

Conservative Protestants, Normative Pathways, and Adult Attainment

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Do religious cultures hold enough sway over individuals' life choices that they can be considered causal mechanisms generating inequality in contemporary American society? Can religious identification and participation create normative standards of behavior that either aid or hinder the development of human capital and either encourage or discourage its use to achieve financial success? These have been pressing questions since Max Weber first wrote *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Yet the contemporary transformation of class structure in postindustrial societies and the declining strength of traditional denominational differences (particularly Protestant–Catholic) raise these issues anew. The new occupational structure of service economies, the increasing importance of dual earners in households to achieve middle class housing and status, the crucial role of postsecondary education (both the type of institution and major) for occupational success, and the critical role of marriage and family postponement in achieving stable lucrative employment all point to new avenues through which religion might influence class location.

Establishing a theory of causality, however, requires evidence that religious participation directly influences behavioral choices, rather than simply attracting people who have made similar life choices for disparate (nonreligious) reasons together in congregations. In this chapter, we review the existence of class-based differences in religious preferences and participation, and we theorize that these differences are not just the epiphenomenon of class-based religious “tastes” but are mechanisms through which class is constructed and reconstructed across generations.

RELIGION AND STRATIFICATION

Religious traditions and denominations have long been distinguished by the social and economic resources available to members and congregations. In contemporary American society we can still see the multiple influences of

social class on religion by observing class-based differences in church attendance (Schwadel, McCarthy, and Nelson 2009), worship styles (Smith and Faris 2005), and religious giving (Putnam and Campbell 2010). Although the precise location of specific traditions shifts over time, the religious stratification system in the United States has been fairly stable during the past century. Some groups, such as liberal Protestants and Jews, have consistently ranked highest in terms of educational attainment, income, and occupational prestige; Catholics and moderate Protestants in the middle; and black and conservative Protestants¹ at the lower ends of these distributions (Pyle 2006; Roof and McKinney 1987; Smith and Faris 2005).

Early studies often treated religion as endogenous with respect to social class, rather than conceptualizing it as a cultural resource that helps reproduce class position across generations (by either aiding or hindering upward mobility). We argue here that types of religious participation and belief do not merely flow from social class positions but actively re-create them through the intergenerational transmission of ideas about educational attainment, sexuality, and family formation. The transfer of social class advantage or disadvantage from parents to children (i.e., the intergenerational transmission of class) has long been central to the study of stratification. Status attainment models (Blau and Duncan 1967; Hauser and Featherman 1977) sought to assess overall social mobility rates and structures by focusing on the connection between parents' background and their offspring's occupational success. Recent work has focused on explaining the mechanisms of social reproduction and stratification (Massey 2007; Reskin 2003). We believe that detailing the connections between religious culture and material outcomes elucidates an important mechanism of class reproduction.

Building on previous empirical work, we theorize that childhood religious affiliation structures the normative pathways to adulthood for young people, especially young women, and transmits class (dis)advantage by affecting the development of human capital and occupational aspirations. To the extent that labor market outcomes are a reflection of human capital development, occupational prestige, income, and wealth accumulation are indirectly affected by childhood religious affiliation. Additionally, these outcomes can be indirectly affected by religious affiliation through the cultivation of values, attitudes, and beliefs that either encourage or discourage family formation behaviors, such as early marriage and parenting, as well as mothers' truncated labor force participation when children are present in the home.

¹ For consistency, we use the term "conservative Protestant (CP)" throughout this article to refer to denominations and traditions that are typically treated as being distinct from, and contrasted to, mainline and liberal Protestantism. Although there is some disagreement regarding the operationalization of this category in empirical work (for widely used classification systems see Roof and McKinney 1987; Smith 1990; Steensland et al. 1980) and in nomenclature (e.g., "sectarian Protestants"; Sherkat 2012), there is considerable overlap.

We focus on conservative Protestants (CPs) and their distinctive demographic characteristics relative to mainline Protestant and Catholic denominations for multiple reasons. First, the empirical patterns of CP disadvantage we describe are robust. These findings are well established in the research literature and have been found using a range of nationally representative data while controlling for other factors. Second, there is a large literature within the sociology of religion on the beliefs, values, attitudes, and practices of CPs. These studies provide rich data that illuminate the cultural elements of this religious subpopulation and demonstrate the boundary-making activities of CPs. Conservative Protestants in the United States disproportionately hold traditional attitudes and beliefs about gender differentiation in the family and adhere to distinctively strict norms governing sexual behavior within and outside marriage. Third, this religious group has grown in numbers and influence over the last several decades in the United States, during precisely that period in which inequalities in earnings, wealth, and family stability have grown dramatically – making the potential impact of cultural scripts on class location even greater than before.

THEORETICAL MODEL

What is the relationship between religion and the intergenerational transmission of class? As discussed later, over the past decades numerous studies have documented the continued significance of religion in understanding a variety of outcomes related to class formation and transmission. Based on this extensive literature, our model identifies the key concepts and processes that together explain the well-documented empirical patterns associated with conservative Protestants in the United States.

Briefly, the class location and religious affiliation of one's family of origin provide economic and cultural resources that influence the timing of life-course transitions – such as marriage, fertility, and labor force entry. These life-course events affect the development of human capital (e.g., education), which in turn influences labor market outcomes (e.g., occupation, income, wealth). In addition to the direct effects of one's family of origin on these outcomes, there are also indirect effects through network formation. Youth embedded in CP traditions will develop interpersonal networks of friends and associates that will influence their behaviors related to family formation and educational pursuits – which will ultimately lead to labor market outcomes. In fact, religious participation may be a key avenue through which some morally conservative parents strengthen their influence over their offspring. Because education and labor market outcomes represent key dimensions of adult socioeconomic status (SES) and social class location, this model highlights the role religion plays in shaping the intergenerational transmission of class. The direct and indirect effects of conservative Protestantism on labor market outcomes are shaped in important ways by cultural processes.

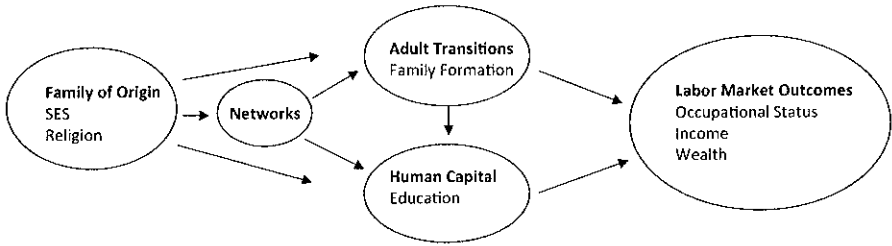


FIGURE 4.1. Conceptual model of religion and the intergenerational transmission of social class.

It is important to note that for reasons of parsimony the conceptual model depicted in Figure 4.1 intentionally omits many important factors that are known to be related to labor market outcomes, including family size and other characteristics (family of origin and adult), and residence (urban/rural, region). Additionally, although we argue that culture plays an important role in producing these outcomes, it is not independently identified in Figure 4.1. As we discuss later, conservative Protestantism serves as a cultural framework that, among other things, influences network formation, life-course transitions, human capital development, and labor market outcomes. As such, the culture of conservative Protestantism is relevant to each concept and stage of the conceptual model.

The Cultural Framework of Conservative Protestantism

A central question in the sociology of culture, and one that is particularly relevant to the case at hand is, What is the relationship between culture and behavior? In a highly influential *Annual Review of Sociology* article, DiMaggio (1997) identifies two competing conceptualizations of culture: culture as a latent variable and culture as “a grab bag of odds and ends” (267). The latent variable approach assumes that cultures are made up of a limited number of abstract themes and related attitudes, beliefs, and the like that are supported by rituals, symbols, and practices. In contrast, the “grab bag of odds and ends” approach, represented by the Swidler’s (1986) “toolkits” analogy, suggests that the number and range of cultural elements are quite large and varied and that individuals carry around with them a whole host of potentially contradictory understandings and meanings that may or may not be deployed in particular situations. DiMaggio states that research in cognitive psychology supports the toolkit conception over the latent variable approach. In particular, this research points to the importance of examining the “schematic organization” of beliefs and representations that individuals possess and the “cues” embedded in situations and interactions that trigger particular schemas (1997: 267).

Institutions play a crucial role in this process and are linked to schemas and typifications: “[T]ypifications (mental structures) influence perception, interpretation, planning and action. . . . Institutionalized structures and behaviors (i.e., those that are both highly schematic and widely shared) are taken for granted, reproduced in everyday action [Giddens “structuration” (1984)] and treated as legitimate” (DiMaggio 1997: 270). Religion, as an institution, provides a context and resource for shaping and using these mental structures and schemas. Religious subcultures, such as conservative Protestantism, comprise institutionalized symbols, practices, and rituals that both create and re-create particular schemas that, in turn, influence behaviors and attitudes. As Christian Smith states,

We can observe that American religions promote specific cultural moral orders of self-control and personal virtue grounded in the authority of long historical traditions and narratives, into which new and young members are inducted, particularly through the efforts of parents, such that youth may use them to guide their life choices and moral commitments. That is, as American adolescents go about forming practices and making choices that compose and shape their lives, religion can provide them with substantive normative bearings, standards, and imperatives to guide those practices and choices (2003a: 415).

Broadly, this observation reminds us that the potential effects of religious culture are particularly important during adolescence and young adulthood because it is during this segment of the life course that individuals not only formulate particular value preferences but also engage in behaviors and make choices that shape their future lives. Whether or not to use contraceptives while engaging in premarital sexual activity, whether or not to remain abstinent until marriage, whether or not to enroll in college-prep high school courses, whether or not to pursue a four-year college degree, whether or not to withdraw from the labor force to raise a family – all these are decisions that represent a potentially defining moment in an individual’s personal and professional life chances.

Of course, many of these “choices” do not represent choices in a strict formal sense. For example, the “choice” of whether to go to college or to get married directly out of high school is determined by a host of factors including information regarding higher education; schemas related to knowledge, family, and gender roles; expectations of significant others in one’s social network; the willingness of family members to provide financial or material support for that choice; and current employment opportunities. People rarely make decisions that are strictly based on a calculus that assesses potential short-term and long-term costs and benefits of specific decisions and actions. Instead, they use a variety of conscious and subconscious shortcuts to guide action. The shortcuts can be thought of as representing culture in action.

According to the dual-process model of culture (Vaisey 2009), culture operates “through *embodied* and *durable* schemes of perception, appreciation and action” (Vaisey and Lizardo 2010: 1599) – which are equivalent to schemas in

our terminology. From this perspective, behaviors and actions are primarily a function of “hot” and “fast” cognitive-affective processes (Vaisey and Lizardo 2010) that rely in large part on schemas. Schemas are developed through interaction and institutionalized behaviors, so it follows that religious subcultures represent powerful institutionalized contexts that can promote particular schematic understandings, which in turn manifest in behaviors and actions among those embedded in these contexts. Drawing from Sewell (1992), Sherkat and Ellison explain how cognitive structures or schemas relate to CP culture, worldview, and lifestyles:

Schematic understandings may become actualized into resources, thereby establishing connections among ideas by lending support to particular propositions or interpretations. Strong commitments to specific understandings can transform informal interpretations into cognitive resources – converting ordinary beliefs into doctrine or dogma (1997: 960).

How does this process happen? It does so primarily through social-relational contexts that provide validation for particular schemas from significant others (Ridgeway 2006; Smith 2003a). Identification with particular religious traditions and involvement in religious activities create an ongoing social-relational context for CPs that produce schematic understandings about the nature of the world (i.e., Martin and Desmond’s [2010] “social ontologies”) and normatively appropriate behaviors (Smith 2003b, 2003c).

Religion can function as a cultural resource that affects material outcomes in multiple ways. For CPs, the development of a subcultural identity (Smith et al. 1998) provides schemas for understanding appropriate sexual behavior, family formation, and gender roles; it also shapes preference structures regarding the value of education, occupational attainment, and wealth. The enactment of particular religious schemas is in turn shaped by other factors, including social class – in other words, the structural location of an individual can influence which religious schemas make sense to them and get employed in everyday decision making (Bourdieu 1984; Edgell and Tranby 2007; Sewell 1992). To the extent that the worldviews of conservative Protestantism “make sense” to working-class and middle-class Americans with limited access to the instruments of social mobility, their children will use these schemas to inform their life choices as well. We turn now to the worldviews that inform conservative Protestantism and how they might translate into behaviors that limit the educational and labor market outcomes and eventual social class location among adherents.

Conservative Protestants are distinguished by “literalist” interpretations of the Bible (including beliefs that the Bible is inerrant and is unitary across the Old and New Testaments), the value placed on having a conversion experience, and the importance of scriptural and pastoral authority (Darnell and Sherkat 1997; Ellison and Musick 1993; Roof and McKinney 1987). Within this broad category there are distinct traditions with particular cognitive structures and

religious practices associated with Fundamentalist, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Charismatic traditions (Sikkink 1999; Smith et al. 1998; Woodberry and Smith 1998). Fundamentalists have a strong separatist history rooted in antimodernist views developed in the early 20th century (Ammerman 1987; Marsden 1980), which encourages disengagement with dominant, secular institutions (Sikkink 1999). The “spirit-filled” focus and lower social class location of Pentecostals and Charismatics have cultivated an oppositional identity that eschews integration into mainstream religious and social institutions (Sikkink 1999). The Evangelical movement, in contrast, advocates an engaged theology that encourages members to go forth into the broader society and to transform institutions from within (Lindsay 2007; Marsden 1980; Sikkink 1999; Smith et al. 1998). Despite these noteworthy differences, empirical studies often place these groups together under the label of conservative Protestant. This happens for both methodological and conceptual reasons. Methodologically, many nationally representative datasets do not contain enough detailed information to distinguish among the categories. Even when the information is there, sample sizes often get too small for each category to conduct reliable multivariate analyses. Conceptually, there is empirical evidence that the differences between CPs and other traditions are greater than the within-category variation (e.g., Keister 2011), thereby making it appropriate in many situations to compare CPs to non-CPs.

Biblical literalism is a foundational belief within CP traditions and can shape attitudes toward a wide range of topics, including science. A literal interpretation of the biblical creation story, for example, is antithetical to the scientific method and science education (Ellison and Musick 1993; Sherkat 2011). Ellison and Musick (1993) identify biblical literalism, and its connection to orthodox theological tenets and views about the pervasiveness of sin, as key predictors of negative views toward science. Negative views toward science, in turn, encourage adolescent CPs to avoid college preparatory work in high school that can decrease their chances of being admitted to and completing college (Darnell and Sherkat 1997; Sherkat 2011).

Additionally, conservative Protestants may eschew higher education, particularly public secular colleges and universities, because of a deep distrust of the motivations and teachings of these institutions of higher learning. For example, Darnell and Sherkat quote conservative Christian author Beverly LaHaye: “One of the dangers of secular college education today is that the whole educational system has been taken over by an atheistic, humanist philosophy that is largely anti-God, anti-moral, and anti-Christian . . . we have seen scores of fine Christian people go down the drain or lose interest in spiritual things while attending such colleges (1997: 308). This sentiment is echoed by highly visible religiously conservative politicians, including this statement by presidential hopeful Rick Santorum – “The indoctrination that occurs in American universities is one of the keys to the left holding and maintaining power in America. . . . As you know, 62 percent of children who enter college with a

faith conviction leave without” – and by Newt Gingrich: “I for one am tired of the long trend towards a secular, atheist system of thought dominating our colleges, dominating our media” (Gentile and Rosenfeld 2012). Within CP traditions there are varying levels of antipathy toward secular education. Sikink (1999) found that 7 out of 10 Pentecostals and Charismatics and approximately 1 out of 2 Fundamentalists and Evangelicals view public schools as being hostile toward moral and spiritual values.

This antipathy toward public and/or secular schooling has led to a variety of alternative educational choices among conservative Protestant parents. Home schooling, non-accredited Christian schools, and biblically based educational curricula all reflect attempts to create educational institutions consistent with their religious beliefs that satisfy public demands for the compulsory schooling of all children. The effects of these alternatives on children’s future occupational success have not often been the subject of empirical scrutiny, however, and much remains to be learned.

CP Schemas Regarding Sexuality, Marriage, and Gender Roles

Across traditions, religious households tend to express more opposition toward premarital sexual activity, nonmarital cohabitation, abortion, and divorce than nonreligious households (Edgell 2005; Pearce and Thornton 2007). Despite this overall commonality across religious traditions, there are distinguishing features of CP theology that lead their adherents to hold particularly strong expectations, values, and attitudes about sexual behavior and family life (Ellison and Sherkat 1993). The restriction of sexuality to heterosexual marriage is a key component of much CP teaching (Regnerus 2007; Smith 2000) and informs a tightly knit schema integrating sexuality, marriage, reproduction, and childrearing. Members of CP denominations typically display more traditional attitudes regarding abortion, premarital sexual behavior, and gender roles within marriage than other religious groups (Brooks 2002; Denton 2004; Gallagher 2004; Gramsick, Wilcox, and Bird 1990; Hertel and Hughes 1987). Pearce and Thornton (2007) found that young adults affiliated with Evangelical Protestant traditions exhibited greater opposition to premarital sex and abortion and also stronger support of a “breadwinner-housewife model” of family. However, these respondents did not differ significantly from those from other religious traditions when it came to attitudes toward cohabitation, marriage, and divorce.

Conservative Protestants tend to view sexual activity as something that should be circumscribed or avoided until marriage. Planning for sexual relations when not married by buying or obtaining contraception is problematic because doing so can indicate premeditated sin (Regnerus 2007). The high valuation of virginity until marriage, particularly among women, is reinforced through purity balls, virginity pledges in schools and churches, and abstinence education in schools. Although the efficacy of such measures has been

questioned (Bearman and Bruckner 2001; Uecker 2008), the intent is certainly to create a seamless behavioral pattern in which premarital pregnancies, abortions, nonmarital births, and sexually transmitted diseases are rare because of volitional behavioral restraint. However, this reliance on volitional behavioral restraint also tacitly encourages earlier marriage and childbearing among youth raised in CP households, because early marriage shortens the portion of the life-span in which sexual restraint is necessary.

Conservative Protestantism also tends to promote and encourage a gendered understanding of appropriate family roles and obligations that admonishes women to focus their efforts on homemaking and child care rather than career attainment (Bartkowski 1999; Peek, Lowe, and Williams 1991; Sherkat 2000; Smith 2000). Conservative Protestant women are more likely than mainline Protestant women to withdraw from the labor market when there are young children present, for example (Lehrer 1995). By emphasizing distinct gender differences in personality, interests, and needs, as well as the efficiency of the breadwinner/homemaker model of marriage, CPs hope to cement the dependency of each sex on the other, thereby reducing the probability of divorce and eliminating the need for nonparental child care. Moreover, when women's domestic labor can be assured within the household in exchange for the financial support of their husbands, contraception and abortion are less necessary because family size limitation is less important. This supports a tighter linkage between sexual activity and reproduction, and the welcome acceptance of all pregnancies in accordance with religious beliefs about the sanctity of life.

However, there is evidence of a counter-discourse within some CP traditions that advocates more egalitarian roles within the household (Bartkowski 1999; Denton 2004; Manning 1999; Smith 2000). The CP theology of family life places tremendous importance on fulfilling marital roles – for women this is primarily about domestic care, whereas for men it means to fulfill both breadwinning and family responsibilities. From this view, family is of greater importance than paid labor (Bloch 2000; Gallagher 2003, 2007; Gallagher and Smith 1999; Heath 2003); therefore both men and women have a responsibility to ensure the success of the family. Some evidence suggests this view leads conservative Protestant fathers to be more involved and emotionally engaged with their children than other fathers (Bartkowski and Xu 2000; King 2003; Wilcox 2004). Yet other findings suggest that this trend has not produced a marked progression toward greater gender equality. Married women in CP households still do more hours of housework than other women (Ellison and Bartkowski 2002), and white CP men do not participate any more in child care or domestic labor than their mainline Protestant counterparts, although they earn lower wages than comparable men in the labor market (Civettini and Glass 2008). Additionally, the timing of life-course transitions has different effects for men and women. For example, early family formation is negatively associated with later adult educational and occupational attainment for women

(Chandler, Kamo, and Werbel 1994; Fitzgerald and Glass 2008; Marini, Shee, and Raymond 1989), but does not negatively affect men.

Entry into the paid labor market for CP women has increasingly been acknowledged and accommodated within CP traditions as well (Bartkowski 1999; Gallagher 2003), but this does not necessarily mean that CP women follow parallel career trajectories to CP men. The same overarching economic forces that have stagnated working-class men's wages and encouraged wives' contributions to family finances affect CP families – but the ability of CP wives to contribute significantly to family income is hampered by their diminished human and social capital when they enter the labor market.

The pattern of earlier marriage and childbearing and larger completed family sizes among women raised in CP households compared to those raised in mainline denominations has been documented in longitudinal data from the National Survey of Families and Households (Fitzgerald and Glass 2008; Glass and Jacobs 2005) and the Add Health Survey (Fitzgerald and Glass 2012). Demmit (1992) suggests that ideological approval of mothers' employment is strongest in CP congregations when that employment is crafted around mothers' domestic obligations; for example, by working part-time or part-year, by working from home, or by working alternative night and weekend schedules that impinge little on time with children.

In sum, the combination of religious beliefs about the sanctity of life and the sanctity of marriage, the imperative of restricting sexual activity to marriage, and the injunction to value family life above employment and material gain affect the potential occupational attainment of both women and men raised in CP households. However, the effects of being raised in a conservative Protestant household depress women's education and labor market outcomes much more dramatically than men's.

CONSERVATIVE PROTESTANTISM AND DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL CLASS

In this section we briefly review the empirical research linking conservative Protestantism and indicators of social class, paying special attention to the mechanisms and possible causal processes that produce correlations between religious affiliation and social class outcomes. The major theoretical issue stemming from this work is whether the stable religious hierarchy of class status is produced by behavior that stems directly from religious belief and practice or whether people are simply attracted to religious denominations based on the class similarity of other adherents and their comfort level with the worship practices of the denomination. That is, can the stable class hierarchy of religious denominations be attributed to the causal impact of religious affiliation and beliefs on income-producing behaviors, or is the hierarchy an artifact of social selection into different class-based religious organizations? We believe the body of both longitudinal and cross-sectional work on this issue with

extensive controls for parental class background supports the conclusion that religious influence is both causal and pervasive across dimensions of intergenerational social class transmission. Although not unequivocal, the evidence is consistent with the interpretation that the subcultural familism and antipathy toward worldly success of many conservative Protestants lead to diminished socioeconomic attainment among adults raised in that faith tradition, particularly white women.

Education

For many religious groups, religious participation and attendance are positively associated with educational outcomes (Muller and Ellison 2001; Regnerus 2000). Using National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) data, for example, Glanville, Sikkink, and Hernández (2008) found that religious attendance facilitates social capital development by shaping adolescents' social networks and involvement in extracurricular activities. These activities both influence their persistence in school and access to information about higher educational opportunities. Yet research using a variety of nationally representative data sources has consistently revealed a pattern of lower educational attainment for young adults raised in CP households compared to those raised in other religious traditions (Beyerlein 2004; Darnell and Sherkat 1997; Fitzgerald and Glass 2008, 2012; Keysar and Kosmin 1995; Lehrer 1999, 2004; Massengill 2008; Sherkat and Darnell 1999). So although religious participation in general may be a positive influence on children's schooling success compared to religious disaffiliation, not all religious belief systems produce similar effects on educational achievement.

Using data from the Youth Parent Socialization Study (YPSS), Darnell and Sherkat (1997) found that, after controlling for other factors, belonging to a conservative Protestant denomination and believing in biblical inerrancy both negatively affected educational attainment. In addition to having a direct effect, these factors indirectly affected educational outcomes by influencing, among other things, curriculum choices. The cultural orientations of CP parents and youth shape their values and preference structures in ways that discourage secular educational advancement. Sherkat and Darnell (1999) develop this line of reasoning further by specifying how parents' fundamentalism can limit children's educational attainment through differential resource allocation, in addition to influencing the beliefs, values, and preference structures of their children. If CP parents value other forms of consumption more highly than the advanced education of their children, the rising costs of postsecondary schooling should disproportionately discourage them from financially supporting their children's higher education.

Using data from the 1987–8 National Survey of Families and Households (NSFH), Lehrer (1999) compared men and women raised in CP denominations with those who were raised in mainline Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish

households and found that overall educational attainment is lowest for CPs. Specifically, compared to mainline Protestants, CP men and women are less likely to earn a high school degree. CP men are also less likely to enroll in college, but once there are equally as likely to graduate. Although CP women are equally as likely to enroll in college, they are less likely to earn a college degree.

As discussed earlier, conceptually, although there are enough similarities to warrant analyzing CPs as a distinct group *vis-à-vis* mainline/liberal Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews, it is important to note that this category is not a monolithic entity but rather comprises diverse strands (Marsden 1980; Smith 2000; Woodberry and Smith 1998). Studies that disaggregate the CP category find differences in attitudes toward secular education (Sikkink 1999) as well as educational attainment. Using cross-sectional data, Beyerlein (2004) found that, when compared to other religious traditions, Fundamentalists and Pentecostals were the least likely to earn a college education. Evangelicals, on the other hand, did not differ from either mainline or liberal Protestants or Catholics. These findings suggest that the lower educational attainment of CPs may be driven primarily by particular subgroups (i.e., Fundamentalists, Pentecostals, Charismatics) and thus are consistent with our theoretical model. If religion serves as a cultural framework that develops schemas that shape values, orientations, and attitudes, then to the extent that there is variation within CP traditions we would expect differential outcomes by subgroup. Longitudinal data that include information on life-course transitions, education and labor market attainment, childhood and adult SES, *and* detailed religious affiliation measures that would facilitate the disaggregation of CP traditions are needed to further develop this line of research.

Income and Occupation

Income and occupation, along with education, serve as key indicators of social class and have been used to map religious stratification systems (Park and Reimer 2002; Pyle 2006; Roof and McKinney 1987). Even analyses that examine finely detailed religious groupings (Smith and Faris 2005) find that the religious hierarchy in income and status attainment of members has been remarkably consistent and stable over time in the United States (Davidson and Pyle 2012; Smith and Faris 2005).

Keister (2011) reports that, although there is some evidence of differences across religious traditions in the number of hours worked and although there are interesting differences within the CP category (e.g., Pentecostals and Southern Baptists are below the mean of hours worked and members of the Assembly of God are above), on the whole white CPs have considerably lower median incomes than mainline/liberal Protestants, non-Hispanic Catholics, and Jews. In addition, a larger percentage of white CPs live below the poverty line than members of these comparison groups (Keister 2011).

Using cross-sectional data from the General Social Survey (GSS), Sherkat (2012) demonstrates that conservative Protestants are less likely than members of all other religious traditions to graduate college and less likely to be employed in professional occupations. The oppositional subculture of conservative Protestants may prevent the adoption of behaviors and attitudes that facilitate status attainment. Opposition to secular education in particular diminishes investments in higher education that then limit labor market opportunities and depress wages.

But lack of education is not the only mechanism that might produce class differentiation along religious lines. In particular, denominational differences in gender and family ideologies may produce class differentiation among adherents. The willingness to engage in income-producing behaviors – such as relocating to pursue advanced training or obtain better quality employment, deferring marriage and family formation to save money and maximize career training, and (especially among women) maintaining continuous labor force participation in order to maximize earnings and authority in the workplace – may be antithetical to conservative belief systems that value familism and religious devotion above material gain and future income growth.

Glass and Jacobs (2005: 557) identified three pathways to lower attainment for white women raised in CP households:

(1) pre-market factors such as the development of human capital and early investments in marriage and childbearing, (2) productivity effects on earnings in which women lose financial compensation because they accommodate family caregiving by remaining out of the labor force as much as possible and fail to accrue work experience and training as a result, and (3) labor market matching processes in which women get matched to jobs based on the gender designation of the job or the nurturant or caregiving content of the job. Mothers may also lose compensation by limiting their work hours, location or work demands.

Although these pathways produced lower wages for white female CPs from all class backgrounds in Glass and Jacobs' analysis of adults from the 1988 National Survey of Households and Families, there were stronger residual disadvantages of being a white conservative Protestant among women from lower class backgrounds. This finding provides evidence that social class and religious background should be examined in tandem to better identify the mechanisms that reproduce class location intergenerationally and the persistence of the American religious stratification system (Coreno 2002; McCloud 2007). High parental social class in the family of origin may buffer the negative effects of conservative religious beliefs on women's status attainment, whereas these effects may be exacerbated among women from lower social class origins. Class-based social capital and more selective use of the cognitive "toolkit" of conservative Protestantism might be the means through which higher status parents protect their daughters' future occupational attainment.

Wealth

Keister (2003, 2008, 2011) demonstrates how religious affiliation both directly and indirectly affects wealth accumulation. Conservative Protestants' lower wealth accumulation is indirectly produced by early fertility, large family size, lower educational attainment, and reduced female labor market participation. But wealth accumulation is also directly affected by particular attitudes toward spending and savings. In short, wealth accumulation is the product of family background, life-course transitions, and labor force participation. Further, as we posited earlier, subcultural CP religious schemas, beliefs, and worldviews play a role in both the direct and indirect pathways to wealth accumulation.

Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 cohort, Keister (2003) compares wealth accumulation across different religious traditions including Jews, conservative Protestants, mainline Protestants, and Roman Catholics. Clear wealth differences remained – even after controlling for a wide range of factors, including family of origin SES, current income, and family size. In particular, both Jewish and CP respondents differ from mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics in important ways. Jews have substantially higher total assets than members of these other religious traditions, whereas CPs have far fewer assets. The fact that these patterns exist net of controls suggests that religious affiliation has a direct effect on wealth formation – by shaping values and attitudes toward consumption, savings, and wealth (Keister 2008, 2011).

Interactions with Race and Gender

In part because of the unique religious and social experiences that led to the emergence of the Black Church (Lincoln and Mamiya 1990), many scholars argue that the classification of religious traditions must distinguish between white and black Protestant traditions (e.g., Roof and McKinney 1987; Steensland et al. 2000). Yet black Protestant denominations do vary in their theological conservatism, as do white Protestant denominations. What seems to differ across black and white CP traditions is the choice of messages, schemas, and behaviors that indicate personal devotion and biblical fealty. The religious and class-based processes that influence family formation and human capital development among CPs are shaped in important ways by race and gender. But even beyond classification systems, taking race into account while examining normative pathways and their relationship to adult attainment is essential.

For example, family formation patterns of African Americans and European origin whites differ in multiple ways. First, rates of early and out-of-wedlock childbirth are higher for African Americans, whereas marriage rates are lower and more likely to occur later in life (South 1999). To isolate the effects of childhood religious affiliation on adult attainment, these racial differences in the timing of life-course transitions need to be considered. Second, the

documented negative effects of both CP affiliation and individual beliefs (such as the inerrancy of the Bible) on women's education attainment and labor market attainment are not observed for black CP women (Fitzgerald and Glass 2008; Glass and Nath 2006). Black women must frequently assume the roles of both economic provider and nurturer for their children and families, making human capital attainment a desirable goal even when circumstances make this difficult to achieve in practice. The relationship between CP affiliation and adult attainment also differs for white men and black men. For example, although CP affiliation in adolescence affects some aspects of white men's income and occupational attainment, it rarely affects African American men's attainment (Glass and Jacobs 2005), and compared to no religious affiliation, adolescent CP affiliation for black men leads to increased adult attainment (Fitzgerald and Glass 2008).

The impact of CP religious involvement varies by race due in part to historical trajectories that resulted in distinct forms of worship and theology. African American churches have historically encouraged both individual empowerment and community organizing in the face of structural disadvantage and institutional discrimination (Lincoln and Mamayi 1990). These cultural messages and resources are present within African American CP churches as well (Patillo-McCoy 1998) and in that regard represent a differing focus from white CP churches (Woodberry and Smith 1998). As a result, African American church membership, regardless of tradition, can provide significant cultural resources that encourage educational and labor market achievement and conventional family formation. Rather than focusing on a tight linkage between sexual abstinence until marriage, gender-differentiated roles within marriage, and avoiding the temptations of material wealth (spiritual topics not likely to resonate with working-class congregants facing the discrimination, joblessness, and poverty endemic in African American neighborhoods), African American churches in the CP tradition focus on the importance of spiritual strength in the face of despair, sharing and compassion toward the less fortunate, and a communal orientation toward education and achievement ("raising the race"; see Patillo-McCoy 1998).

Given these differences in theological emphasis, it is not surprising that CP versus mainline denominational affiliation results in less differentiated outcomes among African American adolescents and young adults. Within this community, it is disaffiliation from religious institutions that seems to create the most difficult transitions to adulthood and subsequent low attainment in adulthood.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter has sought to synthesize the growing body of empirical research on the educational and labor market outcomes of a substantial religious subculture in the United States – conservative Protestants – by focusing on the

mechanisms linking religion and the transmission of social class. We have presented a conceptual model that identifies how adolescent religious affiliation and class location can shape network formation, educational attainment, and family formation. The timing of these life-course transitions and the development of particular forms of human capital, in turn, affect labor market outcomes such as occupational status, income, and wealth. We have highlighted cultural understandings of sexuality, familism, and the moral imperatives that come before material gain as important forces in this overall process. In particular, conservative Protestantism serves as a cultural framework that provides adherents with particular schemas, beliefs, and worldviews that shape behaviors – behaviors that have material outcomes. Our model focuses primarily on adolescent and young adulthood religious affiliation and association because of the importance of these years in the shaping of beliefs, values, and habits (Glanville et al. 2008; Hitlin and Piliavin 2004; Longest and Smith 2011; Trinitapoli and Vaisey, 2009) and also because it is during this phase of the life course the pathways to adult labor market attainment are being determined (Glass and Jacobs, 2005; Keister 2011).

Conservative Protestant denominations have traditionally exhibited high retention rates among their members (Sherkat 1991; Sherkat and Wilson 1995; Smith and Sikkink 2003; Sullens 1993), although switching out of CP traditions can produce gains in educational attainment (Scheitle and Smith 2012). Smith and Sikkink (2003) demonstrate that the influence of social factors (such as education, family size, importance of faith) on religious retention and switching vary by tradition, suggesting that religious culture plays an important role in shaping preferences and choices. For example, the cultural framework and organizational strategies of Evangelicals (e.g., clubs and organizations within the church and within secular high schools and colleges) create strong religious identities that lead to high retention rates of members of Evangelical traditions alongside increased education attainment. In contrast, other CPs, such as Fundamentalists, typically must choose between remaining in the faith or engaging in education and labor market activity associated with secular society (Smith and Sikkink 2003). An interesting direction for future research relates to CP converts. For example, Lindsay (2007) identifies a growing number of CP converts exhibiting high levels of human capital and labor market success. If this trend persists, we will begin to see an overall increase in the average levels of education, income, and wealth for CPs. However, our model suggests that the key determinants of adult attainment are the normative pathways that develop early in life, so whether or not the offspring of CP converts experience intergenerational downward mobility is the crucial question.

Although the focus of this chapter has been on CPs, the broader theoretical argument may apply to other religious traditions as well. Religious culture – the traits, values, and orientations unique to a particular religious tradition – has a role in producing the high educational attainment of Mormon/Latter-Day Saints (Schaefer and Zellner 2007) and the high levels of education and

income earned by Jews (Burstein 2007). This model might be fruitfully extended to examine variation within conservative Protestant traditions. For example, Evangelicals have lower levels of animosity toward secular education than Pentecostals and Charismatics (Ammerman 1987; Sikkink 1999), which may contribute to higher levels of completed education (Beyerlein 2004). The development of an engaged theology that encourages participation in the broader society, including secular institutions (Beyerlein 2004; Smith et al. 1998, 2000), can explain the higher reported incomes of Evangelical Protestants compared to other CP traditions.

Finally, this conceptual framework may also shed light on the declining fortunes of those who are not religiously affiliated. Earlier cohorts of the religiously nonaffiliated tended to have education and incomes comparable to non-CP affiliates. However, there is evidence that this may be changing; for example, Massengill (2008) found that in cohorts born after 1960 the likelihood of completing a four-year degree for those raised with no religious affiliation was even smaller than for those raised CP. Similar processes – whereby cultural frameworks shape social networks and attitudes toward education and work – may be leading to lower levels of education and social capital among the unaffiliated, which in turn hamper job acquisition and career development. Our conceptual model provides a framework for empirically testing and interpreting differences within and between those in faith traditions and those disaffiliated from religious institutions.

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