Media

Compared to studies of media producers and media content, there have been relatively few efforts focused on the third domain of research: the *effects* of mass media with respect to religion. We might have expected some of the work discussed earlier that focused on the biases of the media with respect to religion to be followed by studies to demonstrate that those biases in fact influenced audiences to think or behave in certain ways. This has been the classic approach in instrumentalist mass communication studies, best represented by the long and evolving record of research on media “effects” in areas such as television violence and its influence on children (for the definitive account, see Liebert and Sprafkin 1988; for a scholarly critique and appraisal, McGuire 1986). While a wide range of thought has speculated about specific “effects-like” religious implications of media consumption (e.g. Fore 1990; Schultze 2002; for application to religious marketing, see Engel and Norton 1976), there has never been the energy or momentum behind research on religion-oriented media effects that has pursued questions in other areas of attitudes, beliefs, and social behaviors.

The exceptions have been studies conducted on the effects of religious broadcasting and televangelism. The earliest research, conducted in the 1950s by Parker et al. (1955), focused on the emergence of religious figures in secular media, most prominently Fulton Sheen. From 1951 to 1957, Sheen hosted a weekly television program called “Life is Worth Living,” which drew as many as 30 million viewers and winning an Emmy Award in 1952. The research of Park and colleagues found that Sheen was actually not very influential over non-Catholics, and that an important “effect” of his program was improved senses of social belonging and social participation by American Catholics. Other smaller and more limited studies followed, until an explosion of interest in televangelism in the 1970s brought about significant efforts at studying the effects of religious television on religious audiences (Gaddy and Pritchard 1985).

The major effort in this regard was a study funded by a coalition of religious groups and conducted by the University of Pennsylvania’s Annenberg School and the Gallup organization (Gerbner et al. 1986). The study was subject to considerable commentary and critical review (see Hadden and Frankl 1987; Schultze 1985; for a response, see Gerbner et al. 1989). At the same time, some important questions were answered by the study. Most significant at the time, little evidence was found that televangelism diverted membership or financial support from existing congregations. Instead, these ministries seemed to be preaching primarily to the choir (Hoover 1987). A more complete analysis of the data from the study, elaborated by in-depth field research, amplified some of its findings (Hoover 1988). Most significantly, the primary “effect” of these programs was a sense of identity and solidarity they built up in their audiences. While Evangelicals and Pentecostals dominated in the audiences for televangelism, and others were unlikely to view or be influenced, the core audience found itself supported and reinforced in its beliefs by ministries that were present on the national stage of the mass media. Subsequent effects in such areas as political mobilization were possible (Hadden and Shupe 1988), but further research was limited to studies of specific programs and denominational cohorts, and various demographic groups (e.g. the studies in Abelman and Hoover 1990).

A Shifting Paradigm

One way of looking at the scholarly record on media and religion is to see the history described as a subset of the overall field of mass communication research. As we noted earlier, many of the tools and paradigms that have typified research on media in religion have, in fact, been drawn from there. In that light, the research record on religion as a category of the larger “whole” of mass communication is rather thin, dispersed, and unremarkable. The instrumentalist syllogism is capable of taking us only so far in addressing

the growing and broadening set of phenomena at the intersection of media and religion. The fact that the most convincing implications of media for religion are in areas of information and reinforcement, and that religiously-motivated audiences are in some ways unique, is not a substantive basis for analysis.

The growing field of media and religion scholarship has recognized that the interaction between the domains of “media” and “religion” seems increasingly important in contemporary global culture. Media and religion came together in unprecedented ways in the events of 9/11 and its aftermath, though there were important antecedents (Hoover 2006). Press coverage of religion in each Presidential election cycle reveals a “religion gap” underlying what were once called the “culture wars.” Media tastes and behaviors remain important, even definitive markers of religiously-modulated social meaning and social experience, particularly for cohorts such as teens, pre-teens, those interested in alternative and non-western spiritualities, and those who are motivated to seek out information about an increasingly diverse religious landscape (Clark 2003; Winston 2009). The media, including—increasingly, as we suggest later in this chapter—the digital and social media, have become the definitive—and in some cases the only—sources of the symbols and claims about that landscape. For individual readers, viewers, and listeners the media provide both information about the various religious “others” that we increasingly encounter domestically and globally, and information about “our own” religious faiths and traditions, serving needs of definition and social solidarity.

This evolving reality has been addressed by a changing landscape of scholarship. The scholarship on both media and religion has experienced parallel development in a turn toward the analysis and understanding of the social world through the lens of lived experience, with the result being a convergence of interests and approaches in both spheres.

In mass communication research and media studies, this has been described as a turn toward *culture*, influenced by developments in the humanities and elsewhere in the social sciences.

The field of cultural studies has exerted great influence in media and communication studies, in both theoretical and methodological directions. In a definitive essay, James Carey (1975) challenged the dominant instrumentalist paradigm in media studies, calling instead for what he called a “ritual” approach to understanding media. While his use of the term “ritual” was more metaphoric than substantive (Grimes 2002), it articulated a growing sense that the media needed to be seen in terms of their grounding in and contribution to the making of social meaning rather than in terms of the intended consequences of messages intentionally produced and directed at audiences.

This paradigm shift bears much in common Jeffrey Alexander’s notion of a “strong program” in cultural sociology, focused on a “hermeneutics” of culture, attention to the narratives and codes that make up social texts, and “the power of the symbolic to shape interactions from within, as normative precepts or narratives that carry an internalized moral force” (Alexander and Smith 2002, p. 139). In its own terms, culturalist media studies conceives of the primary concerns of scholarship to revolve around the cultural texts and practices that constitute the context of social meaning (Grossberg et al. 1992; Hall 1982; Turner 1990). As a practical, methodological matter, this has led culturalist scholarship in the direction of qualitative, interpretive, and ethnographic methods (Silverstone et al. 1992; Morley 1992; 1997; Gauntlett and Hill 1999; Hoover et al. 2004; Hoover 2006; Sender 2012; Couldry 2012; Benet-Weiser 2012; Hoover and Coats 2015). This is again consistent with paradigmatic trends in cultural sociology. In the media studies version, culturalism is typified by this qualitative methodology, a focus on practices of reception and meaning-construction among individuals and groups, and the articulation of cultural meanings into the overall context of social life. In addition, the focus is on problematizing the relationship between mediated cultural texts and consequences, functions, and meanings, and a continuing theoretical discourse focused on the question of whether practices of media audiences or the structuring logics of media institutions and

messages are determinative of the consequences of media practice.

In the field of religious studies, and the sociology of religion in particular, a complementary shift in paradigms has been underway over nearly the same period. This change was described by Warner (1993) as a change to a “new paradigm” that shifted the focus of religion scholarship in several important ways. First, there was a focus on practices and experiences of individuals in making religious and spiritual meanings. This focus was rooted in fundamental characteristics of American religious culture, including its disestablishment, its pluralism, its adaptability, and its aspirations to individual empowerment. Second, there was a fundamental shift in understanding religion, from viewing religion as “ascribed” to religion as “achieved.” A range of scholarly approaches in the social scientific study of religion contributed to this paradigm, including feminist, experiential, rational choice, performance, historicist, and material culture studies.

The parallel emergence of these paradigms in religion and media scholarship coincided with changes in the actually-existing worlds of religion and media. Simply put, religion and media were converging in significant ways. Where once it was thought that a “bright line” could be drawn between the realm of religion and the realm of media, it is increasingly difficult to sustain this implicit dualism (Hoover and Venturelli 1996; Hoover 2006; Stolow 2005). The reasons are twofold. First, sociology of religion has incorporated the development of new approaches to religion and to “religions” (Albanese 1981) that are rooted in what Hammond (1992) has called a rise in “personal autonomy” in matters of faith (see also Roof 1999). Anthony Giddens (1991) has been one of the most prominent exponents of a description of late-modern social consciousness as centering more and more on the self and identity.

Hammond’s personal autonomy is a consequence for religion of the focus on the self as it has been described by Giddens. New paradigm religion scholarship, however, differs from Giddens’ understand of and predictions about the future of religion in late modernity. While

Giddens (1991) projects a particular set of consequences for religion, it is really religious institutions that face the challenge of legitimacy or authority that he describes (Hoover 2016). Warner’s “new paradigm” recognizes the same consequences for religion as other ascriptive institutions, but holds that important projects can still be achieved in religious terms through individual and collective actions of meaning-making. Roof (1994, 1999) argued that the “baby boom” generation constituted an important marker or divide in the evolution of American religiosity and religious practice. Practices of what Roof called “seeking” or “questing” have become the fundamental mode in the Baby Boomer and post-Boomer generations (see also Clark 2003; Smith 2009). Individuals today increasingly think of their religiosity as an ongoing project of constructing an ideal faith or spirituality suited to their own biography and their own needs. Wuthnow’s (1998) suggestion that a significant trend is movement away from a “dwelling” and toward a “seeking” form of religious practice reflected a similar culturalist turn. Combined with Hammond’s notion that autonomy and the self are at the center of contemporary approaches to religion, we see an emerging religiosity that necessarily embodies, and actually articulates, a critique of received religious institutions, clerical structures, and doctrinal authorities.

These trends transcend many religious contexts and religious traditions, as Giddens predicted. Roof, Wuthnow, and others pointed out that, in spite of what appears to be a strong tendency for this individualized religiosity to express itself in anti-institutional ways, traditional religious institutions continue to exist, and traditionalist and conservative religiosity endure as has been obvious in presidential election cycles from 2004 to 2016. Autonomy is on the rise, as is an increasing suspicion of the authenticity claims and demands we attribute to conventional religion. At the same time, there is a sense that the traditional religions, as we have known them, still contain within them authentic and pure resources of religious enlightenment. Thus, what results is an ongoing conversation or negotiation through which individuals and groups systematically seek

and appropriate resources, while attempting to do so with as little mediation by religious authority as possible (Lippy 1994; Wuthnow 1998; Roof 1999).

The above developments have accelerated trends that have been at the center of American religion for most of its history: what Hatch (1989) has called a kind of “democratic” approach to religion. Here individuals see themselves occupying (to a greater extent today than in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries) a marketplace of religious choice (Warner 1993; Hoover 2006). This corresponds with the more or less easy acceptance of religious commodities of various kinds as valid mediators, sources, and transitional objects relevant to faith (Moore 1994; McDannell 1995; Morgan 1998; Clark 2007). While such commodified and “materialistic” approaches to piety have traditionally been derogated in mainline Protestant traditions, they have been readily accepted and even encouraged within conservative Protestantism and Catholicism. A kind of cultural divide has existed within American religious culture between those who do and those who do not accept such commodification as normative, a divide that has always been, in part, about class tastes and interests (Promey 1996).

These arguments are essentially cultural as opposed to structural explanations for social behavior. It is the move to this cultural level that makes the so-called “new paradigm” in religion so amenable to culturalist and interpretive analysis and so concordant with trends in the media and in media studies. In the world of the media, religion has always been problematic for a number of reasons (Hoover and Venturelli 1996; Morgan 2013). This resistance to religion by the media and within the field of media studies has now begun to break down, due (at least in part) to the development of deeper and broader religious markets rooted in emerging autonomous, “seeking” religiosity. What has happened, in a sense, is that the media marketplace has begun acting more and more *like* a marketplace when it comes to religion (Hoover 2001, 2006; Clark 2007). We should not forget, when analyzing the media, that they are unlike some other social institutions in that they are economic entities, and that a political economy explains a good deal of what they do.

Structural and economic changes, including the increasing range of channels available through cable and satellite services, the boom in specialty publishing, and most importantly, perhaps, the emergence of the so-called “digital age” have all played a role. The events of September 11, 2001, also have undoubtedly accelerated and modulated trends toward openness to religion, with more and more media producers, editors, and entrepreneurs realizing that a growing market exists for religiously-relevant media materials. Phenomena like the unprecedented success experienced through most of the 1990s by a self-consciously religious program, *Touched By an Angel*, and the explosion of other television programs with religious and quasi-religious themes in recent years have also served to reinforce the notion that religion is both acceptable and even logical as a genre in the mix of print, non-print, and now digital media (Winston 2009).

All of this serves to fit the argument we have been making, that the evolution of scholarship on media and religion within the field of sociology of religion has undergone a paradigm shift in recent years. Earlier understandings of the appropriate questions stressed what we have called an “instrumentalist syllogism.” This approach conceived of media in terms of their institutional structures, their messages, and their “effects,” and saw a necessary connection between these three domains. Increasingly, media studies has been understanding media in more nuanced and less instrumental terms. Consistent with trends toward a new paradigm in the study of religion and the turn toward more interpretive or hermeneutic approaches to cultural sociology, media studies has begun to look seriously at the actual practices and lived experiences of audiences and individuals and the ways that they achieve religious and spiritual meanings through the media they consume. In both fields—religion and media scholarship—this shift in approach has had both theoretical and methodological implications. In theory, there has been a re-thinking of structure and function as key elements, turning instead toward *culture* as a domain that is also capable of generating socially-significant processes and actions. In method, the tendency has been to

move more toward qualitative and interpretive paradigms.

At the same time there is an entirely separate argument that moves religion and media scholarship more in the direction of culturalism and qualitative/interpretive studies. The argument is that the traditional structuralist and functionalist assumptions have simply had a difficult time dealing persuasively with the phenomena under study. Religion is itself a subtle and complex dimension of social life. Sociology of religion has found ways of measuring religion with some success, but has been less successful in developing truly predictive theories (Warner 1993; Finke and Stark 2005). As media scholarship has increasingly discovered, specific dimensions of media practice are, as well, exceedingly complex and subtle. Adding religion, spirituality, faith, and belief to the media mix make the reality to be explained doubly or triply complex. Thus, culturalism in media/religion studies derives in important ways from necessity. In order to be able to study and account for important dimensions of the relationship between media and religion, it is necessary to do so in dense, layered, descriptive, and interpretive terms. That is where the action increasingly is in the field of media and religion scholarship.

Much of this work changes the focus from the instrumentalist syllogism in media studies and the older paradigm in religious studies toward looking in the social universe for evidence of the consequences of assumed structural or institutional determinants in media and religion at the level of whole cultures. Scholars today are assuming the subjective perspectives of religiously or spiritually-motivated social actors, and from there looking at the extent to which the media make sense as a context for individuals seeking and finding religious meaning. In another iteration, scholars are asking for whom, when, and where are these things happening. This marks a fundamental shift in the understanding of the nature of religion, but it is just as fundamental a shift in understanding the nature of the media. For some, it makes sense to think of the media as a kind of *marketplace of symbolic resources* out of which religious or spiritual meanings can be

made. For others, the focus is on the *construction of meaning* that results from the interaction between the individual and the media. For still others, the important questions are how mediated resources, symbols, and experiences *come to be exchanged* and in other ways used in the development of social, spiritual, or cultural capital within and between demographic and social groups.

Studies which have focused on the complexity and subtlety of religious or spiritual impulses as they may be expressed or sought through mediated experience have found that just as the media sphere in some ways conditions the experience of religion, the religious sphere conditions the experience of the media. Thus, a kind of reflexive engagement with each is rooted to a great extent in received or taken-for-granted ideas and expectations about what it means to be either a media consumer, a religious/spiritual practitioner, or an admixture of both. One major study found through in-depth ethnographic and observational studies in media households that the cultural meanings achieved through religiously-modulated media experience are, in important ways, conditioned by social expectations of what it means to be a certain kind of media consumer (Hoover et al. 2004). Furthermore, these meanings are deeply embedded in social values surrounding the meaning of parenting, domestic space, and family life.

There are also critical demographic dimensions that affect these phenomena. A large and growing scholarship around teens and youth culture is increasingly understanding media and mediated experience in a variety of contexts as important in defining and conditioning the meaning of religion, spirituality, and religious experience (Clark 2003; Smith 2003). Other voices consider the extent to which "interpretive communities," rooted in part in religious and spiritual interests, form around specific media icons, programs, and genres (McCloud 2003; Sender 2012). Examples can include everything from Elvis fans (Doss 1999) to popular music (Hulsether 2002; Ingersoll 2000), to Star Trek (Porter and McLaren 1999; Jindra 2000), to film (Martin and Ostwalt 1996).

This theoretical and methodological ferment continues to be built on a good deal of interdisciplinary contact and interchange. Mass-mediated and commodified experience is integrated into such things as the emerging rituals of alternative and new religious movements (Pike 2001), and scholarship directed at those phenomena must therefore encounter and account for media. There are particularly deep disciplinary roots as well in cultural history. Scholars such as Moore (1994), Winston (1999) and Morgan (1996, 1998) have persuasively demonstrated that the interaction between religion and the media is nothing new. Other recent work has expanded our understanding of the social and cultural significance of taken-for-granted religious media (Hangen 2002; Rosenthal 2002; Mitchell 1999; Dorgan 1993).

Digital Religion

Digital media culture is emerging as the reality of lived practice that is most influencing both the world of religion and scholarship focused on religion and media. The “digital turn” has changed the field of media and religion studies in two important ways. First, it has actually affected religion, the practice of people seeking and doing their religions, and the understanding of religion, the religious, spirituality, and the spiritual. Second, the new phenomena and practices generated by digital culture have come to embody some of the most important questions facing the sociological study of media and religion, including issues such as culture, authenticity, and authority—in fact all of things that the term “religion” can stand for (Hoover 2012).

Early scholarly research on what is now called “digital religion” preferred the term “cyber-religion” to describe the ways and locations where religion met virtual reality technologies, the Internet, and cyberspace (Campbell 2012; see especially Bauwens 1996; Brasher 2001; Dawson 2000). These locales where existing religions began to migrate or other forms of religion were newly emergent, were thought of as a “not-so-real” world. A sharp distinction was made between the real and the virtual, offline and online. Meanwhile,

a range of observers suggested that the internet might be the basis for whole new ways of seeing and doing religion and spirituality, and that a kind of restructuring of religion, rooted in these new media, might be underway (O’Leary 1996; Zaleski 1997; Brasher 2001). Public and scholarly discourse optimistically represented the Internet as a transformative opportunity to, in a sense, realize McLuhan’s vision of a “global village” (or villages) with spiritual aspirations and projects (Hoover and Park 2002; see also Cobb 1998; Wertheim 1999).

In an important contribution, Helland (2000) proposed an analytic distinction in the digital realm between “religion online,” or the self-conscious use of the Internet by religious individuals and groups with manifestly “religious” intentions, and “online religion,” or religious behaviors and practices that are centered in the online environment. Despite the usefulness of this distinction for thinking about religious practice in the digital age, scholarship has begun to understand that the digital practices once thought of as “religion online” and “online religion” are, in effect, continuous, overlapping, and constantly permeable or transformable (Young 2004; Helland 2005; Hoover and Echchaibi 2014). Religion in the digital age has been further explored in terms of the implications of digital media culture for religious authority (e.g. Barker 2005; Barzilai-Nahon and Barzilai 2005; Campbell 2007; Hoover *forthcoming*), ritual (e.g. Jacobs 2007; Radde-Anweiler 2008), identity (e.g. Lövheim 2004; Lövheim and Linderman 2005), authenticity (e.g. Echchaibi 2012; Whitehead 2015), and community (e.g. Hutchings 2011; Teusner 2010; Young 2004).

Since the early-2010s, the term “digital religion” has become increasingly prominent in the field of media and religion studies. Scholarly interest in it has spread well beyond the contexts of the West and of Christianity. For example, scholarly studies have examined Buddhism (Grieve and Veidlinger 2015; Grieve *forthcoming*), Judaism (Campbell 2014), and Hinduism (Mallapragada 2010). Projects on digital religion have also looked at contexts outside the West, including Africa (Hackett and Soares 2015) and Asia (Han and Nasir 2016).

Scholarship has also begun to offer increasingly sophisticated theoretical frameworks for understanding religion in the digital age. Building on, but problematizing, work that focused on digital religion as a new medium encouraging different modes of thinking and communication in religion (such as Horsfield and Teusner 2007; Howard 2000; O'Leary 1996), Campbell (2010) has shown how the religious traditions, practices, and value systems themselves shape the adoption and adaption of digital technology. Hoover and Echchaibi (2014) suggest thinking of "the digital" not as a mere medium or technology, but as a site of cultural production, a social space in which people self-consciously imagine, practice, make, and experience meaning. They draw on Homi Bhabha's concept of "third spaces," spaces which are typified by negotiation, ambivalence, and hybrid subjectivity generated by the encounter between the colonial and the colonized. Extending this notion into the realm of digital religion, Hoover and Echchaibi propose that the digital hosts and encourages the generative encounter between commodities and authenticity, authority and autonomy, individual and community, and tradition and secularism. As such, it can be understood as a "third space" between and beyond these various poles. They argue that in digital third spaces, people act as if their new religious imaginaries and expressions are already shared and accepted by their imagined communities as received truth claims. These religious third spaces in the digital realm can thus be significant performative sites where not only unitary and formal structures of religious knowledge and practice, but also received senses of authenticity, authority, and community can be revised and transformed.

The argument thus is that the evolution of digital media has substantially changed the grounds, the structures, and the practices that define religion today. Fundamental characteristics of mediated religion (that is, of religion mediated by the modern "media" of communication), have not substantially changed, but have been instantiated in new ways in an era where the logics of the digital have come to the fore. The characteristics of religion in the media age: autonomy, commodification, struggles over authority and over the

definition of both private and public practice, continue to define the social and cultural meanings of religion today.

Future Directions

We have painted a picture of the developing field of media and religion studies as it relates to the social scientific study of religion in terms of movements to newer paradigms that are more interdisciplinary and more focused on interpretive approaches to culture than was the case in the past. There is an inescapable reality at the center of this research, however: the fact of the media as a set of institutions and practices. The organizations, structures, artifacts, and practices that constitute what we over-simply call "the media" are unique and particular in their economic, cultural, and social sources and locations. They are centrally about cultural products and representations and the practices that surround them, and the sociology of religion must necessarily focus in those directions.

The seeming narrowness of that focus belies, though, broader and farther-reaching historical and theoretical questions. The first among these is the question of whether the media support religion as a solipsistic "language game" around its artifacts and practices, or whether something more substantive and significant may be happening. We can see mediated religion and religious practice as a strategy fitted to late-modern rationalization of a differentiated religious project, or we can see these phenomena serving the construction of new forms of religion that reparticularize religion in the context of a new, global culture. The agenda is thus a large and ever expanding one.

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Part II

Religious Organization

Nancy T. Ammerman

Abstract

This chapter examines three typical forms of religious organization – congregations, denominations, and religious special purpose groups. Using insights from cultural and ecological theories of organizations, it is argued that religious organizations are always shaped both by their own internal cultural traditions and by the cultural, legal, and other contextual forces of their environments. Internal dynamics include size, resources, race, status, and gender, in addition to the official systems of authority prescribed by religious traditions. All of that exists within a pervasive organizational template that prescribes (through institutional isomorphism) the kinds of activities and functions congregations and denominations are expected to undertake. The external environment includes an organization's niche in the social and geographic ecology, but it also includes the historical roles and legal regulations that constrain religious organizing. Denominations and religious special purpose groups are institutionalized forms of organization that extend religious work beyond local communities, but they depend on states that are willing to recognize plural and public forms of religious activity. Future research is needed to allow a more thoroughly comparative analysis of the organizational forms of religious life.

Religion exists in many social forms, from identities and ideas to material objects and social interactions. It permeates virtually every institutional sector of society. Yet its most visible form

may be the organizations that create and maintain religious ideas, rituals, objects, identities, and more. “Organized religion” is often a euphemism for the traditions that modern individuals reject, but the sociologist cannot afford to ignore the fact that religion *is* organized. This chapter will examine three institutionalized forms of religious organization – congregations, denominations, and special purpose groups. While these forms may seem prototypically American (and much of

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the research is from the United States), we will look at how common institutional templates also shape religious organizations across traditions and cultures. As DiMaggio (1988, p. 7) noted, “because much religious activity is institutionalized and carried out through formal organizations...students of religion may have something to learn from the experience of their colleagues in the organizations field.” We will look, therefore, to the cultural and ecological turn in organizational studies for insight, drawing on research from diverse religious communities to sketch out an organizational view of religion.

In turning attention to the institutionalized organizational forms of religion, it is important to retain a focus on both the internal cultural particularities that shape religious organizations and the external cultural contexts in which they exist. Religious organizations do have a moral and spiritual dimension that sets them apart from other organizational types, but that hardly constitutes the singular unique institutional logic postulated by Friedland and Alford (1991). Being “religious” is not reducible to being oriented to doctrine or otherworldliness. We will take religious organizational cultures seriously, but that means that we cannot assume that all religious messages have the logical consequences their words seem to imply. As in all organizations, stated goals and cultural patterns are not identical. Those internal cultural patterns are shaped by specific religious traditions, by forces of race and class, and by dynamics of power and conflict, goals and strategies, growth and decline.

In addition, we will examine religious organizations in their specific cultural, legal, and historical context. We will ask about both the immediate context in which organizations exist and the larger national and transnational forces at work, paying special attention to the regulatory role of the state. Each nation has created different prescribed and/or possible organizational structures, with different relationships to the state, different sources of support, different degrees of competition among religious groups, and different responsibilities for key lifecycle rituals and certifications (Messner 2015). All of those legal realities, along with each society’s unique cul-

tural history, mean that the study of religious organizations must always be context specific. We may be able to identify important factors that have an effect across cultural lines, but we should expect organizational fields to be fundamentally shaped by the specific national regulatory regime within which they operate.

Forming distinct organizations for religious purposes is largely a “modern” phenomenon. Some have argued that it is so distinctly Western (and indeed Protestant) that the very category “religion,” with its organizational implications, should be considered a colonizing project (Asad 1993). Whether in the West or elsewhere, there is a modernizing logic in the formation of rationalized and professionalized bureaucracies (Chaves 1993; Weber 1922 [1963]). Still, there are precursors that suggest a religious urge to organize that goes beyond the desires of modernizing bureaucrats. Jews organized their first synagogues in Babylon in the sixth century BCE (Levine 2000), the Tokugawa dynasty in Japan created something like state-imposed denominational structures on Buddhism in the seventeenth century (Horii 2006), and Catholic missionary orders were arguably the first religious transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Davies 2014).

Congregations, denominations, and religious special purpose groups, modern and Western as they may be, are organizational forms with wide geographic and historical significance. They constitute organizational fields, as that term is commonly used by institutional theorists (Powell and DiMaggio 1991). As we will explore below, both local religious gatherings (congregations) and national religious bodies (denominations) respond to isomorphic pressures from their organizational environment, resulting in similarities in structure and function that often transcend differences in theology and religious authority. Religious special purpose groups often belong, additionally, to the organizational field that corresponds to their particular activity – overseas relief and development or bookselling, for instance. In each case, we will look at religious organizations as *organizations*, and as *religious organizations*.

Congregations

Elsewhere I have defined congregations as “locally-situated, multi-generational, voluntary organizations of people who identify themselves as a distinct religious group and engage in a broad range of religious activities together” (Ammerman 2009, p. 259). The occasional rituals and offerings at temples and mosques around the world do not fit a congregational model. What distinguishes this organizational form is not only its local and religious character, but its face-to-face interaction, sense of belonging, and multi-purpose social form.

The study of congregations is much more common now than it was a generation ago, and its revival was born primarily in the domain of American Mainline Protestantism. Noting that neither religious leaders nor sociologists were paying appreciable attention to local congregations, the 1986 *Handbook for Congregational Studies* (Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney 1986) signaled new academic and theological attention. Since that time, both scholars and practitioners have shifted their focus so that a considerable body of literature is available for examining the organizational dynamics of congregations. Like the *Handbook* itself (and its successor, *Studying Congregations* (Ammerman, et al. 1998)), much of that literature follows the lead of students of formal organizations in focusing attention on goals and strategies, structures and resources. The effort has been to understand the formal and informal mechanisms by which congregations and other religious organizations do their work.

Congregation as Organization and Institution

The idea of looking at religious organizations as goal oriented and rationally organized was articulated a generation ago by Winter (1967). It was clear to Winter that religious organizations were not as “nonrational” and theologically-driven as either they or their observers often claimed. Following Weber (1947), religions had been dubbed “traditional” forms of organization rather

than modern ones, following “normative” goals (Etzioni 1961) or pursuing ultimate truths (Friedland and Alford 1991) rather than rational ones. Winter asserted that religious organizations, just like other organized agencies in modern society, had adopted bureaucratic structures and processes. There were rules and flow charts, short- and long-term goals and quantifiable measures of success. This rationalized pattern has always been easier to see at the level of national denominations than at the level of local congregations (a point to which we will return below), but Winter and his colleagues in that first generation of analysts pointed the way toward a recognition that religious organizations were not immune from the organizational demands of the social and cultural world in which they existed.

Today, most organizational theorists find it more plausible to believe that religious organizations have this-worldly goals and structures than to believe that *any* organization is finally “rational.” Students of congregations, no less than students of other organizations, question the degree to which stated goals are widely shared and official structures actually govern. While no one has proposed a “garbage can model” (March 1978) of congregational decision making, many observers have noted that unspoken values (honoring the ancestors or maintaining social status, for instance) have often guided congregational action as surely as any theologically-informed “mission statement.” What congregations do and how they choose to do it are a complex mix of tradition and rationality, of cultural meaning and pragmatic organization.

Like all organizations, for instance, congregations are confronted with the challenge of accumulating sufficient resources to pursue organizational goals. The actual range of activities undertaken by a given congregation is strongly affected by simple organizational facts like the number of active participants and the size of the budget (Ammerman 2005; Pinto and Crow 1982). In societies that support religious organizations through taxes or other means, this tie between attendance and organizational capacity is less present. Lutheran churches in Sweden can maintain extensive facilities, staff, and programs,

despite drawing a tiny proportion of the population to their services (Church of Sweden 2005). In the U.S., however, the voluntary nature of congregations makes them highly dependent on the willingness of participants to contribute their time, skill, and money to the collective work of the group (McKinney 1998). Unlike businesses that are concerned with markets and profits and products, congregations as voluntary organizations produce less tangible things, like worship services, educational programs, social activities, and works of service, which flow largely from their own collective participation (Wuthnow 1994). Both their organizational goals and the resources to pursue those goals are generated in the voluntary, face-to-face interaction of the group. In contrast, where congregations are understood as a public good, they may generate resources from relative strangers who nevertheless support specific artistic or service goals, or simply want to ensure that congregations are available for civic events and life cycle rituals—something Davie (2006) has called “vicarious religion.”

To the extent that a local congregation has the ability to identify its own goals and seek its own resources, there will be questions of internal communication, authority, and power. Like other modern organizations, many congregations – especially those in the mainstream Protestant traditions – have committees and councils, long-range plans and mission statements. But also like those other organizations, congregations are likely to approach a new challenge with existing (sometimes outmoded) strategic solutions and just as likely to communicate via water coolers as via official newsletters. As Dudley (1998) has noted, a congregation’s informal modes of communication and decision-making can either subvert or facilitate formal organizational procedures. The intricate negotiations by which systems of congregational power and status are maintained make for lively reading in case studies such as Heilman’s (1976) description of a modern Orthodox synagogue, Warner’s (1988) description of a California Presbyterian church, and Williams’ (1974) description of an urban African American Pentecostal church.

More recently, researchers have drawn attention to the potent role of gender and race in shaping congregational participation and power (Whitehead 2013a). Race and ethnicity remain potent factors in sorting populations into distinct congregations, a pattern to which we will return below, but within congregations both race and gender are organizing forces. Edwards (2008) demonstrates that in multi-racial congregations, white norms are likely to guide worship and decision-making styles; and Cobb and associates (2015) add that white norms for explaining racial disparities are likely to prevail, as well (see also Dougherty and Huyser 2008). Gilkes (2001) identified both the essential role of women in Black Churches and the complicated trade-offs that allow men to retain patriarchal power. For immigrant women, there are similar ambiguities, with new organizational leadership roles often available in the U.S. context, while ritual leadership remains in men’s hands (Ebaugh and Chafetz 1999). Chen (2008) and others (see, e.g., George 1998) have described the complicated role played by congregations in the gender transitions negotiated by immigrants, with shifting sources of social status for women and men alike.

In each case, organizational patterns are determined both by official rules and by local adaptations. In the officially-hierarchical Catholic parishes Ecklund (2006) studied, for instance, the empowerment of women was related to the larger pattern of lay participation in the church. The matter of clergy leadership, however, is more strictly governed by the rules of the religious tradition (but also, as Chaves [1997] shows, by the organizational environment in which those traditions are located). This and other questions of religion and gender have been extremely lively areas of research. Much of that literature has addressed family, sexuality, and law, but where it describes religious organizations, there are numerous examples of women’s spaces that provide opportunities for empowerment (Brasher 1998; Mahmood 2005; Rinaldo 2013; Warner 1993). Whether inside an existing congregation or parallel to it, women’s organized religious spaces are important sites of study.

The human dynamics of congregational life have also been visible in the variety of studies concerned with conflict. As Ellison and associates (2009) document, congregational conflict increases negative interactions and decreases the sense of social support members feel. Both relationships and symbols take on a high degree of salience in congregations, and strained relationships and disputed symbols can easily result in schism. Zuckerman (1998) carefully traced those factors in the break-up of the Oregon Jewish temple he observed. He also noted the degree to which differing external political and cultural alliances seeped into the congregation and exacerbated internal antagonisms. That link between external and internal is also noted by Shin and Park (1988) in their study of schisms in Korean-American churches. Competition for leadership and status (and limited external opportunities) sometimes made schism a logical organizational alternative for innovative and ambitious lay and clergy leaders. It is certainly true that congregations sometimes fight over ideas and theologies; the contentious issue of homosexuality is but the most recent example (Brittain and McKinnon 2011; Hartman 1998; Moon 2004; Whitehead 2013b). They also divide when spaces for innovation are not sufficient, when members do not agree on modes of governance or leadership (Dollhopf and Scheitle 2013), and when members hold different understandings about congregational goals. The mix of relational, ideological, and pragmatic dynamics can make voluntarily-organized congregations especially vulnerable to conflict.

Becker's (1999) examination of congregational conflict was built around her insight that there are different institutional models of congregational life; that is, bundles of expectations and practices that go together to shape what a congregation does and how it does it. Over the last decade, an increasing body of research has documented the degree to which "congregation" itself serves as an organizational template (an institution) that shapes the activities and relationships of religious groups we might not otherwise have expected to see in that form. Wind and Lewis (1994) provided the historical context for this

insight in a set of case studies from diverse religious traditions in the U.S.. Drawing on those examinations of local religious life, Holifield (1994) identified a series of organizational patterns that have shaped congregational life in the United States. In each period of history, he noted, congregations across religious traditions tended to conform to similar organizational patterns. Reflecting on that same set of historical case studies, Warner (1994) noted what he called "de facto congregationalism" as the typical pattern for local religious groups. No matter what their official theology proclaims about the purposes of local assemblies and their prescribed mode of governance, in the U.S. religion is "congregational." Religious groups assume that they can voluntarily form, that they should govern their own affairs, and that their own participation and leadership are necessary for carrying on the religious tradition (see also Dolan's [1994] discussion of these effects on Catholic parishes). Warner (1994) describes the typical organizational pattern as functionally diffuse (almost any activity can be justified as legitimate), affectively significant for their participants, normatively particularistic (guided, that is, by particular, rather than universal criteria), and collectivity-oriented (concerned with the collective welfare of the group, but a group that is chosen rather than ascribed).

The pervasiveness of de facto congregationalism in the U.S. has been further documented as researchers have explored the many religious associations being formed by the "new immigrants" that have joined the American population since 1965 (Biney 2011; Kim 2010; Kurien 2007; Warner and Wittner 1998). Many are being absorbed into existing religious institutions, most notably the Catholic church (Murillo 2009). But many others are forming religious societies that are looking increasingly like the Protestant congregations that have preceded them. Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000b) carefully examined structural factors such as lay leadership, professional clergy, membership lists, and member financing and found that most of the immigrant groups they studied were significantly congregationalized. Most had also adopted various "community

center” functions to provide social benefits to their members, in addition to facilitating religious obligation and transmission of tradition. Such congregations have also been identified as significant mechanisms for civic incorporation (Foley and Hoge 2007; Kniss and Numrich 2007).

Such structural adaptation is best explained by the forces of institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Organizations come to resemble similar organizations in their “field” both through imitation and through compliance with regulation. Congregations in most societies register their existence with the state, and that may result in both restrictions and privileges, sometimes negotiated in a delicate dance with local authorities, as Huang has documented in a Chinese community (Huang 2014). In the U.S., congregations usually obtain tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service so that contributions can be reported by participants as tax-exempt charitable donations. Both the need for legal status and other basic organizational functions push groups toward having boards of trustees and designated leaders. Having a building, a phone, an internet site, a leader, a board, a membership list, and a schedule of recognizably-religious services and activities lends legitimacy to the group *as* a congregation, and those common organizational features make communication and cooperation among congregations more possible.

The presence of an organizational template is also discernable in the very range of religious services and activities a congregation is expected to provide. Most basically, congregations are expected to organize opportunities for worship; and when they do, they use a predictable range of ritual activities, almost always including group singing and an inspirational talk (Chaves 2004). What a congregation teaches is shaped by its own particular tradition, but that they have an organized weekly program of children’s religious education is nearly universal, again shaped by that larger culturally-determined organizational template. What they do when they get together for fun may vary from bingo to quilting, but that they organize some sort of social activities is part

of what the larger culture expects. And as soon as they have sufficient resources, American culture also expects a congregation to organize some sort of outreach into the community and the world. The culture provides an organizational blueprint, even if the materials are highly variable (Ammerman 2005).

Organizational Cultures in Congregations

As local religious gatherings, the interaction of participants is shaped by more than pragmatic and legal necessities. Like all social collectives, congregations are structured by cultural patterns and expectations. Each group constructs its own physical spaces and artifacts, its own set of expected activities, and its own symbolic accounts of what is important and why (Ammerman 1998). Lichterman (2012) describes the “styles” of action that evolve for different kinds of religious (and secular) settings, recognizing that culture is enacted in these gatherings as people voice prayers deemed appropriate to the group at hand. Styles, artifacts, and symbols are all on display, as well, in how congregations enact their primary ritual events. Even the most casual congregation worshipping in borrowed space is still likely to hang banners, light candles, hear a call to prayer, or shake hands in ways that carry symbolic meanings that speak to the religious identity they seek to embody. In turn, gathering for worship, especially where that worship engenders a sense of awe, is among the most potent mechanisms in building congregational cohesion (Krause and Hayward 2015).

There are, of course, larger institutional and cultural continuities across the local variations. The National Congregations Study has continued to document both continuities and variations in the ritual elements common to worship in American congregations. Describing an overall trend toward more “informal” worship from 1998 to 2012, the authors of that study report that more people now attend worship services where drums, dancing, and overhead projection are present, and fewer attend where there are choirs and printed

programs (Chaves and Anderson 2014, p. 682). All of those elements are recognized as potential parts of a congregational worship service, but the way they are included and combined reflects cultural trends over time, as well as the particular cultural location of the congregation itself.

Immigrant congregations often include distinct patterns shaped by their native language and culture, and negotiating a combination of old and new cultures is something increasingly common in congregations (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000a; Murillo 2009). Hoover (2014) has shown what that looks like in a “shared parish,” where both immigrants and non-immigrants occupy space and time – and construct their own cultures – within Catholic parishes. Often the sharing is across generations, as younger adults, who may no longer speak the immigrant language, seek to make a congregation their own (Chong 1998; Kim 2010; Yang 2004). There are numerous cultural pulls for these immigrant congregations, including those from existing American traditions and networks (Chou and Russell 2006).

Broad streams of religious tradition shape the range and content of congregational activity among non-immigrants, as well. In the U.S., Mainline Protestants, Conservative Protestants, African American Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and others have each created organizational expectations that bring together their own theologies with their distinctive relationships with American culture (Ammerman 2005). In African American churches, for instance, theology and social history combine to encourage congregations that are highly participatory, intensely spiritual, and deeply involved in community betterment (Collier-Thomas 2010; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Nelson 2005).

That there is a recognizable “Black Church” speaks to the fundamental way race has shaped American congregational life, as well. After two centuries of separate existence, African American and Anglo-American worshippers have developed quite different expectations for what the culture of a congregation should be. Patillo-McCoy (1998) notes how strategic elements of that church culture also find their way into other sectors of community life, including politics (see

also Perrin 2005). From the authority of the pastor to norms for dress and decorum, cultural distinctions are often most apparent when well-intentioned people seek to bridge them (Priest and Priest 2007). A growing number of white Americans now participate in congregations that have at least twenty percent non-white membership (Chaves and Anderson 2014), but genuinely multi-cultural congregations present significant challenges. A growing body of research has addressed the symbolic and practical strategies employed by American congregations that seek to bring diverse ethnic groups together under one congregational roof (Emerson 2003; Marti 2012). We know very little, however, about the way ethnicity and ethnic difference shape congregational life in other parts of the world.

Almost as pronounced as the ethnic cultural divides are those centered on social class and education. The cultures built by congregations inevitably reflect the particular cultural tools available to the participants, and the preferences and skills attached to class standing inevitably make their way into congregations based on voluntary membership (Schwadel 2012). Even where outside authorities assign participants to a particular local place of worship, class-based housing patterns may result in equally class-distinct congregations. Class boundaries may not be strong enough to exclude people who do not “fit” (Reimer 2007), but they do shape the organizational culture of the congregation (Sample 1996).

Among the primary latent functions of congregations is, in fact, the transmission and preservation of subcultural identities, including those that preserve difference. As Warner points out, the U.S. has made religion “presumptively legitimate,” so that “religious difference is the most legitimate cultural difference” (Warner 1999, p. 236). That impulse to preserve and celebrate religious and cultural difference is especially evident in the work of immigrant congregations. They gather to worship, but they also eat together, teach each other (and their children) the songs of their homeland, provide spaces for wearing traditional clothing and doing traditional

dances – and, of course, speaking the traditional language (Ebaugh and Chafetz 1999; Kwon et al. 2001; Warner and Wittner 1998). In the process, they may also provide valuable practical and moral support in the transition to a new culture (Mooney 2009). A similar cultural role has long been played by African American churches and Jewish synagogues. American Jews have often found themselves on the outside of a pervasively Christian culture, and synagogue life has provided a safe space in which to reinforce and celebrate – and often rekindle and reinvent — a religious and cultural tradition (Prell 2000). For still other reasons, Christian fundamentalists have found congregations equally essential in their fight to preserve the sort of Christian way of life they desire (Ammerman 1987).

All of these groups, existing on the outside of a white, mainstream-Christian, native-born American culture have found congregations essential cultural spaces. Only recently, however, have sociologists turned their attention to the cultural traditions being preserved in the white Mainline Protestant churches themselves. Their very position at the center of the culture, combined with their liberal and ecumenical theologies of inclusiveness, conspired to emphasize the absence of boundaries and the illusion that theirs was merely ordinary culture (Hoge, Johnson, and Luidens 1994). Making the distinctiveness of Mainline culture apparent, Wellman (1999) has chronicled the history of Chicago's Fourth Presbyterian Church, and Sack (2000) has highlighted the role of food in the culture of "white-bread Protestants," as he calls them. Bendroth (2002) places family at the center of her focus, describing how assumptions about family life have shaped the rhetoric and practices of white Protestant congregations (see also Edgell 2005; Marler 1995). Generational shifts in economic life and family formation, in turn, affect these normative links between community citizenship and congregational participation (Wuthnow 2007).

The link between religious participation and citizenship has represented a lively area of research since the mid-1990s, spurred both by

attention to "social capital" and by changes in patterns of social welfare provision. The role of congregations in generating trust, communication channels, and habits of collective labor was most exhaustively documented in Putnam and Campbell's *American Grace* (2010), but has been treated in numerous other studies (Seymour, et al. 2014; Smidt 2003). We have seen that congregations are especially critical for relatively disempowered people. Mooney (2009) shows, for instance, that the existence of a voluntary, immigrant-defined religious space marked a critical difference between the experience of Haitians in Miami and those in more state-controlled Paris or Montreal. Among the many things accomplished within such voluntary spaces is the creation and enhancement of civic skills of communication, planning, and decision-making (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). In his study of Latin American pentecostalism, Martin (1990) argues that such processes also work in societies not yet fully democratic. The pentecostal emphasis on the "gift of tongues" means that everyone is given a voice, and anyone can participate.

The degree to which social and civic consequences arise seems not so much a matter of theology, but of congregational size (smaller better than larger), opportunities for engagement, and participatory style (Bane 2005; DiSalvo 2008; Lichterman 2007). Similarly, in the U.S., community volunteering beyond the congregation (Merino 2013), as well as individual well-being and health (Ellison and George 1994; Idler 2014), have been linked especially to the networks of relationship and support in congregations. Local face-to-face interaction seems to be the causal mechanism that explains much of the oft-noted correlation between "religion" and these social consequences. The work of Lim and his colleagues (Lim and MacGregor 2012; Lim and Putnam 2010) has been especially critical in pointing to congregational relationships and participation as the social dynamic driving the effects of religion on social and individual well-being.

Congregations in an Organizational Ecology

The study of congregations has, then, taught us a good deal about the basic organizational practices and structures that constitute this particular form of voluntary organization. We have learned about the internal dynamics of cultural reproduction, as well as the internal politics of these local religious gatherings. We have also begun to take account of the way congregations are situated in a larger organizational and cultural ecology. Taking a cue from others interested in the ecological pressures on organizations, several recent studies have given attention to places, networks, competition, and adaptation. Neitz (2005) reminds us that for rural congregations, the relevant environment includes historic buildings and cemeteries, emigration of old populations and immigration of new ones, as well as the natural landscape itself. In a very different place, Wedam (2003) describes the particular organizational effects produced by being located in an elite urban corridor at the social and geographical center of Indianapolis culture, while Farnsley (2000) analyzes the community relationships typical of congregations in other neighborhoods of that same city. McRoberts (2003) shows how factors ranging from the availability of empty storefronts to the history of housing discrimination have combined to concentrate a high density of small congregations in one Boston neighborhood. Religious traditions themselves play a role, as well. Gamm (1999) documents the very different approaches to territory exhibited by Roman Catholics (who stayed) and Jewish congregations (who left) in response to racial change in city neighborhoods (see also McGreevy 1996). Different kinds of neighborhoods, different kinds of property, and different demographic realities create organizational constraints on congregational mission, resources, and activities (Sinha, et al. 2007).

As the ecology of urban life changes, the relationship between congregations and their communities is both a matter of physical space and of social niche (Ammerman 1997; Numrich and Wedam 2015). This sort of environmental adap-

tation and response is another of the foci of an ecological approach to congregational organizations. Like other organizations, congregations do best in situations where a likely clientele can easily access what they have to offer and less well when separated from those likely participants. In a study of congregations in nine U.S. communities, the effects of different kinds of environmental change and typical patterns of adaptation were apparent (Ammerman 1997). For instance, congregations that were geared to middle-class home-owning families found a population shift to transient singles and immigrant newcomers especially difficult. While congregations do die (Anderson, et al. 2008), they actually take much longer to go out of existence than would a similarly-stressed business or civic group. On the other hand, nearly twenty percent of all the congregations located in the communities Ammerman studied were less than 10 years old, meaning that the overall population of congregations was at least stable, if not growing. Both birth and death are part of the organizational ecology of congregations.

While structural adaptation is less common, there are many examples of innovative congregational responses to the environmental challenges they face. The crisis created by the HIV/AIDS epidemic spawned new messages and new programming in the congregation Leong (2006) studied. In Malawi, Trinitapoli and Weinreb (2012) documented similarly innovative responses, as well as some predictable resistance to accommodation. The post-Boomer generational trend toward disaffiliation has meant a sense of crisis for many congregations (Wuthnow 2007), but others have begun to “deconstruct” and reconstruct ways of congregating (Martí and Ganiel 2014). While some external issues become sites of internal conflict, as we saw above, the same issues can be the occasion for other congregations to create new cultural and institutional patterns. This may be especially likely, as Adler (2012) found, where there is already a pattern of “boundary spanning” practices that can bridge existing structures to emerging challenges.

Among students of organizational ecology, questions of density, dispersion, and competition

have also been raised (Scheitle and Dougherty 2008). Boone and colleagues (2012) demonstrate the link between population diversity and organizational diversity by studying the history of a Dutch city. As the population got more diverse, the number of different kinds of congregations increased. Eiesland's (1997) study of an exurban community outside Atlanta shows, for instance, how the presence of a single megachurch forced all the other congregations to redefine their mission and strategy – some more successfully than others. Wilford (2012), himself a geographer, shows how such a megachurch is likely to be keenly attuned to the spatial patterns of interaction in such exurbs. Ebaugh and her colleagues (2000) carefully mapped the immigrant congregations in Houston and assessed the residential dispersion of their members. They propose that “parish” and “niche” are two ends of a continuum of ecological types that must take both spatial dispersion and the number of competing congregations into account. The study of congregations, then, has begun to draw significantly on insights about density and competition, inertia and adaptation.

All of this attention to the external context of congregations stands in a long line of research that has been especially inspired by the Mainline Protestant theological concern for civic engagement. In the early twentieth century, H. Paul Douglass pioneered sociological research on the relationship between congregational strategy and context (Douglass 1927). That legacy was continued in studies such as *Varieties of Religious Presence* (Roozen, McKinney, and Carroll 1984), which documented typical congregational “mission orientations,” and the work of Livesey's (2000) team in documenting the changing public role of congregations in Chicago. Each has sought to understand how changing social conditions affect the ability of congregations to carry out their service to the community.

Among the most important – and least researched – dimensions of religious organizational ecology is the role of the state. In the U.S., religiously diverse almost from the beginning, the Constitution forbade the state to support any particular religious group, but also left each

group free to pursue its own agenda (Butler 1990). The fact of constitutive pluralism, Greeley (1972) asserted, is the key to understanding the religious history that has followed. And the voluntary character of American religious life is the key, Warner (1993) argues, to understanding the relative vitality of U.S. religion, when compared to the secularization European theorists had expected to prevail. Disestablishment created a space where all sorts of religious and social diversity could flourish, and that diversity has taken organizational form. Religious organizations in the U.S., then, must be understood in the context of their peculiar role as separate from, yet protected by, the state. With neither state requirements nor state support, voluntary groups of religious practitioners have been left free to create whatever organizations they desired; and the state, in turn, was prohibited from all but the most basic regulation of their activity.

That relative absence of regulation is by no means the norm in the world (see Fox's chapter on “Comparative Politics” in this volume). Whether limiting who can preach and what they can say or simply declaring some (or all) religious practice illegal, religious restrictions abound (Finke and Martin 2014; Qadir 2015; Tamadonfar and Jelen 2013). In other cases, certain religions may be favored by the state, with their congregations subsidized and their clergy supported; but that in turn entails a high degree of control. In some European contexts, for instance, it is precisely through the training and support of imams that governments are seeking to ensure moderation (Jödicke and Rota 2014; Oxford Analytica 2006). In China, as Yang (2012) describes, the religious ecology includes official state-sanctioned religious groups (the “red market”), clearly illegal religious activity (the “black market”), and an in-between grey market where “house churches” and other local religious activity may be tolerated. Analyses of the organizational effects of variation in regulation are just beginning to appear, however.

The state has also been a key player in the ecology of congregational life as welfare regimes have increasingly devolved from centralized and comprehensive service provision to local

partnerships. In Europe, these changes in welfare regimes have called attention to the extensive role of religious organizations in the delivery of social services (Bäckström and Davie 2010) and to the way religious traditions have shaped the welfare expectations and structures present in various societies (Manow and van Kersbergen 2009). As we will see below, however, the primary organizational partner for the state in service provision is not congregations, but special purpose groups. And, as congregations navigate a complex organizational ecology dominated by state bureaucracies, they most often look to the larger religious organizations to which they are connected.

Denominations

Those larger organizations are typically referred to as denominations – more and less bureaucratically organized, usually at the national level, and charged with supporting (and sometimes regulating) the groups and traditions that share a religious identity. Organizing denominations is a relatively new religious phenomenon in the long view of human history. Denominations stand in contrast to any culture in which religion is a taken-for-granted part of the whole society. Theologian Ernst Troeltsch (1931) described the Christian version of such all-encompassing structures as “Church,” while the small dissenting groups he saw in Europe he called “sects.” His student, H. Richard Niebuhr (1929), writing about the U.S., noted that “denominations,” like sects, depend on voluntary adherence for their membership. At the same time, like a Church, they mingle religious and social allegiances, often wrapping social divisions in a religious mantle. Sociologists and historians would not disagree with Niebuhr about the ways in which denominations enshrine a combination of religious and social differences.

What sociologists would add is that denominations are a mechanism for legitimizing and regulating religious diversity. In fact, the notion of a social system that forces each religious group to recognize the legitimacy of other religious

groups is often seen as part of the genius of the American political system. By allowing religious groups to organize – as narrowly or as comprehensively as they might choose – the U.S. Constitution created a space for this distinctive form of national religious organization (Greeley 1972). And like congregations, voluntarily-organized denominations are subject to the same cycles of birth, death, and merger (Chaves and Sutton 2004; Liebman, Sutton, and Wuthnow 1988), as well as the same institutionalized expectations about what they will do and how.

While the term “denomination” is often used to denote particular theological traditions and/or the clusters of practices and people who identify with those traditions (Lutheranism and Lutherans, for instance), our concern here is with the organizations those people create (Ammerman 1994). A denomination in this sense is a trans-local cluster of mutually-identified religious organizations, developed by their members, and existing alongside other, similarly constructed, but each more-or-less-distinct religious groups.

Denominations vary widely in the type of authority they exercise within that cluster of organizations. Unlike a business franchise that can ensure standardization of products and control the use of its “brand” (including logos), denominations may or may not control local programming, own local property, train and place local clergy, and the like (Cantrell, Krile, and Donohue 1983). Even those with the most seemingly-hierarchical religious authority may not centralize their functional agencies into a tightly-linked system. There are, for instance, dozens of officially-Catholic agencies (from publishers to charities) that have no functional links among themselves. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Southern Baptists have a theology that enshrines the “local autonomy” of each church; but a single system of state and national agencies is held together by a unified system of finances that originates with gifts from those churches. Between those two forms of authority (referred to theologically as forms of “polity”) are a number of denominations with a mixture of national control (ownership of property, for instance) and

local choice (over clergy hiring, for instance). Polity, then, does make a difference in how a denomination operates, but not a straightforward one. Hierarchies can enforce unpopular policies, as Methodists did when southern churches resisted civil rights (Wood 1970), and they can also limit the flexibility and sense of belonging in congregations, as when new immigrants seek to find their place (Lam 2009). A strong authority structure can compel high rates of financial contribution from their member congregations, as well (Ammerman 2005).

In the U.S., denominations – no matter their polity – largely operate by functional, pragmatic rules, organizing to accomplish necessary tasks and following rational bureaucratic norms (Chaves 1993; Harrison 1959). Primer (1978) documented the early-twentieth-century adoption of these rationalized structures (see also Weeks 1992). Even as “non-modern” a group as the Amish has created a “steering committee” that can perform for them many of the functions performed by the executives and specialists found in the headquarters of other groups (Olshan 1990). Within each denomination, the norms and values prescribed by the religious tradition exist alongside the professionalized codes modern organizations expect, but that is but a very particular version of the way organizational culture and organizational goals are often in tension in bureaucracies.

As we have seen with congregations, denominations are, in fact, subject to the pressures of institutional isomorphism. There are activities (publishing, mission work, and the like) and ways of organizing (boards and budgets and credentialed staff) that all denominations are expected to exhibit. The typical organizational template includes a headquarters building with multiple specialized departments to administer functions such as educational programs, pension plans, and the like. Even the training and credentialing of clergy have been professionalized and standardized, across denominational traditions (Finke 1994; Perl and Chang 2000). This predictable institutional form is most likely to be found in the U.S. among moderate and liberal Protestant denominations, where virtually all have adopted

centralized and rationalized methods of organizing. However, even the professionalized Mainline Protestants are experiencing a weakening of their national organizations, largely due to declines in funding and consequent cutbacks in the projects and services denominations can undertake (Chaves and Anderson 2014).

There are, however, sectors of the denominational field that have never opted for the standard organizational template. One of those sectors comprises the historic African American denominations. Black Baptists sponsor only minimal national collective enterprises and have virtually no national professional staff. Even the National Baptists’ headquarters building in Nashville is more a meeting house than an office building. The Church of God in Christ and Black Methodist denominations have created a somewhat more elaborate structure of professional offices and services, but what holds all these groups together is a sense of camaraderie and fellowship, fostered especially by large annual gatherings to which large church delegations are likely to go (Ammerman 2005). The dominant collective metaphor in the National Baptist Convention is “family” more than corporation, and what the family does is have an annual reunion (Morris and Lee 2004). Not all national religious organizations, then, have fully adopted the predictable corporate form. Even some of those that had now seem to be reversing the trend, as Wittberg (2006) documents among some Catholic religious orders.

Still, there is substantial mimetic isomorphism among denominations, producing organizations that look alike even when the religious traditions themselves are quite different. As institutional theorists would predict, there is regulatory pressure, as well. The credentialing of military chaplains in the U.S., for instance, requires endorsement from a religious group that has been officially registered as a denomination with the Pentagon. In the 1990s, this process effectively signaled that dissident Southern Baptists who had formed a new “Cooperative Baptist Fellowship” had become a separate and distinct religious body. Functionally the Fellowship had already followed the mimetic denominational

pattern, and this added the regulatory dimension (Ammerman 2002).

Outside the U.S., national denominational organizations are similarly in place, often to enable the state to regulate and administer religion. There may, for instance, be a tax system that allows citizens to designate a portion of what they pay to one of an official list of religious groups. There may be official regulations for the education and certification of clergy that are administered through each denomination. In some places a small core of top religious officials effectively assist in political governance, while elsewhere states have attempted tight restraint that usually depends on religious officials willing to cooperate (Finke and Martin 2014; Froese 2004; Yang 2012).

The established institutional forms present in European religion have evolved from a history of Christian monopoly, through a period of Reformation and religious wars into a system of *cuius regio, eius religio* (“whose region, his religion”), seeking to quell the conflict by setting religious and political boundaries in tandem. Until well into the twentieth century, most European countries had a single established state church and, at best, tolerated certain dissenting groups (Knippenberg 2006). Since the middle of the twentieth century, state churches have given up some of their legal privilege, and the space permitted to various Christian and Jewish groups has expanded. In more recent years, however, European systems have been seriously strained by a much wider diversity of religious groups (Bowen 2010; Davie 2000). The presence of a significant number of Muslims throughout Europe has precipitated new and modified organizational forms. Muslims have had to organize something like denominations, while governments have had to modify many of their organizational expectations (Oxford Analytica 2006).

Elsewhere in the world, one of the most striking organizational developments has been the formation of transnational religious networks (Offutt 2015, see also Offutt and Miller’s chapter on “Transnationalism” in this volume). The Embassy of the Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations, for instance, is headquartered in Kiev,

led by a Nigerian-born pastor, and claims over two hundred affiliated congregations in thirty-five countries (God’s Embassy International 2015). Such networks often connect immigrants with familiar religious practices, and allow a remarkably global exchange of products, knowledge, ideas, and practices.

Conservative (white) Protestant groups in the U.S., similarly, have created networks that fill some denomination-like functions, but eschew others. Without centrally-funded pension boards, official publishing houses, and other denominational agencies, congregations connected to these networks nevertheless can often name a consistent set of ministries they (generously) support, curricula they use, and forms of worship they share (Ammerman 2005; Marti 2005). The Willow Creek Association, for instance, is a dues-based membership association that provides a variety of educational materials and training events for its members, but does not ask them to leave their primary denominational home. A second model brings together an informal network of churches that shares a loose sense of identity, fellowship, and accountability – a model adopted by World Ministry Fellowship, the Victory Outreach network, the Potters House Fellowship, and many others. Still another model is being forged by “nondenominational” churches. Many of them see denominational labels as distracting (Sargeant 2000), but most are nevertheless identifiable both by their evangelical or pentecostal cultural style and by the particular range of independent schools, publishers, and mission agencies with which they work (Thumma 1999). Ironically, being nondenominational may begin to function as a “denominational” identity, a particular cultural and organizational model of its own.

As forms of connection evolve, it remains the case that congregations are likely to work together with other congregations that share a common identity and purpose. There may be a wide range of authority exercised, exclusivity claimed, and collective functions undertaken, but something resembling denominations is likely to remain a feature of the organizational landscape. The range of organizational variation in this field

will continue to expand, however, at least in part because the global movement of populations expands the boundaries of every religious group, and global communication allows networks to be connected and resourced in new ways. This is a religious organizational form that is both durable and changing.

Religious Special Purpose Groups

Even before there were recognizable national denominational organizations, there were religious special purpose groups (Davies 2014). One might, in fact, trace them back to the religious orders of the Catholic Church, each with its distinctive “charism” or mission. In the early nineteenth century, in the United States and England, Protestant mission societies began raising money and appointing missionaries (Hutchison 1987; Robert 1997). Publishers, such as the American Tract Society and the American Bible Society began producing religious books and literature. Temperance and abolition societies, inspired by religious faith, were organized to promote social change (Scott 1993; Young 2002). From Hadassah to the Knights of Columbus, religious and ethnic pride flowered into hundreds of voluntary organizations – this in addition to the thousands of schools, hospitals, and orphanages being founded by associations of religious people. If there is a free space in a society for religious organizing, some of that organizing is likely to focus on specific causes and goals. Neither local communal gatherings like congregations, nor united primarily around a specific religious tradition like a denomination, these are organizations held together by common purpose.

Many early U.S. groups were eventually consolidated and centralized in the early twentieth century, as denominations took on their more comprehensive bureaucratic form; but the impulse to begin an organization to pursue religious goals has never subsided. Each new religious or cultural crisis brings a new wave of religious voluntary organizations. The American fundamentalist-modernist controversies, for instance, produced an explosion of new evangeli-

cal schools, mission agencies, broadcast ministries, and more (Carpenter 1980); and the devolution of social service provision since the 1980s has meant hundreds of new religious social service agencies.

These agencies roughly correspond to the non-governmental organization (NGO) category used in organizational research and law, a category that has been growing rapidly since the 1980s and now exceeds 1.5 million organizations in the U.S. (Independent Sector 2015). Covering everything from sports clubs to hospitals, this category also includes local congregations, denominations, and religiously-affiliated charities, cultural organizations, advocacy groups, broadcast and internet organizations, schools, youth programs, and more (Scheitle 2013). Evangelicals have remained the most vigorous founders and supporters of such special purpose groups (Hamilton 2000), and the largest category of American religious nonprofits comprises evangelism and preaching ministries (Scheitle 2013). That said, one of the nation’s largest relief and development agencies, World Vision, is testimony to the breadth of the activities undertaken by religious nonprofits. With revenues exceeding \$2 billion per year, it is among the largest relief and development agencies in the world (King 2012). As the case of World Vision suggests, this is not just an American phenomenon. One fifth of the NGOs registered with the United Nations are religiously-affiliated, and that represents only the most organizationally sophisticated groups, capable of navigating the U.N.’s complicated certification processes (Lehmann 2015).

Each of these special purpose organizations is shaped in part by the particular religious constituencies it seeks to represent and serve, although the biggest of them have managed to define their religious identity broadly enough to encompass a fairly broad religious field. World Vision, for example, not only manages to appeal to evangelicals (its original base), but also to the broader ecumenical and public communities (King 2012). Many religious nonprofits have, in fact, intentionally downplayed the religious specificity of their work, often to the point that it is difficult to find the “faith” in faith-based organizations

(Ebaugh, et al. 2003; Jeavons 1998). This is in part because such groups simultaneously occupy a second organizational field. Christian Booksellers look like other booksellers, and World Vision largely conforms to institutional expectations about relief and development work (Burchardt 2013; Lindenberg and Bryant 2001).

It is also in this sector of religious organizing that we see most acutely the dilemmas posed by government regulation. All of these organizations have to conform to publicly-recognized fund-raising and accounting guidelines. When they fail, public scandal and even jail time may result. How much further the state can intrude, however, varies widely. In the U.S., religious nonprofits enjoy many of the freedoms and exemptions of other religious groups. In China, they may have to stay under the radar, maintaining a distinctly nonthreatening posture toward the state, yet delivering services where the state has failed (Spires 2011). In many European countries, on the other hand, welfare provision finds states and church-based organizations working very much in tandem (Bäckström and Davie 2010). For over a century, various U.S. governmental organizations have been channeling money to religious agencies to care for widows and orphans, train the jobless, and tend to the downtrodden both at home and abroad (Thiemann 2005). World Vision, for instance, received almost \$300 million in relief and development funds from the U.S. government in 2004 (Scheitle 2013). The American legal compromise that has evolved means that when religious organizations accept state funds, separate programming and accountability keep their service work distinct from other, non-state-funded activities that are “pervasively sectarian” (Monsma 1996).

Legislation in the 1990s attempted to make governmental money more widely available to religious charities in the U.S., but the general conclusion was that most aid would continue to flow through separate charitable organizations (Chaves 1999b). A spate of new research on religious nonprofits helped to document the contributions of congregations and their web of community partners to the delivery of social services (Ammerman

2001; Chaves 1999a; Cnaan, et al. 2002), although Farnsley’s (2003) research in Indianapolis provides a careful analysis of the ways those contributions are limited. Wineberg (2001) points to the necessity of understanding religious organizations in the larger organizational (and political) ecology of a community (see also Polson 2008). Similarly, research in Scandanavia demonstrates that even Muslim congregations are well-integrated into local social service networks (Borell and Gerdner 2013).

More activist religious organizations aim at broader political and economic changes that go beyond immediate relief. The role of churches and religious organizations in the American civil rights movement has long been noted (Morris 1996). The rise of faith-based community organizing, modeled explicitly on and often linked with Alinsky-style organizing, demonstrates another way religious ideas and practices are shaped by other organizational dynamics, in this case those of a social movement (Warren 2001; Wood 2002). Studies of social movements ranging from immigrant rights (Davis et al. 2007) to prolife (Munson 2008) have documented the way social movement organizations can (and cannot) depend on ties to congregations for support (Djupe and Gilbert 2009). Much more commonly, religious advocacy takes the form of special purpose groups that may have ties to congregations, but operate in a separate institutional space (Evans 2006; Yamane 2005).

As this brief sketch suggests, religious special purpose groups are both more numerous and more important than the available research might suggest. There is simply much more to be done. Within many of the organizational sectors they occupy – from publishing to relief and development – what we know comes almost exclusively from the secular portion of the sector. As with all of the other religious organizational forms we have examined, important questions surround the intersection of cultures and practices shaped by religious life with cultures and practices shaped by organizational and regulatory demands. Each of those factors has its own institutional logic and its own potential for shaping the others.

Future Directions

Our understanding of all types of religious organizations will be enhanced as we recognize the intricate interplay of cultural logics, an interplay characteristic of all organizations, but perhaps most interestingly visible in the organizations we define as religious. Religious organizations are simply too numerous to be ignored, but they offer intriguing possibilities for addressing a variety of questions. How do regulatory logics pervade organizations to which they do not legally apply? How is the balance between rational/functional imperatives and ideological/cultural imperatives negotiated? How does one organizational field expand or contract in response to changes in other organizational fields? Why are the ecological dynamics of birth and death apparently so different in the population of religious voluntary organizations, as compared to businesses? As scholars seek to answer these and other questions, the intersection of organizational studies and the study of religion will continue to be a very productive one.

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Tricia C. Bruce and Josh Packard

Abstract

The waning utility of popular church-sect typologies requires a new and more flexible framework for studying religious organizations and innovation therein. Here, we posit that religion's shape and change is best observed through a more nuanced examination of the social sources of innovation – including external environments, entrepreneurialism, social movements, and social networks – and measured via transformations in leadership, membership, and structure. Sociologists of religion thinking about organizations would do well to frame their conversations less in terms of narrow typologies and more in terms of the conditions that give rise to new behaviors, that increase the likelihood of innovation, and that ultimately impact the diffusion of innovation.

Faced with a sticky, amorphous mound of fresh cookie dough, one might be inclined to reach for the gingerbread man cookie cutter – or perhaps the heart, or the star. Rolled, flattened, and pressed by the prefabricated tin shape, the dough

transforms into something familiar, something known. Something expected.

The routine is not dissimilar to the approach used all too often in viewing religion and religious organizations in society. Faced with something that takes a curious shape, perhaps with blurred boundaries and an opaque color, scholars reach to available tools to give it a name, a type, and a classification. Indeed, it is a particular penchant of the social scientist to draw out the organizational attributes of religion in the social world: seeing religion as organization enables us to see religion beyond the individual, beyond belief.

But to the extent that our kitchens are filled with only gingerbread men, hearts, and stars, we may also be implicitly assigning shapes to phenomena that merit new designs, or challenge

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the edges of what we may attempt to stuff them within. Trimming off the excess, moreover, may leave us unaware of innovation occurring outside imagined boundaries, our sights limited to pre-fabricated forms.

This chapter considers religious organizations with an eye toward *organizational innovation*. It begins with a brief rearview look at the dominant frames social scientists have created and deployed in studying religion in society, leveling a critical assessment of their limitations. The chapter next draws our attention to the *social sources of innovation* – whom or what is urging innovation in religious organizations? Fertile grounds and social sources foretell the *outcomes of innovation*, explored in a subsequent section. Next comes a discussion of the *diffusion of innovation*. Lastly, the chapter looks forward to *future directions* in related scholarship, offering corollary admonitions for studying organizational innovation in religion using appropriately flexible – and perhaps yet unknown – tools of analysis.

Church-Sect, R.I.P

The study of religion and organizations bears a strong legacy in the sociological canon, notably Max Weber (1949), and in church-sect typologies introduced by Weber's colleague, Ernst Troeltsch (1931). Debuting in *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* (1931), the church-sect typology achieved celebrity status as a theoretical tool for assessing religion's organizational forms and developmental trajectories. Scholars including H. Richard Niebuhr (1929), Howard Becker (1932), J. Milton Yinger (1957), and Bryan R. Wilson (1970) filled our sociology of religion syllabi with concepts like churches, sects, new religious movements, denominations, ecclesia, established sects, cults, and the like. "Innovation" by this rubric follows a fairly logical trajectory: religious organizations initially break away as sects or new religious movements, exhibiting a high level of tension with their surrounding environments. In time, they move toward the "church" end of the spectrum, and friction with society reduces. The process even-

tually dissatisfies those seeking that original apartness, who in turn defect to start a sect anew. Innovation continues.

But the popularity of the church-sect typology has not guarded it against steady criticisms through years of (over)use. Relying on rationalized, logical underpinnings, the church-sect typology is incredibly powerful for explaining standardized pathways. However, when those pathways account for less and less of the religious landscape, the effectiveness of the typology quickly breaks down. Its limited applicability in non-Western contexts, its anachronistic fit to contemporary religion, and the complexity of its terminology and varying definitions leave its current theoretical unity wanting (Bromley and Melton 2012; Dawson 2009). New organizational forms and adaptations do not necessarily march in lockstep along a standardized pole from "sect" to "church." This dichotomous split – even when nuanced with additional stops in-between – creates the kind of binary classification that Kniss (2014, p. 354) warns will "exaggerate and unwittingly reproduce or exacerbate conflict between the binary categories we describe." Innovation in religious organizations is, in reality, more complex.

The church-sect typology, moreover, obscures vast amounts of diversity in the field of religion. Religion and religious organizations are constantly evolving, as "tradition" meets new socio-cultural contexts, shifting demographics, religious pluralism, new cultural norms, and so forth. Change is fundamental to the very nature of organizations, even amidst relative stability (Rogers 2003). Max Weber and Emile Durkheim observed as much. But stagnant typologies stifle more than seed contemporary examinations of organizational innovation. Myriad developments at the intersection of religion, organizations, and change present an alternative vantage point on this evolution. It is time for "grand theories" to yield to more idiosyncratic iterations of decline, stability, and revival (Singleton 2014). Here, a metaanalysis of developments come together under the banner of *organizational innovation*.

Innovation, Kanter (1983, p. 20) tells us, denotes "the process of bringing any new,

problem-solving idea into use.” It is “the generation, acceptance, and implementation of new ideas, processes, products, or services,” and “involves the capacity to change or adapt” (Kanter 1983, p. 20–21). It may be viewed both as process and as outcome (Crossan and Apaydin 2010). Organizational innovation denotes newness in ideas and behavior, realized through links to environments, structures, and performance (Lam 2006). In corporate settings, organizational innovation frequently necessitates cutting costs and keeping ahead of market competition. In religious settings, organizational innovation may re-frame religious practice, commitment, production, and consumption within a plural and deregulated religious market (Stark and Finke 2000).

Organizational innovation is often the progeny of changes in society, whether planned or not. “The emergence and structure of new organizational forms are affected by their particular institutional contexts” (Lam 2006, p. 132). Religion’s inherent social embeddedness means that changes are as much a reflection of shifting external environments as they are entrepreneurially-induced; change happens *to* religious organizations just as change gets introduced *by* religious organizations. As such, the occurrence and diffusion of innovation may be intended or unintended: a consequence of organizers’ creativity, or a side effect of what is happening in the larger ecological field.

Planned innovation would fall under the camp of “planned change” (Porras and Robertson 1992), or “the activities necessary to modify strategies, structures, and processes to increase an organization’s effectiveness” (Cummings and Worley 2014, p. 42). Planned change is self-initiated, deliberate, and responsive to perceived problems or needs. Religious leaders – seeing membership declines, an increasingly global outreach, or strategic growth – may undertake new forms of community, services, administration, and so on, intending to improve their religious work, mission, and outcomes. Scholars of organization describe *unplanned* innovation, by contrast, as more responsive than deliberate. Unplanned innovation is often a byproduct of unanticipated external change. Generational shifts

among religious adherents, precipitous drops in financial stability, fertility, and migration can all harken unplanned innovation among religious organizations.

The Social Sources of Innovation

What spawns innovation – planned and unplanned – in religious organizations? To identify and understand the innovation occurring in religious organizations today, we must look to its social sources. Just as Niebuhr (1929, p. 27) wrote nearly a century ago, “if religion supplies the energy, the goal, and the motive of sectarian movements, social factors no less decidedly supply the occasion, and determine the form the religious dynamic will take.” Nonreligious factors carry as much influence as religious factors.

Innovation and its barriers can stem from external environments, the organizations themselves, or groups and individuals therein (Hueske and Guenther 2015). Both structure and agency breed change. Here, we summarize themes in scholarship on innovation origins, pointing to the particular relevance of external environments, entrepreneurialism, social movements, and social networks as instrumental to generating innovation in religious organizations.

External Environments

Religious organizations operate in an increasingly plural (sometimes interpreted as competitive) religious context. Globally, demographers paint a big-picture glimpse of organizational fields within which religion will necessarily innovate. While Christianity remains in the majority globally, demographers anticipate fast growth in Islam and declines among atheists, agnostics, and others unaffiliated (Pew Research Center 2015a). Smaller folk religions will also grow in absolute numbers. Higher fertility rates and younger adherents portend growth or stability for Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity as a proportion of the projected 2050 global population (Stonawski et al. 2015). Religious organizations

also occupy an ecological context of ever-increasing religious diversity brought on by immigration and religious switching (Pew Research Center 2015a). Such global plurality begets innovation to ensure vitality (see also Kivisto's chapter on "International Migration" in this volume).

In the North American context, Christian proportions have declined as proportions of the unaffiliated rise. Drawing on the multi-wave National Congregations Study (NCS) in his book *American Religion: Contemporary Trends*, Chaves (2011) summarizes several trends that bear particularly on the U.S. context and on organizational life. These include: (1) looser connections between congregations and denominations; (2) more computer technology; (3) more informal worship; (4) older congregants; (5) more high-income and college-educated congregants; (6) more people concentrated in very large churches; and (7) increasing ethnic diversity within predominantly white congregations (Chaves 2011, p. 55–56).

Modernization, moreover, fuels a particular context enlivening religious organizations, one described by some scholars as deeply consumer-oriented. The marketing and "branding" of religion can incentivize large-scale marketization (Usunier and Stolz 2014). Popular religion breeds the commodification of religious goods, whether ritual paraphernalia (Jones 2010) or Santa Muerte votive candles (Chesnut 2011). Such processes may expand religious products but decrease religiosity (Usunier and Stolz 2014). Consumerism, moreover, may produce a more individualized or even tourist-oriented mentality (Lyons 2000). Religion-as-market or religion-as-brand can breed innovation in religious organization that caters to (or resists) these modernizing tendencies (Miller and Miller 2005; Packard and Sanders 2013).

Religious organizations today also operate within a sphere of declining institutional affiliation overall – a suspicion, some articulate, of any formal organization (religious or otherwise). U.S. respondents' trust in the government, for example, peaked at 77% in 1964 before dropping to an all-time low 17% in 2011 (Pew Research

Center 2015c). Gallup (2015) reports that confidence in all social institutions except the military and small business are below historical averages. The confidence that Americans once felt in organizations, leaders, and institutions has largely given way to distrust. Observed innovations thus share a common source: distrust in large, institutional structures.

Played out in the realm of religion, traditionally stalwart organizational spaces navigate new skepticism. The World Economic Forum (2015) reports that while leaders in nearly all sectors are distrusted, religious organizations rank among those least trustworthy. And far from just being a cohort effect, these levels of distrust have risen for every generation. In short, it appears that today's religious organizations are living in an unremitting era of institutional distrust. Organizational innovation in religion is not divorced from these larger social trends.

The presence and rise of the "nones" highlights one facet of this institutional disconnect (see Cragun's chapter on "Nonreligion and Atheism" in this volume). Recent reports from the Pew Research Center show a dramatic increase in the rise of religiously unaffiliated. 23% of the U.S. population and 16% of the population worldwide identify with "nothing in particular" when it comes to an institutional religious affiliation (Pew Research Center 2015a, b). The demographic profile of religious nones, moreover, leaning heavily toward millennials, suggests that the mainstream forms of religious organization will face attendance issues for years to come.

Nones may, by definition, challenge the very concept of religious organization in modern social contexts. They may represent either a cause or a consequence of innovation. Tamney et al. (1989, p. 216) noted years ago that "in a society where almost everyone has a religious identity, a religious none can be considered innovative." More recently, Baker and Smith (2009a, b) revived work in this category by identifying predictive factors of someone claiming "none" as a status. They sorted religious nones into categories of atheist, agnostic, or unchurched, the latter term particularly relevant given its contingency upon organizational linkages. Their conclusion

was that the rise of the nones is not evidence that modern society results in the decline of religion, but rather that “modernizing forces *alter* religion” (Baker and Smith 2009a, p. 732). In other words, the nones are a prime source of innovation in the religious landscape both in terms of their increasing size and presence, and in efforts by religious organizations to attract them.

The history of the religious marketplace in America suggests that churches will respond to these shifts in affiliation with intense innovation and competition (Finke and Stark 2005). Some postulate that entire organization forms (e.g., denominationalism) are under threat, as mainline denominations continue to lose adherents more rapidly than other sectors (see, e.g., Sherkat 2001). Innovation can stave off an otherwise terminal fate.

Also at issue here is whether and how religious organizations will foster innovation while preserving core teachings – or, perhaps, adapt the latter modestly so as to preserve the integrity of extant traditions (Finke 2004). Religious organizations that chase innovation while neglecting to protect core teachings, Finke (2004) argues, will end up too “loose” while those who eschew innovation at every turn will be too “strict.” Innovation may come, at first, from small, unregulated religious expressions that ultimately find their way into dominant, mainstream religious expressions, Finke (2004, pp. 30–31) tells us: “Even small religious organizations that never enter the mainstream or form even a single congregation can shape the future of American religion...[s]ubject movements, independent churches, para-church groups, and other small religious organizations generate innovations that are adapted throughout American religion.” The powers of isomorphism, moreover, could predict the erosion of core values in otherwise stagnant institutions.

Changes to religious organizations’ external environments predicate many of the innovations occurring at both the margins of religion (as people move away from engaging large institutions) and in the mainstream (in innovative spaces of traditional religious organizations). New expressions may ultimately be the source of major and lasting change in the religious landscape.

Entrepreneurialism

Entrepreneurs are generally understood to be organizational actors who combine the primary dimensions of risk and innovation (Drucker 2014 [1985]). While early scholarship focused on the entrepreneur as a component of the for-profit world, recent scholarship has turned its attention to expanding both the scope of the entrepreneur as well as the industries where entrepreneurs might be found. Entrepreneurs are now generally understood to be a component of all aspects of the for-profit, non-profit and government worlds (Thornton 1999).

Scholars in the sociology of religion have also begun to take the role of the entrepreneur seriously. In a study that closely mirrors scholarship on for-profit entrepreneurs, Lee and Sinitiere (2009, p. 3) argue that rather than offering a unique view of Christianity in order to attract followers, “religious suppliers thrive in a competitive spiritual marketplace because they are quick, decisive, and flexible in reacting to changing conditions, savvy at packaging and marketing their ministries, and resourceful at offering spiritual rewards that resonate with the existential needs and cultural tastes of the public.” Their work suggests that scholars should not overlook the impact that individual innovators can have on organizational culture and structure. With very little formal education and training, religious leaders have successfully pushed into new mediums and championed new religious movements as well as reviving old messages. They remind us to look outside of traditional pathways when considering the sources of organizational change.

In this way, it is not simply those institutional actors with access to vast amounts of resources who spawn innovation. Religion entrepreneurs are often found among relative industry outsiders, where there is room to experiment and hone new ideas. This is especially true when thinking about new religious movements (NRMs). NRMs are characterized by religion entrepreneurs’ ability to articulate compelling new visions of the divine. Others may have articulated such visions earlier but were unable to make them stick. This further highlights the importance of the successful

entrepreneur who is able to find the right message and practice at the right time for the right audience. Finke and Iannacone (1993) actually argue that this “supply side” dynamic has been the primary driver behind religious innovation and religious change more generally. But instead of thinking about NRM leaders as innovators, too often we think about them as charismatic leaders, or assess the way that their charisma become routinized. These are worthy questions, of course, but lose sight of entrepreneurs’ role in bringing new ideas, practices, and beliefs onto the religious scene.

Established congregations, too, feel the effects of entrepreneurial innovation. McRoberts (1999) argues explicitly that religion entrepreneurs can change traditional religious spaces. This is especially the case for founding pastors who “are ‘entrepreneurs’ in the sense that they established churches to fill a perceived void” (McRoberts 1999, p. 58). Founding pastors, in particular, are compelled to scan the religious landscape in search of inefficiencies in the religious marketplace, even within their own tradition. In order to succeed, they must cater to those not well-served by existing religious organizations.

In this same vein, Sargeant (2000) argues that one of the fundamental components of evangelicalism in the United States is a reliance on an entrepreneurial framework. His examination of the rise of seeker churches focuses on the entrepreneurial role of the pastor in acting as CEO and spiritual leader. Modern evangelicalism requires religious leaders to think strategically not just about religious content, but also about form and function. Sargeant further notes that the idea of pastor as both a religious leader and an organizational manager and strategic visionary is far from new in the field of religion. He links the development and increasing religiosity of Americans throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to the entrepreneurial abilities of pastors.

Importantly, Sargeant points out that this kind of innovation is necessary for organizations that thrive on both maintaining tradition and adapting to shifting cultural norms. Sargeant (2000, p. ix) writes that “as an entrepreneurial and innovative yet also traditional and conservative movement,

evangelicalism provides an excellent window onto how religious groups negotiate the tensions between social change...and preserving traditional belief.” The power of this argument, of course, is that it extends far beyond the evangelical movement. It provides a framework for understanding the role of the entrepreneur in producing innovations across the field of religion.

Thinking about religion entrepreneurs through a religious marketplace framework means understanding changes in the field of religion as being less about competition and more about innovation. Rather than competing with one another for the same congregants, religious innovators find new and creative ways to engage contemporary culture while maintaining traditional and important religious values. In the language of neoinstitutional theory, these entrepreneurs must bridge technical and institutional pressures just to survive, as their world is both competitive (technical) and filled with the need to signal legitimacy (institutional) (Scott and Meyer 1991). This combination of pressures creates special challenges for religion entrepreneurs, and provides an important source of innovation in the field of religion as a whole.

Social Movements

Social movements operate as another key social source of organizational innovation in religion. Like all organizations, religious collectives can be rife with conflict and politics. In advancing claims, presenting challenges, and disrupting the quotidian, social movements generate opportunities to bring structural and cultural change to religious organizations.

A veritable sea change in social movement scholarship of late has usefully broadened our attention to include movements targeting non-state institutions (Van Dyke et al. 2004). This needed corrective has spawned a number of studies examining how social movements can target – and innovate within – religious organizations. Progressive bishops, for example, advanced revolutionary changes during Vatican II (Wilde 2007); lay Catholics mobilized to address abusive

practices (Bruce 2011); the New Sanctuary Movement blurred lines of immigrant activism in religion and politics (Yukich 2013). Seeing religious organizations as a locus of strategic action, moreover, has usefully destabilized the very definition of a social movement. New conceptualizations define such forms of collective action internal to religious and other organizations as “intrainstitutional social movements” (Bruce 2011). Movements can challenge authority in all its manifestations, including authority housed in and through religious organizations.

By developing into social movement organizations (SMOs) themselves, moreover, movements can bring innovation to religion as both origin and target. Bypassing the state as the central or sole locus of change means that religious SMOs can transform civil society through alternative organizational influences. Davis and Robinson (2012) show in their study of four religiously orthodox movements, for example, how religious movements deconstruct the very notion of separate, defined organizational spheres where religion belongs – and where it does not – in modern social contexts.

Scholarship in social movements and organizations has converged and proliferated in recent years (Davis and Zald 2005; Walker 2012), albeit relatively absent a proportionate focus on religious organizations specifically. Among the fruits of scholarship at this nexus is an appreciation for alternative, atypical movement tactics. Nepstad (2011, 2015), Kucinskas (2014), and others have detailed the ways in which religious and spiritual movements can engage non-confrontational tactics in protest. This may include withholding material resources, introducing discursive politics, or reframing collective identities. Just as the shift beyond the state-as-movement-target has redefined social movements, so too has the shift toward nonconventional tactics redefined movement repertoires. A cultural turn in social movement scholarship has likewise introduced new tools for seeing how religion, religious actors, religious tactics, and religious collectives can introduce organizational innovation across multiple institutional spheres.

Ironically, while we are learning more about religious social movements, we still know relatively little about movements targeting religious organizations themselves, nor their related innovation outcomes. Religion can indeed be disruptive...even to religion. The allure of studying the seemingly (but in fact not) contradictory spaces of religion and protest appears to largely diminish at the door of religious organizations themselves. Prospects are rich. Increased inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual (LGBT) people and families in Christian organizations, as just one example of many, has been traced to “organized and sustained efforts...to challenge religiously rooted condemnations of homosexuality” via social movements targeting religious organizations (Hopkins 2014, p. 172).

Acknowledging social movements as a source of innovation means hammering yet another nail in the coffin of overly-constrictive conceptual tools for seeing innovation in religion. Iterations of “church” and “sect” can scarcely account for the kind of strategic action introduced by social movement actors; using “denomination” as the unit of analysis can overemphasize ideological uniformity (Kniss and Burns 2004). The rigidity of oft-applied conceptual tools in studying organizations may appear to be at odds with the presumed spontaneity and grassroots character of social movements (Clemens 2005). But innovation in religious organizations is assuredly intertwined with movement mobilization therein.

Social Networks

Yet another important social source of innovation is social networks. As organizational scholars have long noted, network analysis allows researchers to consider the embedded roles that activate and constrain individuals in an organization, as well as organizations in a field (Brass et al. 2004). Networks, then, are an important point of innovation for organizations.

Ammerman’s (1997) *Congregation and Community* still stands as a seminal work in this area. Social networks, as revealed through case

studies, comprise part of a larger ecological approach to understanding congregations and change. Though networks have a distinct influence on congregational innovation, the role of networks is not always the same. Niche congregations require networks that extend beyond the local neighborhood and community. Their source of innovation comes from external influence as a way to establish a distinct position in the religious marketplace. Mainstream congregations, on the other hand, may look more like the traditional parish, with stronger ties to the local community. Their innovation comes from drawing on an embedded network of affiliation that can mobilize resources to offset the costs of innovation. This is especially true for congregations in transition – local networks can help to assemble resources that can buy time for organizations to figure out their changing landscape and adapt appropriately.

While numerous studies have taken up Ammerman's call for approaching congregational studies from an ecological perspective, few have focused explicitly on embedded social networks as the unit of analysis for innovation or stability. Among important recent works that point to social networks as a source of innovation, at least in part, is Ellingson's work on the megachurch (Ellingson 2007, 2009, 2010). Throughout his work, Ellingson notes that new megachurches often develop out of an explicit attempt by smaller and medium size congregations to mimic the successful practices and ideologies presented in local megachurches. Far from chasing growth for the sake of growth, these congregations are often innovating for survival. The presence of a megachurch demands innovation by existing congregations; otherwise, they risk losing members and declining to the point of irrelevance or even nonexistence (Ellingson 2010). In this way, the most successful entrepreneurs – from either within or outside of the institution – can have a dramatic effect on entire organizational ecologies.

The local environment and context of an organization may be diminishing in importance as modern technology erodes traditional physical boundaries. Congregational innovation comes

from networks far beyond the physical reach of the local congregation. Guest, working out of the United Kingdom, takes an ecological approach to account for the role of the social network in congregational innovation. In his book, *Evangelical Identity and Contemporary Culture: A Congregational Study in Innovation*, Guest (2007) updates Ammerman's approach in ways that account for modern communication technologies. Instead of outside influences coming primarily from well-connected congregational leaders, Guest argues that individual congregants establish an identity that is increasingly connected and mediated through larger discourses about evangelicalism in general.

Within late modernity, evangelical ideas are negotiated within a far more complex, intricate and international network than ever before. This network not only shapes the construction of evangelicalism as a global phenomenon, but also infiltrates the construction of evangelical identity within local congregations. In this sense, mediating structures need to be reconceived and the maintenance of religious values addressed using a new set of theoretical tools (Guest 2007, pp. 197–98).

Tapping into these conversations and identities through social media and the internet more generally can bring these influences and innovations to bear on local congregations. The primary source of innovation, then, is potentially far removed from any individual congregation. This places even greater emphasis on a few very successful entrepreneurs who are able to leverage social networks in order to disseminate new ideas, styles of worship, and religious organizing.

Innovation Outcomes

Whether planned or unplanned – and whether introduced by external environments, entrepreneurs, social movements, or social networks – religious organizations present ample evidence of novel ideas, shapes, adaptations, and revitalization. The *outcomes* of organizational innovation are grouped here into three general

categories: (1) membership, (2) leadership, and (3) structure. Though not exhaustive, this three-fold categorization offers an intentional look into extant avenues of contemporary change. We review and present examples of each, in turn.

Innovation in Membership

Who belongs to religious organizations? Where do we see innovation in terms of a shifting participant base, intended audience, or institutional affiliation? While organizational membership and organizational structure may be viewed as separate, the two are indelibly linked in processes of innovation: new/fewer/different members beget new and different forms of religious organization. An internally diverse membership also begets innovation. And the diffusion of innovation to organizations involves a complex interplay of changes adopted by individuals who belong, and individuals who are embedded in a shared organizational networks.

Organizational religious ties remain an incredibly important predictor of religious affiliation. Baker and Smith (2009) show that frequent church attendance as a child significantly decreases the chances of claiming no religious affiliation as an adult. Millennials' diminished interest in institutional religion, however, suggests that the immediate future for traditional religious organizations will require adaptation for survival. Congregations are rapidly changing strategies in response to increasing numbers of "nones." A sizeable number of people claiming no religious affiliation still retain some belief in a higher power. The nones have, thus, become a driving force behind religious innovation outside of traditional religious institutions. New religious products and marketplaces developed in recent years aim to reach the "spiritual but not religious" crowd. And "[f]ar from discreet 'religious' and 'spiritual' institutional domains, the robust religious organizations of the United States are prime sources of the production of the spiritual experiences most prevalent in the culture" (Ammerman 2014, p. 127). Rather than signaling the decline of religion in America, there is every

reason to believe that we sit at a time ripe for new organizational forms and practices to emerge.

Another innovative aspect of the "demand" side of the spiritual marketplace is the growing number of "dechurched," or those who have left the institutional church but retain their faith (Packard and Hope 2015). This describes individuals who are not necessarily distancing themselves from religion, *per se*, but from certain iterations and even linguistic constructions of religious organization. They are sometimes referred to as the "dones," as in they are "done" with church, but not with faith or God(s). They have disengaged from organized religion largely due to dissatisfaction with the institutional and organizational arrangements. While specific theological positions or a poor Sunday morning experience were reasons to switch churches, Packard and Hope (2015) found that disengaging from organized religion altogether was more related to stifling bureaucratic structures, a singular pastoral voice of authority, and too much emphasis on a highly produced Sunday morning experience. In other words, the "dones" rejected the homogenizing force of the institutional church. But rather than rejecting their faith as well, the dechurched are catalyzing new ways of engaging spirituality outside institutional structures.

Scholars are documenting numerous ways that formal religious organizations are responding to a shift in (and abandonment of) institutional affiliation. Among the organizational developments cited by social scientists on this front is the "emerging church movement" (ECM). Documented by Bielo (2011), Packard (2012), and Marti and Ganiel (2014), among others, ECM refers to conscious organizational responses that critique and reframe extant evangelical or Christian narratives. Through such new structures as "pluralist congregations" inviting openness to "religious individualization" (Marti and Ganiel 2014), emerging Christianity affords both community and individualism. A pluralist congregation, for example, might replace a traditional sermon with a discussion and conversation. Building understanding takes precedence over preaching specific doctrines and creeds. This

synthesis between individual and organizational religious change generates not only more loosely-tethered membership but also new styles of worship which are more participatory and are designed to reach an itinerant and plural audience. Services might be asynchronous, for example, with participants moving through prayer vigils, readings, discussions, communion, Stations of the Cross, and other worship elements.

Mainstream traditions, too, participate in generating innovative forms of spiritual engagement in response to declines in formal affiliation. Contemporary worship styles are increasingly informal, relying less upon written programs and more upon drums, dancing, informal greetings, projection equipment, and so forth (Chaves and Anderson 2014). Recent trends in worship have veered similarly toward embodied ritual including prayer labyrinths, yoga, and meditation. Further, the source of worship style innovation is increasingly likely to come from local, non-institutional sources than from denominational authorities, further indicating a shift away from dominant institutional religious experiences (Chou and Russell 2006). Innovation in established denominations, however, faces the simultaneous challenge of adhering to core teachings in order to sustain vitality (Finke 2004).

Creative innovation outcomes have also been observed at the juncture of multiple faith communities and interfaith organizations. Collaboration among religious groups sharing political goals can generate what Yukich and Braunstein (2014) call “new edge practices.” These include “aggregative practices” that combine side-by-side the symbols, languages, and practices of faith groups as well as “integrative practices” that merge and mix those same symbols, languages, and practices together (Yukich and Braunstein 2014, p. 801). Jointly-issued public policy statements, for example, may deploy phrases and symbols from multiple traditions to advance an agreed-upon collective good such as gun control. Innovative prayers or songs highlighting non-specific themes like God or humanity can unite religious collectives mobilizing to defeat racism. Greater diversity within an

organization, whether interfaith or otherwise, can increase the likelihood of innovation (Braunstein et al. 2014).

The changing racial and ethnic composition of religious organizations reveals another outcome of innovation (or its counterpart, the status quo). For example, Hawkins and Sinitiere (2014, p. 1) observe, “A new era of multiethnic and multiracial sensibilities seems to be dawning across the American evangelical landscape, manifesting itself in a myriad of ways.” Conversation and actions surrounding racial diversity surface across religious organizations with new prominence as nations including the United States grow increasingly diverse racially. Nonetheless, membership in religious congregations continues to reflect strong internal racial homogeneity. A mere 14% of U.S. congregations contain no more than 80% of one racial group and only 20% of attendees go to congregations where no ethnic group dominates (Chaves and Anderson 2014). Racial diversity internal to religious organizations remains rare.

Despite this continuity in congregational homogeneity, recent percentages of multiracial membership reported in the third wave of the National Congregations Study (NCS) are notably higher than earlier measurements. This suggests that multiracial membership is indeed another outcome of organizational innovation, as congregations are less and less likely to be comprised overwhelmingly of one racial group. Perhaps most notably, “White congregations are less predominantly white than they were” (Chaves and Anderson 2014, p. 680). Multiracial congregations prompt new forms of worship, as congregants come together to do the work necessary to put on a weekly worship service. Marti (2012) notes in *Worship Across the Racial Divide* that the production of worship – even more so than the actual style – acts as an important factor in promoting diversity within a congregation.

Nevertheless, Edwards et al. (2013) critique the organizational innovation surrounding multiracial congregations as stemming primarily from minorities’ presence in white congregations, not the reverse. This affirms their contention that “for racial diversity to occur in congregations it is the

interest of whites that must be served” (Edwards et al. 2013, p. 215). The diffusion of innovation in these spaces may, thus, be stifled by the persistent privileging of dominant groups.

New immigrants, too, evidence innovation in religious organizations. More recent arrivals participate in religious organizations at higher levels than non-immigrants or earlier arrivals (Foley and Hoge 2007). Denominations accommodate ever-higher proportions of non-English language offerings (e.g., CARA 2014). Niche, immigrant-serving congregations transform existing religious organizations amidst neighborhood change (Kniss and Numrich 2007; Cimino et al. 2013). Immigrants are transnationalizing the religious experience in multiple ways (Levitt 2007). Subcultural immigrant communities sharing spaces with other subcultural communities highlight challenges to power in shared spaces (eg Hoover 2014). Here too, as with Edwards’ observations of multiracial congregations, studies of immigrant assimilation showcase the hegemony of a dominant Protestant organizational form (Bender and Klassen 2010; Cadge 2008; Williams 2007).

Religious organizations also look different today in terms of the acceptance and integration of participants identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Wave III of the National Congregations Study revealed a fairly rapid increase in the percentage of congregations permitting gays and lesbians to be full members – now nearly half (Chaves and Anderson 2014). Increased openness may stem from a combination of factors including clergy age, members’ education, and activities elsewhere that bridge social divisions (Adler 2012). The trend of increasing openness to LGBT members is not consistent across denominations, however, highlighting the dual role of broader social-cultural contexts and the social sources of innovation in introducing organizational change. Indeed, another thread of recent scholarship highlights organizational attempts to excise homosexuality from religious organizations and adherents through “reparative therapy” and ex-gay ministries (Gerber 2012; Creek 2014). And even among religious organizations explicitly wel-

coming to all sexual orientations, many decouple this from actions that meaningfully institutionalize such a welcome (Scheitle et al. 2010).

Innovation in Leadership

Leadership opens another window onto notable examples of innovation outcomes in religious organizations, from representation to polity change to reformed engagement to collaboration. Religious leaders occupy key decision-making powers to adapt organizations in response to shifts in membership, external environments, new opportunities, or other altered organizational contexts. But leaders in and of themselves also represent an outcome of innovation: Who is in charge? Who is not? How are religious organizations innovating in terms of openness, empowerment, hiring, and allocating responsibility?

Although nearly all religious traditions still use professional ministers, there has been a noted push to limit or circumscribe these powers, whether out of choice or necessity. The Catholic Church, for example, has experienced a precipitous decline in the total number of clergy and vowed religious in recent decades. Priest shortages have catalyzed the outsourcing of roles and tasks previously held exclusively by ordained male priests; ministry responsibilities are carried out increasingly by paid laypersons, eight in ten of whom are women (CARA 2011). Resource-driven changes in leadership may also motivate more fundamental changes, such as Schoenherr’s suggestion in *Goodbye Father* (2002) that declines in ordination may unlock the priesthood from celibate exclusivity. Or, for the married Catholic convert priests that Sullins (2015) describes, leadership innovation may (ironically, perhaps) work to affirm existing church teachings, such as priests’ celibacy. As Sullins (2015, p. 214) puts it, “married priests are found to be the exceptions that prove the rule.”

Declining membership rolls in mainline traditions have also taken a toll on budgets, reducing the ability of organizations to hire and rely upon full-time paid ministers. Foreshadowing the organizational permeability that Ammerman (2014)

later identifies, Pitt (2012) notes the various strategies that ministers and congregations employ to reconcile the reality that for many congregations a full-time pastor is not an option. They instead rely upon “bivocational” pastors, outsourcing a range of administrative and ministerial needs to others. The consequence is organizations that lean heavily on lay leadership to complete many formerly “professional” tasks. This more distributed leadership model restructures religious organizations accordingly.

Innovative fronts in religious organizational leadership also link back to aforementioned themes of institutional suspicion. “Emerging Christians,” for example, resist traditional powers allocated to a professional clergy and singular organizational authority (Packard 2011). Catholic clergy’s relatively isolated power was challenged in the wake of abuse allegations (Bruce 2011). Some leaders’ singular personalities manage to carve out segments of the religious market that respond directly to them as opposed to a particular system of belief or theological position. The most successful of these religion entrepreneurs may single-handedly change the religious organizational landscape. Lee and Sinitiere (2009) explore this dynamic in *Holy Mavericks*, arguing that a new age of celebrity pastors including Brian McLaren, Joel Osteen, Rick Warren, and T.D. Jakes, shows the importance of supply side theoretical perspectives.

Women comprise an increasing proportion of elite leaders in religious organizations. Approximately one in ten American congregations are led by women in senior ordained positions (Faith Communities Today 2010). Their presence represents a substantial change to American mainline Protestant and Jewish congregations over the last half century. Scholars are documenting ways in which women’s leadership is changing the internal administrative patterns of organizations, such as through preaching or forming study groups on more controversial topics (Olson et al. 2005). But despite the expanded inclusivity of women in key decision-making capacities, sociologists also note that religious organizations remain masculine-gendered institutions through their ongoing construction of

leadership ideals, symbols, and discourse (Whitehead 2013). Women leaders report discrimination (Ingersoll 2003) and lower levels of social support (McDuff 2001). Implicit bias can inhibit the innovation that would otherwise foster higher proportions of women clergy and increasingly feminized organizational regimes. Here again, innovation does not automatically imply diffusion to organizational structures and processes.

As individuals from new social positions occupy key leadership positions in religious organizations, this can also affect the ways in which religious organizations interface with broader social and political realms. By way of example, Olson et al. (2005) report that women’s presence among lead clergy has shifted priorities in congregations’ political advocacy, elevating issues of social justice and family. On the other hand, head clergy leading multiracial congregations occupy inherently strained positions as they navigate two distinct populations. “Race affects the capacity of interracial church head clergy to negotiate their role and deal with role strain” (Edwards 2014, p. 74). The field is ripe for additional assessments of how long-marginalized voices are gaining new prevalence and power, potentially shifting organizational priorities, structures, and outcomes within complex organizational environments.

Innovation in Structure

Beyond (and intertwined with) the outcomes of innovation observed among members and leaders, the forms of religious organizations, too, showcase innovation outcomes sewn by social sources. Structural iterations of religious organization are neither rigid nor stagnant. Recent work (notably Ammerman’s [2014] *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes*) demonstrates the degree to which religion and spirituality are not connected solely to religious institutions. Ammerman argues that porous institutional boundaries call into question the divide between the sacred and the secular, the private and the public. If religious practice cannot be confined to

a particular time and place, we need to do a better job of looking for it elsewhere. Ammerman (2014, p. 6) writes that “we cannot assume we will find religion in the predictable places or in the predictable forms. And if we do not find as much of it in those predictable places as we did before, we cannot assume that it is disappearing.”

To take just one recent example of where we might look for variation in religious experience, Ferguson and Tamburello (2015) suggest that people who live in regions with a nicer natural environment use those amenities as a spiritual resource that competes with traditional, brick and mortar houses of worship. This same line of thinking brings attention also to innovative spaces where religious ideals spawn changed structures and directions, whether in companies (Gallagher and Buckeye 2014), fraternities (Gurrentz 2014), homeless shelters (Mulder 2004), or countless other social settings. Seeing innovation in religious organizations by this rubric necessitates a substantially revised typology.

Structural responses in the field of religion to growing institutional skepticism have been gradual. Just as membership reflects trends toward deinstitutionalization, so too do congregations now report lower levels of attachment. Fewer congregations claim formal affiliation with a denomination, interact with denominational representatives, or financially contribute to a denomination (though the majority of congregations still do) (Chaves and Anderson 2014). This positions some religious organizations in comparatively more isolated organizational fields, perhaps more immune to the sort of institutional isomorphism that has been traditionally observed among congregations in the same denomination. Denominational affiliation, once the norm, has slowly given way to non-denominational churches and more autonomous congregational entities including the megachurch.

Where institutional scholars focusing on the powers of isomorphism have done well to show why organizations, including religious ones, exhibit so much conformity, the margins of religious life have traditionally contained much variability. Popielarz and Neal (2007) show that competition does not always lead to extinction

among organizations, but sometime results in the creation of a new niche that appeals to people who are left out of dominant forms. Marginalization, exclusion, or specialized need can yield structural innovation. LGBT Muslim support groups, for example, provide community among those otherwise exempt from full “religious citizenship” (Yip 2007, p. 210). Gay Muslims invent spaces for congruent identity work between religion and homosexuality, thereby reducing stigma (Siraj 2014). Lesbian Hindu couples attempt to marry in Indian temples despite the illegality of same-sex marriage there (Takhar 2014).

A bevy of recent research lends credence to the prevalence of niche organizational forms. The emerging church movement, “personal parishes” for specialized populations of Catholics, neo-monasticism, house churches, and the like all evidence a growing movement away from traditionally-organized dominant institutions, toward niche-specific modes of organization. Whether by opportunity or constraint, religious organizations can “compel congregations to reexamine their identities and play new roles” (Cimino 2013, p. 78), including catering to a niche-specific market. Just as many school districts have welcomed the advent of niche-serving charter schools, so too are some religious traditions innovating through parallel moves toward “charter churches,” with formal designation as such (Bruce 2017).

Innovative niche molds, moreover, intersect studies in religious organization that question the constitutive criteria of service to an immediately proximate neighborhood. While a parish structure more traditionally prescribes religious organization to a given catchment area, the niche congregational or de facto congregational structure draws instead from a self-selected or formally-identified body of adherents (Ammerman 1997; Warner 1993). Geographically nodal organizational structures have fostered a robust field of ecologically-situated, neighborhood-focused study. Niche organizational structures, by contrast, invite new questions around innovative spaces that span (or even erase) traditional geographic boundaries.

Niche congregations “create an identity relatively independent of context” (Ammerman 1997, p. 131); diverse and mobile populations enable these innovative organizational outcomes.

Religious organizations’ encounter with changing urban populations likewise elevates the pertinence of place. A slow or sudden disjuncture between historic membership and neighborhood composition can yield varied outcomes. Religious organizations and those leading them are hardly passive bystanders to gentrification (Levitt 2007). Religious bodies can be instrumental in either exhibiting staying power in neighborhoods (Gamm 2009) or enabling white flight through congregational polity that facilitates property sale and suburban relocation (Mulder 2015). Kniss and Numrich (2007, p. 200–1) suggest that congregations may align with a pattern of (1) wholly changed member populations, (2) a secondary add-on member population, (3) a status quo but now largely dispersed membership; and (4) relocations driven by choice and idiosyncratic reasons, rather than neighborhood. Tokke (2013) presents evidence that congregations may adapt social and cultural elements to shifting demographics, but still retain a consistent theology.

Individual Hindu leaders, for example, have entrepreneurially developed new social and religious structures in altered cityscapes (Weiner 2013). Some Catholic dioceses have strategically established parishes less reliant upon geography, preserving a symbolic organizational presence amidst membership declines (Bruce 2016). Together, these innovations challenge the default notion of religious organizational structures as indelibly emergent from, embedded in, and acting in service to their immediate geographic contexts. Geographic disentanglement, moreover, carries substantial consequences for the ways that religious organizations relate to their proximate neighbors. McRoberts (2005), for example, points out that organizations comprised of participants who drive in from elsewhere may cripple a community’s efforts to sustain and empower those living just next door.

The structure of religious organizations can also change at the behest of state control or legal

restrictions. City codes, for example, may force organizations to allocate resources to renovation to meet building codes or landmark requirements (Tokke 2013). Operating within the context of Communist rule can stifle formal religious organizations, while facilitating innovation around less-institutionalized modes of religion. Writing of this situation in China, Yang (2012, p. 87) describes how China’s religious market is divided into “red,” “black,” and “gray” markets: the red market is legally permitted; the black market is illegal/banned; and the gray market “consists of all religious and spiritual organizations, practitioners, and activities with ambiguous legal status.” More restrictive regulations produce larger gray markets; structural innovation abounds.

Religious forms also exhibit innovative outcomes born of economic interests. Fueled in whole or part by capital-generating motives, religious organizations throughout the world have ingested a business mission to accompany (or even replace) a spiritual one. The Chinese Tourism Bureau, for example, has re-envisioned temples as tourist sites, charging admission and appropriating religious space. “Some temples have successfully fended off such attempts; some have grudgingly accommodated; and some have been completely taken over” (Chau 2010, p. 10). Similar dynamics occur in highly commercialized districts such as Times Square in New York City (Tokke 2013).

Capitalism and consumption are remaking the organizational forms of religion. One product of this mentality, arguably, is megachurches, which have an ever larger presence – both physically and proportionately – on the American religious scene. Whereas niche-serving congregations may cater to the minority, megachurches stake a claim in catering to everyone. Catholic parishes, too – already much larger than the average Protestant congregation – are supersizing. A third of parishes now boast in excess of 1,200 registered households (CARA 2011). Given that size is positively related to innovativeness (Mytinger 1968; Mahler and Rogers 1999), the rise of large religious organizations predicts ever-more-innovative religious fields. That said, whether size turns out to be an explanatory or a spurious

variable in innovation (perhaps rendered non-causal once resources are accounted for) remains to be seen.

This consumer model of church may be succeeding at the moment, but two things are worth noting here. First, as institutional distrust persists across sectors, we may be coming to the end of the megachurch era. People are increasingly skeptical of consumer-oriented, pre-packaged experiences in religion or otherwise. Across society we view evidence of at least some sectors of the population privileging the small, local, niche, and handmade over the large, corporatized, homogenous consumption experience. The rise of the maker-movement, farmers' markets, food-to-table, craft brewing and online businesses like Etsy, Pinterest, and Lynda suggest that there is a sizeable part of the population that is rejecting, at least in part, the "big-box" experiences of consumption that dominated previous decades.

Scholarship about the megachurch also reminds us that just as the development of rational, market-research driven experiences led to the formation of the massive one-size-fits-all models of religion, scholars should expect the move toward the smaller and more local to have a similar impact. Smaller congregations and religious gatherings may not drive megachurches from the scene entirely, but we would be remiss to think that they would have no effect on the religious landscape as the rest of the consumer world undergoes a shift.

Diffusion

Any innovation, of course, must necessarily move from its source to its adoption in order to successfully change an organization. The *diffusion* of innovation, or how (and if) innovation actually makes meaningful and lasting change to an organization, can be as important as its introduction. An organization's size, structure, resources, strategy, and culture – alongside its external environment and constraints – will impact the ways in which any innovation is reified (Rogers 2003). Adaptation and change does not often roll out smoothly or without contesta-

tion across a religious organization. As Scheitle et al. (2010, p. 1232) note in examining religious organizations' openness to LGBT participants, organizational changes "do not diffuse evenly and unchanged throughout organizational populations."

External social and cultural circumstances, moreover, can generate "loose coupling" resulting in organizational change that is more symbolic than pragmatic (Scheitle et al. 2010; Chaves 1996). Abstract new ideas are not always realized in practical, behavioral changes. On the other hand, loose coupling may create room for innovation to diffuse through non-traditional mechanisms. Lindsay's (2010) work about a network of elite Christians, for example, shows how a lack of organizational structure worked as a catalyst to diffusing innovations. Having both institutional and anti-institutional characteristics served to legitimize an innovative approach to religion among elites, facilitating its spread into more mainstream and classically structured religious organizations.

Diffusion, moreover, may differ in mechanism and success depending upon the social source of the innovation. Entrepreneurial or other leader-driven / top-down innovations can be codified more readily through formal – even legal – arrangements, and communicated accordingly. Innovations spawned via social movements and networks, on the other hand, lack this formality but might have greater odds of continuance given wide participation among members. Polity matters, too: religious organizations with a hierarchical polity will be more likely to exercise "vertical" channels of influence (Wejnert 2002), coerced through centralization. Those with flatter polities may instead diffuse innovations via horizontal channels, through a critical mass of individuals holding similar positions. While "ideas and practices traveling through hierarchical institutionalized structures like the Catholic Church traverse clear, protected channels," those traveling through less formal structures "are more vulnerable to interference and challenge" (Levitt 2013, p. 169).

Meaningfully examining and accounting for the diffusion of innovation in religious organizations

levies yet another challenge to the very analytic categories deployed by sociologists of religion in studying religious organizations. As Levitt argues, our current vocabulary may in fact perpetuate existing hierarchies. Seeing innovation in religion means seeing religion cut across boundaries of space and imagination. Factors that influence encounters with innovation, Levitt (2013, pp. 166–69) argues, include the “social status of the carriers and the receivers,” the “difference between the objects of rituals in motion and those that are already in place,” the “frequency and strength of contact,” the “characteristics of the pathways or channels,” and “the presence of exogenous elements.”

Organization scholars tell us that innovation is not complete until it has been routinized and thereby “incorporated into the regular activities of the organization,” having “lost its separate identity” (Rogers 2003, p. 428). Yang (2012) suggests that even “accidental” innovations can spread infectiously, albeit in ways that are “full of challenges, twists, and turns.” Variables corresponding to characteristics of the innovation, innovators, and the environmental contexts all bear substantial consequences for innovation’s diffusion (Wejnert 2002). There is ample room for additional study in the prospect and process of adapting innovation in religious organizations.

Future Directions for Seeing Organizational Innovation in Religion

The study of religious organizations and innovation therein occupies a somewhat precarious position in an already fragmented subfield. Organizational scholars rarely look to the field of religion as a place for theoretical insight or empirical validation of existing theories, and religion scholars do not often spend enough time accounting for the importance of organizational structures, routines, and styles. This exists despite calls for more joint work in these fields, such as DiMaggio’s (1998, p. 7) well-articulated claim:

Because much religious activity is institutionalized and carried out through formal organizations (e.g., churches, religiously affiliated charities, religious presses, and broadcasters), students of religion may have something to learn from the experience of their colleagues in the organizations field. Because the world of religious organizations is so diverse and because many religious organizations pursue goals and employ structures quite unlike those the firms, service organizations, and public agencies on which most organizational research has focused, it is equally likely that organizational behaviorists have much to learn from students of organized religion.

Three decades since those words were published, it is still possible for us to bemoan a lack of scholarship in the field, especially as it regards innovation.

In part, this lack of attention can be directly attributed to the dominance of the church-sect paradigm discussed at the start. Nearly every one of us who teach the sociology of religion has been stumped by students who want to know if a particular religious organization qualifies as a church, sect, or cult. After some questioning and fact gathering, we can usually shoehorn the example into one of the categories, but the ensuing walk back to the office is dissatisfying. We know, deep down, that those categories are inadequate. They simply do not capture or account for the diversity of organizational forms in religion.

Perhaps even more troubling is that the categorization of all religious organizations into that narrow paradigm may be done in vain. Upon discovering that a particular group fits the characteristics of church or sect, what can possibly be done with that information? What, ultimately, do we learn? Rather than illuminating the activities of the group in question or adding dimension to the social processes under examination, categorization in this way may in fact hinder inquiry and shut down sociological conversation. What need is there to exhaustively examine all of the various organizational dynamics at work when the model should already account for them?

What we propose is a much more nuanced, contextual, and robust understanding of religious organizations, especially with regard to the sources, outcomes, and diffusion of innovation

within them. Years ago, writing in *Tricks of the Trade*, Becker (1998) implored students to stop thinking about types of people and focus instead on types of activities – the particular conditions that make some outcomes more or less likely to occur. Sociologists of religion thinking about organizations would do well to heed this advice and consider thinking less about typologies and more about the conditions that give rise to particular kinds of behavior, or increase the likelihood of particular kinds of innovation.

We know little about how innovation occurs in both standard and creative ways. While this chapter lays out a framework for how and where to look for innovation in religious organizations, it also highlights the need for more empirical evidence. For example, there is little to be found about the effects of congregational intervention efforts, pastoral/ministerial careers, cycles of growth and decline, the inevitability of organizational decline, the degree to which religious organizations' success is influenced by the economic marketplace, organizations' interface with geography in an era of mobility, or the motivations and rewards of religion entrepreneurs, to name just a few that come readily to mind. Each is crucial to understanding the dynamics of religious innovation.

As Fred Kniss (2014, p. 353) pointed out in his 2013 presidential address to the Association for the Sociology of Religion, limiting our focus to mainstream iterations of religion consequently privileges “elite religious forms and institutions” and, as such, “contribute[s] to the persistence and reproduction of dominant religious forms.” So long as we continue to return to kitchens filled with prefabricated gingerbread man, heart, and star cookie cutters, the sweet products of our culinary labor will continue to look the same.

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Abstract

Although it seems paradoxical, religion in all its forms and functions is transferring and blending with the digital world. This new relationship is altering how we do religion and also how religion impacts and influences the society and culture. Digital religion is an intermingling of our modern mediated society with contemporary religious beliefs and practices. Digital religion is not just about having “religion” on digital media, rather it is a blending of all of the societal and cultural components we associate with religion with all of the elements we associate with a digital society. Two current theories have developed that seem to be gaining traction in the field studying religion and digital culture. Campbell has developed a theory called “networked religion,” and Hoover and Echchaibi are developing the concept of “third spaces of digital religion.” By examining several case studies, this chapter will show that each theory has its own merits. Networked religion may be more helpful in examining official religious activity, while third spaces may be more helpful in studying everyday or lived religion.

In a surprise move to many scholars of religion, and even members of their own group, The Family International (formerly known as The Children of God), a highly controversial new religious movement, performed what they termed a “Reboot.” By 2010 they had transformed the structure of their religious organization into a virtual religion built upon multiple online net-

worked community platforms. Chapter houses and communal homes around the world were closed and dissolved, and online connection and activity was increased. This radical transformation was tied to a complete overhaul of the group’s membership requirements and forced members to restructure their religious identity based upon a new form of community and belonging. As Davis (2015, p. 28) discovered, after the transformation of TFI into “a virtual community lacking clearly-defined or strongly-enforced boundaries for membership commit-

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ment, ritual, or collective purpose,” many members believed that as a “virtual community” it was no longer a religious movement. Other members felt that the transformation had lowered the tensions they experienced between themselves and the society, and that the Reboot had allowed them to “exercise self-determination and explore new avenues of personal development and spiritual growth” (Davis 2015, p. 31). This current example highlights the transformations that can, and are, occurring as the digital world blends and merges with religious activities and identities. This was a radical alteration to a religious group and it remains to be seen how this will affect the movement. Initially, there was a significant decline in membership. Whether or not this was an anomalous event, it challenges scholars to think about religion differently, especially if their focus has been on forms of “brick and mortar” religious organizations and the activities that go on inside those buildings.

This chapter will explore the concept of digital religion and contextualize the impact and implications of the wired world on the religious sphere. As Hoover and Echchaibi (2012) have noted, there appear to be three areas where the digital and the religious are overlapping. First, there are new and novel forms of religious activities and practices emerging within digital cultures. Second, traditional religions and traditional religious authorities are clearly establishing strong online presences that are helping to maintain their traditions and their belief systems. However, there is also a third space, a “large, fluid, and evolving category beyond these, where a wide range of old traditions, new traditions, non-traditions, hybridic traditions, and aggressively ‘anti’ traditions, are finding a place in digital space” (Hoover and Echchaibi 2012, 3). Through several case studies linked to these three activities, I will chart the development of online religion and the scholarship that is exploring the emerging relationship between these two seemingly polar opposite things; namely cutting edge computer technologies and religious practice and beliefs that are as ancient as humankind itself.

Digital Religion as Lived Religion

The first heuristic classifications used to examine the levels of religious participation occurring through this new form of media were developed in 2000 (Helland 2000, 2002, 2005). This classification recognized a distinction between *religion-online* and *online religion*. In the case of *religion-online*, the Internet was utilized to facilitate traditional forms of religious communication to present religion based upon a vertical conception of control, status, and authority. Here information was presented about religion in a manner that harnessed the Internet to communicate in a one-to-many fashion. Material concerning doctrine, dogmas, polity, and organization was presented but there was no avenue developed for the participants to contribute their beliefs and input. In many ways this could be seen as a form of mass media and a one-sided communication of religious information from a single source to a very large audience.

The second classification, *online religion*, recognized a form of participation that closely mirrored the ideal interactive environment of the Internet itself and allowed for many-to-many communication and interaction. “Web 2.0” is a term used to describe this social and interactive dimension of the Internet. Argued to be a second phase in the development of the World Wide Web, it allowed for greater interaction and collaboration. It also allowed “end users” to contribute, create, and interact with online material in a variety of creative ways. This included online ritual, prayer, worship, and even meditation. In these cases, through interactive virtual environments, links, chat rooms, and bulletin boards, the setting allowed for the contribution of personal beliefs and offered personal feedback. This was a much more dynamic form of online interaction that allowed for dialogue, the exchanging of information, and reciprocal engagement. This was the new paradox of digital religion, a network filled with openness, religious enthusiasm, *communitas*, and fellowship alongside forms of traditional religious

hierarchical structure and controlled and limited communication.

In the early years of the Internet, it appeared that religious institutions were reluctant to develop open and interactive areas on the web. Areas where people could interact, share, or argue about their religious beliefs, or even participate in online ceremonies were most often provided by non-official and popular religious groups or by commercial ventures such as Beliefnet. Religious organizations and institutions were, and are, very conscious of the way their websites function. Nothing appears on the Internet out of chance or by accident; in fact, a significant amount of time, money, and thought are required to develop an institutional religious website. The manner in which religious groups structure their websites directly influences the type of communication and interaction that can occur online. As Castells (1996) argues, the Internet is ideally designed for many-to-many communication, which represents a form of networked interaction that is significantly different from the form of one-to-many communication used by centralized hierarchies. The groups that were allowing for online religion were in many ways representative of a networked form of religious interaction and participation, which is significantly different from groups that are using the medium to support their hierarchical, “top down” religious worldview. The earliest frameworks for studying digital religion focused upon how people “did” religion online, with many of the case studies exploring neo-pagan rituals (e.g., Brasher 2001; Grieve 1995; Helland 2000; O’Leary 1996; Ramji 2001; Zaleski 1997).

In the early years of Internet use, there was a specialness about online religion. It challenged traditional academic theories that linked the secularization process with developments in modernity and technology. At the same time, it afforded scholars a new environment that could be observed, providing insight into the manner in which religious beliefs and practices adapt to changes in society. However, within a relatively short period of time, the virtual world has gone from feeling like a wide-open frontier to a crowded city. Cyberspace has become a heavily

populated and well-traveled megalopolis, filled with every official church imaginable, live stream religious sermons, and even never-ending free GodCasts. Being online is now a normal part of most people’s everyday activities, to the point that not checking your email, Facebook, and various other online social networks on a daily basis is often the exception.

As Heidi Campbell recognizes, there is an integrating force that bridges and extends online religious spaces and practices with offline religious activity, and vice versa. She suggests that the term digital religion “describes the technological and cultural space that is evoked when we talk about how online and religious spheres have blended” (Campbell 2013, p. 3–4). As Lundby (2012, p. 102) notes in his study of contemporary digital religion and media, the “offline and the online make one reality, one environment. This reality is highly mediated.”

For the person practicing religion within our digital culture, it then becomes a question of “how *has* digital religion become part of my lived religious experience?” Digital religion is playing a significant role in what Woodhead (2012) has called a post-traditional religious identity and certainly with McGuire’s (2008) notion of lived religion. As Hogan and Wellman (2011, p. 55) recognize, the “shift to a ubiquitous, personalized, wireless world fosters personal social networks that supply sociability, support, and information, and a sense of belonging.” For the sociologist studying digital religion, a number of questions arise related to issues of religious authority, belief, identity, community, and the overarching power of religious influence and control. All of these issues are being address by scholars now with significant depth and insight.

Digital Religion: Defining a Field

In an examination of the impact of media on the development of Christianity, Horsfield (2015) recognizes that digital media has several characteristics that make it different than forms of media in the past. This includes the massive amount of information and data storage; hyper-

text and interlinking abilities; powerful new digital data transmission; despatialized personal access to this information; and the decreased size and increased power and mobility of devices that have allowed this technology of information and communication to become insinuated “into almost every aspect and activity of daily life” (Horsfield 2015, p. 262). Digital media is also part of a new form of global capitalism, and as religion blends with this system, it can become commodified, commercialized, and consumer driven.

As Grieve (2013) argues, digital religion can be identified by three unique features. Digital religion is composed of a variety of things including “digital audio, digital video, and computer games, as well as online media such as websites, email, social sites, and multi-player games” (Grieve 2013, p. 108). Due to the way it is created, presented, consumed, and exchanged online, the most unique characteristics of digital religion are its interactivity, hypertextuality, and its method of dispersal. However, Grieve argues, digital religion is not just about having “religion” on digital media. The second component is linked to a technological ideology that “reflects the ways in which technology is linked to economics, politics, and culture.... Digital religion is tied to a similar technological ideology of new media, in that it is seen as more than a new way of communicating, but as new vision for society: its practices are often posed as revolutionary, and tied to the triumph of human creativity and freedom over dogma and blind tradition” (Grieve 2013, p. 109). The third aspect of digital religion, according to Grieve, is that due to the way it is woven within the digital world, it provides a mechanism for dealing with “liquid modernity.”

The characteristics of digital technology in many ways imprint and inform the character of digital religion. Yet digital religion cannot be characterized as simply traditional religion packaged in a new media form. Instead, digital religion is unique because it addresses the anxieties produced in a liquid modern world by using new media’s technological aspects to weave together religious meta-narratives and the ideology surrounding the digital. (Grieve 2013, p. 110)

In the constantly changing, intensely mediated, and rushed environment many people live in, digital religion allows for flexible forms of practice that may provide temporary creative solutions for religious needs and problems.

With these frameworks in mind, it becomes clear that digital religion is a blend of our modern mediated society with contemporary religious beliefs and practices. Yet, how we define religion significantly affects how we view this relationship. In a study looking at several contemporary theories examining media and religion, Lundby (2013) found that the definitions of religion used by different scholars influenced their views concerning the impact of media on religious beliefs and practices, and vice versa. So much so that Lundby (2013, p. 226) argues “the forms of mediation should actually be regarded as an integral part of the definition of religion. Religions are to a large extent shaped by their dominant means of communication.” In a summary of contemporary scholarship on this topic, Lundby finds five different approaches to examining the relationship between media and religion. Each one has a different view concerning the role of digital media and how it is influencing the form and function of religious beliefs and practices.

At one end of his analysis is the concept of the *mediatization of religion*, proposed by Hjarvard (2008). Within this framework, religion is examined from a substantive perspective and media is seen as a powerful force that has its own identity within the culture, yet also becomes integrated and ingrained within other cultural institutions. In the media saturated society, media itself becomes “the primary source of religious ideas, in terms of the bits and pieces of religious text, symbols, and imaginaries that journalists and producers put together when they construct their media stories” (Lundby 2013, p. 229). Media is such a powerful force that religion has to adapt to its functional logic in order to communicate with and engage the society. This influences the content of religion as it is produced and consumed.

Other theories of digital religion rely on what Lundby calls *mediation of meaning*, based upon

“medium theory” that recognizes the reciprocal relationship that occurs between media and religion as they work together and are received by an audience. In this framework, media becomes part of the practice but does not subsume or replace religion; rather, they mutually influence each other (e.g., see Hoover 2006). This form of analysis examines the functional role of religion, with particular emphasis on its cultural impact.

Lynch (2012) has argued that digital religion is a way of mediating the sacred in a very public and prolific way. Lundby recognizes this framework as the *mediation of sacred forms*. All sacred forms are mediated and communicated within a historical context to their believers and it is only through media that sacred forms have material expression. Through digital media people can now interact, communicate about, construct, and maintain the various “multiple sacred forms” that exist within societies and cultures.

The final framework examined by Lundby is the *social shaping of technology*. Campbell (2012) has promoted this perspective in her significant research on digital religion and argues that religious traditions do not sit by and passively allow all forms of new media to impact upon them. Rather, religious traditions constantly shape how new forms of media are used to engage with their religious beliefs and practices. They are actively involved in the “religious social-shaping of technology” and constantly negotiating and adapting new forms of media to meet their needs.

Mediation of religion is now so commonplace that most people simply take it as a given that religion has blended with the digital. One only has to look as far as the apps on your phone to see that religion is being transformed and adapted at an incredible pace (Wagner 2013). For example, Neil Ahlsten (a former Google employee) co-founded Carpenters Code, which built Abide, a smartphone app for guided prayer (abide.is). The app gives you daily “powerful prayers,” allows you to choose topics that you would like prayer help with, and provides music to enhance the online experience. The Abide platform also included in-depth teachings about prayer and meditation, step-by-step audio exercises, the ability to con-

nect with a personal prayer mentor, and the opportunity for scriptural discussions. The goal of the company was to bring prayer and the power of Christian faith into the digital environment. This online activity allows the smartphone to become a spiritual tool for the practitioner, and portal for engaging prayer in a deep and meaningful way. Ahlsten (2015) adamantly believes that the digital can help people encounter the divine. Ahlsten and his development team claim that people using the prayer app on their phone were “five times more likely to be satisfied” with their prayer activities than people who did not use the app. After less than a month on the “app market” the product had already been downloaded hundreds of thousands of times and received thousands of positive reviews. This app clearly demonstrates Grieve’s point concerning liquid modernity and online technology facilitating spiritual and religious practices in our busy, wired lives. It also supports his argument that we cannot begin to understand something like online prayer activities if we try to view it simply as “traditional religion packaged in a new media form” (Grieve 2013, p. 110).

Digital Religion as Network and Space

From these frameworks, two current theories have developed that seem to be gaining traction in the field studying religion and digital culture. Heidi Campbell has developed a theory called “networked religion” and Stewart Hoover and Nabil Echchaibi are developing the concept of “third spaces of digital religion.” Each theory has its own merits, networked religion may be more helpful in examining official religious activity, while third spaces may be more helpful in studying everyday or lived religion.

Networked Religion

Networked religion explores the way digital religion functions within a network of interactions. Based upon the concept of a “networked society,”

Campbell found that the massive shifts in how we function as a society and culture related to developments in Internet technology have significantly influenced religion. A computer-networked society functions in a certain way, and if we participate within that society, the shifts in how we interact and communicate will spill over into all of our activities. For the religious aspect, this means that “religion, especially that which is found online, is informed by the technological structures and characteristics of the Internet such as flattening of traditional hierarchies, encouraging instantaneous communication and response, and widening access to sacred or once-private information” (Campbell 2012, p. 68). In effect, online religious practices are tied to the developments of online culture and its influence on the social sphere. However, as Campbell argues, based upon her view of the social shaping of technology, online culture does not create itself, rather it reflects values and systems from the offline world. Online religious practices are not separate and distinct from offline activities, rather they are constantly reflecting and engaging the practices and activities of people’s religious activities and identities. As such, online religion embodies the significant changes that have occurred in modern societies as religion has changed with secularization, shifts in religious power and authority, freedom of religious beliefs and practices, and a variety of other transitions.

Networked religion recognizes five central characteristics or traits: *networked community*, *storied identity*, *shifting authority*, *convergent practice*, and *multisite reality*. Each of these components is reflective of a digital culture but focused upon the religious aspect, removing the dichotomy between online and offline religion and instead recognizing the blending of the two. *Networked community* is one of the key components of a digital culture. Rather than being based upon physical locations, such as neighborhoods, networked communities are structured upon social networks of varying levels of commitment and affiliation. Networked communities are not just online communities, rather they are representative of “webs of connection between different social contexts to create a personalized network of relations” (Campbell 2012, p. 69).

Storied identity draws from Anthony Giddens and Erving Goffman to examine the religious identity that can be constructed and performed online. Within the digital world, individuals have a variety of resources and social platforms to select, assemble, and present, as their sense of self. As Campbell (2012, p. 69) notes, “it is clear from research that religious identity is not simply absorbed through internet engagement, or is it purely imported from the offline context. Identity is both constructed and performed, as Internet users draw on multiple resources available online.”

Shifting authority recognizes the transitions that have and are occurring as traditional religious authorities deal with new religious authority figures that appear online. This shifting authority is seen as a threat to traditional structures of power and also as a tool of empowerment for others. Online authority has real world influence and can also allow for the transgression of official religious frameworks. However, as recent research has shown (e.g., Hope Cheong 2013), the reverse can also be true. Traditional religious authority that adapts to new forms of networked religion can re-establish ties with followers and become far more connected with them than they may have been in the past.

Convergent practices recognizes the potential of the Internet to shape and shift ritual practices as they are adapted for new media, while also recognizing the fluid nature of the beliefs and practices many people have. This is fostering a “self-directed form of spiritual engagement online... allowing practitioners to select from a vast array of resources and experiences in order to assemble and personalize their religious behavior and belief” (Campbell 2012, p. 76).

Finally, *multi-site reality* highlights the fact that religious practices, attitudes, and beliefs appear within a variety of contexts, both online and off, allowing for a complex integration between the two. This recognizes the intersection between digital media and peoples’ ways of being religious. As Campbell (2012, p. 82) observes, the “movement between media worlds and the public sphere means it can be difficult to separate or distinguish which sources most influence an individual’s spirituality, as people draw

simultaneously from online and offline contexts for their religious identities”

Third Spaces of Digital Religion

The idea of third spaces of digital religion was developed by Hoover and Echchaibi as a way of recognizing the emerging space that is created through “the religious digital” as people engage religion within the wired world. The theory accounts for and explores the forms of the religious (or spiritual) that are developing in the in-between-ness of the digital spaces accorded by this new form of media. This digital space has been socially created by the users and the technology, and within it, “individuals use the technical capacities of the digital to imagine social and cultural configurations beyond existing binaries of the physical versus the virtual and the real versus the proximal religious experience” (Hoover and Echchaibi 2014, p. 14). This theory is not trying to downplay or discount the other forms of religious activity that are occurring within our society and culture; rather, it is developing a lens for recognizing a new form of the religious being generated “by diverse practitioners and audiences who flexibly engage in actions within this new space that they inhabit, which is one that they create in their aspirations and their self-understanding and their subjectivity” (Hoover 2013, p. 267).

The goal of this perspective is to move beyond traditional frameworks of religious analysis that evaluate digital activities by “reifying deterministic binaries of old media-old religion versus new media-new religion” (Echchaibi 2014). The third space perspective interprets and analyzes lived religious experiences beyond dichotomous definitions of both religion and media. It privileges an understanding of “religious and spiritual practices in the digital as part of everyday life and the outcome of potentially contested sites. The spatial metaphor of a third space also allows us to visualize the mobility of everyday religion and explore the dynamic ways in which contemporary subjects imagine, produce and navigate new religious and spiritual places” (Echchaibi 2014).

Third space analysis requires a form of ethnography and in-depth examination of online religious praxis as they are negotiated, created, engaged, and maintained by the people thinking about and doing their religion in this space. Case studies show that this space is “between private and public, between institution and individual, between authority and individual autonomy, between large media framings and individual ‘pro-sumption,’ between local and translocal, etc.” (Echchaibi 2014). Third spaces also stand outside of traditional forms of authority and unitary sources of knowledge as they are contested, negotiated spaces that allow for creative and non-conventional ways of being religious.

This theory sets out to explore the lived religious practices of actors as they negotiate their way of being religious within the digital realm. Third spaces are not large public spaces, but rather smaller groups with focused and purposeful interactions. A third space of religion may appear in a bulletin board, a chat room, an online church, a virtual reality game, or even the conversation thread on a YouTube video clip. Case studies being developed for this research are examining online spaces that “reflect on the creative outcomes of this condition of in-betweenness and the emergence of other places of religious and spiritual meaning, particularly as intervening sites of social practice, or even peripheral spaces of power negotiation and social action” (Echchaibi et al. 2013).

The Third Space of the Wondercafe

In the very early years of public Internet access, several Christian denominations experimented with creating their own computer networks for online communication and private discussions where they could meet, exchange ideas and fellowship, and develop their theologies (in this section, I draw on Helland 2012). One of the first successful experiments of this nature was developed under the guidance of Dr. David Lochhead. On October 31 (All Hallows Eve), 1984, the United Church of Canada started the United Church Computer Users Group (known as

UCHUG). They originally set up the system for two reasons. The first was to overcome the vast geography of the country—from coast to coast there is a lot of distance between churches within Canada. They needed a “place” where they could easily meet without having to travel thousands of miles. The second reason was to allow for the communication of their “textual information” to church leaders and members. Although there were early structural issues (including limited modem connections) the online network system was successful and it quickly became evident that there was a new space emerging online that had its own dimension of religious engagement. The official religious governing body of the United Church of Canada experienced the amazing potential of using the medium to communicate in a one-to-many fashion. It was a great way for communicating clerical issues and connecting from “office to office.” It was also an extremely effective tool for “closed” discussions among church leaders:

Pastors from the Atlantic to the Pacific can discuss, on a weekly basis, the common texts that will be used as scripture readings on the following Sunday. We are also using UCHUG for a denomination-wide discussion of one of the most divisive issues currently facing the United Church: the ordination of homosexuals. (Lochhead 1986)

At the same time, the online members—which at this time were predominantly community church leaders—were using the system to communicate and discuss issues, as well as sharing their thoughts, feelings, and prayer. In sum, they were developing an online environment that they recognized as a form of electronic community. This varying use of the system worried some of the participants as they saw that there was the potential for this communications medium to subtly shift the traditional organizational structure of the United Church of Canada—potentially eroding any form of centralized authority as local groups could now communicate with each other and meet online without having to go through any central office. This was a new space where the community functioned in a way that was not conceivable before the advent of the digital.

However, this new form of online interaction, this third space of digital religion, was not embraced by everyone within the church as it quickly became a contested space that was in-between traditional structure and a new way of communicating and experiencing “Christian fellowship” online.

One of our concerns is the reluctance of national staff officers to involve themselves in the online community; for many of them, the growth of computer networks in the church holds the threat of the marginalization of hierarchy. By allowing the development of close personal relationships among people in widely separated locations, *computer conferencing is enabling the growth of a community of people who do not rely on the traditional patterns of church communication.* (Lochhead 1986, emphasis added)

“Traditional patterns of church communication” represents a one-to-many, hierarchical method of communicating doctrine, dogma, and beliefs. The United Church of Canada was one of the first religious organizations to fully embrace the Internet and recognize that it could play very different roles within religious organizations and the society at large. For them it was a great tool for developing community and for engaging religion on a popular or grass-roots level. It was a place for their everyday lived religion, not the religion with a capital “R” that went on within the traditional church buildings. On UCHUG for example, there was an online conference called “Dharma and Gospel” that allowed for discussions between Buddhists and Christians. It was definitely something new and special for many members of the community and early engagement with this form of digital religion set the United Church of Canada on a path that would put them at the forefront for creating new environments for engaging faith online.

Based upon the overwhelming positive feedback UCHUG received from the people involved in the project, the United Church of Canada switched to a larger computer system that was hosted in the United States. This system allowed for greater online interaction and what they believed very strongly to be an “online ecumenical community.” The more advanced networked

system was called UNISON and it brought together the United Church of Canada with the United Methodists and United Church of Christ.

This online experimentation continued to develop and by 1986 “Joint Strategy Sessions” and “Action Committees” were formed by several Christian denominations in an attempt to discuss how the new Internet system could be used for church mission activities. Eventually, a number of these groups joined together to form the ECUNET system, creating “the largest ecumenical computer network in the world” (Bradley 1997). This was a “closed” or secure networking system developed so that these Christian denominations could communicate among their membership and also with each other. They had private Bulletin Boards, secure chat rooms, email list serves, and also communal areas where they could meet online and discuss different issues or just share their faith. This was another third space for digital religion, though it was not as open and experimental as the UCHUG network had been.

Digital religion is shaped by two equally powerful forces. One of these forces is the end user. The other is the web producer. There is a unique bond between these two groups. Much like the relationship between religion and digital media, they are not separate individual spheres, but rather powerful forces that meld and blend together to produce the third spaces of digital religion. In a development that was very much in line with the early UCHUG third space, the United Church of Canada created a huge online platform (www.wondercafe.ca) as part of a campaign to reconnect the church with the Canadian population. Online in 2006 and running for almost 8 years before it was closed in September, 2014, Wondercafe was a dynamic online environment that hosted a variety of forms of different online interactions. It allowed for email connections, blogging, friend requests, and a number of other Web 2.0 components.

The site was developed and maintained by an official religious organization; however, much like the United Church of Canada’s earlier UCHUG, it was a clear example of a third space of digital religion rather than a website providing data and information about the tradition. In 1986,

UCHUG developer David Lochhead was the first person to use the term “online religion” when he discussed the ecumenical community he had helped create. That same concept—of the online environment as a manifestation of community and non-hierarchical communication between members—resonated throughout Wondercafe.

Wondercafe was not created as a tool for recruitment, conversion, or proselytizing. It was developed to connect the church to the people—where the church believed people were now located, mostly online. The website developed a network; it became a hub for bringing people together into an online environment where, for want of a better description, people could just get together and enjoy each other’s company. As their home page introduction stated:

Welcome to the home of open-minded discussion and exploration of spiritual topics, moral issues and life’s big questions, brought to you by the people of The United Church of Canada. You’ll find lots to talk about in our Discussion Lounge, and you’ll get your very own Profile Page for telling others a little about yourself, starting a blog, or sending and receiving WonderMails. So pull up a chair and join in.

Wondercafe was a very complex website and a powerful representation of Web 2.0. On Wondercafe, participants were able to contribute, develop the conversations and themes, and determine how the website content developed. Along with Twitter and Facebook connections, the website also hosted YouTube clips and other places for online interaction. For many of the people participating online, Wondercafe was the space where they could engage with their religion on a daily basis. Aaron McCarroll Gallegos, one of the people responsible for development and maintenance of Wondercafe, found that many people experienced the website as the “sacrament of community” and an important part of their religious and spiritual identity. Although it was developed by an official religious organization, it is a clear example of the third space of religion. So much so, that after it was officially shut down, members created Wondercafe2 (wondercafe2.ca) so they could continue engaging this third space of digital religion.

Networked Religion, Co-Locating the Sacred, and the Case of a Virtual Tibet

The Tibetan Buddhist Tradition in diaspora was also one of the first organized religions to deeply embrace the Internet (in this section, I draw on Helland 2015). They quickly recognized its potential to communicate and connect their people within diaspora and also its power as a form of media to communicate the difficult Tibetan situation to the world. Recognizing the significance and potential of the Internet to support the Tibetan community in diaspora, in 1996 Tibetan Buddhist monks from the Namgyal Monastery used a variation of the Kalachakra Tantra (a sacred ritual) to bless the network and sanctify the newly created “cyberspace” for this purpose. To conduct the ritual, the monks used sacred chants while they visualized the interconnected network of computers that make up the Internet and the “space” created by these networks. An image of the Kalachakra Mandala (which had been created as a complex sand mandala earlier) was digitized and put up on a computer screen. This further helped with the visualization of the Internet as being part of a giant mandala which was now spiritually anchored within the virtual world. The event was timed to coincide with the “24 hours of Cyberspace” program conducted globally on February 8, 1996 to raise awareness of the positive impact the Internet could have on society and culture.

At first glance, it might seem paradoxical that an ancient religion would respond in this way to new media and the social spaces it affords. Yet from the perspective of the monks, cyberspace was not artificial or “virtual” but a space that people were engaging in a very “real world” way. In their view, there was no dichotomy between online and offline activity, rather the new online environment was viewed simply as a place where people could do things. As the monks put it, “We pray to reduce the negative things that may happen in cyberspace and to increase the positive things... The person using the Internet has the choice” (Namgyal Monastery 1996). Despite “geographical” Tibet being subsumed under the

Chinese State, the Tibetan government in exile, official religious organizations, and politically and religiously motivated individuals actively engage the Internet to promote Tibetan sovereignty and maintain their religious and cultural identity.

As the Internet continued to expand, a number of websites were created to promote and support the “Tibetan Situation,” while Tibetan communities in diaspora began to develop comprehensive websites that provided information on everything from Tibetan restaurants and crafts to localized political activities and international news. As a diaspora community, they were quickly drawn to using the Internet as a tool to help maintain their already dispersed, networked community. By 2004, Internet use within the diaspora had become so significant that Thubten Samphel (2004, p. 167), the secretary of the department of information of the exiled Tibetan government, wrote:

Tibetans in exile are embracing the Internet just as they did Buddhism more than 1,300 years ago. Like a new revelation, the power of the Internet to create virtual communities has fascinated Tibetans in exile. This fascination is intensified by the fact that the ability to create a cohesive community, across international borders, has been denied to Tibetans in Tibet by an Internet-shy China. And Tibetan exiles, scattered as they are across the globe, are converting this fascination into a rash of cyberspace activities that, because of their power to transmit information instantaneously, are profoundly changing the world of the Tibetan Diaspora and beyond. In the process, Tibetan exiles have created a virtual Tibet that is almost un-assailable, free, reveling in its freedom, and growing.

With the main religious leaders leaving Tibet to live in exile (e.g., van Schaik 2011), they continued to develop and maintain a web of connectedness between themselves and their communities, which were living in a form of “stateless diaspora” abroad or still within the traditional territories that were now under the political control of the Chinese government. As new Internet communication tools became available, the Tibetan religious authorities began to explore, and then develop, these networks to communicate news and information about the Tibetan situation to

both Tibetans and non-Tibetans, and to strengthen the communications between the monastic centers (religious authorities) and the Tibetan diaspora community. Originally relying upon volunteers in Canada, the United States, and Britain, several bulletin boards and list-serves were developed for this activity (Anand 2000; Bray 2000; Brinkerhoff 2012; Drissel 2008; Helland 2007; McLagan 1996).

As this online network for projecting and strengthening Tibetan identity inside and outside of China continued to develop and expand, Internet use within the diaspora community began changing based upon the needs of the community. Referred to as the social shaping of technology and the “spiritualizing of the Internet” (Campbell 2005), the users shifted the emphasis from a fourth estate used for combating Chinese propaganda to an online network that began to significantly strengthen the diaspora community. In many ways this primary shift can be viewed as a change from using the Internet to help create a “media spectacle” to using the Internet for create a multisite reality for their community.

One key factor in this development was the push by the diaspora community to develop Internet accessibility and networked connectivity within “Little Lhasa” or Dharamsala, which had now become the religious and political center for the Tibetans in exile. In a major undertaking, Air Jaldi, a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating wireless networks for the Tibetan community in diaspora, facilitated a meeting in 2006 where they built one of the largest Wi-Fi networks in the world. Using a complex wireless mesh network, they linked over 2,000 computers throughout the Himalayan region of Northern India. This allowed for the Tibetans in the Dharamsala area to be “wired” despite the poor quality of phone services and limited access to computers. In support of the developing network and the Air Jaldi conference, the Dalai Lama welcomed the delegates and volunteers building the mesh network and in a written message prayed “that the fruits of your good work will be far reaching and long lasting” (Helland 2015, p. 159).

As the Internet is a complex environment that provides the ability for diaspora communities to

be both consumers and producers of knowledge and representation, centralized, traditional authorities have difficulty maintaining control over this network (e.g., Barker 2005; Campbell 2007; 2010; Helland 2000; Turner 2007). In fact, the new Internet networks “may represent the first time that diaspora members are able to consider aspects of their identity, question traditional interpretations of religion and culture, and choose for themselves what their identity ‘truth’ is” (Brinkerhoff 2012, p. 94). As Campbell notes in her theory on networked religion, shifting authority is a key issue all religious groups have to deal with as they and their membership go online. In an attempt to increase and strengthen the representation of the religious authorities of the monastic centers within this online environment, the Dalai Lama’s official website (originally online in October of 1999) was transformed in 2005–2006 from being purely an information source that promoted the Dalai Lama to a website that engaged with the diaspora community by providing news, teachings, rituals, messages, and speeches. Monasteries that were being re-established in exile also created websites that increased their networked connectivity with the community.

Within a relatively short time, Virtual Tibet became something far greater than just digital activities used to shape public opinion. It became a form of networked religion that allowed for online connectivity and online community, while it also strengthened the networks used for maintaining a globally dispersed group of Tibetans. This overlap between online and offline community identity is clearly reflective of a networked society where the diaspora group is “culturing the technology... so that it can be incorporated into the community and provide opportunities for group or self-expression” (Campbell 2012, p. 64). By actively engaging the online environment in a number of progressive ways, the Tibetan community in diaspora is socially shaping the technology to meet their unique political, religious, and spiritual needs.

Although there are significant digital divides—particularly between new exiles escaping Tibet and traveling to India and exiles that came to

India between the 1960s to the 1980s, this new form of networked society has become extremely significant to members of the Tibetan diaspora for a number of different reasons. In the contemporary online environment, Virtual Tibet is best interpreted as a multisite network that is structured upon five nodes or spheres of websites. The five nodes making up the multisite network are (1) Tibetan Government in Exile websites; (2) Tibetan News websites; (3) Cyber-Sanghas and comprehensive websites; (4) social networking sites; and, (5) Tibetan Monastic and religious websites.

Each node plays a pivotal role in maintaining Tibetan identity both online and off in what can best be described as a multisite reality. In Campbell's (2012, p. 82) examination of networked religion, she argues,

Connected to the idea of a multisite reality is that the online world is consciously and unconsciously imprinted by its users with the values, structures, and expectations of the offline world. Multisite reality means online practices are often informed by offline ways of being, as users integrate or seek to connect their online and offline patterns of life. It also means that there is often ideological overlap and interaction between online religious groups and forums and their corresponding offline religious institutions.

To connect the community in diaspora, a strong multisite reality combined with multiple online networks help maintain community identity, common goals and beliefs, and leadership structures. As such, Virtual Tibet represents the new development of a technologically hybridizing community that is connecting deeply rooted traditional structures of power and authority with new social media.

The Virtual Tibet case study also raises an important issue concerning privacy, cybersecurity, and online activism against formal governments. The Tibetan community in diaspora is aggrieved and persecuted. The community is in a constant struggle with China over issues of territory, independence, autonomy, and authority. This struggle is evident in cyberspace and websites such as Phayul.com, Tibet.net, and Dalailama.com, to name but a few, which have been the focus of concerted cyber-attacks and

online surveillance. The Citizen Lab at the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto recently identified a cyber-attack focused upon the Tibetan diaspora community that compromised a network of over 1,295 infected computers in 103 countries. Up to 30% of the infected computers were considered high-value targets and include computers located at ministries of foreign affairs, embassies, international organizations, news media, and NGOs (Information Warfare Monitor 2009).

Despite the constant threats and challenges posed by the Internet, for Tibetans in diaspora, networked religion has become an essential and vital component for maintaining their community. Religious belief and practice within the Tibetan culture have always been a key pillar of Tibetan identity. With the rise of "networked individualism" (Raine and Wellman 2012), members within the diaspora community are constantly challenged and influenced by "multiple modernities" (Whalen-Bridge 2011) and alternative and competing networks. This struggle of identity and community maintenance is a constant challenge in diaspora, particularly with second generation members that may focus more on developing new ties, rather than on nourishing or rediscovering old social networks (Ardley 2011; Beyer 2006; Nowak 1984; Tiller and Franz 2004; Vertovec 2009).

Within the Tibetan diaspora, there are three clear benefits derived from being actively online. The first is that it allows for a networked identity within the community itself (Helland 2007). Through the Internet, Tibetans living throughout the world can connect in a deep and meaningful way with other members of the community who may not be living within the same nations or even continents. Non-diaspora people do this as a matter of choice; for the diaspora community it is done as a matter of cultural survival.

The second significant benefit achieved by utilizing networked religion within the Tibetan diaspora is to connect monks and religious specialists with the community through websites and online activity. Websites such as rigpa.org and drikung.org allow Tibetans and non-Tibetans alike the opportunity to connect with important religious

figures in a way that was not available in the past. For example, a member of the Tibetan community living in Calgary, Canada can undertake distance learning with a lama, participate in online courses, and watch ritual events in real time, despite being thousands of miles away. In diaspora, there is also a developing divide between the lay and monastic communities, as the lamas are often affiliated with various Buddhist meditation centers that have an elite group of Western followers. These followers often pay large sums of money to attend workshops and teachings and present a high level of devotion to the teachers. The monks must rely on this livelihood for their survival, but this often means that members of the Tibetan community only have the opportunity to connect with their monks during Losar or special festivals (Mullen 2006). With the power of the Internet, the diaspora community now has unlimited access in a new, albeit different way to their religious specialists.

The third important benefit to the community builds upon the second. This new form of connection with religious authorities has developed into a complex network of online ritual activities that co-locate the most sacred aspects of the Tibetan tradition in a very real and meaningful way with the members of the diaspora. New forms of online ritual activity have been developed and facilitated through websites such as *dalailama.com* to allow Tibetans in exile (and within China for that matter) the opportunity to have a close and powerful encounter with the most sacred component of the tradition. By placing ritual online, the Tibetan community can engage the very fabric of the religion: the teachings, ritual events, and sacred lamas, which are central to the identity and practices of Tibetan Buddhists.

Ritual activities and charismatic authority do not always transfer well into the Internet medium (Helland 2012). What is unique about the Tibetan situation is how well the charisma of the high lamas is perceived by the community to be accessible, tangible, and real, even if it is facilitated through computer networks. There are two key factors that may influence why online ritual seems to work so well for this community. The

first can be explored with “ritual transfer theory” (see Miczek 2008; Radde-Antweiler 2006; 2008). Placing ritual online is a process that requires adaptation and changes within any religious tradition and can be viewed as an ongoing activity that involves the three components of transformation, invention, and exclusion. Transformation is the process of shaping or reshaping a ritual that already exists, changing its content or structure in certain ways so it can be facilitated online. For this process to proceed, there may need to be innovation within the ritual based upon the new media environment, and new aspects or components may have to be invented to allow for the ritual to work online. The final element is exclusion, since certain things inevitably have to be left out of the ritual activity in order for it to take place online. When these three forces act upon the ritual, the people participating are then left with a different ritual than they have previously participated in and they have to decide whether the ritual works or has failed. For many people, the exclusion of being physically present is too much of a change and they will not participate; for others, the difficulty might be the lack of nature, the taste of the wine, or the meal after the ceremony. In any case, the ritual transfer process will fail if these three forces somehow destabilize the ritual to the point that people will not recognize it as an authentic ritual activity. For other participants, the changes and transformations that occur to bring the ritual online will be seen as being within a margin of acceptability, and they will view the ritual as still authentic (Helland 2012).

Within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, many ritual activities transfer well. At a basic level, most of the ritual activities facilitated online are teachings about sacred Buddhist texts. In this case, the online ritual is considered an aid for greater understanding and to gain awareness and spiritual awakening, resulting ultimately in liberation from the cycle of rebirth. However, as these teachings are conducted by the high lamas, their power and “sacredness” is perceived to also be transmitted online when people receive the teachings. In effect, by viewing the teachings, even if you do not understand all of the texts’

complexity, one still gains merit just by being part of the transmission process of the teachings. Due to this community perception, the lamas are not merely a visual sign or “summarizing symbol” for the Tibetan tradition and identity, rather they are iconic representations of the divine. The lama or Rinpoche (Precious One) is sacred and holds spiritual or supernatural power that can be bestowed upon his or her students. This occurs during formal and informal oral transmissions. Although in the past this was done face-to-face, through the Internet it is now also done online. Technologies such as Skype and real time synthetic HD video feeds allow for a new form of contact to occur between the teacher/ritual specialist and the person receiving the teachings and empowerment. As such, the Rinpoche has a powerful effect upon people who perceive his or her charisma in this way.

Beyond the ritual transfer theory, the second way that online ritual has such a significant impact upon the Tibetan community in diaspora is that the lamas, and particularly the high lamas (eg., Dalai Lama, Karmapa Lama, Sakya Trizin), are already viewed by the community as being between worlds, both as spiritual beings (bodhisattvas) or incarnate deities and as human monks. This sacredness is conceived as a focus of transcendence, which can rupture normal time and space. It transfers well online because the Internet itself disrupts normal time and space on a regular basis. What makes this online activity more than just a form of “long-distanced” ritual practice (which is very common within Hinduism) or virtual pilgrimage (which is very common within Christianity) is the “co-location” of the sacred through the Internet. Members of the Tibetan tradition in diaspora feel a genuine, authentic, and powerful encounter with the lamas when they engage with them in online ritual activity.

Co-location was first presented as a theory in relation to online ritual activity by Pinchbeck and Stevens (2006). They argued that virtual reality has a number of common features similar to ritual, and that through the liminality of the online environment people could feel like they were having an authentic experience when they were

online. In this case, it was the perception of the participants that gave them a sense of being there or a sense of presence in cyberspace. The second use of the term co-location was developed by Hill-Smith (2011), who argued that through co-location, sacred pilgrimage sites could be authentically replicated online. In this situation, it was the sacred place that was co-located in cyberspace and people who went on virtual pilgrimage felt a true sense of connecting with the real place despite its being an online simulacrum of the authentic sacred site.

What makes the co-location that occurs in Virtual Tibet different from the other two cases is that first and foremost, the people engaging in the ritual are not in a virtual reality environment. They are in diaspora, which is a liminal space in its own right, but it is in the real world at a computer. For example, recently an elderly member of the Tibetan diaspora community watched the Dalai Lama’s teachings and ritual activity broadcast live from the Main Tibetan Temple in Dharamsala. The ritual conducted in “Little Lhasa” was a teaching on Tsongkhapa’s “Three Principal Aspects of the Path” and included a very special ritual called the White Tara Permission. The Dalai Lama stated during the live online broadcast that this ritual was taken from the “Secret Visions of the Fifth Dalai Lama,” which he received in Tibet from Tagdrag Rinpoche. To receive the White Tara Permission from the Dalai Lama, who had received it from a very important lama in Tibet, is a very fortunate and auspicious event for a Tibetan Buddhist. The fact that the person was participating online, in diaspora, rather than at the temple in India was not seen as a great loss. Rather it was viewed as a great benefit and a valid connection between the practitioner and the Dalai Lama. The person participating in the online ritual and teaching lit incense, placed offerings and flowers in front of the computer, and intensely watched the high definition broadcast, listening to the teachings and reciting the proper mantras when instructed by the Dalai Lama.

The second feature that is different from the other two theories of co-location involves the question of place. With virtual pilgrimage, there

is a feeling that the sacred place is authentically recreated in cyberspace in such a way that people genuinely feel they encounter the liminal, sacredness of the site. Lourdes in France or the Western Wall in Jerusalem are good examples. Within the Tibetan diaspora, there is a deep sense of loss and frustration concerning the Tibetan territory. However, the online representations of Virtual Tibet are not focused as much on the traditional land (or trying to virtually recreate it) as they are focused upon maintaining the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and Tibetan identity itself. In many ways this is similar to the conception of a networked community that maintains its “place” through interconnectedness, rather than just traditional territorial or political borders. As Massey (1994, p. 154) argues, “What gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus.” Within Virtual Tibet, the locus and center maintaining the network are the High Lamas.

In the case of Virtual Tibet, co-location occurs in a three-step process that begins online with a ritual activity that is perceived by the community to work. If the community accepts that the ritual can be facilitated online with a level of authenticity that is acceptable within the tradition, then the online ritual “space” creates a liminal environment that the participants can encounter. This liminal space is in-between worlds and shrinks the real-world distance that separates participants from the ritual activity. It may be that a person is in New York City, sitting at his or her desk looking into a computer screen. But due to the liminality of the online ritual event, the participant is in the present, encountering the transcendent element of the tradition, even if the ritual is being conducted 3,000 miles away. What makes co-location different from just watching a ritual on television (which can be a powerful experience in its own right) is the networked community or the multisite network. Participants are engaged within a web of connectedness when they go online for the ritual. It may be that they are going online to the Dalai Lama’s website, or a monastery website, and there they will encounter the

network used by the community for maintaining their identity.

The final aspect that makes co-location tangible to the participants is the icon and “sacred center” around which the ritual is structured. Much like an icon within the Christian tradition, there will be members of the community who do not view the representation (icon, lama, etc.) as something that is divine or spiritual. In many ways this is a good indicator of insider and outsider relationships to the group. An iconoclast will not participate in the rituals associated with icon reverence or worship and will feel no sense of the sacred in the object so revered by the icon-worshipping community (Morgan 2011). However, for the believer, it is an encounter with the divine. For example, for the Tibetan people, the Dalai Lama is the single most important figure around which Tibetan identity circulates. As a personification of the protector deity, he is the primary symbol of Tibetan unity (Kolas 1996, p. 57). For the vast majority of community members, the Dalai Lama has an “aura of sacredness” and a level of charismatic authority that is both institutionalized within the structure of the monastic tradition and sanctified by the community itself (Weber [1922] 1978; Smith 1998). Any opportunity to have an intimate or close encounter with the Dalai Lama is seen as being a profound and significant event. Through these new digital networks, the monastic orders are socially shaping Internet technology to provide their community in diaspora with the opportunity to experience the ritual activity and charisma (or sacredness) of their leadership in a new and dynamic way. This is reaffirming, maintaining, and strengthening the bonds between the monastic centers and their communities, wherever they are located.

On a Tweet and a Prayer

When it comes to digital religion, what a difference a Pope makes. Benedict XVI, who served as Pope of the Roman Catholic Church from 2005 until he resigned in 2013, had a Twitter account and all the web resources the church had to offer

at his disposal. Yet he never engaged with social media in a way that successfully connected with the masses. He was aware of its impact and importance, and for the 47th Annual Communication Day in 2013 his message was, “Social Networks: portals of truth and faith; new spaces for evangelization.” In this regard, he saw new media as a tool for communicating Catholic values and beliefs to the rest of the world. He called online space “a new ‘agora’, an open public square in which people share ideas, information and opinions, and in which new relationships and forms of community can come into being” (Benedict XVI 2013). However, he did not envision it as the digital agora others had. For example, Bishop Jacques Gaillot developed an early online community for his diocese of Partenia. Partenia was a territory in title only and was given to him as a form of demotion. Rather than viewing this as a limitation, Gaillot created an online space that he considered an agora (Zaleski 1997). Here anyone could login and participate in fellowship, debate, and dialogue. It was not a space being used to convert people to Christianity, or even support dominant Catholic dogma. Rather, it was an open and engaging “third space” used for digital religion.

The official position of online religious activity advocated by Benedict, by contrast, was to use the medium to evangelize and engage Christians and to promote the Church’s position on theological matters. He also felt it was to be used as an important tool for getting people to come back to the brick and mortar church. “In our effort to make the Gospel present in the digital world, we can invite people to come together for prayer or liturgical celebrations in specific places such as churches and chapels,” Benedict declared. “There should be no lack of coherence or unity in the expression of our faith and witness to the Gospel in whatever reality we are called to live, whether physical or digital. When we are present to others, in any way at all, we are called to make known the love of God to the furthest ends of the earth” (Benedict XVI 2013).

Ancient tradition and modern communication appeared to work together when the new Pope was elected in Rome in 2013. According to tradi-

tion, white smoke signaled that a new pontiff had been selected. Shortly afterwards, the papal Twitter account (which had been eerily quiet over the previous two weeks) announced to the faithful: “*HABEMUS PAPAM FRANCISCUM*”—or “We have Pope Francis.” The capital letters may have captured the excitement of the occasion, but they also struck a gauche note on Twitter, especially in contrast to the earlier silence of the Pope’s twitter account. With a “business as usual” approach, the former pope failed to recognize the radically different way people interact online.

Pope Francis viewed new media in a very different way. This influenced how he began to use it as Pope and also what role he felt it should play within the Catholic Church. He clearly understands its power and does use social media to increase his online authority (Guzek 2015); however, he is also using the online environment to encourage people to engage in third spaces of digital religion. Perhaps the greatest example of this can be seen in how Francis released his encyclical on the environment. There was a lot of hype and anticipation surrounding the document and when it was finally released, Pope Francis tweeted: “The Earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth” (Francis 2015). Within hours, his tweet was shared more than 30,000 times and it was quoted and referenced in more than 430,000 news articles. Throughout the day, the Pope continued to tweet short statements from his 183-page text, inundating the online world.

Pope Francis’s use of social media to communicate his message was not accidental or unintentional. Most people will not read the entire document, but if they do, they will find that he sees new media as a potential tool for doing good in the world (although he also recognizes that it often a distraction that can lead to social ills and information overload). Francis’ online activity mirrors his own concern that “efforts need to be made to help these media become sources of new cultural progress for humanity and not a threat to our deepest riches” (Francis 2015). In this case, the Pope was practicing what he preached.

Pope Francis’ use of new media may also be the easiest and most effective way for the Catholic

Church to communicate beyond its membership, with people of other faith or even no faith at all. The encyclical was addressed to more than just Catholics; it aspired to “enter into dialogue with all people about our common home” (Francis 2015). Francis was initiating a third space for digital religion. He encouraged and allowed for people to interact with the material he was presenting, to go online and engage in conversation about the important role of faith in environmental stewardship. As a leading religious figure of a church with well over one billion members, the Pope has a guaranteed audience. Yet the position he is presenting on the environment does not resonate with all of his followers. In fact, many Catholics in the United States express doubts about the very existence of climate change. In a detailed study for the Public Religion Research Institute, Gendron and Cox (2015) found that, overall, 47% of Catholics surveyed agreed with Pope Francis on climate change issues. However, 24% disagreed and many as 20% were not familiar with the Pope’s position on the environment. A large number of Catholics had also not heard his encyclical explained or talked about by their clergy in the church. By opening up the conversation and creating a third space for digital religion, the Pope bypassed the mediating structure of the pulpit and engaged directly with his flock.

The Pope’s encyclical was about more than just the environment. In effect, he was presenting a critical assessment of “short-sighted approaches to the economy, commerce and production” and the obsession many have with a lifestyle based on over-consumption and a disregard for others’ well-being. Although some conservative Catholics have downplayed the document, shifting attention away from the economic, ethical, and social aspects of the papal position, his statement resonated with a large portion of the global population that is deeply concerned for the planet’s long-term future. In many ways, Francis was initiating an online conversation on a grassroots level, challenging people of all faiths and belief systems to become engaged with this issue. The easiest place for that to happen is online, through Twitter posts and reposts, chat rooms, Facebook pages, online forums, and any other space that

has been created to allow people to engage in discussion.

Future Directions

The future of digital religion is certain. Religion in all of its forms and functions will continue to blend into the online environment. Digital religion is not something that appeared *ex nihilo*; it represents and reflects religion in our contemporary society. Official religious organizations are adapting their structures to adjust to the digital world. This means they are developing clear strategies that take advantage of online networks and are using them to increase their authority among followers, to strengthen their networks and connections with their churches, temples, or mosques, and to present their dogma, beliefs, and practices on a global scale. Sacred sites are being wired, important rituals are live online, and religious specialists can be friended on Facebook. Despite this activity, unofficial religious use of the Internet is also flourishing. Individual forms of spirituality and syncretic religious practice are thriving online. People are engaging with beliefs from different faiths, meeting online to share common concerns and values, and participating in the new third space of digital religion.

A close examination of digital religion clearly demonstrates the blending of religion and religious activities in many people’s everyday lives. Religious content permeates the online world, yet how it is used, engaged, and incorporated by the end user is a significant component of digital religion. By studying how people are engaging digital religion with their phones, their computers, and their tablets, scholars may now have the greatest opportunity to explore everyday lived religion on a massive scale. Many of these activities are surprising, such as the role of religion in online games (Campbell and Grieve 2014; Geraci 2014), religious influences in online crowdfunding (Copeland 2015), and 3D virtual reality goggles being used to experience the “eight phases of enlightenment.” Digital religion offers an opportunity to explore how people choose to do religion on their own terms in our contemporary society.

However, this activity will always occur within a structure that is dominated and controlled by the media itself. Google, IBM, and Facebook (for example) are not passive players; they dominate how we engage the online world. End users always play a role in the equation, but the structure created by these corporations (and governments) heavily dictates and channels people's level of digital religious activity. For instance, when the Chinese government bans YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, how easy is it for people to engage in third spaces of digital religion? Official religions are also aggressively dictating how new media is to be used by their membership. There are constant struggles of religious authorities online for control over the beliefs and practices of their followers in the digital world. In this case, studying digital religion can clearly show how dominant groups adapt media to meet their needs and influence the culture. As technological and substantive developments of the Internet race ahead, more scholarly work needs to be done in all of these areas.

The good, the bad, and the ugly of digital religion are here to stay. Religious content and online activity is flourishing. Religion in all of its forms and functions is becoming transformed and adapted to blend with societies and cultures that are now constantly online. As people become more and more wired, they adapt their religious practices and activities to function within the increasingly wired world. There is an intrinsic double-aspect to this cultural activity. In order for the religious beliefs and practices to function and be engaged by people within the digital environment, they too must adapt and be transformed. This cycle and relationship between media and religion will not end and clearly demonstrates that religion continues to play a significant and relevant role within our world.

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Giuseppe Giordan

Abstract

The relevance of religion to the heart of contemporary society is open to multiple interpretations. The concept of spirituality emerges into the sociological debate from the context of cultural pluralism, the individualization of religious sentiment, and the subjectivism of belief. This “new” perspective points to an increasingly important role for the freedom of choice of believers vis-à-vis religious institutions. Establishing individual freedom and creativity of faith signifies the possibility of marrying the sacred to relatively new themes such as the search for well-being and personal realization, the understanding of personal feelings, and the search for health and the meaning of life.

Analyzing the path the word “spirituality” has taken within Western culture over the last half century is surprisingly illuminating for a number of reasons. First of all, observing how a term owned almost exclusively by the theological language of the traditional religions has become a popular concept to be found in the most unexpected folds of contemporary society forces us to analyze the deep changes that have shaped our culture in recent decades. If until the 1960s only very narrow circles of people, all very committed and identified within clearly defined religious groups, talked about spirituality, today it is

enough to walk into any bookshop to realize how widespread spirituality is beyond the fences of religions. Or, alternatively, without having to leave one’s home, just enter the word “spirituality” or the adjective “spiritual” on Amazon or Google and see how the boundaries of this concept are difficult to circumscribe clearly.

Since the last years of the twentieth century, and with considerable acceleration at the beginning of the new millennium, the category of spirituality has fully entered into the toolbox of sociologists of religion. Many criticize the concept as not well defined and of limited heuristic use. Others point out the difficulty of making it operational in empirical research. But everybody uses it to say how traditional categories used to study the role of religion in the contemporary world are insufficient to grasp the new specificities, both at the collective as well as at the individual level.

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The appearance of the concept of spirituality in the popular culture and in the ambit of scientific research brings with it also another rather relevant issue. Born of theology, and hence of religion, spirituality is often used in a dialectical position relating to religion. As we will soon see, some people tend to identify themselves as “spiritual but not religious,” highlighting in this way how “religion” and “spirituality” may be understood as mutually exclusive terms of identification.

What we have briefly outlined illustrates how intriguing and instructive the concept of spirituality is both at a general sociocultural and a specifically socioreligious level. If in contemporary culture spirituality conveys a new way of relating with the meaning of life and, for many, with the sacred, within traditional religious institutions such a novel modality of believing is a challenge to get in tune with the new needs of the faithful as far as possible.

While collecting the different issues that define the meaning of spirituality, as if we were putting together the pieces of a puzzle, we will first analyze the changes over the last decades within the religious field that have caused the so called “spiritual turn” in the sociology of religion. Briefly analyzing the theory of secularization, highlighting both the explanatory issues and blatant denials from reality, as well as considering the crisis of the concept of religion, will allow us to outline the new socioreligious landscape within which the category of spirituality seems to have carved out a prominent position.

In the second section we will analyze specifically the concept of spirituality, linking it to the concept of religion. As we will see, the relationship between spirituality and religion is rather complex, one that for many people is best characterized as a zero-sum proposition. In other words, an increase in the level of spirituality should correspond with a decrease in the level of belonging to traditional religion, as if the concepts were at the two ends of the same continuum. While deepening such a relationship between religion and spirituality, we will see how in fact it is rather difficult to describe its contours and dynamics in mutually excluding terms. Only very rarely do

religion and spirituality seem to exclude each other, but this in fact happens in the rhetoric of those who are neither religious nor spiritual (Ammerman 2014).

In the third and fourth sections we will investigate the formation, over the last four to five decades, of the two dimensions within which it is possible to understand the emergence of the category of spirituality. First is the culture of the self, with the centrality of the subject in relation to the institutional frameworks in which it is inserted. Second is cultural pluralism, which corresponds with the re-definition of the concept of power and authority, even in the religious sphere. Finally, in the last section we will see how spirituality can be a key resource for the men and women of our time who seek the meaning of their everyday lives in the swirl of their professional and private activities. We conclude with some thoughts on future directions for research in the social scientific study of spirituality.

Beyond Religion and Secularization: The “Spiritual Turn” in the Sociology of Religion

One of the most problematic features that characterizes contemporary society is change, or, more precisely, the speed of change itself. Change can happen fast enough that its comprehension and its interpretation becomes difficult. Words, concepts, and theories that until not long ago had a convincing explanatory and heuristic capacity now are only partially usable (if they have not become totally misleading), and often need to be specified and contextualized much more.

What do we mean today by politics or economics? And by family or work? What comes to mind when we speak of sexual identity or education systems? In Western societies there is no longer a unique meaning for each of these concepts, which must be re-defined case-by-case. In other words, the transformations that in a few decades have involved the most diverse social phenomena, have sometimes been so fast and deep as to require a new cognitive apparatus: new concepts, new narrations, new theories. The field

of religion is not immune to such processes of change. Indeed, we might say that it is the ambit in which they have settled with more incisiveness and more depth, even up to re-defining that complex system of meanings and behaviors that we usually label with the word “religion.”

Ten years ago Heelas and Woodhead (2005) published a book whose title unequivocally posed the question of the relation between religion and spirituality in the modern world (*The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*). Many scholars believed it was an intelligent provocation, but certainly not capable of questioning the traditional categories used to interpret people’s the relationship with the sacred, most notably that of religion. In fact, things went differently. After a somewhat animated debate -- of which we can find a trace in a book edited by Flanagan and Jupp (2007) -- Warner (2014) jokingly wondered if the word “spirituality” should take the place of the word “religion.” This would even require that the names of some scholarly associations change, such as the “Religious Research Association” becoming the “Spiritual Research Association,” and the “Society for the Scientific Study of Religion” becoming the “Society for the Scientific Study of Spirituality.” Although the title of his article (“In Defense of Religion”) makes clear how Warner (2014) believes the issue should be worked out, the question of the relevance of the concept of spirituality in the field of the sociology of religion is definitely settled in favor of its inclusion. What has made such a “spiritual turn” in the social scientific study of religion possible? To understand this properly we need to step back and consider how, until not long ago, the relationship between religion and modernity was explained.

Secularization and Religion: Are They Concepts in Crisis?

For several decades beginning in the 1960s, the theory of secularization virtually set the agenda of the sociological study of religion. The relationship between modernity and religion was mainly seen as mutually exclusive, both by its

most ardent supporters, as well as by its (weak) detractors. In other words, the continuation of the modernization process would be matched by the slow but inexorable disappearance of religion, at least in its public manifestations. And all that did not fit into this pattern was interpreted as “an exception.”

There is no doubt that this theory has had the indisputable merit of explaining some profound changes that were taking place in the second half of the last century in the Western religious field, such as the differentiation between the religious and the secular spheres, the reduction in religious vocations, and the dramatic decline of regular practices. At the same time, however, it has favoured the consolidation of a habit of mind. Even in the flourishing of new religious experiences in the 1970s and 1980s (the so called “new religious movements”) or in the re-assertion of the public role of religion especially in the 1990s, the inherited models of “disappearance” and “return,” “death” and “revival” were continuously used (Anthony et al. 1987; Barker 1999, 2008; Bruce 1996, 2002; Cox 1965; Ellwood 1994; Griffin 1999; Hanegraaff 1999; Kepel 1991). These are terms that precisely recall the underlying assumption of secularization itself, which proceeded from the distinction between the “presence” of religion in the traditional and pre-modern era, and the lack of the same in the context of the modern world. As shown by Casanova (1994), the theory of secularization actually suggests three different interpretations of the relationship between religion and modernity. First of all, the version that is more commonly associated with “secularization” is the one that predicted the decline and the disappearance of religion. A second version presents secularization as a process of social differentiation, in which the various secular spheres (politics, economics, education, welfare, and science) gradually free themselves from the religious sphere. A final version sees secularization as synonymous with the privatization of religious belief.

The “myth” of secularization, according to which the fate of religion was its disappearance as a remnant of the pre-modern era – with only doubt about the timing and the modalities of this

disappearance (Acquaviva 1979; Berger 1967; Luckmann 1967; Martin 1978; Wilson 1969) – had to come to terms with the actual facts. Not only has religion not disappeared, but its relevance is there for all to see. Its presence in the public sphere is not only obvious, but it is deemed excessive, even problematic (Davie 2002; Martin 2005; Stark 1999; Agadjanian 2006; Berger 1999; Dobbelaere 2002; Swatos and Christiano 1999; Yamane 1997).

The crisis of the theory of secularization, however, far from re-affirming the traditional category of religion, is accompanied by the questioning of the very concept of religion. Within the sociology of religion, the debate about the usefulness of the term religion has always been very lively (Hervieu-Léger 1993). In recent years, its further ambiguity has been highlighted, especially under the pressure of terrorism of seemingly fundamentalist religious origin. The attacks of 11 September 2001 have made clearly visible how religion responds also to dynamics of a political nature and to issues of identity recognition. Without counting the crimes committed in the name of religion by adherents to the Islamic State, there are many instances in which some of the more fundamentalist faithful of the various traditional religions try to defend their values with not always peaceful methods (Almond et al. 2003; Appleby 2000, 2006, 2015; Juergensmeyer 2000; Kaplan 2010; Lawrence 1989; Mason 2015). From this perspective, the concept of religion is connected to conflict and violence, both individually and collectively, and this happens despite the repeated appeals for peace by many religious leaders.

It is worth pausing briefly on this aspect of the relationship between religion and violence because, as we will see, the concept of spirituality is stated also as the desire to free the reference to the sacred from any form of power and abuse of power. Why do religions “go to war”? Why do politicians often arm their language with references to religious symbols to make their messages more effective and mobilize their citizens to fight and suppress “the enemy”? According to reports by Pace (2004), religions succeed where politics alone is no longer able to justify and

make the right of killing another human credible. Clearly what is at stake is not so much the concern of religion to safeguard the purity and integrity of the truths of faith, but rather the affirmation of ethnic identities endangered from outside. According to this specific meaning, rather than referring to the sacred, religions become an essential symbolic resource that legitimizes the public language of the politics of identity. The significant presence of religion in the public sphere is then easily connected to obtaining political objectives such as the affirmation of national identity, the suppression of different ethnic groups, and the strategic alliance with certain political parties in view of specific interests to protect.

It is just this use, or better abuse, of religion to achieve political ends that is radically questioned by those who are looking for a more selfless and authentic relationship with the sacred. If religion is so often manipulated by politicians and by the struggles of identity, which word shall we use to reference the sacred, the transcendent, the mystery, the meaning of existence? Ultimately the word religion seems to be both too narrow and too equivocal, often not adequate to describe the new demands on the sacred that in the modern world seems to recur in ways that are unexpected and unprecedented in many respects.

Decomposition and Recomposition of Contemporary Belief

In short, the persistence of religion in the contemporary world is part of a social and cultural landscape so new and different that its role is hardly comparable to the role played by religion in the context of the traditional world. A somewhat complex relationship exists between the reference to the sacred and the world of late modernity, where markedly heterogeneous issues coexist which are often not consistent with each other. Such complexity can be read as a *decomposition* process of traditional forms of believing, governed by hierarchical structured and undisputed religious institutions, and at the same time as a *recomposition* process where the

public recognition given to religious institutions goes hand in hand with the proliferation of magical and esoteric groups. Such recomposition brings together both the individualization of religious feeling and the subjectivization of beliefs, as well as the challenge of fundamentalist movements and the use of religion as a source of ethnic identity. The relevance of religion within our society therefore lends itself to multiple interpretations, and this requires a new conceptual apparatus that is capable of respecting the complexity of the phenomenon of religion.

So, God is not dead after all. Many people are questioning the meaning of their existence. They often seek to answer this question not exclusively within the supply of beliefs, norms, and rituals of the traditional religious institutions, but also or instead in relation to the Mystery, a Transcendent Being, or a Force that exceeds the materiality of everyday life. This situation forces social scientists to re-calibrate the conceptual tools available and, if they can, to find new ones.

“Spiritual but not Religious”: Distinguishing Religion and Spirituality

The emergence of the concept of spirituality in the social scientific study of religion is placed in this context of deep transformation that touches the most diverse aspects of social life. The socio-cultural frame within which we can understand “the spiritual perspective” consists of two phenomena that are closely connected to each other: on the one hand, the gradual establishment of the freedom of choice of the subject, and on the other hand, the experience of diversity and religious pluralism.

To affirm the freedom and creativity of the individual even in matters of faith means to accept the challenges of a culturally strongly differentiated context, both for what concerns the intensity of the (possible) belonging to one’s own religion as well as in relation to the legitimacy accorded to other religious experiences. That also means to be able to combine the relationship with the sacred with relatively new issues such as the

autonomous research of the meaning of one’s life in a perspective of wellbeing and personal fulfillment, the need to make room for one’s feelings and express one’s emotions, the attention for the body and the natural environment in which one lives. The freedom of choice of the subject in the construction of one’s identity and the comparison with the pluralistic mentality typical of our globalized world will be the subject of the next two sections. To understand its relevance in relation to the theme of spirituality, however, we will pause now to analyze the origin of this lemma, its meaning, and its use in the sociological field. One of the most common criticisms of this concept is the very vagueness of its definition. In fact, it is not easy to find a definition that is shared by and satisfies all scholars. Precisely for this reason it is useful to recall spirituality’s formation in a historical perspective, albeit in an extremely synthetic way.

Spiritualities in the Plural: A Long Story

As we have already had occasion to point out (Giordan 2007), the word spirituality has traveled a rather curious path. Its origin can be traced to the traditional religions, specifically Christianity, while its recovery as a “new” category to understand the novel ways of relating to the sacred by our contemporaries is surprising in many ways. It would be very naive to think that the holistic spirituality of our days is a completely new product in relation to what spirituality has represented until very recently within the traditional religions. The interesting point we will have to reflect upon is why, to define the “religious” needs of contemporary men and women, a better term has not been found than the old term “spirituality,” and why the latter has been contrasted (assuming a positive meaning) with the term “religion.” Ultimately we will have to deal with those who call themselves “spiritual but not religious,” trying to figure out what they have in mind when they define themselves in this manner.

The word spirituality was born within the Christian tradition, even if the referenced experi-

ence is present in many other religious traditions (e.g., Sufism in Islam, tantra and transcendental meditation in Hinduism, or the kabbalah in Judaism). It is interesting to note how, within such religious traditions from time to time over the centuries, the need to return to the pure origin of the religious experience itself has consolidated, almost as if to say that over time historical encrustations have been formed that have somehow distanced the faithful from the effervescence and authenticity of the origins. Such encrustations have made religious institutions themselves stiff, scarcely attentive to the needs of the faithful, too fond of wealth and power.

For example, Catholicism has hierarchically consolidated through the centuries in a very structured and rock-like way. As a consequence, the various spiritual traditions such as the Benedictines, Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits have often had to negotiate their autonomy in relation to the central power, experiencing moments of high tension that have led to the regulation and sometimes to the more or less prolonged closure of the religious orders themselves. The same dynamic of negotiation of personal or communal freedom with the central authority can be found in the spiritual experiences of the Spanish mystics Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. We must not forget that their writings and experiences were the subject of careful observation by the Catholic hierarchy.

According to the Christian Bible, the "spirit" is the breath of life, it is what gives energy to all beings and keeps them on the move, often alluding to the life force that comes from God himself. In the New Testament the word "spirituality" does not appear, only the adjective "spiritual" does, which is opposed to what is "physical" and "carnal." According to Jesus' Apostle Paul, the spiritual man is the man who is free from the passions of the flesh, animated by the spirit of God. It is just this divine spirit which raises the "inner man," capable of offering his true identity as a creature of God. As we shall see shortly, such biblical terminology is often picked up by our contemporaries – if not literally then certainly in its fundamental contents – when they speak of their spiritual experiences in reference to their inner-selves.

In the theological debate of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries another issue of spirituality emerges that is crucial to understanding the meaning we today attribute to such experiences. In indicating the relationship between man and God, the personal, intimate, subjective dimension is stressed more and more. And it is also distinguished and distanced more and more from the institutional dimension represented by the official rituals of the Church. Such a distinction between the believing subject and the objective institution of believing is the trait of paramount importance to understanding the subsequent re-interpretations of spirituality at sociological level.

However, the semantic expansion of the term spirituality, passing from the theological to the sociological sphere, does not simply reiterate the subjective and the objective dimensions of believing. It also puts the two terms in hierarchical order with priority to the sociological perspective. In "theological spirituality" the frame of reference is the objectivity offered by the institution, with its dogmas and rituals to which the subject must ultimately conform. In "sociological spirituality" what comes first is the freedom of choice of the subject who can opt in a selective and creative manner to engage the "objective" reference of one or more institutions of believing (which, as a result of this shift, lose their character of absoluteness and their indisputable control capability).

Spirituality: From Theological Term to Cultural Trait

According to a remark made almost half a century ago by Martin Marty (1967), in the years following the Second World War, the term "spirituality" was gradually disappearing from theological debate to make room for a vocabulary which, next to the academic discussion about the "death of God," focused more and more on social and political issues, such as the war in Vietnam, the fight against poverty, and various types of discrimination. At the same time, and it is always Marty who stresses it, the disappearance of the

term spirituality in the theological context was accompanied by a growing interest in the American culture for the “spiritual issues” and the search for a “spiritual life style,” research that was very often conducted at the margins, or even outside the traditional religious institutions. These considerations echo what Wade Clark Roof (2003, p. 117) said 30 years later:

For religion in modern societies, the early-twenty-first century is a time of considerable and often subtle transformation. One such subtlety is the growing attention to personal spiritual well-being and the ferment surrounding whatever people take to be sacred Some commentators view much of the talk about spirituality as shallow and flaky, and of little good consequence for religious conviction, others attach more significance to what they see, or believe to be happening, but very few serious observers take the position that we should shut our eyes to these developments. Spirituality is now less contained by traditional religious structures and Americans – whether we like it or not – are increasingly aware of alternatives for nurturing their souls.

In other words, taking the concept of spirituality seriously, Roof shows how it broadens the perspective of analysis in the study of the relationship of the American people with the sacred. It is a relationship that, while not excluding the reference to traditional religions, is more and more often the result of a personal search, exploring beliefs and practices that lie beyond the ones known and codified in the official religious institutions.

Spiritual Journeys and Spiritual Marketplace

Already in the 1960s, many studies of new religious movements and the New Age movement had highlighted growing interest in matters of spiritual character. Among the first authors to explicitly use the concept of spirituality in the contemporary sociological sense is the just mentioned Roof. In *A Generation of Seekers: The Spiritual Journeys of the Baby Boom Generation*, Roof (1993) empirically relates the religious and the spiritual dimensions to one another. The American baby boomers who grew up and entered adulthood in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s questioned the meaning of their lives and what

they wanted for themselves and their children. They set in the first place the freedom of personal choice and the desire to find a purpose for their lives without taking for granted what the previous generations gave them in terms of religious values and norms. In such journeys in search of the meaning of life, journeys that sometimes take on the character of wandering aimlessly, individuals build-up their own “tailor-made meaning system.”

One of the unique aspects of such meaning systems is the search for a “spiritual way of life.” The immediate consequence of this spiritual seeking is questioning of and distancing from religious authority and lessening of the degree of belonging and belief in the different faiths. One of Roof’s (1993) most intriguing findings, and one not easily interpreted, is that 95% of the interviewees believe in God, but their religious imagination in defining God knows no bounds. The traditional images of God Almighty, the detached Judge who oversees the events in a rather bureaucratic way, vanishes and gives way to warmer, even feminine images, where the personal relationship of friendship and confidence prevails, or it is described as the experience of a “cosmic energy” or of a “creative power.” Ultimately the divine is seen in contrast with anything that blocks individual creativity and freedom of expression: a companion and a compassionate friend, rather than a rigid and demanding officer.

In the biographical sketches that Roof (1993) presents in his work, all the crucial issues of the distinction between religion and spirituality emerge, issues that would be discussed by sociologists of religion in the following years. First, there are those who are active in particular churches because they do not impose rigid dogmas, but rather stimulate and encourage followers to think on their own to find original answers to the great questions of life and death. Then there are those who, after changing churches three or four times, conclude that what church you belong to is not important, but what really matters is that people feel welcome as individuals without being judged. There are those who do not belong to any church but believe it is important to

educate their children in traditional values such as God, country, and family. Finally, there are those who no longer believe in the “material side of the church,” – clergy, money, power – but share the reference to God as source of meaning for their lives, or to affirm their personal identity or that of their own group.

Ultimately, the life stories presented by Roof (1993), despite the diversity of the individual experiences, have evident common traits which are characteristic of the new modality of being religious: a close link with the concrete everyday life, the search for a believable and authentic spiritual experience, religion meant not as something stable and fixed once for all but rather as an open and fluid reality. If on one side the values of personal freedom, the pursuit of success, and self-realization can sometimes be in conflict with commitment to others, on the other side the marked individualism itself would seem to give rise to the need for an authentic inner life, open to the search for meaning and to the needs of other people.

While emphasizing two different modalities of relating to the sacred, in this first survey by Roof (1993) religion and spirituality seem to live together without excessive contrast: the spirit is the inner and experiential aspect of religion, while the institution is its rigid and exterior form. The keystone of the change, as we have already noted, is the freedom of choice in the search for what makes one feel good about oneself. As we shall explore in the next section, it is evident how the psychological language of personal well-being fully crosses that of the spiritual growth. Spirituality, then, is a personal search for meaning, carried out both inside as well as on the edge or outside the historical religious traditions. Even if the “spiritual styles” vary considerably, they highlight a more dynamic and democratic religious culture, often open to the possibility of forms of syncretism (Roof 1993).

But change in a spiritual perspective is not only the modality of individual believing. Under the pressure of new demands from the faithful, religious institutions become more open and sensitive to the spiritual turning point. While on one side undoubtedly it is the “subjectivist turn” that

is the engine of the spiritual quest, on the other side we must not forget that traditional religious organizations do not remain motionless in the face of such a turn. An accurate description of religious institutions in the contemporary world requires that their attempts to adapt to the new spiritual sensitivity be taken seriously. According to Roof (1999), the category of spirituality changes the value not only in terms of demands for religious goods and services, but also in terms of supply. Under the pressure of the need for spirituality, it is not only the way of believing of the subject that changes, but also the way of “making believe” on the part of the traditional religious institutions.

Dwelling and Seeking

The dynamic relationship between the spiritual individual and traditional institutions of believing was highlighted by Wuthnow (1998), who illustrated the difference between what he calls “dwelling spirituality” and “seeking spirituality.” It is useful to remember that these two phenomena are not dichotomous, but rather two movements that can be dialectically present in the same social and cultural context or in the same person in different moments of his or her life. Dwelling spirituality represents the traditional way of believing. It emphasizes the presence of a sacred place (be it a temple or a church) which has clear boundaries, a codified ritual legitimated by the religious authority, a known and shared symbolic universe, and some clear and undisputable certainties. All this implies the presence of a strong and acknowledged institutional leadership that is capable of defining and enforcing boundaries between the inside and the outside, managing conflicts, working out norms and beliefs, and establishing criteria of conformity.

Seeking spirituality, by contrast, is open to the possibility of diversity. It is the path where the boundaries between inside and outside become porous and flexible, where the truths of faith and moral norms are simply available to the searching subject. The social location of this type of spirituality is no longer religious organizations but daily life, with its contradictions and contaminations. It offers not the stability and security

guaranteed by an established institution, exclusive by nature, but the risk of the inclusive search conducted on one's own and the opportunity to put new teachings, new experiences, and new doctrines together.

As already mentioned, the two types of spirituality are seen by Wuthnow not as mutually exclusive alternatives, but as two polarities of contemporary belief. As pointed out by Droogers (2007), traditional churches meet the challenge of spirituality and try to reposition themselves in response, even in highly secularized contexts like the Netherlands. This obviously does not exempt religious institutions from the risk of hybridization and sometimes from confusion of meanings. Meeting the challenge of spirituality puts a strain on the claims of truth and on the exclusivist approach of many religious institutions, but this is the risk they must run if they do not want to die (e.g., in the Netherlands many churches have been closed due to lack of faithful and, once sold, some have become pizza parlors). And this dynamic often creates situations only apparently paradoxical:

The reduced influence of the churches also applies to the church members who remained in the church, but who nevertheless subjected themselves much less to its control. The emphasis that respondents put on experience as the legitimating source of their religion contributes to the loss of influence by the institution. Consequently these members also tap sources outside the institution, including a selection from all kinds of alternative therapy, thus feeding ideas and practices back into their church. The need for an authentic experience becomes a criterion for the members' appreciation of the ritual services for which the institution is still deemed necessary. (Droogers 2007, p. 93)

The question of the "authentic experience" highlighted by Droogers, as we shall see in the next section, is central to understanding the emergence of the "spiritual perspective": it refers to the crucial role of the subject, emphasizing both the importance of "experiencing" as well as of authenticity.

Spiritual but not Religious

What has been discussed so far, especially in reference to studies carried out by North American

scholars, has highlighted how the two categories of religion and spirituality used together are capable of explaining in a more articulated way the changes taking place in how people relate to the sacred in the contemporary age. None of the authors we examined, however, opposed the two dimensions clearly. Most respondents in their studies overlap the concepts of religion and spirituality (Roof 1999).

Focusing on the definitions that people offer of "religion" and "spirituality," Zinnbauer et al. (1997) conclude that, while a clear majority of respondents define themselves as "religious and spiritual" (74% of the interviewed sample), there is a fairly consistent group that defines themselves as "spiritual but not religious" (19%). And it is just this latter group that understandably attracts the attention of the scholars. This exacerbates a problem not yet solved by social scientists of religion: to reach an agreement on a clear and shared definition of spirituality. According to Zinnbauer et al. (1997), the religious dimension is associated with higher levels of religious participation, authoritarian mentality, identification with a traditional church, and orthodoxy and orthopraxis. The spiritual dimension, by contrast, is associated with New Age beliefs and practices, mystical experiences, and a feeling of offense at the attitudes of superiority and judgment on part of the "religious" people.

Other studies have shown that, when questioned about the meaning of the word spirituality, respondents answer "belief in God and/or seeking to grow closer to God," "belief in a higher power, something beyond oneself," "sense of awe and mystery in the universe," and "inner peace/state of mind" (Gallup and Jones 2000). Still, according to this research, about one third of the respondents define spirituality without referring to God or to a higher authority. Three respondents out of four connect spirituality to a personal and intimate search, while the rest connect the word to religious institutions or church doctrine. Predictably, the meanings attributed to "religion" and "spirituality" vary with the different social and cultural (including religious) contexts to which the respondents belong. For example, the meaning of spirituality to a Catholic is different

from that of a Protestant, New Ager, Jew, Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist.

The label “spiritual but not religious,” in addition to highlighting a non-institutional and sometimes anti-institutional component (Besecke 2014; Fuller 2001; Mercadante 2014), also brings with it a certain “rhetoric of spirituality.” According to Meredith McGuire (2008p. 218), “It is noteworthy that, in late modernity, a considerable number of people choose a rhetoric of spirituality. Those claiming ‘the spiritual’ for their own religious life, in contrast to ‘the religious’ (attributed to others) are, indeed, telling us something. But they are telling us more about the ideological valence of the terms ‘spirituality’ and ‘religiosity’ than about their specific spiritual practices and experiences.”

A different perspective is suggested by Heelas and Woodhead (2005), who not only radicalize the conflict between religion and spirituality, but even assume that in a not too distant future the latter may take the place of the former. Their “spiritual revolution” thesis has generated considerable debate, but at its root seems to interpret one of the deepest cultural traits of our time: the emergence of individual subjects who recognize their freedom and needs, even in their relationship with the sacred.

Spirituality and the “Sacred Self”: About Body, Emotions, and Wellbeing

The contribution of Heelas and Woodhead (2005) is based on studies by Taylor (1989, 1991, 2002) of the “massive subjective turn of modern culture.” The emergence of spirituality in today’s world is certainly connected to a “subjective turn” in our culture and society. But to properly understand the scope of the centrality of the subject, on which the new spirituality is based, it is useful to look back at the conditions that made this change possible. As usual, in understanding social and cultural change, we tend to emphasize moments of rupture between the various ages; but as we all know, such ruptures are inserted in a context of continuity that made them possible.

All revolutions, even the spiritual ones, bring traces of the previous eras with them. The study of such changes helps us to understand how important such ruptures are, how deeply they have changed the way of organizing society and of understanding the role individuals can play in it. This ultimately helps us to evaluate with greater awareness whether new social and cultural phenomena represent passing trends (not few scholars believe that the debate about spirituality is of this kind), or if they are going to last in the long run.

The Silent Revolution

Almost 40 years ago, describing the changes that characterized American and Western European societies from the end of World War II, Inglehart (1977) argued for a shift of values that, although slowly and gradually, appeared to be progressive and far reaching, to the point of speaking of a true “silent revolution.” Inglehart’s thesis is that the values of the Western population have shifted from a materialistic orientation to an increasingly post-materialistic orientation (see also Inglehart 1990, 1997; Inglehart and Baker 2000; Inglehart and Welzel 2005). In other words, starting from the 1950s and 1960s, concern for physical and economic security that had affected previous generations has slowly but gradually been replaced by other, different interests, such as sense of belonging, self-realization, and intellectual and aesthetic satisfaction.

The shift from “materialistic values” to “post-materialistic values” seemed to be an inter-generational fracture, resulting from the different formative experiences of the generations themselves. Obviously materialistic questions were not destined to disappear from the horizon of individuals’ interests, although new interests seemed to become more evident among younger generations, such as quality of life, environmental protection, and personal freedom regarding divorce and abortion. The gradual change in the direction of “post-materialist” values is also accompanied by a progressive decline of the recognized legitimacy of hierarchical authority,

patriotism, religion, and other institutions in general.

The changes in the material sphere, typical of the 1950s and 1960s, then bring with them much deeper changes in the spheres of values and behaviors. Following the insights of Abraham Maslow, according to whom individuals give high priority to those needs whose satisfaction is more difficult, Inglehart (1977) argues that, after achieving sufficient physical and economic security, the opportunity to meet the “needs for self-realization” opened up to Western populations. In addition to greater per capita income and the emergence of welfare programs reducing uncertainty about the future, a key role in this paradigm shift is played by the increasingly widespread level of higher education that makes the young less likely to develop dogmatic attitudes and to submit to authoritarian impositions.

The Therapeutic Culture

The post-materialist emphasis on the quality of life is central to the emergence and gradual consolidation of the need for spirituality. This is accompanied by the growth of the so-called “therapeutic culture” in which the individual’s personal psychological well-being are paramount. This approach is centered on autonomous individuals who decide for themselves about the purpose of life. It is no longer oriented primarily to higher truths but simply to a calculation of effectiveness. As such, it re-interprets the moral reference in a rather ambiguous framework. According to Robert Bellah and colleagues (1985), the commitments that in the traditional world were lived in obedience to imperatives of moral order are now perceived to be an interpretation of the sense of personal well-being. Commitment in the workplace, politics, marriage, or religious faith all depend mainly on feeling good about oneself. As just mentioned, the moral references are not eliminated, but put in a very fragile and ambiguous individualistic framework. Values and moral norms as points of reference lose their character of absoluteness and indisputability; they become simply one of many

resources for meaning-making available from which the individuals can choose.

Bellah and colleague’s (1985) term “Sheilalism” expresses exactly such a radically individualistic attitude where God is simply the self magnified. However the changes triggered in those years in the religious ambit were rather complex and cannot be interpreted in a unilinear way. As Roof (2003, p. 140) observes, “the enhanced subjectivity and moral and cultural relativism of the period generated a fundamentalist religious resurgence, aimed at reclaiming an external authority.

The mood of the time favored moral accountability, but not at the expense of individual freedom and even flexible religious styles The appeal of popular evangelical faith that has emerged in the years since lies in no small part to its focus on personal needs, and not simply on dogma or strict morality. Psychological categories such as “self,” “fulfillment,” “individuality,” “journey,” “walk,” and “growth” became prominent in its rhetoric reconciling a legitimate self with a deeply embedded American religious narrative emphasizing the benefits of faith.

The category of spirituality, then, brings in the religious field the specific needs of each person, even those related to the well-being in everyday life. And this happens with a new therapeutic language that echoes the language of psychology.

The Spiritual Revolution

Ultimately, even with many ambiguities, the radically individualistic attitude that has characterized the “spiritual quest” since the 1960s sets the stage for what has been called a true “spiritual revolution” at the beginning of the new millennium. As mentioned previously, Heelas and Woodhead (2005) interpret the relationship between religion and spirituality as mutually exclusive: gradually but inexorably the emergence of the latter would erode the legitimacy of the former. It is a zero-sum proposition wherein the emergence of spirituality promotes the decline of religion. Proposing this approach, the two English authors radicalize the debate that had taken place on the other side of the Atlantic in the

previous years. Whereas in the United States the issue of spirituality was investigated in relation to religion, as if the two terms lay the ends of a continuum, in Europe (specifically Great Britain) the question seemed to change. The more profound and consistent effects of secularization on traditional religions there suggested that these were not two co-existing perspectives, but that what was being observed was a gradual marginalization of religion by spirituality.

According to Heelas and Woodhead (2005), the decline of some indicators of traditional religions in the Western world – e.g., religious affiliation, religious practices, obedience to the moral norms of ecclesiastical hierarchies – does not correspond to the disappearance of all reference to the sacred. Rather, we see the re-definition of the sacred in line with “the massive subjective turn of modern culture” as described by Taylor (1989, 1991, 2002). According to Taylor, individuals in the contemporary Western world are perceived less and less in terms of their objective roles and the rules imposed on them from the outside. The “true life” of modern individuals are to be found in the personal feelings, deep harmony, and balance that they construct for themselves beyond the roles they must play within the social contexts in which they live. According to this perspective, the men and women of our time tend to build their own existence, distancing themselves as much as possible from the expectations of society, in order to be in tune with the needs they feel as most authentic and profound within themselves.

As explained well by Heelas and Woodhead (2005, p. 3), “the subjective turn is a turn away from ‘life-as’ (life lived as a dutiful wife, father, husband, strong leader etc.) to ‘subjective-life’ (life lived in deep connection with the unique experiences of my self-in-relation).” And the attention to the “self-in-relation” has to do with the ability to listen to our emotions as well as to our passions, to our states of consciousness as well as to the needs of our bodies, to our dreams as well as to our feelings. The meaning of our existence becomes the continuous search for the uniqueness of our self – its value and, ultimately,

its sacredness. As we have already noted, meaning no longer derives from obedience to an external authority, but from following our own path.

These are two very different perspectives, in many ways incompatible, as are the consequences of such a distinction when it is applied to the religious field. That is, when they become “life-as religion” (life lived as a dutiful member of the faith) and “subjective-life spirituality” (life lived in deep connection with the self):

The former is bound up with the mode of life-as – indeed it sacralizes life-as. By contrast, the latter is bound up with subjective-life – indeed it sacralizes subjective-life. Thus the former involves subordinating subjective-life to the “higher” authority of transcendent meaning, goodness and truth, whilst the latter invokes the sacred in the cultivation of unique subjective-life. (Heelas and Woodhead 2005, p. 5)

The spiritual revolution would ultimately be the outcome of the social and cultural changes that had their origins in the “silent revolution” and in the emergence of the “therapeutic culture” a few decades earlier. The phenomenon has strengthened over the years, first with New Age spiritualities and then with the various manifestations of “alternative spiritualities” (Possamai 2003). It continues up to the contemporary forms of “holistic spiritualities” (Heelas 2008) which bring together the needs of the mind with those of the body and the spirit.

The congregational domain, in which all the traditional religions express themselves, and the holistic milieu, in which all the spiritual experiments we have just mentioned were established and developed, are two totally different worlds.

The one emphasizes life-as and the normativization of subjectivities, the other subjective-life and the sacralization of subjectivities. In the former, self-understanding, change, the true life, is sought by heeding and conforming to a source of significance which ultimately transcends the life of this world; in the latter, self-understanding, change, the true life, is sought by seeking out, experiencing and expressing a source of significance which lies within the process of life itself. The one has to do with deferential relationship to higher authority, the other with holistic relationship to the spirit-of-life. (Heelas and Woodhead 2005, p. 31)

For the spiritual believer, subjective authenticity is ultimately more important than adherence to objective standards; personal well-being and harmony with the inner self is more important rather than obedience to rules imposed from the outside.

Cultural Pluralism and Religious Diversity: Spirituality as Democratization of the Sacred

The sacralization of the self, as noted in the previous section, is one of the fundamental coordinates to understand the emergence of spirituality in the contemporary society. But the centrality of the autonomous subject consequently brings with it a true revolution in the way the exercise of power is legitimized. If institutions in the traditional world, including religious institutions, were able to self-legitimize, such self-legitimacy is no longer possible due to the recognition of the rights of the modern subject. The subjective turn of modern culture is at the same time cause and effect of the deepest changes in contemporary society, changes that we usually label as “cultural pluralism.” Precisely such cultural pluralism is the second coordinate that shows how the spirituality of our time responds to the need to legitimize power in a way quite different from the past.

To speak of spirituality in relation to power means to connect this issue to the legitimacy of hierarchical authority. It highlights the emergence of a “democratic mentality” even in the religious field. It points to the contrast between the absoluteness of the dogmatic dimension, in its claim to manage monopolistically the boundaries between what is right or wrong, and to the relativity that is fruit of the freedom of choice of the subject.

Power “At Eye Level”

The theme of spirituality, if understood as a new way of managing power within the religious field, precisely resets the power relations among the various actors who are confronted in this

field: individuals, churches, and the state. The label to describe this particular situation, originally within the French ambit but then gradually also in many other European contexts, is “laicity.” This word, though defined differently in each country in which it is used, captures the central idea regulating the relationships between religion and the state in modern times.

In the traditional world the logic that for centuries ruled both the individual and social life was that of the transcendence and immutability of the religious order. The immemorial succession of generations and the regular cycle of the seasons were seen as the reflection of a “divine order,” an order that was imposed without too much effort in an utterly “logical” and “natural” way (Poulat 1987, 1994). All the evolution of human thought until the dawn of modernity was formed on this founding experience of the supernatural, the transcendent, and the divine. The rise of modern science, accompanied by the great revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, together with the gradual emergence of Enlightenment, have upset these traditional systems of understanding values and life. As Poulat (1994, p. 9) wrote, “once everything was according to the grace of God; today all depends on the freedom of man, within the limits of his possibilities, and with the only controls or prohibitions of the rules deemed appropriate by the society.”

This is the heart of laicity: religions agree to re-define themselves, not always peacefully and willingly, within the confines of common law and individual freedom. As it is not hard to imagine, laicity is a rather complex and dynamic path that triggers a long process of negotiation between religious institutions and the state. This is not a battle between believers and non-believers, nor a question of wanting to eliminate or counteract the role of religions, but rather a new conception of the relationship between the believers, their faith, and the context in which they live it. The reference to different belongings, both in religious and political terms, does nothing more than ratify as fully achieved the distinction regulated by the “principle of laicity,” according to which public space is open to everybody, to the different churches as well as to the different political par-

ties and the different forms of association. In other words, public space is organized and operates according to principles and rules independent of any reference to transcendence. While this was the subject of very heated debates in the “old world,” it is in many respects taken for granted in the “new world.”

In the context of “secular society,” which is regulated according to the “regime of freedom” (Poulat 1987), it emerges clearly that the new understanding of freedom has considerable impact on the understanding of authority and, inevitably, even on the relationship with the foundation of truth. All of these issues impact frontally on the way of understanding religion and pave the path to the emergence of the spiritual perspective. According to Gauchet (1998), the world in which we live has sanctioned “the exit of religion” as the source of legitimization of power. After three modern revolutions (the English, American, and French), power is no longer imposed top down on the people, but comes back to earth “at eye level.” It is a process of democratization that is no longer legitimized by an otherworldly transcendence, but simply rests on itself -- or, better, on the will of those who accept such legitimacy.

As widely recognized in other areas of social life -- from politics to family, from value orientations to choices of ethical character -- even in the religious field there has been a shift of legitimacy from moral codes imposed on the subject from the outside to regulatory systems based on the freedom of the subject. In such perspective, the mentality, the language, and the dynamics of democracy are implemented in the “spiritual dimension.”

Spirituality as Democratization of the Sacred

The affirmation of the subject, no longer understood only in terms of duties to be accomplished but also as having rights, leads to the spread of a democratic mentality that has its consequences even in the specifically religious field. The transition from one absolute authority in the political

or religious ambits, to which one must submit to be socially accepted, to the social recognition of the freedom of choice of the subject as source of legitimacy of one’s life, brings with it a true revolution in the relationship with the sacred. The clear boundaries safeguarded by traditional institutions, whether they are political or religious, are increasingly challenged by the exercise of individual freedom. In this perspective an entire symbolic universe seems to have fallen into a crisis, opening up to a plurality of interpretations which cannot but be precarious and temporary.

The new way of legitimizing power is the keystone that allows us to understand the significance of the shift from religion to spirituality. If the “religious model” founds the relationship with the sacred in an absolute manner on the indisputable authority of hierarchical power, the “spirituality model” founds the relationship with the sacred on the freedom of choice of the individual, who can legitimately believe some truths and not others, and practice certain rituals and not others, each time establishing the boundaries of plausibility and credibility of the relationship with the transcendent.

The sacred included in the spiritual framework is no longer the monopoly of a single institution, but becomes available according to the preferences of the individuals, who freely choose whether and how to relate to it. Religion and spirituality, in this sense, are not a zero-sum proposition. They can coexist in the sense that there are believers who freely choose to adhere with conviction to the dictates of a religious authority without giving up their freedom to make that choice. At the same time, other believers create their own relationships with the sacred more directly, eclectically choosing among the various offers provided by the various religious traditions. And obviously, there are those who just as legitimately choose not to build any relationship with the sacred at all.

According to Michel (1994), this phenomenon can be defined as a transformation from “the era of the absolute” to “the era of the relative,” a transformation that causes unrest and resistance because it undermines identities that were deemed stable and affirmed. It is the end of the

“monopoly of the management of the symbolic capital,” as Michel (1994) puts it, which becomes freely usable by everybody, including those pursuing a relationship with the sacred. From our own point of view, such “democratization of the sacred” is the true spiritual revolution, not in the sense that spirituality will eventually lead to the disappearance of religion, but in the sense that spirituality has already changed religion itself, forcing it to deal with the freedom of choice of individuals.

Ultimately religious institutions must deal with the spiritual revolution which is no longer in their power to control and direct. And, as it is not difficult to predict, there will be religious institutions that will be able to adapt to this new situation more flexibly, and institutions that instead prove to be resistant. Perhaps precisely in this adaptability is the possibility for such religious institutions to face the challenges of the contemporary culture more or less successfully. In any event, it seems undeniable that the “logic of spirituality,” understood as a new way of legitimizing the sacred, is redefining the practices of many traditional religions. The freedom of choice of the subject, as well as the related need for authenticity, self-fulfillment, and well-being, all have an effect within the borders of traditional religious institutions, once considered safe and impassable.

Spirituality: Finding Meaning in Everyday Life

As we have seen above, the concept of spirituality that has established itself in the social scientific study of religion is part of broader changes taking place in the contemporary cultural and religious fields. The gradual establishment of the freedom of the subject, in an increasingly plural world where the possibility of choice is increasing, opens the possibility of searching and choosing even in matters of faith. At the same time, the theory of secularization, understood in terms of progressive disappearance of religion as a socially and personally relevant fact, seems to have been ultimately filed away as a spectacular

oversight of a scientific approach to religion not yet free from prejudices of ideological nature. However, it must not be forgotten that the theory of secularization has also played a positive role. It helped us see that the outcome of functional differentiation of social institutions is twofold. First, our society is no longer structured according to criteria established by the religious institutions; there are other institutions such as the state and the market contending for their place. Second, when religion no longer has a structuring regulatory function within our society, it comes to specialize in what is peculiar to it – specifically, the management of the symbolic patrimony linking the sacred to the great questions of the meaning of existence, both at individual and collective level.

The Paradox of the Post-Secular Age

Stating that religion has not disappeared in the contemporary world, in other words, is not to say that it remains the same, playing a role similar to what it had done in the context of the traditional world. The term spirituality reminds us that religion is being transformed both in its public and most personal and intimate manifestations, according to the trends we discussed in the previous sections. As pointed out by Pace (2011, p. 14), “nothing is created, nothing is lost, everything is kept under the sacred vaults of religion.

Nothing is created in the sense that it is hard to find religions in a state of nature that have not embodied other religions in their historical evolution. Similarly nothing is lost in the sense that the boundaries that each religion tries to draw to establish itself in the pantheon of history certainly fail to protect it from the invasion of other beliefs or from the competition of other faiths.

The relevance of religion in contemporary society, therefore, lends itself to manifold interpretations. As we have seen, this requires a new conceptual framework.

If secularization processes have led to a secular society, the unexpected effects of such secularizing processes have opened the path for a post-secular society. In other words, today we are

able to evaluate some effects of medium to long duration secularization processes; they are so unexpected and ambivalent as to suggest the conclusion of a historic phase. This is exactly the paradox of the post-secular age: while some secularization processes are still present and active within the post-secular age, just these secularizing processes have transformed but not eliminated the function of religion in society (Taylor 2007; Banchoff 2007; Hertzke 2013; Shah et al. 2012).

More than a quarter of a century ago, Berzano (1990) described the second half of the 1980s as a period characterized both by secularization as a process of functional differentiation and by post-secularity. It is just this post-secular condition that detects how the secularization processes,

due to some concatenation of circumstances, have meant that, right on the ground of disenchantment, cultural phenomena have appeared that are significant for the connections with the secularized world and the experience, the history and the knowledge of religions. The effect of secularization has not emptied religion of its religious experience, but it has transformed its connections with the diversity of the secularized world. To the historic religions the post-secular condition is characterized by all the secularization effects, but also by the new spiritual possibilities arisen by living in secularity. (Berzano 2009, p. 13)

Secularization, then, would have had even properly “religious” effects, and these are manifest in the post-secular epoch with features quite different from the religion of the traditional epoch.

If in the pre-modern era religion was shaped as a coherent and structured whole, in the contemporary epoch we witness the explosion of the religious – but which is no longer traceable solely to the institutions that have always codified and controlled it. From the search for meaning to the multiplicity of aesthetic experiences, from the need for moral directions to the search for significant connections, the relationship with the sacred is outlined according to often brand-new modalities not always consistent with the practices and doctrines validated by the churches. The post-secular age has its own specific religious forms, not residual, which include both the renewal of the traditional religious forms as well as the

emergence of new modalities of relating to the sacred. A multiplicity of religious forms, then, and not their disappearance, is the outcome of the secularization process.

Reflexive Spirituality

Berzano does not explicitly use the concept of spirituality, but what he states already prefigures a new modality of believing that we may now label spirituality. Contemporary society, as already mentioned, produces new connections with the sacred, and this starting right from the specific characteristics of the society of late modernity itself. And one of these characteristics is the search for meaning in a world where no one is willing to take anything for granted, not even in matters of faith (Beseke 2001; 2014). As Max Weber taught, the main characteristic of modernity is the gradual emergence of instrumental rationality, which regulates the relationship between means and ends precisely. This mechanism would result in the “disenchantment of the world” (Weber 1967, p. 155). However instrumental rationality is not able to meet the growing need for meaning that seems to characterize contemporary men and women. How shall we then put together the relationship with the transcendent capable of responding to the most pressing questions about the meaning of life and the imperative demand of being rational people?

Reflective spirituality seems to be capable of holding together these two elements that are in tension with each other: the rational and the transcendent (Roof 1998, 1999). In the words of Besecke (2014, p. 3) reflexive spirituality “describes a habit of ‘stepping back’ mentally from one’s own perspective to reflect on it objectively. It is a thoughtful, deliberate, open approach to cultivating religious meaning. When I am practicing reflexive spirituality, I am constantly reflecting on my own spiritual perspective in light of other spiritual perspectives.” Freedom of choice in the field of faith seems, therefore, to materialize in a process of seeking that is being carried out in an “objective” way: distancing oneself from one’s own convictions, considering

them with a critical approach, with open minds toward other religious ideas, other truths of faith, other ritual practices.

Besecke (2014, p. 5) could not be clearer in this regard:

Reflexive spirituality relies on both reason and imagination, both systematic observation and intuitive leaps of faith, both logical analysis and mystical experience, both objective understanding and subjective awe. It refuses to compromise between rationality and spirituality, instead integrating the two by putting them in creative dialogue with each other.

Such reflective spirituality, according to Besecke, can be understood as a criticism of that part of modern culture that is based exclusively on instrumental rationality. This does not imply that reflexive spirituality is adverse to modernity; it simply does not limit the use of rationality to the instrumental adaptation of means to ends. Modern “intellectual reason” can be applied to the search for the meaning of existence, using the religious traditions freely and creatively as resources rather than limits.

Spirituality as Research of Meaning in Everyday Life

The interpretation of spirituality in reflexive terms clearly represents a challenge to the traditional way of understanding the relationship between religious authority and the sacred, the line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and the boundaries of the sacred and the profane. This challenge manifests itself not just in academic discussions of religion, but also in the everyday lives of women and men of our time. Today, the boundaries between personal life and public life, between rationality and emotions, and between the sacred and the profane are more and more porous, more and more negotiable (Sheldrake 2014).

Ammerman (2014) provides perhaps the most advanced and mature work concerning the relationship between religion and spirituality. Through analyses of personal narratives and everyday practices, she effectively illustrates how

these two dimensions are dynamically linked and at times overlapping. Ammerman (2014, p. 28) specifies four dimensions: a “theistic” and an “extra-theistic” landscape, “ethical spirituality” as “common denominator,” and the “contrasted terrain” of those who define themselves “spiritual but not religious.” Theistic spirituality focuses on an idea of God with whom the believer is related, even through spiritual practices. As such, a relationship with religious authorities appears to be an important reference point. In the theistic perspective there is no opposition between traditional religions and the personal search for meaning in life:

What we hear in these uses of spirituality is a seamless adoption of the term as an adjunct to religious talk about God. Far from standing in opposition to traditional religious understanding of the world, god and goddesses adopted from religious traditions define this spiritual genre. The boundaries between talk about spirituality and talk about deities beyond oneself are completely permeable. (Ammerman 2014, p. 31)

The extra-theistic landscape, while not including deities, does not necessarily exclude the possibility that there are clues of transcendence in everyday life that go beyond the ordinary and the mundane. Such clues may be traced back to feelings aroused by awe: the wonder in front of nature or listening to music or looking at a work of art. All of these point to a larger dimension, to “something beyond” what is experienced in the immanence of daily activities. This can be experienced even in a “deep sense of compassion,” or in an “experience of connection,” such as “making love,” as one interviewee put it (Ammerman 2014, p. 37). As mentioned before, the common denominator of the two perspectives, the theistic and the non-theistic, is ethical spirituality. The vast majority of the interviewees in Ammerman’s research insist that spiritual life must be linked to deeds, and this means living a virtuous life, helping other people, overcoming the selfish pursuit of personal interests.

The position of those who oppose spirituality to religion is little represented in the sample studied by Ammerman. As she explains, “the irony is that most of the unaffiliated or nonparticipating

people who claim spirituality as a positive alternative to religion are themselves neither” (Ammerman 2014, p. 50). Beyond the infrequent rhetoric of those who oppose religion and spirituality, these two dimensions are most often intertwined and often blend seamlessly in everyday life. And even many religious institutions align with more or less marked awareness of the new requirements of believing that characterize their faithful. Just to give one example, the reforms that Pope Francis is trying to introduce within Catholicism would seem to meet exactly the demands of spirituality. The papacy itself is attempting to democratize the institution by involving more people in decision-making, recognizing the freedom of choice of the faithful, acknowledging the laity’s concrete life situations, and opening relationships with other Christian denominations and other religions.

Directions for Future Research

Whether or not we are convinced of the usefulness of this “new” concept to understand the changes that are taking place in the contemporary religious field, it is a statement of fact that the theme of spirituality is now firmly placed at the center of sociological debate. Virtually every time the term religion appears, it is accompanied by the term spirituality. The studies we have reviewed here seem to converge on the conclusion that the religious and the spiritual dimensions should not be regarded as antithetical; to the contrary, they present many overlapping features. It would be ultimately naive, therefore, to polarize the “good individual spirituality” and the “bad organized religion” (Zinnbauer et al. 1997: 563). That said, there are various issues that remain open and need further study.

The emergence of the concept of spirituality signals a broader cultural change that has redefined the way our contemporaries relate to the transcendent. The social scientific study of religion must consider more carefully the sociocultural and socioreligious changes that have paved

the way to this new spiritual dimension. It will be necessary to assess what specific needs of contemporary society are a challenge to the traditional way of understanding the relationship with the sacred and the transcendent, and then see what more the term “spirituality” is able to say than the term “religion.”

All in all, the question of the definition of spirituality still remains unresolved. Although there are issues that seem to be shared by all scholars, it will be interesting to analyze how people from different cultures define such a concept. We will have to forward and extend an international comparison according to the interesting model proposed by Ammerman (2014), comparing her data with the work carried out in Italy by Palmisano (2010), for example.

If religion and spirituality do not contrast, as the institutional and the personal aspects of believing don’t, further studies will have to be carried out on the effects that the changes happening in the sphere of the believing subject have brought to traditional religious institutions. In other words, individual spiritual seeking brings greater willingness on the part of the churches to offer spiritual paths, enhancing the experience of the faithful, and perhaps shifting the emphasis away from principles and moral rules that are more rigid and slower to adapt to the rapid cultural changes of our time.

Finally, the category of spirituality will force social scientists to devise new research strategies. These strategies must be more attentive to everyday life, where the neat boundaries between belonging, believing, and behaving are less and less clear. Attention should be paid to experiences of blending the sacred and the profane, institution and subject, religion and spirituality. Qualitative methodologies, such as the innovative photo elicitation interviews used by Ammerman (2014) in her latest research, would seem more appropriate than the traditional quantitative methodologies to understand how our contemporaries connect together the search for meaning in life and their relationship with the transcendent.

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Part III

Family, Life Course, and Individual Change

Kathleen E. Jenkins

Abstract

This chapter stresses the importance of cultural and lived religious perspectives in studying the intersection of family, religion, and spirituality by calling attention to recent works that address religion and marriage, parenting, and work/family issues. It urges scholars to see religion as an influential force in everyday experience and highlights the importance of local religious culture and sacred resources as active in the transformation of normative understandings of family and intimate partnerships. The chapter also encourages those engaged in the sociological analysis of family life to treat religion and spirituality as dynamic forces that shape people's beliefs and identities, rather than static background information.

Family and religion are fluid social institutions produced by multiple beliefs and practices that are deeply connected to other core institutions. Religious communities, as social spaces where beliefs about family are enacted, produced, and contested, inevitably reflect the movement at play in wider cultural forces, especially ideas related to gender and expectations regarding sexual relationships (see Page and Shipley's chapter on "Sexuality" in this volume, Chap. 20). Religious worlds also play a role in shaping broader cul-

tural ideas about family. The June 2015 United States Supreme Court decision affirming same-sex marriage is the culmination of decades of support for same-sex marriage in religious communities like the Metropolitan Community Churches and framed in part by moral entrepreneurs who use religious ideas about marriage equality as ethical grounds (Chauncey 2004). Religious identity is "always inherently fluid and intersectional, with boundaries that are actively made and defended," full of contradictions and shifting understandings of self in relation to sacred beliefs and practices (Edgell 2012, p. 258). Recent scholarship in the sociology of religion and family illustrates these dynamics, indicating that a lived religious perspective is essential for understanding the multilayered relationship between religion and family.

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Conversations among scholars of religion and family who emphasize religion as a substantial and far-reaching moral force take place amidst an alternate discourse in scholarly and popular spaces where remnants of secularization theory at times render religion as insignificant in contemporary Western societies. Yet religion matters across the globe, motivating political conflict and resolution, shaping individuals' daily experiences with family life, and gravely impacting kin relationships in nations where religious authority and the state are deeply intertwined. The United States sustains thriving religious subcultures and over 300,000 congregations. While the rise of "nones" or "dones" may seem ground to some for disregarding religion as a significant social force, recent scholarship, much of it working from a cultural perspective, has demonstrated how religion and spirituality in the U.S. are highly influential outside of institutional worlds and woven into the fabric of everyday life. As the studies I highlight in this chapter demonstrate, even when people reject or challenge religious traditions, they are often engaging with symbolic religious worlds as they shape identity and interactions with intimate partners, parents, and children.

Sociologists who study family in general pay slight attention to religion, treating it largely from a perspective that understands religion as an external force related to support networks or conservative family values. The recent scholarship that I introduce in this chapter views religion as a more dynamic and compelling cultural force: religious beliefs and practices as highly active inside and outside of multiple institutions and as central to identity construction and experiences of family and intimacy. My purpose here is to spark a dialogue between sociologists who study issues like work and family, intimate partnerships, and parenting, and scholars who work from cultural perspectives that illustrate the complex ways religion is a force in shaping kin relationships. Envisioning this exchange of ideas invites new questions, pushing scholars of religion and scholars of the family from various methodological perspectives to construct questions that look beyond normative models of family and common understandings of the

composition and influence of religious and spiritual life.

Dominant Approaches and New Directions

Religion's role in maintaining or undermining a stable family life has been at the heart of much of the scholarship on religion and family. It is reflected in a number of disciplines including psychology, sociology, demography, public health, and community studies. Much of this literature is based in quantitative methods and population studies and suggests that religion and spirituality are associated with positive outcomes. There has been some concern regarding religion as a destructive force, for example the complex relationship between faith and domestic violence (Ellison et al. 1999; Nason-Clark 2004). At the center of inquiries about religion as a positive or negative influence in families are questions about religious identification and practice as related to marriage, parenting, child-development and well-being, work-family balance, and the quality of generational relationships (Ellison and Hummer 2010; Petts 2014; Sherkat and Ellison 1999).

Quantitative studies have suggested an association between religious homogeneity and higher levels of marital quality and commitment, and scholars have tried to tease out the complexities and strength of this relationship. For example, researchers have explored whether service attendance and joint spousal participation in religious activities plays a role in marital quality (Call and Heaton 1997; Glenn and Supancic 1984). Studies have also demonstrated how gender, whether or not children are present in the household, educational level, and economic resources affect relationships (McDaniel et al. 2013). Some have focused on historical and generational patterns (Myers 2006) and others worked to tease out differences in the effect of various types of intra- and interfaith unions (Lehrer and Chiswick 1993). Still others have explored how frequency of attendance and particular theological beliefs on the part of husbands and wives might impact

risk of divorce (Vaaler et al. 2009). Together, this scholarship suggests multiple factors at work regarding religion as a protective force in marriage relationships.

The ambiguous nature of the relationship between religion and marital quality has brought attention to a number of social factors and definitional issues. Mahoney (2010) introduces a useful conceptual framework, “relational spirituality,” for capturing how spiritual belief and practice, which may or may not be tied to institutional religion, can be at work in families and intimate partnerships. Scholars have further explored how religiosity and beliefs and practices at work outside religious institutions may impact marriage, for example how the salience of religion in individual identity and belief might affect marital fidelity (Esselmont and Bierman 2014). Some scholars have demonstrated how relational “virtues” like forgiveness, commitment, and sacrifice might enhance marital quality (Day and Acock 2013). Ellison and colleagues (2010, p. 963) reinforce “the complex nature of the effects of race and ethnicity, as well as religious variables,” finding that “couples’ in-home family devotional activities and shared religious beliefs are positively linked with reports of relationship quality.” These works underscore the need for exploration of religious moral worlds and how they might intersect and interact with larger cultural ideals regarding intimate relationships.

The research addressing parenting and religion has focused largely on Christian traditions, children and youth, and issues of intergenerational transmission of religious beliefs and practices. Scholars have called attention to how beliefs about discipline, authority, and gendered parenting are activated in particular religious contexts (Bartkowski and Ellison 1995; Ellison and Sherkat 1993; Wilcox 2004). Much of this research focuses on conservative Protestantism in the United States, noting an emphasis on obedience and authority rather than child autonomy and choice (Alwin and Felson 2010). Most studies concentrate on children and youth, although some consider how parents’ religiousness may shape the quality of relationships between generations (King 2010). The transmission of reli-

gious values and cultural beliefs to younger generations has been a focus (Bader and Desmond 2006; Bengtson 2013; Stolzenberg et al. 1995) and studies of immigration and religious transmission have brought the complexity of cross-cultural dynamics into this conversation (Chen 2006, 2008; Kim 2010; Min and Kim 2005). For example, Smith’s (2006, pp. 147–185) ethnography of Mexican immigrants and their children in New York teases out transnational processes and tensions related to identity, place, and parent–child relationships for second generation adolescents as they engage in “religious ritual bridges” like devotion to Padre Jesus. Such works offer an important lens for understanding family processes in relation to religious beliefs and practices as they are shaped across time and borders.

Much of the research addressing religion and work-family issues has focused on positive or negative effects of religion and congregations regarding provision of social capital and helping networks (Sherkat and Ellison 1999). Recent voices, however, have called attention to the importance of uncovering the many social forces that shape how work-family conflict is understood as individuals face economic changes and institutional shifts. For example, Ammons and Edgell (2007, p. 821) argue that religion affects behavior related to work/family negotiations and call for more research into how “cultural frameworks” influence people’s work-family strategies. Religion, they argue, “should be analyzed more systematically as a source of these cultural frameworks” (Ammons and Edgell 2007, p. 822). In addition, Edgell and colleagues (2012, p. 1006) suggest that the existing literature offers little knowledge about “how religion affects perceptions of work-family conflict or insufficiency concerns” in a U.S. economic climate where contingent work, lower wages, decreased benefits, and nonstandard schedules often make coordination with family life difficult.

Contemporary sociologists who study family, especially those grounded in conflict perspectives that focus on economic forces, often marginalize religion, understanding its primary significance as related to conservative moral forces and economic concerns. The dismissal of

religion as a deeper cultural force is not surprising given the history of sociology of religion and its attention to the impact of religion on family stability, as well as its tendency to center discussion around normative family structures, heterosexual relationships, and Christian faith traditions. Decades of such research, the gendered assumptions therein, and the primary role of congregations in the literature no doubt has provided little analytical inspiration for sociologists of the family working from more feminist and materialist standpoints. However, the more recent studies noted above by scholars of religion, and those I detail below, point to the activation of religious beliefs and practices in multiple types of families, communities, and local cultures, uncovering how religiosity and wider cultural beliefs about kin come together in everyday encounters.

The works I highlight in this chapter turn to long-standing anthropological and sociological perspectives that focus on everyday interaction rituals. These studies recognize institutional spaces other than congregations as active with religious energy and understand everyday life as charged with sacred meaning and action. This rich body of literature from sociologists, anthropologists, and interdisciplinary scholars of religion makes visible individual conflicts and larger institutional religious forces, pushing beyond a Christian focus in the United States and abroad. Together these scholars highlight the creative engagement of religious resources on the part of individuals who work to validate multiple family forms and ideals. They stress as well the complex moral systems at work in family experience, illuminating “the many ways in which religion occurs as nonobvious sets of processes and dynamics at various levels of analysis” (Marti 2014, p. 508). As such, these works summon conversation with sociologists and scholars who study family, promising a deeper understanding of how religious, spiritual, and moral forces shape intersecting systems of domination.

Such an understanding of the relationship between religion and family life inevitably challenges assumptions about wellness in families.

What makes a good family or healthy family is complicated and revealed as social construction through unpacking how individuals form and understand moral strategies for the dilemmas they face. These works offer fertile ground for strengthening the conversation between sociologists who study family dynamics related to work, parenting, and intimate relationships, and scholars whose primary focus is on religious life.

Marriage, Intimate Partnerships, and Religious Tools

Research addressing religion and intimate relationships has been framed in the scholarly literature by a normative family model that revolves around the institution of marriage. Cultural sociological perspectives redirect this focus by incorporating various understandings of the relationship between intimate partnerships and religion and revealing levels of contradiction, power, and agency at work in individuals’ engagement of religious ideologies. These studies invite new questions about the role of religion in the construction of intimate relationships, taking seriously the value of narratives as a point of inquiry regarding gender, sexuality, and embodied practice, and inevitably underscoring the significance of religion and spirituality as active in everyday life (Ammerman 2006, 2014; McGuire 2008; Neitz 2012). To adopt a lived religious lens is to stress the dynamic power of institutional religious worlds in everyday experiences of intimacy, and to recognize that the borders of “religious identity and commitment” are always “contested, shifting, and malleable” (McGuire 2008, p. 187). Religious beliefs, practices, and participation in sacred communities are then seen as points of creative invention that can reinforce or challenge normative notions about family, marriage, gender, and sexuality.

Kugle’s (2014) research addressing the lived experiences of gay, lesbian, and transgender Muslims in secular democratic countries sees activism at work in individuals’ struggles with family and religious community as they claim

religious identity and form intimate partnerships. He draws from participation in activist groups and in-depth interviews with Muslim activists from South Africa, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the United States, and Canada. Kugle (2014, p. 14) focuses on the multiple “discursive agents” at work in these individuals’ lives such as family, community, religious functionaries, and/or lovers who “refer to Islamic discourses to discuss or regulate” relationships. Although these agents are often represented in his respondents’ narratives as forcing heterosexual marriages and rejecting gay identity, Kugle (2014, p. 53) demonstrates how religious/spiritual forces also play an intricate role for some in challenging normative understandings as they establish intimate relationships with same-sex partners and mine “Islamic tradition for resources” that support a progressive religious interpretation” of sexuality. For example, one respondent actively adapts “the Islamic *nikah* ceremony to her lesbian marriage” (Kugle 2014, p. 50).

Validation of same-sex marriage is not always the ideal end for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual (LGBT) religious individuals. Yip’s (2004) analyses of LGBT Christians in British society confirms a complex relationship between individual agency, power, and the necessity of understanding particular cultural manifestations in the management of religious and sexuality identity. Drawing from interview data, Yip uncovers contrasting views of same-sex partnerships. Understanding marriage as an “oppressive,” “unequal,” and “problematic and dysfunctional institution” that controls individuals’ lives, most of his respondents “rejected the label ‘marriage’” and placed a greater influence on the “quality of the relationship, with appropriate legal protection,” favoring instead non-gendered or sexed legal recognition of “‘civil partnership’ or ‘registered partnership’” (Yip 2004, pp. 174–75). Marriage here is cast as an oppressive hierarchical institution connected to rules and laws that inhibit growth and personal fulfillment. Such critiques demonstrate pervasive cultural beliefs in western nations about contemporary love relationships as egalitarian unions that should promote cultivation of individual selves.

Wilcox’s (2009) qualitative analysis of interviews with queer women in the United States demonstrates how individuals pull from larger cultural frameworks and spiritual symbols to construct a “mosaic” of beliefs that reflect self and everyday understandings of sacred relationships. She argues that her respondents’ “narratives of the sacred and the self...exemplify postmodern religiosities through reliance on ‘everyday sacralogies,’ narrative self-construction, queer intersections of identities and spaces, the search for a ‘true self,’ and the experience of what” she calls “enselved bodies” (Wilcox 2009, p. 167). Love is a major aspect of the sacred invoked by her respondents: “when coming out as a lesbian, ‘I was very secure in the fact that God wasn’t going to punish me because I loved a woman...To me, God and love is one... if I’m finding love in another person, then that is helping me to find myself” (Wilcox 2009, p. 174). Through this example, Wilcox illustrates how religious beliefs about love and self-journeying reflect a familiar set of cultural tools activated outside of religious institutions. The implications of such individual “sacralogies” for “identity negotiations,” are “often profound.” If images of the sacred are “represented by a being whose foremost aspect is love, it is difficult (though possible) to argue that such a being responds to the humans it loves with anything other than warmth and acceptance.” For those who imagine the divine as female, “receiving love from a feminine divine figure provides a sacred model for love relationships between women” (Wilcox 2009, p. 175).

Scholars have also underscored the dynamic, particular, and sometimes contradictory nature of sexuality, gender, and intimate relationships as they are constructed in local religious communities. Wolkomir’s (2006) ethnography of ex-gay and gay Christian support groups in the U.S. Bible Belt illustrates beautifully how religion can be a resource for legitimating and managing a sexual religious self that challenges normative gender ideology and how religion may also be used to alter sexuality to claim normative status. Religious cultural strategies activated in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and queer (LGBTQ)

religious communities can also reinforce essentialist ideas about gender. Sumerau (2012, p. 462), drawing from fieldwork in a southeastern LGBT Christian church associated with the United Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, shows how local religious culture and a group of gay Christian men signified “masculine selves by emphasizing elements of hegemonic masculinity.” In defining “themselves as fatherly guides and financial providers” they stressed “paternal stewardship” in the church and the LGBT community. Such constructions reaffirmed masculine rationality and emotional control, setting apart women and “effeminate men.” Through “defining intimate relationships in a Christian manner,” Sumerau (2012, p. 471) argues, they emphasized “responsible sexual conduct, monogamy, and immutable sexual natures.”

The study of LGBTQ intimate partnership and marriage dynamics could benefit from a more in-depth understanding of religious and spiritual forces at work in the defense and formation of same-sex unions. Religion appears in works that address LGBTQ marriage largely as an oppositional conservative force, a site of social movement activism, or as a model for adaption of ritual ceremonies that in the end reinforce heteronormativity (Chauncey 2004; Kimport 2013, 2014). A more complex understanding of sacred moral forces and their relationship to larger logics about contemporary partnership and companionate marriage could enhance understandings of the lived experiences of same-sex marriage partnerships across national settings. Religious communities and “everyday sacralogies” (Wilcox 2009) provide particular sets of cultural beliefs and practices that combine with the political realities of everyday family life. In the United States, for example, as more churches have openly affirmed same-sex unions and same-sex marriage has legal support, how religious and spiritual tools work in individual constructions and the ongoing legitimation of LGBTQ intimate relationships remains fertile ground for researchers.

Gallagher’s (2012, p. 15) ethnography of women and families in Damascus offers an exemplary study of “how cultural values, lived reli-

gion, and state policies” come together to “empower and enable as well as to constrain individuals’ creative agency.” Drawing from participant observation and field interviews conducted in Syria between 1992 and 2011, she focused on the lives of women in twenty-eight households from different “levels of society” related to economic position, education, and occupation. Theorizing about power regarding human agency and larger social structures, Gallagher makes use of Sewell’s (1992, pp. 7–8) concept of “cultural schemas,” stressing how individuals can creatively exert power as they take the social rules and understandings in their particular “cultural schemas” and apply them to relationships and life choices. Such a theoretical framework offers a way of understanding how these women’s experiences “take place at the intersections of personal identity, normative family ideals, class, and a particular political economy” (Gallagher 2012, p. 8). Their narratives reflect “moral orders” (Smith 2003) or “salient and compelling schemas that affect action and its end. Religion is a subset of these moral narratives – providing a clear practice and set of ideals regarding family, identity, and responsibility” (Gallagher 2012, p. 8). For example, cultural position and circumstances lead women to enact agency through traditional “semiarranged marriages” where parents vet potential partners. Examples from stages in these women’s lives demonstrate how semiarranged marriages originate from multiple sets of cultural schemas such as valued family ties that support reciprocal emotional and relational support for children and parents, and gendered beliefs about women’s dependency and subordination supported in part by essentialist gender ideas in Islam. Gallagher’s work is a lesson in the importance of exploring the convergence of place, historical moment, and symbolic religious worlds in efforts to tease out gender and power dynamics in intimate relationships.

Konieczny’s (2013) ethnographic study of two Catholic parishes demonstrates how contemporary understandings of marriage are reinforced and shaped by local parish culture in distinct ways. The U.S. parishes she studies are similar in family composition and size, but different in

religious practices and beliefs regarding family and religion. Her analysis points to subtle differences regarding ideas about romantic love and religious interpretations of individualism in marriage. Examining how each parish interprets and responds “to church teachings about premarital sex, contraception, and divorce,” she uncovers multiple positions and dynamics at work regarding the activation of therapeutic discourse and moral logics related to marriage (Konieczny 2013, p. 106). For example, subtle yet significant differences emerge in discourse surrounding divorce. At Assumption, a parish that reaffirms traditionalist ritual, worship, and relations of Catholic authority, members talked more about the larger social forces at work in causing divorce. In contrast, at St. Brigitta, “members analyzed marital failure in interpersonal and psychological categories.” While they saw the parish as welcoming to divorced individuals, responses in the community were largely private, understanding its larger parish community as a place where divorced individuals could “heal and re-create their lives” (Konieczny 2013, pp. 131–32). Konieczny (2013, p. 105) shows how “each church redefines spousal love in religious terms but in different ways,” transforming contemporary forms of individualized marriage in distinctly sacred ways. Even more, her analysis illustrates how teachings about marriage and sexuality, while they may seem more on the progressive or conservative end, are actually nuanced constructions that challenge common understandings of the polarization regarding family issues in U.S. Catholicism and beyond.

Scholars have been intrigued by the cultural contradictions at work in conservative religious traditions and communities that promote seemingly traditional gender roles alongside more contemporary beliefs about marriage and core tenets of feminism. In particular, sociologists have explored how women in conservative Christian movements can embrace an ideal of female submission in marriage alongside egalitarian practices and how the exact meaning of submission varies depending on group ideology and aspect of the marriage relationship (Gallagher and Smith 1999; Brasher 1998; Jenkins 2005).

Davidman (1991) and Avishai (2008) have focused on similar dynamics, calling attention to how U.S. and Israeli orthodox Jewish women interpret, live out, and construct gendered religious selves. Bartkowski (2004, p. 65) points to multiple constructions of masculinity at work in the Promise Keeper (PK) movement. He demonstrates how PK authors use a kind of “discursive tacking” to communicate what a PK man is and should do in marriage and family, an approach that allows PK authors to produce flexible images of godly manhood that appear to be “holistic.” In my work on the International Churches of Christ (Jenkins 2005), using Swidler’s (1986, 2001) theoretical works on cultural tools and strategies, I illustrate how this controversial new religious movement sustained an ideological repertoire that reflected a wide range of beliefs. Members embraced wider cultural strategies for constructing healthy marriages based on partnership and individual growth and at the same time answered to church hierarchy and normative gender expectations. The result was confusion and a lack of ideological cohesion that I argue brought members to a place where they felt unsure of the movement’s promise of “awesome families.” Together, scholars who have underscored how religious strategies shape fluid understandings and dynamic approaches to gender have made clear the complicated nature of power at work in religious communities and lived religious experience.

Several studies speak directly to the complex world of violence and power in the lives of women who embrace and negotiate religious understandings of marriage and family. Ingersoll (2003) brings to the surface hidden gender dynamics in conservative Christian ideology to reveal how particular circumstances and various types of disempowerment shape women’s experiences. Menjivar’s (2011, p. 196) book on violence in the lives of Ladina women in Guatemala brings an important cultural lens by focusing “on how women see the church as a space to find solace and comfort,” and how “in turn, church activities can contribute to upholding gender inequalities indirectly, which in the context of other social inequalities exacerbate suffering in

women's lives." Chong's (2013, p. 240) ethnographic study of Presbyterian and Methodist South Korean evangelicalism and gender practices calls attention to the *disciplinary dimensions* (Foucault) that she identifies as "underexplored" in discussions of lived religion. While she finds that women are somewhat empowered by their evangelical beliefs and practices, for example in fostering "psychic/emotional healing from the injuries inflicted by the patriarchal family system," the churches she studied were also "vehicles for propagating the traditionalist ideologies of gender/family" (Chong 2013, p. 243). Chong shows how collective confessional practices reinforce discourse about transformation into ideal women who are submissive and how these *techniques of disciplining* make their way into women's narratives. Most striking is the use of the classic evangelical conversion metaphor of dying in sin and how it translates to "the rhetoric of 'dying' or 'killing' of self," to achieve more submissive wifely manner/interactions. Chong (2013, p. 254) notes how this "dying of self" has an "even more specific meaning in the context of Korean evangelical women; it also refers to a process of a more fundamental self-repression which involves the 'death' of a person's 'self' or 'ego' (*ja-ah*)," indicating "the suppression of all the deep-down desires, emotions, and impulses considered responsible for generating the 'sins' in the first place." Chong's attention to how religious and cultural metaphors intersect speaks to the particular manifestations of moral symbolic worlds in everyday family encounters and power dynamics.

Understanding individuals as actively constructing selves that can live up to religious ideals of intimate relationships and as agents propelled by cultural schemas that impose moral logics helps make sense of the pervasive individualism that operates in contemporary families across nations shaped by Western ideals. Bellah and colleagues (1985, pp. 97–107) noted a "therapeutic" understanding of love relationships that more recent scholars have underscored as an inescapable component of contemporary intimate relationships, a type of intimacy that demands heightened individualism alongside ideals of

sacred togetherness (Amato 2007; Cherlin 2009; Swidler 2001). Thompson's (2014) ethnography focusing on Jews in Atlanta and Des Moines demonstrates well the weight of individualism in the lived experiences of intermarried Jews, their families, and religious leaders. Thompson shows how peoples' motivations are shaped by multiple responses to discursive frames that link intermarriage with assimilation, and the way that individualism has become central to the identity of American Jews. In my ethnographic work on divorce in religious traditions, I capture the pervasiveness of individualism and therapeutic culture at work in constructions of self and intimate relationships, highlighting a dominant cultural strategy, divorce-work, that is shaped by larger therapeutic processes of grief-work and marriage-work (Jenkins 2014). I find distinct yet similar approaches across religious traditions – symbolic meanings behind spiritual "rebirth" and "brokenness" that combine with therapeutic culture to legitimate divorce and make endings meaningful. As with many of the cultural works I have described above, working on self through intimate relationships emerges at once as a religious, spiritual, and therapeutic value and practice inescapable in Western culture (Jenkins 2014; Roof 1999).

Sociologists of the family have touched on religious participation and identity as a force in marriage (e.g. Amato 2007; Cherlin 2009; Hackstaff 1999). Some, for example Hackstaff (1999) and Stacey (1991), have given more weight to religious moral worlds as cultural resources. Still, the intricate weaving of therapeutic, spiritual, and religious forces in individuals' lived experiences of marriage is not explored in most sociological works by family scholars. Edin and Kefalas (2005) offer an example of how a work keenly aware of making visible the cultural strategies at work in women's choices about marriage and family can still marginalize religion as a resource. In their interviews with low-income single mothers in inner cities in the United States, they find marriage and children to be a core part of identity and meaning. Theirs is a powerful work about moral considerations regarding motherhood and marriage, and yet lived religion is

barely explored as a source of these considerations. Their interview guide does not address religion or spirituality, although clues are found in their text that they do surface in interview conversations, for example, a woman who does not use birth control notes that “*God is in control*” (Edin and Kefalas 2005, p. 42). They also relate that many of their respondents were not “religious at all,” offering examples of those with a Catholic background or calling another a “lapsed Catholic” (Edin and Kefalas 2005, p. 119–121). The degree to which religion and spirituality came up in interviews with respondents is buried and difficult to discern, but various sacred cultural frameworks are likely at work in how these single mothers define and develop strategies related to motherhood and religious identity (cf. Sullivan 2011).

Given what we learn from the works highlighted above, the literature could benefit from a deeper exploration of the intersection of religion, spirituality, and larger cultural beliefs regarding marriage and intimate partnerships. Religion as a vital force in family life is fertile ground for qualitative and quantitative research aimed at understanding the complicated moral realities of contemporary intimate relationships. Such a focus is would also be an advantage to sociological works that aim to capture the moral worlds of parenting.

Parents, Religion, and Moral Worlds

Recent scholarship highlights considerable cultural complexity with regard to parent–child relationships, caretaking and emotional labor, and how religious worlds might shape intergenerational relationships over time. Focusing on how religion as a moral force intersects with other social positions and institutional affiliations disrupts debate about certain religious beliefs or parenting styles as being simply “good” or “bad” for children. It also stresses a need to focus on the multiple moral and emotional forces at work in contemporary parenting throughout the life course. As we saw with regard to religious constructions of intimate partnership, in the works I

detail below religious beliefs about family relationships intersect in strong ways with pervasive cultural forces at work in Western therapeutic culture. Childhood innocence, vulnerability, individualism, and choice surface as values that run deep through local religious cultures and various institutional worlds, and are found in particular combinations in everyday lives and parenting practices.

Kermani’s (2013) recent ethnographic study of the values and practices at work in Pagan childrearing in the United States adds new perspective to an understudied religious movement. Kermani (2013, p. 10) notes that Pagan “family values may tilt slightly to the left of ‘average’ Americans, but they emphasize fundamentally similar themes.” She uncovers religious constructions of parenting through entering the world of childhood/parent Pagan rituals. Through participant observation in “SpiralScouts” events, an International Pagan scouting organization and its associated family groups, and interviewing parents and children, she captures “the interactions between contemporary Pagan adults and children as they construct, inhabit, and negotiate understandings of childhood, adulthood, and the religious imagination” (Kermani 2013, p. 3). Contemporary Pagan parents, she writes, “draw on rich, diverse, mythologized understandings of their religion’s history to construct a theoretical understanding of childhood as a realm of wonder, fantasy, and religious wisdom that adults frequently attempt to inhabit” (Kermani 2013, p. 3). The “moral and imaginative frameworks” constructed in relationships between Pagan adults and children include an emphasis on adults as “overgrown children” alongside values found at work in parenting in other religions, for example “honesty, integrity, cleanliness, courtesy, responsibility, kindness, commitment, justice, and empathy.” Particular values like respect “for the earth and nature,” as well as “tolerance, and the value of individuality,” were strong among Pagan parents (Kermani 2013, p. 13). Kermani (2013, p. 87) shows how Pagan belief in individual choice and “the innocent, spiritual, natural child” can confront larger cultural expectations of parental authority and direction in practice. The

focus on childhood as a symbolic time of play, imagination, and self-exploration encourages children to make their own choices about religion and spirituality as they age. Kermani's analysis illustrates how constructions of parenting in Pagans' experiences reflect familiar contradictions and creative engagement with larger values at work in Western culture.

Konieczny's (2013) previously discussed work calls attention to the importance of local religious culture, demonstrating different strategies for parenting in local parishes and how these approaches to accomplishing parenting are supported by particular "religious anthropologies," or moral logics. She shows how parents' responsibilities toward children are grounded in significant ways in the physical worship spaces that provide emotional ritual settings which reinforce particular beliefs about children and religious responsibilities. Through rich and detailed ethnographic description of lived experience and parish culture, this work illustrates how Assumption (the more traditional parish) "is underlain by a religious anthropology that is highly cognizant of human sinfulness," thus impelling "parents to strongly emphasize their role in protecting their children from harmful influences" (Konieczny 2013, p. 144) at work in "a society rent by family breakdown" (Konieczny 2013, p. 151). She argues that such a focus reflects a particular kind of "Christian anthropology" that points to children as innocent and sin as a kind of "disease" at work in the world and in particular individuals that could easily infect children (Konieczny 2013, p. 151). This contrasts with that of Saint Brigitta, where moral logics reflect an emphasis on childhood goodness and parenting based on therapeutic models and a sense of connectedness to others as sacred. At Saint Brigitta, "childhood faith is less something to be channeled than it is to be affirmed and allowed to grow on its own," and parents "give great weight to children's experience, recognizing its fundamental difference from adult faith," patiently allowing "the capabilities of children to grow developmentally" (Konieczny 2013, p. 164). Catholic identity and the expansion of the "boundaries of identity and community at Brigitta" relates to instilling moral

behavior in children. For example, families tend to "eschew practices that create high boundaries with families that don't conform" to normative models and instead "explicitly foster the inclusion of a plurality of family forms through their parenting practices" (Konieczny 2013, p. 176). Furthermore, they talk about the growth benefit of exposing their children to the difficult and "diverse experiences of culture and social class contained in city life" (Konieczny 2013, p. 178). Therapeutic moral logics drawing on psychological tools that reinforce being honest about and expressing feelings influence how parents at Brigitta understand child wellness and their approach to teaching children about managing emotions. Protecting children emerges as "cultivating parents' and children's self-awareness, practicing self-critique, accepting help, and doing mutual psychological work" (Konieczny 2013, p. 173). Konieczny's analysis speaks to how congregations as cultural spaces matter in the lived experiences of Catholic parents and children.

The literature on religion, immigration, and transnational families also reveals religion to be a complex force linked to parents' understandings of cultural/ethnic identity, family concerns, and larger social forces. For example, ethnographers have explored how religious community provides an ethnic and moral environment for children as they experience shifts in national identity and acculturation, and how second generation immigrants confront tensions in immigrant churches, some responding by crafting religious and ethnic identity and space from multiple sources (Chen 2006, 2008; Kim 2010). Chen (2006) suggests that Taiwanese immigrant religion in the United States actively transforms filial duty in Confucian family traditions through evangelical discourse that stresses religious discipleship and equal relationships between parents and children, ultimately supporting Western values of individuality and child autonomy. Sun's (2014) work on aging Taiwanese immigrants in the U.S. adds another layer of complexity by pushing scholars to think more deeply about how such shifts shape aging parents' constructions of their relationship with older children. Traditionally, parents expect "children – especially sons and daughters-in-law" to

take on the “filial duties of physical and emotional care for their aging parents” and to perform a level of “respect for and deference to parental authority” (Sun 2014, p. 877). Sun demonstrates how aging parents, especially those who are heavily influenced by Confucian traditions, shape fresh perspectives about care that reflect the strong value of individualism at work in U.S. culture. Such “reconfigured reciprocity,” as Sun (2014, p. 877) names it, captures the dynamic and complex moral logics at work in parenting relationships related to immigration and urges scholars to think more deeply about how religious and spiritual ideas regarding aging, parents, and caretaking may be constantly rewritten and negotiated through interaction with intimate kin, various institutional worlds, and movement across national borders.

Ethnographic works have also drawn attention to how religious communities can provide individuals with adoptive parents and family, demonstrating the importance of individual choice in the construction of new types of familial relationships outside of biological ties. Kugle (2014, p. 41) for example, relates the story of a male-to-female transgendered activist from Cape Town who describes a range of engagement with Islamic discourse and agents and forges her own path in constructing parental ties. After being kicked out of her house, she finds another ‘family’ in a new mosque where she is “‘adopted’ by the leader’s extended family who observed her transition,” into becoming a woman (Kugle 2014, p. 41). Being accepted by “this religious family” allowed her to “look back with appreciation on the religious tradition in which she had grown up and to find resources in it for guiding her ethical life” as a woman (Kugle 2014, p. 42). Chen’s (2008, pp. 47–48) work on Taiwanese immigrants in the United States, in theorizing about processes of conversion, shows how religious communities can serve as extended family for immigrants. The ethnic Christian church brings new friends, establishes business contacts, and provides adoptive mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles who offer prayers and perform other filial responsibilities like visiting or accompanying them to the doctor. Some members in her study

talked about borrowing money from their new Christian family, filling a role that parents and family traditionally held in Taiwan. In my work on the International Churches of Christ (Jenkins 2005), I take apart the organizational performance of this movement as an idealized new family for converts and detail how members were drawn to the groups’ promise of new family – church parents, grandparents, and brothers and sisters who are supposed to provide emotional labor and guidance for parenting and other intimate relationships.

Scholars have also shifted their focus beyond the nuclear family by drawing attention to the nuanced ways religious socialization occurs through extended kin, as well as how primary socialization can deeply affect individuals throughout the life course. Kugle (2014, p. 11) notes that “grandparents were decisive figures in the identity formation of gay, lesbian, and transgender Muslims,” often substituting for parents “absent due to practical contingencies or emotional distance,” and serving as “role models for healthy spirituality.” He notes how this “extended family can also cause difficulties,” as individuals have to “deal with not just a mother and father but also a host of adult authorities who observe, criticize, and control what they see as norm-breaking behavior” (Kugle 2014, p. 11). Internalization of beliefs about gender and sexuality at work in religious worlds through primary socialization early in life can have long-lasting influence in the construction of self in relation to sacred worlds (Orsi 2005). Kugle’s (2014, p. 53) interviews reveal how challenging family ideas about religion, gender, and sexuality may be an ongoing, life-long attempt to legitimate identity through the mining of religious tradition for “resources for a progressive religious interpretation.” Davidman’s (2015) recent work adds another layer of complexity, pointing to the impact of primary religious socialization for adults who leave Orthodox Jewish families and communities and the weight of changing body practices as individuals transform their selves to embody wider cultural performances of self.

Scholars of religion have uncovered nuanced relationships between religion, spirituality, and

wider cultural beliefs about parenting and family, but many questions remain unanswered with regard to how religion intersects with other significant institutions through different social positions. Paying more attention to religious and spiritual orientations could enhance the work of sociologists of the family who are hard at work exploring moral forces, gender, class, and emotional labor. Lareau's (2003) *Unequal Childhoods* focuses largely on class, but provides some hints as to how religion might play a role in the everyday practices and moral logics of childrearing in the lives of middle-class, working-class, and poor families in the United States. In Lareau's book, activities in churches emerge as part of scheduled routines for children. For example, she calls attention to how an African American Baptist church one family attends each Sunday "includes sermons on social and political issues," and promotes discussion of "political issues" at the dinner table, "including events in the national news such as destructive fires set in African American churches in the South" (Lareau 2003, p. 119). This instance of religious influence is a small analytical point in the development of Lareau's larger theoretical framework, but it points to the ways that religious faith can fold into daily life and family ritual and how such interactions might reveal concrete practices through which parents instill values shaped by class, religion, spirituality, and race/ethnic community ethics. In her study of parenting in the digital age, Schofield-Clark (2013, pp. 138–144) provides a fascinating link between religious ideology and family practices surrounding the use of computers and cell phones. Readers hear how beliefs about parenting, authority, and critiques of rampant individualism at work in education come together to shape how parents and youth in one conservative Protestant middle-class family craft "policies" for media use for their children.

The works above validate that there are essential religious and related wider cultural moral understandings pulsing through various institutional forces and spaces at work in family life such as the media, education, and political communities. Cadge and Konieczny (2014, p. 552) speak to this point directly, reinforcing that reli-

gion and spirituality are "manifested and lived out daily in secular settings, at both individual and organizational levels," and calling attention to educational settings, workplaces, healthcare facilities, government, the military, and other institution spaces where religion is active. Their call to see religion "hidden in plain sight" can push scholars of religion and the family to explore the multiple spaces where individuals enact parenting. Family scholars have noted the importance of situated parenting. For example Marsiglio and colleagues' (2005) edited volume focuses on the multiple physical spaces through which men enact fathering, and Messner and Bozada-Deas (2009) uncover the reproduction of gendered parenting in youth-sports organizations. As Cadge and Konieczny (2014) suggest, how religion manifests in various institutional worlds and experiences is a critical point of inquiry. How, for example, do gendered religious beliefs about fatherhood take on a life in sports settings or behind prison walls?

Sociologists of the family and gender have called attention to the heightened expectations that fall on women and men regarding new ideals of motherhood, fatherhood, and parenting in general. There is some evidence in these works that speaks to the importance of religion and spirituality as a contemporary source for constructing and negotiating those expectations. For example, Hays' (1996) work on intensive mothering traces historical Protestant influences in constructions of childrearing and how evangelical Christian sources emerge in some women's stories. Still, deeper connections between ideas about childrearing as a moral enterprise, contemporary psychological beliefs and guidebooks regarding gendered parenting, and religious/spiritual worlds are left unexplored. Schofield-Clark (2013) demonstrates how religion and media, as they come together in everyday experiences of family life, can impact parental practices. Even so, she is talking about an explicit form of conservative Christianity. How might a more reflexive, therapeutic spirituality play a role in parents' interactions with children through and in response to media and new technologies? There are multiple sacred understandings at work in con-

temporary constructions of gendered parenting that have yet to be uncovered.

Work-Family Dynamics and Religion

Conflicts between work and family regarding identity and strategies for balancing relationships have been at the center of scholarly inquiries (e.g. Damaske 2011; Gerson 2002, 2010). Perceptions of how well one balances work and family are shaped by various cultural ideals such as individualism, hard work, and gendered understandings of parenting. Gerson (2002, p. 8) notes that women and men are searching for new moral strategies “to renegotiate work-family conflicts,” stressing how “institutional obstacles thwart their emerging aspirations to balance personal autonomy with caring for others.” Discussion of religion as a resource or institutional force in forming strategies is rarely addressed in such works. The explicit religious moral worlds active in individual negotiations and therapeutic spirituality as a potential sacred force in everyday balancing of work and family is seldom considered by these scholars. Such marginalization of religion in the sociological research addressing work and family is understandable given these scholars’ focus on economic forces. Still, this disregard ultimately inhibits understanding the compound nature of cultural discourses as they shape power dynamics on individual and structural levels. Edgell and colleagues (2012, pp. 1005–6) argue that “we know little about how religion affects perceptions of work-family conflict” or individuals’ perceptions of insufficiency in work-family experiences. Regarding the work-family nexus in the “new economy,” they suggest that sociologists pay more attention to how congregations and faith traditions may provide particular “moral and cultural frameworks” to make sense of the challenges and conflicts in work-family experiences. Several recent works that employ a cultural perspective speak directly to this gap in understanding.

Researchers who have examined how lived religion is at work in everyday life reinforce the importance of particular community, space, and

symbolic religious worlds as individuals construct, affirm, and at times challenge dominant discourses that address how one should navigate work and family. Gallagher’s (2012) recent work calls attention to how gendered ideas about work and family are shaped by personal agency and local religious, economic, cultural and political forces. This reveals essential contradictions in individuals’ experiences. For example, in analyzing choices about paid work and family in Damascus, she highlights the influence of gendered cultural and religious ideas regarding how men and women are to care for their families in both financial and domestic responsibilities. Here the contradictory nature of their social position shines through. Elite women “work” through volunteer positions, promoting arts, culture, and philanthropy. Gallagher’s ethnographic data also offers detailed illustrations of how women perceive and legitimate earning wages in a culture that supports religious and traditional ideas about gendered family roles. For example, the poorer women who did “handicrafts or sewing explained their work in much the same way as elite women doing craft work at home – as a meaningful way to pass the time before getting married, as a source of personal money, or as a way to preserve and contribute to their cultural heritage” (Gallagher 2013, p. 227). Gallagher’s analysis brings into focus power as it operates on multiple levels and illustrates how class, religion, and local culture matter in making sense of authority at play in women’s experiences of work.

Konieczny (2013) focuses on how the salience of specific moral understandings that surface through distinct worship spaces and discourses translate into individual constructions of work and family experience. For example, at Assumption, a “retraditionalized” parish, the holy family is a dominant metaphor that manifests through liturgy that emphasizes a transcendent God and more traditional understandings of gender roles in family life. In this religious space, parishioners tended to talk about gendered family roles and work in ways that made traditional arrangements sacred. At St. Brigitta, the church was envisioned symbolically through more casual and participatory worship practices, and

their discourse emphasized community equality, connection to a larger world community, and larger social justice issues. In such a cultural religious space, Konieczny found members more likely to see marriage as composed of equal partners who respect individual autonomy and pursuit of career and work interests. However, Catholic women in both churches are “ultimately confronted with a forced choice between maternal and career identities – a choice often urged in the larger culture and reinforced in churches.” Different strands of Catholic thought found in each parish regarding gender and marriage shape “incomplete solutions to women’s efforts at dealing with the pressures of work and family” (Konieczny 2013, p. 190–191). Konieczny’s methodology also reminds us that analyzing “religious biographies” can “reflect” how people “understand themselves, their families, and their faith commitments.” This insight provides clues about “the emotional resonance” individuals feel regarding “positions in cultural conflicts over the family” (Konieczny 2013, p. 67), and underscores how local church cultures matters for individual choices and relationship to wider cultural debates and pressures regarding gender, work, and family.

One might expect sociologists who study work and family and the emotional worlds of kin to ask questions about religion, but such direction rarely surfaces in interview guides and analytical frameworks. Much of this literature focusing on “emotional labor,” “emotion-work,” and “care-work” in families places gender, class, workplace culture, and the economy at the center of the analysis (e.g., Garey and Hansen 2011). But religion and spirituality are often central in understanding motivations and lived experiences of emotion-work and caregiving. Religion and therapeutic spirituality, as I have stressed thus far, are active moral forces at work in choices about gender, family, and work. Pugh (2015, p. 5) explores how “insecurity and inequality” in the new economy combine “to generate consequences not just at work but in intimate lives as well.” Through interviews with eighty individuals, mostly women, she presents how people in different types of jobs (related to privilege and stability

regarding place) construct their obligations and relationships at home and work. She argues that people construct “moral walls,” symbolic barriers that “separate one set of relationships from another,” which results in family shouldering “symbolic responsibility for enduring connections and humane practices” (Pugh 2015, p. 51). Pugh’s (2015, pp. 121–22) arguments about the connections between insecurities in the new economy and contemporary kin experiences like divorce and elder care are provocative, but the institutional sources of moral strategies found in her accounts – referred to as familiar Western values held up by various institutions like the military, civic groups, and church or faith – are not fully explored. For example, churches emerge as comforting spaces that can provide consistency (Pugh 2015, p. 151) and ideas about caring for others, but such sacred spaces are otherwise rather non-consequential in the construction of moral worlds. God is spoken of at times in the midst of her respondents’ stories (Pugh 2015, p. 112), but economic metaphors and conditions of the new economy remain in the forefront of her analysis, with “priests” and “therapists” surfacing as “detachment brokers” when intimate relationships face endings and hardship (Pugh 2015, p. 84). Pugh conducted interviews that provoked deep emotions among her respondents. Her analysis of their constructions of moral worlds captures important power dynamics regarding the dilemmas her research participants faced, but cries out for a deeper understanding of how symbolic religious worlds and therapeutic spirituality may provide essential layers of meaning to the strategies she illustrates.

In a familiar frame, churches emerge in Edin and Lein’s (1997) work, *Making Ends Meet*, as largely nondescript private organizations that give occasional assistance with clothing and food for working poor single mothers. As Sullivan’s (2011) qualitative study suggests, there are likely added layers of religious perspective and practice at work in Edin and Lein’s respondents’ everyday worlds. Sullivan draws from interviews with forty-five primarily single mothers in and around the city of Boston who are for the most part removed from corporate worship and the material

resources and social benefits that congregations may be able to offer. She illustrates how these mothers pull from religious cultural tools and strategies to make sense of their daily struggles, encounters with work and welfare, and their identity as mothers. Prayer and reading the Bible, as well as believing that God was active in their daily lives and sympathetic to their plight, brought strength, self-worth, and confidence. At the same time, dominant understandings of mothering and individualism were present to reinforce images of welfare mothers as lacking in dedication to work. In some narratives, Sullivan shows how the individualism active in religious ideas brought additional guilt regarding maternal failure. This led some mothers to believe that they had failed in the eyes of God. Paying attention to the contradictory nature of moral orders and the interconnectedness of religion and other core social institutions (in this case encounters with social welfare organizations) reveals a more complex understanding of religion's impact on work-family experiences.

As the research I have presented in this section illustrates, congregational cultures shape members everyday experiences of work and family, and religious practice plays a key role in many individuals' strategies for confronting and reconciling contemporary work-family dilemmas. As Gallagher (2012), Konieczny (2013), and Edgell (2006, 2009) suggest, it is through local religious cultures that individuals often come to make sense of how religion and spirituality shape family life and work identity. Congregations are distinct in discourse and symbolic space. In my work with Marti, we demonstrate how a particular evangelical ministry for women in Hollywood, California sustained its own version of gendered ministry discourse that had the potential to heighten work-family tensions, offering powerful symbolic images of women as "warriors" (Jenkins and Marti 2012). Religion is local, complex, and much more than church attendance or emotional support networks. To fully understand work/family dilemmas and contemporary parenting, a more rigorous analysis of the interrelatedness and pervasiveness of religion and spirituality in institutional and individual worlds is a critical

venture. There is likely much about religion and spirituality in the "moral walls" (Pugh 2015) and emotion-work strategies sociologists have highlighted that sustain classist structures and job insecurities in the new economy.

Future Directions

The literature above reinforces the categories of religion and family as fluid and the importance of cultural sociological perspectives for understanding contemporary family life and the significance of religion and spirituality. Differences related to cultural and political context and place become key in making sense of the religious symbolic worlds that shape family relationships. While quantitative studies measuring the effects of religion on health and wellness have been able to cross into the literature on the family with ease, scholars of the family must now strive to see the full potential of integrating cultural perspectives that address the family-religion nexus. Feminist and materialist perspectives on the family have largely seen religion as supporting normative ideas about family and offering network support and social capital. Their focus is not surprising given the centering of scholarship in the sociology of religion on marriage and congregational life. But as the growing body of work from cultural perspectives that I have highlighted here suggests, religion is a force that is much more than that.

The scholarly works I have detailed above stress how religious power operates across cultures and at different points in history, and how institutional contexts and forces outside of congregations are at play in individual and group constructions of religious experience and identity (Bender et al. 2013). From such a standpoint, various types of religiosity and understandings of "reflexive spirituality" inside and outside of religious institutions must be considered in exploring how people find meaning in family relationships and everyday life (Besecke 2014; Roof 1999). How might people, in their day-to-day parenting experiences, draw from spiritual models of self-growth and discovery learned in

educational institutions or medical therapeutic spaces? We know that individuals make space for encounters with the divine in everyday places like work, home, and leisure settings (Williams 2010). Researchers could think more deeply about how such practices in everyday spaces shape, represent, and affirm intimate kin relationships. While I have highlighted qualitative works in uncovering the importance of cultural perspectives, quantitative works and mixed methods are essential in the conversation. Scholarship that takes religion seriously as one of many intersecting forces at work in the construction of moral orders invites new questions, important lines of inquiry, and methodological approaches.

Researchers who study family life should consider how to treat religion as a key social force that shapes people's beliefs and identities rather than regarding religion as static background information. In this spirit, researchers should ask open-ended questions that help them unpack the processes through which religion and spirituality may inform, inspire, and limit how individuals think about families, work, and their intersections. Given the private and individual nature of religious and spiritual identity in Western culture, researchers should not assume that respondents readily share such information. Social scientists as well can be viewed by respondents as scientific experts who may look down on a position of faith or spiritual motivations. Asking questions about religion and spirituality in a manner that lets the respondent know the researcher is interested in hearing about these forces and is open to such interpretations is thus essential. Interview guides should invite discussion about religious or spiritual sources at work in shaping daily life choices. Given the significance of therapeutic spirituality in contemporary social life (see Giordan's chapter on "Spirituality" in this volume, Chap. 11), questions about spiritual beliefs and practices should also be considered alongside questions about how one finds direction regarding values and life goals.

Sociologists of the family who focus on emotional labor need to pay more attention to the emotional worlds created by religious symbols and how they are active in families' everyday

encounters with numerous institutions. Religion is at work for many Americans, to varying degrees, and combines with other secular sources in their anticipation and receipt of emotional support (Edgell et al. 2013). Religion plays a role as well in family strategies for many people as they navigate various institutional worlds. Cadge and Konieczny (2014, p. 560) speak to the significance of spirituality and religion in secular organizations, suggesting numerous fresh lines of inquiry. How might educational institutions, hospitals and clinics, mental health facilities, workplace cultures, and other core social institutional structures impose or offer religious or spiritual understandings that shape families? Therapeutic spiritual assumptions, beliefs, and practices, for example, are pervasive throughout institutional worlds where emotional labor related to divorce, marriage, and family relationships is practiced and legitimated (Jenkins 2014).

I have called attention in this chapter to how religion operates through kinship networks, how religious spaces can help people establish fictive kin ties in daily life, and how individuals creatively engage religious worlds as they claim intimate relationships outside of normative heterosexual models. Such research reminds sociologists of family and of religion to push beyond the nuclear family model and to think about the various ways individuals form partnerships and families in conjunction with sacred forces. Such attention moves the center away from debates about whether the institution of marriage is declining to conversations that consider the significant and changing forms of intimacy in contemporary cultures. For example, there has been a rise across the globe of individuals who are cohabitating and those who are living alone and may also be in committed relationships (Jamieson and Simpson 2013). This larger demographic trend suggests the need for scholarship that takes seriously the moral forces at work shaping experiences of parenting and partnering across households. Partners living apart are likely to do so because of economic and career concerns. How might religious beliefs or therapeutic spiritual approaches be at work as they manage and negotiate long-distance relationships?

We also need more research, especially in the U.S. context, that addresses questions about race, religion, and family dynamics from a lived religious and cultural perspective. For example, scholars have called attention to a “paradox that African-American religious is unusually vibrant and the institution of marriage in the African-American community is unusually fragile” (Wilcox and Wolfinger 2007:570). Shifting the focus away from marriage stability encourages researchers to think about how religion and spirituality may be active in shaping sacred strategies for singlehood and constructions of intimate partnership inside and outside of normative marriage. There are few studies that touch on important cultural dynamics, strategies, and intersections of race, community, family, and religious life. Frederick (2003, pp. 186–209) offers an ethnographic example of the rich potential of such a perspective, uncovering creative forms of spirituality as an interpretive lens at work in the lives of African American women in the rural south regarding intimate renegotiations of self. Abrams (2014, pp. 139–168) offers another ethnographic example that addresses how black empowerment and different theological perspectives in a middle-class Afrocentric Christian congregation in Atlanta shape gender politics.

The works above that move the focus beyond normative family call attention to the nuanced ways religious socialization happens throughout the life course, and bring new questions about the relationship between parents and emerging adults. Scholars have only recently begun exploration of the association between emerging adults’ religious practices and beliefs and parents’ religious understandings (Nelson 2014; Smith 2009). Deeper investigation of the various cultural religious practices that shape these relationships could provide important insight. In my current ethnographic work with parents and emerging adult children on the Camino de Santiago in northwest Spain, I have found that the moral discourse of the Camino and the practice of extended walking pilgrimage brings parents and emerging adult children together in ways that both support their children’s autonomy and reinforce intensive parenting. A common

theme in parents’ narratives of spiritual walking is of *teaching* their children how to embrace pain and injury, preparing them to persevere through the challenges of paid work, careers, and intimate relationships.

Another strong social force shaping parent/child relationships and the construction of emerging adults’ religious and spiritual worlds is the dynamic force of media (Bobkowski 2014). Caidi (2015), in her work on the *Hajj*, illustrates how, “through social media,” and what she names “the ‘holy selfie,’ in particular, the pilgrim wants to both write him/herself into the sacred space and place, as well as to share the journey with loved ones, friends, and others who have gone through the same journey and experienced its transformative nature.” In my analysis of parents and their emerging adult children on the Camino, I have found similar performances of families sharing extended walking pilgrimage through Facebook, blogs, and “apps” that allow family members to follow loved ones’ sacred journeys. As Schofield-Clark’s (2013) work on parenting in the digital age indicates, thinking more deeply about the religious cultural logics that shape family practices related to media sheds light on religion and spirituality as forces at work in the rapidly changing and pervasive use of technology in families.

There is much work to be done in thinking sociologically about how contemporary parents travel across nations and how religion/spirituality shapes these experiences. Questions about aging parents, adult children, and religious forces should not fade into the background through a privileging of research on normative family forms and focus on children and youth. Scholars have explored the importance of meaning-making in later life and how religion and spirituality across faith traditions may play a role in wellness (David 2001; Mehta 1997). Krause and Ingersoll-Dayton (2001), for example, have analyzed religiously motivated forgiveness in advanced age and Sun’s (2014) work suggests the importance of unpacking further how religious cultural motivations for taking care of older kin are shaped by the dynamics of immigration and shifting place.

While several of the scholars I have discussed have pushed beyond Catholic, Jewish, and

Protestant frames as they explore religion and family, there is still much more to be done regarding questions about family relationships in a variety religious traditions, including those spiritually-based and new age communities that provide symbolic sacred resources for individuals. In addition, while scholars of new religious movements have called attention to how children are socialized into communities and how parents negotiate larger cultural ideals about religious freedom and choice (Jenkins 2005; Palmer and Hardman 1999), researchers should keep in mind that emerging and established new religious movements are particularly powerful sites for exploring shifting cultural worlds and capturing contemporary family dynamics.

Cultural explanations of the relationship between religion and family should ultimately be an interdisciplinary conversation. Dillon and Wink (2007, p. 17) offer an example of the power of interdisciplinary analysis in bringing to life individuals' struggles and the "dynamic intertwining of religion with everyday life over time." Drawing from longitudinal data with women and men from Northern California gathered through UC-Berkeley's Institute of Human Development, they uncover how everyday experiences and broader cultural forces intersect with multiple family dynamics. Browning and Clairmont's (2007) edited volume brings together scholars from various fields to address contemporary family dynamics from a range of religious traditions in American society. Its companion volume seeks to bring clarity to the role of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism as they have shaped understandings and policies regarding sex, marriage, and family (Browning et al. 2006). The interdisciplinary voices in these volumes bring diverse perspectives that can help cultural scholars as they consider questions about the relationship between religion and spirituality, family life, and political and legal forces across the globe.

The responsibility to broaden the scholarly conversation and introduce conceptual tools that encourage new imaginings of health and wellness with regard to family, religion and spirituality is a cooperative burden. Social scientists who

study religion, family, work, gender, and sexuality from multiple perspectives must work together. Students of religion who address questions regarding family must continue to reach out to broader audiences by publishing in general sociology journals, as well as family and gender focused publications, to encourage and sustain an ongoing conversation among scholars who study family and moral worlds. Marti (2014, p. 508) advises that sociologists interested in "furthering the study of religion," should "forcefully assert that religion is far more nuanced, unexpected, flexible, and unanticipated than we had ever imagined." As I have argued here, religious beliefs and spiritual therapeutic ideals of self-discovery and individualism combine and matter in profound ways for many contemporary families as they construct and experience intimate relationships.

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Abstract

This chapter reviews literature on adolescent and emerging adult religiosity from the past decade to summarize what is currently known about religion in these developmental stages. Specifically, this chapter provides a portrait of adolescent and emerging adult religiosity, as well as a discussion of how religiosity changes during the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood and how religiosity differs by gender, race and ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation. This chapter also summarizes work on key sources of religious socialization for adolescents and emerging adults (family, peers, education, congregations, media, and religious traditions) and the influence of religion on various adolescent and emerging adult developmental outcomes. The chapter concludes by summarizing areas in which additional work is needed to more fully understand adolescent and emerging adult religiosity.

In an earlier *Handbook of Religion and Social Institutions*, Benson and King (2006) identified an increased interest among scholars in studying adolescent religiosity in the 1990s and early 2000s. This trend has continued to gain momentum over the last decade as scholars have

expanded their focus to further explore the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents and emerging adults. Studying religion during these developmental stages is important, as individuals undergo a number of transitions including increased independence as well as physical and emotional changes. As such, adolescence and emerging adulthood are life stages often characterized by religious instability, but also ones that play a key role in the development of a religious identity (Desmond et al. 2010; Petts 2009a; Uecker et al. 2007). Understanding the processes of religious development are particularly important because religiosity during adolescence and emerging adulthood is linked to a number of pos-

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itive outcomes including dating and romantic relationships, parent–child relationships, physical health, psychological well-being, and a lower propensity to engage in risky behavior (see Chap. 19 of this volume). Scholars have also argued that understanding adolescent and emerging adult religiosity may provide greater insight into American religion as a whole and what this institution may look like in the future (Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009).

Before reviewing the literature on adolescent and emerging adult religiosity, it is important to first define some key concepts. This review focuses on two stages in the life course: adolescence and emerging adulthood. Admittedly, there is some overlap in how scholars have defined these stages (Arnett 2004; Pearce and Denton 2011; Smetana et al. 2006). In this chapter, adolescence is defined as the period between ages 10 and 17 (also referred to as early and middle adolescence) and emerging adulthood is defined as the period between ages 18 and 25 (Arnett 2004; Smetana et al. 2006). This review also considers both the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents and emerging adults. Religion is a multidimensional construct that encompasses a variety of beliefs, behaviors, and experiences related to religious traditions. Pearce and Denton (2011, p. 13) have termed these the “three Cs of religiosity”: the content of religious belief (e.g., doctrine), the conduct of religious activity (e.g., religious attendance and prayer), and the centrality of religion to life (e.g., religious salience). Spirituality is a related, yet distinct, concept. Spirituality refers to a personal search for the sacred, which may or may not involve some aspect of religion (Pargament 2007). Moreover, this chapter will take a developmental approach to understanding adolescent and emerging adult religiosity. This approach assumes that adolescence and emerging adulthood are key stages in the life course that shape one’s religiosity and seeks to understand how social and individual factors influence this process (Dillon and Wink 2007). Religious development is distinct from religious transformation (which results from a rapid change in religion) and religious conversion (which results in a new identity or dramatic

change in one’s self) (Desmond et al. 2010; McGuire 2002; Regnerus and Uecker 2006).

Overall, research on adolescent and emerging adult religion has become more established in the twenty-first century. One of the primary reasons for this is the wealth of data that has been made available. Most notably, the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR) is a nationally representative longitudinal survey focused on adolescent and emerging adult religiosity in the United States. The first survey was conducted in 2002–2003 when youth were 13–17 years old. Follow-up surveys were conducted in 2005 (when respondents were 16–21 years old), 2008 (when respondents were 18–24 years old), and 2012 (when respondents were 23–28 years old). These data have been highly influential in improving our understanding of adolescent and emerging adult religiosity and have led to the publication of a number of major books (e.g., Pearce and Denton 2011; Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009) and numerous journal articles.

In addition to the NSYR, the Baylor Religion Survey is a multi-year study of religious practices, values, and behaviors among American adults that started in 2005 and currently has three waves of data collected. Furthermore, other large national longitudinal surveys of adolescents and emerging adults in the U.S. – such as the National Longitudinal Study of Youth 1997 (NLSY97) and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) – include indicators of religion. In addition to improved quantitative data, a number of important studies have utilized qualitative data and/or mixed methods research (e.g., Freitas 2008; Pearce and Denton 2011; Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009).

Improvements in data have allowed scholars to engage in new approaches to studying religion among adolescents and emerging adults. Specifically, studies have moved beyond basic measures of religion (e.g., affiliation, salience, and attendance) to explore more specific religious beliefs (e.g., belief in angels, belief in the devil), practices (e.g., religious youth group involvement, participation in religious rituals), and experiences

(e.g., witnessed a miracle), as well as images of God that youth have (e.g., God as punishing or judging, God as personally involved in people's lives) (Dickie et al. 2006; Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009). Scholars have also begun to explore the spiritual lives of youth, although psychologists have focused more on adolescent spirituality than sociologists (Ammerman 2013; Good et al. 2011; Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009). Research has also increased our understanding of "religious nones," adolescents and emerging adults who do not claim a religious affiliation (Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009; Smith et al. 2004). Finally, some scholars have moved beyond variable-centered research to take a person-centered approach. These studies utilize statistical techniques to create typologies (or profiles) of religiosity that capture the multidimensional aspect of religion and provide a more holistic view of the ways religion is experienced and practiced by adolescents and emerging adults (Pearce and Denton 2011; Salas-Wright et al. 2012; Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009).

The remainder of this chapter focuses on providing an overview of adolescent and emerging adult religiosity, how religiosity varies by sociodemographic characteristics, theories and sources of religious socialization, and the influence of religion on developmental outcomes in adolescence and emerging adulthood. Throughout this chapter, we focus primarily on research published in the last decade. We also focus primarily on sociological literature, although studies from psychology and other disciplines are included where relevant. Finally, we primarily focus on adolescents and emerging adults in the United States, while recognizing the increasing importance of cross-national research when possible.

Portrait of Adolescent and Emerging Adult Religiosity

We first provide a portrait of adolescent and emerging adult religiosity, focusing on average levels of religiosity among adolescents and

emerging adults as well as how religiosity changes during the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood.

Adolescent Religiosity

Numerous studies suggest that religion plays an important role in the lives of American adolescents. Specifically, research using the NSYR suggests that adolescent religion largely follows conventional religious traditions. For example, most adolescents (84%) believe in God (Smith and Denton 2005). The majority of adolescents also believe in angels (63%), divine miracles (61%), and a judgment day (71%) (Smith and Denton 2005).

The centrality of religion to life is also relatively high among adolescents. About half of American adolescents place a high priority on their religious life; 51% of adolescents believe that their religious faith is extremely or very important in shaping their daily life and 49% believe that their religious faith is extremely or very important in shaping major life decisions (Smith and Denton 2005). The majority of adolescents also feel at least somewhat close to God (71%), with 36% of adolescents feeling either extremely or very close to God. Moreover, the majority of adolescents view God as a personal being involved in the lives of people today (65%) and have made a personal commitment to live their lives for God (55%). Thus, in terms of religious beliefs, religion appears to be important to many American adolescents. Indeed, American adolescents believe that religion is more important to their lives than adolescents in many other high-income countries, but less important than adolescents in many low-income countries (Mayer and Trommsdorff 2012).

According to Smith and Denton (2005), rates of religious conduct among adolescents are more varied. In terms of public religious conduct, the vast majority of adolescents attend religious services at least a few times a year (82%), but only 40% attend services at least weekly. In addition, 38% of adolescents are currently involved in a religious youth group, but 69% either are or have

been involved with a religious youth group at some point in their lives. Moreover, 71 % of adolescents attend Sunday school at least a few times a year, 45 % of adolescents have participated in a religious retreat or conference, and 30 % of adolescents have gone on a religious mission or service project. In terms of private religious conduct, 65 % of adolescents pray and 27 % read scriptures at least once a week (see also Denton et al. 2008). Smaller proportions of adolescents engage in other forms of personal religious conduct including reading religious books other than scriptures (24 %), fasting (24 %), and meditating (10 %).

Although this portrait of adolescent religiosity provides an overview of religious beliefs and practices among American adolescents, it does not take into account the multidimensionality of religion. That is, we are unable to determine from individual statistics how these various beliefs and practices combine to shape adolescents' religious lives. To address this limitation, scholars have begun to take a person-centered approach to religion that combines these various characteristics to construct profiles of adolescent religiosity. One such approach was taken by Smith and Denton (2005) who created a typology of four ideal types of adolescents: (1) *devoted* adolescents (8 %) attend religious services weekly, feel religion is very important, feel very close to God, and engage in private religious practices regularly, (2) *regular* adolescents (27 %) attend religious services monthly but have lower levels of religious salience, youth group involvement, and private religious practices than *devoted* adolescents, (3) *sporadic* adolescents (17 %) attend religious services a few times a year, religion is somewhat or not very important, and there is wide variation in other religious behaviors, and (4) *disengaged* adolescents (12 %) rarely or never engage in religious conduct and religion is not very central to their lives. These ideal types are helpful in understanding adolescent religiosity, but they are not without their flaws. Most notably, only 64 % of adolescents fall into one of these categories, whereas the other 36 % of youth engage in religious beliefs and practices that do not align with one of these ideal types.

Pearce and Denton (2011) attempted to improve on this limitation by using latent class analysis to estimate profiles of adolescent religiosity based on eight indicators of religious content, conduct, and centrality. Their study identified five profiles of adolescent religiosity. *Abiders* (22 %) have high rates of attendance and prayer, feel close to God and believe that religion is important. *Adapters* (28 %) believe in a personal God and are highly involved in personal religious practices, but are more varied in their service attendance and are less likely to have exclusivist views about religion. *Assenters* (30 %) believe in God and engage in some religious practices, but religion is not central to their lives. *Avoiders* (17 %) have low levels of religious conduct and centrality, but express belief in God and believe in basic religious content. Finally, *Athiests* (3 %) do not believe in God. These profiles help to provide a more holistic view of adolescent religiosity, and further add to the conclusion that religion appears to play an important role in the lives of many adolescents.

In addition to religious content, conduct, and centrality, it is also important to acknowledge adolescents' religious tradition. Using the classification scheme developed by Steensland et al. (2000), just under one-third of adolescents are conservative Protestant, approximately 9 % are mainline Protestant, 12 % are black Protestant, and just under one-fourth are Catholic. Smaller proportions of adolescents identify as Mormon (2.5 %), Jewish (1.5 %) or some other religion (2.6 %), and less than 2 % have an unknown religious tradition (these youth either do not know their religious tradition or they refused to answer the question on religious tradition). Religious tradition is also linked to adolescent religiosity, with Mormons having the highest level of religiosity, followed by black and conservative Protestants, mainline Protestants and Catholics, and Jewish and unaffiliated adolescents reporting the lowest levels of religiosity (Smith and Denton 2005). We will return to the topic of religious traditions later in this chapter.

The remaining 16 % of adolescents do not claim a religious affiliation (Smith and Denton 2005). This group, labeled religious "nones,"

have received particular attention as this category has grown over time among adults (Pew Research Center 2012). According to Smith and Denton (2005), despite being unaffiliated, over half of religious nones believe in God, and a minority pray (24%) and read the Bible (7%) frequently. In fact, only 16% of religious nones (2.8% of adolescents) identify as atheist or agnostic. Reasons for being nonreligious vary; some adolescents express skepticism about religion or left religion due to a traumatic event in their lives (divorce, death, etc.), while other adolescents express vague reasons such as simply becoming uninterested in religion.

Similar to the rise in religious nones, there is evidence of an increase in adults who consider themselves “spiritual but not religious” (Pew Research Center 2012). This category captures people who have spiritual beliefs but have distanced themselves from organized religion (Ammerman 2013). Despite media attention directed towards this group, Smith and Denton (2005) estimate that only 2–3% of adolescents fall into this category. They argue that most adolescents are unable to articulate what this label means, and that most adolescents who consider themselves at least somewhat spiritual but not religious are actually both spiritual and religious. These adolescents may place more importance on their personal spiritual lives than on religious doctrine, but they still often follow conventional religious beliefs and practices.

This idea of individualized religion is part of a larger argument made by Smith and Denton (2005) that adolescents are increasingly influenced by an outlook they call Moralistic Therapeutic Deism. According to Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, God created and watches over earth, God wants people to be nice but is not involved in individual lives unless needed to resolve a problem, and the primary goal in life is to be happy and feel good about oneself (Smith and Denton 2005). Overall, although religion plays an important role in adolescents’ lives, adolescents are often unable to articulate this specific importance and think about religion in a way that

coincides with this general outlook (Pearce and Denton 2011; Smith and Denton 2005).

Religious Change During Adolescence

Scholars often argue that religiosity declines during adolescence as youth become more independent (e.g., Petts 2009a; Uecker et al. 2007). Indeed, research suggests that most youth experience a decline in religious attendance from early to middle adolescence (Desmond et al. 2010; Hayward and Krause 2013; Petts 2009a). Research also suggests that average levels of prayer and religious salience decline during adolescence, and fewer older adolescents believe in God than younger adolescents (Desmond et al. 2010; Pearce and Denton 2011).

However, there is also considerable variation among adolescents. For example, although Hayward and Krause (2013) find a dramatic decline in religious attendance from early to middle adolescence, Petts (2009a) finds that only 42% of adolescents experience this dramatic decline, and Regnerus and Uecker (2006) find that only 6% of youth experience a considerable decline in religious attendance. Furthermore, declines in other indicators of religiosity during adolescence (e.g., religious salience) are less dramatic, with overall levels decreasing only slightly (Desmond et al. 2010; Pearce and Denton 2011; Regnerus and Uecker 2006). Evidence also suggests that many youth experience religious stability throughout adolescence (Pearce and Denton 2011; Petts 2009a; Regnerus and Uecker 2006). There is even evidence that some youth increase their religiosity; Petts (2009a) finds that 23% of youth slightly increase their religious participation from early to middle adolescence, Regnerus and Uecker (2006) find that 15–18% of youth experience increases in religiosity, and Pearce and Denton (2011) find that 26% of youth believe they are more religious in middle adolescence than they were in early adolescence (although this often does not include increases in religious practices).

Religiosity in Emerging Adulthood

Similar to religious change during adolescence, scholars often argue that religious decline continues through emerging adulthood until individuals start to form families through marriage and child-bearing (e.g., Petts 2009a; Uecker et al. 2007). Because family formation occurs later in life today (median age at marriage for women is 27 and median age at first birth is 25), it is expected that religious decline would persist during emerging adulthood (Arroyo et al. 2013). Overall, research on religious change from adolescence to emerging adulthood largely mirrors that of research on religious change during adolescence.

Specifically, the decline in religious attendance that began in adolescence continues in emerging adulthood for most individuals (Desmond et al. 2010; Petts 2009a; Smith and Snell 2009; Uecker et al. 2007). Whereas 42 % of youth attend religious services weekly in early adolescence, this number drops to 29 % in middle adolescence and 20 % in emerging adulthood (Pearce and Denton 2011; Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009). There is also a slight decline in average levels of religious salience from middle adolescence to emerging adulthood (Desmond et al. 2010; Pearce and Denton 2011; Smith and Snell 2009; Uecker et al. 2007). Moreover, religious switching is relatively common among emerging adults. Between 25 and 50 % of individuals change their religious affiliation from adolescence to emerging adulthood (Smith and Snell 2009). Most notably, emerging adults are more likely to identify as a religious none than adolescents, with 27 % of emerging adults having no religious preference (an increase from 20 % in middle adolescence) (Pearce and Denton 2011; Smith and Snell 2009; Uecker et al. 2007).

However, just as during adolescence, there is a lot of variability in religiosity among emerging adults (Arnett and Jensen 2002). For example, Petts (2009a) finds that one-third of individuals experience a stable pattern of religious attendance from middle adolescence through emerging adulthood. Moreover, Smith and Snell (2009) find that a number of individuals experience

increases in religiosity as they transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood.

In regard to perceptions of religion, the focus on individualized religion persists from adolescence to emerging adulthood (Arnett and Jensen 2002). In general, many emerging adults seem indifferent about religion; most identify as religious and believe in God, but religion is somewhat on the periphery of their lives (Smith and Snell 2009). This trend of emerging adults being more autonomous and less institutionalized in their view of religion also appears to be occurring in parts of Europe (Anderson 2010). In addition, the outlook of Moralistic Therapeutic Deism persists in emerging adulthood, but appears to become more varied. Specifically, more emphasis appears to be placed on personal, individualized religiosity among emerging adults (Smith and Snell 2009). While most adolescents live with their parent(s), emerging adults break from their parents' mold and emphasize that religion is subjective (Smith and Snell 2009). Overall, Smith and Snell (2009) argue that the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood is largely one of continuity. Although there may be variations in specific religious beliefs and practices, most emerging adults report few changes in their level of religiosity and the changes that do appear often emerged sometime during adolescence.

Variations by Sociodemographic Characteristics

Although it is important to understand overall levels of adolescent and emerging adult religiosity, these patterns of religious beliefs and practices are shaped by social factors. We focus on variations by four sociodemographic characteristics in this section: gender, race and ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation.

Gender

Scholars generally assume that women are more religious than men, citing differences in gender socialization, gender-linked personality charac-

teristics, and risk-taking behavior as reasons to explain these variations (Sullins 2006). Research on adolescents and emerging adults largely supports this assumption. For example, Smith and Denton (2005) find small but significant differences in religiosity by gender; 44% of female adolescents attend religious services weekly compared to 37% of males, 54% of females believe that religion is at least very important in shaping their life compared to 47% of males, and 45% of females pray at least daily compared to 33% of males. Other research provides additional support for gender differences, finding that females are more likely to be religious than males on indicators of attendance, religious salience, and prayer (Bader and Desmond 2006; Pearce and Denton 2011; Petts 2009a).

Research on the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood shows similar differences in religiosity. Specifically, males are more likely than females to experience declines in religious engagement, rapid declines in religious salience, and disaffiliate from religion during the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood (Denton 2012; Desmond et al. 2010; Petts 2009a; Uecker et al. 2007). In emerging adulthood, females continue to be slightly more religious than males on indicators of overall religiousness, attendance, prayer, and closeness to God (Smith and Snell 2009; Zhai et al. 2007; Zhai et al. 2008). Although some studies do not find any differences in religious outcomes by gender (e.g., Desmond et al. 2010; Regnerus and Uecker 2006), most research suggests that females are slightly more religious than males on most indicators of religiosity in adolescence and emerging adulthood.

Race and Ethnicity

Scholars suggest that racial and ethnic minorities (specifically blacks and Hispanics) have higher levels of religiosity than whites (see Matthews, Chase, and Bartkowski's chapter on "Race and Ethnicity" in this volume, Chap. 21). Recent studies on adolescents largely support these claims. Specifically, Smith and Denton (2005) find that black adolescents have significantly higher levels of attendance, religious salience,

prayer, commitment to live life for God, and closeness to God than white adolescents. Moreover, black adolescents view religion as hierarchal and authoritative, and as a result, religion often plays a more central role in the lives of black youth (Christerson et al. 2010). These findings are consistent with other research showing that black adolescents have higher levels of religiosity than white adolescents (Bader and Desmond 2006; Pearce and Denton 2011; Regnerus and Uecker 2006).

Research on differences between Hispanic and white adolescents is more mixed. Smith and Denton (2005) find that Hispanic adolescents have higher rates of prayer and closeness to God than white adolescents, but other studies do not find major differences between these groups (Bader and Desmond 2006; Pearce and Denton 2011). One key difference may lie in how religion is viewed by each group; white adolescents often view religion as individualized and personalized, whereas Hispanic adolescents may adhere to the cultural emphasis on familism, which emphasizes the importance of family and leads Hispanic youth to view their religious community as another family (Christerson et al. 2010). Unfortunately, research on other racial/ethnic groups (e.g., Asian, Native American) is sparse. The limited available evidence suggests that these groups have levels of religiosity that are equal to or lower than that of white adolescents, but more work in this area is needed (Bader and Desmond 2006; Christerson et al. 2010; Smith and Denton 2005).

As adolescents transition into emerging adulthood, these racial and ethnic differences in religiosity persist. Specifically, Denton (2012) finds that whites have a higher likelihood of becoming less engaged in religion during the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood than blacks. Similarly, Petts (2009a) finds that blacks are less likely to experience declines in religious attendance in early and middle adolescence than whites. There is also evidence that religiosity among blacks is less susceptible to changes that may occur during this life stage (e.g., family disruption) than whites (Denton and Culver 2015). Moreover, Desmond et al. (2010) find that religious salience is higher among nonwhites than

whites, and this gap increases over time as youth transition from adolescence into emerging adulthood.

Social Class

The link between social class and religion is a well-studied topic that goes back to the classic works of Karl Marx (see Schwadel's chapter on "Social Class" in this volume, Chap. 18). Despite this historical importance, there has been little research on religious variations by social class among adolescents and emerging adults (Schwadel 2008). Indeed, most research includes social class simply as a control variable, if at all (e.g., Desmond et al. 2010; Smith and Denton 2005). Only one recent study has focused on the link between social class and adolescent religiosity. Specifically, Schwadel (2008) finds that poor teenagers are less active in organized religion than teenagers not in poverty, but are more engaged in private and personal religiosity (prayer, scripture reading, religious salience, and belief in a judgment day).

There is little research on how the influence of social class on religiosity may change as youth transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood, and some longitudinal studies do not even control for social class (e.g., Petts 2009a). There is some evidence that the negative influence of socioeconomic status on religious salience persists in emerging adulthood (Desmond et al. 2010). Denton (2012) also finds that having parents with a college degree increases the likelihood that youth become less engaged with religion as they transition from adolescence into emerging adulthood. Overall though, more research on this topic is needed.

Sexual Orientation

Similar to social class, there is a lack of sociological literature on variations in adolescent and emerging adult religiosity by sexual orientation. The most comprehensive data source on adolescent and emerging adult religiosity, the NSYR,

does not contain information on sexual orientation (Kubicek et al. 2009). Two studies using Add Health data found that average levels of religiosity were lower for gay and lesbian emerging adults than straight emerging adults, with larger disparities between lesbian and straight females than for gay and straight males (Rostosky et al. 2007, 2010).

Results from qualitative studies suggest that most sexual minorities report conflict between their religious and sexual identity, as many religious institutions have negative views on homosexuality (Dahl and Galliher 2012; Kubicek et al. 2009). Despite this conflict, evidence from one study on over 400 gay and bisexual male emerging adults suggests that religion is still important for many of these individuals. Specifically, rates of religiosity are lower for gay/bisexual emerging adults than straight emerging adults; only 8% of gay/bisexual males attend religious services at least weekly, only 9% view themselves as very religious, and over half of them affiliate with a different religion than the one they were raised in (39% identify as nonreligious, spiritual, or agnostic/atheist) (Kubicek et al. 2009). However, 35% of gay/bisexual male emerging adults view themselves as very spiritual, and 87% believe that religion or spirituality is at least somewhat important (Kubicek et al. 2009).

These quantitative data combined with qualitative results suggest that similar to straight emerging adults, gay/bisexual emerging adults focus on personal, individualized religion (Kubicek et al. 2009; Smith and Snell 2009). Rates of organizational involvement are lower for gay than straight youth, but identification and importance placed on spirituality appears to be higher, as gay/bisexual individuals emphasize an internalized, personal connection to a higher power (Kubicek et al. 2009).

Theories of Religious Socialization

Spilka and colleagues (2003, p. 107) define socialization as "the process by which a culture (usually through its primary agents, such as parents) encourages individuals to accept beliefs and

behaviors that are normative and expected within the culture.” Although the socialization process has been addressed using several different theoretical perspectives, such as symbolic interaction and role theory, many consider social learning theory to be the basis of the socialization process (Spilka et al. 2003). Social learning theory argues that people learn primarily through (a) observation and imitation and (b) rewards and punishments. Social learning theory suggests that the religious beliefs and behaviors of adolescents and emerging adults are heavily influenced by modeling others in their social environment, such as parents and peers, as well as the rewards and punishments they receive for adopting religious beliefs and behaviors.

More recent perspectives on religious development, spiritual modeling and spiritual social capital, build on the basic propositions of social learning theory. Spiritual modeling focuses on how the observation and imitation of spiritual exemplars, known as observational spiritual learning, can influence spiritual development (King et al. 2002; King and Mueller 2003). According to Oman and colleagues (2009), spiritual modeling can be conscious, when an individual is motivated to learn from a spiritual exemplar or unconscious by simply being exposed to spiritual exemplars. Although almost anyone can serve as a spiritual exemplar for adolescents and emerging adults, parents, peers, and religious leaders are the most commonly cited and influential spiritual exemplars. Specifically, 33% of emerging adults in a recent study consider their mother to be a spiritual model, 16% consider their father to be a spiritual model, 15% consider their grandmother to be a spiritual model, and 25% consider a member of the clergy to be a spiritual model. Consistent with spiritual modeling, emerging adults who are spiritual and/or religious, compared to those who are neither spiritual nor religious, tend to name more spiritual models and to consider these models more influential.

Spiritual social capital, unlike spiritual modeling, emphasizes the influence of religious interactions rather than the effect of religious examples. As King and Mueller (2003, p. 403)

explain, spiritual capital does not emphasize “the degree of religiousness modeled or professed by an individual, but the extent to which it is actively shared with another.” Spiritual interactions could include praying or discussing religious topics with parents, sharing religious beliefs with peers, bible study or religious youth groups, and attending classes or workshops on religion. The frequency and influence of religious interactions will depend on the quality of social relationships. Therefore, adolescents and emerging adults will be more religious when they are surrounded by many people they feel close enough to discuss spiritual matters with.

Attempts to further develop the spiritual modeling and spiritual social capital perspectives focus on identifying the factors that influence when religious socialization will be most successful. For example, Oman and colleagues (2009) argue that social learning will be influenced by intra-individual factors, environmental factors, and interpersonal factors. Intra-individual factors include previous spiritual beliefs and practices (i.e., adolescents and emerging adults are not blank slates, so their previous experiences influence what they learn from a model) and motivation to learn from spiritual exemplars (i.e., some adolescents and emerging adults may be willing and eager to learn, whereas others may be more resistant). Environments such as family, school, and/or religious congregations influence the availability of spiritual models. For example, if parents are nonreligious and do not attend religious services, then children will be exposed to fewer spiritual models. Interpersonal factors, or relationships, influence the degree to which people learn from a spiritual model, as individuals are more likely to learn when they have a close, personal relationship with a spiritual model.

Sources of Religious Socialization

In order to fully understand adolescent and emerging adult religiosity, it is important to consider the sources through which youth learn religious beliefs and behaviors. Theories of religious socialization suggest that family, peers, educa-

tion, congregations, media, and religious traditions each play key roles in the process of religious socialization for adolescents and emerging adults. We focus on these sources of religious socialization here.

Family

The most important source of religious socialization is family, and research consistently finds that parental religiosity is one of the strongest predictors of religiosity among adolescents and emerging adults (Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009). Although this finding is well-established, studies over the past decade have advanced our knowledge of the influence of the family on adolescent and emerging adult religiosity by exploring variations in the process of religious transmission within families.

Consistent with the spiritual modeling and spiritual social capital perspectives, research suggests that religious transmission is more likely to occur when parents are consistent in their religious beliefs and practices (Bader and Desmond 2006). That is, adolescents are more likely to adopt their parents' religiosity when their parents both attend religious services and believe that religion is important. In doing so, parents are better able to serve as consistent spiritual models.

However, some family structures may be better able to provide spiritual modeling and capital than others due to greater acceptance within religious institutions or the presence of two spiritual models instead of one (Edgell 2006; Zhai et al. 2007). Overall, research suggests that religious transmission from parents to adolescents is less effective in nontraditional families than intact married families, although evidence on specific variations is mixed (Denton 2012; Desmond et al. 2010; Petts 2015; Zhai et al. 2007). However, there is also evidence that youth raised by two biological parents may experience a more rapid decline in religious attendance as they transition into emerging adulthood (Desmond et al. 2010). Although evidence on this trend is also mixed (e.g., Petts 2009a), the lack of spiritual models when living independently may have a more pro-

found impact on emerging adults who were used to having positive religious reinforcement at home (Desmond et al. 2010). Thus, although parents still influence emerging adults' religiosity (Smith and Snell 2009), their impact on daily religious behavior may lessen as youth transition into emerging adulthood and reside on their own (Arnett and Jensen 2002).

Peers

There is a growing recognition that peers play an important role in the religious development of adolescents and emerging adults that may increase as youth transition into emerging adulthood (Arnett and Jensen 2002; Desrosiers et al. 2011; Schwartz 2006). Theoretically speaking, friends can serve as spiritual models and provide opportunities for discussing spiritual matters (Schwartz 2006). With regard to spiritual modeling, religious adolescents and emerging adults tend to have friends who are also religious (Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009). When asked to report the characteristics of their five closest friends, adolescents report that about half (52%) of their friends have similar religious beliefs (Smith and Denton 2005). Adolescents also talk with some (36%) of their friends about their religious beliefs and experiences (Smith and Denton 2005). Similar patterns are present among emerging adults, as emerging adults report that almost two-thirds (63%) of their friends share similar religious beliefs and they talk about their religious beliefs and experiences with about half (49%) of their friends (Smith and Snell 2009).

In general, research finds that friends' religiosity is significantly related to adolescent and emerging adult religiosity. Regnerus et al. (2004) find the average church attendance and average importance of religion within an adolescent's friendship network is significantly related to the adolescent's own church attendance and importance of religion. Also, friends' church attendance during high school (age 11–16) may be a stronger predictor of emerging adult religiosity (age 17–22) than parents' religiosity (Gunnloe and Moore 2002). Research also suggests that

peers provide spiritual social capital; Desrosiers et al. (2011) find that friends' spiritual support (i.e., how comfortable, and how frequently, adolescents and emerging adults are discussing religion and spirituality with their friends) is significantly related to having a personal relationship with God. Although research has focused primarily on the influence of religious friends, additional peer characteristics such as attachment to peers and peer delinquency are also significantly related to adolescent religiosity (Desmond et al. 2010; Smith and Denton 2005).

Although adolescents and emerging adults report having friends with similar religious beliefs, and they report talking with some of these friends about religious matters, there is some question as to the frequency, depth, and significance of these conversations, especially among emerging adults. Although many emerging adults do not consider religion to be a divisive topic (Smith and Snell 2009), emerging adults spend very little time talking with their friends about religion (Smith and Snell 2009). According to Smith and Snell (2009, p. 153), emerging adults do not talk about religion with their friends "because religion is simply not important or relevant enough to everyday life to warrant any real discussion." Many emerging adults have only superficial knowledge of their friends' religious beliefs and practices (e.g., their religious traditions when they were growing up), and they do not discuss matters of faith because their friends appear to be similar to them religiously, they consider religion a private matter, or they may feel uncomfortable discussing their own religiosity (Smith and Snell 2009). Clearly more research on the nature and quality of religious discussions among friends is needed.

Education

Educational settings can also influence the availability of spiritual models, the frequency of spiritual discussions, and the amount of spiritual support. For example, students may be more likely to have spiritual models at religious schools compared to nonreligious schools (Oman et al.

2009). In addition, Barrett et al. (2007) argue that the religious climate of a school may influence the religiosity of adolescents who try to conform to the norms of their school. However, the influence of a school's religious climate on adolescent religiosity may also depend on social ties to the school or how much they identify with the school (Barrett et al. 2007).

Research on the role of education in religious socialization has generally focused on (a) the influence of school religious climate, (b) the effect of attending a religious school on adolescent religiosity, and (c) the effect of attending college on the religiosity of emerging adults. In regard to religious climate, studies consistently show that school climate is significantly related to adolescent religiosity (Regnerus et al. 2004; Regnerus and Uecker 2006). For example, Barrett et al. (2007) find the average religiosity of a school is significantly related to both private and public religiosity, and adolescents may be motivated by social status to change their public expressions of religiosity, but not their private convictions.

In contrast, research on the effect of attending a religious school on adolescent religiosity is mixed. With regard to religious schooling, Uecker (2008) finds that adolescents who attend Catholic school attend youth group and religious education classes less often than adolescents who attend public school. Uecker (2008) argues that Catholic school students may substitute one set of religious activities (attending Catholic school, which already includes classes on religion) for another (youth group and religious education classes). In contrast, adolescents who attend Protestant schools, compared to those who attend public schools, have higher levels of religious salience and private religiosity. In another study, Uecker (2009) finds that emerging adults who attended a Protestant school as adolescents are more religious than emerging adults who attended a secular school, but emerging adults who attended a Catholic school as adolescents are not more religious, and on some outcomes may be less religious, than emerging adults who attended a secular school. Uecker (2008) argues that Protestant schools place a higher premium on

religious development, and immersion in the religious culture provided by Protestant schools contributes to an increase in religious salience and private religiosity.

Finally, research suggests a complicated relationship between higher education and emerging adult religiosity (Hill 2009, 2011; Mayrl and Oeur 2009; Mayrl and Uecker 2011; Uecker et al. 2007). Although it has long been assumed that attending college leads to a decline in religiosity by exposing emerging adults to a diverse range of perspectives and religions (cultural broadening) and encouraging students to be skeptical and question their own beliefs, research does not appear to support these claims. Uecker et al. (2007) find greater declines in religiosity among those who do not attend college. Furthermore, Mayrl and Uecker (2011) find that attending college does not lead to more liberal religious beliefs. It appears that much of the curriculum of higher education is irrelevant to students' faith. Students may not be overly engaged in their classes, they may have limited knowledge of their own faith, they may not perceive many challenges to their faith, or they may not consider religious disagreements to be anything worth arguing about (Uecker et al. 2007). Complicating the matter even further, research by Hill (2009, 2011) suggests that the effect of attending college on religiosity may depend on school type (e.g., Catholic, Protestant, elite).

Congregations

Roehlkepartain and Patel (2006, p. 324) argue that congregations represent a "unique crucible or focal point for exploring the dynamic interplay of numerous forces and processes in spiritual development: family, peer, personal agency, self-reflection, moral guidance, and intergenerational relationships—not to mention the rituals, traditions, and practices that build bridges to the sacred and transcendent." Involvement in a religious congregation may influence the development of particular beliefs and behaviors, as well as the importance placed on those beliefs and behaviors, and the way in which adolescents and

emerging adults are socialized into such beliefs and behaviors (Barry et al. 2012). Congregations can also serve as an additional source of spiritual models and spiritual social capital. Indeed, Smith and Snell (2009) find that adolescents who have more supportive religious adults in their congregation are more likely to be religious in emerging adulthood.

In general, adolescents have a fairly positive attitude about the congregations they attend. Many adolescents have adults in their congregation they enjoy talking with (79%) and most believe adults in their congregation are very easy (38%) or somewhat easy (41%) to talk with (Smith and Denton 2005). The majority of adolescents report their congregation usually makes them think about important things (62%) and their congregation is usually a warm and welcoming place (75%) (Smith and Denton 2005). Many adolescents report their congregation is a very good (45%) or fairly good (21%) place for them to talk about serious issues like family and school problems, and their congregation has done an excellent (27%) or fairly good (33%) job of teaching them what they want to learn about their religion (Smith and Denton 2005).

Although emerging adults respect organized religion and tend to have positive feelings for the tradition in which they were raised, emerging adults also tend to be more skeptical about organized religion than adolescents (Arnett and Jensen 2002; Smith and Snell 2009). For example, 29% of emerging adults strongly agree or agree that religion is a "turn off" for them, 68% strongly agree or agree that too many religious people are negative, angry, and judgmental, and 42% strongly agree or agree that religion is mainly irrelevant to most people their age (Smith and Snell 2009). Smith and Snell (2009, p. 149) argue that many emerging adults consider religious organizations to be "elementary schools of morals" from which adolescents "graduate" (i.e., stop attending) once they learn these morals. Emerging adults may also feel that it is important for them to distance themselves from the religion of their youth (and their parents) as a form of independence (Smith and Snell 2009). Also, emerging adults often do not feel the same sense

of belonging that they report feeling with nonreligious groups such as sports teams or fraternities/sororities. Thus, although congregations may serve an important role in the religious socialization of adolescents, congregations likely exert less of an influence on emerging adults.

Media

In contrast to sources of socialization that adolescents and emerging adults have limited control over (family, peers, schools, and congregations), media consumption represents a form of “self-socialization” (Arnett 1995). That is, adolescents and emerging adults often select and engage with their choice of media. The Media Practice Model is a useful conceptual tool for understanding how religiosity influences, and is influenced by, media consumption. The Media Practice Model, which recognizes a reciprocal relationship between religious identity and media consumption, focuses on three media practices: selection, engagement, and application (Bobkowski 2014). In short, religious beliefs and behaviors should influence the types of media that adolescents and emerging adults *select* and how they *engage* with that media. As Bobkowski (2009) argues, religious adolescents and emerging adults are likely to selectively expose themselves to media that are consistent with, and reinforce, their religious beliefs and behaviors. The next step in the process, *application*, refers to how much adolescents and emerging adults incorporate the media messages they encounter into their religious beliefs and behaviors, which then continues in a cyclical process.

With regard to selection and engagement, evidence suggests that religiosity influences the media consumption habits of adolescents and emerging adults. Religiously devoted adolescents spend less time watching television and are less likely to view television programs with mature content than religiously disengaged adolescents (Bobkowski 2009; Smith and Denton 2005). Religiously devoted adolescents are also less likely than religiously disengaged adolescents to watch R-rated movies, use the internet to view

pornography, and play action video games (Smith and Denton 2005). Religiously devoted emerging adults are less likely to be a member of a social networking site and, for those who are members, spend less time on social networking sites than the religiously disengaged (Smith and Snell 2009).

Although less extensive, research also suggests that media consumption can influence the religious beliefs and practices of adolescents and emerging adults both positively and negatively. Barry et al. (2012) find that positive media use (using media for entertainment, news, and school work) is significantly related to greater religiosity among emerging adults, whereas negative media use (violent video games and pornography) is significantly related to lower religiosity. Furthermore, the use of negative media has both a direct effect and an indirect effect on religiosity through the internalization of prosocial values (Barry et al. 2012). Using positive media only has an indirect effect on religiosity, once again through the internalization of prosocial values (Barry et al. 2012). Therefore, media use may influence the internalization of prosocial values, which then contributes to an increase or a decrease in religiosity.

Religious Traditions

Differences in religious socialization by family and peers, as well as differences in the importance of congregations, may help to explain some of the persistent differences in religiosity among religious traditions. On many typical measures of religiosity, such as religious service attendance and religious salience, conservative Protestants and Mormons (Latter Day Saints or LDS) are more religious than mainline Protestants and Catholics. For example, 67% of conservative Protestant and 68% of Mormon adolescents state their faith is very or extremely important in shaping their daily life, compared to 50% of mainline Protestant and 41% of Catholic adolescents (Smith and Denton 2005). Although there tends to be a decrease in religiosity as adolescents transition into emerging adulthood, and this decrease

tends to occur among all religious traditions, differences in religiosity among religious groups are still apparent in emerging adulthood (Smith and Snell 2009). For example, 57% of conservative Protestant and 59% of Mormon emerging adults say their religious faith is very or extremely important in shaping their daily life, compared to 33% of mainline Protestant and 34% of Catholic emerging adults (Smith and Snell 2009).

Several measures suggest that, compared to mainline Protestants and Catholics, conservative Protestants and Mormons are more successful at socializing their offspring. Conservative Protestant (86%) and Mormon adolescents (86%) are slightly more likely to report the same faith as their parents, compared to mainline Protestants (68%) and Catholics (83%) (Smith and Denton 2005). Mormon adolescents are also far more likely to say their religious beliefs are very similar to their mothers (73%) and fathers (75%), compared to conservative Protestant (48% and 42%), mainline Protestant (36% and 30%), and Catholic (33% and 31%) adolescents (Smith and Denton 2005).

According to Smith and Denton (2005), differences in the quantity and quality of religious interactions with parents and friends may help to explain some of the differences in religiosity among religious traditions. Conservative Protestant and Mormon adolescents, for example, are more likely to discuss their faith with their parents and friends, compared to mainline Protestant and Catholic adolescents. Whereas 46% of conservative Protestant and 74% of Mormon adolescents talk about religion with their parents at least a few times a week, only 23% of mainline Protestant and 24% of Catholic adolescents talk about religion with their parents at least once a week. Conservative Protestant (53%) and Mormon adolescents (79%) are also more likely than mainline Protestant (35%) and Catholic adolescents (36%) to pray with parents outside of mealtimes or religious services. With regard to friends, there is not much difference between religious groups in the average number of close friends who hold similar religious beliefs, but Mormon adolescents are more likely to talk about their religious beliefs with their friends than con-

servative Protestant, mainline Protestant, and Catholic adolescents.

In addition to parents and friends, Smith and Denton (2005) find there are also congregational differences between religious groups. Mormon adolescents (3%) are less likely than conservative Protestant (18%), mainline Protestant (22%), and Catholic (14%) adolescents to attend more than one congregation. Conservative Protestant (70%) and Mormon (81%) adolescents are more likely than mainline Protestant (58%) and Catholic (52%) adolescents to say their congregation usually makes them think about important things. Conservative Protestant (31%) and Mormon (47%) adolescents are also more likely than mainline Protestant (24%) and Catholic (17%) adolescents to say their congregation has done an excellent job of teaching them what they want to learn about their religion. Conservative Protestant (75%) and Mormon parents (96%) are more likely than mainline Protestant (56%) and Catholic (47%) parents to believe that ministering to adolescents is a very important priority of their congregation.

Developmental Outcomes

In this section, we briefly review some of the research on the relationship between adolescent and emerging adult religiosity and developmental outcomes, including dating and romantic relationships, parent-child relationships, physical health, prosocial behavior, psychological well-being, and risky behavior.

Dating and Romantic Relationships

Religiosity influences perceptions of acceptable dating behaviors, partner selection, and living arrangements (Smith and Snell 2009; Taylor et al. 2013). Taylor et al. (2013) find that religious emerging adults are less likely to believe that kissing, handholding, sexting, and sexual activity are acceptable prior to being in a committed relationship. Religious emerging adults are less likely to stay overnight with their roman-

tic partners (Jamison and Proulx 2012) and religiously devoted emerging adults are less likely to ever cohabit (Smith and Snell 2009).

Research shows that religious adolescents and emerging adults are more likely to delay sexual activity (Burdette and Hill 2009; Hull et al. 2011; Nonnemaker et al. 2003; Regnerus 2007; Sinha et al. 2007; Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009) and are generally less likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors (Grossman et al. 2013; Landor et al. 2011). Religious beliefs and practices influence sexual behavior by shaping attitudes about the appropriateness of sex and the consequences of engaging in sex (Hull et al. 2011; Landor et al. 2011). Also, adolescents who attend religious services more often are less likely to report that their friends think they should have sex (Hull et al. 2011).

In addition to sexual activity with a partner, religious adolescents and emerging adults are also less likely to use pornography (Baltazar et al. 2010; Carroll et al. 2008; Nelson et al. 2010; Short et al. 2015). Although religious adolescents and emerging adults are more likely to consider using pornography unacceptable (Carroll et al. 2008), which in part explains why they are less likely to use pornography (Carroll et al. 2008), one study finds that 35% of emerging adult men who consider viewing pornography unacceptable still viewed pornography within the last year (Nelson et al. 2010). Another study finds that some college students believe that using pornography interferes with their relationship with God (16.1%), spirituality (14.3%), and religious participation (4.9%) (Short et al. 2015, p. 571).

Parent–Child Relationships

Compared to religiously disengaged adolescents, religiously devoted adolescents are more likely to report that they feel very close to their mothers and fathers, get along very well with their mothers and fathers, and have fun doing things with their mothers and fathers (Smith and Denton 2005). Religiously devoted adolescents are also more likely to believe that their parents understand them, love and accept them, and pay a lot of

attention to them (Smith and Denton 2005). Evidence suggests that these differences persist into emerging adulthood (Smith and Snell 2009).

Physical Health

Although there is comparatively less research on the relationship between religiosity and physical health than other developmental outcomes, a few studies find that religiosity influences health attitudes and behaviors (Mahoney et al. 2005). For example, Smith and Snell (2009) find that, compared to religiously disengaged emerging adults, religiously devoted emerging adults are more likely to state their physical health is excellent or very good. Religiously devoted emerging adults are also more likely to have a normal body mass index (BMI), instead of being overweight or obese, than religiously disengaged emerging adults (Smith and Snell 2009).

Research on the relationship between religiosity and body image/eating disorders has yielded mixed results (Boyatzis and Quinlan 2008). Compared to those who are religiously disengaged, religiously devoted adolescents and emerging adults feel happier with their bodies and their physical appearance (Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009). Religious involvement may also reduce the impact of eating disturbances on mental health (Henderson and Ellison 2015) and exposure to thin ideals on body satisfaction (Inman et al. 2014). However, some aspects of religion, such as quest orientation, may contribute to body dissatisfaction and bulimia (Boyatzis and McConnell 2006; Boyatzis and Quinlan 2008).

Prosocial Behavior

Existing research suggests that several measures of religiosity are significantly related to prosocial behaviors such as academic performance and civic engagement and volunteering. With regard to academic performance, religious adolescents are less likely to skip school (Muller and Ellison 2001), get better grades (McKune and Hoffman

2009), and are more likely to finish high school (Erickson and Phillips 2012). The effects of religiosity on academic performance are partially mediated by family and community social capital (Muller and Ellison 2001), social networks (Glanville et al. 2008), and religious mentors (Erickson and Phillips 2012). Although adolescent religiosity is consistently related to positive school outcomes, a recent review concludes that fundamentalist beliefs may reduce academic attainment and emerging adult religiosity does not seem to predict academic success in college (Mayrl and Oeur 2009).

Research has also explored the relationship between religiosity and civic engagement/volunteering. Religiously devoted adolescents and emerging adults, compared to adolescents and emerging adults who are religiously disengaged, are more likely to report that they have donated money to an organization or cause in the last year (Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009). Religiously devoted adolescents and emerging adults are also more likely to regularly or occasionally do volunteer work and volunteer more times per month on average than religiously disengaged adolescents and emerging adults (Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009). Religiously devoted adolescents and emerging adults are more likely to report that they care about the needs of the poor, elderly people, and equality between racial groups than religiously disengaged adolescents and emerging adults (Smith and Denton 2005; Smith and Snell 2009). Evidence from Europe is consistent with these findings, showing that religion is positively associated with humanitarian beliefs among European emerging adults (Kay and Ziebertz 2006).

Psychological Well-Being

Many studies have examined the relationship between adolescent and emerging adult religiosity and indicators of psychological well-being such as depression, suicide, and gratitude and forgiveness. A recent meta-analysis of psychological outcomes in adolescence and emerging

adulthood suggests that religiosity and spirituality is consistently related to greater happiness, life satisfaction, and self-esteem (Yonker et al. 2012). Smith and Denton (2005) find that religiously devoted adolescents are more likely to feel cared for than religiously disengaged adolescents. Compared to religiously disengaged adolescents, religiously devoted adolescents are also less likely to feel alone and misunderstood, invisible, or that life is meaningless (Smith and Denton 2005). Similar differences between those who are religiously devoted and religiously disengaged are apparent in emerging adulthood (Smith and Snell 2009).

Similarly, research suggests that adolescent and emerging adult religiosity and spirituality is consistently associated with fewer depressive symptoms (Nonnemaker et al. 2003; Petts and Jolliff 2008; Sinha et al. 2007; Yonker et al. 2012). However, religious salience tends to have a stronger effect on depression than religious service attendance, and religiosity tends to be more strongly related to depression among adolescents than emerging adults (Yonker et al. 2012).

Furthermore, Nonnemaker et al. (2003) report that private religiosity, but not public religiosity, is significantly related to suicidal thoughts and attempting suicide. Based on three waves of Add Health data, Nkansah-Amankra et al. (2012) report that religious participation reduces suicidal behavior among adolescents, but the strength of the relationship between religious participation and suicidal behavior is reduced during emerging adulthood.

Research has also examined the relationship between religiosity and gratitude and forgiveness. Although religiously devoted emerging adults express more gratitude than religiously disengaged emerging adults (Smith and Snell 2009), the relationship between religiosity and gratitude appears to be complicated. Kraus et al. (2015) find that only a few measures of religiosity, in particular religious efficacy and having religious friends, are significantly related to gratitude, whereas Tsang et al. (2012) find that religiosity predicts greater feelings of gratitude only under some conditions. Research also suggests a

complex relationship between religiosity and forgiveness (Davis et al. 2013; Fehr et al. 2010).

Risky Behavior

There has been an abundance of research on the relationship between adolescent and emerging adult religiosity and risky behaviors such as delinquency and substance use. Research on the relationship between religiosity and non-substance use related forms of delinquency and crime, such as theft and violence, generally shows that religious adolescents and emerging adults are less likely to engage in delinquency and crime (Nonnemaker et al. 2003; Pearce and Haynie 2004; Petts 2009b; Salas-Wright et al. 2012, 2014a, b). In one of the few studies to examine the effect of spirituality apart from religiosity, Jang and Franzen (2013) find that emerging adults who identify as spiritual but *not* religious may be more likely to engage in crime than emerging adults who identify as spiritual *and* religious. Given that spiritual but not religious is often significantly and negatively correlated with other measures of religion, such as attending religious services and religious salience (Kraus et al. 2015), the designation spiritual but not religious may reflect a lack of religion, or even an anti-religious stance, which is a risk factor for involvement in delinquency and crime.

Religious adolescents and emerging adults are less likely to drink alcohol, smoke, and use marijuana and other drugs in both the U.S. and internationally (Ghandour et al. 2009; Nonnemaker et al. 2003; Rew and Wong 2006; Sanchez et al. 2010; Sinha et al. 2007; Smith and Snell 2009). According to a recent meta-analysis, religious salience may have a stronger impact on substance use than attendance and religiosity may have a stronger effect on substance use for emerging adults than adolescents (Yonker et al. 2012). Similar to studies of delinquency, research suggests that religiosity may reduce substance use by influencing attitudes or moral beliefs (Ford and Hill 2012), reducing the influence of substance using peers (Desmond et al. 2011), and increasing self-control (Desmond et al. 2013).

Conditional Relationships

Although research generally shows that religion is related to positive developmental outcomes, the effects of adolescent and emerging adult religiosity on developmental outcomes can often depend on other factors such as age, sex, and race (e.g., Burdette and Hill 2009; Petts and Jolliff 2008). There are two conditional relationships that seem particularly noteworthy. First, a small body of research suggests that the effect of adolescent religiosity on developmental outcomes such as academic achievement (McKune and Hoffmann 2009), sexual behavior (Grossman et al. 2013), parent-child relations (Stokes and Regnerus 2009), and delinquency (Pearce and Haynie 2004) depends on parents' religiosity. According to research, religiosity can have beneficial effects when adolescents and parents are equally religious, but when there is "religious discord" (e.g., when parents are more religious than their children), the resulting conflict can have adverse effects on adolescents. Second, research suggests that the relationship between attendance at religious services and developmental outcomes may depend on whether or not adolescents believe that religion is important (Desmond and Kraus 2012, 2014). When adolescents believe that religion is important, attendance at religious services is related to positive developmental outcomes, but if adolescents are coerced by their parents to attend religious services then attendance may have no effect, or even a negative effect, on developmental outcomes.

Theoretical Approaches

Although numerous studies suggest a relationship between adolescent and emerging adult religiosity and positive developmental outcomes, many studies are atheoretical (Rew and Wong 2006). As a whole, theoretical explanations for the effects of religiosity on developmental outcomes "remain largely disjointed and fragmented" (Smith 2003, p. 17). For example, research on the relationship between religiosity and delinquency often draws on criminological theories (Desmond et al. 2013;

Ulmer et al. 2012), research on religiosity and academic performance often draws on social capital theory (Glanville et al. 2008; Muller and Ellison 2001), and research on religiosity and sexual behavior often relies primarily on attitudes (Hull et al. 2011).

In one of the few noteworthy attempts to advance our theoretical understanding of religious effects, Smith (2003) proposes nine factors, grouped into three main dimensions, which may help to explain religious effects on developmental outcomes. The three “dimensions of influence” proposed by Smith (2003) are (a) moral order, which includes moral directives, spiritual experiences, and role models, (b) learned competencies, which includes community and leadership skills, coping skills, and cultural capital, and (c) social and organizational ties, which includes social capital, network closure, and extra-community skills. Research on developmental outcomes has generally focused on a few of these factors while ignoring others. Research on the influence of adolescent and emerging adult religiosity on developmental outcomes would benefit greatly from constructing and testing new theoretical approaches.

Future Directions

There have been significant advances in research on religion in adolescence and emerging adulthood in the past decade. Greater availability of data and increased interest in these life stages have led scholars to focus more on the religious lives of youth than ever before. However, despite this increase in the quantity and quality of research on this topic, there is still much to be learned.

First, although scholars have begun to utilize analytic strategies that take advantage of longitudinal data, more work in this area is needed to better understand the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood and how this transition impacts religiosity. Many longitudinal studies incorporate only two time points of data, which may mask more nuanced fluctuations that occur between data points. Incorporating more waves of data (which is now possible with available

data) and employing strategies to utilize these multiple waves (e.g., growth curve models, group-based trajectory models, etc.) will allow us to better estimate and understand patterns of religious beliefs and behavior during adolescence and emerging adulthood.

Second, the open-ended NSYR interviews have been helpful in understanding how adolescents and emerging adults view religion. However, more qualitative data is needed to provide additional context and meaning to the numerous quantitative studies on adolescent and emerging adult religion. Furthermore, scholars should expand their focus on contextual factors that may influence adolescent and emerging adult religiosity such as social class and sexual orientation.

Additional work is also needed to improve our understanding of religious socialization. Understudied areas include religious transmission in nontraditional families and the role of grandparents, siblings, and romantic partners (especially in emerging adulthood) in religious socialization. Future research should also explore how parents directly and indirectly influence the religiosity of emerging adults. For example, how do parents use technology (e.g., email, social networking) to continue to provide religious socialization to their emerging adult children? More research is also needed on the influence of college on religiosity and how religiosity varies between resident students, commuters, and those who do not attend college. Research should also focus more on the bidirectional nature of religious socialization, as adolescents and emerging adults may be more or less receptive to efforts at religious socialization and can influence their own development through self-socialization (Arnett 1995).

With regard to developmental outcomes, more research is needed on understudied areas such as the relationship between religiosity and using pornography, body image, and aspects of physical health such as diet, exercise, and sleep. More importantly, additional research on the causal mechanisms that link religiosity to developmental outcomes is needed. One review determined that only 12% of studies of religion and adolescent health tested mediating variables (Rew and

Wong 2006). Furthermore, more research is needed on sociodemographic factors that may condition the influence of religiosity on developmental outcomes such as sex, race, and parents' religiosity. Such approaches will be especially beneficial in the development of theoretical arguments linking religion to developmental outcomes.

Finally, research on adolescent and emerging adult religion in the U.S. has largely focused on Christians. Although the U.S. is a predominately Christian society, it is important to also understand the lives of religious minorities and how religion influences (and is influenced by) the lives of non-Christian adolescents and emerging adults. Furthermore, cross-cultural research would be helpful in understanding similarities and differences between the religious and spiritual lives of American adolescents and emerging adults and those of other countries. Such studies could provide insight into the role that religion plays in developmental processes among youth as well as cultural variations in these processes. A few studies cited in this chapter suggest that there may be some similarities between adolescent and emerging adult religiosity in the U.S. and other countries, but much more work in this area is needed.

Overall, research on religion in adolescence and emerging adulthood is important for a variety of reasons that have been discussed in this chapter. Thus, it is essential that scholars continue to look for ways to improve our knowledge of the role that religion plays in the lives of adolescents and emerging adults.

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Abstract

The purpose of this chapter is to selectively review research on religious involvement in late life. The discussion is divided into four sections. Age differences in religiousness are examined in the first section. In the process, empirical research and theoretical frameworks which propose that people become more religious as they grow older are presented. Issues involving the relationship between religion and health during late life are evaluated in section two. After showing that many facets of religion are associated with the health, it is argued that the literature can be more tightly integrated when the pivotal role of social relationships in the church is assessed. Race and ethnic differences in multiple dimensions of religion are evaluated in section three. This research reveals that older Blacks are more deeply involved in religion than either older Whites or older Mexican Americans. Next steps for future research are identified in section four.

Approximately 40 million people age 65 and over were living in the United States in 2010. By the year 2030 this figure is projected to nearly double to 72 million and older people will represent nearly 20% of the total U.S. population (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics 2012). The same demographic trend is expected worldwide. Bloom and colleagues (2015) estimate that between 2015 and

2030 the number of older adults worldwide will jump from 800 million to 2 billion. These investigators argue that this global aging phenomenon is, “both pronounced and historically unprecedented” (Bloom et al. 2015, p.1). Given the rapid rise in the number of older people, it is not surprising to find that sociologists and psychologists who study religion have begun to pay a considerable amount of attention to older individuals. For example, an increasing number of books have appeared that focus solely on religion and aging (Atchley 2009; Krause 2008) and a specialty journal is devoted solely to this topic (e.g., *Journal of Religion, Spirituality, and Aging*).

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The purpose of this chapter is to selectively review research on religion and aging with a special emphasis on the relationship between religiousness and health in late life. Focusing on health is justified because research reveals that health care expenditures increase rapidly with age. The per capita health care spending for adults under the age of 65 in 2010 was \$6892 for women and \$5353 for men. However, in the same year, women over age 65 spent, on average, \$19,110 for health care while older men spent an average of \$17,530 (Center for Medicare Services 2010). Showing the ways in which religion may affect health in late life is important because it addresses the pressing need to make academic research more relevant in the lives of average men and women (Krause 2015).

The discussion that follows is divided into four main sections. The current level of religious involvement among older adults is briefly reviewed in the first section. In the process, a fundamental question that has yet to be resolved in the literature on religion and aging is examined: Do people become more deeply involved in religion as they grow older? Following this, research on religion, aging, and health is examined in section two. After briefly sketching out the depth and breadth of this burgeoning field, an effort is made to show the important role that church-based social relationships play in this literature. Next, research on race and ethnic differences in religious involvement during late life is reviewed in section three. Finally, section four focuses on issues that should be addressed in future research on religion, aging, and health. As the author has published a version of this chapter in an earlier handbook (Krause 2005), the intent of the current chapter is to update the previous version by focusing primarily on studies that have appeared in the past 10 years.

Religion in Late Life

Religiousness in the Current Cohort of Older Adults

As empirical research on religion began to evolve, researchers quickly realized that religion is a vast multidimensional phenomenon (Fetzer

Institute/National Institute on Aging Working Group 1999). Consequently, it is difficult to provide a comprehensive overview of religious involvement in late life. Even so, research on a cluster of core markers of religion reveals that older people are deeply immersed in religious life. The following data come from the Landmark Spirituality and Health Survey (LSHS). This is a nationally representative survey of adults age 18 and over (N=3010) that was completed in 2014 by Krause and his colleagues (see <http://landmarkspirituality.sph.umich.edu/>). This study is the largest attempt to date to examine the relationship between religion and health. Unpublished findings from the LSHS suggest that 39.1% of people age 65 and older attend worship services at least once a week, 67.7% report that they pray privately on a daily basis, and 33.8% indicate they read the Bible at least a few times a week. Moreover, 79.6% of the LSHS older adults agree or strongly agree that their religious beliefs lie behind their whole approach to life.

Religious Involvement Over the Life Course

William James is widely regarded as one of the greatest psychologists of religion. Writing in 1902, he maintained that, “the religious age par excellence would seem to be old age” (James [1902] 1997, p. 34). This statement, coupled with a considerable amount of subsequent work, has led a number of investigators to argue that people tend to become more deeply involved in religion as they grow older. Although this perspective makes an important statement about human development, it is surprising to find that it is often overlooked in developmental psychology texts. A necessary first step in infusing life course issues on religion into this mainstream literature involves determining whether this perspective is valid. This is accomplished in the discussion that follows by addressing two issues. The first involves reviewing empirical studies on age differences in religion, while the second has to do with examining the theoretical rationale that has been devised to explain change in religious involvement over the life course.

Empirical Studies on Religion and the Life Course

A good deal of the research on age differences in religion is cross-sectional. For example, Brown et al. (2013) used data from a cluster of convenience samples to assess age differences in a scale that was designed to capture spiritual transcendence and religious sentiments. The spiritual transcendence dimension assesses prayer fulfillment, belief in a larger meaning in life, and a sense of connectedness with other people. In contrast, the religious sentiments dimension encompasses participation in religious rituals as well spiritual struggles (e.g., religious doubt). The data suggest that spiritual transcendence scores were significantly higher among middle aged adults than either younger or older adults. With respect to the religious involvement dimension, the data indicate that significant differences did not emerge between middle-aged and older people. However, scores were higher among middle aged and older adults than among younger adults.

A different pattern of age differences emerge from the LSHS study. Unpublished findings from the assessment of the four measures of religiousness that were discussed above indicates that compared to either middle-aged or older adults, younger adults did not attend church as often, pray as often, read the Bible as frequently, or feel as deeply committed to their faith. The findings further indicate that older people attend church more often than middle-aged adults, they read the Bible more frequently than middle-age adults, and they are more deeply committed to their faith than their middle-age counterparts. However, significant differences in the frequency of private prayer between middle-aged and older adults failed to emerge from the data.

An obvious problem with using cross-sectional data to assess age differences in religiousness arises from the fact that it impossible to differentiate between age, cohort, and period effects. Clearly, longitudinal data that have been gathered over an extensive period of time are needed to disentangle these factors. Few such studies are available in the literature. Even so, four of the longitudinal studies provide valuable insight into change in religion over the life course.

The first study was conducted by Schwadel (2011). He analyzed data from the General Social Survey that cover a span of 34 years. Four measures of religion were assessed in this study: the frequency of attendance at worship services, the frequency of private prayer, belief in an afterlife, and belief that the Bible is the literal word of God. The data suggest that age has a strong positive relationship with church attendance. However, significant cohort differences also exist with the frequency of attendance declining significantly over successive cohorts. A similar pattern of findings emerged with respect to private prayer. The data suggest that the frequency of prayer increases with advancing age, but once again, the frequency of private prayer is also greater in earlier than in later cohorts. In contrast to the results that have been discussed so far, there were only modest age, period, and cohort differences in belief in the afterlife. Finally, belief in Bible literalism increases with age. However, in this instance there is a significant period effect with belief in Bible literalism declining during period from 1990 to 1999. However, it is not clear why this is so.

The second longitudinal study on age differences in religiousness was conducted by Wilhelm et al. (2007). These investigators examined age and cohort differences in religious tithing and the frequency of church attendance. Based on data from multiple studies, these investigators report that, like Schwadel (2011), there were both age and cohort effects in the data. The findings further reveal that religious giving and church attendance both increase over time in the prewar cohort, but decline over time in the Baby Boomer cohort.

The third longitudinal study on life course differences in religiousness was conducted by McCullough et al. (2005). These investigators analyzed data from the widely-cited Terman Study, which consists of interviews with very bright individuals (i.e., those with an IQ above 135). Data were obtained from these participants from 1940 through 1991. Religion was measured in this study with a single composite that consisted primarily of interest in religion and satisfaction with religion. Using sophisti-

cated growth mixture models, these investigators report that rather than one universal pattern of change in religiousness, three distinct trajectories of religious involvement emerged from the data. Some study participants experienced increases in religiousness in early adult life followed by a decline with advancing age, some exhibited low levels of religiousness in early adulthood followed by a subsequent age-related decline, and others reported increasing religiousness with advancing age.

The fourth longitudinal study on age differences in religiousness was conducted by Hayward and Krause (2015). This study was based on data from the widely-cited World Values Survey/European Values Study, which consists of data from 80 nations that span a period of 32 years. Responses were provided by approximately 700,000 study participants. The breadth of these data is noteworthy because it is unlikely that people in 80 different nations will share the same cohort and period experiences. The findings suggest that views on the importance of God as well as the frequency of church attendance tend to increase with advancing age in a large majority of nations. However, the largest effects of age were observed in Western nations, suggesting that some cultural or economic factors may be at work, as well.

Before making some summary comments about the literature on age differences in religion, it is important to touch on an issue that has not received adequate attention in the literature. This issue has to do with examining change in religiousness *within* late life. Although researchers have yet to agree on an operational definition of old age, many would agree that it spans the period from age 65 to age 100 or so. It is difficult to imagine that a person could live 35 years and not experience change in a number of life domains, including religion. Two studies by Hayward and Krause (2013a, b) show why it is important to examine this issue.

The first study (Hayward and Krause 2013a) examined change in God-mediated control beliefs using four waves of data from a nationwide survey that span a 7 year period. God-mediated control refers to the belief that God

works together with people to control the unwanted events in their lives and to attain desired goals and plans. The findings from this study indicate that feelings of God-mediated control tend to increase over the course of late life. Moreover, there was some evidence that increases in God-mediated control were accompanied by a decline in feelings of personal control, especially among older Blacks. This suggests that feelings of God-mediated control may compensate for the widely documented decline in personal control over the life course that has been observed in a number of studies (e.g., Mirowsky 1995).

Using the same data, Hayward and Krause (2013b) also examined change in church-based social relationships during late life. Based on a series of individual growth curve models, they found increases with age in the amount of emotional support that older people receive and provide to fellow church members. But in contrast, the amount of tangible help that was received from and provided to coreligionists declined over the course of late life.

The goal of the discussion that was provided above was to review empirical research that was designed to see if people become more involved in religion as they grow older. Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide a definitive answer at this time. Some studies suggest that the highest levels of religious involvement may actually occur at mid-life while others show either an increase with age or no age differences at all. Moreover, as this research reveals, significant cohort differences in religious involvement further clouds the issue. There are at least four reasons for these inconsistent results. First, the samples that are used in a number of the studies are inadequate. Some researchers rely on convenience samples while others focus on samples of exceptionally intelligent individuals. Second, the measures of religion that are used in many studies are not on the cutting edge: the frequency of church attendance still appears to be the most commonly used indicator. Third, a number of the studies rely on cross-sectional data, which is ill-suited for estimating age-related changes in religiousness. Fourth, a good deal of the research in this area is not based on a fully-articulated theory that

explains why age differences may be present in the data.

Although most of the research on age differences in religion is not grounded firmly in sound theories, theoretical frameworks have been devised to address this issue. Initially, it may seem that turning to these theories may help researchers get a better handle on the issue of life course change in religiousness. However, as the discussion in the next section will reveal, theories on age differences in religion are as diverse and disjointed as the empirical findings on this issue.

Theories of Life Course Change in Religious Involvement

At least three different theoretical views on life course change in religiousness may be found in the literature. The first perspective proposes that religious involvement increases as people grow older; the second suggests that levels of religious involvement are relatively stable over the life course; and the third maintains the differences between older individuals simply becomes more pronounced as they grow older. A number of investigators have proposed conceptual frameworks that fall into each of these three categories. Rather than review the work of each researcher here, one specific approach is examined in each of the three categories identified above.

Tornstam's (2005) theory of gerotranscendence represents the cluster of conceptual perspectives that propose that people become more involved in religion as they grow older. Tornstam (2005) specifies that as people grow older, they experience a fundamental shift in the way they view the world and their place in it. Although he does not mention religion explicitly, he proposes that as people age, they begin to think more about the "cosmic dimension" of life, which includes issues involving immortality (Tornstam 2005, p. 145). Tornstam (2005) provides some empirical support for his theoretical perspective. However, the factors that promote age-related change are not described sufficiently.

In contrast to the work of Tornstam (2005), Atchley's (1989) Continuity Theory proposes that as middle-aged and older adults make adaptive choices in life, they try to preserve and main-

tain existing internal (e.g., cognitive) and external (e.g., social) structures. Simply put, Atchley (1989) argues that people exhibit a strong preference for using adaptive strategies that are based on past experiences and beliefs. Cast within the context of religion, this means that levels of religious involvement in old age are influenced by religious beliefs and behaviors that were formed and maintained at early points in the life course. There have been some attempts to empirically evaluate Continuity Theory within the context of religion and spirituality, (e.g., Boswell and Boswell-Ford 2010), but once again, the underlying "causal" mechanisms that drive the presumed strain toward continuity in religiousness have not been articulated fully.

Earlier, empirical research was presented which suggests that some types of religious involvement may peak at mid-life (e.g., spiritual transcendence; Brown et al. 2013). The Family Life Cycle hypothesis that was developed some time ago by Bahr (1970) helps explain why this may be so. In essence, this hypothesis specifies that expanding family roles that occur at early and mid-life may foster greater involvement in religion. Two family roles are especially important in this respect. The first is marriage and the second is parenthood. With respect to the latter, empirical findings suggest that there is a spike in religious involvement among people who have preadolescent school-age children. This presumably occurs because parents are concerned about passing on (or at least exposing) their children to religious life.

The study by McCullough et al. (2005) that was reviewed in the previous section suggests that there might not be one religious developmental path that is followed by all people as they move across the life course. Instead, there are a number of different trajectories of religious involvement over the life course. This more complex view is consistent with Nelson and Dannefer's (1992) aged heterogeneity hypothesis. According to this perspective, differences between people become more pronounced as they move through the life course. Nelson and Dannefer (1992) marshal an impressive array of evidence in wide range of life domains to support

their view. For example, they find that patterns of personal control, self-esteem, and social network involvement become more diverse and more differentiated with advancing age. It is especially important to note that they found evidence that religious participation also followed a pattern of increasing differentiation with age.

As the discussion in this section reveals, theories on age differences in religion are as diverse as empirical findings on religiousness over the life course. It is for this reason that the observations made by Reich (1992, p. 151) over two decades ago still apply today: “there exists no encompassing, generally accepted psychological theory of religious development.” Initially, this might seem discouraging. But there is another way to look at this situation. In the process of exploring life course change in religiousness, researchers have identified a host of issues and concepts that identify the parameters of the complex phenomenon they strive to study. Once the content domain of potential explanatory factors has been fleshed out the next step involves finding ways to integrate and synthesize all that has been learned. An effort is made in the next section to show how this might be accomplished within the context of religion, aging, and health.

Religion, Aging, and Health

Empirical research on religion, aging, and health is growing rapidly. In the process, investigators have linked many dimensions of religious involvement with a wide array of health-related outcomes (see Hill, Bradshaw, and Burdette’s chapter on “Health and Biological Functioning” in this *Handbook*). With respect to health, research suggests that greater involvement in religion tends to have a beneficial effect on self-rated health (Krause 2010), health-behaviors (e.g., diet and exercise, see Homan and Boyatzis 2010), functional ability (Fitchett et al. 2013), cognitive functioning (Agli et al. 2015), longevity (i.e., the risk of mortality, Krause 2006a), and a number of markers of biological functioning including body mass index, blood pressure, C-reactive protein, and Epstein-Barr virus (Hill

et al. 2014). Moreover, these health-related benefits have been attributed to a wide range of religious factors including the frequency of church attendance (Hill et al. 2014), forgiveness (Lawler-Row 2010), intrinsic religiousness (Sun et al. 2012), a sense of meaning in life (Homan and Boyatzis 2010), social support (Dulin 2005), religious coping responses (Ai et al. 2006), various aspects of prayer (Krause and Hayward 2014), a sense of divine control in life (Schieman et al. 2005), and the strength of identification with a religious group (Ysseldyk et al. 2013). Taken as a whole, this vast body of research may seem a bit overwhelming. Even so, as the discussion that follows will reveal, it is possible to identify a dimension of religion that serves as a conceptual anchor and helps weave the various findings into a more coherent whole.

Church-Based Social Relationships as the Core of Religious Life

A central premise in this chapter is that turning to social relationships that older adults form in the place where they worship provides a way of attaining a greater sense of coherence in the literature on religion, aging, and health. This premise is based on a firm theoretical footing. Maintaining a strong faith is hard work because people must believe in things they cannot see or fully understand. In order to grapple with these challenges, they often turn to significant others for affirmation of their beliefs and for encouragement to develop them further. Viewed from a sociological perspective, interacting with others in this way is part of the social construction of religious world views. Berger (1967) captured the essence of this perspective in his classic sociological theory of religion. He argues that religious world views “are socially constructed and social maintained. Their continuing reality, both objective ... and subjective ... depends upon specific social processes, namely those processes that ongoingly reconstruct and maintain the particular worlds in question” (Berger 1967, p. 45). Elsewhere in the same volume Berger (1967, p. 17) refers to these social processes as “conver-

sation, be it with the same or new significant others.” Further support for this perspective is found in the theory of religion that was developed by Stark and Finke (2000). Referring to religious world views as “religious explanations,” these investigators maintain, “An individual’s confidence in religious explanations is strengthened to the extent that others express their confidence in them” (Stark and Finke 2000, p. 107).

Before turning to the integrative function of church-based social relationships, it is important to address two issues about the nature of this construct. The first has to do with the potentially unique properties of church-based social ties while the second is concerned with the important role that social relationships in the church may play specifically in late life.

Church-Based Social Relationships and Social Ties in the Secular World

Krause (2008) maintains that social relationships which are formed at church may be more beneficial than social relationships that arise in the wider secular world. There are three reasons why this may be so. First, as Lundberg (2010) points out, every major faith tradition in the world extolls the virtue of loving others. Second, every major faith tradition in the world also places an emphasis on the importance of forgiving people for the things they have done (Rye et al. 2000). Third, another core tenet of every major religion is the importance of helping people who are in need (Lundberg 2010). A vast body of research that has been done in secular settings reveals that people who have a strong social support system tend to enjoy better health than individuals who do not maintain strong social ties with others (Roy 2011). If social relationships in the church are firmly based on principles of love, forgiveness, and helping others, then it follows that these social ties may provide greater health-related benefits than social support systems in the secular world. Support for this notion is provided in a nationwide survey of older adults that was conducted by Krause (2006b). The findings from this study suggest that emotional support from fellow

church members tends to offset the deleterious effects of financial strain on self-rated health while support from secular social network members fails to perform a similar stress-buffering role.

Church-Based Social Support in Late Life

Although church-based social support may be an important asset for people of all ages, insights from two theoretical frameworks suggest that the ties formed with people at church may be especially important in late life. The first perspective is Carstensen’s (1992) socioemotional selectivity theory. According to this view, as people go through late life they become increasingly aware that they have relatively little time left to live. This awareness fosters a reevaluation of their social relationships. The upshot of this process is that as people grow older, they place a greater emphasis on social relationships that are emotionally close and disengage from more peripheral social network ties. Although this theoretical perspective has not been evaluated in the church with data from people of all ages, some support is found in the study by Hayward and Krause (2013b) that was discussed earlier. Recall that this research reveals that the amount of emotional support that people receive as well as provide at church tends to increase over the course of late life.

A good deal has been written about the contribution of attachment to place in the process of successful aging (Wiles et al. 2012). Attachment to place has to do with imbuing physical locations with significance and meaning. For example, many older people are attached to their homes because they have experienced major life transitions in them, such as raising their children. Spending the majority of one’s life in places that are imbued with significance is important because it provides an anchor or secure base for facing the outside world. Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2004) argue that in addition to becoming attached to their homes, people may also become attached to religious institutions. Although these investiga-

tors note that attachment to religious institutions may be attributed to a number of factors, a good deal of their argument is based on the role that is played by religious others. Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2004) maintain that significant others help build a sense of attachment to place in a number of ways, including the sharing of rituals as well as the solidification of religious identities. Simply put, attachment to religious institutions is important for older people and their fellow church members may play a significant role in helping them feel that way.

Exploring the Integrative Role of Social Ties in the Church

As Krause (2011) points out, research on religion and health is in a state of disarray. This problem may be attributed, in part, to the fact that research in this field has evolved without the benefit of a unified theory. Although it is not possible to provide a complete theoretical framework here, it is possible to lay the groundwork for it by showing that social relationships that are formed at church provide the impetus for many religious beliefs and behaviors. This is accomplished in the discussion that follows by linking church-based social support with a number of other dimensions of religion.

Up to this point, the discussion of social relationships in the church has focused primarily on the emotional support that is exchanged by fellow church members. However, as Krause (2008) points out, there is another type of assistance that is unique to religious institutions – spiritual support. Spiritual support is assistance that is exchanged informally among fellow church members for the explicit purpose of bolstering and maintaining the religious beliefs and behaviors of the recipient. Spiritual support is important because a series of studies by Krause reveal that it is associated with a number of core dimensions of religious life.

A longitudinal study by Krause (2010) suggests that a stronger sense of God-mediated control is associated with better self-rated health over time. This study is noteworthy because other

research by Krause (2007) indicates that older people who receive more spiritual support in the place where they worship tend to experience stronger feelings of God-mediated control. It is important to note that these findings were observed after the effects of attendance at worship services, Bible study groups, and prayer groups were taken into account.

As Hood et al. (2009) maintain, one of the primary functions of religion is to help people find a sense of meaning in life. Deriving a deep sense of meaning in life is important because research reveals that older people who have a stronger sense of meaning are less likely to experience a decline in physical functioning over time (Krause and Hayward 2012a). Moreover, as the study by Homan and Boyatzis (2010) indicates, a strong sense of meaning is associated with the practice of better health behaviors in late life. If a sense of meaning in life is important for good health, then it is important to know how it arises. Consistent with the overall theme in this section, a longitudinal study by Krause (2008) reveals that emotional and spiritual support provided by fellow church members are associated with a stronger sense of meaning over time. However, of the two, stronger effects were exerted by spiritual support than emotional support.

Another important function of religion is to help people deal with adversity (Pargament 1997). Consistent with this view, a number of studies indicate that greater use of religious coping responses is associated with better health in late life (e.g., Ai et al. 2006). Once again, there is some evidence that spiritual support that is received in religious settings is associated with greater use of positive religious coping responses in later life (Krause and Hayward 2012b). Moreover, the results suggest that the relationship between spiritual support and coping is stronger than the corresponding effects of church attendance, attendance in Bible study groups, and participation in prayer groups.

Recall that Rye and his colleagues report that every major faith tradition places an emphasis on the importance of forgiving others (Rye et al. 2000). Studying forgiveness in late life is important because a number of studies indicate that

older people are more likely to forgive than younger adults (e.g., Steiner et al. 2012; Toussaint et al. 2001). There is some evidence that forgiving others is associated with better self-rated health and fewer chronic health conditions in late life (McFarland et al. 2012). Moreover, research suggests that the willingness to forgive one's self is associated with a lower mortality risk (Krause and Hayward 2013). Consistent with the research that has been provided up to this point, this study further reveals that older people who receive more spiritual support at church are more likely to forgive others than older adults who do not receive spiritual support as often.

One of the primary functions of religion is to help people adopt a codified set of principles which may be construed as virtues (Krause and Hayward 2015). Although there are many religious virtues, feelings of gratitude to God have received some attention in the literature (Rosmarin et al. 2011). This research reveals that the pernicious effects of living in a rundown neighborhood on self-rated health are offset for older adults who feel more grateful to God (Krause 2006c). Once again, research reveals that this important element of religious life may arise from the social relationships that emerge in religious institutions. This notion is supported by data from a longitudinal study that suggests older people who receive more emotional support at church tend to feel more grateful to God over time (Krause and Ellison 2009a).

Taken as whole, the discussion provided above suggests that some of the core facets of religious life (God-mediated control, meaning in life, religious coping, forgiveness, feeling grateful to God) arise and are reinforced by the informal relationships that older adults form with fellow church members. However, it is important to note that social ties in the church are not always positive and that, at times, interaction with fellow church members may be conflicted and troublesome (Krause 2008). Although this literature is not fully developed, there is some evidence that interpersonal conflict in the church may exert a deleterious effect on health. A longitudinal study by Krause and Ellison (2009b) indicates that older people who experience negative interaction

in church are more likely to have doubts about their faith over time. Moreover, the findings further reveal that older adults who experience religious doubt tend to rate their health less favorably over time, especially if they try to cope by suppressing their concerns about their faith.

Exploring Variations by Race and Ethnicity

In 2010, the U.S. population of older adults was comprised of 80% non-Hispanic Whites, 9% Blacks, 7% Hispanics, and 3% Asians, with the remainder identifying with other racial and ethnic groups (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics 2012). However, demographers predict that by the year 2050, 58% will be non-Hispanic Whites, 20% will be Hispanic, 12% will be Black, and 9% will be Asian (Federal Interagency Form on Aging-Related Statistics 2012). If the racial composition of older adults in American society is becoming increasingly diverse it is important that researchers address issues involving race and ethnicity in their work on religion. So far, most of the research on race/ethnicity and religion in late life has focused on older Whites and older Blacks. Recently, research on older Hispanics (especially Mexican Americans) has begun to appear, as well. However, very little empirical research has been conducted on religious involvement among older Asians and older Native Americans. Consequently, only research on older Whites, older Blacks, and older Mexican Americans will be considered below.

This discussion is divided into two sections. First, the religious history of Blacks and Mexican Americans is reviewed in order to see why race and ethnic differences in religious involvement may arise. It is important to examine historical factors because, as C. Wright Mills (1959, p. 3) argues, "Neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both." It makes sense to assess wider historical forces when studying older minority group members because, as the discussion that is provided below will reveal, older

Blacks and older Mexican Americans have faced centuries of discrimination and prejudice that have shaped all aspects of their lives, including their involvement in religion. Moreover, these historical factors may have an especially pronounced influence on the current cohort of older minority elders because they came of age during a time when racial prejudice and discrimination was especially overt. Following the discussion of historical issues data on religious involvement among older Whites, older Blacks, and older Mexican Americans will be examined.

Historical Experiences of African Americans

Historical influences on the development of the church in the Black community were discussed some time ago, by Nelsen and Nelsen (1975). These investigators argue that due to centuries of prejudice and discrimination, the church became the center of the African American community. Black people turned to the church because it was the only institution in their community that they built, funded, and wholly owned. Consequently, the church became much more than a place of worship: it also became a conduit for the delivery of social services. Moreover, the first schools for black children were located in them, as well. In fact, it is not surprising to find that many of the great political leaders in the Black community have strong ties to the church, and many have been members of the clergy (e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr.).

Perhaps no one wrote more on the early history of the church in the Black community than W. E. B. Du Bois. Writing in 1887, he concluded:

The Negro church . . . provides social intercourse, it provides amusement of various kinds, it serves as a newspaper and intelligence bureau, it supplants the theater, it directs the picnic and excursion, it furnishes the music, it introduces the stranger to the community, it serves as a lyceum, library, and lecture bureau – it is, in fine, the central organ of organized life of the American Negro. (Du Bois 2000, p. 21)

Later, in 1899, Du Bois (2000, p. 34) went on to argue that social ties in Black churches were even

stronger than those that are found in White congregations: “Without wholly conscious effort the Negro church has become a centre of social intercourse to a degree unknown in white churches even in the country.”

Although the observations of Du Bois (2000) were made over a century ago, the importance of church in the Black community is still discussed widely today. For example, J. Deotis Roberts (2003, p. 78), a noted Black theologian, maintained that, “The black church, as a social and religious body, has served as a kind of ‘extended family’ for blacks. In a real sense then, thousands of blacks who have never known real family life have discovered the meaning in real kinship in the black church.”

Historical Experiences of Mexican Americans

Like older Blacks, older Mexican Americans have struggled with pernicious historical experiences. There are at least two ways in which these historical forces came into play. First, the conquest of Mexico by the Spanish caused a great deal of pain and suffering (Leon 2004). Carrasco (1990) documents the shocking extent of this problem. He reports that in 1500 there were 25 million indigenous people living in Mexico, but due to factors such as disease and slavery, this population was reduced to 1 million by 1600. Given this data, it is not surprising to find that Leon (2004, p. 198) refers to this period of colonization as the “Mexican diaspora.”

Second, the deleterious consequences of colonization were exacerbated by a number of subsequent historical events including the Mexican American War of 1848, the Mexican Revolution of 1910, and the great labor shortages during World War I. Each of these events rekindled earlier conditions of subordination and diaspora that were encountered during Spanish colonization. The vestiges of these historical events are evident in the way contemporaneous scholars view situation of Mexican Americans. For example, Rodriguez (1994, p. 69), argues: “What makes the experience of Mexican Americans unique compared to other ethnic populations that

migrated to this country is their psychohistorical experience and their subsequent subjugation – all taking place in what the indigenous peoples considered to be their own land.” Rodriguez (1994) goes on to point out that physical colonization of Mexican Americans has been accompanied by psychological colonization that fosters feelings of hostility, inferiority, and apathy.

At first, it may seem that like Blacks, Mexican Americans would turn to the church for solace. But a closer examination of the history of the church in the Mexican American community suggests otherwise. As Krause and Bastida (2011a) report, approximately 77% of older Mexican Americans identify with the Catholic faith. But unlike African Americans, Mexican Americans did not own and operate the church in their own community. Instead, it was imposed upon them by Anglos. Three factors help explain the more tenuous position of the church in the lives of many Mexican Americans. First, men of Hispanic ancestry were not permitted to become priests until the early twentieth century (Fernandez 2007). Second, as Burns (1994) points out, during the first half of the twentieth century, Anglo members of the clergy viewed many of the religious practices of Mexican Americans (e.g., maintaining altarcitos – religious alters in the home) as mere superstitions. Third, Virgilio Elizondo is regarded as the founder of Latino theology (Matovina 2000). When he was struggling to be ordained into the priesthood in the 1970s, he found that “U.S. Catholicism was ashamed of our Mexican Catholicism, and thus to become good priests ... we had to assume that shame of our own people” (Elizondo 2000, p. 55). Because of these developments, Leon (2004, p. 94) concludes that, “it should not be surprising to find that many Mexicans have developed a strong attachment to the symbols and rituals of Catholicism, while developing a weak commitment to its institutional obligations.”

Taken as a whole, the historical information that is provided above suggests that levels of involvement in religion should be higher among older Blacks than either older Mexican Americans or older Whites.

Race/Ethnic Differences in Religious Involvement

In 2001, Krause launched the Religion, Aging, and Health Survey (see Krause 2008). This was the first nationwide survey of older Whites and older Blacks devoted solely to the study of religion and health. The sample for the survey contains approximately equal numbers of older Blacks (N=752) and older Whites (N=748). A parallel nationwide survey (Religion, Aging, and Health – Mexican American Survey) was conducted by Krause in 2009–2010. This is the first nationwide survey of older Mexican Americans to be devoted solely to religion and health. A total of 1005 older Mexican Americans were interviewed successfully. The discussion that follows uses the data from both surveys to assess differences in five areas of religious involvement among older Whites, older Blacks, and older Mexican Americans: prayer, religious coping, forgiveness, work at church, and church-based social support.

Race/Ethnic Differences in Prayer

For over a thousand years, theologians and other scholars have argued that prayer lies at the very heart of religion. For example, Martin Luther argued that faith is “prayer and nothing but prayer” (quoted in Heiler 1932, p. xiii). Similarly, John Calvin ([1536] 2006, p. 120) maintained, “The necessity and utility of this exercise of prayer no words can sufficiently express.” And William James ([1902] 1997, p. 486) asserted that prayer is “the very soul and essence of religion.” Describing prayer as “religion in action,” James ([1902] 1997, p. 486) believed that prayer is the arena in which the “real” work of religion is done.

So far, the wide majority of researchers who study prayer focus solely on the frequency of private prayer (e.g., Taylor et al. 2004). Although this is clearly an important facet of prayer, research reveals that prayer is a vast, multidimensional domain that can be measured in a number of ways (Laird et al. 2004). For example, some investigators have studied the type of prayer an individual offers, such as petitionary prayer

(Poloma and Gallup 1991), whereas others have examined specific beliefs about how prayer operates, such as the belief that God answers prayers right away (Krause 2004). Consistent with the notion that prayer is multifaceted, Krause (2012a) assessed differences in the prayer lives of older Whites, older Blacks, and older Mexican Americans in eleven different measures of prayer: private prayer, participation in formal prayer groups at church, praying specifically for other people, other people praying for the study participant, the belief that prayers are answered, the belief that it is important to wait for God to answer prayers in His own time, the belief that God answers prayers in the best way, as well as the frequency of prayers that focus on thanksgiving, prayers for health, prayers for material things, and prayers that God's will be done.

Based on the data described above, the findings reveal that levels of involvement in prayer were higher among older Blacks than older Whites on each of the eleven prayer indicators (Krause 2012a). Older Blacks were more deeply involved in seven dimensions of prayer than older Mexican Americans while no differences between these groups emerged in the remaining four prayer items. Finally the data suggest that compared to older Whites, scores on the prayer items were higher for older Mexican Americans on all but one indicator. Viewed more broadly, the findings indicate that, with respect to prayer, older Blacks are the most deeply involved of the three race/ethnic groups followed by older Mexican Americans and older Whites, respectively.

Race/Ethnic Differences in Religious Coping

Coping responses are the specific cognitive and behavioral acts that people pursue in order to deal with the stressful events they encounter in life. Religious coping responses refer to those cognitions and behaviors that have an explicitly religious focus. As the work of Pargament (1997) reveals, religious coping responses can be either positive (e.g., turning to God for guidance and strength when a stressor arises) or negative (e.g., feeling abandoned by God when a stressor

arises). Using the two data sets that are described above, Krause and Hayward (2012) assessed differences in positive religious coping responses among older Whites, older Blacks, and older Mexican Americans.

The findings reveal that there is a clear hierarchy in the use of positive religious coping responses across the three race/ethnic groups. More specifically, the data suggest that older Blacks are more likely to rely on religious coping responses, followed by older Mexican Americans and older Whites, respectively.

Race/Ethnic Differences in Forgiveness

Like prayer, research reveals that forgiveness is a complex multidimensional phenomenon in its own right. Krause (2012b) evaluated race/ethnic differences in multiple facets of forgiveness with the two data sets that are described above. The first dimension has to do with the source of forgiveness. Study participants may forgive others, they may feel that God has forgiven them, they may forgive themselves, and they may believe that others have forgiven them. The findings indicate that levels of forgiveness were higher among older Blacks than among older Whites on three of the four sources of forgiveness. In contrast, few differences emerged between older Blacks and older Mexicans, while older Whites generally tended to exhibit lower levels of forgiveness than older Mexican Americans.

There are two ways in which a victim may go about forgiving a transgressor. Either the victim may forgive the transgressor right away (i.e., automatically) or the victim may require the transgressor to perform acts of contrition. Acts of contrition include making an apology for committing the offense, promising not to commit the same transgression in the future, and providing restitution when it is possible to do so. Studying acts of contrition is important because research indicates that levels of psychological distress are lower among older people who tend to forgive others right away (Krause and Ellison 2003). Krause (2012a) also assessed race/ethnic differences in expectations involving acts of contrition. The findings that emerged from the data were complex, but the results generally reveal that

older Whites were less likely to believe in the necessity of performing acts of contrition followed by older Blacks and older Mexican Americans, respectively.

One of the more challenging facets of the process of forgiveness involves attaining a true state of reconciliation with a transgressor. One way to assess whether a state of reconciliation has been reached involves being able to forget as well as forgive. The third dimension of forgiveness that was assessed by Krause (2012b) had to do with whether there are race/ethnic differences in the ability to forgive and forget. The data reveal that compared to older Whites, older Blacks and older Mexican Americans say it is easier for them to forgive and forget. However, statistically significant differences in the tendency to forgive and forget failed to emerge among older Blacks and older Mexican Americans.

People may be able to forgive others but some individuals may find it is more difficult to do so than others. The fourth dimension of forgiveness that was studied by Krause (2012b) has to do with the amount of difficulty older people encounter in forgiving others as well as forgiving themselves. The results indicate that older Blacks find it easier to forgive others than either older Mexican Americans or older Whites. However statistically significant differences failed to emerge among older Whites and older Mexican Americans. With respect to forgiving one's self, a clear hierarchy emerged from the data: older Mexican Americans find it is easier to forgive themselves followed by older Blacks and older Whites, respectively.

Race/Ethnic Differences in Church-Based Social Support

Krause and Bastida (2011b) assessed race/ethnic differences in church-based social support among older Blacks, older Whites, and older Mexican Americans. Eleven different measures of church-based social relationships were evaluated in this study. The measures assessed social relationships with rank-and-file church members as well as relationships with members of the clergy. The findings revealed that older Blacks tend to have more well-developed social relationships in the

church than either older Whites or older Mexican Americans. This is true with respect to relationships with fellow church members as well as relationships with the clergy. However, relatively few differences emerged between older Whites and older Mexican Americans.

Race/Ethnic Differences in Work at Church

In addition to engaging in activities related to worship, older people may perform work-related activities at church in at least two areas. First, they may engage in volunteer work through the church that is designed to help people who are in need. Second, they may do jobs around the church like preparing meals or doing yard work. Using the data sets that are described above, Krause and Hayward (2014) assessed whether older Blacks, older Whites, and older Mexican Americans differ in the extent to which they perform these types of work-related activities in the places where they worship.

There was a clear order in the extent to which members of the three race/ethnic groups engaged in work-related activities at church. The findings suggest that older Blacks perform more work at church than older Whites who in turn do more work than older Mexican Americans.

Summary

A significant amount of data on religious involvement has been presented in this section and as a result, it is important to search for patterns or trends across the studies that have been reviewed in order to see if a few summary statements can be derived. Two trends emerge across the dimensions of religious involvement that are discussed above. First, the findings indicate that compared to older Whites and older Mexican Americans, older Blacks tend to pray more often, rely more heavily on religious coping responses, they are more likely to forgive, they have more fully developed church-based social relationships, and they tend to engage in more church-related work activities. Second, significant differences also emerged between older Whites and older Mexican Americans, but these differences were not as consistent as those involving older Blacks.

When it comes to religious activities that are more private in nature (i.e., prayer, religious coping, and forgiveness), older Mexican Americans appear to be more deeply involved than older Whites. However, when it comes to measures that capture involvement in religious institutions per se (i.e., work at church and church-based social ties), then far fewer differences emerge between older Mexican Americans and older Whites. Viewed broadly, these two trends are consistent with the historical information on the role of the church in the Black and Mexican American communities. For Blacks, the church indeed appears to be the center of the community. However, given the more tenuous historical ties to the church among Mexican Americans, differences in religious involvement are more evident among the personal than among the institutional markers of religious involvement.

Future Directions

Over the course of the past decade there has been a considerable increase in the number of studies that examine religion in late life. In fact, the number has grown so much that it is tempting to conclude that researchers know more about religious involvement among older adults than religious involvement in younger age groups. This does not mean, however, that research on religion among older people is fully mature. As the discussion provided above reveals, some of the most basic issues in the field have yet to be resolved. More specifically, it is still not possible to say whether people become more religious as they grow older or whether higher levels of religious involvement among those who are presently old merely reflects a cohort effect that will vanish as younger individuals who are less religiously inclined move through the life course.

A significant emphasis was placed in this chapter on assessing the relationship between religion and health among older adults. There are two reasons why this focus is justified. First, older people consume a disproportionately greater amount of health care costs. Second, as Krause (2015) points out, the university land-

scape is shifting dramatically in recent years. Appropriations to state run universities is declining sharply, research funds are drying up, and the use of non-tenured lecturers is increasing rapidly. As a result, there is significant pressure on researchers to show that the work they do addresses real world problems and has practical implications that can benefit the average individual.

Although research on religion, aging, and health holds out the promise of providing ways to improve the lives of our aging population, those who work in this area faced with significant challenges. One challenge involves making sense of the vast amount of research that has been done so far. So many facets of religion have been associated with health that it is hard to make specific recommendations about how to help older people. An effort was made to address this issue above by arguing that, at its base, religion is a social phenomenon and exploring the relationships that older people forge in the places where they worship may hold the key to developing explicit models that can drive church-based interventions. Work in this area has already begun (Allicock et al. 2013), but researchers need to know much more about church-based social ties in order to be successful. As research reviewed above indicates, there are substantial race/ethnic differences in religious involvement which suggests that careful consideration must be given to tailoring faith-based interventions to the specific groups they are designed to benefit. Moreover, it appears that church-based social ties are beneficial for health, but the precise mechanisms that link the two have not been identified clearly.

Another area of research in the religion, aging, and health literature that is vastly underdeveloped involves the ways in which health is assessed. So far, the wide majority of studies focus on self-reports of health. It is time to use more direct markers of biological functioning, such as measures of stress hormones (e.g., IL-6), that can be obtained through blood spot samples. The rationale for doing so is straightforward. If religious involvement really has a beneficial effect on health, then these benefits should ultimately be manifest at the biological level. As

noted above, some work on this issue has begun to appear in the literature (e.g., Hill et al. 2014), but this research is often hampered by reliance on crude measures of religiousness, such as the frequency of church attendance. The Landmark Spirituality and Health Survey (LSHS) study that was described earlier contains a number of biomarkers and a deep pool of religion measures. However, work on these data is in very preliminary stages. Even so, an unpublished paper by Krause and colleagues (2015) suggests that God-mediated control beliefs tend to exert a beneficial effect on measured levels of uncontrolled hypertension. Working with this as well as other biological measures will help integrate research on religion and health into the mainstream medical literature.

Yet another area that is in need of more work has to do with the way age and race differences in religiousness have been studied. The research that was reviewed above focuses primarily on the level of religious involvement across age and race/ethnic groups. While this is an important issue to pursue, it is important to also see if there are age and race/ethnic differences in the *impact* of religious life on health. Put another way, it is one thing to know if older Blacks are more involved in religion than older Whites. But whether older Blacks derive more health related benefits than older Whites from their deeper involvement in religion is an entirely different issue. Both may be present at the same time. For example, older Blacks may receive more church-based support than older Whites and older Blacks may reap greater health benefits from the social ties they forge at church than older Whites. Taken together, issues involving the level and impact of religious involvement provide a more finely textured view of age and race/ethnic differences in religiousness during late life. Work on both perspectives is underway (Krause 2008), but a comprehensive assessment with a full complement of religion measures has yet to appear in the literature.

Even though there are many problems with the literature, significant headway has been made in research on religious involvement in late life. Researchers have come a long way from merely

assessing the relationship between the frequency of church attendance and self-rated health. Hopefully, the vast literature that was reviewed above and the issues that were raised will help motivate other researchers to become involved in evaluating the ways in which religious life may shape the health of our aging population.

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Abstract

This chapter provides a broad summary of the sociology of religious identity. I begin by considering strategies to account for religious identity common in quantitative studies, and then address shortcomings of these approaches with attention to how identity functions in specific traditions. I next move to a consideration of religious mobility and the complexity of religious identity in pluralistic societies. Finally, I consider non-religion and end with a call for studies that are more global and comparative in their conceptualization of and methodologies for studying identity.

Most sociologists of religion are familiar with the “3 Bs.” Believing, behaving, and belonging, we were taught, are the central social aspects of religion in modern societies, and these are indeed still used to orient contemporary research (Olson and Warber 2008). The 3Bs have been useful because they encourage us to consider the personal and social domains of the self (Coates 2013), as well as the voluntary nature of religious affiliation and action in an increasingly individualistic and pluralistic religious environment (Berghuijs et al. 2013; Bok 2014; Smith 2011; Wilcox et al. 2012). However, other work reveals the limitations of the well-known heuristic device. For example, recent writers have added

“becoming” to the list, suggesting that religious identity, measured as believing, belonging, and behaving, is significantly less stable than we may have once believed. A wealth of contemporary sociology forces us to think about identities as fluid, changing, and intersectional. Identities that were once built within and maintained by strong religious institutions are now intentionally crafted by religious seekers who may reject any or all of the traditional markers of religious identity (Martí 2008; Perl and Gray 2007; Sherkat 2008, 2014; Suh and Russell 2015; Vargas 2012).

In this chapter, I provide an analytical summary of the broad existing literature about religious identity, primarily focused on the United States. I begin with a discussion of how sociologists typically account for religious identity in research, and coverage of debates within the field about how best to do so. Next, as a way to illustrate potential weaknesses of broad categorical

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measurement common in much sociological work, I explore important aspects of identity in specific religious traditions which are often overlooked by general approaches. The chapter then moves on to discuss religious identity as variable and contextual, exploring research on atheist identity, religious switching, conversion, and apostasy. Finally, I offer some reflection on the future of research on religious identity. It is clear that, while there are recurring themes that cross decades of research and trace back to the founding of the discipline, the complexity of identities that are invariably tied to ever evolving religious movements leaves a number of open questions.

Identity as Affiliation

Religious identity is frequently measured as an individual's affiliation with a religious group via official membership or stated preference. Individuals are considered to belong, in any number of ways, to longstanding religious traditions that are more or less clearly distinguishable from one another. Quantitative social science frequently includes a measure of religious affiliation as an independent variable used to explain an outcome of interest across a large sample (Steensland et al. 2000), but studies of religious switching, as just one example, regularly explain religious identity as an outcome of several social processes. The broad literature about differences between religious traditions, religious families, and denominations is, to a significant extent, motivated by a desire to advance quantitative, sample survey based research – and has an implicit bias toward the quintessentially denominational Protestant culture in the United States.

Sometimes in response to the relatively blunt quantitative worldview, qualitative researchers have explored the complex dynamics of identity under the umbrella of larger traditions like “fundamentalist,” “Catholic,” “Atheist,” or “Muslim” (Bok 2014; Haw 2010; Smith 2013b; Yip 2008). These studies tend to provide more nuanced accounts of the complex symbolic boundaries around any religious identity, as well as the ongoing

negotiation of identity within religious and secular communities. An advantage of a qualitative approach to studying religious affiliation is that it often shows that the content of religious belief is secondary to the dynamics of life in community and that features of daily life in what at first appear as quite different religious communities are in fact very similar (Bartkowski and Read 2003; Read and Bartkowski 2000). Nonetheless, it is very common to see quantitative researchers use affiliation with a well-known religious tradition as a measure of religious identity, and questions about how to do it efficiently and effectively have been long considered.

Early work in the sociology of religion was not particularly nuanced in its conception of religious identity. For example, Herberg's (1955) influential book, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew*, exemplifies thinking in terms of the broad religious traditions that dominated America's early history. Denominationalism was a clear organizing principle of American sociology of religion in the middle of the twentieth century (Greeley 1972). Perhaps it was reasonable to claim that members of denominations generally shared religious beliefs, social attitudes, and personal characteristics, but scholars eventually came to see that divisions within larger families of denominations were often as significant as differences between traditions. Recognizing these divisions proved more analytically effective when studying a wide range of social attitudes and behaviors (Roof and McKinney 1987; Smith 1990; Wuthnow 1988). The religious families approach offered by Roof and McKinney (1987) identified six groupings: Catholic, Jewish, liberal Protestant, moderate Protestant, conservative Protestant, and Black Protestant. The Protestant categories are developed according to historical, theological, and social differences that create boundaries between the groups as well as between each family and wider society. Whereas “mainline” Protestants are of relatively higher social status and more centrally involved in American culture, conservative Protestants are of lower status and retreat from mainstream culture.

Smith's (1990) scheme for operationalizing variance among American Protestants places denominations on a fundamentalist to liberal continuum. The key beliefs of the anti-secular fundamentalists are outlined in the well-known series of early twentieth century pamphlets, *The Fundamentals*, while liberal denominations are more difficult to identify with Smith's system. Liberal Protestants embrace a social gospel focusing on positive social change in this world, relative to Fundamentalists who are more concerned with salvation. Liberal Protestants, unlike fundamentalists, are not biblical literalists and are accepting of science as a way of knowing. Of course, between the poles of fundamentalist and liberal is a varied group of moderates who look more or less like the polar camps depending on the issue.

Smith's work was frequently cited in the 1990s, prompting similar work on other traditions (Starks 2009), but eventually gave way to the influential "RELTRAD" coding scheme of Steensland and his colleagues. Steensland et al.'s (2000) "The Measure of American Religion" is one of the most cited articles in the sociology of religion in the twenty-first century. In less than 15 years the article amassed well over 300 citations, and scholars used the scheme to explore a range of empirical questions. The defining feature of the scheme is to move away from the "fundamentalist-moderate-liberal" continuum (Smith 1990) in favor of categories and terminology sensitive to the historical development of religious traditions. For example, similar to the earlier work of Roof and McKinney (1987), American Protestants are classified as mainline, evangelical, or Black Protestant to account for cultural differences between the Black Church and white Protestantism, as well differences within white Protestantism.

The work of Steensland and colleagues (2000) proved influential enough that a reflection on the coding scheme was included in the 90th anniversary issue of *Social Forces*, along with a number of other pieces commenting on issues important to a general sociological audience. In this later article, the authors respond to some criticism of the original, but primarily defend their coding

decisions (Woodberry et al. 2012). However, they acknowledge that doctrinal markers of individuals are an important part of any system used to categorize American religion and that the constant evolution of American denominationalism calls for regular reexamination of the scheme. As well cited as the coding scheme is in quantitative sociology, new work on the "dechurched" (Vermurlen 2015) or the religious "nones" (Baker and Smith 2009b; Hout and Fischer 2014; Manning 2013; Massengill and MacGregor 2012; Nielsen and Cragun 2010) might suggest that changes in the American religious scene make work like that of Steensland and colleagues less useful for understanding American religious identity than much contemporary research assumes.

As noted, when Woodberry and colleagues (2012, p. 67) comment on their original work, they make reference to "doctrinal markers" as a key component in successful measurement of individual religious affiliation. In particular, these markers are essential in identifying evangelical Protestants. "Evangelical" may denote "religious affiliation, doctrinal markers or religious movement identification" (Woodberry et al. 2012, p. 66). Using a standard coding scheme without thoughtful reflection on context and fluid meanings of traditional terms, especially as understood by average believers, may lead to misspecification with serious consequences for research findings. Work like Hout and Fischer's (2014) about the growing tendency of Americans to claim no religious preference only makes this point more relevant when they note that it is just a small minority of "unchurched believers" who do not believe in any god.

Perhaps, however, the solution to the challenge of categorizing American religious diversity is more refined measurement. This was the path chosen by Dougherty et al. (2007), who used the Baylor Religion Survey to develop a modified scheme for measuring religious tradition. While similar to those developed by earlier researchers, it has the advantage of using more survey space to deploy a series of questions rather than the typical questions about religious tradition and denominational affiliation. In addition,

respondents are asked to choose terms that describe their own religious identity, the full name of their current place of worship, as well as its location. The authors note that their scheme prioritizes belonging over belief, whereas Steensland et al. (2000) use doctrinal markers based on individual beliefs. In this way, Dougherty et al. (2007) is more clearly focused on the institutional aspects of religious identity than most of the other standard schemes available. Whatever advantages this system provides, however, are unhelpful to those researchers who use existing survey data which do not have the detailed questions the Baylor Religion Survey includes.

Nonetheless, Dougherty et al. (2007) provide a needed reminder that standard approaches to measuring identity in quantitative sociology have meaningful limitations. In fact, coding schemes for religious identity that focus on the institutional aspect of belonging are at risk of obscuring the salience of believing and behaving, regardless of formal affiliation or even regular participation in community life. It is well known that religious belief is far from uniform within religious traditions or even within local religious communities (Dougherty et al. 2009; Hunter 1991; Wuthnow 1988), and acceptable behavior standards can vary widely among adherents of the same faith (D'Antonio et al. 2001, 2007; Dougherty and Huyser 2008; Starks 2013). Analytically, then, it may make sense to let individuals subjectively self-identify rather than sorting respondents independently of their own sense of self.

A number of scholars have chosen just such an approach, particularly when writing about evangelical Protestantism. Most work in this vein asks Protestants if they identify as “evangelical,” “fundamentalist,” “conservative,” “mainline,” or “liberal” (Alwin et al. 2006; Hackett and Lindsay 2008; Smith 1998). Of course, people may use a wide range of terms to describe their own religious world view, and many labels are used without much specificity not only in scholarly work, but also in the popular press (Woodberry and Smith 1998). Regardless, an often cited study is Christian Smith’s (1998) *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*, in

which he makes a strong case that average believers know where they fits into the landscape of American religion even if they may not use sociological jargon to tell us who they are. The simplicity of asking average believers who they are is difficult to deny, but there remains much scholarly debate about the meaning of various terms.

Undoubtedly the strongest recent criticism of trends in accounting for religious affiliation with systems that categorize denominations and traditions is found in *Changing Faith* (Sherkat 2014). The book begins with wide ranging criticism of the status quo in contemporary sociology of religion, both in terms of theory and methods. While he points out problems with conceiving of religious identity as affiliation with religious organizations rather than subjective sense of self (Sherkat 2014, p. 2), his criticism of various approaches is more about the details of measurement than the complexity of conceptualizing religious families. For example, Sherkat reasonably argues that sociological use of the label “evangelical” rarely matches well with the sociological concept of “evangelicalism,” and that many religious people who call themselves “evangelical” probably are not actively engaged in proselytization as the term is used to denote a political side of contemporary faith. Several well-known denominations, in fact, use the term evangelical differently than sociologists do, and individual members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America likely would not call themselves evangelical (Sherkat 2014, pp. 16–17). Sherkat directly critiques the often used scheme of Steensland and colleagues for its “misnamed” evangelical category (Sherkat 2014, p. 26).

Like Steensland et al. (2000) and Dougherty et al. (2007), many scholars use “evangelical” as the general label for American Protestants who hold more traditional religious values (Kellstedt and Smidt 1991). Woodberry and Smith (1998), on the other hand, use the broad label of “conservative Protestant” to contrast with more culturally mainstream mainline Protestants. Subcultures of conservative Protestants would then include evangelicals (to denote the moderate wing of the broader conservative movement), as well as fundamentalists and charismatics. There appears to

be significantly more agreement about what to call mainstream Protestants – “mainline” or “liberal” protestant being widely used without as much conceptual work devoted to what to call those Christians who are more critical of American culture.

For Woodberry and Smith (1998, p. 28), fundamentalist Protestants are that subset of conservative Protestants who “emphasize a strict literal interpretation of the Bible, dispensational theology, premillennial eschatology, and institutional separation from ‘apostasy.’” The term is often misused to refer to all conservative Protestants, particularly in popular media accounts. Further, although the historical root of the term is a twentieth century movement of American Christians, the term “fundamentalist” is today often used to refer to non-Christian religious groups, particularly Muslim movements (Emerson et al. 2006).

Two more conservative Christian movements with which Protestants may identify are Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement. While Pentecostals tend to retreat from worldly affairs, if less so than Christian Fundamentalists, they do not understand the bible as God’s settled word. Rather, Pentecostals believe that God continues to reveal himself (Woodberry and Smith 1998, p. 29). This difference may reveal itself in political and social attitudes, but Woodberry and Smith’s work also suggests a deeper relevance for religious identity. While Fundamentalists emphasize doctrine, Pentecostals give greater credence to experience (Woodberry and Smith 1998, p. 29). Thinking about measurement of religious identity, it is clear that this is an important detail. Scholars identifying Evangelical or Conservative Protestants as those who believe the bible to be God’s settled word may miscategorize Pentecostals as non-conservative. Theoretically, it is easy to imagine that these different understandings of religious authority and experience could have wide ranging effects for religion and politics, as well as for how religion operates in everyday life.

Of course, belonging to a tradition is no simple matter, and it is not necessarily the most efficient measure of religious identity. Identity is a subjective experience and there is a multitude of

ways to (self-)identify with religious institutions or movements (Stryker and Burke 2000). An abundance of research exists that explores the many different ways one can identify with the religious traditions that survey based work often, out of necessity more than neglect, treat as monolithic (Jonathan and Justin 2007). As the growth of recent work about “unchurched believers” shows, many who self-identify as religious may not formally belong to any religious organization nor use tradition based terms to describe themselves (Baker and Smith 2009a, b; Hout and Fischer 2014). Even when identifying with a religious movement with a well-known history, for example “Protestant,” a survey respondent may not mean what scholars intend, and the category of “belonging without believing” is rarely considered (Sherkat 2014). If religious expression becomes less tied to historically meaningful religious organizations, as a number of scholars say it may (Martí 2015; Wilcox et al. 2012), then the status quo of measurement in the sociology of religion will be less useful moving forward.

To this point, each of the religious identities discussed is strongly affiliated with Protestant Christianity. This is largely because the labels often used by scholars to study personal religious identity and its social causes and consequences are grounded in broad movements within nineteenth and twentieth century American Protestantism, although they have also spread across the globe (Johnson 2009). Charismatic Christianity, perhaps because it is a more recent religious movement, encompasses a wider range of Christians than many of the other labels. Woodberry and Smith (1998, p. 20) write that “like Pentecostalism, the charismatic movement emphasized speaking in tongues and miraculous healing.” But, in general, those who identify as charismatic tend to be better off financially and less likely than Pentecostals to retreat from mainstream society. An additional reality of charismatic identity makes clear one of the drawbacks of measurement strategies based on denominational affiliation. Charismatics can be found among many denominations, including Roman Catholicism (Neitz 1987), as well as evangelical and mainline Protestant denominations.

Denomination based strategies for measuring religious identity are relatively blunt, and often fail to capture the complexity of individual level religious identity. Rather than empty vessels passively collecting the teachings and histories of religious traditions, individuals are active producers of self who often construct a bricolage of religious identity using the range of religious resources available in the modern, post-secular world.

Beyond Affiliation: The Complexities of Identity

Identity is clearly more than simple affiliation, which is in fact a relatively inefficient proxy for understanding the cognitive and affective aspects of religion which allow it to be such an effective source of self for so many people. Scholars have surely recognized this dynamic, and as such examples of accounting for religious identities that do not fit neatly into discrete categories are available. Scholars have addressed these shortcomings in a number of methodological ways, both quantitative and qualitative. In this section I explore such refinements by focusing on traditions that typically receive less attention than white evangelical or mainline Protestantism: Catholicism, Judaism, and Islam.

Catholic Identity: One Category Doesn't Fit All

The remarkable diversity of Catholic identity is overlooked by any system with a single category for Catholic affiliation, and sociologists of religion know well that Catholicism includes a wide-range of subcultures. Starks (2009, 2013) has explored the relatively common categories of “traditional,” “moderate,” and “liberal” Catholic. He correctly points out that very limited work has been done to understand the mechanisms through which individual religious identity is formed, and the bulk of that work concerns evangelical Protestants (Hunter 1983, 1987; Smith 1998). Interview data allow Starks to describe what “tra-

ditional,” “moderate,” and “liberal” mean to Catholics who, more often than not, feel quite comfortable using the terms to self-identify. Importantly, Starks’ work directly addresses research about Protestant identity, suggesting blind-spots in that work and contrasting processes of Catholic identity formation and maintenance.

Smith’s (1998) discussion of evangelical identity posits that the individual’s sense of self is a result of aligning with a religious movement. The “identity-spaces” created by religious social movements are inhabited and defended by communities that spread across denominations and are linked by interchurch groups like the National Association of Evangelicals (Smith 1998). Starks (2009) explores the extent to which models of identity grounded in social movements – one which he calls the SMO Socialization Model and another Movement Identification Mode – explain Catholic identity. He finds each of these relatively lacking. While about a third of Starks’ interviewees were able to identify various liberal or conservative movements, like Voice of the Faithful or the Knights of Columbus, remarkably few were personally invested in such movements.

Starks argues that a Generalized Cultural Conflict Model – in which Catholics are generally aware of various issues positions of liberals or traditionalists – is in the background of Catholic identity, but that the more direct source is relationships with parishes and other Catholics (Starks 2009, p. 21). Placing themselves within their own networks, which usually include religious liberals and conservatives, individual Catholics develop their own sense of self as it relates to those around them. In a later study, Starks (2013) adds detail from his in-person interviews to describe traditional Catholics as those who desire clear moral boundaries, value obedience, and prefer stability in the Church. Liberal Catholics, on the other hand, are inclusive, question Catholic authority on many issues, and understand themselves as agents of change. Starks (2009, 2013) work is important because it shows, first, that models of Protestant identity cannot be simply transferred into other traditions,

and second, because it takes identity formation as an outcome worthy of careful research.

The best known research about Catholic identity uses a wealth of data to explore divisions among the laity. In a series of books, D'Antonio and his colleagues track American Catholic beliefs and behaviors over a quarter century (D'Antonio et al. 1989, 1996, 2001, 2007, 2013). While gender and ethnicity each occasionally help explain variation among American Catholics, the work most clearly provides evidence that Catholic socialization has changed significantly across generations. D'Antonio, et al. and colleagues organize their analyses according to generations they call "pre-Vatican II" (born before 1940), "Vatican II" (born 1941–1960), "post-Vatican II" (born 1961–1978), and finally the "Millennials" (born 1979 or later). Pre-Vatican II Catholics grew up in a very stable institution around few people who would question the Church about issues of theology or social teaching. Over time, however, all Catholics have come to value autonomy in decision making. Evidence of change is abundant, particularly in terms of how much authority the average Catholic is willing to grant the Church hierarchy (cf. Baggett 2008). Catholics from all generations showed declines in deference to authority, but, as is likely expected, pre-Vatican II Catholics demonstrate the greatest level of commitment (D'Antonio et al. 2013, p. 58). This said, on core issues of faith – those dealing with the sacraments and theological beliefs – most Catholics are in agreement (Greeley 2000). It is on issues of church teaching about a range of social issues, for example birth control, same-sex marriage, or abortion, where we see less agreement and more generational variation (Dillon 1999). Overall, this body of research suggests that what it means to be Catholic, even prior to questions about whether one is liberal, moderate, or traditional, is complex and changing over time.

Who Is a Jew?

As crisp as many of the analytical abstractions of religious identity research may appear, the lived

reality of religious identity is endlessly complex. This is undoubtedly the case for Judaism (Alba 2006; Ammerman 2006; Hartman and Kaufman 2006; Hartman 2006; Klaff 2006; Phillips and Kelner 2006). Beyond typical challenges of operationalizing identity, studies of Jewish identification are complicated by questions about whether identifying as "Jewish" is religious, ethnic, or cultural – or some flexible and fluid combination of these factors. What seems clear is that each of these typical ways of conceiving of Jewish identity alone is reductionist and less than ideal for researchers who want to understand how a Jewish sense of self functions in daily life. It is difficult to know what it means to be ethnically Jewish, for example, once you recognize that Jews have been, throughout history, dispersed around the globe, adapting to a wide range of social contexts.

Certainly, many who identify as Jewish mean it to indicate their religion, and it is typical in survey research to ask respondents to identify as members Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist denominations or synagogues. Recent Pew Research Center data on Jews in America, based on a survey that allowed respondents to self-identify as Jewish with a set of broad screener questions, reveal that 78% of those who identify as Jewish can be classified as "Jews by religion" (Cooperman et al. 2013, p. 7).

Jews who self-identify with a denomination do tend to be more traditional in their belief and practice, but many of those do not belong to a synagogue (Ammerman 2006, pp. 361–62). Moreover, the just mentioned Pew data show that 22% of American Jews identify as such on the basis of ancestry, ethnicity, or culture, but not religion (Cooperman et al. 2013, p. 7). Even if religious affiliation is the chosen measure of Jewish identity, should those who converted after birth be counted the same as those born into the tradition (Hartman and Kaufman 2006)? Current research shows that, similar to other traditions, once reasonable ways of understanding Jewish identity (for example, affiliation with a synagogue) are less valid than before. In fact, among Jewish teenagers, syncretism appears typical as intermarriage and isolation from other Jews

becomes normative (Schwadel 2010). Similar to American Catholics, generational differences in identity stand out for American Jews as the older are more likely to identify as Jewish by religion (Cooperman et al. 2013, p. 38). Yet, among the denominations, the Orthodox movement is, on average, younger than the others, thanks to relatively high fertility and increasing retention (Cooperman et al. 2013, p. 10).

Nothing about the current state of contradictions and confusion in research about Jewish identity should be surprising. Most work on Jewish identity suggests that to identify as a Jew is to be uncertain of where one stands relative to wider culture, and to be deeply reflective about just what it means to be Jewish. The question “who is really a Jew” seems to be on the minds of not only scholars, but also of many average Jews. For example, is the Jewish tradition so central to American society that it is reasonable to write about a common Judeo-Christian worldview (Forsberg 2005)? Or, are Jews outsiders in all but the most urban American environments (Cutler 2006)? For most American Jews, most of the time, the truth is probably somewhere between these extremes. Heilman (2003) observes that in the early history of the American “melting-pot” with “the so-called Judeo-Christian culture...the accent always was more emphatically on the latter than on the former” (2003, p. 54). As such, much of what was distinctive about being Jewish was adapted to more closely resemble the Christian mainstream.

While Orthodox Judaism did eventually grow in the United States, today it is the smallest denomination with just 10% of American Jews identifying as such (Cooperman et al. 2013). The largest identifiable groups of American Jews are the 35% affiliated with the Reform movement and the 30% who claim no denomination (Cooperman et al. 2013). These numbers raise reasonable questions about the future of Judaism in the United States. While it is not reasonable to predict that Jewish identity will entirely vanish, it would not be surprising if “Jews by religion” are eventually a minority among those who self-identify as Jewish. The 2013 Pew data, for example, show that more than half of American Jews

say that “remembering the Holocaust” (73%), “leading an ethical/moral life” (69%), and “working for justice/equality” (56%) are “essential part(s) of what being Jewish means” (Cooperman et al. 2013, p. 14). However, only 28% say “being part of a Jewish community” is essential, and only 19% believe “observing Jewish law” is necessary to be Jewish (Cooperman et al. 2013, p. 14).

However, it would likely be a mistake to interpret these numbers to mean that Jewish identity will soon disappear in America. It may simply be a matter of change in what it means to be religious. In this sense, developments in Jewish identity fit well with how sociologists are coming to understand religion. While there are always formal tenets and teachings, lived religiosity rarely fits nicely back into a single denominational box. Judaism is a fine case study of this general theme. For example, the 2013 Pew report shows that 94% of U.S. Jews are proud of their Jewish identity, and 75% report “a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people” (Cooperman et al. 2013, p. 13). While the meaning of the identity may be less subjectively “religious,” it clearly remains important. Among respondents to the Pew survey, 70% said they participated in a Passover meal and more than 50% fasted for at least part the previous year’s Yom Kippur. One is more likely to come away from a study of American Jewish identity questioning the utility of binary concepts like secular or religious than to be able to say with any confidence that Jewish identity is clearly one or the other.

Islam: Global and Contested

Perhaps no religious identity has garnered as much attention as Islamic identity has in the early years of the twenty-first century. Much of this research is born out of interest in what it is like to identify as Muslim in a hostile “post-9/11” world. Of course, hostility and resulting personal and collective identity searching is what many Muslims have dealt with on a daily basis since the religion has come to symbolize terror in many non-Muslim’s eyes, particularly in the United

States. Abdo (2006, p. 3) writes that many American Muslims understood 9/11 as a call to “become more involved and educated about their faith,” and “to embrace their beliefs and establish an Islamic identity as a unified community.” Perhaps, then, there is not a better context within which to study religious identity in the contemporary social world than among a community of believers who assume their religious identity must be consciously crafted and clearly communicated to others.

While media attention to Muslims increased dramatically after 9/11 (Bowe et al. 2015), scholarly research on Muslim identity, of course, predates 2001. A thoroughly global religion, much research on Islamic identity asks what it means to be a Muslim in a specific national context. In this vein, research has understood Islam as (1) related to national and collective political identity in colonial contexts (Robinson 1998); (2) a tool used to express personhood for disenfranchised and economically marginalized people (Aslam 2014); (3) a process of negotiation for immigrants in new cultures (Akbarzadeh and Roose 2011; Ali 2011; Bloul 2008; Foroutan 2011; Jonathan and Justin 2007; Meer 2008; Robinson 1998; Seddon 2010); and (4) related to gender performance, especially in reference to veiling and modesty norms (Aslam 2014; Aziz 2014; Fábos 2012; Haw 2010; Mirza 2013; Read and Bartkowski 2000; Silvestri 2011).

A thorough review of Islam in the United States, in terms of its history and contemporary trends, is Leonard’s (2003) *Muslims in the United States*. Islam, like all global religious movements, has remarkable internal diversity in terms of nationality, language, cultural traditions, and sectarian movements. Much of this diversity is reflected in nations where the Muslim population is mostly recent immigrants. Leonard (2003) contrasts Muslim communities in the United States that work to maintain a sense of national identity with those that encourage transnational community. The latter tend to find it easier to fit into American political and social life, while the former face the emotional struggle of being stateless. For example, Cainkar (1996) writes about Palestinian Muslim women in Chicago who feel

unsettled in their daily lives, are stressed about the hardships faced by their family and friends in Palestine, and miss their family members who have been dispersed around the globe. For many Muslims, then, a religious identity comes packaged with a political identity, whether one personally pursues related political goals or not (Fatima 2011).

The highly politicized character of Islam since 9/11 only accentuated the degree to which individual Muslims must deal with the social meaning of their faith. A key sociological insight about identity is that one’s sense of self is formed relative to the reactions of others. For Muslims in many countries, it is not uncommon to encounter others who find the faith curious, suspicious, or even dangerous (Read 2008). Unsurprisingly, American suspicion of Islam is unfounded. American Muslims are largely indistinguishable from the average American in their political and social attitudes, as well as their religious commitment (Read 2008). Nonetheless, Muslims find themselves managing their identity in a context where they are often perceived as outsiders.

In the realm of lived religion the question of whether women should wear the veil is an excellent example of the presentation of the Muslim self. A number of studies have addressed the question, all strongly arguing that the meaning of the veil is multifaceted and complex. Writing before 9/11, Read and Bartkowski (2000) spoke with 24 devout Muslim women about the meaning of the veil and their decision to wear it or not. For many, the decision to veil reflects a desire to follow the teachings of the faith, as they understand them. It is a sign of devotion to Islam, strong religious commitment, and submission to Allah. However, social motivations rooted in religious identity also explain the decision to veil. The *hijab* may symbolize connectedness to the “broader religious community of other veiled Muslim women,” or to significant others and immediate social networks. In this sense, Read and Bartkowski show how wearing the veil is related to identity in ways similar to how any of us may use a range of fashion choices to build and maintain social relationships.

Generational differences in attitudes about the *hijab* are also relevant, and exemplify the complexities religious identity in immigrant communities beyond Islam, and beyond gender. While many first generation Muslims downplayed their religious and cultural distinctiveness as a way to work toward economic well-being (Abdo 2006; Haw 2010), those in second generation often came of age in societies that had embraced multiculturalism and were therefore more willing to be open about their faith. However, that faith may not have been their parents' Islam. Complicated by language issues and the place of children in mosque, second generation Muslims often developed a more modern or liberal religious identity (Leonard 2003). Conflicts with parents might arise over the appropriateness of arranged marriage (Abdo 2006; Leonard 2003), the proper role of women in public life, "Americanization," or the importance of family relative to American individualism (Kibria 2011).

The *hijab* is also a fundamentally gendered symbol. However, what it says about the identity of those who choose to wear it, or those who reject it, is contested. Some Muslim women believe the *hijab* is repressive. In this reading, it symbolizes women's submission to men, rather than to Allah. Muslim feminists choose not to veil as a statement of women's equality and as an attack on the perceived patriarchy of the Islamic faith. These Muslim women may see the *hijab* as a sign of unnecessary orthodoxy or fanaticism rather than a pure expression of faith (Read and Bartkowski 2000, p. 409). For the unveiled, then, veiling appears to be more of a political than religious statement, and they identify as more modern Muslim women who are still devout. For some who choose to veil, however, the *hijab* is a tool of female liberation in a world dominated by male sexual compulsion. Because men cannot control their sexual urges, this perspective maintains, the veil allows a woman to live in the world protected from men's natural, sexual gaze. Here, the veil is symbolic of essential gender differences, even as it is not necessarily considered repressive. As Read and Bartkowski (2000) rightly point out, each of these perspectives reveal that female Muslim identity contends very

directly with conceptions of Islamic masculinity as inherently sexual and domineering.

Whatever the *hijab* may represent for an individual, analytically scholars cannot ignore the intersectionality of the veil. A symbol firmly grounded in a religious meaning system, it not only indicates religious commitment, but also an ethnic and gender identity. The "hijab is closely connected with their overlapping religious-gender-ethnic identities and links them to the broader community of Islamic believers and Muslim women" (Read and Bartkowski 2000, p. 404). It also is a material representation of a symbolic boundary between Muslims and non-Muslims. Although they are proud to wear their faith for others to see, it also makes salient their place as outsiders in mainstream culture. What may make some feel special can simultaneously make them feel strange (Read and Bartkowski 2000, p. 406).

The strangeness of Islam in America, and in many other places around the globe, was accentuated after 9/11. The extremist attacks of September 11th put Muslims around the globe in a challenging place and all but required that they become more vocal about what they believe and who they are. The identity work of Muslims around the globe since extremists became the public face of the religion has been fertile ground for studies of religious identity more generally. Like Catholic and Jewish immigrants before them, Muslims routinely ask what it means to be Muslim and American (Ali 2011), and who counts as Muslim (Fatima 2011)? Fatima answers the question about "who counts" by arguing that individual and communal aspects of Islam in contemporary America make it an inescapably political identity (Fatima 2011, p. 351). Many everyday Muslims appear to agree, and are motivated by this fact to be more open about their religious identity and what it means to them. Ali (2011) writes of a community of Muslims in Arizona who feel that Islam in America is more authentic as a result of interaction between immigrants from a range of Muslim cultures. Differences lead to questions about what it means to be truly Muslim, and resulting conversations encourage individuals to make sense of their

identity in an environment where faith is contested, self-authored, and often more salient. Identity displays like the *hijab*, an accepted part of the cultural norms in majority Muslim countries, become political statements for religious minorities in an environment where religiosity is implicitly politicized. Muslim religious identity in contemporary multicultural societies is a process of being, becoming, and belonging. Decisions about whether and how to “strategically deploy” it are of great significance (Haw 2010).

As this discussion of Islam makes clear, scholars have found the tradition fertile ground for studying processes of religious identity and religious change. It is not that Islam is unique in terms of how one develops and manages identity, but rather that its global reach and recent political realities raise a wide range of questions about religious being, belonging, and behaving in the contemporary world. Similarly, a rapidly expanding body of work explores the identity work of the fast growing number of atheists in modern societies.

Secular Identities: Nones, Atheists, and Humanists

There is far less research about secular identity than about religious identity (but see Cragun’s chapter on “Nonreligion and Atheism” in this volume, Chap. 16). It is telling that there remains no consistent label used to categorize those without religious affiliation or belief. While it is relatively common to see research consider religious “nones,” this typically refers to people who choose not to affiliate with a tradition rather than those who reject religious belief (LeDrew 2013a). While “atheist” seems like a straightforward category, it perhaps works better as an analytical term as many non-believers choose labels like “free-thinker” or “secular humanist” to express their identity (Smith 2013a). While the growth of the religious nones is well documented (Sherkat 2014) and survey research about their characteristics is available (Baker and Smith 2009a), work on self-identified atheists tends to be more

exploratory. Typical survey research does a poor job of conceptualizing or locating large enough samples for meaningful analysis. Nonetheless, as LeDrew (LeDrew 2013a, 2013b, p. 432) makes clear, “atheists...are a specific group that must be studied in their own right.”

Given the difficulty of finding large samples of atheists, much of what we know about who the secular are comes from survey research about “nones.” Estimates of the unaffiliated in the United States suggest that around 1 in 5 adults are “unaffiliated,” with about 3% identifying as “atheist” and 4% as “agnostic” (Pew Research Center, 2015). In the United States, those who reject religious affiliation tend to be younger, somewhat better educated than average, white, and male. The language of “rejecting” religious affiliation does seem appropriate, at least in a society as religious as the United States, where many non-believers grew up being socialized into their family’s faith (Sherkat 2014). Atheist identity is most often, according to many who have written about it, the culmination of a process leading to an achieved rather than an ascribed identity (Hunsberger and Altemeyer 2006; Smith 2011).

Smith (2011) writes that atheist identity is constructed in social interaction and that the process leading to “coming out” includes common experiences. To begin, many who identify as atheist began their lives in rather religious environments. Belief in god is, as we have seen, quite common and being socialized to share that belief is typical for young people in religious societies. Importantly, while typical socializing agents like family, church, and school are important in inculcating religious faith, theism is also “deeply entrenched” in American culture (Smith 2011, p. 220). Even those born into relatively secular households are exposed to religious socialization external to their immediate families, and often have little choice about participating in religious culture to some degree. In a religious context like the United States, it is reasonable to understand belief in god as the default position (Smith 2011, p. 222). Smith’s interviews of atheists reveal, therefore, much about how religious identity takes shape, even among those who will eventually reject it.

For some who do reject theism, it begins with questioning beliefs that are common and widely held. Leaving the family of origin, perhaps for college, presents an opportunity to critically question religious dogma (Smith 2011; Uecker et al. 2007). In fact, throughout life, changes in religious identity are related to disruptions of social networks and new opportunities (Sherkat 2014). The transition to atheism rarely happens all at one moment, but rather is a “slow progression” which may include a period of doubting while still being religiously active (Zuckerman 2011). It appears that periodic thoughts about leaving one’s faith are not that uncommon. Among religiously affiliated respondents to the Portraits of American Life Study (PALS) between 2003 and 2006, 13% reported that they considered leaving religion (Vargas 2012). While less than half of the PALS respondents who considered leaving followed through, for others doubt may turn into a “generalized and non-descript discontent with religious beliefs” and deeper questions about what it means to be a moral person (Smith 2011, p. 223–24). Such self-examination may result in a fundamental tension between a long-standing religious identity and a newly discovered sense that one can live without faith in god (LeDrew 2013a; Zuckerman 2011).

Atheist identity, however, is more than simply not believing in a god. Instead, it is for most an active rejection of theism and the construction of new sense of self (Zuckerman 2011). Like most religious conversion experiences, social networks are important (Sherkat 2014), but Smith (2011) emphasizes the internalization of a scientific and rational world view. Atheism is, then, explicit rejection of supernatural explanations and construction of symbolic boundaries between theism and non-belief. The last step in Smith’s model of becoming an atheist is to “come out” – to publicly claim the identity as an atheist. The disruptions of coming out as an atheist are not only symbolic, but in a country where many are less likely to trust that atheists share their vision of community (Edgell et al. 2006), there can be social consequences as well. While research shows that friendships between believers and non-believers are relatively common (Vargas and

Loveland 2011), many atheists actively seek out fellowship with like-minded people (Tomlins 2015), thus limiting their ties with believers (Smith 2011). However, most of the atheists interviewed in Smith’s study faced little resistance from friends and family. In fact, and not unlike Muslim women who understand discarding the veil as a rejection of religious domination (Read and Bartkowski 2000), those who publicly self-identify as atheist may experience a sense of liberation (Smith 2011).

While Smith’s model of becoming an atheist is generally accepted, LeDrew (2013b) criticizes its linearity. Essentially, Smith’s model is the well-known religious conversion model of Lofland and Stark (1965) applied to de-conversion from religious faith. Rather than converting to a new religious movement, the convert rejects religion and adopts a rational and scientific worldview. LeDrew (2013b) questions the degree to which claiming atheist identity is a function of adopting a new rational, non-supernatural perspective. LeDrew adds two other ways that an atheist may “discover” their new identity, rather than rejecting a past identity. Some eventual atheists may have been raised in a thoroughly secular environment and so do not experience any period of troubling doubt. They are simply socialized into the secularism of their families. Others may be raised secular, eventually seek religion, but find it unsatisfying. So, in LeDrew’s model, it is the communal life of atheism – which is early in its development – that must be explored (Cimino and Smith 2007). While “New Atheists” get much attention with their strident criticism of religious belief, many average atheists do not learn about the belief system from them. Instead, what the New Atheist movement may do is to make atheism more public and raise awareness of the possibility of living as an open atheist and finding others who share atheist beliefs.

It is reasonable to hypothesize that atheist community forms, at least to a degree, because atheist identity is stigmatized. Atheists are less trusted than believers and do experience discrimination (Gervais et al. 2011), and many believers in the United States and around the globe reject atheism as a dangerous belief system (Edgell et al. 2006).

Edgell and colleagues provide evidence that non-believers are not accepted into the imagined communities of many in America. The results of a nationally representative survey show that many Americans are uncomfortable with atheists, do not want them in their families, and think that non-believers reject the norms of American life and are therefore difficult to trust. In this environment, it is not surprising that atheists work to create their own communities. It is not only a matter of having friends, but of creating a safe space to be who they are, and to achieve political and social recognition.

Studies of secular identity have, indeed, considered how context matters, from exploring what it means to be a non-believer who joins local organizations to considering the place of nontheism within national cultures. Research consistently shows that the number of seculars in America is growing (Sherkat 2008), and around the world many countries are much more secular than the U.S. (Zuckerman 2008). As the number of non-believers grows, and more people identify as atheist or have secularists as friends (Vargas 2012), communities may become more accepting of those who reject religious belief. Much atheist identity work is done via new media, for example blogging and social networking, which provide non-believers the opportunity to find and connect with others who share their way of thinking (Cimino and Smith 2011). While atheist identity has historically been stigmatized, and atheists have usually been more focused on defending “against persistent religious influence” rather than advancing a secular worldview (Cimino and Smith 2011, p. 25), scholars of irreligion and secularity are beginning to document ways that non-believers are being more proactive in the interest of creating new communities and establishing positive public identities.

Research about the growth of the atheist community and the discovery of atheist identity provides an excellent point of transition to a discussion of religious mobility and fluidity. While analytical work in the sociology of religion often treats religious identity as relatively stable, in the next section I highlight a wealth of research that shows how identity varies across the life course in many ways.

Mobility and Fluidity

About a third of Americans will change their religious identification throughout their lives. For some who change, it will be a dramatic movement between two forms of faith that are very different from one another. For most, however, the experience of religious mobility will entail a more modest movement between two religious groups that are relatively similar. Stark and Finke (2000) call the former changes “conversion” and the latter “switching.” The scholarly literatures on conversion and religious switching are largely separate, and here I briefly summarize each.

Research about religious conversion is fundamentally influenced by Lofland and Stark’s (1965) “Becoming a World Saver Model,” even as it has been criticized and revised (Gooren 2007; Kox et al. 1991; Long and Hadden 1983; Snow and Phillips 1980). Questions about whether or not converts are active or passive remain important, as do questions about what exactly changes when one undergoes conversion. Is it a change in attitudes, or a change of values, and what sort of transformation is radical enough to be considered a “conversion”? What seems clear is that existing explanations of conversion rely too heavily on the Lofland and Stark (1965) model even as decades of research have shown it to have a number of weaknesses (Gooren 2007). Modern conceptions of conversion critique the fundamentally Christian bias of the concept itself, and problematize basic dimensions of commitment to a religious movement and religious identity. Identity is understood less as something to be claimed by successful religious movements and more as the work of active producers with complex religious careers. In sum, religious identity is understood as continuously variable and contingent rather than something settled early in life and rarely changed.

Gooren’s (2007) synthesis of prior models of conversion is helpful in that it articulates specific questions about the role of religious experience in conversion, encourages us to conceptualize the individual as a complex nexus of culture, structure, and agency, and conceives of conversion as just one of many phases in a religious career.

However, as Jindra (2011) makes clear, very few past studies of conversion have used comparative methodologies. This relatively straightforward critique leads Jindra to focus on religious content to a degree prior studies have not, and to recognize that the social nature of conversion is contingent upon the worldview of the religion to which one converts. Some pre-conversion factors common in the literature are important – Jindra (2011, p. 288) calls these “generic push (or pull) factors.” Difficult relationships with parents, for example, are relatively common among converts in several traditions, but the narrative the convert constructs about the significance of various push or pull factors is significantly conditioned by the ideology of the destination faith. This innovative study moves research about conversion forward by encouraging comparative methodologies and seriously considering the content of religious belief – something sociologists are often guilty of ignoring by privileging structural and network similarities (Jindra 2011).

Sherkat’s (2014) analysis of 40 years of General Social Survey data confirms much of what we have long known about religious switching, while at the same time demonstrating how attention to cohort and ethnicity is essential to understanding how religion has changed over time and will continue to change. Research has consistently shown that changes in religious identity are a function of social ties and context (Loveland 2003; Sandomirsky and Wilson 1990; Sherkat and Wilson 1995; Sherkat 2014; Suh and Russell 2015; Uecker and Ellison 2012). Early religious preferences are a result of socialization and common life events like marriage, parenting, geographic mobility, educational attainment are correlated with reaffiliation. Religious identity, like all identity, is essentially social.

The most pressing questions in religious switching are about what theories might explain well understood patterns and how large scale shifts in the religious environment may affect individual affiliation and belief. Clearly, the number of people who are disconnecting from traditional religious organization is rising, as well as

those who are leaving religion all together. Will supply side theories be proven correct – will strict churches remain strong in the face of growing disaffiliation? Or, will secularization theory rule the day – will nonbelief and rejection of religious identity become the norm? Sherkat’s (2014) study clearly argues that neither of these grand theories does justice to what is happening in the daily lives of believers and non-believers, and that demographics explain much of the change we see. While some conservative churches grow, quintessential conservative movements like Baptists tend to attract few switchers. At the same time, most Unitarians have switched from another faith. Traditions like Catholicism and Judaism attract few converts, but those who leave the tradition tend to become non-religious rather than to join a more conservative movement. As earlier cohorts die and new generations of immigrants become integrated into communities, the religious structure of a society changes in ways that present everyone with new opportunities for religious expression and commitment. What seems certain is not verification of existing theories, but rather continuous change and the need for more nuanced description of the religious landscape.

Beyond movement across the well-known traditions with long histories and a stable presence in the culture, we should not forget that many of those who remain in one tradition their entire lives will experience changes in religious identity salience and meaning. In addition, some researchers are focusing on the growth of non-traditional religious movements such as American Wicca (Jensen and Thompson 2008), and others are exploring syncretic belief systems that fail to be accounted for by typical measurement strategies (Bader 2003; Catherine 2011; Mencken et al. 2009). A critic could argue that the appearance of stable religious identities are an artifact of poorly formed research questions, researcher biases, sociological methods, or a function of unique moment in history (Butler 1990). Each of these possibilities points to potential future directions for studying religious identity.

Future Directions

I must begin this concluding section by highlighting a shortcoming of my own work in this chapter. The bias toward Western religions in general, and U.S. sociologists studying the United States in particular, has likely not been overlooked by attentive readers. This is more a function of selection than of a lack of available resources. Research with a consciously global perspective is available but rarely made central in social science research, and should serve to motivate future work in the sociology of religion. For example, Bean (2014) asks what seems like a very obvious question when our U.S. dominated attention is broadened to include just one additional country: Canada (see also Bean et al. 2008). U.S. white evangelicals are more economically conservative than other Americans, but Canadian evangelicals who share the same theological beliefs are no more economically conservative than other Canadians. To address this difference, Bean and colleagues argue that religious identity interacts with national identity in significant ways and cannot be understood without accounting for the ways in which religious institutions and beliefs complement and counter national culture. As such, she explicitly encourages scholars of religion to move beyond “belief, belonging, and behavior to consider the varied ways that religious groups imagine broader cultural membership” (Bean 2014, p. 166). This work, like that of Hout and Fischer (2014) discussed above, suggests that the social consequences of religious identity are a function not only of theology and religious practice, but also of other aspects of identity – in this case national identity. Political culture may have an independent effect on religious identity and proper tests this emerging hypothesis will require comparative, international research projects.

The most illuminating research will likely treat religious identity as a product of dynamic contexts to show how it is contingent and variable. A suggestive example of what this sort of research may look like comes in Chew’s (2014) study of language choice and religious identity in Singapore. Chew’s work is premised on the

insight that identity is not static, but dynamic and changing. Similarly, the language choices that bilingual speakers make are complicated by social contexts and are sometimes deployed to project particular identities. Her study of three Singapore madrasahs providing religious education in Arabic, English, and Malay, respectively, demonstrates that Islamic identity, even within one small republic, is fluid and performative. Chew (2014, p. 54) describes the Islamic community in Singapore as “engaging, imaginative, informative and refreshingly uninhibited.” Language is understood as a living thing which works to organize religious practices and knowledge, and hence to construct and maintain particular religious identities.

Ethnographies like Chew’s treat religious identities as lived, constructed, and evolving, and as such scholars interested in religious identity will be wise to incorporate the findings from these studies into their thinking about religious identity in the modern world. Anderson and London (2009), for example, study the Jewish identity of members of the Moemedi Pentecostal Church in Johannesburg, South Africa. Here is a congregation of believers who privilege the Old Testament, believe themselves to be God’s chosen people, and self-identify as Jews, but claim no historical Jewish identity. Instead, we see the active construction of a Jewish identity that typical tradition based sociological approaches to accounting for religious identity would find difficult to classify as anything but the marginalizing category of “other.” In most other subfields within sociology, categorical conceptions of identity have lost favor to those that recognize the fluidity of self. Just as the gender binary and forced choice measures of racial identity have become dated, sociologists of religion should think carefully about not only the validity of categorical measures like those of Steensland et al. (2000), but also of the ethical implications of erasing religious identities from view.

The Moemedi Pentecostal Church is only one example of religious dynamism in Africa, and around the globe religious identities are in flux. Kollman (2012), for example, presents a fascinating study of Catholicism in Africa, showing how

generational acceptance or resistance of Catholic practices is related to self-identifying as Catholic and the growth of autonomous Catholic communities. However, the potential for syncretism in African Catholicism is not to be overlooked, as Kustenbaurer (2009) well describes in his study of Legio Maria Church in Kenya. This African Initiated Church (AIC) seceded from the Roman Catholic Church in the early 1960s, and members believe the church's founder, Simeo Ondeto, to be the reincarnation of Jesus. As example of the agency of African Christians, this and similar movements should serve to remind sociologists of the incredible diversity and fluidity of religious identity. Scholars of religion have also closely tracked the development of religious identity in post-communist countries, but this work has not noticeably affected the way sociologists write about religious identity. For example, research about Islamic identity in post-communist countries has shown how religion grows when the institutional context changes (Elbasani and Roy 2015; Wiktor-Mach 2011), and how Islamic identity facilitates the growth of national solidarity (Spehr and Kassenova 2012). Post-Soviet Russia has also seen the resurgence of Orthodox identity (Evans and Northmore-Ball 2012), as well as flourishing eastern religious identification (Holland 2014).

No one study can completely account for the complexity of religious identity. Nor, as this chapter's shortcomings attest, can a single review. However, in the aggregate, the sociology of religious identity incorporates an impressively wide range of questions and perspectives. While quantitative approaches that place individuals into static categories have their limitations, they nonetheless help to reveal stable patterns of relationships between religious identity and behavior, as well as connections between religious identity and secular outcomes like political behavior or the composition of friendship networks. It is unlikely that schemes like that of Steensland and colleagues (2000) are going to disappear, and it is certain they will continue to be refined as our thinking about religious identities and symbolic boundaries evolves. Qualitative work on identity, in particular ethnographies that highlight those

religious movements often marginalized as the "other," must be taken seriously by those who choose to do quantitative sociology of religion. Further, global religious change demands that many scholars who wish to understand religious identity in a generalizable way broaden their horizons to incorporate the many ways people identify as religious, or nonreligious, around the world.

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Ryan T. Cragun

Abstract

Nonreligious people (those without a religious affiliation) and atheists (individuals without a belief in a god) make up a sizable proportion of the world's population. In this chapter I provide definitions for the various terms used in the sociological study of nonreligion and atheism. I then examine findings regarding the characteristics of nonreligious people and atheists. I summarize research findings on the reasons why people leave religion and/or adopt an atheistic worldview and examine the growing body of research exploring the pervasive prejudice and discrimination against atheists, in particular, and the nonreligious in the US and around the world. I conclude with some suggestions for future areas of research related to the sociology of nonreligion and atheism.

While there is a long history of sociologists studying religion (c.f. Durkheim 1995; Weber 2001), it has only been in the last 10–15 years that serious and sustained scholarly attention has focused on the nonreligious or “religion’s other.” It’s not entirely clear why interest in the nonreligious grew just after 2000, but it is likely due to a number of factors. The American Religious Identification Survey (Kosmin et al. 2001) brought the doubling of the percentage of the American population that was nonreligious, from

7% in 1990 to 14% in 2001, to the attention of the media. Shortly after the rise of the nonreligious in the United States gained attention, the “New Atheists,” Sam Harris (2005), Richard Dawkins (2006), Daniel Dennett (2006), and Christopher Hitchens (2008), released a wave of bestselling books that drew even more attention to the growth of the nonreligious in the U.S. and also to some of the serious problems with religion and religion-inspired violence (see also Juergensmeyer 2003). While there were a few earlier pioneering studies on the nonreligious in the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Campbell 1971; Demerath 1969a; Vernon 1968), it was not until just after the turn of the millenium that scholars created the subfield of nonreligious or secular studies, with a scholarly society, the Nonreligion

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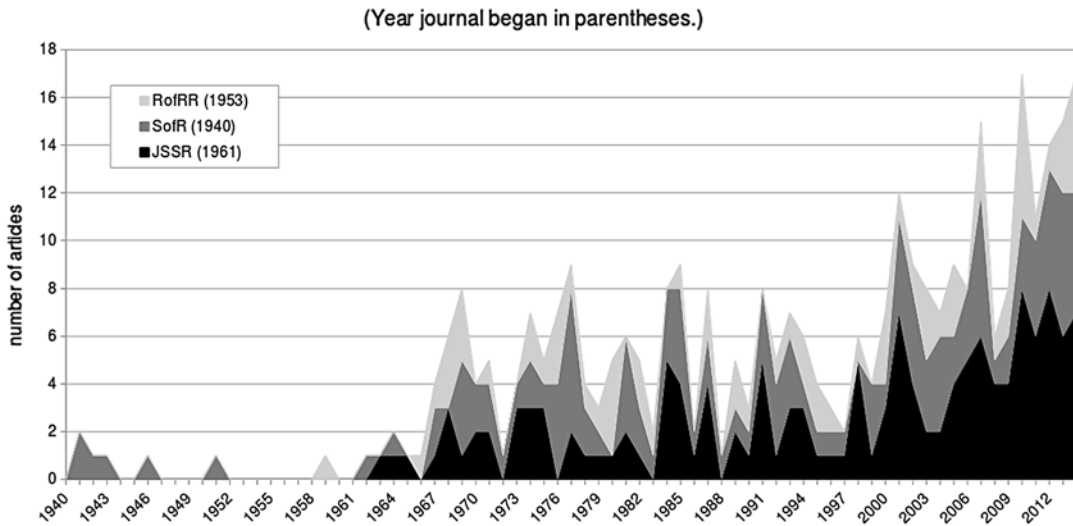


Fig. 16.1 Number of articles mentioning “atheism” or “atheist” in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (JSSR), *Sociology of Religion** (sofR), and *Review of Religious Research* (RRR). (*Sociology of Religion was

titled *The American Catholic Sociological Review* from 1941 to 1963 and then *Sociological Analysis* from 1964 to 1992)

and Secularity Research Network, and a journal, *Secularism and Nonreligion*. Figure 16.1 illustrates this very recent rise in interest in the nonreligious among scholars of religion, showing that there were very limited references to “atheism” or “atheist” in prominent sociology of religion journals – *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *Sociology of Religion*, and *Review of Religious Research* – until the early 2000s. Interest in this topic has grown steadily since then, perhaps because of the continued growth of nonreligion and secularism in developed countries throughout the world and the threat this poses to religious hegemony.

I begin this chapter by defining relevant terms in the study of nonreligion. I then describe the growth of research in this area and detail key findings. I conclude with a discussion of future directions for research in the study of nonreligion.

Definitions

As is the case with most areas of research, scholars studying people and things that are not religious have wrestled with terminology. Definitions

are always conditional and every scholar can mold and shape definitions to fit their particular research objective (Chafetz 1978). Additionally, the study of that which is not religious is still quite young, and it is likely that definitions for common terms will change and new terms will be introduced (Cragun forthcoming). Even so, a general agreement on the definitions of terms can be helpful in clarifying the focus of a field of inquiry.

Before I begin discussing the terms employed by those who study this topic, it may be helpful to note that no field of scholarly study that takes religion as its focus (e.g., anthropology, psychology, sociology, religious studies, etc.) has coalesced on a single, universal definition of religion. For instance, Max Weber (2001) suggested that religion is collective beliefs and rituals relative to the supernatural. This is a very common definition used in the sociology of religion, but it is also tied to Western notions of religion. Other scholars have suggested that religion is always context specific (Campbell 1977; Stuckrad 2013); what religion is in Japan is very different from what religion is in Jordan or in Jamaica (Josephson 2012). Such definitions consider “religion” to be a signifier that may or may not

mean the same thing in different contexts. This means that the study of what is not religious or what is “other to” religion is also difficult to define, since it is difficult to study that which is “other to” something that is itself ill-defined.

Nonreligion

Those who study that which is “other” to religion have increasingly begun to refer to this field as the study of “nonreligion.” Nonreligion is, like religion, a problematic term, precisely because it includes “religion” within it. One of the most well-known proponents of the term, Lee (2012), suggested that this is perhaps the best term for the field of study focused on that which is “other” to religion because “nonreligion” specifically notes that it is interested in that which is *not* religion but is *related to* religion. For example, those studying nonreligion would be interested in atheist activists in the U.S. suing to remove monuments of the Ten Commandments from public property or people leaving Islam in Saudi Arabia, both of which are phenomena outside of religion but still related to religion. These examples also illustrate how this understanding of nonreligion is relational and relative, like some definitions of religion are. Thus, what is other to but related to religion is just as context specific as is religion (Campbell 1977; Quack 2014; Quillen 2015).

Secular, Secularity, and Secularism

The word “secular” was introduced into Christian thought by theologians as a reference to that which is not religious. The meaning of the word today is similar; “secular” is an adjective that describes things that are not religious in orientation. For example, sleeping and exercising would typically be considered secular activities. Secular is broader than nonreligion as it encompasses all that is nonreligious (i.e., other to but related to religion), as well as all that is *not* religious and is *unrelated* to it. The state of being secular is “secularity.”

Despite the definition offered above, it is fairly common for scholars to use the word “secular” interchangeably with “nonreligion,” as in “secular studies,” which is a reference to scholarship on that which is not religious but related to it (Zuckerman 2014). Additionally, many of the social movement organizations working toward the normalization of nonreligion around the world refer to themselves as “secular” organizations (e.g., Secular Coalition for America) or the movement as the “secular movement” (Pasquale 2010). Thus, while secular is really broader than nonreligion, it is quite common for the two to be used interchangeably.

A related term is “secularism.” Secularism is primarily viewed today as a political philosophy that advocates a separation between religion and government (Berlinerblau 2013). The “-ism” suffix turns the word “secular” into a philosophy or ideology rooted in the idea that there should be distance between that which is religious and that which is secular when it comes to government. Organizations that advocate for secularism are sometimes labeled “secularist” (Kosmin and Keysar 2007). Such organizations advocate for secularism, discouraging any involvement of religion with the government. The aim of such organizations is generally to reduce the privileging of religion in those societies.

Atheism and Atheists

At the simplest level, the word “atheism” can be separated into its constituent parts. The “a-” prefix means “without” or “lacking.” The root of the rest of the word, “-theism,” is from the Greek term, “theos,” which means god. Theism is the belief in a god. The most common understanding of the term “atheism” today is, therefore, to be without belief in a god or gods. “Atheists” are individuals who are without belief in a god or gods.

There are at least two ways that people can be without belief in a god or gods (Smith 1980). People can be aware of the claimed existence of a god (e.g., Aphrodite) and deny the existence of that deity. This is typically referred to as positive

atheism, meaning the individual is making a positive assertion about the non-existence of a deity. People can also be unaware of the claimed existence of a god (e.g., Jörð, the Norse goddess of the earth) and therefore be without belief in that god. This is referred to as negative atheism, or being without belief in a god or gods because of no prior knowledge of the claimed existence of that god or those gods. It is in this fashion that most people alive today are atheists – they are unaware of the claimed existence of the millions of gods of, for instance, Hinduism, or the many other gods of the many other extant or defunct religions. They are therefore atheists towards those gods (i.e., without belief), but in a negative fashion. Likewise, it is in this sense that all babies are atheists; until they are taught about a god, they are negative atheists toward all gods (Cragun 2013; Cragun and Hammer 2011).

Of note, there has been some discussion among atheists in recent decades as to whether atheism should be limited to what its adherents do not believe (i.e., in the existence of a god or gods) or whether it should also be reformulated to encapsulate what atheists do believe, such as skepticism, humanism, equality, or critical thinking. This discussion has led some scholars to suggest that “atheist” can be considered an empty signifier, similar to some definitions of the term “religion” (Quillen 2015; Stuckrad 2013). An empty signifier is a label that is applied, whether by the individual or to the individual, that indicates that the individual may belong to a certain category or group of people, but precisely what is meant by membership in that category is not perfectly clear. In this understanding of the term, anyone can identify as an atheist, just like anyone can identify as being religious, but the specific meaning of the term can only be determined by combining the context in which the labeling occurred and what the specific individual understands the term to mean (Quillen 2015). This understanding of atheism also illustrates the important contextual nature of atheism, as the god or gods toward which someone is without belief are context specific; an atheist in Saudi Arabia is likely without belief in a different god or gods than is an atheist in India or an atheist in

a tribal group in the Amazonian basin in Brazil (Campbell 1977; Quack 2014).

Agnosticism and Agnostics

Like atheism, agnosticism is, at its simplest, understood relative to the constituent parts of the term. Again, the prefix “a-” means “without” or “lacking.” The rest of the term, “-gnosticism” is based on the root word, “gnosis,” which also comes from the Greek and means “knowledge.” Combining the two, “agnosticism” is the condition of being “without knowledge.” In the context of this chapter, agnosticism refers to being “without knowledge of a god or gods.” However, it is common to extend the definition of agnosticism to include the idea that it is also not possible to gain knowledge about the existence of a god or gods (Smith 1980). With this addition, agnosticism would mean something like, “not having knowledge of a god or gods and believing that such knowledge cannot be obtained.” “Agnostics” are those who adhere to agnosticism.

The definition above is not how many people understand the term “agnosticism” today. Many people understand agnosticism to mean that someone is unsure of the existence of a god or that they have doubts about the existence of a god. Not being sure about the existence of a god could still qualify as agnosticism if, for instance, one believed in a god but recognized that there was no evidence for the existence of that god. If the basis for the doubts or lack of surety of belief in a god is a person’s lack of knowledge of those gods, then such individuals would be agnostic theists. But if individuals who are unsure about their belief in a god but believe they have knowledge or can obtain knowledge about the existence of the target god or gods, then this would not qualify as agnosticism using a strict definition of the term. Instead, this would be theistic uncertainty. This clarification leads to an important point: the definitions of atheism and agnosticism are not mutually incompatible. Since atheism is the condition of being without belief in a god or gods, and agnosticism is being without knowledge of a god or gods, one can be both simultaneously: an agnostic atheist.

Apostates and Exiters (and Other Terms for Those Who Leave Religions)

Perhaps the most widely used term to refer to those who leave a religion is “apostate.” This term comes from the Greek, “apostasia,” which means to defect or revolt. This term can be used in a relatively neutral fashion to simply describe those who leave a religion, but often it is not used that way. While there has been an attempt in recent years to reappropriate the term “apostate” by those who have left religions similar to how homosexual men reappropriated the term “gay” (Brooks 2015), it is still generally the case that the label apostate is applied externally to those who leave a religion and is done so by those who remain members of the religion (Bromley 1998). In this fashion, “apostate” is a pejorative label and is meant to reflect the sense of betrayal felt by those who remain members of the religion (Cragun and Hammer 2011).

Cragun and Hammer (2011) argued that the term apostate reflects a privileging of religion. Because “apostate” is a pejorative term, it should only be used to describe those people who leave a religion when scholars are attempting to capture the attitudes of those who remain members of the religion. But referring, generally, to those who leave religions as “apostates” in any other context except perhaps when such individuals use “apostate” as a self-reference reflects the privileged and normative status of religion in society (Beaman 2003; Schlosser 2003). Since privileging religion necessarily subordinates that which is “other” to religion (i.e., nonreligion and the secular), to prevent such privileging, those who leave religions should not be labeled using the terminology of the religious. They should be allowed to self-identify and self-label.

Apostate is just one of the many pejorative terms that has been used to describe those who leave religions. Other terms that have been used in reference to such individuals include: defectors, dropouts, disaffiliates, disengagers, and deserters (Cragun and Hammer 2011). All of these terms depict those who leave religions negatively, implicitly raising religion to a privileged

and preferential status. Given the contentious and pejorative nature of these terms, Cragun and Hammer (2011) suggest that a more neutral term would be “religious exiter” as it reflects only the fact that someone left a religion and implies nothing else about where that person went or whether they are now critical of the religion they left. As such, it minimizes the privileging of religion.

Humanism

Humanism is a philosophical perspective that posits a number of principles or values not rooted in supernatural or religious beliefs that people can use to guide their behaviors and decisions. Precisely what those principles are varies somewhat based on the specific pronouncement of humanist principles. Such pronouncements tend to include ideas like the following: ethical and moral principles need not rely on the supernatural or religion, but rather can be based on human experience, logic, and reason; all humans are of equivalent worth and value; working toward the equal treatment of all humans and a world free of discrimination is desirable; science is superior to religion as a method for discerning how the natural and social worlds work. This list of humanist principles is not exhaustive, as many such principles have been proposed (Kurtz 2007). “Humanists” would be those individuals or organizations that adhere to the principles of humanism.

There are many more terms that are used in the research on those who are “other to” religion (Cragun forthcoming). However, for my purposes in this chapter, the above terms and definitions are sufficient. The rest of this chapter discusses the results of research on those who are “other to” religion. Most of that research has focused on just two groups of people: the nonreligious (or “religious nones,” as they are often referred to) and atheists. Much less research has examined agnostics or Humanists. Additionally, most of the research on the nonreligious and atheists is from the U.S. and Western Europe, which is an issue I revisit in the Future Directions section of this chapter.

Rise of Research on Nonreligion and Atheism

As noted above, research on the nonreligious and atheists has just recently begun to accelerate. This is illustrated in Fig. 16.1, which shows that there were very few articles published prior to the 1960s that even mentioned atheism or atheists. More importantly, interest in studying atheists and atheism (as well as the nonreligious, not shown in Fig. 16.1) has grown substantially since around 2000. Prior to 2000, the most articles published in a single year mentioning atheism or atheists in the three journals combined were nine (in 1976 and in 1985). Since 2000, there have been almost that many articles published every year, and some years have seen nearly double that number. There is also, as of 2012, a journal dedicated to the study of nonreligion and atheism, *Secularism & Nonreligion*.

Of course, an article just mentioning atheism or atheists doesn't mean that atheism was the actual focus of the article. Briefly glancing over the work published before the 1960s suggests this was largely the case. There was, however, a brief period of interest in atheism and nonreligion in the late 1960s and early 1970s (visible in Fig. 16.1). This generated some seminal works in the field, like Colin Campbell's book, *Toward a Sociology of Irreligion* (1971), as well as calls for increased attention to the nonreligious by various scholars (Demerath 1969b; Vernon 1968). Even so, this interest was short-lived, and much of the work published in the sociology of religion between the 1970s and the early 2000s only rarely mentioned the nonreligious or atheists. When the nonreligious or atheists were mentioned, it was often in the interest of considering ways to convert them to religion (Bibby and Brinkerhoff 1973; Roof and Hadaway 1977) or to suggest how religion was superior to atheism or nonreligion (Brennan and London 2001; Hadaway 1989; Albrecht and Bahr 1983). As of the early 2000s, this appears to be changing as research on the nonreligious and atheists has begun to focus on these phenomena in and of themselves and not as deviant subsets of religion (Smith 2010, 2013).

Characteristics of the Nonreligious and Atheists

Before I turn to the well-known characteristics of the nonreligious and atheists, I should note that not all atheists are nonreligious and not all the nonreligious are atheists. Being nonreligious is a reference to self-identification with a religion, while atheism, as noted above, refers to a position vis-a-vis the existence of a deity. Table 16.1 shows how atheism and nonreligion overlap in the U.S.; Table 16.2 shows a similar overlay in Europe. In the U.S. in 2008, just under one in four (23.7%) nonreligious Americans were atheists, 1.4% of people with religious affiliations were atheists, and 75.9% of atheists were nonreligious. In Europe in 2008–2010, the numbers were rather different. 60.8% of the nonreligious were atheists, 7.4% of the religious were atheists, and 69.9% of atheists were nonreligious. What the data in Tables 16.1 and 16.2 indicate is that there are many nonreligious people who are not atheists and many atheists who report a religious affiliation, though most atheists are nonreligious.

As is the case with many areas of research at their outset, one of the questions that has most interested sociologists studying the nonreligious is who they are studying, and how they differ from religious people. As a result, a number of studies have focused primarily on the characteristics of the nonreligious and/or atheists. Well-known ways in which the nonreligious and (typically) atheists differ from the religious include the following:

Table 16.1 Belief in God by religious affiliation in United States

<i>Percentage nonreligious and religious who are Atheists and Theists</i>		
	Nonreligious	Religious
Atheist	23.7	1.4
Theist	76.3	98.6
<i>Percentage Atheists and Theists who are nonreligious and religious</i>		
	Atheist	Theist
Nonreligious	75.9	12.3
Religious	24.1	87.7

Source: Pew Religious Landscape Survey (2008); N=85,199

Table 16.2 Belief in a God by religious affiliation in Europe

<i>Percentage nonreligious and religious who are Atheists and Theists</i>		
	Nonreligious	Religious
Atheist	60.8	7.4
Theist	39.2	92.6

<i>Percentage Atheists and Theists who are nonreligious and religious</i>		
	Atheist	Theist
Nonreligious	69.9	10.7
Religious	30.1	89.3

Source: European Values Survey, Wave 4 (2008–2010); N=63,013

- They are younger than the religious
- They are more likely to be male
- They are often better educated and more intelligent (more so for atheists than the nonreligious)
- They are less likely to be married and more likely to cohabit
- They are more liberal and/or progressive in their political views

Importantly, the nonreligious and atheists do not appear to differ substantially from the religious in how prosocial they are, how happy they are, or in how healthy they are. I discuss each of these findings in greater detail below.

One widely observed difference between the nonreligious and the religious is that the nonreligious tend to be younger, on average, than the religious, both in the U.S. (Baker and Smith 2009; Sherkat 2008, 2014) and in many other Western (Hayes 2000; Hayes and Mcallister 1995; Mason et al. 2008; Norris and Inglehart 2004) and Eastern (Mullins 2012; WIN-Gallup International 2012) countries. Atheists, on the other hand, do not tend to be quite as young as do the nonreligious, though they are still younger than the religious, at least in the United States (Kosmin and Keysar 2006; Pew Forum on Religion 2012; Sherkat 2008). Precisely why the nonreligious tend to be younger than the religious is not clear, even though scholars have known about this pattern for at least several decades (Caplovitz and Sherrow 1977; Condran and

Tamney 1985; Glenn 1987; Hoge 1981). Some of the research examining the age difference between the religious and nonreligious has tried to frame this difference as nothing more than a life-course effect: young people leave religions or reduce their religiosity as they explore the world and discover themselves, but eventually return once they begin their families (Becker and Hofmeister 2001; Hoge 1981; Stolzenberg et al. 1995). Yet, more recent research suggests that most of those who leave religions do not return, even with the formation of families, as each successive generation in the U.S. has been less religious than the generation before it over the last 40 years (Merino 2011; Schwadel 2010). Thus, it is unlikely that the age/cohort difference in religiosity is a simple life-cycle effect. A more likely explanation for the younger average age of the nonreligious is that it is a reflection of one of the mechanisms of secularization: the transmission of religiosity from parents to children (Cragun forthcomingb). In the process of transmitting their religiosity to their children, there are numerous possible ways that the transmission from parents can be interrupted, including a disconnect between the social values of parents and children (Jones et al. 2014), shifts in values between generations generally (Lyons et al. 2007), or disinterest in religion by both parents and children (Bengtson 2013; Zuckerman 2011). Regardless of the specific cause, the result is that children tend to be less religious than their parents, resulting in a consistent age and cohort difference between the religious and nonreligious.

Many studies have found that men are less religious than are women, a finding observed in most developed countries (Voas et al. 2013) and many other countries as well (Norris and Inglehart 2004). The gender gap is even larger among atheists, at least in the U.S. (Cragun 2014; Hunsberger 2006). Like the age difference, it is not entirely clear why men are less religious than women. Some scholars have suggested innate, biological differences, particularly related to risk-taking behavior (Miller and Stark 2002; Stark 2002); others have suggested the differences are the result of socialization (Lizardo and Collett 2009; Trzebiatowska and Bruce 2012). Another

approach to the difference in religiosity by gender has suggested that this may be a socio-structural relationship, as religions may appeal more to women who want to be stay-at-home mothers who feel alienated in the workplace (Woodhead 2008). Psychological research has suggested this may also be the result of men's lower levels of mentalizing ability (i.e., an individual's ability to conceptualize the minds of other agents), as men are more likely to fall on the autism spectrum than are women (Norenzayan et al. 2012). While it may not be clear why men are less religious than are women, this is a robust finding.

Historically in the U.S. (and in some other countries; see Bruce 2002), the nonreligious were better educated than were the religious, or at least were among the better educated and more affluent (Roof and McKinney 1987). That is no longer the case in the U.S. (Baker and Smith 2009; Kosmin and Keysar 2006; Sherkat 2014). However, atheists are still better educated than the religious in the U.S., on average (Sherkat 2008). Additionally, while there is no evidence for a difference in intelligence between the nonreligious and the religious, a number of studies have found significant differences in intelligence between atheists and the religious, both in the U.S. and in other countries (Dutton and Lynn 2014; Kanazawa 2010; Lynn et al. 2009; Nyborg 2008; Zuckerman et al. 2013). The diminution of the difference in education between the nonreligious and the religious in the U.S. is likely the result of the growth of the nonreligious, resulting in the nonreligious making up a sizable proportion of the population. As the nonreligious have increased in size, they have begun to look more like the U.S. population because they make up a larger proportion of the U.S. population (Kosmin et al. 2009; Pew Forum on Religion 2012; Pew Research Center 2015a). As for why atheists tend to be better educated and more intelligent than are religious people, one of the most common explanations is that atheists tend to exhibit higher levels of analytical thinking (Gervais and Norenzayan 2012a), a characteristic rewarded in higher education and often included as part of IQ measures.

Another difference between the nonreligious and the religious that has been found in numerous studies is differences in marital status. The nonreligious are less likely to have married than are the religious (Baker and Smith 2009; Hayes 2000; Stolzenberg et al. 1995; Uecker et al. 2007). One possible reason for this difference could be the lower average age of the nonreligious, but even when controlling for age, the nonreligious are more likely to be single and never married than are the religious (Kosmin et al. 2009). Another reason for lower rates of marriage among the nonreligious is a higher rate of cohabitation (Uecker et al. 2007), which has been shown to decrease religiosity in a causal fashion. Despite lower rates of marriage among the nonreligious, there are not notable differences in divorce rates between the religious and nonreligious (Call and Heaton 1997).

Nonreligious individuals in the U.S. are substantially more liberal or progressive in their political views than are religious individuals (Baker and Smith 2009, 2015; Hout and Fischer 2002; Sherkat 2014). Atheists are also more liberal than the religious, though there is also a sizable proportion of atheists who lean libertarian in their political views (Cragun 2014; Sherkat 2008). These differences translate into greater support for: abortion, the legalization of marijuana, gender equality, same-sex marriage, and universal healthcare (Cragun 2013; Finlay and Walther 2003; Ford et al. 2009; Hooghe et al. 2010; Kenneavy 2012; Kettell 2013b; Marsiglio 1993; McDermott and Blair 2012). The proclivity among nonreligious people and atheists to be more liberal and progressive in their political views is probably related to general personality characteristics, as psychological research has found substantial differences in characteristics like openness toward change that are rooted in the human psyche (Amodio et al. 2007; Jost 2006). Others have suggested that the connection between nonreligion, atheism, and liberal political views could be the alignment of political conservatives with religious conservatives (Hout and Fischer 2002). As a result of this alignment, Hout and Fischer argue that liberal or progressive individuals have stopped identifying as religious as a

symbolic protest against the co-opting of religion by political conservatives, leading to a rise in people identifying as nonreligious.

Despite years of demeaning and belittling research targeting the nonreligious and atheists (Cragun and Hammer 2011) and scholarship trying to make the nonreligious and atheists look deficient and inferior in a number of ways (Babik 2006; Bainbridge 2005; Bibby 2007; Brennan and London 2001; Hadaway 1989; Smith 2007; Ventis 1995; Williamson and Yancey 2013), recent research has found that there are either no or only negligible differences between the nonreligious and atheists in a number of important areas. When appropriately measured (Hill and Pargament 2003; Hwang et al. 2011), there is no difference between nonreligious and religious people in mental health (Galen 2015; Galen and Kloet 2010; Moore and Leach 2015) or physical health (Sloan 2006). While occasionally studies find minor differences in happiness or subjective well-being between the nonreligious and the religious, this difference tends to be observed primarily in highly religious countries. It disappears in countries with lower levels of religiosity (Diener et al. 2011; Stavrova 2015), suggesting that discrimination against nonreligious minorities may be the factor that reduces their happiness in highly religious countries. Finally, despite many claims to the contrary (Putnam and Campbell 2012; Saroglou 2012), there is now compelling evidence that atheists and nonreligious individuals are just as likely (if not more so) than religious individuals to engage in prosocial behaviors like volunteering and donating money to charitable causes (Galen 2012a, b). In short, atheists and nonreligious individuals are not the socially deviant, immoral, criminal individuals they are often depicted to be both by the general public (Edgell et al. 2006; Heiner 1992) and by pro-religious scholars (Smith 2007; Stark 2013). To the contrary, nonreligious people and atheists are pretty normal.

Sources of Atheism and Nonreligion

A topic that has long been of interest to sociologists who study religion, many of whom are interested in reducing religious exiting, is why

people leave religions. This has led to several theories suggesting how religions can stem the flow of adherents out of places of worship (Kelley 1986), including the religious economies model which argues that religious demand is constant and how religion is supplied is the key factor in reducing the exodus out of religion (Stark and Finke 2000). According to these approaches, the reason why people leave religions or reduce their involvement is not because they do not want religion (demand for religion is assumed to be constant in light of a supposedly universal fear of death) but because religions are not providing the appropriate forms of their product. Strangely, then, atheists don't really exist in the religious economies model, since demand for religion is presumed to be universal and constant, and the source of nonreligious people is a shoddy supply of religion.

In contrast with the religious economies model and supply-side theories of religion is secularization theory, which argues that religiosity declines as a result of modernization (Bruce 2002, 2013). Bruce (2013), in what is perhaps the most well-developed theory of secularization, argues that there are numerous factors that contribute to secularization in society, including: individualization, democratization, privatization, relativism, religious and cultural diversity, egalitarianism, science, rationality, and literacy. The general forces associated with modernization lead to structural differentiation in society (i.e., religion being removed from other aspects of society, like government, educational institutions, and hospitals; Dobbelaere 2002), but also to declining levels of personal religiosity, which is manifest in many ways, including: lower levels of religious attendance (Chaves 2011), higher rates of disaffiliation from religions (Pew Research Center 2015a; Sherkat 2014), and lower levels of religious authority in society and over people's lives (Chaves 1994; Yamane 1997). Collectively, all of these forces "disenchant" the world, leading people to no longer need or want religion. As a result, people leave religion or diminish their involvement so substantially that religion is basically no longer a part of their day-to-day lives (Bagg and Voas 2010; Lim et al. 2010; Storm 2009).

While the above two paragraphs suggest theoretical reasons why people might leave religions, there is also a growing body of research that explores the reasons those who have left give for leaving. This research can be somewhat problematic, as all people have a tendency to reconstruct their past so that it aligns with their present. As a result, the stories we tell about our past may not perfectly reflect the reality of what happened, even if we are fully convinced that it is the truth. With this caveat in mind, those who have left religion (and, for some, become atheists), have offered many reasons for their decisions.

One of the most common reasons given for leaving religion is that people came to realize, often through education or training in science, that religious teachings are simply not credible (Blackford and Schuklenk 2009; Gervais and Norenzayan 2012a; Norenzayan 2013; Zuckerman 2011). As people gained knowledge about the world, they came to realize that religious claims, particularly fundamentalist religious claims, did not accord with empirical reality. Thus, claims like a man building a boat large enough to accommodate every species of animal (Moore 1983) or the earth being just a few thousand years old became untenable and, as a result, they decided they did not believe what their religion taught, leading them to leave.

Another reason given for leaving religion is value misalignment. For many young people, the fact that religion was and continues to be the primary impediment in allowing equality for gender and sexual minorities (Cragun and Kosmin 2013; Cragun and Sumerau *forthcoming*) has led them to question the religious dogmas they were taught growing up, and for many of them played a substantial role in their decision to leave religion (Jones et al. 2014). Value misalignment can become particularly salient when religions are politically active in opposing equality for migrants, women, and gender and sexual minorities (Zuckerman 2011). For many who have left religions, they have made a conscious and conscientious decision to withdraw their support from an organization whose policies, values, and activism they personally oppose.

Nonreligious individuals and atheists who have left religion often also cite religious intrusion into their sexual activity or rejection of their sexual identity. Gay, lesbian, and other sexual minorities are less religious than are heterosexuals in the U.S., and, for many of them, the primary reason for this is because the religion in which they were raised rejected their sexual identity (Pew Research Center 2013; Sherkat 2002). Religious teachings regarding sexual activity are also often restrictive, barring sex between anyone other than married, monogamous, heterosexuals, as well as masturbation and the viewing of pornography. The guilt some members of these religions experience as a result of engaging in these behaviors has resulted in them taking their own lives (Malan and Bullough 2005). What's more, religious teachings about the consequences of viewing pornography (Sumerau and Cragun 2015) have led many religious people to believe they are addicted to pornography, a condition that scientists are now realizing is almost exclusively afflicting people who have been taught to believe that viewing pornography can lead to addiction (a beautiful yet horrific illustration of a self-fulfilling prophecy; see Grubbs et al. 2015a, b; Ley et al. 2014). For many people who have left religions, they report that the intrusion of religion into their personal sexuality was psychologically, emotionally, and sexually damaging, and that they are much healthier, mentally and sexually, having left religion (Ray and Brown 2011).

Some people who have left religion report that it was their interaction with people who were not part of their religion that led them to see no reason to continue participating in their religion. For some, just interacting with people of other faiths helped them realize that people of any faith or no faith could be moral and pleasant, which ran counter to their typically religiously fundamentalist upbringing (Blackford and Schuklenk 2009; Wall and Pulitzer 2008; Zuckerman 2011). For others, meeting and getting to know someone who was not religious or was an atheist was the catalyst that led them to question the necessity of religion in their own lives (Zuckerman 2009). Scenarios like these would seem to be supportive of Berger's (1990) assertion that religious plural-

ism holds the potential to undermine religious plausibility structures.

While there are many other reasons people give for leaving religion or arriving at atheism (Blackford and Schuklenk 2009; Brewster 2014; Zuckerman 2009), I note just one more: religious indifference. Perhaps for the majority of people who leave religions around the world, the primary motivation for doing so is that religion simply didn't matter to them (Streib et al. 2009; Zuckerman 2006, 2008). It may have been the case that they were raised nominally religious by parents who also did not consider religion all that important, but by the time they were in their late teens or early twenties, many people who have left religions did not see the benefit or utility of continuing to participate in a religion (Altemeyer and Hunsberger 1997; Hunsberger 1983, 2006; Zuckerman 2008). Religion was, for them, just not important.

Leaving religion can be quite challenging, depending on how big of a change is involved (Ebaugh 1988a, b), the support one has from family and friends (Zimmerman et al. 2015), the culture and context in which one decides to leave religion (Cottee 2015; Eller 2010), and one's trajectory after religion or the new identity one adopts, whether it is religious indifference, spiritual but not religious, atheism, agnosticism, or humanism (Smith 2010; Streib et al. 2009). Another complication can be finding a sense of meaning or purpose in life without religion (Hammer et al. 2013; Schnell and Keenan 2011). For some who leave religion, this means turning to spirituality (Heelas et al. 2005), though certainly not all those who leave religion consider themselves spiritual (Creel and Tillman 2008). But what people mean by spirituality can vary substantially based on their other nonreligious or religious views. For instance, Ecklund (2010) found that a sizable minority of eminent scientists considered themselves "spiritual," but meant something quite different by "spiritual" than they thought most religious people understood the term to mean. For them, spirituality meant experiencing moments of wonder and awe at times, often as a result of observing natural phenomena. While developing a personalized worldview and

a sense of purpose and meaning can be challenging without the help and guidance of religion, most nonreligious people and atheists appear to manage this just fine (Hammer et al. 2013; Schnell and Keenan 2011).

Prejudice and Distrust

One fairly well-developed area of research when it comes to atheism and, to a lesser extent nonreligion, is the prejudice that exists against atheism and nonreligion in the U.S. and internationally (Harper 2007; Heiner 1992; International Humanist and Ethical Union 2012; Jenks 1986; Swan and Heesacker 2012; Wallace et al. 2014). While it has long been known that Americans are unlikely to vote for an atheist for President, thanks to polls asking this question for more than 50 years, only recently has research into the prevalence and motivation behind the prejudice and discrimination against atheists and the nonreligious been undertaken.

One of the first to highlight prejudice against atheists, Edgell and colleagues' (2006) study also offered a proposed explanation for the prejudice: that Americans see atheists as "other" and that religion is intimately connected with American culture. Subsequent research found that 40% of self-identified atheists in the U.S. reported experiencing discrimination in a variety of contexts (e.g., home, work, school, the military) in the previous 5 years; double the percentage reported by nonreligious individuals (20% reported discrimination in the previous 5 years; Cragun et al. 2012). Discrimination against the nonreligious takes a variety of forms, from physical violence and death threats, to micro-aggressions like assuming that people are religious or questioning atheist parents' ability to raise their children because they do not believe in a higher power (Furnham et al. 1998; Hammer et al. 2012; Huang and Kleiner 2001). Internationally, there are thirteen countries where atheism is still punishable by death (International Humanist and Ethical Union 2012).

While Edgell and colleagues' (2006) argument that atheists are perceived to be "other" in

the U.S. is still a compelling explanation for the high degree of antipathy that exists toward atheists, there is now a growing body of evidence that offers an explanation for why atheists are perceived to be “other” by the religious. Atheists are disliked in the U.S. and in numerous other countries (but to a much lesser degree in more secular countries) primarily because people do not trust atheists (Gervais 2013, 2014). Theists believe that atheists’ lack of a belief in a higher power means that they are less likely to behave morally (Gervais 2014), even though there is no evidence that this is the case (Galen 2012a).

Having figured out what underlies the prejudice toward atheists in the U.S., some scholars have begun to investigate ways to reduce that prejudice. One possible intervention that appeared to reduce prejudice against atheists in an experimental setting was to suggest that atheists were more prevalent in a country than they really were (Gervais 2011). The more atheists people thought there were in a society, the less prejudice they exhibited towards atheists, suggesting that a fairly effective way to reduce prejudice against atheists and the nonreligious is for such individuals to be open about their views on religion. Of course, there is a catch twenty-two here: in order to reduce prejudice against nonreligious people and atheists, nonreligious people and atheists need to be open about their views. However, being open about their views may subject atheists and the nonreligious to discrimination, which reduces their likelihood of being open about their views. Another effective way to reduce prejudice against atheists is to remind theists of another form of authority in society: secular government (Gervais and Norenzayan 2012b). Just as priming individuals about religious ideas and priming people about secular authority figures reduces people’s tendency to cheat or engage in unethical behavior (Norenzayan 2013), reminding people about an alternative authority figure to the supernatural – secular government – has been shown to reduce prejudice against atheists.

Secular Organizations and Social Movements

As noted above, it is quite common to refer to organizations that advocate for a separation between religion and government and for the normalization of nonreligion and atheism as “secular organizations” or, collectively, as “the secular social movement.” Scholars are just beginning to examine these organizations and the movement. While secular organizations have existed for hundreds of years (Jacoby 2005), they have been quite small for most of that time. Only since the early 2000s have most secular organizations seen substantial growth, though they still remain quite small (Cimino and Smith 2014; Langston et al. 2015). It is not entirely clear why there has been a recent increase in secular activism. In all likelihood it is a combination of factors. For instance, the recent rise in religion-inspired terrorism (Juergensmeyer 2003) has been specifically noted as the issue that made religious privilege more salient for some members of the secular movement (Harris 2005). Scholars have also argued that the development of advanced communication technologies have allowed relatively small numbers of nonreligious people, atheists, and humanists to organize online (Cimino and Smith 2014).

The little research that has been published on the secular movement and secular organizations has tended to be historical in nature (Budd 1967, 1977; Hecht 2004; Jacoby 2005). Only recently have social scientists begun to turn their attention to this movement. As a result, we are beginning to gain insights into certain aspects of the movement. As is true of many social movements, the secular movement has suffered numerous setbacks from internal schisms and conflicts (Demerath and Thiessen 1966; Kettell 2013a, 2014; O’Hair 1989; Silverman 2012).

For instance, Paul Kurtz, the founder of Center for Inquiry (CFI) and the Council for Secular Humanism (CSH), was once a celebrated leader in the American Humanist Association (AHA) and the editor of the magazine of that

organization, *The Humanist*. While his efforts with *The Humanist* were highly valued, his management practices caused a substantial degree of consternation among the board members of the AHA, particularly his use of funds. This resulted in a highly contentious meeting in 1978 during which a new editor of the magazine was chosen after Paul Kurtz refused to allow the board to oversee the finances of the magazine. As a result of this meeting, Paul Kurtz left the AHA and created the Council for Secular Humanism as a competitive organization with its own journal, *Free Inquiry*, vowing to crush the AHA for how it treated him. Animosity between Paul Kurtz's organizations, CFI and CSH, and the AHA remained high until Kurtz's power was substantially curtailed by the board of CFI in 2008, leading to his resignation and replacement (Cragun and Fazzino [forthcoming](#)).

While these internal conflicts have caused problems for the movement (though that tension has subsided substantially in recent years; see Cragun and Fazzino [forthcoming](#)), there is some evidence that the internal conflicts and multiple organizations may ultimately help the movement be more successful (Blankholm 2014), in part because multiple organizations within the movement appeal to activists with different goals (Langston et al. 2015). Another problem the secular movement has faced is a lack of racial and gender diversity in its ranks, though there are currently efforts to address this problem (Hassall and Bushfield 2014).

Like most research on nonreligion, research on secular organizations and the secular movement is just beginning. Very little is known about key aspects of secular organizations and the secular movement. For instance, many secular organizations have begun to train secular or humanist celebrants to replace religious clergy in the performance of life-cycle rituals, like marriages or funerals. Very little is known about these celebrants and the rituals they perform (though see Engelke 2015 and Hoesly 2015), or even about how many celebrants there are, their motivations for becoming celebrants, and how many rituals and services they perform. There is also very little known about the internal dynamics of the

organizations, to what extent they collaborate or compete, and how they recruit supporters and members. In sum, this is a topic in the sociology of nonreligion that is substantially under-researched.

Future Directions

While we now have a fairly clear understanding of the characteristics of the nonreligious and atheists in the U.S. and in many other developed countries in the West, very little is known about these two groups outside of these national contexts. There are, of course, atheists in most countries around the world (Cragun et al. 2013; Eller 2010; Tong 2010; Zuckerman 2006). But our limited knowledge about them is particularly problematic given that more than half of the world's nonreligious population, 62.2% live in China, and sizable percentages live in other countries in southeast Asia, like Japan and Vietnam (Pew Research Center 2015b). Collectively, 76% of the world's nonreligious live in the Asia-Pacific region, yet there is very little research on nonreligion in these countries (though see Josephson 2012 and Roemer 2010). It is not known whether atheists and the nonreligious in countries outside of the developed West have similar characteristics to atheists inside the developed West. Additionally, it is not clear whether identity development for the nonreligious and atheists is similar in non-Western countries and cultures, or whether it plays out differently. In other words, we know more about the nonreligious and atheists where they are growing minorities (in the developed West) than we do where they are substantial majorities (in the East) or continue to be embattled minorities (in the Global South). This suggests that our current knowledge about the nonreligious and atheists is of limited generalizability. It also suggests that, while there continues to be a need for research on nonreligion and atheism in developed countries, there is a much greater need for research on nonreligion and atheism outside of the developed West.

Another avenue for future research on the nonreligious and atheists is the role that relation-

ships play in leading people out of religions. As noted in the section above on sources of atheism and nonreligion, some scholars do recognize the role of relationships in facilitating their exit from religion. However, there is very limited research on this topic and it seems likely that, just as relationships help attract people to religions (Stark and Glock 1968) and other groups (Aho 1990), relationships may play a prominent role in leading people out of religions.

There are numerous other topics in the sociology of nonreligion that warrant additional research. Very little is known about the dynamics of coming out as nonreligious or an atheist and the corresponding response by family and friends (though see Zimmerman et al. 2015). Does this process vary by culture, by family setting, by race/ethnicity, and by socio-economic status? How do the nonreligious and atheists view religious people, and does this vary by the religion and the cultural context? Do nonreligious people and atheists differ in their personalities and their family dynamics (though see Manning 2013)? As noted repeatedly throughout this chapter, research on nonreligion is in its infancy and much remains to be examined. Additionally, with the rapid growth of the nonreligious in developed countries around the world, it is likely that much of what we currently “know” is going to change.

In the last 20 years or so, scholarship on the nonreligious and atheists has increased dramatically. Thanks to this burgeoning scholarship, we now have a clear sense of the characteristics of atheists and the nonreligious in Western countries, have a better understanding of why people are leaving religions, and have some compelling insights into the nature of anti-atheist prejudice. However, there remains much to be done in this area. Very little is known about atheism and nonreligion outside of highly developed, Western, formerly Christian countries. Likewise, little is known about the interpersonal relationships of atheists and the nonreligious nor about their day-to-day lives. The increasingly prominent global secular movement holds great promise for substituting secular rituals for religious ones in light of secularization, yet very little is known about humanist, atheist, secular, and freethought social organizations. Given current trends in most

developed countries, atheist and nonreligious populations are highly likely to continue growing. Social scientists studying religion may want to reconsider the disproportionate amount of money, time, and energy spent studying religious people and organizations in light of the coming wave of nonreligious and atheist people around the world.

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Abstract

The relationship between religion, juvenile delinquency, and deviance in general has been explored for many years. In fact, some of the seminal works in the discipline of sociology addressed the association between religion and deviant behaviors such as crime and suicide. This chapter reviews theory and research that has addressed the relationship between various aspects of religiosity and deviance, including juvenile delinquency, suicide and suicidal ideation, and sexual deviance; as well as studies that have examined religion as deviance. The chapter concludes with a discussion of three areas that require attention in order to improve our understanding of the association between religion and deviance.

The relationship between religion, juvenile delinquency, and deviance in general has been explored for many years. In fact, some of the seminal works in the sociology of religion addressed deviant behaviors such as crime and suicide. The most famous of these works was written by Emile Durkheim, but several other founders of the modern social sciences, such as Branislaw Malinowski, André Michel Guerry, and Adolph Quetelet, also considered whether suicide or other forms of deviance were associated with religious affiliation, participation, or

other aspects of society's spiritual life. It should come as no surprise that these early scholars studied religion and deviance. After all, they were concerned with factors that made social cohesion or integration possible, and religion has long been seen as a key integrative institution for good, as many early functionalists contended, or for ill, as implied by Marx and Freud (Davie 2013). Deviance and specific prohibited acts such as juvenile delinquency and drug use are normally considered as disruptive to the social fabric, and thus as something that religion should, in some way, mitigate.

Although it has been more than one hundred years since these founders of the social sciences published their seminal studies, there continues to be research on the relationships that might exist among religion, delinquency, and deviance.

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The terms moral communities, social integration, and the hellfire hypothesis have become commonplace in both the sociology of religion and the sociology of deviance, including its subdisciplines of criminology, suicidology, and the sociology of mental health. However, given the numerous studies that examine these various phenomena, it is perhaps time to consider more generally what we know and what we do not know about the effect of religion on delinquency and deviance. This is particularly important since there continues to be a lack of cross-fertilization between core disciplines that study these phenomena. For instance, many criminologists who are interested in the effects of religion address their work on understanding juvenile delinquency primarily toward other criminologists. Although there are exceptions to this trend, we contend that additional cross-fertilization will lead to better and more thorough research about the relationships among religion and the various behaviors that fall under the general scope of deviance.

This chapter provides an overview of theory and research on religion, delinquency, and deviance. Specifically, the focus of this chapter is limited to juvenile delinquency (including adolescent drug use), suicide, sexual deviance, and a brief section on religion as deviance (which may deserve its own chapter-length treatment; see Stark and Bainbridge 1997, Part 2; Inderbitzin et al. 2014). We then discuss some areas that could use additional attention by researchers interested in religion and deviance.

Before beginning, however, it is important to note that, true to the etymological origin of the term *deviance*, we attempt to avoid making ethical judgments about the behaviors discussed. Although there are many controversial issues involving how individuals or groups judge these behaviors, deviance, for us, implies primarily behaviors that diverge from normal standards of behavior. Of course, as long recognized by legal scholars, philosophers, and social scientists, what constitutes normal standards is socially and culturally constructed (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 2009; Horne 2001). Hence, there is no simple rule of thumb for deciding which activities are deviant and which are normative. In some societies

behavior that is considered deviant is considered normative in others (e.g., tattooing among traditional Maori vs. Old World Amish). Behaviors are also bounded temporally, with changing attitudes leading to redefinitions of deviant acts as normative or vice-versa (e.g., ritual suicide [*seppuku*] among Samurai). Moreover, the acts that define juvenile delinquency differ across time and space, with status offenses (acts that are prohibited for those below a certain age, such as curfew laws) providing the best example. We have thus opted to follow the list of deviant behaviors found in most textbooks and journals that specialize in this area. We deviate from this list, however, as we do not include mental illness or adult criminal behavior.

Conceptualizing Religion and Religiosity

An ongoing challenge for research has involved the different conceptions of religion and religiosity (Pirutinsky and Rosmarin 2013). Most scholars agree that religiosity is a multidimensional construct that is useful for understanding how people practice and experience “religion,” but there is no agreement as to what those different dimensions are or how they are interrelated. Chitwood and colleagues (2008) identified seven dimensions of religiosity, whereas others have identified up to twelve different types including meaning, values, beliefs, religious practice, religious and spiritual coping, commitment, and organizational religiousness.

The different types of religiosity tend to be correlated and most researchers have focused on two major dimensions, public (extrinsic) and private (intrinsic) religiosity. Chitwood et al. (2008) referred to the first as *organizational religiosity*. It is most often measured by church attendance and formal involvement in group religious activities and rituals. Private religiosity refers to internal beliefs such as whether one believes in God, prays, reads scriptures, and strives to live religious teachings. Some individuals attend church regularly but do not believe in certain religious tenets and do not pray regularly. Similarly, some

who do not participate in organized religion are very religious privately, believe strongly in God, and pray regularly. Nevertheless, in the following review, we spend little time on how studies have measured religiosity. Instead, we address mainly whether the measures of religiosity that have typically been employed are associated with deviant behaviors.

Delinquency and Religion

Delinquency is conceived as any behavior committed by minors (typically those below the age of 18) that is illegal. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) categorizes delinquency into five major types: (1) violent crimes, (2) property crimes, (3) drug offenses, (4) sex offenses, and (5) public order offenses (Sickmund and Puzzanhera 2014). A sixth type is status offenses—behaviors that are illegal for juveniles but not for adults, such as drinking alcohol, skipping school, running away from home, and staying out too late (Agnew and Brezina 2012).

Although the number of juvenile arrests decreased substantially from 2000 to 2014, a considerable number of juveniles continue to commit serious offenses. In 2011, juveniles between the ages of 10 and 17 were 10.7% of the U.S. population but accounted for 14% of all violent arrests, 21% of all arrests for property crimes, 10% of all drug arrests, and 18% of all arrests for sex offenses (Sickmund and Puzzanhera 2014). In 2013, juvenile courts in the U.S. processed more than 1 million cases and supervised more than 31 million youth (Hockenberry and Puzzanhera 2014).

Religiosity has been largely neglected as an explanatory variable in delinquency research (Johnson et al. 2000a). Most studies of delinquency have not included measures of religiosity as predictor or control variables. Furthermore, much of the research on religiosity and delinquency has been plagued by methodological problems such as a lack of longitudinal data, inadequate measures of religiosity, and a lack of random samples (Johnson et al. 2000a).

Despite inconclusive findings and methodological limitations, some consistent findings have emerged from the research. Religiosity, in its various forms, tends to have a negative association with delinquency, particularly in the higher quality studies (Johnson et al. 2000a). Longitudinal studies and meta-analyses have shown that religious beliefs and behaviors are negatively associated with delinquent behavior and illicit drug use (Baier and Wright 2001; Johnson et al. 2001; Chitwood et al. 2008). Other studies have supported these general findings, with the association between religiosity and adolescent misbehaviors robust even after considering numerous control variables (Pickering and Vazsonyi 2010; Klanjsek et al. 2012; Bahr and Hoffmann 2008; Borders and Booth 2013; Wallace et al. 2007). Nevertheless, a question that remains is whether or not the relationship between religiosity and delinquency is, at the core, spurious. Some have maintained that religiosity has no effect on delinquency after other relevant variables, such as peer and family relations, are taken into account. However, other researchers have reported that a significant association between religiosity and delinquency remains even after considering numerous potential confounding variables (e.g., peer associations, parent-child relationships, personality domains) (e.g., Cretacci 2002; Pickering and Vazsonyi 2010).

The negative association between religion and drug use is consistent regardless of the measure of religion (e.g., attendance, public vs. private religiosity, core beliefs) or the type of drug studied (Bahr et al. 1998; Chitwood et al. 2008). The evidence is consistent across a variety of samples in different geographical regions and time periods. The findings are similar among males and females, adolescents and adults, and different minority groups (Chitwood et al. 2008; Clarke et al. 1990).

There is also evidence that the religious context influences delinquency and drug use. For example, youth who attend schools with higher aggregate forms of religiosity tend to use cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana less than youth who attend other schools (Wallace et al. 2007;

Bahr and Hoffmann 2008). Not surprisingly, attending a highly religious school appears to have an especially strong protective effect among adolescents who are themselves highly religious (Wallace et al. 2007; see, however, Bahr and Hoffmann (2008) for contradictory evidence).

Although the inverse association between religiosity and juvenile delinquency is consistent, the sizes of the empirical associations tend to be modest (Cheung and Yeung 2011), with regression coefficients typically ranging between $-.10$ and $-.30$ (Benson 1992). Moreover, measures of private religiosity appear to be stronger predictors of these behaviors than measures of public religiosity (Benda and Corwyn 1997). When compared to other predictors of drug use, religiosity tends to have a stronger influence than personality constructs (self-esteem, internal locus of control) and social class but not as strong an influence as peer associations or parental characteristics (Benson 1992).

Even though the associations are consistent, there is much we do not know about some specific aspects of religiosity and delinquency. Reviews of research have identified three major limitations. First, as mentioned previously, religiosity is a multidimensional concept, so it is important to consider its different dimensions (Chitwood et al. 2008; Pickering and Vazsonyi 2010). For example, as noted earlier, private religiosity is more strongly associated with delinquent behaviors than public religiosity. Religious salience, a type of private religiosity, appears to be more strongly associated with delinquency than church attendance (Cheung and Yeung 2011; Laird et al. 2011; Longest and Vaisey 2008). Similarly, intrinsic religiosity tends to be more strongly associated with delinquency than extrinsic religiosity (Klanjsek et al. 2012). It seems clear, then, that additional research is needed on the specific types of religiosity that may have the strongest associations with juvenile delinquency and adolescent drug use.

A second limitation is that most research has not differentiated among various types of delinquent behavior. The anti-asceticism hypothesis proposes that more serious offenses, such as robbery or physical assault, are condemned by most

institutions, secular and religious. Thus, the broader society tends to act as a sufficient deterrent for serious forms of delinquent behavior. Yet, less serious offenses, those deemed anti-ascetic (based on the idea that abstention is a virtue), are not as consistently condemned by secular institutions, but often do go against the precepts of religious organizations. Thus, religious influences should affect minor offenses, such as drug use, more so than serious offenses, such as violent crime. In particular, religious organizations often provide unique teachings and controls affecting drug use and other forms of minor offending that are not provided by the broader community (Middleton and Putney 1962).

Evidence regarding the validity of the anti-asceticism hypothesis is inconsistent. For example, Resig et al. (2012) found that religiosity was not associated with self-reported criminal offending net of controls, but that it was associated with minor acts such as illegal drug use. However, Baier (2014) reported that Christians who were highly religious tended to commit fewer violent acts than those who were less religious. On the other hand, among Muslim students, those who were more religious tended to be more violent than those who were less religious. Hence, the association between religiosity and delinquency may depend on the type of religion and its teachings rather than simply offering a general influence on offending.

The third limitation is a lack of theoretical development to explain how and under what conditions religiosity may influence delinquency and drug use (Benda 2002; Benda and Corwyn 1997). In the next section we review and evaluate theories that have been used to explain the association between religiosity and delinquency. This includes a consideration of promising theoretical directions.

Theories of Religiosity and Delinquency

Although there has been a considerable amount of research on the association between religiosity and delinquency, we do not have a good under-

standing of why this association exists (Chitwood et al. 2008; Hoffmann and Bahr 2005). In this section, we describe and evaluate three theories that have used to help understand how religiosity influences delinquency: (1) social control theory, (2) social learning theory, and (3) strain theory. This is followed by a review of several other theoretical perspectives.

Social Control Theory

One of the major theoretical orientations used to explain the influence of religion on delinquency is social control theory (Hirschi 1969). This theory is based on the premise that deviance is normal and therefore it is conformity, rather than deviance, which must be explained. Given the pervasiveness of delinquency and drug use in society, most adolescents are exposed to delinquent opportunities and may be inclined to become involved in them if there are no social controls provided through families, peers, and religious organizations. Thus, juveniles must develop bonds to society that restrain them from committing criminal acts. According to Hirschi (1969), these bonding mechanisms include attachment, involvement, commitment, and beliefs. Most social control theorists have focused on bonds to family, but bonds to religious organizations may also deter delinquency in several ways. First, individuals may become attached to a faith community and its members. Because of this attachment and the negative sanctions that may follow illegal behavior, those who are attached to a religious community are less likely to commit delinquent acts than those who are not attached to such a community.

Second, involvement in religious activities allows less time for unstructured activities where opportunities for deviant behavior may exist. Formal religious activities for adolescents tend to be structured and to have authority figures present which, according to social control theory and a related model that addresses unstructured socializing (Osgood et al. 1996), constrain deviant tendencies among youth and reduce delinquent opportunities. Participation in a religious community may also provide a network of support that insulates people from opportunities to become involved in illegal activities.

Third, commitment to a religious organization and its goals may provide existential meaning that makes various types of delinquent activities less attractive. Moreover, religious youth have a “stake in conformity,” so if they commit delinquent acts, they are likely to incur costs—negative sanctions from religious family members and friends, a loss of associations with religious friends, and disappointment from family members, friends, and church leaders. Furthermore, being involved in a religious community encourages social conformity, such as following the dictates of authority figures and parents.

Finally, religious organizations foster particular beliefs that discourage delinquent and other deviant behaviors. In short, religious organizations tend to involve people in conventional activities, provide a social network that disapproves of illegal behavior, and inculcate beliefs that discourage deviant activities (Burkett 1993; Hoffmann and Bahr 2005).

A considerable number of studies have found evidence consistent with social control theory. However, this research has tended to find that social control variables such as attachments to parents and parenting style mediate the association between religiosity and delinquency (Allen and Lo 2010; Hoffmann and Bahr 2014). For example, Li (2014) discovered that family religiosity contributed to stronger parent-child attachments and more effective parenting practices, which were subsequently associated with less delinquent behavior (see Pickering and Vazsonyi [2010] for contrary evidence).

One early model that was grounded in social control theory is known as the *hellfire hypothesis*, formulated by Hirschi and Stark (1969) and based on Hirschi's (1969) social bonding theory. This hypothesis predicts that, because most religious traditions condemn criminal activities and provide justification for abstaining from them (e.g., risking exile in the fires of hell, *hutama*, or *gehenna*), religious adherents are less likely to commit crimes than are others. It focuses primarily on belief as a social control mechanism. However, evidence for the hellfire hypothesis has been inconsistent (Lasky 2014).

A specific form of social control that is studied often by criminologists involves self-control:

the ability to resist the tendency to immediately gratify one's most pressing (perceived) needs and desires. It focuses mainly on personal tendencies that are formed during early childhood and is closely related to the personality trait of impulsiveness: those low in self-control tend to have impulsive tendencies. Resig et al. (2012) found that the association between religiosity and some illegal behaviors was spurious: when levels of self-control were controlled, religiosity was not associated with these behaviors. However, Laird et al. (2011) determined that adolescents who rarely attended religious services or did not consider religion as important in their lives tended to have lower self-control, and low self-control was associated with higher levels of antisocial behavior (see also Pirutinsky 2014).

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theorists posit that motivations to participate in or refrain from illegal behaviors are learned through associations with significant others in small, informal groups. It is in these intimate settings that individuals observe the behaviors of others and acquire attitudes regarding delinquency and other deviant behaviors. The specific learning mechanisms included in this theory are modeling, direct teaching, reinforcement, and punishments (Akers and Sellers 2013).

A key way that learning occurs is through reinforcement and punishment. For example, youth who associate with drug-using peers are likely to be exposed to drug use, develop favorable attitudes toward it, receive positive reinforcement for their own drug use, and perhaps even negative sanctions if they refuse to use. Moreover, they are provided models of how and when to use drugs, as well as why use is considered a positive experience. On the other hand, if they associate with non-users, they are likely to receive positive reinforcement for avoiding drug use and perhaps even be punished by their peers if they do engage in use.

Most social learning theorists have focused on parents and peers, but religious involvement may also play an important role in these learning mechanisms. Religious organizations provide direct instruction to participants to refrain from

illegal activities such as stealing, lying, and using illegal drugs. Religious groups also provide an interpersonal network in which delinquent activities may be considered inappropriate, harmful, or evil. If through religious activities individuals develop a network of friends who do not skip school, fight, shoplift, or use drugs and whose attitudes are not tolerant of these delinquent behaviors, they likely experience reinforcement of attitudes against involvement in these activities. Even those whose friends are involved in delinquency might refrain from participation if they receive high levels of counterbalancing definitions and reinforcement from religious teachings and activities. Thus, religious activity provides an environment where juveniles are taught to obey the law, associate with peers and adults who obey the law, and perceive sanctions that discourage violation of the law.

Empirical data tend to support religious involvement as a way that youth learn to be law abiding. Individuals who belong to religious groups that teach abstinence have lower rates of drug use than those in religious groups that do not proscribe the use of alcohol, tobacco, or other substances (Bahr and Hawks 1995; Benda and Corwyn 1997). To illustrate, Jang and Johnson (2011) found that those with a conservative religious upbringing were less likely to have friends who used drugs. This, in turn, decreased their risk of drug use in adolescence. On the other hand, childhood exposure to parental drug use was associated with an increased risk of having drug-using friends, which increased the risk of drug use. Thus, drug-using friends served to mediate the influence of both religious involvement and parental behavior. Religious involvement helped insulate adolescents from exposure to delinquent friends (see also Palamar et al. 2014; Bahr and Hoffmann 2008; Adamczyk and Palmer 2008).

Social learning theory also posits that reducing exposure to delinquent peers should move youth away from engagement in delinquent behaviors. Avoiding old influences or "selective involvement" is a common risk reduction strategy for avoiding future delinquency and drug use (Abrams 2006; Shapland and Bottoms 2011).

And, as suggested by the research discussed earlier, religious involvement may provide one way for youth to avoid delinquent associates and, rather, to be exposed to law-abiding friends and situations. Overall, then, the evidence is consistent with a social learning explanation of the association between religiosity and delinquency. It is important, however, to elaborate the ways in which this association is mediated by peer selection (Bahr et al. 1998; Hoffmann 2014).

General Strain Theory

A third theoretical framework that may help explain delinquency and other forms of deviant behavior is general strain theory (GST). According to this theory, delinquent behavior is framed as a response to various types of undesirable experiences. Agnew (2006) postulated that strains tend to result in negative emotional states such as anger, frustration, jealousy, depression, and fear. These emotions lead to pressure for corrective action, reduce one's ability to cope in a legal or socially acceptable manner, and reduce concern for the potential costs of delinquent reactions. Furthermore, strain may reduce the protective effects of social controls and foster a learning environment conducive to delinquent behavior.

There are three common types of strain identified by Agnew (2006). The first type of strain is goal blockage—the inability to achieve a desired goal. Examples of this type of strain are school failure, not being offered a job, or losing a competitive sporting event. Furthermore, living in an economically deprived community may be stressful if it blocks or restricts opportunities to get a better education or a good job (Akers and Sellers 2013). The second type of strain involves losing something of value—such as a romantic relationship, a family member through death or divorce, or losing something of monetary value. The last type of strain involves experiencing a negative stimulus such as being bullied at school, yelled at by a parent, or the victim of a criminal act. These types of strain can also be dichotomized into objective and subjective. Strains are objective when they are considered to be negative by most others. On the other hand, subjective strains are the

result of life events perceived to be negative by an individual but not necessarily by most others.

The degree to which a person can effectively cope with strains and resultant negative emotions is dependent on both demographic characteristics and conditioning factors, which are characteristics that either increase or decrease one's ability to effectively manage strain. Factors that can increase the ability to cope are individual self-efficacy and social support. Factors that may decrease the ability to cope are low social control, association with criminal others, and situational constraints (Agnew 2006).

Religious involvement may help individuals learn how to cope with stress in constructive and conventional ways. In addition, religious activities may provide a support network that gives comfort and support when youth are faced with stress (Jang and Johnson 2003). This may help them cope with the stress rather than become involved in illegal activities. In addition, religion often provides a unique perspective and existential meaning that helps youth cope with loss and stress. However, one possible consequence of strain is a decreased attachment to social groups or institutions. In the face of strain, one may stop participating in religious activities and become estranged from others, which may reduce the support needed to cope effectively with strain.

There has been relatively little research on how GST may explain the association between religious involvement and delinquency. One exception is work by Jang and Johnson (2003). They found that the social support provided by religious membership served as a conditioning factor, alleviating the impact of strain caused by negative life experiences. In particular, religiosity tended to buffer or lessen the deviance generating effects of negative emotions (see also Chu 2012; Brauer et al. 2013).

In sum, preliminary evidence indicates that higher levels of religiosity can reduce and alleviate the strain produced by negative events through providing social support, associations with conventionally-minded persons, and increased self-efficacy. Additional research is needed to examine whether and how religiosity may help

youth cope with stress and decrease their involvement in delinquency.

Additional Theories

Several other theories have been employed to explain delinquency but they have rarely been used to examine the association between religiosity and delinquency. For example, theories of deterrence, genetics/biological mechanisms, symbolic interaction, self-esteem/self-derogation, rational choice, and various combinations of these perspectives have been used to describe the etiology of delinquency (Akers and Sellers 2013; Hesselbrock et al. 1999). It is rare, however, to find studies that examine how religiosity might play a role in delinquency from any of these theoretical perspectives. Nevertheless, several other theoretical perspectives have been developed to better understand how religiosity might be associated with delinquency, most of them at the macro-level of analysis. We turn now to a discussion of some of these perspectives.

Religiosity at the Macro-level: Religious and Moral Communities A fundamental supposition of research on religion and delinquency is that, since most religious traditions prohibit engagement in most forms of crime, especially those considered *mala in se* (“wrong in themselves,” e.g., robbery, burglary, rape, murder), membership in a religious tradition or a high concentration of religious adherents in an area should reduce involvement in illegal behaviors. Research focused on the macro-level version of this view has found the expected negative association (Kposowa et al. 1995; Stark and Bainbridge 1997). In particular, Bainbridge (1989) demonstrated that church membership rates (including Jewish synagogue membership rates) in U.S. metropolitan areas were negatively associated with assault, robbery, burglary, and larceny, though not with murder or rape. These associations persisted in the presence of controls for other socially integrative factors such as residential mobility, divorce rates, and poverty rates. One explanation for these crime-specific effects is that religious affiliations, and the attitudes they inculcate, are more likely to deter deliberative

crimes than “crimes of passion” (Bainbridge 1989). However, it is not clear if these findings offer evidence regarding how religious communities affect juvenile crime rates.

Researchers have used the term *moral communities* to address how religiosity at the macro-level affects crime and delinquency. Building on the hellfire hypothesis, for example, Stark and Bainbridge (1997) argued that whether religious factors attenuate involvement in crime depends on whether the community supports religious-based moral sanctions. Their hypothesis contends that when a community has a high concentration of religious adherents it will see a significant negative association between individual-level religion and criminal involvement. Consistent with general sociological principles, a large proportion of religious adherents in a community provides—through networks, shared norms, and similar beliefs—support for and integration with basic behavioral proscriptions and prescriptions. Thus, religious norms are reinforced in moral communities. Several studies have found support for this perspective (Johnson et al. 2000b; Regnerus 2003; Stark 1996).

Community Resource Perspective Lee and Bartkowski (2004a, b) attempted to elaborate the moral communities perspective by describing an important process that may provide a more persuasive theoretical link between religion and rates of deviance than has previous research. Their community resource perspective argues that communities draw upon certain interpersonal resources to attenuate the likelihood of deviance. Rather than viewing the lack of institutional control or access as providing opportunities for crime, as social disorganization theory predicts, they contended that the presence of civic participatory programs enhances social networks and trust among community members and increases guardianship of residences and supervision of residents. Civic engagement in communities involves both religious and secular organizations, but each may function as a community resource that attenuates crime. Their view is consistent with research showing that volun-

teer work, including faith-based activities, diminishes involvement in criminal behavior and attenuates the risk of arrest (Hoffmann and Xu 2002; Uggen and Janikula 1999). In an analysis of U.S. counties, Lee and Bartkowski (2004a) found that religious civic participation was associated with lower adult and juvenile homicide rates, even after controlling for the influences of other social integrative factors (e.g., divorce rates, unemployment rates).

Social Disorganization The level of disorganization in the community may affect the association between religion and delinquency. Johnson et al. (2000b) found, for example, that among inner-city African-American youth, church attendance was negatively associated with both drug use and non-drug crimes. Using a different data set, Johnson et al. (2001) determined that church attendance was inversely associated with various types of crime even after controlling for the effects of non-religious social bonding and social learning variables. They speculated that in communities that are more stable and organized, religious involvement is not needed to help deflect youth from drug use. In disorganized communities, however, the church may be one of the only protective institutions that decreases the attraction to drug use and other illegal behaviors (Jang and Johnson 2001).

Delinquency and Religion: Future Research Directions

Addressing the potential indirect effects of religion on delinquency and drug use is a promising avenue for future research. As shown in several studies (e.g., Benda 2002; Smith 2003), religion in its various guises is associated with several intra- and interpersonal characteristics that are negatively related to delinquent behavior. Religious participation, beliefs, and other aspects of one's spiritual life have been linked to lower levels of aggressiveness, peer deviance, and self-arousal, as well as higher levels of altruism, shame at the prospect of wrongdoing, self-control, happiness, positive coping strategies,

volunteerism, parental supervision and moral expectations, and parent-child attachments. Several of these characteristics are key components of prominent criminological theories such as social bonding, self-control, deterrence, symbolic interaction, social learning, and general strain theory. For instance, as suggested earlier, high levels of religious participation and salience may expose individuals to conforming peers, enhance normative identities, provide coping resources, and heighten expectations of shame or punishment at the prospect of delinquent involvement. These potentialities suggest that religion is indirectly linked to certain forms of delinquent behavior. The task for future research is to explore these links in greater detail.

Suicide and Religion

Given that several nineteenth century researchers, including Durkheim, Guerry, Wagner, Masaryk, and Morselli, were interested in the association between religion and suicide, it is no surprise that numerous studies of this association have been conducted in the ensuing years. However, in contrast to studies of juvenile delinquency, most of this research has involved macro-level data. The obvious reason for this pattern is that, unlike criminals, it is not possible to interview those who complete suicide (although, as discussed later, some have interviewed family members or associates). Therefore, studies about religion and suicide tend to be macro-level or address suicide ideation or ideology (see reviews by Colucci and Martin 2008; Gearing and Lizardi 2009; Stack 2000).

Three general perspectives have typically been used to link religion and suicide. First, from a Durkheimian perspective, various religious traditions foster more or less social integration. Members of traditions that promote more integration should have a lower likelihood of suicide (Stack 2000). Second, several religious traditions maintain core beliefs that oppose suicide or attenuate stress by emphasizing otherworldly rewards (Gearing and Lizardi 2009). This may

include individual commitment to religious norms or, at the macro-level, a moral community based on shared religious beliefs and commitments, either of which can diminish the likelihood of suicide (Stack 1983). Third, religious participation enhances social networks and thus provides more social support when depression or sadness turns to suicidal thoughts (Robins and Fiske 2009; Stack and Kposowa 2011). Each of these perspectives can be viewed from a micro- or a macro-level lens.

The results of studies that focus on membership rates—typically using church membership as the standard—and suicide rates have been inconsistent. Research in the U.S. has suggested that the association between church membership and suicide rates is spurious: It diminishes once residential mobility and the divorce rate are considered (Bainbridge 1989). However, cross-national research has continued to find a negative association between various aspects of religious behavior and suicide rates (Stack and Kposowa 2011), especially when assessing female suicide rates (Neeleman et al. 1997). Moreover, one study reported that African-American suicide rates in metropolitan areas of the United States are negatively associated with church membership rates (Burr et al. 1999).

Most macro-level studies of religion and suicide are the common legacy of Durkheim's (1897) influential study *Le Suicide*. This foundational study of modern sociology is best known for ascribing differences in Catholic and Protestant suicide rates in late nineteenth century Europe to varying levels of social integration found in these religious traditions. The "social fact," as Merton (1934, p. 326) termed it, of higher suicide rates among Protestants spawned dozens of studies in the following one hundred years. However, few definitive conclusions have resulted from these efforts.

Several observers have argued that Durkheim either used his data selectively or misunderstood basic religious tenets, and therefore he mistakenly concluded that Protestant suicide rates were higher than Catholic suicide rates. Reanalyses of data from late nineteenth century Europe indicated that Catholic and Protestant suicide rates

were either quite similar (van Poppel and Day 1996; but see Simpson 1998) or that any differences were attributable to misreporting among Catholics (Day 1987). Historical and contemporary data from the U.S., and some cross-national data, also suggested few differences between Catholic and Protestant suicide rates (Stark and Bainbridge 1997; Wasserman and Stack 1993).

It is important to recognize, however, that combining all Protestant groups into a single entity is unwise, especially in pluralistic nations, because the variation in beliefs and practices of Protestant groups is substantial. Pescosolido and Georgianna (1989), by disaggregating the proportion of Protestants in U.S. counties into constituent groups, found that there were varying suicide rates among religious traditions. For example, counties with a high proportion of Catholics had lower suicide rates than counties with a high proportion of Methodists, but higher suicide rates than counties with a high proportion of Nazarenes. Moreover, Van Tubergen and colleagues (2005), using data from The Netherlands, determined that the higher the proportion of religious persons—which included two large Protestant groups and Catholics—in a municipality, the lower the suicide rate, even among non-church members. In both studies, the key characteristic that attenuated the risk of suicide appears to be the integrative and regulative aspects of network ties and community norms. As described earlier, many religious traditions provide strong network ties and furnish emotional and social support and norms; these decrease the tendency to engage in self-destructive behaviors.

It is important to note, however, that both of these studies also determined that counties or municipalities with a large proportion of Catholics had lower suicide rates than in most other areas (Pescosolido and Georgianna (1989) found a similar pattern in counties with a large proportion of Jewish people). What might explain this finding? First, perhaps many contemporary Catholic groups offer strong social networks. Second, one must not forget the power of beliefs and tenets: Although religious proscriptions against suicide in some faith communities may

have diminished over the years, they still maintain powerful messages about the eternal risks of suicide (Stark 2001; Stark and Bainbridge 1997). Third, Burr et al. (1994) demonstrated that the percentage of Catholics living in a metropolitan area negatively affected suicide rates in the U.S., but part of this effect was mediated by the divorce rate. In other words, there were both direct effects of percent Catholic and indirect effects, through the attenuation of divorce rates, on suicide rates.

Research on suicide among African-Americans illustrates how culture and religion may influence suicide rates. In an illustrative study, Early (1992) sought to understand why the African-American suicide rate in the U.S. was about half as large as the white suicide rate (although rates have been converging; see Kubrin et al. 2006). Given the social disorganization, anomie, and powerlessness suffered disproportionately by African-Americans, one might conclude that their suicide rate should have been higher than the rate in the general population. Early argued, however, that African-American churches provide a normative climate that helps keep suicide rates low. He observed that the church helps define suicide as alien to the African-American experience. It promulgates ethics, traditions, and moral values, and serves a unifying function. Early concluded that these churches stood as bastions in social struggles and helped individuals develop resilience against suicide. Religious involvement gives African-Americans hope, strengthens them, and bonds them together in a tradition of unity. This general view is supported by recent studies showing that religious coping and participation can increase hope among African-American youth, thus diminishing the likelihood of suicidal behaviors (Fitzpatrick et al. 2008; Molock et al. 2006).

The search for lower suicide rates among particular religious traditions has also motivated studies of Islamic influences. Cross-national research has shown that countries with high proportions of Muslims tend to have lower suicide rates, even after controlling for the effects of economic and social conditions (Shah and Chandia 2010; see, however, Lester 1996; Neumayer 2003). Moreover, negative attitudes toward sui-

cide are relatively high among Muslims (Stack and Kposowa 2011) and completed suicides tend to be lower compared to other groups (Coskun et al. 2012). Researchers have offered two explanations for lower suicide rates among Muslims and in Muslim nations: (1) Muslim practice encourages daily ritual and an immersion of self in broader communities that strongly attenuates the likelihood of suicide (i.e., a social network explanation); and (2) traditional Islamic beliefs that proscribe suicide and teach the severe penalties for such acts continue to hold sway over this type of behavior (Anees 2006). However, there is little evidence that suicide attempts are lower among Muslims relative to others (Lester 2006). This suggests that Muslims may not complete suicides as often as others (Gal et al. 2012), but more research is needed to confirm this conjecture.

Although it has been tempting to preserve Durkheim's legacy by comparing distinct religious faiths, a promising alternative is to explore the effects of religious pluralism on suicide rates. Ellison and colleagues (1997) argued that religious homogeneity—the relative concentration of denominations in a given geographical area—is a more appropriate focus for macro-level suicide studies. They reasoned that religious homogeneity encourages social interaction, enhances social support processes, allows the shaping of local culture so that it fits better with particular beliefs and practices, and augments positive identity formation. These, in turn, increase the likelihood of help-seeking behavior and diminish mental health problems that may lead to suicide. Consistent with Pescosolido (1990), however, they recognized that, at least in the U.S., there are also regional issues: Religious homogeneity may have its strongest effect when it intersects with more extensive regional or ethnic cultures, such as when Southern Baptists are the majority group in particular southern counties or when Mormons are in Utah. Their analysis of U.S. counties indicated that religious homogeneity had a more powerful effect on suicide rates than percent Catholic or rates of church membership, and that it was particularly consequential for Catholic concentration in the

Northeast and for Evangelical Christian concentration in the South.

As with studies of delinquent behavior, there have been several studies of individual-level religion and suicide. However, these have typically involved research on suicide ideation or attitudes. It is obviously quite difficult—but not impossible as some studies have interviewed friends and family members—to gather data on the religious practices of those who have completed suicide. In the few studies that have gathered information about those who have attempted or completed suicide, there appeared to be influences of religion, but they were confounded with mental health status or the data were drawn from limited clinical samples. For example, a Finnish study using autopsy data found that a disproportionate number of religious adherents experienced psychotic disorders and sought help prior to completing suicide (Sorri et al. 1996). A similarly designed study in China demonstrated that those who committed suicide were slightly less religious than those in a control group, but that other psychosocial factors were much more consequential (Zhang et al. 2010). Studies of suicide attempts have suggested that importance of religion among U.S. adolescents, religious-based moral ideals among those with predisposing mental health disorders, and a “spiritual cultural orientation” (traditional tribal orientations about balance and harmony in one’s life) among American Indians were associated with a lower likelihood of suicide attempts (Dervic et al. 2014; Garrouette et al. 2003; Nonnemaker et al. 2003).

Most of the individual-level research has addressed suicidal ideation or ideology. Although not directly germane to actual suicidal behavior, it is important to note that tolerance for suicide is associated with higher rates of suicide at the national level (Neeleman et al. 1997; Stack and Kposowa 2008), thus studies of attitudes about suicide can be useful. A consistent finding has been that measures of religiosity are negatively associated with suicidal thoughts or tolerance (Cook et al. 2002; Neeleman 1998; Rasic et al. 2011; Stack 1998; Stack and Kposowa 2011). For example, a recent study found that Muslim affiliation, finding strength from religion, and believ-

ing in God, an afterlife, and hell were negatively associated with approval of suicide across 56 nations (Stack and Kposowa 2011). Moreover, there are some demographic groups that appear to benefit more than others from involvement in religion. African-Americans, who tend to have less tolerance than whites for suicide and also tend to be more involved in faith communities, experienced a weaker negative association between religious beliefs or attendance and tolerance for suicide (Neeleman et al. 1998; Stack and Wasserman 1995). Measures of religion tend to be among the strongest correlates of suicide ideology among whites, but not among African-Americans (Stack 1998). This may be due to the lower variability in religious behaviors and suicidal ideology among samples of African-Americans relative to whites. However, it may also be linked to the association between religiosity and better mental health, such as the diminished likelihood of depressive symptoms among religious and spiritual individuals (Koenig 2013; Walker and Bishop 2005).

In addition to searching for group-specific effects, there are two other directions taken by individual-level studies of religion and suicide. First, similar to research on the moral communities hypothesis, studies have begun to look at whether religion plays a larger role in certain geographic areas. For instance, studies have suggested that religious practices are linked more strongly to tolerance for suicide in less religious areas of the Netherlands, but also in nations that are “highly religious” (Neeleman 1998; Neeleman et al. 1997). Although this appears inconsistent, it points generally to the need for more research on the cross-national context of religion and suicide (e.g., Stack and Kposowa 2011).

Second, similar to research on the indirect effects of religion on delinquency and drug use, studies have implied that religion affects tolerance for suicide indirectly through feminist orientations, help seeking behaviors, symptoms of mental health disorders, and social support (e.g., Dervic et al. 2014; Greening and Stoppelbein 2002; Stack et al. 1994). In other words, if religious beliefs or practices attenuate mental health

disorders or encourage social support, then they may indirectly diminish the likelihood of suicide or pro-suicidal attitudes. However, more studies are needed that explore intra- and interpersonal characteristics that might mediate the relationship between religion variables and suicide.

Sexual Deviance and Religion

The term “sexual deviance” is perhaps the most sensitive topic in this chapter. It is impossible not to acknowledge the changing norms about sexuality that have occurred in the U.S. and across much of the developed world over the past three or four decades (see Page and Shipley’s chapter on “Sexuality” in this volume). These changing norms have redefined what it means to be sexually deviant, and, although some deviance textbooks still discuss issues such as homosexuality, fetishism, or tranvestism, these practices are only tenuously defined as deviant in contemporary discussion (at least in much of the developed world). Therefore, rather than attempt to delineate the boundaries of sexual deviance, this section merely gives a flavor of some recent studies of the effects of religion on sexual behaviors that have been or are considered deviant by some.

Perhaps the most widely studied phenomenon in the realm of sexual deviance and religion involves nonmarital sexual behavior. However, since more than one-third of high school aged adolescents, about half of high school seniors, and almost three-fourths of unmarried adults in the U.S. report that they are “sexually active” (have had sexual intercourse in the past 3 months) (Liu et al. 2015; Lindberg and Singh 2008), it seems dubious to use the term deviant to describe this behavior. Nonetheless, most research addressing this issue finds that variables such as religious service attendance and importance of religion are negatively associated with premarital sex (Adamczyk and Hayes 2012; Regnerus 2007). This relationship may have changed temporally, however, with membership in Evangelical denominations having a stronger negative impact on premarital sexual behavior over time (Brewster et al. 1998). Belonging to a Muslim group or

living in a majority Muslim nation also appears to minimize the likelihood of premarital sex (Adamczyk and Hayes 2012; Addai 2000). Moreover, religious service attendance and biblical literalism are associated with a significantly lower risk of having extramarital sexual relations (Burdette et al. 2007).

Religiosity also has a relatively consistent association with attitudes toward nonmarital sexual behavior. Survey data have consistently indicated that members of religious groups, especially members of more conservative groups and those who attend services more often, tend to be among the least tolerant of premarital and extramarital sexual relationships (Chaves 2011; Hoffmann and Miller 1998). In fact, members of conservative religious traditions have sustained much of the opposition to premarital sexual relations in the U.S. and elsewhere in the world (Greeley and Hout 2006). Similar to explanations given earlier in this chapter, conservative religious groups tend to have stronger and more consistent beliefs about particular types of behavior, be involved in more religious and devotional activities, and have more cohesive networks, which combine to lead to an efficient transmission of messages about moral behaviors (Cochran and Beeghley 1991; Stroope 2012).

The greater tolerance for homosexuality in the U.S. and elsewhere in the developed world has led to an increasing number of studies on the impact of religion. Any myth about the irreligiousness of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual (LGBT) people has been dispelled by research on religion and spirituality among them. However, unlike general research on religiosity that has shown that females are more religious than males (Miller and Stark 2002), Sherkat (2002) found that gay men had higher rates of religious participation than lesbians, bisexuals, or heterosexual men. Other studies have suggested that LGBT people are marginalized by many religious traditions, thus they have a lower likelihood of participation in faith-based activities. Although Sherkat’s research disputes this notion for gay men, he did find that lesbians and bisexuals attended religious services less often and were more likely to report “no religious affiliation”

than others. Many lesbians and others in the LGBT community experience spirituality through alternative means, though, such as female-based religious groups (e.g., Wicca), faith groups open to or designed for their sexual identities, and individualized forms of spirituality (Neitz 2000; Porter et al. 2013; Wilcox 2002).

Attitudes about homosexuality and same-sex marriage became more tolerant over the past three decades (Baunach 2012; Loftus 2001), especially among more recent birth cohorts (Andersen and Fetner 2008). However, those who attend religious services frequently or hold traditional religious beliefs have lagged behind others in their level of tolerance (Sherkat et al. 2011; Whitley 2009). This is likely due to the mechanisms discussed earlier, especially among Evangelicals and members of other conservative religious groups who base their doctrine on particular biblical and scriptural prohibitions against homosexuality (Adamczyk and Pitt 2009; Sherkat et al. 2010; 2011).

Although there are several other forms of sexual deviance that have garnered the interest of researchers, most have not considered religion or spiritual-based factors in their assessments. Exceptions to this include child sexual abuse; polygamy, which is more appropriately considered under the topic *religion as deviance* since it is typically based on religious teachings; and cohabitation, which is more suitably considered a family issue rather than a specific issue of sexuality. Studies have also addressed religious influences on the development of sexual identities (Levitt 1995; Sherry et al. 2010) and on attitudes toward and the use of pornography (Sherkat and Ellison 1997; Short et al. 2014). In general, those who report greater religiosity are less likely to view pornography (Regnerus 2007; Short et al. 2014). Sherkat and Ellison's (1997) study of conservative Protestantism and opposition to pornography is especially instructive for understanding why certain religious adherents are opposed to this, and perhaps other, sexual behaviors. Briefly, they posited that commitment to biblical inerrancy supports moral absolutism and beliefs about societal contamination through immorality. These two mechanisms, in turn,

heighten opposition to pornographic materials. This pathway is also useful for understanding attitudes towards homosexuality (Burdette et al. 2005). The value of Sherkat and Ellison's model is that it describes specific indirect influences of religiosity on attitudes toward behaviors that have traditionally been identified as deviant. Therefore, it is consistent and, in some ways elaborates, research on how religion indirectly affects deviance through cognitively- and socially-based mediating processes.

Religion as Deviance

A topic that is too broad to consider in this chapter involves the deviance process, or how certain behaviors or lifestyles come to be labeled as deviant (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 2009). There are numerous examples of the way in which a majority group's religious doctrines or ideology have been used to justify the passage of laws targeting specific behaviors (e.g., witchcraft trials, Prohibition in the U.S.) or the labeling of faith-based groups as deviant (Christians in first century Rome, Scientologists in Germany, Falun Gong, the Branch Davidians) (see Richardson's chapter on "Law and Social Control" in this volume). Moreover, the role of the media and popular culture in defining certain behaviors as deviant has, at times, taken on a religious flavor or drawn from popular religion (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 2009). The role that the dominant group's religious beliefs have played in defining certain behaviors as deviant is a topic too extensive to be included in this chapter.

A slightly more circumscribed topic involves *religion as deviance*. There are numerous studies of historical and contemporary manifestations of religion as deviance in the U.S. and elsewhere. Most of these studies focus on new religious movements or schism groups, violence in the name of religion, or extreme forms of religious behavior that are identified as mental illness (Dawson 2006). Recent research on religion and mental illness has dismissed the notion that religious adherents are more likely to suffer from mental health disorders (Koenig 2013), although

some clinical psychology studies continue to discuss the exacerbating role that extreme religious beliefs play in depression and suicide attempts (Exline et al. 2000).

Perhaps the most prominent example of religion as deviance in the contemporary world is the potential link between terrorist activities and religious beliefs and affiliation. A frequently studied phenomenon has involved the so-called “suicide bomber;” many of whom report at least some motivation from their religious beliefs. However, research has indicated that religious motivation is actually a relatively minor reason that suicide bombers engage in this extreme form of deviant behavior. The most consequential factors included perceived social exclusion, defense of one’s nation or cultural group, and a quest for liberation (Brym and Araj 2006; Kruglanski et al. 2009; Pape 2005).

New religious movements or religious cults have been the topic of many studies (Dawson 2006). Although there is not space to conduct a sufficient review of these groups and how some might view them as deviant, we do wish to point out that there are many examples of behaviors that are labeled as deviant mainly because they are promulgated by new religious movements. Examples of these behaviors include polygyny among Mormons in the nineteenth century and among fundamentalist Mormons in contemporary U.S. society; avoidance of certain medical procedures by Christian Scientists; the establishment of utopian communities—which are normally isolated from the broader society—by several new religious movements; animal sacrifice among Santeria; and sexual practices that are deemed non-normative by others in the surrounding community (e.g., sexual abstinence among adult Shakers). Moreover, some have examined the link between violent behavior and certain new religious movements, although scholars typically point out that very few of these groups ever turn to violence (Hall 2013).

Finally, there is the issue of the control of deviance within religious groups: How do they develop and enforce sanctions to attenuate behavior that falls outside their normative boundaries? The general issue of social control within reli-

gious groups is a common motivation for conducting research on new religious movements, and has led to numerous studies of deviance within groups (e.g., Straus 1986; Wright 1986). As deviant behaviors become common in groups, there is, finally, the issue of how this affects group stability, schismatic behavior, or accommodation to the broader culture (Finke and Scheitle 2009).

Future Directions

Interest in the relationship between religion and deviance has generated a large body of impressive studies. The presumed opposite social forces of integration and fragmentation that concern much of the social sciences virtually mandate a concern with religion—usually seen as a force for integration—and deviance—by definition a force for fragmentation. Although there have been numerous studies of religion and deviance over the past 150 years or so, there continue to be large gaps in our understanding of how these two concepts are related. Given our review, we discuss three areas that are in particular need of further consideration.

First, studies have accomplished much empirically to help us understand whether religion is associated with juvenile delinquency, drug use, suicide, and sexuality. However, we lack a comprehensive understanding of why these factors might be linked. Theories of delinquent behavior and drug use, for instance, have done a poor job of incorporating religion variables into their models. At the individual-level, how might a religious upbringing affect the motivations or impediments for drug use or delinquent behavior? This should be a key concern for social learning, social bonding, strain, deterrence, and symbolic interaction theories of deviance. Furthermore, are there reciprocal relations between religion and deviance? Most studies include only one-way causal arrows, from religion to deviance, but participation in deviant behavior may also attenuate involvement in religious activities (Burkett and Warren 1987; Hoffmann 2014).

At the macro-level, what role do religious institutions play in community social control,

the development of community norms, or providing alternatives for youth who may otherwise find themselves on a path toward crime, gang membership, violence, or drug use? Research by Johnson and colleagues (2000b) and Lee and Bartkowski (2004b) suggested that faith-based institutions affect the likelihood of youth involvement in crime, drug use, and violence. Both sets of researchers take a social capital approach to understanding these connections, but we should not preclude addressing other theoretical perspectives such as routine activities and rational choice as well. Moreover, we ought not ignore potential macro-micro links between religion and deviance, both theoretically and empirically. What does it mean, for instance, to have a “moral community?” Will a critical mass of religious adherents in a neighborhood allow more control over deviant activities? Are there threshold effects? Is deviant behavior affected by interactions between the proportion of religious adherents in a neighborhood and individual-level characteristics such as self-control, criminal propensities, peer associations, and so forth? Theories of deviance are richer when they incorporate both macro and micro-level factors into their models. Johnson et al. (2000b; see also Jang and Johnson 2001), for example, provided a promising multilevel model for understanding the role that religious institutions play in reducing youth crime and drug use in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Second, there has been too little attention to the measurement of religion and deviance. Evans et al. (1995) showed that how religious participation is measured affected whether there was a consistent association with illegal behaviors. Ellison et al. (1997) found that religious homogeneity was a better predictor of suicide rates than was percent Catholic or Protestant. Note that these illustrative studies addressed limitations in how religion was measured. Yet criminologists have also considered the measurement of delinquency and drug use in a more careful manner. Studies have demonstrated that the predictors of delinquent behavior differ depending on whether one measures *participation* in delinquent activities (a yes-no question) versus *frequency* of

offending (counts of offending over a fixed time period). A question that comes to mind is whether religious behaviors and beliefs are more consequential influences over whether individuals cross a threshold and participate in delinquency and drug use at all; or whether they affect frequency of offending. Are they more influential in affecting drug use or abuse? Initiation or escalation? In our view, it remains to be seen under what circumstances religion affects involvement in delinquent or drug using behavior.

Finally, there has been far too little attention to race, ethnicity, and gender in research on religion and deviance. Although some studies have addressed whether African-Americans, Hispanics, or females benefit more from religious participation than whites or males, there are few conclusions available at this point. It has been observed repeatedly that African-Americans and females are more likely than whites or males to participate in religious activities (religious service attendance, prayer, etc.); however, whether this translates into less deviant behavior is unclear. Considering that African-Americans are disproportionately represented among juvenile arrestees and in the U.S. correctional system, assessing the role of religion in their lives and how it affects involvement in delinquent and criminal behaviors should be a high priority. A similar observation applies to Hispanics in the U.S. Moreover, if females are more involved in religion (especially in the industrialized West), yet less likely to engage in crime or complete suicides, perhaps there should be an emphasis on whether their spirituality attenuates involvement in deviant activities. Or are there traits distinctive to females that affect both religious involvement and the likelihood of deviant behavior?

The study of religion and deviance has left us with a rich set of results and a provocative set of ideas. There seem to be consistent and persistent effects of religion on several forms of deviance, including delinquent behavior, drug use, and suicide. But are these effects simply a reflection of a common set of traits that influences religious behavior *and* deviant behavior, or is religious behavior part of a casual pathway that leads one away from deviant behavior? Are the effects of

religion on deviant behavior stronger in certain groups or cultures? Conducting more careful research on religion and deviance is clearly recommended, but it also promises to yield important guidance for understanding the myriad factors that integrate and fragment contemporary society.

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Part IV

Difference and Inequality

Philip Schwadel

Abstract

This chapter provides a theoretically-motivated overview of the association between social class and religion, primarily in the United States. I focus on three dimensions of this association. First, social-class stratification in religious affiliation, emphasizing both change and stability in the social-class hierarchy of religious traditions. Second, social-class differences in religious belief and participation, which indicate both positive and negative associations between social class and religiosity. Third, the influence of religion on views of social stratification, which in some ways support and in other ways conflict with expectations derived from classical theory. For each of these dimensions of the association between religion and social class, I review the relevant literature and provide empirical examples using the General Social Survey. I conclude by offering suggestions for future research.

Of the three foundational figures of sociological theory, two of them—Karl Marx and Max Weber—viewed religion and social class as intrinsically connected. It is not hyperbolic to say that research on the relationship between religion and social class was fundamental to the formation and institutionalization of the discipline of sociology. Weber and Marx disagreed about the

centrality of wealth in the stratification system. Nonetheless, they both believed that class stratification influences religion, and vice versa. Contemporary research continues to demonstrate robust connections between religion and social class. This chapter provides an overview of the principal associations between social class and religion, primarily in the United States, by reviewing the extant literature and by providing empirical examples with nationally representative survey data. I focus on three ways that religion and social class influence one another: class stratification in religious affiliation, social-class differences in religious belief and participation, and the impact of religion on views of social

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stratification. Throughout the chapter, there is an emphasis on the relationship between sociological theory and empirical findings.

Theoretical Foundations

It is important to begin by clarifying what we mean by social class. Social class is rooted in social stratification. Without stratification, there are no social classes. Thus, social class is often viewed as a relational concept (Wright 1993), where classes are defined—and ranked—relative to one another. Without a working class, there is no manufacturing class. Without a lower class, there is no upper class. As Bourdieu (1987, p. 12) noted, the upper and lower classes, and the manufacturing and working classes, are clearly distinct because they are “situated at extreme ends of the distributions;” such distinctions become “evidently less effective in the intermediate zones.” While the Marxist perspective is that economic position is the principal arbiter of one’s position in the stratification system, the Weberian perspective suggests that social stratification is multidimensional: power, prestige, and wealth are each relevant. A strict Marxist viewpoint also suggests that classes are well defined and that individuals strongly identify with their specific social class (Jackman and Jackman 1973). Importantly, these differences may influence how we empirically operationalize social class. In this chapter, I will focus both on social class as a subjective position in a stratified society, as well as social class an objective position defined by income, education, and occupation (Wright 2005). These positions, as both Marx and Weber emphasized, influence life chances.

Marx’s (1972 [1844]) writings on religion largely pertain to how religion relates to potential changes in the economy, or lack thereof; though he also argued that religion is alienating in its attribution of human qualities to the divine. For Marx, religion legitimates existing social structures, specifically economic conditions. Despite this macro focus, he makes assumptions about the nature of the relationship between class and religion that should be observable among groups

of individuals. Marx was famously critical of religion. He believed that social class influences religion in the sense that in a capitalist economy religious institutions will come to serve the purposes of the bourgeoisie. Just as the economic base determines every other aspect of the superstructure, a capitalist economy will produce religious institutions that reflect existing economic divisions. For Marx, this meant that otherworldly religion was used to pacify the proletariat. Here we see how religion can also influence social class. Otherworldly religion, in Marx’s view, promotes a worldview that leads the proletariat to accept their position in a stratified society. Thus, otherworldly religion can inhibit social mobility.

Similar to Marx, Weber was also interested in how religion can influence the economy, as well as society more broadly. Unlike Marx, Weber saw religion as a force of both stability and change. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1992 [1930]) is his most famous treatise on religion. Weber argued that Protestantism, and specifically Calvinism, provided the ethos or “spirit” necessary for the development of modern capitalism. Specifically, Calvinism emphasized the doctrine of *predestination*, which maintained that some people were destined for salvation and others for eternal damnation. Calvinists were left uncertain about their fate and often sought “signs” that they were predestined for everlasting life. Worldly success came to be seen as such a sign, leading to a broader cultural emphasis on the importance of economic success. This form of ascetic Protestantism also stressed lifestyle choices, such as avoidance of worldly pleasures and the importance of thrift, which promoted success and laid the foundation for a capitalist economy. Weber ([1906] 1946) was particularly struck by the popular association of religion with virtue in early twentieth century U.S. culture, where being a member of a church was a key credential that provided trust and allowed economic transactions to flourish without evidence of available credit.

Despite the popularity of the Protestant ethic thesis, Weber’s work on class-specific religious orientations has had a greater impact on contemporary research on religion and social class.

In *The Sociology of Religion* ([1922] 1993, pp. 138–9), Weber described how transcendental religions, which are characterized by a divinity that is largely removed from the world (e.g. Christianity, Islam, and Judaism), induce the problem of theodicy: “the problem of how the extraordinary power of such a god may be reconciled with the imperfection of the world he has created and rules over.” There are various “solutions” to the problem of theodicy, and these solutions vary by social class. For instance, Weber argued that affluent adherents of transcendental religions are generally proponents of a theodicy of good fortune. Similar to the popular interpretation of Calvinist doctrine discussed above, a theodicy of good fortune characterizes worldly success as a sign of divine approval, and lack of success as indicative of moral failings. A theodicy of good fortune thus legitimates existing social structures and inequalities. Conversely, Weber believed that less affluent adherents of transcendental religions ascribe to a theodicy of suffering. Such a theodicy emphasizes that worldly misfortune is fleeting, and suggests that misfortune will be compensated for with otherworldly rewards. This is precisely the type of theodicy that Marx saw as harmful to the proletariat.

One of Weber’s key contributions in this area concerns the development of the church-sect typology ([1906] 1946). Weber used the terms *church* and *sect* to indicate ideal types of organizations that are primarily differentiated by the mode of membership. He defined churches as organizations comprised of members who were born into membership and sects as organizations that require people to choose to become members (i.e. conversion). Theologian Ernst Troeltsch ([1931] 1992), who was Weber’s colleague and neighbor, expanded on Weber’s use of church and sect by emphasizing not only the mode of membership but also compromise with the surrounding social environment. Unlike Weber, Troeltsch saw church and sect as forms of behavior in addition to organizational typologies. Churchlike behavior is accommodating to secular society while sectlike behavior rejects the secular social environment. Troeltsch also added a third behavioral type in *mysticism*, which is a

subjective form of religiosity with little organizational attachment. Most importantly, he emphasized class distinctions. According to Troeltsch, the lower class exhibit sectarian behaviors while the upper class, particularly the highly educated, are drawn to mysticism.

The church-sect typology was introduced to American social scientists predominantly through H. Richard Niebuhr’s *Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929). According to Niebuhr, churches administer grace through sacraments and they define membership by descent. Sects, on the other hand, emphasize the priesthood of all believers and they require a religious experience or conversion for membership. Sects constitute the *churches of the disinherited*, which appeal to the lower classes through a promise of reversal of fortune in the afterlife. Conversely, middle-class, churchlike religion emphasizes sin, salvation, and righteousness, which leads to a sense of individual worth, self-help, and responsibility. Niebuhr described a dynamic process where the children and grandchildren of converts to sects are upwardly mobile and eventually seek more compromise with the surrounding environment. Thus, sects eventually become churches. As the remainder of this chapter demonstrates, the views of religion and social class expounded by Marx and Weber, as well as the development of the church-sect typology in the work of Troeltsch and Niebuhr, are fundamental to contemporary research on social class and religion.

A Note on Data

Throughout this chapter, empirical analyses of survey data are used to demonstrate some of the principal associations between social class and religion. The analyses employ data from the General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is a repeated cross-sectional survey that has been administered annually or biennially in the United States since 1972. The samples are representative of non-institutionalized Americans age 18 and older. All analyses are weighted to adjust for sampling variations. For analyses that employ objective measures of social class, the sample is

limited to respondents 25 years old or older to avoid limiting variation in education and occupational prestige. For more information on the GSS, see Smith et al. (2015).

I employ both objective and subjective measures of social class. Contemporary research endorses this approach to capture both current social and economic circumstances with objective measures and class identity with subjective measures (Rubin et al. 2014). The objective measure of family social class is an additive index of standardized measures of years of education (0–20), family income in constant (2000) dollars, and occupation prestige. I combine occupational prestige scores based on the 1960 census (for respondents in the 1972 through 1987 surveys) with prestige scores based on the 1980 census (for respondents in the 1988 through 2010 surveys) (Nako et al. 1990; Nako and Treas 1990). The combined measure ranges between 12 (low prestige) and 86 (high prestige). For married respondents, occupational prestige and years of education are coded as the highest values among the couple. Each variable is standardized (i.e. mean of zero and standard deviation of one) before adding them together to create the scale. The scale is then also standardized. Cronbach's Alpha for the scale is .75.

It is important to remember that social class is a relational concept (Wright 1993). Perceptions of one's own social class are influenced not only by education, occupation, and household wealth, but also by feelings of control, financial security, and satisfaction, which involve social comparison (Singh-Manoux et al. 2003). A subjective measure of social class “assesses social class rank relative to other members of the same university, community, or country. As such, subjective SES captures the individual's perceived place within a resource-based hierarchy” (Kraus et al. 2009, pp. 992–93). The GSS data include a measure of subjective social class, which indicates whether the respondent considers him/herself to be lower class, working class, middle class, or upper class.

Several analyses employ measures of religious tradition. Respondents are coded into one of 10 unique religious traditions. Catholic, Jewish, and unaffiliated (sometimes referred to as

“none”) are each their own traditions. The black Protestant category is based on the denominational scheme proposed by Steensland and colleagues (2000). The liberal Protestant category represents contemporary incarnations of the “Protestant Establishment” churches (Roof and McKinney 1987): the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Episcopal Church, and the United Church of Christ. The mainline Protestant category consists of all the denominations in Steensland and colleagues' (2000) coding of mainline denominations with the exception of the liberal Protestant denominations. This group includes denominations such as the United Methodist Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The evangelical Protestant grouping follows the categories defined by Steensland and his coauthors (2000) except Pentecostals and nondenominational Protestants are not considered evangelical. Evangelical Protestant includes denominations such as Southern Baptist Convention and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The Pentecostal category includes denominations such as Assemblies of God and most Churches of God (see Garneau and Schwadel 2013). Due to the varied nature in how researchers view nondenominational Protestants—as fundamentalists (Kellstedt and Smidt 1991), as evangelicals if they attend church relatively frequently (Steensland et al. 2000), or as moderate Protestants (Smith 1990)—nondenominational Protestants are their own category. Finally, the “other” religion category follows Steensland and colleagues' (2000) coding. This group includes Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Christian denominations such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Jehovah's Witnesses. See Schwadel (2014a) for more information on this religious categorization. Additional measures are discussed as they are introduced throughout the chapter.

Religious Stratification

The concept of religious stratification highlights the close connection and reciprocal influence of religious and social class hierarchies in a society. Every nation has its own particular pattern of

religious stratification with its own unique history. In many nations, the establishment of one or more religions determines the location of religions in the class hierarchy (Finke and Stark 2005). Still, immigration can promote mobility in the class hierarchy of religions, even in nations with legacies of establishment (Berger et al. 2008). Here I chronicle the case I know best, the United States, where a free religious marketplace has dominated since establishment was barred by the government in 1791, yet immigration is still responsible for much of the fluidity in religious stratification.

History of Religious Stratification in the United States

Social-class stratification has been a persistent characteristic of American religion since the founding of the nation. Nine of the original 13 colonies had an established religion, either Episcopalian (i.e. Anglican) or Congregationalist (Davidson and Pyle 2011). Although establishment is barred by the 1st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, early on these churches enjoyed economic and social privileges that affiliates of other religions did not have access to. Along with Presbyterians, these groups are considered the “Protestant Establishment.” In 1776, the majority of religious adherents in the newly formed United States were affiliated with one of the three Protestant Establishment denominations; affiliation with smaller, more sectarian Protestant churches, as well as non-Protestant religions, was seen as less socially desirable (Finke and Stark 2005).

Soon after the founding of the nation and the disestablishment of religion, the Protestant Establishment churches began to decline and sectarian religion—chiefly Methodist and Baptist—grew rapidly. Social class was integral to this process. The sects disproportionately attracted less affluent Americans. Heightened religious fervor in the early nineteenth century was promoted through camp meetings and religious revivals. “This type of revival-style worship appealed to the plain folk struggling to make

their way in the back country....but did not have much appeal for the well-to-do in urban settings” (Davidson and Pyle 2011, p. 66). Revivals and camp meetings emphasized equality in access to ministry and an emotional style of worship that was distasteful to the leaders of Protestant Establishment churches. The clergy in Protestant Establishment churches believed that “revivals aroused the riffraff against their betters” and “would cause common people to lose proper respect for their betters” (Finke and Stark 2005, p. 107).

In addition to differences in social class between affiliates of Protestant Establishment churches and affiliates of sects, there were also large social-class divisions among religious leaders. As Adam Smith ([1776] 2007, p. 608) argued, the social class of the clergy in turn affects the vibrancy of the religion:

The clergy of an established and well-endowed religion frequently become men of learning and elegance, who possess all the virtues of gentlemen, or which can recommend them to the esteem of gentlemen: but they are apt gradually to lose the qualities, both good and bad, which gave them authority and influence with the inferior ranks of people, and which had perhaps been the original causes of the success and establishment of their religion.

Speaking specifically of social circumstances in the United States in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Davidson and Pyle (2011, p. 64) noted:

One reason that the colonial mainline denominations failed to make inroads in the nation’s backwater areas was that there was a pronounced social divide between the seminary-trained clergy associated with mainline Protestantism and the unlettered settlers in the newly expanding regions. Unlike the mainline clergy, Baptists lay preachers and Methodist leaders in newly settled regions were from the same background as those they ministered to.

Sects thus established social-class affinity between preachers and laypeople, which strengthened the appeal of sects, while social-class distinctions between preachers and laypeople hindered the growth of Protestant Establishment churches. Consequently, by 1850, less than 8% of religious adherents in the U.S. were affiliated

with the Episcopal and Congregationalist denominations, and more than half of all adherents were affiliated with Baptist and Methodist denominations (Finke and Stark 2005).

Religious change in the U.S. in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was motivated by both sect to church transitions and more varied immigration from Europe. Church-sect theory proposes that over time, or across generations, sectarian affiliates become upwardly mobile and seek a religion that is more accommodating to the surrounding, secular environment (Niebuhr 1929; Troeltsch 1992 [1931]; Weber 1993 [1922]). Indeed, Methodism did become more churchlike, and Methodists as a whole moved into the middle class (Finke and Stark 2005). Methodists built seminaries, ended the institution of circuit riding preachers, and insisted on educated clergy. Baptist churches, on the other hand, remained sectarian, and Baptists remained disproportionately lower class. Finke and Stark (2005) argued that the autonomy of local congregations and strict control over seminaries were key to maintaining the sectarian nature of the Baptist religion.

In addition to Methodism becoming a more churchlike religion, increased migration from Southern and Eastern Europe influenced the social-class hierarchy of religious traditions, as well as the religious makeup of the nation. Large numbers of Catholics from Ireland and Italy led to tremendous growth in the Catholic population. The proportion of the American population that was Catholic more than tripled between 1850 and 1926 (Finke and Stark 2005). In the latter-half of the nineteenth century, the multi-ethnic nature of American Catholicism led to class distinctions within the religion, with Irish Catholics—the earlier immigrants—generally being of a higher social class than Italian Catholics (Davidson and Pyle 2011). Immigration from Eastern Europe brought almost two-million Jews to the U.S. between 1870 and the beginning of World War I (Ahlstrom 1972). Similar to Catholicism, there were ethnically-based social-class divisions within American Judaism, with German Jews—the earlier immigrants—being of a higher social

class than Eastern European Jews (Davidson and Pyle 2011).

The mid-twentieth century brought more changes. While Catholicism slowly transitioned to a middle-class religion, Judaism quickly became an upper-class religion in the United States. By the 1930s, Jews had joined Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians at the top of the class hierarchy (Pope 1948). By the 1950s, Catholics were part of the middle class, along with groups such as Methodists and Lutherans (Lazerwitz 1961). Baptist denominations continued to grow, and they remained disproportionately lower class; while the Protestant Establishment churches continued to shrink, and they remained relatively upper class (Demerath 1965; Lazerwitz 1961). In line with Weber's multidimensional conception of stratification, the upper-class status of Protestant Establishment churches was evident in their power and prestige as well as their wealth. For instance, 44% of U.S. Presidents between 1900 and 1960 were affiliates of Protestant Establishment churches, and one-half of the people listed in the 1950–1951 edition of *Who's Who in America* were affiliates of Protestant Establishment churches (Davidson and Pyle 2011).

Religious Stratification, 1972–2010

In contrast to the changes in the social-class hierarchy brought on by the upward mobility of Methodists in the nineteenth century and both Catholics and Jews in the first half of the twentieth century, empirical research suggests that the class hierarchy of American denominations did not change much in latter part of the twentieth century (Davidson and Pyle 2011; Pyle 2006). For instance, Smith and Faris (2005, p. 103) concluded that “from the early 1980s to the late 1990s...socioeconomic inequality in the American religious system has been persistent and stable.” This stability is clear in Fig. 18.1. Employing GSS data and the objective measure of social class, Fig. 18.1 shows the relative class ranking of religious traditions in the 1970s,

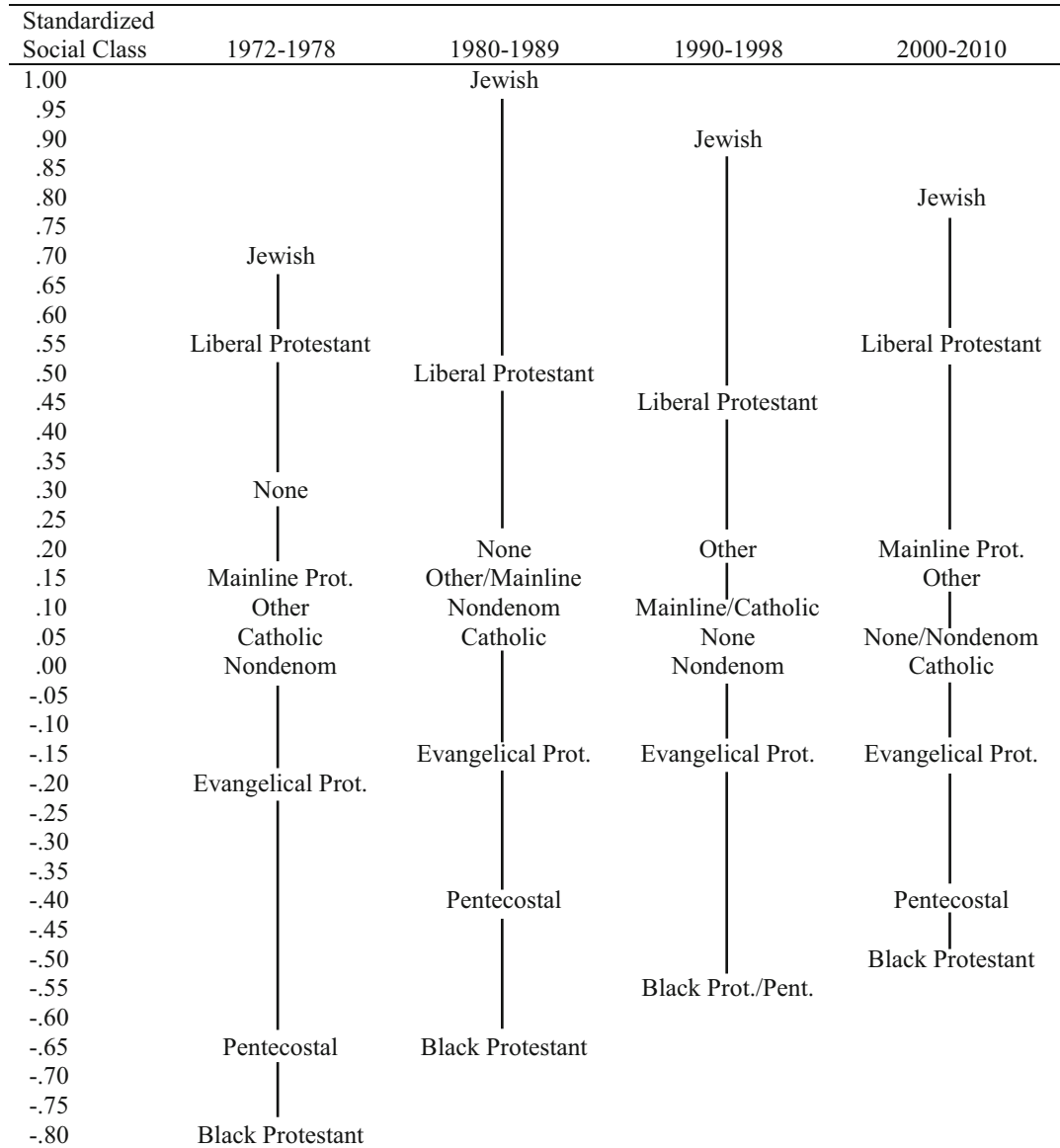


Fig. 18.1 Social class ranking of religious traditions (Notes: 1972–2010 General Social Survey; sample limited to respondents at least 25 years of age; N=39,325)

1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s. This figure depicts the average standardized social class score within each religious tradition for the four time periods.

To begin with, Fig. 18.1 shows that Jews and liberal Protestants (i.e. Protestant Establishment churches) were the highest and second highest ranked groups, respectively, in each of the four time periods. The Jewish advantage was particu-

larly large in the 1980s and 1990s. Nonetheless, both the Jewish advantage and the liberal Protestant advantage remained robust in the early twenty-first century. The religiously unaffiliated (“none”) were of a relatively high social class early on. In the 1970s, unaffiliated was the third ranked group, 0.3 standard deviations above the mean of social class. By the early twenty-first

century, unaffiliated was the fifth ranked group, tied with nondenominational Protestants. In other words, the unaffiliated declined from the upper-middle class to the middle class (i.e. near the mean). Mainline Protestants tended to be middle to upper-middle class, with social-class scores between 0.15 and 0.20 standard deviations above the mean. Despite minor fluctuations, Catholics and nondenominational Protestants were consistently middle class. The standardized social-class scores for both Catholics and nondenominational Protestants varied between the mean and 0.10 standard deviations above the mean.

Protestants affiliated with theologically conservative churches and churches that predominantly serve the African-American community constituted the lower end of the social-class hierarchy. Evangelical Protestants were between 0.15 and 0.20 standard deviations below the mean of social class. Black Protestants reported the lowest levels of social class across all four time periods. Pentecostals fell between evangelical and black Protestants, though they tended to be closer to black Protestants. In their influential work on denominational classification, Steensland and colleagues (2000) argued that nondenominational Protestants who attend church monthly should be considered conservative Protestants, similar to evangelical Protestants and Pentecostals. Alternative analyses that split the nondenominational category into two groups—those attending church monthly and those attending less often—do not support this argument, at least not in terms of expected social-class rankings (results not shown). In the 2000–2010 period, for example, the standardized social class score was 0.19 standard deviations above the mean for regularly attending nondenominational Protestants and 0.12 standard deviations below the mean for nondenominational Protestants who rarely or never attend church. Thus, irregular and non-attending nondenominational Protestants fit the social-class depiction of sectarians more so than their regularly attending counterparts.

Overall, the rankings in Fig. 18.1 show considerable consistency in the social-class hierarchy of American religions between 1972 and 2010. The only notable change was the decline in

the relative social class of the religiously unaffiliated. Importantly, this group also grew tremendously during this time period. Although religious non-affiliation was relatively stable in the 1970s and 1980s, generally accounting for about 7% of Americans, it doubled in the 1990s (Hout and Fischer 2002). By 2012, the unaffiliated comprised one-fifth of the American population (Hout and Fischer 2014). As non-affiliation has become more common, it has also become a less elite phenomenon (Schwadel 2014b). Aside from the downward mobility of the unaffiliated category, the social-class hierarchy of American religions has been remarkably stable in recent decades. Jews and liberal Protestants were at the top, and sectarians and black Protestants were at the bottom. This stability, however, does not account for ethnic variation within the largest religion in the nation or for the proposed mechanism of social change across generations.

Latino Immigration and Differences Among Catholics

Immigration not only affects the social-class hierarchy of religions by adding new religious groups, but it also masks changes in existing groups. Late nineteenth century Judaism and Catholicism were both internally divided by ethnicity and social class, with the more recently immigrated ethnicity being of a lower class than the longer settled ethnicity. Similarly, treating contemporary Catholics as a single group masks important social-class divisions between ethnicities, with Latinos—the more recently immigrated group—occupying a lower position in the social-class hierarchy. Despite evidence of the Protestantization of Latinos, more than one-half of all Latino Americans are affiliated with the Catholic Church, and more than one-third of all American Catholics are Latino (Pew Research Center 2014). The location of Catholicism in the social-class hierarchy is thus strongly influenced by the social class of Latino Catholics.

Research suggests that non-Latino white Catholics are an upwardly mobile group. Over three decades ago, Greeley (1981) highlighted

the internal variation in income in both the Catholic and Protestant communities, as well as the relatively high levels of income among white Catholics. Keister’s (2007, 2011) work provides the most thorough support for upward mobility among non-Latino white Catholics. Kesiter argued that non-Latino white Catholic upward mobility is associated with marriage and fertility patterns, education, distance from immigration status, and values related to work and money. Specifically, she showed that non-Latino white Catholics now have relatively small families, high marriage rates, low divorce rates, older ages at which they have children, high levels of education, and instrumental attitudes toward work and money. These attributes promote upward class mobility, particularly wealth accumulation, which is essential for transmitting middle- and upper-class status across generations.

Beginning in 2000, the GSS asked respondents if they identify as Latino/a or Hispanic. With this information, I divided Catholics into three categories: those who self-identify as Latino/a or Hispanic, whites who do not self-identify as Latino/a or Hispanic, and non-whites who do not self-identify as Latino/a or Hispanic. Figure 18.2 reports the standardized social class ranking of these three Catholic racial-ethnic groupings in 2000–2010, which can be compared to the rankings in the 2000–2010 column in Fig. 18.1. As Fig. 18.2 shows, Latino Catholics had particularly low levels of social class (0.55 standard deviations below the mean). Latino Catholics even ranked below Pentecostals and black Protestants. Non-Latino white Catholics, on the other hand, were 0.25 standard deviations above the mean of social class, ranking just above mainline Protestants. In 2000–2010, Liberal Protestants and Jews were the only groups with a higher average social class than non-Latino white Catholics. Overall, Fig. 18.2 provides considerable support for Keister’s (2007, 2011) arguments about non-Latino white Catholics continuing their upward mobility after the mid-twentieth century. Contemporary non-Latino white Catholics are a middle- to upper-middle-class group on average, while Latino Catholics are predominantly lower or working class.

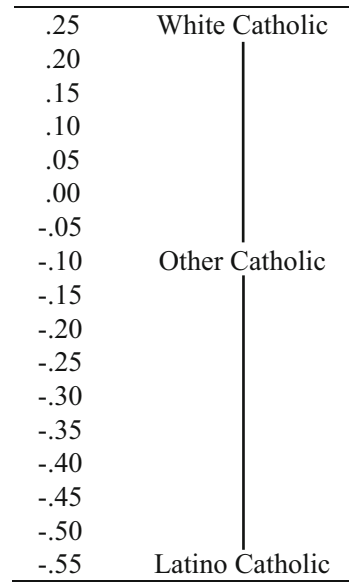


Fig. 18.2 Social-class ranking of Catholics, 2000–2010 (Notes: 2000–2010 General Social Survey; sample limited to respondents at least 25 years of age; reports standardized social class based on entire 2000–2010 sample age 25 and older; N=2,813)

Birth Cohorts Rather Than Time Periods

In addition to social-class variation within religions that can mask social mobility and changes in the social-class hierarchy of religions, there is also the problem of generational or cohort change. In 1965, Norman Ryder published an influential article on the role of birth cohorts in promoting social change. Ryder argued that structural transformations, such as the upward mobility of specific religious groups, occur across birth cohorts due to cohort-specific experiences with education, culture, politics, and the economy. People are highly influenced by their formative years, and values and beliefs are resistant to change as people age (Alwin and Krosnick 1991). Each generation is exposed to unique social environments—such as wars and terrorism, depressions and recessions, political assassinations, and social movements—leading to the development of generation-specific perspectives and attributes. Structural transformations can cumulate across generations as each generation

influences the subsequent generation (Edmunds and Turner 2002). This emphasis on change across birth cohorts comports with the assumptions of church-sect theory as described in Niebuhr's (1929) work. Niebuhr argued that second and third generation sectarians should be upwardly mobile. Changes in the social-class hierarchy of religious traditions should thus be evident across birth cohorts or generations rather than over time among the population as a whole.

Recent research employing hierarchical age-period-cohort models does indeed reveal notable across-cohort changes in the relative social class of sectarian Protestants (Schwadel 2014a). Although such an analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter, focusing on a specific age range at different time periods provides insight into potential cohort changes. Figure 18.3 shows the social-class ranking of religions in 1972–1978 and 2004–2010 for those ages 25–34. The 1972–1978 data are thus roughly limited to those born between 1938 and 1953, and the 2004–2010 data are limited to those born between 1970 and 1985. The data were restricted to a specific age range to avoid conflating cohort and age effects. Ethnic and racial divisions within Catholicism are only shown for the 2004–2010 rankings because the measure of Latino ethnicity was not included in earlier years of the GSS. An “all Catholics” category is also shown in 2004–2010 to enable direct comparison with 1972–1978.

Figure 18.3 reveals considerably more movement across birth cohorts than was evident in the changes over time shown in Fig. 18.1. The sectarian groups were particularly upwardly mobile across birth cohorts. Pentecostals, for example, go from 0.60 standard deviations below the mean of social class to 0.35 standard deviations below the mean. Although they remain relatively lower class, this represents considerable upward mobility across generations of Pentecostals. Similarly, while 25–34 year old evangelical Protestants averaged 0.25 standard deviations below the mean of social class in 1972–1978, in 2004–2010 their social class was 0.05 standard deviations above the mean. Nondenominational Protestants made similarly large gains. While some sectarian

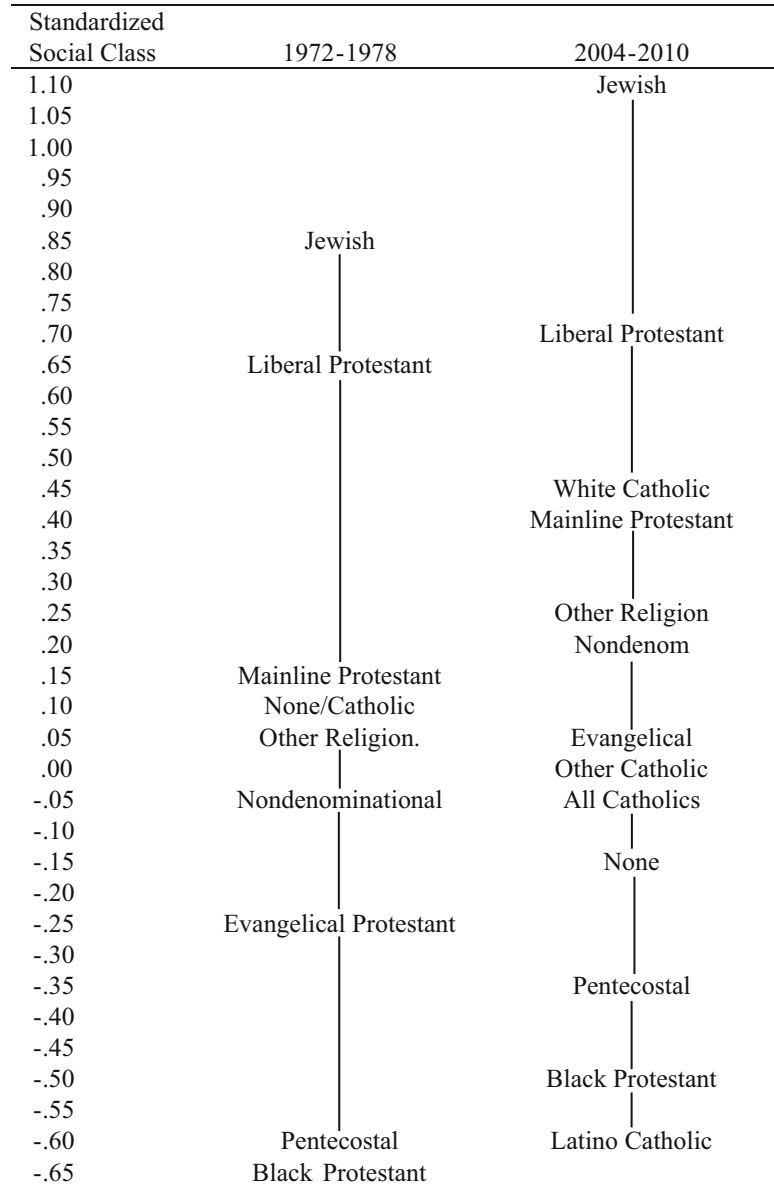
Protestants moved into the middle class, Mainline Protestant became more of an upper-middle-class tradition, with an average social class 0.40 standard deviations above the mean in 2004–2010. Catholics as a whole declined in social class, largely due to the social class of Latino Catholics. Among those age 25 to 34, non-Latino white Catholics were the third highest ranked tradition in 2004–2010, with an average social class 0.45 standard deviations above the mean. In contrast to these upwardly mobile groups, the unaffiliated declined notably in their social class.

Evaluating Church-Sect Theory

Church-sect theory, particularly as described by Niebuhr (1929), proposes a dynamic system of intergenerational upward mobility where the middle-class descendants of lower-class sectarians seek a form of religion that is more accommodating to the surrounding social environment. Methodism from the late eighteenth century through the early twentieth century fit this depiction. Methodism transitioned from a sectlike religion with lower-class affiliates to a more churchlike religion with middle-class affiliates. Other than Methodism and perhaps some segments of Lutheranism, however, changes to the social-class hierarchy of American religions have generally been the result of immigration. The relative stability of the social-class hierarchy does not provide much support for the dynamic process assumed in church-sect theory.

There is, however, more support for church-sect theory when generational differences and ethnic variation within Catholicism are taken into account. Nonetheless, sectarian Protestants were still relatively lower class: Pentecostals remained well below the mean of social class, and evangelical Protestants continued to lag behind their mainline and liberal counterparts. Moreover, recent research suggests that this pattern is repeating itself in the Latino community, with Catholic and mainline Protestant Latinos experiencing more rapid upward mobility than sectarian Latinos (Keister and Borelli 2014).

Fig. 18.3 Social class rankings of religious traditions, age 25–34 (Notes: 1972–1978 and 2004–2010 General Social Survey; sample limited to respondents 25–34 years old; N=1979 for 1972–1978 and N=1641 for 2004–2010)



Sectarian Protestants face important social, cultural, and demographic barriers to the upward mobility required for the transition from sect to church.

As Fitzgerald and Glass (2014, p. 98) argued, sectarian culture in the United States appears to “re-create [class positions] through the intergenerational transmission of ideas about educational attainment, sexuality, and family formation.” This cultural orientation discourages secular

education due to the perceived association between education and secular humanist values, evolution, and scientific investigation more generally (Darnell and Sherkat 1997; Lehrer 1999). Along with relatively low levels of education, sectarian Protestants’ views of sexuality, reproduction, marriage, and gender roles limit their upward mobility. In particular, sectarian Protestant theology and culture promote large

families, early marriage, and low rates of female participation in the labor force (Fitzgerald and Glass 2012, 2014; Glass and Jacobs 2005; Sherkat 2000, 2014). These factors contribute to lack of wealth accumulation, and thereby limit sectarian intergenerational mobility (Keister 2008, 2011). Consequently, Pentecostal, evangelical, and fundamentalist churches may continue to serve as churches of the disinherited.

The Current State of Religious Stratification

What is the current state of religious stratification in the United States? To begin to address this question, Fig. 18.4 reports the subjective social-class breakdown in each religious tradition using the most recent years of GSS data (2012 and 2014). As Fig. 18.4 shows, Liberal Protestants (73%) and Jews (85%) were particularly likely to consider themselves either middle class or upper class. Conversely, Pentecostals (64%) and black Protestants (68%) were particularly likely to consider themselves either lower class or working class. Latino Catholics, however, were the most likely to consider themselves lower class or working class (77%). Non-Latino white

Catholics were comparable to mainline Protestants, with 56% of both groups identifying as middle class or upper class. Objective measures of social class show similar patterns (not shown). For instance, 49% of Jews, 30% of Liberal Protestants, 24% of non-Latino white Catholics, and 21% of mainline Protestants had family incomes at least 0.5 standard deviations above the mean in 2012–2014. Conversely, more than one-half of Pentecostals, black Protestants, and Latino Catholics had family incomes at least 0.5 standard deviations below the mean in 2012–2014.

This stratification across religious affiliations equates to considerable overrepresentation of some religious groups in the middle and upper classes, and, of course, underrepresentation of others. Figure 18.5 shows the ratio of the proportion identifying as middle and upper class to the proportion of the total sample size for each religious tradition in 2012–2014. Values above one indicate overrepresentation and those below one indicate underrepresentation. Not surprisingly, liberal Protestants and Jews were highly overrepresented in the middle class and especially the upper class. For instance, almost four times as many liberal Protestants considered themselves upper class as would be the case if the religious

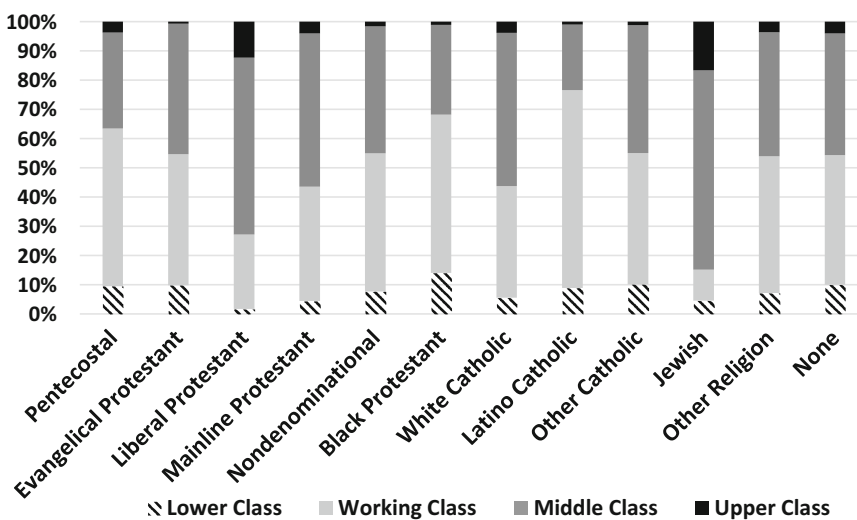


Fig. 18.4 Subjective social-class status within religious traditions, 2012 and 2014 (Notes: 2012 and 2014 General Social Survey; N=4300)

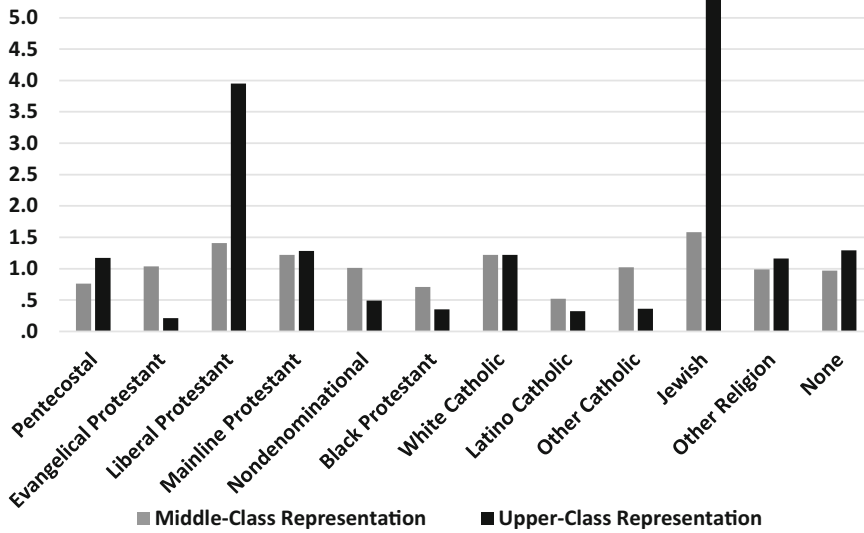


Fig. 18.5 Ratio of middle and upper-class identification relative to proportion of sample size (Notes: 2012 and 2014 General Social Survey; N=4300)

traditions had equivalent subjective social-class distributions. Mainline Protestants and non-Latino white Catholics were moderately overrepresented in subjective positioning in both the middle and upper classes. Despite the downward mobility of the religiously unaffiliated, they too remained overrepresented in the upper class, but not in the middle class. The gains in social class made by nondenominational and evangelical Protestants are evident in their being proportionately represented in the middle class. Nonetheless, evangelical and nondenominational Protestants were highly underrepresented in the upper class, as were black Protestants, Latino Catholics, and other Catholics.

Analyses using the subjective and objective measures of social class appear to tell the same story. The evidence suggests that while the size of the Jewish and liberal Protestant communities have declined, their place at the top of the social-class hierarchy has not changed; that sectarians remain highly underrepresented in the upper class; that religiously unaffiliated Americans were downwardly mobile but continue to be overrepresented among the elite; and that mainline Protestants and non-Latino white Catholics are disproportionately middle to upper-middle class.

Social Class and Religiosity

Religion is more than affiliating with the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, or Hindu religions; or with sectarian, liberal or, mainline Protestant denominations. These organized religions each endorse specific beliefs and behavioral expectations. Social scientific research emphasizes this multidimensional nature of religiosity. Glock and Stark's (1965) work in this area was particularly influential. They defined five dimensions of religion: religious participation, belief, experience, knowledge, and consequences. Their work has inspired considerable research, as well as notable critiques (see Mueller 1980). Nudelman (1971) suggested a simpler but more empirically relevant classification with only two dimensions: devotion and participation. "Devotion," according to Nudelman (1971, p. 52), "is composed of religious belief, feeling, and striving, while participation refers to behavior that is, in large part, explicitly social."

Church-sect theory, particularly as articulated by Niebuhr (1929) and Troeltsch (1992 [1931]), indicates not only that religious affiliations vary by social class, but also that other dimensions of religiosity differ across the social classes.

Specifically, church-sect theory suggests that middle-class religions emphasize the sacraments, and thus regular participation in religious services, while lower-class religions emphasize religious experiences and a personal connection with the divine. As Troeltsch acknowledged, most religions have both churchlike and sectlike affiliates. Within any given religion then, lower-class affiliates should exhibit sectlike behaviors and middle-class affiliates should exhibit churchlike behaviors. These class distinctions also apply to those who do not attend religious congregations, and even those who claim no religious affiliation, since unchurched and unaffiliated Americans often have theistic beliefs (Kosmin and Keysar 2009). In line with Nudelman's (1971) approach, I focus on the association between social class and two dimensions of religiosity: religious participation and religious devotion or beliefs.

Religious Participation

In their work on the dimensions of religiosity, Glock and Stark (1965) argued that the behavioral or participatory dimension is positively associated with social class. In support of their proposition, empirical research in the 1940s through 1960s generally found that middle-class Americans were relatively likely to take part in religious activities, particularly to attend religious services (see review by Demerath 1965; cf. Bultena 1949). Despite the empirically-established association between social class and service attendance, the causal ordering of this relationship was generally not made clear (Mueller and Johnson 1975). Even the work of foundational theorists suggests both that social class affects religious participation and that religious participation affects social class. For instance, Weber's Protestant ethic thesis implies that church participation leads to upward mobility by encouraging hard work, thrift, and lifestyles that are conducive to social mobility. Conversely, church-sect theory suggests that the middle and upper classes seek out more church-

like religions that emphasize the importance of religious participation.

In the 1970s, social scientists began questioning the assumption that lower-class Americans were less active in religious organizations (e.g. Alston and McIntosh 1979; Hoge and Carroll 1978). Mueller and Johnson (1975, p. 798), for example, concluded that interest in social-class differences in religious involvement was "perhaps unwarranted (at least in contemporary society)." Such proclamations led to a dearth of research on the subject for some time. Sherkat (2012, p. 76) linked the decline in interest in the association between social class and religion in the 1970s to the "dominance of structural theories, and a paucity of mechanisms linking cultural institutions and orientations to concrete stratification outcomes." Nonetheless, the topic has received renewed interest in the twenty-first century.

Contemporary research on social class and religious participation suggests that changes to religious and secular institutions have led religious congregations to feel less welcoming to the lower classes. For instance, Wilcox and his coauthors (2012) argued that changes in the family encourage "religious deinstitutionalization" among lower-class Americans. Their work builds on the observation that declining economic opportunities for those without a college degree led to reduced marriage rates among less-educated Americans (Cherlin 2009). Wilcox and colleagues (2012) contended that the emphasis on the importance of marriage and the family in contemporary churches (Edgell 2006), which was once a draw for the lower classes, now drives unmarried, lower-class Americans away from church. The demographic makeup of contemporary religious congregations may similarly promote religious deinstitutionalization among the lower classes. Although American churches are highly segregated racially, many congregations are relatively diverse in their social-class composition (Schwadel 2009). Some lower-class Americans feel uncomfortable in religious congregations with large numbers of middle and

upper-class attendees (Sakalas 1999; Sullivan 2011), leading to them to be less socially embedded in their congregations (Schwadel 2012). This discomfort may also lead to reduced participation.

Declines in civic participation and social capital (Putnam 2000) may similarly promote relatively low levels of church participation among the lower classes. Social integration—the basis of social capital—is strongly influenced by social class (House et al. 1988). Researchers in the 1960s and 1970s proposed a mediation model where the positive association between social integration and religious participation is responsible for social-class differences in religious service attendance (e.g. Goode 1966; Mueller and Johnson 1975). In other words, the middle and upper classes are relatively likely to participate in voluntary organizations in general (Putnam 2000), which includes religious congregations. More recent research instead suggests that social integration moderates the influence of social class on religious participation (e.g. Schwadel et al. 2009). Specifically, lower-class Americans who lack social integration are unlikely to regularly attend religious services while those who are more socially integrated resemble middle- and upper-class Americans in their frequency of church attendance. Thus, as social capital and

other forms of social integration wane, social class grows in its importance as a predictor of religious participation.

Figure 18.6 employs 2012 and 2014 GSS data to illustrate the association between social class and religious service attendance. The figure shows the percent who attend religious services regularly (at least two to three times a month), irregularly (between once a year and once a month), and rarely or never (less than once a year), within subjective social class. The middle class were the most likely to regularly attend services (42%). The lower class (36%) were not any less likely than the working class (36%) or the upper class (33%) to regularly attend religious services. They were, however, the most likely to report rarely or never attending services (39%, compared to 33% of working class, 28% of middle class, and 34% of upper class). This comports with expectations from church-sect theory, as well as research suggesting religious deinstitutionalization of the lower class.

In the mid-twentieth century, Bulenta (1949, p. 388) observed, “It is sometimes assumed that certain classes of people attend church much more than other classes—thus, for example, that business and middle classes, in general, attend more than laboring and low-income groups.”

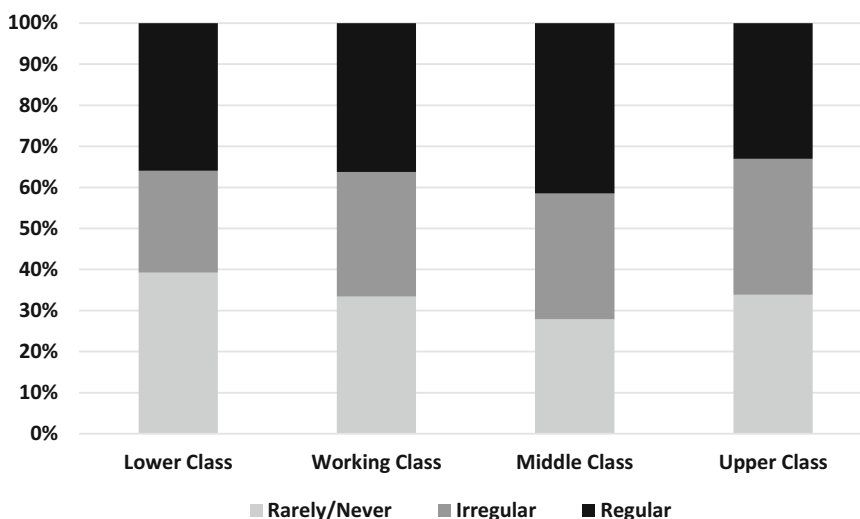


Fig. 18.6 Frequency of religious service within subjective social classes (Notes: 2012 and 2014 General Social Survey; N=4215)

This assumption appears to be accurate more than a decade into the twenty-first century. The relationship between social class and service attendance, however, is not a linear one. The middle class, not the upper class, were the most likely to attend regularly. In fact, upper-class Americans were relatively unlikely to regularly attend religious services, though they were not especially likely to rarely or never attend. This fits with Troeltsch's (1992 [1931]) depiction of the upper class as oriented toward mysticism, which, as Demerath (1965, p. 39) described, "is an individuation of the religious experience so that it lacks the fetters of an organizational allegiance." As both classic and contemporary theories suggest, church participation is disproportionately the domain of the middle class.

Religious Beliefs and Devotion

Even more so than religious participation, religious belief and devotion are thought to be strongly tied to social class. There is a long-established connection between social class and otherworldly religious beliefs in particular. This relationship was most famously conveyed by Marx (1972 [1844]), who argued that lower-class religion promotes an otherworldly theology that legitimates the place of the proletariat in the stratification system. The lower and working classes should therefore put more emphasis on the afterlife, and especially in the potential for judgment and rewards in the afterlife. More generally, lower-class religion emphasizes sectarian and orthodox beliefs while middle-class religion emphasizes beliefs that are more accommodating to secular society. According to Demerath (1965, p. 44),

[T]he church type will be more influenced by non-religious ideologies...The church type's religious beliefs will be more modern in the sense that they are more dictated by his everyday concerns. The sect type, on the other hand, will reverse this priority. Traditional beliefs will determine his concerns and the secular values to which he can subscribe.

As with religious participation, the causal direction in the association between social class and religious belief and devotion is not always clear.

Church-sect theory suggests that social class influences religious beliefs and devotions. As the Demerath quote above indicates, the middle and upper classes are thought to seek a form of religion that has minimal conflict with secular goals and secular society more generally. They are drawn to religious beliefs that align with a theodicy of good fortune, which views worldly success as a sign of blessing from god. The lower classes instead pursue high-tension religion (Finke and Stark 2005). They are comforted by a theodicy of suffering that emphasizes eternal salvation above worldly success. In line with this causal argument, contemporary research emphasizes how objective components of social class—particularly income and education—can affect religious beliefs and devotion. Those who are economically disadvantaged, for example, may "construct a bond with the divine to compensate for their plight and acquire otherwise-unattainable rewards" (Schieman 2010, p. 28; also see Stark and Bainbridge 1985).

Higher education—which is a key component of middle-class status (Fischer and Hout 2006) and essential to upward mobility in the modern American economy (Greenstone et al. 2013)—is central to contemporary causal arguments about the negative effects of social class on religious belief. Education is said to "erode" religious belief (Johnson 1997). Researchers point to the conflict between the substance of some religious beliefs and the curricular content of secular education (e.g. Beckwith 1985; Johnson 1997; Stark 1963). This conflict is evident in both direct disagreements, such as occur with evolution and the age of the earth, and more generally in the incompatibility of religious and scientific approaches to the world (Halman and Draulans 2006; Miller 1967). In support of the "conflicting worldviews" argument, empirical research suggests that education is particularly detrimental to religious beliefs that evince such a conflict (Schwadel 2011). The social component of education may also play a role. The people we interact with influence our religious beliefs (Durkheim [1912] 1965; Cheadle and Schwadel 2012). Higher education promotes changes in social networks (Marsden 1987), which in turn affects religious commitment

and belief (Mayrl and Uecker 2011; Smith and Snell 2009).

Reversing the causal direction, there are also sound arguments and convincing evidence to suggest that religious beliefs affect social class. Marx's view was that religious beliefs influence social class by limiting the social mobility of the proletariat. Weber's Protestant ethic thesis proposes that certain religious beliefs promoted lifestyles that led to the development of the middle class and modern capitalism. In the contemporary American religious landscape, research suggests that views of the bible influence lifestyle choices that affect social class. For instance, a literal view of the bible promotes distinct roles for men and women, with men as breadwinners and women as homemakers and caretakers (Jelen 1989). Among women, biblical literalism is more important than denominational affiliation in predicting a preference for traditional gender roles (Peek et al. 1991). Traditional gender roles limit upward mobility by promoting large families, encouraging childbirth at young ages, and discouraging women's participation in the paid labor force. (Fitzgerald and Glass 2012, 2014; Glass and Jacobs 2005; Keister 2008, 2011; Sherkat 2000, 2014). Similarly, a literal reading of the bible fosters skepticism of science and secular education (Ellison and Musick 1995), which limits upward mobility (Keister 2011). For instance, Darnell and Sherkat (1997) found that, in addition to religious affiliation, both parent and child biblical literalism reduce children's educational attainment.

Regardless of the causal direction, the extant literature clearly suggests that social class is associated with religious belief and devotion. Figure 18.7 demonstrates some of these associations using 2012 and 2014 GSS data. As this figure shows, social class was strongly associated with biblical literalism ("the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word"). Specifically, the proportion of biblical literalists declined as social class increased, from 43 % of the lower class to 19 % of the upper class. Biblical literalism is an orthodox belief that is not very accommodating to secular society. The negative association between social class and bibli-

cal literalism thus supports the church-sect theory proposition that middle- and upper-class religious beliefs generally have minimal conflict with secular goals and secular society. It also comports with the view that biblical literalism inhibits upward mobility (Darnell and Sherkat 1997).

The next measure of religiosity in Fig. 18.7 is being "born again" ("been 'born again' or have had a 'born again' experience—that is, a turning point in your life when you committed yourself to Christ?"). This measure of religiosity falls within both the belief dimension (implies belief in divinity of Christ) and the experiential dimension as defined by Glock and Stark (1965). Similar to biblical literalism, the proportion born again declined as social classes increased, from 51 % of the lower class to 22 % of the upper class. This too supports church-sect theory, which depicts religious experiences and conversion as essential sectarian characteristics.

Daily prayer, the final measure of religiosity in Fig. 18.7, is more devotional in nature. Material concerns are hypothesized to promote frequency of prayer, both individually and at the aggregate (Norris and Inglehart 2004), largely due to the petitionary nature of some prayers. Figure 18.7 supports this argument by showing that the lower class were particularly likely to pray daily (64%), the working and middle classes were similar to each other in their likelihood of daily prayer (between 58 and 59 % pray daily), and the upper class were the least likely to pray daily (43 %). In addition to lower frequency of prayer, Demerath (1965, p. 23) argued that that the upper class often view prayer "as self-administered therapy in the secular psychiatric sense." Conversely, the lower classes are relatively likely to pray for specific outcomes, such as health and financial security, and for personal spiritual concerns, such as to ask for forgiveness (Baker 2008).

Research has emphasized the otherworldly focus of lower-class religiosity since Marx's proposition that a promise of reversal of fortunes in the afterlife is an obstacle to upward mobility for the proletariat (e.g. Niebuhr 1929; Stark and Bainbridge 1985). Belief in a vague afterlife, however, has become ubiquitous in the U.S., even in religious communities that historically had

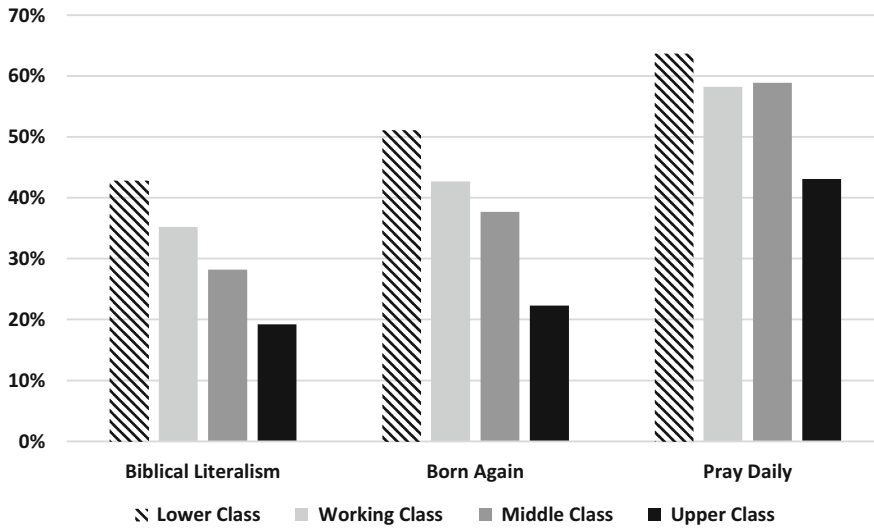


Fig. 18.7 Religious belief and devotion by subjective social classes (Notes: 2012 and 2014 General Social Survey; N=4215)

little focus on life after death (Greeley and Hout 1999). Consequently, financial deprivation may not promote belief in a general afterlife, but it is strongly and positively associated with measures of belief in the afterlife that imply divine judgment (Schwadel 2008). The 2008 GSS included questions about belief in Heaven and Hell rather than a vague afterlife. These more specific beliefs imply the potential for judgment of the affluent (i.e. Hell) and rewards for the pious (i.e. Heaven). As Fig. 18.8 shows, definite belief in both Heaven and Hell declined precipitously as social class increased. For instance, the lower class were 50% more likely than the upper class to believe in Heaven, and almost three times more likely to believe in Hell.

As the above discussion makes clear, religious participation, belief, and devotion in the United States vary considerably by social class. While there are undoubtedly important caveats, such as the impact of social class differing across religious traditions (Schwadel 2011), social class generally has a negative association with religious belief and devotion but a positive association with religious participation. This supports the emphasis on sectlike behavior

among the lower class and churchlike behavior among the middle class in the work of Troeltsch, Niebuhr, and Demerath. Nonetheless, the causal direction in these associations remains unclear. We must ask both how does religiosity affect social class, and how does social class affect religiosity? Empirical research has begun to address this issue with longitudinal survey data. Darnell and Sherkat (1997), for example, assessed the effects of parent and child biblical literalism on children's later likelihood of attending and graduating from college. Reversing the causal order, Uecker and colleagues (2007) showed that those who do not graduate from college decline in their service attendance more than those who earn a college degree. Hill's (2009, 2011) work in this area has been particularly informative. As Hill (2009, p. 523) concluded, "educational attainment is both a result of, as well as a cause of, higher religious participation during adolescence and young adulthood." Future research should extend this type of serious treatment of causality to the relationship between religiosity and other aspects of social class, such as income, occupation, and subjective class status.

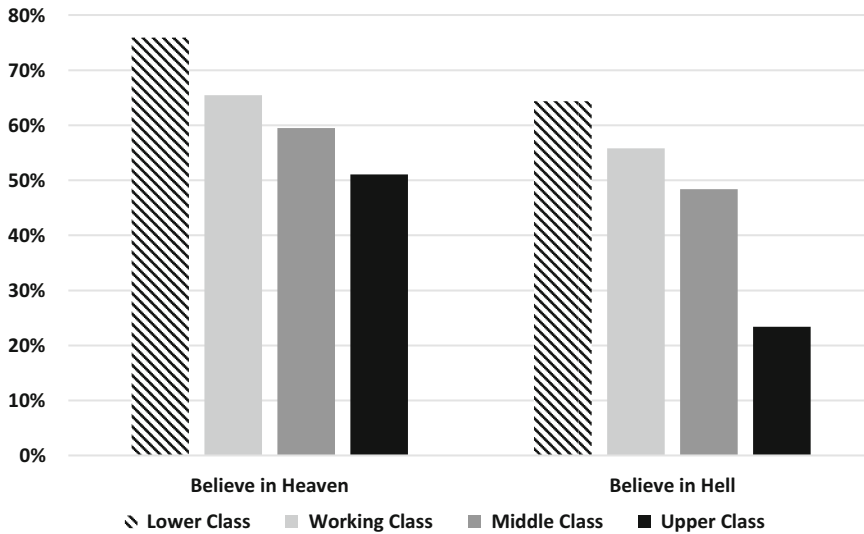


Fig. 18.8 Definite belief in heaven and hell by subjective social classes (Notes: 2008 General Social Survey; N = 1304)

Does Religion Legitimate Social Stratification?

Social scientists have viewed religion and perceptions of the stratification system as intricately connected since Marx's (1972 [1844]) proposition that otherworldly religion curtails proletarian opposition to stratification. Weber's (1993 [1922]) depiction of the theodicy of good fortune is particularly pertinent. According to Weber, middle- and upper-class religion promotes a culture that views economic and occupational success as a sign of god's approval. The unfortunate correlate for those at the bottom of the class hierarchy is that lack of success is thus viewed as a moral failing. In a welfare state such as the U.S., this should equate to relatively low levels of support for assistance to the poor among affiliates of middle- and upper-class religions.

It is in the best interest of sectarians, who are disproportionately lower and working class, to promote redistribution of wealth in the form of assistance to the poor. The revolutionary nature of the churches of disinherited as described by Niebuhr (1929) further suggests a connection between sectarian religion and support for wealth redistribution. This is not, however, what most empirical research shows (cf. Clydesdale 1999).

Contemporary research suggests instead that evangelical and fundamentalist Protestants are particularly likely to oppose government spending on the poor and the redistribution of wealth (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2007; Pyle 1993). As Hackworth (2010, p. 92) concluded, despite expressions of "concern and compassion for the poor" on the part of sectarian Protestants, "almost every reference to welfare includes an implied or direct critique of government-based efforts to solve it."

Figure 18.9 shows religious tradition differences in the percent who say the U.S. government spends too much on assistance to the poor, from the 2012–2014 GSS. Mainline Protestants were the most likely to oppose government assistance to poor (22%). Evangelical Protestants (15%), Pentecostals (14%), and non-Latino white Catholics (14%) were also relatively likely to oppose government assistance to the poor. Among the remaining predominantly white religious groups, Jews and liberal Protestants (8%) were particularly unlikely to say the government spends too much on assistance to the poor. These differences lend some support to the view that middle-class religion, but not upper-class religion, endorses a theodicy of good fortune. Mainline Protestants and non-Latino white

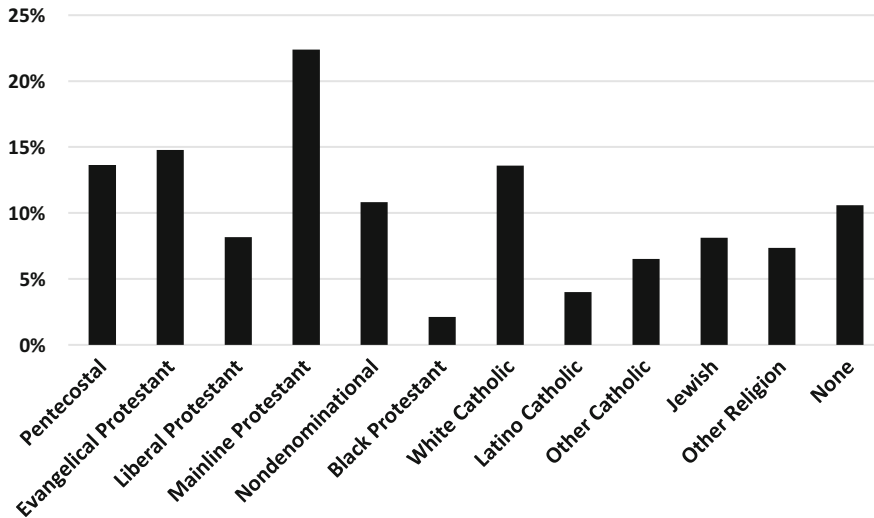


Fig. 18.9 Opposition to government spending on assistance to the poor (Notes: 2012 and 2014 General Social Survey; N=2089)

Catholics were relatively opposed to assistance to the poor; and these are the two largest middle to upper-middle class religious groups. Conversely, the two groups with the highest average social class—Jews and liberal Protestants—were particularly likely to support government spending to assist the poor.

Relatively high levels of opposition to government spending on assistance to the poor among evangelical and Pentecostal Protestants runs counter to the assumption that the theodicy of good fortune is limited to middle-class religions. It is possible that contemporary sectarian Protestantism has also incorporated such a theodicy. Indeed, Davidson and Pyle (1999) argued that while some churches encourage a theodicy of social justice, more churches promote a theodicy that perpetuates inequality; and the balance is increasingly tipping toward the latter. In many churches, “groups and individuals with more conservative values and interests have gained power” (Davidson and Koch 1998, p. 301), which facilitates a movement to a theodicy that legitimates inequality. Perhaps not surprisingly, these changes have taken place at a time when sectarian Protestantism has become increasingly associated with the Republican Party (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2007), which is clear in its oppo-

sition to government attempts to redistribute wealth (Layman and Carsey 2002).

The question of whether sectarian Protestantism has incorporated a theodicy of good fortune can be addressed by looking at perceptions of the theological and moral qualities associated with economic wellbeing that are implied by such a theodicy. The GSS includes such questions, though they have not been asked since the 1990s. Recall that a theodicy of good fortune depicts economic success as a sign of divine approval, and lack of success as a sign of divine disapproval and potential moral failing. Addressing the assumption that success is a sign of divine approval, Fig. 18.10 shows religious tradition differences in the view that god’s decisions are very important in deciding why a person’s life turns out well or poorly. Sectarian Protestants—black Protestants (47%), Pentecostals (43%), evangelical Protestants (37%), and to a lesser extent nondenominational Protestants (26%)—were particularly likely to see a divine hand in a person’s place in the stratification system. Though informative, these results should be interpreted with the understanding that sectarian Protestants are relatively likely to emphasize divine involvement in life in general (Schieman 2010).

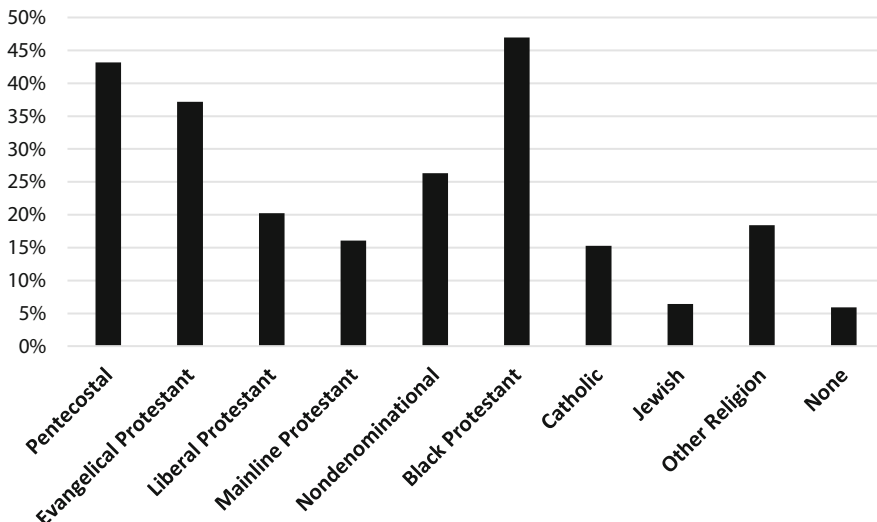


Fig. 18.10 God’s decisions very important in why a person’s life turns out well or poorly (Notes: 1993 General Social Survey; N= 1531)

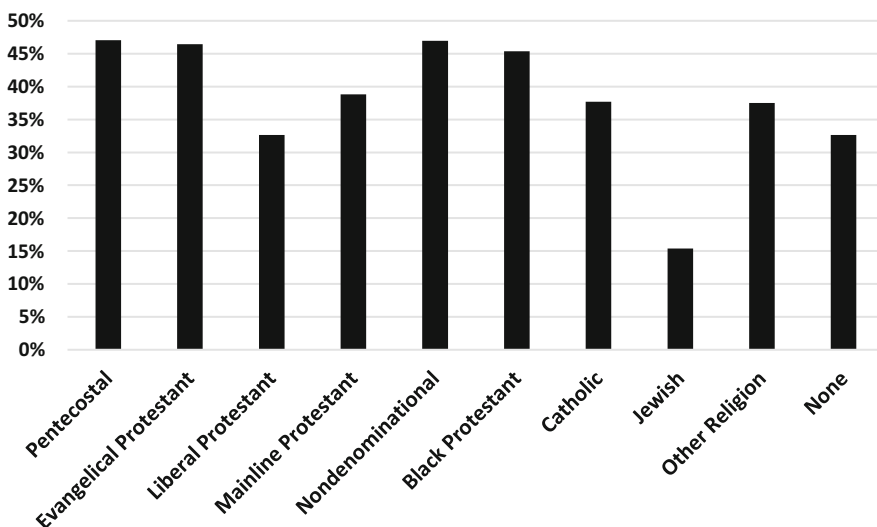


Fig. 18.11 Loose morals and drunkenness very important reason for poverty in U.S (Notes: 1990 General Social Survey; N= 1296)

Addressing the assumption that lack of success is a sign of moral failing, Fig. 18.11 shows religious tradition differences in the view that loose morals and drunkenness are very important in explaining why there are poor people in the U.S. Sectarian Protestants—Pentecostals (47%), nondenominational Protestants (47%), evangelical Protestants (46%), and black Protestants

(45%)—were the most likely to attribute poverty to loose morals and drunkenness. Taken together, sectarian Protestants’ views of the moral and theological failings implied by poverty and their views of god’s role in deciding one’s social class suggest that some form of a theodicy of good fortune has become common in sectarian theology and/or culture. Unfortunately, however, these

data are quite dated. Future research can address this deficiency by examining contemporary sectarians' attribution of the causes of poverty and affluence.

The argument that middle- and upper-class churches promote a theodicy of good fortune was particularly prominent in Liston Pope's (1942) influential analysis of life in a mill town in North Carolina, where he contrasted the lower- and working-class "mill" churches with the more affluent "uptown" churches. Pope (1942, p. 92) described what he saw as living embodiments of the theodicies of suffering and fortune: "If religion in the mill villages is largely an escape from economic conditions, religion in the uptown churches is to considerable degree a sanction of the prevailing economic arrangements." Yet even the lower- and working-class mill churches were economically reliant on the mill owners to some degree, which led the clergy to temper their support for a strike against the mill. Despite Niebuhr's (1929) emphasis on the revolutionary nature of churches of the disinherited, these churches also appear reliant on existing economic conditions and thus reluctant to provide too strong a counter to a theodicy of good fortune. In fact, Niebuhr himself foresaw this possibility when he lamented the lack of new churches of the disinherited.

In the contemporary religious landscape, the Prosperity Gospel—a movement that connects religious faith to economic and physical well-being—exemplifies a form of religion that disproportionately appeals to the lower and working classes but also emphasizes a theodicy of good fortune (Schieman and Jung 2012). Hladky (2012, p. 93) summarized the Prosperity Gospel theodicy:

Believers...are often told that they are the only ones who determine the outcomes of their life. No outside force, from racism and sexism, to a bad economy, or another individual can impact their lives. God will fulfill his promises of success, wealth, health, and emotional peace, as long as believers are keeping up their end of the bargain.

Though hotly debated, many suggest that the Prosperity Gospel movement is strongly influenced by affluent conservatives whose interests are served by connecting economic wellbeing with morality and piety (e.g. Coleman 2002;

Stoll 1990). An interesting example has emerged from lawsuits following the "Great Recession," which reveal partnerships between banks and leaders of Prosperity Gospel churches to sign churchgoers to subprime loans (Rosin 2009). In something of a reversal from the 1960s, when Protestant religious leaders were often more liberal than their parishioners (Hadden 1969), lower- and working-class churches are now frequently led by those with economic sensibilities that favor the middle- and upper-classes.

Conclusions and Future Directions

Although social scientists have learned much about the association between religion and social class, advances in data collection and analysis methods offer opportunities to greatly expand this knowledge. As noted earlier, additional research is needed to clarify causal ordering. How does religion affect social class, and how does social class affect religion? There is also a lack of empirical research addressing the social nature of religion. Durkheim ([1912] 1965) argued that we both create and reify religion through social interaction. Simmel (1905, p. 366) agreed that "faith...is first a relation between individuals." For the most part, however, empirical research measures religion as an individual phenomenon, disconnected from its social origins. Empirically established associations between religion and social class may instead reflect the social influence of religion. For instance, the effect of strict religious beliefs on educational attainment (Darnell and Sherkat 1997) may operate indirectly through tight-knit sectarian social networks. Future research on the effects of religion on social class must ask: are religious beliefs, activities, and affiliations the cause, or is the religious homophily of social networks (McPherson et al. 2001) the cause? The proliferation of longitudinal data collections, surveys with measures of social ties, and network analysis techniques should help address these issues.

There is also a dearth of knowledge about how the supply of religion influences associations between religion and social class. Finke and Stark (2005) argued that religion behaves like

other commodities in a free market in that both supply and demand influence the prevalence and forms of religion. This chapter has focused on the demand side by exploring, for example, how the types of religion people prefer varies by social class. Supply, however, may also play a role. Are religious institutions offering the type of religious products that each social class demands? Are they supplying religion to all groups equally? Smith (2001) addressed the latter question, and found that the urban poor in Indianapolis were both underrepresented in church and relatively unlikely to be contacted by their local churches. This research should be expanded to other communities, both in terms of geography and social class.

Although limited in number, qualitative research on religion and social class has been particularly informative. Nelson (2009), for example, used several ethnographic studies to show that aesthetic, linguistic, and physical preferences for worship styles vary by social class. Sullivan (2011) reported lower-class women's concerns about how they and their families are perceived by other churchgoers. This type of information would be hard to quantify or to glean from a survey. Qualitative research also excels at describing small and hard to reach populations. For instance, Lindsay (2007) provided insight into how religion influences the power elite, those at the very top of the social class hierarchy. More qualitative studies are needed to provide clarity and nuance to the associations depicted by quantitative analyses.

There is also a need for more international comparisons. Researchers have demonstrated that the associations between religiosity and both education and income differ across nations (e.g. Barro and McCleary 2003; Bettendorf and Dijkgraaf 2010; Braun 2012; Sacerdote and Glaeser 2001). They are just beginning to address why. For instance, recent research shows that the association between higher education and religiosity varies by the average level of religiosity in a nation (Schwadel 2015). This cross-national research is informative but relatively Christian-centric. Expanding this research to nations that are not predominantly Christian would be informative.

The focus here has been on the United States, which is a highly stratified nation. According to the World Bank (<http://data.worldbank.org/>), the U.S. had the highest level of economic inequality in the world in 2013. This means that relatively few families—disproportionately liberal Protestant and Jewish, and to a lesser extent mainline Protestant and non-Latino white Catholic—have a large and increasing share of the wealth. Conversely, a large number of families—disproportionately Latino Catholic, black Protestant, and Pentecostal, and to a lesser extent evangelical Protestant—have a small and decreasing share of the wealth. A Marxist perspective indicates that this situation is ripe for some form of social upheaval. Yet the religious and economic perspectives of the lower and working classes suggests this is not the case. Lower- and working-class Americans continue to emphasize otherworldly beliefs, which, as Marx noted, may lead them to place more importance in the potential for a reversal of fortunes in the next world and less importance in their place in the social stratification system. Lower- and working-class Americans are also relatively likely to believe that god has considerable influence on people's place in the stratification system, and they disproportionately view lack of success as a moral failing. In other words, religiously or culturally, the lower and working classes have incorporated a theodicy of good fortune. Marx would undoubtedly be troubled by these circumstances.

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Abstract

This chapter provides a historical overview of gender and religion studies in sociology, reviews four areas of contemporary research, suggests how current research agendas can better engage the sociology of religion, and articulates a comprehensive conceptual framework. Women in conservative religions and the question of agency; feminism, religion, and religious women's political activism; and religious masculinity reflect a critical turn in gender and religion studies but studies of gendered religiosity have been disengaged from gender theorizing and serve as a cautionary tale about specialization. The final section articulates a comprehensive conceptual lens, religion as a gendered social institution that intersects with other systems of inequality. This lens grounds the scholarship in both subdisciplines, thereby advancing the study of gender and religion from two disparate bodies of literature to an intersectional lens that considers both simultaneously. This ensures that religion is not discussed as *sui generis* or in a vacuum while allowing for topical, empirical, and theoretical flexibility to consider a range of phenomena.

Much has changed in gender and religion studies since Ebaugh's (2006) *Handbook of Religion and Social Institutions* was published. The research has achieved legitimacy that eluded earlier scholarship (previous overviews had to stake their ground; see Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend

2006, 2007; Neitz 2003). However, the field's empirical foci, conceptual frameworks, and key questions have dramatically changed in the past 15 years. In addition, although the scholarship is robust, its status in the sociology of religion remains tenuous; the "discovery" of religion by gender scholars, which accounts for much of the research reviewed here, has been accompanied by a distancing from the core concerns and theoretical frames of the sociology of religion (Avishai and Irby 2015). These insights inform this chapter in several ways.

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First, to make sense of the central themes and future directions of gender and religion scholarship, I begin with a brief historical overview. Second, my goal is to place gender and religion studies more firmly within the sociology of religion. Thus, throughout the review I suggest how current research agendas can better engage questions of interest to religion scholars. Finally, while the empirical areas I review here (e.g. women in conservative religion; religious masculinity) are usually viewed as disparate bodies of literature, I argue that they are united by an analytical lens: religion as a gendered social institution. I begin with a history of gender and religion scholarship, discuss its marginal status within the subdiscipline, and identify several theoretical and topical shifts since the turn of the twenty-first century. I then discuss several strands in contemporary scholarship: women in conservative religions and the question of agency; feminism, religion, and religious women's political activism; religious masculinity; and gendered patterns of religiosity. The first three topics have generated much interest among gender and religion scholars and they capture the critical, postcolonial, and queer turn that the field has taken. Gendered religiosity, a research agenda that has been disengaged from gender theorizing, is a cautionary tale about excessive specialization. The final section outlines a comprehensive gender lens in the sociology of religion.

Gender and Religion Research: From Studying Women to Studying Gender Regimes

Gender and religion research can be divided into three periods, moving from an era (pre-1980s) of negligible research, through a period (1980–1990s) of emergent scholarship from within religion circles marked by low visibility and status, to the contemporary period of scholarship firmly embedded in key conversations in the sociology of gender (Avishai and Irby 2015). The transition from the first generation of gender and religion studies to contemporary scholarship was accom-

panied by significant shifts in empirical and theoretical foci.

There was little research on gender and religion before the 1980s. When Neal (1975) surveyed publications in the sociology of religion in the mid-1970s, she found little scholarship about women and textbooks that included no references to women and gender topics. In addition, few women were cited or viewed as authorities. This situation was not unique to the sociology of religion; academia was generally a man's world and the empirical knowledge it generated, and from which it theorized, paid little attention to women's experiences and realities (Ferree et al. 2007). Neal expected that the entry of women scholars into academia would expand knowledge about their religious experiences and change the very questions and foci of the discipline (see also Wallace 1989, 1997). Indeed, women scholars who entered the discipline over the next two decades asked new questions, employed new methodologies and epistemologies, and drew on new conceptual frames to discuss religious experiences and realities, especially *women's* religious experiences and realities.

The 1980s saw the entry into the subdiscipline of a small cohort of women sociologists. Like other women scholars of the era (Thorne and Laslett 1997), many were mobilized by the women's movement and their intellectual interests were shaped by emergent feminist sensibilities (see reflections collected in Nason-Clark and Neitz 2001). The first cohort of gender and religion scholars drew on feminist concepts such as women's empowerment, emphasized gender difference, and celebrated women's standpoint and women's ways of knowing. They studied empirical realities of the time: women's conversion (Davidman 1991); new religious movements (Jacobs 1989); ordination (Charlton 2000; Nessbitt 1997); women's religions (Neitz 2000), and nuns (Ebough 1993) (The study of gender and religion included other scholars, but the agenda was set by this group of self-identified feminist sociologists.) Overviews of the sociology of religion and gender during this era reflected these research agendas, though none,

other than the women in conservative religions, endured beyond the 1990s.

This trailblazing generation produced valuable knowledge about previously understudied and undertheorized phenomena. They shed light on women's religious experiences and assessed religious gender regimes and messages about women's bodies, sexuality, and gender roles. But they were marginalized in both gender and religion circles, and their writing from the era suggests an uphill battle for recognition (Avishai and Irby 2015). They attributed marginalization in religion circles to the fact that their scholarship defied accepted empirical, methodological, conceptual, and epistemological paradigms (Charlton 2000, 2015; Nason-Clark and Fisher-Townsend 2007; Nason-Clark and Neitz 2000; Neitz 2003, 2014). They were equally marginalized by gender scholars (Avishai and Irby 2015). The main culprit is an intellectual pattern that I call the feminist dilemma of religion (Avishai 2015). Women's and gender studies as a discipline has historically regarded religion as an obstacle to feminism's goals and has therefore approached it with ambivalence. In the discipline's foundational texts, religion is variably ignored, criticized, or viewed as an impediment for achieving feminist social change (Aune 2015; Braude 2004; Llewellyn and Trzebiatowska 2013; a foundational text in women's studies is Mary Daly's 1975 scathing critique of religion, *Beyond God the Father*). Many gender textbooks do not include a chapter on religion (Avishai 2015).

But the fortunes of gender and religion studies have been changing since the late 1990s. Gender scholars across a range of disciplines began to study gendered dimensions of religion, bringing with them new theoretical tools and empirical interests, consequently transforming the subfield. First, in contrast to the trailblazing generation, whose gender training occurred primarily on the job (the sociology of gender developed and expanded in tandem with their careers), scholars of gender and religion who entered the field in the past decade and a half are generally trained as sociologists of gender (Avishai and Irby 2015). Many, especially those more recently trained, are versed in critical, queer, poststructural, and post-

colonial theories, and their empirical foci reflect gender theorists' concerns with intersectionality, interdisciplinarity, and transnationalism. In gender and religion studies, the "cultural turn" in the sociology of religion (Edgell 2012) is apparent in the use of such frames to discuss phenomena at the intersection of gender and religion. Critiques of Orientalism and secularism (Asad 2009; Charrad 2011; Hafez 2011; Mahmood 2005) and their legacies have shaped contemporary debates. These new frames helped replace the feminist dilemma of religion with a gender lens that acknowledges religion's multi-faceted dimensions, thereby positioning gender and religion cases as sites that not only capture a slice of the human religious experience but also as sites to investigate core questions in the sociology of gender and feminist theory.

Conceptually, the focus shifted from finding, celebrating and empowering women to understanding how social institutions construct gender as a social category, how individuals respond to and navigate these social institutions and contexts, and how gender is produced, reproduced, taught, negotiated, and transformed. Contemporary research is concerned with gender religious regimes and ideologies, with particular interest in women and gender in conservative religions, religious masculinity, and experiences of sexuality (see Page and Shipley's Chap. 20 on "Sexuality" in this volume). Previous "hot topics" such as ordination and women's religious movements have lost traction and are therefore not surveyed here. However, this distancing from previous research agendas and the embrace of critical gender frames may have come at a price. Courtney Irby and I find that many gender and religion studies do not engage core concerns in the sociology of religion. We also document a gulf between authors who orient their work towards sociologists of gender and those who orient their work towards sociologists of religion—to the point that few authors are conversant in or engage the "other" literature (Avishai and Irby 2015). The result, as I discuss below, is that some scholarship at the intersection of gender and religion is insufficiently attuned to key questions in the sociology of religion (e.g. religious

masculinity) or in the sociology of gender (e.g. gendered religiosity). I therefore end this review by sketching a conceptual framework that is grounded in both subdisciplines.

In sum, the study of gender and religion expanded throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Many early scholars were self-identified feminists trained as religion scholars whose interest in gendered religious phenomena developed in tandem with their embrace of feminism. They aimed both to study gendered religious phenomena and to revolutionize the theoretical paradigms of the subdiscipline, but their work was marginalized. Contemporary gender and religion research is much more visible in sociology of gender circles, but the critical, queer, and postcolonial turn it has taken has distanced it from the core concerns of the sociology of religion. I now turn to discuss several threads in this scholarship.

Women in Conservative Religions and the Question of Agency

In the past two decades considerable research has focused on women's involvement in conservative religious communities. This research engages central questions in the sociology of religion: why do people join religious communities and why do they stay? How do they construct meaning and communal boundaries? This scholarship also addresses a core question in the sociology of gender: are agents who are constrained by their environments capable of agentic action? Gender and religion studies inquire into why women embrace religious regimes, traditions, ideologies, and practices that reproduce inequalities and potentially compromise their agentic capacities. They also consider processes of communal meaning-making and boundary maintenance and women's diverse experiences with conservative religious traditions as sites of oppression, empowerment, negotiations, and meaning making. In recent years, agency has emerged as the dominant conceptual paradigm; studies of women in conservative religions have engaged debates about competing definitions of agency as resistance, subversion, performance, a resource, and ethical formation.

The research reviewed here has predominantly focused on evangelicals, Orthodox Jews, Mormons, and Muslim. Research on women's experiences in mainline religions has declined significantly in the past two decades (Avishai and Irby 2015). Conservative religions vary widely in doctrine, practice, views about the transcendental, the relative importance of practice versus belief, and liturgical literalism, among other things. At the same time, they share several key perspectives on gender. These include a belief in essential ontological differences between men and women (e.g. women are naturally nurturing and men are natural leaders); notions of gender complementarity; and an institutionalized gender hierarchy that privileges men. While specifics vary, conservative religious gender ideologies are associated with differential access to clerical and lay leadership positions (Chaves 1999), liturgical education (El-Or 2002), and places of worship (Prickett 2015; Sztokman 2011; Sullins 2006). Religious gender ideologies also shape access to health care and secular education and influence practices regarding paid employment, child rearing, and domestic division of labor (Gallagher 2003).

Research on women in conservative religions can be divided into two main periods. Starting in the 1980s and continuing into the early 2000s, many studies were shaped by the feminist dilemma of religion that viewed women's acquiescence to conservative religious traditions as paradoxical (Avishai 2008a; Burke 2012). However, as studies documented the varied ways that women interacted with conservative religious traditions and the range of reasons they were drawn to them, religion turned out to be a double edged sword that both reproduced gendered power dynamics and also subverted these systems while empowering women.

Studies found a range of motivations for joining and staying. Some had to do with the value systems associated with modern, secular societies (Davidman 1991) and their imperial legacies (Göle 1996). Joining and staying was sometimes a strategic hedge against harsh realities, as in MacLeod's (1991) research on veiling in Egypt, where she found that some women embraced veiling because it afforded mobility and respect-

ability in a quickly changing economy that forced them into paid employment and the public sphere. The veil was a tool to balance a loss of traditional identity as wife and mother, new economic pressures to support their families, and a masculinized public space. MacLeod articulated a duality that has framed much of the ensuing research: her respondents were simultaneously accommodating traditional gender norms and utilizing religion as a resource to protest against new societal arrangements. Subsequent studies documented the myriad ways that women use religion as a resource. Taiwanese women who converted to Buddhism and Christianity after immigrating to the United States and evangelical Korean women used religion to negotiate patriarchal family structures (Chen 2008; Chong 2008 respectively). A relationship with god helped evangelical American women deal with the realities of modern life (Griffith 1997). Devout Catholic women used their religious tradition's position on assisted reproductive technologies to avoid using them (Czarnecki 2015). These findings suggest that religious affiliation is often instrumental and that women appropriate religion to further extrareligious goals such as economic opportunities, domestic relations, political ideologies, and cultural affiliation.

The research also documented a broad range of experiences with religious traditions. Women derived joy and a sense of meaning and belonging from affiliation (Avishai 2008a; Brasher 1997; Davidman 1991; Prickett 2015). Some women experienced their religious traditions as empowering or even liberating (Bartkowski and Read 2003; Brasher 1997; Chen 2008; Chong 2008; Davidman 1991; Gallagher 2004, 2007; Griffith 1997; Hartman 2003; Macleod 1991; Manning 1999; Prickett 2015; Stacey and Gerard 1990). They were also not merely complying with edicts and norms; studies documented how they subverted and resisted official dogma through partial compliance (Pevey et al. 1996) and creative interpretations and adaptations that infuse doctrines and practices with new meanings (Chen 2008; Gallagher 2003, 2004; Griffith 1997; Hartman 2003). Religion emerged as a site of ceaseless negotiation of self, family, and com-

munity, indicating that religious practices, doctrines, and institutions were simultaneously sites of oppression and empowerment, of reproduction and resistance (see Jenkins' Chap. 12 on "Family" in this volume).

Read through the lens of the sociology of religion, this research suggests the fluidity of "religion" and demonstrates that people negotiate their religious traditions while making meaning and constructing practices. These insights are reminiscent of frames that approach religion as a lived experience and as part of the fabric of everyday life (Ammerman 2006, 2013; McGuire 2008), but the lived religion frame has largely been absent from this scholarship. Instead, in recent years research on women in conservative religions has become almost synonymous with feminist theorizing about agency. Scholars have used their research to complicate the narrative that religiously affiliated women were cultural dupes, doormats, or under the spell of a false consciousness. Religious women emerged as thinking, strategizing, and planning individuals who made choices within a certain set of realities.

Agency has long been a contested term in gender scholarship because of a tendency to universalize about women's common experiences of oppression (Collins 1990; Kandiyoti 1988; Mohanty 1988). The first generation of scholarship on gender and religion helped articulate the agency of those who maneuver within oppressive social structures. Scholars built on Kandiyoti's (1988) notion of "bargaining with patriarchy" that considered how women strategize within patriarchal structures and recognized the agentive potential of non-male, non-western subjects. The research cited above identified agency as resistance, subversion, performance, a resource, and emancipatory remodeling of identity (McNay 2000). But by the early 2000s, feminist scholars began to note the limitations of these definitions and religion cases proved to be fertile ground to examine and extend definitions of agency. One concern was that an agency premised on resistance and dislocation of dominant norms underestimated the possibilities for self-authorship. A second concern was that definitions of agency were infused with liberal, secular,

Western ideas about agentic action as premised on free will, individualism, choice, satisfaction of individual preferences, and the capacity for rational thought (Mack 2003; Mahmood 2005). The feminist dilemma of religion was revealed as a secularist bias that assumes “that those who are inspired by religious enthusiasm or fanaticism, or who live under the influence of a religious institution or discipline, have no agency or limited agency, whereas secular society, which locates religious authority and practice outside the spheres of politics or the marketplace, allows for domains of free, autonomous behavior” (Mack 2003, p. 153). In other words, the emphasis on agency as resistance, empowerment, and partial compliance was premised on the assumption that agentic action was incompatible with devout religiosity. This approach disregarded the core of the religious experience as a desire to affiliate, to accept religious mandates, and to fashion oneself as a religious subject.

Anthropologist Saba Mahmood’s (2005) study of the Egyptian piety movement was a game changer. Mahmood linked the productive aspect of agency with concerns about secularist intellectual biases to locate agency in the ethics of subject-making, or the work that one undertakes to comply, adhere, produce, and transform oneself into a virtuous religious subject. Mahmood challenged assumptions that pervaded previous discussions of agency as relating to freedom, choice, resistance, subversion, or strategic compliance. She envisioned a nonliberal agentic subject, where agency is rooted in docility, compliance, and piety, in aspiring to conform (and conforming) with religious ideals. In sum, Mahmood offered an alternative agency as a capacity for action that is not necessarily aimed at liberation.

Mahmood’s insistence that agency can be located in the work one does to develop oneself as a moral, rule-following subject inspired a post-colonial turn in sociological studies of women and conservative religions. Winchester (2008) examined how Muslim converts produce new moral selves through embodied religious practices. In my work on Orthodox Jewish women in

Israel, I developed the term “doing religion” to indicate that the process of becoming a religious subject and the performance of religious identity were agentic but not necessarily purposeful or strategic. I further suggested that when viewed as a strategic undertaking, religion may be done in the pursuit of religious goals (Avishai 2008a). (Studies of religious women’s political mobilization, which I discuss below, were also reshaped by the postcolonial turn.)

Others cautioned that the emphasis on agency as performance underestimates structural constraints (Bilge 2010; Zion-Waldoks 2015), and that liberal and docile agency were not necessarily incompatible. Zion-Waldoks (2015) argued that rather than adjudicating between competing notions of agency, we should think about agency as a *range* of competencies and capacities. Rinaldo (2013, 2014) brings the conversation about religious women’s agency full circle. Rinaldo found that religious women activists in Indonesia were simultaneously highly learned, very pious, and critical of their religion; she argued that they manifested a *pious critical agency*. By emphasizing a generative but critical subjectivity, Rinaldo challenges the dichotomy between a liberal feminist agency as resistance and a pious, docile agency, thereby rejecting Mahmood’s (2005) claim that Islamic piety is at odds with the liberal ideals of feminism.

Readers may have lost track of religion in this recounting of debates amongst feminist sociologists about the intricacies of agency. This is precisely the point. Research on women in conservative religions can potentially be instructive on religion as a site of individual and communal meaning making and shed light on how religious subjects negotiate with political, cultural, and social realities, and how they live their religion. However, debates about agency have overshadowed such inquiries. Consequently, while this scholarship has proven to be a useful intervention in gender theory (Avishai 2015), its diminished investment in uncovering and analyzing *religious* experiences has compromised its relevance to sociologists of religion.

Feminism, Religion, and Religious Women's Political Activism

Related scholarship explores how ideas about gender equality and feminism shape women's daily lives and their political activism. These are two distinct lines of inquiry but they converge in exploring the interface between feminism and religion. Studies of feminism and religion also engage questions of interest to sociologists of religion about the interface between conservative religions and modern, secular culture and politics. But here too the focus has been on feminist debates. The feminist dilemma of religion (an assumption that religion and feminism are incompatible) had served as a point of departure. Feminist theologians' attempts to reconcile religion and feminism (for an overview see Schneider and Trentaz 2008) have both helped inform and mobilize religious women's movements and transformed scholarly analyses of these movements (Rinaldo 2014; Zion-Waldoks 2015).

One line of research has considered how feminism shapes religious women's lives, finding that religious women are not uniformly antifeminist; sometimes they embrace purportedly feminist practices and ideologies. Gallagher found that evangelical women were supportive and appreciative of the gains of liberal feminism, and in related work she found that despite a purported cultural gulf, evangelical family life and gender relations were influenced by feminist ideas about family division of labor (Gallagher 2003, 2004; see also Bartkowski and Read 2003; Gallagher and Smith 1999). They distanced themselves from the feminist label but their goals, strategies, and everyday lives were inspired by feminist ideas. I came to similar conclusions in my work on orthodox Jewish menstrual practices (Avishai 2008a). Although many commentators criticize this ritual domain as a remnant of a patriarchal social order that objectifies women and reproduces gender hierarchies, Orthodox traditionalists reject such critiques. Nevertheless, I found that traditionalists – many of whom identified as *anti-feminists* – drew on feminist-inspired ideas about gender, sexuality, women's rights, bodies, privacy, religious authority structures, women's

claims to ritual authority and textual expertise, the male gaze, and empowerment as they restructured the practice in the name of piety. In aggregate, this line of research suggests that feminism shapes both deliberate efforts to reform traditions and works under the surface to shape religious women's decisions about religious domains such as worship and practice, as well as secular domains such as work, family, and spousal dynamics.

Since the early 2000s, research on the interface of religion and feminism has considered religious women's political activism and social movements. A vibrant scholarship has focused on Muslim women's activism and movements in locations such as Indonesia, Iran, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, and Tunisia (Badran 2009; Charrad 2001; Gonzalez 2013; Mir-Hosseini 2006; Moghadam 2012; Rinaldo 2013, 2014; Salime 2011) and migrant women's experiences in Europe (Parvez 2011). This focus mirrored empirical realities: Muslim women's political movements in the Middle East and Asia, expanding since the 1980s, had a long legacy of differentiating themselves from Western feminism, which was associated with colonialism (Charrad 2011). As religious revival expanded, Islamic feminists became a significant voice in struggles for gender equality (Charrad 2011). The result is a robust literature about these movements' impacts on the public sphere and religious communities. Though Muslim women's movements have received the most attention, religious women's movements have been documented in other traditions (Manning 1999; Roded 2012; Zion-Waldoks 2015).

Secular women's movements are largely motivated by ideas about social justice and equality (Mahmood 2005), tend to be removed from religious ideas and texts, and typically make little attempt to address gender inequality *within* religion. In contrast, religious women's movements both engage with religious texts and ideas *and* use them as resources to promote social change (Rinaldo 2014). They may therefore be seen as paradoxical. Students of religious women's movements and political mobilization have examined the motivations, strategies, and

sensibilities of these social actors. What cultural and conceptual tools do they draw on to assert themselves as legitimate political actors who define and resist social injustices, including gender inequality? Are they feminist by virtue of coming together as *women* political actors? Are they anti-feminist by virtue of coming together as *religious* political actors? Most of the research reviewed here argues that religious women activists produce new, localized brands of feminism. Rinaldo (2014) views engagement with religious texts as the dividing line between an era of secular political women's movements that either ignored or criticized religion and contemporary women's movements that blend Islam and modernity.

Some studies compare feminist-religious, secular-feminist, and Islamist women's movements (e.g. Charrad 2001; Rinaldo 2013; Salime 2011; see Charrad 2011 for overview). Others provide extended case studies of religious women's political activism (e.g. Gonzalez 2013; Zion-Waldoks 2015). These studies make several claims. First, feminist ideas infuse religious movements—and vice versa. For example, Salime's (2011) study of human rights work in Morocco demonstrates that religious and secular movements are interdependent: the feminist movement there was both enabled and circumscribed by Islamist women's activism, while she found that feminism has actively shaped Islamist activism by providing an agenda, a language, and goals. Mir-Hosseini (2006) arrives at similar conclusions about a dialogue between Islamist and feminist ideas in the Iranian context, while Rinaldo (2014) discusses this process in the Indonesian context. Focusing specifically on Islamist women's activism, Rinaldo (2013) finds that they draw on Islamic theology and feminist ideologies. She identifies "a melding... in which proponents draw on both human rights and egalitarian interpretations of Islam to argue for women's rights and equality" (Rinaldo 2014, p. 831). The takeaway is that religious and feminist frames are often complementary rather than incompatible; conceptual dichotomies such as religion vs. feminism or religion vs. social justice are empirically erroneous and conceptually inco-

herent (Charrad 2011; Rinaldo 2013; Salime 2011).

These studies also find that theological reinterpretation and engagement with religious texts amount to feminist political acts, a strategy that lends a unique quality to religious women's activism. Rinaldo (2014) argues that religious women's political agency is *rooted* in their interpretive capacities, and views religion as a resource for political mobilization. El-Or (2002) predicted as much in her work on the literacy movement of the 1990s of Orthodox Jewish Israeli women. In her reading, Orthodox women's practice of intensive Judaic studies had the potential to alter gender relations and identities within the Orthodox community and impact Jewish theology and law. Subsequent studies have confirmed these observations (Avishai 2008b; Hartman 2007; Israel-Cohen 2012; Zion-Waldoks 2015).

A related finding is that religious women's work towards social justice is intended to further rather than undo tradition and that their political activism is enabled by activists' multiple locations, religious commitments, and their views on women's equality. Rinaldo (2014) observes that while reformist religious activists' use of critical interpretation as a vehicle for social change has a long history, what is new is the use of this strategy by women, and that they are using these strategies in part to promote women's rights and inequality within their religious tradition. Zion-Waldoks (2015) study of religious women's activism surrounding Jewish divorce laws confirms this observation. She argues that religious activism derives from a desire to deepen rather than breach religious commitment and that political agency is a product of engagement with divine will and religious institutions, communities, and traditions. She finds that religious women's political activism arises "from within culture, speaking critically in its name and for its sake." The tension between political and feminist activism is thus undone.

In sum, this line of research considers how pious religious women's movements draw on and are shaped by both religious and feminist ideas. Religious women's political activism is not necessarily feminist nor anti-feminist, but rather in

dialogue with feminist (and secular and western) ideas about gender equality. Religious women activists are conversant in and draw on feminist ideologies and sensibilities to articulate goals, explain political participation, and construct strategies; however, many reject feminist labels that they associate with colonial regimes and orienting frameworks (Charrad 2011; Rinaldo 2014). At the same time, religion and piety facilitate challenging gendered power relations within gender-traditional religious communities and state apparatuses. The impetus for activism comes from engagement with rather than rejection of religious texts and involves the deployment of feminist practice vis-à-vis these texts as a basis for action. The motivation is not to undo tradition but to work within its logics; feminism is thus a resource to advance both a political vision and a religious identity.

Thus far I have been discussing studies of women's movements that are explicitly political, engaging issues such as human rights, reinterpretations of religious laws, and women's access to higher education and paid employment, and in which the key players are religious women whose impetus, tools, motivations, and language combine secular and religious resources. But religious women's movements are not always *political* movements. Piety movements focus on women's active attempts to mold their own lives in accordance with their understanding of their faith. Parvez (2011) challenges the politicization of religious practice and the view that ethical formation is inherently political. In her work on veiling among Muslim women in France, Parvez argues veiling may represent a *rejection* of politics and a valorization of private life. She cautions that political Islam and piety movements should not be conflated; religious practice is not always a site of political mobilization.

Like debates about agency, the study of religious women's mobilization and movements reflects the postcolonial turn in gender and religion studies. The empirical analysis of religious women's movements has been accompanied by a political project that assesses the orientalist nature of social science research on the topic (Abu-Lughod 2013; Mahmood 2005); much of

the work surveyed here criticizes the use of western feminist ideas about liberation and gender norms to discuss activism in diverse social contexts. Nevertheless, these studies also potentially engage questions of interest to the sociology of religion about the interface between conservative religions and modern, secular culture and politics. First, while scholars have focused on unraveling the cultural logics and tools that religious women use to establish themselves as legitimate political actors, these studies also portray religious movements as multidimensional in their strategic tools and cultural resources and indicate how religious actors can transform the public sphere and promote goals such as gender equality. This can help us assess changes in other contexts. Second, recent research on religious women's political activism confirms and expands earlier insights about how feminism informs everyday lives. This work can help us understand other processes within gender traditional religions, including gender regimes among Muslim immigrant communities, demands for Mormon women's ordination, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and queer (LGBTQ) acceptance movements. Finally, this line of research expands our understanding of the interface of religion and secular, modern life. In particular, it can complicate observations stemming from studies drawing on the World Values Survey that utilize a narrow lens of gender equality as indicative of modernization. The research surveyed here shows that binaries—feminist versus religious; feminist versus modern; feminist versus antifeminist—are inconsistent and erroneous frames through which to consider how religious subjects interact with modern, secular society and how they draw on their own cultural sources to engage civil society and/or effect social change.

Evangelical Masculinities

In the past two decades students of gender and religion have been interested in religious masculinities, with a particular focus among U.S. scholars on evangelical masculinity. Research on

evangelical masculinity mirrors a more general focus on gender as a relational system of power and its emergence coincided with explorations of how ideas about gender, sexuality, and family function to construct and maintain communal boundaries. Evangelical masculinity has been investigated vis-à-vis diverse topics such as work-family negotiations, sexual ethics and practices; the Promise Keeper movement of the 1990s; and the ex-gay movement of the 2000s.

Gender scholars conceptualize masculinity as a cultural construct, a form of belief, practice, and interaction rather than a personality or physical trait. Though masculinity can take many forms, in each cultural context hegemonic masculinity dominates other masculinities and all femininities, and it provides the ideological and cultural ground for legitimizing male power and privilege. Hegemonic masculinity is generally presumed to be white, heterosexual, and upper class, though its content is culturally, geographically, and historically specific (Connell 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

Studies have used content analysis, interviews and fieldwork to investigate how ideas about masculinity are portrayed in evangelical literature and media (Bartkowski 2004; Gallagher 2003; Gallagher and Wood 2005), how these ideas are communicated through sermons, conferences and workshops (Gardner 2011; Gerber 2015), online forums (Burke 2014), and in congregations (Sumerau 2012), and how evangelical men and women enact these ideas in their daily lives (Bartkowski and Read 2003; Diefendorf 2015; Gallagher 2003). The sites and topics are equally diverse. Gallagher (2003) interviewed evangelical men and women to learn how they negotiate ideas about male headship and women's subservience in their daily lives and compared their answers to ideologies as they emerge from a range of media. Bartkowski (2004) found that the literature of the Promise Keepers movement gave rise to several idealized forms of evangelical masculinity (see also Heath 2003). Others focused on evangelical sexual practices. Burke (2014) studied how evangelical men who engage in "deviant" sexual acts distinguish themselves from gay men who engage in such practices by

insisting on the heterosexual identity of their partners. Diefendorf (2015), Wilkins (2009), and Gardner (2011) considered how abstinent evangelical men make sense of a sexual ethic that maintains that abstinence, rather than conquest and promiscuity, define real manhood. Several studies have focused on masculinity in the context of LGBTQ individuals. Robinson and Spivey (2007) studied mixed marriages and noted the gender work that wives do to maintain their husbands' heterosexual status; Sumerau (2012) found that gay men attain manhood by distancing themselves from effeminate and promiscuous others; and Gerber's (2015) study of the ex-gay movement suggests that evangelical masculinity has subversive elements.

These studies have converged around three themes: defining evangelical masculinity and identifying how it is communicated and enforced; assessing tensions between ideal evangelical masculinity and its empirical iterations; and the relationship between evangelical masculinity and hegemonic masculinity. Scholars generally agree on the first two points (components of evangelical masculinity and gaps between the ideal and real), but disagree about whether evangelical masculinity amounts to hegemonic masculinity and its subversive potential.

Evangelical masculinity is premised on gender complementarity, male dominance, and heteronormativity. Gender is understood as a binary hierarchical system rooted in immutable essence (Gardner 2011; Heath 2003; Robinson and Spivey 2007; Wilkins 2009). Masculine privilege, feminine submission, and gender specific traits, tastes, strengths, and weaknesses are considered as divinely ordained, and masculinity is associated with leadership, protection, authority, and self-control (Bartkowski 2001; Gallagher and Smith 1999; Gallagher and Wood 2005; Kaylor 2010; Robinson and Spivey 2007). This gender system also assumes that heterosexuality is the only appropriate expression of human desires (Gardner 2011).

Other aspects of the evangelical gender system do not align with conservative interpretations of gender. First, evangelical masculinity emphasizes capacity for leadership, self-control, and

authority over others rather than strength, violence, or aggression. More importantly, evangelical masculinity encompasses traits not typically associated with masculinity: emotional expression, vulnerability, and close friendships among men (Bartkowski 2004; Gerber 2015; Heath 2003). It is also premised on a sexual ethic that emphasizes self-control, abstinence, and measured expressions of (hetero)sexual practice (Diefendorf 2015; Gardner 2011; Wilkins 2009)—contrary to dominant secular perceptions of hegemonic masculinity as engaged in uncontrollable and relentless pursuit of sexual adventures (Wilkins 2009). These features have led scholars to term this a “soft boiled” and “godly” masculinity, to distinguish it from hegemonic masculinity (Bartkowski 2004; Heath 2003).

The scholarship also points to gaps between ideal evangelical masculinity and realities of evangelical lives, and many studies investigate strategies that help evangelicals make sense of this gap and “reclaim” masculinity. These strategies involve playing up some components of masculinity against others or changing the meaning of evangelical masculinity. First, there is a gap between the ideal of male headship and realities that necessitate women’s paychecks. This tension may jeopardize the leader/submissive relationship, but Gallagher (2003) found that these tensions are resolved through a blend of a symbolic insistence on traditionalism and a pragmatic practice of egalitarianism (see also Bartkowski 2001; Gallagher and Smith 1999). More broadly, evangelicals reject feminist egalitarian ideas but adjust their gender expectations to allow women to work outside the home and men to be caring parents and spouses (Wilcox 2004). Insistence on the immutability of gender differences and male dominance produces flexibility and sensitivity within domestic spheres (Donovan 1998). Although this strategy seems egalitarian at the individual level, it does not challenge larger patriarchal social structures (Heath 2003).

Similar negotiations occur vis-à-vis sexual practice. Here heterosexuality and gender essentialism are used to reclaim the masculinity of men whose sexual practices defy hegemonic het-

eronormative definitions of masculinity. Burke (2014, 2016) studied evangelical men who engage in sexual practices associated with homosexual desire—receptive sex and erotic cross-dressing. Their claims of masculinity hinge on the gender of their sexual partners (heterosexual wives) and the immutability of gender differences. Sexually abstinent men embrace an expanded definition of masculinity that emphasizes self-control and respectability to claim a masculinity that is not premised on sexual conquest (Diefendorf 2015; Gardner 2011; Wilkins 2009). In other cases, where heterosexuality cannot be assumed—as in the case of ex-gay men—evangelical masculinity is expanded to include a broader range of practices (Gerber 2015). A final example comes from Sumerau’s (2012) study of the construction of gay masculine Christian identities. His subjects faced a conundrum: they couldn’t live up to the evangelical heterosexual male ideal. Their strategy was to embrace other aspects of evangelical masculinity they could access: they emphasized paternal stewardship, emotional control, and the “Christian” (monogamous) aspects of their intimate relationships. As they positioned themselves as superior to promiscuous and effeminate others, they claimed evangelical masculinity at the expense of women and sexual minorities who did not share their Christian sexual ethic of responsible sexual conduct, monogamy, and immutable sexual nature.

In sum, this literature identifies a range of evangelical masculine practices and ideals, fissures between ideal and real, and strategies evangelical men utilize to claim masculinity. But scholars disagree whether evangelical masculinity amounts to hegemonic masculinity. Some see an overlap between hegemonic and evangelical masculinity (Donovan 1998; Diefendorf 2015; Heath 2003; Robinson and Spivey 2007; Sumerau 2012). Robinson and Spivey (2007) argue that ex-gay reparative therapy reproduces hegemonic masculinity by teaching ex-gay men to acquire stereotypical masculine behaviors, shun feminine behaviors, engage in homosocial interactions, and enter heterosexual marriage and fatherhood. Sumerau et al. (2014) argue that portrayals of masculinity in secular and religious magazines

are almost indistinguishable in their emphases on control, leadership, protection, and the immutability of gender differences.

Others acknowledge but downplay the potential flexibility of evangelical masculinity. Research on abstinent men has taken this approach. Since sexual purity is associated with femininity and is incongruent with hegemonic masculinity, Wilkins (2009) and Diefendorf (2015) consider whether abstinent men challenge normative definitions of masculinity. Both reject this possibility. Wilkins argues that evangelical men's masculinity projects may ameliorate failed masculinity of individual men but do not rewrite masculine norms; their goal is not to rethink this construct but to salvage their own heterosexual identity. Diefendorf (2015) also finds that seemingly transgressive practices do not challenge boundaries and hierarchies; her abstinent-until-marriage respondents emphasized heterosexuality and future sexual engagement to reinforce rather than negate hegemonic masculinity.

Others critique the conflation of hegemonic and evangelical masculinity, emphasizing the latter's subversive, even queerish potential (Gerber 2015). Gerber shows that while ex-gay ministries are conservative in their gender ideology (they endorse gender hierarchy and male privilege), they also expand idealized masculinity by de-emphasizing heterosexual conquest, embracing male emotional expressiveness, and allowing for homo-intimacy. This ideal relieves "(ex-) gay men from the pressures of heterosexual performance, expanding the repertoire of legitimate gender expressions, and allowing for a considerable degree of male–male intimacy" (Gerber 2015, p. 127). She thus sees disruptive possibilities that may generate a queerish masculinity that blurs gender boundaries, albeit one that is not deliberately subversive. Since the expansion of legitimate expressions of masculinity potentially serves all evangelical men, Gerber emphasizes the revolutionary potential of the ex-gay masculinity rhetoric. Burke (2014) also comes down on this side of the reproduction of inequality vs. subversive potential debate. While she acknowledges the hegemonic potential of her subjects' appeals to heterosexuality as

they work to reassert their gender normalcy, she emphasizes the disruptive and subversive potential of the actions of evangelical men who engage in non-normative sexual acts usually associated with homosexual desires. Though they profusely reject deviance, queerness, or effeminacy, they reveal that evangelical sexual logic stands on unstable ground.

In rejecting the conflation of evangelical and hegemonic masculinity, these scholars prefer Bartowski's (2004) notion of godly masculinity. This construct acknowledges that evangelical masculinity is rooted in a binary and hierarchical gender system, and is advocated by people who support the dominance of masculinity. But it also allows for the subversive potential of a masculinity that cannot, by definition, meet many of the requirements of hegemonic masculinity. This approach allows scholars to discuss the complexity of religious gender regimes. Gerber (2015) argues that it is erroneous to confuse ideological support for gender hierarchy with the lived iterations of evangelical masculinity. This conflation is factually incorrect and erases the subversive potential on the ground. Both Gerber and Burke show that gender experimentation is compatible with maintaining a conservative gender ideology (Gerber 2008, 2014, 2015). They emphasize that some evangelical masculinity projects subvert some aspects of hegemonic masculinity and that it is important to notice the fissures and changes within the system.

The research on evangelical masculinity sheds light on religious gender projects but its conceptual and empirical premises need to be expanded. First, though the production of masculinity and femininity occurs across religious traditions, thus far we know little about these processes outside evangelical Christianity. More work on a range of religious traditions in transnational contexts would deepen our understanding of the subversive and reproductive potential of religious masculinity. Second, research on evangelical masculinity also engages broader conversations about how religious beliefs and practices are both in tension with the demands of modern life and secular culture, and are influenced/reshaped by feminist, queer, and progressive rhetoric. The

empirical record suggests that this dialogue between conservative gender projects and secular gender regimes is much more profound than public imagination would allow, and that religious gender regimes are quite flexible and malleable. Finally, the interpretive battle about the subversive potential embedded in evangelical masculinity raises similar concerns to the ones discussed above about the turn away from religion in studies of gender and religion. Those who equate evangelical masculinity with hegemonic masculinity tend to be gender scholars who are primarily interested in cultures of masculinities rather than in evangelical life. Such studies are less attuned to evangelical history and culture. In contrast, those who are interested in investigating how Christianity is lived on the ground are more likely to acknowledge the dual potentialities of evangelical gender regimes (e.g. Bartkowski 2004; Burke 2014; Gallagher 2003; Gerber 2015).

Gendered Patterns of Religiosity

For several decades, sociologists of religion have been fascinated with a religiosity gender gap, or the purported tendency of women to be more religious than men on measures such as church attendance and beliefs in the afterlife, God, and biblical literalism. It is now taken as “evident that women are, on average, more religious than are men in most religious traditions and in most nations of the world” (Roth and Kroll 2007 p. 218). Critics argue that these claims and attempts to explain purported gendered patterns of religiosity are ahistorical, undertheorized, and erroneous because they universalize the Christian western experience (Cornwall 2009; Sullins 2006). I include this topic in this overview because it has garnered much attention, but it also serves as a cautionary tale of splintering academic disciplines and fields of knowledge. These intellectual failures suggest the need for an overarching conceptual lens in the sociology of religion, and I articulate such a lens in the concluding section.

Early research attributed the religiosity gender gap to the *differential socialization* of women as more submissive, passive, obedient, and nurturing, and to differences in *structural location* that associated women’s increased religiosity with their role as primary parents and lower workforce participation that left them with more time to engage in church related activities and a need for a source of personal identity and commitment (see Collett and Lizardo 2009 for an overview). Iannaccone (1990) claimed that women are socialized as religious consumers who allocate more time for religious activities and are also more skilled at attaining religious rewards for their families. Empirical support for these theories had been mixed (Cornwall 1989; de Vaus and McAllister 1987; Thompson 1991), but changes in patterns of employment, parenting, and family formation have rendered these theories outdated (Edgell and Hofmeister 2008).

A more recent explanation has centered on *risk aversion theory* that attributes the religiosity gender gap to men’s and women’s differential risk-taking propensities. Miller and Hoffmann (1995) offered a two-step argument. First, drawing on the theory that risk preference explains a range of social behaviors (such as health practices and the likelihood of participating in criminal activities), they argued that religious acceptance amounts to risk averse behavior. Second, they argued that women’s lower tolerance for risk and men’s higher likelihood of engaging in risky behavior accounted for gendered differences in religiosity. This explanation captured the realities of Christian communities in the United States that had become increasingly feminized and was in line with the rational choice frame that dominated the sociology of religion at the time (Finke and Stark 1992; Stark and Finke 2000). The Miller and Hoffmann article has taken on a life of its own in the sociology of religion, displacing earlier theories of gendered patterns of religiosity (Collett and Lizardo 2009; Hoffmann 2009; Miller and Stark 2002; Roth and Kroll 2007). Having mostly accepted the premise that risk preference is the best explanation (though see Roth and Kroll 2007 for an alternative view),

the debate shifted to explaining what Miller and Hoffmann left unexplored: *why* are women more risk averse than men? What followed was a debate about the roots of gender differences amongst religion scholars who traced women's risk aversion to physiology, evolution, and socialization. Notably, this decade-long debate did not consult gender scholarship on this question.

On the "nature" side, Stark (2002) rejected socialization as an explanation for gender differences in religiosity, arguing that male physiology makes males more impulsive and less likely to submit to religious prohibitions. Miller and Stark (2002) considered and rejected the possibility that failure to provide empirical support for socialization is a product of the near-exclusive focus of this scholarship on the U.S. or that the tools of social science are too crude to adequately measure subtle forms of socialization. Using the American General Social Survey and World Values Survey data, they claimed that there was no relationship between socialization and levels of religiosity. Others argued for a "nurture" explanation for gender differences. Rejecting the physiological explanation, Collett and Lizardo (2009) drew on *power control theory* to provide a socialization-based explanation for gendered patterns of religiosity. However, they left the risk preference model unchallenged.

Critics have argued that this line of research is ahistorical and undertheorized, and that it erroneously universalizes from a mostly Christian, Western experience. Most troubling, this scholarship is decontextualized from social, political, and historical contexts that produce gender differences and inequalities and from the ethnographic research discussed in this review about gendered dynamics of religious affiliation. Carroll (2004) argues that universal accounts of gendered religiosity are historically inaccurate; the feminization of piety is a relatively recent phenomenon, and this account is insensitive to historical gender dynamics that explain why males fled Protestant congregations or why women were drawn to religion. For example, religion was one of the few institutional arenas

where women could raise and discuss issues that were important to them as a group and resist patriarchal values (Orsi 1996; Reed 1988). As noted, sociological studies of women in conservative religions have come to similar conclusions: women affiliate for a complex host of reasons related to power differentials within families, congregations, denominations, and broader cultural and political contexts. Attributing affiliation to narrow concepts of socialization (let alone physiology!) without engaging this research compromises the validity of this line of research.

Others have noted that this research reflects the tendency in the sociology of religion to universalize and generalize from Eurocentric and Christianized definitions of religiosity. Sullins (2006) has shown that the purported gender gap relies in large part on how "religiosity" is defined (see also Cornwall 1989; Edgell and Hofmeister, 2008), and that drawing a distinction between affective religiousness (personal piety) and active religiousness (ritual practice) produces alternative results. Using these more sensitive measures, Sullins finds gendered differences in the first case (personal piety), but smaller and far from universal differences in the latter. While he finds that in Islam and Orthodox Judaism men are more religious and more *actively* religious than women, he attributes these differences to the fact that these religions are highly gendered to begin with. Greater male participation "is in part the result of the gender-differentiating effects of the organization, norms, rituals, or beliefs of these religious institutions or cultures themselves. Both [Orthodox Judaism and Islam]...practice sex segregation in religious practice and ritual, exclude women from leadership, and promote strong norms of masculine religious identity and ideals, which all may have direct and differential effects by gender" (Sullins 2006, p. 874). Sullins concludes that attempts to explain gender differences have ignored the role of institutional differences—as documented by ethnographic studies of women's experiences discussed above.

These critiques converge on the most troubling aspects of this research agenda: it takes a reduc-

tive approach to gender; it fails to consider religion as a gendered social institution; and it disregards theories of gender that trace gender dynamics and patterns to culture, history, politics, and the economy and question the adequacy of “nature” as an explanatory mechanism. In the three decades that sociologists of religion have been debating gendered religiosity, gender scholars have developed sophisticated tools to analyze gender as a central social institution that is produced and reproduced by a range of practices, interactions, and institutions—among them religion (Acker 1990; Martin 2004). Gender scholars have shown that nature/nurture is a false dichotomy (Fausto-Sterling 2012). Socialization is seen as a complex process that shapes the very measures that this research attempts to assess, including how social structure, inherently gendered, shapes men’s and women’s tastes, choices, and trajectories (see Hoffmann and Bartkowski (2008) for one instance that does take this into account). From this perspective, the key working categories are not essentialized notions of men and women but rather femininity and masculinity (Lorber 1994, 1996); gendered patterns both produce gendered individuals and maintain a gendered social order premised on institutionalized inequalities (Acker 1992). In other words, gender theory instructs us that gender is a social construct that shapes how people develop their identities, tastes, and preferences and navigate social institutions. Cornwall (2009, pp. 252–53) summarized these analytical flaws, noting that research on gendered religiosity reifies “cultural beliefs about men and women and reinforces researchers’ own taken-for-granted assumptions about gender differences” (see also Hoffmann 2009).

In sum, scholarship on gendered religiosity has been disengaged from gender theorizing and ethnographic research on religious experiences; it is also ahistorical and generalizes from the Christian, Western religious experience. This scholarship is a cautionary tale about intellectual insularity in the sociology of religion (Avishai 2015; Avishai and Irby 2015) and demonstrates the utility of a comprehensive gender lens in the sociology of religion.

Conclusion and Future Directions: Religion as a Gendered Social Institution

Thus far this review has been organized topically. I have discussed conceptual and empirical shifts and noted that contemporary gender and religion scholarship is comprised of distinct research agendas that do not engage one another. In this final section, I discuss a conceptual lens that runs through these research agendas: religion as a gendered social institution.

Conceptual lenses utilized in the surveyed literature share several shortcomings. They fail to take seriously *both* religion and gender, and they cannot encompass the breadth of research agendas. The feminist dilemma of religion stifled interest in religion among gender scholars. Its normative stance on religion as antithetical to women’s interests along with secularist assumptions produced narrow attention to topics such as women and gender in conservative religions. The cultural feminist lens, which dominated in the 1980s and 1990s, took religion seriously, but the emphasis on uncovering and documenting women’s experiences failed to engage other scholars. The result was a marginalized research agenda in both religion and gender circles, a process that may explain why, despite enduring relevance, topics such as women clergy have received little attention in the past decade. Women are agitating for expanded religious authority in mainline religions in places like sub-Saharan Africa (Agadjanian 2015) and in previously entrenched conservative denominations such as Orthodox Judaism, the Mormon Church, and the Catholic Church. In addition, women’s religious leadership in mainline traditions in the United States is still rife with inequality (Adams 2007; McDuff, 2008). Finally, the prominence since the early 2000s of poststructural, queer, and postcolonial lenses has displaced the feminist dilemma of religion. However, the near-exclusive focus on questions emanating from feminist theory has obscured the core concerns of the sociology of religion. This distancing likely explains why research about gendered phenomena (e.g. gen-

dered religiosity) continues to ignore gender scholarship: those not engaged in critical feminist conversations deem gender theory as irrelevant. However, gender and religion scholarship can be consolidated into a comprehensive conceptual lens that encompasses these distinct research agendas. In what follows, I articulate the lens of religion as a gendered social institution, trace its logic to gender theories, discuss its prominence in the literature, and map existing research onto this frame.

Contemporary gender theory views gender as a multi-faceted social institution that shapes, facilitates, and constrains human experience and interaction through ideology, practices, conflicts, and power (Martin 2004). This dynamic conceptualization of gender emerged from critiques of approaches that reduced gender to individual, psychological, biological, or other micro phenomena and a decades-long debate between structural and interactional theories of gender. Contemporary paradigms reject the micro–macro dualism. Instead, they emphasize the sociality of gender, its collective aspects, its historicity (gender regimes vary over time), and the centrality of power and human agency. Gender theorists argue that gender works simultaneously on the individual, interactional, structural, and symbolic levels (Acker 1990, 1992; Connell 1987; Lorber, 1984; Martin 2004; Risman 2004). Moreover, given the pervasiveness of gender in shaping the ideology, practices, conflicts, and power structures of all social institutions, gender theorists claim that this conceptualization of gender should guide studies of social relations, dynamics, practices, rules, and procedures in other institutional spheres (Acker 1990, 1992; Martin 2004).

Conceptualizing religion as a gendered social institution means that it is a site where ideas about gender, femininity, masculinity, men, women, sexuality, and the body emerge and are negotiated, developed, and practiced. These constructs, in turn, shape institutional structures, how people live their lives, and how communities define themselves. Crucially, this approach suggests that these ideas do not emerge or operate in a vacuum; they can only be understood in the context of the societal, political, economic, cul-

tural, and institutional organization of gender. In other words, gendered religious patterns, institutional structures, interpersonal dynamics, and cultural symbolism are intimately intertwined and in dialogue with broader social patterns. Likewise, religious change across space and time cannot be understood outside of this context. In sum, this lens suggests that religion is one site, among many, where gender is produced, reproduced, and enacted. The idea that gender defies institutional boundaries is almost taken-for-granted in gender scholarship; studies of gender in Muslim communities in particular have eluded clear separation between culture, religion, and society (e.g. Abu-Lughod 2013; Gallagher 2007; Khurshid 2015; Mahmood 2005). But religion scholars still tend to conceptualize religion as *sui generis*, raising concerns about the tendency to decontextualize religion from the environment in which it exists (Guhin 2014; Marti 2014; Wuthnow 2014). This lens disrupts this conceptual insularity.

This approach does not mean that gender is always the most important or salient aspect, but it does instruct us to always be aware of gender when analyzing institutional power structures, organization, dynamics, practices, and ideologies (Avishai et al. 2015). Thus, analyses of gendered religiosity and discussions of practices such as veiling (Moore 2007), movements such as the Promise Keepers (Johnson 2000), or organizations such as fraternities (Gurrentz 2014) run afoul of this mandate when they do not account for how religious traditions organize gender. This does not imply, however, that religion is singularly responsible for gendered social inequalities, nor one where these inequalities can be resolved in a vacuum. “It is naive to think that if everyone woke up tomorrow an atheist, no one would continue to be sexist, racist or homophobic. These negative values suffuse society and transcend particular cultural systems. Blaming religion for these problems means not having to acknowledge how deeply ingrained hierarchy and oppression are within contemporary societies” (Zwissler 2012, p. 363).

Finally, this approach implies that gender and religion are co-constituting (Avishai et al.

2015; Irby 2014). Like race, class, or immigration status, religion intersects with gender to produce gendered religious dynamics are not reducible to either institution. Religious women's agency and evangelical masculinity are products of this intersection. This means that gender scholars who study these phenomena must pay attention to context-specific iterations of gender dynamics and analyze these phenomena within the logics of specific religious traditions under investigation. It also means that we need to develop better tools to analyze such co-constituting practices.

Although rarely articulated as an orienting frame (for a partial iteration see Sumerau and Cragun 2015), many gender and religion studies explore dimensions of religion as a gendered institution. In what follows, I map this research onto several key aspects of gendered social institutions: ideologies, institutional logics, interpersonal interactions, and practices.

Some studies focus on religion as a site that produces symbolic ideas about gender. Scholarship on *gendered religious ideologies* examines the gender logics of religion, specifically how categories such as male and female, masculinity and femininity, and a variety of gendered (wifely submission, appropriate gendered division of labor) and sexual (chastity, abstinence, self-control) scripts and behaviors are defined, constructed, and operationalized, as well as justifications for this gender system. Data for these studies come from content analysis of sacred and popular texts such as books, magazines, advice manuals, or materials used in church-related activities, sermons, interviews with clergy and other religious leaders, and observations at a range of religious activities. Studies of advice manuals include Bartkowski's (2004) analysis of Promise Keeper literature, Gallagher's (2003) study of family advice manuals, and Burke's (2014, 2016) study of evangelical sex manuals. Sumerau and Cragun (2015) studied Latter Day Saints' (LDS) archival material to show how LDS clergy and women lay leaders defined authentic womanhood and taught femininity in ways that sanctified gender inequality. Sigalow and Fox (2014) studied how Jewish

children's books produce and transmit ideas about gender differences. And Gardner (2011) analyzed how materials used by the abstinence movement constructed ideas about femininity and masculinity. Sociologists can relate their work to interdisciplinary scholarship on the gendered logics of sacred (Knust 2011) and popular (DeRogatis 2014) religious texts, as well as theological analyses of the gendered nature of male deities, language, and creation stories (see Llewellyn and Trzebiatowska 2013 for an overview of feminist theology).

Other studies examine *gendered religious institutional structures*, focusing on the gendered logics of religious institutions, authority structures, and organizations. Studies of gendered authority structures explore gendered patterns of lay and clerical leadership and their implications (Adams 2007; Chaves 1999, Nesbitt 1997) while others focus on organizational logics. Perry (2013) demonstrates how enduring traditionalist gender ideologies shape the work experience of male and female employees of evangelical parachurch organizations. Cadge (2004) examines how Theravada Buddhist teachings produce gendered roles and responsibilities that limit women's access to leadership positions in Buddhist organizations. Institutional structures also limit women's access to religious literacy and interpretive authority (Avishai 2008b; El-Or 2002; Rinaldo 2013) and establish differential access to religious spaces (Prickett 2015; Sztokman 2011; Sullins 2006).

As noted above, gendered institutions are not only about the symbolic realm nor do they operate only at the structural level—they also work at the micro level through interactions and embodied practices. Feminist theorists emphasize that gender is “done,” produced, enacted through everyday interactions (Butler 1990, 1993; West and Zimmerman 1987). In gender and religion studies this idea has been used primarily in analyzing processes of ethical subject formation. Many studies have examined how religious subjects are produced through practices involving learning and interpreting texts (Rinaldo 2013, 2014), clothing (Winchester 2008), veiling (Mahmood 2005; Parvez 2011), and other reli-

religious observances (Avishai 2008a). However, religious practices undertaken by male and female subjects, like their secular counterparts, are deeply gendered. Two recent studies have expanded on this notion to consider how religious observances encourage men and women to develop specifically religious *and* gendered dispositions. Rao (2015) studied how American converts to Islam contend with religious injunctions around clothing and polygyny. Her point of departure was that religious observances make different demands on men and women. She found that in the case of converts to Islam male respondents strove to develop a disposition of responsibility that was positioned in opposition to secular masculinity, while female respondents developed a sacrificial disposition that was positioned primarily against Muslim men. Rao thus showed that the process of adherence to religious injunctions produces gendered religious subjects. Irby's (2014) study of evangelical dating narratives demonstrates that understanding gendered practices undertaken by religious subjects hinges on accounting for the two institutions as interrelated. Her respondents' perceptions of premarital relationships could not be separated from either evangelical ideas about gender complementarianism or from religious practices such as prayer. These studies suggest that "doing gender" is achieved via doing religion, and vice versa—against the backdrop of a secular other (Avishai 2008a).

This mapping of gender and religion scholarship suggests that though rarely articulated as such, the gender and religion literature can be read as converging on an overarching conceptual lens that considers religion as a gendered social institution. This lens suggests that religion is structured by gendered processes and patterns that produce and justify gender inequality and which mirror gender dynamics in the broader culture. Since gender operates through ideologies, practices, interactions, gendered division of labor in the home and of public space, symbolic cultural artifacts and practices, and texts and authority structures, studies of any of these realms shed light on religion as an embodied and ideological social institution that intersects with

other systems of inequality. This lens provides a comprehensive framework that ensures that religion is not discussed as *sui generis* (Guhin 2014) or in a vacuum (Wuthnow 2014), while allowing topical, empirical, and theoretical flexibility to consider a range of phenomena. Finally, since this approach is firmly grounded in both the sociology of gender and religion, it ensure that both institutions are taken seriously, thereby advancing the study of gender and religion from two disparate bodies of literature and theoretical frames to an intersectional lens that considers both simultaneously. To make full use of this frame, religion scholars will need to develop a proficiency in gender theorizing, and vice versa. Their reward will be a comprehensive conceptual framework that will help avoid theoretical, analytical, and topical blind spots.

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Abstract

The emerging study of sexuality within the sociology of religion is becoming a significant research area; both the reasons for this growth and the current scope of this research warrant broader attention. Much of the existing research interest focuses on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) experiences, especially due to the perceived conflicts experienced between these identities. This chapter will argue that it is unhelpful to castigate religion exclusively as a sexuality-regressive space, noting how it is often rhetorically convenient for secular publics to view religion in this way. Instead, utilizing a “lived religion” approach, the nuances and complexities in the relationships between religion and sexuality can be explored. This approach will be facilitated through an examination of a broad range of issues pertinent to sexuality and religion, including gender and sexuality, counter-normative sexualities, LGBTQI experiences and youth sexualities. As heteronormative assumptions continue to pattern the experiences of many individuals – of varying sexualities, genders, ages and (non)religions – heteronormativity as a concept will be drawn upon throughout.

Sexuality has increasingly become an issue of concern within the study of religion, with much research attention now being placed on how religious and sexual identities are managed (Hunt and Yip 2012). This newfound interest has occurred in a context of growing anxiety about the presence of religion within public settings, and along with gender, sexuality is increasingly used as a measuring stick to gauge the extent to which religious organisations comply with broader equality norms (Alcoff and Caputo 2011;

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Jenzen and Munt 2012; Puar 2007). Indeed, it is around the issues of gender and sexuality that religions are considered to be overwhelmingly conservative and out of step with modernising trends, leading to concerns regarding how lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI)¹ individuals manage their religious identities (see also Avishai's Chap. 9 on "Gender" in this volume).

Meanwhile, disquiet about the extent to which women's sexuality is controlled by religious norms is commonly expressed. Despite these wider anxieties, careful research into religion and sexuality reveals that the relationship between religion and sexuality is highly nuanced. Conservatism is not the only response, and there is much inter- and intra-religious variation, making it very hard to say definitively what a particular religious tradition's view on sexuality is (DeRogatis 2003; Hidayatullah 2003; Lidke 2003; Yip 2011). Indeed this is why deploying a lived religion approach to research, where focus is placed on the individual, with no a priori assumptions being made about their theological commitments (Ammerman 2014; McGuire 2008; Yip and Page 2013), can be enormously beneficial in highlighting the complexity and variation in how sexuality is lived and understood by religious adherents.

Using the theoretical concept of heteronormativity, this chapter will explore the research terrain relating to religion and sexuality. As we will further explain, heteronormativity is the idea that heterosexuality is normalized within society at large, and despite increasing efforts to include LGBTQI populations equally, this does little to disrupt heterosexuality as a principal means of organising society (Jackson and Scott 2010). Therefore heteronormativity has been used conceptually as a means of explaining heterosexual

privilege, with the understanding that heteronormativity is evidenced both within pro-LGBTQI environments, as well as societies unfavorable towards LGBTQI individuals (Jackson and Scott 2010; Kinsman 1996; Puar 2007).

How does this relate to religion? Religion and its corollary, secularism, are both loaded categories. Both are used generally without critical reflection on the categories, their development, or their relationship to one another (Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2003; Pellegrini and Jakobsen 2008; Woodhead 2013). The critical study of religion has become an increasing focus of academic research (see e.g., Arnal and McCutcheon 2012; Beckford 2003, 2012; Woodhead 2013). The full scope of the critique is outside the parameters of this chapter, but it is important to acknowledge the over-simplified usage of both religion and secularism here. As many nation-states develop more inclusive policies and standards regarding LGBTQI identities, the frequent "rationale" to explain inclusive versus exclusive spheres is the separation of church and state (MacDougall 2000; McKay 1997). Nations that tout themselves as being more inclusive towards gender and sexual diversity are considered to be "secular" states, while those whose policies and norms are exclusive (some to the extent of state-sanctioned violence towards gender or sexual difference) are defined as "religious" states (Shipley 2014). Regardless of whether Western, liberal democracies are "secular" (or un-religious), the overt message is that secularism is rational and inclusive while religion is irrational and exclusive.

Challenging the assumed inherent inclusivity of the secular sphere, research on secularism and gender exposes the ways the supposedly inclusive (liberal) secular state has permitted ongoing negative experiences for women and LGBTQI individuals, including pervasive discrimination (and violence) (McGarry 2008; Shipley 2015; Taylor and Peter 2011a, b). Further, the insistence that religion will never accept women or the sexually diverse – and therefore religion must be abandoned by those groups (Daly 1993) – misses the reality of religious identity and expression for people who see their religiosity as being as much a part of them as their gender or

¹We are using the acronym LGBTQI throughout this chapter; however, we recognize that much of the research to date focuses on some, but not all of these identities. We highlight the gaps in the study of sexuality (and religion) in our conclusion and wish to acknowledge here the limitations in the use of LGBTQI. Where we use a different acronym (i.e. LGBT) it is to refer to the indicative research, not to be exclusive.

sexuality (Althaus-Reid 2001; Raab 2001). Some counter and non-normative sexualities (e.g., polygamy) become overtly linked to the “problem” of religion; polygamous groups are framed as inherently patriarchal and harmful to women and children (Beaman 2014). Yet very little research has been conducted within these groups and, that which has, shows a complex and multifaceted picture – much like monogamous traditions and families (Campbell 2014). Meanwhile, youthful sexuality is a source of consternation and is also embedded with expectation; youth are pre-figured as secular, “liberated,” and highly sexualized but rarely ascribed the characteristic “religious” (Young 2014).

Using a multi-faith approach, this chapter will deploy a number of case studies to explore the relationship between religion and sexuality. We will firstly explain what we mean by heteronormativity and its relationship to religion. We will then explore how heteronormativity structures experiences in relation to a variety of issues: gender (attending to gendered regulations around sexuality within religious communities); counter and non-normative sexualities (sexualities that can be deemed out of synch within broader cultures but are endorsed and valorized within some religious communities, such as celibacy and singleness, and polygamy and polyamory); LGBTQI individuals; youth sexuality and religion (e.g., virginity pledges and experiencing sexualized youth cultures). Our conclusion will explore the broader implications of the research into sexuality and religion conducted so far.

Heteronormativity

Heteronormativity is a meta-narrative imposed on both social and legal norms which continues to have negative repercussions for “deviations” from the norm. It has had an impact on the structuring of both religious and secular spaces, and given its prevalence within social life, throughout this chapter we will be making reference to it. Heteronormativity assumes an inherent or “natural” character dictated by being either female or male and presumes this character of female-ness

and male-ness to be a biological imperative resulting in normative heterosexuality. Females and males are seen to be complementary to one another, biologically “designed” to procreate (Rich 1976; Rubin 1994; Warner 1991). Heteronormativity insists on rigid frameworks for what is considered acceptable gender performances and defines “family” within restrictive terms based on normative gender and sexuality assumptions (Halberstam 1998; Lustenberger 2014). The assumption of this “natural” character of females and males as complementary creates rigid parameters for what is considered to be family and what constitutes an acceptable family form (Cossman and Ryder 2001; Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2003).

Heteronormativity was originally challenged in feminist critiques, specifically the assumptions embedded in what “womanhood” versus “manhood” encapsulated (Irigaray 1984; Rubin 1994). The notion that females and males fell into two distinct, supposedly natural, categories which then dictated their roles was challenged (Halberstam 1998; Irigaray 1984; Rubin 1994). Rich (1980) conceptualized the term “compulsory heterosexuality” to identify the ways in which heterosexuality as an institution restricted women. She articulated how women were expected to orient their sexual desire to men, with this desire cemented through romantic notions and ideals instilled from an early age (e.g., dreams of the big, white wedding, depicted in novels, film and magazines). But this fantasy masked the costs of compulsory heterosexuality – structured around the needs of (heterosexual) men. Sex itself therefore comes to be defined in ways conducive to male eroticism and pleasure (see Lewis et al. 2013) and this is institutionally valorized through cultural norms (e.g., the way sex itself is usually understood to mean penetrative vaginal sex). Meanwhile lesbian sexuality is seen as incomplete and inadequate. Rich’s concept of compulsory heterosexuality was revolutionary because it put heterosexuality forward as an object for critique. Instead of seeing it as normal or natural, Rich posited that heterosexuality was an institution. Rich was pioneering in understanding the links between gender and sexuality,

something that has continued in the scholarship in this field (e.g., Holland et al. 1998, Lewis et al. 2013; Thompson 1990; Tolman 2002). Heteronormative attitudes have been demonstrated to be deeply rooted and implicit in day-to-day life, from mundane activities such as shopping (Wolin 2003) to less visible but still impactful issues, such as income inequality and tax penalties (Johnson 2002).

Critics challenge the taken-for-granted expectation that heterosexuality is the norm and any alternative sexuality is a deviation (Jagose 1996; Warner 1991; Weeks 2011). Constraints that are placed on non-heterosexual identities are based on social expectations and social stigmas. This includes the notion that marriage is “naturally” between a man and a woman and that the purpose of marriage is to procreate. Definitions of family based on the “natural” composition of female and male dynamics has been the source of wide-ranging repercussions for non-heterosexual individuals and those who live non-heteronormative lives (Califia 2001; Delphy 1993; Dreyer 2007; Lustenberger 2014; Weeks 2011). The lack of access to health care benefits because of normative definitions of family status is one example of these repercussions (Cossman 2007; Cossman and Ryder 2001; Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2003); the inability of same-sex couples to adopt where marital status is required is another (Kinsman 1996). In some cases, the policy itself is not explicitly discriminatory; rather, its reliance on normative definitions creates an exclusionary reality. In the United States, until 2015 when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of marriage equality, although many states did not explicitly restrict adoption to heterosexual couples, their policies required that couples were married in order to adopt. Same-sex couples, by default, were not considered eligible.

Heteronormativity is also discursively embedded in ways that are difficult to unpack. The performance of normative gender and normative sexuality in public spaces, especially schools, implicitly supports the expectation of heterosexual and heteronormative identities (Gleason 1999; Naugler 2010; Robins and Davies 2008; Søndergaard 2012). Sex education curricula

which do not include sexual and gender diversity further reinforce the notion that “good” femaleness and “good” sexuality are embodied through normative expressions (Gleason 1999; Robins and Davies 2008; Taylor and Peter 2011a, b); non-heterosexuality and gender non-conformity are both implicitly and explicitly framed as deviations (Fetner et al. 2012; Taylor and Peter 2011b). Gender non-conforming or sexually diverse students have reported that their experience of schooling, where LGBTQI or gender diversity were at best ignored, left them without information about dating, healthy relationships, or healthy expectations based on their gender or sexuality (Naugler 2010; Taylor and Snowdon 2014a; Yip and Page 2013). The dominant message where heterosexuality is the norm and non-heterosexuality is invisible can lead to tragic consequences, including pervasive discrimination, bullying, and even suicide (Søndergaard 2012). It is clear that everyday spaces are imbued with heteronormative assumptions. Although it is usually religious spaces which are held up to account, it is apparent that the experience of heteronormativity is wide-ranging, and the relationship between heteronormativity and religion is a complex one.

In recent decades, an increasing number of challenges regarding exclusive definitions of family and acceptable sexuality have been articulated, recently achieving successes such as the recognition of same-sex marriage in numerous countries and changes to restrictive categorizations of what is considered family across diverse policy and legal contexts (Cossman 2007; Cossman and Ryder 2001; Denike 2007; Rehaag 2009; Valverde 2006). These recent changes have marked increased access to services for LGBTQI communities; however, they do not come without their own problems. For example, when Massachusetts first recognized same-sex marriage it simultaneously canceled civil recognition for same-sex couples. The consequence was that same-sex couples had to get married in Massachusetts in order to gain or maintain access to benefits that were previously recognized for couples through civil union declarations (Duggan 2012). Although same-sex marriage recognition

is an inclusive modification to previous definitions of marriage as being only between a woman and a man, it is also a normative imposition for same-sex couples. The “acceptable” performance of same-sex relationships becomes intertwined with a fairly conservative, traditional relationship dictate: marriage (Denike 2007; Duggan 2012; Valverde 2006). Making marriage the hallmark of LGBTIQI inclusion is also seen as problematic: where the “acceptable” same-sex couple is a married one and when marriage equality is achieved, the resulting perception is that the fight for rights is “done” (Denike 2007; Puar 2007; Valverde 2006). This underscores a prevailing concern that while rights and inclusivity have been advanced for many non-heterosexuals, at the same time trans, intersex, bisexual, and non-monogamous sexualities are overlooked or underrepresented in the majority of these cases and in the research (Irving 2008; Toft 2012).

Religion’s role in the imposition of gender and sexual norms is often perceived to be only oppositional towards gender or sexual diversity (Althaus-Reid 2001; Llewellyn and Trzebiatowska 2013; Plaskow and Christ 1989; Ruether 1993; Young 2012). Normative religiosity and normative sexuality are seen as explanatory teachings regarding the ways many people live their religious and sexual experiences (Aune 2015; Miller-McLemore 1994). In other words, religion is assumed to always support heteronormativity. Opposition to the redefinition of family and subsequently the redefinition of marriage to include families and couples beyond the heterosexual matrix come most commonly from particular religious groups and individuals (Hunt 2014; Strhan 2014; Young 2012). The appearance of these repeated objections to heterosexual marriage and family standards become overgeneralized as “the” religious view regarding gender and sexual diversity. However, this overgeneralization ignores that in Canada it was a religious organization that was the first to perform same-sex marriages in the 1970s. The Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto argued that the inability to perform same-sex marriages was a violation of their religious freedom. They pushed for marriage equality, and

were ultimately successful at the federal level in 2005 (Shipley 2016). Meanwhile, in England and Wales, it was religious leaders who were instrumental in helping to decriminalize homosexuality in the 1960s (McLeod 2007).

Religious doctrine often becomes referenced in controversies about religion, gender, and sexuality – it is used both to support heteronormative standards and is simultaneously critiqued for this usage. Opponents to inclusive policy changes reference religious teachings and texts which condemn non-heterosexual or gender non-conforming identities (Hunt 2014; Strhan 2014). What is lost or unheard in these public controversies are the numerous voices of religious individuals who argue it is their religious beliefs that encourage inclusivity and acceptance of diversity (Young 2015; Yip and Page 2013). Further, many religious individuals are also non-heterosexual or gender non-conforming (Althaus-Reid 2001; Wilcox 2009; Yip and Page 2013); these identity categories exist together for many and the picture of religion as “naturally” opposed to sexual diversity ignores these intersectional experiences (Boisvert 2013; Taylor and Snowdon 2014a). In Aune et al.’s 2008 collection, the supposed inherent inclusivity of the secular sphere was challenged by women’s experiences of gender impositions, expectations of conformity and experiences of gender disciplining for any deviation from the norm as experienced across non-religious spaces.

Although heteronormativity is a social construct based on stereotypes and assumptions about the inherent “nature” of sex and gender – stereotypes and assumptions that have been repeatedly disproven (Butler 1993; Rubin 1994; Weeks 2011) – its power in regulating expectations and attitudes continues. Religion’s role in the maintenance of heteronormative attitudes is often presumed to be a dominant issue (Adamczyk and Pitt 2009; Dreyer 2007; Henshaw 2014). Yet studies on sexuality and immigration (LaViolette 2010; Rehaag 2009) and the role of government influence on heteronormative attitudes demonstrate that sex and gender assumptions are heavily influenced by “secular” institutions (Henshaw 2014) and national contexts (Adamczyk and Pitt

2009). In Canada, bisexual refugee claims are regularly rejected. Immigration and Refugee Board Tribunal members have often denigrated bisexual refugee claimants' sexuality; some commented that claimants also pursued sexual relationships with members of the opposite-sex, therefore they were not "truly" homosexual or "really" being persecuted for being homosexual (Rehaag 2009). Puar (2007) used the Abu Ghraib prison photograph scandal as illustrative of the ways queerness is connected to terrorism, terrorist activities and to frequent same-sex sexual torture mechanisms.

Sexual diversity, bisexuality and non-monogamy are often framed in government policy and in political debates as security threats (Henshaw 2014; Rehaag 2009). These framings reinforce societal expectations and attitudes towards sex and gender. Bullying and discrimination in schools based on sexual and gender difference rarely are demonstrated to have religious roots or reasoning (Fetner et al. 2012; Taylor and Peter 2011a, b). In some cases parents have acknowledged that they ignored gender and sexual disciplining in schools because they preferred for their children to be unhappy rather than unheterosexual (Taylor and Peter 2011b). Taylor and Peter's study (2011a, b) uncovered the daily experience of bullying based on sexual and gender diversity in schools across Canada, perpetrated by students and teachers. The experiences of sexually diverse youth in non-religious settings, reinforces the reality that although "religion" is seen as the problem regarding inclusivity, secular expectations of normative gender and normative sexuality permeate public, private and online spaces (Naugler 2010; Taylor and Peter 2011b). In a Canada-wide survey of discrimination in high schools, 70% of participating students reported hearing expressions such as "that's so gay" and 48% reported hearing remarks such as "faggot," "lezbo," and "dyke" every day in school. Students reported regular physical and verbal harassment about their sexual orientation, the perception of their sexual orientation, and the sexual orientation of their parents; and 10% of LGBTQIQ students (the last "Q" is for "questioning") reported hearing homophobic comments

from teachers daily or weekly (Taylor and Peter 2011a, p. 15–17).

Social ordering and social expectations regarding cohabitation, marriage, and family life continue to be dictated within heteronormative frameworks, even where marriage equality has been achieved for same-sex couples (Calder and Beaman 2014; Duggan 2012; Jakobsen and Pellegrini 2003). These entrenched assumptions about the "natural" path toward adulthood – insisting on monogamous pairing, marital status, and producing children – are prescribed across religious and secular institutions. Social norms regarding adulthood are witnessed in mundane daily experiences from branding and marketing (Wolin 2003) to more formal influences, such as policy and legislation (Cossman 2007). Governmental and legal expectations about normative sexuality are also deeply influential on social norms (Henshaw 2014). Youth experiences of these social orders and of normative gender and sexuality continue to be pervasive, and they are not relegated to religious spaces. Although youth are frequently considered to be "secular" and "liberated," the frequency of trans, bi and homophobic taunts in schools and online demonstrate entrenched norms and biases.

When persecutory experiences of bisexuals are dismissed because bisexuals are also romantically engaging in "heterosexual" relationships (LaViolette 2010; Rehaag 2009), and when homosexual violence is enacted against imprisoned suspected terrorists (Puar 2007), pervasive norms about sexuality become clearly connected beyond religion and religious dictates. While religion is frequently seen to be the source of normative expectations, particularly when it comes to gender and sexuality, the pervasiveness of heteronormative standards across public and private spaces demonstrates that social ordering of sexuality is far more entrenched in secular life than it is often perceived to be.

Gender and Sexuality

The policing of women's bodies is central to societal censorship of sexuality. Religions (as well as secular institutions) are implicated in this

control. As Trzebiatowska (2015, p. 129) notes, women “continue to be the ones responsible for the collective honour of their community and exercising sexual purity on behalf of men.” Many women feel that this surveillance is heightened in religious communities, particularly as many religious traditions have narratives that prioritize heterosexuality evidenced through marriage and procreation within marriage. Of course, religions are not the only community spaces where surveillance is experienced, and contextually, how this is lived out will differ markedly between and within different religious traditions. But this prioritisation of heterosexuality features prominently as a dominant script across many religions.

For example, despite Christianity containing a wealth of interpretations regarding the valuing of both singleness and marriage, many contemporary Christian traditions valorize heterosexual marriage and procreation (Aune 2008; DeRogatis 2003; Llewellyn 2013; Price 2006). Meanwhile, Judaism and Islam tend not to support celibacy and singleness, and are much more willing to embrace sexual pleasure as a right, but this is traditionally sanctioned only in particular situations (i.e. heterosexual marriage – see Dialmy 2010; Hunt 2010; Landau 2009). The valorization of heterosexual marriage and procreation in various religious traditions can lead to unequal outcomes, evidenced in research whereby religious communities have pressured married couples to have children (Llewellyn 2013; Yip and Page 2014). It can also result in the pressure to present one’s family as subscribing to a particular norm; Nason-Clark’s (2004) research on domestic violence demonstrated the potential consequence of this. Although Christian homes were no more predisposed to suffer domestic violence than non-Christian homes, women encountering abuse from husbands were more likely to stay in those relationships because of the negativity placed on marital failure in the eyes of the religious community and in the eyes of god (Nason-Clark 2004).

Not all religious traditions are organized around such norms. For example, Buddhism can be understood as subversive to heteronormative

edicts. As Satha-Anand (2005) notes, Buddhism does not encourage nuclear families, and sex and reproduction are not central to its teaching. But gender inequalities still emerge, especially around childcare, and the way women are devalued in some interpretations (Gross 2015). Indeed, although much of Buddhist teaching is genderless, with no menstrual taboo, certain sacred Buddhist sites (e.g., in Sri Lanka) are off-limits for menstruating women (Kustiani and Hunt 2012).

Many religious norms, such as not having sex before marriage, have traditionally been in congruence with broader societal norms, but in some geographical contexts, there has emerged a disjuncture between the two. In contexts such as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, births outside of marriage have proliferated since the 1960s (Brown 2012) and pre-marital sex is now considered acceptable by vast swathes of these populations (Dempsey and de Vaus 2004; McAndrew 2010; Regnerus 2007). The relationship between gender norms and sexuality shifts in the process. For example, in these contexts, contemporary discourse around sexuality centralizes women’s experience (Beres and Farvid 2010). This can be evidenced in women’s magazines emphasising women’s orgasm, and the increasing availability and marketization of sex toys for women (Attwood 2009). Women’s sexual pleasure is the new focus and ordinary women are accorded new expectations to be sexy – but not too sexy. Particular gender norms remain. Although societal norms tolerate women’s increased sexual activity, this should still not eclipse men’s (Johansson 2007). Holland and Attwood (2009) have examined the recent popularity of pole dancing as a form of exercise among women. Cultivating new moves allowed women to feel sexier and more confident, but this was patterned within traditional expectations, whereby sexual attractiveness was understood in relation to heterosexual male desirability. New forms of femininity were achieved on conflictual terms. Power and confidence were accompanied by greater sexual objectification. Meanwhile Lewis et al. (2013) noted how although women’s orgasm was seen as important in sexual

encounters among young people, this was not necessarily coded as important for women's experience per se, but to "prove" male accomplishment. Performing "well" was seen as a badge of masculinity. The young men appeared to show no greater respect for women's bodies, continuing to construct women's genitalia in terms of disgust. These studies of the "secular" sphere highlight how women's sexuality, despite the talk of increasing levels of freedom, is normatively constrained.

This increasing proliferation of sexual activity and sexualized spaces has an impact on how religious individuals negotiate their religious cultures, and how religions respond. It is clear that some religious communities have hardened their line, re-emphasising the importance of pre-marital virginity through marking clear boundaries between secular sexualized culture and religious expectations (e.g., as demonstrated through virginity pledges and populist literature focused on keeping chaste – more on this later). But how this affects women's and men's lived negotiation of gender and sexuality is highly variable. What is clear is that even when particular religious norms exist, religious adherents rarely follow them wholesale.

For example, Irby (2013) noted how conservative Christians were highly critical of literature targeted at keeping sexually pure before one's wedding. And Page and Yip (2012) found that although some Hindu, Sikh and Muslim women experienced pressure from religious communities to remain a virgin until marriage, the way this was managed was highly variable. Some emphasized the importance of the ("intact") hymen, broken only on the wedding night; virginity was "proved" through bloodied sheets (see also Marcotte 2015). Others argued that the bigger taboo was not virginity loss per se, but pre-marital pregnancy. The visibility of the pregnant body was to be avoided at all costs. Meanwhile, Sharma's (2011) Christian participants who had engaged in premarital sex said they felt that religious leaders could tell just by looking at them that they had "transgressed." Therefore, what is considered to be visibly sexual is culturally contingent, but it is usually women's bodies that are implicated and more heavily scrutinized.

Many religious organizations have been reluctant to allow explicit discussions of sexual matters (Cooksey and Dooms 2010; Yip and Page 2013), but technological change is enabling people to create their own spaces for debate (see Helland's Chap. 10 on "Digital Religion" in this volume). Some researchers have examined online forums, where religious individuals discuss and debate sexual matters. Issues of gender feature prominently in forum discussions. For example, Marcotte's (2015) study of Muslims' online discussions in forums such as MuslimVillage.com highlighted how gender concerns were at the forefront of much discussion about sex. Forum-users were well aware of a gendered double standard, whereby it was deemed far more acceptable for a Muslim man to have pre-marital sex than for a Muslim woman. But this tacit understanding led to many heated debates about the repercussions of this – from questions such as whether brides could ask their grooms to have an STI (sexually transmitted infection) test before the wedding takes place, to whether hymenoplasty (a surgical intervention to restore the hymen) was an appropriate procedure for women who were no longer virgins. This opened up discussion about sex, and emphasized how Islam, just like any other tradition, is variably lived. It highlighted the ways the double standard can be challenged (e.g., asking for an STI test) or entrenched (e.g., through contemplating hymenoplasty).

Meanwhile marriage itself comes with its own set of expectations and norms around sexuality. As Irby (2014, p. 1270) notes, marriage "involves men and women *becoming* 'husbands' and 'wives,' a process that men and women regularly engage in as they strive to enact the gendered expectations associated with marriage." But while much research has been motivated by the way marriage is gendered, this assessment has largely been based on examining expectations about being a good wife and mother or a good husband and father, with less of a focus on how sexual practice impacts on the negotiation of power within intimate relationships. Jung (2005, p. 79) is unusual in highlighting the implications of viewing gender roles and expectations from the perspective of sexual activity. Her starting point was Roman Catholic Church edicts positioning

penetrative vaginal sex as the only authorized way of having sex. While procreative sexual activity might happen to correspond with many men's route to sexual pleasure, she specified that this was certainly not the case for many women. Jung uses a story from Marie M. Fortune's (1995, p. 120) *Love Does No Harm: Sexual Ethics for the Rest of Us* to further her point. Fortune asked – if a Christian husband had sex with his wife, orgasmed, then promptly rolled over and went to sleep, why was his behavior not seen as immoral? Why was women's pleasure not taken seriously? This opened up a different means to examine power dynamics within relationships, and shed light on the perpetuation of heteronormative practices which privileged sexual activity that was traditionally associated with conception, and in which women's pleasure had little part.

But the ways in which sexual activity is framed within religious contexts is highly variable, and does not always centralize men's pleasure. Indeed, even in conservative religious contexts where sex outside of marriage is eschewed, some traditions prioritize women's sexual pleasure. DeRogatis (2003) observed the increasing proliferation of evangelical sex manuals where women's orgasm was foregrounded, and Imam (2005) noted the centrality of a woman's sexual arousal as a religious duty within Muslim marriages. Understanding the various discourses that operate from different religious traditions is important; what is also needed is an examination of how dominant scripts are absorbed, reformed, or rejected by religious adherents themselves.

Indeed there has been much less attention on how sexual practice is gendered for religious individuals. An exception has been the number of studies examining the experiences of Orthodox Jewish women. As Ner-David (2009) explains, Judaism has explicit rules on permissible and impermissible sexual activity. Sexual activity is not only curtailed before and outside of marriage; it is also regulated within marriage through the laws of *niddah*. This is both a sexual prohibition and a set of purity laws, which deems a woman to be ritually impure when she is menstruating and for seven "clean" days following (Kaufman

2002). Her status is reversed when she undergoes a *mikveh* bath. During this time, not only is sexual contact with her husband prohibited; all physical contact with her husband is ruled out; marital beds are separated and objects (e.g., dishes) cannot be passed between husband and wife (Avishai 2012). Liberal Judaism no longer follows these edicts, but perhaps because of the very prescribed and strict set of codes married Orthodox couples experience, much research attention has been given to how this is managed. For example, Guterman (2008) researched the extent to which Orthodox Jews followed the *niddah* rules, finding that transgressions occurred across the whole *niddah* period, but were more apparent in the second week, highlighting the extent to which couples decided for themselves how closely they followed the laws.

Avishai's (2008, 2010, 2012) research emphasized not only how the *niddah* laws structured the experiences of Orthodox Jewish women's lives, but also how marital sex itself was negotiated. Her study included interviews with bridal counsellors who advised brides-to-be about what *niddah* entailed. In an environment where such matters were little-discussed, some bridal counsellors used radical tactics to enable women to value their bodies sexually. Not only were some explicit in advising how brides should approach sex, they also advised how to use *niddah* mandates to cultivate bodily awareness and pleasure. During the seven "clean" days, women are to undertake an internal check to see whether any blood remains. Some counsellors encouraged women to explore their bodies during this time as a form of "erotic self-exploration, until now off limits, but now legitimate, even mandated" (Avishai 2012, p. 285).

Sharma (2008a, b, 2011) too examined the specific negotiation of sexual practices among young Christian women, highlighting how their experiences were profoundly gendered. Sharma's framework was underpinned by the notion of the "good girl" and the "bad girl." The "good girl" followed a particular set of dutiful codes – desiring marriage and future motherhood while saving sexual activity until marriage. The "bad girl," by contrast, was coded as someone who engaged in

pre-marital sex and non-coital practices like masturbation. Sharma noted that women absorbed the message that sex was sinful to the extent that even when women got married, they found it hard to let this feeling go. The idea that sex was sinful remained ingrained in mind and body, affecting how women experienced sex. Sharma noted the particular ways her participants oriented themselves to sex once they were married, with a central focus on pleasing their husbands rather than themselves. This meant that the fantasy of married sex, which they had been “promised by many churches to be good and satisfying,” was in fact disappointing, and much work was needed by the women to overcome this (Sharma 2011, p. 85). Nevertheless, Sharma’s participants were committed to Christianity due to the way it offered an alternative means of undertaking femininity.

Religion as a protective mechanism was also apparent in Douglas’s (2011) account on how Black women have been positioned in relation to sexuality. Because Black women are constructed as hypersexual by dominant white society, the Christian identity and styles of pious and modest femininity cultivated by Black churches attempt to counteract this negative discourse. But as Douglas (2011, p. 11) argues, this attempt “to sever the link between blackness and ‘abnormal’ sexuality” entails compliance “with what is deemed by narratives of power – white patriarchal heterosexual narratives – to be a ‘proper’ sexuality.” In this way, Black women’s sexual expression has been downplayed, restricted, and even denied, in order to rebut these racist discourses.

The aforementioned studies indicate how religious individuals negotiate religious scripts. They articulate the ways in which women who are positioned as vanguards of community purity and modesty respond to this, and the ambivalence and multi-layered responses that emerge. They also, however, articulate how women respond to scripts which signal their bodies as inferior, and the extent to which they can reject such negative responses. Religious understandings of sexuality can play a part in both entrenching these scripts, as well as giving women the resources to resist these discourses. Although religious spaces are

often seen as inherently negative for women’s sexual lives, the rhetoric emphasising the liberatory potential of secular spaces to secure women’s sexual freedom has been critiqued by feminists (e.g., Holland and Attwood 2009; Lewis et al. 2013).

Further understanding is needed about the interplay between religious and secular scripts in informing sexual experience. Indeed, rather than being wholly negative, the research highlighted here suggests that religious scripts can provide ammunition for women to challenge secular expectations around feminine sexiness. In addition, the study of gender, sexuality, and religion has mainly been about women. Much more is needed on how men negotiate lived sexuality within their religious traditions. To what extent do heteronormative scripts affect men who identify as religious? How do they feel about particular expectations of them and their bodies (e.g., the Jewish imperative to sexually please their wives) and how is this understood in a shifting context of secular sexuality? There is recent development in the area of masculinity and religion; however, the majority of this work considers gay identities, and not necessarily heterosexual masculinity and religion (e.g., Boisvert 2013).

Counter/Non-normative Sexuality

Societies always have normative understandings of what constitutes appropriate and good sexual relationships. For example, until very recently in many Western countries, heterosexual, married sex was deemed to constitute normative sexuality. This was challenged from the 1960s onwards, as increasing numbers of people had sex before marriage. In countries with legislation in place, homosexuality started to be decriminalized. But the marginalization of homosexuality remained; homosexual activity was still deemed non-normative, with homosexuals being defined as deviants (Weeks 2007).

However, from the 2000s onward, the issue of equal rights came to prominence, and many countries debated whether to institute same-sex marriage, as well as other LGBTIQI equalities

such as adoption rights, consumer rights, and protection against work-place discrimination. Indeed, although in many contexts around the globe, LGBTQI people continue to experience legal sanctions and intensive discrimination (see Shipley 2014), attitudes in many Western contexts are now much more positive to lesbian and gay communities, resulting in a change to the normative landscape. However, as previously noted, the picture is a complex one, with much contextual variation. Despite legal changes, discrimination against LGBTQI people continues (Shipley 2014).

Although the normative landscape can change, a new normative will emerge, regulating what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable sexual behavior. Western contexts legalizing same-sex marriage may be deemed sexually liberated, but regulatory frameworks persist. And these regulate individuals excluded from the dominant scripts (Jackson and Scott 2004). What we will consider here are examples where so-called non-normative sexual practices are religiously inspired, focusing on celibacy and singleness, as well as polygamy and polyamory.

Aune (2002) argues that singleness is increasing in contemporary Western societies, and it is usually assumed that sexual activity will be part of the single life. Yet for some religious communities (her focus was evangelical Christianity) sexual activity was deemed out of synch with religious tenets. Despite Christianity having resources supporting singleness and celibacy, Aune noted the discrimination that single people experienced in churches. They were often excluded from church activities, which tended to be centred on couples and families. Few preachers addressed the needs or issues faced by single people in sermons, and congregants put explicit pressure on single people to enter partnerships, with marriage being strongly encouraged. In some cases, their singleness could even be deemed threatening to families and couples. Therefore, in many church communities, singleness is not deemed normative. The path promoted is marriage with children.

One might expect that individuals in Christian traditions which specifically encourage religious

orders comprised of single people (e.g., Catholicism) would experience more positive attitudes toward their vocation as nuns or monks. Trzebiatowska's (2008) research indicates that this is not necessarily the case. Her case study exploring Catholic nuns in Poland revealed that nuns encountered much hostility, not only from the general public, but also from family members, who deemed their calling "abnormal" (Trzebiatowska 2008, p. 83). Some parents even felt embarrassed about their daughter's calling. Trzebiatowska explained that nuns undermined dominant notions of femininity and the normative sexuality associated with femininity. Because they closed off the possibility of marriage and motherhood, their choices were deemed out of synch with broader norms. Nuns were, therefore, reviled for this choice. The sacredness of a religious vocation could not compete with the sacredness ascribed to marriage and motherhood, with this regulation emerging as much from a "secular" space as from a "religious" one.

This problematizing of singleness is experienced in other religious traditions too. For example, Imtoul and Hussein (2009) noted how a satisfied life within many Muslim communities was deemed possible only when one is married, and singleness was deemed a highly undesirable state. But due to the later average age of marriage and increasing levels of divorce, many Muslim women were single – and if one was single, celibacy was expected. This created a difficult situation whereby women had to repress any sexual desire or interest, yet feign happiness in the process. Therefore, Imtoul and Hussein (2009, p. 25) argued that women were forced to perform "the myth of the happy celibate." And while single men were not routinely chastised for engaging in sexual behavior, this was deemed unacceptable for Muslim women, who risked being labelled a "slut" (Imtoul and Hussein 2009, p. 25).

Meanwhile Page (2016) noted how most religious young adults held negative attitudes towards celibacy; it was viewed as unnatural, with a celibate priesthood blamed for encouraging child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. But for a minority of religious young adults, celi-

bacy offered new possibilities. Some young people identified as asexual (defined as those “who do not experience sexual attraction or desire” [Scherrer 2008, p. 621]); celibacy allowed them to define their experience. At the same time, celibacy itself was dominantly understood as denoting no physical contact with another person. Although an asexual person may not welcome sexual contact, they may want to experience physical connections (e.g. hugging). But because such physical contact was often misconstrued as a precursor to sexual activity, it meant that asexual individuals were unable to articulate a celibacy that they craved – tactile relationships that did not involve genital contact. Other young adults adopted celibacy as a means of exerting control of their sex-saturated environment, and some saw celibacy as a religious duty (e.g., Buddhists who wanted to become monks or nuns). But these young adults were acutely aware that they were in a minority. They had to justify their stance and experienced negativity (especially by those outside of their religious tradition) for the choices they made.

Another non-normative identity relates to having concurrent multiple partnerships. Although the meanings overlap somewhat, it is important to distinguish between polygamy and polyamory. There are various definitions of polygamy, but it often relates to a married partnership that involves more than two people, typically involving one husband with multiple wives (Brooks 2009). Polyamorous relationships are variable too, but do not necessarily entail the more common polygamous model of one man with more than one female partner (polygyny), and marriage is not necessarily privileged. Sheff (2006, p. 621) describes polyamory as denoting individuals who “openly engage in romantic, sexual, and/or affective relationships with multiple people simultaneously.” Both polygamy and polyamory challenge the norm of monogamy which is strongly endorsed in most Western contexts. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for example, encountered much hostility in the U.S. when they endorsed polygamous relationships. The federal government created legislation to outlaw the practice, with mainstream Mormons

abandoning polygamy in 1890. Some Mormon sects, such as the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, continue to practice it (Campbell 2014). Non-monogamy is often perceived to be harmful to individuals, particularly women (Beaman 2014; Jackson and Scott 2004; Ritchie and Barker 2006). Therefore, those who do practise non-monogamy of one kind or another can experience much chagrin. Beaman (2014) observed that viewing polygamy negatively was often taken as a given – no explanation was deemed necessary to explain people’s hostility. And the reasons for hostility seemed little-different to the critique that could be made of monogamous families. For example, many argued that polygamy was patriarchal. Yet there was nothing to suggest that polygamous families were more or less patriarchal than monogamous families. Indeed, Calder and Beaman’s (2014) collection pointed to a greater number of similarities rather than differences between polygamous and monogamous relationships. The research suggested that polygamy was not inherently harmful. Certainly some experiences within polyamory can be exploitative and problematic, but no more so than experiences within monogamous contexts. It is not polygamy itself which exclusively determines harm (Johnson 2014); therefore, one must look to other reasons regarding why polygamy is excluded from normative codes.

Calder (2014) noted how much legal rhetoric was concerned with defending monogamy through criminalising polygamy as a means of assuring monogamy’s status. Selby (2014) argued that monogamy was inherent in particular Western forms of nation-building. Monogamy defines citizenship, demarcating the “true” citizen. Meanwhile those practising polygamy were considered the “Other” who needed to be contained, marginalized, and excluded. Selby’s case study of France offered a compelling insight into how Muslim families were deemed responsible for the Parisian youth riots of 2005. Government and media rhetoric converged to argue that the riots were not due to a lack of jobs and poverty, but due to unruly and out-of-control large polygamous families. Despite being a minority presence in

France, polygamous families were deemed culpable. In one fell swoop, Muslim families were not only blamed for the riots, but were also constituted as being opposed to a French way of life, for the “properly” French citizen was to be monogamous. This further emphasized the way secular ordering of normative sexuality was reinforced. Here the threat to social order was tied both to non-normative sexuality (polygamy) and non-normative religiosity (Islam). The queering of religious and sexual difference, and the intertwined justificatory narratives that were deployed to determine non-normative identities, were also part of a larger, nation-building exercise distinguishing the “good” citizen from the “bad” citizen (Cossman 2007).

Indeed, Anapol (2010) asserts that monogamy is a social convention structured through law and societal norms, and that once outside of these restrictions, loving relationships become disentangled from monogamous norms and expectations. When sexual norms came to be questioned in the 1960s, monogamy’s centrality was also challenged, but as Jackson and Scott (2004) argue, this critique went nowhere. At the same time that previously deviant sexual practices (e.g., sex before marriage) were normalized, others like monogamy became further entrenched. A minority did persist with this critique, advocating polyamorous relationships. Some locate the roots of polyamory in spiritual subcultures such as Paganism and New Age spirituality (Anapol 2010; Klesse 2007), and today polyamorists can be located within a number of religious traditions. Crucial to their practice is a focus on love and honesty (Anapol 2010; Klesse 2007). For example, Buddhists subscribe to a precept outlining the avoidance of sexual misconduct, but what sexual misconduct is and how this is understood is variable. Unlike religious traditions which centralize marriage, Buddhist ethics maintain that marriage (and monogamy) is not free from harm. This critique allows space for Buddhists to imagine other possibilities beyond the normative, envisioning ways of doing relationships through careful ethical exploration (Page 2016). As Keele (2012) noted, some Buddhists have argued that polyamorous relationships could fulfil the ethical

requirements underpinning the sexual misconduct precept, in that such relationships might in fact be more ethically robust than ones subscribing to more normative sexual partnerships. Page (2016) has mapped how an emerging generation of religious young adults were examining what concepts like polyamory could offer them. Out of all religious traditions, Buddhist adherents were most positive about polyamory, even if they did not envision entering a polyamorous relationship themselves. However, those who did engage in polyamorous partnerships were likely to encounter hostility, with this most likely to emerge from those outside of their religious traditions (see also Page 2014).

What this exploration of non-normative sexualities emphasizes is the way sexuality continues to be regulated. Heteronormativity continues to play a central role in structuring people’s experiences. Non-normative sexualities are not solely experienced within either secular or religious contexts. So-called sexual liberation does not liberate everybody, and new forms of sexuality that become normalized can be accompanied by greater marginalization of other sexual formations. Those engaging in sexual practices deemed against the grain will expect to experience negativity, and may even be called upon to explain themselves and their sexual practices (Foucault 1978). When religion is invoked as one of the reasons for non-normative practice, further hostility may be experienced, as evidenced in the negativity shown towards polygamous families. This is because religion is often negatively positioned on sexual matters, deemed irrevocably conservative and inherently patriarchal. This anti-religion rhetoric can then feed into broader narratives promoting particular (normative) visions of society and nationhood.

LGBTQI Experiences

In order to unpack the assumptions inherent in religion’s relationship to sexual diversity it is important to consider the implicit counter-point to this assumption: that in contrast to the religious sphere, the secular (public) sphere is some-

how inherently inclusive of LGBTQI individuals, identities, and groups. Research about sexual identity and phobic attitudes, particularly among youth, demonstrates that the experience of discrimination based on non-heterosexuality is wide reaching, often daily, and transcends the religious-secular divide (Shipley 2015; Taylor and Peter 2011b). Secularity and secularism are frequently used in the same uncritical manner that “religion” is deployed; where religion is seen as oppressive and archaic, secularism is valorized as liberating and rational.

The relationship between religion and LGBTQI identities is often narrowly represented and misunderstood. Religion is often seen as the oppressor of sexuality and sexual diversity, with reference to doctrinal sources and teachings about normative sexuality and sinful deviations (Farrow 2007; MacDougall 2000). MacDougall (2000) pointed to the traditional norms in judicial decision-making, many of which he saw as relying on religious beliefs that dictated the way judges decided cases about religion and homosexuality. He argued that while many religious beliefs about homosexuality are constant, the legal and social position of sexual minorities (especially homosexuals) has changed. What was problematic in these assertions was that when a claimant was religious *and* a sexual minority, the attribute “religious” was ascribed to their opponent, whose religious belief was said to be “under threat.” This is supported by Farrow’s (2007) claim that recasting marriage (through marriage equality) unequivocally damages family relations and the care of children, and makes “marriage” genderless and procreationless. According to Farrow (2007, p. 16), these changes are outside the bounds of law because the right to marry can only be conferred by god. Both of these arguments presuppose that religion can only be opposed to marriage equality or sexual minority rights.

Religious individuals and increasingly religious institutions integrate social, political, and philosophical values in their belief systems, relying on non-textual and non-religious sources to create a spiritual or religious understanding of gender and sexuality (Taylor and Snowdon

2014a, b; Young and Shipley 2015; Yip and Page 2013). The assumption that religion is naturally opposed to gender or sexual diversity has several important implications. It ignores the reality of individuals who live across these identity categories, who are both religious and sexually diverse, thus rendering the queer subject as “the quintessentially secular subject” (McGarry 2008, p. 248). It also ignores the ongoing and pervasive experiences of discrimination toward LGBTQI communities within non-religious spaces (Shipley 2014). Research has teased out the specificities of agreement and disagreement with LGBTQI lifestyles. Yip (2011) found that although many were keen to protect an LGBTQI person from experiencing job discrimination or to allow a same-sex couple to marry, people were less likely to support the adoption of children by LGBTQI individuals or couples. Others have argued that LGBTQI people are accepted, even by some conservative factions, only so far as they subscribe to the broader norms of monogamy and marriage (Jackson and Scott 2004).

The relationship between religion and sexual diversity frequently connects to debates about education and young people. For example, in the Canadian context, public funding for Catholic Schools continues to be a source of contestation. In recent years, the lack of acceptance and recognition for LGBTQI youth has been given as a reason that the public funding ought to be discontinued (Rayside 2014; Seitz 2014). While the Catholic Church and Catholic School Board (in Canada and elsewhere) undoubtedly adhere to discriminatory doctrines about non-heterosexuality, relying only on religious texts as the evidence of discrimination is problematic. Frequent and pervasive homophobic, transphobic and gender-negative attitudes were witnessed across religious and non-religious spaces (Henshaw 2014; Rehaag 2009; Shipley 2014). Hooghe et al.’s (2010) research on anti-gay attitudes in Canada and Belgium pointed to a number of factors influencing anti-homosexual views. Conservative religion was one factor, though negative views of homosexuality were also more prevalent among males. Support for the LGBTQI community was similar across non-religious and

Jewish respondents, and Christian and Jewish respondents clearly demonstrated attitudes and beliefs divergent from doctrine and teaching (Hooghe et al. 2010, pp. 395–96). The reality of daily discrimination based on gender and sexual difference is entrenched in social attitudes, connected to implicit and explicit performances and messages about heteronormativity.

In the U.S., Regnerus (2007) found that teens have quite conservative attitudes towards homosexuality, but this was usually accompanied by tolerance, and often acceptance, of lesbian and gay friends. Yip and Page (2013) and Shipley and Young (2016) have mapped the complex and nuanced attitudes of religious young adults towards LGBTQI individuals from a range of religious traditions within the U.K. and Canada, respectively. In the U.K., Yip and Page (2013) found that while 31.6% of 18 to 25 year-old religious young adults supported the statement, “Heterosexuality should be the only expression of human sexuality,” 58.1% supported the statement, “Homosexuality and heterosexuality should be treated equally.” Similar to Regnerus’s findings, support for lesbian and gay equality was not overwhelming. But when participants were asked to explain their stance, it was apparent that their reasoning was multi-layered and complex. The young adults were keen to stress their non-judgmentalism, emphasizing their support for gay and lesbian friends. Meanwhile others firmly committed to LGBTQI equality, but who belonged to religions espousing a conservative position, experienced a tension between their personal views and their religions’ stance. Shipley and Young (2014, 2016) undertook a parallel study of 18 to 25 year-olds in Canada. In response to statements such as “Heterosexuality and homosexuality should be treated equally,” “Same-sex marriage should be treated the same as heterosexual marriage,” and “Consenting adults should be allowed to express their sexuality however they wish,” participants responded strongly in agreement. Across all studies, therefore, support for equality is palpable, but complex.

Studies examining the intersectional identities of LGBTQI individuals further demonstrate how

religion and sexuality are simultaneously negotiated. The notion that religion “today” is more inclusive than religion “of the past” was challenged by Wilcox’s (2009) study of the religious and spiritual lives of lesbians in Los Angeles. She showed that welcoming and inclusive religious spaces have existed for much longer than many realize. Research has also mapped interesting developments at the intersection of “religious” and “secular” space. Gray and Thumma (2005) highlighted what happened when a gay bar in Atlanta accommodated two hours of gospel music and singing, led by a gay man in drag. Initially, new customers were reticent and existing customers felt aggrieved that “their” space had been invaded by religion. But for those who were gay/lesbian and Christian, this offered a new space to give ritual credence to their identity, and offered much spiritual comfort. Meanwhile Jaspal’s (2012, 2014) research into gay Iranian Muslims migrating to the U.K. emphasized the challenges faced in integrating one’s sexual and religious identity. This was especially so when religious scripts have been utilized to persecute gay citizens, leaving those individuals in an ambivalent position regarding how to be a Muslim. On migrating to the U.K., secular gay spaces were not necessarily experienced as a remedy to this identity negotiation, and could in fact entrench feelings of negativity. Part of this depended on the extent to which alternative theologies which do not castigate homosexuality are freely available. Yip (2005) found gay and lesbian Christians and Muslims rejecting censure through religious texts. Instead, religious texts were “queered,” to highlight the ways dominant readings of the texts have become entrenched, even when alternative readings are possible. These hermeneutical engagements enable LGBTQI Muslims and Christians to cultivate new theological spaces where their identities are religiously sanctioned. But access to these emerging discourses is dependent on one’s level of social and cultural capital (Jaspal 2012; Yip 2005).

Trans, intersex, and bisexual identities are vastly understudied and underrepresented. Toft’s (2012) research with bisexual Christians

exposed the false assumption that the challenges lesbian and gay individuals face were the “same as” issues bisexual Christians face. This conflation has made bisexual Christian identities, and therefore the struggles faced by bisexual Christians, invisible. Such studies point to the lack of nuanced consideration for differing challenges, stereotypes, and standards regarding the diversity of sexualities within sexual diversity. Challenges that face trans communities are also widespread, under-represented, and misunderstood (Irving 2008). Debate within feminist scholarship has struggled to attend to challenges that are presented when sex and gender are rigidly understood and also to include and represent trans individuals who seek out defined gender identities (Butler 1993; Irving 2008). Research on trans, intersex, and bisexual identities is beginning to grow; however, the connections between these aspects of identity and religion is still markedly absent.

Religion’s relationship to LGBTQI identities – as an intersectional experience of attitudes from one space to another – is frequently assumed to be one of conflict, with “religion” framed as inherently anti-homosexual and anti-LGBTQI. This is largely based on over-generalizations from some religious groups heard loudly in public debates about gender and sexuality (Lefebvre and Beaman 2014; Shipley 2014; Young 2012). The complex interweaving of expressions of identity, particularly as reported by youth in studies of the U.K. and Canada, illuminates the external pressures queer youth experience and their resulting identity expressions and repressions (Shipley and Young 2016; Taylor and Snowdon 2014a; Yip and Page 2013). Normative assertions about what “being religious” or “being queer” means influence the ways these multi-faceted identities are perceived. The expectation that one cannot be both religious and queer pre-determines expectations for LGBTQI individuals (Shipley and Young 2016; Yip 2014).

Youth Sexuality

In many contemporary societies, young people are referenced in relation to sexuality. For example, consumer goods are often promoted using sexually attractive youthful bodies (Johansson 2007; Nikunen 2007; Plummer 2003, Smith 2010), and young people’s sexual activity is taken as a given. In most Western contexts, at least, young people are positioned as being able to benefit from a loosening of older social norms, unconstrained by waiting until marriage to have sex or necessarily focusing their sexual activity on someone of the opposite gender (Johansson 2007; Regnerus 2007). They are perceived to be freer than any previous generation, having the knowledge to practise safe sex and avoid pregnancy, and access to advice on how to have “good sex” (Johansson 2007). Yet alongside this potentiality lies another strand of youth experience: risk (Bearman and Brückner 2001). Older concerns around contracting STIs, teenage pregnancy, and coercion in sexual activity exist alongside more recent challenges that have emerged due to technological changes. These include potential exploitation through sexting and the impact of being able to freely access pornography online (Parker 2014). This also relates to debates about how and what young people are taught about sexuality (Allen 2005).

Meanwhile, the sociology of religion has also taken a keen interest in young people, but usually from the perspective of assessing how interested young people are in religion, whether religion is therefore in decline, and whether new forms of religiosity are emerging (Lynch 2010; Shepherd 2010; Smith 2006; Winston 2006; Woodhead 2010). Sexuality can be one lens through which religious decline is mapped. If young people do not subscribe to particular sexual moral codes within their religious traditions, then they may be more likely to leave (Crockett and Voas 2003; Regnerus 2007; Sharma 2011). Within the context of changing norms, where religious values can diverge markedly from secular ones, young

people have complex terrain to navigate. Educational institutions offer important contexts for making sense of sexuality and religion. Freitas (2008) found a marked difference between Catholic and non-religiously-affiliated colleges as compared with Evangelical colleges in North America. Catholic and non-religious colleges featured unfettered sexual activity, where hook-up sex – “a sexual encounter with limited to no immediate commitment to the other person” (Irby 2013, p. 182) – was normalized and relationship commitment rare. Evangelical colleges, by contrast, maintained a strict culture restricting sex to marriage and silenced students’ sexuality until that time. Freitas concluded that on all the college campuses she studied there was a disconnect between religion and sexuality. While Evangelical college discourse constructed sex as a battle, with sex before marriage leading to ruination, hook-up sex on Catholic campuses was disconnected from church attendance. Therefore, conversations connecting sexuality and religion were either non-existent or very prescriptive. In all these college contexts, “Positive student stories – stories of pleasurable sex, self-approval, and happiness with past experiences – were rare” (Freitas 2008, p. 13). Sexual contentment was elusive for those inhabiting more “secular” spaces as those located in more “religious” spaces.

Indeed, Freitas’ work tapped into a broader concern with youth sexuality, notably the division between assumed rampant sexual activity amongst teenagers and the emergence of abstinence movements in the U.S. such as True Love Waits (Bearman and Brückner 2001; Irby 2013; Uecker 2008; White 2012). Teenagers subscribing to the True Love Waits message sign a pledge declaring that they will not have sex until marriage. This movement and others like it advocating the teaching of abstinence as the only form of sex education have become hugely popular in the last 20 years. They have also faced much criticism for not informing young people about contraceptive use and avoiding STIs. Abstinence movements have spawned a range of products enabling young people to identify themselves as virgins, such as rings and t-shirts. Purity is there-

fore commercialized, and positioned to appeal to a youth demographic (Bearman and Brückner 2001). White’s (2012) analysis highlighted the ways in which purity culture was not simply a backward-looking endorsement of traditional sexual behavior. It was attuned to contemporary language about youth culture and sexuality, not only deploying marketized techniques to make virginity “cool,” but also using the language of gay rights (such as “coming out” as a virgin) to demonstrate linguistic competency with minority perspectives.

Regnerus (2007), who has undertaken one of the largest studies in the U.S. (with over 3,000 teenagers), concurs. Understanding religion and youth sexuality is not as simple as marking a dividing line distinguishing one group of young people as liberal and having sex (the religiously uncommitted) from another group as conservative and not having sex (the religiously devout). Indeed, young people were not having as much sex as everyone thought they were, they were much less knowledgeable about sex than was often assumed, and being religious was not enough for a young person to abstain from having sex. Meanwhile, what was considered “sex” and who was still considered a virgin was not clear-cut, and most who pledged to retain their virginity (88 %) did not abstain until marriage. In part due to the very poor delivery of sex education (where 30 % of schools in the U.S. adopt an “abstinence only” approach) and the widespread availability of pornography, many boys believed that the sex depicted in pornography reflected reality. In terms of sexual practices, more young people engaged in oral sex, and, again influenced by pornography, anal sex. This was more of a strategy to avoid pregnancy rather than to maintain virginity, and was more likely to be practised by the non-religious or liberally religious rather than the religiously committed. So-called “technical virginity” was not about virginity, then, but about pregnancy avoidance.

Regnerus’s (2007) study highlighted that context matters. The type of sex education received, the dominant culture (e.g., the impact on evangelical abstinence rhetoric alongside American individualism), and levels of youth religiosity

have an impact on how sexual identity is negotiated. Yip and Page's (2013) study of religious young people in the U.K. noted several findings parallel to Regnerus, as well as some divergent ones. This study mapped nearly 700 young adults (18–25 years of age) identifying with one or more of the six main religious traditions. Similar findings on a number of issues were captured. For example, young adults were well aware of religious stances that positioned sex for marriage only, but this was not underscored by a prominent abstinence movement, making it a rather different context than the United States. Only 43% of women and 40% of men had any sort of commitment to remain a virgin until marriage, and this view was more associated with particular religious traditions, such as Islam and Sikhism. Those belonging to other traditions – e.g., Buddhism – put little emphasis on virginity. One finding which highlighted a gender gulf, rather than difference precipitated by religious tradition, was pornography. Support across the sample for using pornography was low. But when this was mapped against pornography use, men were three times more likely to say that they used pornography compared with women. Some young men in the sample were experiencing a major disjuncture between their negative perception of pornography and their use of pornography, and many articulated a view that depictions in pornography were unrealistic and portrayed women in a negative and over-sexualized light. But it was religious resources, rather than secular ones, that were utilized in order to reduce their use of pornography (e.g., refocusing the mind on god, using peer support from one's religious network).

Yip and Page (2013) highlighted the importance of context in understanding how sexuality and religion were experienced for young adults. The religious tradition one belongs to matters in terms of attitudes to sexuality and sexual practices; this is also further sub-divided by which strand of a religious tradition one belonged to (Page 2014). Whereas young adults living in the U.K. were not influenced by a dominant abstinence rhetoric, they were acutely aware of a broader sexualized youth culture, which they were actively managing. Many of the religious

created their own ethical pathways, which may include asserting that having sex before marriage was acceptable, or stances that strongly support LGBTQI rights. Similarly, in the Canadian context, Shipley and Young's (2016) research highlighted that young people pointed to a dominant sexualized culture, mostly as a source of consternation in their experiences of their sexuality and sexual identities. Participants in the Canadian study indicated that while society assumes that young people are highly sexualized, secular or non-religious, and engaging in multiple casual sex encounters, the majority of study participants stated they did not engage in casual sex (63%). Many religious young people in the Canadian project felt that religious organizations did not adequately cater to youth. Many of the programs and services were geared to older demographics, so that although they identify as religious (and some across multiple traditions), their engagement with religious practices was more likely to occur in adulthood (Shipley and Young 2016).

Fidolini's (2014) research on Morocco also highlighted the importance of context. In an environment with high numbers of young people who remain economically dependent, many do not have the resources to run their own household, and were therefore unable to get married. Young people were expected to remain sexually celibate until marriage, but this created conflict. Instead, young people used ritualized resources to legitimate sex which accorded with Islamic codes. They did this by displacing marriage with a commitment ceremony that subscribed to Islamic codes. This was not as formal as marriage, but was not considered adulterous either. These contextual issues – high youth unemployment and the expectation that young people will be highly educated, alongside the expectation for young people to remain sexually inactive for longer – created a situation where young people had to be resourceful, and were using religiously-inspired means in order to facilitate legitimated sexual activity. As Fidolini (2014, pp. 185–86) argued, hetero-directed norms dictated by tradition and religion were being displaced, whereby “these young people use traditional beliefs to legitimize their new sexual necessities.”

Although it is common to think about religious young adults as distinct from youth more generally, the reality is more complex. While religious traditions mandate particular perspectives on sexuality (which may well be of a conservative nature), this does not mean that religious youth will mechanically adopt that religious stance. Rather, they actively negotiate their sexuality in particular contexts, influenced by a variety of factors. Social scientists studying religion and sexuality have begun to document and explain these variations, but much work remains to be done.

Future Directions

As we have noted throughout this chapter, because the field is very much in development, many gaps exist in the research that connects religion and sexuality. We noted how very little research has explicitly focused on how religious individuals negotiate sexual relationships with regards to gender. Does having access to religious perspectives make a difference in how sexual lives are lived out? The perspectives of male research subjects on this issue are notably absent. We have emphasized the increasing amount of research that has focused on youth, religion, and sexuality, which is highly pertinent because these identities are often perceived to be in conflict. But we know much less about how older cohorts of religious individuals navigate religion and sexuality. We have highlighted the ways some sexual identities and experiences continue to be deemed counter-normative (e.g., polygamy and polyamory), but research is only just beginning to tease out the religious connections and implications. We have emphasized how sexual identities across the acronym – LGBTQI – are frequently conflated. The experiences of bisexual, trans, and intersex individuals are very different (from one another and from lesbian and gay experiences) and are currently marginalized. Sexual diversity (defined as non-heterosexuality) is seen as a monolithic category, whereby all diversities are thought to experience the same forms of discrimination and disadvantage. Just as problematic are

that they are considered to have attained the same “success” in recognition via marriage equality or other provisions regarding equal rights. As is clear in examining counter and non-normative sexualities, non-monogamous and non-heteronormative identities do not have access to the same legal or social recognitions, and continue to be framed as security threats across national contexts (Henshaw 2014; Puar 2007; Selby 2014).

The relationship between religion and non-heterosexual identities requires further study. The research described in this chapter exploring the relationship between religion and sexual diversity is a beginning point for much broader exploration of social, religious, and cultural attitudes regarding gender and sexual diversity. Religious attitudes towards sexuality and sexual diversity are misunderstood and misrepresented; a lived religion (Ammerman 2014; McGuire 2008) and lived sexuality approach is necessary to unpack beliefs and expectations beyond doctrine, texts, and clinical definitions about sexuality and sexual relationships.

The influence of religious and non-religious values and attitudes on family decisions, adulthood, and relationships among non-heterosexual (LGBTQI) individuals and groups also needs further development. Although 2015 marked ten years of marriage equality at the federal level in Canada, research on family life among same-sex couples is only beginning to be explored (Green 2010). Gendered expectations in same-sex couples are necessarily different markers for household labor equality, in that same-sex couples do not divide up labor based on gender. But it is clear that research needs to address the normative markers that have framed how family life is viewed in light of diverse family life contexts (see also Jenkins’ chapter on “Family” in this volume).

Understanding more fully youth identities as they connect to religion and sexuality will offer multifaceted research possibilities for understanding these intertwined narratives as already in dialogue among a new cohort. Youth are frequently seen to be non-religious or apathetic to religion, and yet many studies of young people

and religion demonstrate their religious lives and identities are every bit as complicated and nuanced as their adult counterparts. While youth in many studies also state they feel that religious organizations do not cater to young people, they see themselves participating in religious spaces as adults and express their complicated religious identities thoughtfully. Youth are also expected to be highly sexualized and engaging in frequent casual sexual encounters; however, many youth studies challenge this assumption, highlighting young people who dislike the over-sexualized reputations ascribed to them.

While youth are seen to represent “sexuality,” their adult counterparts are expected to represent “religion” (and not sexuality so much). Research on adult relationships, experiences, intimacy, and family life as both religious and sexual is an area that requires in depth study. Much of the research that is being developed targets particular forms of religiosity (for either adults or youth) or particular aspects of sexual identity (sexual exploration for young people; sexual identities for older demographics). But research also needs to attend to the exploration of sexuality among older demographics as part of their religious and spiritual lives. Although research regarding the complex relationships between religion and sexuality are beginning to be produced more rapidly, studies bridging disciplines and categories are still rare. As challenges toward restrictive policies and discriminatory social norms continue to evolve, the framing of normative sexuality and normative religiosity will also evolve. It will continue to be important to identify the overarching narrative of normative versus non-normative expectations in order to flesh out better understanding about gender, sexual, and religious diversities.

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Abstract

This chapter addresses the impact of religious involvement on race in America by examining the research literature that has emerged over the past decade. Attention is paid to trends and patterns in religious participation and practices across racial-ethnic groups during that time period. The continued debate over religion as an integrative or divisive community force is also probed in depth, as are commonalities and differences in attitudes and outcomes across racial-ethnic and religious lines on a variety of issues. The concluding section offers thoughts on the state of the literature and suggested directions for future research.

In the aftermath of the 2008 U.S. Presidential election of Barack Obama, declarations that a new post-racial era had emerged in America were heard in many quarters. At the same time, social

research on race and religion proliferated, with some indications of racial inclusivity, integration, and reconciliation in U.S. congregations and denominations. If these patterns proved to be pervasive, then perhaps W.E.B. DuBois' (1903) characterization of the "color line" as the defining problem of the twentieth century would no longer apply at the turn of a new century. Such changes might signal the transformation of the U.S. into the "beloved community" envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King. Although Sunday mornings had long been considered the most segregated hour of the week, perhaps faith communities had finally become incubators of racial integration.

This positive view, however, is not shared by all. Many observers contend that little if any progress has been evident with respect to racial justice in contemporary America. Police violence against African Americans, riots in major cities

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such as Baltimore, and persistent racial inequality continue to grip the nation's conscience. Given these occurrences, the celebrated decline of racial inequality and segregation may be premature at best and, at worst, could be viewed as a façade for deteriorating race relations. So, even if some religious congregations have become more racially inclusive, just how significant are these changes in the larger landscape of racial stratification?

This chapter addresses the impact of religious involvement on race in America. Is religion a force for promoting greater social inclusion or more widespread division along racial-ethnic lines? What does the recent scholarly literature reveal about the linkages between religion and race during the past 10 years? This chapter offers an update to the review provided over a decade ago by Bartkowski and Matthews (2005). Yet, even as we explore trends in the race-religion nexus over the past decade, we pay special attention to research that has attempted to move beyond the binary construction of race as Black-White and the largely myopic focus on Judeo-Christianity. In doing so, we explore not only recent developments in American Protestantism and Catholicism. We also document trends evident among Latinos—a diverse group in its own right—as well as religion among Asians, Arabs, and American faithful situated outside the Christian orbit (Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus).

Religion continues to serve as an incredibly influential social institution with respect to race-ethnicity. Yet, religion also continues to have a paradoxical role in this facet of American life, such that faith can facilitate the empowerment of racial-ethnic minorities and can, alternatively, preserve racial-ethnic hierarchies. In this sense, we argue against simplistic approaches to the subject and instead underscore the complexity of the religion-race relationship (Bartkowski and Matthews 2005). Our chapter is informed by recent reviews on the subject (Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Edwards et al. 2013; Emerson 2008; Emerson et al. 2015), but also aims to offer significant extensions and generate new insights. We begin by documenting key trends in religion and

race over the past decade, including differences in participation and subjective religiosity. Next, we explore how religion both reinforces and challenges the existing racial-ethnic order today. And, because the intersections between religion, race, and health have attracted such sustained attention, we are careful to review that literature. Finally, a brief critique of the state of the literature is offered along with proposed future directions for scholarship in this key area of social science research.

Twenty-First Century Trends in Race, Ethnicity and Religiosity

Over the past decade, many scholars have assessed patterns of consistency and change across racial and ethnic groups regarding religiosity (Chatters et al. 2008, 2009; Pew Research Center 2009, 2014, 2015a, b; Putnam and Campbell 2010). Because religious involvement measures are not featured on the decennial U.S. Census and few if any measures are available in the major national surveys, researchers must rely on data collected by large national survey institutes (e.g., National Opinion Research Center, Pew Research Center, Gallup Organization) and well-funded research studies on American religion (e.g., Chaves 2011; Putnam and Campbell 2010). Pew has regularly conducted large-scale, nationally representative surveys on religious participation that have yielded recent reports such as *America's Changing Religious Landscape* (Pew Research Center 2015a), *The Shifting Religious Identity of Latinos in the United States* (Pew Research Center 2014), and *A Religious Portrait of African-Americans* (Pew Research Center 2009). Putnam and Campbell (2010) conducted the *Faith Matters Surveys* in 2006 and 2007. Other major surveys such as The Baylor Religion Survey, the National Studies of Youth and Religion, and the Portraits of American Life Study have also been developed and implemented in multiple waves in recent years. Thus, the proliferation of valid national surveys with an array of religion measures is a most welcome development.

The general contours of the relationship between religion and race have not changed dramatically over the past decade. Pointing to one of the most persistent patterns, Putnam and Campbell (2010, p. 26) note, "African Americans are far more religious than whites, or any other ethnic and racial group in America." Recent studies suggest that African Americans are less likely than Whites to identify as religiously unaffiliated and to report that they seldom or never attend worship services (Brown et al. 2013). However, the degree to which African Americans maintain levels of religious commitment that are distinctive from other racial-ethnic groups is less clear. African Americans attend religious services much more frequently, are much more likely to see religion as extremely important, and in general report significantly higher levels of religious practice and belief than Whites or other groups (see also Pew Research Center 2015a). Latinos are also much more religious than Whites, but that Asian Americans tend to demonstrate lower levels of religiosity than Whites (Putnam and Campbell 2010). In fact, Putnam and Campbell see ethnicity and religion as "mutually reinforcing" and believe that it is "no coincidence that the United States is both a nation of immigrants and a nation with high religiosity" (Putnam and Campbell 2010, p. 260). This insight is not new, as it has been long held by scholars of religion in America (Herberg 1955; Marty 1972). Further, this link does not only exist for recent immigrants. All ethnic groups in the United States demonstrate high levels of religiosity compared to those in most other countries (Putnam and Campbell 2010). Still, religious practice tends to be ethnically homogeneous.

Despite high levels of religiosity, the general trend over time in religious participation in the United States has been towards increased secularization. Trends in religious participation by race and ethnicity in the U.S. over the past decade show relatively consistent patterns of change that mirror those for the overall population, with the percentage who are Christian in each racial-ethnic group observed by the Pew Research Center (2015) reporting affiliation declines from 6 to 9% between 2007 and 2015. White non-

Hispanics who identified as Christian declined from 78 to 70%, while Black non-Hispanic Christians decreased from 85 to 79%. Hispanic Christians declined from 84 to 77% during this same period, and other race non-Hispanic Christians declined the most, down to 49% in 2014 from 58% in 2007 (Pew Research Center 2015a). Those reporting a non-Christian faith in general were mostly unchanged, except among other race non-Hispanics who increased from 18 to 21%. Meanwhile, for all other racial-ethnic groups, only 2–5% report participation in non-Christian faiths (Pew Research Center 2015a).

Growth during the last decade was largely observed among the religiously unaffiliated, who increased from 16 to 24% of White non-Hispanics, from 12 to 18% of Black non-Hispanics, from 14 to 20% of Hispanics and from 22 to 29% for other race non-Hispanics (Pew Research Center 2015a). Researchers realize there is much to be learned about religious non-involvement among different ethnic and racial groups in the United States (Brown et al. 2015). Non-Hispanic Whites, Hispanics, and Asian Americans are more likely than African Americans to attend worship services rarely and identify as religiously unaffiliated or non-religious (Brown et al. 2015). Also, non-Hispanic White, Hispanic, and Asian Americans are more likely than African Americans and African Caribbean Americans to identify as religiously non-involved (Brown et al. 2015). Among Asian Americans, more than half of Chinese Americans (52%) identify as religiously unaffiliated (Brown et al. 2015). The Chinese rate of non-affiliation is the highest among all Asian groups. Conversely, at roughly 10% unaffiliated, East Indian and Filipino Americans are the least likely Asian Americans to identify as religiously unaffiliated (Pew Research Center 2012). Subgroup heterogeneity is also evident among Latinos. Cubans and South Americans are less likely than other Hispanics to attend worship services weekly, while Central and Mexican Americans are most likely to do so (Suro et al. 2007).

Why do these differences exist across racial-ethnic groups within the United States, particularly the elevated rates for African Americans?

One argument is drawn from the security axiom proposed by Norris and Inglehart (2011), which suggests that African Americans are less likely than Whites to disassociate from organized religion due to African Americans' more socio-economically disadvantaged and marginalized status (Brown et al. 2015). However, a counter argument suggesting a different role for religion maintains that marginalized groups, such as women, non-Whites, and groups of limited economic means, create religious institutions and belief systems that support their resistance to and coping with the oppressive systems that are the source of their economic insecurity. These conscious acts of resistance reinforce a sense of personal and group agency and thereby heighten religious salience (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990).

In terms of specific denominational shifts within the Christian faith, declines in Protestant affiliation were observed for White non-Hispanics (especially Mainline denominations), for Black non-Hispanics (in the historically Black churches largely), and for other race non-Hispanics (among Evangelical and Mainline denominations) (Pew Research Center 2015a). For Hispanics, the trend towards increased rates of Protestant affiliation continued, largely within the Evangelical denominations, where growth was observed from 23 % in 2007 to 26 % in 2014 (Pew Research Center 2015a). Catholic market share of the adult population declined among White non-Hispanics (22–19 %), other race non-Hispanics (15–13 %) and most notably amongst Hispanics (58–48 %) (Pew Research Center 2015a). The decline in Catholic participation among Hispanics has also been documented by the Pew Research Center in their most recent National Survey of Latinos and Religion, in which 24 % of Hispanic respondents identified as *former Catholics* (Pew Research Center 2014; emphasis in original). Reasons for switching vary by group, but for the largest segment of Latinos who have switched (former Catholics who are now Evangelical), the primary factors cited are no longer believing in the religion's teachings (59 %), finding a congregation that reaches out and helps its members more (51 %), and gradually drifting away (45 %) (Pew Research Center 2014).

Few changes occurred among Orthodox Christians, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, or other Christian groups. Also, there were not many significant changes in terms of the absolute percentage outside of Christianity, though it should be noted that the percentage of Black non-Hispanics reporting Muslim affiliation doubled to 2 % from 1 % (Pew Research Center 2015a). Finally, among the unaffiliated, large proportional increases occurred within each group for those identifying as atheist and (to a lesser extent proportionally) for those identifying as agnostic, while significant growth occurred across the board for those who professed no particular faith tradition (both for those who said religion was important to them and for those who said it was not important) (Pew Research Center 2015a). In fact, those who claim no particular faith tradition are now the second or third most prevalent group when included with the denominational options for each racial-ethnic group, and have widely surpassed Mainline Protestants among Black non-Hispanics, Hispanics, and other race non-Hispanics (Pew Research Center 2015a).

Some interesting patterns emerge when examining the racial and ethnic composition of religious groups in the United States in comparison to the overall percentages of the different racial-ethnic groups in the population. In 2014, White non-Hispanics made up 62.1 % of the population, Black non-Hispanics made up 12.4 %, Latinos made up 17.4 % of the population, and Asian-Americans were 5.3 % (Colby and Ortman 2014). In terms of race, ethnicity, and religiosity, 44 % of Buddhists, 36 % of Jehovah's Witnesses, and 38 % of Muslims in the U.S. were White non-Hispanic, while 12 % of Buddhists and 32 % of Jehovah's Witnesses are Latino (Pew Research Center 2015a). Ninety-four percent of Historically Black Protestants, 28 % of Muslims, and 27 % of Jehovah's Witnesses are Black non-Hispanic (Pew Research Center 2015a).

In terms of racial differences in religious practices and beliefs, African Americans report much higher levels of both overall than do other groups. In both Putnam and Campbell (2010) and the 2009 Pew Research Center study, strong majorities of African-Americans reported that: (1) they

engage in regular religious attendance (nearly weekly or more often); (2) religion is very or extremely important to them (including those unaffiliated with a church); (3) religion is very important to their decision-making; and (4) they pray at least on a daily basis. Regarding each of these, and many other markers of religiosity, African Americans typically are 20–30% or more likely to engage in these practices or to hold these beliefs than are members of other racial or ethnic groups (Pew Research Center 2010; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Chatters et al. 2009).

Interesting patterns exist within the African American population regarding other socio-demographic characteristics linked to variations in religious involvement (Taylor et al. 2014). In one study that drew upon the African American subsample of the National Survey of American Life (NSAL), those who had experienced stigmatizing life experiences like incarceration and cohabitation reported both lower levels of religious involvement and feeling less closeness to religious people (Taylor et al. 2014). Conversely, females, older people, those in the first marriage, and those in the South reported higher levels of religious involvement (Taylor et al. 2014). These findings conform with other research that concluded, “(n)o group of men or women from any other racial or ethnic background exhibits comparably high levels of religious observance” when compared with African Americans (Pew Research Center 2009, p. 4).

In a study using data from the NSAL, Chatters et al. (2009) found that both African Americans and Caribbean Blacks reported higher levels of religious participation than Whites, observing that African Americans reported higher levels of official membership, engaging in activities, and requesting prayer from others than Caribbean Blacks, while reporting lower levels than Caribbean Blacks of reading religious materials. Again using the NSAL, Chatters et al. (2008) also found that African Americans and Caribbean Blacks were more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to indicate they are both religious and spiritual and less likely to identify as spiritual only or neither spiritual or religious. Interactions

of race/income differences were also observed in this study, with White higher income respondents being more likely to indicate they are religious only, where African Americans and Caribbean Blacks were less likely to say that they are religious only (Chatters et al. 2008).

Differences in how African Americans and Whites engage in worship were examined by Edwards (2009) using data from the National Congregations Study (NCS). In this study, the use of verbal affirmations were found amongst both Whites and African Americans, though African Americans were much more likely to engage in them, and African American congregations were the only ones found to engage in spontaneous physical worship. Finally, an interesting shift within the African American population was noted, as ecstatic, participatory worship practices are now tied to more socio-politically and religiously progressive African American congregations, as opposed to the past when they were more likely to be found in marginal, less educated ones (Edwards 2009). These types of inter-group analyses are rarely observed in this literature, though they can significantly illuminate our understanding how race and ethnicity interacts with other important socio-demographic characteristics to shape patterns of religious practice and belief.

The contours of elevated levels of religiosity for African Americans are relatively unchanged over the past decade (Bartkowski and Matthews 2005; Taylor et al. 1996). It is important to note here, though, that Evangelicals of all races and ethnicities (which includes the Historically Black Church) tend to report similarly high participation and similarly strong beliefs. The key differences emerge amongst the unaffiliated, where African Americans who fit in this category report much higher levels of practices and beliefs than Whites or Latinos (Pew Research Center 2009, 2014; Putnam and Campbell 2010). It is the combination of the relatively high percentage of African Americans who report as Protestant (in mostly Evangelical and Historically Black Churches) and the unaffiliated that leads to the typically observed gap of 20–30% in practices and beliefs amongst African Americans versus other racial and ethnic groups.

One interesting contradictory finding in the literature is found in the work of Brackens (2013). Using the 2010 US Religious Knowledge Survey from Pew, the author found that African American Christians knew less about the Bible than other groups even though they were more likely to attend church frequently. Furthermore, regardless of attendance frequency, African Americans were likely to answer significantly fewer questions correctly than Whites.

The intensity of religious belief and practice among Latinos tends to fall between that of African Americans (who are, on average, highly religious) and Whites (who are, on average, moderately religious) (Pew Research Center 2014). Interesting yet similar patterns again emerge when Hispanics are broken up by religious denomination, with Hispanic Evangelicals engaging in much higher levels of church attendance, frequency of prayer, and the degree of importance they assign to religion in their lives than either Hispanic Catholics or Hispanics who are unaffiliated (Pew Research Center 2014). In general, Hispanic Evangelicals and Catholics report similar levels of participation when compared to either Black or White Evangelicals or White Catholics, with the Hispanic unaffiliated population reporting very low levels of engagement (Pew Research Center 2014).

Although Whites and African Americans attracted nearly all of the attention in previous scholarship on race and religion (Bartkowski and Matthews 2005), research on Latino religion has gained considerable ground in the past decade. This new focus extends to the basic demographics presented above, where other groups are often labeled as just that, either “others” or “non-Hispanic others.” Characterizations such as these obscure and exclude individuals of African or Asian descent (and with few exceptions, those of Caribbean descent as well). This could easily lead one to presume (based on the data presented above) that global Evangelical Christianity is rapidly growing into the largest segment of the religious marketplace, alongside a rise in the unaffiliated or non-religious, that Catholicism is on the decline, and that all other religions are marginal in comparison to Christianity. However, in a

recent publication examining current trends and projections of global religion over the next half century, Pew Research Center (2015b) contends that: (1) the number of Muslims will come close to that of Christians worldwide; (2) atheists, agnostics and the unaffiliated will decline as a proportion of the global population; and (3) Muslims will outnumber Jews in the U.S. The rise in the Muslim population is especially pronounced due to increased reach in Asia and Africa, including in countries that have a rapidly increasing population (Pew Research Center 2015b).

One interesting exception to the paucity of research focusing on Asian American religiosity was that conducted by Zhai and Stokes (2009). They explored differences in ethnic and family contexts in terms of Asian American adolescent religiosity using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (commonly known as Add Health). A number of interesting findings emerged from this rich dataset, but most relevant here were significantly higher levels of religiosity observed for Protestant Asian American adolescents from families where their parents also identified as Protestant versus Buddhist or Catholic adolescents from families where their parents identified as Buddhist or Catholic (i.e. what the authors called “affiliation concordance”) (Zhai and Stokes 2009).

It is manifestly evident that real challenges exist in becoming more inclusive in the measurement of general racial and ethnic patterns in religiosity given small sub-group populations from which to sample and difficulties in reaching them for inclusion. Thus, larger studies such as Pew Research Center (2015b) often rely on projections and should be treated with some caution. However, it is also clear that there is much more going on around the world in terms of shifts in the patterns of religiosity than what scholars can glean from the literature to date.

Segregation and Diversity in Religious Organizations

One major focus of scholarship in the sociology of religion related to race and ethnicity deals with the question of the composition of religious

organizations, particularly at the congregational level. The composition of congregations is particularly important, as the local faith community is one of the more significant in-groups to which individuals and families form attachments in their lives. Thus, forming these bonds seems perfectly natural as perhaps a basic human tendency, where individuals value familiar social environments over foreign or competing ones. However, such a tendency is often the driving force in tribalism and nationalism (Hall et al. 2010), and other aspects of human life that have a tendency to lead towards strong in-group versus out-group tensions and conflict. For religious organizations to play such a role seems contradictory to their professed values, but this tendency is evident in all major world religions. Yet, there is a countervailing trend as well. Increasingly, research points to congregations that seek to bridge racial and ethnic boundaries consciously, and these faith communities represent a powerful force for social integration. In their review a decade ago, Bartkowski and Matthews (2005, p. 178) focused primary attention on both sides of this issue, concluding: "Where American race relations are concerned, religion is both a bridge connecting racial groups and boundary dividing them." This section updates the literature over the past decade to document how religion both reinforces and challenges the racial-ethnic divide.

Religion Reinforces the Racial-Ethnic Divide

The vast majority of religious congregations are largely racially homogenous, with only 13.7% being considered racially mixed in 2010 (Edwards et al. 2013; Emerson and Woo 2006). It is worth noting that this 2010 figure represents a significant increase in congregational heterogeneity over time, namely, a doubling of the comparable percentage from 1998 (Edwards et al. 2013; Emerson and Woo 2006). But the key point is that a rather small proportion of American congregations are racially integrated.

Non-Christian congregations are twice as likely as Catholic congregations to be racially

heterogeneous, and almost six times as likely to be diverse compared to their Protestant counterparts (Edwards et al. 2013; Emerson and Woo 2006). How is this determined? Emerson and his colleagues have long used a measure of racial heterogeneity that involves a congregation having no more than 80% of its members being from a single racial group. A more stringent standard of no more than 75% from a single racial group is used by Putnam and Campbell (2010), though they contend it is essentially the same since Emerson et al. noted that most people tend to overestimate the diversity in their congregation, usually by rounding to the next highest 5%. Not surprisingly, the studies emerge with a similar finding that separation by race and ethnicity is the norm. Other approaches utilize a continuum to capture relative racial diversity, generally concluding that religious congregations are less diverse than communities at large, and can be characterized as highly or hyper-segregated (Dougherty and Huyser 2008; Emerson and Woo 2006).

It should come as little surprise that Brown (Brown 2011a) found that for Whites only, frequency of worship attendance is associated with elevated support for racial segregation. Those who are most racially progressive (secular and young adults) attend worship services the least. On the other hand, Porter and Emerson (2013) analyzed data from the Panel Study of American Religion and Ethnicity, and observed that having a friend of a different race is the most direct consequence of religious belonging. Thus despite the high degree of racial homogeneity within congregations overall, friendships are still formed across racial groups within these highly but not totally segregated institutions. Still, conservative Protestants (both White and Black) have a significantly lower likelihood of having a friend of a different race in their close social network when compared to other religious traditions and the non-religious (Porter and Emerson 2013).

This high degree of homogeneity is not terribly surprising to Putnam and Campbell (2010), who contend that it is likely due in part to ethnic settlement patterns in the U.S. In their book, they present a series of county-level maps exploring

the relationship between self-identified ethnicity and religious participation by denomination (German and Scandinavian/ Lutheran in the Upper Midwest; Italian and Latino/Catholic in the Northeast and Southwest respectively; “American”/Evangelical in the Southeast) (Putnam and Campbell 2010).

However, for Evangelical Protestants, Putnam and Campbell (2010, p. 318) cite Nathan Hatch who describes Evangelical Protestantism as fighting the contradictory aspects of its “egalitarian character and its racism” in the U.S. over time, with racism being the norm throughout most of history but some tilting towards egalitarianism now.

This view of Evangelical Protestantism is not shared by Lichtman (2008, p. 2), who believes the high degree of racial homogeneity in these denominations is due to an “anti-pluralistic ideal of America as a unified, White Protestant nation.” This racialization of religion has been at the core of American right-wing politics since the 1920s. Further, white Catholics have been folded into this grouping in a “partial and uneasy rapprochement” since the late twentieth century, primarily involving similar stances on “pro-family issues, anti-Communism and opposition to militant Islam” (Lichtman 2008, p 4).

Another view is presented by Emerson and Smith (2000), who maintain that there are multiple factors at play, mostly involving ecological and organizational dynamics instead of individual and small group prejudices:

Merely ending racial prejudice would not end racially divided churches. The need for symbolic boundaries and social solidarity, the similarity and homophily principles, the status quo bias, and the niche edge and niche overlap effects all push congregations, and volunteer organizations in general, continually towards internal similarity. (Emerson and Smith 2000, p. 151)

This view is expanded upon by Porter and Emerson (2013, p. 754), who contend that “being ‘divided by faith’ into ‘closed communities’ is more of a reflection of religious belief systems < i.e., *Conservative Protestant beliefs* > and a necessity to focus attention internally on a homogenous group of individuals than it is on the

propensity to be intolerant of others” (emphasis in original). Thus what drives these tendencies towards racial homogeneity is considerably contested and unclear.

A half century ago, Herberg (1955) famously predicted that the religious identities of Protestant, Catholic, or Jew would subsume the racial identities of immigrants to the United States. Recent works have challenged this argument for both Asian and Latino immigrants (Chen and Jeung 2012). Instead of the diminution of racial identity in favor of religion, second-generation Asian and Latino immigrants have instead followed four divergent paths: (1) religious primacy, (2) racialized religion, (3) hybridized ethnoreligion and (4) minority religions and family traditions (Chen and Jeung 2012).

Scholars are not so divided on what led to the rise of what is commonly referred to as the “Black Church.” Racially discriminatory treatment of African Americans within White churches led Rev. Richard Allen and other African American dissenters to establish the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1816 (Frazier 1964; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990). As the only institutions controlled by African Americans, religious gatherings were key spaces in established and invisible institutional churches for African Americans to cope with the horrors of slavery, maintain hope for liberation, and uphold their sense of self-worth and mental health (Raboteau 1978). In some cases, a revolutionary interpretation of Christianity led to active resistance via escaping from or engaging in armed rebellion against their masters and the slavocracy at large (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Raboteau 1978). The emergence of the Black Church led DuBois to characterize it as a “sacred canopy” (Wortham 2009).

These churches were also key spaces for African Americans to gain confidence and organizing skills during the racially violent time period following Reconstruction and prior to the civil rights movement of the early 1950s (Frazier 1964; Lincoln and Mamiya 1990; Morris 1986; Pattillo-McCoy 1998). These organizing skills, coupled with the role of Black churches as operational centers, were essential to African

Americans mounting the successful civil rights movement, when the political opportunities presented themselves (McAdam 1982; Morris 1986). The role that these religious congregations continue to play as vehicles through which many African Americans address their social-economic and racial concerns likely contributes to African Americans being more likely than the general population to say that religion plays a very important role in their life (Chatters et al. 2009). Moreover, the unique historical legacy of the Black Church combined with its continued centrality within the lives of many African Americans (Taylor and Chatters 2011; Taylor et al. 1987) may contribute to African Americans being less likely than Whites to become estranged from organized religion. Increased valuation of religion extends beyond African Americans, though, as Sherkat and Ellison (2009, p. 141) contend that religion is a “vital source for marginalized communities” of all sorts.

Whatever causes this high degree of racial homogeneity within congregations, it is clear that faith communities can, in some circumstances, reinforce ongoing racial-ethnic divisions in this U.S. In a particularly notable study examining the key influences in homophily today using data from the 1985 and 2004 General Social Surveys, Smith et al. (2014, p. 451) find that “homophily has not changed much.” This is especially true regarding race and religion, which are the two strongest social distinctions structuring homophily in confidant relations in both time periods. It is important to note that homophily does not only structure friendship networks, but congregational homophily also influences the dating and mating pool as well.

Finally, the effects of racial segregation affect length of tenure in congregations (Scheitle and Dougherty 2010), as members of a numerical minority stay as members of congregations for a shorter period of time, and the gap between the two increases with the size of the majority. On the other hand, data from the 2001 U.S. Congregational Life Survey reveal that those who are part of the largest racial group in a congregation possess a stronger sense of belonging, report closer congregational friendships and

participate at a deeper level (though not different in terms of attendance) than congregants of other races (Martinez and Dougherty 2013).

Religion Challenges the Racial-Ethnic Divide

As noted in the previous section, the percentage of racially heterogeneous congregations doubled from 1998 to 2010 (Edwards et al. 2013; Emerson and Woo 2006). This trend mirrors the increasing heterogeneity of the U.S. population as a whole. African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian-Americans are growing in both absolute and relative terms, while non-Hispanic whites are projected to be less than 50% of the population by 2044 (Colby and Ortman 2014). These compositional changes directly affect the racial and religious makeup of individuals’ social networks, though these changes are rather small overall as racial distinctions in particular still hold remarkable salience (Smith et al. 2014).

This reality notwithstanding, both Chaves (2011) and Smith et al. (2014) describe changes in shared worship. One is less likely today to find a spiritual community where worshipers are surrounded by a majority of White faces. The percentage of U.S. congregations with only non-Hispanic Whites declined from 20% in 1998 to 11% in 2012 (Chaves 2011). On the other hand an important factor that cannot be overlooked is the use and impact of social media on the connectivity between racial and ethnic groups. With religious communities embracing new technology, such as Facebook and Twitter, significant changes have been undertaken in many areas which include the growing acceptance of informal worship (Chaves 2011).

There appear to be significant differences in the rising diversity in religious communities, where conversations about subjects from immigration reform to racial and sexual equality may be tempered and informed by less homogenous memberships (Chaves 2011). A more diverse membership is believed to show an increased sensitivity to different perspectives and a reduced tendency to be judgmental of racial and ethnic

groups outside the social boundaries of the community (Chaves 2011).

Hispanics are more likely than other racial-ethnic groups to attend diverse congregations, and those who live in racially heterogeneous counties are much more likely than those in racially homogeneous counties to attend a diverse congregation (Putnam and Campbell 2010). Increased congregational size is the most important predictor of diverse congregations, though, which is significant as it means large numbers of people from different races and ethnicities are interacting and likely developing friendship bonds (Putnam and Campbell 2010). Growth of large, racially-diverse Evangelical congregations is a relatively new phenomenon, with some contending it is a social movement (Emerson and Woo 2006), while others believe it is really about the least diverse congregations simply becoming less white (Chaves 2011).

There are multiple perspectives about the factors that are driving the trend towards increased numbers of diverse congregations. One camp believes it reflects a begrudging effort towards diversity born out of necessity (Dougherty and Mulder 2009). Analyzing fourteen Christian Reformed congregations in Southeast Grand Rapids, Michigan over a 30 year period, Dougherty and Mulder (2009) found that neighborhood churches had to expand their reach to survive as White residents left urban neighborhoods. The older, more traditional churches plummeted in membership while the newer, more suburban congregations showed greater stability. This led to more diverse congregations drawn from a wider geographic area.

While such efforts may work in the short term, Edwards (2008) draws on data from the National Congregations Study and findings from a case study she conducted to conclude that interracial congregations are forced to placate White members and their religious preferences to maintain a diverse congregation. Edwards' case study in particular illuminates the survey findings by showing how Whites in an interracial congregation do not recognize their White privilege, are not interested in addressing race differences in worship, and ignore the religious preferences of

African Americans in the church. Perry (2012) draws a similar conclusion in a study of White and minority workers within interracial Evangelical outreach ministries. Perry finds that racial conflicts in interracial religious organizations are best framed as moral disputes and these conflicts are worked out via institutionalization and instilment of White cultural norms, leading to the hegemony of White moral standards.

Some scholars have joined forces with religious leaders to very clearly and forcefully argue for a new path towards racial integration of congregations. For example, DeYoung and colleagues (2003, p. 184) declare: "*We are calling for a movement in the church towards multiracial congregations*" (emphasis in original). They further argue for moving towards integrated multiracial congregations instead of assimilationist or pluralist ones, but believe a key barrier to this end is a "lack of leadership" which sees these efforts as "God's design" (DeYoung et al. 2003, p. 170). Despite such a call, Garces-Foley (2008) finds no unified Christian movement for integration of churches. Rather, there are three independent movements (in Roman Catholic, Evangelical, and Mainline Protestant churches) pushing for institutional change nationally with virtually no contact amongst them.

So what leads to success for multiracial congregations? Several critical issues for multiracial churches to address were noted by DeYoung et al. (2003) including: worship styles, racially diverse leadership, intentionality of action towards integration, and adaptability to new groups and cultures. More recent research has tended to support elements of this inclusivity framework.

In a meta-analysis of several qualitative studies, Lichterman et al. (2009, p. 204) find that the critical dimension for White conservative Christians to engage in "race-bridging" is what they call a "Christ-centered strategy" that downplays racial-ethnic differences and emphasizes informal interpersonal relations. Further, Braunstein et al. (2014, p. 712) find that prayer practices are key to becoming a bridging group, specifically by focusing content on a "shared identify as people of faith and the shared convic-

tions that mobilized them to participate.” However, in their analysis of data from a national sample of all faith-based community organizing coalitions in the United States, they also found that this may also result in certain forms of exclusion, as theologically conservative congregations do not typically participate in these groups.

Internal characteristics of congregations also promote diversity (Dougherty and Heyser 2008). These include having a racially diverse clergy, inclusion of electric guitars, drums, and bodily response in worship, and development of relational ties within congregations that are not “monochromatic.” However, developing these diverse relational ties is made more difficult by the forces of housing segregation, educational segregation, and employment segregation in the U.S. (though less so in the urban West) (Dougherty and Huyser 2008).

Marti (2008, 2009, 2010) undertook several studies seeking to identify what leads to success in the formation of racially diverse congregations. In the first study, Marti (2008) begins by critiquing the predominant existing approach to the study of multiracial churches as lacking due to racial essentialism. In his ethnographic study of two churches (identified as Oasis and Mosaic), he finds that successful multiracial churches become such by fostering a shared identity as a diverse congregation that replaces or “trumps” racial and ethnic designations. This process of creating a stable affiliation with a multiracial congregation develops through a process of religious racial integration, in which “a person considers the congregation to be *his or her* congregation, considers himself or herself as *belonging* to the congregation, has *committed himself or herself* to the congregation, and sees himself or herself as an *extension* of the congregation” (Marti 2009, p. 54, emphasis in original). Those who do not experience this process tend to leave these churches and go back to homogenous congregations (Marti 2005, 2008).

One particularly noteworthy aspect of this study is that Oasis and Mosaic are both conservative Christian congregations, a particularly fascinating group to study since they tend towards greater homogeneity than other traditions. In the

final study, Marti (2010) draws on Oasis to argue that ethno-racial identities must be reinforced in order to facilitate participation in multiracial churches, at least early in the process. This ethnic reinforcement attracts highly race-conscious participants who later move towards religious racial integration. Diversity is promoted in this large, broadly Evangelical Protestant non-denominational church by emphasizing ethnic specificity and religious unity simultaneously (Marti 2010).

It should be clear following this brief section that religion can serve as a force both for integration and division along racial and ethnic lines. This contradiction is neither surprising nor new. That said, one development which should be recognized is the apparent increase in conscious activities within religious organizations designed to facilitate bridging and bonding across racial and ethnic lines, rather than allowing themselves to serve largely to promote insularity and division (intentionally or not).

Differences in Social and Political Attitudes

Religiosity has long been seen as an important attribute driving variation in attitudes about social and political issues. How do racial and ethnic differences affect this relationship, if at all? A significant literature has developed over the past decade that seeks to explore this question around issues such as abortion, same-sex marriage and other family issues, terrorism, and political partisanship to name a few.

Abortion

The issue of abortion has long been a central focus for those who are religious, particularly those who hold the most conservative religious beliefs (Bartkowski et al. 2012). Until recently, most studies of religion and abortion were either of non-Hispanic Whites or African Americans. These studies typically find that African Americans hold relatively similar views to the

public at large, with roughly half favoring keeping abortion legal in most or all cases. Evangelical African Americans are more likely to be opposed to abortion than other African Americans, though less likely than other Evangelicals to be opposed (Pew Research Center 2009).

Latinos have become the focus of recent research on this relationship (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Ellison et al. 2005; Pew Research Center 2014). In general, Latinos are more likely to believe abortion should be illegal in most or all circumstances, by about 10 percentage points (Pew Research Center 2015a). Both Bartkowski and colleagues (2012) and Ellison et al. (2005) find that conservative Protestant Latinos are much more anti-abortion than Catholic Latinos. This relationship holds particularly for those most highly committed (i.e. regularly attending) conservative Protestants (Ellison et al. 2005). This is consistent with the differences between White Conservative Protestants and Catholics (Bartkowski et al. 2012).

Family Life

When examining issues of family life, including the question of same sex marriage, researchers have found significant changes amongst the overall population towards increasing acceptance of familial diversity. However, these shifts are not uniform, with Conservative Protestants of all races and ethnicities being opposed to same sex marriage at higher rates (Ellison et al. 2011). Using data from the 2006 Pew Hispanic Forum, Ellison et al. (2011) find strong opposition to same sex marriage amongst Latino Evangelical, Conservative Protestants and sectarian groups (e.g., Latter Day Saints), even when compared with devout Catholics. More recent data from the Pew Research Center (2014) show that the gap is widening, as religiously unaffiliated Hispanics favor same sex marriage by a 4 to 1 ratio, roughly half of Hispanic Catholics favor it, just under half of Mainline Protestants favor it, and Hispanic Evangelical Protestants oppose it by over a 3 to 1 margin. Similar, though not quite as strong, gaps emerge between Evangelical African Americans

and non-Hispanic Whites and their racial counterparts (Pew Research Center 2009). However, it is important to take heed of the rapidly changing dynamics of this issue overall in the public, as the percentages in support versus those opposed to same sex marriage basically flipped over the past decade, from roughly 55–60% opposed in the middle of the first decade of the 2000s to the same percentage being in favor of same sex marriage today.

As regards other aspects of family life, Ellison et al. (2013) use data from the 2006 National Survey of Religion and Family Life (NSRFL) to study differences amongst the working-age Latino population regarding issues such as marriage, divorce, cohabitation, and casual sex. They find consistently that Evangelical Protestant Latinos hold more conservative attitudes on these issues than do Catholic Latinos. They also find that those who are highly committed (i.e. attend regularly or pray frequently) hold more conservative views.

Another study using the NSRFL to examine racial and ethnic variations in non-marriage was conducted by Burdette, Haynes, and Ellison (2012). This study compared non-Hispanic Whites, Latinos and African Americans, and finds that increased church attendance reduces perceived barriers to marriage for non-Hispanic White respondents, who report fewer barriers to begin with than African American or Hispanic respondents (Burdette et al 2012).

Political Partisanship and Activity

Differences in political partisanship, ideology, and activity are linked with levels of religiosity and type of religious affiliation. Typically those who report higher levels of religious involvement and those who are Conservative Protestants in the U.S. are more likely to identify as Republican and/or politically conservative (Pew Research Center 2009). However, this pattern is not uniform across racial and ethnic groups. In particular, religious differences in ideological orientation tend to be smaller amongst African Americans, with “the vast majority of African Americans of

all religious backgrounds expressing support for the Democratic Party” (Pew Research Center 2009, p. 12). The same holds true for Hispanics, though Conservative Protestant Hispanics are much more likely to identify as Republican (30%) than are other groups of Hispanics or African Americans (Pew Research Center 2009, 2014). In another study, McDaniel and Ellison (2008) find that Republicans’ lack of success in recruiting Black Evangelicals (and to a lesser extent Latino Evangelicals) is due to differing religious worldviews. Specifically, race and ethnicity have “the ability to shape both biblical interpretation and partisanship” (McDaniel and Ellison 2008, p. 183).

Not only are religious differences related to political partisanship and ideology in contrasting ways across racial and ethnic groups, but levels of political activity vary by race and ethnicity across the religious spectrum. Political encouragement from clergy is found to be associated with Black and Hispanic activism, but not White or Caribbean Black action in a study using data from the National Politics Study (Brown 2011b). The rationale offered for this variation is that White congregants of varying denominational backgrounds tend not to share ideological worldviews with their clergy or other congregants (Brown 2011b), which he argues is likely the case for Afro-Caribbeans as well. In another article analyzing the character of the relationship between race-specific congregations and political action, Brown (2009) uses the Faith Communities Today (FACT) survey and finds that Black congregations are more likely to engage in voter registration efforts than White, Hispanic or Asian congregations, though this is believed to be due to the greater social justice orientation of Black congregations, which led them to also be more likely to engage in community organizing. By contrast, Fitzgerald and Spohn (2005) analyze data from the 1993–1994 National Black Politics Study and find that activism in the Black Church does not significantly increase protest politics. Their results, however, did provide support for the idea that the church does serve as a crucial context for the dissemination of political messages and exposure to opportunities for protest

for Blacks with relatively low educational achievement and organizational involvement (Fitzgerald and Spohn 2005). Finally, one recent study examines the link between religious attendance and differences in minority political participation in Europe, utilizing the 2010 Ethnic Minority British Election Study (Sobolewska et al. 2015). As in the U.S., regular religious attendance is correlated with increased political participation amongst ethnic minority groups who have been previously unexplored in U.S.-based studies (Muslims and Sikhs) (Sobolewska et al. 2015).

Of course, high levels of support for the U.S. Democratic Party are not surprising given the relationship of the Historically Black Church to the Civil Rights Movement, and the connection of that movement’s major political achievements (Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act) to Democratic President Lyndon Johnson, along with the 2008 election of Barak Obama as the first Black President of the United States. What is interesting and perhaps surprising is that despite the ascendancy of a reliably Republican voting bloc composed of largely White Conservative Protestant over the past 30 years (Lichtman 2008), African Americans still express high degrees of comfort with religion’s role in politics *even when compared to White Evangelicals*. As noted by the Pew Research Center (2009), 61% of African Americans believe houses of worship should express their views on social and political matters, almost identical to the percentage of White Evangelical Protestants (59%) who hold this view. Finally, Hispanics are less likely overall to support this sort of public engagement with politics from the pulpit, though again Hispanic Evangelical Protestants are most likely to support it (61%) (Pew Research Center 2014). This is almost exactly the opposite of what the public at large says about this issue, and reflects a place where religious identity, not race or ethnicity, is what drives views on political engagement. Read and Eagle (2011), following Chaves (2010), are important to highlight here, as they contend these mixed results should not be surprising, given their critique of the religious congruence fallacy

in research (i.e. essentializing based on religious communalities). Their research on conservative social values and voting behavior find mixed results, which they believe should be expected.

Terrorism

Terrorism is a major concern worldwide and in the United States in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York City and Washington D.C. However, sociologists of religion have largely avoided the study of this issue (Williams and Josephsohn 2013). One notable and interesting exception is a study of Arab Americans in Detroit (Sun et al. 2011). This study finds that those who identified both as Arab American and Muslim show less favorable attitudes towards counterterrorism measures such as surveillance, stop and search, and detention (Sun et al. 2011). This data was collected in 2003, at the height of aggressive policing, especially of Arab Americans, thus the authors note that attitudinal differences may be lessened today. Given its continuing relevance and importance in the world at large, more study of this issue would be illuminating. The lack of attention to it reflects a lack of a critical lens in the sociology of religion arena more generally (Goldstein et al. 2015; Williams and Josephsohn 2013).

This cursory overview of scholarship on the relationship between race, religion, and sociopolitical attitudes on a few selected issues such as terrorism, abortion, and family life again points to the complexities of how religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices both shape and are in turn shaped by broader currents in culture, politics, and other major social institutions. There is no reason to expect otherwise in a world rife with tremendous social change and multifaceted, highly complex social relationships.

Individual and Social Outcomes

Religious practices and beliefs have been linked to both positive and negative impacts on different aspects of individual and social life. A significant

amount of research over the past decade has focused on how racial and ethnic differences influence the effect of religion on physical health, mental health, and community life. Highlights of this literature are reviewed in this section.

Physical Health

Religion has long been framed as a positive force for individual physical health (Chatters 2000; Ellison and Levin 1998; Williams and Josephsohn 2013), with a large body of literature that documents positive correlations between religious involvement and a variety of positive health outcomes and inverse correlations between religious involvement and negative health outcomes (see Hill, Bradshaw, and Burdette's Chap. 2 on "Health and Biological Functioning" in this volume). However, most of this literature focuses on non-Hispanic Whites (Ellison et al. 2010a, b), and has almost entirely focused upon the positive aspects of religion and health in an uncritical way (Williams and Josephsohn 2013). This section will explore a small selection of recent major studies on the relationship between religion and health, highlighting studies that show racial/ethnic differences and also emphasizing those studies that show more nuance regarding the overall relationship between religion, race/ethnicity, and health.

Regarding the link between African American religiosity and physical health, the research has generally pointed towards a link between higher levels of religious involvement and reduced mortality rates, especially for African American women (Ellison et al. 2000; 2010a, b). Few studies have offered compelling evidence for a link between African American religious involvement and other types of physical health (Ellison et al. 2010a, b), though one study (Ellison et al. 2007) has found using data from Wave 1 of the National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH) that religious attendance has a negative impact on domestic violence, as religious attendance dramatically reduces levels of domestic violence for African American men especially and Hispanic men as well (though they both, especially African

American men, start out at much higher rates than Whites). Religiously involved African American women are also much less likely to be victimized as well (Ellison et al. 2007).

Another important study that examined the link between the religious environment, and racial differences in mortality was conducted by Blanchard et al. (2008). The authors use restricted county-level data from the National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Census, and the 2000 Churches and Congregation study to examine how differences in the “religious ecology” of a county impacted mortality rates for White and African American men and women. They found that the religious environment exhibited strong impacts upon mortality rates *except* for Black males and Black females (Blanchard et al. 2008). While not offering a definitive explanation for this anomalous finding, they pointed to the possibilities of the accumulative effects of racial discrimination upon African Americans and the unique aspects of the Historically Black Church as a “semi-involuntary institution” as possible explanations (Blanchard et al. 2008).

Examinations of the link between mortality and religious activity among Hispanics are even more scarcely observed in the literature. One notable exception is Hill et al. (2005), which examined the effects of religious attendance on mortality risk among Mexican Americans 65 and over. Using data from the Hispanic Established Populations for Epidemiologic Studies of the Elderly, they find that Mexican Americans aged 65 who attend once a week have a 32% reduction in risk of mortality compared to those who never attend religious services (Hill et al. 2005). In relation to other aspects of physical health, Burdette and Hill (2009) find that family religiosity is associated with reduced odds of sexual intercourse among White adolescents but not Hispanic adolescents. A study that did identify positive impacts of religion on health for Protestant Latinos was conducted by Garcia et al. (2013). In this research, which used a statewide probability sample of Texans, Protestant Latinos who regularly attended religious services were significantly more likely to abstain from alcohol and to never smoke, while those who reported no

religion were significantly more likely to engage in both activities.

One further study is of interest in terms of the link between the Latino population, religion, and health. This research was conducted in Chiapas, Mexico, and examined child mortality and religiosity via data from the Mexican Census 10% sample (Vargas Valle et al. 2009). The authors found that child mortality in Chiapas was linked to differences in religiosity for indigenous people who are Presbyterian versus Catholic. It was believed that the indigenous health ministry of the Presbyterian Church, along with social and cultural transformations linked to religious conversion may have been behind this improvement in child mortality (Vargas Valle et al. 2009). This kind of study is significant as it expands our scope of understanding beyond the U.S. context, and will hopefully become more prevalent in future years.

Mental Health

Involvement in religion has been seen as a generally positive force for mental wellbeing for some time (Assari 2013; Ellison et al. 2010a, b). It is not a uniform finding, however, as some of the articles described in this section will detail.

In general, research has shown that higher social support is associated with better mental health among African Americans who are regularly involved in church (Assari 2013). Frequency of church attendance is one of the proxies for religious involvement, which has been shown to be associated with better mental health, subjective well-being, physical functioning, and general health. Frequency of church attendance was significantly associated with higher life satisfaction among all ethnic groups. Frequency of church attendance was significantly correlated with positive and negative social support among all ethnicities (African Americans, Black Caribbeans, and non-Hispanic Whites).

Regarding major depression and African Americans, Ellison and Flannelly (2009) use longitudinal data from the National Survey of Black Americans and find that African American

respondents reported that those who had a “great deal” of guidance from religion in their lives at Time 1 were roughly half as likely to report major depression at Time 2 (3 years later), controlling for sociodemographic and psychological factors and major depression at Time 1. They did not find a link between religious attendance or church support and major depression (Ellison and Flannelly 2009). A study of Black Caribbeans in the United States found that a variety of religious mechanisms reduce depression over 12 months or lifetime (Taylor et al. 2013).

Other studies have focused on how religiosity improves aspects of mental wellbeing such as psychological distress and perceived significance to others for African Americans and to a lesser extent Hispanics and Asian Americans. For example, using the National Survey of Black Americans, Ellison et al. (2008) found that religious guidance and religious attendance moderate the effects of racism on psychological distress for African Americans, and that congregational support has a direct effect on distress, partially offsetting the effects of discrimination. In research utilizing data from the National Co-Morbidity Study, church attendance is shown to have a stronger relationship with lowered distress for Hispanics and African Americans than for Whites (though the results were not statistically significantly different between Hispanics and Whites) (Tabak and Mickelson 2009). A particularly interesting facet of this study was that stress events themselves did not interact with religious attendance, so the authors argue perhaps a cultural explanation is necessary to understand how religion impacts levels of distress (Tabak and Mickelson 2009).

Another study using data from a survey in Miami-Dade County in Florida found that higher levels of “mattering” (i.e. perceived significance to others) for African Americans compared to Whites are largely explained by their high levels of private religiosity (prayer frequency and self-perception of religiosity), elevated attendance at religious services, and higher participation in religious organizations (Lewis and Taylor 2009). Examining older populations, Krause and Bastida (2011) found that older African Americans tend

to have more well-developed social relationships (especially those providing emotional support) from their church than do older Whites or older Mexican Americans. They also observed that Whites tend to receive more support than Mexican Americans. Finally, in a study examining older Asian Americans, Zhang and Zhan (2009) found that social isolation and a lack of social support systems resulting from immigration and aging were primary motivators for Mainland Chinese elders to become involved in Chinese Christian gatherings as a means of social support (see also Krause’s Chap. 14 on “Aging” in this volume).

As noted above, not all studies found a positive relationship between religiosity and mental wellbeing. Using data from a large probability sample of Chicago residents, researchers found that contrary to their hypotheses, religiously involved Blacks and Hispanics did not receive greater mental health benefits than their White counterparts (Sternthal et al. 2012). Furthermore, there was only a relationship between increased religious attendance reducing depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and Major Depressive Disorder for Whites in the sample (Sternthal et al. 2012).

Community Life

Religion serves an important role in shaping community life, though not always in uniform ways for different racial and ethnic groups. At the societal level, assuming that religion is primarily an adaptation to cope with psychological stress and uncertainty (Norris and Inglehart 2011), religious belief would be expected to decline in states that enjoy greater material prosperity and existential security (i.e., expectation of leading a long healthy life). Economic development increases our ability to prevail over the hostile forces of nature (e.g., predators, hunger, inclement weather, and diseases), thereby increasing existential security and weakening religion in this view (Zuckerman 2007, 2008).

Barber (2011) concluded that his research is consistent with previous cross-national research

indicating that religiosity declines as the quality of life improves.

Specifically, state religiosity declines with an improved quality of life due to economic development (i.e., affluence, education, health) and increases with psychological stress (i.e., hypertension, African American population). Both state differences and country differences in religiosity are thus explainable in terms of the quality of life, and the same conclusion applies to ethnic-group differences in religiosity. (Barber 2011, pp. 322–23)

In other words, there is a likelihood that as the quality of life improves, religious involvement decreases.

A number of other studies have examined how religion, race and ethnicity and community life interact in a variety of ways related to issues such as residential segregation, the provision of education and other social services, civic participation, and community openness to others. One such study focused on how counties with large numbers of Conservative Protestant congregations exhibited higher levels of residential segregation (including racial segregation) (Blanchard 2007). To explain this phenomenon, Blanchard proposed the closed community thesis, wherein White Conservative Protestant congregations are more closed off from other groups with fewer bridging ties, and the community also lacks efforts to redress structured inequalities due to the power of the Conservative Protestant cultural worldview in that community.

Merino (2011) reinforces the notion of White Evangelical Protestants seeking closed communities. He finds that there was a significantly stronger preference for same-race neighbors amongst White Evangelicals than among members of all other religious groups or the unaffiliated. In another study, Merino (2010) finds that while religious diversity was seen as relatively uniformly positive, opposition for the inclusion of Muslims and Hindus in community life was found amongst those who hold theologically exclusionary views (i.e. my religion is right), and Evangelical Protestants in particular were wary of non-Christians, especially Muslims.

Regarding the provision of social services, Barnes (2015) studied a number of Black

Churches across denominations and found that they have a long history of supporting educational efforts. However, larger Black churches and those with formally educated leaders and members were more likely to sponsor tutoring or literary programs. Cadge and colleagues (2013) used semi-structured interviews with representatives of 48 organizations to compare Portland, Maine and Danbury, Connecticut and the ways each community provided social services to recently arrived immigrants. Religious organizations played a more central role in Danbury, where collaboration among organizations was more common (i.e. religion appears to serve as a barrier to this collaboration in Portland, where municipal organizations provide most of the services). Religious dimension of cities as contexts of reception are thus argued to not be homogenous, with the variation likely resulting from history, demographics (especially of the immigrants) and organizational ecology.

A voluminous literature has explored civic engagement over the past two decades, especially in the wake of Robert Putnam's (2000) landmark *Bowling Alone* study. Religion was argued to be a major positive predictor of civic involvement, thus many researchers have explored the relationship between religion and civic activity. Several studies in this line of scholarship focus on Asian Americans, a group that is otherwise under-examined in the religion and race/ethnicity literature, thus this section focuses on those studies to the exclusion of those related to other groups. This is especially appropriate since the results of these studies point to a different relationship between religion and civic activity. Using Putnam's Social Capital Benchmark Survey (SCBS), Ecklund and Park (2007) found that Asian American Protestants, Catholics, and non-Christian religions are involved in civic activities to varying degrees, but fewer Hindus and Buddhists volunteer than the non-affiliated ("surprisingly" for them). In another study, Cherry (2009) also employed the SCBS and found that Asian Americans were overall less likely to participate in civic engagement if they are regular (weekly) attenders. Participation in church activities was positively associated to

political and community engagement generally, along with participation in religious groups outside the place of worship, a finding that differed from Ecklund and Park (2007). Protestant Asian Americans were more likely to vote and be interested in politics than Asian American Catholics, but this did not significantly impact their community participation (Cherry 2009).

Two other studies are worth mentioning here, as they examine groups that are both relatively ignored in the literature (Sikhs and Muslims) and because they face significant hostility in community life. Ahluwalia and Alimchandani (2013) found that Sikhs have experienced significant harassment and violence in the post-9/11 era in the U.S. due to the turbans they wear, leading to their misidentification as Muslims. Historically they were seen as “strange” Indians, contrasted with “dangerous” Muslim Indians and safe yet exotic Hindus (Joshi 2006). But post-9/11, Sikhs are now misidentified as Muslim and are thus perceived as “strange and dangerous” (Ahluwalia and Pelletiere 2010). In a study focused on Muslims in Ireland, Carr and Haynes (2015) found that despite having resided in Ireland since the 1700s, Muslims there are now caught in a “clash of racializations,” between racialized Muslimness and exclusionary Irishness. Further, this process seems to be a cohesive force for the overall Irish State, which has yet to define anti-Muslim racism as a specific offense (though some have fought for such protections), and which generally maintains a very specific notion of Irishness, defined as WHISC (White, heterosexual, Irish, sedentary, and Catholic) (Carr and Haynes 2015). This perception of Muslims – and to a lesser extent Sikhs, Hindus, and adherents of other non-Judeo Christian religions – as “dangerous others” and how they are marginalized can be seen as another example of the essentializing process that was highlighted previously as a significant problem (Chaves 2010; Read and Eagle 2011).

Future Directions

The literature on religion and race-ethnicity is robust, rich, and ever-evolving. However, as noted in this review, there are some areas that can

be shored up and addressed by future scholarship. One recurring theme in this chapter has involved the issue of essentializing regarding racial and ethnic categories, a topic that El Sghiar (2011) tackles directly by calling for the deployment of a new theoretical approach that moves beyond concepts like race, culture, religion, identity, and ethnicity in minority research, as these can often be limiting, disempowering, homogenizing, and static. The new approach focuses instead on identification(s), in effect “consciously and unconsciously making, maintaining and breaking off connections” (El Sghiar 2011, p. 445), and its forms (functional, normative and emotional identification). Utilizing more fluid approaches to racial and ethnic identification is largely the province of European and Asian social science at present (Borchert 2014; El Sghiar 2011; Gale 2008; Kalra 2009), though scholars of immigration in the U.S. also are making similar calls for strengthening our understanding of race, ethnicity, and other similar categories as far more fluid than static (Kim 2011; Kurien 2005). Deepening the understanding of the mechanisms of identity formation and fluidity will help all scholars of religion better understand how race and ethnicity influences and interacts with religious institutions, and how religion influences and interacts with individuals across different racial and ethnic groups.

Finally, space constraints have led us to focus in this chapter on interconnections between racial-ethnic differences and religion in American society. Although research on religion and race outside the U.S. is beyond the purview of this chapter, the field has benefited from comparative investigations of the race-religion nexus across national borders. This research has lent yet additional insight into the interstices between race and religion across different quarters of the world.

As has been well-established, the expression of religion and the mobilization of religious resources to confront social problems often depends on the particular social factors at play within a nation (for an excellent example, see Trinitapoli and Weinreb 2012). Thus, religion has proven to be a quite flexible social resource. Yet, at the same time, cultural definitions of race vary

dramatically across social contexts as well. Race is principally defined by skin color in the United States, but is defined quite differently (e.g., family lineage, region of origin) in other locales. Race and religion are, in many respects, mutually constitutive. Yet, the range of possible race-religion conjunctions and disjunctions across societies is indeed breathtaking.

This review essay concludes with a call to explore the interstices of race and religion in a more self-consciously comparative fashion wherein the complexity of both race and religion are studied in full measure. Perhaps one of the best ways to move decisively in this direction entails a more sustained dialogue among scholars interested in religion, race-ethnicity, and comparative sociology. Scholarship often appears Balkanized in these areas, with minimal opportunities for genuine sustained dialogue across areas of specialization. To be sure, this review has revealed that there is excellent scholarship being conducted on race-ethnicity by sociologists of religion, many of whom also consider race-ethnicity a central area of focus in their work. Hopefully the future will present more opportunities to expand the conversation and the range of vision through which race and religion are examined.

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Part V

Political and Legal Processes

Jonathan Fox

Abstract

In this chapter I examine the role of religion in politics. I focus on four major influences: (1) religious identity, (2) religious worldviews, beliefs, doctrines and theologies, (3) religious legitimacy, and (4) religious institutions, especially their influence in political mobilization. I also examine one of the results of this influence, government policy. I focus on four types of government policy. First, official religion policy dividing government religion policy into 13 categories which represent a continuum between the countries which officially most strongly link themselves to a single religion to those that are hostile to all religion. Second, I examine 51 ways governments support religion. Third, I survey 29 ways governments restrict, regulate, and control religion in general. Finally, I discuss 31 ways governments restrict religious minorities in a manner not applied to the majority religion.

The intersection between religion and politics is a broad and complicated topic, one that is too extensive to cover properly in a single chapter (see also the Chap. 23 by Svensson on “Conflict and Peace” and Chap. 24 Richardson on “Law and Social Control” in this volume). The study of politics is a big tent with many subfields. It includes diverse topics all of which have something important to say on the topic of religion and politics. Political thought or political philosophy

addresses the question of what role religion ought to play in politics. This includes questions like should government remain separate from religion? And how ought governments to deal with religion? A growing literature in international relations addresses how religion can influence foreign policy and how religious groups interact with governments and international organizations in the international arena.

However, in this chapter I focus on two other aspects of religion and politics, both of which look at religion in domestic politics rather than political thought and international relations. First, I examine ways religion can potentially influence the political process. This discussion is

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grounded in the discipline of comparative politics which traditionally compares politics across states but does not examine the issue of religions between states. Second, I discuss the nature of government religion policy. While this issue can be considered within the school of comparative politics, it is also an aspect of public policy.

Religious Influences on Politics

Traditionally, there are two approaches to discussing religion and politics in the domestic context: the case study approach and the theoretical approach. The case study approach generally looks in detail at one or a small number of countries and examines the role of religion in their politics with the intention that these countries serve as examples of how religion and politics interact. In this section I use the theoretical approach. This approach identifies factors that can potentially influence religion and politics in any country and discusses them on a more generalized and theoretical level with the intention that the general principles identified in this approach can be applied by the reader in multiple contexts. I discuss the following influences: religious identity, religious worldviews, beliefs, doctrines, ideologies, and theologies, religious legitimacy, and religious institutions.

Religious Identity

Theories that focus on religious identity tend to make one of two types of arguments. Some posit that the political behavior of some specific identity group is somehow different from that of other religious identity groups. For example, one might argue that Buddhists are less likely to engage in conflict because of their pacifist ideology. Second, some argue that some form of political phenomenon is different—perhaps stronger or more common—when it occurs between religious identity groups as opposed to within the same religious identity group.

These types of theory are both the most common and most problematic type of theory which

seeks to describe the relationship between religion and politics. They are likely common because they are one of the simplest types of theories to develop and test. For example, if one wants to test whether religious conflicts are more common or violent than non-religious conflicts, it is relatively simple to obtain a list of conflicts, identify whether the parties involved belong to the same or different religions and compare the two.

Samuel Huntington's (1993, 1996) "clash of civilizations" argument is perhaps the best known version of this type of theory as applied to conflict. It also provides a good demonstration of why this type of theory is problematic. In this theory, which he first proposed in a *Foreign Affairs* article, Huntington (1993) argued that after the end of the Cold War most conflict, both international and domestic, would be between various "civilizations" which were mostly religiously homogeneous. Thus, he predicted that from 1990 onward, conflict across religious identities would be more common and violent than conflict between groups belonging to the same religious identity. In addition, Huntington expressed the other type of religious identity theory by predicting that the Islamic civilization would be particularly involved in inter-religious conflict.

From its inception, the theory has been extremely controversial with many arguing against the theory for multiple theoretical reasons. While a detailed discussion of this debate is beyond the scope of this chapter (but see Fox 2004), it is relatively simple to accumulate lists of conflicts and test Huntington's basic propositions. Most studies which tested the "clash of civilizations" theory in this manner found inter-religious conflicts to be less common than intra-religious conflicts, that civilization is a poor predictor of conflict, and that Muslims are not particularly prone to conflict compared to other religious identity groups such as Christians (Chiozza 2002; Ellingsen 2002; Fox 2004, 2005, 2007, 2012; Gurr 1994; Henderson 1997, 1998, 2004, 2005; Henderson and Tucker 2001; Russett et al. 2000; Svensson 2007; Tuscisny 2004).

This failure of the facts on the ground to conform to Huntington's theory demonstrates precisely why identity-based theories are problematic. Religion is linked to conflict but the connection is more complex than depicted in Huntington's theory where the simple meeting of different religions can cause conflict. As I discuss in more detail below, that religion can justify, facilitate and even cause violence is not a difficult proposition to demonstrate. However, these dynamics are better explained using the concepts of religious ideologies, legitimacy, and institutions which I discuss below. More generally religion is a complicated multifaceted phenomenon as is the interaction between religion and the political. One has to delve deeper into religion in order to understand how it interacts with politics than Huntington did in his "clash of civilizations" theory.

Bringing the topic back to domestic conflict, religions' connection to violence is complicated. Most major traditions have within them the potential to support both peace and violence. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, for example, all have concepts of holy war. Even Buddhists, whose religion is doctrinally pacifist, have used their religion to justify violence in specific instances. For example, in Sri Lanka some Buddhist monks have interpreted Buddhism to justify violence against the country's Hindu Tamil minority. This interpretation posits that Buddha charged them with preserving true Buddhism and gave them the Island of Lanka to create a "citadel of pure Buddhism." Violence is, accordingly, justified to accomplish this task (Manor 1994). While many would dispute this interpretation of Buddhism, this example demonstrates that even pacifist religions can be used to justify violence.

At the same time, most religions have doctrines that support peace. Islam, for example, which Huntington and others posit is among the most violent religions, includes in at least some interpretations of its doctrines and theologies concepts such as consensus, independent judgement, consultation, social and economic justice, acceptance of the status quo, and reconciliation (Appleby 2000; Fuller 2002; Keddie 1985;

Philpott 2007, 2012). Scott Appleby (2000) calls this duality in religion the *ambivalence of the sacred*. Thus, if we want to understand how religion influences conflict we must ask under what circumstances religion's violent and peaceful aspects become activated rather than simply assuming groups of different religions fight with each other more often than groups which belong to the same religion.

Studies which examine the religious content of conflict shed some light on this question. Fox (2004) finds that among ethnic minorities which seek self-determination, when groups are making religious demands in addition to nationalist demands, levels of violence can double. Another set of studies show that when religious claims are made by at least one side in a conflict, those conflicts are less likely to end with a peaceful settlement and that those who make such claims are unlikely to compromise on their religious goals but may compromise on other types of issues such as territory (Svensson 2007; Svensson and Harding 2011). Based on this, religious identity is likely most often salient to politics when religious issues are salient to the issue at hand.

The literature on the origins of religious identity politics also implicitly makes this argument. This literature contains three theories on the origins of religious identity—primordialism, instrumentalism, and constructivism—which can also be viewed as three alternate paths by which religion can become salient in politics rather than as competing theories. Primordialism refers to cases where religious issues are ancient and culturally embedded within religious identity groups. Religion is relevant today because it was relevant for so long that no one living remembers when it was not relevant. Primordial-type conflicts are those that have continued for generations and the levels of hatred and perceived injustices go back generations. Conflicts such as the Israeli-Arab conflict and the conflict in Northern Ireland fit well into this category.

Instrumentalism posits a more recent origin to religious salience in politics. While different identity groups have existed within a society they have been until recently politically dormant. Then, a political entrepreneur decides to activate

religious identity as a political resource in order to achieve a political goal. This commonly occurs in times of transition from one political regime to another. It is also common in times of political crisis such as economic downturns and after losing a war. In both of these situations, the political pie tends to be re-divided which can be a high stakes game where new alliances form. Many argue that this is precisely what happened in the former Yugoslavian republics of Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia after the end of the Cold War (De Juan 2008).

Like instrumentalism, constructivism posits religious identity recently becoming salient to the efforts of political entrepreneurs. In this case, however, rather than activating an existing identity, the political entrepreneurs create a new one. This approach has its origins in the ethnicity and nationalism literature where constructing a new identity means shifting group boundaries where several identities are combined or one is broken off from a larger identity group (Gurr 1993; Horowitz 1985). While it is difficult to identify a new religion which was constructed for political purposes, many argue that modern religious fundamentalism is a constructed identity. For example, Appleby (2002, p. 498) argues, “the mentality of fundamentalists is shaped by a tortured vision of the past—a construction of history that casts the long and otherwise dispiriting record of humiliation, persecution, and exile, of the true believers...as a necessary prelude to the decisive intervention of God and the final vanquishing of the apostates.”

Religious Worldviews, Beliefs, Doctrines, Ideologies, and Theologies

That religious worldviews, beliefs, doctrines, ideologies, and theologies influence human behavior, and that this includes political behavior, is an uncontroversial proposition. Human beings need a belief system or framework of some sort to help them comprehend, process, and interpret the information they receive through their senses. In the larger scheme of things this includes understanding the physical universe, our

place in it, and how we relate to it. More specifically to the matter at hand it can help us understand day to day events as well and give guidance on how the world, including the political world, ought to be ordered.

While religion is clearly not the only means to understand political issues it has the capability to provide a framework for understanding and acting on these issues. For example, political ideologies including liberalism, fascism, communism, socialism, and nationalism, among many others, can also provide this understanding as can many other sources. Yet religious beliefs are common. Most studies of the topic show that most of the world’s population has some level of religious belief and even the most secular of populations still have a significant minority who are religious (Norris and Inglehart 2004). This implies that religion has the potential to influence the political beliefs and behavior of most of the world’s population. Thus while religious beliefs, worldviews, doctrines, ideologies, and theologies do not deal solely with political issues and are not the only source of guidance on these issues, they are certainly among the more important political influences worldwide.

Of course, the influence of religious beliefs on an individual’s political beliefs and behavior is roughly proportional to the influence of religion in an individual’s life. When someone’s belief system is based solely on religion its influence can be profound. Ammerman (1994, p. 150) argues that for a true believer religion can be all encompassing:

This conviction that the world is best knowable and livable through the lens of divine revelation is coupled with the ... conviction that their revelation is one that radically reframes all of life. All other knowledge, all other rules for living are placed in submission to the images of the world found in sacred texts and traditions. All other authorities and credentials are de-legitimized, or at least put in their place.

While Ammerman is not speaking directly of political behavior, such a believer would certainly subordinate all political opinions and actions to their larger religious belief system. Obviously, not everyone’s belief system is

dominated completely by religion, but to the extent that religion influences one's belief system it can also influence one's political behavior.

This influence is also present at the collective level. As Silberman (2005, p. 649) notes "collective meaning systems enable groups and group members to interpret their shared experiences including their historical and recent relations with other group. They can influence the goals and the behaviors of groups on both national and international levels." This is particularly important for understanding religion and politics because collective action based on shared beliefs is a key element of many aspects of politics.

When examining the influence of religious beliefs, frameworks, worldviews, ideologies and theologies on politics in general an important manifestation is government policy. Essentially, religious political actors want government policy to more closely reflect their religious views on how society and politics should be ordered. However it is important to remember that religious interests compete with other interests to influence policy. This is especially true of political-secular interests. Political secularism is the belief that religion ought not to influence politics. For some manifestations of secularism this also applies to public space in general. Every country, no matter how religious or secular its political regime, has those who believe that the regime does not support religion enough, as well as those who feel it is not sufficiently secular. The rivalry between these competing interests is one of the most common and important manifestations of religion's influence on politics (Fox 2015).

Belief systems are important to religious politics not only as a motivating force but also because when politics are based on or influenced by religious belief systems, this can change the nature of these politics. One common outcome of this process is intractability. Most politics involves competition and compromise. When religious beliefs are involved competition can be more intense and compromise unacceptable. Demerath (2001, p. 202) makes precisely this argument:

Absolute religious principles do not fit well in the compromise world of statecraft. Theological constraints on state actions do not sit well with officials who seek to preserve a capacity for flexible policy responses to changing circumstances. And if religion must be incorporated into law or state policy, most officials prefer very brief and very general codifications that can be variously interpreted as conditions warrant.

Laustesen and Waever (2000, p. 719) put this more bluntly when they argue that "religion deals with the constitution of being as such. Hence, one can not be pragmatic on concerns challenging this being" This theoretical argument, as noted above, is confirmed by studies which show that once religion is invoked as an issue in a conflict the conflict is less likely to be settled peacefully and there is a low likelihood on compromise over the religious issues in the conflict (Svensson 2007; Svensson and Harding 2011).

The intersection between violence and religious beliefs, ideologies, theologies, and doctrines can manifest in one of four overlapping but distinct ways. The first is instrumental violence. Religion can inspire a wide range of political agendas which can include the establishment of a religious state, creating or maintaining the dominance of a religion, the passing of laws intended to privilege or support a religion or enshrine its precepts in law, restricting minority religions or any number of other agendas. As is the case with any political agenda, there are multiple avenues to achieve it, both legitimate and illegitimate, as well as both violence and peaceful. As most rational political actors, including religious ones, tend to prefer peaceful and legitimate methods for achieving their goals whenever possible, instrumental violence usually occurs when peaceful avenues fail and the only option that remain are failure or violence.

Anti-abortion violence in the US is a good example of this phenomenon. The 1973 US Supreme Court decision *Roe vs. Wade* banned limitations on abortion in the first trimester. While political opposition to this decision began immediately, the first arson attack against an abortion clinic did not occur until three years later in 1976 and the first murder of an abortion provider occurred in 1993, two decades after the

decision. While most who oppose the availability of abortion in the US prefer to use peaceful means to achieve that end, a small minority, usually at least in part religiously motivated, are willing to use violence.

The second manifestation of religious violence related to religious beliefs is defending the religion. Religious beliefs, ideologies, frameworks, doctrines and theologies are not simply an abstract intellectual framework that helps people understand the world and can motivate actions. They are also a central element of the individual and collective identities and psyche of believers which resides at least in part in the non-rational portion of a believer's mind. Because of this, when a believer or community of believers perceive a threat to their religion, this threat demands action. It is a threat to their very being, to how they perceive themselves and the world as it ought to be. It is felt at least in part on an unconscious level which is difficult if not impossible to ignore and, accordingly, demands action. Thus both rationality and instinct tell believers that they must defend their religion against this threat. This defense can often take the form of violence.

There are many examples of this phenomenon. In September 2009, the city of Jerusalem opened a public parking lot near an ultra-Orthodox neighborhood. The lot was open on the Sabbath. As most religious Jews consider driving a car on the Sabbath to be a violation of Sabbath laws, some of the residents of this ultra-Orthodox neighborhood engaged in violent protests against the police over this issue. Similarly, unflattering images of Muhammed in 2005 in a Danish newspaper which were republished in other European newspapers sparked often violent protests across the globe and deadly terror incidents against these newspapers years after the incident. Unflattering depictions of Jesus and other Christian figures in Hollywood movies such as "Dogma" and "The Life of Brian" sparked protests in the US, though these protests were usually nonviolent.

Third, sometimes religious doctrines and theologies specifically mandate violence. For example, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism all include

concepts of holy war. While historically, these wars are often justified as defending the religion, they can also include conquering territories and people in order to expand the power and influence of the religion in question.

Finally, even seemingly benign religious actions can result in violence. This is because these benign actions can be seen by others as a threat to their religion. Perhaps one of the most common forms of restrictions on religious minorities is limiting their ability to build places of worship (Fox 2015). While a place of worship is in and of itself benign, it is often perceived as a threat to the majority religion in the area and, accordingly, opposed and restricted. Although this opposition is usually nonviolent, violent opposition sometimes occurs.

Religious Legitimacy

Legitimacy can be defined as "the normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed" (Hurd 1999, p. 381). That is, a government's legitimacy is based in its ability to convince its constituents that it has the right to rule and that its policies, laws, and officials should be followed for that reason. Robert Dahl (1971), one of the most influential political scientists of the 20th century, considered legitimacy essential for a government. While it is possible to rule through other means such as force, most governments (and certainly democratic governments), generally collapse when they hold no legitimacy.

There are many potential sources of legitimacy including a government's success in accomplishing its goals, tradition, popular consent (usually through democracy), indigeneness, charisma, the rule of law, international recognition, ethnicity, and nationalism (Fox 2013, p. 72). Religion is also included in this list and is able to both support and undermine the legitimacy of governments, policies, political actors, and political institutions. In fact, religion is capable of justifying just about anything. Religion has been used to justify some of the most violent and heinous acts and institutions in political history including both civil and

international wars, slavery, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and Apartheid.

The use of religion to legitimize governments, laws, policies, and institutions is ubiquitous. In fact, for much of Western history, religious legitimacy was a prerequisite to rule a country. Until the past few centuries most Westerners believed that the king ruled through divine right; that is, his power descended directly from God Himself. Under this theory of legitimacy the king's subjects had no right to oppose the king's divinely supported regime. Today most governments are legitimated through an "ascending" theory of legitimacy where the governed must give their consent to the government's rule, usually through democracy, though communist and fascist theories of government also include the concept of popular consent (Turner 1991, pp. 178–83; Toft et al. 2011, pp. 55–56).

Nevertheless, religion still plays a role in legitimating many governments in the modern era. In fact, most countries link their regimes to religion in some manner. Of the world's governments, 23.2% have official religions. An additional 24.8% unofficially support one religion more than all other religions. This means that about half of all governments single out one religion for a special relationship with the state. If we also include countries that give more than one religion preferential treatment, this reaches around two-thirds of all countries. These numbers remain largely consistent even when looking only at democracies (Fox 2012, p. 72, 2015, p. 43). While this type of relationship is more complex than a simple granting of religious legitimacy to a government, this type of policy certainly represents an attempt by a government to, among other things, benefit from religious legitimacy.

Many argue that the role of religion in legitimizing governments has been increasing in recent years. For example, Juergensmeyer (1993; 2008) argues that, especially in the Third World, governments which base their regimes and legitimacy on Western secular ideologies such as liberalism, socialism, fascism, and communism are suffering from a crisis of legitimacy. This is

largely because they are perceived as corrupt and inefficient, but also because of the non-indigenous nature of these ideologies outside the West. As a result, religion—which was a strong element of pre-colonial governments—is returning to fill this power and legitimacy vacuum. Religious political organizations are seen by many as culturally indigenous, moral, and non-corrupt and, accordingly, significantly more legitimate than many existing governments.

Juergensmeyer's focus on religious legitimacy in the Third World is part of a larger picture where there is a tension between secular and religious sources of legitimacy in the modern era. Unlike the competition between religious and secular actors to influence government policy, however, this is not a zero-sum competition. It is possible, and in fact quite common, for governments to utilize both secular and religious forms of legitimacy to support their rule.

Gill (2008) argues that the extent to which this occurs is largely a result of the interests of politicians. A classic relationship between religion and state is that the state gives a single religion or sometimes selected religions special privileges such as state financial support, enforcement of religious laws, and preferred access to the public education system in return for that religion's institutions and clergy overtly supporting the regime. Religious institutions benefit from their monopoly status and the government benefits because increased legitimacy lowers the material costs of ruling. This type of arrangement is often present even in autocratic states (Cesari 2014; Koesel 2014).

More specifically, maintaining order requires resources such as police, courts, and jails. A population's acceptance of a regime's rule lowers these costs for the regime and if these costs are lowered more than the costs of supporting a religion or several religions it is rational for leaders to support the religion or religions in question. As noted above, on a practical level the majority of countries in the world do exactly this. Thus, even if a leader does not personally believe, she can still find religion a useful source of legitimacy.

Religious Institutions and Mobilization

One of the most interesting observations about the political role of religious institutions is that they “are neither designed nor intended to mobilize political action. Yet across the world, they seem to have done exactly that” (Wald et al. 2005, p. 212). That is, religious institutions are often used to organize people for political action, both peaceful and violent.

Why is this the case? Essentially because, while religious institutions do not primarily exist in order to engage in political activity, they happen to include or have access to many resources that are extremely valuable to political activists. (1) They have a public profile which increases the likelihood that their political activities will be noticed by politicians and the media. (2) Clergy and religious institutions often have significant political connections. (3) Places of worship can be used just as easily for political meetings as religious ones. Basic facilities such as a place to meet and office resources are essential to political mobilization. (4) Religious institutions have communication resources which give them the ability to reach out to their congregants, among others, to ask for support for a political cause. This can include announcements during religious services, newsletters, telephone and e-mail lists, as well as social media. (5) This is important because the congregants themselves are a potential resource. People willing to put in the hours organizing, engaging in grass roots lobbying and attending events such as rallies and protests are a significant political resource. (6) While financial resources are not absolutely essential to political mobilization, they are a powerful resource. Religious institutions have such resources and, more importantly, access to potential donors. (7) Political mobilization requires leadership and religious institutions have leaders and develop leadership skills. In addition to clergy, organizing activities such as food drives or religious events, which are often done by lay members of congregations, develop leadership skills. (8) Movements supported or organized by religious institutions usually have a certain amount of legitimacy. (9)

Religious ideologies can add to the motivation of participants in the mobilization effort. (10) Religion can have a bridging effect, essentially combining people and groups that might not otherwise be willing to work together. (11) Finally, in less democratic regimes religious institutions can have a protected status where governments are less willing to use repression against a movement, though this protection is by no means absolute (Fox 2013, pp. 87–88).

Based on this, one would assume that all religious institutions would be involved in political mobilization all the time. Yet this is clearly not the case. This is because there are also costs to using religious institutions for political mobilization. (1) Devoting resources and time to political activity reduces the resources and time available for these institutions’ primary purposes. For example, clergy are less available to minister to the needs of their congregants when they are running a protest rally. (2) Political issues are often divisive. Taking a political stand on an issue will often alienate at least some congregation members, possibly to the point where they might leave the congregation over the issue. Though, political activity can also attract new congregants and when issues are closely related to a congregation’s religious beliefs, ideology and theology, dividing a congregation is less of an issue. (3) Political organizing can create enemies and blowback, particularly when this organization is against powerful political interests or the government. This can even be true in democratic states which would be unlikely to overtly repress religious institutions (Fox 2013). Over 80% of governments financially support religious institutions in some manner. While it is uncommon for democracies to suppress religious institutions, or at least religious institutions belonging to the majority religion, they can easily reduce the financial support they give to those organizations. (4) Many governments, including democratic governments, restrict the right of religious organizations to participate in politics. For example, in the US supporting or opposing the election of a specific candidate can cause a religious organization to lose its tax-exempt status. On a more general level, 42.4% of countries limit religious

participation in politics in some manner including restricting the participation of religious institutions in political activity, restricting the ability of clergy to hold political office, and monitoring sermons for political content (Fox 2015).

Given these crosscutting pressures, when do religious institutions choose to support political mobilization? Basically, it comes down to the opportunity structure. That is, costs and benefits are weighed in order to make a decision. How important is the collective good sought through the political mobilization? How high are the direct and opportunity costs of the mobilization? What is the probability of success? Based on all of this, is the effort at political mobilization worth the price? This calculation can be complex because all of these factors are difficult to measure and different people will assign different values to each of these factors.

However, opportunity structure is not the only influence. Some religious belief systems are more conducive to supporting political activities than others. To the extent that core religious values or interests are at stake, mobilization is more likely. This is especially true when the survival of a religious institution or its congregants is at stake. Finally, even if an issue is not essential on a religious level, if it is sufficiently important to an institution's congregants, then religious institutions often get involved in order to remain relevant to their congregants' lives.

Religion in Government Policy

In the previous section I discuss how religion can influence politics. In this section, I focus on one of the results of that influence: government policy. I base this discussion on the Religion and State (RAS) dataset which includes detailed information on 177 countries on the four categories of religion policy covered here.¹ It is important to note that a policy can be created in multiple

manners including laws passed by legislatures, rules created by government bureaucracies, decisions by the judicial system, and the actions taken in practice by government officials.

Official Religion Policy

Many (though not all) countries have a clear official religion policy declaring the country either to have or not to have an official religion. 41 countries have official religions. Most of them declare this in their constitutions, though eight of these countries use other means to declare their official religion. For example, the United Kingdom has no constitution but by tradition the Church of England is its official religion. 75 declare that the country is secular, has no official religion, may not establish a religion, or is in some other way separated from religion. The rest do not address the issue directly either in their constitutions or other laws.

In practice, I divide government religion policies into 13 categories based on their overall policy toward religion, which I list in Table 22.1. These 13 categories represent a continuum between the countries which officially most strongly link themselves to a single religion to those that are hostile to all religion. These relationships do not change often. Between 1990 and 2008 only 21 of the 177 countries included in the study changed their official policy (Fox 2015). However, as we will see below, official policy is not as determinative of policy in practice as one might think.

Support for Religion

The RAS database tracks 51 ways a country might support religion. Interestingly, of the 177 countries included in the database only South Africa engaged in none of those types of support in 2008. Thus, as shown in Table 22.2, supporting religion is ubiquitous whether a country has an official religion, unofficially prefers one or some religions more than others, is relatively neutral on the issue of religion, or is hostile to religion. This

¹ For a more comprehensive discussion of the dataset see Fox (2008, 2015). The data are available at www.religion-andstate.org. This discussion is based on the results for 2008.

Table 22.1 Categorization of countries according to overall policy toward religion

Category	Description	#	Examples
Religious states	The state has an official religion, and strongly supports that religion to the extent that it enforces the rules of that religion on members of the majority religion if not all residents of the country.	10	Afghanistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia
State-controlled religion, positive attitude	The state has an official religion which it both supports and substantially controls but has a positive attitude toward the religion. Some aspects of the religion may be mandatory in public spaces.	7	Bahrain, Jordan, Tunisia
Active State religion	The state actively supports its official religion but that religion is not mandatory and the state does not dominate the religion's institutions.	29	Chile, Guinea, Ireland
Multi-tiered preferences—one religion	The state has no official religion and religion receives unique recognition and support. There exist one or more tiers of religion which receive less benefits than the preferred religion but more than other religions.	11	India, Italy, Russia
Multi-tiered preferences—multiple religions	The category is the same as the above but the top tier is occupied by multiple religions.	6	Bosnia, Hungary, Latvia
Cooperation	The state has no official religion and multiple religions receive benefits that all others do not.	27	Belgium, Lebanon, Switzerland
Supportive	The state has no official religion and supports all religions equally.	9	Brazil, Jamaica, New Zealand
Accommodation	The state has no official religion and provides minimal if any support for religion.	34	Australia, Fiji, United States
Separationist	The state has no official religion and provides minimal if any support for religion. No religion is preferred and the state has an overtly negative attitude toward religion.	9	Eretria, France, Mexico
Nonspecific hostility	The state has no official religion and all religious organizations are restricted in a manner similar to other non-state organizations	1	Cuba
State-controlled religion, negative attitude	The state has no official religion but sets up officially recognized religious organizations for one or multiple religions which the state fully controls. All religion outside of the context of these official organizations is restricted. The purpose is clearly to control rather than support religion.	6	China, Uzbekistan, Vietnam
Specific hostility	The state has no official religion and the government bans or restricts all religion for ideological reasons.	1	North Korea

Table 22.2 Average levels of government support for religion in 2008, controlling for official religion policy

Official religion policy	All states	Majority religion			Western democracy	Range of scores	
		Christian	Muslim	Other		Min.	Max.
Official religion	16.78	8.31	21.40	15.00	9.25	2	42
One religions preferred	8.23	6.53	15.50	10.00	6.00	2	28
Some religions preferred	7.85	7.78	11.50	5.67	8.43	1	13
Equal treatment (supportive, accommodation, separationist)	4.28	3.87	6.12	4.08	4.83	0	11
Hostile to religion	5.11	N/A	6.00	4.40	N/A	2	8

is even true of Western democracies which are often assumed to follow policies of separation of religion and state. This is likely because government support for religion can be the result of a number of diverse motivations.

First, to the extent that a country endorses, either officially or unofficially, one or a few religions more than others it is more likely to support the endorsed religion or religions. However, as shown in Table 22.2, the official relationship between religion and the state is not fully determinative of levels of support. For example, among states with an official religion, Liechtenstein engages in only two types of support as opposed to Saudi Arabia which engages in 42. The vast majority of countries with no official religion engage in more types of support than does Liechtenstein.

Second, often religion is considered part of a state's culture and, accordingly the government supports it as an element of its general support for national culture. Third, one of the best ways to control religion is to support it. This remains true no matter how hostile a government may be toward religion.

When a government supports a religion, this can make the religion dependent upon or beholden to the government, giving the government influence it might not otherwise have (Cosgel and Miceli 2009; Demerath 2001; Grim and Finke 2011). Toft et al. (2011, pp. 34–35) argue that establishing a religion, government influence over a religion's finances, and giving religious leaders a formal part in the political process all undermine the independence of religious institutions. For instance, all four Nordic states –

Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – finance religion and all but Sweden (since 2000) have official religions. Likely because of these links between religion and state, these countries have successfully pressured their national churches to alter their doctrines on issues such as gay marriage and the ordination of women (Kuhle 2011).

While it is clear that these countries' motivation for supporting religion is not solely control, in other countries the motivation of control is clearly dominant. China's government recognizes five religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. It has established a religious "patriotic" organization for each of these religions. While religious activities are legal within the context of these institutions, the government created them explicitly because it realized that it cannot eliminate religion in China at this time and that religious organizations can pose both ideological and political challenges to the government. Accordingly, allowing religious activities to take place under the auspices of religious institutions which are tightly controlled by the government is an efficient way to control this problem. Yet this control leads to support because while the government appoints and works closely with the leaders of these organizations it also funds them, builds their places of worship—both forms of support measured by the RAS database.

Finally, as noted above, it is often in the interests of politicians to support religion. Maintaining order has costs such as police, courts, jails, and other government enforcement institutions. If religious institutions successfully encourage the population to support the government and obey

its laws this can be worth the effort and cost of supporting those religious institutions. Basically, as long as the reduced enforcement costs are greater than the costs of supporting religious institutions, it is rational for political leaders to support those institutions (Gill 2008).

The 51 ways a government can support religion can be divided into seven categories. The first three involve legislating religious precepts into law. That is, the government directly or indirectly bases laws or policies on religious doctrines or scriptures. The first and most common of the three categories of religious legislation includes seven types of laws which legislate religious values regarding interpersonal relationships, sex, and reproduction:

- *Laws restricting abortions* (119 countries) are declining but remained the most common law in this category in 2008.
- *Laws banning homosexuality or homosexual sex* (58 countries) are also declining worldwide but remain the second most common law in this category in 2008.
- *Religious marriages have automatic civil validity* (41 countries). In these countries the government cedes some of its power to control the institution of marriage.
- *Personal status laws* (34 countries). Laws regarding marriage, divorce, burial, or other aspects of family law are based on religious law. Most countries which have this type of law are Muslim-majority states that base these laws on Islamic law.
- *Restrictions on interfaith marriages* (27 countries). Most of these cases are Muslim-majority states which ban a Muslim woman from marrying non-Muslim man. One exception is Israel where all interfaith marriages are impossible because couples can only get married under religious auspices.
- *Restrictions on sex outside the auspices of marriage* (8 countries) is present in Brunei, Iran, Kuwait, Malaysia, the Maldives, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), all conservative Muslim countries.

Overall at least one of these types of law was present in 134 countries in 2008. As most people will at some point in their lives marry, have sex, and have children this is a significant level of influence.

The second type of religious precept that governments enact are restrictions on women. The following five types of restriction are found mostly in Muslim-majority states:

- *Female testimony in government court is given less weight than male testimony* (19 countries) is based directly on Islamic law.
- *Restrictions on the public dress of women* (7 countries)—specifically that women are required to wear clothes that meet religious modesty standards—are present in seven countries in 2008. In 1990 they were present only in Brunei, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Since then in four countries these laws were enacted by national or some local governments.
- *Women may not go out in public unescorted* (2 countries) in Saudi Arabia and parts of Sudan. This type of restriction was also present in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime.
- The RAS database also has a category, *other restrictions on women*, which encompasses policies that do not fall into the above categories. 18 countries limited women's freedoms in many ways such as restricting their ability to drive a car and leave the country without the permission of a male relative, among others.

Overall, 28 countries restrict women in some manner. This includes a bit over half of Muslim-majority states.

The final category of legislating religious precepts includes all of the religious precepts legislated as law which do not fit into the above two categories. Unless otherwise noted, the items in this category are present mostly in Muslim-majority countries:

- 36 countries have *laws of inheritance based on religious laws*.
- 24 countries *ban alcohol*.
- 24 countries restrict *conversion away from the dominant religion*.

- 16 countries, including several Christian-majority countries, require the *closing of some or all businesses on religious holidays or the Sabbath*.
- 12 countries use *religious laws to define or set punishments for crimes*.
- 10 Muslim-majority countries and Israel enforce religious *dietary laws*.
- 5 countries restrict *public music or dancing* beyond the usual zoning restrictions.
- 5 countries ban or restrict the *charging of interest*.
- 2 countries have religious laws regarding *public appearance or dress* that apply to men.
- 16 countries, including several Christian-majority countries, *restrict other types of activities on religious holidays or the Sabbath*.

Overall, 55 countries engage in at least one of these types of practices.

I list the remaining four categories of support for religion from the most to least common with the exception of the final category which includes all of those types of support which do not fit into any of the other categories. The most common form of support for religion is funding religion. The RAS database includes 11 types of funding:

- 81 countries fund *private religious schools or religious education in private schools*.
- 64 fund the *building, maintaining or repairing places of worship*.
- 58 countries in some manner *fund clergy*.
- 49 give *direct grants to religious organizations*. That is they grant money to these organizations with no instructions on how the money will be used.
- 46 give religious organizations *free airtime on radio or television*.
- 33 fund *religious education in colleges or universities*.
- 29 fund *institutions which train clergy*.
- 25 support *religious pilgrimages*. These are mostly Muslim-majority states funding the *Hajj*.
- 24 fund *religious charitable organizations*.
- 18 countries collect *religious taxes*. That is rather than give religious organizations money

from the general budget there is a specific tax to fund religion. Interestingly 11 of these countries are in Western Europe.

- 25 countries engage in some *other type of funding* not included in the above 10 categories.

Overall, 147 countries fund religion in some way. This funding is common across demographic and geographical divides. The average country which funds religion engages in about three types of funding.

The RAS database measures six ways in which religious and government institutions become entangled in a manner that blurs the lines between religious and government institutions:

- 96 countries have *ministries or departments of religion*.
- 24 countries *require at least some government officials to be members of the majority religion*.
- 15 countries *apportion, at least in part, seats in their legislative branch or cabinet based on religion*.
- 7 give religious officials *political appointments by virtue of their religious offices*.
- 6 countries give political officials an *automatic position in the state religion*.
- 6 countries give at least some religious *leaders diplomatic status or some form of legal immunity due to their religious office*.

Overall 109 countries have at least one of these forms of entanglement, 57 if we exclude the religious department or ministry category.

Another way to support religion is to create laws or institutions which focus on the enforcement of religion or protecting its status in society. The RAS database looks at five such institutions and types of protection:

- 42 countries have *blasphemy laws or restrictions on speech about the majority religion*. While the countries which have such laws are mostly Muslim-majority, there are 15 Christian and other-majority religion states

with this type of law including Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Poland, and Russia.

- 32 countries, most of them with Muslim majorities, have *religious courts with jurisdiction over family law*. To be clear, these are not civil courts which enforce religious laws but separate religious courts with this type of jurisdiction.
- 23 countries engage in *censorship of the press on the grounds that it is anti-religious*.
- 11 countries have *religious courts with jurisdiction over matters other than family law*.
- 7 Muslim-majority states have a *police force or government agency devoted exclusively to enforcing religious laws*.

Overall 55 countries have at least one of these types of institutions or laws.

The RAS database includes eight additional forms of support that do not fit well into any of the above categories:

- 118 countries have *religious education in public schools*.
- In 106 there is a *registration process for religious organization* which is different from how all other organizations register with the state.
- 36 have *religious symbols on their flag*.
- In 22 one's religion is *listed on identity or other significant government documents*.
- 20 have *prayer in public schools*.
- 19 have *blasphemy laws which protect minority religions*.
- In 15 *public schools are segregated by religion or there are separate public schools for members of at least some religions*.
- 30 support religion in some manner not included in the above 50 categories.

Overall support for religion is increasing. In 1990, the average country had 8.16 types of support. This increased by 8.6% to 8.86 in 2008. As I note above, all countries save South Africa engage in at least one of these types of support, making this type of policy the most common religion policy in the world. The other categories which I describe below, while present in a large

majority of countries, are not present in a significant minority of them. Thus, in practice, supporting religion is demonstrably the most difficult form of entanglement between religion and government to avoid, even among states which are hostile to religion.

The Regulation, Restriction, and Control of Religion

As noted above, supporting religion is often intertwined with controlling it. However there are 29 policies covered by the RAS database which are explicitly about restricting, regulating, or controlling religion in general. It is important to distinguish between when a government regulates the majority religion and perhaps all other religions as well from when a government restricts only minority religions. While, for example, a government can restrict the building of all places of worship in a country or do so only for minorities the former represents a hostility toward or fear of religion in general while the latter can represent an attempt to support the majority religion. Thus while many of the activities in this section overlap with those in the discrimination against religious minorities section of this chapter below, this distinction in motivation is significant.

As shown in Table 22.3, the regulation, restriction, and control of religion is linked to official religion policy, with states with official religions engaging in this practice more than most other states. However, not surprisingly, levels of restriction, regulation, and control are highest in countries hostile to religion. Also, while this type of activity is common, it is not as common as support for religion. 82.5% of countries engage in at least one of the 29 types of behaviors in this category.

There are two basic motivations for this type of policy. First, this can be a result of anti-religious political ideologies, but these ideologies are common only in states hostile to religion or perhaps neutral toward religion. Since these types of policy are also present in states which support religion, this motivation's ability to

Table 22.3 Average levels of government regulation, restriction, and control of religion in 2008, controlling for official religion policy

Official religion policy	All states	Majority religion			Western democracies
		Christian	Muslim	Other	
Official religion	12.15	3.77	17.44	4.33	4.00
One religions preferred	7.61	5.94	12.33	11.83	2.33
Some religions Preferred	4.61	3.61	7.00	6.83	4.29
Equal treatment (supportive, accommodation and separationist)	5.14	3.80	12.75	3.42	2.67
Hostile to religion	36.56	N/A	35.25	37.60	N/A

explain the phenomenon is limited. Second, states can fear religion as a potential challenger to their rule. They might also support religion because, as discussed earlier, supporting religion can be an effective way to control and limit it. Even states which support religion and have a positive attitude toward religion might want to limit its political power. As Gill (2008) notes, politicians find supporting religion a useful means to rule but this incentive is undermined if religious elites encroach on the rights and privileges of political elites (see also Demerath and Straight 1997; Driessen 2010; Koesel 2014; Sarkissian 2012, 2015).

The fear that religion and its institutions can have political influence is a real one with numerous historical and current precedents. According to Wald and colleagues (2005, p. 121), “Religious institutions are neither designed nor intended to mobilize political action. Yet, across the globe, they seem to have done precisely that.” As noted above, this is because these institutions are well suited for political activity and often have strong motivations to become involved. Thus, if not restricted, religious institutions are quite likely to become involved in at least some political issues.

Like religious support, the RAS database divides the regulation, control, and restriction of religion into several categories. The first is restrictions on religion’s role in politics. These policies do not restrict the practice of religion itself but rather limit the ability of religion to encroach on politics:

- 63 countries restrict *religious political parties*.
- 44 restrict the ability of *religious organizations or clergy to engage in political activities*.
- 41 mostly Muslim-majority states monitor, restrict, or control *sermons*.
- 22 restrict *the ability of clergy to hold political office*.
- 7 restrict *trade or other civil associations from being affiliated with a religion*.

Overall 95 countries engage in at least one of these types of restriction. This type of policy is clearly linked to the motivation of politicians to limit religion’s ability to interfere in politics.

The second category is restrictions on religious institutions. For some governments it is not enough to limit the ability of religious institutions and clergy to engage in political activities. These governments limit religious institutions in a manner that limits their ability to function independently and in some cases also to provide religious services to their congregants. The RAS database identifies nine types of restrictions in this category:

- 43 governments *restrict or harass members and organizations affiliated with the majority religion but that operate outside the state-sponsored or recognized institutions*. In this case the government allows religious activities but only in the context of institutions the government controls or recognizes.

- 36 governments are involved in *the appointment of at least some religious officials*.
- 26 influence *the inner working of religious institutions in some manner other than appointing clergy*
- 20 restrict *all religious organizations*. That is, no religious institution is allowed to exist without some form of government restriction or control.
- 14 countries restrict *access to places of worship*. This can mean them being closed nearly all the time, as is in the case of North Korea, or more limited restrictions, such as an Algerian policy of limiting their use to religious services only.
- 10 governments *pass or must approve laws governing the state religion*. By this I mean control of issues such as doctrine and other issues that would normally be under the control of a religious institution.
- 10 countries require that the *head of all religious organizations be citizens*.
- 8 countries require *foreign religious organizations to have a local sponsor or affiliation*.
- 2 require *all clergy to be citizens*.

Overall 77 countries engage in at least one of these practices.

The least common form of restriction, regulation, and control are limitations on the practice of religion itself. This is because other than states with anti-religious ideologies—which account for a large proportion of these restrictions—there is little rational motivation to engage in this type of policy. If the goal is to limit religion’s political power, there are more efficient ways to do so which are less likely to upset people than limiting religious practices. However, governments do not always choose the most efficient policy to achieve a goal. The RAS database includes seven such policies:

- 20 restrict the *dissemination of written religious material* such as the Bible or Koran.
- 18 countries restrict the *public display by private persons of religious symbols*, including religious dress, facial hair, nativity scenes and icons.

- 18 restrict *religious activities outside recognized religious facilities*.
- In 15 countries *conscientious objectors to military service are not given other options for national service and are prosecuted*.
- 12 countries restrict the *public observance of religious practices including holidays and the Sabbath*.
- 10 place *restrictions on religious public gatherings not placed on other types of public gatherings*.
- 8 *arrest people for engaging in religious activities*.

Overall 54 countries engage in at least one of these types of policies.

The final category consists of the eight types of regulation, control, or restriction of the majority religion that do not fit into the above categories:

- 47 restrict religious-based *hate speech*.
- 35 regulate the content of *religious education* in general including in private schools.
- 33 own a substantial amount of the country’s *religious property*.
- 30 regulate the content of *religious education* in public schools (this does not include banning such education).
- 28 countries *arrest, detain, and/or harass* religious officials or people engaging in religious activities.
- 14 regulate the content of *religious education* in higher education.
- 13 countries place restrictions on *public religious speech*.
- 50 engage in some form of regulation, restriction or control not included in the other 28 categories.

Overall 116 countries engage in at least one of these “other” forms of regulation, control, and restriction of the majority religion or all religions.

Like support for religion and, as we will see below, discrimination against religious minorities, the regulation, restriction and control of religion has been increasing. In 1990 (or the first

Table 22.4 Average levels of religious discrimination in 2008, controlling for official religion policy

Official religion policy	All states	Majority religion			Western democracies
		Christian	Muslim	Other	
Official religion	18.32	4.92	26.28	10.00	5.25
One religions preferred	11.80	9.97	18.17	15.17	3.33
Some religions Preferred	6.97	6.17	11.00	7.33	12.00
Equal treatment (supportive, accommodation and separationist)	3.62	3.23	6.12	2.92	3.00
Hostile to religion	31.22	N/A	38.40	22.25	N/A

year in which a country existed),² 132 countries engaged in at least one of these practices. This increased to 146 countries in 2008.

Discrimination Against Religious Minorities

I define religious discrimination as restrictions placed on the practices or institutions of minority religions which are not placed on the majority religion. Thus, to “discriminate” means to treat differently. While many of the policies in this category overlap with those of the previous category, targeting only religious minorities as opposed to the majority or all religions is the difference between countries like North Korea where all religions are repressed and Saudi Arabia where all religions other than the state-supported version of Islam are repressed. Christians in both countries, for example, are highly repressed but the motivations for this repression are very different.

Motivations for religious discrimination can vary and do not always include supporting the majority religion by restricting its competitors, though this is likely the most common motivation. Because of this, religious discrimination can be a better measure of the extent to which a government wants to create a religious monopoly than the extent to which it supports the majority religion. Other motivations include protecting the national culture, links between religious identity

and a state’s nationalist ideology, repressing ethnic minorities who are challenging the state and happen to also be religious minorities, and protecting citizens from “dangerous” and “predatory” religions (especially “cults” and “sects”). Religious minorities can also be perceived as security threats under some circumstances, as well as threats to the political success of sitting governments.

82.5% of the 177 countries included in the RAS dataset engaged in at least one type of religious discrimination measured in the study. As shown in Table 22.4, levels of religious discrimination are influenced by official government religion policy, but this relationship is not determinative for Christian-majority states, especially Western democracies. This is largely because the countries which support multiple religions—including particularly Austria, Belgium, and Germany—are restrictive of religions considered “cults” and sometimes those that are simply not “traditionally” present in the country. That is, they tend to support religions with a long-standing history in the country but restrict religions new to the country. Religious discrimination is relatively low in all other categories of Western Democracies.

Like the previous categories of government religion policy, the RAS database divides religious discrimination into multiple categories. The most common category is restrictions on religious institutions and clergy. While restricting religious practices (a category I discuss below) essentially bans elements of a religion, restricting its institutions and clergy underlines one of the most important ways religions organize, recruit members, maintain doctrinal orthodoxy, and

²A number of the 177 countries in the RAS database were not independent or had no functioning governments in 1990.

transmit themselves from generation to generation. Thus, these are serious restrictions. They include:

- 82 require minority religions to *register* as religions in a manner not incumbent on the majority religion.
- 73 countries restrict the *building, maintaining or repairing* of places of worship.
- 46 restrict *formal religious organizations*, usually banning them.
- 35 restrict the access of *clergy* to hospitals, jails, and the military.
- 35 restrict *access* to existing places of worship.
- 26 restrict the ordination of or access to *clergy*.

Overall, 121 countries place at least one of these types of restrictions on at least one religious minority.

The second type of restriction is that placed on conversion and proselytizing. Most religions seek to expand through conversion. For some engaging in proselytizing is a central religious obligation. On the other hand, this “poaching” of members is likely to be perceived as a direct threat to dominant religions. The RAS project identifies seven distinct policies in this category:

- 80 restrict *proselytizing by foreign clergy or missionaries*.
- 57 restrict *proselytizing by citizens* to members of the majority religion.
- 30 restrict *proselytizing by citizens* to members of minority religions.
- 29 countries restrict *conversion away from the majority religion*.
- 18 engage in *attempts to convert* members of minority religions that do not use force.
- 15 countries force recent converts away from the majority religion to *renounce their conversion*.
- 5 engage in *forced conversions* of people who were never members of the majority religion.

Overall, 93 countries engage in at least one of these types of restrictions or policies.

The third category is restrictions on the practice of religion:

- 55 countries restrict the *public observance* of religious practices including holidays and the Sabbath.
- 41 restrict *writing or publishing* religious materials such as the Bible or Koran.
- 34 restrict *importing religious publications* such as the Bible or Koran.
- 29 restrict the observance of *personal status laws* including for marriage, divorce and burial.
- 27 countries restrict the *private observance* of religious practices including holidays and the Sabbath.
- 24 restrict the wearing of religious *symbols or clothing*.
- 20 countries require at least some minorities to observe at least some *religious practices of the majority religion*.
- 19 countries restrict the ability to make or obtain *materials* necessary for religious rites, customs, or ceremonies.
- 14 restrict access to *religious publications for personal use*.

Overall, 86 countries engage in at least one of these restrictions.

The final category of religious discrimination is all types of discrimination that do not fit into the other three categories:

- 55 *arrest, detain, and/or harass* religious officials or members of the minority religion.
- 41 place members or institutions of minority religions under *surveillance* not justifiable by security issues.
- 41 engage in official or semi-official *anti-religious propaganda* against minority religions.
- 37 countries require at least some members of some minority religions to take religious *education in a religion other than their own*.
- 34 declare some minority religions *dangerous or extremist sects*.
- 33 countries restrict *religious schools* or religious education in general.

- 18 grant *custody of children* at least in part on the basis of religion.
- 37 engage in some form of discrimination not included in the other 29 categories listed above.

Overall, 101 countries engaged in at least one of these policies.

Religious discrimination also fits the pattern of increasing over time. In 1990 (or the first year in which a country existed), 136 countries engaged in at least one of these practices. This increased to 146 countries in 2008.

Conclusion and Future Directions

In this chapter I discussed the multiple ways religion can influence politics and the 111 types of government religion policy covered in the Religion and State (RAS) dataset. The role of religion in politics can be complicated. It has many different but related yet often crosscutting influences on politics. For example, only South Africa engages in none of the 110 specific types of government religion policy discussed in this chapter (number 111 is the official government policy and each state falls somewhere on that scale). None of the remaining 176 countries has a set of policies which is identical to another's.

Thus, each and every country in the world deals with religion somewhat differently. Most have complicated policies that in some ways support religion, and in other ways restrict and regulate the majority religion, as well as discriminating against at least some minority religions. The one common denominator is that religion is difficult to avoid in politics. It always interacts with government and other elements of the political system. This means all governments must take a position on the issue of religion. While true neutrality is possible, it is arguably the rarest of policies and likely the most difficult to maintain.

To put the matter in perspective, I do not claim all politics involve religion. There are clearly many aspects of politics that have little if anything to do with religion. However, few, if any, governments can entirely escape dealing with

religion. Religious and secular actors compete to influence governments over at least some aspects of policy. Also, governments cannot avoid setting a religion policy. Thus, while not all politics is religious, no government can entirely avoid dealing with religion.

Despite this profound and pervasive influence of religion on politics, the field is in its infancy. Before 2001, research on religion and politics, while present, was clearly outside of the discipline's mainstream (Philpott 2007; Wald and Wilcox 2006). Even today it is still understudied compared to other topics in the field of politics (Kettell 2012). While we know considerably more today than we did a decade or two ago, a large amount of basic research has yet to be done. Much of the current work is based on studies of one or a few countries. Cross-national databases cover the topics of government religion policy, religious demography, and various forms of conflict and terrorism. However, major topics such as religious interest groups and political parties, among many others, have yet to be catalogued in a world-covering format. As interest in the field of religion and politics is growing, I anticipate that many of these lacunas will be filled in the coming decades.

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Abstract

This chapter examines the role of religion in war and peacebuilding processes, drawing from empirical studies in peace and conflict research. Distinguishing between the onset and escalation of conflicts, I show how religious factors may help to create the underlying structural conditions and proximity causes that spark wars and violence, but also contribute to intensification of conflicts, polarization, and increase in hostile demands including religious factors behind the intractability and challenges of peaceful conflict resolution. Yet, religious factors are also important in accounting for peaceful developments. Thus, this chapter identifies the different conditions under which religion influences peace, which have also spurned the interests of peace and conflict scholars. Religion can increase the chance for nonviolent uprisings, and religious actors are often important in peacemaking processes, including in re-interpreting radical and militant religious messages into more peaceful ones. In the end, I draw the two areas of research on religious dynamics – peace and conflict – together by laying out some of the most important avenues for future research.

This chapter deals with religion in conflict and peace. The key word here is “and.” As a starting point for the overview of the field it should be recognized that religion has a role in both peace *and* conflict. Religion is a crucial (albeit some-

times misunderstood) factor behind political violence and armed conflicts, but it is simultaneously a force for more constructive peaceful developments. The phrase “ambivalence of the sacred,” coined by Appleby (2000) for this duality in regard to religion, indicates the important and basic point that the effect of religion varies. This is a pivotal starting-point for an overview of the scholarly work on religion in peace and conflict. It is not uncommon to meet either of the two extreme positions: the attitude that religion (and

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not uncommonly then the particular religious tradition that the person making the statement happens to follow) is inherently good, constructive, and peaceful, or alternatively (and not uncommon amongst those that do not adhere to any religious faith-tradition) that religion lies behind most or even every armed conflict or act of violence. As we shall see in this analysis, research on religion and conflict shows a more nuanced, and actually much more interesting, picture. Religion – through its precepts, belief-structures, demographic patterns, actors, organizations, and mobilization structures, can contribute to both peace and conflict, but under particular conditions. In this chapter I set out to identify the particular conditions which determine whether religion becomes a force for peace or for war.

This also leads to another point that can serve as a spring-board for the coming analysis: the role of religion in the context of peace and conflict is both conditional and marginal. With the word conditional, I imply here that the role religion will come to play in particular contexts is contingent on a set of particular conditions, which will be extensively discussed in this chapter. And with marginal, I do not mean to suggest an approach of negligence of the religious factors, but rather that we should, as we enter the study of peace and conflict, acknowledge that armed conflicts are multifaceted and highly complex social and political phenomena that cannot be explained by a single factor. Armed conflicts are multi-causal processes, in which religion can play a role, but not the only one, and often not the most important one. In other words, we must take religion into account when trying to understand why conflicts occur, escalate, and end, but the analysis of religion will never be enough to understand armed conflicts and political violence. Religion is often not the decisive factor behind decisions of war and peace, but it does influence the dynamics of these processes, in ways that the analysis below will try to tease out. Understanding the conditional and marginal nature of religion as a factor influencing conflict and peace is essential, as it helps us to avoid some of the traps in previous debates. That is, it

helps us to prevent over-emphasizing or neglecting the religious factor.

Following this logic, this chapter consists of two parts. Part one discusses research on religion and conflict, and Part two on religion and peace. Thus, this chapter discusses the different conditions under which religion influences peace and conflict. In the end, I draw these areas of research together in trying to identify a set of important avenues for future research on religion in peace and conflict.

How Religion Influences Conflict

Religious factors can affect the risk of armed conflicts and organized violence at several stages. Here, we apply the analytical distinction between onset and escalation of conflicts. Religious factors may help to create the underlying structural conditions and proximate causes that spark wars and violence (*conflict onset*). There are also religious factors that contribute to intensification of conflicts, polarization, and increase in hostile demands (*conflict escalation*), including religious factors behind the intractability and challenges of peacefully resolving conflicts. These two dynamic processes of conflicts will in the following serve as frameworks for analyzing how religion is related to conflict.

Religion → Conflict Onset

A first aspect to digest is related to religion as a cause of armed conflict. Are there any particular conditions that increase the risk of religion contributing to the onset of political violence within or between states, and if so, what are these conditions? Whether the risk of civil war and political violence can be explained by the religious structure of societies is something that is debated in the scholarly community. There is, by now, a considerable body of research on the conditions under which *religious demography* influences the propensity of civil conflict. Hence, a lot of scholarly attention has been paid to the overall structural religious compositions of societies,

particularly how religious demography influences propensity for armed conflicts. There are several different lines of arguments in this field of research, some of which are incompatible with each other.

The most well-known theory (and one of the most controversial) is proposed by Samuel Huntington (1993, 1996), through his proposition that the world is moving – and this was an expectation expressed at the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the post-Cold War era – towards a *Clash of Civilizations*. Huntington suggested that the traditional fault lines – particularly between communism and liberalism – was waning and that in its place, culturally based identity conflicts would emerge, organized along large cultural blocks – civilizations – and these were to dominate the new landscape of conflicts. Thus, his theory is essentially a prediction of what could be expected to happen when the ideological cleavages between East-communism and West-liberalism faded away (Huntington 2000). Civilizations and not nation-states or transnational ideological alliances, according to Huntington, are the emerging, main, and basic building-blocks in international relations. Thus, the question of war and peace can only be understood through the lenses of a civilizational perspective. Civilizational identity boundaries essentially follow the large religious faith traditions, and thus civilizational collectives are effectively transnational religious groupings. Religious identities and religious values would provide a new landscape for international relations. Huntington's controversial proposition has stimulated a large body of empirical research. Overall, empirical research on civilizations and conflicts has focused on testing two of Huntington's central propositions: (1) that inter-civilizational relations are more conflict-prone (and intractable and violent once they get started) than intra-civilizational ones; and (2) that there is an increase in civilizational conflicts after the end of the Cold War. Empirical research over the last decades has, by and large, shown that the clash of civilization theory is unable to rightly predict empirical patterns of armed conflicts in various forms (Russett et al. 2000, Chiozza 2002;

Tusicisny 2004). The trajectories of ethnic conflicts have been a particular focus of empirical analysis (Fox 2004a, b). For example, a recent empirical study shows, again against the predictions of the Clash of Civilizations theory, that civilizational differences do not increase risk for civil war onset among ethnic groups after the 1989 time period (Bormann et al. 2015). Yet, this non-finding is basically in accordance with several other studies, examining other levels of political conflicts. Thus, civilizational differences cannot account for the trends and prevalence of militarized interstate disputes (Russett et al. 2000). Moreover, interactions between states representing different civilizations do not contribute to a higher risk of escalation into interstate conflict than interactions between states that belong to the same civilizational sphere (Chiozza 2002). The effects of civilizational differences over time are marginal (Tusicisny 2004). Disputes between ethnic groups and governments, in which the identities follow civilizational cleavages, are indeed more likely to escalate than intra-civilizational conflicts within states. Although this seems to lend some support to Huntington's claim, it appears to be major cultural divisions rather than civilizational differences by themselves that account for the intensity of intra-state conflicts (Roeder 2003). Thus, whereas identity-politics, religious dimensions of armed conflicts, and religious extremism have indeed increased over time, civilizations as such have not replaced states in the post-Cold War world order. In many instances "intra-civilizational" conflicts have been as challenging or even more so, in comparison to conflicts between civilizations. Moreover, a basic problem with the Clash of Civilizations theory is that it does not convincingly specify the causal process through which civilizational divide would increase the risk for conflicts or make them more bloody or intractable once they start.

Given the poor empirical support that previous studies have provided to the civilizational clash thesis, it is probably not the most fruitful way of trying to understand how religious demographic conditions set the context for risk of political violence and armed conflicts. Yet, civilizational

divides are just one aspect of religious demography, and there are other forms in which religious demography can influence the risk for conflict. One of the most influential studies on civil wars, Fearon and Laitin (2003), included *religious fragmentation* as a variable, and found that it did not increase the risk of civil wars. Religiously diverse countries have actually not been more at risk of an outbreak of civil war than religiously homogeneous countries (Fearon and Laitin 2003). Thus, religious heterogeneity does not contribute to the risk for outbreak of large-scale intrastate conflicts. Indeed, zooming in to the category of ethnic conflict, it seems to be not the religious differences, but rather the linguistics that account for the risk of civil war onset (Bormann et al. 2015). Taking both relational perspectives into account – that is, the relationship between that group which dominates the government and the identity of other ethnic groups – religious differences do not seem to be a predictor of civil conflict. Yet, it is possible that religious diversity may not have a direct effect on the risk of political violence. Religious observance – a measure that combines individual devotion and religious organization and social capital – is found to be positively correlated with religious tolerance, but only in areas that have high degrees of both religious diversity and integration between different religious groups. In areas that are more homogeneous, or that are diverse but not integrated, there is no effect of religious observance. In other words, it is religious segregation, rather than religious diversity, that is the determining condition for explaining when religion (or more specifically, degree of social religiosity) has a benign effect in increasing the support for religious tolerance (Dowd 2014). In fact, in a study that examines religious diversity and conflict in the Sub-Saharan African context, Dowd (2015) finds that Christian and Muslim communities in religiously diverse and integrated settings tend to be more supportive of key features of liberal democracy than in a religiously homogenous or segregated settings.

Other measures in the realm of religious demography include *religious polarization* and *religious domination*. Indeed, both religious

polarization and religious domination have been expected to increase the risk of armed conflict, as these conditions, in comparison to religious diversity, are prone to strengthen in-group/out-group formations (Reynal-Querol 2002, Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2002). The empirical evidence is, however, mixed and does not confirm any strong relationship between religious polarization or dominance, on the one hand, and the onset of a conflict, on the other. The strongest support is found in relation to religious dominance of one or two groups. This might be explained through the perceived threat felt by the smaller groups in the face of the dominant, possibly discriminating religious groups, with this leading to strengthening of unity among the smaller groups against the dominant one (Reynal-Querol 2002; Montalvo and Reynal-Querol 2005; Pearce 2005).

Another important aspect of religious demography is the extent to which religious identities overlap with other group-identities, such as language cleavages, class structures, and ethnic identity-markers. The research findings on the impact of *cross-cutting religious identities* on the risk of civil war and intrastate conflict reveal a mixed picture. The causal pathways may go in different directions. On the one hand, cross-cutting identities can mitigate the risk of ethnic fractionalization. If there are identities that entail both religious and ethnic dissimilarities, the salience of out-group differences may be deeper and thereby the risk for onset of civil war can increase. Cross-cutting identities, on the other hand, decrease the possibility of utilizing identities for mobilization and recruitment, and thereby modify the effects of ethnic fragmentation in divided societies (Selway 2011). Empirically, studies find different effects of cross-cutting identities on the risk of civil war. Indeed, overlapping identities – where religious identity differences interact with group dissimilarities in terms of language and welfare – appears to increase the risk of an onset of civil war (Basedau et al. 2016). On the other hand, if we focus on language and religion cleavages only, then cross-cutting differences seem to have no effect on the risk of political violence and armed

conflicts (Bormann et al. 2015). Thus, given the mixed record of previous research, we can conclude that the conditions under which cross-cutting identities can mitigate risk for civil conflict remain to be specified. Deeper and more comprehensive analyses need to be conducted on other forms of cleavages that in combination with religious identities increase the risk of political violence. Moreover, the specific conditions under which cross-cutting religious identities help to mitigate the risk of civil war need to be identified.

It should be noted, however, that while religious demography may not impact the risk for internal armed conflicts directly, it may do it through political factors that make demographic cleavages salient. At times, religious demographic factors can come to play a central role in political discourse. Religious demography *per se* cannot fully account for the causal pathway to conflict, unless political salience of identity issues is taken into account. Thus, the political strategies of repression and accommodation are key factors in order to understand the conditions under which the religious demographic of a country influences the risk of civil conflict (Nordås 2014).

Overall, research on the structural religious demographic has done better in explaining changes in civil war risk propensity between countries and contexts, than in accounting for changes over time. More dynamic models are needed to explain how *shifts* in religious demographics affect the risk for civil war and political violence. What happens, for instance, in a society that experiences a rapid change in its religious demography, in terms of religious diversity? We know, for instance, that shifts in the settlement patterns of Christian-Filipino population in the traditional Muslim-Moro land in Southern Philippines provided some of the structural underlying causes for the intractable conflict between the separatist groups and the government.

One debated question about the impact of religion on war has been whether particular religious traditions are inherently more violence-prone than others. In particular, the special role of Islam

has been at the center of the debate. One articulation of an argument along these lines suggests that Islam suffered from a lack of a reformation period, equivalent to the one that Western Christian traditions have had, and that the lack of separation between religious and political spheres is a fundamental challenge for the Islamic tradition to usher in pluralistic and peaceful societies (Lewis 2002). Huntington expected that Islam would be the civilization most engaged in conflict with neighboring civilizations, stating that Islam has “bloody borders” (for an empirical evaluation of the role of Islam in general conflict patterns, see de Soysa and Nordås 2007).

A more nuanced argument is developed by Monica Toft, through her attempt to explain the prevalence of Muslim conflicts in the larger empirical landscape of religious civil wars. In the category of civil wars fought over religious issues and identities, Islam is over-represented in comparison with its share of the world’s population. Toft set out to explain this puzzling prevalence by developing the idea of “religious outbidding” (Toft 2007). The decentralized nature of Islam lends itself to competing interpretations and different religious entrepreneurs, and the market of ideas promotes radicalization through the outbidding process: more radical voices outbid the moderate ones. This can help to clarify why Islam has dominated the large-scale intrastate political violence over religious issues.

More broadly though, and beyond merely Islam, the religious traditions of *monotheism* have been suggested to be particularly exclusive and by its nature more prone to zero-sum ideological battles and, ultimately, violence. For instance, the lack of religious conflicts in East Asia in traditional times can be explained by its more inclusive religious ideologies. According to Kang (2014), the inclusive nature of the religious traditions in East Asia implied that they were not as exploitable by political leaders as a means of differentiating groups or justifying violence. Despite the multiplicity of religious traditions and identities in East Asia, religious violence has largely been absent in Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and China. This suggests that the conclusions in international relations regarding peace and war –

drawn largely from the experiences of the monotheistic traditions of Christianity and Islam about the potential of religion to mobilize support in times of war – are not globally generalizable. In fact, an analysis implicitly built on the experiences of the monotheistic traditions may lead the scholarly community to distort the relationship between religion and war. By contrast to the emphasis on one particular tradition, other scholarly research, most prominently by Juergensmeyer (1994, 2008), makes a point by showing the basic similarities across religious traditions in regards to the religious nationalist movements. Thus, there is much commonality between “religious nationalists”, be them in the Middle East, South Asia or the former Soviet Union. In fact, they are “united by a common enemy” – Western secular nationalist – and a common hope for the revival of religion in the public sphere (Juergensmeyer 1994, p. 6). Thus, the basic political (and religious) aspiration of religious nationalism is to question, challenge, and ultimately replace Western-based secularism. Even though there are different arguments in the debate on specific religious traditions’ impact on the propensity for conflict, a general conclusion to be drawn at this point is that referencing a specific religion is not enough to explain the propensity for war. There is simply too much variation within any given religious tradition for one religious tradition to be sufficient as an explanation for violence and armed conflicts. There is also the empirical fact that religious violence, at different times and in different contexts, has occurred in all major religious traditions (at least those that have had longer relationships with political power), a fact that should make us question the validity of the singular-religion argument.

A last structural explanation to be mentioned in this section is the impact of religious grievances on the risk of war. Suppression of religious rights can create underlying grievances that spark political violence and civil wars. Thus, any comprehensive picture of the risk for war derived from religious factors would miss out on essentials if religious grievances were not discussed. Religious freedom is an important area of empirical research on religion and international rela-

tions (see Fox’s Chap. 22 on “Comparative Politics” in this volume). The way in which governments regulate religion and actively support religious institutions within a society – as well as the way in which wider social climate and cultural practices restrain, inhibit, and restrict religious freedoms of minorities and other religious groups and individuals – need to be taken into account (Grim and Finke 2006). Research shows a connection between the occurrence of religious terrorism and the lack of religious freedom. In particular, the degree of government regulation of religion helps to explain the risk for terrorist activities by a religious actor, driven by religious ideologies or motivation and framing its mission (at least partly) in religious terms. Importantly, this is something different than an actor who utilizes religious symbols or rhetoric for other goals and ambitions (Saiya and Scime 2014). When government suppresses manifestations of religious beliefs or aspirations, it may backfire and increase the support for radical religious forces in a society. Religious suppression may push those with religiously-anchored political aspirations underground and in the longer run lead to a more radical undercurrent of religious mobilization.

On the other hand, religious freedom can open up space for political dialogue, the creation of moderation through the weight of bearing official responsibility, the establishment of cross-cutting ties within the political system and socialization of norms of democratic deliberation, and empowerment through peaceful organization channels. In line with this argumentation, a recent study on all religious minority groups in the developing world from 1990 to 2008 finds that religious discrimination by the state leads to perceived religious grievances by those being discriminated against (not surprisingly). Yet, it is also found, more surprisingly, that neither religious grievances nor religious discrimination lead to violence by the religious group (Basedau et al. 2015).

We have discussed how religion influences the risk for armed conflicts becoming initiated and outlined some of the most important structural factors that make certain contexts more at risk for war than others. We now turn our attention to the

risk for escalation of conflicts once they have started.

Religion → Conflict Escalation

So far, we have discussed risk for armed conflicts in general. Yet, there are also different types of armed conflicts, in some of which religion plays a more prominent role than in others. One type of escalation is through sacralization of conflict. This refers to a process in which an originally secular conflict becomes drawn into the religious sphere. It is important to note here that religious aspirations can be hiding political, economic, or other types of non-religious ambitions. Religiously defined conflicts can sometimes (some would even suggest as a rule) be a public facade hiding more material (economic, political, individual) interests. That a conflict is framed religiously does not necessarily imply that the underlying causes, or the parties' true intentions, are related to religion. Religion can be instrumentalized in the mobilization process of conflict, as a way of trump up support, draw on institutional religious networks, and create sacred legitimacy for an ultimately profane cause.

Religion can enter into the political sphere of social conflicts and political violence through two processes. Political elites and other leaders can instrumentally utilize religious rhetoric, organizational structures, or symbolism in order to mobilize support. Alternatively, religious actors can themselves enter into politics: trying to utilize the political methods to advance their religious goals and ambitions. Juergensmeyer (1996) makes a useful distinction between these two processes: the "politicization" of religion, and the "religionization" of politics. Thus, much depends on the elites' ability to frame a conflict in religious terms. Not all attempts to frame a conflict religiously are successful, though. Examining the variation in outcome of attempts to mobilize religiously in the Philippines and Thailand, the ability to frame a conflict religiously is found to depend on the credibility and authority of the religious leadership, and whether or not there are counter-frames available. It also depends on the

religious infrastructure: successful religious mobilization depends on whether there is an organizational structure that can enable a religious framing of a political campaign (De Juan and Hasenclever 2015). The conclusion is essential: "it is not religion and religious differences as such that increase the risk of conflict onset and that impact on conflict intensity and conflict duration but interpretations of the sacred offered by political and religious elites and as accepted by their constituencies" (De Juan and Hasenclever 2015, p. 204). The question is, how is a conflict perceived among the population when the rebels take up arms? When can an armed conflict be considered to be religious and "holy"? A contextual reading of the burial practices, public discourses, local recruitment patterns, and other social and cultural indicators can be useful in order to account for the perceptions of religious stakes in conflicts (Barter and Zatzkin-Osburn 2014).

Attempts to frame a conflict religiously may succeed, or not, depending on whether the conflict is perceived as religious by the population in the territory in which the conflict occurs. This may account for variations, for example in Southern Thailand and the Mindanao conflict in the Philippines, in the culturally anchored approach of religious-social practice (Barter and Zatzkin-Osburn 2014). In line with this, there is some evidence – although this is clearly an understudied area of research – arguing that the causes that drive armed conflicts in general are not necessarily the same that lie behind religiously defined conflicts. In fact, religious grievance or religious discrimination do not affect the risk of armed conflicts in which there is a religious incompatibility (Basedau et al. 2015).

The relationship between the state and the religious sphere is a condition that has been identified as an important explanation for why the religious influence becomes destructive and violence-prone. As suggested by Toft et al. (2011), it is the intimacy of the state and religion sector, as well as the character of the religious message, that can help to account for when religious forces are mobilized for democracy and peace versus when they are associated with

terrorism, civil wars, and autocracy (see also Philpott 2007). Most problematic, according to their analysis, it is when the state and the religious sphere are intimately related and violence-accepting interpretations are influential in the religious tradition. Consequently, separation between state and religion is a key for understanding whether religion contributes to peace or war. Similar lines of argument – pinpointing the dual factors of religious content on the one hand, and the relationship between religion and state, on the other – have also been developed (Little 2011). Yet, religiously motivated violence cannot occur everywhere. It depends both on the depth of the grievances and the political opportunities to raise concerns. In comprehensively authoritarian states, the room for raising dissent is severely restricted, whereas in democratic or democratizing societies, the possibilities to create unrest are significantly larger. In contexts where religious movements feel threatened or provoked by challenges to central religious commitments, principles, or values, and where there are opportunities to launch protests, religious violence (such as riots over blasphemy issues) is more likely to occur (Hassner 2011).

Horowitz (2009) shows that religious considerations and motivations can help explain the longevity of military campaigns beyond strategic logic and material factors. Thus, something significant happens to the conflict dynamics when they are framed in religious terms. Even if material interests may many times lie behind conflicts fought in the name of religion, these types of conflicts cannot therefore be understood without taking the religious considerations seriously into account. Yet, the escalation and duration of conflicts, even those of religiously defined ones, may not necessarily be driven by religious factors, at least not if these are seen in a restricted form implying immaterial religious ideologies. For example, religious militants seem more willing to carry the costs of war and thereby counter-insurgency measures do not have similar effects on religiously defined groups, as other groups, such as nationalists. Utilizing disaggregated data from Russia's North Caucasus, Toft and Zhukov (2015) examine whether Salafi-Jihadi groups are

more resilient to coercive counter-insurgency actions by government than nationalist groups. It is not the religious motivation *per se* which is driving the result, but rather the relative dependence on internal or external support structures. “By offsetting local support with revenues and manpower from elsewhere, Islamists can continue fighting even where the population faces heavy penalties for supporting them” (Toft and Zhukov 2015, p. 223). This is in line with earlier research on religiously framed terrorism, particularly self-proclaimed Islamist terrorism. It is the organizational structure, rather than ideology, that explains the lethality (Piazza 2009). Overall, religious ideologies carry relatively little empirical explanatory power, when it comes to accounting for conflict escalation and violence. Actually, extreme groups with political aspirations in congruence with religious precepts and derived from religious sources are *not* more likely to take up violence than others. Examining inter-organizational variations, it seems to be other ideological traits that are more important as explanatory factors for the decision to take up arms, such as the ideology of gender exclusion (Asal et al. 2014). Religious terrorism, including suicide terrorism, is driven to a large degree by a logic that is strategically, not necessarily religiously, based (Pape 2003). It should be stressed that the distinction between religious terrorism and other forms of terrorism could be problematized (Gunning and Jackson 2011).

Examining suicide terrorism, Henne (2012a) offers another set of empirical findings in regards to the issue of religion's influence on terrorism. According to his quantitative analysis, it is religious ideology that helps to explain the relative high fatality numbers of religious terrorism in relation to other forms of terrorism. Indeed, it appears that even when accounting for the possible intervening factors and alternative explanations such as socioeconomic factors or the demographic structure of the group, suicide attacks by groups that are religiously motivated are more violent than the attacks of groups with nationalist or leftist ideology. Another study by Henne (2012b) also points to the importance of religious ideology. Here, Henne (2012b)

examines the influence of different institutional religion-state relations in inter-state conflicts and finds that conflicts between a religious state (religion and state closely linked) and a secular state tend to be more severe than other interstate conflicts. Yet, it appears to be the severity of conflict that is influenced by ideological differences, not the frequency of conflicts. Indeed, this supports the argument presented below on the difficulty of ending religiously motivated conflicts.

Religious factors can impede peaceful conflict termination. Even if conflicts' underlying causes are not necessarily religious in nature, once the religious card has been played, it is difficult to reverse the trend. In other words, conflicts that are framed religiously are more difficult to end peacefully. Empirical studies show that contentious religious issues make conflicts less likely to be settled through negotiated settlements (Svensson 2007; Svensson 2012). Religious conflicts are more intense than non-religious conflicts, as has been shown in studies of both ethnic (Fox 2004a) and territorial (Pearce 2005) conflicts.

We are at this stage relatively certain that religion serves as an obstacle for peaceful conflict termination in those cases where it has entered into the political controversy of the parties. Scholars know significantly less *why* this is the case. There are several explanations for why religiously defined conflicts would be more difficult to resolve than other types of conflicts. Hassner (2009) suggests that *indivisibility* can be a key explanation. Religiously defined conflicts (particularly those occurring in sacred spaces) tend to lead to indivisibility as religious aspirations cannot be compromised with or even stepped down from demands anchored in a divine sphere. Toft (2006) points to the role of extended *time-horizons* when fighting for sacred causes, implying that religious militants may be ready to discount present-day costs against a longer expectation of time, which means that they will be ready to carry greater costs for their cause. Juergensmeyer (1993, p. 155), on the other hand, focuses on world-view and the "vocabulary of cosmic struggle." But there may be other factors that hinder religiously framed conflicts from

being resolved. For instance, in many religiously framed insurgencies (for example, Kashmir, Patani, Syria), there have been several rebel-groups fighting for (sometimes elusively defined) religious causes. To a certain extent, these can compete with each other, trying to pull resources from external donors and internal followers by portraying themselves as the most valid – and radical – spokesperson for the group. Radicalization, thus, can be the outcome of a process of inter-group competition in which different groups try to win the legitimacy over the other. The nature of the trans-national links that occur between religious identities (in contrast to national or ethnic identities) lends itself to internationalization of local struggles, in a way that brings in foreign fighters, capital, logistical support, or ideological networks. This kind of transnationalization of religiously defined armed conflicts can lie behind their intractability. Several armed conflicts including Islamist militant groups could be given as examples of this dynamic. Thus, it is not necessarily religious factors *per se* that explain why religious conflicts tend to escalate and why they are so difficult to settle peacefully.

How Religion Influences Peace

We have now surveyed the research findings related to the question of how religion impacts conflicts through increasing the risk for conflicts to start and escalate, and how religion hinders peaceful resolution. In many ways, this shows the destructive role of religion in many settings around the world. But the relation between religion and conflict would be asymmetrical if we did not pay attention to the more positive role that religion can also play. Two broad areas can be identified, which have also spurred the interests of scholars. Religion can increase the chance for nonviolent uprisings, and religious actors are often important in peacemaking processes, including in re-interpreting radical and militant religious messages into more peaceful ones. We will now discuss these two areas.

Religion → Nonviolent Revolutions

Religious factors can help to account for how groups mobilize against injustices, political repression, and autocratic regimes. It is important to discuss the role played by faith-communities in mobilizing for nonviolent opposition. Empirical cases in which religious factors have been influential in the emergence and outcome of nonviolent revolutions include: the role of the Churches in Poland and East Germany during the end of the Cold War; the role of the Catholic clergy in the 1996 Philippines People Power revolution; and the role of the Buddhist Sangha in the Saffron revolution of 2007 in Myanmar. Thus, religion can be a key factor in understanding how nonviolent uprisings may unfold. Religious actors have played crucial roles in the organization of nonviolent uprisings. Three causal pathways through which religion affects the chance for popular nonviolent uprising can be identified.

First, religious traditions commonly provide a normative basis that can be utilized for criticizing unjust practices or rulers. Protesters and activists can draw on these normative grounds when trying to create enough opposition against “the incumbent regime.” Religious institutions can help to legitimate causes and provide a basis for questioning the basic legitimacy of a regime. Thus, religious actors in many societies around the world have a high degree of moral power that can be utilized in times of societal crisis. If challengers can get the support of religious clergy and hierarchies, their cause may be enhanced.

Second, religion has an organizational feature that can be utilized for mobilization purposes. Religious organizations are commonly widespread and far-reaching. In societies where there are few civil society organizations beyond the control of a contested regime, the religious sector can provide an organizational basis for nonviolent struggles (Nepstad 2011). They reach out to the grass-roots in the society, and in many places exist where the state is not present. Although the types of organizations vary – from a strict hierarchy such as in the Catholic Church to more independent units that collaborate such as in the

Pentecostal movement or Muslim mosques – the fact that there are organizational structures creates a possibility for organization. During the Arab Spring in Syria, for instance, the Friday prayers provided a focal point that could help to organize the uprisings (Gelvin 2012, p. 112).

Third, religiously-based cultural practices can be used and transformed in a way that shapes the chances and forms of nonviolent organization. Historical cases have also illustrated how religious and cultural traits can be used in order to facilitate nonviolent resistance. For example, the case of *Ghaffar Khan* in Pakistan shows how honour cultures (such as the one found in the *Pashtun* context) can be cultivated for building a highly disciplined and effective nonviolent force in a patriarchal and traditional society (Johansen 1997).

Yet, not all religious groups choose to challenge regimes through nonviolent means. Some religious groups instead opt for armed struggle. It is important to understand what affects the strategic choice between armed or unarmed forms of political dissent for religious groups that seek to challenge the status quo. One important aspect is the political and ideological characteristics of the religious groups. For example, gender ideologies help to explain why some religious groups choose nonviolent tactics. More gender inclusive ideologies are associated with higher chance that religious groups will choose nonviolent rather than violent means of struggle and conflict (Asal et al. 2013).

The relationship between the state and religious spheres, as well as the content of the political theology, help to shape how nonviolent dissent against regimes unfolds. Yet, the empirical results points in different directions. On the one hand, in studies that examine variations between states, nonviolent uprisings for democratic purposes seem more likely to occur in situations where state and religion are kept separate, and there is a relative tolerant and benign (but still public, and not private) interpretation of the political theology (Toft et al. 2011). On the other hand, interdependence between a government and religious groups may have an opposite effect. Interdependence implies that there are

opportunities to utilize moral authority, draw upon connections, and use moral leverage in order to mobilize and be successful in challenging regimes through nonviolent uprising. In fact, examining more disaggregated data on religious groups worldwide, preferential treatment of the government vis-à-vis a religious group (government religious favoritism) seem to *increase* the likelihood that a religious group will take up non-violent means of dissent and protest (Butcher and Svensson 2014).

Religion → Peacemaking

Religion can also influence peacemaking processes. In fact, in many areas of armed conflict and societal tension around the world, it is religiously based actors who have been in the forefront of preventing violence, managing conflicts, and building peace. Religious actors can be motivated by their faith to engage in efforts to bring armed conflicts to peaceful ends. Religious networks can also provide particular entry-points into conflicts and provide access to key actors and individuals. Sometimes religious actors are motivated to act because armed conflicts occur within the realm of their dominations. Yet, religious peacemaking can be concerned with issues other than religion. For instance, many churches have taken an active stance against the international weapons trade that enables war and conflict to proliferate.

In terms of the functional ways in which religiously based organizations contribute to building peace, four main roles that religious organizations tend to adopt when acting as third parties and peacebuilders in conflictual societies can be identified. Religious organizations can act as (1) *advocates*, who try to get attention to and work for addressing the underlying structural causes and grievances of armed conflicts, political violence, and crises; (2) *intermediaries*, in which religious actors mediate, listen, and facilitate resolution processes, including bridging informational divides and clarifying misunderstanding that may arise between antagonists; (3) *observers*, by which religious actors increase the

transparency and verify conciliatory measure and implementation of joint agreements and deals; and finally (4) *educators*, through which religious actors act less by themselves directly, and rather try to empower local actor to have the knowledge and skills to be actively involved and engaged in peace processes (Sampson 2007).

Religion is a potentially powerful force for peacemaking as most people of the world identify with a religious faith tradition. Also, religious organizations have mobilization capabilities. Religious organizations can utilize their transnational character for peacemaking purposes, or their soft power to cultivate public attitudes of conciliation, understanding, and forgiveness. Lastly, religious organizations are field-based – they are present on the ground. Yet it should also be recognized that religious actors' involvement in some violence and armed conflicts may hinder their ability to play a peacemaking role (Reychler 1997). Religious peacemaking can work through different causal processes. Distinguishing between religious norms, identities, and organizations is a useful way for accounting for how religion can contribute to more peaceful societies. Religious peacemaking entails a process of challenging existing conflict-inducing norms and transforming these into ones based on tolerance and nonviolence, influencing faith identities, and by working in and through religiously based organizations (Harpviken and Røislien 2008).

Through which causal paths are religious mediators and peace-builders most able to contribute to successful peacebuilding processes? Faith-based actors may be particularly effective go-betweens since they have high degree of legitimacy and leverage – two of the basic aspects in conflict resolution processes (Bercovitch and Kadayifci-Orellana 2009). The legitimacy of faith-based mediators is derived primarily from their moral, cultural, and spiritual basis within a given religious context. As insiders they have often gained a high local respect and a reputation of integrity that may increase their legitimacy as faith-based peacebrokers. They also possess certain forms, and sometimes particularly strong, influence over the antagonists in conflict. This

type of leverage can be different than the leverage secular peacemakers possess. Religious leaders and other faith-based peacemakers have moral and spiritual leverage and through their institutional and spiritual realm, they can provide an important influence on their respective communities. Thus, there are certain spiritually-based values that can provide a religious anchoring of peacemaking processes, in a way that helps them to become more locally grounded, durable, and resilient in face of spoiler attacks and provocations. These include such religious norms as sanctity of life, certain spiritual practices of restraint, discipline, and self-denial (including fasts, interior mediation, and prayers). A core religious value is compassion, ultimately derived (at least as far as the monotheistic traditions are concerned) from God's empathy with humanity. These religious values can be harnessed for the cause of conflict resolution (Gopin 2000).

Treating religion as a tool for normatively valuable causes such as peace or justice, however, can also run the risk of "instrumentalizing" religion (Powers 2010). Followers of faith-traditions believe and practice their religion because of the inherent religious values they share in their traditions, because of the meaning-bearing frameworks of religion that are fruitful for them as way to interpret their lives and fates, or because of their own or others' experiences with a divine sphere. Religion, for a follower of a faith tradition, cannot be reduced to a motivation (or organisational basis) for a political cause, even if such a cause is of the highest normative value, such as peace or justice. When such a reduction does occur, it may risk affecting the authenticity of the religious experience and framework. Paradoxically, then, treating religion as a tool for peace may make religion less effective in being such an instrument (Powers 2010). By contrast, through acknowledging and building on an authentic religious experience, religion can come to play a useful role in strategic peacebuilding. It can, for instance, counter extremist interpretations of religious precepts or provide underlying motivations and organizational resources for durable and patient peacemaking processes.

Faith-based diplomacy can be broader than a diplomatic practice that only relies on a secular basis (Johnston and Cox 2003). The main difference in comparison to secular diplomacy is that faith-based diplomacy appreciates and relies on spiritual resources and spiritual authority. With resources and authority grounded in the religious sphere, faith-based diplomacy can work through other processes and reach a deeper level of commitment with parties in conflicts and crisis. In particular, it entails a broader and more holistic approach that seeks to transcend the present interactions between states and between non-state actors, in a way that goes beyond what secular diplomacy can do. A diplomatic practice rooted in or informed by religious knowledge may also benefit from another appreciation of the time-factor in relationship-building processes. As faith-traditions have longer time horizons than secular diplomacy, they may foster greater perseverance. We have seen above that the time factor may be one reason why religious conflicts tend to be so intractable. With longer time horizons, antagonists may discount the costs of the present against a wider horizon into the future (and a deeper and longer appreciation of the historical trajectory). This would affect negatively the possibilities for peaceful settlements and termination of conflicts. Here the logic of the religious dimensions can help to explain particular strength in religious peacemaking. Faith-based diplomats may persevere in their peacemaking efforts, even when others abandon what is seen as ineffective processes that do not yield any immediate results.

One prominent form of faith-based diplomacy is faith-based mediation. Faith-based mediation occurs in all religious traditions. Empirically, civil society initiatives seem to be most prevalent in the Christian traditions, whereas inter-governmental agencies such as the Organization for Islamic Conferences (OIC) have dominated the peacemaking activities of the Muslim world (Johnstone and Svensson 2013). Zooming in on the Muslim peacemaking practice, two important basic facets of the Islamic tradition have been identified that can be harnessed for the sake of conflict resolution and the building of peace: the

emphasis within the Islamic tradition on social justice, and the notion of the community (*Ummah*). Anchoring the practice of conflict resolution in a religiously informed framework may help to create better conditions for peaceful transformations of conflictual group relationships (Abu-Nimer 2003).

What explains whether religious actors become active in processes of transforming conflicts, building peace, and preventing violence, hatred, extremism, and intolerance? Important factors have to do with the social and religious context, in general, and the institutional and cultural basis for religious organisations, communities, and leaders, in particular. One especially important role in this regard is the knowledge and competence of religious traditions (Appleby 2001). Individuals and societies with less religious knowledge are more likely to be misled and misdirected in their religious interpretations, towards more malign and violence-inducing religious interpretations. Thus, the degree of religious illiterate individuals among a population can make such a society more or less likely to be ripe for negative influences of extreme actors. The same dynamic could be said, of course, of religious peace-messages: they could also be manipulated and influenced by religious elites and the ability to do so would at least partly be a function of the a-priori depth of religious knowledge of the population. Yet, in general, interpretations of religious message conducive of peacemaking and peacebuilding require a deeper religious interpretation that often goes beyond the superficial literal interpretations in the Holy Scriptures of the religious traditions (that invariably consist of elements that glorify, sanctify, or legitimize violence, “othering”, or intolerance). Thus, a deeper religious knowledge can provide a firmer anchoring of religious tolerance and lay the basis for active roles of religious actors and organizations in peacebuilding processes. Hence, religious knowledge and beliefs can serve as an impetus towards more peaceful developments. There is some evidence pointing that religious piety can be seen as a factor contributing to more tolerant interpretation of religious traditions. In fact, whereas Muluk et al. (2013) find

that support of religious violence is related positively to support for Islamic laws, they also find that it is *negatively* related to the levels religious practice. Thus, more active religious practise is associated with less support for religious violence.

Two important instruments of religious peacebuilding are local institutions that can act to manage tensions locally, as well as the instrument of inter-faith dialogue. The role of institutions in cross-cutting religious or ethnic lines is an important predictor in decreasing the risk of communal violence (Varshney 2002). Local religious institutions can decrease the risk for communal violence, empirical evidence from Indonesia suggests. Examining the density of local religious institutions and showing that mass fighting between communal groups is less likely to occur where these types of institutions exist, research shows that there are powerful institutional dimensions of religion that can mitigate against violence. Importantly, religious institutions may mitigate conflicts in general, but not those in which religious actors are participating: “the peace impact of religious institutions possibly declines once a manifest interreligious conflict begins” (De Juan et al. 2015, p. 12).

Another, also very important form of religious peacemaking is inter-religious dialogues (Smock 2006). These have been utilized to bridge societal cleavages across religious fault-lines. Interfaith dialogue is an essential part of religious peacemaking, particularly in the context of group-based conflicts in which different religious identities seem to be clashing with each other. When contentious interfaith relationships complicate conflicts and hinder clear communication across the lines of the antagonists, interfaith dialogue can provide a possibility to de-escalate sectarian tensions, clarify misunderstanding, and break stereotypes. Dialogue with actors and individuals from different religious tradition may serve to defuse tensions, and could be especially applicable to situations where religion has been drawn into the conflict dynamics and religious issues have thereby become contentious.

The field of religious peacemaking has developed a set of possible causal mechanisms

identifying how religion can influence the chance for peace. Yet, so far, the relationship between religious peacemaking efforts and their outcomes have not been studied systematically. Thus, we lack empirical studies that detail the causal pathway from religious peacemaking to some type of peaceful outcome, showing how exactly religious dimensions influenced the decision of the antagonists to transform their conflict from a violent to a less violent one. Likewise, we lack systematic evidence for correlations between religious peacemaking and peacemaking “success” (which of course can be defined in a multiple of ways). Studies that have been conducted (mostly impact assessments of various programmes) have hitherto not taken into account other possible explanatory factors, including context and actions of other peacemaking processes. They have also not been able to settle the problem of selection effects: surveying those that participate in a religious peacemaking program, or inter-faith dialogue, cannot tell us whether the program by itself affected the recipients, or whether it is some type of individuals that are selected, or self-selected, into these types of religious peacemaking programmes.

One study of how dialogue across religious and ethnic lines did affect their relationship in terms of attitudes and behaviour, showed some interesting and surprising results. Using randomized intervention methodologies, Svensson and Brounéus (2013) have shown that dialogue programmes reduce mistrust between ethnic groups, but also increase their sense of grievances (the perception that their group being discriminated against), as well as their identification with their own ethnic group. Thus, these programmes both decrease mistrust but also simultaneously can help to strengthen ethnic identities. This gives ground for treating dialogue as potentially fruitful, but also caution against its application, as such programmes may actually deepen identity-cleavages. Thus, any clear-cut empirical evidence that substantiates an overall positive effect of religious peacemaking, inter-faith dialogue, and faith-based peacebuilding, is still lacking.

Lastly, an important power of religious actors lies in their ability to re-frame existing violence-

legitimizing messages and provide religious counter-interpretations that can challenge militants’ rhetoric. Religious actors, and in particular leaders, can help to transform religious messages from one of war to one of peace. How religious leaders can re-interpret religious messages so that it forms support for peace and not war has not been sufficiently studied. The role of leadership is ambivalent, a “double-edged sword” (Bock 2001), so to speak. The framing of religious ideologies in conflicts is an actor-oriented explanation for the dynamic of religious violence. Faith-based actors, under particular conditions, can re-formulate a militant religious ideology to arrive at an interpretation that is characterized by tolerance, compassion, and justice. This is what Hasenclever and Rittberger (2000) describe as the “dialogue strategy,” and this entails a confrontation with militant and violent-inducing rhetoric, behavior, and structures, and a counter-challenge toward the legitimacy that is sought from religious sources. In a similar line, empirical research has identified how religious leaders of militant groups, under pressure from regimes and after military failures, have been able to re-adjust and de-radicalize the aspirations and ideological motivations underlying religiously defined armed groups (Ashour 2009).

Concluding Discussion and Future Directions

The field of International Relations, and peace and conflict research in general, have historically been permeated by a secular bias, and have thereby tended to neglect and down-play religious factors. Religion, essentially, is a social and not merely private phenomenon, something that is commonly misunderstood in the Western or secular context. A deeper comprehension of religious social praxis can help to create a better basis for religious and cultural pluralism (Thomas 2003). Over the last decade, the relative neglect of religion has been replaced by an on-going and thriving research endeavor in which research tries to tease out the more exact causal pathways through which religion influences the behavior of

state and non-state actors, in a way that influences the risk of war and chance for peace. To see the breadth and scope of research on religion in war and peace, we need to have a broad appreciation of how research on religion has examined international relations, how research has been able to identify the religious factors that influence the war and peace, and how research has developed and utilized various approaches and methods in studying these complex but intriguing questions (see Hassner and Svensson Hassner and Svensson (2016) for an overview of this field).

The analysis presented here on religious dimensions of war and peace is still in its infancy. What this overview has tried to make clear is that many interesting and revealing research insights are gained when religious factors are introduced to explain the dynamics (both onset and escalation) of armed conflicts, as well as dynamics of peace. Although a significant and important scholarly sub-field has grown over the last decades and identified the basic tenants of religious dimensions of war, as well as religious peacebuilding, many central questions remains unanswered. Let me end this chapter by pointing out three of the most urgent, still unanswered, research questions.

First, research on religion and war has been relatively isolated from research on religion and peace. For example, as we have seen in this chapter, religious factors exist behind peace and war dynamics, although they should not be deemed to be decisive and overplayed. Explanations relating to religious demography illustrate how religion influences conflict dynamics. These include civilizational divides, religious diversity, religious polarization, cross-cuttingness, and whether any particular religious traditions are more or less likely to be exploited as basis for political violence. Yet, relatively few of these explanatory factors have been integrated into the analysis of religion and peace. And the same could be said in the opposite direction: insights about religious organization, sacralisation and de-sacralisation, religious actors and mobilization, the role of dialogue, and so on are all factors that have been part of the debate on religion and

peace, but are largely absent (or at least have played a relatively minor role) in the debate on religion and war. Yet, obviously, the question of war and peace are intimately related. We cannot understand how to create peace unless we know why wars start in the first place, and without knowing the difficulties of reaching peace, we cannot understand why antagonists start and continue conflict. Thus, if we zoom out and examine the broader scholarly debate, there is a clear need to integrate studies on war and peace, as driven (partly) by religious factors. This is an avenue for future research which would be particularly fruitful.

Second, we know that religious issues can be drawn into a conflict that originally, or at its core, is more material or mundane. Explicit religious grievances expressed by rebels or governments may hide political, economic, or private interests. Religious ideologies may come in as instruments to challenge or maintain power. Moreover, failures of earlier revolutionary ideologies to produce desired results, or the fact that these ideologies fall out of favor because their representatives show themselves to be inept or corrupt, may lay the ground for religious actors to enter into the conflict scene. Yet, once a conflict has been sacralized, its dynamics shift in nature and evolution. Previous research has identified some of the trajectories of how conflicts, even if they were originally about other goals and ambitions, become religiously framed and defined. How religion enters – sacralization – and how it may diminish in significance and relevance in a conflict – desacralization – are processes that have not fully been explained. We currently do not know how they unfold and, even more importantly, why. In Basedau and de Juan's (2008, p. 5) words, "the question remains as to which specific characteristics of the 'religious landscape' and surrounding conditions in fact influence religion to either stimulate conflict or contribute to peace."

Third, as the last years have so vividly illustrated, religiously defined conflicts involving rebel-groups with self-proclaimed Islamist-Salafist ideological aspirations are a partly new and pressing issue. There have been considerable intellectual efforts put into trying to understand

why these types of conflicts erupt, and how they can be countered from a military and strategic perspective. Yet, how to manage or resolve conflicts where religion – at least on the surface – plays a fundamental role in general, and the jihadist armed conflicts in particular, remains an intellectual challenge for the field. Could there be conflict resolution processes in jihadist armed conflicts? Are jihadists even ready to sit down at the negotiation table? For some of the conflicts, such as ISIS in Syria and Iraq, the most convincing answer would be negative; for others, such as the Philippines and Tajikistan, the Islamists were able to come around to support a political settlement. To identify the key scope conditions under which the general conflict resolution theories are applicable to the partly new empirical landscape of jihadist armed conflicts, remains a task for the research community interested in understanding the role of religion in peace and conflict.

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Abstract

Social control efforts involving religion often involve applications of law and of legal processes. Herein the theories of two prominent sociologists of law, Donald Black and William Chambliss, are applied to development of laws regulating religion and the application of laws against new religions. The ways in which both traditional and minority faiths such as New Religious Movements (NRMs) can themselves sometimes make use of the law, and in the case of dominant religions, even help construct the law also are examined. The use of the pseudo-scientific concept of “brainwashing” as a major tool for social control of new religions is examined, as is the use of laws dealing with children that supplanted brainwashing claims in social control once second generations developed within NRMs. The chapter closes with a discussion of future directions for research concerning how religions function within modern societies characterized by the “judicialization of politics.”

Social control efforts, including those directed toward religion and religious groups, do not always involve applications of law. Social control can be exerted in many ways, from the raising of an eyebrow to the murder of someone in a self-help “moralistic killing” to right some perceived wrong that has been visited on a person, their family, or clan (Black 1999). Building on the earlier work of Durkheim and Weber even as he

criticized them, Donald Black (1976, 1999) offers four major types of social control: penal, compensatory, therapeutic, and conciliatory. The end goal of these types of social control are, respectively: punishment, restitution, treatment, and dispute resolution. These types of social control, all of which may involve applications of formal law, will be used herein to characterize various approaches to exerting social control over religion and religious groups.

In many modern societies law has become a social control methodology of choice, often serving to undergird other efforts at social control, even if those other, less formal, methods of social

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control are more ubiquitous (Black 1999; Richardson 2001). Those in positions of power can get laws passed to implement their negative evaluation of participants in groups defined as deviant, including religious groups. The process of passage of specific and targeted laws is worth examining using the dialectical theoretical approach of William Chambliss (1993; Chambliss and Zatz 1993). Also, laws already on the books can be applied in innovative ways toward unpopular groups. The process of developing new laws or applying extant laws in social control efforts directed toward religious groups is of great interest to both scholars and policy makers.

There can be considerable testing of boundaries as societal authorities seek to exert social control over religion and religious groups, including ones defined as deviant, as are some New Religious Movements (NRMs). Such experimentation reveals what can and cannot be done with the approval of those whose opinions matter within or external to a given society. Characterizing the various approaches to legal social control using the theorizing of Black (1999) will assist in understanding important differences in how social control operates with respect to religion.

Legal Social Control and Traditional Religions

Traditional religious groups must operate within the confines of the legal structure of the societies within which they operate, abiding by the constitutional provisions and statutory laws of those societies. However, in many modern societies, some religious groups enjoy a position of relative privilege, and the usual legal structures dealing with religious groups may not be applied to dominant religious organizations in the way they are used with less popular religions (see chapters in Richardson 2004a and Lucas and Robbins 2004, and Fox's Chap. 22 on "Comparative Politics" in this *Handbook*). Indeed, often dominant churches can influence the very structure of the legal system in ways benefit themselves (Beckford and Richardson 2007). For example, in many

European countries, including former Soviet-dominated ones, certain religions are accorded a privileged legal status in the constitution and laws of the country. The Catholic Church has a privileged status in a number of European countries, and also in Latin and South American countries, with special treaties or concordats established with governments. The Russian Orthodox Church has special legal status in Russia (reaffirmed in recent years since the fall of communism), as does the Greek Orthodox Church in Greece, and the Lutheran Church in Germany, where it shares special legal status with the Catholic Church. In the United Kingdom, the Church of England is defined as the dominant church by law, even to the extent of a legal requirement that the presiding king or queen must be a member (Beckford 2002). Even in China, one of the last bastions of communism, certain religious groups are designated as officially acceptable, as long as they accede to the dominance of the Communist Party and the Chinese government (Edelman and Richardson 2003; Yang 2006).

The United States, which claims equality of all religious groups as part of its basic values, nonetheless grants special privileges to the Catholic Church as well, through the operation of its tax laws, and in other ways. For example, the Catholic Church retains a blanket exemption from filing individual annual tax reporting documents for all its many convents, monasteries, and other communally oriented operations, whereas other religious groups, especially new ones, must prove their right to exempt status annually, a sometimes very difficult task (Emory and Zelenak 1982). In certain regions of the United States, other denominations occupy a relatively privileged status, including the Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) in Utah and Southern Baptists in the South. Within the confines of federal and state laws and constitutional provisions, these religious groups operate as a part of the establishment, with attendant privileges, not simply as ordinary organizations subject to various laws.

The differential treatment of religious groups within modern societies offers a potentially fruitful application of concepts from Black's theories

to the area of religion, something that has seldom been done. Black (1999) makes much of the status of parties involved in legal actions. His predictions of the “behavior of law” is that law virtually always operates in favor of those of higher status, and is used more frequently by those of higher status, especially in their effort to exert social control over groups and individuals of lower status. Indeed, he points out that those individuals and institutions of higher status in a society can engage in self-serving construction of legal systems, which they can then use to maintain their position of social dominance against pressures from those of lesser status. Chambliss’s (1964) classic study of the derivation of vagrancy laws is an excellent example of the effects of political power and status, as he points out that labor shortages brought on by the Black Plague led to the first laws being passed in what is now England, forcing people to work whether they needed to or not. The infamous “enticement statutes” passed in the South after the collapse of Reconstruction made it illegal to offer a job to a former slave at a higher wage, a legal stricture obviously designed to maintain former slaves as agricultural workers on plantations (Cohen 1976; Roback 1984).

Important historical examples of the operation of status in constructing legal systems also can be found in the area of religion. The Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), although initially in favor of religious freedom while still under the yoke of communism, shifted its position rapidly after communism fell. The ROC took a leadership role in getting the liberal laws concerning religion that were established in the early 1990s over-turned in favor of laws that implicitly and explicitly gave a privileged status to the ROC. The ROC worked openly with conservative politicians (most were former communist officials) to accomplish this end, and used relatively powerless minority faiths as pawns in the effort to assert itself as the dominant faith in Russia (Shterin and Richardson 2000, 2002).

Another variable of import in Black’s scheme is personal and cultural intimacy, which refer to the degree to which people share each other’s values and participate in each other’s lives. If people

share basic values, or if they know each other personally, then they are able to understand and assist each other in promoting shared values, even if unconsciously. This variable operates within legal systems when those in decision making positions are “intimate with” those about whom decisions are to be made. An example would be a judge who is a member of the dominant religion in a society, hearing a case involving that religious organization. Such occurred in a major legal case in Russia in 1996 when a functionary of the ROC was being sued for libel by members of several small and controversial newer religious groups. That case, described in Shterin and Richardson (2002; both were expert witnesses in the trial), clearly showed a bias in favor of the ROC in how the case was handled, as well as in the outcome.

The intimacy variable as it operates within the legal system does not, of course, always guarantee that the dominant church will win in legal battles. But it does mean that the decision maker, if he or she shares the values espoused by the dominant church, will at least understand what representatives of that religious organization are saying. And the decision maker may agree with, and be sympathetic to, the perspective being promoted by the dominant church’s representatives. Thus, the odds of the traditionally dominant church being dealt with harshly are lower than would be the case if smaller, controversial, and unfamiliar religious groups were involved (see Wybraniec and Finke 2004).

Another way to state this conclusion is that, in situations involving dominant traditional religious groups, because of the operation of status and intimacy variables, there will be a tendency for social control to operate in a less penal or punitive manner toward such groups. Instead, there will be more efforts to resolve disputes with conciliatory and therapeutic processes. In cases in which major religious organizations have been involved in wrongdoing, or the organization sanctioned illegal activities, then the emphasis may well be on restitution as opposed to more punitive forms of punishment. It is informative to test this notion by examining the recent major problem with child sex abuse in the Catholic

Church using the types of social control developed in Black's theorizing. This problematic area demonstrates attempts, at least early on, to deal with the scandal less punitively and more therapeutically. Only later, when the full extent of the problem became known, and considerable media attention was focused on the issue, were there any serious moves toward more punitively oriented legal solutions to the problem, and toward significant restitution. Meanwhile a number of smaller and less popular religious groups experienced raids and having children taken away by state agents on sometimes very minimal claims of child abuse (Richardson 1999; Wright and Richardson 2011; Wright and Palmer 2015).

When a smaller and controversial group does successfully initiate a legal action, or succeed in defending itself against an action brought by parties attempting to exert social control through the legal system, such episodes demand explanation. Such was the case in a major court battle that took place in Hungary in the early 1990s, when the Hare Krishna were successful in a libel action against a major figure in the dominant Protestant church there (Richardson 1995a, b). Here again Black's theorizing is helpful, as the concept of "third-party partisanship" can be applied (Black and Baumgartner 1999). The Krishna group was supported by a number of more liberal elements in Hungarian society, which lent support for the Court's ruling, which was upheld on appeal. The third-party partisanship concept calls attention to the fact that people in positions of power sometimes decide, for various reasons, to side with a lower status and "non-intimate" party in its legal battles. This intriguing circumstance will be developed more in the section that follows on minority religions and social control.

Legal Social Control of Newer and Smaller Religious Groups¹

New Religious Movements (NRMs), often pejoratively referred to as "cults" or "sects" (Richardson 1993a), must also operate within the

confines of a given society's legal structure. However, those legal structures may impinge much more pervasively on smaller, less powerful and popular religious groups than they do on dominant religious groups (Richardson and Bellanger 2014). NRMs and other minority faiths, which by definition are less powerful and influential, test the legal and normative boundaries of social control in their societies. NRMs have been problematic for many since they came to public attention several decades ago in the United States and elsewhere. Other not so new minority faiths also may operate on the margins of acceptable behavior in a society. While informal efforts at social control, especially of the "self-help" variety (Black 1999), have been frequently used toward participants in such groups, legal and judicial solutions often have been used as well, and have sometimes been supportive of self-help remedies.

Such efforts at control of NRMs have been promoted especially by participants in what sociologists call the Anti-Cult Movement (ACM) (Shupe and Bromley 1980, 1994). This counter movement started in the United States in the early 1970s, and has since spread around the world. It has increased its purview to include, in Europe and elsewhere, some groups that in the United States are considered part of the religious landscape (e.g. Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses). The ACM is made up mainly of disaffected former members, parents of participants, and leaders of a few traditional religious groups. More recent ACM groups have mimicked the activities of earlier groups critical of more traditional minority faiths and also the anti-Catholic movement in early American history (Miller 1983; Corrigan and Neal 2010). As indicated, the ACM has become international in scope, as American based ACM organizations have joined forces with international ACM groups, and has expanded to include campaigns against a number of minority religions (Shupe and Bromley 1994; Shterin and Richardson 2000; Barker 1989; Wright and Palmer 2015). Some political leaders have been quick to join the social control effort being led by ACM groups, even if for reasons of self-interest (see chapters in Richardson 2004a). Key societal legitimators such as journalists and major news media also contributed. They were

¹ Parts of this section are an enlarged version of Richardson (2001).

“doing their jobs” as media representatives (Beckford 1994), but sometimes with obvious biases that contributed to the moral panic that developed concerning “cults and sects” (Van Driel and Richardson 1988; Richardson and Introvigne 2007). Sometimes political, legal, and judicial officials at every level combine efforts, often supported by the media, to exert control over NRMs. See, for example, analysis of the situation in Oregon with social control efforts directed toward the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh’s group which involved the collusion of federal and state legal authorities as well as other institutions such as mass media (Richardson 2004b).

Thus it is clear that the law can be a major instrument of social control toward newer and minority religious groups (Richardson and Bellanger 2014). Courts function normatively, and in so doing promote societal values that may be quite unsympathetic toward minority religions. Courts, as well as other parts of the institutional social control apparatus in societies, can exercise considerable discrimination as they deal with unpopular religious groups (Richardson 2000). Such an approach often disadvantages minority faiths within the legal arena, as is well illustrated in many societies including the United States, Russia, Japan, and France (see chapters in Richardson 2004a, and Richardson 1995a, b).

For example, in Japan hundreds of members of the Unification Church and the Jehovah’s Witnesses have been kidnapped and “deprogrammed,” often with the assistance of Protestant ministers. These deprogrammings have even led to Japan being criticized by some of the annual reports issued by the U.S. State Department on the status of religious freedom around the world (U.S. State Department 2010). Efforts have been made over the years to seek legal redress for these deprogrammings, but law enforcement officials and the legal system have not been willing to respond to such actions, and often have defined them as “family matters.” Only in 2015 was a law suit finally won against parents and deprogrammers brought by a Unification Church member who was incarcerated for 14 years in an effort to make him leave the Unification Church (HRWF 2015). Winning this law suit was the culmination

of years of pressure being brought to bear through negative world-wide publicity about the deprogrammings that were occurring in Japan. The situation well-illustrates the importance of the involvement of sympathetic and influential third parties in such disputes.

In France efforts were made by authorities to force the dissolution of several minority faiths using creative applications of tax laws. A number of minority faiths in France were forced by the government to reveal financial information to the tax authorities, including names of those giving funds and amounts given. This information was then used to justify huge tax bills on the grounds that the contributions were gifts and therefore fell under the auspices of gift tax laws that required a 60% tax rate. Bills based on this logic were sent to several groups, including the Jehovah’s Witnesses (which was charged over \$50 million), Scientology, an Evangelical Christian group, and the Aumist group at Mandarom in southeastern France. All these groups except Scientology attempted to seek redress in French courts, but were completely rebuffed. After being rebuffed in French courts the three groups submitted their cases to the European Court of Human Rights, and after years of waiting, finally received positive rulings that France had violated Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees religious freedom (Richardson and Lee 2014; Lykes and Richardson 2014; Richardson 2015b).

Legal sanctions against unpopular minority faiths tend to be more punitive in nature, and there is usually less opportunity to resolve differences through conciliation or mediation, demonstrating the application of Black’s theorizing to this area of study. Examples of this more penal approach include the French cases just mentioned, the tax evasion trial of Reverend Sun Myung Moon in the United States (Richardson 1992; Sherwood 1991; Richardson 1984), the aforementioned situation with the Rajneesh group in Oregon (Carter 1990; Richardson 2004b), as well as criminal charges being brought against Christian Science parents who treated their children’s illnesses unsuccessfully with Spiritual Healing (Richardson and DeWitt 1992).

Restitution is also often sought against minority faiths, especially in the United States with its civil legal system designed to allow plaintiffs more access to the courts to seek damages for supposed grievances than is the case in many countries. Some quite large verdicts have been rendered against some NRMs, although they are usual overturned on appeal, or settled for lesser amounts (Anthony and Robbins 1992, 1995).

The manner in which preexisting laws have been used against NRMs and other minority religious groups in various societies is of interest, as are creative methods whereby legal procedures have been augmented during efforts to exert social control over such religious groups, and new laws are approved (Chambliss 1993). Also notable are variations in the application of law to smaller religious groups in different countries and regions of the world. Some of these major variations on the theme of law as an instrument of social control toward minority faiths will be examined below, as will efforts by these groups to make use of the law to challenge their detractors (see Richardson 1998b).

However, as noted above, sometimes minority faiths do win major legal battles. They manage to attract assistance from others who help level the legal playing field, and they take advantage of an historical context that allows the group to defend itself using the legal arena. Scientology has managed to win major battles in a number of countries, and indeed their cases have become precedential for other nations dealing with legal definitions of religion. This has occurred in the U.S., Australia, Italy, and England (Richardson 2009, 2015b), and Scientology also has won major battles against Russia in the European Court of Human Rights (Lykes and Richardson 2014). The Jehovah's Witnesses have won dozens of legal battles in the United States, Canada, and before the European Court of Human Rights (Richardson 2015a), and has thereby helped establish crucial rights to freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech, as well as the right to exist and function in some countries formerly dominated by the Soviet Union. Another example of minority religious groups using the law effectively in their defense

occurred with the "sacred tea" cases involving Brazilian-derived small groups in New Mexico and Oregon successfully suing the Federal Drug Administration over confiscation of their sacred drink, ayahuasca, which contained a Schedule I drug (Richardson and Shoemaker 2014).

These cases illustrate the concept of third-party partisanship (Black and Baumgartner 1999) that seems quite applicable to many of these legal victories by minority faiths and NRMs. Individuals, groups, and organizations sometimes weigh in on behalf of minority faiths caught up in legal battles. However, it may also be the case that the concept could sometimes be applied to the courts themselves, as they make use of cases brought by minority religions to assert and expand their authority and promote values of the courts themselves (Richardson 2015b).

Early Efforts to Control NRMs

NRMs first came to the attention of the general public and policy makers in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but were not viewed initially as a social problem. Indeed, there was an initial positive reaction to some of the groups, which were credited with getting young people off drugs, off the streets, and out of political movements of the time (anti-Vietnam War, Civil Rights, etc.). However, it quickly became clear that some NRMs were "high demand" religions seeking to affect major changes in the lives of participants. Young, relatively affluent members of society were dropping out of school to become missionaries, or were fund-raising on the streets of America and even in other countries. Parents of recruits sometimes sought help from government officials, but encountered difficulties because of protections afforded religious groups by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees religious freedom. This situation sometimes led to self-help solutions, such as "deprogramming" and the use of the legal system to gain the physical control necessary for deprogramming to occur (Shupe and Bromley 1980; Anthony and Robbins 1992). Other countries without First Amendment protections sometimes

adopted a more paternalistic approach toward NRM participants (e.g., Germany and France), leading to fewer “self-help” efforts toward NRMs. Instead, the state itself sometimes took official paternalistic actions designed to discourage participation (Beckford 1985; Richardson and van Driel 1994).

Initially the legal system in the United States was used to seek temporary guardianships or “conservatorships” so that parents could gain physical control of their children, with the assistance of law enforcement (Bromley 1983; LeMoult 1983). Such legal devices gave official sanction to attempts to “deprogram” NRM participants (see Richardson 1992 for one telling example involving a Hare Krishna participant). Conservatorship laws have historically had as their main focus allowing adult children to assume legal responsibility for elderly parents no longer able to properly care for themselves. However, conservatorship laws were sometimes used successfully against participants in NRMs in the mid-1970s. Some courts conveniently overlooked the fact that the focus of such applications was on young people, usually of a legal age, who had joined a religious group of which their parents did not approve.

Conservatorship laws being used in NRM situations were dealt a severe blow in the United States in 1977 in *Katz v. Superior Court* (73 Cal. App. 3d 952). The California Supreme Court overruled a lower court decision that had allowed the parents of some Unification Church members the right to deprogram their children. This case became persuasive precedent in other legal jurisdictions around the country, causing the use of conservatorship laws for purposes of deprogramming to lessen considerably. Efforts were made in a number of American states to expand conservatorship laws to incorporate young adults who had joined religious groups, but none succeeded, although some efforts came close to being fully approved (Flinn 1987; Guttman 1985). Other “consumer protection” oriented efforts to exert control over NRMs legislatively also failed to gain traction (Richardson 1986).

“Brainwashing” Claims Against NRMs

The ideology of brainwashing originated during the Korean War in the 1950s and was developed during the decades-long battle against communism, but was subsequently transformed for application against NRMs (Richardson and Kilbourne 1983; Fort 1985; James 1986; Anthony 1990, 1999). Claims that participants in NRMs had been “brainwashed” surfaced in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the United States as a part of efforts to exert social control over NRMs (Richardson and Kilbourne 1983; James 1986; Barker 1984). These ideas were used to promote many legislative efforts to exert control over NRMs, as documented by Flinn (1987). These legislative efforts and legal claims were limited by First Amendment concerns in America, and ultimately failed in conservatorship cases (LeMoult 1983; Bromley 1983), but were effective for a number of years in civil actions for money damages against NRM groups by former members and their parents (Anthony 1990; Richardson 1991, 2012). Brainwashing cases were brought in civil courts, seeking damages for alleged harms to former members that had been done by a religious group and its leaders. Such cases have been popular “self-help” (Black 1999) remedies in the United States particularly because the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution precludes most overt and direct action by the government against religious groups that are not violating laws. These actions were promoted for a time by organizations in the Anti-Cult Movement, as a way to force NRMs to limit recruiting, or even stop operating if civil damages that might be awarded would bankrupt the groups. Defending against these legal attacks based on pseudo-scientific brainwashing ideas absorbed resources of the groups which were sued, and contributed to their “deformation” into different types of organizations with modified goals, the foremost of which was survival (Richardson 1985).

“Brainwashing” claims in these civil actions in the United States were used to support several traditional tort claims, such as intentional infliction of emotional distress, fraud, and deception. These traditional torts would be claimed in the court filings, but then the plaintiff’s argument would discuss, if allowed, “brainwashing” and “mind control,” conflating the popular pseudo-scientific terms with ordinary tort claims (Richardson 1993c; Ginsburg and Richardson 1998; Anthony 1990, 1999). Trial judges allowed such claims for several years, and juries were prone to accept the claims as valid, as concerns about the new groups were acted on by judges and juries acting in a normative fashion (DeWitt et al. 1996; Pfeifer 1999). Juries in so-called “cult brainwashing” cases often would find liability and award large damages. For example, one famous case in California against the Hare Krishna brought by the parents of a former member, Robin George, resulted in an initial award of \$33 million to the plaintiffs (subsequently reduced by the judge to \$9.7 million; see Richardson 1991). This large amount, when appealed to the United States Supreme Court, resulted in the organization having to put up a bond that, if the case was lost, would have resulted in the loss of all the Krishna property in California and other areas. This would have severely hampered the organization, if not put it completely out of business. The case was eventually settled for an undisclosed amount, but it demonstrated the vulnerability of minority faiths to such self-help legal actions by detractors.

Thus the inherent discretion of courts and juries usually was acted out in ways favoring those who would attack NRMs using the legal system, a development illustrating again the value of Black’s theorizing in this area of legal conflict. Eventually, however, such brainwashing-based legal claims also were disallowed, this time by decisions in federal courts which determined that “brainwashing” was not a scientifically based concept, but was instead something of an ideological weapon to use against unpopular groups (Flinn 1987; Anthony 1990; Richardson 2014).

The major decision that led to the demise of brainwashing based cases was *Fishman v. United*

States (1990, N.D. California), a criminal case involving a former Scientology member who was charged with mail fraud. Fishman claimed a type of insanity defense, saying that he was brainwashed by Scientology which led to his committing criminal acts. After much effort to discredit the brainwashing defense, particularly by psychologist and scholar Dick Anthony who consulted in the case, Fishman’s defense was not allowed on the grounds that such explanations were not generally accepted within relevant scientific disciplines. A civil case in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit had also seen such theories disallowed two years earlier. *Kropinski v. World Plan Executive Council* involved a suit by a former member of Transcendental Meditation and that decision was upheld on appeal. Another decision in the D.C. Circuit Court, *Green and Ryan v. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi et al.* (U.S. D.C. No 87-0015 and 0016 [1991]), also rejected brainwashing claims. Thus, brainwashing based legal actions became much less prevalent in the United States after these decisions disallowed the testimony of some key proponents of brainwashing theories (Richardson 2014).

Brainwashing based legal theories were more successful as a defense in cases where those who were kidnapped for purposes of deprogramming later sued their kidnappers and deprogrammers (and sometimes their parents who hired the deprogrammers) in a civil court action, based on a false imprisonment claim. One such case in which the author was an expert witness is briefly described in Robbins et al. (1985, pp. 225–226). Brainwashing also factored into the defense in some of the relatively few instances that public prosecutors brought criminal kidnapping charges against deprogrammers. The deprogrammers in both civil and criminal cases would use a “necessity” or “choice of evils” defense (Bromley and Robbins 1993; Richardson 2004a), claiming that, because the deprogrammees had been brainwashed and were under “mind control,” the deprogrammers had done the lesser of two evils in kidnapping the converts, thus “rescuing” them from the clutches of the “evil cult.” When such defenses were allowed, this enabled the defen-

dant an opportunity to discuss the beliefs and lifestyle of the NRM in question, something usually not acceptable under the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment freedom of religion clause. However, such cases against deprogrammers were rare, and are seldom seen today, in large part because there are far fewer deprogrammings in the United States, where the furor over NRMs has died down in recent years.

The rarity of these cases against deprogrammers, and their usually successful use of brainwashing based defenses, illustrates well the theories of Black (1976, 1999), who would predict that ways would be found to allow those of relatively higher status who shared values with the decision makers to prevail in such legal actions, or to avoid legal action against themselves altogether. Black also would not be surprised that the successful use of brainwashing based civil actions occurred for a number of years. He would note that the parties winning such cases were usually of higher status and shared the values and social position of those doing the decision making in such cases.

Mark Cooney (1993), a student of Black, has written insightfully about the "partisanship of evidence," a concept with clear implications for the use of pseudoscientific brainwashing based testimony in civil actions against unpopular religious groups. Leaders in the legal system were so intent on finding ways to exert control over NRMs that they were willing to allow very questionable testimony against them (Richardson 1991, 1993a, b, c; Anthony 1990). Thus, such evidence received, for a time, a positive sanction by the courts in cases involving the controversial groups. Only after the intervention of some powerful third-party partisans, who exerted what they thought were higher values that should be considered in the brainwashing based cases, did the minority faiths begin occasionally to prevail within the legal arena.

Two major groups of third party partisans emerged on behalf of the minority religions. One grouping included such organizations as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the National Council of Churches, both of which took strong positions that kidnapping and depro-

gramming, as well as civil actions based on brainwashing ideas violated the basic civil and human rights of participants in the religious groups. Some of these organizations filed amicus briefs in major cases where brainwashing based claims were being made (see below).

The other major group that acted in ways that served the partisan interests of NRMs included a number of social scientists whose research did not support brainwashing based claims. Several scholars and the professional academic organizations in which they participated became involved in efforts to preclude such testimony, although not always successfully. This author and a few other scholars worked with the American Psychological Association (APA) to develop an *amicus* brief that was filed with the California Supreme Court in one major case (*Molko and Leah v. Unification Church*, 46 Cal 3d 1092, 1988). The brief, however, was eventually withdrawn by the APA after a major internal controversy developed within the APA over it (Richardson 1996b, 1998a; Robbins 1998). This author and others also worked on an *amicus* brief filed by the American Sociological Association (ASA) in the appeal of the *Molko and Leah* case to the United States Supreme Court. The ASA brief also resulted in internal controversy and was eventually withdrawn. Another brief developed by this author and others was filed by the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion in the *George* case (discussed above). This brief was more successful than these others in that the case was remanded by the California Supreme Court for further proceedings, and was eventually settled for an undisclosed but smaller amount of money. Clearly, attempts to counter brainwashing-based legal claims were not without considerable controversy, including legal actions taken against the scholars and professional organizations which entered the legal battles directly (Richardson 1996b, 1998a).

This controversy notwithstanding, brainwashing based theories have become an important cultural export from the United States. They have been promoted and gained credence in countries outside the U.S. where NRMs are still viewed by some as a major social problem (Richardson

1996a; Richardson and Introvigne 2001). As a result, brainwashing based ideas diffused from the United States have lent support to claims made in legal cases and legislative efforts at control in a number of other countries which do not have strong prohibitions such as First Amendment protections found in the United States (Richardson 1996a; Anthony 1999; Richardson and Introvigne 2001; also see some chapters in Richardson 2004a). This includes Western nations, as well as countries that were affiliated with or dominated by the former Soviet Union, and even in Catholic regions such as South America. As indicated above, brainwashing based theories continue at the time of this writing to justify deprogrammings in Japan, where members of the Unification Church continue to experience significant numbers of deprogrammings (Richardson 2011; HRWF 2015; Richardson and Edelman 2004). In some other countries, brainwashing based claims have been used to undergird new legislation designed to make it harder for NRMs to enter the countries and function effectively. This is the case in France, where new legislation was passed in 1990 making “mental manipulation” (a term referring to what in the U.S. is called “brainwashing”) a crime (Duvert 2004). Russia is another country where the 1997 revision of a liberal new law concerning religions was approved to control NRMs coming into the country (Shterin and Richardson 2000). Russia has also used the cover of concern about terrorism to pass laws against extremist literature, laws which are used most often against minority religious groups, including especially the Jehovah’s Witnesses and some Muslim groups. Such new laws often have the backing of dominant traditional churches, as was the case in Russia, because those traditional churches see such legislation as a way to stop competing religious organizations from the West. The machinations involved with passage of these punitive laws aimed at minority faiths demonstrate the utility of Chambliss’ theorizing about how laws are developed (Chambliss and Zatz 1993). Those groups with power and influence in a society can manage to use the law in social control efforts, including obtaining the passage of new laws to augment such efforts.

Legal Concerns Deriving from Presence of Children in Religious Groups

Another major arena of legal action designed to exert control over religious groups involves children. A number of older minority faiths and multi-generational NRMs have encountered difficulties in the legal arena over care of children, with the state trying, sometimes successfully, to exert control over children in a religious group, at the expense of parental rights (Palmer and Hardman 1999; Wah 2001). Christian Scientists have had a number of major cases against parents whose children died after being treated with Spiritual Healing methods. Such cases aroused considerable negative publicity for the religion, and have even led to efforts to change laws that were designed to offer some protections for parents who chose to use Spiritual Healing (Richardson and DeWitt 1992; Miller 2014). Jehovah’s Witness parents also have encountered difficulties in court cases involving children. There have been battles over forced transfusions that have led to laws being passed giving medical authorities protections under certain circumstances if they give transfusions to children in order to save their lives (Cote and Richardson 2001; Wah 1995, 2001, 2003). There have been, as well, allegations against the Witnesses for covering up child sex abuse and attempting to handle such matters internally rather than through normal law enforcement methods (Fife-Yoemans 2015).

Accusations of sex abuse in some other older religious groups have also led to considerable difficulty for those being accused. The largest such episode ever to take place in the United States occurred when Texas officials raided the Yearning for Zion (YFZ) Ranch, a Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints community in Eldorado, and took over 400 children into custody (Wright and Richardson 2011). This case is complicated because the State of Texas raised the legal age of consent from 14 to 16 as a result of the FLDS group coming to Texas, and then charged a number of FLDS men with violating the new law. Some of the men were found guilty of marrying and having sex with girls who were not yet of the

new legal age. However, virtually all of the children were eventually returned to their families, but only after the considerable difficulty of successfully appealing the initial court decision authorizing the raid and apprehension of the children. However, the actions of Texas authorities led to the group disbanding, and the State eventually also assumed ownership of the property (Wright and Richardson 2014). Allegations of child abuse, including sex abuse, also fueled the raid on the Branch Davidians compound outside Waco, Texas in 1993 that ended so tragically (Wright 1995). Sex abuse has also been alleged in some NRMs, including The Family (formerly the Children of God) (Richardson 1999; Borowik 2014) and the Hare Krishna (Rockford 2007).

As NRMs matured, families were often formed and children were born into the groups, a development that eventually led to two major and sometimes related types of legal problems. One problem was that custody battles might erupt when one member of a couple in the group decided to divorce their partner or leave the group with their children. Such custody battles sometimes become quite heated, with accusations of all sorts being exchanged, including sex abuse, contributing to negative publicity associated with some NRMs.

A second problem that arose with the onset of children in the groups was that the state might attempt to exert control over how the children are raised and schooled. Some NRMs prefer to home school their children, but this may be illegal in a given society (Palmer 1999). Also, some NRMs may not make use of modern medicine with their children to the extent that societal leaders may want. The state may be obligated to intervene if certain types of accusations are made, and sometimes graphic accusations of child abuse, including sexual abuse, were made in the heat of custody battles or by ACM representatives intent on harming the group (see, for example, Swantko 2004 and Wright and Palmer 2015). In some instances authorities seem much too quick to take such accusations at face value and implement raids to take custody of the children when doing so was not legally warranted. Such was the case with the Twelve Tribes group in Vermont

described by Swantko (2004) and in Australia when authorities in both Victoria and New South Wales raided homes of The Family, taking dozens of children into custody (Richardson 1999). The children of The Family were eventually returned and damages were paid to the group by the State of Victoria. Also, the Texas raid on the FLDS community was instigated by one phone call from a person who was not even a member of the group, but claimed to have experienced beatings and sex abuse from an elderly man she was forced to marry (Wright and Richardson 2011).

Custody of children is always a major issue when couples divorce. The issue becomes even more salient when only one member of a couple belongs to a “high demand” religion that has strict expectations about how to rear children (Bradney 1994). Courts in most modern societies are supposed to make custody decisions based on the criterion of the “best interest of the child,” which is a very flexible guideline allowing much discretion on the part of the judge or other authorities of the state (Homer 1999). Often custody decisions are made that favor the party who is not a member of a minority religion or other controversial religious group, a result in keeping with the predictions based on Black’s theory. The court may exercise its judgment in a manner that illustrates the normative function of courts, as the basic values of a society, including the view of what is and is not an acceptable religion, are used to justify a custody decision.

In many modern societies in recent decades a plethora of laws designed to protect children have been enacted. These laws have had the overall effect of redefining children more as the property of the state than of their parents. These new laws have made it easier to attack religious groups for not treating children as the society expects. Four major areas of law that come into play concerning some NRMs and other minority religions are schooling, corporal punishment, health care, and possible sex abuse of children (see Richardson 1999, for a fuller discussion of these four areas, as well as Swantko 2004).

Home schooling is legal in some countries if carried out with reasonable supervision of the state authorities to ensure that the child is being

given at least a minimal level of education. But in some societies, France and Germany for instance, home schooling is not legal to the degree it is in the United States and some other societies. Some religious groups also practice corporal punishment with children, spanking them for misbehavior. Spanking can be, and has been, quickly translated by the media into “beating” the children, which is, of course, thought to be child abuse by most citizens and policy makers. Such claims have arisen in custody disputes involving NRMs in a number of countries. Health care needs of children in minority religions are also of concern for authorities of the state, and, as noted, this is also an issue that impacts older minority faiths. As discussed above, these concerns have been made more prominent in recent decades by controversies over the blood transfusion issue with the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the “Spiritual Healing” practices of the Christian Scientists.

Other Legal Issues Raised Affecting Minority Religious Groups

There are many other legal issues that have been raised around the world concerning minority religions (Richardson 1998b). The outcomes of these other legal conflicts usually are easily interpreted using Black’s (1976, 1999) explanation of the “behavior of law.” Communal NRMs have sometimes run afoul of zoning regulations that limit the number of unmarried adults who can live in a residence. Solicitation laws have been enforced in various countries in an attempt to stop NRMs from raising money. The Unification Church has won most such battles in the United States, but in other countries the legal precedents are not so helpful, and such efforts to gain financial support can be more limited. In the United States, the Hare Krishna, after successfully challenging legal restrictions on solicitation of funds in public places such as airports and state fairs, eventually had limits placed on their solicitation in public settings, as courts made rulings against them justified by public safety and “time and place” restrictions on their solicitations (Rochford 1988). Laws requiring contributions to social

security and health plans have been applied to communal NRMs in some countries, as have minimum wage statutes, thereby undercutting some of the benefits of communal living. In the United States, the Internal Revenue Service has acted against some newer religious groups, exerting claims that funds earned from communal work teams were taxable income even though given to the organization for communal support (Emory and Zelenak, 1982). Laws have been used to limit the immigration of members of some NRMs to various countries, including the United States and parts of the former Soviet Union, some of which have imposed severe restrictions on members of some NRMs and other minority religions coming into the country (Shterin and Richardson 1998, 2000). In China and Russia legislation and new rules have been passed that label some minority religions as terrorist by virtue of their activities and the literature they produce. This is particularly the case with the Jehovah’s Witnesses in Russia, which has had hundreds of pieces of its literature declared terrorist, leading to the arrest of many members of the Witnesses and the destruction of large amounts of their literature. The Witnesses have filed legal actions against Russian governmental entities over characterizing their literature as terrorist, and there currently are cases before the European Court of Human Rights on this issue.

One quite complicated legal situation involving an NRM is that of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh group that settled in Antelope, Oregon in the 1980s (Carter 1990; Richardson 2004b). The Rajneesh group bought up virtually the entire town and controlled all that occurred there. Only members or invited guests could be present in the town. This had many ramifications, as the group ran the local schools, the local police force, and was serving as the local government for the town. The State of Oregon, working closely with federal government agencies and the courts, managed to exert control over the situation after many legal battles, by claiming that to assist the town in any way (such as sending state revenues to fund operation of the schools and law enforcement) would violate the Anti-Establishment Clause of the U.S. and Oregon State Constitutions. This

view prevailed, and led to the demise of the group in Oregon, although not before a violent backlash was promulgated by some leaders of the group that led to criminal charges being brought against them (Richardson and Shterin 2009).

Use of Law by Minority Faiths

New and smaller religious groups have sometimes been able to use the legal system in their defense, especially in countries such as the United States with its First Amendment protection for religious freedom. Many other Western-oriented countries can rely on statutory or constitutional provisions of regional agreements that allow minority religions to take legal action against those who criticize them or refuse to allow privileges granted to other religious organizations. A prime example of this is the Council of Europe that established the European Court of Human Rights. However, as Black would predict, the ability to take such actions does not guarantee success, and most such actions are lost. It is noteworthy that in some countries minority faiths are disallowed from bringing legal actions at all if they are not properly registered with the government (Durham and Scharffs 2010).

Legal actions taken by minority religious groups, where allowed, might include suits against tax officials who have exercised their judgment in ways that preclude a minority religion from claiming tax exemptions available to other religious organizations. Scientology has had some success in legal battles with tax officials and other governmental agencies in a number of countries, and thus has succeeded in obtaining legal privileges that otherwise would not have been possible (Richardson 2009; Introigne 2014). Also, a number of NRMs and other minority religions are attempting to make use of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in an effort to deter the exercise of legal social control over them in the 47 Council of Europe countries, which includes a growing number of former Soviet dominated countries. The record before the ECtHR has been mixed, particularly earlier in the Court's jurisprudence.

The ECtHR preferred a posture of deferring to member countries in matters having to do with religion (Richardson and Garay 2004). But in more recent years the ECtHR has exerted its authority in a manner that has supported many new and minority faiths in legal battles with their home countries (Richardson and Shoemaker 2008; Lykes and Richardson 2014; Richardson and Lee 2014; Richardson 2015a, b). Many of those decisions have involved efforts to dissolve minority faiths with strict registration laws in newer members of the Council of Europe that were part of or under the dominance of the former Soviet Union. However, even France has recently lost some major cases in which they were attempting to force some minority religious groups to cease operating using punitive applications of tax laws.

Scientology is perhaps the best-known NRM for using legal action as a way to deter detractors and promote its organization. Other NRMs also have developed legal prowess, even if only via the process of being forced to defend the organization or its leaders and members in court actions (Richardson 2009). Jehovah's Witnesses have also made heavy use of litigation, both defensively and offensively, winning some major battles in the United States and Canada (Cote and Richardson 2001), as well as before the European Court of Human Rights (Richardson and Garay 2004; Richardson 2015a, b). As discussed above, this tactic requires a major allocation of group resources toward legal action, as has been done with the Witnesses, Scientology, and the Unification Church, particularly. However, many other minority faiths also have had to expend resources in legal battles, something that may "deform" such groups, and detract from the group's overall goals (Richardson 1985). Such has occurred with brainwashing-based cases brought by former NRM members in civil actions seeking damages. But, particularly with the advent of efforts by various governments to assume authority over children of group members, some groups such as The Family have invested heavily in developing an adequate legal defense (Richardson 1999). The Witnesses also have fought many legal battles over control of

their children in terms of lifestyle and blood transfusions (Wah 2001).

Some NRMs also have launched libel and defamation actions against their detractors, a tactic that is not usually successful, though has been on occasion. In Hungary, the Hare Krishna won a major victory in the 1990s against a prominent religious leader who had published a brochure defaming the group in a manner well illustrating the concept of third-party partisanship previously discussed. The Krishna became something of a “poster child” for liberal forces in the political arena, and gained much favorable press and support for their being able to function in the country (Richardson 1995a, b; Karamanas 1995). However, in Russia, a major defamation action failed against a prominent representative of the Russian Orthodox Church who published extreme accusations against a number of NRMs and other minority faiths. This case was actually used by the ROC and political authorities in the successful effort to gain approval for restrictive legislation that would limit the activities of NRMs in Russia demonstrating that third-party partisanship can work against minority religions (Shterin and Richardson 2002).

Conclusions and Future Directions

The law is a major instrument of social control over all religions, religious groups, and participants. However, the law is selective in how it operates toward religious entities, depending on major variables such as status of the group and its personal and cultural intimacy with major decision makers within a society (Black 1976, 1999). Also, the behavior of law toward religious groups is importantly affected by the actions of third party partisans (Black and Baumgartner 1999), which may upset the usual pattern of treatment of religious groups under a given legal system, for good or ill.

Traditional religions, especially those that hold a dominant position in a society, generally fare well when dealing with the legal system. Indeed, such entities make use of the law to work their will as well as to defend the organization

when attacked. Dominant religious groups can even assist in constructing legal systems in ways that protect the major religious group, demonstrating the usefulness of Chambliss’ (1993) dialectic approach to lawmaking (Beckford and Richardson 2007). This has been done in a number of societies, as dominant religious groups support passage of laws that limit the actions of potential competitors, from both inside and outside the society, as well as granting the dominant religions special privileges (Richardson 2000).

Minority religious groups have, in some societies, legal weapons that can be used in battles for legitimacy. Such groups can and do sometimes successfully defend themselves against legal attacks, and are also able to launch their own legal battles that have sometimes had positive outcomes for the organizations and their members. In other societies, particularly those dominated by one particular traditional religious organization, the exercise of legal rights for smaller faiths has been decidedly more difficult. Indeed, unsurprisingly, such groups usually lose in legal actions whatever the societal context, as the courts exercise their normative function and make decisions in line with the basic values of the society. When minority religions win in court this is surprising, and demands explanation, bringing into play the concept of “third-party partisans.” But such situations are not frequent, and the conclusion must be drawn that overall relatively lower status and unpopular religious groups do not usually fare very well in the legal arena, a finding that fits with the theorizing of Black, as has been noted.

Much more research is needed to learn more about how religious groups both large and small operate within modern societies which have seen dramatic growth in the networks of legal structures within which they must function. The expansion of the liberal state in many western nations has impinged on individual freedoms of many types, including in the area of religion. How this occurs, what factors contribute to more control over religious beliefs and practices, and how religious groups might counter this strong historical tendency is vitally important to understand.

Tracing how social control of religion efforts have increasingly become the purview of the courts, both national and regional (e.g. the European Court of Human Rights) is also of import, as the area of religious control or management, demonstrates the rapid development of the “judicialization of politics” (Hirschl 2006; Tate and Vallinder 1995; Richardson 2015b). Studying the effects of the growth of legal cases about religion on religious organizations also should yield important insights. Religious groups operating in the era of the “judicialization of religious freedom” (Richardson and Lee 2014) requires them to be able to defend themselves legally, as well as assert their rights within the legal arena. Thus the allocation of more organizational resources to legal matters may be required in order to function and survive in today’s world.

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Part VI

Globalization and Transnationalism

Victor Roudometof

Abstract

The chapter offers an overview of the relationship between globalization and the study of religion. It highlights the particular significance of some themes that have shaped the field's evolution. These include: the interdisciplinary nature and institutional frameworks of the study of religion, the challenges of Orientalism, Eurocentrism and parochialism for the evolution of the field, and the failures of post-World War II secularization theory. The above have contributed to the emergence of globalization as a distinct problematic in the field of religion. The basic propositions and ideas concerning the relationship between religion and globalization are reviewed, with special emphasis on globalization's geographical dimension and its connections with transnational religion and migration. Emergent themes for future research on religion and globalization are also presented. These include: the revitalization of the history and religion relationship, the emergence of the problematic on culture and religion, and the consolidation of global-local or glocal religion.

The task of addressing the topic of globalization within the broader framework of the social scientific study of religion implicitly raises a series of thorny issues and debates on contested topics. These include the question of the interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary study of religion, the institutional frameworks for the study of

religion, issues of Orientalism, Eurocentrism, and parochialism, and of course the never-ending secularization debate. These issues are related to the introduction and place of globalization within the sociology of religion and, to a lesser extent, on related fields and disciplines. Of course and in large part as a result of the author's professional credentials, in the following attention has been focused on the sociology of religion. But an effort has been made to include other perspectives beyond the mainstream. Such an inclusion can become a useful source for intellectual cross-fertilization.

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This chapter is organized as follows. The first section discusses the evolution of the various disciplinary and inter-disciplinary fields that address the social-scientific study of religion. Having noted the effect of institutional history in this broad area of study, the chapter next discusses in greater length the twists and turns of the secularization paradigm in sociology and related fields. Of key importance in this respect is the historical experience of the 1979 Iranian revolution which offered practical refutation of some of modernization theory's predictions. All of the above help set the stage for understanding the concerns that have prompted and contributed to the emergence of globalization as a distinct problematic. In outlining the key themes of globalization discourses special attention is paid to the geographical dimension of globalization and its connections with transnational religion and migration (see also Offutt and Miller's Chap. 26 on "Transnationalism" and Kivisto's Chap. 27 on "International Migration" in this volume). The last section addresses some of the relatively recent research foci within this broader problematic. The topics examined include the revitalization of the relationship between history and religion, the renewed interest in the relationship between religion and culture, and glocal religion.

Institutional Trajectories and the Western Bias

Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, two of the classical theorists revered as sociology's founding fathers, left a rich legacy of engagement with religion. But the study of religion was never confined to a single discipline or field and to this day remains an inter- or cross-disciplinary area of inquiry (Crawford 2001). In the course of the twentieth century, religious studies (as well as comparative religion) were not successfully incorporated into social scientific disciplines. Rather, "sociology, psychology, history, philosophy departments in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have moved religious studies towards the margins of their subject" (Hinnells (2010a,

p. 6). Instead of religious studies, different disciplines developed their own particular disciplinary lenses, in an effort to examine religion from within the premises of each discipline. That is not entirely surprising and reflects broader tendencies towards academic professionalization.

Still, this tendency resulted in a curious historical trajectory. The social sciences almost uncritically endorsed the Western understanding of "religion" and, simultaneously, the inter-disciplinary field of religious studies or comparative religion has displayed a far a greater level of cross-cultural awareness. Readers are invited to compare the orientation, scope, and foci covered in Turner's (2010b) *New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion* versus Hinnells' (Hinnells 2010b) *Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion* to gain a better sense of these important divergences. These divergences are related to the field's organizational structure and specifically the fact that the study of religion has been only belatedly incorporated into the institutional structures of social scientific organizations. To this day, the three major scholarly associations devoted to the study of religion – the American Academy of Religion (AAR), the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR), and the Association for Sociology of Religion (ASR) – have maintained their institutional autonomy. Moreover, within the American Sociological Association (ASA), the largest and oldest sociological association, a Sociology of Religion Section was founded only in 1994. In sharp contrast to this belatedness, the SSSR was founded in 1948 and the ASR was founded in 1938 (as the American Catholic Sociological Society). The ASR's annual meetings take place concurrently with the ASA's annual meetings but are organized independently.

Perhaps part of the reason for these developments lies with the initially denominational connections of some of these organizations. Both the US-based ASR and the European International Society for the Sociology of Religion (ISSR) initially had strong Catholic connections. The ISSR developed a more social scientific orientation gradually over the second half of the twentieth

century (for an overview, see Dobbelaere 2000). While religion eventually became more central to sociology and other social sciences since the 1980s, it is important to note some of the features that are part of this institutional legacy. First, a large number of researchers came from Protestant and Catholic countries or represented Protestant and Catholic constituencies, thereby transferring denominational preconceptions to a broader level, even if that was not done self-consciously. Second, Western Christianity remained, for the more part, a privileged domain of inquiry, with far less attention paid to other world religions. This underdevelopment is acutely reflected in the world religions' demography. It has been partially rectified through the recent addition of the *World Religion Database: International Religious Demographic Statistics and Sources* (Johnson and Grim 2014) and to a lesser extent by the Pew Templeton Global Religious Futures Project (www.globalreligiousfutures.org). Third, the convergence of these tendencies with the post-World War II rise of the secularization paradigm led to important blockages that contributed to the reproduction of Western preconceptions or misconceptions.

Conventional scholarly perspectives have tended to accept as natural or self-evident culturally specific notions of religion, secularity, and secularism. This Western bias means that for a long time the West was seen as providing the model for religious developments, and departures from that model were construed as deviations from a normative standard. Unsurprisingly, the critique of Orientalism (Said 1978; also Turner 1994) has been of critical importance for shaping the understanding of the field itself. More specifically, the work of Asad (1993, 2003) has offered perhaps the most important challenge to the seemingly "normal" Western idea of a "religion" as such. Asad has documented the slow formation of the Western understanding of what constitutes a "religion" and of an entire array of practices that are then taken as given in the researchers' understandings – and even the very definition of "religion." Asad's work is instructive because it exposes not so much the Orientalism that used to be prevalent in previous

centuries but the consequences of contemporary academic parochialism. Echoing this line of thought, Riesebrodt and Konieczny (2010, pp. 159–60) argue that the sociology of religion "must overcome its rampant parochialism. It must move beyond theoretical paradigms that work just for . . . a particular group of Western nations or religious traditions." This parochialism has meant that all too often sociologists have abandoned the study of religion of non-Western societies to scholars from other disciplines (usually anthropologists or various regional experts).

To this day, the overwhelming majority of work in the sociology of religion naturalizes the largely transatlantic cultural context of its surroundings. Encounters with religious traditions that do not share the same self-image readily reveal the limits of such notions. This is the case even *within* Christianity. In Eastern Orthodox countries, for example, religious worship and rituals are not necessarily manifestations of individual belief and religious practice does not necessarily reflect the depth of personal conviction or belief (Tomka 2006; see also Naletova 2013). And that is not just the case of mere *regional* specificity. According to Krindatch (2010), even U.S.-based Orthodox Christians report that regular church attendance, obeying the priest, and observing Great Lent are not significant for their own understanding of what constitutes a "good Orthodox." In fact, US-based Orthodox Christians are practicing *ethnodoxy* – that is, they abide by a collectively held belief system that rigidly links their own particular group's ethnic identity to its dominant faith (Karpov et al. 2012). In such cases, employing traditional social indicators (such as church attendance) that have been developed on the basis of the features associated with Protestantism or Catholicism can lead to widely inaccurate interpretations.

The aforementioned example aptly illustrates the issues raised by the Western bias. In this respect, the major cleavages that shape the problematic of the relationship between religion and globalization include both the well-known division between a socioeconomically privileged North and an underprivileged South, but also the one between the West and the East (see Turner

and Khonder 2010). Western social theory has been based on the themes of modernity and secularity, and thus it has ignored not only non-Christian faiths, but even non-Western branches of Christianity (Hann 2011). For example, it has become exceedingly problematic to ignore the fact that Max Weber's celebrated analysis of world religions is framed in terms of a binary opposition between the "Occident" and the "Orient."

Reflecting this realization, scholars have taken important steps towards the articulation of theories and interpretations that would henceforth explain not just the phenomenon labelled "religion" in the West, but the development of "world religions" as such (see Masuzawa 2005; Beyer 2006; Hedges 2012; Riesebrodt 2012). The very employment of the label of "world religions," of course, is indicative of the acceptance of varied understandings of what "counts" as a "religion" in different cultural contexts and traditions (for a discussion, see Lechner 2003). Such a turn incorporates the critique of Eurocentrism and offers a foundation for setting a new research agenda. It makes it possible to take into consideration the "provinciality" of Europe in the course of world history (Chakrabarty 1992).

The above are not purely theoretical considerations but reflect on the manner in which history is presented in textbooks. The topic of secularization enjoys entrenched dominance in Western scholarly traditions, and as a result, "one major weakness of much modern sociology of religion, including the usual range of textbooks, is . . . the strange neglect of globalization" (Turner 2010a, p. 5). But this criticism applies equally to the broader field of religious history or religious studies. To illustrate this point, let us consider two historically oriented textbooks. *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (Logan 2002) offers an account that focuses almost exclusively on the historical evolution of Western Christianity, while *Religion and Globalization: World Religions in Historical Perspective* (Esposito et al. 2008) reflects the repercussions of a growing engagement with the inclusion of non-Western historical trajectories. Within Christianity, MacCulloch's (2009) history should

be applauded, as it represents a noteworthy effort towards inclusiveness.

Globalization is, therefore, a conceptual vehicle that can transcend this traditional Western bias. The taken-for-granted invisibility of Western cultural specificity is linked to the cultural surroundings of most twentieth century scholarly traditions. To this day, there is a strong Western scholarly presence in the study of religion and the majority of the social scientists working in the field are preoccupied with the study of Europe and North America. It is not surprising that a central issue in this field concerns the non-Western experience and a major bone of contention is the existence of a Western bias in concepts, methods, and research agendas. This issue gains in importance in the twenty-first century as population growth in the South means that organized religions need to pay more attention to these regions as opposed to regions in the North.

The Secularization Debate: A Brief Primer

For most of the twentieth century, the research agenda of the social sciences has been dominated by the debate over secularization (Turner 2009, 2010b). Social scientists inquired into the scope, nature, extent, and parameters of secularization in order to unveil the overall patterns and trajectories of the modern world. Initially, secularization theory had a strong following, but over time it was superseded by re-evaluations favorable to the skeptics of the secularization thesis (Berger et al. 1999; Berger 2002; *Sociology of Religion* 1999). Critics pointed to various processes and tendencies that operated to mitigate secularizing tendencies. In fact, the rise of fundamentalism in developing societies was one of the anomalies that played a role in the emergence of globalization as an alternative to secularization (this is discussed in the following section).

Theorists proposed alternative perspectives. For example, Davie (1994) introduced the notion of vicarious religion; Stark and Finke (2000) proposed the religious economies model; and others pointed out the continuing significance of popular

or folk religion and contemporary spirituality (see for example, Heelas et al. 2005). The cumulative weight of the various criticisms prompted a scholarly reappraisal. Long-held assumptions were reversed. Western Europe, once regarded as the paradigmatic case of secularization and the model for the rest of the world, is now seen as an exception from global patterns of religiosity. The United States, whose high levels of religiosity render it exceptional among modern societies, is now seen as representative of mainstream global patterns of religiosity (for discussions see, Davie 2002; Berger et al. 2008).

How relevant is secularization for the rest of the globe? Is secularity the best way to think about the relationship between religion and society? The secularization paradigm (which includes both advocates *and* critics) has been constructed on the basis of the historical trajectories of a selective group of Western nations, while ignoring non-Western regions. The paradigm is in turn derived from the broader modernization paradigm and relies heavily upon the Western European historical experience. As a result, the limits of the paradigm's explanatory power are rather self-evident. One of its major shortcomings is its extensive reliance upon the image of the "isolated individual" and its use of culture as a residual category invoked only as a defense against secularism (Martin 2005; Bruce 2011). Culture is invoked as a factor that explains the failures of secularization – in other words, it is used as a means of explaining away *difference*. Theories of secularization have been in large part unable to recognize the social and cultural power of the religious factor (Robertson 2007). Traditionally, the conventional frameworks for the study of religion viewed religion mainly in terms of two dimensions: the institutional and the individual. No space was left to contemplate the non-institutional but collective and public cultural dimension of religion (Besecke 2005, p. 179). Because this dimension was not a central issue, the result was to take for granted the cultural elements of the "West." As discussed in this chapter's third section, the problematic of culture represents one of the more recent research foci that have become more central to the study of religion.

In academic scholarship perhaps the most widespread response to the crisis of secularization is the notion of post-secular society – or post-secularism. This idea was originally put forward by Jürgen Habermas (2008; Habermas and Ratzinger 2006). Post-secularity is seen as a contemporary phase in modern societies, whereby religion makes a return to the public sphere from where it was cast out during the era of modernity (Turner 2010c). It might be seen as a religious phase that mirrors post-modernity. This revitalized public religiosity takes many forms. In some contexts, such religiosity provides the impetus for the rise of what commonly is referred to as religious fundamentalism. Elsewhere, it involves the semiotic or public "flagging" of confessional association without a concomitant practice. In Great Britain, Grace Davie (1994) coined the phrase "believing without belonging" to account for the simultaneous public "flagging" of religious belief that is not matched by religious practice (for additional examples, see Naletova 2013). Religion made a forceful return into mainstream European Union (E.U.) politics when it was invoked in the context of the debate of the failed proposal to have an E.U. constitution. The lack of reference to Europe's Christian roots was a cause for inter-faith mobilization among mainstream Churches and that in turn caused an equally strong opposition among committed European secularists (Schlesinger and Foret 2006). The notion of post-secularism, though, is not universally applauded or celebrated; it remains to be seen whether it will endure as a meaningful description of contemporary trends (Gorski et al. 2012).

While at the turn of the millennium secularization was declared *passé*, secularization theory has experienced a renewal during the first decade of the twenty-first century. This has taken two principal forms. First, in *A Secular Age*, Taylor (2007) offers an influential reframing of secularization. The modern world, Taylor argues, is still secular, but not because of a mere decline of levels of individual religiosity or a growing church-state separation. Rather, it is because our frameworks of understanding have shifted radically. Whereas in the sixteenth century Westerners

could scarcely be ignorant of God, that is an option available to them today. As a result, secularization is understood as a shift in the overall frameworks of human condition which makes it possible for people to have a choice between belief and non-belief in a manner hitherto unknown. Of course, Taylor (2007) is quite adamant that this interpretation is based on a generalization grounded on the historical trajectory of the *West* or the transatlantic world (for a critical assessment, see Torpey 2010).

Second, secularization is seen as a result of secularism, an active *project* that is articulated alongside the Western modernity of the post-1500 world (Gorski and Altinordu 2008; Calhoun et al. 2011). In this line of thinking, secularism is a multifaceted movement that has caused the onset of secularization in Western societies. That is, secularization does not occur inexorably as a result of broader cultural, economic, and political changes, but rather is the outcome of social action.

Refining secularization and addressing Eurocentric biases in the framing of that debate is a major objective of Casanova (2006). He suggests that future revisions of the secularization paradigm have to take into account the construction of both sides of the secular-religious dichotomy. Extending this idea, Beyer (2013) has suggested that the current *status quo* of religion globally is shaped by departure from past standards of the secular-religious dichotomy. These standards were initially articulated in Treaty of Westphalia (1648). In that Treaty, religious affiliation was set to coincide to the local ruler's religious affiliation. The decision terminated the Thirty Years' War between Protestants and Catholics and signified the gradual acknowledgment of religious tolerance as a practical matter in inter-state relations. The Treaty also served as a guide that helped structure the relationships between states and religious faiths. That model of understanding of the terms religious and secular, as well as the seemingly appropriate relationship between these two domains, became eventually diffused throughout Europe. The label "post-Westphalianism" is used to suggest a departure from that standard. The term signifies a pluraliza-

tion of options with regard to relationships between religions and the state and for the relationship between the so-called "secular" and the so-called "religious" domains. "Post-Westphalianism," Beyer (2013, p. 676) concludes, "is thus a lot like somewhat cognate ideas like postmodernism and multiculturalism: all we know is that they represent a plurality of options and voices; but we really have no clear idea of what they mean because the new self-evidences at which they hint are not yet present." Beyer's work is suggestive of an effort to re-think the secular-religious divide outside of the secularization paradigm.

Central Themes in the Religion and Globalization Problematic

The above-mentioned discussion is an important prerequisite of understanding the topic of globalization as employed in scholarship about religion. From the outset it is necessary to admit that globalization has been subject to multiple and often competing definitions and perspectives that reflect differences in research foci (see Albrow 1997; Robertson 1992; Waters 1995; Beck 2000; for overviews, see Ritzer 2007; Rossi 2008; Guillen 2001; Steger et al. 2014). Globalization is not a process that can be easily summarized in a single authoritative narrative. Instead, the very notion of various locales coalescing into the global promotes the construction of multiple narratives that reflect the manner in which each group, religious tradition, or region contributes to the construction of the "global." People outside of the social sciences, both laypersons and experts, are typically familiar with a notion of globalization that relates to economic expansion, the curtailment of state power, immigration, and information and communication technologies. But while largely unacknowledged, key ideas about globalization emerged from within the confines of sociology of religion – and specifically in response to what was seen as failures of the secularization paradigm.

The notion of globalization operates subversively against the centrality of modernity as an

organizational template for world history. By extension, in the field of religion globalization operates subversively against the idea of the centrality of secularity as organizational template for understanding religion or “world religions” – as these have been reconfigured in the *long durée* (i.e. the long term). The expression *long durée* has its origins in the French *Annales School* of historical writing. It designates a particular approach to history that gives primacy to the analysis of long-term historical structures over short-term events. It is typically associated with the work of French historian Fernand Braudel and incorporates social scientific methods into the study of history. The use of this approach in the study of globalization implies a view of globalization as a long-term phenomenon (=hundreds if not thousands of years). This view stands in sharp opposition to popular or journalistic views of globalization as a recent phenomenon, with a history numbered in terms of decades (or a few centuries at most).

In this section, I offer a brief explication of the aforementioned thesis by describing some of the key themes and literature streams that are discussed under the rubric of religion and globalization, as well as the rich literature that involves the problematic of de-territorialized religion, globalization, and transnationalism.

Key Themes and Literature Streams: A Précis

According to post-World War II modernization theory, modernization meant the success of universalism, secularism, and at least a certain level of cross-cultural convergence (which remained a contested issue). But since the 1970s, social scientists have been confronted with a series of phenomena that offer a practical refutation of the predictions of modernization theory. On top of the list is the 1979 Iranian revolution, followed by the rise of fundamentalism and various religious revivals in Islamic countries and elsewhere. Modernization did not translate into secularization – and the empirical refutation of this connection meant the de-legitimization of post-World

War II modernization and secularization theories.

Science rarely simply abandons a paradigm without an alternative (Kuhn 1962). One alternative came with the notion of globalization, formulated in the early 1980s by Roland Robertson in a series of publications that eventually became his *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (1992). Robertson arrived at the notion of the “global” through an implicit extension of Parsons’s (1977) evolutionary theory. Parsons postulated the inevitable universalization (or “globalization” in the sense of their universal applicability and adaptation) of certain institutions (such as democracy) in the *long durée* of human history. Parsons reached such a conclusion based on these institutions’ adaptive ability. Robertson (1992, p. 8) defines globalization as “the compression of the world.” By “compression” Robertson means the accelerated pace of contact among cultures, peoples, and civilizations, or the sense that the world is “shrinking.” But unlike Parsons, Robertson does not equate globalization with universalism. Rather, he proposes the interpenetration of universalism and particularism.

Robertson’s approach offered an alternative to modernization theory by stressing the significance of the “search for fundamentals” as part of globalization. That means that fundamentalism or religious revivals are not seen as “anomalies” but accounted for as responses to globalization. The key idea underlying this framing is Robertson’s notion of *relativization*. Once a group encounters a new reality or condition or comes to contact with hitherto alien cultures, worldviews, or ideas, it readjusts or “relates” its own condition to the new realities. To avoid misunderstandings, it should be stressed that relativization is *not* relativism. To use perhaps what has become a cliché example, the late Osama Bin Laden and other Muslim fundamentalists are not located outside of modernity; they are responding to it (Kurzman 2002). This is a broader point, as numerous researchers have observed that practices depicted as “traditional” (such as the Muslim veil) are innovations that transform past practices into contemporary cultural forms in

order to express a felt incongruity with what is perceived to be a threat to identities and traditions. And while perhaps the most widely publicized examples refer to Islam, this phenomenon is observed in other religions, too. (The Counter-Reformation is a famous historical example within Western Christianity.) In terms of the relationship between religious institutions and the state, research has confirmed that both in the advanced industrial societies and in developing countries there is a general tendency for religion to return to the public sphere or domain – a tendency sometimes referred to as the “de-privatization” of religion (Casanova 1994; Haynes 1998; for Europe in particular, see Madeley and Enyedi 2003).

For both Robertson (1992) and Giddens (1990), space-time compression – or the “stretching” of social relations across time and space – is a central feature of globalization. But there is no uniformity of opinions over the issue of prioritizing spatial or temporal dimensions. For example, Albrow (1997) speaks of a “global age” that supersedes the “modern age”; Giddens (1990) views globalization as a “consequence of modernity”; and Beck (1992) sees it as the result of a “second modernity.” In these interpretations, emphasis is placed on globalization’s temporality, where contemporary developments are said to constitute a new era or phase or stage that is viewed as qualitatively distinct from past historical eras. These interpretations represent an effort to curtail the more radical postmodern interpretation, whereby the West is seen as entering into a “post-modern” phase or condition that involves the negation of modernity as such. Inspired partly by postmodernism, and Baudrillard (1988) in particular, Lyon (2008) has put forth an interpretation that suggests an intertwining of contemporary instances of religious revival or expression and postmodernism. In this approach, religion’s effervescence is seen as part of the trespassing of the conventional boundaries erected by modernity: “Jesus in Disneyland” becomes a metaphor that expresses these trends.

In contrast to the aforementioned approaches, other theorists have questioned the temporal organization of the phases of globalization in

terms of modernity and of Western modernization. Different organizational schemes have been proposed by Robertson (1992), Therborn (2000), and Campbell Van Pelt (2007). While these authors are not in agreement in terms of the temporal phases or stages of globalization, they all share a long-term perspective that extends globalization further into the past. In doing so, they separate globalization from modernization. Of course, whether globalization and modernization are distinct and whether these have different historical origins remains a contested issue in the literature (see Guillen 2001; Grew 2008; Stearns 2010).

Since the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, there has been an abundance of scholarship on the topic of globalization. For a shortlist of prominent and influential publications, see Bastian et al. (2001), Berger and Huntington (2002), Stackhouse and Paris (2000), Hopkins et al. (2001), Beckford (2003), Juergensmeyer (2003), Beyer and Beaman (2007), and the special issue on globalization of *The Hedgehog Review* (2002). There are also numerous journal articles that directly or indirectly engage with globalization. In fact, a four-volume set exists that offers a useful compilation of articles and chapters (Altglass 2010). Therefore no reason exists to attempt an exhaustive enumeration of all individual publications here. It is best to briefly outline the key themes that feature prominently in a variety of publications. In addition to the well-publicized problematic of civilizational conflict among major world religions, some additional themes include the following: the rise of religious nationalism (Juergensmeyer 1994), the return of religion into public life (Casanova 1994), the proliferation of international terrorism (Juergensmeyer 2001), the increasingly personalized *bricolage* of individual religiosity (Beyer 1994), and the study of service-oriented religious movements (Cherry and Ebaugh 2014; Davis and Robinson 2012).

Overall, theorizing religion and globalization has been subject to two different lines of interpretation. On the one, there is the problematic of globalization of religion, and on the other hand, the problematic of globalization and reli-

gion (Obadia 2010). In the first problematic, the fundamental research question pertains to the spread of religions and specific genres or forms or blueprints of religious expression across the globe. Beyer (2006) proposes that the very notion of what constitutes a “religion,” as commonly understood, is the product of a long-term process of inter-civilizational or cross-cultural interactions. The study of secularism and the adaptation of secularization in various cultures and faiths across the globe is an important facet of the same problematic. In the second problematic, the position and place of religion is problematized *within* the context of globalization. This problematic concerns the relations and the impact of globalization *upon* religion. From this point of view, even religions that are not conventionally considered “global” – such as Eastern Orthodox Christianity or various fundamentalist movements – are nevertheless influenced by globalization. They face up to the global condition and reshape their institutional practices and mentalities (Agadjanian and Roudometof 2005). In so doing, religious institutions generally tend to adopt either strategies of cultural defense or strategies of active engagement with globality (Roudometof 2008). Although a religion can reject globalizing trends and impulses, it is nevertheless shaped by them and is forced to respond to newfound situations. This problematic incorporates notions of resacralization as a response to secularizing agendas and views instances of transnational nationalism cloaked in religious terms as cultural expressions stimulated by globalization (for examples, see Zubrzycki 2006; Danforth 2000).

From De-territorialization to Transnationalism

In addition to the aforementioned contrasting interpretations concerning globalization’s timeline, there is also a research agenda that addresses the issue of space and spatiality in globalization. Unlike Giddens (1990) and Albrow (1997), Robertson (1992) and Waters (1995) have emphasized the spatial dimension of the “global.” They

have suggested that globalization involves the de-construction and re-construction of human or lived space. This idea has been expressed in terms of the dialectic of de-territorialization and re-territorialization (Held et al. 1999; Scholte 2000). It means that globalization leads to the “lifting” of social relations from within conventional spatial boundaries and further causes the “grounding” or “anchoring” of social processes into new or reconfigured spatial units. Old forms of territorial attachments are decoupled, while new forms of such attachments are forged. This dialectic is the very mechanism by which globalization operates concretely to construct new forms of attachment and reshapes the world’s religious geography through increased cross-cultural contact. It makes possible the lifting of social relations from their original setting, whereby a “locale” ceases to be always geographically circumscribed (Kennedy and Roudometof 2002).

It is further possible to locate a countertrend to the de-territorialization of human space. This countertrend entails the possibility of reconstructing, creating, or recreating locality. As Appadurai (1995) has suggested, the construction of locality itself is a global phenomenon and is shaped by trans-border flows. While by no means restricted to the contemporary era, such flows have greatly increased in the twentieth century. In order to map such flows, Appadurai (1996) has developed a model of five cultural landscapes. While initially religion was not included among them, researchers have since extended it in order to include religion. In doing so, they turn religious landscapes or *religioscapes* into a conceptual heuristic that can be used to map complex relations resulting from the migration of faiths and peoples across borders, as well as the geographical coexistence or overlapping of sites claimed by different world religions (McAlister 2005; Hayden and Walker 2013).

This “deterritorialization” of religion refers to the appearance and, in some instances, the efflorescence of religious traditions in places where these previously had been largely unknown or were at least in a minority position (Casanova 2001; Martin 2001; Roy 2004). Since these terri-

tories or religious landscapes are shaped by human action, it goes without saying that population movements are of key importance for reshaping religious landscapes. International migration has heavily contributed to this process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization – and that led to the consolidation of transnational religion as an important research site. Transnational religion emerged through the post-World War II spread of several religions into new world regions. Perhaps the most prominent example is the explosion of Protestantism into the hitherto solidly Catholic Latin America (Martin 2001; Levitt 2001). Some additional examples include Muslim migration into hitherto solidly Protestant and Catholic Western Europe, and the less publicized migration of Orthodox Christians from Eastern into Western Europe (Triandafyllidou 2010; Roudometof 2015).

Transnationalism, of course, is the subject of a separate chapter by Offutt and Miller in this volume. It is conventional to suggest that transnationalism refers primarily to lived experiences of individuals that are simultaneously embedded in two or more nation-states, while globalization generally refers to processes that are planetary, interregional, or intercontinental. But as the previous discussion has shown, the line between the two is not clear-cut. While scholars of transnationalism have attempted to distinguish transnationalism from “strong” versions of globalization as a set of world-wide or interregional processes, it is nevertheless true that “given the complexity of today’s world, the boundaries among the transnational, global, and diasporic religious modalities are very porous” (Vasquez 2008, p. 164).

In this regard, it is important to see the interdisciplinary field of transnational studies as a key fellow traveler and companion to globalization scholarship. After all, people often refer to “global and transnational studies” as a single field. Of course, transnational studies has its own distinctive trajectory. As a scholarly movement, it emerged in the 1990s in connection to the study of post-World War II new immigrants or transmigrants who moved from Third World and developing countries into developed First World nations (for an overview, see Levitt and Khagram

2007). New immigrants no longer assimilated into the cultures of the host countries but rather openly maintained complex links to their homelands, thereby constructing, reproducing, and preserving their transnational ties. Immigrant transnationalism recast the relationship between people and religion (Casanova 2001; Ebaugh and Chafetz 2002; van der Veer 2002; Hagan and Ebaugh 2003; Levitt 2001, 2003, 2004; Csordas 2009). Even though it has a US focus, Levitt’s *God Needs No Passport* (2007) is perhaps exemplary of this research agenda, which actually extends into several advanced industrialized countries – such as Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

The extensive and widely publicized debates over the public presence of Islam in Europe are but the most visible manifestation of this process (see Bjorgo 1997; Raudvere et al. 2012; Bhargavaa 2014). Islam is a prominent case that points to the limits of European secularism. The issue of headscarves (most notably in France), unheeded Muslim demands to build mosques and therefore to properly practice their faith (Germany and Italy), discrimination against ritual slaughter (Germany), and unheeded demands for proper burial grounds (Denmark, among others) are some notable examples (all cited by Bhargavaa (2014)). These suggest that religious de-/reterritorialization faces extensive challenges across European states.

To the extent that transnational religion is a means of describing solutions to newfound situations that people face as a result of migration, it involves various blends of religious universalism and local particularism – or to be precise, an entire range of variation between these two poles (McLoughlin 2010). In the first pole, religious universalism gains the upper hand and religion becomes a central reference for immigrant communities. In such instances, religious transnationalism is often depicted as a religion “going global.” Jenkins (2007), for example, has noted the rapid growth of Christianity in the South, countering arguments that Islam would overtake Christianity as the world’s most popular faith. In cases in which immigrants share the same vernacular or are members of a church with a cen-

tralized administration (such as the Catholic Church), the propensity for such a pattern inevitably increases. Migrants participate in religious multi-ethnic networks that connect them to their co-religionists locally and globally. Their main allegiance is not to their original homeland but to their global religious community. In the second pole, local ethnic or national particularism gains or maintains a central role for immigrants, leading to the formation of transnational national communities. In such cases, religious hierarchies perform dual religious and secular functions that ensure the groups' survival (for examples, see Danforth 1995; Roudometof 2000; Karpov et al 2012). While such diasporas or transnational communities preserve an association between religion and ethnicity, they still adopt the host country's cultural habits. The "Protestantization" of various faiths among US immigrants is a well-known example (see Kivisto's Chap. 27 on "International Migration" in this volume).

In addition to groups of people, transnationalism has been applied to institutions, whereby communities living outside the national territory of particular states maintain institutional relationships with their home religious institutions. In many instances people did not cross borders; instead, the borders changed around them. For example, after the post-1989 disintegration of the communist bloc and the collapse of the Soviet Union, a Russian Orthodox transnational community of close to 30 million people emerged outside the borders of the Russian federation (Cava 2001; Curanovic 2007; Matsuzato 2009). Although Moscow remained as an administrative center, close to half of the Russian Orthodox Church's parishes and clergy were relocated to other post-Soviet republics. In Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, the Russian Orthodox Church's autonomous branches are the largest local churches (Krindatch 2004, p. 118). In several instances (Ukraine in 1990, and Moldova, Latvia, and Estonia in 1992), the Russian Orthodox Church granted autonomy to its local branches. Henceforth, these churches became independent from Moscow as far as their internal affairs and daily lives. In contrast, in Belarus and Kazakhstan, the Orthodox Church performed a rather formal

change of administrative status and maintained strong ties with Moscow. Finally, in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Lithuania, and the post-Soviet states of Central Asia – in which Orthodox Christianity is a minority faith – the status quo remained unaltered. This administrative restructuring represents a major feature of the post-Soviet era and is most often what is meant when transnationalism is invoked with reference to the post-Soviet religious landscape. In several instances (Moldova, Estonia, Ukraine), ecclesiastical disputes resulted from the clash between rival ecclesiastical nationalisms (for an overview, see Payne 2007).

In conclusion, this section has sought to present in summary format some of the central ideas and theses that have been instrumental in the articulation of the religion/globalization problematic. Tracing the articulation of the idea of globalization allows readers to grasp the central foci of this problematic vis-à-vis the conventional debates on secularization. Of course, globalization is a contested term. In the above discussion, various interpretations have been presented regarding its timeline and its spatiality. The relationship between space and globalization has been further explored through a discussion of the processes of de-territorialization and re-territorialization. These processes help establish important bridgeheads to the theme of transnational religion, which is closely connected to globalization. Examples and blueprints of transnational religion have been presented and specific instances from different regions of the globe have been discussed. Obviously, the above presentation is meant to offer just a conceptual outline of key themes on globalization and religion. The various volumes and collections mentioned in this section allow readers to explore this literature in further detail.

Recent Developments

In this chapter's last section, attention is focused on just a handful of research agendas in the social-scientific study of religion. These research agendas are of particular importance for the problematic of religion and globalization, and

relate closely with some of the ideas explored in this chapter.

History and Religion: A Renewed Relationship

First, the intertwining of history and religion has become an area of renewed interest and attention – reframed under a conception of globalization as a long-term process and not merely as a recent trend. Contemporary scholarship abounds with examples that trace the consequences of contemporary interconnectivity for religious expression. In contrast, scholarship addressing the *historical* intertwining of religion and globalization has been far less prolific. Up until the early twenty-first century, this was a major lacuna in the literature. For a long period, and in spite of the fact that classical theorists like Weber and Durkheim wrote extensively about the historical trajectories of different religions, social scientific literature in the field of historical sociology did not pay sufficient attention to religion. During the post-World War II period, the rise of US-based comparative-historical sociology was linked to a turn toward analyses of the state, revolutions, long-term social change, and other structural and political factors (for an overview, see Demetriou and Roudometof 2014). Although the majority of scholarly output in various fields tends to assume the novelty of globalization, scholars of religion have stressed its historicity. Globalization is profoundly historical; its pace and influence for the crystallization of various religions requires a birds-eye view of historical developments. Interpretations of globalization as a “consequence of modernity” (Giddens 1990) or as the result of a “second” modernity (Beck 1992) fail to satisfactorily address the issue of historicity and reduce globalization to a relatively recent historical process. From the perspective of the *long durée*, though, it is the “rise of the West” that takes place *within* world-historical globalization (Hobson 2004; Stearns 2010).

Gradually, the relationship between historical sociology and the sociology of religion was revitalized (Gorski 2005; Christiano 2008), and this

dimension represents an increasingly significant research agenda. Gorski’s (2003) *Disciplinary Revolution* generated renewed interest in the problematic of religion and historical sociology, though it does not specifically address globalization. There are other important contributions that serve as reference points in historically oriented scholarship. These include Warburg’s (2006) impressive study of the Baha’i (see also McMullen 2000) and Beyer’s (2006) general historical survey. Beyer’s historical *tour de force* aims at an examination of the historical articulation of the world’s religions. In large part building upon the ideas of German theorist Niklas Luhmann, his work involves a masterful overview of the historical trajectories of different religions.

A specific issue of interest in historical sociology concerns the relationship between religion and nationalism (see Brubaker 2012 for an overview). While it is not possible to explore this connection in detail here, there are some important recent contributions that have offered new insights into the critical role of religions for the shaping of modern nations. Gorski (2000), for example, has argued that in central Europe the rise of nations was in large part related to the re-deployment of religious categories of classification. Roudometof (2001), in his work on the rise of nations in Ottoman-held Southeastern Europe, has also pursued a similar argument with regard to the nineteenth century rise of Orthodox nations in region (Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania). Both authors suggest that modern nations are linked to specific confessional denominations – and hence, that religion serves as an important bridgehead between pre-modern and modern social formations.

Building further on historical and comparative sociology, Nelson and Gorski (2014) have offered an alternative narrative that aims to reframe the terms of the conventional U.S. versus Europe contrast in accounts of religious change. In their narrative, modernization disrupts older *parochial* forms of religious community. Such forms had originally emerged in the Middle Ages. The old parochial forms of organization were predicated upon the local parish and rested on hierarchical

complementarity among three divinely ordained social estates: those who pray, those who fight, and those who labor. Modernization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries involved the rise and diffusion of newer *de-parochialized* forms of religious belonging and organization. These confessional or de-parochialized forms involved more attention to doctrinal and ethical purity. Religious homogeneity was modeled and enforced through harmonious cooperation between worldly and churchly leaders. In their analysis, Nelson and Gorski further take into account the effects of missionary organizations and evangelism with the policies and organizational models adopted by different states and bureaucracies. Their goal is to offer an explanation that accounts for mass churching versus unchurching across specific national contexts.

This renewed attention to the historical intertwining between religion and the state (and more broadly, politics) is also the focus of Turner's (2013) *The Religious and the Political*. The author's thematic area of focus registers what is widely perceived as a topic of central significance for societies around the globe – namely, the necessity to gain a better understanding of the varieties of entanglements between organized religion and the state, and an appreciation of the different ways in which these two institutions arrive at a *modus vivendi*. In this respect, social movements scholarship – such as in Davis and Robinson's (2012) study of welfare religious movements in Egypt, Israel, Italy, and the United States – offers raw material for reconsidering the processes and mechanisms that enable religious organizations to become successfully institutionalized in specific settings, even in explicit or implicit opposition to the state.

Multiple Modernities

A second research agenda focuses on the concept of “multiple modernities.” This research agenda in some ways complements the renewed interest in the historical intertwining between religion

and globalization. The origin of this research program lies in the work of S.N. Eisenstadt (1986, 2002, 2003). His perspective is largely derived from Karl Jaspers's argument about an “Axial Age” of civilizations (defined usually as the period approximately between 500 BC up until 700 AD). The central feature of that era is the rise of Universalist philosophies and world religions in the Afro-Eurasian landmass, including the Abrahamic religions, Greek philosophy, and Persian, Indian, and Chinese religions (Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism). This era is also seen as one in which a major pre-modern wave of globalization occurred (Therborn 2000). The central feature of this wave involves the construction and proliferation of world religions that enabled the transcendence of particularistic trends in favor of Universalist doctrines. The emergence of world religions further corresponds to an extension of commercial linkages and networks over the Euro-Asian landmass and is related to the political-military projects of several empires (Tehrani 2007).

From within these lenses, Eisenstadt (2002, 2003) argues that several distinct modernities come into existence. Western modernity represents just one of the various possible ways of entering into the modern world. For example, Arjomand (2004) argues that modernity's central challenge to Islam involves the implementation of constitutionalism, democratization, and human rights. In a sense, even Western modernity is not necessarily uniform. In fact, within Europe different historical trajectories exist, suggesting a multitude of distinct historical pathways (Spohn 2003). For this research program, the post-1500 “rise of the West” through colonialism and imperialism is seen as a second historical phase of a process that stretches far back into human history. Connecting the theme of multiple modernities with the problematic of secularization, researchers have extended the logic of multiple modernities into religion, by arguing in favor of the existence of multiple secularities (Burchardt and Wohlrab-Sahr 2013).

Religion, Culture, and Glocalization

The third major research agenda concerns the interface between religion and culture. Traditional viewpoints that marginalized culture have been superseded by a more intense attention to the links between culture and religion (for an overview focusing mainly on the U.S., see Edgell 2012). A good indication of this renewed interest is the appearance of journals focusing on the intersection between religion and culture, including the *Journal of Religion and Culture*, the *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*, *Culture and Religion*, and *Religion and American Culture*. The invocation of culture as a factor in the sociology of religion owes much to the rise of cultural sociology in the broader discipline. But in spite of the voluminous literature produced under the rubric of cultural sociology, discussions of the relationship between religion and globalization remain remarkably limited to the topic of secularization (for example, see Thompson 2011).

A more promising and innovative line of inquiry comes from the “spiritual revolution” thesis (Heelas et al. 2005). In its bare essence, the argument is that the decline of religion in the West is actually more apparent than real. While people declare themselves to be less religious, at the same time there is a vibrant movement from religion to spirituality. Spirituality translates into a loose or flexible understanding of the divine and is related to a less personified understanding of God. That argument has spearheaded an entire research agenda that inquires into a variety of spiritual practices that remain prominent in Western societies even though these are not widely seen as reflecting religious practices or being formally associated with a religion. Many of these practices are imported or adapted from non-Western contexts (such as yoga and meditation). Colin Campbell (2007) has suggested that during the post-World War II era the disenchanted West has been re-enchanted through imports from the East. This “Easternization” of the West has become a hot topic of debate and discussion. Although it represents a line of argument broader than just religiosity, it offers a fresh perspective

on the interplay between religion and culture. One of the great advantages of Campbell’s line of interpretation is the flexible relationship between East and West; these are not seen as fixed essences, as the “Orient” and the “Occident” of previous centuries. Moreover, Campbell’s analysis highlights the extent to which various practices – such as yoga or other forms of spiritualism – have been imported and adopted in the West without the actors’ explicit understanding or realization of their religious character. In itself this notion suggests the necessity of a broader understanding of “religion” beyond its Christian or Western conceptualizations.

Instead of attributing fixed essences to cultural units, then, it is possible to concentrate on the various processes referred to as indigenization, hybridization, or glocalization (Pieterse 2003; Burke 2009; for specific examples see Altglas 2010). These processes register the ability of religion to mold into the fabric of different communities in ways that connect it intimately with communal and local relations. Religion sheds its universal uniformity in favor of blending with locality. Global-local or glocal religion thus represents a “*genre* of expression, communication and legitimation” of collective and individual identities (Robertson 1991, p. 282; Robertson and Garret 1991, p. xv). Groups and individuals use religious tradition symbolically as emblematic of membership in an ethnic or national group. Both institutional avenues and private means are employed in this symbolic appropriation, and these are usually interwoven into a web of other associations and relationships.

Although communities continue to be formed around the notion of “locality,” this category is further divorced from its original connection with a specific geographical area and it can be transnationally and/or symbolically reconstituted (Kennedy and Roudometof 2002). These processes involve the construction of cultural hybrids that blend religious universalism with several forms of local (national or ethnic) particularisms. For example, consider the case of *Santo Daime*, a syncretic religion founded in the Amazon region of Brazil. It combines elements of folk Catholicism with influences of spiritualism,

African animism, and indigenous South American shamanism (see Dawson 2012). To mention once more an example from religious terrorism, Al Qaeda has been described as operating as a “glocal” (global-local) organization (Marret 2008).

Glocal religion involves the consideration of an entire range of responses as outcomes instead of a single master narrative of secularization and modernization (Beyer 2007). Based on a survey of the history of Eastern Christianity, Roudometof (2013, 2014) argues that it is possible to detect four forms of glocalization: indigenization, vernacularization, nationalization, and transnationalization. Whereas vernacularization involves the rise of vernacular languages (such as Greek or Latin or Arabic in the case of Islam) endowed with the symbolic ability of offering privileged access to the sacred, indigenization connects specific faiths with ethnic groups, whereby religion and culture are often fused into a single unit. Vernacularization was often promoted by empires, whereas indigenization was connected to the survival of particular ethnic groups. It is important to stress that this is *not* an exclusively contemporary phenomenon. The creation of distinct branches of Christianity – such as Orthodox and Catholic Christianity – bears the mark of this particularization of religious universalism. Nationalization connects the consolidation of specific nations with particular confessions and has been a popular strategy both in Western and Eastern Europe (Hastings 1997; Gorski 2000; Roudometof 2001). Finally, transnationalization has complemented religious nationalization by forcing groups to identify with specific religious traditions of real or imagined national homelands or to adopt a universalist vision of religion.

The applicability of glocalization in studies focusing on Asia is also considerable. In *Japanese Religions and Globalization*, Dessi (2013) offers a highly instructive study of the variety of glocalized adaptations of Japanese religions that highlights both inclusive and exclusive tendencies within Japanese forms of religiosity. Spickard (2004) has also studied the transnational expansion of *Sekai Kyusei-kyo* – a new Japanese religion – by specifically examining issues of

transnational religious coordination. Spickard argues that culture has shaped the religion’s local reception while local culture has further overturned initial organizational hierarchies and models. Additional examples of glocal religion, ranging from the transnational revival of Maya religiosity to religious hybrid rituals in the Caribbean, can be found in the “Glocal Religions” special issue of the e-journal *Religions* (Roudometof 2016). Even outside the realm of the social sciences, glocalization has been invoked as a conceptual vehicle to interpret Christianity’s adaptation strategies in China (Ng 2007), and has been debated as an interpretative strategy for public theology (Storrar 2004; Pearson 2007).

Future Directions

This chapter has sought to map some key developments in the relationship between the social scientific study of religion and globalization. The chapter stressed the significance of the interdisciplinary nature of the study of religion and traced the repercussions of the Western bias in the study of religion. In large part, this Western bias colluded with the use of secularization as the central concern in the field to produce perspectives that have tended to naturalize Western developments and to ignore non-Western parts of the globe. The chapter has further offered an overview of the gradual de-legitimization of the secularization paradigm and covered attempts to revitalize or reframe the terms of the secularization debate. Overall, the presentation here has stressed the discontinuity between research agendas that focus on secularization and globalization. Traditionally, secularization has contributed to a naturalization of Western cultural specificity whereas deviations or divergences from the Western developmental model of social change were attributed to cultural factors. From the author’s point of view, the emergence of globalization as a new research agenda or paradigm in the study of religion registers a de-centering of secularization and modernization perspectives. However, as the revitalization of the secularization

debate has demonstrated, there is certainly renewed interest in this topic.

This chapter has sought to outline the articulation of globalization in the social scientific study of religion by stressing those explanatory mechanisms and thematic issues that clearly distinguish between secularization and globalization. The chapter has stressed the contested nature of globalization and inquired into different interpretations of key facets of globalization by various theorists. It has further traced the consequences of globalization for re-orienting research agendas in the study of religion. Theoretically, the chapter has stressed the notions of religious relativization, the role of globalization in promoting religious revivals, and the growth of de-territorialized or transnational religiosity as conceptual vehicles that offer important new insights that address newfound scholarly concerns that are not sufficiently addressed by secularization.

The chapter has specifically mentioned cases and examples that go beyond the traditional focus of scholarship. Among others, specific instances mentioned include: the Easternization of the West, the “spiritual revolution” and the study of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. These are meant only as examples of the growing range of topics and areas of interest. The inclusion of new regional experiences and topics of renewed interest (such as spiritualism) is meant to help the field transcend its traditional roots in the study of Christianity and in Western modernization, and to grow by attempting to engage with diverse historical eras and cultural contexts. In the course of this chapter’s discussion, the relationship between the literature on globalization and the literature on transnational religion was also addressed. This underscores the complementary nature of work on globalization and scholarship on Transnational Studies.

In its last section, the chapter addressed some new promising areas of inquiry on the relationship between religion and globalization. The first of these areas is the renewed interest in the intersection of historical sociology and the study of religion. This research agenda offers a long-term perspective that provides the necessary historical depth for understanding shifts in the role of reli-

gion in society. The second area concerns the application of the multiple modernities agenda to the study of religion. In many respects, it operates in conjunction with the first one, as the multiple modernities agenda has focused on long-term trends instigated by the Axial Age of civilizations.

The third area concerns the renewed interest in the relationship between culture and religion. This is a multifaceted and growing area of inquiry that can be integrated into diverse disciplines and subfields. Of key significance for its development are the growing realization of the significance of global-local (or glocal) religion and the multitude of glocal cultural hybrids made possible by divergent combinations of the local and the global. In this regard, the chapter has highlighted the significance of the notion of glocalization for the study of new forms of religious hybrids and syncretism. Transnational and cross-cultural connections are increasingly a feature of everyday life in the twenty-first century, and that in turn means that their study is certain to attract the attention of new generations of researchers and scholars.

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Stephen Offutt and Grant Miller

Abstract

In this chapter we explore the ways in which transnational religious connections change communities of faith and their relationships with society. We explain the content and multi-directional nature of transnational religious flows, including the push and pull factors that draw such flows across borders. We argue that transnational religious connections create organizational and cultural change in local houses of worship and alter the global power dynamics within international religious communities. Transnational religious connections also change the way people of faith interact with public institutions and people of other faiths. Sometimes this results in positive interactions that allow religious values to strengthen civil society; sometimes it increases conflict between groups. What is clear is that transnational religious connections are an important part of contemporary global society and have significant power to create social and religious change.

On May 22, 2015, Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was martyred in El Salvador's bloody civil war 35 years earlier, was beatified. Many of the 250,000 people in attendance were transnational visitors. A Salvadoran priest who had immigrated to the United States as a boy during the war returned home for the event. He brought 15 of his parishioners; most were first time

visitors to El Salvador. Other Salvadorans who were living abroad returned with family and close friends; they stayed for a week or more and visited their old neighborhoods in addition to attending the beatification. Grassroots visitors like these were joined by a more elite crowd: political leaders including the presidents of Ecuador and Panama attended. Other dignitaries such as United States' President Barack Obama issued statements celebrating the event from their home countries. Religious leaders also attended: seven Cardinals, 90 bishops, and well over 1000 priests arrived not just from the Americas but also Asia, Europe, and

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Africa. The media provided extensive coverage of the event. Broadcasts, websites, and radio addresses sent live reports around the world.

During Romero's beatification a rare solar halo, or a ring of light around the sun, appeared. Many felt that it was a transcendent moment, a sign that God was present (there are also scientific explanations for the appearance of solar halos). The halo appeared as relics from Romero's ministry were being displayed on stage and the choir was leading the crowd in the traditional "Gloria." One priest said that "the halo was the last sign that the heavens were saying 'yes, he is a saint, he is with us'" (Harris 2015). Another priest categorized the halo's appearance as a miracle.

The solar halo was atypical for a religious gathering; the high levels of transnational activity surrounding the beatification was not. Transnational religious people, communication, goods and services now flow through most religious events, whether in major celebrations such as the beatification or in the weekly services of houses of worship anywhere in the world. The transnational element of religion is simply a fact of life.

Transnationalism as an academic term is still relatively new. It originated and grew within the literature on migration (see Kivisto's Chap. 27 on "International Migration" in this volume). The first definition for the term may have been offered by Basch et al. (1994, p. 6), who argued that transnationalism refers to "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement." In line with this definition, some scholarship on religion has contributed to our understanding of how religion intersects with contemporary migratory processes. Scholars have explored religious remittances that circulate within transnational spaces created by migration (Levitt 1998, 2007; Adogame 2013). They have also pointed to the important roles religious institutions (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; Yang and Ebaugh 2001) and religious identity (Bowen 2004) play in knitting together transnational communities that were created by migration. Such scholarship is important partly because migration is so prominent in

contemporary society – there were 232 million international immigrants around the world in 2013, according to the United Nations Population Fund (2015) – and partly because it helps us understand the religious nature of transnational migration.

Even the earliest scholars of transnational migration, however, acknowledged the impact of transnational activity on non-migrants as well as migrants (Levitt 1998). Kennedy and Roudometof (2002, p. 1) state that transnational relationships are not confined to immigrants, but rather "extend into and shape the lives of people engaged in many other kinds of associations, clubs, and informal networks as well as in cultural life at large." Indeed, this expanded lens is part of the appeal of the transnational approach: it allows scholars to study people migrating and those left behind, as well as the many other cross-border dynamics at work in today's globalized world.

Similarly, some scholarship on religion and transnationalism includes transnational dimensions of religion that are not related to migration (Wuthnow and Offutt 2008). Migration in this literature remains important as it can tell us much about the nature of religion itself. Levitt and Jaworski (2007, p. 140) argue that "religion supports and is itself transformed by all aspects of the migration experience—the journey, the process of settlement, and the emergence of ethnic and transnational ties." Scholars who look beyond migration benefit from these insights. They also note that religion is part of many other types of transnational connections, activities, identities, and communities. These too must be studied and analyzed.

The present chapter is written with the broader topic of the transnational dimensions of religion in mind. It focuses specifically on transnational religious connections rather than on identity or other transnational concepts. We define transnational connections as flows of people, information, goods, services, and other resources across national boundaries (Hannerz 1996; Kellner 2002; Wuthnow and Offutt 2008).

One of the tasks of the early scholarship in this field was to show that religious communities have indeed become transnational (Wuthnow and

Offutt 2008). It confronted views of global religious communities that discounted the importance of transnational ties (Jenkins 2002). It also countered research which vastly underplayed the amount of transnational activity in which most American congregations were engaged (Chaves 2004; Green 2003). Although ample evidence existed to this effect in religious communities and organizations everywhere, the scholarly case had not yet been made.

In this chapter we move on from such initial debates to explore the ways that transnational realities matter for contemporary religious communities. Specifically, we ask: how do transnational religious connections change religious communities and their relationships with society? We argue that transnational religious connections create organizational and cultural change in local houses of worship and alter the global power dynamics within international religious communities. Transnational religious connections also change the way people of faith interact with public institutions and people of other faiths. Sometimes this results in positive interactions that allow religious values to strengthen civil society; sometimes it increases conflict between groups. What is clear is that transnational religious connections have significant power to create social and religious change.

Religion and transnationalism as an area of scholarship has recently experienced cross-cutting trends. On the one hand, its importance has continued to grow, as has been witnessed by the number of times key pieces of scholarship on the topic have been cited. Peggy Levitt, the best known scholar of transnational religion, has been cited widely. By 2015, Levitt and Schiller's (2004) article had been cited 1274 times and Levitt and Jaworsky's (2007) article had been cited 591 times, according to Google Scholar. Such interest is consistent with the exponential growth that scholarship on transnationalism has experienced more generally. Worldcat, for example, catalogued more than 6000 books published from 2007 to 2015 with the term "transnationalism" in the title. In the *Social Science Abstracts* database, the number of articles with transnational as a keyword leaped from just a handful of

articles in the 1980s to more than 1300 in 2003 (Cano 2005). Transnational studies are clearly a growth industry in the academy.

And yet relatively few books and articles have directly studied religion and transnationalism. From 2007–2015, only eight articles using the term "transnational" or "transnationalism" in the title appeared in the three most important U.S. based sociology of religion journals combined -- *Journal for the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, *Sociology of Religion*, and *Review of Religious Research*. To sum up these two cross-cutting trends, increasing amounts of scholarship on religion acknowledge the transnational dimensions of the topic under study but a dearth of scholarship exists in the social scientific study of religion that actually pushes back the frontiers of our knowledge in this area.

There are compelling reasons to increase the amount of scholarship on transnational religion. The first is the ubiquitous nature of transnational activity in religious life. No member of a faith community can escape its transnational dimensions for long. Second, local congregations are changing as they become integrated into transnational life and flows. Short term mission trips may be the most prevalent example. Third, power is accumulated and articulated differently by transnational religious communities. This has internal and external consequences for a faith community. Fourth, values, beliefs, and practices change through transnational activities. It would be helpful to better understand the nature and trajectory of those changes. Finally, religious transnationalism has a significant impact on global civil society more generally. Put simply, transnationalism influences local religious communities and transnational religious communities influence the world around them; we know far too little about how and why these dynamics occur.

We organize this chapter in the following way. First, we briefly review the broader (and burgeoning) transnational field with the intent to appropriately situate the literature on religion and transnationalism. Second, we review what we know about contemporary trends in transnational religion, highlighting those areas that effect change in religious communities. Third, we

analyze the kinds of changes that transnational religious flows create in religious communities. Finally, we suggest directions for future research. Throughout the chapter, we privilege the literature in the sociology of religion. But we also draw on other disciplines which have taken up this topic – a move that enriches and cross pollinates the still growing corpus of transnationalism literature within the sociology of religion. We pay particular attention to literature from the fields of anthropology and missiology.

Transnationalism: Field Overview

Transnationalism is a cross-disciplinary field. It is populated by anthropologists, sociologists, missiologists, economists, political scientists, legal scholars, historians and demographers. Such an interdisciplinary community must find some points of common analysis. Levitt and Khagram (2008, p. 2) accordingly identify five “intellectual foundations” of transnational studies: empirical, methodological, theoretical, philosophical and public. These foundations, while being explored through the lens of a variety of disciplines (Vertovec 2010), help to provide common themes across the broad landscape of transnational studies.

Across disciplines, the categories most commonly used in the study of transnationalism are micro (grassroots), meso (social and institutional focus), and macro (structural analysis) levels of study. Micro studies promote a “transnationalism from below” approach that focuses on the “daily lives, activities and social relationships” of “everyday people” (Ali-Ali and Koser 2002, p. 2). Meso level studies emphasize the importance of social ties in transnational activity, be they between individuals or between institutions (Faist 1997). Castles and Miller (2009, p. 30) describe “intermediate meso-structures” as individuals, groups or institutions that “take on the role of mediating between migrants and political or economic institutions.” Macro level studies look at global power perspectives and paradigms (Schiller and Faist 2010). They note power inequalities across regions and nation states as

well as between local communities and multinational corporations or other non-state actors. By focusing on different layers of activity, the micro-meso-macro system of analysis has effectively captured many important elements of contemporary transnationalism.

Other ways to think about transnationalism have also emerged. Some scholars are focusing on social spaces in which transnationalism occurs (Faist et al. 2013). Cities are the primary area of interest. Hannerz (1996, p. 13) argues that cities “are good to think with, as we try to grasp the networks of relationships which organize the global ecumene of today. They are places with especially intricate internal goings-on, and at the same time reach out widely into the world, and toward one another.” The cheaper and easier transportation and communications that spur on transnational activity are especially present in urban areas. Education and academic opportunities also frequently carry a transnational dimension (Arthur et al. 2012; Hanciles 2008), and these too are primarily urban. Foner (2010, p. 58) thus applies a “city as context” approach to studying immigration in New York City, while Schiller and Caglar (2011) show how transnational urbanites fight for position in a global hierarchy. Nation states garner less attention than cities in this literature but should not be ignored. Collyer and King (2015) bring to light the role of nation states by looking at how states attempt to control transnational activities and relationships. Finally, global routes of migration are important for transnational study. Along such routes “modes of migrant transnationalism are negotiated within or alongside everyday interactions and cross-cutting ties between a number of groups- often other immigrants” (Vertovec 2010, p. 6). By identifying transnationalism’s social spaces, scholars overcome one of the subject’s surprisingly tricky empirical puzzles: where, in a very concrete way, is transnationalism?

A second innovative approach to transnational studies attempts to synthesize the macro, meso, and micro levels of transnationalism. In the past, a “canyon” has divided those who prefer macro and micro approaches (Brettell and Hollifield 2000). Understanding the difference between the two is

still important: Roudometof, in his Chap. 25 on “Globalization” in this volume, aptly distinguishes between the “processes” of globalization and the “lived experiences” of transnationalism. Vertovec (2010, 14) builds off such a distinction; he calls on researchers to make “policy evaluations and recommendations” based on their understanding of the complex lives and struggles of today’s immigrants. Appadurai (2013, 269–270) takes this idea a step further by calling on the immigrants themselves to become researchers. Appadurai argues that citizen groups need tools to study and analyze their own transnational lives and communities in ways that help them overcome knowledge gaps, negotiate risks and opportunities, and shape their own futures. It may be too early to know if a significant body of literature will follow from these ideas and, if so, whether it will yield important theoretical and policy relevant knowledge.

In the midst of these scholarly innovations, migration remains the primary topic of transnational scholarship. Migration is creating social change on a grand scale. About 3% of people on earth are defined as “international migrants.” Levitt and Jaworski (2007, p. 132) state that “although the numbers who engage in regular transnational practices may be fairly small, those who engage in occasional, informal transnational activities ... are much greater.” Thus, the cumulative effect of all these efforts “can alter the economies, values, and practices of entire regions.” As is often noted, the sheer scale of migration around the globe is unprecedented in human history, and the impact it has reverberates far beyond just those who are on the move.

Transnational immigrants encounter both risks and opportunities. They may find new and more productive lives. But the inherent vulnerability, especially of undocumented migrants, also means that calamity could befall them along the journey or after they arrive (Vertovec 2010). The underlying tension of migration lies, according to Appadurai (2013, p. 295), between the “ethics of possibility” and hope and the “ethics of probability” and risk. In sum, there are winners and losers in transnational communities, and chance plays a significant role in determining which fate befalls any given immigrant.

Religion has a clear and important place in the current panorama of transnational studies. Religion has facilitated transnational communities for centuries and continues to do so today. Levitt (2007, pp. 12–13) states that “religion is the ultimate boundary crosser” that also “transcends the boundaries of time because it allows followers to feel part of a chain of memory, connected to a past, a present, and a future.” Levitt (2007, pp. 169–72) further argues “transnational actors are natural religious diplomats” with “the best resume for today’s world...serving as intermediaries between parties who desperately need to understand each other.” Schiller, et al. (2011) point to a similar “cosmopolitan sociability” that builds on “inclusiveness” and “shared human experience” to overcome divisions. Contrary to observers who claim we are in a secular age, religion plays an important role in our contemporary and increasingly transnational world.

Religion can play both a positive and negative role in transnational society. It often “simultaneously enables and disempowers” (Cadge et al. 2011, p. 442). Transnational migrants are seen shaping and “exporting both more moderate and more conservative versions of faith, often with political and social consequences” (Levitt and Jaworski 2007, p. 141). Levitt (2007, p. 7) states that “true religious pluralism means making more than just superficial room for their voices. Given current world events and the religious extremism that is often behind them, we can’t afford not to listen.”

Scholars also discover unexpected characteristics of religion when it is in a transnational setting. African Christianities, for example, carry within them remarkable diversity and pluralism (Sanneh 2008). This remains true as immigrants from Africa extend their religious communities into Europe and the United States. African Christians do not become less religious when they take up residence in the West (Ter Haar 2009). Rather, African Christianities simultaneously exist as transnational religious communities and as newly legitimate parts of European and American religious ecologies (Adogame 2013). Such discoveries about religion as it is manifested in a transnational condition contrib-

ute to our understanding of religion's basic characteristics.

Transnational Religious Connections: Content, Direction, and Organization

In order to understand how transnational religious connections change religious communities and their relationship with society, it is helpful to review what we know about them. In this section we outline the origins of transnational religious connections and then review their content, the directions they flow, and their social organization.

Why Transnational Religious Connections Exist

There are two key reasons why transnational religious connections exist. First, many religions, particularly the world religions, were always meant to be transnational and transcultural. Rudolph (1997, p. 1) explains that "religious communities are among the oldest of transnationals: Sufi orders, Catholic missionaries, and Buddhist monks carried word and praxis across vast spaces before these places became nation states or even states." The early Christian faith spread precisely because "translation" was a critical component of its DNA; how Greek and Hebrew communities negotiated the meaning of the gospel and became a transnational, transcultural community of faith is a central New Testament theme (Walls 1996). Later, the Catholic Church became the dominant institution of globalization in the medieval period, predating the colonial empires and crossing more ethnic and racial groups and territories than did those empires. Other world religions crossed similar boundaries. Like the Catholic case, they were both limited and empowered by global political and economic dynamics.

Most world religions are anchored in a physical point of origin that helps to shape their official identities, but they nonetheless enjoy

multi-directional flows of transnational communication and culture. Again, the Rome-based Catholic Church is a case in point. Even as Rome assumed a dominant position in the medieval world, "it was," claims Sanneh (1989, p. 94), "the extraordinary multiplicity of mother-tongue idioms that became the subject of Christian mission rather than the cosmopolitan values of an ascendant West." More recently, a similar multi-directional orientation has marked the growth of the Pentecostal movement. Revivals occurred in far flung places that were (sometimes weakly) transnationally connected (Adogame 2013; Kalu et al. 2010; Wilson 2011, Robert 2009, Shaw 2010). These included but were not limited to Chile, India, Los Angeles, South Africa, and Uganda.

The East African Revival provides a particularly interesting case. Walls (2002, p. 46) describes the East African Revival as a "remarkable and essentially African phenomenon... which after well over half a century stubbornly refuses to go away." From the beginning this revival has appeared to outsiders as "an unlikely blend of Wesleyan-Anglican theology, Pentecostal fervor and African passion ... a strange mix of the local and global" whereas to insiders "it all made sense" (Noll 2009, pp. 186–87). The East African Revival remains a "significant force" in Uganda, with a legacy that is "fundamental to the language and culture of evangelicalism in East Africa as a whole" (Ward et al. 2013, p. 9). Its impact can also be seen in Tanzania, where Christian revival meetings continue to fill soccer stadiums. Such events allow the church to spread across diverse language groups and, in the contemporary era, to the United States, where Tanzanians living in diaspora watch videos of the meetings and share in the revival experience.

Globalization is the second key reason that transnationalism exists (see Roudometof's Chap. 25 on "Globalization" in this volume). Globalization produces transnational networks, including religious ones (Hulwelmeier and Krause 2010). The hallmarks of globalization include improvements in technology, transportation and communication, and fewer political

obstacles to flows of people, goods, and services. Csordas (2007, p. 186) argues that “the increasing articulation of the world social system generates an ideological impulse towards formulations of universal culture such as the Catholic charismatic movement.” Within such global dynamics, religious practices of the Nigerian Yoruba tribe can be found in Cuba and Tzu Chi, a Taiwanese Buddhist foundation, has a Houston-based office and programs in Nepal, Haiti, and Los Angeles. These kinds of religious networks connect people who share deeply seated values and beliefs. While even religious networks can conjure up the latest fad in global pop culture, they more often help network members negotiate the shallow and quickly changing currents of contemporary societies.

Content

“Social remittances,” a term coined by Levitt, is perhaps the most useful way of talking about the content of transnational religious flows. Levitt (2001, p. 11) defines social remittances as “the ideas, behaviors, and social capital that flow from receiving to sending communities” that become “tools with which ordinary individuals create global culture at the local level.” Social remittances change migrants’ culture of origin both positively and negatively. They also help to stimulate the next round of migration by providing future migrants with an “enhanced tool kit” (Levitt 2001, p. 55). In Levitt’s typology of social remittances, normative structures consist of ideas, values, and beliefs. Systems of practice consist of actions shaped by normative structures and social capital consists of goodwill that is earned and transferable, able to be cashed in back home (Levitt 2001, pp. 61–62).

Social remittances and the dynamics of their transmission and reception are complex. Hannerz (1996, p. 28) explains the “local” is the “arena where the global, what has been local somewhere else, also has some chance of making itself at home,” although it is “not entirely predictable or entirely unpredictable who’ll turn out to set meanings acquired from afar in local circulation.” He

explains that even if they are “transmitted through telephone calls, cassettes, family videotapes and gift parcels, some of the meanings and meaningful forms of transnational life, at least, may well strike deep in the people’s hearts and minds” (Hannerz 1996, p. 100). Appadurai (1996, p. 35) describes how, in a world of mediascapes, the line between real and imaginary landscapes can become blurred. Hannerz (1996, p. 101) elaborates on mediascapes by stating that “everybody almost everywhere is more than ever before aware of many possible lives; fantasy has become a major social practice.”

The transnational flows upon which such complexity of meaning is built fall into two basic categories: people and resources. First, people flows include migration, religious workers, short term volunteers, and people who travel internationally for work or leisure. Second, resource flows include the movement of financial remittances, religious funding, humanitarian aid, religious products, and information across borders (Wuthnow and Offutt 2008). Theological ideas, values, and beliefs are embedded in such flows as they are often sent via “recorded audio and video tapes of leader’s sermons and major church programmes” (Adogame 2013, p. 119). Due to their breadth and rapid growth, transnational religious flows have the ability to permeate the everyday lives of people around the world.

Directionality

The multidirectional nature of transnational religious flows demonstrates both durability and change. The continuing heavy flows from the West to other destinations are a demonstration of durability. The creation of the European world system from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, and the predominance of the United States within that system since the early part of the twentieth century, allows the West to continue to influence the globe in uneven ways (Wallerstein 1974). This extends to its religious influence. Religious news and broadcasts, religious publications and educational materials, and professional and volunteer religious personnel continue to

flow out of the United States and Europe. Hence, one can find books by U.S. author John Piper in church libraries throughout Latin America; Centers of Islamic Studies housed in the West produce knowledge used in Asia and the Middle East; and the American Jewish community maintains significant relationships and influence in the state of Israel and beyond. In sum, traditional centers of political and economic power generate high volumes of religious flows.

Such durability exists alongside the rapid emergence of new, multi-layered transnational flows. Globalization's new "winners" – most notably China, but also countries like Brazil, India, Nigeria, South Africa and South Korea – are changing global religious dynamics. All of these countries continue to receive missionaries and other religious resources. But they now export increasing volumes of religious people and goods. In South Korea, "super" churches, or churches with over 10,000 members (and in several cases over 50,000 members), help to facilitate this process. The Seoul-based Yoido Full Gospel Church is the largest church in the world. Its networks span the globe and it has invested heavily in a hospital that it is building in North Korea. Onnuri Community Church, another Korean super church, has several layers of transnational ties. Onnuri holds services in eleven languages for the growing immigrant community in Korea. The church also has numerous staff members who grew up in the U.S. and continue to have close family ties to America. Finally, Onnuri sends missionaries to countries across Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, with a particular interest in Japan. The super or megachurch model is one of several effective strategies that religious groups in emerging economies use to create transnational religious influence.

Even countries with modest economic power are increasing their transnational religious activity. A local church in Ghana called the Church of Pentecost Kaneshie, for example, teaches its congregants about international mission activities and donated roughly \$24,000 to missions in 2014 (Onyinah 2015). Likewise, the Mavuno Church in Nairobi has planted churches in Malawi, Zambia, Rwanda, and Germany (Shaw and Gitau

2015). Such formal initiatives are accompanied by informal transnational religious connections. Members of African Initiated Churches in Zimbabwe often board buses for Malawi or Tanzania to participate in weddings or other religious rituals. In Myanmar, there are many Baptists among the Karen tribe. They regularly cross the border into Thailand for both political and religious reasons. The point of these examples is to show that even countries that do not flex a great deal of economic might are able to generate transnational religious flows.

Push and Pull Factors

Although today's religious flows appear (and sometimes are) chaotic, global push and pull factors do create general flow patterns. We identify six such factors: birth places or centers of world religions, spiritual pilgrimages, missionary impulse, humanitarian crises and chronic poverty, urban centers, and economic hardship and political persecution. We also mention circular religious transnational flows, which are structurally different but are catalyzed by many of the same religious forces.

First, birth places or centers of world religions draw people and resources from around the world. Jerusalem, Mecca, Rome, the Indus River Valley, and Lumbini are among the most prominent such destinations. Israel had 3.54 million tourists in 2013 (Jewish Virtual Library 2015). 53% of these tourists were Christians, the largest number of these coming from the United States, but with significant flows from Africa, Asia, and Europe (Reinstein 2014). About 15 million Muslims visit Mecca each year. For the *Hajj* itself, the number grew from 24,000 in 1941 to roughly 1,400,000 coming from 188 different countries in 2013 (Huda 2015). In Rome, the Vatican is limiting the number of visitors to the Sistene chapel to six million per year in order to maintain its preservation (Pullella 2014). Large numbers of international visitors each year also flow through the Indus River Valley and Lumbini, the birth places of Hinduism and Buddhism, respectively.

Second, spiritual pilgrimages are a growth industry in contemporary global society. Bradley

(2009, pp. 9–11) defines pilgrimage as a “departure from daily life in search of spiritual well-being.” Travels to the birthplaces just mentioned are an important part of this dynamic, but holy sites exist around the world. Taize, France, for example, is currently “one of the world’s most important sites of Christian pilgrimage” (BBC 2014). The ecumenical Christian community at Taize receives 100,000 visitors annually. Youth from every continent are welcomed to join the community as it claims to “live out the Christian gospel in a spirit of joy, simplicity and reconciliation” (Bradley 2009, p. 185).

Spiritual pilgrimages attract the extremely faithful and those who are still searching for a religious identity. The growing numbers of people (especially Americans) who identify as “spiritual but not religious” find pilgrimages helpful. Books targeting this audience explain how to rediscover ancient elements of religious practice (George 2006; Foster 2010). People with diverse religious perspectives thus find themselves “chasing Francis,” the wandering saint from Assisi (Cron 2013; Bradley 2009) or seeking other centuries old routes. The 1200 year-old pilgrimage of the *Camino de Santiago* through France and Spain to the shrine of St. James has enjoyed renewed popularity with as many as 100,000 pilgrims annually (Bradley 2009, p. 99). Pilgrims have been following the footsteps of St. Columba to the Scottish island of Iona for 1400 years. Today, the site receives 250,000 visitors each year (Bradley 2009, p. 120). In Ireland, as many as 40,000 people a year climb Croagh Patrick to make a pilgrimage of penance. St. Patrick is believed to have climbed this mountain 1500 years ago to pray and fast for forty days and nights (Cooke 2015). In this way, ancient religious practices are being revitalized and sometimes completely reshaped. They may not be as physically demanding for current pilgrims as they were in centuries past, but they appear to still be laden with religious meaning. The total number of visitors continues to soar.

Third, transnational flows are generated by the missionary impulse, or the desire to introduce a religion in new places. Christianity and Islam are particularly interested in crossing boundaries to

share their faiths. Missionaries are obviously central here, and there are roughly 400,000 U.S. missionaries according to Johnson (2014). But the construction of churches and mosques, media conglomerates, and the diverse activities of non-profit organizations are all part of this process. The world’s major religions have been “winners” in the transnational era; their gains have often come at the expense of localized religions such as animism or beliefs in local spirits. Sometimes this process has involved an integration of global and local belief systems that creates diversity and syncretism within the larger world religions. Heterodox versions of Christianity, for example, appear in some African Independent Churches (Jenkins 2002). An example is the late Isaiah Shembe’s movement in southern Africa, where many members believe Shembe has messianic powers while continuing to believe in the messianic powers of Jesus. Such dynamics are a reminder that transnational connections can lead to interesting religious innovations.

Fourth, transnational religious flows seek to alleviate humanitarian crises and chronic poverty. People of faith have historically responded to physical suffering. In recent years, tsunamis along the Pacific coast, earthquakes in Central America and the Caribbean, wars in Africa and the Middle East, and hurricanes and monsoons around the world have evoked responses from many different faith communities. The resulting flows of people and resources often stay within a faith community as they cross borders. Salvation Army members in Britain, for example, may send money to Salvation Army representatives in Albania or Ukraine. Once in the destination country, such resources are administered by institutions that implement disaster and relief programs. Other religiously motivated humanitarian flows cross religious as well as national borders. When natural disasters strike, Buddhists may help primarily Catholic countries, as Tzu Chi did in El Salvador, or Christians may send aid to predominantly Muslim countries such as Syria, and so on. In particularly severe disasters, it is likely that representatives of multiple world religions will cross borders, cultures, and religious lines to provide some kind of humanitarian assistance.

Fifth, global cities are a pull factor for religious flows. As noted in the previous section, cities are fertile ground for transnational life and study. Religion is no exception. African churches in Queens and the Bronx link their immigrant members to home congregations in Ghana, Nigeria, and elsewhere (Gornick 2010). Cosmopolitan churches, like the Amsterdam branch of Hillsong, an Australian megachurch, draw the young and internationally mobile crowd (Klaver 2015). Institutions of higher education are also often located in cities. When international students arrive in a new place, they show particular interest in exploring religious faiths and traditions (Arthur et al. 2012; Hanciles 2008; Williams 2013). Finally, religious organizations in Latin America and Africa almost always establish offices in capital cities. They do so in part to carry on transnational communications and relationships (Offutt 2015). Because cities have superior infrastructures, draw large numbers of immigrants, and play an important role in organizing global society (Sassen 2012), they also influence patterns and volumes of transnational religious connections.

Sixth, economic hardship and political persecution push large volumes of people across borders. Economic hardship is the greatest single push factor for migration. Political persecution also generates immigrants. The decimation of Syria beginning in 2011 has created over four million refugees (Syria Regional Refugee Response 2015). This outpouring of people from Syria created transnational religious activity throughout the Middle East, Europe, and in parts of Asia and North America. Most that cross borders for these reasons are vulnerable, and communities of faith often respond to their needs. In the 1980s many U.S. churches joined the sanctuary movement in an effort to provide safe havens for Central American refugees (Smith 1996). Some of these efforts resulted in long lasting relationships between houses of worship in the U.S. and Nicaragua, as well as other countries in the region. These kinds of relationships are generated on a more informal basis in various hotspots of contemporary international migration.

Intermingled with push and pull dynamics are circular transnational religious flows. Koser notes that “migrants today are often more able to return home for a short time and then migrate again in ways that spur debate about how this circular migration contributes to development” (Koser 2007, p. 51). This is true for seasonal work that Mexicans do in California. Mining-based migration in South Africa from several of its southern African neighbors has long functioned in this manner. China’s extraordinary internal migration is also often circular in orientation. Circular migration may be a subspecies of today’s transnational approach to migration, but it also has much deeper historical roots than today’s manifestation.

Religious flows exist within these circular migration patterns. Indeed, circular flows are particularly amenable to migrants and other religious travelers who do not wish to leave one community permanently as they venture off to new countries and new communities. “Sojourning” is occurring at unprecedented levels as circular and temporary migration seem “set to become a more dominant norm” in the future of migration (Koser 2007, p. 110). In Africa, the “increasing itinerancy of religious leaders, freelance evangelists and members between the homeland and diasporic spaces cannot be over-emphasized” (Adogame 2013, p. 162). Religious transnationalism and “geo-mobility” of African Christians is also increasing Ghana’s religious diversity (Adogame 2010; Asamoah-Gyadu and Ludwig 2011).

Social Organization

While push and pull factors establish general pathways for transnational flows globally, local people employ different kinds of social institutions to help direct such flows at a grassroots level. Within the migration experience, various strategies exist for doing this. Levitt (2004, pp. 2–3) notes three such strategies employed by different types of religious migrants. The “extended strategy” is used most often by Catholics and it allows migrants to move “almost

seamlessly between sending and receiving country parishes.” The “negotiated strategy” is most often used by Protestants. It also helps to incorporate migrants into cross-border organizational linkages, but which organizations become involved and how they connect to one another is decided on a case-by-case basis. Finally, the “re-created strategy” is used predominantly by Hindus in Levitt’s study. This strategy “strongly reinforces members’ ties to their home country. ... Many of these are structured like franchises or chapters of sending country religious organizations” (Levitt 2004, p. 3). Levitt argues that the recreated strategy can diminish members’ social integration in a receiving country. But once in the U.S., all these strategies tend to be connected to a congregational model of organization, to which immigrant churches regardless of tradition frequently conform (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000).

Other types of social organizations also help to channel the religious flows coursing through global civil society. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become critical to this process. Schnable (2014) notes that more than 10,000 NGOs have been founded just by Americans since 1990, and that more than \$29 billion flows through NGOs annually. In contemporary global civil society, it is hard to underestimate the prevalence of NGOs and the role that they play in providing transnational linkages. Schnable argues that as NGOs link people transnationally, religion provides these organizations with frames, or ways of thinking about relief and development, modes of action that are familiar to the faithful in multiple religious sites, and networks through which money and volunteers flow. Critically, Schnable shows that religion is used in these ways not just by NGOs that have traditionally been labeled as faith based, but also by the non-religious NGOs as well.

In this section we show that transnational religious flows are ubiquitous in contemporary global society. The content and direction of the things that flow through these connections varies tremendously, as do the places that they link. Such variation allows for transnational connections to have wide ranging effects. In the next section we focus on a few of the more important

ways transnational religious connections affect religious communities.

Changes Wrought by Transnational Religious Connections

Robbins (2009) compares “transcendent” and “transnational” dynamics in contemporary religion and argues that transcendence is more powerful, more able to achieve its desired ends, and more central to religion’s existence than the transnational dimensions of religious communities. Robbins’ work is a good reminder of the central element of religion – connecting people to the transcendent-- and it serves to keep the claims found in our argument in perspective. It recalls our opening example of Romero’s beatification and the importance of the appearance of the solar halo at that event. However, it remains true that transnational connections *do* change religious communities and their relationship with society. In this section we explain some of these changes and how they occur.

How Transnational Religious Connections Change Religious Communities

Transnational religious connections change religious communities in at least three ways: (1) organizationally (at the national and congregational levels), (2) culturally, and (3) in terms of shifting global power dynamics.

The transnational era is forcing national faith communities to change the way they engage with the world. For American Christians, this is simply the most recent chapter in a history of organizational adaptations. Wuthnow (2009) traces the four major organizational innovations that Christians in the U.S. have used over time: (1) the denominational boards of the nineteenth century that were used to send America’s first missionaries; (2) independent agencies that operated outside of denominational structures emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century; (3) the meteoric rise of faith-based nongov-

ernmental organizations (NGOs) in the post-World War II era; and (4) more direct approaches that have recently been devised by local congregations. All four organizational strategies are still being employed by U.S. Christians. The fourth approach has had the greatest recent impact on people in the pews because it has made transnational initiatives more personal, participatory, relational, and plentiful.

The emergence of short term missions (STMs) is a significant part of this story. Nearly 1.6 million adults from the U.S. travel abroad on STMs each year (Wuthnow 2009). Most who study STMs agree that the numbers of youths who go on such trips far surpass the numbers of adults. The short term mission movement is now a global phenomenon, with STMs originating in every region of the world (Offutt 2011). The most reliable data comes from the American context where, in 2012, 28 % of U.S. congregations sponsored a trip that crossed borders (Chaves, Anderson, and Eagle 2014). It is now almost inconceivable to imagine youth ministry in middle- and upper-class churches without short term mission trips (Priest 2008). In just a few decades, STMs have gone from being nearly non-existent to being a taken for granted part of church programming.

The introduction of STMs has created changes in local congregations. Perhaps the most important is that it creates the ability for lay people to do ministry in far off places. Congregations have always sought to serve their local communities – this is embedded in the basic congregational template (Ammerman 2005). But never before has congregational life included regularly sending local members to remote ministry locations. This kind of transnational activity is a genuinely new wrinkle in how congregations operate and it should force sociologists to rethink what we know about the cultures and environments of local religious organizations.

STMs also redirect finances within congregations. Americans may spend as much as \$2.7 billion annually on STMs (Wuthnow 2009). These monies come both from new sources that have been raised specifically for such trips (through car washes and other fundraising activities) and

from money that has been redirected to STMs from other congregational initiatives. Redirecting funds can create conflict within congregations and it can deemphasize or completely eliminate the congregational initiatives that are losing out to STM initiatives.

Other elements of transnational life also change how religious communities organize themselves. Tanzanians who have left their homes use phone prayer lines to stay connected and pray together daily. Rather than having a simple neighborhood prayer meeting, a Tanzanian pastor now leads a phone prayer line that connects more than forty people from eighteen different U.S. states. These phone prayer lines are open to people from all nations as African Christians living in America may connect and pray daily with Tanzanian friends and family living in the United Kingdom, or Canada as well as those living back home in Tanzania. This often requires participants to wake up in the middle of the night to join in prayer with those across the globe. Many have come to see this sacrifice as a normal part of spiritual life (Miller 2016).

A second area in which transnational religious connections change religious communities is in the cultural sphere. Consider Grace Church, a small, impoverished congregation in a coastal Salvadoran town. Average attendance on a Sunday is about forty and the average offering per week is about \$15. Yet, on a recent Sunday morning, a mission team from Virginia visited. They were accompanied by a full time missionary from Argentina. One of the church members was Honduran; he had recently moved to the town to find work. A Mexican flag hung in the sanctuary because a man who grew up in the church is now serving as a missionary in Oaxaca, Mexico. Roughly 50 % of the church's members have family living outside of El Salvador, including in Australia, Canada, and the United States. On that particular Sunday, the transnational connections flowing into and out of this congregation impacted the conversations that occurred in the church, the content of the worship service, and the approach to ministry that the church did during the week. These ongoing flows also expose the church's congregants, few of whom

have studied past the ninth grade, to the outside world in many and often relationally intimate ways. The transnational dynamics at Grace Church may seem remarkable, especially in such humble environs, but they are not unique. Scenarios like this are being played out in places of worship around the world.

Wanner (2007) captures how the same transnational forces create different kinds of cultural changes in Ukrainian congregations. Wanner showed that emigration to the U.S. and the transnational ties that resulted, as well as considerable U.S. missionary influence in the country, has led to two very different evangelical congregational identities. The older Soviet-era congregations still enact strategies resulting from severe religious persecution. Their culture is ascetic and quietist. The newer churches are, Wanner argues, major sites of cultural innovation in Ukraine; they differ from the older churches in attire, forms of worship, and outreach strategies. The new congregational culture is especially embodied by The Embassy of the Blessed Church of God for All Nations, a megachurch whose founder and pastor is Sunday Adelaja, a Nigerian who immigrated to the Soviet Union in 1986. They seek visibility and engagement with culture, and have a wide range of approaches to making a social and cultural impact in the Ukraine. Such approaches to congregational life are in line with the culture of other hallmark megachurches in the global Pentecostal movement.¹

Places of worship are also spaces in which transnational flows from multiple directions collide. The cultural impact of these encounters is impossible to predict and can create competition among immigrant groups. At other times flows from the same region coalesce. In this way Africans from quite different cultures and regions find themselves worshipping together in Western venues. A Tanzanian pastor living in the U.S., for example, may be invited to lead and serve con-

gregations of Nigerians, Kenyans, Congolese refugees (who may have lived in refugee camps in Tanzania before being resettled in the U.S.), and/or African-Americans (Miller 2016). In the U.S., this has caused many ethnic congregations take on pan-regional rather than national or specifically ethnic identities (Mora 2014), a phenomenon that also occurs in multi-ethnic, multi-national congregations in Europe, South Africa, South Korea, and elsewhere. Such congregations show how new identities and ways of relating can emerge from transnational religious activities.

Third, transnational religious flows change transnational power dynamics within global religious communities. As people, finances, goods, and services flow across borders, they begin to change the social locations that receiving and sending communities have with each other. In many cases, this is an intended effect of religious flows. Migrants send remittances back to their home countries because of the greater need that exists there. House and church construction projects for those in need is the second most popular STM activity, and they can change the entire appearance of small villages (Priest et al. 2010). But faith communities also change their national social location for other reasons. H. Richard Niebuhr ([1929] 1957, p. 54) argues that “the churches of the poor all become middle-class churches sooner or later.” He highlights restrictions on consumption and an emphasis on production as the motors for such upward social mobility, and he notes that “there is no doubt of the truth of Max Weber’s contention that godliness is conducive to economic success” (Niebuhr [1929] 1957, p. 54). Such longstanding sources of change in social location combine with transnational social forces to create new power dynamics within transnational faith communities.

An important element of this is the creation of a transnational elite who inhabit urban centers across the globe. Churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples can be found in the affluent neighborhoods of New York, London, Hong Kong, Santiago, and Addis Ababa. The people who inhabit these faith communities are highly com-

¹ We should note that Wanner’s study took place before the Ukraine conflict that began in November 2014. We do not know how this is affecting the transnational activity or congregational culture that Wanner observed.

petent professionals who are embedded in transnational networks. Such actors have often been trained in universities outside their own countries, work for transnational companies or ministry organizations, have family connections that cross borders, and travel extensively. What is critically important to understand is that these kinds of actors do not just receive religious flows; they also generate religious ideas, organizations, and people flows that span out across the globe. An evangelical church in San Salvador, for instance, has a missionary presence in India and sends teams to other places in Latin America, Africa, and Eastern Europe (Offutt 2015). Such transnational actors, based in the Global East and South, have significant influence in the networks that knit global faith communities together. Their increasing numbers and activities are flattening the power differential that has historically tilted in favor of Western actors.

Connected to the phenomenon of a global transnational elite within faith communities is the “reflux” phenomenon. A small but growing literature suggests American mission efforts are allowing those with whom they have come in contact to change the values of U.S. Christians. Swartz (2012) points to the ministries of Intervarsity and the Human Needs and Global Resources program at Wheaton College as two examples. Intervarsity, or the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students as it is known internationally, is a Christian ministry that works on college and university campuses around the world. A number of students who were influenced by its ministry have subsequently become important intellectual voices within the international movement. Ecuadorian Rene Padilla is a case in point. After receiving his degree, Padilla along with other young Latin Americans championed a very different social agenda than the one that was emerging among Western evangelicals. He gained a hearing both in the U.S. and in global events such as the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in 1974. Conversely, programs that send Western students of faith to other countries influence the way they think about the world. Because of their transnational experiences, these future leaders provide a different tra-

jectory to the Western faith communities that they eventually serve.

The still numerically small but growing numbers of congregations in the West that are under the religious authority of actors in the Global South and East represent another way in which transnational religious connections shift religious power dynamics. This occurs both transnationally and transculturally. The most common form of this occurs within migration streams. A Ghanaian Presbyterian denomination, for example, has immigrant churches in New York City, Columbus (Ohio), and elsewhere (Gornik 2010; Wan and Edu-Bekoe 2013). Several churches in Zimbabwe have daughter churches serving Zimbabwean immigrants in London (Moyo 2014). Other religious communities draw on both immigrant and national populations. Mosques in Europe and North America (as well as Asia, Africa, and Latin America) are affiliated with movements whose power centers are in the Middle East. Hindu and Buddhist communities in Chicago, Boston, and other Western cities look to spiritual leaders in India and Eastern countries for guidance. All of these examples point to the fact that people who live in traditional economic and political centers of power may participate in religious organizations whose power centers lie elsewhere.

It must be noted that some the transnational elites who are leading these kinds of power shifts also feel victimized by the global dynamics in which they participate. Many Tanzanian Christians, for example, have been raised in tight-knit traditional African communities of extended family, as well as in Christian communities of revival fellowships and prayer groups. In diaspora, while grateful for new opportunities, many express feeling caught betwixt and between their old and new lives. They strive to recreate true local and Christian community in the West, but find that the pace of life and work schedules make fellowship and accountability much more difficult (Miller 2016). Immigrants often feel “partially present” and “partially absent” physically, economically, and spiritually in both places at the same time. This creates a tension that is difficult to sustain and endure (Sayad 2004, p. 125).

How Transnational Religious Connections Change the Relationships Between Faith Communities and Society

Religion has played a significant role in creating global civic structures that facilitate non-market, increasingly face-to-face interaction between persons who are otherwise separated by national borders. We point to five ways that transnational religious connections change how communities of faith relate to the society around them: (1) the presence of religion in humanitarian organizations; (2) increased civic participation; (3) increased public visibility and potential for religious competition; (4) the role of religious institutions in preparing immigrants for public life; and (5) the nature of faith communities' interactions with political and economic systems. We explain each of these in turn.

First, humanitarian organizations are among the most important actors in global civil society and religion is pervasive in this sector (Schnable 2014). Networks of international and local NGOs, churches, and other religious and non-religious organizations enable people of faith to respond to poverty with greater knowledge and resources than would otherwise be possible. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), for example, has funded local religious organizations around the world to combat HIV/AIDS, house microfinance projects, undertake relief projects after natural disasters, and to help bring reconciliation to countries embroiled in military conflict. These funds are often channeled through U.S.-based international organizations like World Vision, and they are matched by funds given by people of faith in the U.S. Such blended funding streams either create new responses to social problems by people of faith in developing countries or they significantly increase existing efforts.

Second, change does not just occur in communities who are on the receiving end of transnational religious flows. Short term mission trips, for example, can change the behavior of the travelers upon their return home. Beyerlein et al. (2011) show that STMs originating in the U.S.

increase the likelihood that participants will engage in other forms of charitable and political action. Smith (1996) and Nepstad (2004) have argued that trips had a lasting impact on those who visited Nicaragua during the Central American peace movement. Some became advocates for the victims when they returned home or saw their participation in political protests increase. Indeed, many who initiate STMs are more interested in the changes the travelers may undergo than they are in any changes that might occur in their destination countries. This is especially true of churches and parents who sponsor high school and college students who go on these kinds of trips.

Third, transnational religious connections can increase public visibility and the potential for competition between religious groups. In Ghana and Nigeria, religious pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Mecca have become integrated into the public discussion of faith communities at multiple levels. On the one hand, they increase the public status of Christian and Muslim travelers alike. Billboards along the side of the roads feature charismatic Muslim and Christian leaders; as part of the advertisements, the religious pilgrimages they have made are trumpeted. On the other hand, government support for such trips has become a political issue. Initially only Muslims received public financing for their trips, but Christians argued that they too should receive public funding for their pilgrimages. This has opened up another front for debate between the two religious communities (Asamoah-Gyadu 2015).

Fourth, religious organizations and networks help immigrants interface with public institutions. Connor (2014, p. 71) observes that churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples provide "classes to help immigrants improve their language skills, understand the new country's culture, or obtain new skills like writing a resumé or preparing for a job interview." These are critical services that communities of faith are particularly motivated to provide and which have a clear impact on migrants' ability to interact with local school systems, government programs and regulations, and in areas of commerce. Such services are provided by a wide

range religious groups and their role in providing them has been well-documented (Levitt 2007; Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Mooney 2009; Connor 2014).

Religious networks also often help people overcome the ethnic boundaries that can obstruct integration. Connor argues that such affinity has very practical implications: “networks present opportunities for people to share job leads, obtain job referrals from co-congregants, or learn how to work through bureaucratic red tape” (2014, p. 71). This works for co-religionists, like Muslims from India who move to the United Arab Emirates and who are accepted by the Muslim community there, or Catholics from Colombia who join a parish in New Jersey. Thus, transnational lives are facilitated by religious connections that are transcultural in addition to being transnational.

But religion can also create barriers to those hoping to integrate into a new society. If immigrants’ religion sets them apart from mainstream society in a new land (Muslims in the U.S., for example), it pushes some jobs and opportunities further out of reach. Even when immigrants’ religion is shared by the host community, there can be challenges in connecting with co-religionists transculturally, as culture only ever consists partly of religion (Connor 2014). Such dynamics introduce complexity and nuance into the claims we have just made, namely that religion provides immigrants with opportunities and networks. It clearly does in some cases, but people struggling to make homes in foreign lands are still usually marginalized, and religion can also be a marginalizing factor.

Fifth, transnational religious connections can affect faith communities’ interactions with political and economic systems. In the Middle East and Africa, transnational connections helped to spark the “Arab spring” that began in late 2010 and facilitated its spread across the region. How transnational Islamic and secularist connections have been involved in the Arab Spring’s subsequent successes and failures is a highly complex issue, and we know of no scholarship as yet that unpacks the causal relationships in the case. But clearly, religion is an integral part of efforts to

create the governance structures that are evolving in the region.

In another example of how transnational connections can shape faith communities’ political activities, questions persist about linkages between the evangelical movement and U.S. political and military interests during the Cold War. The evangelical movement experienced global growth in the 1960s–1980s. Some of its fastest gains came in the hottest theaters of the Cold War. Some scholars felt that this was more than mere coincidence. Stoll (1990) outlines connections between strategic U.S. agencies and the missionary efforts of America’s religious right in Latin America during this time. Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose (1996) posit that America was exporting a brand of religious fundamentalism around the world and warned that it could be more dangerous than Islamic fundamentalism. Although some of the claims made by this literature now appear to have been overstated, it is hard to diminish them completely. It is empirically verifiable that connections existed between evangelicals and the U.S. government in the Cold War period. How those ties shaped political and religious activity remains a matter of scholarly debate.

The transnational connections of the global evangelical and Pentecostal movements may also strengthen democratic tendencies. Martin (1990, 2002) and Adogame (2010) argue that converts to Pentecostalism become more physically and socially mobile. This weakens or cuts ties to traditional, more hierarchical authority structures and replaces them with more horizontal, cosmopolitan, and transnational relationships. Such dynamics are part of why local evangelical congregations have been referred to as “schools of democracy” (Freston 2008a, b), as they make it easier for civic participation to occur. When this is combined with global Pentecostalism’s tendency to have a positive rather than critical approach to institutions, or to have a “pro-systemic orientation” (Lechner 2006), democracies are generally strengthened by the movement.

Finally, transnational religious connections change how faith communities interact with

global economic structures. Reynolds (2015, p. 2) examines “the ethical and political voice that religious organizations have in the formation and critique of free trade and free trade agreements.” Catholic, Presbyterian, and ecumenical organizations – the cases Reynolds highlights— are able to gather intellectual, material, and cultural resources across borders. They use the resources to cast a vision about values and ethics that should govern all types of transnational activities. Such advocacy work is necessarily transnational in its scope and orientation.

Faith based international NGOs also seek to influence economic structures. Such NGOs and the religious communities that support them are finding that they are well suited to use advocacy to reduce global poverty. As Reynolds and Offutt (2014, p. 247) observe, “The strength of their organizations, international connections, and cultural resources often place them in position to speak for marginalized communities in the halls of power.” By doing so, organizations like Bread for the World and World Vision have influenced economic realities in many poor communities around the world.

Future Directions

In this chapter we have argued that transnational religious connections change communities of faith and their relationships to society. Transnational religious connections create organizational and cultural change in local houses of worship and alter the global power dynamics within international religious communities. Transnational religious connections change their relationships communities of faith have with contemporary global society by permeating the humanitarian aid industry, increasing and changing the nature of religious groups’ civic participation and public visibility, and providing pathways and motives for interaction with leaders of the international political economy. The prominent role that religion takes in global society has cross-cutting implications. Religion generates and ameliorates conflict, promotes and diminishes opportunities for human flourishing, and

facilitates and creates obstacles for those seeking to integrate into a new nation-state. Whether religion is good for global society thus remains a matter of debate. But because many of the world religions thrive in transnational and transcultural environments, we can expect religion to be a permanent and influential fixture of the global era and consequently an important area for study.

As we offer future directions for research, we return to a fact mentioned in the introduction. Although much current scholarship acknowledges transnational dimensions of religion, surprisingly few recent studies in the sociology of religion have directly attempted to push back the frontiers of our knowledge about transnational religion. The field is vast and there are many appropriate research strategies and conceptual points of entry. We have focused on transnational flows; much more could still be learned about them. Other themes of transnational life include issues of identity, network durability, how agency is expressed within religious transnationalism, the ability to make meaning in spatially distended contexts, and the role of virtual versus physical presence in religious activities. These are just a few of the field’s potential research areas.

The influence of religion on other transnational activities is also relatively unexplored. In this chapter we have made transnational religious flows the independent variable and we have looked at how they affect religious communities. Surely, transnational religious flows change more than just religious communities. What they impact and how they do so are also compelling questions to ask. Making transnational religious connections the dependent variable and asking what creates change within these connections is another important area of inquiry. Our knowledge in all of these areas is most notable for its limitations.

Finally, much transnational activity, especially outside the West, has implications for human development. The Sociology of Development Section is one of the newest and fastest growing sections in the American Sociological Association. Understanding how religious transnationalism fits into community, economic, political, and social development has

tremendous potential and importance. A few scholars have examined transnational flows within NGOs, and these are excellent early works (Bornstein 2005; Schnable 2014). But the transnational religious dynamics within the field of development are highly complex and deserve much more scholarly attention.

The connection between transnationalism and human development is important because, for too many, border crossing activities are painful matters of life and death rather than voluntary luxuries. We must remember the stark contrast between those who choose to embrace transnationalism and those who use transnationalism as a mode of survival. “Cosmopolitan” globe trekkers who embrace cultural diversity and wanderlust often have the luxury of choosing when and how they wander and, more importantly, they always know exactly “where the exit is” (Hannerz 1996, p. 104). Millions of migrants today, however, often have little choice and almost no certainty regarding any exit (Miller 2016). Many transnational migrants continue to feel insecure and unsettled no matter which or how many borders they cross.

The crisis in Syria, which has reached historic levels, is a stark example. In the first eleven months of 2015, nearly three-quarters of a million (744,175) migrants from the Middle East crisis entered Europe. Another 3440 drowned attempting to do so (BBC News 2015b). When refugees arrived on the shores of Greece after a harrowing journey, some claimed that risking death at sea was still better than awaiting certain death at home. Others, though, thought the risk of staying in Syria might have had a lower psychological and physical cost than the difficult journey they had chosen (BBC News 2015a). The Syrian tragedy is a reminder that, although the rise in transnational lifestyle is made possible in part by positive advances in communications, transportation, and technology, it is too often motivated by the horrors of political violence, ethnic warfare, or worse. Religion is integrated into most types of transnational spaces, experiences, and motivations. In Syria and other humanitarian hotspots around the world, a better understanding of religion’s role can have both

theoretical and practical, possibly even lifesaving, value.

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Abstract

A substantial body of research on religion and immigration has been published during the past quarter of a century, with the result being that much has been done to redress the earlier marginalization of the religious factor in immigration studies and the relative neglect of immigration by sociologists of religion. Research foci have varied widely. One recent effort to describe the major topics that have been pursued identified four: immigrant identity work; reframing religious organizations and practices; transnational religious networks; and church/state relations and the public sphere. This chapter contends that within this larger framework five important questions have been raised: (1) Is immigration a theologizing experience? (2) Do immigrants exhibit a return to theological foundations? (3) Does de facto congregationalism capture a general reframing of immigrant religious organizations? (4) How robust is immigrant religious transnationalism? (5) Is religion a bridge to inclusion in North America and a barrier to inclusion in Western Europe?

For the past quarter century, the topic of immigrants and religion broadly construed has become one of the most dynamic subfields in the sociology of religion, while simultaneously interest in religion has grown in the field of migration studies—and in the process cross-fertilization between these two arenas of sociological research has advanced. This stands in stark contrast to the

preceding quarter century. Taking stock in the early 1990s of the body of work that had been devoted to this topic since the middle of the past century, when at varying rates global migration grew, I concluded that although one could point to a number of significant contributions to the topic, in fact overall religion and immigration as a topic of inquiry was characterized by relative neglect (Kivisto 1992).

A substantial body of research on religion and immigration has since been published, with the result being that much has been done to redress the earlier marginalization of the religious factor

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in immigration studies and the relative neglect of immigration by sociologists of religion (Warner 1998a; Yang and Ebaugh 2001; Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Massey and Higgins 2011). Within the sociology of religion subfield, immigrant religion is today a hot topic, the way that the study of new religious movements was two decades earlier. This occurred as established scholars—nobody more important than R. Stephen Warner and Helen Rose Ebaugh—created major research agendas that served to frame the work of a substantial number of younger scholars. Meanwhile, many established sociologists of immigration who had not previously focused on religion have begun to do so (e.g., Alba and Foner 2015; Foner and Alba 2008; Massey and Higgins 2011), while younger colleagues have picked up on the topic early in their careers. Major funding for large-scale research projects derived in particular from the Lilly Endowment, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Social Science Research Council in the United States has facilitated this development.

Much of the research during the early years of this wave was conducted in the United States (and, in a smaller way in Canada; see, Breton 2012) using ethnographic case studies of religious organizations. While this type of research is not lacking among Western European sociologists, when they began to develop their own agendas, the focus often shifted to the issue of church/state relations, with a particular focus on what those relations meant for Muslim integration.

As might be expected, research foci have varied widely. One recent effort to describe the major topics that have been pursued identified four: immigrant identity work; reframing religious organizations and practices; transnational religious networks; and church/state relations and the public sphere (Kivisto 2014; see also Connor 2014). These four were not intended to imply that the entire waterfront had been covered, but merely to point in the direction of the primary preoccupations of researchers. This article will contend that within this larger framework five important questions have been raised:

- Is immigration a theologizing experience?
- Do immigrants exhibit a return to theological foundations?
- Does de facto congregationalism capture a general reframing of immigrant religious organizations?
- How robust is immigrant religious transnationalism?
- Is religion a bridge to inclusion in North America and a barrier to inclusion in Western Europe?

Before addressing these questions, the next section provides a brief overview of the demographics of immigrant religion in order to paint in broad brushstrokes a portrait of what religious pluralism actually looks like in North America and Western Europe today.

The Religious Diversity of Immigrants

In tracking the flows of migrants across international borders, the standard definitional unit is national origin, not religious affiliation. Indeed, government census offices in many countries (including the United States) do not gather information based on religious affiliation. It is with this in mind that the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures project titled “Faith on the Move” attempted to provide a broad overview of the movement of religions across borders along with the individuals that embrace them, in what is intended to be a starting point for further data gathering efforts (Pew Research Center 2012).

The United Nations (2013) estimated that in 2013 there were 232 million migrants globally, representing 3.2% of the total population of the world. Although the number of migrants had nearly tripled over the past half century, as a percentage of overall world population, the rise had only amounted to a 0.5% increase. At the same time, 232 million is a very large figure. In fact, there are only four countries in the world whose populations exceed that number. The Pew Research Center stitched together data from a wide array of sources in order to obtain their

estimates. The result is “a baseline look at the nominal affiliation of migrants, with no attempt to measure their levels of religious commitment” (Pew Research Center 2012, p. 8).

Among global migrants, the two largest religious groups are Christians at 49 % of the total and Muslims at 27 %. The next largest category, the unaffiliated, represent 9 % of the total, while in descending order, Hindus account for 5 %, other religions for 4 %, Buddhists for 3 %, and Jews for 2 %. It is not surprising that Christians and Muslims are the two largest groups due to the fact that they are also the two largest world religions. With 2.3 billion adherents, Christians account for one-third of the world’s population overall, and thus they are overrepresented in the ranks of international movers. In the case of Muslims, the levels are closer, as Islam’s 1.6 billion adherents worldwide constitute 23 % of the world’s population. Jews, too, are overrepresented. All of the other categories reported are underrepresented in the ranks of immigrants, with Hindus being the most underrepresented.

According to the United Nations (2013), 41 % of current immigrants reside in a nation of the global South. These 96 million individuals have not been the subjects of the sociological gaze in the way their counterparts in the global North have been. When looking at the top 10 destination countries, only 6 are located in North America or Western Europe (the United States, Germany, Canada, France, the United Kingdom, and Spain). The U.S. is the number one destination country for Christians, Buddhists, and the unaffiliated. Israel is the main destination for Jews, Saudi Arabia for Muslims, India for Hindus, and Hong Kong for religious others (Pew Research Center 2012, pp. 16–50).

Given the growing salience of anti-Muslim views in both North America and Western Europe, which often includes fears of being overwhelmed demographically, a brief comment on demographic reality is in order. According to the Pew Research Center’s (2011, p. 142) projections in their report, “The Future of the Global Muslim Population,” in terms of numerical increases, the Muslim population in North America will grow,

while remaining a small minority of the overall population. Canada’s Muslim minority is projected to increase from 2.8 % in 2010 to 6.6 % in 2030, while that in the United States will increase from 0.8 % to only 1.7 %.

The current percentage of Muslims in Western Europe is 4.5 %, which is higher than in North America, but still a relatively small figure. The projection calls for that to rise to 7.1 % by 2030. There are, however, differences among these nations. Some countries currently have very small Muslim populations and that will likely continue to be the case. Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, and Portugal will have percentages of Muslims registering under 3 %. At the other end of the spectrum are the countries that have and will continue to have the highest percentages. Only two countries, France and Belgium, are projected to have Muslim population percentages over 10 %. They are followed by Sweden and Austria, whose estimates are in the 9 % range, and these in turn are followed by the United Kingdom and Switzerland, with projections in the 8 % range, and Germany with slightly over 7 % (Pew Research Center 2011, p. 124).

With this profile in mind, we address the five questions presented in the preceding section.

Is Migration a “Theologizing Experience”?

Are immigrants more religious than their counterparts who remain in the homeland? Do the dislocations brought about by migration lead people to seek out religion in order to obtain what Charles Hirschman (2004) has referred to as the three r’s: refuge, respectability, and resources? Much of contemporary research either explicitly points to an intensification of religious identification and involvement or implicitly assumes it is happening. In an oft-cited article, historian Timothy Smith (1978) argued that this was true of the Great Migration in America—and in his opinion all periods of American history. Concurring with Oscar Handlin’s “uprooted” portrait of the alienating consequences of migration, Smith (1978, p. 1175) contended that as a

result, “migration was often a theologizing experience.” The individual migrant was forced to reckon with the fact that “[e]verything was new” from architecture to technology to language to everyday patterns of social exchange. Immigrants had to grapple with a situation in which they had been freed from the “moral constraints that village culture had imposed in matters monetary, recreational, occupational, alcoholic, educational, and sexual.” In the face of this freedom, it was necessary “to determine how to act in these new circumstances by reference not simply to the dominant ‘host’ culture, but to a dozen competing subcultures” (Smith 1978, p. 1175).

Smith failed to offer a succinct account of what he meant by theologizing experience, but it appears that what he had in mind was more than religious participation, for it also implied a reflective quality. In other words, Smith believes that at least in the past immigrants tended to become more religious than they were in the homeland, and he appears to think that their engagement with religion is self-reflective, rather than being the product of habit. However, contemporary scholars have been inclined to treat the idea of theologizing experience as being little more than a synonym for describing heightened religiosity. For example, Carolyn Chen’s (2008) claim about the Taiwanese Buddhists and Christians she studied is representative of many studies which conclude that their subjects became more religious after migration. This raises the inevitable question that is asked about all ethnographic research, namely, how representative is it of immigrants in general? The problem is compounded in the study of religious belief, affiliation, and practice insofar as most research to date has focused on active members in religious organizations—congregations, temples, mosques, gurdwaras, and so forth. Missing from such research are immigrants who have not chosen to become members of such organizations.

This lacuna has been addressed in the New Immigrant Survey (NIS), a panel survey of a nationally representative sample of new legal immigrants. An early book chapter by the principle investigators did not address the matter of whether or not migration led to increased reli-

gious involvement. Instead, it offered a descriptive overview of the findings, stressing the growing religious pluralism in the nation resulting from contemporary immigration (Jasso et al. 2003). The first effort to address religiosity, by Cadge and Ecklund (2006), actually made use of the smaller sample from the NIS’s pilot study conducted in 1996, in which there were only two questions about religion included in the survey (about affiliation and attendance). They concluded that immigrants who were less integrated into the receiving society were more inclined to attend religious services regularly than was true of those who were more integrated.

Three recent studies have made use of the 2003 NIS survey. The first, by Akresh (2011), picks up on an implication of the Cadge and Ecklund study, which is that as immigrants become more integrated into American society they will become less religiously active. Akresh does not focus on the contrast between pre-migration and post-migration, but instead on what happens to religious attendance over time in the post-migration context. She concludes that “there is a tendency towards greater attendance with increased time in the US and no evidence of a decline” (Akresh 2011, p. 657). On the other hand, Connor (2009) found that in comparing pre-migration and post-migration religious participation rates, decline is evident among both Christian and non-Christian groups, a pattern he also found in a separate study that focused solely on Quebec (Connor 2008). In both cases, Connor contends that contextual factors appear to be more salient than individual-level characteristics in accounting for decline. This can include the religious climate of the larger society (e.g., the dramatic secularization that has occurred in Quebec in recent decades) as well as the level of availability of “religious products and services” (Connor 2009, p. 797) and the presence or lack of a critical mass of fellow immigrant co-religionists in the area.

The third study, by Massey and Higgins (2011) explicitly addresses—indeed, challenges—Smith’s “theologizing experience” thesis. Massey and Higgins note an overall dramatic decline in religious attendance after migration.

The decline is more pronounced for Christians than non-Christians and within the ranks of Christians, the decline is greatest for Catholics. Followers of all other major religions also experience decline, though it is not as pronounced as for Christians, probably because adherents to these other faiths participate less frequently in the pre-migration context than their Christian counterparts. This is reflected in the fact that Protestants exhibit higher levels of congregational membership than any other religious group. The study paints a complex portrait reflective of both the religious diversity of the immigrant population and the diversity of national origins. To cite one example of what this means, when looking at Christian patterns of membership, the range is broad, with only 10% of Salvadorans reporting membership in a church in contrast to 76% of Koreans (Massey and Higgins 2011, p. 1383).

Massey and Higgins (2011, p. 1387) conclude that rather than supporting Smith's theologizing hypothesis, their findings "are more consistent with what might be called an alienating hypothesis." Like Smith, they point out that immigrants must adjust in ways large and small to their new setting, but unlike him, they emphasize that the process of adjustment is time consuming. Religion, thus, competes for time with the demands of jobs, schooling, language acquisition, and a host of other aspects of life that also require time commitments. Their second point, echoing Connor, is that immigrants who are not part of the Judeo-Christian tradition enter a religious sphere where their faith tradition may be institutionally thin. While these are no doubt factors contributing to a lessening of religious participation, it is less obvious why this situation should necessarily be seen as a matter of alienation. However, following Connor, it does reinforce the idea that religious participation must be located in a larger societal context. In particular, as van Tubergen and Sindradóttir (2011) concluded in their comparative analysis of European nations, findings from the European Social Survey indicated that immigrants exhibited higher levels of religiosity in more highly religious countries (such as Poland) than in more

secular ones (such as Sweden). Given that the United States ranks high on this measure, this contextual reality must be taken into account.

While Massey and Higgins (2011, p. 1387) are right that a focus on congregation-based samples can distort the picture of the larger immigrant religious landscape, it is also true that to more fully understand the religious experiences of the "highly selected and unrepresentative" members of congregations, it strikes me that the claim that immigration is actually religiously alienating is unwarranted based on the data at hand. This is not to deny that the evidence to date supports the idea of decline in religious participation. Studies conducted in other countries lend support to these findings. Diehl and Koenig (2013, p. 19), for example, in a study of Polish and Turkish immigrants in Germany, concluded that "far from constituting a 'theologizing experience' new immigrants experience a decrease in religious practices."

That being said, we continue to have much to learn about those who are involved in institutional religion. But religiosity is more than participation. It is important to know if and how the religious beliefs of participants and non-participants alike have changed. We have far more to learn about those who are not involved, including those who have embraced privatized forms of religion or spirituality, before concluding that religion has proven to be an alienating experience.

Do Immigrants Return to Theological Foundations?

The preceding question is concerned with the immigrant experience at the individual level. Here we address a related topic that is located at the intersection of the individual and organizational levels, one that looks at what Yang and Ebaugh (2001) describe as a "returning to theological foundations." This particular topic does not concern immigrants in general, but rather only those who are institutionally affiliated. Yang and Ebaugh (2001) stress that a returning to theological foundations is not necessarily the same

thing as a turn to fundamentalism. Whereas fundamentalists see “modern culture as a threat,” Yang and Ebaugh (2001, p. 281) found that sometimes for their subjects “reaching toward foundations among immigrant religions can generate liberal or liberating ideas and actions—liberating followers of a religion from stifling cultural traditions and sectarian limitations.” In their portrait, the tendency to return to theological foundations is driven in no small part by the need of religious minorities to transcend ethnic and national-origin boundaries in order to develop a critical mass sufficient for success in organizing a sustainable religious community.

Although they note that the return can be to either the actual origins or the imagined origins, it is my sense that the significance of the imagined or constructed nature of origins is understated in their formulation. That being said, what return entails is what Breton (2012, p. 113) calls a process of “pristinization,” which amounts to an attempt to separate religion from culture in a “search for the ‘universal’ since the theological foundations must be common to all members, whatever their national or ethnic backgrounds.”

Yang and Ebaugh (2001, p. 280) present a simple illustration of one of the less controversial ways this plays out. Noting that Pakistani Muslim immigrant men pray with caps, while Arab men do not, the former were forced to ponder whether there was a scriptural basis for the practice of cap wearing or if it was simply an artifact of their particular ethnic culture. Yang and Ebaugh do not address in any detail the larger sectarian divide between Shi’ites and Sunnis that characterizes Islam globally, but observe that umbrella organizations such as the Islamic Society of North America make an effort to stress the commonalities shared by all Muslims while downplaying differences. Breton (2012, p. 114) frames the issue as follows:

This may entail distinctions between what is fundamental and what is less so. In Islam, the fundamentals include the belief in one god, the existence of the prophet Mohammed, and salvation (for Shi’ites, there are five fundamentals). In addition, there are five pillars: the profession of faith, praying five times a day, almsgiving, annual fasting, and a pilgrimage to Mecca for all those able to

make the journey. Muslims will still be considered Muslim if they do *not* practice the five pillars, but not if they disagree with any of the three basic principles. (See also Sutton and Vertigans 2005, pp. 20–21)

Yang and Ebaugh report findings from the Houston-based Religion, Ethnicity, and New Immigrant Research (RENIR) project that indicate this tendency within Islam can also be seen in other non-Christian religions (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000). Thus, Buddhists in the metropolitan area have sought to forge a consensus within the religion that overcomes traditional differences between Mahayana and Theravada Buddhists. Similarly, efforts are underway, spearheaded by leaders of an organization known as the World Hindu Council (Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America), to identify those concepts and practices that are shared by all Hindus. The Eastern Orthodox community has likewise sought to transcend national differences in constructing a unified Orthodox Church in America (Yang and Ebaugh 2001, pp. 279–280).

These examples are intended to reflect a general trend, as the adherents of immigrant religions create a space for themselves in a pluralistic religious landscape, adapting and adjusting their beliefs and practices in the process. In describing this as an effort to separate religion from culture, it generally means a distancing from ethnicity and pre-migration national identities. Of course, not all groups attempt to make this separation, instead working hard to define religion and ethnicity in such a way that the two are mutually reinforcing. Min’s (2010) study of Indian Hindus and Korean Protestants in the New York City metropolitan area analyzes two groups that make just such an effort. He is particularly concerned with exploring the ways in which religion is or is not utilized to preserve ethnic identity. He discovered that Koreans were less successful in maintaining the religion/ethnicity linkage, due in large part to a generational shift in which the children of immigrants distanced themselves from their Korean background as they assertively defined themselves as Christian in a manner that they viewed as freeing themselves from the particularities of being a Korean Christian. In

contrast, for Hindus, from both the first and second generations, religion was an important vehicle for maintaining a sense of being Indian.

Min explains the difference in terms of differing levels of “dogmatic authority” in each belief system. Among Korean adherents to evangelical Christianity was a firmly-rooted conviction that their religion was the one true religion, whereas among Indian Hindus, an embrace of religious pluralism and of mutual toleration of different religions leads to a lower level of dogmatic authority. The net result is that Korean Christians find that they do not need their ethnic background to reinforce their religious identity while Indian Hindus do. While minority religious communities with long histories in the United States—such as the Amish and Hasidic Jews—have managed to keep the linkage intact, they remain intentionally very much outside of the religious mainstream (Kivisto 2007).

The general trend has been for ethnic churches to merge into larger bodies and by so doing, relegating the ethnic character of the church to the realm of nostalgia. A major contributing factor for this shift in the past was widespread intermarriage and with it religious switching. It is too early to determine if this general pattern will repeat itself. It is worth observing that past immigrants were overwhelmingly of European-origin, and whether they were white on arrival or became white over time (Guglielmo 2003; Roediger 2005), by the time that the third generation came of age, race did not constitute a factor shaping marital choices—provided, of course, that marriages occurred between fellow Europeans-Americans. It is worth noting that currently 28% of Americans of Asian ancestry marries out, while 26% of Latinos do.

This leads to the second point. It is important to note that the vast majority of these past immigrants were Christian, whereas today’s immigrants find representation from all of the major world religions and from many minor ones. That being said, as noted at the outset, Christians still constitute a substantial majority of the new immigrants. At issue is whether the ways in which immigrants respond to their respective religious traditions differs depending on whether the reli-

gion in question is Christian or non-Christian. For the former, a place at the table has already been set. Indeed, given the varieties of Christian expression in the United States, a number of places at the table have been set and they are free to sit where they please. In contrast, non-Christians are confronted with the task of finding a place at that pluralist table (Kurien 2007).

Immigrant Christians discover that Protestant Christianity in the United States is divided between two expressions that have lived in a tense relationship to each other since the nineteenth century. Hollinger has chosen to distinguish the two versions of Protestantism as “ecumenical” and “evangelical.” He succinctly distinguishes the two by writing that, “While the ecumenists increasingly defined themselves through a sympathetic exploration of wider worlds, the evangelicals consolidated ‘home truths’ and sought to spread them throughout the globe” (Hollinger 2013, p. 21).

Since the 1960s, sociologists of religion have speculated about why ecumenical denominations have been losing numbers—or as the advocates of a rational choice perspective on religion would have it, market share—while evangelical (or “strict”) churches have witnessed significant growth, at least until recently (Iannaccone 1994; Finke and Stark 1992). Given this reality, immigrants would appear to have a choice of opting for denominations in decline or denominations exhibiting vibrancy. And it is evident that many immigrants, particularly Asian immigrants but also Latinos attracted to Pentecostalism, have opted to affiliate with evangelical churches, whether they are part of larger denominational structures or among the substantial body of non-denominational churches.

But these institutional options are only part of the religious field, for immigrants also enter a landscape characterized by a set of cultural values that serve to frame how religion in general and particular religious expressions are to be recognized and what sorts of interreligious relations are to be encouraged and which discouraged. Demerath (1995, p. 458) finds something paradoxical at play, for he argues that the decline of liberal Protestantism should be seen, not as

having occurred because it watered down its doctrines as some have suggested, but as a consequence of its “cultural triumph on behalf of such values as individualism, freedom, pluralism, tolerance, democracy, and intellectual inquiry.” Hollinger cites this argument favorably, adding the caveat that liberal Protestantism was not alone in shaping this general cultural milieu, but was aided and abetted by other sectors of American society with similar inclinations, including liberal Catholics, cosmopolitan Jews, and secularists. The point for our purposes here is that when immigration scholars contrast the climate of opinion regarding newcomers in the past versus the present, there is a general consensus that today’s immigrants enter a more receptive society than did their earlier counterparts. And this is, ironically, due in no small part to the efforts of that sector of American Protestantism that is least likely to attract contemporary immigrants into their denominational life.

What does all this say about the “returning to theological foundations” thesis? First, there has been no research since the RENIR project that explicitly examines this question. Secondly, it addresses a topic meriting further attention, one that can be divided in two parts. The first involves determining where, when, and how often what Breton called *pristinization* is occurring, while paying equal attention to those instances where active resistance to severing the cultural stuff from the religious core occurs. Second, since return or resistance occurs within the larger religious field of the receiving nation, consideration of the varied ways in which that larger field shapes either the vision of imagined origins or the challenges associated with keeping sending country culture and religion fused needs to be given.

Does De Facto Congregationalism Characterize Immigrant Religious Organizations?

The most sustained attempts to analyze a general pattern of organizational adaptation of immigrant religious organizations have focused explicitly

on the US, with a series of publications by R. Stephen Warner (1993, 1994, 1997, 1998a, b, 2000) on “de facto congregationalism” constituting the touchstone for this work. The idea of de facto congregationalism was first articulated in Warner’s (1993) seminal essay on a “new paradigm for the sociological study of religion in the United States,” where it represents one of the elements of the paradigm. The argument he advanced was that there was ample evidence of a new way of viewing religion in the United States emerging in the sociological literature, and that it marked a distinct contrast to the older, heretofore dominant model that used Western European societies as the main referents. Underlying the contrast between Europe and the United States as conceptual referents was the observation that whereas religious observance was on the decline in Europe, it remains robust in the United States. Warner points to an explanation of this difference in terms of the open religious market in the latter case versus the state monopoly in the former.

This view is reminiscent of the religious economy perspective advanced by Finke and Stark (1992), though Warner (1993, p. 1053) stresses that, “The new paradigm is not *defined* by economic imagery, [...] but by the idea that disestablishment is the norm.” In a detailed schematic comparison of the two paradigms, Warner offers the following contrast. The old paradigm presupposed a situation in which a particular faith tradition possessed a monopoly on legitimate institutionalized religion, and thus could readily make taken-for-granted claims to being a universal church with ascription being the primary basis for religious identity.

The new paradigm is distinctive insofar as it envisions a competitive environment in which religious identities are contested and fluid, making way for entrepreneurial leaders—rather than state-supported or other established religious officials—who must actively recruit members. The hallmark of this religious field is, thus, one characterized by cultural pluralism (Warner 1993, pp. 1052, 1058). Primary attention throughout the article is directed to a reframing of the way in which we look at religious change. Specifically, the paradigm casts into doubt the

old paradigm's assumptions concerning the secularization of modern societies, an assumption that was forced to treat the American case as an anomaly. In the old paradigm, the questions often posed tended to revolve around identifying what were presumed to be the sources of American exceptionalism. In the new paradigm, the unresolved questions concern European exceptionalism.

In subsequent publications, Warner outlined his understanding of the American religious field. First, he contends that Americans are "elective parochials," and religion in the nation is aptly characterized as being "profoundly associational and voluntaristic" (Warner 1998b, pp. 124–25). Furthermore, he concurs with Morris Janowitz's contention that "American communities tend to be 'communities of limited liability'." Finally, while noting that there is no monolithic religious culture shared by all Americans, but rather a number of cultures, he contends that "religion mediates difference." It is, in his opinion, "the institutional area where US culture has best tolerated difference" (Warner 1997, p. 219).

Our interest here is on only one facet of the model, which concerns organizational structure. Drawing on H. Richard Niebuhr's classic work, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (1929), Warner views the denomination in its American setting as a structural innovation made appropriate in a context characterized by disestablishment and its consequent facilitation of religious pluralism. This was true even during the earliest phase of the nation's history, when it was an overwhelmingly Protestant country, but one in which Protestantism was divided into an array of discrete religious bodies whose boundaries were drawn based on such factors as theological differences, ethnicity, language, and the national origin of members. Secondly, Warner (1993, p. 1065) contends, "Another pervasive American pattern is the congregational model of local church organization, whether or not sanctioned by the hierarchy." Warner calls this pattern "de facto congregationalism." Warner (1993, pp. 1066) explains that the term serves to label "an institutionalized bias of American religious life toward affectively significant associations under local

and lay control, beginning with observations of differences between congregations within the same denomination." He continues noting, "De facto congregationalism implies that the local religious community is in fact constituted by those who assemble together (which is the etymological root of 'congregation') rather than by the geographic units into which higher church authorities divide their constituents, which is what 'parishes' historically are" (Warner 1993, pp. 1066–67).

There is little question but that congregationalism has been a hallmark of American Protestantism in a nation that at its founding rejected the idea of a state church in favor of creating a wall of separation between church and state. But is this organizational pattern relevant to other religions, as well? Warner thinks it is, and in considering earlier waves of migration he points to Catholic church historian Jay Dolan's (1985) assessment that whereas Vatican II pushed Catholic laity into a considerably more prominent role of leadership, evidence of their significance in establishing and developing churches should be dated to a far earlier time in the history of Catholic America. In the case of Judaism, Warner (1993, p. 1067) states that its "normative congregationalism ...has long facilitated adaptability."

Warner also contends that a similar tendency is at play among post-1965 immigrant religious groups. He cites as an example trends among Muslim immigrants in the United States. Whereas in the pre-migration setting the mosque was solely a place of prayer and the imam's role that of prayer leader, in the American context the functions of the mosque have expanded to include education and socializing, while the imam is tasked to engage in such activities as counseling, visitations to the sick and homebound, conducting marriages and funerals, and serving as a representative of the mosque to the larger society. In short, Warner (1993, p. 1067) writes, the imam becomes a "religious professional" who models his role along the lines of "pastors, priests, and rabbis" (see also Warner 1998a, p. 209). The findings of the New Ethnic and Immigrant Congregations Project (NEICP), which Warner

directed with funding from the Lilly Endowment and the Pew Charitable Trusts, reinforced his conclusions concerning *de facto* congregationalism (Warner and Wittner 1998). The previously mentioned RENIR project also added further empirical evidence to support the thesis (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000).

Warner (2000, pp. 277–78) identified a number of elements making up the “congregational form” as it applied to immigrant religious institutions, a summary account of which includes the following: (1) a voluntary membership association defined by choice rather than proximity; (2) lay leadership taking form as boards of directors, trustees, deacons, and so forth; (3) incorporation for tax purposes as a not-for-profit organization; (4) it may be truly independent or may be part of a larger denominational organization; (5) clergy tend to be viewed as professionals hired by the lay leaders; (6) an exclusivity of membership based on ethnicity or national origin; (7) a multi-functional organization that besides its religious function serves one or more other functions, which he specifies as including “educational, cultural, political, and social service activities”; and (8) a tendency to conduct religious services and other activities on Sunday, paralleling Christian practices in America.

Yang and Ebaugh (2001), making primary use of the RENIR data, to a large extent concur with Warner’s *de facto* congregationalism in analyzing what they describe as the “transformations in new immigrant religions.” Complementing congregationalism, they observe the emergence of larger organizational networks that tend to resemble Protestant denominations. They also note other ways immigrant congregations come to resemble Protestant churches. For example, whereas in traditional Buddhist temples the people sit on cushions on the floor, at the His Nan Temple in Houston pews have been installed, and traditional chanting has been replaced by hymns, some which have borrowed melodies from Protestant hymnals. Finally, they note that language is a fraught issue, particularly insofar as it reflects generational differences in acculturation to American society. Whereas the immigrant generation tends to want to maintain their home-

land language, a shift towards English usage is evident, with a bilingual phase often setting the stage for a shift to English-only usage. In panethnic congregations, the move to English often occurs more quickly because of the need to find a common language (Yang and Ebaugh 2001, pp. 277–78). The one area of disagreement concerns whether immigrant congregations tend to exclusivity based on ethnic and national origin or inclusivity. Contrary to Warner’s claims, they found evidence of the latter, which accords with their return to theological foundations thesis.

As with the theologizing experience thesis, *de facto* congregationalism has tended to be taken as a given by numerous researchers, and one might conclude that the evidence supporting the thesis is convincing. Cadge (2008) has provided one of two instances of a sustained critical analysis of *de facto* congregationalism, in her case calling for a revision of the original thesis. The other instance is contained in Foley and Hoge’s (2007) study of immigrant religious organizations in the Washington, DC area, in which they argue that the reality on the ground is more complex and varied than the *de facto* congregational thesis recognizes. We look only at Cadge here because the two arguments are essentially the same, but she provides a more detailed example to make her case. She begins her brief by contending that despite its apparent modesty, the hypothesis “touches on profound and central themes as regards the meaning of modernity and the changing nature of religious institutions in the modern world” (Cadge 2008, p. 346).

The crux of her critique revolves around two charges. First, by failing to define the organizational field, Warner presumes the existence of a unified field rather than considering the possibility of multiple and diverse religious fields. The second charge concerns the presumed failure to offer an adequate account of the processes by which one or another type of religious organization emerges. Here Cadge turns to the influential work of DiMaggio and Powell (1991) on institutional isomorphism, which specifies three ideal types of isomorphism: coercive, mimetic, and normative. She contends that Warner and those who have followed his lead have assumed,

without stating so explicitly, that congregationalism is to large extent the result of the interplay of coercive and mimetic isomorphism.

Identifying these presumed shortcomings of Warner's thesis, Cadge offers a revised approach that hinges on the idea that it is necessary to speak about multiple organizational fields rather than a unitary organizational field. Her empirical case is Buddhist immigrants from Thailand. She argues that their temples across the United States engage one another in a sustained way both at the informal level and through the work of two umbrella organizations, the Council of Thai Bhikkhus and the Dhammayut Order in the United States. As such, she contends that they constitute one particular organizational field in the much larger arena of multiple religious organizational fields in the nation. With this framing, she divides Warner's thesis into eight elements and offers her assessment of whether or not the Buddhist temples fit the model. She concludes that on four of the items they very clearly and uniformly do fit: (1) they are characterized by voluntary membership; (2) in which people identify with the temple based on a sense of connection to fellow members rather than predicated on territorial proximity; (3) members undertake systematic fund raising efforts to insure the economic viability of the organization; and (4) they gather together regularly for worship and fellowship on Sundays.

For three of the items she finds what she refers to as variations. First, in terms of clergy being hired as professional employees, she observes that precisely how monks are selected differs somewhat among temples, as do the specifics of the job requirements and the amount of power and autonomy they are granted. While monks are called to temples by lay members, they are not paid salaries the way professional clergy are in Warner's model. The calling aspect clearly fits the model. Given that Cadge does not provide information about how monks are compensated, it is impossible to assess if their economic relationship to the temple departs significantly from the model.

Second, in terms of multifunctionality, she observes variations in what temples actually do,

but notes that the "vast majority of Thai temples in the United States are multifunctional, including at least one educational, cultural, political, or social service activity in addition to their religious activities" (Cadge 2008, p. 360). That most temples provide such services to members would appear to validate Warner's position. The variations discussed by Cadge simply involve differences in the precise services performed and the extent to which they are. Larger temples with more extensive resource bases, not surprisingly, tend to offer a greater array of services. But in this regard, they do not differ from non-immigrant Protestant congregations, as Chaves (2004) has shown in his research on American congregational life.

Third, Cadge's study found that only a minority of temples were ethnically exclusive. Although she does not provide details about the heterogeneity of temples, she does point to the widespread presence of Laotians in the Thai temples and in smaller numbers other Asian groups, including Cambodians, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Sri Lankans. In addition, slightly more than one in three temples has some non-Asian members. One of the consequences of this tendency is that English frequently becomes the *lingua franca* (Cadge 2008, p. 358).

The one element in Warner's model that Cadge did not test was the role of the laity in temple functions, both because of data limitations and some of the distinctive features of Thai Buddhist temples. However, what she has to say on the subject appears to lend credence to de facto congregationalism. Thus, she observes that "lay people have taken on more temple leadership roles through administrative work, the education of children, meditation teaching in some contexts, and other functions" (Cadge 2008, p. 355). Her article concludes by calling for a revised version of the de facto congregationalism thesis, one that is more attentive to heterogeneity and variability and which offers an account of process by utilizing the insights of the new institutionalism.

But based on the evidence Cadge has presented, such a revision is unwarranted as her case lends credence to, rather than challenges the

thesis. Even if it did offer evidence that was clearly at odds with de facto congregationalism, it would not undermine it. The thesis is predicated on two main assumptions. First, the congregational model is an ideal type, and as such in the real world we can expect to find organizations that more or less resemble it on a scale—as well as finding some that don't seem to bear a resemblance to the type. Second, when it comes to immigrant religious organizations, the claim is that there is a *tendency* to take on the congregational form. This suggests that not all such religious bodies will assume this form. I would note that Foley and Hoge (2007, p. 218) say as much when they point to Warner's claim that de facto congregationalism is the "dominant" organizational form—not the only one. Moreover, those that do take this form will not necessarily do so in ways that make them identical to the traditional Protestant congregation. And as to why such a tendency exists, Warner does not rely on theoretical appeals to modernity or to Bourdieu-inspired ideas about religious fields, but rather offers a far more grounded analysis based on such things as the quest for tax-exempt status and the pragmatic considerations that go into deciding to use Sunday as the primary worship and social gathering day of the week.

Unlike the "theologizing experience" thesis, for which the jury is out, and the "return to theological foundations" thesis, which has not been given its due in recent research agendas, for the "de facto congregationalism" thesis there is sufficient empirical evidence to confirm its theoretical robustness. That being said, the thesis is explicitly about the American context, predicated as it is on the idea of disestablishment. Thus, in thinking about whether or not a similar pattern of organizational reframing is occurring elsewhere, particularly in Western Europe, one has to acknowledge that this remains an open question. To date, sociologists have not explicitly taken up this topic to see if either a parallel phenomenon is occurring in Europe or if a new type of reframing is underway due to differing church/state relations—a topic that has been addressed for different purposes that will be discussed in the fifth question. But before turning to

it, we examine the question of religion and immigrant transnationalism.

How Robust Is Immigrant Religious Transnationalism?

Transnationalism entered the lexicon of immigration studies in the early 1990s (Schiller et al. 1992). It refers to the varied ways that immigrants link their place of origin to their place of settlement, in the process creating a social field that encompasses both there and here. The earliest formulations contended that it was an entirely new type of immigrant incorporation, that it represented a mode of resistance to capitalism, and that it would become increasingly consequential in the future and would persist over time and across generations. It was assertively promoted, though sometimes in revised form that did not embrace all of the above-noted features, by several principal advocates and rather quickly embraced by many scholars (Schiller 1997; Faist 1998; Portes 2001). However, it was also confronted by critics, sympathetic and unsympathetic (Kivisto 2001; Waldinger and Fitzgerald 2004), to which advocates have responded in a variety of ways. The result is that the concept has undergone substantial revision since its earliest formulations, the consequence an often-spirited dialogue (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007; Faist et al. 2013).

The focus of most of the research on transnational migration is on economics, politics, civic incorporation, and family dynamics. The scholar most responsible for concentrating attention on religion and transnational immigrants is Peggy Levitt (2003, 2004, 2007). At a relatively early stage in this evolving research agenda, she took stock of the state of research, concluding that up to that point most of the research consisted of descriptive snap shots of particular religious groups at specific moments in time. Very little research was longitudinal. She concluded her assessment by noting that, "This article is intentionally short on conclusions and long on calls for more empirical, grounded work" (Levitt 2003, p. 868).

In a subsequent article, Levitt (2004, p. 6) focused on the complex interplay of factors contributing to religious identity and practice in migratory settings and to the role of religion in forging and sustaining transnational ties. She offered a provisional typology for understanding the varied ways in which the social construction of a religious presence in a new context takes organizational form. Presenting three organizational types as “heuristic devices rather than static, fixed categories,” she distinguishes extended, negotiated, and recreated transnational religious organizations.

The extended type is characteristic of major religions that have succeeded over the centuries in developing a global network of religious institutions. The Catholic Church is the example of this type par excellence. In Levitt’s (2004, p. 2) description, it has such a well-established presence in so many sending and receiving countries that it “allows migrants who choose to do so to move almost seamlessly between sending- and receiving-country parishes and religious movement groups. The Church integrates them into powerful, well-established networks where they can express interests, gain skills, and make claims with respect to their home and host countries.” One might suggest that in a somewhat more attenuated way, those Protestant denominations that have remained closest to the Catholic Church—Anglicans and Lutherans—can also be seen as examples of the extended pattern, though in a more limited way. Anglicans, for example, have a network shaped by the British colonial legacy, while Lutherans have developed one since the nineteenth century as a result both of the migration of many Lutherans from the Nordic countries and Germany to North America and elsewhere, and of missionary work in the developing world.

Levitt’s (2004, pp. 2–3, 8–11) second type, negotiated transnational organizations, applies to religious groups that lack the long histories and the relative size of these three examples. Whether or not there is a central body overseeing work at the local, congregational level, much of the initiative comes from below rather than top-down. There is a far-less developed set of routinized

policies and procedures, as well as a more flexible and decentralized authority structure. As an illustration of this type, Levitt points to the International Church of the Four Square Gospel (ICFSG), a relatively small American-based congregation founded by the charismatic and controversial fundamentalist preacher Aimee Semple McPherson in 1924, whose Angelos Temple was a forerunner to today’s megachurches.

The ICFSG’s proselytizing work in the developing world has led to substantial growth in a number of countries. In fact, of what are claimed to be 8 million members worldwide, the vast majority reside outside of the country where the denomination was founded. Levitt’s specific case is that of Brazil, where, she reports, there were an estimated 10,000 ICSFG churches in 2001 (a large number, and one disputed by the denomination’s Brazilian website, which reported 3,988 at that time (Foursquare Historical Department *n.d.*)). A wave of Brazilian converts has immigrated to the United States, settling chiefly in the Northeast. Levitt has examined one congregation in the Boston area that is ministered to by a Brazilian pastor who, too, is a migrant. Her description of his congregation and its ongoing though loosely-structured relationship to the ICSFG in Brazil leads her to generalize about the negotiated type, noting that such churches “arise from a set of personal and institutional relationships that emerge organically, in response to the challenges posed by a particular context” (Levitt 2004, p. 10). In the process of ongoing negotiation with a variety of actors, individual and institutional, both there and here, members of the ICFSG congregation in Boston entered into various civic engagements, ranging from signing petitions in opposition to same sex marriage to volunteering at soup kitchens. They did so with an understanding advanced by their pastor that to be a good Christian required being a good citizen.

The recreated transnational religious group represents an attempt to relocate or transplant a religious tradition in a new national context that is intended to replicate the religious beliefs and practices characteristic of the homeland in the receiving society. Here a premium is placed on

“strongly reinforce[ing] members’ ties to their home country, often at the expense of receiving-country social integration.” To reinforce this organizationally, Levitt (2004, p. 3) writes that, “Many of these groups are structured like franchises or chapters of sending-country religious organizations.” Levitt cites as an example Gujarati Hindus who migrated to the United States, moving from a country where they constitute a sizeable majority of the population to a situation where they are a very small religious minority existing in an institutionally incomplete community (Breton 1964). In contrast to Catholicism, with its hierarchal institutional structure and in the Vatican a clear center of legitimate authority, a defined sacred text, a long history of theological inquiry shaping the contours of the faith, creedal commitments that all the faithful are to embrace, a shared liturgy familiar to all Catholics around the world, and so forth, Hinduism exists at the opposite end of the spectrum. It lacks a central authority and one clearly demarcated institutional structure. The beliefs and practices vary considerably based on a number of factors, including regional and caste differences. Not all agree about what are the religion’s sacred texts. Indeed, both within and outside of Hinduism, some would contend that it is less a religion and more a way of life. Given these profound differences between Catholicism and Hinduism, it is evident why the extended form is not a viable option for the latter.

Examining two groups in the Boston area, the Devotional Associates of Yogeshwar, which is also called the Swadhyaya movement, and the International Swaminarayan Satsang Organization (ISSO), she describes the reliance of immigrant members of both groups on leadership and guidance from India. Members of the Swadhyaya movement, for example, gather weekly. Part of their gathering is devoted to watching and discussing videotapes of the Indian-based founder of the movement. In addition, leaders in Mumbai continue to play a role in assisting immigrants in their personal lives when financial, marital, or psychological problems arise.

The larger ISSO has state offices and a national office that can intervene at the local level, thereby reducing somewhat the reliance on the Indian operation. For example, within the United States a revolving loan and skill fund is available when members in a particular locale are about to embark on major projects, particularly temple construction. The dependence on *Sadhus* (holy men or teachers) from India who spoke no English and were not only unfamiliar with American customs, but opposed to many, such as interacting with women, meant that they promoted an insular version of religion for the adherents. Despite being a fairly successful group in economic terms, many ISSO members sought to distance themselves and their children from being tainted by many aspects of Western culture and to encourage social relations that were largely confined to their religious community (Levitt 2004, pp. 11–14). In contrast to Four Square Brazilians, Hindus from these two religious groups exhibited little civic involvement; when they did it was often inadvertent as the general view of most members was that they should focus on family and friends and steer clear of political involvements.

As with her paper from a year earlier, Levitt was both taking stock and seeking to articulate a research agenda for the future, one that addressed issues of identity, connections or networks, and the institutions available or created that seek to make possible religious practice in a transnational idiom. Since then, a growing body of research has been produced, much of it in article form, which often means that although valuable, the publications lack the thick description that more sustained book-length efforts make possible. While some transnational scholars have concluded that transnational connections are to large extent a first generation phenomenon, Levitt (2009) disputes this conclusion. She is convinced that transnationalism has a potential durability over time that ought not to be underestimated. And given the borderless nature of major world religions, a world where *God Needs No Passport* (Levitt 2007), it is particularly in the realm of immigrant religion that transnationalism would seem to have the potential to persist (see Offutt

and Miller's Chap. 26 on "Transnationalism" in this volume).

Her position is implicitly called into question in the most sustained effort to date to build on transnationalism while offering a corrective to its approach, which is found in Waldinger's *The Cross-Border Connection: Immigrants, Emigrants, and Their Homelands* (2015). In Waldinger's view, the salutatory contribution of the transnational turn in immigration studies is that it offers an effective rebuttal of methodological nationalism, with its optic focused on either the receiving or the sending country, but not on the dialectical interplay between here and there. He agrees that transnationalism is a real phenomenon, one that can be found in the past and in the present. And he concurs with transnationalists about the forces at play in creating transnationalism.

Waldinger parts company with them because of what he sees as their unwillingness to complement those insights with equal attention to the forces that over time serve to undermine cross-border connections. There are three features of his alternative model that set it apart from theorists of transnationalism: the stress he puts on the salience of place, the state, and borders. Migration is a dislocating event, one that upsets the isomorphism of state, society, and people. It does so because when individuals cross territorial boundaries in order to improve their lives, they "pull one society onto the territory of another state," resulting in "intersocietal convergence" (Waldinger 2015, p. 38).

Contrary to some theorists of globalization, he disagrees with claims about the declining significance of place as people presumably become comfortable defining home in broader terms of border-crossing social space. Despite cheap phone calls, email, Skype, and the like, distance cannot be completely overcome. As Waldinger (2015, p. 42) puts it, "there is no death of distance, as it simply cannot be killed." Waldinger is convinced that over time the frequency of cross-border activities in most instances declines, the result being "intersocietal divergence." Migrants in general do better economically than their counterparts remaining in the homeland. If they

didn't, they would return home. For those experiencing improved economic circumstances, the incentive is to remain in the destination country that affords a "better future," but in so doing, he asserts that the immigrants "also enter a cage, where their home country ties inexorably wither" (Waldinger 2015, p. 81). Indeed, Waldinger's state-centered thesis is predicated on the fact that the sending state loses its ability to cage, while the receiving state gains that capacity, and in so doing requires newcomers to undergo a process of political resocialization in order to become national citizens.

Waldinger does not address religion, but if his thesis is correct, all manifestations of immigrant transnationalism have a limited duration. Unlike the preceding three questions, the answer to the robustness of transnationalism calls for predicting the future based on limited evidence from the present. One might be tempted to say, "Check back a few decades from now and we'll know the answer." That being said, there is a recognition that in other spheres of social life transnationalism does not exhibit particular robustness, and one might conclude that this may also be true of immigrant religion. One possibility to consider is that while religious transnationalism persists, the offspring of immigrants will no longer be part of border-crossing religious organizations, but rather will be assimilated into the religious territory of the new homeland.

Is Religion a Bridge to Inclusion in North America and a Barrier in Western Europe?

The basic outlines of the theses on immigrant inclusion advanced in two widely-cited articles have become frameworks for subsequent comparisons of the United States and Western Europe. The articles are Zolberg and Woon's (1999) "Why Islam Is like Spanish: Cultural Incorporation in Europe and the United States" and Foner and Alba's (2008) "Immigrant Religion in the US and Western Europe: Bridge or Barrier to Inclusion?" The former begins by noting the simple demographic fact that Mexicans constitute

by far the largest immigrant group in the United States and when other immigrants from Central and South America are added into the mix, over half of contemporary immigrants originate from Spanish-speaking countries. Meanwhile, the Muslim population in Western Europe, particularly in some of the largest immigrant receiving nations—France, Germany, Great Britain, and the Netherlands—represent a far larger portion of the immigrant population as a whole and of the country's overall population than is true of the United States. As a consequence, the cultural arenas in which contestation transpires differs, with language being the major fault line in the United States, while religion defines that fault line in Western Europe.

As barriers, language and religion differ. For one thing, in most nations there is a demand for a single official language, one necessary if a person is to function in all facets of public life, whereas religious diversity is an accepted phenomenon. Secondly, individuals are capable of being bi- or multi-lingual, and thus it is not necessarily the case that having an official language means that other languages disappear. At the same time, external pressures—subtle and not-so-subtle—to conform linguistically often encounter a desire on the part of the second and third generation offspring of immigrants to embrace the language of the larger society rather than of their ancestors. Certainly, the history of American immigration reveals a nation that has proven to be, to large extent and for better or worse, the graveyard of languages other than English. Third, as Zolberg and Woon (1999, p. 21) point out, “the sphere of language rights is more limited than that of religious rights.” Zolberg and Woon (1999, p. 28) conclude by answering their own question: “In what sense is Islam in Europe like Spanish in the United States?”

In that public debates surrounding the emergence of large immigrant groups identified by religion in the one case and language in the other are emblematic of larger issues of inclusion and exclusion, which in the last instance are about identity—of the hosts, of the newcomers, and most important, of the social entities that will result from their prolonged interactions.

In an essay that builds on Zolberg and Woon, Brubaker (2015) emphasizes the fact that religious pluralism on both sides of the Atlantic is more robust than linguistic pluralism. He points out that immigrants are not expected to embrace the dominant religion of the receiving country, but they are expected to learn its dominant language. Religious pluralism “is not simply normatively accepted in liberal states but institutionally supported” (Brubaker 2015, p. 95). But this does not imply that religion is not a potential barrier to inclusion. On the contrary, because it has tended to become a more salient source of “vision and division” than language, it often becomes “the cutting edge of contestation over the political accommodation of cultural differences in Western liberal democracies” (Brubaker 2015, p. 101). And in the post-9/11 world, that contestation is overwhelmingly about Islam.

In comparative terms, Foner and Alba (2008) contend that religion has proven to be a greater barrier to inclusion in Western Europe than in the United States. In attempting to account for why religion would be a barrier to inclusion in one setting and a bridge in the other, they point to four main factors that distinguish the two contexts: (1) the religious composition of the respective immigrant populations differs, with the vast majority of immigrants to the United States being Christian, while a sizeable plurality of the immigrants to Western Europe are Muslim; (2) Muslims in the United States are on the whole more socioeconomically successful than their Western European counterparts; (3) the level of religiosity is considerable higher in the United States than in Western Europe and being religious is viewed positively in the former far more so than in the latter; and (4) different church-state relations, which have deep histories, make religious pluralism easier to accommodate in the United States than in Western Europe (Alba and Foner 2015, p. 130–131). In short, the differences are demographic, cultural, and institutional in nature. The first of these needs no further commentary, and thus we turn to the intertwined impact of the other two.

A brief historical excursus grounds the subsequent discussion of the contemporary scene. The

modern nation-states of Western Europe took form at the moment that Christendom on the continent was fractured by the Protestant Reformation that led to a sustained period of religious wars. Conflict ended with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. An era of peace was achieved when it was agreed that the religion of any particular state would be determined by the religion of the ruler (*Cuius regio, eius religio*). Thus it was that religious pluralism took hold, though a very qualified pluralism. For one thing, the varieties of legitimate religion were limited to Catholicism and Protestantism, and for another, pluralism existed only in a trans-state perspective, not within any particular nation. But this set the stage for more far-reaching changes in church-state relations and the place of religion in public life. Modood and Kastoryano (2006, p. 162) succinctly summarize what transpired, as the idea of a religious monopoly within states was “chipped away at. Not only did toleration come to be seen as equally important but the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century in various ways challenged the Christian faith, the authority of the Church, and the promotion of religion by the state.”

This process of political secularization entailed, in somewhat distinctive ways depending on the nation in question, two aspects: (1) the admixture of institutional differentiation whereby religion, state, economy, and civil spheres attained their own relative autonomy; and (2) religious pluralism protected by law and culturally embedded in values supportive of mutual toleration (Maclure and Taylor 2011). But political secularization is only one aspect of the historical trajectory of the Occidental world, for this “secular age” is also characterized by, in Taylor’s (2007, p. 352) words, “the expanding universe of unbelief.” While political and cultural secularization are analytically distinct, they interact in complex and context-specific ways, and as such have different implications for varied understandings—both among and within nations—of the proper role of religion vis-à-vis the public sphere.

Focusing specifically on political secularism, Modood (2012) distinguishes between radical and moderate versions. Using different terminology, Kuru (2009) offers an insightful compara-

tive account of three different overtly secular political regimes: France, Turkey, and the United States. What Modood refers to as radical, Kuru designates as “assertive” secularism, while he characterizes the moderate variant as “passive.” In his view, both France and Turkey are examples of the former, while the United States is an exemplar of the latter. Assertive secularism requires the state to actively intervene to exclude religion from the public sphere, while the passive form requires the state to remain neutral toward all religious doctrines.

Confining ourselves here to the United States and France, the operative concept in the former, as Warner’s (1993) “new paradigm” makes clear, is disestablishment, derived from the First Amendment’s articulation of church-state relations in a formulation that is on the surface remarkably simple: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” That the interpretation of the amendment is not so simple can be seen in the conflicting positions between those who advocate a position that emphasizes the willingness of the state to accommodate to religion versus those who call for a strict wall of separation between religions institutions and the state.

Kuru contends that while the distinction between accommodationists and separatists is to large extent accurate, the competing perspectives are actually more varied than that. He distinguishes the Christian right from other accommodationists, and strict separatists (the new atheists, for example) from their more moderate counterparts. In his view, only the strict separatists want to exclude religion entirely from the public sphere. At the same time, it is only the Christian right that seeks to promote the cultural hegemony of Christianity. When it comes to certain policy preferences, both categories of accommodationists support prayer in public schools and state funding of religious schools, while both categories of separatists reject those policy proposals (Kuru 2009, p. 54).

It is generally argued that the French policy of *laïcité*, reflecting a history of religious conflict dating to the French Revolution, constitutes a more radical type of secularism when compared

to the American. The history since 1789 was often tumultuous. In the wake of the Revolution, Catholicism was rejected as the state religion but with the Concordat of 1801 it became defined as the hegemonic religion of France. The nineteenth century pitted Catholics and secularists in an ongoing cultural war, seen vividly in the fault lines that characterized the Dreyfus Affair.

Though the idea of *laïcité* had its origins in the mid-nineteenth century, it was the passage of the Third Republic's 1905 Law on the Separation of the Churches and State that planted it in the nation's legal system. The law parallels the First Amendment in asserting state neutrality in the religious domain and the freedom of religious expression. One way in which it differs from the United States is a provision of the law defining public powers related to religious institutions. The law was the product of a compromise between Catholics and secularists. In the nineteenth century the state funded four state-proscribed religions: Catholicism, Calvinism, Lutheranism, and Judaism (the last three in combination amounting to less than 2% of the French population). The rationale for such funding tended to be articulated in terms of providing compensation for the confiscation of church property in the aftermath of the French Revolution. This practice of direct funding ended with the 1905 law, but a new arrangement was created whereby the state owned worship buildings and thus it assumed responsibility for maintaining them.

Both the American and French versions of church-state relations treat the state as responsible for insuring freedom of religious conscience as part of the larger package of constitutionally guaranteed individual rights. The United States has done so in a context characterized by a history of accommodating diversity and by, in legal scholar Schuck's (2003) phrase, a preference for "keeping government at a safe distance." In contrast, according to Liogier (2009, p. 25), "interference in religion by public authorities is the norm rather than the exception" in France, comparing state bureaucrats to sports referees. The state, for example, serves as an arbiter in determining which organizations are bona fide reli-

gions versus which are "cults," with the former achieving the status of legitimate institutions and accruing such benefits as tax exempt status, whereas the latter are seen as potential threats to public life (differing responses to Scientology being a case in point).

If Americans are anxious about an overreaching state, the French are concerned about the potential challenge to social unity caused by factions. This is a reflection of the difference between America's Lockean vision versus the French embrace of Rousseau's social contract. Bowen (2006, p. 15) summarizes the difference as that of the American commitment to "freedom from the state" versus the French quest for "freedom through the state" (see also Joppke 2009, p. 29).

Complicating the picture are nations that are not strictly secular, but instead either make provision for an established state church—with the Anglican Church in Britain constituting the paradigmatic example, but also including Lutheran State churches in Denmark, Iceland, and Norway—and corporatist systems such as Germany and Italy. Freedom of religious expression is protected similar to the more explicitly political secular states, as is religious diversity. Nevertheless, in these two models, either a single religion is privileged or two or more religions are accorded special status vis-à-vis other religions (Fetzer and Soper 2005). From the point of view of Tariq Modood, an advocate of multiculturalism who is particularly invested in the incorporation of Muslims in Britain, a state church need not necessarily be seen as an impediment to inclusion. Indeed, he thinks that a more pluralistic understanding of that nation's religious landscape is possible, taking comfort in Prince Charles' assertion that as monarch he would seek to be the "Defender of Faith" rather than the "Defender of *the* Faith" (Modood 2005, p. 145).

Given these different institutional arrangements defining church-state relations, one can expect to find variations in responses to the growing presence of Islam. And at the same time, there is evidence of convergence among pluralist democracies in terms of how their respective legal systems address matters associated with the

status of religious organizations. Joppke and Torpey's (2013) comparative analysis of legal attempts to integrate Islam in Canada, France, Germany, and the United States argue that differing national histories make a "one-size fits all" approach impossible, but given the shared commitment to liberal values, all four have made genuine efforts to integrate Muslims. And, without glossing over the problems and shortcomings of these efforts, their concluding assessment provides grounds for cautious optimism in all four countries—and their bridge/barrier distinction notwithstanding, a view Alba and Foner share (2015, p. 141). Religion in liberal democracies is viewed, at least implicitly, not simply as a right of private individuals, but as a collective right possessed by a community of people sharing a religious faith and committed to structuring their life together according to that faith. Differences, however, persist in the proper role of the state vis-à-vis religious organizations and in defining the proper place of religious communities in relation to the public sphere.

Is religion a bridge to immigrant inclusion on one side of the Atlantic and a barrier on the other? Does American religiosity make the country more hospitable to Islam? Or, given that some research indicates that the highly religious harbor higher levels of prejudice towards Islam than the nonreligious, is something else at play? Is the social class location of Muslims more important than the cultural content of Islam, as Joppke and Torpey (2013) contend? Do distinctive national characteristics trump a transcendent commitment to liberal democracy, or is it the other way around? Provocative answers have begun to emerge, but as the authors discussed in this section would concede, we have much to learn.

Future Directions

As this chapter reveals, the research literature on religion and international migration, once a neglected topic in both the sociology of religion and in immigration studies, has during the past quarter of a century become a dynamic and rapidly expanding field of research. A recent attempt

to make sense of the research published to date did so by dividing it into four broad topical categories that reflect the major preoccupations of academics: immigrant identity work, reframing religious organizations and practices, transnational religious networks, and church/state relations and the public sphere. Despite advances in our understanding of each of these dimensions of the topic, it is reasonable to conclude that in all of them much still needs to be done.

More specifically, when turning to the five questions examined herein, the review of the state of the field indicates numerous lacuna that ought to shape future research agendas. The question concerning whether or not migration is a theologizing experience has not been addressed satisfactorily because researchers have examined those immigrants actively engaged in religious activities, but have not looked in-depth at their unengaged counterparts. In effect, researchers have sampled on the dependent variable. Future research would benefit from assuming three categories of migrants: those who become more religious after migrating, those whose religious activities (whether active or inactive) remain the same, and those for whom migration proves to be what Massey and Higgins (2011) call an "alienating experience." Interconnected with the first question is the second one, which asks if immigrants seek to return to theological foundations. Again, our understanding might be better advanced by assuming that some engage in a process of "pristinization," separating the impact of accretions of the homeland culture from the religion's core, while others do not. Researchers should seek to understand why different immigrant responses occur and what makes immigrants in each category different from the others.

If there is a question that does appear to have been answered in a reasonably definitive way, it is the one that asks if *de facto* congregationalism constitutes a general pattern of organizational framing. The topic has focused on the United States, where the evidence supports the thesis—in that particular nation. However, it remains an open question for future research whether this pattern would be applicable to other countries, particularly those of Western Europe. There is

more uncertainty about the transnational question and one concerning the role of religion as either a bridge or barrier to inclusion. In terms of the former, a growing body of evidence points to transnationalism being a phenomenon largely of the immigrant generation, one that erodes from the second generation forward. At the same time, given the portability of global religions, it may be the case that while most manifestations of transnationalism will decline and disappear, religious transnationalism may have the potential for greater staying power. But at this point, this remains an open question in need of further exploration. Regarding the latter, I have already suggested the current limits to our knowledge. And, of the five questions considered herein, this question is clearly the one with the most pressing political implications.

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