Who Lynches on the Frontier?

Select Jesuit References and the Wild West Paradigm

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Abstract

Contemporary historians of Western lynching point out that the influential frontier justice interpretation has many weaknesses, especially its inattention to the role of race and ethnicity. Selected Jesuit incidental references both reflect the influence of this paradigm and support its contemporary critique by identifying frontier lynching as an Anglo-American practice.

Keywords: Jesuits, lynching, vigilantism, Las Vegas College, frontier

Introduction

On December 9, 1881, Fr. Francis Hillman, SJ, set out from Omaha on a mission trip to Sydney, Nebraska. A report on Jesuit missionary activities in the state, including Hillman's visit to Sydney, later described the town as "the last place of any note" along the tracks of Nebraska's Union Pacific Railway. After outlining the various accomplishments of Hillman's mission, the report's anonymous Jesuit author added: "The people of Sydney think they are making rapid progress in civilization and good manners; for during the preceding year only one man was lynched and only four murders were committed, quite an improvement on former records" (*CDRSI* 14:479; *WL* 1882, 175–76).

The mindsets that the Jesuit writer ascribes to the people of Sydney reflect an influential narrative about American lynching. This trope associated the practice of lynching with the Western frontier, interpreting vigilantism as a regrettable, yet temporary, substitute for

conventional mechanisms of law and order that had yet to be established.[1] Given the prevalence of that explanation, it is not surprising to find traces of its influence in Jesuit accounts of their experiences in the nineteenth-century American West. And yet, if some Jesuit references to lynching reflect the Wild West trope, others support interpretations of Western frontier lynching that emphasize hierarchies of race, class, and ethnicity rather than institutional weakness. Jesuit incidental statements about lynching on the Western frontier, therefore, both confirm the influence of the institutional immaturity trope and anticipate recent interpretations of lynching as a practice that white/Anglo settlers brought with them and exercised by choice rather than necessity.

To understand these Jesuit references, one must set them in historical context, first by considering the trope of frontier lynching, and then, the presence of Jesuits on the Western frontier. This background will illuminate one twentieth-century Jesuit reference that illustrates the influence of the frontier justice paradigm. It will also facilitate analysis of three nineteenth-century Jesuit references to lynching from the Alaska and New Mexico Territories. By associating lynching with whites or "Americans" (i.e., Anglos), these references anticipate contemporary historians' emphasis upon the role of race and ethnicity in Western frontier vigilantism.

The Western Lynching Trope

In the mid-nineteenth century, the portrayal of lynching as an emergency mechanism of frontier justice attempted to defuse an American public relations problem. Against conservative British claims that US vigilantism revealed the slippery slope leading from democracy to anarchy, apologists responded that vigilantism was necessary where legal remedies were weak (Silkey 2015, 16–17, 23–24; Pfeifer 2011, 64). This excuse treated lynching as a temporary expedient that would disappear as maturing communities developed conventional systems for responding to crime. In addition, depictions of frontier culture often interpreted accounts of lynching as part of "the authentic American experience" – a stereotype portrayed, for example, in Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show during its European tour in 1892 (Silkey 2015, 27; Gonzales-Day 2006, 113–14). As a result, reports Sarah Silkey (2015, 28), frontier lynching became an "integral part of transatlantic popular culture." Ken Gonzalez-Day (2006, 38) emphasizes the influence of this paradigm on everything "from the five-penny novels of the nineteenth century to the great American Westerns of the silver screen in the twentieth." Such narratives often romanticized lynching as an emergency response to lawlessness.

Despite its influence, the institutional immaturity explanation of Western lynching fails to explain critical features of the historical record, as many recent studies attest. While acknowledging some deficiencies in frontier law and order, Carrigan and Webb (2013) cite the chronological record of Western lynchings of so-called Mexicans to demonstrate this model's weaknesses.[2] If lynchings were primarily the product of institutional immaturity, one would

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[1] In the discussion that follows, "Western frontier" will refer to current US states west of Missouri (excluding Hawaii) that were still or became US territories after the end of the American Civil War.

[2] Carrigan and Webb (2013, 57) point out that Anglo-Americans often conflated Mexican nationals with Mexican Americans and other Latin Americans.

expect numbers to crest early, and to decline as communities developed conventional mechanisms of criminal justice. Instead, documented Western lynchings of Mexicans increased in three distinct periods: the 1850s, 1870s, and 1910s. Institutional immaturity cannot explain these saw-toothed statistical trends (Carrigan and Webb 2013, 20–33). Similarly, Ken Gonzales-Day argues that one must not exaggerate the chronological discrepancy between the American West and other parts of the country in creating institutions to control crime. San Francisco and Los Angeles, he points out, began to establish police forces at roughly the same time as New Orleans, Cincinnati, Boston, and Chicago (2006, 76). In addition, while the numerous accounts of lynch mobs extracting or attempting to extract prisoners from jail might indicate distrust of or impatience with the normal administration of justice, they also illustrate that such facilities existed when the crowd acted.[3] In such cases, the issue was clearly not the dearth of conventional systems for responding to crime, but the unwillingness to wait for or to respect their results.

The institutional weakness narrative regarding frontier lynching also presumes that lynching communities would have preferred to rely upon conventional mechanisms of criminal justice. However, Michael Pfeifer (2011) argues that alternative views regarding the appropriate response to crime in the American context were competing during the nineteenth century. One approach defended respect for the rights of the accused and for rule of law as foundations of public order, while rejecting public executions as a dangerous to civic virtue (Pfeifer 2011, 4–5, 12–13, 21). The other prioritized local consensus about guilt and defended a community's right to protect itself with swift and violent punishments (Pfeiffer 2011, 13–15). Lynching, Pfeifer (2011, 21–22, 54, 69–70, 78) believes, emerged from the second approach, and was sometimes chosen as a conscious repudiation of the due process paradigm. In Pfeifer's (2011, 31, 71) view, settlers who had already embraced the legitimacy of vigilantism brought lynching with them to the Midwestern and Western frontiers. If he is correct, then Western lynching was less a response to frontier conditions than a manifestation of pre-existing attitudes.

However, the most significant flaw in the institutional weakness interpretation is its failure to consider the significance of race, ethnicity, and nationality in determining persons' relative risk of being lynched in the West, although the role of race in Southern lynching has long been recognized (Carrigan and Webb 2013, xiv, 1–16; Gonzales-Day 2006, 34–35). In fact, before the American Civil War, Pfeifer (2011, 32) argues, "practices of racial lynching became a means for white southerners, midwesterners, and westerners to assert that their regions would constitute a 'white man's country' regardless of the protections due process law might theoretically extend to black, Indian, and Hispanic defendants." For Gonzales-Day (2006, 10), the image of Western lynching as the fate of "cattle rustlers and stagecoach robbers" obscures the frequent association of vigilantism with racial violence on the frontier. Carrigan and Webb (2013, 5) provide an inventory of 547 Mexicans lynched in the West between 1848 and 1928, while acknowledging that this represents "a fraction of the actual number." In the West, in fact, lynching was only one form of collective violence against subordinated groups, who were

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[3] See, for example, *Topeka Daily Capital* 1882; Otero 2018, 232; Segale 2019, 51–54; *LVDG* 1882b.

also subject to massacre and expulsion (Pfeifer 2011, 47–53; Carrigan and Webb 2013, 28, 35–38, 44; Lew-Williams 2018, 1–3).

Background on the Jesuits and Lynching

In an 1874 report for his Neapolitan province, Salvatore Personè, SJ, described the character of the Society of Jesus's new mission field in the Colorado Territory, as it had been when he and his companion first arrived in Conejos in 1871. Four months before the Jesuits took up their new assignment, three men had been found one morning hanging from the limbs of a tree. Personè's letter provides no further details about this lynching; nor does he specify its location. (Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish encompassed more than two dozen mission stations scattered across the San Luis Valley). Instead, Personè mentions this event to illustrate the positive effects of the Jesuits' ministry upon an area previously demoralized by vigilantism. Since Spanish and English-speaking settlers had begun to establish permanent communities in the Valley less than two decades before, Personè's report provides a good example of a Jesuit incidental reference to lynching on the US Western frontier (Stoller and Steele 1982, 177–84, 4, xx-xxiv).

That Jesuits encountered Western frontier lynching is unsurprising because the scope of their activities in the West grew dramatically during the nineteenth century. In the 1840s, Jesuits came as missionaries to the Rocky Mountains, where some dreamed of recreating the Paraguayan Reductions (McKevitt 2007, 93–94). However, ministry among the indigenous people of the continental United States and, later, of Alaska was by no means the Jesuits' only commitment in the American West. The shortage of clergy, especially – but not only – for the Hispanic Catholic populations in territories added to the United States following the Mexican American War, made Jesuits a valuable pastoral as well as educational resource for the frontier Catholic Church, and many Jesuits were fluent in languages other than English (Vollmar 1976, 85–87; Owens 1950, 22–23). One of Hillman's confreres in the Nebraska Jubilee Missions, for example, was a priest from the Austrian Province prepared to preach to the young state's German and Bohemian immigrants (*WL* 1882, 86–87).

The need for Jesuits in the American West coincided with the Society's challenge to resettle members exiled from various parts of Europe. The lifting of the Society's suppression in 1814 did not eliminate the suspicions that it faced on the continent, especially in a century of political unrest. The revolutions of 1848, for example, drove half of the world's Jesuit from their native provinces, at least temporarily (McKevitt 2007, 14–35; McGreevy 2016, 8–25). Many nineteenth-century Jesuits had their own stories of facing mob violence (McKevitt 2007, 14–16, 25–26, 28–29, 33–35; Kertzer 2018, 56, 65, 70–71). Even in the United States, a Know-Nothing crowd in Ellsworth, Maine, tarred and feathered a Swiss Jesuit émigré, John Bapst, who would later become the first president of Boston College (McGreevy 2016, 26–62). Thus, vigilantism could be a matter of personal as well as pastoral and academic concern for Jesuits serving in the United States.

Jesuits addressed lynching in textbooks for their students and in US periodicals such as *Revista Católica* and, in the twentieth century, *America* (Fleming 2020, 46–47).[4] The Society's flagship Italian journal, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, published an important exchange on US lynching in the early 1890s (Fleming 2020). The discussion to follow, however, will concentrate on four English-language references to lynching, all but one taken from the *Woodstock Letters*, an internal Jesuit publication printed at the Maryland theologate from 1872 until 1969. All, like the Colorado example from 1874, are incidental references – in other words, the author mentions lynching to make another point instead of analyzing the practice itself. All concern events on the Western frontier during the 1880s. The first, published in 1947, reflects the extended influence of the frontier justice or institutional immaturity paradigm for interpreting lynching. By contrast, the second, third, and fourth, all published in the nineteenth century, anticipate contemporary lynching studies' attention to race and ethnicity through references to the identity of the perpetrators. Lynching, suggest these narratives from Alaska and New Mexico, was a practice associated with dominant Anglo-American culture (*WL* 1947; Barnum 1893; Hughes 1880; Deane 1884).

The Influence of the Frontier Lynching Paradigm

The 1947 volume *The Woodstock Letters* includes a striking illustration of the Western lynching trope in an obituary for the long-lived Jesuit John Brown, who during his more than sixty years in the Society had served as president of the College of the Sacred Heart and as Superior of the New Mexico-Colorado Mission (*WL* 1947, 170–76; Stansell 1977, 62–76; McKevitt 2007, 186, 220–21, 304–5). Born in Michigan in 1867, Brown moved with his family to Colorado when he was nine. From there, his parents sent him to a new Jesuit college in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Brown applied to become a Jesuit, and entered the Society on November 13, 1881 (*WL* 1947, 170; *WL* 1878, 40–43; *CLV* 1880-1881, 13; *CDRSI* 24.105).

Brown's obituary includes a story concerning his early novitiate in the Southwest.[5] One morning, when he was opening the residence's shutters, he saw three bodies dangling from ropes outside the window. The victims had been taken from the house next door, which was serving as a jail, and lynched while the Jesuit community was asleep. Brown told his fellow Jesuits that he slammed the shutters closed again and ran back to bed. According to the author of his obituary, Brown "was transferred, at the end of the year, to the more stereotyped noviceship at Florissant, where he finished his probation with no more lynchings" (*WL* 1947, 171).

The Jesuit author of Brown's obituary clearly invokes the frontier justice lynching trope in describing these events, not only because he uses the term "rope justice" in speaking of the victims' fate, but also because he emphasizes the stark difference between the present and the "era of Billy the Kid," when John Brown entered the Society (*WL* 1947, 170–71). For the

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[4] For an example from *Revista Católica* (founded 1875), see *Revista Católica* 1879. I will explore that publication's approach to lynching in a later article. For *America* (founded 1909), see *America* 1919; Schadewald 2003, 73 n.84. On the change in *America's* position on anti-lynching legislation, see Southern 1996, 89–93, 195.

[5] The obituary indicates that this event took place in Las Vegas, but Stansell says that Brown entered the novitiate in Albuquerque (*WL* 1947, 170-71; Stansell, 62). On the foundation and short history of the Jesuit novitiate in Albuquerque, see Owens, 68, and Sorrentino, 69-70.

Jesuit who shared Brown's story, what Brown saw as a novice highlights the challenges of the uncivilized frontier, as distinct from the experience of contemporary Jesuits. And yet, if John Brown's obituary reflects the lingering influence of the frontier justice paradigm, its details also anticipate some of the critiques of that paradigm raised by later historiography. The victims may have been imprisoned in a house, but they had been captured and were awaiting trial. If the institutions of conventional law and order were under development in New Mexico, they were certainly not absent. Thus, Brown's story provides an appropriate introduction to other Jesuit references that anticipate modern historical interpretations of Western frontier lynching. The first, from the Alaskan frontier, casts the identity of potential lynchers into sharp relief, not least because its reference to their whiteness is so nonchalant.

The Murder of Archbishop Seghers

In July 1886, Archbishop Charles Seghers left British Columbia to pursue his longstanding dream of establishing a mission in the Yukon River Valley. Since he had persuaded the Society to take charge of the mission, Jesuit fathers Pascal Tosi and Aloysius Robaut accompanied him. The archbishop also insisted upon inviting Frank Fuller, an off-again, on-again employee of the Rocky Mountain Missions, to join the party, against the advice of the Jesuits, who had noticed his recurrent periods of mental illness. When the group reached the place where they had planned to spend the winter, the archbishop insisted on going further, while the Jesuits stayed behind. As a result, the Jesuits were far away when Fuller shot the archbishop, under the paranoid delusion that the cleric wanted him dead. Fuller brought his victim's body to the trading post at St. Michael's, where he claimed to have killed the archbishop in self-defense. The Jesuits only learned what had happened many months later, when the spring thaw made it possible for them to travel to their scheduled reunion with the archbishop. Fuller was arrested and convicted of manslaughter (McNally 2000, 113–19; Barnum 1893, 437–48; *WL* 1887, 272–74, 281–82; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 1888a).

The murder of Archbishop Seghers became an important international news story. Particularly problematic for the Jesuits were media references to Fuller as a *Jesuit brother*: in fact, Fuller himself made this claim in a statement following his conviction (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 1888b). The archbishop's "unfortunate oversight" in referring to "Brother Fuller" in a letter from the Yukon only compounded the problem (Barnum 1893, 441; McNally 2000, 118; Seghers 1887). Although non-Jesuit sources confirmed that Fuller was not a member of the Society, references to him as "Brother Fuller" spread from British Columbia to Sydney (*Victoria Daily Times* 1887b; *Los Angeles Times* 1887; *Victoria Daily Times* 1887a; *Sydney Morning Herald* 1887).[6]

The general dispatch on Alaska published in the 1887 volume of the *Woodstock Letters* included a brief report about the murder (272–74). However, in 1893, Francis Barnum composed a more extensive account of the event – an account he tells us was edited and approved by Tosi (*WL* 1893, 436–49).[7] Barnum emphasizes that Fuller was never a Jesuit, that the Jesuits had warned the archbishop against hiring and retaining Fuller because of his

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[6] McNally (2000, 118) mentions that Fuller had briefly been a postulant.

[7] McNally's analysis (2000, 116–19) draws upon archival sources and includes details missing from the *Woodstock Letters'* accounts.

paranoia, and that Father Tosi's statement was critical in securing Fuller's arrest (*WL* 1893, 440–41, 437–38, 447). The text's reference to lynching appears as part of the story regarding Tosi's statement to the authorities.

Tosi was on his way to San Francisco to report the murder when he was interviewed at Ounalaska by the captain of the US revenue cutter *Bear*, who was investigating a report that a priest had killed the archbishop (Barnum 1893, 447). Before the development of railroads and roads in Alaska, revenue cutters "were the primary federal presence in the territory," with a wide variety of responsibilities, including law enforcement (Thiesen; O'Toole 1997, part 3). Barnum does not name the captain, but he was Michael Healy, brother to James Healy, the bishop of Portland, Maine, and Patrick Healy, SJ, the past president of Georgetown University (O'Toole 1997, part 1; Curran 2010, 274).

Barnum (1893, 447) describes the encounter in this way: "A meeting of the white men was then held in the office of the agent, and Father Tosi made a statement of facts."[8] As a result, the *Bear* set off the next morning to arrest the real killer. Barnum's account adds one additional detail: "There had been some talk of lynching Fuller, but the scheme failed on account of the small number of whites."

This detail of Barnum's narrative stands in sharp contrast to his account of the aftermath of the crime itself. The archbishop died one day before his group would have reached his destination, a village called Nulato where he had spent the winter on a previous visit (Barnum 1893, 436–37, 440, 442). According to Barnum, when Fuller and the Indigenous guides arrived in the village after the murder, the enraged Nulato people considered shooting Fuller, until a trader convinced them not to retaliate. Thus, Fuller did not face summary justice in the village or at the trading posts where he spent the winter (Barnum 1893, 443–46). It was only after news of the murder reached the authorities that lynching became part of the narrative.

Of course, Tosi had only secondhand knowledge of Fuller's reception in Nulato, and Barnum's information was even more remote. Nevertheless, the events at Ounalaska include a clear implication about lynching: it is an option that white men can choose when they are present in sufficient numbers. Lynching is less a frontier practice than a monopoly available to whites on the frontier.

Barnum's reference to lynching includes no moral argument: it is only a description of events as he has chosen to portray them. However, two young Jesuits teaching at Las Vegas College in New Mexico invoked lynching to contrast Anglo and Nuevomexicano cultures.[9] This contrast, moreover, depends upon an implicit moral assessment of lynching. To appreciate their arguments, it is helpful to consider the background of the town in which they came to teach.

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[8] Nothing in the account identifies the agent, but this could be a reference to an agent of the Alaska Commercial Company, which fulfilled some governmental functions in Alaska during this period. During the 1870s and 1880s, one of the ACC's largest trading posts was at Unalaska (Lee 1996, 22, 33–34).

[9] I will follow John M. Nieto-Phillips (2004, 2) in using the term *Nuevomexicanos* for the Spanish-speaking population of New Mexico. See his explanation of the debate over the appropriate term for this group (Nieto-Phillips 2004, 3–9).

Background on Las Vegas, New Mexico

Unlike Santa Fe and Albuquerque, the town of Las Vegas, New Mexico, was not a Spanish settlement. Founded in 1835 by Mexican colonists, and claimed by the United States in 1846, the town became a commercial center that attracted Anglo, German, and French-Canadian settlers eager to profit from trading opportunities on the Santa Fe Trail (Perrigo 2010, 1, 8, 12; Rojas 1998, 21–24, 158–59). The Jesuits, who began teaching in Las Vegas in 1874 and opened Las Vegas College in 1877, settled in a community physically shaped by the Laws of the Indies, which established the standards for town planning in Spanish colonies, including the creation of a central plaza. These conventions remained dominant in northern New Mexico even after Mexican independence (Perrigo 2010, 135–36; Rojas 1998, 30–40).

In July of 1879, however, the arrival of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad line reconfigured the landscape, and to some extent, the culture of Las Vegas. Rather than building its depot in the existing community, the railroad chose a site a mile to the east, on the other side of the Gallinas River. This led to the creation of a second business and residential district in the east, with Anglo-Americans as the primary residents (Rojas 1998, 60–64, 74–75). Attempts to combine the two districts administratively proved controversial, initially rousing opposition from New Town and two years later, from Old Town (Stanley 1951, 169–78; J. M. 1882). Except for a brief period in the 1880s, Old Town and New Town (west and east of the river, respectively) remained separate political entities until both communities approved a referendum on consolidation in 1968 (Stanley 1951, 169–78; Rojas 1998, 67–69, 116–17; Perrigo 2010, 193).

However, if the railroad expanded Las Vegas's businesses and population, this growth also produced an alarming crime wave (Perrigo 2010, 70–71). According to Miguel Otero II (2018, 222), who would eventually become New Mexico's territorial governor, "The coming of the railroad was accompanied . . . by an influx of bad men of all sorts." "During 1879–1880, Las Vegas was the headquarters for all kinds of criminals from every known locality in the United States and Mexico" (Otero 2018, 216). The problem was particularly acute, Otero asserts (2018, 222–23), in New Town, which "fell under the control of as vicious and corrupt a set of scoundrels as could be found anywhere in the West." Their success in obtaining positions in New Town law enforcement compounded the problem. When a visiting friend was shot in his hotel, Otero (2018, 240) called in a justice of the peace from Old Town to take the dying victim's statement, since he believed that the New Town representatives could not be trusted.

Otero's comments are not the prejudices of an Old Town resident disturbed by the transformation of his community. Although descended from a prominent New Mexico family, the younger Miguel Otero had been born in St. Louis, and spent much of his early life in Kansas and Colorado. His father, after an early career in politics and law, became a businessman who promoted railroad interests, and the family settled in Las Vegas only in 1879, in anticipation of the railroad's arrival there. They were also residents of New Town (Otero 2018, 345, 340–43, 8, 187–88, 200). Otero's literary agenda, in fact, is to provide an entertaining Wild West narrative, including stories of Wild West lawlessness. In the process, however, he also attempts to justify the vigilante response to Las Vegas's crime wave. In many ways, Otero's story follows the Western institutional immaturity paradigm.

Otero (2018, 231–33) describes an escalating cycle of violence and community outrage, with special emphasis upon February 7, 1880, when a crowd extracted from jail three men awaiting trial for the murder of a deputy sheriff and took them to the windmill derrick in the Old Town plaza, where they hanged one man and shot all three. A month later, vigilantes planned to lynch Otero's friend's killer, until someone warned Otero that gunmen were protecting the jail. Instead, Otero admits, the group eventually facilitated a jailbreak and arranged for the posse to shoot the escaped criminals on sight (2018, 239–40, 242–43). In early April, following another murder, several civic leaders, including Otero's father, addressed a mass meeting, in which the group decided to blanket the town with notices offering criminals two choices: leave town or die. "The flow of blood MUST and SHALL be stopped . . . and the good citizens of both the old and new towns have determined to stop it, if they have to HANG by the strong arm of FORCE every violator of the law." The vigilantes backed up the threat with a squad of riflemen. Commenting upon the failure of official law enforcement to ensure public safety, Otero comments, "the only course open was to let the better element take the reins into their own hands and handle the situation in a drastic way" (Otero 2018, 250–51).

While Otero's narrative is a classic appeal to the institutional weakness justification for frontier lynching, some elements of his story (such as the incarceration of the victims) undercut that excuse. In fact, one might reasonably argue that the vigilantes' influence over jailors, posses, etc., represented the most obvious institutional flaw in Las Vegas law enforcement. For a Jesuit reporter on the same period in Las Vegas history, however, these events illustrated the contrast between two cultures.

Michael Hughes

In September of 1879, a year before John Brown matriculated at Las Vegas College, a Jesuit scholastic named Michael Hughes traveled west on the new railroad line to teach there. Born in Boston in 1855, Hughes, a member of the Maryland-New York Province of the Society of Jesus, was the first American Jesuit to serve on the Las Vegas College faculty. His *Woodstock Letters* account from 1884 offers an explanation for his assignment: the chance to study English was one of the major attractions of the college, and the students' parents wanted a Jesuit, rather than a lay instructor, to teach this important subject (*CLV* 1879–1880, 10; *CDRSI* 9.365; H. 1884, 42; McKevitt 2007, 221).[10] Presumably, Hughes meant that the school wanted a native English speaker, since four Italian Jesuits had taught English in the school in the previous year (*CLV* 1878–1879, 9).

Six months after his arrival, Hughes wrote a long report about the college and the people with whom the Jesuits were working in and around Las Vegas. His account, published in the *Woodstock Letters* in 1880, ranged from the poverty of the Jesuit mission to the prevalence of static electricity in the area (Hughes 1880, 134–41). Lynching in Las Vegas also plays a role in his narrative.

Hughes devotes much of his letter to the students in the school and to the character/customs of the people living in the area, particularly the "Mexicans." While Las

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[10] The author of the 1884 letter is listed only as *H*, but the details make it clear that Hughes was the author.

Vegas College's students included both Mexican nationals and American citizens of Mexican ancestry, Hugh applies the term "Mexican" without further specification.[11] By contrast the word "Americans" within his text refers to the Anglo settlers, especially those who followed the railroad to Las Vegas – the residents of New Town, as opposed to Spanish Old Town. Such usage was common: Nieto-Phillips (2004, 72) reports that both Spanish and English language newspapers used it in the late 1800s, and the Jesuit Giuseppe Sorrentino (1948, 9, 218), who came to Las Vegas in the early twentieth century, says that "American" covered those with neither Indian nor Mexican ancestry, whether or not such persons were US citizens. Clearly, the terms "Mexican" and "American" were functioning as markers of ethnic background rather than citizenship status.

Toward his students' culture, and toward Mexican culture in general, Hughes's reactions are ambivalent. He regrets his students' lack of career ambition, marvels at their taste for chilies, and finds many local customs strange (1880, 135, 137–39). Poverty and ignorance, he believes, explain the general malaise among the local Hispanic population (Hughes 1880, 137). Yet at the same time, he finds much to admire in their piety, and in his students' respect for their elders and obedience in class (Hughes 1880, 137, 139, 135). Moreover, Hughes is outraged by the contempt that the American newcomers direct toward the Mexicans – a contempt he ascribes, in part, to anti-Catholic prejudice (Hughes 2018, 137, 138). "All the Americans that have written about the people of this place have done them grievous injustice," Hughes argues (2018, 137).

Although Hughes does not offer specific illustrations at this point, later in his text he identifies "Rev. Foote" (sic) as the author of an article that had "vilified" the Mexican community. In December 1879, a Kansas newspaper had published a travel report from a local Methodist minister, Rev. J. I. Foot, about what he had seen in Old Town, Las Vegas. This is clearly the article to which Hughes is referring, since he mentions Foot's mistaken identification of the parish church as a Jesuit Catholic church equipped with "gewgaws" (Hughes 1880, 138; Foot 1879). One can also infer how Hughes became aware of the article. In February 1880, the Las Vegas *Eureka* reprinted Foot's article, and wrote to a sister newspaper in Kansas about the controversy that followed. According to the *Eureka,* the "Jesuit brothers" refused to print the paper's March issue, in outrage over Foot's portrayal of their order and of the Catholic Church (cited in *La Cygne Journal* 1880).[12] This must be a reference to the Jesuit press, originally established in Albuquerque, but soon transferred to Las Vegas, to print Spanish language textbooks, devotional materials, and (from January 1875) *Revista Católica* (Owens 1950, 64–70; Vollmar 1976, 88–90). Since the press and the school were housed in the same building, the controversy would have been very close to home for Hughes (Stanley 1951, 244, 258).

With only one passing reference to New Town, Foot (1879) offers his readers an "account of a Mexican town and its people," describing the architecture, geography, and culture of Old

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[11] After the Mexican-American War, Spanish-speaking former citizens of Mexico who remained in New Mexico became "free white" American citizens (Nieto-Phillips 2004, 47). By 1880, many "Mexicans" in Las Vegas would have had US citizenship from birth!

[12] On the foundation and earlier printing of the monthly *Eureka*, see *LVDG* 1879.

Town Las Vegas. Regarding the culture, Foot has little good to say. The business leaders are "chiefly Jews and wealthy Mexicans," who dominate the poor "by a system nearly akin to peonage," since there has been "little wholesome competition" in Las Vegas to regulate prices. The poor plow with a stick, and herd their sheep just as people did in first-century Judaea. After describing their earthen floor homes and meager rations, Foot wonders what "the average Mexican greaser or peon family" would make of a Kansas farmhouse, with its abundant food, furnishings, newspapers, books, and other accoutrements "all pointing unmistakably to more higher culture" (Foot 1879).

When describing mass in the "Jesuit Catholic church," Foot again distinguishes the rich, who arrive late in their "rustling silks" from the poor – Mexican, Native American, and mixed-race – who kneel and squat upon the floor, making the effort to look their best in their "patched and mended clothes." "They are dwindling away, year by year," Foot argues; "they are weaker and poorer and are ready to perish before the advancing hosts who bring the railroad and a higher civilization" (Foot 1879).

Foot (1879) develops this claim in the article's final section, which describes the arrival of the railroad and the crowds who turned out to greet it. "The reign of superstition is now to be broken," he argues. Mexicans may have sung "Ave Marias" and "plowed with a stick for centuries," but now the "newspaper reading, railroad building, progressive American" is about to build homes, exploit the territories' mineral resources, and create a new way of life that the Mexican shepherd cannot imagine. Yet Foot does not predict the consequences of these changes for the Mexican community. Will the newcomers improve their lives or simply displace them, as they reshape Las Vegas as an American town?

Hughes ascribes Foot's exaggerations to anti-Catholicism, although he admits that the minister has said "some true things" (Hughes 1880, 138). Certain Mexican cultural practices will surprise Americans, including their limited diet: they do not have the money to buy more substantial food (Hughes 1880, 139). Earlier in his letter, Hughes had already acknowledged the negative effects of ignorance upon the local community. To refute the claims of Foot and other American writers, therefore, Hughes (1880, 137) juxtaposes Mexican piety and American violence, with lynching as an illustration of the second.

Hughes has no doubts about who is responsible for threats to public order in his community. Disturbances rarely occur in Spanish Old Town. Las Vegas's seedy reputation for violence comes from the newcomers. No Mexican, Hughes argues, committed any of the fifteen murders perpetrated in the town during the past few months. Similarly, "the horrible lynching affairs whose accounts have reached even secluded Woodstock" were orchestrated almost exclusively by the newcomers (Hughes 1880, 137–38). Hughes is probably referring to the February lynchings, which gained attention from several Eastern newspapers (see, for example, *Baltimore Sun*; *Boston Post*; *New York Sun*).

Thus, for Hughes, lynching reveals the hypocrisy of the American newcomers' claims to moral superiority. Ironically, the Americans who are regarded as the "go-ahead people" and the "spice of society" are the perpetrators of vigilante violence. They are, Hughes argues, "more degraded" than the people they hold in contempt (137). From this perspective, lynching is not a frontier problem; it is an *American* (i.e., an Anglo) problem.

Inigo Deane

In 1882–1883, Michael Hughes's last year at Las Vegas College, its faculty welcomed another young Jesuit from the Maryland-New York Province, Inigo Deane, a Fordham graduate who had been born in Dublin in 1860 (*CLV* 1882–1883, 19; Fagan 1892, 87; Stansell 1977, 27; O'Donoghue 1912, 102). Deane spent only two years in Las Vegas before his reassignment as prefect of studies for a new Jesuit college in Morrison, Colorado (Stansell 1977, 27; *CSH* 1885–1886, 12; *CSH* 1886–1887, 10). During his time in Las Vegas, however, he published an article in *The Catholic World* that used lynching to distinguish the American and Mexican cultures of New Mexico (Deane 1884). Although his general thesis is consistent with Hughes's argument, Deane's Las Vegas context and the challenges of his literary project distinguish his approach from his confrere's.

Transition in Las Vegas

The summer before Deane joined the faculty marked a critical transition for official responses to lynching in Las Vegas. On July 1, an attempt to protect a Native American prisoner from lynching by transferring him from the jail in East Las Vegas to the county jail in Old Town had failed, after a mob battered down the door and hanged the victim from a from a telegraph pole (Stanley 1951, 166–67; *Topeka Daily Capital*).[13] Less than a week later, the county commissioners considered a response to the armed assault on Old Town facility, including the possibility of referring the matter to the territory's attorney general (*LVDG* 1882a). Soon afterward, on July 11, a mob converged on the jail for another lynching, but this time the sheriff was ready for them. When the crowd slammed a beam against the jail's new door for the fourth time, the sheriff's men opened fire. Three members of the crowd were wounded, including Eddie Brown, a fourteen-year-old boy who died a few days later (*LVDG* 1882b; 1882d). The editor of the *Gazette*, who had defended the earlier lynching, also defended the sheriff's response to the later attack on the jail, reporting that the sheriff had tried to reason with the leaders of the mob, ordered his men to aim low to avoid injuries, and ensured that the order to disperse was given in English as well as Spanish (*LVDG* 1882a; 1882c).

At the end of August, the *Las Vegas Gazette* published letters from Margarito Romero, one of the leading businessmen and philanthropists of Old Town, and Nepomuceno Segura, the deputy sheriff in charge of the jail at the time of the July 1 lynching (Romero 1882; Segura 1882; Perrigo 2010, 25, 161; Stanley 1951, 318). Following their participation in grand jury proceedings about the case – Romero as a juror, and Segura as a witness – each had received an anonymous letter from 300 "reputable citizens" which threatened to hold him personally responsible for any resulting prosecutions. Romero includes the complete text of the message within his letter to the editor.

Both Romero and Segura assert that they were doing their duty under the law, and each dares the 300 to do their worst. Romero (1882) warns that they will not find him "bound in chains and locked up in jail," like the Navajo lynching victim. Segura (1882) promises them the "lively reception" he would have given them during that lynching, if most of the jail's

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[13] Francisco Tafoya, commonly known as Navajo Frank, had lassoed and dragged Howard Hunter, injuring, but not killing him. See *Topeka Daily Capital* (1882), which reprints the report of the *Las Vegas Optic*. The windmill derrick had been dismantled by this time (Wilson 2019, 18).

guards had not deserted. He also insists that the threat's authors come "only and solely from East Las Vegas." This claim was too much for the *Gazette's* editor, who argues that many in Old Town approved of the lynching and that the origins of the anonymous letter are impossible to prove (*LVDG* 1882e). It is striking, nonetheless, to see the association of lynching with East Las Vegas – an association made by Hughes in 1880 – offered by a deputy sheriff who also had experience as a newspaper publisher! In the decades that followed, Romero and Segura would have distinguished careers in San Miguel County, and both would be chosen as delegates to the state's constitutional convention in 1910 (*Santa Fe New Mexican* 1910; Perrigo 2010, 90). If his involvement with vigilantism did not derail Miguel Otero's political future, neither did standing up to the vigilantes preclude Romero and Segura's future achievements.

When a new county jail building opened in December 1885, the *Gazette* reported that Navajo Frank's case was the "last successful attempt to lynch prisoners" in the sheriff's custody (*LVDG* 1885). In fact, during Deane's years in Las Vegas, the *Gazette* mentions only two local cases in which there was talk of lynching, neither of which resulted in an actual lynching (*LVDG* 1882f; 1884f).

This does not mean that lynching, including frontier lynching, disappeared from the paper: the *Gazette* offered its readers a stream of reports about lynchings, expected lynchings, threatened lynchings and thwarted lynchings across the United States (see for example, *LVDG* 1884g; 1884e; 1883a; 1884d;1883b).[14] In addition, during Deane's last semester at Las Vegas College, the *Gazette*'s editor defended lynchings at Socorro and Ouray, Colorado, attacked an anti-lynching statement from the *Denver Republican*, and reprinted a sermon offered by Las Vegas Presbyterian minister James Fraser, which included a long quotation about lynching as a vindication of justice (*LVDG* 1884b; 1884a; 1884c; Fraser 1884; on Fraser, see *LVDG* 1883c). Justification of lynching was very much present in Las Vegas culture while Deane was there, but it manifested itself in print rather than in application.[15]

Deane's Project and Argument

If Deane's Las Vegas context differed from Hughes's, so did his audience. Hughes wrote for fellow Jesuits. Deane, who had begun to publish poetry as a Jesuit, wrote his article for the public audience of *The Catholic World* (Deane 1884; 1885; 1887; 1888; 1890a; 1890b; 1891; 1892a; 1892b; 1895; Russell 1898, 32, 97; O'Donoghue 1912, 102; *Lincoln Daily State Democrat* 1887).[16] This prose piece was a description and analysis of a lay spiritual movement he had encountered in the New Mexico countryside. Complete with classical allusions and Greek,

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[14] On newspaper coverage of lynching in general, see Waldrep 2009, 7.

[15] In June of 1882, a few months before Deane began teaching at the college, an article in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* had cited the admission of the editor of the East Las Vegas newspaper, *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, that he had participated in nine lynchings during his two-and-a-half years in the community (J. M. 1882).

[16] There is no record of Deane in the *CRDSI* and some posthumous citations of his poetry, including one from a Jesuit editor, identify him only as *Inigo Deane* (O'Donoghue 1912, 102; Russell 1898, 32, 97). In 1891, he sent a short note to *WL* from the French scholasticate for Toulouse, located at that time in Spain (Uclés), which indicates that he was still a Jesuit at that time. (*WL* 1891, 307).

Latin, and German vocabulary, "The New Flagellants: A Phase in New Mexican Life" attempts to place the group commonly known as the Penitentes in historical context.[17]

Dean (1884, 302) tells us that he became curious about the Penitentes when he passed a *morada* (lodge building) on an isolated mountain road. Later he witnessed their Good Friday procession, an event culminating in the voluntary crucifixion of a member of the group.[18] Deane (1884, 307–10) describes the scourging and other penitential practices carried out within the procession in vivid detail. Several times, he emphasizes the New Mexico clergy's opposition to the brotherhood and its practices, which he believes developed through the lack of pastoral oversight.[19] Soon, he predicts, the group will fade away of its own accord. But Deane (1884, 307, 311) is also anxious to distinguish any excesses of some members of the group from the virtues of Spanish civilization that have survived in Mexican Catholic culture. That concern seems responsible for Deane's surprising references to lynching in an article focused on a very different topic.

Although Deane never mentions the issue directly, the brotherhood's practices had often been cited to demonstrate the primitive character of New Mexican Catholic culture. In 1876, the Minority Report of the House Committee on the Territories had included material on the group and the Catholic clergy's failure to eliminate it as evidence that New Mexico was not yet ready for statehood (US Congress 1876, 12–13). When discussing the superstitious practices of New Mexico, Foot (1879) also mentioned the local reverence for the Penitentes. In the same year that Foot visited the territory, a long article in the *New York Times* ascribed the lack of development in New Mexico to the inhabitants' excessive religious practices, including their sabbath observances and acceptance of scourging (*NYT* 1879). The Jesuits understood, therefore, that the Penitentes' sensational public observances could fan anti-Catholic and anti-Mexican prejudices (McKevitt 2007, 198).

Probably to avoid such a response, Deane (1884, 301) is careful to emphasize Catholic Church disapproval of the group while highlighting the virtues of Nuevomexicano culture: strong faith, respect for parents, and "a certain spiritual way of viewing things" that contrasts favorably with the common American emphasis on profit and loss. Thus Deane, like Hughes, argues that both Mexican and American cultures have strengths and weaknesses. What sets Deane's approach apart is his appeal to the Middle Ages in interpreting both cultures in New Mexico.

As his title suggests, Deane compares the Penitentes to the flagellants, members of an extreme penitential movement from the Late Middle Ages. However, Deane (1884, 301) extends the analogy, arguing that, in contemporary New Mexico, the thirteenth and the nineteenth centuries exist side by side. Deane develops this claim in terms of social roles. If the Penitentes are the new flagellants, the wealthy "sheep-lords" and "cattle-lords" are the new

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[17] For background on the group, see Espinosa 1993.

[18] The person representing Christ was tied rather than nailed to the cross.

[19] McKevitt (2007, 196-99) argues that the Jesuit reaction to the group varied, and that Jesuits were more tolerant toward the brotherhood than the French clergy. See the *Conejos Diary* (1982, xxv–xxvii) for the Jesuits' approach in Colorado. Deane (1884, 307) himself observes that the members include "some people of excellent private character."

barons, and the cowboys are the new "Free Companions," i.e., the mercenaries available for hire by medieval princes. Linking cowboys together with lynchers, Deane makes two additional claims about them: they have replaced "the dispossessed Apaches and Navajos," and they are almost always Americans rather than Mexicans (1884, 301).

This last observation undergirds Deane's claim that both American and Nuevomexicano cultures have their flaws. If Mexican culture produced the Penitentes, American culture has given rise to "Knownothingism and Spiritism and Oneida Communities" (Deane 1884, 311). There are excesses on both sides. If some of the territory's citizens lack economic drive or respect for the lives of others, there are also persons "whose primitive disregard for forms of law strongly recalls medieval ways of meting out justice" (Deane 1884, 301). For Deane, lynching parties – whose members he insists are almost always Americans – are another medieval throwback. Thus, the archaisms that an educated person can expect to encounter in New Mexico are associated with Anglo as well as Mexican culture.

The Significance of Hughes' and Deane's Claim

To counter claims of Anglo-American superiority, Hughes and Deane defended Nuevomexicano culture by associating vigilantism with the former rather than the latter. One should note that they were neither the first nor the last to make this claim. More than a year before Hughes arrived in New Mexico, the *Las Vegas Gazette* (1878) admitted, "peace and order more generally reigns" in territorial counties with predominately Mexican rather than American populations. Noting the prevalence of violence and "mob spirit" in the latter, the paper urged the American settlers, "for the good name of their race," to insist upon "the strict enforcement of the laws," since lynching invariably leads to injustice. Twenty-one years later, long-time Methodist missionary Emily Harwood also claimed that *Americans* rather than *Mexicans* were responsible for the territory's lynchings – and train robberies (Harwood 1899, 1916). Clearly, the assumption that lynching was an Anglo practice rejected by Nuevomexicanos was not peculiar to the Las Vegas Jesuits.

One may reasonably ask whether this assumption was accurate. According to Carrigan and Webb (2013, 89–90, 93–94), Mexican-Americans were involved in lynchings, especially in New Mexico, where the Anglo population remained in the minority until the twentieth century. As Christopher Waldrep (2009, xvii, 8–9) points out, however, "virtually everything we know about lynching comes through popular culture," and the defenders of lynching had every reason to claim that they enjoyed widespread community support. This would have been no less true in Las Vegas than elsewhere. Certainly the *Daily Gazette* (*LVDG* 1882a) took pains to insist men from both East and West Las Vegas took part in the Tafoya lynching – against Deputy Segura's indictment of the vigilantes from New Town. However, the significance of Hughes and Deane's assertion extends beyond its literal accuracy. In fact, their claim rests upon an implicit moral assessment of lynching and (indirectly) reverses the traditional frontier justice paradigm.

First, the young Jesuits mention lynching to counter the stereotype of Nuevomexicanos as backward, in comparison with the Anglo newcomers. To avoid reinforcing that stereotype when discussing the Penitentes, Deane brings in lynching as a countervailing "American" weakness. Hughes invokes Anglo vigilantism to undermine Foot's patronizing description of Nuevomexicano culture. In each case, lynching highlights the flaws of the supposedly superior

"American" culture. Although they agree that New Mexico needs progress, Hughes and Deane argue that true progress will not emerge from the wholesale replacement of Nuevomexicano with Anglo values. Each culture, they believe, has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Second, Hughes and Deane's argument depends upon the judgment that lynching is wrong. Without that assessment, lynching could not serve as a counterweight to what the Jesuits identify as the weaknesses of Nuevomexicano culture, such as ignorance for Hughes, or Penitente excesses for Deane. To function within the Jesuits' argument, therefore, lynching must be both wrong and an Anglo practice.

Third, the Jesuits' approach implicitly contradicts the institutional immaturity explanation for Western frontier lynching. That model views lynching as a temporary expedient that will fade away as frontier communities mature. Hughes and Deane's argument treats lynching as an imported aberration that compares unfavorably with communal standards already in place. From that perspective, Western frontier lynching became a symptom of decline rather than immaturity.

Finally, the question of who lynches (or at least who is perceived as lynching) is as critical for the New Mexico references as it is for Barnum's story of law enforcement in Alaska. That case explicitly associates lynching with white men, while the New Mexico texts ascribe it to *Americans* (i.e., Anglos). In all three narratives, lynching reveals the comparative social power of the newcomers. Their imported practice manifests immunity cloaked in appeals to necessity.

Conclusion

Recent scholarship about lynching in the American West has emphasized both the influence of the frontier justice paradigm and the failure of that model to acknowledge the significance of race and ethnicity for Western vigilantism. Selected Jesuit incidental references for lynching illustrate both points. While John Brown's obituary mentions lynching to highlight the Wild West conditions within which the Society of Jesus once operated, earlier texts from Barnum, Hughes, and Deane characterize lynching as a white or *American* practice. Although none of these earlier texts addresses the identity of the victim, their statements regarding the identity of the perpetrators support contemporary attention to the role of race and ethnicity for Western lynching.

Abbreviations

CDRSI   *Catalogue defunctorum in renata Societate Iesu ab a. 1814 ad a. 1970*. See under Mendizábal.

CLV   *Catalogue of Las Vegas College.*

CSH   *College of the Sacred Heart* [*Catalogue*].

LVG   *Las Vegas Gazette.*

LVDG   *Las Vegas Daily Gazette.*

NYT   *New York Times.*

WL   *Woodstock Letters.*

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Abortion Legality and Morality

A Preliminary Investigation Examining the Influence of Religiosity on Abortion Attitudes Among a Sample of US Latinxs

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Abstract

Religiosity is a common predictor of abortion attitudes, especially among US Latinx. In this article, we examine religiosity, operationalized in various ways (e.g., affiliation, beliefs, practices), and abortion attitudes among US Latinx adults. We administered a web-based survey to English and Spanish-speaking US Latinx adults (n=169) using quota-based sampling to achieve demographic diversity. We tested differences in abortion attitudes using k-group median tests. Results indicate participants were less likely to support abortion legality and morality in some circumstances (e.g., if the woman is not married) than others (e.g., if the woman's life is at risk). Participants who see the Bible as God's literal word or attend religious services regularly were significantly less likely to support abortion legality or perceive abortion as moral. Biblical literalism and church attendance may be stronger predictors of abortion attitudes than religious identity. These findings highlight how religiosity may predict support for abortion legality and morality across several circumstances among Latinx adults.

Keywords: abortion, Latinx, morality, legality, biblical literalism, church attendance

Introduction

Christian religious denomination/affiliation, beliefs, and behaviors have been some of the most consistent and strongest predictors of abortion attitudes (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Bolks et al. 2000; Holman et al. 2020). Those who strongly identify with a religious denomination tend to be more opposed to legalized abortion compared with unaffiliated (or non-religious) people who often hold more progressive views on abortion (Bruce 2020a; Pew Research Center 2014a). Similarly, individuals who interpret the Bible literally tend to hold more negative abortion beliefs (Holman et al. 2020), and adherents who attend church regularly tend to be more hostile toward abortion than those who seldom attend services (Adamczyk and Valdimarsdóttir 2018; Bartkowski et al. 2012; Ellison et al. 2011; Holman et al. 2020; Jones and Cox 2012).

Although the relationship between religiosity and abortion attitudes is well documented (e.g., Adamczyk 2008, 2013; Adamczyk and Valdimarsdóttir 2018; Barkan 2014; Cook et al. 1993; Gay and Lynxwiler 1999; Hoffmann and Bartkowski 2008; Hoffmann and Johnson 2005; Strickler and Danigelis 2002), less is known specifically about these associations among Latinxs, an ethnic group collectively known for strong religious beliefs and conservative social views (see Bartkowski et al. 2012; Branton et al. 2014; Ellison, Echevarria, and Smith 2005; Holman, Podrazik, and Silber Mohamed 2020). While there are higher rates of abortion in the Latinx community than the general US population (see Medoff 2014), there seems to be less support for abortion among Latinx people than among the general US population (e.g., Bolks et al. 2000). Given the well-established link between Catholicism and Latinx identity (Hunt 2001) as well as recent trends that show growing movement among Latinx away from the Catholic Church into Evangelical denominations (Espinosa 2004; Lugo and Pond 2007), a nuanced exploration of the relationship between religiosity and Latinx abortion attitudes is warranted.

Herein, we examine the relationship between religiosity and Latinxs' attitudes toward abortion legality and morality, drawing on data from a multilingual (English/Spanish) Latinx sample. We account for various aspects of religiosity, including religious affiliation (e.g., Catholic, Protestant), religious beliefs measured by biblical literalism, and religious behaviors measured by church attendance. We also measure abortion attitudes using a multidimensional approach to assess different aspects, such as abortion morality and legality, of people's attitudes toward abortion. As such, we aim to take a more nuanced approach to examining abortion attitudes among Latinx in the US, with a specific focus on how religiosity influences those attitudes among a heterogeneous population.

Background

Abortion Attitudes in the United States

Attitudes toward abortion are multidimensional and contextual (Hans and Kimberly 2014; Jozkowski et al. 2018; Smith and Son 2013). For example, in the United States, abortion attitudes vary depending on moral/legal dimensions and the intersection between those dimensions. Indeed, most US adults believe abortion should be legal, yet do not necessarily believe abortion is moral (Jones and Cox 2012). However, assessments of abortion legality seem far more common than assessments of abortion attitudes in other contexts, like morality

(see Bowman and Sims 2017). For example, the General Social Survey (GSS) includes items that assess attitudes from legal dimensions – the GSS asks whether "it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion" providing six specific circumstances (e.g., "If there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby"; "If she is married and does not want any more children") with a seventh item for any reason (Smith and Son 2013).

Despite its focus on the legal dimension of abortion attitudes only, a strength of the GSS is evaluating support for or opposition to abortion across different circumstances. Items from GSS are commonly divided into two categories – abortion for "elective/hard" and "traumatic/soft" reasons – and summed into a single scale that measures people's support for abortion legality (Blake 1971; Jelen 1984; Rossi and Sitaraman 1988; Smith and Son 2013; Tedrow and Mahoney 1979). Janiak and Goldberg (2016) argued that such differentiation based on the reason for seeking abortion ("elective" v. "traumatic") reinforces implicit bias about abortion in certain circumstances and creates a dichotomy between justified abortions and those that are not. Although the labels associated with this categorization may be problematic, some scholars (e.g., Blake 1971; Jelen 1984; Rossi and Sitaraman 1988; Smith and Son 2013; Tedrow and Mahoney 1979) have used them to contextualize the reasons for abortion.

Without expressly measuring moral viewpoints about abortion and considering different contexts of abortion, nuance in attitudinal assessments may be lacking. Further, given that religiosity may yield insight into the moral and legal dimensions of abortion, measuring different components of religiosity may be helpful to determine the role of each component in the support (or lack thereof) for abortion legality and morality across several circumstances.

Religiosity and Abortion Attitudes

Among the predictors of abortion attitudes, religiosity is often considered the strongest (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Bolks et al. 2000; Holman et al. 2020). Religiosity can refer to people's involvement in a faith, measured by people's religious affiliation, practices, and beliefs (Fehring and Ohlendorf 2007). These three dimensions are associated with abortion attitudes in slightly different ways (Adamczyk and Valdimarsdóttir 2018; Barringer, Sumerau, and Gay 2020; Bartkowski et al. 2012; Ellison, Echevarria, and Smith 2005; Jelen and Wilcox 2003).

Traditionally, religious affiliation – or the self-identified association of a person with a religion, denomination, or sub-denominational religious group – is perceived as an influential factor linked to abortion attitudes (Adamczyk and Valdimarsdóttir 2018). There is evidence that religious affiliation predicts support and opposition to abortion in varying contexts (Adamczyk and Valdimarsdóttir 2018; Bartkowski et al. 2012; Ellison et al. 2011; Holman et al. 2020; Jones and Cox 2012). Indeed, those who strongly associate with a religious denomination tend to be more opposed to legalized abortion than unaffiliated (or non-religious) people who may hold more progressive views on abortion (Bruce 2020a; Pew Research Center 2014a). There is also evidence that the extent of negative abortion views varies by religious denomination (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Holman et al. 2020; Kelly and Kelly 2005; Wong 2015). For example, conservative religious groups, such as Evangelical Protestants and Catholics, tend to condemn abortion and hold anti-abortion attitudes. By contrast, more liberal religious groups, such as Jews and mainline Protestant denominations, tend to be more

supportive of legal abortion or reproductive positions that value autonomy (Adamczyk and Valdimarsdóttir 2018; Holman et al. 2020).

Religious practices also seem to influence abortion attitudes regardless of religious affiliation (Adamczyk 2013; Jelen and Wilcox 2003). In this paper, we operationalize religious practice as people's participation in religious activities such as attending religious services. More religiously committed people – those who attend church more regularly or are more socially connected to the church – are more likely to be exposed to religious teachings and ideologies through their social interactions that expressly condemn controversial practices (Bartkowski et al. 2012). Yet this relationship may also vary by the denomination itself and degree of attendance by that denomination. Adamczyk and Valdimarsdóttir (2018) argue, for example, that some mainline Protestants may be more accepting of abortion because they attend church less frequently than some Evangelical Protestants or Catholics. Specifically, highly devout followers who attend church regularly tend to be more hostile toward abortion and have a greater tendency to oppose legal abortion than those who seldom attend services (Adamczyk and Valdimarsdóttir 2018; Bartkowski et al. 2012; Ellison et al. 2011; Holman et al. 2020; Jones and Cox 2012).

Anti-abortion attitudes are also reinforced by religious beliefs, which include biblical literalism. We conceptualized biblical literalism as a religious worldview in which the Bible (and sometimes other sacred texts) are perceived as the literal word of God. Individuals who interpret the Bible literally, such that the Bible is the unequivocal word of God, tend to hold more negative abortion beliefs (Holman et al. 2020). Historically, more conservative groups such as Evangelical Protestants perceive the Bible as the actual word of God (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Ellison et al. 2011). This interpretation has been used to argue that life begins at conception (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Ellison et al. 2011). By contrast, moderately religious groups view the Bible and other religious texts as the word of God, but not as something that needs to be taken literally (Leal and Patterson 2014). For example, Leal and Patterson (2014) found that Catholics read the Bible in a less literal way, whereas more liberal groups tend to see the Bible as a book of history or stories written by men (Kelly and Morgan 2008).

Research suggests Catholics and Evangelicals interpret the Bible differently (Hoffmann and Bartkowski 2008). For example, Hoffmann and Bartkowski (2008) argue that Catholics do not generally embrace a literalist ideology of the Bible. Traditionally, most Catholics' views of social issues, such as abortion, are shaped by authority figures such as priests and bishops who interpret the Bible and teach about the morality of abortion and other social issues (Jelen 1992). In other words, most Catholics do not study the Bible nor know the biblical basis of their abortion beliefs. This may be primarily due to the centralized doctrinal authority of the Catholic Church (Jelen 1992). In this way, a Catholic interpretation of the Bible differs from a Protestant interpretation, especially Evangelical Protestants. The latter believe that the Bible is the final authority on beliefs and practices (Hoffmann and Bartkowski 2008).

US-Based Latinx Abortion Attitudes

Beyond religiosity, cultural norms and views tied to race and ethnicity may affect abortion attitudes (Bruce 2020b; Dillon 2014; Holman et al. 2020; Thomas et al. 2017). For example, Thomas and colleagues (2017) found that people who identify as Latinx seem to hold less supportive attitudes regarding abortion legality. Similarly, others have argued that US-based

Latinxs tend to exhibit a somewhat higher overall opposition to abortion when compared with the general population (Bolks et al. 2000; Hartig 2018). Findings from several leading polls, which corroborate this body of work, indicate that the majority of Latinxs do not support abortion legality, with only 45% of US-based Latinxs believing that abortion should be legal in all or most cases compared with 54% of the general population (Jones et al. 2019). Findings from Gallup also indicate that more Latinx (61%) believe that abortion is morally wrong compared with less than 47% of the general public (Gallup 2018–2020). Although Latinx individuals seem to have more negative views toward abortion overall, there are internal variations driven by, among other factors, their religiosity (Bartkowski et al. 2012).

Religiosity and Abortion Attitudes among US-Based Latinx

Data from recent polls show that US Latinx are slightly more opposed to abortion than other racial and ethnic groups (PRRI 2019). To understand the nuance in Latinx abortion attitudes, it is helpful to examine the intersection of Latinx identity and religiosity. Some argue, for example, that Latinx social conservatism may partly stem from a concurrent Catholic identity (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Branton et al. 2014). However, this relationship between Latinx identity, conservatism, and Catholicism has become less clear over time (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Branton et al. 2014).

Most US-based Latinx fall into the Christian branches of Catholicism and Protestantism (Reyes-Barriéntez 2019). Among US-based Latinx, Catholicism is the dominant religion (Ellison et al. 2011); however, more recently, US-based Latinx are leaving the Catholic Church and converting to Protestantism (Espinosa 2004). Importantly, this growth in the Protestant denomination is mainly occurring among Evangelical variants of Protestantism rather than mainline (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Ellison et al. 2011; Reyes-Barriéntez 2019). Indeed, Latinx in the US – and Latin America at large – are experiencing a theological shift, with more Latinx people becoming Evangelical Protestants (22%) or unaffiliated (18%) from religion entirely (Ellison et al. 2005; Hunt 2001; Reyes-Barriéntez 2019). According to the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI 2019), opposition toward abortion legality is stronger among Latinx Protestants (58%) than Latinx Catholics. However, the high levels of opposition toward abortion among Protestants is primarily driven by those who identify as Evangelical Protestants. In other words, Evangelical Protestants are more opposed to abortion (62%) than non-evangelical Protestants (43%) (PRRI 2019). Thus, the "Latinx evangelicalization" is overwhelmingly associated with greater opposition toward abortion (Lugo and Pond 2007; Pew Research Center 2014a; Taylor, Gershon, and Pantoja 2014). Additionally, Latinx Catholics may have greater diversity in opinion regarding abortion; and those who have moved away from religion entirely tend to hold social views that mirror the general population and are less anti-abortion, with more than 60% of Latinx unaffiliated believing abortion should be legal in most cases (Ellison et al. 2005; Holman et al. 2020; Jones and Cox 2012; Reyes-Barriéntez 2019).

In addition to religious affiliation, other dimensions of religiosity, such as church attendance and biblical literalism, are strong predictors of abortion attitudes, specifically among US-based Latinx (Amaro 1988; Barringer et al. 2020; Bartkowski et al. 2012; Ellison et al. 2005; Holman et al. 2020; Kelly and Morgan 2008; Pantoja 2010; Ruiz et al. 2017). Among Evangelical Protestant and Catholic Latinx, religious service attendance increases socio-

political conservatism (Pantoja 2010). In turn, regular attendance at religious services is associated with less support for legal abortion and more support for abortion being illegal (Branton et al. 2014). Further, regular church-attending Latinx Evangelical Protestants are the least supportive group of legalized abortion (Bartkowski et al. 2012) and the most supportive of anti-abortion policies, especially among Latinx men (Holman et al. 2020). Similarly, studies have shown that biblical literalism is associated with lower support of legal abortion among Latinx communities (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Holman et al. 2020). In general, Latinx people who believe the Bible is the literal word of God hold more conservative views on abortion (Holman et al. 2020).

Given that religious practices and beliefs may offer a more nuanced perspective of the relationship between religiosity and Latinx abortion attitudes than religious affiliation alone, we seek to examine whether support for abortion legality and morality among a Latinx sample differ across their religious affiliation, beliefs regarding approaches to biblical interpretation, and religious service attendance. Most of the studies that examine the link between religiosity and abortion attitudes in the Latinx community focus only on responses to one or two abortion attitude items and focus specifically on the legality of abortion; moral positions about abortion are often overlooked. However, by examining multiple dimensions of abortion attitudes (i.e., legality and morality), including several contexts of abortion (e.g., if there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby; if she is married and does not want any more children), and assessing their linkage with various aspects of religiosity (i.e., religious affiliation, practices, and beliefs), we add new and needed complexity to this area of research.

Current Study

In this study, which is part of a larger national study, we investigated the relationship between religious affiliation, beliefs, and practices and Latinxs' attitudes about abortion legality and morality across several circumstances. The study is guided by three research questions:

> RQ1) Does support for abortion legality and morality among a Latinx sample differ across their religious affiliation (i.e., Catholic, Protestant, born-again Christian)?

> RQ2) Does support for abortion legality and morality among a Latinx sample differ across their beliefs regarding the Bible (e.g., biblical literalism)?

> RQ3) Does support for abortion legality and morality among a Latinx sample differ across their religious behaviors (i.e., church attendance)?

We anticipate Latinx participants who attend religious service would be more likely than those who do not participate in religious service to oppose abortion legality and find it morally unacceptable. Similarly, we anticipate that Latinx participants who believe the Bible is the literal word of God would be more likely to oppose abortion legality and find it morally unacceptable in all types of circumstances. Finally, we anticipate that Evangelicals or born-again Protestant Latinxs would be more likely to oppose abortion legality and morality than Catholic and mainline Protestant Latinxs across all types of circumstances. Findings from this study will contribute to the discourse about the extent that religion, a strong cultural marker of Latinx identity, predicts support for the legality and morality of abortion across several circumstances.

Methods

Data Collection and Participants

A web-based survey on abortion attitudes was administered to English- and Spanish-speaking adults in the US via Qualtrics, an online web-based survey company that distributes surveys and aggregates responses. Qualtrics uses opt-in panels, in which eligible people are invited to participate in a study (Yu et al. 2019). In general, in non-probability-based panels, potential participants either come across the panel's website or are directed to it by a friend or advertising, resulting in panels that may contain difficult-to-recruit groups (Yu et al. 2019). To achieve greater demographic diversity, we set quotas to achieve ample representation across race/ethnicity, gender, age, and political affiliation. We specifically recruited and oversampled Latinx Spanish speakers, setting their quota at one-third of the sample. All participants were offered Qualtrics credits as an incentive for participating in the survey. Indiana University's Institutional Review Board approved all protocols outlined herein.

Data were collected from November 2018 to February 2019. A total of 580 respondents completed the survey. Because this study was uniquely concerned with the effect of religiosity on Latinx participants, our analytic sample was restricted to only include people who identified as Latinx, were at least 18 years of age, and currently reside in the US. Participants were identified as Latinx if they 1) selected Hispanic/Latinx as their primary race/ethnicity variable; 2) if they selected bi-racial or multi-racial as their primary race/ethnicity and then selected Hispanic/Latinx on a follow-up question; and 3) if they selected "other" as their primary race/ethnicity *and* typed-in a reference to being Hispanic/Latinx. This resulted in a final analytic sample of 169 Latinx participants.

The sample representation for gender was 47% women, 50% men, and 3% identifying as non-binary, and the average age was 46 (*SD* = 16), ranging from 18 to 97. A third of our participants indicated they have a high school diploma or GED, with 24.3% having a bachelor's or graduate degree (see Table 1). Just under half of our participants (46.2%) classified themselves as Democrats, 11.2% as Republicans, and 21.9% as Independents. Most sample participants (52.7%) completed the survey in Spanish. This high rate of Spanish participants is due to our purposeful oversampling of Hispanic/Latinx participants using the second language survey. Most participants were born in the US (66.9%), with 48.6% of these participants having parents born outside the US or birthplace unknown.

Regarding the religiosity variables used in the study, most participants classified themselves as Catholic (53.3%) or Christian (29.6%), with the remaining 17.2% identifying as another religious group (i.e., Hindu, Mormon, Jewish, Muslim, non-denominational) or non-religious (i.e., atheist, agnostic; see Table 1). Slightly more than one-third of the participants indicated that they have had a "born-again" experience (36.1%), and a similar percentage believed the Bible is the literal word of God (37.9%). Although most (95.2%) of our participants selected a religious identity, the percentage that attends religious services weekly was 32.0%, and 24.3% indicated that they never go to religious services.

Table 1: Sample Demographic Characteristics

Age		M = 45.95	SD = 15.94
		n	%
Gender	Women	79	47.0
	Men	84	50.0
	Non-binary gender	5	3.0
	Missing	1	0.6
Education	Some H.S. or less	18	10.7
	H.S. diploma or GED	55	32.5
	Some college	33	19.5
	Associate's degree	22	13.0
	Bachelor's degree	29	17.2
	Graduate degree	12	7.1
Political Party	Democrat	78	46.2
	Republican	19	11.2
	Independent	37	21.9
	Libertarian, Green, Other	5	3.0
	No party identity	29	17.2
	Missing	1	0.6
Abortion Identity	Strongly pro-choice	38	22.5
	Moderately pro-choice	13	7.7
	Slightly pro-choice	13	7.7
	Equally pro-choice and pro-life	17	10.1
	Slightly pro-life	10	5.9
	Moderately pro-life	6	3.6
	Strongly pro-life	34	20.1
	I am neither pro-choice nor pro-life.	20	11.8
	I prefer not to answer	18	10.7
Survey Version	Spanish	89	52.7
	English	80	47.3
Nativity	US-Born	113	66.9
	Foreign	53	31.4
	Missing	3	1.8
Religious Affiliation	Catholic	90	53.3
	Christian	50	29.6
	Agnostic or atheistic	8	4.8
	Other	21	12.4
Born-again Experience	Yes	61	36.1
	No	91	53.8
	I do not know	17	10.1
Biblical Literalism	Bible is the literal word of God	64	37.9
	Bible is the word of God, but not to be taken literally	57	33.7
	Bible is a book of history	7	4.1
	Bible is a book of stories	16	9.5
	I don't know	25	14.8
Church Attendance	Once a week or more	54	32.0
	Few times a year	41	24.3
	Never	41	24.3

Measures

The survey was developed in English and translated into Spanish. The translation was conducted using a team-based approach to ensure that the translation kept the content of the questions semantically similar, kept the question format similar within the bounds of the target language, and retained the same content for both the source and target instruments (Mohler

et al. 2016; Valdez et al. 2021). Participants were asked to complete an anonymous 15-minute survey to assess social attitudes about controversial issues. Upon completing the survey's demographic portion – which included items related to religious affiliation, practices, and beliefs – participants were asked a series of questions regarding the morality and legality of abortion. In this study, we operationalized abortion morality as a person's belief whether abortion is morally permissible or not morally permissible. Generally, this position is influenced by religious beliefs. Conversely, we operationalized abortion legality as a person's beliefs regarding whether abortion should be legal in various circumstances.

Dependent Variable

Abortion attitudes were measured by asking participants whether they believe abortion (1) should be legal and (2) is morally acceptable in nine circumstances (see Table 2). The nine circumstances included six circumstances similar to core abortion-related items used in the General Social Survey (Smith et al. 2019). In addition, three circumstances were added to measure a broader attitudinal range. We grouped circumstances into three major categories based on the reasons for abortion identified in the literature.

From the sets of abortion circumstance items, three subscales were created: those related to extreme (previously referred to as traumatic or hard reasons) and social (previously referred to as elective or soft reasons; Blake 1971; Jelen 1984; Rossi and Sitaraman 1988; Smith and Son 2013; Tedrow and Mahoney 1979). The third set of items refers to selective reasons, which includes circumstances related to recent state-level abortion bans in cases of sex or race selection (see Guttmacher 2020). Four items (items 3, 4, 6, 7) were aggregated for the extreme circumstance subscale. Responses to three items (items 1, 2, 5) were aggregated to create the social circumstance subscale. Finally, two circumstances (items 8, 9) were deemed selective and combined to create the third subscale. We calculated the mean scores to measure the rate at which support for abortion legality and morality was expressed in the various circumstances. The response options for the legality and morality questions were recoded as "No" = 1, "Unsure" = 2, and "Yes" = 3. Item responses were averaged to calculate scores ranging from 1 to 3, with higher scores indicating more favorable views toward abortion morality and legality and lower scores indicating less favorable abortion morality and legality views.

Table 2. Abortion Unidirectional Item Set

Regardless of whether you think it is morally acceptable, should it be **legal** for a woman to obtain an abortion in the following circumstances? / Regardless of whether you think it should be legal, is it **morally acceptable** for a woman to obtain an abortion in the following circumstances?
1. If the woman cannot afford to support the child. 2. If the woman is not married. 3. If the woman's life is at risk because of the pregnancy. 4. If the baby will be born with serious birth defects. 5. If the woman does not want any more children. 6. If the pregnancy is a result of rape. 7. If the woman's mental health is at risk. 8. If the father is of a different race than the woman. 9. If the baby is of a different gender than the parents desired.
Note: Items 1-6 modeled after the General Social Survey (Smith et al. 2019).

Independent Variables

We assessed religiosity via four measures: religious affiliation, identification with being "born-again," biblical literalism, and church attendance.

Religious affiliation. To determine religious affiliation, we first asked participants a question regarding their religious identity: "Which of the following best represents your religious identity? Catholic, Christian, Hindu, Mormon, Jewish, Muslim, Nondenominational, Atheist, Agnostic, Other." For our study purpose, religious affiliation was coded into three categories: Catholic, Christian, and Other. There is evidence that most US-based Latinx identify as Catholics (Ellison et al. 2011; PRRI 2019) and that Catholicism is more of a nominal affiliation for Latinxs (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Ellison et al. 2005). That is, for some being Catholic is a matter of cultural roots rather than religion (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Ellison et al. 2005; Pew Research 2015). Of course, not all Christians are Catholics, but all Catholics are Christians. However, given the cultural relation between being Catholic and Latinx, it seems to be the case that most Latinx who identify as Catholics may not necessarily identify as devout Christians. Most cultural Catholics identify more with being a Catholic than any other faith traditions they may also belong to (Pew Research 2015). Further, generally, surveys that measure religious identity like Pew Research, Gallup, and the National Survey of Hispanic Adults rely on respondents' self-identification. These surveys often combine Protestants and those who identify as Christians under the same category (see Gallup 2012; Pew Research 2014b; Perl et al. 2008). However, those who identify as Catholic are labeled as Catholics only, suggesting that Latinx who identify as Catholics are more likely to select Catholic as opposed to Christian. Similarly, a 2008 report from the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) divides Latinx religious identification as Catholics and Other Christians (non-Catholic Christians) (Perl et al. 2008). This separation into these two broad categories indicates that although Catholicism is a branch of Christianity, those who identify primarily as Catholics tend not to identify as Christians when reporting their religious affiliation on a survey. Within this context, we use the Christian self-identification as a religious identity that encompasses other forms of Christianity other than Catholics, such as Protestants. Those who identified with religious groups other than Catholic or Christian, and those who identified as agnostic, or atheist were combined into the "other" category due to their small subgroup sizes ($n \leq 9$).

Born-again. To obtain a comparison between Latinx who may identify with an evangelical Christian denomination versus a more mainline Christian denomination, participants were asked if they consider themselves "born-again": "Have you ever had a 'born-again' religious experience? Yes, no, I do not know." Given that Evangelicals believe in the conversion or "born-again" experience in receiving salvation, this is frequently used to assess Evangelicalism (Burge and Lewis, 2018).

Biblical literalism. To measure religious beliefs, we asked participants a question regarding their beliefs about the Bible: "Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible? it is the literal word of God; it is God's word, but not to be taken literally; it is a book of history; it is a book of stories; or I do not know." We merged the last three response options to create three broad categories: The Bible is the literal word of God, the Bible is the word of God but not literal, and the Bible is not the word of God (i.e., it is a book of history or stories, or do not know).

Religious service attendance. Finally, as a measure of religious behaviors, participants were asked, "Approximately how often do you attend religious services? More than once a week, every week, two or three times a month, once a month, several times a year, once or twice a year, less than once a year, and never." We grouped participants' responses into three categories: Once or more a week, several times per year up to two or three times a month, and twice a year or less.

Analysis

We compared participants on the three sets of circumstances regarding whether they believe abortion should be legal and whether they believe abortion is moral based on religious affiliation. The distribution of abortion legality and morality attitudes were multimodal, not yielding normally distributed data. Therefore, k-group median tests for independent samples were used to compare groups. Because we leveraged multiple comparisons on six outcome variables to investigate trends in attitudes about abortion morality and legality in extreme versus social and selective circumstances, a conservative alpha level of .01 was selected to reduce type I error inflation due to multiple testing, with a Bonferroni correction employed for post-hoc analyses. Average percentiles are provided for the k-group median tests with larger percentile values indicating greater support for abortion legality and belief in abortion being moral.

Results

The average abortion subscale scores for the overall sample are presented first to provide an indication of the attitudes for abortion legality and morality in the three types of circumstances (extreme, social, selective) for Latinx participants (see Table 3). Participants indicated higher support for abortion legality in extreme circumstances than social circumstances, and the lowest level of support for abortion legality in selective circumstances (M = 2.16, 1.66, and 1.53, respectively). The same trend was observed with attitudes about the moral acceptability of abortion (M = 2.20, 1.65, and 1.42, respectively). Scores for extreme and social circumstances were almost identical for legality and morality for the sample. Morality scores were slightly lower than legality scores for selective circumstances. Participants indicated abortion is probably not morally acceptable for social and selective circumstances, and the majority stated it should not be legal.

Table 3. Average Scores, Attitudes for Abortion Legality and Morality

	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Median
Abortion Legality					
Extreme	1.00	3.00	2.16	.72	2.00
Social	1.00	3.00	1.66	.79	1.33
Selective	1.00	3.00	1.53	.77	1.00
Moral Acceptability of Abortion					
Extreme	1.00	3.00	2.20	.71	2.00
Social	1.00	3.00	1.65	.76	1.33
Selective	1.00	3.00	1.42	.67	1.00
Note: *n* = 169					

Religious Affiliation

Regarding our first research question (i.e., does support for abortion legality and morality among a Latinx sample differ across their religious affiliation), we were limited to religious identity groups of Catholic, Christian, and other religious and non-religious groups combined. We anticipated that mainline Christians would have similar abortion attitudes to Catholics, with both being less supportive of abortion than those with other or no religious affiliation. There were no significant differences on the three scales when comparing the attitudes toward abortion legality and moral acceptability for the three religious identity groups (see Table 4). However, a consistent trend was observed across all scales when comparing the group medians – Christians were less supportive of abortion than the Catholic group, who were less supportive than participants of other religious affiliations or no religious affiliation.

Table 4. Religious Affiliation and Abortion Legality and Morality

	χ^2	p	Catholic ($n = 90$)			Christian ($n = 50$)			Other and Non-Rel. ($n = 29$)		
			P_{25}	P_{50}	P_{75}	P_{25}	P_{50}	P_{75}	P_{25}	P_{50}	P_{75}
Abortion Legality											
Extreme	7.07	.029	2.00	2.00	3.00	1.19	2.00	2.50	1.88	3.00	3.00
Social	3.85	.146	1.00	1.17	2.33	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.67	3.00
Selective	1.84	.398	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.75
Moral Acceptability of Abortion											
Extreme	7.52	.023	1.75	2.25	3.00	1.50	2.00	2.50	1.63	2.75	3.00
Social	2.45	.294	1.00	1.33	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.67	3.00
Selective	0.77	.681	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.00	2.00

Note: P_{25}, P_{50}, P_{75} = 25th, 50th, 75th percentiles; χ^2 = median test

Table 5. Born-Again and Abortion Legality and Morality

	χ^2	p	Born-Again ($n = 61$)			Not Born-Again ($n = 91$)			Don't Know ($n = 17$)		
			P_{25}	P_{50}	P_{75}	P_{25}	P_{50}	P_{75}	P_{25}	P_{50}	P_{75}
Abortion Legality											
Extreme	5.46	.065	1.50	2.00	2.50	1.75	2.50	3.00	1.50	2.00	2.38
Social	1.20	.548	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.33	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.00
Selective	0.15	.928	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00
Moral Acceptability of Abortion											
Extreme	4.68	.096	1.50	2.00	2.63	1.75	2.50	3.00	1.63	2.00	2.50
Social	0.07	.966	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.33	2.33	1.00	1.33	1.67
Selective	0.75	.688	1.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.75

Note: P_{25}, P_{50}, P_{75} = 25th, 50th, 75th percentiles; χ^2 = median test

Born-Again

There were no significant differences on the abortion legality scales or the moral acceptability scales for Latinx participants based on whether they have had a "born-again" experience (see Table 5). A consistent trend can be observed when comparing the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentiles for the scale scores for each group, with those "born-again" having the

lowest support for abortion (*Mdn* = 1.00 to 2.00) and those not born again exhibiting the highest levels of support (*Mdn* = 1.00 to 2.50); however, these differences were not significant.

Biblical Literalism

For our third research question (i.e., does support for abortion among a Latinx sample differ across their beliefs about the Bible?), we hypothesized that biblical literalism would be associated with opposition toward abortion legality and morality. Our results showed that there were significant differences regarding biblical literalism on the abortion legality social ($\chi^2(2)$ = 14.05, *p* = .001) and selective circumstances scales ($\chi^2(2)$ = 12.58, *p* = .002; see Table 6). Pairwise comparisons indicated that participants who consider the Bible not to be the word of God or indicated they "don't know" were significantly more supportive of abortion being legal in social circumstances (e.g., if the woman cannot afford to support the child) and selective circumstances (e.g., reasons such as if the father is of a different race than the woman) than those who believe the Bible is the literal word of God. However, there were no significant differences in support for abortion legality between those who see the Bible as the word of God but not to be taken literally and the other two groups (i.e., Bible is the literal word of God, the Bible is not the word of God) for any of the circumstance sets.

The same subgroup differences were observed for both the social ($\chi^2(2)$ = 16.54, *p* < .01) and selective ($\chi^2(2)$ = 9.69, *p* =.008) circumstances in relation to moral acceptability; those believing the Bible is not the literal word of God or "don't know" indicated higher moral acceptability than those believing the Bible is the literal word of God.

Table 6. Biblical Literalism and Abortion Legality and Morality

	χ^2	*p*	Literal Word of God (*n* = 64)			Word of God–Not Literal (*n* = 57)			Book of History, Stories, or Don't Know (*n* = 48)		
			P_{25}	P_{50}	P_{75}	P_{25}	P_{50}	P_{75}	P_{25}	P_{50}	P_{75}
Abortion Legality											
Extreme	6.78	.034	1.00	2.00	2.50	2.00	2.50	3.00	2.00	2.25	3.00
Social	14.05	.001	1.00	1.00	1.67	1.00	1.67	3.00	1.00	2.00	2.58
Selective	12.58	.002	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.50	2.38
Moral Acceptability of Abortion											
Extreme	3.43	.180	1.50	2.00	2.50	2.00	2.50	3.00	1.81	2.50	3.00
Social	16.54	< .001	1.00	1.00	1.67	1.00	1.33	2.33	1.00	1.67	2.58
Selective	9.69	.008	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.25	2.00

Note: P_{25}, P_{50}, P_{75} = 25th, 50th, 75th percentiles; χ^2 = median test

Religious Attendance

For the last research question (i.e., does support for abortion among a Latinx sample differ across their religious behaviors?), we anticipated that Latinx participants who attend religious services regularly would strongly oppose abortion morality and legality. We found no significant differences in the abortion legality and morality scales. However, there was a consistent trend with participants who attend religious services twice a year or less frequently. This group was more supportive of abortion being legal (*Mdn* = 1.00 to 2.50) than those who attend religious services once a week or more frequently (*Mdn* = 1.00 to 2.00; see Table 7).

Table 7. Religious Service Attendance and Abortion Legality and Morality

	χ^2	p	Once or More a Week ($n = 54$)			Several Times per Year ($n = 44$)			Twice a Year or Less Frequent ($n = 71$)		
			P_{25}	P_{50}	P_{75}	P_{25}	P_{50}	P_{75}	P_{25}	P_{50}	P_{75}
Abortion Legality											
Extreme	6.91	.032	1.50	2.00	2.56	1.50	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.25	3.00
Social	3.17	.205	1.00	1.00	2.33	1.00	1.17	2.00	1.00	1.67	3.00
Selective	0.68	.712	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00
Moral Acceptability of Abortion											
Extreme	5.13	.077	1.50	2.00	2.50	1.56	2.00	3.00	1.75	2.50	3.00
Social	2.81	.245	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.33	2.00	1.00	1.67	2.67
Selective	1.02	.602	1.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00

Note: P_{25}, P_{50}, P_{75} = 25th, 50th, 75th percentiles; χ^2 = median test

Discussion

Religiosity is one of the principal factors that shape attitudes toward abortion (Adamczyk and Valdimarsdóttir 2018). In the context of the Latinx religious diversification, our study goes further than previous work to examine the link between Latinx respondents' religious affiliation, beliefs, and practices across both moral and legal dimensions of abortion attitudes with particular emphasis on different abortion contexts or circumstances. Consistent with the extant literature (e.g., Bartkowski et al. 2012), we found that different dimensions of religiosity are related to Latinx participants' legal and moral attitudes toward abortion. Specifically, we found that biblical literalism was more strongly associated with differences in abortion attitudes than religious affiliation and religious attendance for the present sample. These findings complement the literature supporting the link between high levels of religiosity and abortion hostility (e.g., Bartkowski et al. 2012; Ellison, Echevarria, and Smith 2005; Holman, Podrazik, and Silber Mohamed 2020). Yet, other findings in this study present more nuanced perspectives that warrant further attention.

Biblical Literalism Strongly Predicts Abortion Attitudes Among Latinx

We found that biblical literalism was the strongest differentiator of abortion attitudes. Participants who believe the Bible is the literal word of God endorsed abortion legality and moral acceptability for social circumstances (e.g., if the woman cannot afford to support the child) and selective circumstances (e.g., if the baby is of a different gender than the parents desired) at significantly lower rates than those who believe the Bible is not the word of God or do not know. This finding is consistent with previous research that shows that biblical literalism is associated with greater opposition to abortion (e.g., Bartkowski et al. 2012; Hoffmann and Bartkowski 2008; Holman, Podrazik, and Silber Mohamed 2020). This may be because biblical literalism facilitates a religious rationalization and judgment on abortion. For example, conservative religious traditions have used the Bible to argue that life begins at conception, children are a blessing, and abortion equals murder (Bartkowski et al. 2012; Hoffmann and Bartkowski 2008; Holman, Podrazik, and Silber Mohamed 2020). Therefore, those who endorse this perspective of the Bible may be more inclined to hold anti-abortion attitudes.

Interestingly, there were no significant differences in attitudes toward abortion morality and legality by biblical literalism for extreme reasons (e.g., if the woman's life is at risk because of the pregnancy). This is in line with previous literature (e.g., Hoffmann and Johnson 2005) that shows that extreme circumstances garner more support for abortion compared with social circumstances. Amaro (1988) and Ellison and colleagues (2005) add that Latinx people tend to approve of abortion for health reasons, especially if the pregnancy endangers the woman's life. However, their support decreases for other reasons, such as if the woman cannot economically support the child. More research is needed to investigate how Latinx adults interpret these circumstances, justify moral and legal differences to abortion attitudes based on those circumstances, and what about those circumstances influences their supportive/hostile beliefs.

Religious Attendance Displays Weak Association with Abortion Beliefs

Branton and colleagues (2014) argue that service attendance is associated with more conservative views toward abortion. In our study, religious service attendance was associated with trends in attitudes toward abortion morality and legality, but the differences were not statistically significant. Specifically, participants who attend religious services more frequently (i.e., once a week or more) displayed more negative views toward abortion than those who attend less frequently. Although not significant, this finding is consistent with previous research that shows a connection between conservative moral practices and anti-abortion or pro-life attitudes (e.g., Bartkowski et al. 2012; Bolks et al. 2000; Branton et al. 2014; Ellison, Echevarria, and Smith 2005; Holman, Podrazik, and Silber Mohamed 2020; Rafi and Baunach 2013). Comparisons of the magnitude of the median differences suggest that views on abortion may be most nuanced and variable, especially in relation to religious behaviors, when abortion is sought for non-life-threatening social reasons. Resembling the biblical literalism results (i.e., smaller median differences regarding abortion morality and legality for extreme reasons), these outcomes highlight that the relationship between different dimensions of religiosity (e.g., service attendance) and abortion attitudes is not necessarily universal across circumstances. Instead, some contexts of abortion (e.g., extreme circumstances) are more supported, disregarding people's religious practices, while other circumstances (e.g., selective) are more universally opposed.

Protestants are Marginally Less Supportive of Abortion than Catholics and Other Religious Groups

Third, for the religious affiliation dimension, our results show that although differences were not statistically significant, those identifying with no religious affiliation or with a tradition other than Catholic or Christian were the most supportive of abortion on the extreme and social circumstance scales. Further, Catholics were consistently more supportive of abortion than Christians. This trend, as other researchers explain, may be related to the increase of nominal Catholicism in the Latinx community (see Bartkowski et al. 2012), meaning that those who identify as Catholics do not necessarily practice Catholicism nor follow its moral teachings but see Catholicism as a cultural identity (Ellison et al. 2005). Moreover, these results suggest that opposition to abortion may increase with growing affiliation with Evangelical Protestantism. Furthermore, since we grouped multiple and different Christian identities into one category, it is possible that having Christian denominations like Episcopalians (liberal) and Evangelical/Baptist (conservative) in the same

group diminishes the differences between Catholics, Christians, and other religious (and non-religious) groups. More research is needed regarding attitudes toward various contentious social issues within conservative religious denominations.

Similarly, there were no significant differences based on having a born-again experience – a marker of Evangelical identity. Our inability to find a significant difference could be partially attributed to the small size of our sample. However, our results show a consistent trend, with participants who claimed to have had a "born-again" religious experience exhibiting the lowest support for abortion. This trend is consistent with previous research that argues that Evangelical Christian Latinxs are more opposed to abortion than Catholic Latinxs (e.g., Ellison, Echevarria, and Smith 2005). However, others, such as Adamczyk and Valdimarsdóttir (2018), argue that religious affiliation may not have a direct effect on participants' attitudes because "Catholics and conservative Protestants disapprove of abortion and both are Christian faiths" (p. 141). Thus, affiliation with any Christian tradition, rather than with a specific Christian faith, may be the more important affiliation-related variable, with other indices of religiosity providing additional detail and nuance to the relationship and indicating more or less support for the legality and morality of abortion within a specific Christian faith tradition.

Mirrored Abortion Support Across Morality and Legality Dimensions

Finally, when comparing our sample's support toward abortion morality and legality, our findings show a trend in which abortion moral and legal acceptability mirror each other in all the circumstance sets. This trend suggests that for Latinx people, moral and legal views may often be intertwined. This result is in line with other studies, such as Jones and Cox (2012), that point out that 73% of Latinxs who believe abortion is morally wrong also believe that abortion should be illegal in all or most cases. In comparison, 52% of Black Americans who believe abortion is morally wrong still support abortion legality in all or most cases (Jones and Cox 2012). We contend that the lack of difference between views on morality and legality may be associated with the difficult nature of disentangling these constructs (i.e., morality and legality) in the context of abortion attitudes. However, more research is needed on how abortion morality and legality are understood among Latinxs and non-Latinxs, including whether such dimensions are interpreted within an American or Latin American context.

Limitations

This study is subject to limitations we hope to address in future research. First, our religious denomination response options may have been limiting; thus, for future investigations, we recommend including more religious differentiation, such as Protestantism as its own option. Second, our data were aggregated from a quota-based panel of self-identified Latinx respondents residing in the US. Given the limitations of quota-based sampling (Beauchemin and González-Ferrer 2011), our findings may not necessarily be generalizable to all Latinx in the United States. Additionally, Latinx who participate in opt-panels like Qualtrics may not be representative of Latinx living in the US. Indeed, it is possible that those who participate in online surveys are more acculturated. Thus, other sampling techniques should be employed in the future to obtain a more representative sample of US Latinx adults. Further, researchers could consider testing the same hypotheses among specific Latinx sub-groups

(e.g., Puerto Rican versus Cuban) and include measures of acculturation such as language preference and nativity.

Additionally, because of the small sample size and preliminary nature of our study, we could not conduct more sophisticated statistical analyses that incorporated multiple independent variables. Therefore, more research is needed to examine Latinx abortion attitudes and to understand the patterns in which religiosity may influence Latinxs' and other groups' abortion views. Finally, researchers should examine whether religious denomination moderates the relationship between church attendance and Bible literalism and abortion attitudes.

Conclusion

In general, our findings suggest that Latinx attitudes regarding abortion morality and legality are complex and not uniform and that various components of religiosity influence them. Our results also indicate that the relationship between abortion attitudes and religiosity can vary across circumstances, meaning that religious and abortion attitudes among Latinx are contextual. Additionally, they shed light on how religious affiliation, beliefs, and practices are associated with different dimensions of abortion attitudes, including attitudes toward morality and legality and attitudes toward abortion for different types of circumstances. Given the religious shifting among Latinxs and the US-based Latinx population's rapid growth, more research is needed to examine the complex relationship between religiosity and social attitudes among this group.

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Coronation in Physics

String Theory and the Pursuit of the Theory of Everything

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Abstract

This study examines the popularization of string theory in science literature and documentary film, which is presented to audiences with emphasis on the irreconcilability of two key paradigms in physics, quantum mechanics and general relativity, enabling the crowning of string theory as the long-sought "theory of everything." As string theory is presented as physics' final theory, a metaphysical rather than empirically based description of the cosmos, its writers draw upon heroic and religious language, and employ descriptions of prophesies of string particles, battling criticism of the theory, and finally a coronation and sainthood identity as the field of physics finally finds its theory of everything.

Keywords: religion, science, rhetoric, metaphor, literature

Introduction

A 2020 article on NASA's website titled "Chandra's Data Tests 'Theory of Everything'" explores how the earth-orbiting Chandra space observatory is being used to examine the possibility of tiny string-like particles in space (Mohon 2020). As the cause of that NASA search, string theory is shifting the way we understand the universe, and this comparatively new scientific idea is based on laws of physics that challenge our traditional understanding of the universe's particles. As a promoted "theory of everything," string theorists speak of its ability to unify all other theories of physics. In this study, I examine the language and arguments that are unique to the theory of everything pursuit in string theory literature, specifically popular science books, articles, and documentary film.

I argue that the story of string theory in popular discourse utilizes explicit religious themes, resulting in a transcendent coronation of string theory as the theory of everything, ultimately suggesting that the study of theoretical physics is a finished journey. The metaphysical nature of string theory allows its public discourse to operate at an audience-relatable level and readily take on religious form. Yet, contention persists over string theory despite the proliferation and rhetorical power of the common string theory story. The promotion of string theory as the theory of everything as it has transpired over several decades – particularly the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s – is given specific attention in order to capture unfolding events and claims as they happened. Advocates describe string theory's progress in basic ways that are designed to be read and understood by non-scientific audiences, escalating over the last few decades due to the theory's significant scientific advances in the 1980s and 1990s. This analysis focuses on the presentation of key people and research advancements surrounding the string theory story, which together offer confidence in it being the final theory of physics. Further, exploration of what these early developments mean now in scientific discourse include reference to contemporary confidence in string theory, highlighted at the end of this article.

Theory of everything discourse in physics adopts a theological and destiny-like tone, which takes audiences through a journey of difficulty and eventually a crowning moment when physicists reverence string theory as the final theory. I demonstrate how within popular string theory discourse, specifically, proponents first display confidence with words of prophetic promise for string theory as the theory of everything. Then, the discourse of theoretical battle intensifies the challenges string theorists face through expressions of criticism from other physicists. Finally, string theory is crowned as the theory of everything. Literary critic Kenneth Burke (1970, 45) describes this literary process of creating a sense of conflict and the need for closure in narratives as "division." As a result, string theory discourse gives special attention to the historical clash between these two established theories. In the process of creating division within discourse, "transcendence" is then made possible when a solution is prescribed, "Texts explicitly concerned with transcendence, as theological doctrines are, provide us with 'perfectly through' instances of such processes," or in this study, specifically, scientific transcendence over divided, uncooperative theories (Burke 1970, 38). In the process, string theory proponents apply religious language and descriptions to crown string theory as the theory of everything.

With string theory proliferating the phrase "theory of everything," the popularity of the term grew, including becoming the title to the biopic about the life of legendary physicist Stephen Hawking, *The Theory of Everything* (Marsh 2014). Yet, despite the string theory story as told in numerous popular science texts, the rush of acceptance of string theory legends and heroes also comes with concern about the theory being celebrated too early and without consideration of other explanations, such as how physicist Bernard Lavenda (2015, 1) describes the "backlash against popular science books that mislead the general public into believing that it is only a matter of time that superstring theory . . . will open up a new reality." Still, the string theory story remains a scientific force, as well as a rhetorical one with its public dissemination, a popularization process which Thomas Lessl (1989, 188) describes as having religious resonances, "Just as the institutional church endeavors to analyze history as the enactment of heavenly design, so the scientist depicts history as the unfolding of

deterministic processes that lead naturally to modern science," a process that bring public support to a new, exciting idea. String theorists are situated to bypass the demands of hard science and operate in a descriptive format that captures a non-observable existence, thereby offering identification with readers through a religious style, a priestly voice. Therefore, in describing transcendent dimensions of space, religious metaphors and descriptions become available and useful.

Scientific Rhetoric and Storytelling

Drawing upon the insights of rhetoric of science scholarship, we can situate the telling of the string theory story as its proponents draw upon cultural values. When scientists transfer claims from the technical realm to non-scientific audiences, technical vocabulary is translated into non-technical terminology, therefore engaging in the process of finding and using language that appeals to a non-scientific audience, such as one of the early rhetoric of science explorations, John Angus Campbell's (1970) analysis of Charles Darwin's *Origins of Species* as a religious-like transcendence journey. Similar studies of religious themes in scientific stories include examinations of the discourses of Carl Sagan (Lessl 1985), scientific naturalism (Lessl 2005), and the works of Francis Bacon (McKnight 2007). As scientists can take on a "priestly voice" with audiences (Lessl 1989), string theory advocates appeal to themes of sacredness and celebrate scientists as heroes, and this romanticized tale leads to a blissful, final destination in which a grand theory operates as a new, finalized state of scientific understanding.

Lloyd Bitzer (1968, 6) explores how technical problems are magnified for audiences so that the need for a solution is understood as urgent, "Any *exigency* is an imperfection marked by urgency, it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done." To address exigencies in science, Lawrence Prelli (1989, 184) describes the necessity of carefully crafting scientific solutions to the public, "This means picking out the crucial points for decision, expressing them so they secure needed attention, and rendering scientifically reasonable the decisions proposed to the community." But transference of scientific ideas into everyday discourse cannot happen without science writers being familiar with the values that are shared by readers (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969). In dissecting string theory discourse, I am talking about a scientific movement that uses a strategy of division and therefore labors to create an unsettling need for closure, provided by string theory, for the audience to experience regarding the theoretical contradictions of quantum mechanics and general relativity.

Early rhetoric of science scholarship has further enlightened and encouraged the growth of popular science studies, such as Joseph Rhodes's (2014, 323) "atheistic voice" in response to Lessl. Similarly, Davi Johnson (2004) utilizes Lessl's model to explore the scientific voice in female body empowerment. Also significant to scientific rhetoric has been the exploration of the solo science hero, which Leah Ceccarelli (2014, 4) describes as scientists "seeing themselves as risk-taking, adventurous loners . . . but that nonetheless comes to rely on the profitable discoveries they bring back from the frontier of research"; a common American scientific discourse of frontier discovery (Hocker Rushing 1983; Smith 2009; Swanson 2020). Other recent scholarship on the rhetoric of science has centered on scientific discourses connected to political and social influence (Smits 2006; Teehan 2018; Young & Carpenter

2018; Ambrus 2019), as well as the empowerment of the scientific feminine (Early 1995; Hamlin 2015; Faithful 2016).

To understand the context of string theory discourse, emphasizing the contradictions in physics paradigms is important. So, as the paradigms of general relativity and quantum mechanics are two primary, established camps in the field of physics, they are presented as contradicting each other. As a result, string theory discourse gives special attention to the historical clash in these other theories' laws of physics, along with focus on the long-sought and needed unifying theory. In the process, string theory proponents rework and apply religious language and descriptions.

Prophesies of Strings

As part of the prophetic prediction theme, the search for a final theory is an ancient effort (Weinberg 1992; Davies and Brown 1988). Many have spoken of the day when the theory of everything will be discovered, and they do so in religiously themed descriptions, such as University of Michigan physicist Michael Duff (1998, 64) comparing string theory discourse to biblical prophets, that they are "millennial Jeremiahs," referring to the ability to predict future events. Other string theory discourse is also ripe with predictions, which Lessl (1989, 188) describes as "Priestly communication" that "reminds people of what they might become . . . by nudging them gradually into the symbolic environment" of rhetorical influence. Physicist John Ellis says that "we will eventually discover all the elements which go together to make a Theory of Everything," and "we [will] eventually reach the Theory of Everything somewhere off in the distant future" (Dine 2007, 166). With similar optimism, Michael Duff (1998, 64) states that, "The Theory of Everything is emerging." And according to string theory pioneer John Schwarz (1987, 39), string theory is accumulating evidence as the theory of everything at a "breathtaking pace." In the same way, physicist F. David Peat (1988, 119) states that string theory is approaching theoretical physics' "final step." It is also called a "bold step" (Halpern 2004, 1). These kinds of phrases build excitement toward an eventual, transcendent discovery.

Along with the tradition of prophetic-like prediction and descriptions of how a theoretical unification will happen, string theorists speak of scientists being guided by nature, teasing them along to discovering its hidden mysteries in revelatory ways. Nobel laureate Steven Weinberg (1992, 6) writes about how nature is teasing string theorists toward discoveries,

> Sometimes in discussions among physicists, when it turns out that mathematically beautiful ideas are actually relevant to the real world, we get the feeling that there is something behind the blackboard, some deeper truth foreshadowing a final theory that makes our ideas turn out so well.

In Weinberg's argument, nature is teasing physicists along, continually prodding them to realize the true form particle physics. Adopting conclusions of a metaphysical existence as real, string theorists can operate at an authoritative level above empirical description. Their discourse is gracefully philosophical, and observably theological.

The led-by-nature personification is further captured in the depiction, in PBS's *The Elegant Universe* (McMaster 2003) documentary, of nineteenth-century physicist Theodor

Kaluza's dramatic epiphany of mathematically discovering string theory, a process that Lessl (1989, 188–89) describes as the priestly voice being merely the messenger of what the mysteries of the personified cosmos want to reveal, "the priestly voice does not portray itself as the agency of any merely human group; it is the voice of God or of Nature, a mouthpiece." Also recounting the Kaluza story, physicist Paul Halpern (2004, 3) calls the impetus of string theory the "Kaluza-Klein miracle." In 1919, physicist Theodor Kaluza was an unknown scholar, working as a humble, unpaid lecturer at the University of Konigsberg in Germany. One day Kaluza was fiddling with some mathematical ideas while at home when he decided to be creative with the idea of applying Einstein's theory of gravity to a "hypothetical five-dimensional universe" (Halpern 2004, 5; note that string theory's mathematical formulations are based on the concept of extra dimensions of space beyond what we physically experience). He then realized that in a five-dimensional universe, adding one more than Einstein's theory of four dimensions, he could unify Einstein's theories with electromagnetism. This discovery allowed Kaluza to begin thinking about unifying all the laws of physics, and his realization was thrilling, "he froze momentarily in place, then stood up abruptly and – in his own eureka shout – began to hum a Mozart aria" (Halpern 2004, 6). But Kaluza's theory never gained enough support to have a lasting effect on theoretical physics.

Continuing the rhetoric of nature revealing itself to physicists, three years later and on another continent, physicist Oskar Klein, unfamiliar with Kaluza's work, happened to carry out the same tests that Kaluza had done. Klein was teaching basic physics courses at the University of Michigan when he realized that he could examine the electromagnetic strength of particles within gravitational fields, and he was surprised to discover that some basic particles look more like string-like loops than point particles, and that they could disappear into unknown dimensions. Eventually his colleagues convinced him to abandon his theory, and the laws of nature would once again have to try later to reveal themselves to scientists (Halpern 2004).

Halpern (2004) also describes how two other thinkers extended the Kaluza-Klein discovery several decades later when nature showed up again to reveal its deeper mysteries. In the 1950s, the Italian physicist Tulio Regge was tracking the behavior of particles when throwing them against different kinds of surfaces. At the time, physicists assumed that all particles were spheres and behaved as solid objects. But rather than bouncing off various surfaces, Regge noticed that some particles would vibrate, and he found that they were not spherical, point particles, but "spinning blobs of matter . . . that are smeared" (Halpern 2004, 44–45). In essence, Regge understood that particles bend and twist like strings. Then, in the 1960s, Roger Penrose's story brought string theory even closer to being an established theory. A geometrist, Penrose argued that elementary particles are twists. The larger physics community, however, dismissed the findings from these physicists who articulated the early manifestations of string theory, and at the time most physicists remained convinced that particles are indeed spherical points rather than strings.

Despite the resistance from the larger field of physics, string theorists and their predecessors who also sought to find the theory of everything, such as Albert Einstein, are nonetheless consistently framed as oracle-types who are in connection with a personified form of nature, which takes on religious description. In his own efforts to unify theoretical

physics, Einstein was a "minister counseling his flock" and "presented his assistants with an implied list of virtues and sins" when doing theoretical physics (Halpern 2004, 171). Halpern (2004, 171) also tells of a similar religious-like thought process that Einstein employed, "Despite his disinclination to mix science with religion (in the conventional sense), these injunctions took on a biblical tone." Halpern (2004, 171) then connects string theory's arrival in physics to divine intervention, "Einstein based the legitimacy of a 'Theory of Everything' on whether or not God would have made the universe that way. In that sense, his guidance was an attempt to read and interpret divine preferences." Ultimately, on their sacred journey in the string theory story, audiences are led to the culminating confrontation, the theory of everything's triumphant arrival to battle the monolithic physics establishment that would fight to keep string theory at bay.

Fighting Disbelief

No prophetic prediction is effective without running into confrontations that, through battle, will ultimately lead to triumph. In this way, Peat (1988, 119) employs military metaphors in describing the pursuit of the theory of everything, "From now on, an army of theoretical physicists would shift their focus from particle to string theories. A revolution in theoretical physics had occurred." Similarly, to describe the commitment to fighting on, physicist and journalist Adrian Cho (2004, 1426) calls these scholars "The Children of the Revolution," magnifying the need for resolution in the process which Burke describes as literary division in stories. Science journalist George Musser (2008, 277) calls these efforts, "The String Wars."

Although Einstein also pursued a theory of everything, he was resistant to early ideas that resembled string theory as the answer. The tale of Einstein being a hindrance to Theodore Kaluza is dramatized as Kaluza attempted to publish his findings on a fifth dimension. *The Elegant Universe* (McMaster 2003) portrays a hypothetical one-sided conversation between Kaluza and Einstein as they sit across from one another in Einstein's office. Kaluza sits to join Einstein and tries to explain his discovery of extra dimensions, which would solve some of the theoretical divisions in physics, but Einstein ignores Kaluza, who then goes on to express his deep frustration with Einstein's lack of cooperation. But Einstein continues to refuse to acknowledge Kaluza's presence. The rhetorical division between these two theorists, each representing competing camps, contributes to the need for a rhetoric of conclusion and union amongst divided physicists. In his fixation on his own explanations, Einstein is depicted as incapable of seeing beyond his own idea. Like most physicists at the time, even Einstein is portrayed as lacking the ability to observe the existence of multiple dimensions that the cosmos was beckoning scientists to realize.

The battle theme is also applied in explaining the heightened contention of division between quantum mechanics and general relativity, which allows the advent of string theory as the solution. After Duff (1998, 64) explains the depressing state physics was in with the two non-cooperative paradigms of quantum mechanics and general relativity, he sets up the arrival of a theory of everything coming to fruition as he describes how the division between the established paradigms will soon crumble because a significant change will happen, leading to the conclusion that "Something big has to give." Schwarz (1987, 36) refers to these dramatic events in physics in his *Physics Today* article as the realization of string theory

as the final theory being capable of offering us "profound implications." A theory of everything is so important to physicists that Schwarz (1987, 35) believes that in physics there is not a "more significant theoretical proposal."

String theorists also demonstrate their sense of urgency for readers by reciting their own passion to find a unifying theory of everything, a type of rhetorical effort that Bitzer (1968, 1) describes as the presentation of "a dangerous situation" where "events, persons, or objects . . . threaten him, someone else, or something of value." Physicist Michio Kaku (Clark 2002) recalls being a young man when he heard about the death of Einstein and of his secret notebook (the notebook Einstein was using to create formulas that would be the final theory of physics) that was found at his bedside when he died. Kaku's curiosity and realization that something great was going to happen in the world of physics inspired him to embark on a lifelong journey in physics in order to "know what was in that book" (Clark 2002). Einstein is also portrayed as passionately searching for the theory of everything before his death in PBS's *The Elegant Universe* (McMaster 2003) documentary. In this depiction, Columbia University physicist Brian Greene stands in front of the house where Einstein passed away and tells the story in a haunting scene. Einstein "spent the last two decades of his life . . . relentlessly [seeking] a single theory so powerful it would describe all the workings of the universe." Greene then emphasizes the weight of the task of seeking a theory of everything on Einstein up to his death, "Convinced he was on the verge of the most significant discovery in the history of science, Einstein ran out of time, his dream unfulfilled."

Like Einstein's commitment to finding the theory of everything up to the moment of his last breath, string theorists are similarly expected to fight on, according to Halpern (2004, 148), "To fight for his beliefs, Einstein drew upon what he saw as his most powerful arsenal: his ability to construct a unified field theory." In a similar way, University of Chicago physicist Jeff Harvey explains the reason for string theorists maintaining such a longstanding faith, "The reason we keep on with it is that it seems to lead to new physical insights and beautiful things, wonderful structures . . . it's sufficiently convincing that there's . . . something to it" (Taubes 1999, 513).

As part of a religious-like battle narrative, such as the string theory "millennial Jeremiahs" mentioned early, heroes endure as they await a day of triumph when their predictions will be fulfilled. University of Maryland physicist James Gates (2007) discusses the troubles string theorists have faced in seeking experimental evidence in his letter to *Physics Today*. He suggests string theorists are going to get their revenge against those who do not heed the prophetic call of string theorists when the days of finding the theory of everything come closer, "Researchers excited about superstring[s] . . . are foremost and thoroughly dedicated and well-trained physicists. Accordingly, they are rooting most enthusiastically for the success of their experimentally driven colleagues, if for no other reason than the opportunity for vindication" (Gates 2007, 16).

Within this context of the historical battle over string theory, it becomes clear that calling string theory "the theory of everything" is because "rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy of objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality" (Bitzer 4). The name is a reaction to criticism of string theory, and

John Ellis "invented the term in response to critics who had called string theory a 'theory of nothing,'" referencing string theory's lack of experimental evidence (Dine 2007, 37). And the resistance toward and criticism of the theory as a solution to divisions in theoretical physics was significant. For example, physicists Paul Ginsparg and Sheldon Glashow are quoted as mocking string theory that it should "be conducted at schools of divinity by the equivalents of medieval theologians" (Musser 2008, 278). But string theory proponents align their efforts with the most famous minds in history. Even before the 20th century, there was a long-standing push for scientists to discover the "final theory," which was a dream that even Aristotle pursued and was at the forefront of Isaac Newton's experimental efforts, as explained by physicist Mark McCutcheon (2010, 17).

As part of the fight against doubters and to build suspense in telling the string theory story, authors and directors climactically identify string theory as the theory of everything near the end of string theory books and documentary film. In Musser's book (2008), he discusses string theory as the final theory only after demonstrating how string theory unifies physics' theoretical chasms, and physicist Paul Halpern (2004) also saves his discussion of the *Theory of Everything* title until the end of his retelling of the string theory story. Similarly, Weinberg (1992, 230, 241) strategically uses the theory of everything description for string theory only in his last two chapters after discussing unification, with the chapters titled "Facing Finality" and "What About God?". For these writers, presenting a theory of everything at the end of their tales is a climax, a dramatic presentation for the reader at the end of retelling of the "millennial Jeremiahs" in physics who were shown the hidden laws of nature. *The Elegant Universe* documentary also reserves discussing the theory of everything until it is first shown that string theory is the answer to unifying quantum mechanics and general relativity (McMaster 2003).

In arguing that an eventual cohesion in physics can be achieved, string theorists and their predecessors looked forward to the day when string theory would be firmly established as the theory of everything. They write about it as having previously been only a dream, but also display their faith that the day would come, despite their battles. Nonetheless, as a *Physics Today* writer who goes by the acronym BMS (1985, 17) states, string theory will "save the day." It allows reflection on human history, can be perceived as confirming cultural assumptions, and opens the door to opportunities between physics and belief, manifest in the use of religious metaphors.

As described so far, proponents of string theory see the significance of recognizing the roles of key scientists who helped bring it to its eventual moment of victory because, in science, "The locus of priestly authority, whether in its religious or secular forms . . . originat[es] in institutional circles from which the audience is largely excluded," such as the telling of important figures doing extraordinary things, namely the string theory story (Lessl 1989, 195). The pivotal moment of resolution, when string theory arrives as a recognized and respected theory of physics, is the 1984 "Green-Schwarz discovery" (McMaster 2004), also known as the "first revolution" when string theory was proven to be mathematically anomaly-free by physicists Michael Green and John Schwarz (Taubes 1999, 512). This discovery put string theory on the map of physics, and turned it into a seriously studied subject, "String theory has been the subject of thousands of papers since 1984" (Taubes 1999, 512). And one year after Green and Schwarz's calculation, physicist Mitchell Waldrop

(1985) published an article in which he crowned string theory, "String as a Theory of Everything" in *Science*. In September 1986, Michael Green published an article in *Scientific American* with a title that makes string theory superior to its predecessors with the prefix super- by calling it, "Superstrings." Then in 1987, John Schwarz joined his colleague Michael Green in calling string theory super- in the widely read journal *Physics Today* with the same article title, "Superstrings." Within three years of the Green-Schwarz discovery, string theory was introduced to the public as popular science journals shared their zeal for the anomaly-free claims of string theory.

Coronation and Sainthood

Offering closure in theoretical wars promises to bring a peaceful rest to physicists, as well as for readers of string theory who await a solution to the rhetorical chasm created for them. Audiences come to appreciate string theory's previous prophetic struggles and predictions because "rhetorical discourse must be embedded in historic context" of the conflicts that are presented as needing transcendence (Bitzer 1968, 3). All previous frustrations are resolved at the point of unification in 1984. The heroes' struggle to convince the others that a transcendent, final theory has come via a religious-like tale in which theory-prophets struggle, but eventually win, and are rewarded with a mathematically sound solution to the divisions in physics.

I utilize the coronation metaphor as description because it captures the accumulating event process of physics arrival at a theory of everything, which coincides with other described religious metaphors. Coronation comes with narratives of kings being chosen and crowned by deity, such as the description of the return of Jesus in Revelation 14, and in the myth of King Arthur (Monmouth 2007) being chosen above all others to reign, just as string theory also is portrayed as struggling, battling, but eventually reigning above all others. As a result, the idea of a theory of everything is "hailed," as Peat (1988, 89, 328) emphasizes twice.

Also using religious descriptions of string theory's arrival as the theory of everything, James Gates (2007, 16) makes explicit comparisons to religious pursuits, that it "would be a point of great pride to have clearly perceived the mind of God." Also, it is repeatedly called the "perfect theory" (Peat 1988, 119; Clark 2002). And as a heavenly reward these string theorists' efforts have put them on "grounds for sainthood in the Einstein canon," demonstrating victory over others' doubt about string theory (Halpern 2004, 172).

Part of establishing a reigning theory is crowning a governor, someone to preside. If the Kaluza-Klein theory was the breakthrough for the potential of other dimensions and the Green-Schwarz discovery legitimized string theory as the unifying theory, then Edward Witten is the movement's "impresario" who brought about a second, further convincing string theory revolution about multiple dimensions of space and the soundness of string theory as the great unifying theory (Taubes 1999, 512). Witten's (1996) discovery solidified knowledge of how the strings in string theory work and how many dimensions of space there truly are, "Ed just walked up the mountain and looked down and saw the connections that nobody else saw . . . he just took a different perspective, and bang, it all came together. And that's genius" (McMaster 2003). Duff (1998, 64) calls Witten, "the guru of string theory (and according to *Life* magazine, the sixth most influential American baby boomer)." And

Gary Taubes (1986, 48) says that Witten "is considered so bright that his colleagues are willing to take seriously virtually anything he suggests." Witten's discovery, as string theory proponents argue, has essentially closed the door on arguments against the theory. String theory now has its Einstein. Fast forwarding several decades, renowned physicist Henry Tye (Cai and Yan 2021, 2) recently concluded that "you have to go with string theory . . . I think the future goal is to understand why string theory can yield a naturally small cosmological constant."

Conclusion

In Disney's animated film *The Sword in the Stone* (Reitherman 1963), King Arthur's mentor Merlin expresses his frustration about the lack of having a rightful king before Arthur removes the sword from the stone and proves his divine appointment, "A dark age indeed! An age of inconvenience!" Similarly, string theory is presented as lifting theoretical physics out of its inconvenient dark ages, such as physicist when Henry Tye described the process of resolving the mysteries of the cosmos with string theory, "They don't need to know string theory, they just need string theory to tell them where to look and what to look for" (Cai and Yan 2021, 2). Embracing and utilizing metaphysical explanations, string theorists offer artful descriptions with theological appeal to capture the public's imagination of the theory's concrete mathematical models. Like prophets, string theorists speak of tapping into realms beyond human understanding and description. This graceful display of describing a reality beyond our own through oracles is convincing because it bypasses scientific empiricism. As its elegance takes on a form of religious discourse, it implies a reality made of dimensions beyond humanity's observations, and equally beyond the descriptions of empirical scientific demands.

Burke (1970, 128–29) argues that such strategic storytelling efforts allow imperfect things, such as theoretical physics in this instance, to be "gradually purged . . . of its obscurities," and that this is a transcendent process that requires rhetorical skill in presenting a solution, "in theological terminology . . . there may be a certain craftiness in unveiling it." The use of sacred themes gives string theory writers an immediate connection to audiences. This process is observable as we examine the religious metaphors used to dramatize stories of discovery. In this tale, the battle for legitimacy in theoretical physics leads to an eventual peaceful reign of an explanation emerging, and along with Witten as the established leader who wields a priestly voice, as string theory is described as the presiding theory of everything.

Despite the developments and popularity of string theory, it maintains its critics. Amidst the heightened string theory public celebrations, Peter Woit (2007) argues against string theory and its convenient infallibility due to its lack of empirical experimentation in *Not Even Wrong: The Failure of String Theory and the Search for Unity in Physical Law.* Also, Lee Smolin (2020) continues his work on Einstein's quantum theory as foundational to physics. And with concern about the popularity of string theory emerging more as a social power than a scientific theory, in 2015 Bernard Lavenda concluded his work *Where Physics Went Wrong* with the question, "Has String Theory Become a Religion?" (75). Further, Daniel Cossins (2019, 1) recently described how, at this point, string theory is not yet "verifiable."

Yet in string theory's elegant mythological references, it is also empowered to situate its critics into camps of disbelief, comparatively atheistic toward this metaphysical description of the universe. Critics are perceived as lacking perspective on the possibilities of string theory and lacking understanding of the fate-like arrival that comprises string theory's repeated mathematical emergence. At the same time, string theory is also being situated with and explored alongside other explanatory models, "Theorists, young ones in particular, are starting to move between the camps for the first time" in the theoretical debate where "neither strings nor loops [is] landing a killer blow" (Cartwright 2017, 29). Hence, although string theorists describe the quest for the theory of everything as concluded, the debate continues, and non-string theory physicists have not thrown in the towel.

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Observations on Why Promotors of Italian American Culture Need to Know More

The Italian/American Experience of Religion

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Opinion

> I am convinced that there are in America today numerous young men and women of Italian origin who are proud of their heritage, not in the sense of those hoodlums who scream about Italian power, or "Italian is beautiful" and similar imbecilities, but in the sense of awareness of one's hereditary values. This can be done, provided one is willing to spend years and years digging and digging, without expectation of any reward, except the feeling of doing some good. (Giovanni Schiavo, *The Italians in America Before the Revolution*, 1976)

I have opined – some might say *ad nauseam* – about the necessity knowing fundamental Italian and Italian/American history for those who see themselves as protagonists in the national discussion on Italian ethnicity in the United States.[1] In my *Re-reading Italian Americana: Specificities and Generalities on Literature and Criticism* (Tamburri 2014), I dealt with such notions in chapters 1 and 8, the importance of which is so vital, in my opinion, that I felt compelled to bracket my overall discussion of Italian/American literature and criticism with this exhortation. In chapter 1, I stated (2014, 4):

> [I]t is necessary that the in-group have a firm grip on the history of Italians in America: specifically, their migratory history; their development as a community herein surely through World War II; the dominant culture's treatment of Italians in America, especially before the onslaught of the 1970s' "Made in Italy." These basic literacies, I would submit, are requisite for a

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[1] See Tamburri 1991 for my use of the slash (/) in adjectival binomials regarding ethnicity.

> deeper understanding of our migratory history and its consequences for "immigration" to figure as a major rallying point. It is not enough to sing the virtues of classical Rome and Renaissance Italy to declare oneself a well-informed spokesperson of Italian America. . . . [T]o understand the Italian in the United States, one needs to possess an intimate knowledge of that history, regardless of his or her standing in the community.

It is very much knowledge of both Italy and Italian America that helps scholars better understand the challenges immigrants faced at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and, further still, comprehend the roots of said challenges. All Italian/Americans who identify as such, not just scholars of the field, need to inform themselves of Italian history in order to be an informed person of Italian heritage.

Given what I have just stated, and in regard to a discussion of a more performative nature – namely, when one decides to engage in activism around Italian/American history and culture – I returned to the idea once more (Tamburri 2014, 152–53), this time in chapter 8, stating that it is "imperative that [one] have a fundamental knowledge of Italy's history and how it might relate to today's world of Italian America"; and, further still, that "the individual who claims to be in the forefront, who declares . . . to be the spokesperson, [s/he] needs to know all of what [Robert] Viscusi [offers his] reader in his preface and introduction [of his *Buried Caesars*]. Anything short of a solid knowledge of these facts – and how to relate then to other phenomena – is simply not acceptable."[2] Such knowledge gaps create negative rhetorical outcomes that are embarrassing for Italian Americans within a greater discussion of US ethnicity.

One such example of an egregious outcome is contained in an article penned by an individual who sees himself as a leader of *the* Italian/American community, whatever this monolithic entity may be according to him and others who use the label so freely, especially with the anteceding definite article "the," as if there were only one *community* of Italian Americans. My contention is not with the individual per se, but rather with a particular incorrect assumption in their article. My intention is to correct a historical misconception, not to engage in any supercilious *ad hominem* attack on this individual or anyone else who makes such a claim contrary to history and current scholarship.

The article is titled "What Makes Us Italian American?" (Russo 2021a). In it, the author writes (Russo 2021a, 10):

> We are the descendants of poor but proud people whose values are rooted in three essential elements, namely a deep and abiding sense of family, a strong work ethic and *a centuries-long devotion to our Catholic faith* [emphasis added].

I was surprised that this statement would come from an Italian/American in 2021, particularly from someone who sees himself as the leader of and spokesperson for major Italian American organizations.[3] This is especially perplexing since he preceded the above-mentioned

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[2] I am referring here to Viscusi's book *Buried Caesars* (2006).

[3] The author in question is the current president of the Conference of Presidents of Major Italian American Organizations (COPOMIAO), an entity with over fifty member organizations.

declaration with the statement (Russo 2021a, 10) that the "first step in being an Italian American is learning and appreciating our family's history, both in Italy and here in America."

Such a statement essentializing Italian/Americans as Catholics ignores the complex nature of Italians and Italian/Americans and their relationship to – or against – Catholicism, especially as a religious structure of doctrinal guidance. Of course, class, gender, geography (e.g., northern Italy vs. southern Italy), migration, and demographics also play a part, be it here in the United States or in Italy. It is true that more than 95% of Italians at the dawn of the twentieth century were Christians – but not all were Catholics (Data Player 2021). But it is also true that there was, at the same time in the United States, the "Italian Problem," as Henry Browne (1946) underscored. There was a concern in some quarters that Italian immigrants would not be loyal to the Catholic Church and, in others, these immigrants might now support the Catholic Church (Browne 1946, 52–53). In her entry "Religion" in *The Italian American Experience: An Encyclopedia*, Mary Elizabeth Brown (2000, 539) tells us that "[m]ass migration from Italy presented a possibility of a religious heterogeneous Italian community. Several American Protestants dominations conducted missionary work among the immigrants." In 1933, H. G. Duncan (184) wrote that Italy was "the least Catholic of the catholic countries of Europe . . . [And that a]ccording to both Catholic and Protestant estimates, between 60 and 75 percent of the Italians in the United States maintain no connection to the church." Joseph Varacalli (1986), in turn, points out that "the immigrant's ultimate allegiance [was] to the mostly non-Catholic culture of south Italy" (1).[4] Rudy Vecoli had already discussed in detail the Italian immigrant's complex relationship to religion in his 1969 essay, "Prelates and Peasants: Italian Immigrants and the Catholic Church." He tells us that "[m]illions of Italian immigrants and their children, it was thought, were succumbing to religious indifference and even apostasy, deserting to the camp of the enemies of the true faith" (Vecoli 1969, 220). Indeed, said problem had already been identified at the end of the nineteenth century. As Vecoli (1969, 244) tells us:

> [I]n 1886 by Monsignor Gennaro de Concilio . . . professor of theology at Seton Hall University and pastor of an Italian church in Jersey City, lamented that half a million of his countrymen were living "without any religious help or comfort, and do not practice any religious duty; they do not hear mass; they do not, for years and years, use the sacraments; they do not listen to the word of God." (244).

In addition to the primary texts both Vecoli and Varacalli cite in their respective essays, one might then move on to more recent studies (e.g., Peter D'Agostino [2004], Richard Juliani [2007], Robert Orsi [1985], Joseph Sciorra [2015]). Were the essay in question truly engaged in Italian history, conversant with many chronicled phenomena over the past 160-plus years in both Italy and in the United States, it would reflect that such an issue is even more complex today. Approximately 74% of Italians ascribe to some form of Christianity, with Catholicism as the majority group among Christians; the percentage differs in a few polls, fluctuating between approximately 72% to 83%. (World Atlas; Pew-Templeton). Other denominations of

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[4] Varacalli's 1986 revisitation of Henry J. Browne's 1946 exegesis of the "Italian Problem" is truly one place to begin one's education on the Italian American's relationship to Catholicism. From there one can get a good handle on the significant preceding essays, especially Vecoli's extended study cited herein.

Christianity include Eastern Orthodox, Jehovah's Witness, Methodist, and other kinds of Protestant. Other forms of religious practices in Italy include Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sikhism. Further still, approximately 12–14% of Italians are unaffiliated and/or professed atheists. As an aside, let us remember that the National Catholic Educational Association's latest report (2021, 1) underscores the ecumenical characteristic of Catholic schools: "The majority of families who transferred into Catholic schools were Catholic (68%), reported a household income of $100,000 or higher (66%), and were white (78%)."

Richard Alba had pointed out the challenges and complexities of religion as an identifying characteristic in his 1985 (112–13) book, *Italian Americans: Into the Twilight of Ethnicity*:

> Religion is inextricably bound up with the definitions of many American Ethnic groups. Irish Catholics, for example, must be distinguished from Irish Protestants, since these two groups entered the United States in different periods, settled in different places, and are distinguishable in a variety of ways, from politics to educational achievements. Therefore, in defining groups to compare against Italian Americans, to chart the latter's shifting place, it is often desirable if not necessary to include religion (the religion in which a person was raised, in deference to the notion of ethnic *origins*, rather than current religion). But this seems undesirable for defining the Italian group, if only because this book concerns Italian Americans, whatever their religion. (Also, limiting the Italian group to persons raised as Catholics might bias the results a bit, by excluding some relatively acculturated Italian Americans who have been raised as Protestant.) In any event, the Italian-American group remains heavily Catholic. Over 90 percent of Italian Americans in the combined General Survey Sample were raised as Catholics, and 80 percent called themselves Catholic at the time they were surveyed. [emphasis in the original]

A few observations about Alba's comments. First, his data come from the General Social Survey and are currently still available online (see NORC). Second, Alba (1985, 113) clearly underscores the complex nature of religion as a fundamental quality to identifying Italian Americans: "limiting the Italian group to persons raised as Catholics might bias the results a bit, *by excluding some relatively acculturated Italian Americans who have been raised as Protestant*" (emphasis added). Indeed, as we saw above, not only "Protestant[s]" but Eastern Orthodox, Jehovah's Witness, Protestant, and Methodist are among other Christian groups; and, I would add here, those other above-mentioned religious practices in Italy: e.g., Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism. Third, in Alba's survey group, which dates from a 1975–1980 statistical portrait (1985, 109), we see that at that time, more than four decades before our author in question's declaration of Catholicism as an essential identifying characteristic, only "80 percent called themselves Catholic at the time they were surveyed."[5]

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[5] In contrast to the author under question's desire to make all Italians and Italian Americans Catholic, one might readily recall the tragic history of the Waldensians in Italy, which begins at the end of the twelfth century. In the centuries that followed their excommunication in 1184, the Waldensians were the victims of further social exclusion and physical violence (e.g., the "Massacre of Mérindol" [1545], the "Piedmont Easter" [1655]). For one example of Italian Waldensians in the US, see North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

When pitted against essential declarations such as Catholicism as a *sine qua non* to evaluate any notion of an Italian/American identity, these demographic figures underscore the problem associated with a declaration that Catholicism is one of three essential elements to being Italian/American. Such a statement negates *tout court* the other 20% of Italians and all their descendants in the United States, including the 8,000 Italian Jews who were deported from Italy to Germany and killed in the concentration camps. Primo Levi, an Italian Jew who survived Auschwitz, wrote the literary classic *Se questo è un uomo (Survival in Auschwitz),* which is a harrowing narrative of life in a German concentration camp. The classic De Sica film, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis,* from the novel of the same name by Giorgio Bassani, another leading literary figure of twentieth-century Italy, recounts the tragic consequences of Italy's five-plus year enforcement of racial discrimination against Italian Jews, the infamous "Leggi Razziali" decree of November 17, 1938.[6] Why do I mention such historical events in Italy? Because, if you say that our "first step in being an Italian American is learning and appreciating our history . . . in Italy," as we read in "What Makes Us Italian American?", then it should reflect such a complex history, including the history of Italian emigration in the shadow of what would become World War II.

Italian fascists forced many Italian Jews to leave Italy and emigrate to other countries, including the United States, where many established themselves as leaders in science, the academy, religion, and other fields. According to the article in question, they would not be considered Italian/American despite their birth in Italy and immigration to the United States – all because they were not Catholic.[7] Why would none of them be considered Italian/Americans?[8] Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, atheists, and others are all part and parcel of an Italian-descendent population and, as such, constitute a plurality of Italian/American communities in the United States.[9] As such, then, we need to redefine the notion of "Italian/American community" as a broad, diverse group of people who share the commonalities of what is Italian in its various and sundry forms, and, in so doing, we can then speak in terms of "the" Italian/American community, as is the wont of many.

Given what I have outlined above, let me say that the notion of being rooted in "a deep and abiding sense of family, a strong work ethic" (Russo 2021a) is more than welcomed and is something I believe that, while not unique to Italian/Americans, ties together many of the diverse ethnic groups in the United States, as well as the many types of Italian/Americans. Conversely, the notion of being rooted in "a centuries-long devotion to our Catholic faith"

2016. For an overview of Waldensians, see Emilio Comba (1978). For an overview of Protestants in Italy and the US – including Waldensians in the US – see, Dennis Barone (2016).

[6] There is a plethora of excellent books on the subject. To start, I would mention Feinstein (2004), Zimmerman (2005), and Zuccotti (1987).

[7] See, on this, Pontecorboli 2015.

[8] And what of those who may have converted from Catholicism to Islam? I have in mind Patricia Dunn, novelist (https://www.patriciadunnauthor.com), and Maria Provenzano Singh, one of the few women taxi drivers in New York City (https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-15236154).

[9] Were we to then pass into the political realm, then we would find ample material to discuss with regard to the substantial tradition of anarchists and the sort. In this regard, one can begin with the work of Marcella Bencivenni (2011), Nunzio Pernicone (2016), and Fraser Ottanelli (Pernicone and Ottanelli, 2018).

(Russo 2021a) as an over-arching criterion presented as a *sine qua non* to qualify one's Italian/American identity is inaccurate – it is simply too essentialist and exclusionary. To be clear, the application of such a notion only recalls, alas, some of the horrible legacies of religious and ethnic intolerance, be that legacy in the form of twentieth-century Italian racial laws, which were part and parcel of the Holocaust; or the victims of the "foibe," the mass killings by Yugoslav partisans, both during and immediately after World War II, of the local ethic Italian population;[10] or, yet still, in an earlier form as the Armenian Genocide.

I have put these thoughts to paper for one primary reason – a need for Italian/Americans, especially leaders in the community, and scholars of Italian America to be as well informed as possible of the history and heritage before engaging in any form of all-encompassing discourse on the history of Italians in the United States, especially on notions of identity. Italian/American history does not begin with the 1891 lynchings in New Orleans, as the author in question recently stated in a letter he penned to the president of the United States as a complaint of President Joe Biden's two proclamations on Columbus Day, one honoring Native Americans, the other honoring Columbus and Italian Americans: "By effectively 'cancelling' Columbus Day, you have shown that you . . . do not truly understand our story, which began with the lynching of eleven Italian immigrants in 1891 by a mob of five thousand people in New Orleans" (Russo 2021b, 1).

Italian/American history begins in 1635, when Pietro Cesare Alberti first set foot on what is now New York's shores. That history continued with the likes of Filippo Mazzei, Carlo Bellini, and Lorenzo Da Ponte; it continues today because we stand on the shoulders of those individuals among whom we ought readily to include all non-Catholic Italian/Americans.[11]

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[10] In 2004 the Italian government instituted a *Giorno del Ricordo* (Day of Memory), on February 10, to commemorate the victims of the "Foibe" and the forced exodus of nearly the entire population of Italians then living in Dalmazia and Venezia Giulia, which was brought about by Yugoslavia.

[11] I wish to thank Stephen Cerulli, Donna Chirico. Fred Gardaphé, and Joseph Sciorra for comments on an earlier draft.

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An Ethnographic Account of the Birth, Marriage, and Death Rituals among the Muslims of Kashmir

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Abstract

Islam has governed the operation of Muslim society in Kashmir, regardless of the geopolitical situation in the region. Muslims regard birth and death as transitions between two distinct lives, and marriage as a way of preserving humanity until the day of judgement. Nonetheless, the Kashmir valley's diversity of identities and traditions demonstrates the spread of cultural components within and across distinct ethnic groupings. One example is the rites of passage practiced by Muslims in this Himalayan region, who, in defiance of Islam's precepts, have included a variety of components into their birth, marriage, and death ceremonies, rendering them highly fascinating and unusual. Thus, this essay provides an in-depth examination of these facets of Kashmiri Muslims via an anthropological lens to comprehend both continuity and change from an Islamic perspective.

Keywords: Ethnography, Himalayas, Islam, Kashmiri Muslims, Rites of Passage

Introduction

Kashmir is admired for its topographic exquisiteness and cultural legacy with diversified and captivating cultural complexes. The Kashmir valley's culture blends various subcultures with different ethnic and religious backgrounds. When combined with different religious institutions, these unique Kashmiri cultural entities form an exceptional endemic cultural whole called *Kashmiriyat*.

Surrounded by Pir Panjal and Himalayan ranges from the southwest and northeastern directions respectively, the boat-shaped valley of Kashmir forms the northernmost region of India. Originally settled during the Neolithic period (Bandey 2009), the land has witnessed different ethnicities and religions because of its geography. Being a hub of Hinduism and Buddhism, it was not until the 14th century when Shah Mir became the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir (Asimov and Bosworth 1999) and incorporated elements of Islamic culture in the region. For the next four centuries, the valley was ruled by different Muslim rulers, including Mughals and Afghans, and ultimately fell to the Sikhs in 1819 under the leadership of Ranjit Singh (The Imperial Gazetteer of India: Karachi to Kotayam 1908). After winning the first Anglo-Sikh war in 1846, the British sold the land to Raja Gulab Singh, thus becoming the first ruler of the newly established state of Jammu and Kashmir. The valley was ruled by *Dogras* for the next century until Maharaja Hari Sigh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir at the time, signed the instrument of accession and joined the dominion of India in 1947 (Stein 1998). Since then, Kashmir has been a center of a dispute between India, Pakistan, and China, and continues to be in a state of war. According to the 1941 census, the Kashmir valley had approximately a 5 percent Hindu population, which ultimately decreased to 1.84 percent, followed by a 0.8 percent Sikh population and a 0.11 percent Buddhist population, according to the 2011 census, due to the armed conflict that broke out in the valley in 1989.

The presence of multiple ethnicities in the region has led to the diffusion of cultural traits among different religious groups. Before the 1990s, Hindus and Muslims lived in a synchronous cultural system (Khanday 2019) that was different than in mainland India and in the Muslim-dominated country of Pakistan. Muslims adopted various traits from Hindu brethren which are still persistent in the region. More specifically, in the rituals of birth, marriage, and death among Muslims, one finds the cultural elements of Pundits (local name for Kashmiri Hindus).

Kashmiris are exceptionally sociable. They often adhere to traditional beliefs, which means one can bet on traditional clothing, customs, dishes, and folklore, among other things, that are integral to the day. However, what occurs at less-publicized celebrations? Moments of residential significance that occur in conjunction with the ceremonial threshold crossing. Is there a stipulation? What specific rites of passage do birth, marriage, and death entail?

Academic Research into Islam

Today, Muslims residing in Asia account for over 60% of the world's total Muslim population (Hefner 2003). Moreover, India has the second highest Muslim population of any Asian country, with around 178 million Muslims counted in the 2011 census 2011. This covers around 68.31% of the Muslim population in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Muslims in northern India hail from a variety of national origins; the territory's first Muslim settlers came from Central and East Asian countries, the region's original non-Muslim inhabitants converted to Islam, and the Muslims who moved to the region later from neighboring nations. This mingling of ideas and beliefs has resulted in belief systems that stand in stark contrast to those ruled by Islam. This Muslim population, regardless of ethnicity, is the subject of this investigation.

Since the 1950s, the academic study of religion as a social phenomenon has been accomplished throughout South Asia, notably India. Islam was only absorbed into India's

established legacy of ceremonial and theological studies following the country's independence from the British (Ahmad 1972; Madan 1995). The widespread neglect of anthropological research on Islamic theology in India was largely due to their concern with the caste system and other facets of Indian culture during this period. Apart from a few monographs, such as Leela Dube (1969), there was little academic work on Muslims in India. Not until Imtiyaz Ahmad's works did the situation somewhat improve. In the 1970s and 1980s, he compiled papers on rites of passage, rituals, beliefs, and social structures, which finally led to the conviction that Islam is not a religion based on textual reflections. Furthermore, the concept of the "textual" is fluid, as Roy (2005) notes that historians investigating Islam in India have uncovered a plethora of evidence demonstrating that Muslims in India engaged in a range of behaviors.

There have been a few studies on Islamic lifecycle rites, or some components of them, as they are practiced in northern India, particularly the Kashmir region (Kochak 2016; Khanday 2019). Despite these and other pertinent publications, we lack a thorough examination of Islamic lifecycle rites as they are practiced in this Himalayan valley. As such, we want to contribute to such research through this article. Unlike previous research in the region, which has concentrated on a single ritual, we seek to provide an anthropological description of all the significant rites linked with a person born and raised in the Kashmiri Muslim community.

Methodologies

This study takes a qualitative approach. The researchers gathered data through observation and in-depth interviews. The observations of these activities were made before, during, and following the rites described. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted with individuals drawn from purposive samples. The samples were drawn from a variety of geographical locations around the Kashmir valley to provide a comprehensive perspective on rites of passage. The data was examined using suitable qualitative data analysis techniques, including data reduction, data visualization, and conclusion drafting.

Rituals of Birth

Islamic law confers rights on the mother and her unborn child prior to conception. It begins with the notion of legitimate union and proper upbringing of the child. When a woman becomes pregnant, she is elevated in rank according to Islamic theology as the Quran declares, "Respect the womb that carried you" (4:1). With such a jubilant state comes the awareness of the perils of evil to the mother's soul and the fetus in the womb. Islam teaches several recitations for warding off evil, yet we see a plethora of cultural constructs for the same practice across the world. Wearing an iron bangle or carrying an iron knife is a crucial practice for pregnant women in the Kashmir valley because it is thought to protect the mother and her child from superstitious evil. Additionally, pregnant women are not permitted to leave their rooms during eclipses, during the night, or while someone of questionable character is around. These features are also common among the valley's other religious communities and have a major cultural significance. While many methods of integrating a baby into society are common across countries and religious identities, Kashmiri Muslims have developed their own traditional components blended with Islamic ceremonies for welcoming the newly born as a community member.

It is advised to whisper the *Adhan* into the baby's right ear and the *Takbeer* into the left ear immediately after delivery (the *Adhan* is the Muslim call to prayer, and *Takbeer* is the Islamic name for the formal proclamation clause "Allahu Akbar"). The words chanted contain Allah's name and the name of the prophet Muhammad. These proclamations serve as the axis around which a Muslim's life revolves, which explains their symbolic significance at birth. Generally, this should be done by the baby's father, but in the Kashmiri valley, it is customary to wait for someone of recognized excellent character to offer the *Adhan*, since it is believed that the baby inherits the characteristics of the one who gives it. However, according to Islamic beliefs, it is via *Tehneek* that the excellent qualities of the one who does this are passed to the child. *Tehneek* is performed in accordance with the Adhan, in which a person of good character eats a date or another sweet item and rubs the softened date over the newborn's lips and upper palate. During our fieldwork, we discovered that there is a cultural component to this religious procedure, which entails inviting the person who performs the *Adhan* and *Tehneek* to a feast, whether that individual is related to or known to the parents. Since this study was conducted through participant observation, one of the authors (U. Dar) performed this ceremony and afterwards was invited to a feast by the family.

If the woman gives birth in a hospital, she and the infant generally return to the mother's original home for at least two to three months. This practice is widespread in the valley, and in most cases, the woman also to her family home approximately two months prior to the delivery. This is believed to give both beings much-needed rest. Furthermore, during the period of discharge of fluids, a woman is not permitted to pray, fast, or touch the Quran. She may, however, easily blend in with regular home activities, as there are no limitations on such things. Just as the mother carries iron objects, such as a dagger, to fend off evil, newborns in the valley are typically adorned with an iron bangle, regardless of sex, to protect them from evil. Additionally, many Kashmiris place an amulet called *Taweez* around the baby's neck, which contains Quranic verses and occasionally additional prayers. Even though Islam categorically bans such acts, their prevalence on the subcontinent across all major faiths has opened the path for them to spread among Kashmir's Muslims as well.

Circumcision is another procedure that is regarded as an Islamic requirement by Muslims worldwide. Male children are circumcised in the valley, in accordance with Islamic beliefs, and it is now regarded more of a cultural occurrence in the region. Since there is not a defined age for this practice, Muslims in Kashmir typically circumcise their children before the age of five. In this study, the youngest age for circumcision was three days and the oldest age was four years. Locally, it is referred to as *Khutna*, and on such occasions, womenfolk perform traditional songs, while some households also host a modest feast. On such occasions, presents are also exchanged. Following this rite comes the vital task of naming a child. In this regard, Muhammad said, "On the day of resurrection, you will be called by your own name and that of your father, so select wisely" (Abu Dawood). The infant may be named on the day of birth, on the third day, or on or after the seventh day. Naming is a contentious issue in Kashmir, as everyone has a say. Numerous factors are considered while naming a child, including the name's influence on the child's upbringing, its simplicity of pronunciation, and the compatibility with the surname. Children are named in a variety of ways, the most common of which are as follows: first name, followed by father's name, and then last name, or a title of name such as Muhammad, Abdul, Ghulam, etc., followed by the first name, and finally the

last name in the case of a baby male. When a female child is born, she is typically given a name followed by either her father's name or suffixes such as Bano, Akhter, Bi, Begum, or her surname.

The woman gets visited by all her relatives and friends throughout her stay in the biological home. Additionally, there is a practice called *Pyaav heth gasun*, in which the in-laws and their relatives send sweets and presents for the mother and infant following the delivery. To express gratitude to the almighty, the family must sacrifice two sheep in the event of a male and one sheep in the case of a girl to fulfil the obligation of *Aqiqah*. When an animal is slaughtered, it is either distributed to close relatives or the relatives are invited to a feast where everyone eats and blesses the mother and her child. *Aqiqah* is typically performed in the Kashmir valley concurrently with the child's hair being shaved. This is regarded as a tradition from Muhammad and is followed by Muslims worldwide. Traditionally, the newborn's scalp hair that has developed throughout pregnancy is shaved during the first seven days of life. Locally referred to as *Zar Kaasin*, this job is performed by numerous families who bring their children and a barber to one of the sacred places. On such occasions, folk songs are sung, and in certain cases, the child's hair is weighed, and a corresponding quantity of silver is presented to charity.

As a result of the preceding discussion, newly born Muslim infants are endowed with a variety of Islamic rights. These rights must be upheld via the duties placed on the parents and the community to which the newborn belongs. Along with religious components, the Muslims of Kashmir have adopted a variety of birth rituals from other cultures. This variability results in the emergence of distinct traditional components that require anthropological documentation.

Rituals of Marriage

Events Leading to Marriage

From a cultural perspective, the institution of marriage is one of the most diverse social institutions among Muslims. For Muslims, marriage is an obligation. Muhammad says, "The best people of my nation are those who get married and have chosen their wives, and the worst people of my nation are those who have kept away from marriage and are passing their lives as bachelors" (Nuri 1987). Islamic marriage is meant to take place according to Islamic (*Shari'ah*) rules, with the least interference from conventional customs. However, most Kashmiri Muslim marriages contain customs and rituals in addition to those mandated by Islam and are practiced religiously by both families. This combination of Islamic law with Kashmiri cultural components results in a highly polished affair and the greatest illustration of cultural synchronization.

In the Kashmiri language, marriage is referred to as *Khander*. The actual marriage ceremony is preceded by a series of activities, beginning with the identification of a good match for the prospective bride (locally referred to as *Maharein*, meaning "queen") and groom (called *Maharaz*, meaning "king"). Close relatives are preferred for a good match since both prospective mates are well-known to the families, increasing the likelihood of a healthy marriage. If no potential bride or groom is discovered within the family, the families use the services of a *Manzimyor* (meaning, "middleman"), who, with a greater awareness of indigenous

cultures, years of experience, and a broader network of friends, assists in locating a good match.

Before arriving at a final decision, both families inquire about each other through local contacts and, when satisfied, a meeting (locally known as *Vichni Gasun*) is arranged either at a public place, like a restaurant, or at the girl's house where the prospective partners can see and talk to each other. If satisfied, the boy's family, along with some elder relatives, visit the prospective bride's house with gifts of gold, clothes, cash, and sweets. With the ritual of *Khuda Rasool* (local for the oath taken on the name of Allah and Prophet Muhammad), the boy's family can claim the girl as their own now. Tea is presented to the guests and the boy's mother puts cash or gold in the empty cup as a gift to the girl. This is called *pyalas trawun* (filling of the cup). Since it is not permissible for the boy to be part of this ceremony, the girl's family sends a vessel full of cooked chicken (*koker daeg)* with a specially prepared bread for their future son-in-law as a token of love. The chicken and bread are distributed by the boy's family among their relatives, and sweets are sent to the girl's family in reciprocation. This whole ceremony of validation of the bond is known as *Nishani* or *Pachil*—colloquially known as the engagement. After a few days or weeks, the girl's family is also invited for a feast, which is known as *Saatnaam.* There are some post-engagement rituals in which both the families send gifts to each other on some special occasions, such as Eid (*Eid Bogh),* or during the month of Ramadhan *(Roz Kushada).* After this, the betrothal is complete.

When one examines Islamic teaching on pre-marriage rites, it becomes clear that Kashmiri Muslim marriage has several cultural innovations. According to Islamic law, a man may propose to a girl through anybody, and if both parties agree, they should go immediately to the marriage ceremony. Thus, these rites are unique to the Kashmiri setting and are mistakenly considered to be part of Islamic law when they are not.

Ceremony of Marriage

After the first step is completed, a small gathering is held at the girl's house in the presence of a few elders from both families to determine an auspicious day for the marriage ceremony. Dates are determined based on a variety of variables. Due to local beliefs, the Islamic months of Ramadhan and Muhharram are avoided, although there are no such prohibitions in Islamic texts. November to February, when many weddings take place in other areas of India, is avoided in Kashmir due to the severe winters. Additionally, planting and harvesting seasons are avoided, as the valley's majority of people is reliant on agriculture and horticulture. Thus, the time between late July and late October is when most marriages take place in Kashmir. After a date is chosen for the wedding, preparations begin immediately. Both families begin purchasing jewelry and clothes (*wardan*), as well as other necessary items. As the wedding day approaches, relatives and friends are invited via invitation cards. Verbal invites are discouraged, as it is regarded as an insult not to send a card. Locally, this procedure of inviting close and dear is referred to as *Dapni or Prichni gasun.*

The ceremony begins with the *Malmaenz* rite, during which the bride's hair is let down (*Mas Trawun*) and greased by old women. After oiling the bride's hair, it is braided into small braids (*waankh*), with each braid wrapped in a different color ribbon. Additionally, the bride is dressed in artificial jewelry made of inexpensive materials. The bride's elder brother applies a tiny quantity of ghee on her hair. This ceremony is performed to the accompaniment of

popular Kashmiri wedding songs and concludes with the braids being untied (*Mas Muchrawun*). Following the untying of her hair, the ribbons and jewels are distributed to the women present.

This ritual is also known as *Haldi* or *Mayun* in various parts of the Indian subcontinent. The next night, the night before the Nikah ceremony, there is a ritual in which henna is applied to the bride's hands and feet, while a small quantity is put to the groom's little finger on his right hand. *Maenzraat* is the name given to this night in Kashmir (*Maenz* meaning "henna" and *raat* meaning "night"). It is referred to as *Mehandiraat* in various parts of the Indian subcontinent. This evening, young girls from the groom's family visit the girl's residence and provide the henna for the bride to apply. After applying henna to the groom's little finger, his relatives and friends wrap it in cash notes of various denominations. Historically, paper was used in place of monetary notes. Throughout the night, women perform traditional folk and wedding songs (*wanwun*) at both households and are presented with little packets of henna and candy at the conclusion. Nowadays, young adults play Bollywood music throughout the *mehandiraat's* late hours, and young people dance throughout the event. In recent years, a new tradition has developed in which a cake of varying size and quality is cut in both households and given among the relatives present. For some time now, a new tradition has developed in which the groom delivers the bride's cake together with the henna on *Mehandiraat* itself. Meanwhile, specialist Kashmiri cooks (called locally as *Waaza*) are hard at work preparing a range of dishes for the next day.

On the morning of the wedding ceremony, the bride is required to take a bath (*aab sherun*) and pray to the Almighty for a better post-marriage life. Additionally, the groom gets his hair trimmed. The morning is spent preparing for the afternoon feast that will be served to the locals and relatives. As part of the *Yini Wol* tradition, both families host a feast (locally referred to as *Waazwan*) based on their economic standing. The chefs offer a variety of meals to the visitors, who dine on a special copper plate in groups of four. Each house may host between 50 and 600 guests for lunch, and occasionally more. Mutton and chicken, as well as a variety of vegetables, are favored for this feast, which has a high cultural importance. It is a unique event at which everyone gathers to bless the couple with prayers, gold and cash presents, and a variety of other things. Each family member is allocated a specific function and is required to participate throughout the ceremony. One of the duties assigned to an individual with a good educational background is to keep record of presents. It is critical for a family to know who the gifts come from so that they can return the present in a similar manner when their turn comes. It is thought that financially blessing the bride/groom can assist the family in covering the costs of the marriage, indicating the communal aspects. After lunch, the groom's family prepares to see the bride's family. Previously, about 200 or more people from the groom's end would accompany him, but this tendency has shifted recently, with only the closest three or seven accompanying him. The bride is prepared for her departure at this time.

Usually at night, the groom departs with his companions to accept his wife. He is bid farewell with traditional melodies and is greeted with great reverence upon his arrival at his future in-laws' house. Normally, his future mother-in-law greets him with milk and presents him with a golden ring as a sign of affection. Other relatives of the girl also present the *Maharaz* with gold and cash. The groom may wear either a western-style suit with a traditional turban (*dastar*) or a traditional sherwani (similar to the *pathani* outfit) with the turban. Then, in the presence of a Muslim cleric, the Nikah ceremony takes place, in which a marriage contract is

formed between the prospective spouses, either in the presence of the bride (*asaaltan*) or in the presence of the *wali* (on behalf of the bride) and other witnesses (*wakaltan*). Bride money (*Mehr*) is a contractual obligation between the groom and the bride, and he promises to pay the agreed-upon amount. This money is provided exclusively to the bride, and she may spend it anyway she wishes. After all requirements are satisfied, the *Al-Ijab Wal-Qabool* (offer and acceptance) ceremony occurs, during which the wali or cleric gives the bride to the groom, who subsequently accepts. As part of *Al-Ijab*, the wali or cleric may address the groom with the following: "I give you my daughter/the girl in marriage in line with Islamic Shari'ah in the presence of the witnesses present with the *mehr* agreed upon. And Allah is the most reliable witness." "I accept," the soon-to-be spouse responds. This is repeated three times. The bride is also needed to consent. The bond (*Nikah*) is complete with this mutual consent.

The hosts treat the groom and his guests to a sumptuous and magnificent feast. Locally, this feast is referred to as *Maharaz Saal* (Feast for the King). After the meal, the bride's parents offer her an emotional farewell (locally known as *Rukhsati*), and she joins her husband at his new house (*Waeriv*), where she either lives permanently with her spouse or the pair can move after a period of time to a new place of their own. The bride is clothed in either traditional Kashmiri attire (*pheran*) or a contemporary dress code, often a *lehnga*, as she departs for her new home. The veil is then placed over her, to be raised by her mother-in-law in front of other local women and relatives. This is locally referred to as *Muhar Tullun* (lifting of the veil). The bride presents some gifts to her mother-in-law, which the mother-in-law graciously returns. Typically, a close friend of the bride or her foster mother would accompany her for a few days until the new family member became familiar with her new relatives. Certain households adhere to the Islamic tradition of giving *Walima* (feast). In this scenario, the groom's family does not serve lunch on the day of the wedding; instead, they gather their relatives and neighbors, as well as the bride's relatives, and prepare a large feast for everybody. This habit is based on the teachings of Muhammad and is spreading throughout the Kashmir valley. This tradition concludes the marriage process among Kashmir's Muslims and is followed by a few ceremonies.

When viewed through a religious lens, the Kashmiri marriage stands in stark contrast to the one provided by Islam. *Al Ijab Wal-Qabool* is the first step of Islamic marriage, followed by *Mehr*, and lastly *Walima*. Indeed, Islam forbids extravagant wedding celebrations and gender mingling. However, given the valley's traditional structure, we find a great deal of innovation and spread of other cultural components in Kashmiri Muslims' rites. This is also demonstrated by the fact that Islam makes no mention of post-marriage ceremonies, but in the next part, we will examine the components that prepared the way for the region's marriage pattern.

Post-Marriage Rituals

A few days after the bride leaves her parental home, her family pay her a visit to check on her well-being. This practice is referred known locally as *Khabar Heth*. Additionally, she and her in-laws get gifts in the form of cash, sweets, and fruits. The bride's parents invite their in-laws and the newlyweds to a special feast called *Phiri Saal*, which is also attended by the groom's closest relatives. Guests are greeted with elegance and the highest level of hospitality. Afterwards, the groom's family members depart, leaving the pair alone for around seven days. Following this time, the pair, together with the bride's family members, return to their home

with presents and dowry (if demanded by the groom's family and accepted by the bride's). The new daughter-in-law is expected to give her in-laws presents. The mother-in-law receives jewelry or clothing, locally referred to as *Hash Mond* (Hash here translates as mother-in-law), while her sister-in-law receives presents referred to as *Zom Dej*. Additionally, sweets and bread are included in the presents that are subsequently divided among the family. Now that the bride, who was previously forbidden from working or performing household duties, is permitted to participate in the everyday lives of her new family, she may restart her life with a new identity in a new social environment.

Death Rituals

Rituals pertaining to death differ across cultures and are usually associated with religion (Chachkes and Jennings 1994). There are set guidelines for the rituals from birth to death in Islam, but the historical background and the process of acculturation play an important role in deviation from pre-set rules. Kashmir, with a fairly heterogenous culture, has paved way for rituals that are associated with different religious groups, thereby giving rise to rituals that are different from the Muslims in other regions. Although social practices associated with the death of a member have been dealt, there is a lack of an ethnographic account of the same. So, the purpose of this section is to describe in detail every phase of this ritual.

When a person is on their death bed, s/he is laid in the direction towards Mecca i.e., *qibla* and to ease the suffering of the dying person, fellow Muslims are encouraged to support by offering him or her some water to drink or by reciting the *shahada* (an Islamic oath, one of the five pillars of Islam) and part of the Adhan; it reads: "I bear witness that there is no deity but God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God") and Quranic chapters and prayers. It is considered as *sunnah* of the prophet to encourage the dying person to imitate the *shahada* to reassure that these become her or his last words.

When a person dies among the Kashmiri Muslims, his/her eyes are closed and a white cloth is fastened around the head to tie up the jaw. Later, the body is undressed and wrapped in a clean white cloth and the limbs are straightened along with the body. Then, the family members and friends are allowed to take one last look at the deceased's face, and in a short span of time, the body is prepared for ritual ablution (*Ghusl*), shrouding (*Kafan*), and burial (*Dafan*). Announcements of the death are made over the mosque loudspeakers and people far away are informed via mass media to take part in the S*alat-al-Janaza* (Funeral Prayer) and condolences. *Ghusl, Kafan, Salat-al-Janaza,* and *Dafan* are considered as *Fard-eKkifaya* (collective obligation) of the Muslims and, if these obligations are fulfilled by many, then others can be excused from the duties. In the proceeding sections of this paper, we will take an elaborate look at all the three obligations of the Muslim community on the dead person.

Death and Burial Preparations

Time spent between death and burial should be kept to a minimum; once a person has died, his or her body should be placed in the ground as quickly as possible. Immediately after the death, the corpse is washed, the shroud is used, the funeral prayer is spoken, and the burial is carried out.

Ritual Purification (Ghusl)

Once the body is ready for *Ghusl,* it is laid on a platform made of wood or aluminum, set for this specific purpose, and is shared by all the community members. The platform is fumigated with scent to provide pleasant aromas, which is considered a tradition from Muhammad. Private parts of the deceased are then covered with a cloth and ritual purification begins from cleaning the private parts. Ritual cleansing, in practice, consists of washing the anus and genitals; the *Istinja,* the *Wudu,* and the washing of the whole corpse; the *Ghusl.* Private parts are washed three times followed by *Wudu,* that is performed by wiping of the mouth and nose with clean cloth or cotton swabs or fingers; washing of the face and arms to the elbow thrice; wiping the head; and finally washing of the feet. The *Ghusl* is done with water and soap, every time progressing from the ventral side to the back and from the head to the toes. This is done an odd number of times, usually thrice. Finally, scented water is poured all over the body and it is dried with a clean towel for shrouding.

While washing the body, it is placed in a way that the dead person is facing *Ka'abah.* Usually, the close kin of the deceased perform the last washing, and if nobody is available, then there are some members in the community who undertake the task. The number of washers range from 3–4 and they must be of the same sex as the deceased. Even a husband or a wife is not allowed to wash his/her partner's body. Furthermore, arrangements of the materials necessary for the *Ghusl* is provided by Mosque organizations. One aspect specific to the Kashmir valley is an aluminum pot used for warming water on dried grass because the dead body is not washed with cold water.

Shrouding (*Kafan*)

Shrouding the deceased is another communal responsibility of the Muslim community. Prior to being placed in the grave, the entire corpse, including the head, should be covered with a shroud (*Kafan*). In Kashmir, it is considered good if the deceased that s/he purchases the *Kafan* for herself/himself when alive, and duty is accorded to the children to use the same shroud. *Kafan* is mostly a simple white cloth and varies from men to women. For a man, a burial shroud comprises of a shirt-like covering for the body, a winding that encircles the body from head to toe, and an outer winding. A woman needs an additional cloth to wind around her head, as well as one to wind around her chest, meaning that two additional fabrics are added. The shrouds are arranged in order of size, with the largest one on the bottom so that they can be wrapped over the deceased body to accommodate its size. After wrapping the right side of the body, the left side is wrapped in the tiniest layer of fabric following the same technique. Once the *Kafan* is securely tied with a few strips of fabric, the body is ready to be taken for the funeral prayers.

Salat al-Janaza

After ritual purification and shrouding of the body, it is put inside the coffin (*Taboot*). Coffins used to be made from pine wood, but gradually wooden coffins have been replaced with aluminum ones. Coffins are shared by the community, and they are the property of local mosques. Since the dead body is thought to be alive in the next world, it is gently put inside the *Taboot* gently. This stage is considered to be extremely painful. A large cloth, with Quranic verses sewn on it, is wrapped on the upper side of the coffin and it is carried by the closest kith and kin of the deceased to a place set specific for funeral prayer. In Kashmir valley, the funeral place varies, as some prefer to pray *Salat-al-Janaza* at the premises of the deceased

person, while the majority prefer the prayer to be said either at the graveyard or somewhere near to the graveyard. In the case of our respondents, funeral prayers were held at the graveyard compound.

Institution of Funeral Funds

During our fieldwork, we observed that immediately following the death, a few community members chosen by the local mosque collect funds from each household, ranging between 100 and 500 rupees. This money is given either to the nearest kin of the deceased to assist with necessary arrangements during the period of mourning, or to a community kitchen that is established at the deceased's residence to provide food for the guests for three to four days. Additionally, if the family is impoverished, these funds are used to purchase necessary burial items, such as a shroud. If the deceased owed any money, that debt is also settled through these funeral funds. After the funeral obligation is fulfilled at the community level, we move on to the next obligation, which is burial.

Burial

The burial practices of Muslims in the Kashmir valley and those observed in other Islamic nations bear remarkable resemblance. These include the practice of walking the corpse to the burial location, the way in which the corpse is placed in the grave, and the habit of remaining at the cemetery for a period of time following the interment.

Place of Burial

A deceased individual is often buried at the graveyard that many of these families own. In the instance of our respondents, they had acquired the plot of land in the local graveyard around 50 years ago and had been exclusively burying their deceased there. Each town has a single communal graveyard where only unidentified or foreign dead corpses are interred. Additionally, it is preferred that each individual arranges for his or her own death by acquiring property for a cemetery building. Locally referred to as *Maqbar*, the graveyard is jointly maintained by all families without the intervention of mosque committees or other village/community groups. In metropolitan areas, such as Srinagar, one may observe the beginnings of a growing professionalization of the funeral rite. This has resulted in the hiring of professional washers and those who build graves for a fee.

Grave Construction and Interment

Islamic law requires that a burial take place as soon as possible after death, but no later than the next day. Keeping this in mind, all deceased subjects in this research were buried within 5–8 hours of death. In Kashmir, it is customary to bury only one deceased person in a rectangular grave of six feet in length, three feet in breadth, and around six feet in depth. The body is placed in the grave towards Qibla on its right side. A kind of cavity is prevalent in the grave where the shrouded corpse is place. The cavity is commonly referred to as *Lahd* and is excavated on the pit's qibla side. To prevent the soil from falling over the person, the niche is sealed, preferably with *Potri Kani* sandstone. Prior to filling the grave, present individuals toss handfuls of soil into it, either directly upon the body or against the slats that prevent the body from being completely covered in earth. Following that, a group of men fill the grave, with everyone chanting Quranic verses for the deceased. A small mound is piled on the location to

denote the burial, and two stones are placed in the direction of the head and feet. Later, a stone slab with the deceased's information is built near the head. However, this is not a widespread practice throughout the valley.

Attendance of Women at Interment

Generally, men wash a deceased man's body, while women wash a dead woman's body. Regardless of the deceased's sex, however, putting the corpse in the grave is considered a man's responsibility. According to most people questioned for this ethnographic account, women are not permitted to join in the funeral procession and their presence at the burial is undesirable. They explained their position by stating that Islam forbids women from visiting graveyards. However, there were times when women visited the graves of their dear ones, which was always disapproved by community members.

Waiting at the Graveside and the *Talqin*

Numerous Islamic traditions refer to the presence of two angels, *Munkar* and *Nakir*, to the deceased after he or she is buried, who interrogate the departed about their religion. Islamic scholars disagree on whether, in light of the angels' interrogation, the *Talqin*, the teaching of the Islamic faith's fundamental doctrines at the cemetery, should take place immediately following the interment. According to the local imam (head of the mosque), reading sura Fatiha (1), suras beginning with Qul (112–114), and sura YaSin (36) on this day assists the departed in preparing for the angels' inquiry. Thus, the imam, together with the deceased's family and friends, remain until the grave is entirely filled and then pray collectively and individually for the departed soul before proceeding to the deceased's home for condolences.

Condolences and Mourning

According to Islamic law, one should express condolences to the bereaved (*Ta'ziyah*) just once, at the time of the funeral or, if unable to attend the funeral, at the earliest possible opportunity. Mourning entails abstaining from ostentatious clothing, eyeliner, perfume, jewelry, and similar adornments for four months and ten days in the case of the deceased's widow, and three days in the case of other relatives. The grieving time for a widow is as long as the *'Idda*, the legally mandated period during which a widow or divorcee is not permitted to remarry. In the Kashmir valley, when the local Muslim community learns of a death, they congregate at the deceased's home to give their condolences. The time of grieving and the way the bereaved copes with their loss differed from person to person. Some people opt to stay at home for a few days, while others abstain from celebrations for a whole year. Typically, families and community people pay a three- or four-day visit to the bereaved. During this time, the bereaved family abstains from cooking and home chores. Everything is taken care of by the established committees, and on the fourth day, depending on the school of thought, the bereaved family either holds a special function called *Chaharum* in which food is distributed to all relatives and community members, or the bereaved family resumes their normal activities, thereby concluding the mourning period. In the case of those who follow *Chaharum*, they also observe similar feasts on the 15th and 40th days after death, during which they recite the Quran and other prayers in the presence of the mosque's imam, known as *Esale Sawab* and *Khatam Sharif*. Additionally, relatives visit the deceased's home on major events, such as Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha, as well as his or her cemetery on Fridays, Eids, and other significant

days. Rites of separation are the most prominent in funeral rites as the deceased is separated physically from the other members of the society.

Conclusions

With this study, we sought to depict the rites connected to birth, marriage, and death among the Kashmiri Muslims. Focusing on activities around these rites of passage among the participants has led to the conclusion that the Muslims in Kashmir choose their relationship with the rituals of initiation and separation in line with the cultural background and the Islamic law. In this specific setting, they remain a community with a very strong religious identity and sense of belonging to the Islamic law, but the incorporation of cultural and ethnic components in these major ceremonies is fairly evident. Also, we infer that the rituals of birth, marriage, and death have altered in various ways because of influx and outflow of cultural components in the valley of Kashmir. Thus, the life-cycle rituals observed by the inhabitants of Kashmir incorporate Islamic as well as cultural elements. Pregnant mothers are instructed during the prenatal rite to defend their child from all forms of evil. Similarly, the people of Kashmir collaborate on the marriage ritual. Meanwhile, the principles of solidarity and collaboration are evident in the funeral rites, which are founded on the indigenous people's conviction that these activities are required of the entire Muslim community. As a result, the rites constitute a distinct heritage that must be preserved.

Acknowledgement

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Networks of Parish Churches across a Growing Metropolis

Catholic Territorial Strategy in Late Twentieth-Century Seoul, South Korea

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Abstract

This article offers a new perspective on interactions between religion and urbanism through an exploration of the territorial strategy implemented by the Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul, South Korea, in the late twentieth century. In this growing Northeast Asian metropolis, the archdiocese was remarkably prosperous, benefitting from drastic urban development, a rapid nationwide economic boom, and the boost given to Catholicism around the world by the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). By mapping and statistically analyzing the construction of parish churches between 1973 and 1994, we argue that the archdiocese strengthened its influence over society and space in the city thanks to a strategy that was open and responsive to the extensive urban development driven by central and local governments.

Keywords: Catholicism, parish church networks, religion-city relationship, Seoul, urban development

Introduction

Recent studies of the relationship between religion and urban space have suggested several innovative approaches, such as urban religious practice that promotes "vernacular modernities" (Hancock and Srinivas 2008), the "postsecular city" (Beaumont 2008), and the "fundamentalist city" (AlSayyad and Massoumi 2010), as well as "entrepreneurial religion" in neoliberal urbanism (Lanz and Oosterbaan 2016), and "sociospatial fragmentation" during religious revival (Pobłocki 2021). Their focus, however, has remained predominantly on

Europe, the United States, and the global South. The collection of articles edited by Hancock and Srinivas (2008) contributed significantly to the postcolonialism of the field by dealing with urban religions in West Africa, West Asia, and South and Southeast Asia. This attempt at postcolonialism was reinforced by another collection of articles, edited by Lanz and Oosterbaan (2016), covering cities in South America, West Africa, and the margins of Southeast Europe. Despite this, both collections left one region out of reach: Northeast Asia. Moreover, the articles in these collections, focused on how religion develops its urban infrastructure, referred mostly to cases of exclusive urban areas for certain religious-social groups, including an enclosed community complex for middle-class Muslims (Çavdar 2016), a Pentecostal prayer camp comprising residential, business, and prayer sites (Ukah 2016), and a shantytown complex renovated by the Pentecostal movement (Lanz 2016). Each of these religious urban clusters was governed – sometimes even built – by logic, founded on the religion's internal value system, rather than an interaction with other surrounding urban affairs.

This article focuses on Seoul, a Northeast Asian metropolis, and probes the late twentieth-century territorial strategy of the Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul by mapping and statistically analyzing parish church construction from 1973 to 1994. The different regional settings of the archdiocese's practice in this study reveals a new facet of the interactions between religion and urbanism. We argue that the archdiocese strengthened its influence over Seoul's society and space by implementing a strategy receptive to government-driven urban development, consequently forming citywide networks of Catholic parishes and erecting churches in beneficial urban locations.

In wake of the Korean War (1950–53), Christianity dramatically increased in South Korea, reaching approximately 26% of the population in 1995 (Statistics Korea 2007). This increase was remarkable in a conventionally Buddhist and Confucian country, especially considering pre-war efforts by foreign missionaries that had seen only modest success. In South Korean Christianity, the Catholic Church continued to grow, eventually reaching around 7.51% of the population in 1994. In the Archdiocese of Seoul, the proportion of the Catholic population grew from roughly 5.38% in 1983 to around 9.28% in 1994. Membership growth in the Korean Catholic Church fell to under 4% in 1995, however, reflecting the limits of high growth (Catholic Conference of Korea 1984, 22; 1995, 6; 1996, 8). South Korean Catholicism's most prosperous period overlapped with rapid national economic growth, the worldwide Catholic reformation of the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), and the drastic urban development of Seoul from 1973 to 1994. Against the backdrop of these many historic changes, numerous new Catholic church buildings were erected in Seoul.

This article identifies three major stakeholders and their interactions with regard to church buildings and their geographical networks: the universal Catholic Church and its global territorial organization; the Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul as the ecclesiastical province of the centralized global Catholic Church, responsible for all local diocesan parishes; and the Seoul Metropolitan Government under the national central government. How did the global Catholic reformation and social, political, and economic changes, in addition to governmental urban projects, affect the archdiocese's territorial strategy for locating new parish churches in the city?

Collecting Dispersed Catholic Data for Mapping and Quantitative Analysis

We have assembled a database of the 150 parishes founded from 1882 to 1994 and of church construction projects in the Archdiocese of Seoul. This includes basic information (parish establishment dates, mother and daughter parishes, past and present addresses, and church completion dates).[1] Since recent archdiocesan archives cannot be accessed for private purposes, research materials were obtained mainly from official Korean Catholic websites and two Catholic academic institutions (the theology library of the Catholic University of Korea and the library of the Research Foundation of Korean Church History). Most information was collected from the Guide to the Catholic Church in Korea,[2] a website containing the addresses of Catholic institutions including parishes provided by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea, and *Catholic Parish Boundaries of Seoul Archdiocese* (in Korean), edited by the archdiocese (2013).[3] This database allowed us to carry out quantitative analysis of the geographical and chronological distributions of parish establishment and church construction projects. To accompany the statistics, we have included maps that show the geographical organization of parish church construction projects, mostly in the research period (1973–94), and in the two previous periods divided by the end of the Korean War (before 1953 and 1953–72). Mapping has been rarely used by previous studies of the history of Korean church architecture,[4] although new digital tools have brought revolutionary ways of mapping to the field of research into historical landscapes, allowing for an exploration of "spatio-temporal relationships that have previously remained hidden" (Coomans, Cattoor, and De Jonge 2019, 9–14).

To locate elements on the map according to an accurate universal geographical standard, all maps were compiled based on the online diocesan map produced by the Seoul Archdiocese's Administrative Geographic Information System.[5] We consulted historical maps

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[1] For cases in which church completion dates could not be found, the dates of dedication, first mass, or relocation were used. Dates of land purchasing were collected for church buildings located within 1 kilometer of subway or train railroads.

[2] http://directory.cbck.or.kr/OnlineAddress/Default.aspx.

[3] Supplementary sources for the database include the theology library of the Catholic University of Korea and the library of the Research Foundation of Korean Church History (for parish history books); Korean Catholic Encyclopedia (in Korean) edited by Hangukgatollikdaesajeonpyeonchanwiwonhoe (1991); Building Life Cycle Management System, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, https://blcm.go.kr/cmm/main/mainPage.do; Jeongbu24 [Government 24], Ministry of the Interior and Safety, https://www.gov.kr/portal/main, and Daehanminguk Beobwon inteonetdeunggiso [The internet registration office of the Court of Korea], Supreme Court of Korea, http://www.iros.go.kr/PMainJ.jsp (for land registers); Guide to the Catholic Church in Korea, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea (for links to each parish's website); CPBC, Catholic Peace Broadcasting Corporation, http://www.cpbc.co.kr/CMS/index.php; Good News, Archdiocese of Seoul, http://www.catholic.or.kr.

[4] Jung-shin Kim pioneered the history of Korean church architecture. In *Hanguk Gatollik seongdang geonchuksa* (1994), he presented the first comprehensive historical overview of Korean Catholic church architecture from 1785 to 1992. He expanded his research interests in *Yeoksa, jeollye, yangsigeuro bon Hangugui gyohoegeonchuk* (2012), covering Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox churches.

[5] This diocesan map shows every parish and its governing area, other Catholic organizations, and shrines on the digital map of Seoul (Archdiocese of Seoul n.d.-b).

of the years closest to the end of each period to describe urban contexts.[6] Further information on administrative boundary alterations were supplemented with publications by the Seoul Historiography Institute,[7] and more precise data on mountain contours was acquired from digital topographical maps of present-day Seoul.[8] Each church construction project was located on the maps following a search for its address in Naver Map,[9] an online digital map and navigation service specialized for South Korean regions. Mapping temporary churches was an important step in the process.[10] Where the location of a (temporary) church building is unknown or untraced in the current address system, the location of the next (temporary) church building of the parish has been borrowed.[11]

Seoul, A Key City for the Korean Mission: Time and Space

The Catholic mission in Northeast Asia was initially headed by the Society of Jesus in Japan and China in the mid-sixteenth century. While Joseon, the last Korean dynasty (1392–1910), remained closed to Catholic missionaries, Chinese Catholic books introduced Christianity to Korean Confucian scholars. In 1784, Yi Seung-hun (1756–1801), a scholar who had paid a short visit to Beijing, was baptized by a foreign missionary. On returning to Joseon, he founded the first Korean Catholic community. Catholic communities were constantly persecuted because of differences between Christianity and Confucianism (Research Foundation of Korean Church History 2018, 12–23), a situation that recurred across the country with the 1801 Sinyu Persecution (J. Choi 2006, 111–12, 118–27).

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[6] These urban contexts include the administrative boundary of Seoul, the Han River, mountain contours, and the city wall, as well as infrastructures such as main buildings, roads, and subway or train railroads. Historical maps of reference are: *Seouldosigyehoekgongwonbyeongyeonghugyehoekdo* [A scheme drawing of Seoul's urban planning after the re-designing of its parks], the early 1950s (estimated), 1:15,000 scale, courtesy of Seoul Museum of History's Seoul History Archives, archive no. 67542; • *Seouldosigyehoekgaromangdo* [Seoul urban planning street network map], 1953, 1:15,000 scale, courtesy of Seoul Museum of History's Seoul History Archives, archive no. 67530; • *Seoulsigajido Seoul Road Map* [Seoul road map, Seoul Road Map], the mid-1950s (estimated), 1:25,000 scale, courtesy of Seoul Museum of History's Seoul History Archives, archive no. 67517; *Seoulteukbyeolsigado* [Seoul Special City street map], 1955, courtesy of Seoul Museum of History's Seoul History Archives, archive no. 72660; *Seoulteukbyeolsi (Seoul Special City) jido* [Seoul Special City map], 1957, 1:12,500 scale, courtesy of Seoul Museum of History's Seoul History Archives, archive no. 67512-67516; *Saeseoulduro, jibeongaeryangjiguyakdo* [New Seoul rough map with roads, lot numbers, and improvement zones], 1968, 1:135,000 scale, courtesy of Seoul Museum of History's Seoul History Archives, archive no. 67533; *Gaejeongseoulteukbyeolsijeondo* [Seoul Metropolitan City full revised map], 1974, courtesy of Seoul Museum of History's Seoul History Archives, archive no. 67535; *Seoulsijeondo* [Seoul full map], 1994, 1:100,000 scale, in *Seouldorojido* (M. W. Choi 1994).

[7] The following books have been consulted: *Seourui gil* (City History Compilation Committee of Seoul 2009a, 166–68), *Seoul 2cheonnyeonsa: 32, hyeondae Seourui haengjeong* (Seoul Historiography Institute 2016a, 78–82), and *Seoul 2cheonnyeonsa: 35, hyeondae Seourui dosigeonseol* (Seoul Historiography Institute 2016b, 26–31).

[8] These digital topographical maps can be accessed via Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport n.d.

[9] https://map.naver.com.

[10] Temporary parish churches refer to parish places of worship that were either newly constructed for temporary use, formerly constructed for a secondary station, or formerly constructed for other uses such as residential, commercial, or office work, in addition to other Christian community services.

[11] In the event that the lot number of an address had been changed in the current address system; its new lot number was traced through the website "Bakkwinjibeon chatgi" (Seoul Metropolitan Government n.d.).

Despite persistent oppression, the Vicariate Apostolic of Korea was established by Pope Gregory XVI in 1831 and has been staffed by French missionaries from the Paris Foreign Missions Society since 1836. Since the signing of the first commercial treaty with Western countries in 1882, religious freedom had been implicitly accepted in Seoul and persecution consequently came to an end. The 1886 France-Korea Treaty provided regulatory grounds for Catholic missionaries to evangelize in Joseon, leading to Korean Catholics receiving legal approval in 1899. During the Japanese colonial era from 1910 to 1945, the Catholic Church was under governmental control that restricted missionary work. After the end of WWII in August 1945, the Catholic Church was faced with two contrasting mission fields: in North Korea, most priests were arrested and churches closed, while in South Korea, native bishops and priests gradually replaced foreign missionaries. The Holy See sent the first papal envoy to Seoul in 1947 and welcomed the establishment of the South Korean government in 1948. Conflict between these two opposed governments came to a head with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 (Research Foundation of Korean Church History 2018, 50–53, 84–86, 108–30).

Figure 1. Parish churches and the topography of Gangbuk and Gangnam in 1952 (map produced by Youngji Kang).
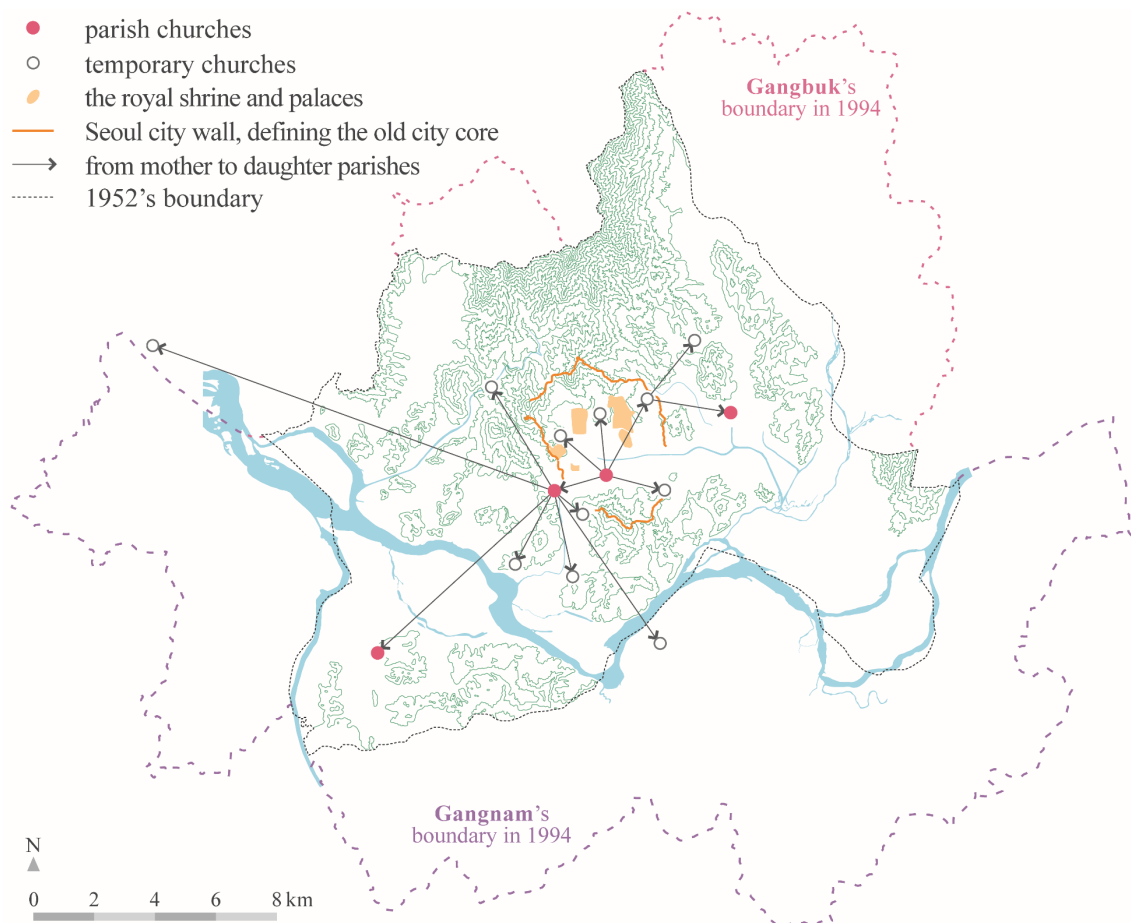
Meanwhile, Seoul played a vital role in the development of the Korean Catholic Church. The first Korean Catholic communities emerged in the city and most Catholic missionaries were based there, benefitting from the networks of foreign legations after the 1886 France-Korea Treaty. The first noticeable growth of the Korean Catholic Church with unofficial religious freedom began in Seoul before spreading to other provinces (Research Foundation of Korean Church History 2011a, 51–55, 73–81, 145–50). Seoul's first Catholic parish was founded within the walled city. Subsequently, most parishes were scattered around Gangbuk, the area north of the Han River, while only two parishes were established in Gangnam, the area south of the river, before the Korean War.[12]

Knowing the city's topography and boundary development is required to understand the geographical spread of Catholic parishes in Seoul (Figure 1). Yi Seong-gye (1335–1408), the first king of Joseon, established Hanyang as the capital in 1394, Seoul's old core and its surrounding area in Gangbuk, a favorable location in the middle of the peninsula and with access to well-established river traffic. Moreover, Hanyang and its royal ancestral shrine, altar, and palaces faced the Han River at the front and were surrounded by mountains – Bugaksan to the north, Inwangsan to the west, Naksan to the east, and Namsan to the south – forming an exceptionally auspicious arrangement in *fengshui* theory (Hur 1994, 207–8; City History Compilation Committee of Seoul 2009b, 99, 106–9, 310). The capital's administrative boundary was extended across the Han River by the Japanese colonial government in 1936 and included modern-day Yeongdeungpo-gu (Yeongdeungpo-gu Office 2019), where the first Catholic parish in Gangnam was established in the same year (Archdiocese of Seoul 2013, 450).

The Korean War (1950–53) severely damaged the Catholic Church both in North and South Korea: church buildings were destroyed; educational, publishing, and social welfare businesses were discontinued; and native and foreign clergy, along with laypeople, were arrested, killed, or disappeared. However, after the war, the number of South Korean Catholics increased from around 170,000 in 1953 to around 530,000 in 1962 due to constant ecclesiastical and social restoration work. Wartime aid funds from international Catholic networks enabled reconstruction and relief work for refugees and orphans. The postwar South Korean Catholic Church, supported by relocated or newly settled missionary societies and monastic orders, involved laypeople in its activities, while initiating the credit union movement for overcoming extreme poverty and vocational guidance education for widows and the unemployed (Research Foundation of Korean Church History 2018, 132–35).

This expansion was also based on the higher social and political authority of the Catholic Church, whose passive and seclusive attitude under ceaseless persecution was revolutionized by Kinam Ro, the first native bishop of Seoul from 1942 to 1967. Kinam Ro's efforts to support political participation among Catholics led to cordial relationships with political powers. The Catholic Church eventually strengthened its practical status in mainstream Seoul society while simultaneously contributing actively to pro-American and anti-communist propaganda, combined with the Holy See's principle of social ministry after WWII (Ro 2005, 142–49, 156–57, 178–81).

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[12] Data from "Bondang" (Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea n.d.).

Although Syngman Rhee's subsequent dictatorship gradually alienated the Catholic Church (Ro 2005, 179–80), initial friendly relations with the first two post-1945 governments had laid a firm foundation for the spread of Christianity. In the Cold War system, the US military government's religious policy supported Protestantism and Catholicism, while suppressing Confucianism, Buddhism, and other folk religions, which advocated nationalism rather than pro-Americanism and anti-communism (Ro 2002, 3–13). Syngman Rhee, a Methodist himself, inherited the previous government's principles of religion and preserved Christianity as the nationally recognized religion (D. K. Kang 1993, 37–41). His intentional interference in the internal disruption of Confucianists and Buddhists weakened their resistance against the government (Ro 2002, 11–12).

Moreover, the Catholic Church benefited from the Protestant boom that had been generated since the mid-1890s by the American Protestant mission's modern medical service and education, overcoming the population's bias against Westerners and Christians (C. Park 2003, 16–22). Before the Japanese colonial era, some Korean Protestant pastors and believers had already managed their congregations autonomously, amounting to 1% of the whole population in 1910. During the occupation, Protestants led independence movements against the Japanese. After the partition of the country, members of Protestant churches grew from 3% of the South Korean population in the 1950s to 6% in the 1960s. This increase in proportion broke down conventional social prejudices towards Christianity, allowing the public to perceive it as a trustworthy and good religion, which also encouraged Catholics to participate in mission works (Grayson 1995, 247–58, 267–68).

The Flourishing Catholic Church in an Emerging International Metropolis

In 1973, Seoul's urban growth was stimulated by the central and city governments through the announcement of redevelopment areas, which were based on the amended 1971 urban planning law and facilitated by a US presidential visit and North-South Korean diplomacy. Lyndon B. Johnson's visit to Seoul in 1966 attracted more than two million citizens, who welcomed him in the streets and on city hall square. Exposing adjacent slum areas on television channels provoked Korean-American associations to petition for slum clearance around the city hall. In addition, the joint communiqué between North and South Korea on July 4, 1972, led to periodical Red Cross conferences in Seoul and Pyongyang, which motivated the former to become a well-developed modern city (Son 2003a, 117–26, 159–65).

High-rise buildings of approximately twenty stories were promoted by Seoul's urban planning bureau in the redevelopment areas announced in 1973. An overseas field trip was organized with the head of Jung-gu's district office and influential local merchants who owned land and real estate. After visiting New York's Rockefeller Center, the Barbican district in London, and La Défense in Paris, they were convinced that economic growth needed to be accompanied by high-rise redevelopment. Subsequently, major conglomerates purchased small plots from numerous landlords to erect large, lofty buildings. In 1976, the completion of the Seoul Plaza Hotel and of the Samsung Group building transformed the urban scenery near the city hall (Son 2003a, 165–73).

These high-rise redevelopment projects prospered with rapid economic growth, while South Korea's per-capita GNI increased slightly more than fourfold from 1980 to 1991, resulting in a desperate need for office space. Furthermore, the 1986 Asian Games and 1988

Olympics required sports stadiums and accommodations for athletes and tourists, as well as urban infrastructure that complied with internationally accepted standards (Son 2003a, 185–86). Before the 1988 Seoul Olympics, no fewer than 93 redevelopment areas of a total of 426,490 square meters were completed in the city center. Regeneration also began in the outskirts from 1983, with cooperative projects between resident associations and construction companies that eliminated illegal shanties in the Han riverside and the city as a whole (Son 2003c, 45–46). Subway construction contributed to Seoul's radical transformation into a highly compacted megacity within about 600 square kilometers. Four subway lines were built before the 1988 Olympics. Financial difficulties slowed momentum until 1996, when line no. 5 was opened (Survey and Research Division in the Seoul Museum of History 2015, 31–37, 148–50).

In 1988, thirty-five years after the Korean War, the population of Seoul exceeded ten million (Survey and Research Division in the Seoul Museum of History 2015, 11). A little-known and war-ravaged small capital city had metamorphosed into a metropolis with global standards. Besides shiny new buildings on neatly rearranged sites with subway networks, the city was equipped with crucial infrastructures: an urban expressway along the Han River to improve traffic flow between eastern and western areas, a tourist bus terminal and parking lots, and green open spaces that included two parks for international competitions, as well as agricultural, marine, and electronics markets (Son 2003c, 41–47).

Meanwhile, Korea's Catholic population more than tripled from 166,471 in 1953, to 530,217 in 1962, which led to recognition within the global Catholic Church. On March 10, 1962, Pope John XXIII established the official clerical hierarchy with legislative, judicial, and administrative autonomy within the Korean Catholic Church. From then on, Korea was no longer a mission field, and the vicariate apostolic of Seoul became an archdiocese. This emancipation came twenty years after the consecration of the first native vicar apostolic of Seoul in 1942, thus transferring institutional operations from French missionaries to Korean clergy. The elevation of the Korean Catholic Church in the universal Catholic Church resulted in Korean bishops attending the Second Vatican Council, 1962–65, where Pope John XXIII declared that the Catholic Church needed updating – known as the *aggiornamento*. Liturgical and practical reforms were implemented accordingly, with three major focuses: the Korean language replaced Latin in church liturgy, lay people became more involved in pastoral work, and the Catholic Church committed to socio-economic and political participation (Research Foundation of Korean Church History 2011b, 143–45, 225–49; 2018, 146).

The Archdiocese of Seoul experienced its most dynamic era under Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan, the second archbishop of Seoul from 1968 to 1998. It reached out to various social groups including industrial laborers, the urban poor, and prisoners, while supporting pro-democracy movements against consecutive military dictatorships. The archdiocesan Catholic population grew more than sevenfold from 156,722 in 1969 (Research Foundation of Korean Church History 2011b, 263–75, 316–37), to 1,129,376 in 1994 (Catholic Conference of Korea 1995, 6).

This prosperous period was accompanied by enormous church ceremonies in public spaces and popular rallies in the cathedral of Seoul, showing that Catholicism was no longer a persecuted cult, but rather an influential Korean religion. In 1984, Pope John Paul II canonized 103 Korean martyrs on Yeouido Square and celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Korean

Catholic Church in the presence of around one million of the faithful (Research Foundation of Korean Church History 2018, 152–55). In 1989, more than 650,000 people gathered on the same square during the 44th International Eucharistic Congress (Catholic Peace Broadcasting Corporation n.d.). At the same time, the Myeongdong Cathedral emerged as a safe place for civic movements against the military government, especially during the June Democracy Movement in 1987 (Research Foundation of Korean Church History 2011b, 332–37).

Behind this rising social influence, however, the archdiocese was faced with two main challenges. On the one hand, massive parish communities made it harder for parish members to sustain a sense of community, and alarmed the archdiocese, with the average number of members per parish reaching 7,000 in 1992 (Archdiocese of Seoul 1993, 5–7). On the other hand, increasing middle-class dominance in the Korean Catholic Church impeded parishioners in other classes from taking a leading role in parish operations. The financial commitment of middle-class parishioners was required for the construction and management of large church buildings for sizeable congregations, enhancing their leverage in the communities (M. Park 2016, 47–50). In 1992, 84.5% of the Korean Catholic population belonged to the middle class and 34.6% lived in Seoul (U. Seo 1994, 158–59).

Gangbuk and Gangnam: Contrasting Settings for Church Construction

Another issue faced by the Archdiocese of Seoul during its heyday was the unbalanced urban development of Gangbuk and Gangnam, the two main areas of Seoul, north and south of the Han River. Once the capital had been brought directly under the authority of the prime minister and its mayor promoted a position equivalent to that of a minister in 1962, large areas of present-day Gangnam were incorporated into Seoul in 1963 (City History Compilation Committee of Seoul 2009b, 323–24). The drastic urban development of these areas started with the Yeongdong Land Readjustment Project, designated in 1967 as the starting point for the highway to link Seoul with the cities of the south. In addition, land development in Gangbuk was officially prohibited in 1975 to concentrate its population and industrial endeavors into Gangnam. In particular, the remarkable Yeongdong area development received continuous governmental incentives that produced beneficial infrastructures such as subway lines no. 2 and no. 3, express and intercity bus terminals, and large apartment complexes. The prosecutors' office and prestigious schools were moved from Gangbuk to Yeongdong, which experienced one of the nation's highest land price rises, increasing more than 1,300-fold between 1963 and 1979 (Son 2003b, 69–70, 86–95, 158–71, 344–53).

This Gangnam-focused development led to population movement into and within Seoul. Population influx from other cities and provinces peaked in 1975, with almost 995,000 immigrants, continuously exceeding 680,000 every year until 1990 (Statistics Korea 2022). Gangnam's growth rate was higher than Gangbuk's. The population of Gangnam formed about 20% of the population of Seoul in 1970, climbing to almost 50% in 1990 (Seoul Development Institute 2008, 36).

This population drift was carefully observed by the Archdiocese of Seoul, which strived to found new parishes. The 1979 pastoral guide determined a yearly need for the establishment of five or six new parishes because of high population density and housing complex construction projects (Archdiocese of Seoul 1979, chapter 1). The annual pastoral guides issued by the archdiocese between 1979 and 1982 referred to highly focused areas for parish

establishment, notably fifteen neighborhoods in Seoul, nine of which were in eastern Gangnam and five in eastern Gangbuk (Archdiocese of Seoul 1979, chapter 1; 1980, 7; 1981, 14; 1982, 14). Among today's 232 parishes in the Archdiocese of Seoul, 84 were established between 1973 and 1994.[13] New parishes became increasingly clustered in Gangnam and eastern Seoul, rather than in Gangbuk and western Seoul. Among the 83 new parishes (excluding the international parish that was not affiliated with a certain area), 52 were in Gangnam and 31 in Gangbuk. In other words, 56 were in eastern Seoul and 27 were in western Seoul.

Not every newly established parish directly led to church construction, however, particularly since 1979, as the interval between parish establishment and construction completion indicates. This trend can be largely attributed to financial shortfall, given that in its 1979 pastoral guide the archdiocese officially clarified that its earlier custom of purchasing land for new parishes would be no longer observed due to colossal land values (Archdiocese of Seoul 1979, chapter 1).

Although the Archdiocese of Seoul faced difficulties in providing financial assistance to its parishes, its provision of centralized supervision and advice on building parish churches is still ongoing. Church architecture and construction were governed by the department of finance under the archdiocesan regulation on administrative and personnel systems, which took effect in 1972 (Archdiocese of Seoul n.d.-c, 8–9, 30). This department was succeeded by the current department of administration (Catholic Publishing House 1984, 163–68; Archdiocese of Seoul n.d.-a). The archdiocese also had two committees that were concerned with parish church construction: one that focused on the architecture and the other on the art. In March 1968, *Kyeonghyang Magazine*, a Korean Catholic periodical founded in 1906 (Yun 2006, 11–12), reported the creation of the committee of architecture, which was composed of a coadjutor bishop and roughly five priests, and was affiliated with the archdiocesan council (*Kyeonghyang Magazine* 1968, 38–39). In January 1969, this magazine announced that the architecture committee had recruited new members, including three laypeople: Seungyong Moon, the diocesan secretary general, Cheonsu Han, a company president, and Changjun Moon, a businessman (*Kyeonghyang Magazine* 1969, 47), revealing that the committee dealt primarily with administrative and economic issues relating to church architecture.

The archdiocesan subcommittee for art deliberated over architectural designs for parish churches (S. Seo 1971, 17–18). In April 1964, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea decided to found the committee for liturgy in May 1964 and elected William John McNaughton (1926–2020), the bishop of Incheon, as its first chairman. Every diocese was required to appoint at least one priest as a member of this committee, or if possible, three priests to oversee liturgy, music, and art, respectively (*Kyeonghyang Magazine* 1964, 4). The discussion of church construction reported in *Kyeonghyang Magazine* in July 1971 revealed that the subcommittee for art in the Archdiocese of Seoul included two lay advisors: Soonsuk Lee (1905–86), a craftsman who pioneered Korean applied arts, and Sechoong Kim (1928–86), one of Korea's first contemporary sculptors (S. Seo 1971, 18). Both were professors at the College of Fine Arts at Seoul National University and served as the first two presidents of the

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[13] Data from "Bondang" (Catholic Bishops' Conference of Korea n.d.).

Catholic Artists' Union of Seoul, founded in March 1970 (*Kyeonghyang Magazine* 1970, 58–62; Kim Se-choong Memorial Foundation 1996, 251–53; Catholic Artists' Union of Seoul 2008). Sechoong Kim, however, pointed out that this subcommittee did not have sufficient power to assert its opinion over parishes, which was the result of a situation that saw construction funds raised primarily by the individual parishes rather than the archdiocese (S. Seo 1971, 18–19).

Figure 2. Sincheondong Catholic Church surrounded by apartment complexes (photo reproduced from Mideumgwa sarangui baljachwi: Cheonjugyo Sincheon Bondang yeoldol [Sincheon Bondang 10nyeonsa Pyeonchanwiwonhoe 1991, 159] by permission from Sincheondong Catholic Church).

Meanwhile, as the schedules in the 1979 pastoral guide show, by the late 1970s, the archdiocesan committee for architecture was already meeting regularly (Archdiocese of Seoul 1979, chapter 2, chapter 3), indicating that church construction had become a major activity. Parish church construction, particularly around new residential complexes, was also a means of expanding religious influence (Figure 2). For example, the archdiocese purchased sites marked for development into residential zones in the Yeongdong area, corresponding to modern day Gangnam-gu and Seocho-gu, anticipating a consequent population influx. As expected, radical population growth of about 100,000 new arrivals per year from the late 1970s to the early 1980s occurred in the Yeongdong area, where parish churches were constructed around apartment housing areas to spread Catholicism (E. Choi 2001, 6, 23, 38). The congregation of Cheongdamdong Church, for example, rose to 5,289 in 1983, nearly tripling

since the completion of its parish church building in 1977 (Cheongdamdong Catholic Church 1984, 110, 135, 501). Another example in Songpa-gu, also in eastern Gangnam, was the construction of Sincheondong Church, which was completed in 1985 in a residential zone where eight apartment complexes for more than 11,300 households were erected during 1974–89 (Sincheon Bondang 10nyeonsa Pyeonchanwiwonhoe 1991, 26–30, 157), while the parish received 3,287 new congregants during 1985–89 (Sincheondongbondang 30nyeonsa Pyeonchanwiwonhoe 2011, 342–43).

From 1973 to 1994, 94 new churches were constructed by 83 of 150 parishes, with 49 new parishes leading almost 60% of these projects. Overall, church construction reveals greater geographical balance than the establishment of new parishes: 47 projects in Gangnam and 47 in Gangbuk; and 55 in eastern Seoul and 39 in western Seoul.

However, categorizing each project according to its sequence within its parish presents distinctive geographical distributions. Around 66% of first projects were located in eastern Seoul, where roughly 67% of new parishes were located. Around 64% of second projects and 75% of third projects were based in Gangbuk, where the Catholic Church had begun to disperse earlier, resulting in a more deeply rooted local history. Among second and third projects, 75% were implemented on the same sites on which previous church buildings had been demolished and removed, suggesting that second and third constructions were mainly the result of a need for new places of worship, rather than a location change. Meanwhile, the completion of two construction projects by eleven parishes primarily aimed to provide larger space for their congregations (Archdiocese of Seoul 2013, 36, 88, 116, 186, 244, 248, 260, 334, 404, 464, 466). Six of these parishes moved to new sites, demonstrating their urgent need for more space.

The Mother-Daughter Networks of Parishes

The territorial system of the Catholic Church is structured by dioceses divided into parishes. As soon as the need arises, a diocesan bishop can establish a new parish by altering an existing one, according to a fission development mechanism comparable to that of cell division. The new parish has a juridical personality, and the diocesan bishop is required to entrust the parish to a diocesan priest, who will be appointed the proper pastor of the parish, reside in the parish, and be in charge of the pastoral care of the community committed to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop ("Code of Canon Law" 1983, canons 515–52). Thus, there is always a mother parish and a daughter parish, and these develop complex genealogies since a mother can have one or more daughters, granddaughters, etc. Each parish has one parish church, which is a sacred place that cannot be built without the consent of the diocesan bishop and, after completion, is dedicated or blessed by the diocesan bishop ("Code of Canon Law" 1983, canons 1205–22).

Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan, Archbishop of Seoul, applied the universal principles of the Catholic Church to the context of Seoul. Networks of parish church buildings were the key feature of the geographical organization of his ecclesiastical province,[14] linked by mother and daughter relationships between original parishes and their separated parishes (Figure 3). These

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[14] The parish church buildings that form networks exclude temporary churches.

networks need identification in order to understand the spread of parishes and consequent church construction, since mother parishes tended to financially support their daughters.

Figure 3. Parish church construction projects from 1973 to 1994 (map produced by Youngji Kang).
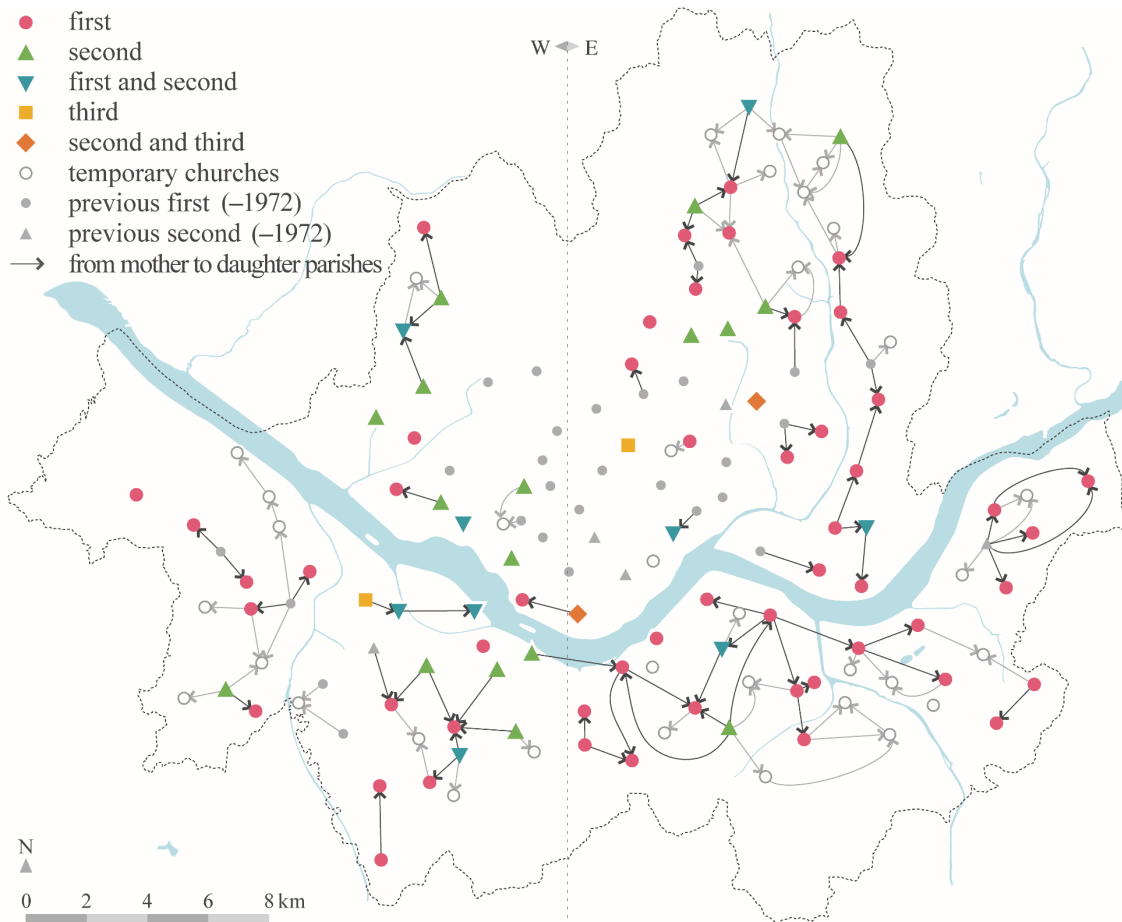
This type of financial support was boosted by the way in which the archdiocese established parishes under Cardinal Kim. The distinctive feature of the new system involved designating existing parishes as the main stakeholder in the founding of new parishes. This idea was roughly introduced in the pastoral guide of 1979 (Archdiocese of Seoul 1979, chapter 1) and more explicitly explained in the guide of the following year. The goal was to approach the establishment of parishes from a new perspective: existing parishes would establish secondary stations and support them to develop into parishes. The archdiocese stressed that the rate of increase for priests was less than half that for believers and that the expense of founding a parish was enormously high, despite the need for four or five new parishes every year. It added that if this new system did not work fully, existing parishes would need to extend their functions to cover the growing pastoral needs in the area (Archdiocese of Seoul 1980, 7). In its 1981 pastoral guide, the archdiocese reported that it had reached its goal of establishing two parishes out of three and encouraged parishes to make a greater effort, putting forward the increased goal of founding five parishes in a year. This goal also considered that existing parishes would provide absolute support for preparing land or buildings for the establishment

of secondary stations and elevate them to parishes (Archdiocese of Seoul 1981, 14). In 1982, the archdiocese put forward nine parish candidates – almost double that of the previous year (Archdiocese of Seoul 1982, 14). This new system of parish establishment, as provided by Cardinal Kim Sou-hwan, conformed to the Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church, which states that it is "only for the diocesan bishop to erect, suppress, or alter parishes," following a requirement to hear the opinions of the presbyteral council, and that "when certain communities cannot be erected as parishes or quasi-parishes, the diocesan bishop is to provide for their pastoral care in another way" ("Code of Canon Law" 1983, canons 515–16).

Figure 4. Parish church construction projects from 1953 to 1972 (map produced by Youngji Kang).
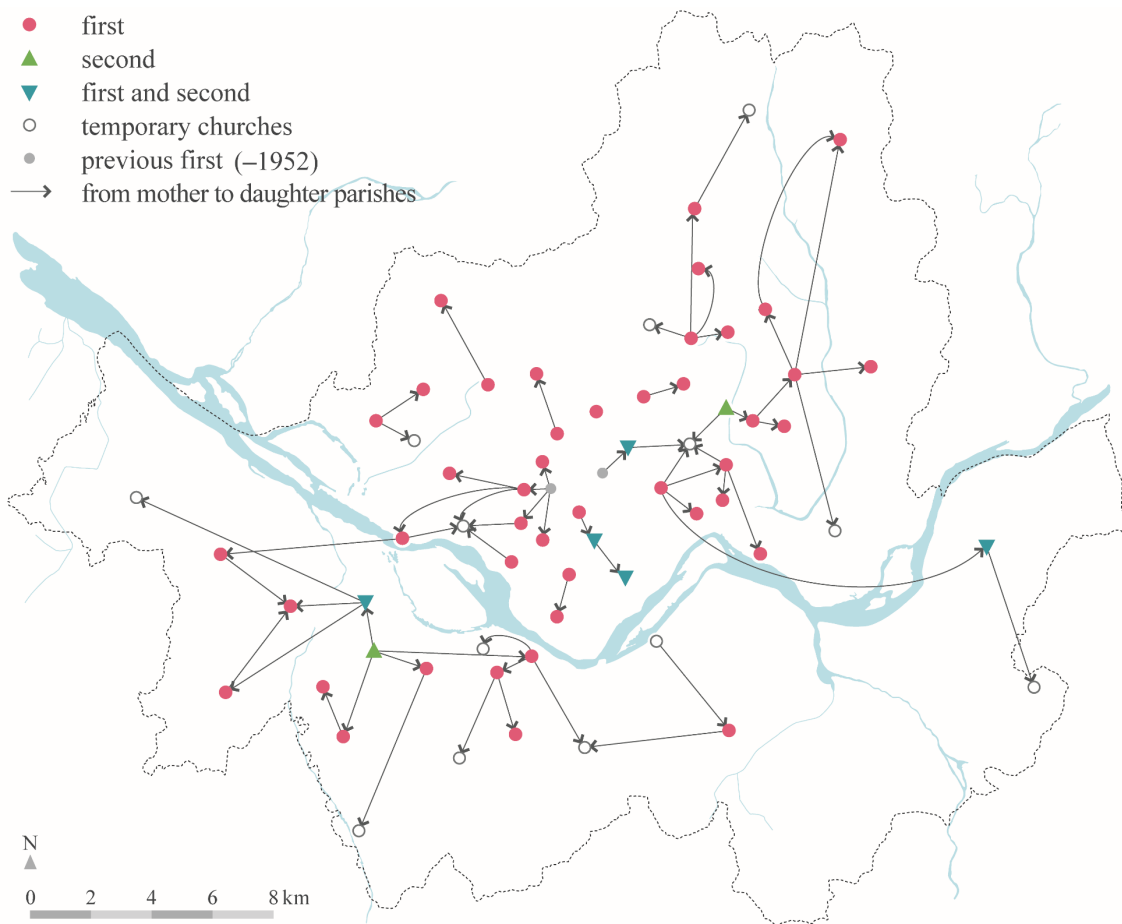
Enhanced financial solidarity between mother and daughter parishes created unique geographical networks of parish church buildings in Gangnam and Gangbuk. Gangnam's networks tended to be interconnected with more components, while Gangbuk's networks were mostly linear with fewer components. This can be attributed to previously built church landscapes. Most of the central areas of Gangbuk had already been occupied by older parish church buildings, whereas Gangnam had more potential sites for creating opportunities to evangelize in every direction. Accordingly, Gangbuk's networks developed along the boundaries of Seoul and the Han River, while Gangnam's networks sprawled into the outskirts of Seoul and simultaneously into central areas, both widening the archdiocese's influential

sphere and increasing its density of church buildings. Additionally, some comparatively rich parishes in Gangnam impacted the geographical distribution of the networks. For instance, Gangnam's Cheongdamdong Church received the second highest income in the archdiocese, behind Myeongdong Cathedral in 1978 (Cheongdamdong Catholic Church 1984, 181–82). From 1973 to 1994, the Cheongdamdong Church separated developed four daughter parishes. These five parishes completed no fewer than six church construction projects, leading to the construction of five granddaughter churches and consequently contributing to creating the biggest network over the largest area in this period, covering Yeongdong.

Comparison of parish church construction networks during the period 1973–94 and the previous period 1953–72 shows a clear evolution (Figure 4). In the latter, parish church construction remained in the city center before spreading out to the margins. Construction projects across the Han River to Gangnam began to appear more frequently than before, yet make up only around 27% of all projects and were concentrated in the west.

## Church Construction along Metropolitan Railroads Penetrating City Cores

When Seoul was under Japanese occupation in the late 1920s, private companies were responsible for the first subway projects required by the rapid population increase and subsequent traffic congestion (Korean Society for Railway and Korean Society of Transportation 2003, 5–7). A 1939 government article on Seoul's traffic problem predicted that the city would reach 930,000 inhabitants in 1945 and that the population outside the compacted center would predominantly increase, requiring public transport across broader areas. The article's author suggested converting what were then national railroads into electric double tracks and linking them with underground and partly elevated railroads to disseminate tram and bus passengers (Ahn 1939, 86–88). These early plans for a subway across the historical downtown and connecting the existing railroads in marginal areas were not realized, but the concept was revived in the 1960s (Korean Society for Railway and Korean Society of Transportation 2003, 5–9).

In the post-Korean War era, subway route design was closely linked to urban planning. This policy began in the early 1970s, as subway line no. 1 offered a compromise to a city government dealing with both traffic congestion and low-class housing shortages under financial constraints. Line no. 1 resulted in an integrated railroad network that radiated out to the north and south, providing workers from adjacent cities with one-hour commutes rather than low-cost housing within Seoul. This alternative gave the government breathing space before the need for residential projects, as well as allowing for greater investment of the municipal budget in subway construction (Survey and Research Division in the Seoul Museum of History 2015, 36–37).

Initial planning foresaw a single core city that included the main commercial business district within the walled city and the development of radial transport routes extending out to marginal areas. Reversing the mono-core plan, subway line no. 2 was a circular line intended to link three or four city cores in a loop, encouraging the growth of both smooth traffic flow and other commercial business zones (Survey and Research Division in the Seoul Museum of History 2015, 38–40). This urban plan was aimed at dealing with an unevenly distributed population – 72% of which was concentrated in Gangbuk – by creating two new cores in Gangnam for business and residential districts. Furthermore, subway lines no. 3 and no. 4,

running diagonally across Seoul and the existing lines, were designed to pass through the city cores and resulted in the intersection of all lines, taking passengers to their destinations without the need to transfer more than once, if at all. Circulating buses were intended to ferry citizens who did not live near subway stations. Subway line no. 2 was completed in 1984 and lines no. 3 and no. 4 in 1985 (Korean Society for Railway and Korean Society of Transportation 2003, 21–22, 932–34), quickly transporting almost two million passengers daily (Noh 1985). In 1994, the Seoul subway carried roughly 3.7 million passengers per day, representing around 24.6% of the city's entire transport network (Song 1994).

Figure 5. Multiple city cores in 1994 generated by subway lines no. 2, no. 3, and no. 4 (map produced by Youngji Kang).
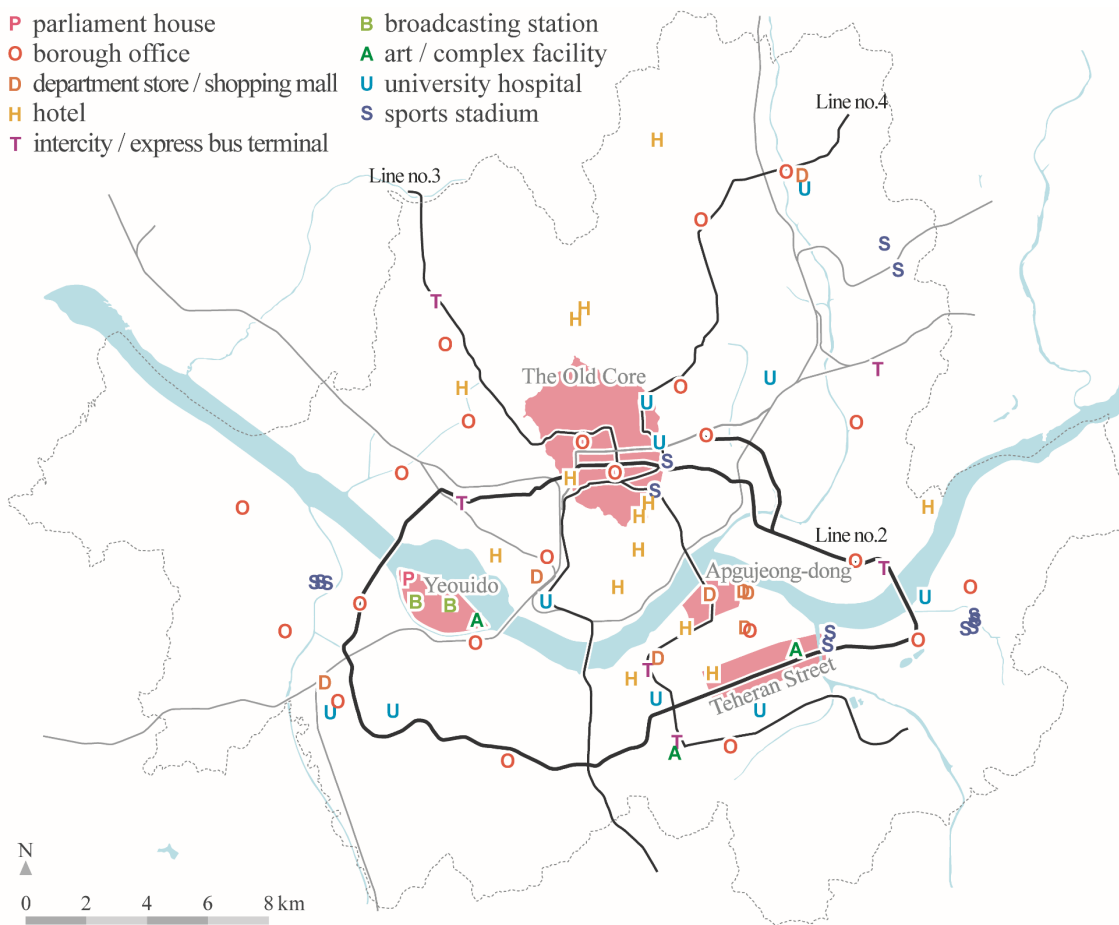
The subway became Seoul's most vital mode of transport and, as a result, multiple city cores were developed gradually, as the government had planned (Figure 5). Commercial and business activities in the old core were largely moved to Yeongdeungpo-gu and Gangnam-gu, in western and eastern Gangnam, respectively. In Yeongdeungpo-gu, financial institutions and mass media organizations carved out their own neighborhood in Yeouido. In Gangnam-gu, department stores and shopping malls were clustered in Apgujeong-dong, while large office buildings and hotels gathered around Teheran Street, where a concentration of skyscrapers was formed within about a decade along subway line no. 2. Substantially expanded

employment in office, sales, and service sector endorsed this conversion into a multi-core urban structure, urging relevant companies to leave the old commercial business core to pioneer a new one. Moreover, the new cores in Yeongdeungpo-gu and Gangnam-gu brought benefits of higher-quality road systems, cheaper land prices, and less time-consuming land purchase processes (Korean Society for Railway and Korean Society of Transportation 2003, 934–36).

Figure 6. Parish churches built from 1973 to 1994, classified by distances from subway lines and subway-connected train railroads (map produced by Youngji Kang).
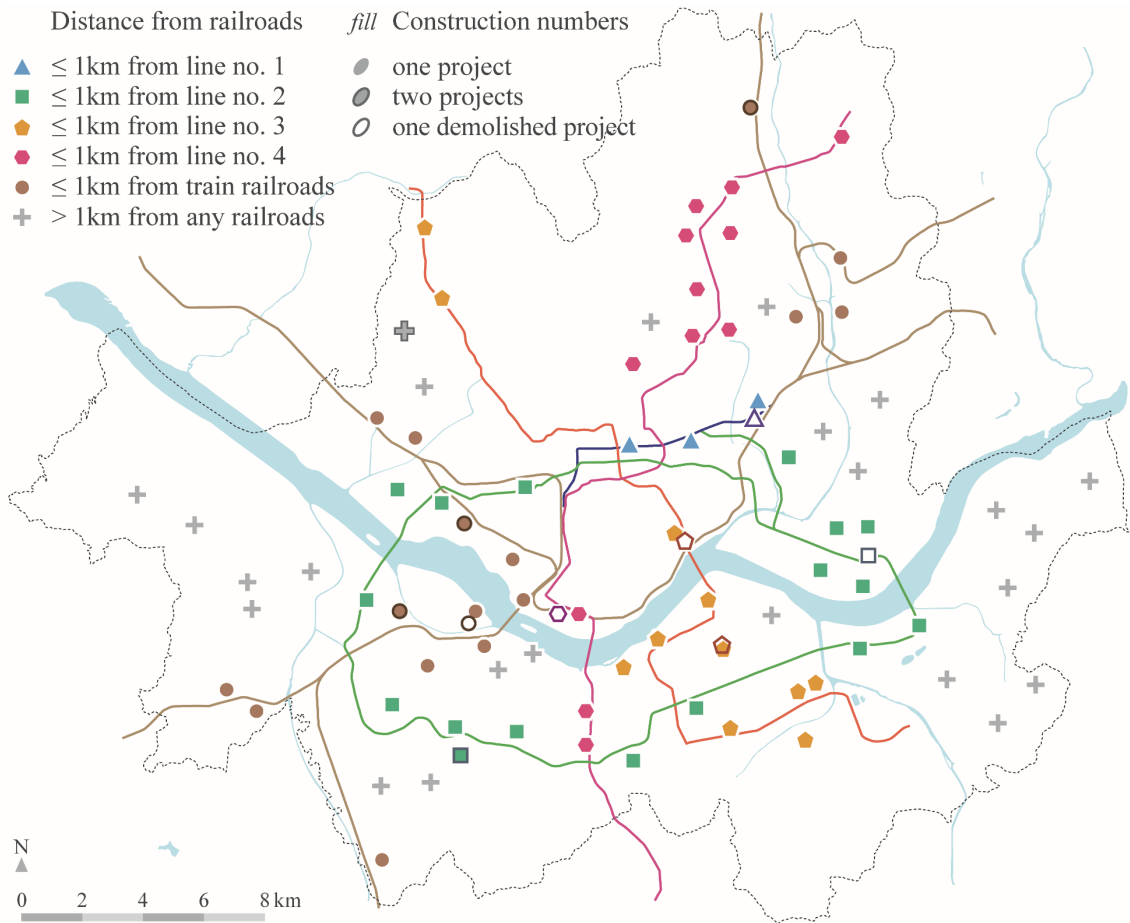
Lines nos. 1 to 4 are classified as the outcome of the first subway construction period spanning from 1971 to 1985 (Survey and Research Division in the Seoul Museum of History 2015, 47, 148, 168). The network of city cores and the areas that linked them were visualized based on the aforementioned purposes and development contexts. Parish church construction projects completed between 1973 and 1994 were often located along these first-period subway lines (Figure 6). Sixty-nine of the ninety-four church projects were situated within 1 kilometer of subway lines or train railroads connected to subway lines, suggesting that the Catholic Church of Seoul closely monitored subway construction and, consequently, modernized traffic systems. This hypothesis becomes more reasonable if we compare the chronology of the construction of each subway line and the adjacent churches (Table 1). Twenty of forty-nine

projects within 1 kilometer of a subway line, namely about 41%, purchased their construction sites during the interval between the line's last full route design before ground was broken and the full opening of the line (Interval A). This proportion rises to around 55% if we add one or two years before and after this interval, respectively (Interval B). This indicates that the archdiocese anticipated urban revitalization following the development of subway lines and their surrounding city cores, as well as the construction of new churches in line with an increase in the general and Catholic populations.

Table 1. Parish church construction projects within or further than 1 kilometer from railroads

Church construction projects	≤ 1 kilometer from				Train railroads	>1 kilometer from any railroads	Total
	Line no. 1	Line no. 2	Line no. 3	Line no. 4			
All	4	19	13	13	20	25	94
Purchasing sites during Interval A	2	8	5	5			
Purchasing sites during Interval B	2	12	7	6			
* Interval A	Mar. 16 1971 – Aug. 15 1974	July 9 1975 – May 22 1984	April 17 1979 – Oct. 18 1985				
* Interval B	Mar. 16 1970 – Aug. 15 1976	July 9 1974 – May 22 1986	April 17 1978 – Oct. 18 1987				

Note: Intervals A and B are defined based on construction process dates from the Korean Society for Railway and Korean Society of Transportation (2003, 15–32, 1007–1013). Soure: Authors' statistical calculations

The construction projects of parish churches located further than 1 kilometer from subway lines or subway-connected train railroads were mostly on mountainsides or in marginal areas, particularly in Gangnam's west and east ends. Ninety-six percent of those projects, however, remained within 1 kilometer of main roads,[15] suggesting that the archdiocese had still considered their ease of access to public transportation (Figure 7).

Conclusion

Our investigation has uncovered the territorial strategy of the Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul, which promptly responded to and benefitted from extensive urban development driven by central and local governments for the growth of the Catholic population and influence in the city. Our findings demonstrate that in a specific regional state, a receptive rather than defensive territorial strategy implemented by a religious institution can be more powerful at protecting, and even strengthening, its presence in a city, inviting flexibility to prevail over rigidity. By unearthing new material about a Northeast Asian city, this article also contributes to postcolonial religious and urban discourses.

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[15] These main roads are marked in yellow on *Seoulsijeondo* [Seoul's entire map], 1994, 1:100,000 scale, in *Seouldorojido* (M. W. Choi 1994).

Figure 7. Parish church construction project sites from 1973 to 1994 further than 1 kilometer from subway lines and subway-connected train railroads, classified by distances from main roads (map produced by Youngji Kang).
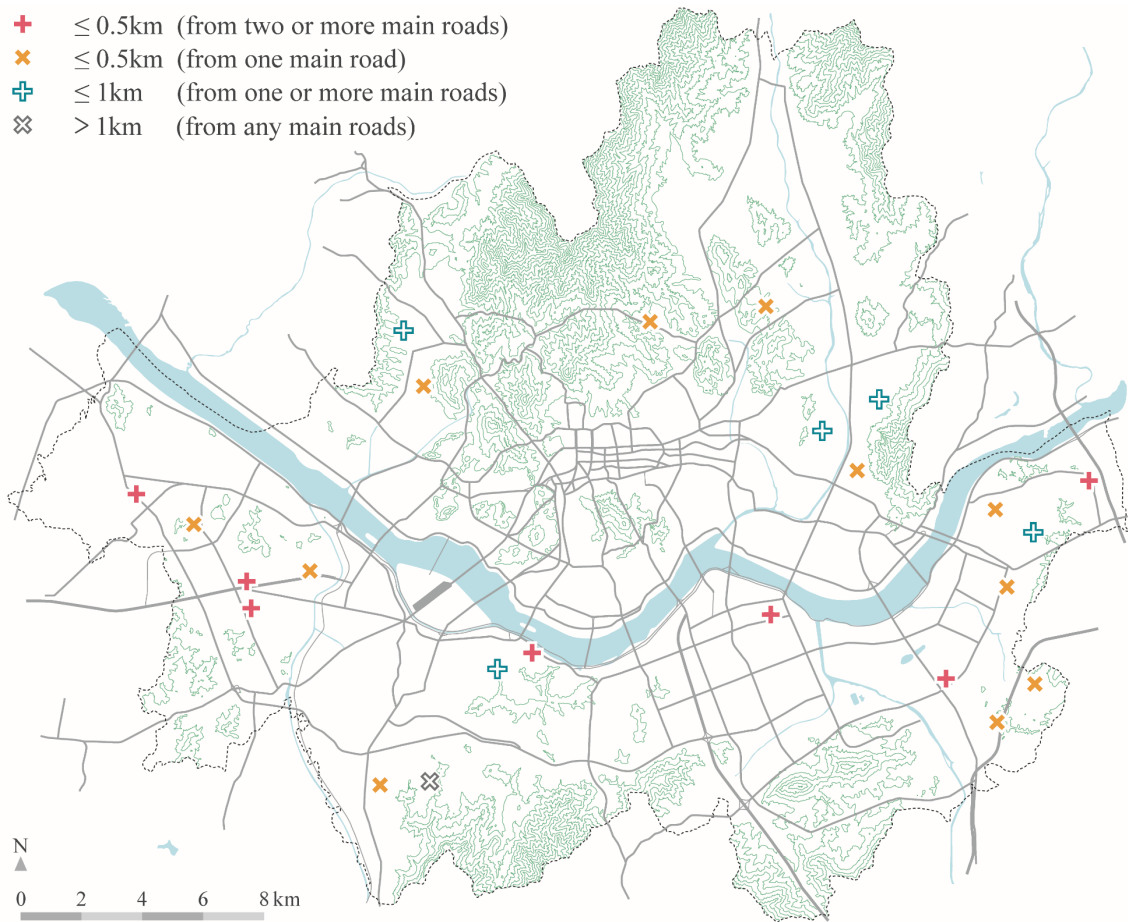
Instead of building gated complexes or enclaves, the archdiocese cautiously monitored urban changes and anticipated population migrations into and within Seoul. Based on this observation, it purchased sites around which potential or existing believers would converge, especially in housing complex development zones and new city cores that profited from the proximity of new subway stations. The sharpest rises in the separation of daughter parishes from mother parishes into surrounding areas, both increasing the density of parish churches and widening the Catholic Church's reach within Seoul, shows that the archdiocese's considered choices of location provided effective physical environments and positions in the city, sustaining the Catholic boom. The archdiocese had become a major player in Korean society by the late 1980s, with its growing international and domestic renown, capable, to some extent, of protecting its territory from the reaches of governmental power.

The intrinsic characteristics of late twentieth-century Seoul were behind the archdiocesan strategy: drastic economic and urban development under the might of military governments and pro-Christian geopolitics had become entangled with anti-communism since the Cold War. The construction of citywide networks of parish churches over roughly two decades was

also achievable thanks to both the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, which stimulated Catholics to make inroads into modern societies, and the centralized archdiocesan system based on the global Catholic territorial principle.

The year 1994 was transitional for the city and archdiocese of Seoul. With the past two decades of dynamism that had brought Catholic infrastructure general revolutions in urban networks, as well as in architecture (Y. Kang 2021), now a thing of the past, the relationship between religion and urbanism entered a new era. Under the first civilian government established in 1993, as part of the 1994 celebrations marking the city's 600th anniversary as the capital, the Seoul Metropolitan Government implemented special projects aimed at enhancing the city's historical, livable, cultural, and international appeal, shifting the focus from previous development goals. As a major urban and architectural project, the government demolished apartment buildings on Namsan Mountain to create a central public park and to bring back earlier views of the mountain and its topography (Seoul Metropolitan Government 1995, 72–73, 154–55). This came about a month after the collapse of Seongsu Bridge, one of the main bridges across the Han River (*Dong-A Ilbo* 1994), symbolically revealing some of the limits of seemingly cutting-edge technology. Meanwhile, the Archdiocese of Seoul was confronted by the constraints of its rapid growth, since the proportion of dormant and unidentified archdiocesan members reached almost 25% in 1994 (Y. Park 1995). To deal with the social alienation caused by massive parish sizes, the archdiocese started that same year to train laypeople to lead small community movements, even tackling the doubts harbored by some priests (Research Foundation of Korean Church History 2011b, 292–94). In general, the upward curve in South Korean Catholicism began to decline, with the growth rate dropping to 3.36% in 1995, and as low as 1.9% in 2003 (Catholic Conference of Korea 1996, 8; 2004, 8).

The case of the Catholic Church in Seoul as discussed in this article reveals that the interaction between religion and urbanism is shaped amid contemporary configurations of political, economic, social, and urban contexts, as well as global and domestic religious conditions. Organically linked to these constantly changing factors, the relationship between religion and city also evolves continuously over time. Therefore, it may be possible, to get a fuller understanding of this relationship by considering the features of these chronological shifts. Many Northeast Asian megacities, Seoul among them, have the potential to provide appropriate case material based on their turbulent modern and contemporary histories – usually accompanied by dramatic and multifaceted urban transformations – effectively and definitively revealing evolutions in the relationship between religion and city.

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Influence of Adolescent Religious Experiences on Faith Decisions in College

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Abstract

This study seeks to examine the effects of early religious experiences on later decisions regarding organized religious involvement among a study population of college students at a mid-sized public state university in the Midwestern United States. This project fills a gap in the existing literature by performing an exploratory study regarding students who maintain religious participation in college, continue involvement with the church at a decreased frequency, and those who permanently cease religious involvement during the college years. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses are used to examine how positive and negative religious experiences impact decisions post-high school and what overarching trends exist in this study population's experience in religious institutions. The study includes an examination of the relationship between the perception of the church as an institution and patterns of involvement.

Keywords: adolescence, high school religious experiences, religious involvement in college

Influence of Adolescent Religious Experiences on Faith Decisions in College

Many adolescents are involved, to some degree, in religious activities during their high school years. However, when they transition from high school to college, they often discontinue their religious involvement, which is a concerning issue for churches today. Often the positive and negative experiences associated with religious involvement in high school influence how this population makes decisions about religious involvement in college. Students seem to be no longer involved, have become involved in the college setting with less consistency, continued involvement during their college experience, or have become more

involved religiously while enrolled in a higher education institution. Discovering what churches as a whole are doing well in reaching the adolescent population, as well as what is being done to drive them away from being involved after transitioning to college offers valuable insight. Based on these discoveries, churches may examine their practices so that they may provide adjustments to increase the likelihood that adolescents will choose to continue or increase their religious participation once they move away to college.

Literature Review

A substantial body of knowledge relating to factors that influence religious participation decisions of adolescents and young adults currently exists. Hoge and Petrillo (1978) investigated a study population of tenth grade youth. In their research, the authors examined attitudes of high school youth towards the church. They discovered perspectives of rejection are influenced by a dislike of religious training, as well as perceiving church leaders as unapproachable, insincere, or uncertain of expressing their beliefs. In addition, they were prone to rejecting youth group involvement if they had previous unpleasant religious experiences. This study aligns with findings from Waters and Bortree (2012), as they examined what impacted college student relationships with their religious organizations and found that the responsiveness of the leaders and the demonstration of care for congregation members played a role in the development of good relationships. It was also important for church members to be engaged in conversation and activity outside of official church services. This study, however, only focused on the views of those engaged in religious organizations and what influenced their relationship and excluded those not engaged in religion (Waters and Bortree 2012).

Similarly, others have continued to explore the influences on behaviors related to religious involvements. Petts (2009) investigated factors that influence different trajectories of religious participation in young adults between 20 and 25 years of age. Family characteristics, such as religiosity, family structure, young adult relationship decisions, and past life experiences all had an influence on later religious decisions in terms of whether participation remained stable or changed. The vast majority of youth were attending religious services less than once a month on average by the age of 25 (Petts 2009).

Uecker, Regnerus, and Vaaler (2007) focused on different factors facing young adults. Decreases in attendance for religious activities were reported for 70% of young adults, 20% experienced decreased personal importance of religion, and 10% disaffiliated from organized religion (Uecker et al. 2007). These particular researchers did not connect attendance in higher education with decreased religious activity for a variety of reasons, including that college attendees are enrolled primarily to complete a degree, as well as the religious shifts on college campuses across time.

Uecker and colleagues (2007) also acknowledged they were still unable to adequately explain religious decline. One assertion may be the lack of suitable religious socialization in the families of origin for adolescents. This lack of socialization may lead to attrition once the grounding structure is left behind, as Petts (2009) recognized. There is a presumable possibility that churches do not focus on issues relevant to young adults or create a space for them (Uecker et al. 2007). Additionally, they found that young adults who do not attend college exhibit the highest rates of religious decline.

Petts (2009) studied the difference in declines in attendance between mainline and evangelical Protestants as well. Members of mainline Protestant, Catholic, Mormon, and other Christian groups are more likely to experience a decline in participation in contrast to evangelical Protestants. This may be explained by Smith and Snell's research (2009), attributing this trend to the fact that members of mainline denominations are more likely to view church attendance less as a spiritual activity and more as a weekly routine.

In an earlier study, Smith, Faris, Denton, and Regnerus (2003) investigated four measures of the importance of religiosity to American adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18, including agreement with parental religion, approval of churches, influence of churches, and financial donations to churches. This study found that a large portion of adolescents approved of the role of the church and felt that churches were supportive and displayed a positive level of influence. The results of this study, however, were based on data from 1996, which indicates that further, modern research is needed to determine how opinions have changed in the past two decades and how a young adult's view of the church as an institution affects religious participation.

Schwadel (2017, 85) studied how the context of religion that an adolescent experienced impacts the religiosity of emerging adults, and stated, "Higher education is particularly likely to lead to religious decline for mainline Protestants and those with religiously active parents." Additionally, Schwadel found increases in religiosity for college students that were raised in a household with parents that attended religious services on an infrequent basis. Religiosity increased for religiously unaffiliated college students.

Contrary to many researchers stating claims of religious involvement at the college level continually decreasing (Petts 2009; Smith and Snell 2009; Fenelon and Danielsen 2016; Schwadel 2017), Schmalzbauer (2013) found that rather than a decline in religious activities on college campuses, participation by students has remained stable and consistent over the past century due to six factors ranging from religious expansion, reinvention, revitalization of student organizations, growth of alternatives, beginnings in renewal of various options, and involvement of student affairs. Hill (2011) reported that college has only a minor impact on religious beliefs for the vast majority of emerging adults.

An important consideration in this field of study involves what factors influence the quality of the relationship between young adults and the church. Bader-Saye (2006) reported millennials are drawn to churches that are open to engaging in discussion over differing points of view and display a greater tolerance towards differences instead of adhering to a strict doctrine. This opens the door to investigate if the lack of factors influencing relationships between those who chose not to be involved in religion post high school.

Black's research (2008) supported that meaningful and deep relationships with both peers and older adults positively impact religiosity at the college level. When college students attend church and other religious activities with their peers, they are more likely to engage. In addition, religious activity outside of church completed by families during the high school years increases the chances of college students remaining involved at the college level. Mentorship, encouragement, and a supportive environment welcoming youth to contribute is vital. Brown's research (2016) further contributed the impact of relationships to higher rates of retention for emerging adults. Through intergenerational mentoring, positive relationships

with pastoral staff, and a sense of community, young adults become more engaged and active in their religion. Fostering focus groups with young adults, participants shared that "feeling a sense of belonging, witnessing the importance of fellowship or community, and feeling like the church was a 'family'" were important factors in their lives (Brown 2016, 11).

Significant research for the present study was implemented by Fenelon and Danielsen (2016); findings regarding the relationships between religious disaffiliation and overall well-being were examined. Disaffiliation from religion is associated with a disadvantage in well-being as compared with those who do not disaffiliate or with those who were never affiliated. In addition, religious participation itself is linked with academic success and civic engagement, which constitute additional reasons to be interested in the factors influencing religious participation (Smith, et al., 2003). As such, it is important to understand the factors that influence this disaffiliation and subsequent decrease in well-being. Schmalzbauer (2013) highlighted that the college campus of today offers a wide variety of religious opportunities for college students displaying an interest. With the variety of viewpoints researchers have uncovered, we must move forward to best inform the church regarding the identification of optimal supports.

While several researchers have focused on adolescents and young adults, limited findings emphasize the current study population of college students, and it is necessary to determine if the factors discussed in this study impact college students in their decision-making processes about religious involvement. Moreover, it is important to revisit the ideas present in the findings to determine if what was found to historically impact youth and young adult views on religious participation are still relevant in modern day.

Method

This article reports on the results of a study aimed at gaining a better understanding of the high school experiences and the correspondence between religious participation choices of college students. The experiences during their high school career, as well as their interest level and participation during college are examined. Results of the study are utilized to better inform religious leaders, college support personnel, and the university as a whole of college students and their religious pasts, current interests, and involvement in religious activities. The impact those high school opportunities had on college endeavors related to religion is explored.

Participants

This study includes 340 undergraduate college students from one mid-sized public state university in the Midwestern United States. The students were pursuing a wide range of academic programs during their college experience, and one commonality among them was their enrollment in a general education course to fulfill a university program requirement. The college students varied in their current class ranking at the university, as 155 freshmen (41.1%), 155 sophomores (23.3%), 139 juniors (20.9%), 98 seniors (14.7%) participated in this study.

Demographic data collected by the Pew Research Center (2014) indicated that in the state where this university resides as a whole, 75% of individuals identify with a religion, however only 33% of those adults reported attending religious services at least once a week, and additional 35% report attending between a few times a year to one to two times a month.

These numbers are comparable to the demographic data of the United States as a whole. Additionally, 2018 enrollment data from the university indicated that 90.8% of undergraduate students were from this state, indicating the data gathered in this study can, with caution, be assumed to be representative of trends in the state as a whole (Central Michigan University 2018).

Procedure

As a graduation requirement at the university where this study took place, students are required to complete a well-rounded basic education foundation. Courses range from the arts, global experiences, science, and human development to list a few. Students enrolled in two different courses in the university program were invited to participate in the current study. Both courses are offered in the Human Development and Families Studies program at the university and are one of the options students may choose when determining their academic plan.

Upon IRB approval, the researchers attended sixteen different sections of face-to-face courses (eight sections of HDF 100: Lifespan Development and eight sections of HDF 110: Oppression: Roots and Impact on Human Development in the United States) to invite college students to share their experiences. For this study, students enrolled in online sections were not included in the sample. An original survey titled *Influence of Adolescent Religious Experiences on Faith Decision in College* consisting of twelve questions was distributed to college students interested in engaging in the research project. At the conclusion of the survey, students could offer their contact information if they were interested in completing a brief interview about their religious experiences in high school and college. With the information provided, the researchers completed six interviews to gain a deeper perspective on how these students viewed the issues presented in this study.

Data Analysis

After survey collection was complete, the researchers analyzed the data utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze quantitative data, and thematic analysis was utilized to examine qualitative data. The original number of college students invited to participate in this study was 859, and 666 of these students completed the survey (77.5%). However, 326 participants were removed from the data analysis due to their lack of involvement in religion during high school (49%), or their religious affiliation as non-Christian (3.6%).

Those indicating non-Christian religious affiliation were excluded for two reasons. The primary reason is related to the authors' intention for the study to provide insight to the Christian church in the United States as to what factors specifically related to church structure and characteristics impact adolescents as they transition to young adulthood. Secondly, the overall number of students affiliated with a non-Christian religion was low, with only 24 students (3.6%) reporting their religion as other than Christian. Specifically, six participants practiced Islam, four were Jewish, three reported their religion as Native American, and one participant each reported their religion as Agnostic, Atheist, Hebrew Israelite, Hindu, and Mormon. In addition, four participants chose the Other, however did not list the specific religion. This low representation of various religions makes drawing statistically significant

conclusions unlikely. A detailed analysis of the data from 340 target subject surveys took place, including descriptive statistics and percentages utilizing a comparative analysis.

Additionally, the open-ended responses were reviewed and divided into themes. The process of coding the data took place by making note of initial themes through the process of memoing, followed by the completion of summary statements. The authors coded text within the themes to determine emerging specific ideas regarding positive and negative religious influences.

Results

As stated previously, the responses from 340 undergraduate students were included in this study. Of the participants, 124 were freshmen (36.5%), 83 sophomores (24.4%), 76 juniors (22.4%), and 57 seniors (16.7%). When asked to share their religious affiliations, 217 of the participants stated they were Christian, with 123 of the 340 students specifically identifying as Catholic. The participants varied in their field of study and were enrolled in academic programs among six different colleges, as well as some students yet to decide their educational plan. The most common area of study of participants was Education and Human Services (25.3%), followed by Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (16.8%), Science and Engineering (16.2%), Arts and Media (15.3%), Health Professions (11.7%), and Business Administration (7.9%). An undecided plan of study was the status for 6.8% of study participants. Details of the participant demographics are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Class Ranking	n	%	Area of Study	n	%
Freshman	12	36.5	Education/Human Services	86	25.3
Sophomore	83	24.4	Liberal Arts/Humanities	57	16.8
Junior	76	22.4	Science/Engineering	55	16.2
Senior	57	16.7	Arts/Media	52	15.3
			Health Professions	40	11.7
			Business	27	7.9
			Undecided	23	6.8

Trends

After coding the data, it was analyzed for trends to develop an understanding of what students engage in after high school for religious involvement, as well as what the overall expression of positive and negative experiences were in this study population. At every level of high school involvement, we found sharp declines in participation. For the study respondents, 44.1% had been involved in religious activities every week in high school. At the college level however, a 26.7% decrease was discovered as only 17.4% remained involved at this level. We also observed a 11.2% decrease amongst students who had been involved 1–3 times a month, with the percentage dropping from 21.8% to 10.6%. Amongst the 34.1% who

reported involvement several times a year in high school, only 23.5% maintained that level of involvement in college, a decrease of 10.6%. Finally, 48.5% reported they were no longer involved at all during their college experience. It should be noted, however, that of the group that reported not being involved at the college level, 20.6% of individuals are interested in being involved in religious activities.

It is both of interest and of concern that the greatest level of decrease was found amongst those who were most intensely involved in high school as this provides a strong indication that the experiences that they had in high school were not compelling enough to create a desire for ongoing involvement. However, this data also shows the value of the present study, as these youth are the ones that the church has the most opportunity to influence. Therefore, if there are church-related factors that encourage participation in college, churches would be well advised to be mindful of these things in order to pursue a greater level of retention for these students.

The respondents followed several timetables of religious involvement initiation. Twenty one percent of students indicated that they became involved immediately upon arrival to the college setting, 21.5% stated that they began involvement after 1–3 months, and 53.3% reported that they are no longer involved, with 3.2% of respondents not sharing a response to this item. The percentages are slightly incongruent with those stated above, although this may reflect that some students are not involved in religious activities during college, however, are still involved in their home setting. Perhaps these participants answered they are not involved in college for this item but indicated involvement in the previous item because of maintaining religious involvement at home.

The findings on the strength of experience for this population displayed that 37.1% of respondents indicated only positive religious experiences during their high school career, 41.2% reported both positive and negative experiences, 15% gave no mention of any type of experience, and 6.8% indicated only negative experiences. Overall students have experienced more positive experiences than negative experiences with regard to religious involvement in their various backgrounds.

For the purposes of this study, one question we explored was whether college students perceived their previous religious experiences as having an impact on their decisions in college focused on religion. The frequency analysis on the responses to this item (n=340) discovered that 65.9% indicated that they felt their previous religious experiences in high school did impact their college involvement in religion.

The investigators were also interested in examining whether a connection existed between the college participant's major and their patterns of religious involvement, as each college is markedly different in the types of skills required of students who major in one of the subject areas. To examine this, a Pearson Chi Square test was used to determine association between these two variables ($H_0 = \chi^2 = 0$, $\chi^2_{crit} = 12.59$, $p < .05$). Findings showed $\chi^2_{obt} = 2.885$, $p = .823$, and as $\chi^2_{obt} < \chi^2_{crit}$, we were unable to disprove the null hypothesis.

One of the main intentions of this study was to determine whether the presence of positive and negative experiences in high school religious experiences were related to the decisions made by college students regarding religious participation. To evaluate this, a variable

called Strength of Experience (SOE) was created, and was ranked from 1 to 4, with 1 being all positive experiences, 2 being both types of experiences, 3 being neither type, and 4 being only negative experiences. It was hypothesized that the value of the strength of the experience variable would be negatively correlated with the level of involvement in this population. Comparative statistics utilizing the Somers' d test of directional association (H_0: $d_{yx}=0$, p<.05), used as a directional measure, were implemented to determine whether a relationship existed between these two variables, with college participation being dependent on SOE. The test revealed the Somers' $d_{yx}=.157$ with p=.001. The results show a small, positive relationship between the variables with college involvement being dependent on SOE.

Examining how the previous experiences with religious activities influenced the timing of students' entrance into religious participation was another focus on the current study. It was hypothesized that lower values for SOE would be positively correlated with earlier entrance into religious participation at the college level. For this variable, respondents were able to choose from three options: 1-immediately began participation, 2-began participation after more than 1 month, or 3-no longer participating. The Somers' D test, H_0: $d_{yx}=0$, p<.05 was run to determine the association between these variables. $D_{yx}=.179$, p=.008, disproving the null hypothesis and confirming a small relationship between SOE and time of entrance into participation.

Given the assertion that previous experiences would influence decisions regarding religious involvement at the college level, it was also hypothesized that the frequency of religious involvement in high school would lead to higher frequency of involvement in college. This hypothesis was analyzed utilizing Kendall's tau-c (H_0: $\tau_c=0$, p<.05) to determine correlation. This test was selected because the variables being analyzed are ordinal, monotonic variables and because the cross-tabulation yielded a rectangular table. Running this test yielded a value of $\tau_c=.344$, p=.000. As $\tau_c>0$, the null hypothesis is disproved, showing that the frequency of participation in high school is somewhat predictive of how frequently a person will participate in college.

A final point of interest for the researchers was whether a participant's perception of the church as an institution would impact the degree of their participation in college. We hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between perception and involvement, with more positive perception leading to greater levels of involvement. To test this hypothesis a Somers' D test of directional association (H_0: $d_{yx}=0$, p<.05) was used. In this analysis, perception was the independent variable and the level of involvement in college was the dependent variable. Running the Somers' D test to confirm association between the independent and dependent variables revealed a value of $d_{yx}=.167$ and a significance level of .004, showing a small, positive relationship.

Themes

Qualitative analysis of the data collected throughout this study resulted in the identification of both five positive themes and eight negative themes as study respondents shared their perspectives on various topics. The survey asked college students to share their perceptions of the role of the church in American society, examples of religious experiences at the high school level, their positive and negative experiences in high school related to religion, and examples of religious experiences at the college level. Five positive themes

emerged consistently from the analysis and include a positive religious environment, church as a welcoming place, opportunities to be involved, models of living morally, and a safe environment.

Positive Religious Environment

Several college students participating in this study shared ideas about their appreciation for the positive and supportive features of their religious experiences during high school. For example, one respondent stated, "The church in which I was involved in high school provided me with a sense of community." Another respondent described the religious experiences as "very uplifting and motivating."

Church as a Welcoming Place

One component of religious experiences appreciated by a significant number of college students centered on the high level of warmth they felt in the church environment. As one participant stated, "My church environment was very welcoming, and it felt like my second family." Similarly, another individual shared how he/she felt as a result of being involved at church, "Surrounded by loved ones whenever I went to church, always friendly people."

Opportunities to be Involved

Many college students enjoyed the accessible volunteer and service opportunities available through religious involvement. One shared, "I was able to be involved in volunteerism, and work with people who care for me and shared a common goal." Yet another student shared involvement in religion outside of the traditional church service, "In high school, I was active in church through church orchestra and youth group. These helped me build confidence by sharing experiences with others while getting out of my comfort zone. I did a lot of volunteering with the community."

Models of Living Morally

Some student participants highlighted their religious experiences during high school and how their experiences assisted with the development of a strong moral foundation. For example, statements such as "It provided a basis for my morals.", "I feel it helped me keep a high moral ground.", and "It taught me good morals" provide examples of how religion positively influenced their lives.

A Safe Environment

The final theme that emerged from the analysis of positive experiences in religious activities during high school centered on the concept of safety. Several college students reflected on how the high level of safety made a significant difference for them through reassurance and support. One respondent shared, "My high school involvements provided me with a safe place to visit and spend time." Another person explained, "During high school, I went through a hard break up and going to church made me feel safe and loved once again. It showed through faith you can overcome anything."

The negative themes that emerged from the student responses were much more scattered and individualized. The eight main themes represented in the data include feeling judged,

forced to believe certain things, boring experiences, hypocritical actions, strict environment, challenging social or political issues, poor leadership, and a misalignment with personal beliefs.

Feeling Judged

Judgment was a term that was used commonly among student participants as they described challenges related to religious activities they experienced in high school. Stated simply, one person described church as "Very judgy, very rude, [and] self-involved." Another participant shared frustration through this viewpoint, "The church made me feel guilty for simply being human, led me to make numerous decisions that made me miss out on experiences I now wish I had, and led me to believe/not believe things for illogical, nonsensical reasons."

Forced to Believe Certain Things

Another negative theme that emerged from the student responses focused on being forced or pressured in different situations involving religious education or activities. One respondent stated that they did not appreciate, "Having to be forced into believing things during religious education." Another spoke of the challenges related to pressure of donating money during high school or college and having only one path of belief, "Sometimes [it] felt that they [the church] were criticizing me for not going every week, and criticized for not tithing . . . I'm a broke college student!"

Boring Experiences

Several people commented on the lack of interest they had while attending religious activities in high school. As a result, the theme of boredom emerged as a descriptive term regarding church. One participant bluntly stated, "Church bored me to death" and another commented on the lack of interactive and engaging approaches by describing church as, "traditional, boring practices/routines."

Hypocritical Actions

Still other ideas emerged through the analysis of student responses regarding the negative experiences they had while pursuing religious experiences. Several individuals expressed dissatisfaction with the level of hypocrisy they experienced in religious environments. One person stated, "Christian school pushes views, church is very hypocritical." Another statement was made that parallels these views, "I have been told that if you don't give substantial money to the church you go to hell – which seems like a greedy cash grab to me."

Strict Environment

Several responses included ideas about the strict and traditional routines, practices, and views upheld in some religious settings. One student described high school religious experiences as "very strict, no room for failure." Others described their perceptions and set of beliefs challenged, "The Catholic church has many strict beliefs about the LBGTQ community and pro-life vs pro-choice, that I don't agree with and I felt shamed."

Challenging Social or Political Issues

Negative experiences that related to current social or political issues were reported by a variety of participants in this study; for example, with regard to sexuality, one person shared, "I never felt welcome at my family's church due to my sexuality. I always felt like religion was being forced on me." Another comment highlights challenges related to varying political beliefs and the intersection between politics and religion, stating church as "very clique-like, some things go against political views."

Poor Leadership

Some participants cited the types of leadership styles within religious organizations as the reason for their negative experiences. One study participant highlighted the challenges created by the leadership of the church, "I went to one church and it was a very judgmental pastor… I question religion now." Another individual stated reasons for negative experiences as "pastors can be harsh at times," and "don't accept people from all backgrounds."

Misalignment with Personal Beliefs

The final theme that emerged from study responses centered on individuals being challenged by religious messages not aligning with their personal beliefs. For example, one quote highlights this view, "church just didn't match my beliefs/personality." Another college student summarized their stance about religion as, "I was going . . . but realized my views are not in alignment with them, I don't know how much I believe in Christianity."

Discussion

This study both supports and expands on the previous research in this topic area. The trends present in this study population support the previous findings by Petts (2009) that the rate of religious participation among young adults is steadily decreasing. Seventy two percent of the respondents in this study reported being involved at the college level only several times a year or not at all, which marks a drastic decline from their high school participation. During their high school careers, 65.9% were involved between once a week and once a month and 100% had been involved at least to some degree. This finding is concerning for the church today, as the drastic decrease in participation indicates that the church may not be attractive enough to the current generation to keep them participating. This finding cannot be completely attributed to issues within the church, however, as some respondents included other types of religious participation in their responses, such as Catholic school and summer camps, which could be part of the reason for the drop in participation. Regardless, the percentage of college age youth who were involved in high school and who have decreased or ceased participation in religious activities in college is a concerning trend to see.

This decrease could be due to a variety of factors. Family factors such as religiosity and family structure may provide part of the answer (Petts 2009), and this study provides some evidence that college students' previous experiences with organized religious activities may influence their decisions in college. This is shown by the small, positive relationship between the strength of a participant's experience and their involvement in college; increased presence of negative experiences in high school was predictive of decreased participation in college. The strength of a respondent's experience was predictive of their time of entrance into religious

activities in college if they did become involved. The presence of more negative experiences was predictive of later entrance into participation itself. It is important to note here that the majority of respondents (65.9%) self-reported that their previous experiences with organized religious activities influenced their decisions regarding involvement in college. This self-report itself indicates a need for further research to better understand the mechanisms of how these experiences influence students.

This current study provides an update to the 1996 data used in Smith, Faris, Denton, and Regnerus' study (2003) indicating that the view of the church as an institution by adolescents is largely positive. At least for this study population, the view of the church is still largely positive, as 78.7% of respondents indicated that they believe the church does everything right or does most things right with some room for improvement. Only 9.7% indicated that they felt the church does more harm than good or is unnecessary in society, and the remaining 11.6% indicated an opinion other than the options provided. There was a small, statistically significant relationship between the perception of the church and the respondents' participation in religious activities in college. The small size of this relationship, however, combined with the fact that although the perception of the church remains overwhelmingly positive while attendance continues to decrease, indicates that there are other reasons influencing this trend that need to be discovered.

This study found no difference in college participation between respondents who identified as Catholic and those who identified solely as Christian, which was surprising given the previous research by Petts (2009) that found those identifying as Catholic experienced greater declines than those identifying as Evangelical Protestants. However, part of this discrepancy may be due to the design of this study, which did not allow for distinctions between types of Christianity and did not clearly identify Catholicism as a subset of Christianity. This issue will be further discussed in the directions for future research section of this paper.

Previous research among populations ranging from high schoolers to college students identified factors such as church leadership, relationships, and openness to new ideas as factors impacting the likeliness of people in this age range to be involved in church activities (Waters and Bortree 2012; Bader-Saye 2006). Additionally, a dislike of religious training was associated with negative feelings about involvement among high schoolers (Hoge and Petrillo 1978). The current study both confirms the influence of these factors and exposes additional elements that have an impact on high school students and the decisions they make as they transition to college. Warm, supportive relationships were mentioned numerous times as a positive experience and feeling judged or unwelcomed were also prominent themes. This points to the value of monitoring and developing a warm, supportive culture within church bodies, as the role of relationships in influencing decision making is undeniable.

Limitations

It is necessary to consider the results of this study in light of the limitations present in the methodology and study population. This study only used data from students who identified as Christian or Catholic, and as such, the viewpoints and experiences of students from other religious backgrounds are not represented, although as has been mentioned, this could be considered a strength as well, due to the goals of the study. In addition, this study was

conducted at one mid-sized Midwestern university. Results may have been different if the survey was administered in a more diverse setting. One of the biggest limitations present in the research was the lack of data on gender, ethnicity, and age.

Although a thorough analysis of the data was conducted in various ways, the lack of information on these three major demographic categories served to limit what was capable of being discovered. This does, however, provide direction for future research investigating the role gender, ethnicity, and age in how students make religious participation decisions. A final limitation that deserves to be mentioned is the subjective nature of the research at hand. As the researchers were coding the short answers detailing positive and negative experiences, there was an unavoidable level of subjectivity as we chose how to categorize answers, and due to this, some responses may not be accurately represented in the final analysis as the respondents intended.

Directions for Future Research

This study provides several avenues for future study that would be beneficial for churches in the United States to be able to better understand why college students make their religious participation decisions. One of the most interesting findings of this study was the discovery of a significant percentage of college students with prior religious involvement (20.6%) are not currently involved but have an interest in being involved. The present study, however, did not have a means of gathering data on what barriers exist that keep this group of students from becoming involved. A quote from one of the students who was interviewed when asked what would make her more interested in being involved in religion at the college level may provide some initial insight into this question; "I think more outreach by the church activities…. There was nobody that really reached out to me. I definitely would [become involved], I just don't know where to start." This is just a starting point, however, and shows that considerable research is needed to understand what keeps college students with interest in religious involvement from being involved. Discovering answers to this question will provide valuable guidance to college ministries and churches as they engage in outreach and ministry activities.

Future research should also investigate the differences in college participation between branches of Christianity by using more exacting standards than this study was able to do. The current study only differentiated using the terms Catholic and Christian, which is not specific enough to perform detailed analysis on potential differences in participation from high school to college. By creating more descriptive categories that address divisions within the Christian church, future research may be able to find statistically significant differences in participation patterns among college students based on their previous affiliations.

This study broke ground by focusing on how the strength of a respondent's experience impacted their decisions about religious participation in college. However, the variable used to measure this only considered whether positive and negative experiences were present and was not able to measure the relative strength and weakness of those experiences for each individual. Future research should use a Likert-type scale to allow participants to rate the strength of their experiences and then use this more detailed data to examine if the relationship between college participation and previous experiences is stronger than this current study was able to demonstrate.

A final direction for future research is found in the data that was not analyzed in this study. There were several participants who indicated that they had no prior religious involvement, yet since arriving at college, had become involved. Although this observation was interesting to the researchers, it was not considered in the present study due to the selective focus of the questions at hand. However, future investigators should investigate this population to understand better both its motivations and to gain a clearer picture of how widespread this trend is. An investigation of this nature will expand our understanding of the trends present in religious involvement among college age youth.

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Heresy and Its Uses

A Twentieth-Century Heresiarch and his Evangelical Detractors

Taylor Cade West

Abstract

The embers of heresy in Christianity were neither snuffed out in antiquity nor in the Middle Ages. The United States of the twentieth century was home to its own champions of theological unorthodoxy; chief among them was Herbert W. Armstrong, whom conservative evangelicals branded as dangerously and even satanically heretical. Despite Armstrong's straying from traditional Protestant orthodoxy, from the 1930s onward, he was able to create a massive publishing and religious "empire," as evangelicals called it. Although Armstrong had a global footprint, the scholarship on American religion is largely silent when it comes to this religious leader. Even less has been written about the tension between evangelicals and Armstrong, their theological opponent. This article brings to light this history of accusations of heresy, examining the rhetoric that surrounded it and how the allegation of theological unorthodoxy fit and fed into an atmosphere of alarm during the Cold War.

Keywords: Heresy, Evangelicalism, Herbert W. Armstrong, Worldwide Church of God, American Christianity

Introduction

Herbert W. Armstrong spoke into a microphone at his recording studio located on the campus of Ambassador College, a university he had founded in 1947 in Pasadena, California. Outside the recording booth, a whole mass of "co-workers" undulated and swirled, pouring their energy into the "work" of God, as Armstrong referred to it (Armstrong, "Melchisedec - but by Every Word of God"). Armstrong's voice, now polished and trained by decades of radio broadcasts and sermons, slipped onto the airwaves; from there, it ricocheted around the world. In this broadcast of *The World Tomorrow*, Armstrong urged that "God is a family!" To

which he added, "And when we're born of Him, we'll be like He is. And we'll be no longer flesh and blood. We'll be no longer human; we will be divine. We will be very God" (Armstrong, "The Soul That Sinneth Shall . . ."). Armstrong's promise of deification for all true believers, a pan-deification of the faithful, was a trope of Armstrong's religious discourse, repeated oft and in diverse formulations. Towards the final third of the Cold War, almost all areas of the globe had fallen under the tenor of his message, possibly millions hearing his voice (Hopkins 1974). Those not reached sonically might also have been touched by Armstrong's printed word. *The Plain Truth*, one of his organization's many publications, was a monthly magazine[1] with a circulation in the millions,[2] primarily because the publication was free. Armstrong, like so many other evangelicals, had shrewdly harnessed technological developments and created textual spaces for the expansion of his message. The millions of souls regularly or accidently tuning in to *The World Tomorrow* broadcast were treated to an enthralling admixture of commentary on current events, apocalyptic predictions, advice, and musings about the present and future. In this eclectic, meandering, and international radio program, there was always one constant: Armstrong pounded home his Christian message and theological doctrines with the force and dinging repetition of a blacksmith shaping metal. Armstrong's message of deification had two valences depending on the possible audience. For the curious listener, unmoored in the shifting and changing seas of religious life in twentieth-century America, the message might have been perceived as unspeakably seductive. Who, in the end, would rebuff the divine for the human? Who would reject omnipotence in exchange for the finiteness and limited nature of the human person? Roger R. Chambers, in his book *The Plain Truth About Armstrongism*, first published in 1972, dismissed Armstrong's promise of apotheosis for his followers as a perennial and naïve desire of human beings: "Men have always wanted to be God" (1988, 9). While for many the notion that one might become God was tantalizing and appealing – the success of Armstrong's ministry being powerful evidence for such a claim – other Americans experienced this message in an entirely different way. In the judgement of conservative evangelicals who encountered Armstrong's movement and watched with palpable unease its growth, this and other doctrines were unbiblical, blasphemous, and registered in their minds almost universally as heresy.

By the mid-1970s, conservative evangelicals[3] had published a spate of manuscripts of opprobrium against Armstrong and against what they argued were his errant doctrines

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[1] The magazine was eventually translated and printed in six languages other than English: Spanish, Italian, German, French, Dutch, and Skandinavisk [sic]. See The Herbert W. Armstrong Searchable Library: http://www.herbert-armstrong.org/index.html.

[2] According to the April 1984 issue of *The Plain Truth*, the magazine's circulation stood at 6,664,000 (*The Plain Truth*).

[3] Evangelicals are a changing and varied group in the United States, diverse in beliefs, religious practices, and political leanings. Evangelicals, nowadays in the twenty-first century, are also racially diverse with more than a third of evangelicals in the United States coming from the African American, Latino, and Asian communities (Kim 2019). Over 700 churches in the United States today, for example, have incorporated mixed martial arts (MMA) into their ministries (Watson and Brock 2015). This clearly complex, shifting, and diverse religious landscape in American evangelicalism is beyond the scope of this historical inquiry; moreover, the questions of definitions have been dealt with at length elsewhere in the scholarship. In this article, the term "evangelical" will be used to describe white, conservative evangelicals for the reason that the works under examination come from

(DeLoach 1971; Hopkins 1974; Benware 1975; Chambers 1988; Martin 2019). These studies are important for two reasons: first, they are an invaluable register of how evangelicals reacted to fellow Christians, though of a visibly different breed; how evangelicals sought to crush heresy; and how they lodged their complaints. Through these writings, we are provided a first-hand account of how some evangelicals were mobilizing to admonish other Christians and drive them out from the Bride of Christ. Second, these works provide scholars, once one has sifted through the copious chaff of theological tit for tat, with new insights and a breadcrumb trail to other secondary sources. Joseph Hopkins' 1974 *The Armstrong Empire*, for example, provides endnotes, a bibliography, financial charts from the Worldwide Church of God, and a map of the United States, which is bespeckled with locations of Armstrong's churches in almost every American state. In short, it is a valuable compendium of different sources, commentaries, and information on Armstrong's work from the time. These works also present the reader with a critical stance beyond mere theological questions. For example, Hopkins touches upon Armstrong's widely diffused belief in British-Israelism (also called Anglo-Israelism), the doctrine that the British, and by descent Americans, but also northern Europeans (Armstrong, "Wake up and Return to Our God!"), were members of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel and therefore the true Israel, i.e., God's chosen people. Hopkins and Chambers point out the problems this belief created in terms of race (Hopkins 1974; Chambers 1988). Hopkins identifies the "racist tone. . . beneath the surface" of such rhetoric and the ideology of British-Israelism's problematic relation towards Jews (1974, 68). Another contribution from Hopkins is when he points out the glaring inconsistencies between Armstrong's doctrine that the Old Testament law was binding and must be kept by God's elect today, on the one hand, and the realities in practice on the other. "Most of the Israelite civil statutes and the intricate regulations governing priestly garb and duties, as well as animal sacrifice and outmoded Temple rituals," Hopkins writes, "have been dropped" (1974, 135). Hanukkah, celebrated by Jesus, was also discarded by Armstrong (1974, 145). Hence, Hopkins elucidates, the process by which Armstrong revived the Old Testament law in Christian circles, in the twentieth-century United States, was highly selective: some bits were integrated into his synthetic religious worldview, others were unceremoniously dropped by the wayside. Armstrong's theological palate was eclectic, but also uncategorical. Alongside the works already mentioned, we can place the 1975 study of Armstrong by Paul Benware, who was then a professor of theology at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, and Walter Martin's *The Kingdom of the Cults*, first published in 1965 (2019). Finally, Charles DeLoach, an actual member of the Armstrong movement, who defected and became a born-again evangelical Christian, wrote his own exposé titled *The Armstrong Error* (1971).

The thesis of this article is that the concept of heresy became a tool amongst Armstrong and rival evangelicals that was wielded with powerful effects. The mutual accusations of heresy, between Armstrong and these evangelicals, were not simply a denunciation of a perceived deviation from revealed truth. Instead, the claims of heresy, or error, became a conceptual space in which both the heresiarch, from the evangelical perspective, and his detractors could elaborate certain types of discourse, participate in various forms of rhetoric.

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this segment of American evangelicalism. For more detailed histories of American evangelicalism, see (Marsden 1991; Balmer 1999; FitzGerald 2017).

Through accusing one of heresy, and the rhetoric surrounding it, these historical actors also contributed to an atmosphere of alarm that was an essential ingredient in creating the aroma of the Cold War. Through such charges of heresy, Armstrong and his evangelical foes were able to continually redraw the lines around which collective identity could become visible. Alongside these useful characteristics of heresy-hunting, evangelicals' anathemas had an important consequence in that they cordoned off Armstrong and his style of evangelism by firmly and repeatedly presenting the claim that the radio evangelist was unchristian. Some evangelicals' categorization of Armstrongism as heretical, and therefore outside Christianity, had a negative impact on the scholarly literature in that it delegitimized his ministry. This article is not a historical exploration of the theological truth of one rival camp or another, which is the field and work of apologetics; nor is it an inquiry into the origins of Armstrong's beliefs, a species of genealogy of "heresy," a subject covered largely by the evangelical publications against Armstrong. Instead, what is under examination is the rhetoric surrounding the allegations of heretical belief and practice, and the use of these allegations as a means of continually indoctrinating the faithful and as a vehicle for transmitting the idea that the period in which one was living was an age of deception. A forthcoming article shall explore the relation between Armstrong and evangelicals in more depth.

Herbert W. Armstrong – A Brief History

For a figure who is largely unknown, did not have the popular recognition of a Billy Graham, or does not have a notable footprint in the scholarly literature, a brief introduction to Herbert W. Armstrong's life and work will help situate historically this American religious leader. Armstrong hailed from an Iowan Quaker family. His first forays into the world were not in the realm of the spirit but rather, and aptly for his future endeavors, in the secular world of advertising (Lupo 2002).[4] Armstrong drank in, without reserve, the culture of success that was expanding in the United States during the first part of the twentieth century, as the historian Michael Scott Lupo brings to the fore in his dissertation (2002). Culturally speaking, material success and social status were strongly infused in Armstrong's thinking for the remainder of his life. After ups and downs in the advertising industry, the future religious leader headed west to Oregon to try his fortunes there. Armstrong was exposed, via his wife in 1926, to Sabbatarianism, the belief that the Sabbath should be held on Saturday instead of the almost universal Christian practice of holding the Sabbath on Sunday. After an arduous bout of self-study, according to Armstrong (Armstrong, "Prove What . . ."), attempting to best his wife and her "religious fanaticism" (Armstrong, "We are to be Like God"), he came to the realization that his wife Loma possessed the truth, and he threw himself headlong into Christian life. In a situation of abject poverty, with little prospect of staying afloat in the social and economic whirlpool of the Great Depression, he and his growing family become involved in a Church of God Seventh Day in Eugene, Oregon. After a brief stint as a pastor and after doctrinal conflicts with the local church's ecclesiastical hierarchy (Lupo 2002), Armstrong, with the help and sacrifice of his wife, set out on an enterprising religious ministry of his own, unfettered by hierarchy, unbound by the burdens of traditional Protestant Christianity. His

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[4] In this, Armstrong and conservative evangelicalism were cut from the same cloth because, in twentieth-century American evangelicalism, there was an explicit and unabashed mental union between the act of selling, on the one hand, and the activity of evangelization on the other (West 2021).

first radio appearance was in 1934 (Lupo 2002). *The Plain Truth*, a humble self-published sheet also appearing in February of that year (1934), would eventually become one of the religious magazines with the largest circulation in the United States. Initially named the Radio Church of God, the church later changed its name to the Worldwide Church of God (Chamber 1988).

The next and most important chapter in Armstrong's life took him to California. There, he expanded his radio ministry. In Pasadena, Armstrong founded the first of his college campuses. Ambassador College would be a crucial space for the training of future disciples in the "true values" (*Envoy* 1958, 7), tapping the labor of students for the promulgation of his message who worked in all aspects of the ministry, and signaling to the world through its lush gardens, millionaire mansions, ever-expanding facilities, and the grandiose concert hall that was eventually erected, that Armstrong, a man of God, had arrived.[5] Success had been achieved. Ambassador College was one of three campuses: the Ambassador campus in St. Albans, England was created in 1960, the campus in Big Sandy, Texas, was founded in 1964 (Hopkins 1974). The rest of Armstrong's career as spokesman of God was marked by considerable expansion of his church's global reach, infighting between the patriarch and his son Garner Ted and other ministers, and a surprising and almost unwavering fidelity to the version of the Gospel that Armstrong had fashioned. There were also, as is often the case with televangelists, moments of scandal, lawsuits, and extravagant uses of wealth: private jets, globe-trotting, visiting world leaders, and Rolls Royces. Many apostates from Armstrong's church denounced him as controlling, abusive, authoritarian (Hopkins 1974; Chambers 1988). Amidst it all, until the very end, he proclaimed that he was an "apostle" and the only one who possessed the "true Gospel" (Armstrong, "Sermon on the Mount - Part 3").

Armstrong arrived at a variety of beliefs at which most Christians would look askance, beyond the deification of true believers through the reproduction of God and his firm stance on Sabbatarianism. Armstrong's religious tenets, which he believed to be biblically derived, are well documented in the literature produced by evangelicals (Hopkins 1974; Benware 1975; Chambers 1988; Martin 2019). At the most basic level, Armstrong's theological anthropology taught that the soul was not immortal but rather material (Armstrong, "Jesus Is the Bread of Life"). If there was no immortal soul, this soul's eternal damnation and torture in hell was, necessarily, problematic. Thus, hell was dispensed with too (Armstrong, "Hades and Gehenna Explained"). Armstrong also rejected the idea of heaven as an actual future place beyond this life (Armstrong, "Not in Heaven"). Against the orthodox Christian teaching on heaven, Armstrong offered his good news of the wonderful "world tomorrow," a post-apocalyptic physical kingdom on earth that would be ruled by Armstrong and his flock. To the Christian Godhead, Armstrong took his scalpel and started cutting and rearranging. The Trinity was rejected (Hopkins 1974). God was, in his religious system, a family and all true believers would "be like God" (Armstrong, "We Are to Be Like God"). While all these positions were scandalous to evangelicals, perhaps Armstrong's most egregious departure from "historical Christianity" ("Why 'Christianity Today'" 1956, 20), as evangelicals sometimes called it, was the fact that he adopted or appropriated, depending on one's viewpoint, Jewish practices and holidays. As mentioned before, the process of weaving back into Christianity various Judaic

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[5] The yearbooks from Ambassador College, titled *Envoy*, are buoyant representations of space as a signal of worldly success. See, for instance, *Envoy* 1953.

religious traditions was selective. Kosher was kept (Hopkins 1974), other Jewish religious practices and holidays that built community and a collective identity were adopted and made binding: the Feast of Tabernacles, for example, yet other Jewish practices were simply ignored. This stance towards the Old Testament, this insistence that the law of God must be maintained for salvation, placed Armstrong in direct opposition to Protestantism's salvation doctrine (*sola gratia*), where salvation was given upon the admission of one's sins and one's wholly sinful nature, as well as the acceptance of Christ, without the aid of human works. In sum, Armstrong's theology constituted a total loss of center, where the logic of the Christian faith and the psychological value of rebirth and salvation no longer held meaning. For this religious leader and his thousands of adherents and his millions more of readers and listeners, the Christian theology and dogma of the past were no longer feasible options for the faith. Here, we catch a glimpse of a far-reaching revolution in Christian thinking.[6] This underlying notion of the irrelevance of Christian orthodoxy, these dark tidings from the perspective of the conservative Christian faithful, were heralded by Armstrong, who believed himself a Christian. Hence, by the Cold War, after Armstrong's movement had gathered steam, a radical break with the Christian past was emerging, which resonated with many. The schism was not coming from masses of unbelievers influenced by Soviet communism and its avowed atheism, nor by the modern forces of secularism, but was flowering in the ambit of religion itself.

Sources and Methodology

Various evangelical authors during the Cold War were aware of Armstrong, documented his beliefs, and frequently spoke out against him. The scholarly literature on Armstrong, in contrast, offers a far different picture. The purely academic literature, untinged by religious sectarianism, is almost silent on Armstrong and his Worldwide Church of God from the church's beginnings in the 1930s until the religious leader's death in 1986. Many important and excellent studies of American religion and American evangelicalism neither make mention of him nor attempt to situate Armstrong's brand of Christianity in the wider terrain of American religious belief.[7] Professor of Christianity Brian Stanley's sweeping global study *Christianity in the Twentieth Century* is one example; Armstrong was not made a part of Stanley's history. Where Armstrong might appear – in the section on British-Israelism – Armstrong, one of the most famous exponents of this religious ideology in the United States, is absent (2018, 24–25). Far from being a stain on Stanley's scholarship, this occurrence is perhaps a natural consequence of "the activity of contemplation, *theoria*, intensive *seeing*." (Park 1983, 382). In order to bring something into focus, other things must pass from view, and

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[6] The evangelicals who wrote against Armstrong and his beliefs would largely disagree with this statement. Many of these works take great pains to inform readers that Armstrong's movement was nothing more than a hodgepodge of previously tried and now defunct forms of heresy, which had first reared their heads in the ancient world. To their eyes, "Armstrongism" was nothing but a resurrection of ancient heretical systems: Gnosticism (Hopkins 1974, 128); legalism of the variety that sprang up among the believers of Galatia (Hopkins 1974, 125–27); "the ancient Ebonite [Ebionite] error" (Chambers 1988, 9).

[7] Numerous scholarly works, foundational works even, that touch on a variety of subjects–radio ministries, international evangelism, evangelicalism in general, American Christianity, premillennial apocalypticism–subjects where Armstrong naturally might enter the discussion, make no mention of him. The reader is pointed to the following examples: (Diamond 1989, 1995; Balmer 1999; Armstrong 2000; Lahr 2007; Sutton 2014; FitzGerald 2017).

Armstrong has passed by largely undetected. Apart from the various constraints facing scholars–time, financial resources, access, space, interests–there are two additional reasons why this general oversight might have occurred, which stem from the form Armstrong's various organizations took. First, as Chambers recognizes, Armstrong had a massive global presence through radio, television, and physical churches; despite this, his ideas remained largely unknown (1988). A reason for Armstrong's lack of acknowledgement could be attributed to the distribution of his ideas via pamphlets and other publications, which were presented to readers and listeners upon request but did not always present his ideas as clearly and explicitly as possible. His magazine, *The Plain Truth,* was spiced with biblical references; its main goal was to engage with the public with an intense focus on current events, as opposed to a direct exposition of doctrine. There was, in many cases, a carefully crafted public message and then there were the weeds of Armstrong's theology into which one might become lost once one entered more deeply into the fold. Another plausible reason scholars of American religion have largely missed Armstrong is the development of secretive practices in his churches, which placed distance between Armstrong's elect and the wider world. For instance, Armstrong's satellite churches met in rented spaces with the understanding that they would soon outgrow a new, physical church. The absence, at times, of physical and identifiable spaces allowed the church to operate in a fog. Armstrong's ministers were unlisted in phone directories and the general public was discouraged from attending church services until their doctrinal conformity could be properly sussed out (Chambers 1988). These catacombic religious practices were, according to Chambers, relaxed in 1973 (1988). Armstrong's absence in the academic literature raises an important theoretical question: How could a religious leader who preached to millions for decades, had churches scattered throughout the world, met frequently with heads of state, and founded three university campuses be glossed over with such ease?

Though Armstrong is notably absent from studies about American religion, some studies do exist.[8] One crucial piece of the historiography comes from Lupo, mentioned previously. In his 2002 dissertation *Advertising the Time of the End*, one of the few lengthy studies of a scholarly nature, Lupo explores Armstrong's "world tomorrow" in the context of American culture before and during the Cold War. Lupo provides confirmation of the conclusion stated earlier, namely, that conservative evangelicals have largely dominated the understanding of Armstrong and that almost all studies had an intense focus on Armstrong's perceived heresies. Lupo points out, quite rightly, that there was a tendency in these evangelical monographs to portray Armstrong as a "doctrinally-aberrant religious leader" (2002, 1). One of Lupo's insights is that his history challenges the narrative put forward by some evangelicals regarding the work of Armstrong. While many conservative evangelical Christians attempted to paint Armstrong as merely a confusing and incorrect religious leader, Lupo disregards the idea that Armstrong was simply bizarre and "misguided" (2002, i). Instead, Lupo shows that Armstrong floated

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[8] Though not relevant to this historical inquiry for various reasons, the reader is pointed to other scholarly studies on Armstrong (Tricia and Thomas 2009; Martin 2018). Armstrong is mentioned in a footnote, in the afterword, of *Mapping the End Times: American Evangelical Geopolitics and Apocalyptic Visions* (Dittmer and Sturm 2010). Armstrong also made it into another footnote (number 33) in an article on the anti-cult movement in the United States (Kaplan 1993, 291).

leisurely on the currents of American life and culture during the twentieth century. Nowhere was this more apparent than Armstrong's thinking about success, which was, according to Lupo, appropriated from the surrounding American culture in the first part of the twentieth century (2002). Far from being a mere theological abnormality, Armstrong's life, work, and message were less a product of mere heresy and more the outgrowth of the times in which he was living. The focus of Lupo's scholarship did not allow for an exploration of the confrontational relationship between Armstrong and conservative evangelicals. The present study, therefore, complements Lupo's findings.

Given that this article deals with Christian heresy, one area of scholarship necessarily elbows its way into the discussion. The scholarly literature on Christian heresies spans vast geographies, cultures, and periods of time. Though this scholarship is usually moving in historical moments other than the twentieth century, it offers insights that are relevant to a discussion of Armstrong's deviation from conservative evangelical orthodoxy and the reaction it produced in some evangelicals. Professor of religious studies Joseph F. Kelly focuses on debates surrounding heretical belief as a causation for identifiable and repeated forms of discourse, social interaction, and anxiety, in his 2012 *History and Heresy*. While Kelly condemns the past violence that often-accompanied denunciations of those who strayed away from the righteous path of orthodox belief, the author views the condemnation of a heresy and a following counter-apologetic or exposition of theological truth as a perfectly legitimate type of religious behavior (2012). In Kelly's exploration of one ancient heresy–Montanism–he identifies clear rhetorical tactics and patterns of action surrounding the ancient second-century controversy in the early Christian Church. Kelly observes that it was the adherents of orthodoxy itself who codified the official knowledge of the heresy in question. The sites and literature of a heresy were at times annihilated. As such, only a partial portrait is what we are left with. The orthodox believers of old were also those who had the power of naming and creating the terminology through which an intellectual or religious movement was identified. The proponents of accepted orthodox belief also raised serious doubts about the legitimacy of unorthodox prophecy, thereby undermining the very authoritative foundation from which some heresies spring to life. One additional aspect that Kelly identifies is that, surrounding heretical movements and their impassioned denunciations, one often encounters the use of slander or an emphasis on scandal as instruments of delegitimization (2012). Another study that can be used to add depth to the understanding of heresy in its previous historical iterations is Silvia Federici's *Caliban and the Witch*. Set in the European Middle Ages, Federici's work shows that, while heretical movements existed, in the sense that they were deviations from traditional and institutionally accepted belief, beneath these unorthodox creeds swirled copious and powerful social critiques. Thus, in medieval Europe, the suppression of a given heresy was not only a matter of religion but became a clear project of maintaining intact certain socio-economic relations, certain protected provinces of social privilege, and was imbued with a desire to maintain or transform social relations between men and women (Federici 2009). The American historian Henry Charles Lea in his 1906 history of the inquisition similarly observes that the heresies of the Middle Ages "were no longer, as of old, mere speculative subtleties propounded by learned theologians and prelates in the gradual evolution of Christian doctrine" (1906, 60). Two patterns, according to Lea, emerged in these medieval heretical movements: some were antisacerdotal, directed at the clergy, its power, its corruption, its

wealth; and others were Manichaean in their leanings, thoughts, and actions, spurning the flesh and the material in favor of the spiritual. Both forms of heresy were being mobilized against the feudal system and its abuses and excesses (Lea 1906).

In this exploration of what evangelicals interpreted as a twentieth-century heresy, and the reaction to it, two sets of primary sources have been used. The first set of primary sources have been limited to the radio programs and sermons of Armstrong. This in no way constitutes the bulk of Armstrong's evangelistic work, given that Armstrong, his adherents, and his various organizations produced a staggering number of magazines, pamphlets, books, radio programs, calendars, sermons, and other related materials. Despite the exclusion of some sources, the radio programs and sermons examined offer a faithful representation of Armstrong's message, his beliefs, his rhetorical style, and his estimation of how his church fit into the larger religious mosaic of the United States. These primary sources have been taken from the digital repository Herbert W. Armstrong Library (HWA Library).[9] The digital library presents problems from the perspective of academic precision and detail. Dates, for example, are not always provided; when they are provided for audiovisual sources, there is no way to authenticate them. The radio addresses and vast print resources, while astoundingly complete, are, in the end, the ones provided. One cannot judge what gatekeeping methods have been used, what has been archived, and what has, for whatever reason, been left out. The second type of literature that will be used are secondary sources on Armstrong himself, five studies that were written by evangelical Christians. What in certain instances serve as secondary sources, here will be analyzed from a different vantage point and used as primary sources, as historical textual evidence of how perceived heresy was identified, denounced, and the historical uses of the conceptual idea of being heretical.

The findings of this article contribute to the already vast scholarship on American religion in two ways. First, the exploration of how conservative evangelicals dealt with Armstrong's straying from their theological doctrines adds an additional layer of understanding regarding how evangelicals were operating in the twentieth century. There has been much ado about the theological conflicts between liberal Protestants and conservative evangelicals in the twentieth century (Sutton 2014; FitzGerald 2017; Stanley 2018). Far less has been said about how evangelicals engaged with those who dwelled beyond the horizon of traditional belief or, to put it differently, how they attempted to slice off certain members from the body of Christ. The evangelical movement, such a powerful force in American society and politics, has been widely studied; conservative evangelicals' heresy-hunting has not. Second, this article casts light on a man and his evangelistic enterprise, who has largely remained a blurred figure in the landscape of American religion, recovers him from the margins, and places him back in the midst of American religious life.

The Rhetorical Framework of Heresy and its Hunting

The complexion of Armstrong's Christianity naturally struck evangelical champions of orthodoxy as a heretical divergence. Contemporaneous and parallel to Armstrong's growing ministry was the conservative evangelical movement. In the 1930s, Christian fundamentalists were mobilizing and organizing, especially against President Franklin D. Roosevelt, whom they

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[9] Herbert W. Armstrong Library: https://www.hwalibrary.com/.

labelled the antichrist, and the president's New Deal (Sutton 2012). In the 1940s, important parachurch organizations of conservative Protestant Christianity were put in place such as the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and the famous evangelist Billy Graham, affectionately dubbed "America's Pastor" (Wacker 2014), had already begun his career as an evangelist. In the 1950s, as the Civil Rights Movement began to break up the long night of racial segregation and systemic oppression of African Americans and other racial minorities, many conservative evangelicals challenged and attempted to undermine this movement (Dupont 2013; Jones 2020). These efforts and this activism, along with an ever-more robust communications apparatus in the form of radio, the printed word, and later television, meant that when the 1960s came into view, conservative evangelicals were an established, formidable, and expanding religious phenomenon (Schäfer 2013).

A useful starting point for an inquiry into the twentieth-century heretical controversy between evangelicals and Armstrong is the rhetorical framework in which charges of heresy were levelled. A crucial beam in this rhetorical framework was the act of naming. On its face attaching a name or series of terms to a complex and decades-long religious enterprise might appear straightforward or mere rhetorical flair. Far from being insignificant, the process of naming was highly important in the identification, condemnation, and possible eradication of perceived religious heresies. In many historical instances, the naming of a heresy was the privilege of theological opponents and of the victor in theological struggles (Kelly 2012). Names and terms have the function of supplying the mind with a category of thought into which a given phenomenon might be placed and become fixed. Regarding Armstrong, the names and terminology fashioned to describe him, his beliefs, and his disciples in the Worldwide Church of God served, on the one hand, to delineate the acceptable bounds of Christianity and, on the other, were also ways in which the smudge of difference could mark the flesh of the supposed unbeliever. The terminology created was not, however, only an innocent means of spatial orientation. That which was outside the delineating lines of Christianity was also perceived and presented as a form of transgression. Boundaries and their maintenance, crucial conceptual factors for making sense of the world (Douglas 2005), were not only felt but were solidified rhetorically. With Armstrong, this ancient practice of creating distance through names was avidly continued by twentieth-century evangelicals who saw themselves as zealous defenders of Christian orthodoxy. In the context of an expanding evangelicalism in the United States and Armstrong's widening movement, evangelical texts of denunciation did not simply present Armstrong as an alternative form of Christian belief and practice. Nor was this a denomination like any other. Evangelicals labelled the Armstrong phenomenon as an "ism." The most easily identifiable heretical category presented in the evangelical literature on this figure was "Armstrongism" (Hopkins 1874; Benware 1977; Rogers 1988; Martin 1965). Because a new "ism" had been born, naturally, a corresponding term was created for a member of this form of religion, which was, to evangelicals' minds, beyond the frontiers of Christianity: an "Armstrongite" (Benware 1977, 2). Through such terminology, these particular evangelicals clearly conveyed their conviction that Armstrong was anything but a messenger of the Gospel of Christ. Likewise, Armstrong's followers were not walking in the footsteps of the Lord; instead, there were followers of a mortal man.

With Paul N. Benware's 1977 study *Ambassadors of Armstrongism*, this designation would be innocent enough if it were not for what confronts the reader in the opening pages. In the

second paragraph, the reader is informed that "Orthodox Christianity is being confronted with an intensification in the propagation of erroneous doctrines" (Benware 1977, 1). Chief among these propagandists of error was Armstrongism, "one of the fastest growing cults in the world" (Benware 1977, 1). Added to this portrait of dangerous theological deviation and a cultlike religious movement was the notion that Armstrongism had "opened an attack" on true, biblical Christianity (Benware 1997, 1). Here, Benware was engaging in a type of metaphor that was and is widespread in American culture, politics, and evangelicalism: that of war and violence (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). Quite effectively, evangelical detractors of Armstrong constructed a tension in people's mind in which a "cult," with all its inherently negative connotations, was waging a war against the true Church itself. In such rhetoric, the discussion had moved far away from a debate of doctrinal differences. Just as Armstrong's evangelism was framed as an attack, so too was the evangelical response couched in such terms. The Cold War evangelical manuscripts presenting and denouncing Armstrong's theological divergence are intertextual: they cite each other. In *The Armstrong Empire*, Hopkins cites Roger R. Chambers' *The Plain Truth About Armstrongism*. Hopkins describes his fellow evangelical's literary work as an "attack" (Hopkins 1974, 220). Amidst what evangelicals perceived or mentally construed as a battle, Chambers lays out quite plainly to the reader his intentions. Chambers examines one doctrine: Armstrong's British-Israelism, which elevates the United States and the British Commonwealth to the chosen status of Israel. If this doctrine is false, Chambers asserts, "Armstrongism is destroyed" (1988, 12). While it may be expected in such theological debates, which since antiquity have roused and directed human passion, to find these forms of rhetoric, the fact remains that it offers scholars of religion in the United States one additional layer of understanding. Conservative evangelicals in the United States were not looking to engage in a benign form of "cultural custodianship," as the scholar James A. Patterson suggested (2006, 811–12). Destruction is not usually part of the social praxis of the custodian. Nor was it simply theological disagreement and debate. Attacks and destruction are not the usual characteristics of open debate – instead, the game had become one of life or death, destroying or being destroyed, or so these utterances would have us believe. By using such forms of speech, Evangelicals were participating in and contributing to a rhetoric that was widespread in the United States. To be fair, Armstrong's evangelical inquisitors do not couch every critique in the verbiage of war and violence. They also presented their claims, throughout these books, in a straightforward and matter-of-fact-way. One can safely conclude that these monographs were an admixture of measured critique and chock-full with a rhetoric of danger, deviation, war, and undoing.

Alongside this naming was other descriptive terminology used to identify, in a sweep, Armstrong's movement. One illustrative example is "empire," which was included in the title of Joseph Hopkins' 1974 study. The term "Armstrong empire" was also used by Benware (1975, v). This term is, in the first instance and most obviously, a *conceptismo* of the immense size and startling reach of the Worldwide Church of God. Armstrong's physical and radio church were large both in the number of actual members, geographies covered, but also in terms of fellow travelers, the occasional readers and listeners that made up Armstrong's audience. Tagging Armstrong's evangelistic work as an empire was an invocation of bigness. Yet, the term must also be read from the vantage point of the transgression that evangelicals clearly felt Armstrong and his church represented. The term empire must be nestled alongside

the ideas put forward by evangelicals of attack and cult. Thus, these evangelicals used the term to conjure up a notion of a gigantic and global, but also dangerous and iron-willed, march of legions. Empires destroy just as much as they create, and these authors deployed such a term so as to invoke the notion of unacceptable and dangerous otherness in the minds of readers.

In the shifting frontiers of American Christianity, with its myriad denominations, groups, and personalities, the rhetoric of heresy cut both ways. Though Armstrong was worlds away in terms of belief, in the competitive field of Christian religion, his rhetoric bore a striking and not insignificant symmetry to his evangelical counterparts. The twentieth-century religious leader also utilized his communication platforms to bathe other Christians in a less than flattering light. Indeed, it may be safely argued that his species of Christianity was crafted with a constant eye to what evangelicals were doing in terms of practice and belief. Catholicism was obliquely mentioned from time to time, but the bulk of Armstrong's condemnations in his radio addresses targeted conservative Protestants, which indicates that the contours of the Worldwide Church of God's collective identity were chiseled vis-à-vis evangelical orthodoxy. The alleged heresies of evangelicals threw Armstrong's religion into relief. Just as evangelicals zealously attempted to delegitimize Armstrong, connect him with the ideas of error, falsehood, danger, and "confusion" (Rohrer 1970, 3), so too did Armstrong seek to undermine evangelicalism. While evangelicals wrote of attacks and cults, Armstrong believed other Christians, and there is every reason to believe he was thinking about evangelicals, were "dumb," "stupid," and "ignorant" (Armstrong "The Seventh Day"). In a radio broadcast titled "The Seventh Day," Armstrong sculpted a biting rhetorical frieze: "Some people will say today that Christianity is not a way of life, it's just a matter of professing or confessing or making a decision for Christ or something like that, of exalting Christ" (Armstrong "The Seventh Day"). Here, Armstrong described and subsequently dismissed as false the moment of spiritual rebirth in Christ, and he did so in undeniable "evangelicalese," to use author Amanda Montell's term (2021, 42). From the phrasing of this statement, it can be gathered that Armstrong had evangelicals firmly in mind. It also becomes clear that he had been thoroughly exposed to conservative evangelical Christianity. He was so well versed in it, could employ with such ease its verbiage, that he could use it to negatively derive his own religious outlook. After clearly summoning before the minds of listeners whom he was talking about, Armstrong proceeded to inform his audience what these other Christians were:

> We're like even the professing Christians mostly, they're like a lot of dumb; and I mean mentally dumb, ignorant. I don't mean dumb of speech, I mean dumb of comprehension. The way we use the word in perhaps a slang expression today, stupid. That's a fact. Let's look down into our own minds and hearts and recognize it my friends, it's true (Armstrong "The Seventh Day").

Armstrong and his followers were in danger of becoming like this "lot of dumb, stupid, lost sheep that have lost their way" (Armstrong "The Seventh Day," n.d.). Deviation from true belief was the pretense, but the game quickly degenerated into open disparagement. The essential difference was that evangelicals could name. Armstrong, at least publicly in the context of mass radio evangelism, was in a weaker position and attempted to not single out certain evangelical sects or leaders overtly, and thereby he avoided potentially alienating his audience. Judiciously crafted allusion, then, was his public mode of denunciation. Generalized

Protestant Christianity was his target. The leader of the Worldwide Church of God first sketched an outline of the opposing form of Christianity for his audience and then undermined it.

In 1979, in one of the rare occasions that Armstrong provides specifics on his radio program, he fingered fundamentalists as agents of deception and as promoters of a false form of Christianity. These Christians believed in the facts but then so did the devil, Armstrong reasoned. "But just believing something in an empty faith and believing in a fact, my friends, will not save anyone," Armstrong informed (Armstrong 1979b). In Armstrong's theology, the evangelical formula of salvation was bankrupt, something more was needed. There was a tangible difference between Armstrong's rhetoric designed for mass consumption and the rhetoric that was deployed in sermons and meant to nourish the faithful. How heresy was identified and denounced differed, with Armstrong, in the public and private spheres. In sermons, his faithful were treated to names, specifics, and tangible figures. One illustrative example comes from a recording (two hours and fifteen minutes long) of a sermon from February 1981. Armstrong admonished the faithful that "Jesus came and preached the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Jesus didn't say, 'Please accept Me as your Savior.' He didn't come on a soul-saving crusade. Maybe Billy Graham thinks He did, but He didn't" (Armstrong 1981). To his audience of the already converted, in the safety of the closed doors of the church, Armstrong felt comfortable and empowered enough to denounce what he considered a heretical and vapid form of Christianity: mere acceptance of Christ as Savior. Whereas, Armstrong believed, Jesus had come to preach the Kingdom of God, an actual physical reign on earth that would take place in the future. Armstrong, in his well-hewn eclecticism, had appropriated and integrated into his religious scheme premillennial apocalypticism, a stalwart belief of American evangelicalism and Christian fundamentalism (Noll 1994; Lahr, 2007), though he transparently redeployed this form of eschatology towards other theological ends. But in this slice of life between Armstrong and his congregation, a moment of intimacy that this primary source provides, the heresiarch, as evangelicals saw it, did not just criticize evangelicalism's most important figure–Graham–and his mode of evangelism–the crusade– Armstrong named names. In the same sermon, in the face of a growing Pentecostalism, Armstrong also spewed forth his proscription against this charismatic form of Christianity. The heresy of the Pentecostals, to Armstrong's mind, was that they neither followed the teachings about the Kingdom of God nor upheld the Old Testament law. Moreover, Armstrong condemned, they were drunkards, spiritually "drunk" in their charismatic and emotion-laden rituals (Armstrong 1981). They were, Armstrong preached in another sermon in 1983, "on a sort of emotional jag, or drunk" (Armstrong 1983). The fundamentalist leader Jerry Falwell, in the privacy of the Worldwide Church of God, was also singled out and denounced in this sermon (Armstrong 1983).

That, in the early 1980s, Armstrong named and dismissed Graham, Falwell, and Pentecostals was neither accidental nor insignificant. Graham, already by the early 1960s, had established himself as one of the most influential evangelists, captivating audiences in the United States and across the world. C. Ralston Smith, a minister from Oklahoma writing in *Christianity Today* in 1961, reported that Graham had preached to an estimated 30 million people and that, because of Graham's evangelistic work, some 900,000 individuals had turned their lives to the Christian Savior (Smith 1961, 4). While the accuracy of these numbers is

perhaps open to question, what is undeniable was Graham's public presence–through radio, crusades, magazine, meetings with elected officials–and his appeal. Falwell, too, was becoming a powerful force in American life. Falwell, had made a name for himself through his radio and television program *The Old-Time Gospel Hour*, founded Liberty University in 1971, and directly intervened and reshaped American politics through his organization the Moral Majority, founded in 1979. Just as with Graham and Falwell, Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement, with its renewed focus on the Holy Ghost and the gifts of the Spirit, spread rapidly in the United States from the 1960s to the 1990s (Stanley 2018). From its appearance in the United States, this form of Christian belief and practice would be exported to the far corners of the world. Thus, on the one hand, Armstrong engaged with the most prominent features of religious life in the United States at the time. He and his congregation were naturally aware of these phenomena. On the other hand, for Armstrong's project, these were growing and budding elements of American religion, and as such, were perceived as a creeping danger. From Armstrong's theological perspective, both evangelists and the Pentecostal movement were heretical. At the same time, these modes of American Christianity were formidable forms of competition. Armstrong identified these competitors, denounced them, and attempted to delegitimize them in the minds of his congregants. It can therefore be concluded that the heresy of others, from Armstrong's religious milieu, was not only a point of egregious theological deviation but that it was a tool in a highly competitive struggle for the social reproduction of one's type of religious life. The identification and condemnation of the heresy of others was a means of policing the belief and movements of the faithful, establishing a safe distance between the congregation and powerful currents in American religion.

The interpretation that heresy was also a mechanism for continually regulating one's flock gains currency when one considers the historical reality of religion in the United States. The landscape of American religion, scholars agree, because of the disestablishment of the church and the separation of church and state, was and is characterized by a competitive environment to win souls and expand (Noll 1994; Casalini 2007). Churches in the United States have been left to their own devices and, in order to survive, must appeal directly to the faithful, as they could not look to the state as an overt source of support. Given this historical reality, the apologetics found in these works were, in the first place, a theological activity focused on defending what was believed to be true Christian doctrine. In the second place, it was a much-needed tool for keeping the faithful in the pews. This was abundantly clear with Armstrong. In the competitive and changing environment of American religion, conversion was not the only event in the life of the believer; the religious journey was also punctuated, on occasion, by inculcations of orthodoxy. Looked at from this perspective, evangelicals too used the expanding publishing arm of their movement to discipline readers and remind them of true belief.

Sins of Deception

The heresiarch and conservative evangelicals were locked in a continual game of identification of false belief and its rotund condemnation. The rhetorical tricks employed were naming, so as to place the other outside the bounds of true Christianity, militarized

terminology, and accusations that the other posed a danger.[10] Heresy was neither mere theological debate, nor was the discourse confined to mere theological truths. In the age of the Cold War, with its myriad of dangers and endless sirens of alarm, goading populations up mounts of hysteria, conservative white evangelicals issued endless proclamations of social crisis, societal collapse, a veritable and perhaps permanent setting of the sun on the West. The watchwords of the hour in *Christianity Today*, conservative evangelicalism's premier intellectual publication, were "crisis" (Henry 1960, 3) and "decline" (Kirk 1960, 5). Meshing perfectly with these rhetorically manufactured mirages of decline, which touched everything from morals to culture, was a new sort of enemy: cults and irreligion. The perceived threat of irreligion stemmed from a variety of different phenomena in the United States during the Cold War, particularly the godless ideology of Soviet-style communism and a perception that secular forces in the United States were gaining power. Already in 1960, in *Christianity Today*, the threat of cults was being presented to the readership. Harold Lindsell, the then professor of missions at Fuller Theological Seminary, wondered if cults might not be "outpacing our churches" (1960, 3). Two years later, an editorial in the magazine, whose title confronts readers with the harrowing possibility of a "post-Christian era," offered more of the same. "The wavering phalanx of Protestantism has been beleaguered by the astounding growth of the so-called religious 'sects,'" the editorial reads, "Our country has itself made room for over 200 of these aberrant denominations" ("Hope in a 'Post-Christian' Era" 1962, 20). "Irreligion," other evangelicals wrote in the magazine, was sweeping the land ("Life for a Wayward Society" 1964; Marcel 1964). *Christianity Today* did not exist and thrive in a compartmentalized world of its own; Hopkins, the author of *The Armstrong Empire*, also wrote for and read the magazine (1971; 1986). To the minds of some conservative evangelicals, the age of the Cold War was a space of growing dangers and transgressed boundaries, where new and ominous forces were gathering on the horizon and contained within them the polluted Geist that surely would bring about the destruction of American life.

It was in such a historical landscape and common apprehension of the world that evangelicals viewed the man whom they saw as the heretic from Iowa. Armstrong was made a part of this world of decline, which evangelicals perceived but also crafted through their written discourse. Chambers, having been moved by this same sentiment about the state of American society and culture, opened his book on Armstrong with the line "the spiritual vacuum of the twentieth century is the inevitable womb of a durable cultism" (Chambers 1988, 7). To Chamber's mind, the United States was indeed experiencing a moment of decay and decline. And connected to this moment were phenomena like Armstrong's version of

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[10] A brief diachronic analysis, a stepping back in time, will serve to somewhat deflate this observation and will show that to a large degree, when heresy was involved, attention was heightened and tongues were sharpened, and, therefore, that these evangelical forms of speech were very much in keeping with historical precedent. While many historical examples can surely be summoned, the Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* provides an illustrative example. Bede, in his history, turns to the Arian heresy and its entrance into the island of Britain, and he does so in emotionally charged and biological terms. He wrote that Arianism was an "insanity" [*vesania*], "infecting the whole world" ["*quae corrupto orbe toto*"], as a "disease" [*pestilentia*], and as a "venom" ["*virus*"] (Bede 1930, 44–45). The point is that when it comes to heresy, the tone and urgency of such forms of speech, whether it be evangelicals in the twentieth century or a monk in the eighth century, changed little. What Bede had done by promiscuously taking from the experience of the body and applying to the realm of theology, evangelicals achieved by other means (militarism and warnings of societal collapse).

Christianity. Those evangelicals who were attuned to the activities of Armstrong charged him with falsehood and error. An illustrative example comes from the endorsement of DeLoach's book *The Armstrong Error*. Herbert Vander Lugt, the Research Editor of Radio Bible Class in Michigan, praised the work and warned that many were being "deluded by a cult which is a masterpiece of Satanic deceit" (Lugt, quoted in DeLoach 1971). Because such satanic forces were being unleashed upon the earth, Lugt urged that "every evangelical Christian" needed to read this book. The audience, to Lugt's mind, was American evangelicals, who were in danger of falling prey to Armstrong's alleged falsehood. Armstrong, quite clearly in Lugt's assessment, not only deceived but was in league with the devil. The charge of both Chambers and Lugt reveal much more than mere opposition to Armstrong and his movement. Both these evangelicals attempted to further the idea that Armstrong was willfully and dangerously deceitful. Indeed, falsehood and error are the *leitmotifs* of these works.

Armstrong was highly aware of the accusations against him, of the mobilization of other Christians determined to undermine him and his message. The words of these evangelicals stung him, and he spoke out to the world of his hurt. What emerged between Armstrong and these evangelicals was a type of truncated and stilted dialogue, neither direct, nor concrete, nor sustained in time. It was almost as if human communication was breaking down. Here and there Armstrong would mention his naysayers on his radio program, acknowledging them and addressing them in the emptiness of the radio airwaves. "A lot of people will tell you that I'm a false prophet," he told his listeners in one broadcast (Armstrong, "The One True Church"). The criticisms and accusations of heresy against him were all reduced and made part of a logic of persecution and victimhood. In one broadcast of *The World Tomorrow*, Armstrong gave his take on those who schemed to undo both him and the work of God: "Now, I have had other enemies because in the work that God has called me to, and set me in, I have had to suffer a great deal of opposition and persecution of all kinds. If I hadn't, I couldn't be the servant of God" (Armstrong 1979a). Persecution was converted, in this particular religious cosmos, into a sign of the truth of one's ideas and values. Outside opposition to his movement was transformed into a form of legitimization. Though Armstrong did not address them by name, though he did not speak to them directly (at least in the sources that were analyzed), and though his ripostes were occasional, Armstrong was not impervious to evangelical barbs; they would occasionally sink beneath the unorthodox evangelist's armor and wound him. There appears to have never been a direct dialogue between these evangelicals and Armstrong (Hopkins did conduct an interview with Armstrong's son Garner Ted) (Hopkins 1974). In lieu of interfaith dialogue, it seems, both sides were content to remain in their own habitats and from time to time to send abroad their detractions and accusations of heretical doctrines.

Though Armstrong was perturbed by the criticisms against him and although he crafted such critiques into an elaborate theater of victimhood, he himself was not above hurling the same allegations at evangelicals. Armstrong, too, was a mastermind at fashioning and presenting a perception of the world in which the average person was being, at every turn, maliciously deceived. The world was moving, in Armstrong's words, in an "age of deception." In a radio broadcast on the "purpose of the Christian life" (date not given), he informed the listening audience:

> Well, in the first place my friends, you're wrong. You've been deceived, you're
> in an age of deception. Sure you're honest. Sure you believe it. Of course you

do. You believe what's been stuffed in your mind. You believe what you've always heard. You believe what other people believe because you're all like sheep and you go right along with the crowd (Armstrong, "The Purpose of the Christian Life").

In short, choppy, and easily digestible phrases, infused with a casual and familiar chumminess, the religious leader moved beyond the anonymity and impersonal nature of a radio audience, establishing a "community" of "friends" into which he inserted firmly and repeatedly the listener by clever use of the second person singular. It was not someone in abstracted form that Armstrong was talking to; rather, it was you, an individual. Then Armstrong constructed for this community of friends the reality of deception of which evangelicals, to this religious leader's mind, were an integral part. The words Armstrong spoke did more: they reached into the minds of those tuning in and deposited beliefs, instructed listeners in what they thought, and performed the act of thinking for them. "You believe," Armstrong repeated three times, driving home his message. No time was given to the listeners to reflect upon whether they did in fact believe this. The sonic moment was brought into perfection by the use of negative accusations of blindly following the masses, something which many would instinctively want to disassociate themselves with.

Evangelicals and Armstrong contributed continually and artfully to the atmosphere of decline that was part of the Cold War and of which a theological opponent could be made a part. The background was cataclysm, decline, crisis, and deception; in the foreground, one could sketch theological opponents. But even here, in such formulations, it is apparent that what was happening was not simple theological discordance. The back-and-forth allegations of deception are significant for the reason that evangelicals and Armstrong added to a growing atmosphere of alarm in American society during the Cold War. The Cold War was a moment of tension on the geopolitical plain and on the existential level in the face of atomic destruction. Other social changes such as the Civil Rights Movement and the student movement challenged the understanding that many had of their nation. But the era was also a moment in which tension was not only felt but created in the domestic sphere. The tension of the Cold War spilled over, far beyond the political space, into the internecine strife in the Body of Christ. The Cold War has been described as a religious war, and quite rightly (Inboden 2008; Wallace 2013). However, one important component has been left out of this analysis. The Cold War era was a moment of international and domestic conflicts in various forms. But on the domestic front, one contributing factor to making the Cold War was the creation and circulation of a notion that all around one there were creeping agents of deception, all around God's elect were agents of falsehood. These evangelicals and Armstrong continually spread messages that one was endlessly being deceived, and the consequence of these repeated messages was an undermining or at least cracking open of one's *fundus rerum* (Augustine 2014, 12),[11] one's foundation of reality.

One final consideration is the question of how evangelicals' reactions to Armstrong fit into the mosaic-in-motion that was American religion during the Cold War. The opposition of born-again Christians to Armstrong was not unique per se. The evangelical sources

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[11] Augustine's original, in the *Confessions*, reads: "*usque ad fundum rerum*" (2014, 12).

examined here took considerable pains to point out, for instance, that Armstrong held beliefs that overlapped with Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses (Hopkins 1974; Chambers 1988), though no evidence was ever mobilized to show an explicit connection between Armstrong and these two religious communities. The point is that in making such connections, these evangelicals were delegitimizing Armstrong's belief system, saying it was nothing more than a distorted copy of some contemporary religious movement or merely a reiteration of an ancient heretical system. Walter Martin's *The Kingdom of the Cults* is a useful source for placing the opposition explored in this article in the context of wider tensions between conservative American evangelicalism and other religious movements. Martin wrote in 1965:

> The Christian Church in this atomic age is faced with the highly 'fissionable' problem of accelerated cult activities both in the continental United States and on every major mission field throughout the world. Today, as never before, the danger of a 'Cult-Bomb' detonating in the Christian world grows ominously closer as the Church delays unified action against the looming specter of insidious cultism (Martin, quoted in Martin 2019, 11).

Martin, here, drew dramatically from the times in which he was living to discuss the question of religious experience in the twentieth century. The boundaries between atomic apocalypse and different religious movements were being cleverly smeared, leaving the reader with a *sfumato* mental image where the confines between cults and atomic weapons technology were no longer visible. It wasn't that they were equated but rather that the two phenomena, in his mind, had the same destructive potential. A cult, which was a "danger" and "threat" (Martin, quoted in Martin 2019, 11), had become almost synonymous and interchangeable with the concept of heresy itself. What is intriguing about Martin's massive study, one that was updated over the years, was the use of the term "cult" itself. Cult, as the title of his book suggests, became an umbrella term for a variety of religious experiences. The chapter on Armstrong was placed alongside movements connected with Christianity like Mormonism, Christian Science and Jehovah's Witnesses. But also included in Martin's study were other religions such as "Eastern Religions," Islam, and Buddhism. And new religious movements like Scientology formed another category. Cult had clearly acquired in Martin's hands a convenient elasticity. All things that Martin, a Baptist minister and believer in biblical inerrancy (Martin 2019, 14), understood as "rivals of historic Christianity" (Martin 2019, 575) he slid into this category. The term cult, in Martin's usage had also ceased to denote a "relatively small group of people"[12] engaging in what some deemed were bizarre or deviant practices. The term was now being applied to mass and global religious movements or religions. Armstrong's church clearly had these features of size and geographical reach, and Martin identified his movement, placed it alongside other forms of Christianity, new religious movements, and other historical religions, and all of these could be collapsed into the concept of cult. All of them, to Martin's mind, were full of "false doctrines" and potentially "evil" (Martin 2019, 19). Thus, it is important to make clear, Armstrong was not singled out as the exclusive target of this evangelical's ire. Nor was Martin's treatment of Armstrong essentially different from the identification and denunciation of other alleged heresies and cults. The chapters in Martin's book proceed in a general presentation of "heretical doctrines" (Martin 2019, 441), followed by a refutation of

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[12] *Oxford English Dictionary*, *OED* online, s.v. "cult, b," 2021.

those doctrines. This was the case for both Armstrong and for other so-called cults. To a certain degree, then, the phenomenon of Armstrongism and its multiple denunciations by evangelicals can be situated in the growing anti-cult movement, a game of "cult/counter-cult," in the United States beginning in the 1960s (Kaplan 1993).

Conclusion

Certain conclusions about the history of twentieth-century American evangelicalism in the United States can be gathered from this exploration of some aspects of this combative relationship between evangelicals and Armstrong. In the first place, conservative evangelicals did not view only liberal Protestants as their theological opponents. The liberal-conservative, or modernist controversy, was a part of evangelicalism's development (Henry 1946). This has been well documented by scholars. Yet, other controversies swirled, and these turbulences have gone largely unrecorded. In the second place, American evangelicalism expanded through the positive and Christ-affirming message of their interpretation of the Christian Gospel after World War II. Alongside this spreading of their version of the Gospel, conservative evangelicalism expanded, published, and constantly readjusted the boundaries of collective Christian identity through negativity, through this antithetical relation to Armstrong (and to other religious movements or historical religions). Third, evangelicals in their anathemas and denunciations were largely successful in delegitimizing "Armstrongism" as a valid form of Christianity; their words cast him if not into oblivion than at least into a forgotten limbo. The consequence of their exile of Armstrong from the body of the elect is that scholars have been left in a haze of unknowing. It would be entirely historically inaccurate to lay all the blame on evangelicals for what constitutes a large lacuna in the historiography of American religion. That said, at least an iota of responsibility can safely be placed at the feet of evangelicals; conservative evangelicals were Armstrong's earliest interpreters, and these interpretations produced a species of *damnatio memoriae*. Lastly, the crusade against the Armstrongites of the twentieth century can be viewed, ultimately, as successful in light of what happened after Armstrong's death. The Worldwide Church of God, the fruit of Armstrong and so many others' labors, splintered.[13] This fragmentation occurred, of course, for various reasons. But from the standpoint of the champions of evangelical orthodoxy this delightful fact, this fall of an empire, can be counted as a great achievement. Beyond the church's fracture, a large contingent of Armstrong's followers abandoned the "heresies" of their spiritual father and were pulled into the embrace of mainstream evangelicalism. The prodigal return of the remnants of Armstrong's worldwide movement was sealed through the acceptance of the main splinter group – Grace Communion International – into the National Evangelical Association (NEA) in 1997 (Martin 2019). Though obstinate heretics remained, from the standpoint of adherents to conservative evangelicalism, "heresy" was "destroyed," to use Chambers' telling verbiage, and the evangelical body of Christ was expanded. Declaring others heretics and using this conceptual tool, along with all the ideas that accompany it, we learn, pay dividends.

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[13] Chambers reports, for example, that after a sex scandal involving Armstrong's son, Garner Ted Armstrong, 5,000 members abandoned the Worldwide Church of God in 1972, along with some 40 ministers (Chambers 1988). Martin, too, mentions some "fifty splinter groups" that broke away from Armstrong's church during the leader's life, see Martin 2019, 414. See also Benware 1975.

This contemporary tale of belief and deviance, along with the attempts to squelch differing theological approaches to God, also brings greater audibility to who Armstrong was and to his message. While a great deal remains to be said about Armstrong, one concrete and vital conclusion can be extracted from this present inquiry: conservative evangelicals and Armstrong differed vastly in terms of doctrine, beliefs, and socio-religious practices. This is glaringly apparent, and we are, by both sides, reminded of it constantly. While in terms of doctrine there was seemingly insurmountable difference, in terms of what these two religious movements were doing, there was a visible and continual similarity. Conservative evangelicals and this modern heretic (from the evangelical perspective) were operating very much in the same way, moving along the same lines, dancing to the same rhythms. Their style of rhetoric enjoyed an admirable symmetry; it was a finished product from the same workshop. That Armstrong "detected and damned" a heresy (Bede 1930, 44),[14] and to his mind evangelicals were clearly heretics, in the end, brought Armstrong and evangelicals in ever closer proximity. In the realm of heresy, its pursuit, and its denunciation, what emerged was less irreconcilable difference and more a telling identity.

Finally, a word can be said about how heresy itself has changed and how, in the contemporary world, heterodox belief was deployed towards highly different ends. Armstrong's alleged heresy in this specific case in the United States during the twentieth century[15] differed vastly from the constantly emerging heresies of the Middle Ages in Europe. In these past iterations, in their cutting antisacerdotalism and Manichaeism, there was perhaps the most developed critique of feudal Europe and its most dangerous enemy before the Enlightenment. Beneath heresies like Waldenism and Catharism, there was a revolutionary spirit that sought to fundamentally undermine the structures, privileges, abuses, and monopolies of power that existed in medieval European societies. Armstrong's body of doctrine, which had been fully dipped in the river of heterodoxy, in that it diverged from traditional Protestantism, did nothing of the sort. On the contrary, there is every indication that Armstrong, his values, his beliefs, his leadership, and his lifestyle further glued men and women to the world, fastening them to a plethora of nodal points of modern existence. In the Armstrong wing of Christianity, one does indeed find critiques of twentieth-century life: his church's pacifism (Chambers 1988) and his pro-ecological bent and denunciation of our modern wholesale destruction of the natural world are just some examples (Armstrong 1979c). Yet, more often, one finds in Armstrong's messages, conveyed through sonic and written word, a celebration of the world. Abstract notions of success, financial success, getting "everything you lack and everything you need" (Armstrong, "Freedom from Fears and Worries"), nationalism, all these things indicate a palpable and telling accommodation to American life. Armstrong thought himself a prophet of "the World Tomorrow," the apocalyptic Kingdom of God, yet his message of a "great consummation" (Cohn 2001, 112)

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[14] The Venerable Bede, in his ecclesiastical history of England (c. 731 CE), mentioned the Arian heresy. His original phrasing was "*cuius temporibus Arriana haeresis exorta et in Nicaena synodo detecta atque damnata*" (Bede 1930, 44).

[15] If we move beyond the geography of the United States, this assertion might not hold. As Manuel Ríos points out, in the context of Nicaragua during the Cold War, liberation theology was a form of heresy in the eyes of many and a form of "heteropraxis," which means that heresy and social reform, to which liberation theology was certainly geared, in some cases, still might walk hand in hand (2009, 7, 10, 16).

looked more like the world as it was. From this, it might be concluded that "heresy" was coopted, and far from posing a danger to the existing order of things, it seemed to further that social order.

Armstrong's multi-fanged "heresy" was not designed to bite into the world because it was not motivated by a desire to challenge the social and economic structure of American society, nor was Armstrong's theological colorfulness a means of democratizing the Church and dismantling clerical or ecclesiastical power, which was the case with medieval heresies. Armstrong's denunciation of traditional evangelical doctrines and repeated delegitimization of Protestant orthodoxy were clear means of solidifying his authority within the Worldwide Church of God. It is evident that freeing himself from the conservative evangelical mainstream was a necessary step in erecting within his church and the various associated organizations a doctrinal rigidity and dogmatism that would produce admiration in any inquisitor. The Worldwide Church of God was rife with defections and its history is littered with doctrinal disputes, points of theological conflict on which, generally, Armstrong was impervious to pleading and suggestion. Disfellowship, the act of excommunication, was an institutional religious practice of his movement (Hopkins 1974). Those who did not conform saw themselves left out in the cold like a rebellious Holy Roman Emperor after his Walk to Canossa. Above all, Armstrong loudly proclaimed that he was an apostle of Christ's "true Gospel" and that he spoke with all the authority of Christian Scripture and the Christian deity (Armstrong 1982). Many would defect from Armstrong's "true church." Those who fled Armstrong's religious community created a whole genre of literature and counter-propaganda (Lupo 2002). The charges of authoritarianism against this twentieth-century apostle, both from evangelical observers and apostates from Armstrong's movement, mar his reputation (Hopkins 1974). In the end, if we are to believe these numerous accusations, "heresy" in the twentieth century had also become, through cutting people off from traditional Christianity, an iron glove by which to stranglehold the faithful.

Acknowledgement

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