

ABSTRACT

The Intersection of Race and Religion in the United States

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Race relations in America are at a unique point in history, and much has changed in the American racial landscape in the fifty years since Milton Gordon authored his seminal work, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. Religion is often viewed as having the potential to foster racial and ethnic unity, but religion historically has served as an impediment to race relations in the nation. This study examines the relationship between race and religion in contemporary America and asks two primary questions. First, do contemporary American religions help foster integration and alleviate racial tension or merely perpetuate it? Second, does religion alleviate the burdens placed upon racial and ethnic minorities in the United States or heighten them? Drawing from multiple datasets at both the individual and organizational levels, the three analyses in this dissertation examine the relationships between religion and race relations in the United States. Specifically, this project examines the following: (1) racial and ethnic integration into predominantly white congregations, (2) the relationship between childhood religiosity and participation in interracial romantic relationships across cohorts, and (3) the effects of religiosity on depression/anxiety,

delinquency, and alcohol abuse for young Latino Americans utilizing General Strain Theory. The results and implications for each study are discussed as well as their limitations and directions for future research.

The Intersection of Race and Religion in the United States

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DEDICATION

To Amy and Connor

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Social Structures and Race Relations in the United States

Race relations in America are at a unique point in history. It was over fifty years ago that Milton Gordon penned his classic, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*. In this book, he shed light upon the importance of social structures and group life in understanding and effectively addressing the problems of prejudice and discrimination. Gordon convincingly argued the individual psychological states and activities related to prejudice and discriminatory behavior are the by-products of social and group structures, and confronting these structures is the only way to legitimately address these vital issues (Gordon, 1964).

Gordon (1961, 1964) proposed a multidimensional model of assimilation and applied it to three different theories of assimilation in America: Anglo-conformity, the melting pot, and cultural pluralism.¹ His model of assimilation contained seven dimensions: cultural, structural, marital, identificational, attitude receptional, behavior receptional, and civic assimilation. His analysis of these seven dimensions revealed that when majority and minority group members interact with each other cultural assimilation or acculturation generally occurs first, but this dimension can happen independently of

¹ The three different theories of assimilation described by Gordon (1961, 1964) are unique and distinct from one another. Anglo-Conformity is a broad term that assumes maintaining the English institutions, customs, language, and cultural patterns prevalent in America is the most desirable form of integrating immigrant groups. The Melting-Pot theory suggests the amalgamation of different cultures and customs held by various immigrants and people groups will create a distinct American culture that will represent the assimilating groups. The theory of Cultural Pluralism seeks to preserve the ethnic cultural traditions of all groups assimilating into the United States while maintaining the standard civic responsibilities of American life.

the others and does not necessarily lead to the other dimensions either. Additionally, he noted that when structural assimilation occurs, all other forms of assimilation eventually follow. According to Gordon, the ideal goal is to reach the latter three stages of assimilation, which results in the absence of prejudice and discrimination as well as the absence of value and power conflicts (Gordon, 1964). While Anglo-conformity was the dominant type of assimilation seen throughout American history, it failed to achieve the ideal goals of assimilation. Similarly, the melting pot hypothesis failed to reach the latter stages of assimilation, with one exception in the religious sphere, where a triple-melting pot of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews was able to form in the mid twentieth century (see Gordon, 1978; Herberg, 1960). Consequently, cultural pluralism is seen as the theory of assimilation most likely to successfully achieve the structural assimilation necessary to effectively reduce prejudice, discrimination, and power imbalances (Gordon, 1961).

Classical assimilation theory as defined by Gordon (1961, 1964) has received two main criticisms. First, some scholars have questioned its usefulness in contemporary America for explaining race relations, largely because the assimilation of African-Americans, non-European immigrants, and other racial and ethnic minorities have not progressed in the same manner as they did for European immigrants in the first half of the twentieth century, especially with regards to economic attainment (Omi & Winant, 1994; Portes & Zhou, 1993). Secondly, classical assimilation theory oftentimes is accused of being ethnocentric (Alba & Nee, 2005), a critique that also was cautioned by Gordon himself (1978). Consequently, some modern scholars promote the concept of multiculturalism for minority groups to achieve upward mobility (Alba & Nee, 2005). This concept is less unidirectional than the original conception of classical assimilation

and involves movement from both dominant and subordinate groups. It contends that racial and ethnic boundaries can be crossed, blurred, or shifted as greater socioeconomic equality is obtained, and acknowledges that not all subordinate groups may desire to adapt the dominant cultural values (Alba & Nee, 2005; Qian & Lichter, 2007). While Gordon's theory of assimilation has been critiqued over the past five decades, the stages of assimilation are still applicable for racial and ethnic integration today, and the end goals of reducing prejudice and discrimination, as well as economic and power inequalities remains constant (Qian & Lichter, 2001).

Gordon's work was published during the political height of the American Civil Rights Movement. The movement culminated in the passing of the American Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin in schools, the workplace, and for voter registration. The Civil Rights Movement was a major step in achieving structural assimilation by removing the legal barriers that prevented it.

Over the past five decades racial and ethnic groups in America have made great strides in achieving structural equality. The beginning of the twenty-first century presented a picture where Gordon's last three stages of assimilation, with regards to race and ethnicity, were both imminently feasible and attainable. In fact, by the end of the first decade of the new millennium, many declared that we had achieved Gordon's ideal goal, and that America had truly become a "post-racial" society (McWhorter, 2008). Many commentators, conservative and liberal alike, pointed to the election of Barack Obama as the president of the United States in 2008 as evidence that African Americans had achieved, or were on the cusp of achieving, racial equality (see Dawson & Bobo, 2009).

President Obama's election elicited similar responses throughout the nation, and this narrative was propagated by several media outlets as soon as he was seen as a legitimate candidate in the Democratic primaries. For example, a National Public Radio story aired shortly after Obama won the Iowa caucus and fared well in the New Hampshire primaries stating that America had entered into an era of "post-racial" politics. This story claimed the dreams of civil rights veterans were being seen and Americans were able to make race-free judgments as to who should lead them (Schorr, 2008). Similarly, after his election many concluded that race was less important than it used to be, racial boundaries had been overcome, and racism was no longer a problem in our nation. One scholar, John McWhorter of the Manhattan Institute, went so far as to say that America had by and large overcome the problem of racism, and "racism is not Black people's main problem anymore. To say that is like saying the earth is flat" (quoted in Lum, 2009). While perhaps not conceding that America had achieved post-racial status, several other scholars contended that Obama's election at least signaled that a post-racial or post-ethnic future was imminent for the nation (see Hollinger, 2008, 2011).

Despite proclamations heralding America's ascension to a "post-racial" society, many race scholars were skeptical and claimed that race still mattered. For example, Feagin (2006, 2013) argued that the racism and racial oppression prominent in our nation's history successfully reproduced itself and created a system plagued by a racial hierarchy and inequalities that are evident still in contemporary society. He maintained most major institutions had been infused with racial stereotypes and practices that are inherently discriminatory towards nonwhites. Historically, whites used violence to explicitly oppress minority groups; however, white supremacy currently does so through

a different tactic: ignoring racial oppression and suffering while systematically denying its existence. Similarly, Bonilla-Silva (2001, 2006) claimed the ideology of “colorblindness” purported by many whites in America in and of itself endorses racial inequality by ignoring the realities of prejudiced attitudes and discriminatory practices. Several other race scholars echoed the concerns of Feagin and Bonilla-Silva, and noted that America had yet to overcome its racial barriers, as racial inequalities still plague the nation (see Dawson & Bobo, 2009; Lum, 2009).

Since the election of Obama, scholars have continued to identify racial disparities in America. These disparities are still evident in education (Jencks & Phillips, 2011; Van de Werfhorst & Mijs, 2010), occupational attainment (Pager, 2008; Pager, Western, & Bonikowski, 2009), criminal arrests and sentencing (Kramer & Ulmer, 2008; Rocque, 2011; Western & Pettit, 2010), income and net worth (Corra & Borch, 2014; Wilson, 2009), and health care outcomes (Olshansky et al., 2012; Stroope, Martinez, Eschbach, Peek, & Markides, 2014) to name just a few of the structural inequalities found within the nation.

The declaration of America as a post-racial nation towards the end of the first decade of the new century was soon overshadowed by the second decade. This decade made the racialized nature of American structures more pronounced than they had been in decades and brought them to the forefront of the nation’s attention. The shooting of an unarmed black teen in February of 2012, and the ensuing acquittal of his white Hispanic shooter remained in national headlines for nearly two years, making the unequal criminal sentencing in America a national conversation (CNN Library, 2014).

Perhaps the year 2014 made the prominence of race and ethnicity in America most evident, as national stories and events of race relations were at the center of national conversations throughout most of the year. The persistence of individual discrimination and negative racial attitudes were brought to light when the racially prejudiced comments of a prominent billionaire led to the eventual forced sale of his professional basketball team (Shelburne, 2014). The persistence of structural inequalities, especially within the criminal justice system, were made evident when unarmed black men were killed by white police officers in Ferguson, MO, New York, NY, and elsewhere. The subsequent decisions of separate grand juries to not indict the officers involved in the killings resulted in protests and demonstrations across the nation demanding racial equality (CBS News, 2014; Goodman & Baker, 2014). The preceding events sparked a growing national movement entitled “black lives matter” in an attempt to bring to light and address the racial disparities in America (Lynch III, 2015). These examples of the racial inequalities and prejudices in contemporary American society reveal that despite the numerous advancements made in race relations, the nation still lags in achieving the ideal stages of assimilation outlined by Gordon fifty years ago.

The Intersection of Race and Religion in the United States

Throughout American history, religion has been used to spur on social change, and it has played a central role in a number of social movements (Finke & Stark, 2005). For example, the cultural schemas of religious institutions, specifically Evangelical Protestantism, provided a repertoire of meanings, motives, and resources necessary to fuel the temperance movement and support the abolitionist movement in the early nineteenth century (Young, 2002). Similarly, the American Populist movement of the late

nineteenth century obtained a politically legitimate discourse and was able to find the balance between individual and communal equality through the use of an American “civil religious” discourse (Williams & Alexander, 1994).

While religious institutions were at the forefront of several social movements, their contributions to movements promoting racial equality have been more tenuous. Despite the positive involvement of religious institutions in the abolitionist movement (Young, 2002), religious teachings commonly were used to justify slavery and oppose this movement as well (Emerson & Smith, 2000). Additionally, religious institutions served to hinder structural assimilation by promoting segregation from the end of Reconstruction throughout the first half of the twentieth century, and religious teachings frequently were utilized to sustain the validity of the Jim Crow laws in the south (Hunt & Hunt, 2001). Throughout the first half of the twentieth century congregations served as venues to Americanize immigrants, promoting acculturation and Anglo-conformity (Stevens-Arroyo, 1998). While this practice helped some immigrants adjust to their new country, it subsequently resulted in the forfeiture of non-Anglo culture and implied that the dominant culture was the ideal culture. Thus, religious institutions in America have a history of impeding race relations and excusing prejudice attitudes by implicitly elevating one racial group and their culture above all others.

Many contemporary scholars maintain the effects of this historical impediment to race relations are evident still, and the relationship between race and religion in America remains divisive (Shelton & Emerson, 2012). The majority of the nation’s religious congregations are racially homogenous (Edwards, Christerson, & Emerson, 2013). These racially homogenous congregations tend to promote segregated social networks and

frequently lead to greater levels of residential segregation (Blanchard, 2007). This is especially true for areas densely populated with Conservative Protestants on account of their lack of social services and outreach programs directed towards nonmembers in the community (Ammerman, 2005; Blanchard, 2007; Chaves, 2004a). Moreover, the ideology of Conservative Protestantism fosters a worldview that rejects the impact of structural inequalities on racial and ethnic minorities (Emerson & Smith, 2000).

Others, on the other hand, are more optimistic and view the relationship between religion and race relations as more amenable. Putnam and Campbell (2010) find that individuals in all major American religious traditions have increasingly become opposed to racial discrimination and supportive of racial equality in all forms since the 1970s. Some go so far as to contend that religion can play a vital role in mediating racial tension in America and creating more racial harmony (DeYoung, Emerson, Yancey, & Kim, 2004). In their examination of religious congregations, DeYoung and his colleagues (2004) described three types of multiracial congregations: assimilated, pluralist, and integrated. Assimilated congregations tend to reflect the values, interests, and practices of the dominant racial group in the church, in a manner similar to Anglo-conformity as described by Gordon (1961, 1964). Pluralist congregations contain multiple racial groups, and while the power and interests of these groups are relatively evenly distributed, the amount of actual interracial interrogation is relatively low. Finally, integrated congregations possess high levels of cross-racial interaction and are typified by high levels of shared identity. These congregations are seen as venues through which society can resolve long-standing racial divisions (DeYoung et al., 2004).

The diversity fostered by multiracial congregations is known to create a shared identity across racial and ethnic lines that mirrors the identificational assimilation described by Gordon (1964). Individuals in these congregations can develop a shared religious identity that is dominant over their racial identity (Becker, 1998), this shared identity can cultivate ethnic-transcendence (Marti, 2005, 2009). Emerson (2006) notes that some individuals who attend multiracial congregations do not fit within their ascribed racial schema, and he refers to these individuals as “Sixth Americans” because they do not fit within the five major American racial groups. While “Sixth Americans” may possess all of the physical attributes of one of the five major American racial groups, they socially represent a different group that is defined by racial heterogeneity as opposed to homogeneity. Consequently, religion in contemporary America has the potential to help the nation obtain cultural pluralism where prejudice, discrimination and power inequality is minimal (Gordon, 1961, 1964). I will explore the relationship between race and religion further in the subsequent chapters, as I shed light upon the role religion plays in the integration of racial and ethnic groups. Many negative outcomes are associated with racial stratification and religion can impact stratification directly and indirectly. This dissertation examines religion’s direct and indirect involvement with stratification in this nation and seeks to answer two primary questions. First, does religion directly help foster integration, alleviate racial tension, and minimize stratification in America or merely perpetuate them? Second does religion indirectly address stratification in the nation by helping relieve the burdens placed upon racial minorities in America or heighten them?

Research Agenda

American congregations are the largest voluntary organizations in the nation and a common setting for civic participation (Ammerman, 2005; Putnam & Campbell, 2010; Wuthnow & Evans, 2002). Gordon viewed churches as a pivotal venue to foster structural integration. He noted that these organizations hosted activities that “create personal friendship patterns, frequent home intervisiting, communal worship, and communal recreation,” which often fostered intimate “primary relationships” (1961, p. 279). Congregations are an important and unique location to examine structural integration on account of the valuable benefits they offer their members, and because they are not required by law to integrate due to the disestablishment clause in the Constitution. Thus, they approximate the effects of a “free market” on racial integration. Chapter Two examines whether congregations serve as venues to alleviate racial tensions or create more hurdles and another mechanism of stratification for racial minorities to overcome as they struggle for greater opportunities for upward mobility, and inclusive participation in public life. Drawing from the homophily principle and organizational ecology theory I follow previous literature and predict racial minorities in predominately white congregations will have lower levels of belonging and commitment than those belonging to the white majority. Going beyond this literature, I incorporate contemporary racial stratification literature and propose the racial hierarchy in America would transfer to congregations. Thus, integration into a white congregation should vary for racial and ethnic groups. I test my hypotheses using multilevel modeling techniques to analyze a national multilevel level dataset of congregations and their members.

The third chapter will examine the relationship between religion and participation in interracial romantic relationships. Interracial marriages are often viewed as the last major step in the assimilation process (Qian & Lichter, 2001, 2007). They are the natural outcome of successful structural integration, as consistently racially mixed social networks inevitably lead to racial exogamy (Gordon, 1978). Gordon's theory of assimilation focused specifically on intermarriage; however, dating and romantic relationships are the usual predecessor to these marital relationships (Yancey, 2007). Those who participate in interracial relationships have the ability to reduce the social distance between racial and ethnic groups (Kalmijn, 1998), and thus the dynamics of those who participate in these relationships is a worthy topic of study. Chapter Three analyzes the effects of childhood religiosity on participation in interracial relationships in America, and whether these effects vary across cohorts. Following previous literature I hypothesize that greater levels of childhood religiosity are negatively correlated with participation in interracial relationships. However, I expect this relationship to be less pronounced for younger cohorts on account of the growing acceptance of racial exogamy within American society. I utilize a national dataset and multivariate regressions in order to test my hypotheses.

Gordon's interest in the assimilation process derived from his desire to see an end to prejudice and discrimination towards minorities as well as more economic and power equality between dominant and subordinate groups (Gordon, 1964, 1978). The continual experience of racial stratification has a real and direct impact on the lives of subordinate group members. Individuals who encounter prejudice attitudes and discriminatory behaviors at both the institutional and individual level often experience large amount

strain and subsequently negative emotions, such as depression and anxiety (Agnew, 2005; Agnew, Brezina, Wright, & Cullen, 2002; Cohen, 1956; Merton, 1938). Chapter Four provides a case study and asks if religion alleviates these burdens or heightens them for a specific ethnic group known to experience high level of prejudice and discrimination: Latino Americans. Latinos are the largest minority group in the nation and account for a disproportionate amount of the nation's criminal offending; yet, they remain understudied. Utilizing Agnew's general strain theory and drawing from contemporary racial stratification literature, I contend the effects of strain and negative emotions on delinquency are especially salient among young Latinos, for which general strain theory has not often been tested. Additionally, drawing from the sociology of religion, I hypothesize that religiosity is negatively correlated with delinquency, and also attenuates the effects of strain and negative emotions on delinquency for Latino adolescents. Moreover, I hypothesize that the impact of religiosity on delinquency would be more salient for foreign-born than native-born Latino youth. I examine these hypotheses using a national longitudinal dataset and lagged multivariate regressions.

The role religion plays in racial stratification as well as pro social civic outcomes is highlighted in all three chapters. Chapter Two examines racial stratification within predominately white congregations, and argues that the American racial hierarchy has direct implications for levels of belonging and commitment within these organizations. Racial stratification directly impacts interpersonal relationships. Chapter Three asks how childhood religiosity is correlated with participation in interracial relationships, as participation in these relationships can help individuals overcome longstanding racial barriers. Additionally, racial stratification tends to negatively affect members in

subordinate groups more than those in the dominant group. Chapter Four examines religious influence on a common response to stratification, deviance and delinquency, within an understudied subordinate group, Latino Americans.

Religion often promotes pro social civic outcomes, and Chapter Two examines behavioral outcomes vital to the survival of the nation's largest voluntary organization (Putnam & Campbell, 2010). Chapter Three explores if childhood religiosity is correlated with the pro social behavior of participating in an interracial relationship. Chapter Four observes deviant behavioral outcomes and asks whether or not childhood religiosity hinders participation in these outcomes. The focus on childhood religiosity within Chapters Three and Four stresses the importance of religious socialization on behavioral outcomes and highlights the importance of the socialization that occurs within religious institutions, as emphasized within Chapter Two.

The final chapter will expand upon the conclusions from each analysis and the dissertation as a whole. This chapter will also suggest additional areas of study for future research to explore that will extend the work of this dissertation. Lastly, I will comment on the relationship between race and religion in contemporary America, and how the interplay of race and religion could look in the future.

CHAPTER TWO

The Integration of Racial and Ethnic Minorities into White Congregations

Introduction

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously stated in 1963 that the most segregated hour in America was at eleven o'clock on Sunday mornings. Dr. King was keenly aware of the racial segregation that plagued American congregations and urged them to change. He viewed congregations as places that promoted peace and brotherhood and could serve as realistic venues to spur on social change and foster racial integration. Since then government interventions have required racial integration in many settings, but due to the disestablishment clause in the Constitution, congregations have remained free of government mandated integration. Despite the increase in racial integration over the past several decades, structural racism and inequalities are still rampant in society (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2006; Feagin, 2006, 2013). Similarly to the perspective Dr. King, religious organizations are frequently viewed as venues to spur positive social change (Finke & Stark, 2005), and they are settings where intimate relationships are formed that can cross racial and ethnic barriers (Emerson, 2006; Gordon, 1961; Marti, 2005, 2009). This chapter examines the racial dynamic of predominantly white congregations, and asks if religious congregations serve to alleviate racial tensions or create more hurdles for racial minorities to overcome as they struggle for upward mobility and greater organizational and institutional inclusion in public life.

Congregations are the largest voluntary organizations in the United States (Ammerman, 2005; Putnam & Campbell, 2010; Wuthnow & Evans, 2002). While the

primary function of congregations is religious in nature, these organizations also serve a number of important social functions. They provide a critical entry point for participation in the community, venues to obtain social capital, and a number of social benefits for those who attend (Blanchard, 2007; Greeley, 1997). Friendships, social connections leading to educational and occupational opportunities, and the adoption of cultural norms are some of the social benefits frequently associated with congregations (Emerson, 2006; Gordon, 1961; Stark & Finke, 2000). Additionally, the majority of American congregations have some form of system set up to economically assist their members who are in need (Cnaan, 2002). While the majority of religious organizations have been segregated historically, many contemporary religious leaders have pushed to integrate congregations (see Emerson, 2006; Martinez & Dougherty, 2013). As a result, most congregations are open to the idea of integration, and they serve as a viable venue in which members of different races and ethnicities can become more familiar with each other. The integration of racial minorities into predominantly white congregations could help racial minorities obtain the social and economic capital necessary to gain access to other white-dominated areas of society including highly valued neighborhoods, higher paying occupations, and more competitive educational institutions.

A substantial amount of recent literature has examined the racial dynamics in religious organizations and has found that numeric racial minorities bear higher costs of memberships and typically have shorter durations of memberships. Previous studies examining race relations within congregations typically fit within one of three categories; they focus on numeric representation (Martinez & Dougherty, 2013; Scheitle & Dougherty, 2010), observe the distinction between whites and nonwhites (Emerson,

2006), or perform case-studies between two races (Christerson & Emerson, 2003; Edwards, 2008). I expand on this body of work by incorporating contemporary racial stratification literature and comparing the three largest American minority groups: African-Americans, Latinos, and Asian-Americans to whites. No other study utilizes national data to examine racial group differences within predominantly white congregations.

Drawing from the homophily principle and organizational ecology theory, I follow prior research and predict racial minorities within predominantly white congregations will have lower levels of belonging and commitment than those who are a part of the white majority. Moreover, I incorporate contemporary racial stratification literature and propose the American racial hierarchy would transfer to congregations. Thus, integration into a white congregation should vary for racial and ethnic groups. Results from multilevel models provide partial support for my hypotheses as well as unexpected findings. Specifically, I find African-Americans and Latinos have lower levels of belonging than whites in predominantly white congregations, yet exhibit *higher* levels of commitment. Conversely, Asian-Americans have greater access to the social benefits of the congregation, yet exhibit *lower* levels of commitment. These findings reveal two things. First there are clear racial group differences within white congregations similar to the American hierarchy, and second the homophily principle and organizational ecology theory are not sufficient for explaining the complex racial dynamics within congregations. These results, their implications, and potential directions for future studies are further discussed.

Race in Religious Organizations

Multiracial congregations, congregations in which no single racial group accounts for eighty percent or more of the congregation (Emerson, 2006; Emerson & Kim, 2003), have garnered the interest of scholars of both race and religion since the turn of the century (see Edwards et al., 2013). Multiracial congregations provide many benefits for their members and have the ability to alleviate racial tension in America. It is argued that these congregations can develop a shared religious identity that supersedes the individual racial identities of their members (Becker, 1998), and individuals in multiracial congregations can use their shared religious identity to transcend racial and ethnic differences (Marti, 2005, 2009). Additionally, DeYoung and his colleagues (2004) contend these congregations produce a setting that is capable of resolving long-standing racial divisions. Therefore, much attention has been devoted to understanding the internal and external dynamics of these congregations in an effort to determine what factors contribute to the success of these congregations (Dougherty & Huyser, 2008; Emerson, 2006; Emerson & Kim, 2003; Garces-Foley, 2007; Yancey, 2009; Yancey & Emerson, 2003).

Multiracial congregations offer their members numerous benefits, but these congregations are both rare and difficult to sustain. In fact, it is estimated just over thirteen percent of all American congregations would be classified as multiracial, where no single racial group accounts for at least eighty percent of the population (Edwards et al., 2013). These overwhelming numbers have motivated a number of researchers to investigate why the vast majority of congregations are racially homogenous.

The pressures of homophily help explain why most American congregations are racially segregated. The homophily principle states: people prefer to associate and interact with those who are like themselves (Blau 1977; Burt 2000; Edwards 2008; Lazarsfeld and Merton 1954). This principle has been applied to a number of social relationships and holds true along a variety of dimensions including social class, gender, age, and religion. However, the most divisive category in American social networks is race and ethnicity (see McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Perhaps, no other social setting illustrates this principle as clearly as American congregations, which are voluntary organizations that exist in an open, pluralistic market (Emerson & Smith, 2000; Finke & Stark, 2005; Stark & Finke, 2000). As mentioned earlier, congregations are not subject to government mandated integration on account the disestablishment clause in the Constitution. Thus, they approximate the effects of a “free market” on race relations as individuals are free to rationally choose which faith community they want to attend. Since people generally prefer to belong to groups with members similar to themselves (Popielarz & McPherson, 1995), voluntary organizations, such as congregations, experience organizational pressures to specialize in and attract racially homogenous members (Emerson & Smith, 2000; McPherson, 1983).

In conjunction with the homophily principle, several studies utilize organizational ecology theory to explain the lack of diversity and extrapolate upon the challenges of heterogeneity within congregations (Christerson, Edwards, & Emerson, 2005; Christerson & Emerson, 2003; Emerson, 2006; Martinez & Dougherty, 2013; Scheitle & Dougherty, 2010). Organizational ecology theory draws from theories of plant and animal ecology and contends that organizations compete for similar resources within a

given niche of society (Blau & Schwartz, 1984; Carroll, 1984; McPherson, 1983; Popielarz & McPherson, 1995; Scheitle & Dougherty, 2008). In order to maximize their ability to obtain the resources in their particular niche, the majority of successful organizations, both voluntary and involuntary, become niche specialists by focusing their efforts on a specific aspect of the population, such as race. Specializing in a specific niche provides a competitive advantage to organizations, as they are able to customize the organizational structure around the needs and preferences of those within their specific niche. This specialization can formulate an organizational culture that unites members through shared values, beliefs, and practices. However, the shared culture often formulated by niche specialization tends to leave organizational members who are not part of this niche at the fringe of the organization, and they are typically less committed to the organization than those who belong to the niche's core (Martinez & Dougherty, 2013; Ott, 1989; Popielarz & McPherson, 1995). Church growth literature reflects a knowledge of the homophily principle and an awareness of these organizational pressures, as some influential church leaders specifically advocate specializing in race in order to maximize congregational growth potential (McGavran, 1990).

Several congregational studies utilize these theories to look at inequality stemming from proportional representation among racial and ethnic groups (Christerson et al., 2005; Christerson & Emerson, 2003; Emerson, 2006; Emerson & Kim, 2003; Scheitle & Dougherty, 2010). They find individuals who are members of a numeric racial minority within congregations generally are satisfied less with their church experience, as they often bear higher costs of membership than those in the largest racial group. For example, an ethnographic study of a traditional Filipino congregation found that the non-

Filipino members experienced higher costs of membership than Filipino members, as they reported lower levels of belonging, higher levels of frustration, and claimed to have fewer friends within the congregation (Christerson et al., 2005; Christerson & Emerson, 2003).

However, the costs of being a numeric minority in congregations become less severe once the group reaches a critical mass of twenty percent. At this point almost everybody in the largest group will have contact and interact with at least one person in the numeric minority (Emerson & Kim, 2003; Sigelman, Bledsoe, Welch, & Combs, 1996). When a numeric minority group accounts for less than twenty percent of the population in a congregation they experience the effects of tokenism. Kanter (1977a, 1977b) contends when a minority group does not have a critical mass they suffer from a disproportionate visibility in the organization, creating an increased sense of difference. These members are often at the edge of the organizational decision making process, granting them a minimal amount of power within the organization, and this power imbalance serves as strict barrier for many racial minorities to successfully integrate into religious congregations (Emerson, 2006). However, when a group does reach a critical mass within a congregation, members of the numeric minority begin to experience equal benefits to those in the largest racial group (DeYoung et al., 2004; Emerson, 2006; Emerson & Kim, 2003). Thus, the costs of membership for racial minority groups in nearly homogenous congregations are more extreme than those in multiracial congregations.

Studies drawing from the homophily principle and organizational ecology theory consistently find congregational members in the numeric racial minority experience

higher costs of membership and are less embedded than those in the numeric majority. However, these theoretical frameworks treat race as a static variable and do not account for the differing societal positions of the races and ethnicities represented within congregations.

Contemporary race theorists contend a racial hierarchy exists in America; yet, only a few studies have examined how the different social positioning of racial groups impact their congregational experience. Edwards (2008) goes beyond the effects of numeric representation of minority groups in congregations and accounts for the social positioning of the smaller group. She finds that African-Americans attending a predominantly white congregation tend to conform to the white Anglo standard of the church. However, she discovers the opposite to be true in a black congregation and finds that the congregation tends to cater to the white minority. Additionally, Emerson and Smith (2000) argue that the largest racial gap in religious organizations is between African-Americans and whites. However, no study has examined how the integration process into predominantly racially homogenous congregations varies for racial and ethnic minority groups according to their racial group position within society. I contend the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities in congregations are not shared equally, and the negative impact of being in the numeric minority will be greater for some races than others based on the symbolic group positioning of their racial or ethnic group.

Racial Stratification in America

According to race theorists white hegemony is seen as the rule that all racial minorities are subjected to in America (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Feagin, 2006, 2013; Omi & Winant, 1994; Winant, 2004). However, a growing body of literature in racial

stratification research contends that the experiences of racial minorities differ by their racial position (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Kim, 1999; Massey, 2007). Therefore, the bifurcation of race into white and nonwhite is not sufficient in teasing out the experiences racial minorities encounter, and a number of race theorists note a racial hierarchy exists in American society that extends beyond the conventional bi-racial order.

Kim (1999) contends that a racial triangulation exists in modern America, with whites at the top of the stratification order, blacks at the bottom, and Asians triangulated relative to both groups. Massey (2007) sets forth another meta-analysis of racial stratification in America utilizing the stereotype content model developed by Fiske and her colleagues (2002). He argues that whites are at the top the American racial hierarchy, with African-Americans and Latinos at the bottom and Asian-Americans positioned between whites and non-Asian minorities.

Similarly, Bonilla-Silva (2004) maintains that the United States is moving towards a tri-racial order based on skin-tone similar to the Caribbean-like racial order. He conceptualizes these groups along a continuum of social superiority on one end and social inferiority on the other. Greater access to society's structural resources is typically enjoyed by those at the top of the racial hierarchy, while those at the bottom have limited access to structural resources. Bonilla-Silva proposes racial stratification consists of three groups: "whites, honorary whites, and collective blacks." These three groups are divided primarily by racial pigmentation, and the majority of African-Americans and Latinos are categorized as "collective blacks." He argues that the "honorary white" category (primarily composed of Asian-Americans) serves as a buffer between the "whites" and "collective blacks." This positioning is reminiscent of the "model minority myth," which

posits that some minority groups in America exemplify character traits reflecting the ideals of the dominant racial group in the nation state, such as a high degree of intelligence, a strong work ethic, and persistence in effort (Ecklund & Park, 2005; Osajima, 2007; J. Z. Park & Martinez, 2014; Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, & Lin, 1998). Several commonalities exist between all these theories of racial stratification in America. Namely, whites enjoy a privileged racial position in America, while African-Americans and Latinos experience higher levels of racial barriers and inequalities. Additionally, the symbolic positioning of Asian-Americans lies between whites and the positioning of African-Americans and Latinos, and they are stereotypically viewed as a model minority.

Since white hegemony persists in America, this racial hierarchy should also translate and hold true in predominantly white congregations. Congregations are known to have prototypical members that display high levels of commitment to the organization, and others typically look to them for cues as to how to behave and be a “true” or “authentic” member of a community (Bean, 2014; Bean & Martinez, 2014b; Hayward & Elliott, 2011). These prototypical members could personify an image of an “ideal congregational member” similar to “ideal workers” in the workplace (Gorman, 2005; Heilman, 1983).

Within predominantly white congregations this image of an “ideal member” would be white, which places individuals of other races and ethnicities at a social disadvantage, as they could not fit this image. All racial and ethnic minorities would have a harder time integrating than whites. However, the stereotypical perception of Asian-Americans as model minorities or “honorary whites” could afford them a greater ability to fit this image within a congregation than members of other minority groups. Therefore,

I expect that the more positive racial placement of Asian-Americans would alleviate some of the negative consequences generally associated with being a numeric minority within white dominated organizations. Additionally, I expect the social group positioning of African-Americans and Latinos would heighten the costs they encounter within these congregations on account of their numeric minority status.

The Integration of Racial and Ethnic Minorities into White Congregations

A number of studies have shown that racial minorities in congregations bear disproportionate costs and are typically less embedded in the congregation than those belonging to the largest racial group, and subsequently minority group members are less committed as well (Christerson et al., 2005; Christerson & Emerson, 2003; Emerson, 2006; Martinez & Dougherty, 2013). I expect these findings to also hold true in predominantly white congregations, which leads to my first hypotheses.

H1a: Given their numeric rarity in predominantly white congregations, African-Americans, Latinos, and Asian-Americans would have lower levels of belonging than those in the white majority.

H1b: Given their numeric rarity in predominantly white congregations, African-Americans, Latinos, and Asian-Americans would have lower levels of commitment than those in the white majority.

While all three minority groups would have less access to the social benefits of the congregation than the white majority, the racial positioning of the minority groups in American society should impact congregational perceptions of racial minorities causing the consequences of being an extreme numeric minority to vary by race and ethnicity. The symbolic group positioning of Asian-Americans as “honorary whites” would buffer the negative consequence of being in the extreme minority within predominantly white

congregations. This group positioning of most Asian-Americans¹ provides them with an ascribed status that is more favorable than other racial minorities, and should result in Asian-Americans having greater access to the social benefits of congregations than members of other minority groups.

Similarly, the ascribed statuses of African-Americans and most Latinos derived from their symbolic group positioning would intensify the hardships placed upon them by their minority status when trying to integrate into white congregations. The greater hardships they encounter penetrating social networks in the congregation would generate lower levels of belonging. Furthermore, greater levels of belonging to an organization are associated with greater commitment, as individuals are more likely to invest in organization in which they have greater levels of embeddedness (Stark & Bainbridge, 1996; Stark & Finke, 2000; Stroope, 2012). This leads to my final hypotheses.

H2a: Given their symbolic group positioning, in predominantly white congregations, Asian-Americans would be closer to the white mean of belonging than African-Americans and Latinos.

H2b: Given their symbolic group positioning, in predominantly white congregations, Asian-Americans would be closer to the white mean of commitment than African-Americans and Latinos.

Data and Methods

Data for these analyses come from the 2001 U.S. Congregational Life Survey (USCLS), a national sample of both U.S. congregations and their attendees. This survey used a hyper-network sampling procedure which relied on a random selection of

¹ The Asian-American racial category is comprised of several different ethnicities and nationalities. Their placement in the American racial hierarchy varies by ethnic community. While the majority of Asian-Americans are classified as “honorary whites,” some are also categorized as “collective blacks” (Bonilla-Silva, 2004). The mixed positioning amongst Asian-Americans is important and should not be overlooked; however, the lack of disaggregated data does not allow for the present study to account for these differences.

individuals in order to identify a selection of congregations that produce a representative look at U.S. congregations. Individuals used in the hyper-network procedure were those who indicated that they attended church in the 2000 General Social Survey, and they were asked to name the congregation they attended. This produced a sample of 1,214 verified congregations, 434 of which participated in the study and returned completed surveys, producing a 36 percent response rate. The attender data collected information on all individuals 15 or older who attended worship services on or about April 29, 2001 with a total of 122,404 respondents. In addition to the individual respondents, a leader within the congregation completed a congregational profile producing a nationally representative multilevel dataset (Woolever and Bruce 2002). The attender surveys provide individual-level data for people within each congregation, and the congregational profiles provide contextual data at the organizational level that is applicable to the individuals. The unique size and structure of the USCLS is truly invaluable in testing these hypotheses. A common problem when studying individuals in the extreme numeric minority on a national scale is that such individuals are rare by definition in most settings, making it difficult to find or develop a survey containing a large number of them. The USCLS is the only dataset with a sizeable number of Asian-Americans, African-Americans, and Latinos within white dominated organizational settings to compare to the white majority.

Since this study is focused on the group positioning of various racial groups within predominantly white organizations, I restricted the sample to only include congregations whose racial proportion was over eighty percent white, omitting all minority dominant and multiracial congregations. Therefore any racial minority within

these congregations would be attributed with numeric token status. Additionally, all respondents who indicated that they were a visitor or attending the congregation for the first time as well as those under 18 years of age are excluded. The final sample consists of 50,372 individuals and 268 congregations. The mean racial composition of these congregations is approximately 91 percent white. There are a total of 442 African-Americans, 1307 Latinos, 691 Asian-Americans, 696 racial others, and 1194 multi-racial individuals in this study.

Dependent Variables

This study focuses on differences in belonging and commitment within white dominated congregations, and two dependent variables from the attender surveys of the USCLS are used to measure each of these concepts. Organizational belonging is a multifaceted concept, and the present study incorporates a subjective and objective measure of this concept. Subjectively, respondents were asked “Do you have a strong sense of belonging to this congregation?” The following seven responses were provided: “yes, a strong sense of belonging that is growing;” “yes, a strong sense - about the same as last year;” “yes, but perhaps not as strong as in the past;” “no, but I am new here;” “no, and I wish I did by now;” “no, but I am happy as I am;” and “do not know or not applicable.” I transformed this variable into a dichotomous measure since the provided responses do not provide an unambiguous ordinal scale. Following the coding of prior research, 1 = those who have a strong sense of belonging that is either consistent with or growing from how they felt the previous year and 0 = all other responses (Dougherty & Whitehead, 2011; Martinez & Dougherty, 2013; Stroope, 2011; Stroope & Baker, 2014).

The second dependent variable of belonging is more objective and measures whether or not the individual has close friends within the congregation. Friendship networks serve as one of the greatest social benefits acquired in religious congregations, and thus a vital component of belonging (Christerson et al., 2005; Emerson, 2006; Stark & Finke, 2000). Respondents were asked, “Do you have any close friends in this congregation?” Four possible answers were provided: “No, I have little contact with others from this congregation outside of activities here;” “No, I have some friends in the congregation, but my closest friends are not involved here;” “Yes, I have some close friends here as well as other friends who are not part of this congregation;” “Yes, most of my closest friends are part of this congregation.” I transformed the responses into a dichotomous variable where 1= those who selected either of the “yes” responses, and 0 represents those who responded with either of the “no” categories in order to distinguish those individuals only with close friends in their congregation. This coding is identical to that of Martinez and Dougherty (2013).

In order to measure the commitment levels of individuals within the congregations two dependent variables are utilized. The first measure is financial contribution to the congregation since financial giving is a common measure of religious commitment and necessary for the organization’s survival (Iannaccone, 1997; Scheitle & Finke, 2008; Whitehead, 2010). The USCLS asks: “About how much do you give financially to this congregation?” Respondents select from five descending categories ranging from “I give 10% or more of net income regularly” to “I do not contribute financially here.” These responses were recoded so that higher values signify higher

levels of giving to the congregation following Scheitle and Finke (2008) and Whitehead (2010).

The final measure of congregational commitment is whether or not the respondent invited any of their friends or relatives to the congregation in the past year, which is a common measure of commitment. Furthermore, bringing people to a congregation is essential to the vitality of a congregation, as the primary source of new members for any voluntary organization derives from the existing social network of their members (Froese & Bader, 2007; Martinez, 2013; McPherson, Popielarz, & Drobnic, 1992; Stark & Bainbridge, 1980). Respondents were asked “Would you be prepared to invite to a worship service here any of your friends or relatives who do not now attend a congregation?” Five possible answers were provided: “Yes, and I have done so in the past 12 months;” “Yes, but I have not done so in the past 12 months;” “Don’t know;” “No, probably not;” and “No, definitely not.” Since my hypotheses center around acts of commitment, this variable was transformed into a dichotomous variable so that those who selected the first response and actually invited someone to their congregation are coded as 1, and all others are zero.

Independent Variables

As this study seeks to determine how the integration experience varies by racial group positioning, the racial and ethnic identity of the respondent serves as the primary variable of interest. Race/ethnicity is measured using a system of binary variables with whites serving as the contrast group. The other races include African-American, Latino, Asian-American, other, and multi-racial. All races were determined by the respondent’s

self-identification. If a respondent identified with two or more races, they were classified as multi-racial.

Several controls related to belonging and commitment are utilized on both the individual and congregational level. The individual level controls are gender (female=1), age (in years, limited to 18 and older), education (ranging from 1, no formal education to 8, Master's, doctorate or other graduate degree), income (ranging from 1, less than \$10,000 in total income before taxes to 6, \$100,000 or more), marital status (married=1), and children living in the home (1=yes). Several religious variables are also accounted for, including: congregational attendance (ranging from 1, "hardly ever/special occasions only" to 6, "more than once a week"), whether or not they are a member of the congregation (1=yes) and whether or not the respondent is a biblical literalist (1 = yes).

Nesting effects are accounted for in all models by using congregational level controls. The region (south=1) of the congregation is controlled for. Congregational size is also accounted for in all models. Congregational size is a continuous variable of the average number of weekly attendees, and this variable is log transformed due to its skewed distribution. Following Steensland *et al.* (2000) congregations are categorized as Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or Other based on the identification of the congregational profile. Evangelicals serve as the contrast group in all models since they are known for having embedded members with high levels of commitment (C. Smith, 1998). Additionally, the racial proportion of all minority groups in each congregation is accounted for, as the group size of numeric minorities impacts their levels of belonging and commitment (Martinez & Dougherty, 2013). Since the congregations examined in this study are all white dominant, the largest possible

proportion for numeric minorities is nineteen percent, but within this sample, the largest actual proportion of any minority group within a single congregation is fourteen percent. All ordinal and continuous variables on both the individual and congregational-level are centered at their mean, as is customary in multilevel models (Luke, 2004). Table 2.1 provides the descriptive statistics of all variables utilized in the study.

Table 2.1

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
<i>Dependent Variables</i>					
Belonging	49,907	0.75	0.42	0	1
Close Friends at Church	49,926	0.70	0.45	0	1
Giving	49,737	2.53	1.03	0	4
Invited Someone to Church	50,048	0.48	0.49	0	1
<i>Individual-Level Variables</i>					
Female	50,372	0.60	0.49	0	1
Age	50,372	52.12	16.01	18	100
Education	50,372	5.78	1.66	1	8
Income	50,372	3.83	1.44	1	6
Married	50,372	0.74	0.44	0	1
Children living at home	50,372	0.56	0.49	0	1
Congregational Attendance	50,372	4.90	0.78	1	6
Member of Congregation	50,372	0.85	0.36	0	1
Biblical Literalist	50,372	0.26	0.44	1	5
White	50,372	0.92	0.23	1	5
Black	50,372	0.01	0.07	0	1
Latino	50,372	0.03	0.14	0	1
Asian	50,372	0.01	0.09	0	1
Other Race	50,372	0.01	0.09	0	1
Multi-Racial	50,372	0.02	0.11	0	1
<i>Congregational-Level Variables</i>					
Congregation Size	268	515.03	687.59	11	3500
South	268	0.29	0.45	0	1
Evangelical	268	0.46	0.50	0	1
Mainline Protestant	268	0.30	0.46	0	1
Catholic	268	0.18	0.39	0	1
Jewish	268	0.02	0.14	0	1
Other Religion	268	0.04	0.20	0	1
Black Proportion	268	0.01	0.02	0	0.11
Latino Proportion	268	0.01	0.02	0	0.12
Asian Proportion	268	0.01	0.01	0	0.14
Other Race Proportion	268	0.01	0.01	0	0.10
Multi-Racial Proportion	268	0.01	0.02	0	0.09

Source: US Congregational Life Survey (2001)

Analytic Method

This study includes both structured organizational and individual-level data, which are best analyzed using multilevel modeling because this method allows for the groups' effects to be tested on individuals (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002; Snijders & Bosker, 1999). Multilevel regression differs from single-level regression techniques because it corrects for biased standard errors commonly found within a hierarchical framework. Due to the clustering design of multilevel data collection, the residuals for persons within congregations do not match the "independence" assumption in single-level regressions and require a more rigorous model. Multilevel models take into account the within-congregation covariance between individuals into consideration for modeling congregational-level effects (Luke, 2004).

Null models were run on all four dependent variables, and they all found significant variation between each dependent variable across congregations (level two). These models (not shown) confirm the necessity of multilevel modeling. I utilize four multilevel models (one for each dependent variable) with both the level-one and level-two effects specified in order to test my hypotheses. Normal specifications are used in the model with an interval-level dependent variable (giving), while a Bernoulli distribution with a logit link function is used for the rest of the models, as they each have a dichotomous dependent variable.

Results

Table 2.2 presents the findings from two multilevel models predicting congregational belonging. Model 1 predicts the likelihood an individual subjectively feels a strong sense of belonging to their congregation. Age, attendance, congregational

membership, and biblical literalism are all positively associated with experiencing a strong sense of subjective belonging to one's congregations, and Jewish synagogues and other religious traditions have higher mean levels of belonging than Evangelical congregations. Alternatively, females have lower levels of belonging than males and educational attainment and congregational size are negatively correlated with individual-level belonging. Contrary to Hypothesis 1, African-Americans and Latinos do not differ in their sense of belonging from those belonging to the white majority. Similarly no differences between other or multiracial individual and whites exist. Surprisingly, Asian-Americans were *more* likely to report experiencing a strong sense of belonging to their white congregation than whites ($b = .258$; $p = .028$). While no racial groups are less likely to have a strong sense of belonging, the stronger sense of belonging experienced by Asian Americans suggests that the integration process for them is smoother than other racial groups. Thus, the status as "honorary whites" for Asian-Americans could serve as a buffer against the negative effects of being an extreme minority in a white dominant congregation.

Model 2 predicts the likelihood that an individual has close friends within their congregation. Age, attendance, congregational membership, biblical literalism, and congregations in the Evangelical tradition are all positively correlated with having close friends in one's congregation, while marriage and congregational size are negatively correlated.

The race variables in Model 2 indicate that no significant difference exists between whites and multi-racial individuals or other races. However, in accordance with Hypothesis 1a, African-Americans ($b = -.642$; $p < .001$), Latinos ($b = -.435$; $p < .001$),

and Asian-Americans ($b = -.383$; $p < .001$) are all significantly less likely than whites to have close friends in white congregations, suggesting that all three groups are objectively less likely to belong to the congregation than those who are a part of the white majority. While all three groups expressed a strong sense of subjective belonging, their lack of close friends within the congregation suggests that this sense of belonging is experienced in ways beyond connecting with other members. In predominantly white congregations, African-Americans have 90.1 percent lower odds of having close friends than whites, while Latinos have 54.6 percent lower odds than whites. Comparatively, the odds of Asian-Americans having close friends in their congregation are 46.4 percent lower than whites.² It is also important to note that these racial group differences are not a byproduct of greater proportional presence within these congregations since the models control for the proportional representation of each racial or ethnic group. While all three of these racial groups are significantly less likely to report having close friends in their congregation than whites, the odds of having a close friend in a white church are further from the white mean for African-American and Latinos than they are for Asian-Americans, thus providing support for Hypothesis 2a.

Table 2.3 contains two models predicting commitment through giving and inviting others to the congregation. Model 1 predicts giving rates at the individual level. Being female, married, and a member of the congregation (particularly Evangelical ones), along with greater age, educational attainment, household income, congregational

² To calculate the percent change in odds for the measures with negative odds ratios, due to their being bounded between 0 and 1, 1 was divided by each ratio. Therefore African-Americans = $1/0.526 = 1.901$; Latinos = $1/0.647 = 1.546$; Asian-Americans = $1/0.683 = 1.443$ (see Stroope, Draper, & Whitehead, 2013)

attendance, and biblical literalism, are positively correlated with giving. Conversely, having children at home is negatively correlated with giving.

Table 2.2

Effects of Race on Belonging in Predominantly White Congregations (Multilevel Models)

Variables	M1: Subjective Sense of Belonging		M2: Having Close Friends in the Congregation	
	Estimate	Odds Ratio	Estimate	Odds Ratio
Intercept	0.583*		1.236***	
<i>Individual Level</i>				
Female	-0.056*	0.945	-0.003	---
Age	0.006***	1.006	0.017***	1.017
Education	-0.052***	0.950	-0.001	---
Income	-0.014	---	0.011	---
Married	0.006	---	-0.077**	0.926
Children at home	-0.012	---	0.027	----
Attendance	0.654***	1.924	0.331***	1.393
Church Member	1.407***	4.082	1.027***	2.793
Biblical Literalist	0.215***	1.239	0.104***	1.109
Race ^a				
Black	0.044	---	-0.642***	0.526
Latino	-0.019	---	-0.435***	0.647
Asian	0.258*	1.295	-0.383***	0.683
Other Race	-0.032	---	0.057	---
Multi-racial	-0.148	---	0.071	---
<i>Congregation Level</i>				
Size of Congregation	-0.084*	0.919	-0.105**	0.900
South	0.014	---	0.015	---
RELTRAD ^b				
Mainline Protestant	0.334	---	-0.402**	0.669
Catholic	-0.075	---	-0.571**	0.565
Jewish	1.191***	3.291	0.339	---
Other	0.328	---	-0.434*	0.648
Racial Proportion				
Black	1.109	---	-2.404	---
Latino	-0.052	---	-1.349	---
Asian	-2.399	---	-0.767	---
Other Race	-1.992	---	-1.252	---
Multi-racial	3.099	---	1.569	---
N (Individual)	49,408		49,409	
N (Congregation)	268		268	

^a Contrast Group is White non-Hispanic

^b Contrast Group is Evangelical Protestant

***p≤.001 **p≤.01 *p≤.05

Table 2.3

Effects of Race on Commitment in Predominantly White Congregations (Multilevel Models)

Variables	M1: Giving		M2: Invited a Person in the Past Year	
	Estimate	Standard Error	Estimate	Odds Ratio
Intercept	2.238***	0.039	-0.290***	
<i>Individual Level</i>				
Female	0.068***	0.008	0.450***	1.569
Age	0.014***	0.001	-0.009***	0.991
Education	0.018***	0.003	-0.017*	0.983
Income	0.053***	0.004	-0.007	---
Married	0.171***	0.010	-0.042	---
Children at home	-0.027***	0.009	0.066**	1.069
Attendance	0.321***	0.005	0.400***	1.492
Church Member	0.592***	0.012	0.252***	1.287
Biblical Literalist	0.157***	0.011	0.184***	1.203
Race ^a				
Black	0.173***	0.050	0.225	---
Latino	-0.025	0.028	0.322***	1.379
Asian	-0.085*	0.040	-0.022	---
Other Race	-0.012	0.043	0.117	---
Multi-racial	0.053	0.037	0.442***	1.555
<i>Congregation Level</i>				
Size of Congregation	-0.027	0.015	0.026	---
South	0.033	0.029	0.467***	1.595
RELTRAD ^b				
Mainline Protestant	-0.419***	0.032	-0.294***	0.745
Catholic	-0.616***	0.045	-0.923***	0.397
Jewish	-0.269*	0.115	0.967***	2.630
Other	-0.649***	0.069	-0.175	---
Racial Proportion				
Black	0.464	0.806	2.938	---
Latino	0.646	0.725	2.600	---
Asian	-0.173	0.911	-1.001	---
Other Race	1.792	0.974	-0.376	---
Multi-racial	-0.451	0.908	2.359	---
N (Individual)	49,234		49,543	
N (Congregation)	268		268	

^a Contrast Group is White non-Hispanic^b Contrast Group is Evangelical Protestant

***p≤.001 **p≤.01 *p≤.05

When looking at the racial differences in giving, African-Americans give a higher percentage of their income than do whites in predominantly white congregations (b = .173; p < .001). Latinos do not significantly differ from whites in the percentage of their income that they give to their congregation, nor do other and multiracial individuals in

contrast to Hypothesis 1b. However, Asian-Americans give a lower percentage of their income than do whites ($b = -.085$; $p = .032$), providing partial support for Hypothesis 1b. Similar to the models predicting close friends, a racial hierarchy appears with regards to the percentage of one's financial contribution to the congregation, but this hierarchy is in the reverse order of the one predicted by Hypothesis 2b. This hierarchy is also opposite of the one found with the likelihood of having close friends within the congregation.

Model 2 predicts the likelihood that an individual invited a close friend or family member to their predominantly white congregation in the past year. Females, individuals with children living at home, congregational members, biblical literalists and congregations in the south are more likely to invite someone to church. Likewise, more frequent church attendance is positively correlated with inviting someone to the congregation. However, age and educational attainment are negatively associated with inviting another person to one's congregation, and Evangelical congregations are more likely to have individuals who invited people to their church than Mainline Protestant and Catholic congregations but less likely than Jewish ones.

Contrary to Hypothesis 1b, the odds of inviting someone to a predominantly white congregation in the past year are significantly greater for Latinos (37.9 percent greater odds; $b = .322$; $p < .001$), and no significant difference exists between African Americans or Asian-Americans and whites. This is also true for people of other races; however, multi-racial individuals are more likely to have invited someone to their congregation than whites. It is also important to note that the racial proportions of the minority groups in the congregations are not significant for any of the dependent variables. Thus, the findings of previous literature emphasizing the importance of group reaching twenty

percent of a congregation is supported here as the racial proportion of extreme minority groups do not directly impact the rates of congregational belonging and participation (Emerson, 2006; Emerson & Kim, 2003). Interestingly, the social positioning of the American racial hierarchy tends to favor Asian-Americans in predominantly white congregations over African-Americans and Latinos with regards to belonging and access to congregational social networks. However, African-Americans and Latinos exude the highest levels of commitment to predominantly white congregations (in different ways) despite these lower levels of belonging.

Discussion

The goal of the current work is to contribute to the growing body of literature on race and congregations by examining racial group differences within predominantly white congregations. A substantial amount of research is devoted to understanding multiracial congregations as well as the differences between the numeric majority and minority racial groups in congregations. Following these studies, I draw from the homophily principle and organizational ecology theory and hypothesize that racial minorities within predominantly white congregations would have lower levels of belonging and subsequently be less committed to these organizations than those in the white majority. Additionally, I incorporate contemporary racial stratification literature and propose these differences in belonging and commitment would vary by racial group based on their symbolic positioning within the American racial hierarchy.

Results from multilevel analyses are largely unexpected. Using nationally representative data of congregations and their population, the only dependent variable to align with all of my hypotheses is an objective sense of belonging, measured by

friendship networks. Racial minorities have less access to the social benefits (measured by friendship networks) in predominantly white congregations than those belonging to the white majority. This form of belonging represents one of the greatest social benefits individuals receive from congregations, as it provides access to social networks, which have the potential to create educational and occupational opportunities (Emerson, 2006; Gordon, 1961; Stark & Finke, 2000). Thus, it is perhaps the most telling indicator of how well racial minorities are welcomed as they integrate into white congregations. All three minority groups were less likely to have a close friend in their congregation. However, Model 2 in Table 2.2 indicates that African-Americans are the most different from whites in whether or not they have close friends in the congregation, Asian-Americans are the most similar to whites, and the odds of Latinos having close friends fit between African-Americans and Asian-Americans when compared to the white majority. These results support racial stratification literature, which contends that a racial hierarchy in American society impacts the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities (Bonilla-Silva, 2004; Fiske et al., 2002; Kim, 1999; Massey, 2007).

In contrast to friendship networks, African-Americans and Latinos do not differ from the white majority with regards to their subjective sense of congregational belonging, and Asian-Americans are more likely to experience a strong sense of belonging to their white congregation than whites despite their numeric rarity. While these findings fail to support Hypothesis 1a, it is worth noting that Asian-Americans are distinct from the other racial groups within predominantly white congregations, perhaps as a result of their symbolic group position. Thus, these findings partially support Hypothesis 2a. It is odd that these minority groups subjectively report a strong sense of

belonging that is on average equal to or greater than the white majority, while simultaneously having significantly fewer friends within the congregation. It is possible that these respondents are interracially married and have social networks outside of the congregation, and fostering social networks within the congregation is rarer for them as the minority member of the relationship.

In addition to differences in congregational belonging, I found differences in commitment levels. Interestingly, African Americans give significantly more of their income to their congregation. Similarly, Latinos are more likely to have invited a friend to their congregation than whites; however, they do not significantly differ from whites in their mean percentage giving. Conversely, Asian-Americans give significantly less of their income to their congregation than whites, but do not differ in whether or not they invited someone to their congregation.

These results differ from previous studies that find that numeric racial minority members of a congregation are less committed than those belonging to the majority (Christerson et al., 2005; Christerson & Emerson, 2003; Martinez & Dougherty, 2013), and fail to provide support for Hypothesis 1b. However, there are once again distinct differences in commitment levels across racial and ethnic groups. While the differences in commitment are inverted in the direction hypothesized, the patterns do resemble that of the American racial hierarchy. With regards to giving, Asian-Americans give less than whites, while Latinos are similar to whites, and African Americans give more. Additionally, Latinos are the most distinct in whether or not they invited someone to their congregation, while Asian Americans, African-Americans, and whites resemble each other. These findings are unexpected; yet important since monetary giving and bringing

potential members to a congregation are two of the most essential elements for success in any voluntary organization (Iannaccone, 1997; Stark & Bainbridge, 1980).

There are a number of potential explanations for these unexpected findings. Perhaps the most basic explanation is that African-Americans and Latinos are simply more religious than whites. Both African-Americans and Latinos are known for reporting high levels of religiosity. However, these high levels of religiosity are frequently found within ethnically homogenous communities (D'Antonio, Davidson, & Hoge, 2007; Emerson & Yancey, 2008; Gallup, 1996; Putnam & Campbell, 2010). While it is possible that the religiosity of African-Americans and Latinos is intrinsically strong enough to overcome the organizational difficulties encountered by being an extreme minority, prior research suggests that this is unlikely (Emerson, 2006; Kanter, 1977a, 1977b).

Another likely explanation is that racial and ethnic minorities who attend predominantly white congregations do so purposefully. As mentioned earlier, congregations offer their attenders a number of social benefits, and it is reasonable to believe minority group members would seek to attend predominantly white churches in an attempt to gain access to the social networks and cultural capital available there (Emerson, 2006; Emerson & Yancey, 2008; Gordon, 1961). In fact, one study found African-Americans, Latinos, and Asian-Americans trying to raise funds within the Evangelical tradition specifically stated that they attended white congregations in an attempt to gain access to the networks and social capital within these congregations (Perry, 2013b).

While previous studies on multiracial congregations draw from tokenism literature in order to explain why extreme numeric minorities are generally less

embedded in their congregation than members of the dominant group, the effects of tokenism on minority group members extend beyond numeric representation. Prior research indicates that numeric tokens in any work or organizational setting experience heightened performance pressures, stereotyping, and social isolation as a result of not only their proportional representation (Jackson, Thoits, & Taylor, 1995; Kanter, 1977a, 1977b; Pettigrew & Martin, 1987), but also on account of the minority's group social status (Roth, 2004; Turco, 2010; Yoder, 1994). The typical response to these heightened pressures is to either overachieve or become socially invisible. If racial and ethnic minorities are in fact purposefully attending white congregations in order to obtain the social benefits that accompanying these congregations, then the former response is the most rational, as the latter is counterproductive since the social networks within a congregation are the most valuable resources. Moreover, the socially invisible response is less common within a congregational setting as individuals typically enjoy more freedom to leave the organization than they would in an occupational setting. Thus, the pressures ascribed to extreme minorities most easily are remedied by simply joining another congregation (Scheitle & Dougherty, 2010).

The desire to overachieve in order to gain access to the cultural capital and social networks within congregations reasonably accounts for the high levels of commitment from African-Americans and Latinos in white congregations, but it simultaneously raises the question as to why Asian-Americans do not follow the same pattern if they too desire these benefits. It is possible the social positioning of Asian-Americans as “honorary whites” allows them to better fit the image of the ideal or prototypical congregational member granting them greater access to the social benefits of white congregations than

other racial minorities as made evident by their greater levels of belonging. This would grant more freedom for Asian-Americans to “free-ride” within these congregations, which is the most rational response for individuals, without sacrificing their access to these benefits (Iannaccone, 1994; M. Olson, 1965; Stark & Finke, 2000).

If the minorities attending these congregations are indeed doing so purposefully, then a self-selection effect is likely present, and those attending predominantly white congregations are likely those committed to doing so. Consequently, the above results may be muted, and the difficulties minorities encounter within predominantly white congregations may actually be pronounced than the ones found in this study.

Implications

The results from these analyses have important empirical, theoretical, and practical implications despite only providing mixed support for my hypotheses. Empirically, this study is the first to examine racial group differences in predominantly white congregations at a national level, and I do so by analyzing a large multilevel dataset. The vast majority of studies of race and congregation look specifically at multiracial congregations, which only account for approximately thirteen percent of American congregations (Edwards et al., 2013). Alternatively, other studies tend to focus on numeric representation, regardless of race (Martinez & Dougherty, 2013; Scheitle & Dougherty, 2010), or compare two racial groups, generally a white and nonwhite group (Christerson & Emerson, 2003; Edwards, 2008).

Results from these unique analyses suggest Asian Americans have greater access to the benefits of the congregations yet are less committed, while African Americans and Latinos experience low levels of belonging while simultaneously exhibiting high levels

of commitment. These findings are surprising, especially in light of the fact that having close friends within one's congregation is a strong predictor of religious commitment (Stroope, 2012). The findings for Asian-Americans follow this trend, as they have fewer friends in the congregation than whites and are subsequently less committed than whites. However, the findings regarding African-Americans and Latinos are unexpected as they should exhibit lower levels of commitment based on both their lower levels of belonging and numeric representation.

While these findings are unforeseen, they do clearly reveal two things. First, there are clear racial group differences within white congregations that mirrors the social placement of racial and ethnic minorities in America, despite the desire of many congregations to be racially diverse (Emerson, 2006). While America has seen some political and structural progress towards racial equality, the stratification of individuals based on race still remains a serious issue. The presence of racial stratification is well documented in both the workforce and educational institutions; however, little attention is devoted to the stratification within religious organizations. The current work elucidates on this understudied area of stratification.

These findings have direct implications for inequality research as it implies that congregations may serve as a mechanism for exclusion. Previous studies reveal religious congregations are a rich setting to develop social networks and ties that can help strengthen educational and economic attainment (Christerson et al., 2005; Gordon, 1961; Putnam, 1995, 2000; Stark & Finke, 2000). Since congregations are voluntary and generally receptive to new members, many racial and ethnic minorities may attempt to join these organizations in an effort to obtain social betterment. However, when these

voluntary organizations maintain exclusionary practices, whether deliberate or not, then they merely provide another obstacle for racial minorities to overcome instead of serving as a vehicle towards equality.

Second and building upon the first, the theoretical framework of the homophily principle and organizational ecology theory is not sufficient in explaining the totality of race relations within congregations, even within predominantly racially homogenous congregations. While these theories have much to contribute to our understanding of race and congregations, it is not enough to merely look at numeric representation as distinct racial group differences exist within these organizations.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Limitations of the present work point to fruitful direction of future research. One limitation is the data used is cross-sectional, and thus cannot produce strong causal claims as to the mechanisms producing these unexpected findings. I propose racial minorities attending white congregations do so purposefully in order to obtain the social benefits affiliated with congregations (Emerson, 2006; Emerson & Yancey, 2008). Consequently, minority groups with greater obstacles to these benefits are willing to exhibit greater levels of commitment in order to gain access to these benefits. However, future work should pursue longitudinal and qualitative analyses in order to elucidate upon the specific mechanisms and motivations for these findings. An additional shortcoming of the USCLS is that it is only administered in English, and as a result non-English fluent congregations are excluded from this study. The English only format of the survey may discourage minority group members whose primary language is not English from participating in the survey. This also indicates that the minorities attending predominantly white

congregations are more structurally or culturally integrated than non-English speaking minorities. Moreover, the USCLS does not account for the different nationalities and ethnicities that compromise Asian-Americans and Latinos. Ideally, the data would identify the distinct Asian-American and Latino ethnic communities so that this study could account for the mixed-positioning of these groups (Bankston & Zhou, 1995; Bonilla-Silva, 2004; Zhou & Bankston, 1998).

Another limitation concerns the generalizability of these findings. The present study focuses on white dominant congregations and finds a racial hierarchy within these organizations. However, the possibility for selection bias exists. Congregations are for the most part voluntary organizations, so the sample of racial and ethnic minorities in this study is self-selected. While the minorities attending these congregations may do so to obtain access to their benefits, the fact that they are comfortable enough to attend a predominantly white congregation may indicate that they already have greater access to white social networks than other racial and ethnic minorities. Thus, other racial and ethnic minority group members could encounter heightened experiences than the sample in this study. These patterns could also change within congregations that are predominantly African-American, Latino, or Asian-American. Future studies would do well to examine the racial and ethnic dynamics in congregations where whites are in the numeric minority. Would the favorable group positioning of whites in America translate in minority dominant congregations, despite their numeric disadvantage? Previous qualitative work suggests that whites in African-American congregations enjoy favorable access to congregational power structures (Edwards, 2008). More work is needed to examine if these results extended to other racial groups across the nation. Additionally,

studies should test whether or not the current results hold true in other organizational settings, especially where racial integration is mandated or forced by government intervention.

Conclusion

While many studies look at the dynamics of multiracial congregations, few observe how racial minorities integrate into predominantly racially homogenous congregations. This study indicates that symbolic group positioning of racial and ethnic minorities influences the experiences they have within the vast majority of religious organizations. Therefore, if congregations truly want to address minority group integration or become multiracial, they need to be cognizant of pressures and hardships different minorities encounter within these organizations. American history has shown that racial integration is a difficult thing to achieve. While giant strides have been made in both educational and occupational institutions, these advancements have only occurred after forced integration through government policies such as affirmative action, school desegregation, and housing programs. However, congregations are immune to these government programs requiring integration due to the disestablishment clause in the Constitution. Thus the largest form of voluntary organization that is free of government intervention reveals the effects of a “free market” on race relations. Since no governmental force is pushing religious organizations to diversify, the onerous task of addressing racial diversity generally lies within each congregation. Possessing an awareness of the difficulties racial minorities experience is the first step congregations need to take as they encounter diversity. Predominantly white congregations should also become more purposeful in getting to know the racial minorities that attend in order to

alleviate the burdens placed upon them as extreme numeric minorities. While Dr. King had hope for congregations to foster integration and promote social change, unfortunately, over fifty years later, the majority of religious congregations possess a racial hierarchy, which creates yet another hurdle for racial minorities to overcome as they struggle for social betterment.

CHAPTER THREE

The Evolving Effects of Childhood Religiosity on Interracial Relationships

Introduction

In June of 1958 Mildred Jeter and Richard Loving, two Virginia residents, were married in the District of Columbia. Shortly after returning to their home state, they were indicted by a grand jury for violating Virginia's ban on racial exogamy. Mildred, a black woman, and Richard, a white man, pleaded guilty to the charges in January of 1959, and were sentenced to one year in jail. However, their trial judge, Leon M. Brazil, agreed to suspend their sentence under the condition that they left and did not return to the state of Virginia for twenty five years. Judge Brazile appealed to the divine in order to morally justify his sentence, stating: "Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay, and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And, but for the interference with his arrangement, there would be no cause for such marriage. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix" (*Loving v. Virginia* 1967).

As demonstrated by the views of Judge Brazile in this landmark case, the American conceptualization of the family is heavily influenced by religion. This is also made evident by a large and growing body of literature revealing that religious beliefs, practices, and communities are pertinent to a wide array of family-related values and behaviors such as: attitudes towards gender roles (Bartkowski & Hempel, 2009; C. W. Peek, Lowe, & Williams, 1991), fertility (McQuillan, 2004; Wildeman & Percheski, 2009), parenting styles (Ellison, Bartkowski, & Segal, 1996; Ellison, Musick, & Holden,

2011; Wilcox, 2002), union formations (Eggebeen & Dew, 2009; Thornton, Axinn, & Hill, 1992; Uecker & Stokes, 2008; Xu, Hudspeth, & Bartkowski, 2005), and sexual behavior and beliefs (Adamczyk & Hayes, 2012; Petersen & Donnenwerth, 1997; Regnerus, 2007; Uecker, 2008).

Additionally, a smaller body of work examines the relationship between religion and attitudes towards and participation in interracial relationships (Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Perry, 2013a, 2014; Putnam & Campbell, 2010; Yancey, 2002, 2007). These studies generally reveal that religiosity is negatively correlated with holding favorable attitudes towards racial exogamy, and subsequently, religion is negatively associated with actually engaging in interracial relationships. However, Putnam and Campbell (2010) argue that the negative correlation between religiosity and attitudes towards interracial marriage has decreased over time.

The present study examines the effects of childhood religiosity on participation in interracial relationships in America, and whether these effects vary across cohorts. Following previous literature I hypothesize greater levels of childhood religiosity are negatively correlated with participation in interracial relationships. However, I expect this relationship to be less pronounced for younger cohorts on account of the growing acceptance of racial exogamy within American society and religious institutions. Results from analyses utilizing the 2007 Baylor Religion Survey uncover a multifaceted relationship between childhood religiosity and interracial relationships providing both partial support and opposition for my hypotheses. Multivariate models reveal that one dimension of childhood religiosity, church attendance, is negatively correlated with interracial relationships, while childhood religious salience is positively correlated.

Additionally, interaction effects display that the negative impact of childhood church attendance remains constant across cohorts. However, childhood salience is positively correlated with interracial relationships for younger cohorts and negatively so for older ones. The potential explanations and implications of these findings are discussed further.

Interracial Relationships

The unique history of racially and ethnically exogamous unions in America has triggered social scientists to devote an increasing amount of attention to the topic. The majority of research focuses on intermarriage. Gordon (1964) penned his classic, *Assimilation in American Life*, at time when interracial marriages were a national conversation. His views and opinions were likely influenced by these national discussions, and likewise talk of intermarriage was probably influenced by him. He argued that intimate relationships between the nation's dominant group and all other groups would serve to dissipate the racial and ethnic social division between groups. Subsequently, these marriages are often viewed as a barometer of both race relations and social distance between racial groups (Gordon, 1964, 1978; Qian & Lichter, 2007). Racial and ethnic intermarriages are also seen to have the potential to spur on social change (Kalmijn, 1998). Consequently, studies observe the patterns between groups (Fu, 2001; Kalmijn, 1993; Qian & Lichter, 2001) as well as the socio-demographic characteristics correlated with intermarriage (Gullickson, 2006b; Jacobs & Labov, 2002). In addition to understanding racial intermarriage, a body of literature examines the consequences of these marriages, including marital quality, duration and fertility (Fu, 2008; Jones, 1996).

The vast majority of studies on interracial relationships focus on exogamy; however, not everybody who participates in interracial relationships are willing to marry interracially as well (Yancey, 2002, 2009). Therefore, a number of works concentrate on dating relationships in order to understand who enters into these relationships and who refrains from them (Eastwick, Richeson, Son, & Finkel, 2009; Fisman, Iyengar, Kamenica, & Simonson, 2008; Fujino, 1997; Wang & Kao, 2007; Yancey, 2007). Studies on interracial dating for the most part find similar patterns of participation to those focused on interracial marriage. For example, racially heterogeneous relationships are more common for men than women (Fisman et al., 2008; Fitzpatrick, Sharp, & Reifman, 2009). Politically liberal individuals are generally more likely to interracially date, except for African-Americans, who are more likely to participate in these relationships if they are politically conservative (Eastwick et al., 2009). Individuals in interracial relationships tend to be educationally similar, and couples with higher educational attainment have slightly higher rates of interracial relationships (Qian, 1997; Yancey, 2002). Conversely, measures of income are found to not have a large impact on whether or not whites interracially date or marry. However, blacks and Asians are more likely to interracially date if they have a higher incomes (Wang & Kao, 2007), and similarly, lower-class blacks are often isolated from the interracial marriage market (Gullickson, 2006b).

Research on racial exogamy and dating as a whole contends that these couples have for the most part transcended the longstanding racial group boundaries that have plagued America. This vast body of work demonstrates that participation in interracial relationships has direct implications for race relations on both a micro and macro level,

and they have the ability to reduce the social distance between racial and ethnic groups (Kalmijn, 1998).

Religiosity and Intimate Interracial Relationships

A handful of studies have revealed a negative relationships between religion and participation in (Herman & Campbell, 2012; Yancey, 2007, 2009) as well as attitudes towards (Johnson & Jacobson, 2005; Putnam & Campbell, 2010) interracial relationships. However, one study found this relationship is not unilateral. In his analysis of adult religiosity, Perry (2013a) shows church attendance and affirming biblical literalism are negatively correlated with participation in interracial relationships while private devotional practices such as praying and reading sacred texts are positively correlated with interracial dating. There are two likely mechanisms that lead to the negative correlation between religion and interracial relationships frequently found by prior studies: (1) religious beliefs and teachings that promote racial endogamy and (2) religious institutions limit the potential dating market for individuals by fostering racially homogenous social networks.

Religion has been evoked to promote racial segregation throughout American history. This relationship can be traced back to colonial times (Carter, 2008; Jennings, 2010), and during the Civil War era religious teachings were utilized to oppose the abolitionist movement (Emerson & Smith, 2000). Similarly, whites frequently appealed to religious teaching and used religious institutions to justify racial segregation and uphold the morality of the Jim Crow laws throughout the first half of the twentieth century (Blanchard, 2007; Hunt & Hunt, 2001). These teachings promoting racial segregation affect individual attitudes towards interracial relationships, and some the

leaders of some conservative Christians have gone so far as to claim that interracial dating is “sinful” (see Yancey, 2007). Religious beliefs have been used to justify opposition to racial exogamy, which is perhaps best exemplified by the opinion of Judge Brazile.

In addition to the specific beliefs and teachings promoted, religious institutions also contribute to the negative correlation between racial exogamy and religion in a more indirect manner. The majority of religious congregations are racially homogenous (Emerson, 2006; Emerson & Kim, 2003). In fact, almost fifty percent of the faith communities in America are completely racially homogenous (Dougherty & Huyser, 2008). Americans typically choose to interact and associate with individuals who are like themselves (Burt, 2000; Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1954), especially with regards to race. Race is the most divisive category in American social networks (McPherson et al., 2001). This is true for neighborhoods and friends, and congregations are no exception, as they often reaffirm racial differences (Emerson & Smith, 2000). Racial segregation within faith communities creates alienation between religious communities, fostering group exclusivity along racial lines that reinforces broader racial group bias and prejudices (Emerson & Smith, 2000).

Congregations are known as places rich in bonding capital and strong social networks (Putnam, 1995, 2000; Stroope, 2012; Stroope & Baker, 2014). Thus, the more embedded an individual is within their congregation; the more likely they are to have their social networks be racially homogenous since most congregations are racially homogenous. Children who attend church at high rates are likely to develop extensive social networks within their congregation and are most likely to seek a dating partner

within their religion, as most individuals practice religious endogamy (Kalmijn, 1998). Religious institutions frequently emphasize finding a spouse with similar “religio-cultural understandings,” which often promotes intra-congregational dating (Perry, 2014). As a result, the potential dating pool for congregational members is often limited by both the lack of diversity within their existing social networks and the emphasis on inter-congregational dating by religious institutions. Consequently, the racial homogeneity of most congregations will likely reduce the chances of finding a suitable partner of a different race to date. The negative correlation between religiosity and participation in and attitudes towards interracial relationships could derive from receiving and internalizing teachings that promote segregation and racial endogamy or from a limited dating pool being restricted to other congregational members as well as a combination of these two. The current study contributes to this growing body of literature by examining whether childhood religiosity is negatively correlated with interracial relationships, and if this relationship remains consistent across generations.

Childhood Religiosity and Interracial Relationships

Childhood experiences influence family formation and mate selection, and childhood religiosity is consistently found as influential for union formation including marital age and cohabitation practices (Eggebeen & Dew, 2009; Lehrer, 2004; Thornton et al., 1992). Despite the consistent connection of childhood religiosity to union formation, this measure is rarely connected with any form of interracial relationships. This is an important oversight in the literature because childhood socialization is a vital component of American religious institutions (Stark & Bainbridge, 1996).

Previous studies have revealed that church attenders who do not belong to the numeric racial majority of their congregation are often less embedded in their church and have shorter durations of membership (Christerson & Emerson, 2003; Martinez & Dougherty, 2013; Scheitle & Dougherty, 2010). Therefore reverse causality is possible, as those who are in an interracial relationship could choose to not attend a congregation because of the racial tension that one of the members would feel, as opposed to current church attendance influencing their decision to not interracially date. The use of childhood religiosity measures helps minimize the causal ambiguity in this relationship as these measures capture childhood religious socialization prior to the age most individuals enter the dating market. Hence, it is logical to examine the effects of religiosity at age 12 on interracial relationships because the formative process of religion would have presumably occurred prior to the majority of individuals entering the dating market. Two unique dimensions of religiosity are examined in this chapter: religious practice, measured by church attendance, and religious belief, measured by how important religion was to the respondent when they were twelve years old.

As noted above, religious institutions place a high value on childhood socialization, and congregations are one of the primary locations this socialization occurs. Churches espouse religious doctrine and convey moral and social messages and norms to their adherents both directly and indirectly (Stark & Finke, 2000). Furthermore, church attendance is a common predictor of youth behavior (Regnerus, 2007). These messages include relational mores about dating and sexual behavior. The more entrenched an individual is within a congregation, the more likely they are to internalize and conform to congregational norms about dating, such as choosing an “appropriate” dating partner.

Consequently, higher levels of childhood church attendance will likely result in individuals following the patterns of racially homogenous relationships historically associated with higher levels of religiosity (Putnam & Campbell, 2010; Yancey, 2002).

Another dimension of religiosity that would directly impact who potentially participates in an interracial relationship is how important an individual's religious beliefs were to them when they were a child. One's religious identity consists of both adherence to norms, such as attending church, and the salience of one's religious identity. Religious salience typically consists of the internalization of the religious experience (C. Smith & Denton, 2009; Wimberley, 1989). Religious salience is measured by how important religion is to an individual. While salience and church attendance are often correlated, they are two distinct elements of religiosity that do not necessarily capture identical processes or mechanisms. One could attend church regularly without internalizing the religion. Conversely, one could place a high importance on their religion but not publically practice it, in other words they could be spiritual but not religious (Jang & Franzen, 2013; Regnerus, 2007). As a result, it is necessary to account for both of these elements when observing the effects of childhood religiosity on interracial relationships in order to encapsulate both of these dimensions. However, religious salience should function in a similar manner as church attendance as previous literature finds that both of these components of religiosity are negatively associated with both attitudes towards and participating in interracial relationships. This leads to my first hypotheses:

H1a: Childhood church attendance is negatively correlated with participating in an interracial relationship.

H1b: Childhood religious salience is negatively correlated with participating in an interracial relationship.

Historical Changes in Interracial Relationships in America

Religiosity is generally negatively correlated with interracial relationships; however, there is good reason to expect this relationship is stronger for older cohorts than younger ones. American society as a whole has become less racially discriminatory and more accepting of interracial relationships in the latter half of the twentieth century, and religious individuals for the most part have mimicked this national trend (Putnam & Campbell, 2010).¹ The United States has a history of racial discrimination and segregation, which historically has created structural barriers and opposition to interracial marriages as well as interracial relationships in most forms.

Antimiscegenation laws were first enacted in the colonial period in order to prevent the intermarriage of black slaves and indentured servants of European descent who were oftentimes in close contact with each other (Fu, 2008). As the nation expanded, these laws persisted as the majority of states held some form of law banning interracial marriages. The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of antimiscegenation when they ruled that Alabama's law against racial exogamy did not oppose the Fourteenth Amendment in *Pace v. Alabama* (1883). These laws coupled with the institutional segregation enacted by Jim Crow laws fostered a difficult, if not nearly impossible, environment for interracial relationships to occur.

The structural barriers towards interracial relationships were prevalent during the twentieth century, and they did not start to show signs of decline until the late 1940's. In 1948 the California Supreme Court overturned its state antimiscegenation statutes with its

¹ While most religions and their followers have grown more racially accepting over the past four decades, this trend could be the result of either growing racial tolerance or aversive racism. Thus, the underlying racial attitudes of religious individuals may not have truly changed. Instead, they could just not express their opinions since it is not acceptable to appear racially intolerant.

ruling in the *Perez v. Sharp* case. Successively, many of the non-southern states repealed their laws against interracial marriage throughout the 1950's, but it was not until the landmark Supreme Court case *Loving v. Virginia* (1967) that antimiscegenation laws were declared unconstitutional on a national level. While this case eradicated any legal barriers towards interracial relationships, the effects of longstanding structural barriers still remained in most states, making the presence of these relationships rare.

In his study, Gullickson (2006a) examined the broad national trends of interracial marriages, specifically between blacks and whites, from 1850-2000 and found that racially exogamous marital patterns for the most part mirrored the national structure of race relations. Interestingly, he notes that intermarriages were uncommon but not rare prior to the end of Reconstruction, but a sharp decline occurred between 1880 and 1930, the period in American history with the lowest percentages of intermarriages. After 1930 the trends of interracial marriage began to slightly increase until the Civil Rights era, when the frequency of racial exogamy started to significantly increase. Similar to the overturning of antimiscegenation laws, the south lagged behind the rest of the nation in experiencing higher rates of interracial marriages. The large, steady growth rate began after 1960 for the nation as a whole and after 1970 for the states in the south, shortly after the laws banning interracial marriages were overturned (Gullickson, 2006a). Once again it is important to note, that not everyone who interracially dates is willing to commit to an interracial marriage (Herman & Campbell, 2012), but it is reasonable to conclude that the rates of interracial dating follows a similar historical pattern to the rates of interracial marriages as dating typically preceded marriage. Therefore, one would expect for younger cohorts who entered the dating market after 1960 to participate in interracial

relationships at higher rates than older cohorts, and the likelihood of interracial dating to be higher amongst younger cohorts.

Religious Americans in the post-Civil Rights era followed the nation's trend of racial tolerance, and the rhetoric of religious individuals against religious discrimination became more outspoken. Consequently, the vast majority of religious institutions stopped openly promoting racial segregation, and thus, religious individuals were no longer receiving direct messages opposing interracial relationships. In fact, several religious institutions have made public attempts at racial reconciliation, and the majority of modern religious teachings have either conformed to societal norms of promoting racial tolerance and acceptance or remained silent on these issues (DeYoung et al., 2004; Edwards et al., 2013; Putnam & Campbell, 2010). Therefore, children exposed primarily to post-Civil Rights religious teachings would have more racially accepting attitudes than those who grew up in the midst of racial segregation, as churches have continually strayed away from conveying racially intolerant messages. Subsequently, children who internalize the religious messages of love and acceptance and are continually exposed to non-religious messages supportive of racial integration may be more open to dating someone of a different race than those who are less religious. The growing opposition to racial intolerance by religious individuals coupled with institutional silence regarding the morality of racial exogamy should reduce the negative effects of religiosity on participation in interracial relationships.

This leads to my final hypotheses:

H2a: The negative effect of childhood attendance on interracial relationships is moderated by the individual's year of birth.

H2b: The negative effect of childhood salience on interracial relationships is moderated by the individual's year of birth.

Data and Methods

Data from the 2007 Baylor Religion Survey (BRS) are used to test the relationship between childhood religiosity and interracial relationships. The BRS was formulated using the General Social Survey as a template, and consists of a random national sample of 1,648 U.S. citizens collected by the Gallup Organization in 2007. Gallup weighted the survey for gender, race, region of the country, age, and education using a statistical algorithm developed from information obtained by the Census Bureau, and this weight is used in all analyses presented in this paper. Bader, Mencken, and Froese (2007) provide an in-depth analysis of the methodology used in the BRS. In this study, listwise deletion is used to account for missing data, as it is not prone to Type 1 errors and provides a parsimonious test of the data (Allison, 2001). The total N of these analyses is 1,262, which is similar to other studies employing the BRS (see Bader, Desmond, Mencken, & Johnson, 2010; Froese & Bader, 2007; Froese & Mencken, 2009; Perry, 2013a).

Interracial Relationships

A binary measure of whether or not the respondent ever participated in an interracial relationship serves as the dependent variable for this study. Respondents were asked: "Have you ever dated or been romantically involved with a person of another race?" Approximately 38.5 percent of valid respondents answered this question affirmatively (559 total individuals), and they were coded as 1. This coding is identical to that of Perry (2013a, 2014). In order to test my hypotheses, binary logistic regressions are

employed, and all continuous and ordinal measures are mean centered in order provide a meaningful intercept.

Childhood Religiosity

This study revolves around understanding how early individual religiosity is correlated with participation in an interracial relationship. Previous studies reveal that religiosity is determined simultaneously with other education and other demographic factors (Lehrer, 2004; Waters, 1995). Since it is unclear whether or not participating in an interracial relationship influences the religious choices of adults, measures of religiosity of the respondent at age twelve are used to test my hypotheses, as these measures are less affected by endogeneity than the adult measures of religion. Ideally, longitudinal data would be used for this study in order measure each individual's level of religiosity when they were twelve years old; however, the design of the current dataset makes this impossible. The BRS is cross-sectional data and no multigenerational longitudinal dataset examining religiosity and interracial relationships exists. Therefore, this study relies on the respondent's recollection of how religious they were at age twelve. This measure provides the benefit of simultaneously encompassing individuals belonging to several different generations, as opposed to following one generation over time. Similar measures of reflexive childhood religiosity have been significantly correlated with other family and relational outcomes (see Zhai, Ellison, Glenn, & Marquardt, 2007).

Childhood religiosity is measured through two variables. First, as a measure of communal religiosity, respondents were asked: "by your best estimate, how often did you attend religious services at age 12?" Provided answer choices range from 0, "Never," to 8, "Several times a week." Next, in order to measure the salience of one's religious

beliefs, respondents were asked: “How personally religious were you at age 12?” The BRS supplied five answers: “not at all religious” (1), “not too religious” (2), “somewhat religious” (3), “very religious” (4), and “I don’t recall.” Eighty people indicated that they did not recall, subsequently these individuals were dropped from the analyses.

Cohort

American attitudes towards interracial marriage have gradually become more accepting since the American Civil Rights Movement (Putnam & Campbell, 2010). Therefore, the cohort in which the respondent belongs to should impact the likelihood of an individual partaking in an interracial relationship. The year of the respondent’s birth is used to measure their cohort. This is a continuous variable created by subtracting the age of the respondent from 2007 (the year the survey was administered), and it ranges from 1911 to 1989. Interacting the respondent’s cohort with their childhood religiosity illustrate how the effects of childhood religiously on interracial relationships change over time.

Controls

Several potentially confounding demographic characteristics that previously have been associated with attitudes towards or participation in an interracial relationship are included in all multivariate analyses. Education is measured using a system of four binary variables including: less than high school a graduate (contrast group), high school graduate, some college, and college graduate or greater. Income is a seven category ordinal scale with categories that range from \$10,000 or less, \$10,001-\$20,000, \$20,001-\$35,000, \$35,001-\$50,000, \$50,001-\$100,000, \$100,001-\$150,000, and \$150,001 or

more. Ideally, it would be possible to control for the region that the respondent grew up in; however, this information is only available for their present location. Region is controlled for using four binary variables with “west” serving as the contrast group, as the west coast traditionally has more favorable attitudes towards interracial relationships. Political ideology is measured with an ordinal scale ranging from 1 (extremely conservative) to 7 (extremely liberal). Other demographic variables that serve as controls include: gender (male=1), marital status (married=1), whether or not the respondent has any children living at home (1=yes), whether or not they live in a large city (1=yes), and race (white non-Hispanic=1). Ideally, the BRS would include measures of the childhood religious affiliation. The respondent’s adult religious tradition is also controlled for using a modified version of RELTRAD typology formulated by Steensland et al. (2000). For a detailed description of the this modified version of RELTRAD, see Dougherty, Johnson, and Polson (2007). Descriptive statistics for all variables are presented in Table 3.1.

Results

Table 3.2 presents six models predicting whether or not an individual ever participated in an interracial relationship. Model 1 contains all of the independent variables sans the childhood religiosity measures, and the findings remain consistent with previous studies on interracial relationships and attitudes towards them. This model reveals that white, non-Hispanics are less likely to participate in interracial relationships than non-whites, and men are more likely to do so than women. Additionally, interracial romances are more common among members of younger cohorts, people with politically liberal ideologies, and those living in the west, while income is negatively correlated with

interracial relationships. Evangelical Protestants are more likely to participate in these relationships than Black Protestants, but less likely than Jewish individuals.

Table 3.1

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Interracial Relationship	0.385	0.487	0-1
Attendance at age 12	5.265	2.413	0-8
Salience at age 12	2.857	0.921	1-4
Cohort	1959.650	16.823	1911-1989
Male	0.470	0.499	0-1
White non-Hispanic	0.830	0.376	0-1
Married	0.624	0.485	0-1
Child	0.198	0.399	0-1
Large City	0.130	0.337	0-1
Education			
Less than High School	0.078	0.269	0-1
High School	0.287	0.453	0-1
Some College	0.376	0.485	0-1
College Degree	0.258	0.438	0-1
Income	4.307	1.598	1-7
Region			
West	0.225	0.417	0-1
South	0.324	0.468	0-1
East	0.218	0.413	0-1
Midwest	0.234	0.423	0-1
Political Ideology	3.619	1.625	1-7
Religious Tradition			
Evangelical Protestant	0.331	0.469	0-1
Black Protestant	0.048	0.213	0-1
Mainline Protestant	0.207	0.404	0-1
Catholic	0.221	0.414	0-1
Jewish	0.019	0.136	0-1
Other	0.061	0.238	0-1
None	0.113	0.316	0-1

Source: BRS 2007

Models 2 and 3 incorporate the two childhood religiosity measures individually. Model 2 includes childhood church attendance and Model 3 incorporates religious salience at age 12. Neither of these variables are significantly correlated with participation in racially heterogeneous relationships, failing to support hypothesis 1.

While childhood religiosity is not significant independently, Model 4 suggests that a suppressor effect is present. When both childhood attendance and salience are included into the model a clearer picture of how these variables are associated with participating in interracial relationships is revealed. The relationship between childhood attendance and childhood salience and interracial dating are muted in Models 2 and 3 respectively. Once both variables are included in the model, childhood church attendance is negatively correlated with interracial dating ($b = -.056$, $p = .060$ in Model 2 and $-.104$, $p = .004$ in Model 4), and a positive correlation between religious salience and interracial dating is displayed ($b = .049$, $p = .526$ in Model 3 and $b = .209$, $p = .029$ in Model 5). Interestingly, these two measures of childhood religiosity work in opposite directions. One measure of childhood religiosity, church attendance, supports my first hypothesis, but the other measure of religiosity, religious salience, contradicts it. Model 4 suggests that these two different measures of religiosity are functioning in two distinct ways.² Therefore, the correlation between childhood religiosity and interracial relationships is more intricate than previously hypothesized. The significance of childhood salience in Model 4 reveals that there is a dimension of religiosity apart from church attendance that is positively correlated with racially heterogeneous dating, similar to the findings of Perry (2013a).

Hypotheses 2a and 2b are tested in Models 5 and 6, which interacts the year the respondents are born with childhood attendance and childhood salience, respectively. These two models reveal no significant interaction and subsequently fails to support

² Childhood church attendance and childhood religious are positively correlated with each other ($r = .636$), which helps explain the suppressor effect present when both forms of religiosity are not accounted for.

hypothesis 2. Therefore, the negative relationship between childhood church attendance and having an interracial relationship is consistent across generations.

Table 3.2

Logistic Regression Predicting the Likelihood of Participating in an Interracial Relationship

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Male	0.496***	0.483***	0.501***	0.490***	0.491***	0.479***
Cohort	0.021***	0.021***	0.021***	0.020***	0.020***	0.020***
White	-1.220***	-1.214***	-1.226***	-1.237***	-1.238***	-1.253***
Married	-0.152	-0.142	-0.158	-0.159	-0.161	-0.172
Children	0.285	0.249	0.300	0.283	0.285	0.295
Large City	0.153	0.146	0.149	0.123	0.123	0.117
Education						
High School	-0.509	-0.494	-0.511	-0.487	-0.480	-0.493
Some College	-0.120	-0.062	-0.127	-0.043	-0.034	-0.040
College Degree	0.094	0.161	0.088	0.187	0.191	0.182
Income	-0.134**	-0.133**	-0.134**	-0.130**	-0.131**	-0.136**
Region						
South	-0.873***	-0.845***	-0.879***	-0.847***	-0.851***	-0.858***
East	-1.106***	-1.131***	-1.103***	-1.136***	-1.131***	-1.123***
Midwest	-0.945***	-0.942***	-0.944***	-0.935***	-0.940***	-0.942***
Political Ideology	0.263***	0.255***	0.266***	0.259***	0.260***	0.260***
Religious Tradition						
Black Protestant	-0.771*	-0.751*	-0.782*	-0.782*	-0.782*	-0.785*
Mainline Protestant	-0.301	-0.311	-0.303	-0.324	-0.328	-0.337
Catholic	-0.230	-0.209	-0.241	-0.240	-0.238	-0.221
Jewish	1.513*	1.406**	1.532**	1.402*	1.381**	1.333*
Other	0.264	0.235	0.266	0.220	0.208	0.196
None	0.100	-0.003	0.132	0.049	0.055	0.076
Religiosity at age 12						
Attendance	---	-0.056	---	-0.104**	-0.111**	-0.105**
Salience	---	---	0.049	0.209*	0.210*	0.153
Interactions						
Attendance*Cohort	---	---	---	---	0.001	---
Salience*Cohort	----	----	----	----	---	0.008
Intercept	1.116**	1.078*	1.125*	1.086 *	1.086*	1.126***
AIC	1416.79	1415.14	1418.38	1412.34	1414.14	1412.03
Pseudo R-squared	0.2596	0.2629	0.2600	0.2671	0.2673	0.2692
N	1232	1232	1232	1232	1232	1232

*** $p \leq .001$ ** $p \leq .01$ * $p \leq .05$

Source: BRS 2007

Discussion

The present study seeks to better understand the relationship between religiosity and interracial relationships. More specifically, I predicted that higher childhood

religiosity would negatively affect the probability of participating in an interracial relationship. Additionally, I expected this negative relationship to decrease for younger generations. Contrary to my theory developed from prior work, my results reveal a unique relationship between early religiosity and interracial relationships.

These findings suggest that the negative relationship between the two is more nuanced than the simple negative correlation I previously predicted, as various elements of religiosity are associated with interracial relationships in distinct and different ways. Childhood church attendance is negatively correlated with interracial romances, and this negative relationship remains consistent regardless of one's generational identity. Conversely, childhood religious salience is positively correlated with participating in an interracial relationship.³

As mentioned earlier, the history of religion and racial attitudes underwent important transitions throughout American history. The growing opposition to racial intolerance by religious individuals coupled with institutional silence regarding the morality of racial exogamy provides a plausible and likely explanation for the unexpected relationship between childhood religious salience and participation in an interracial relationship.

The changes towards racial perceptions in American history also had an impact on the racial attitudes of religious individuals, seemingly affecting their likelihood of interracially dating. However, high rates of church attendance remain strongly and consistently negatively correlated with interracial relationships. Congregations represent

³ In ancillary models not controlling for religious tradition as an adult, the interaction between childhood salience and birth year was significant. This interaction revealed that childhood salience was negatively correlated with interracial dating for older cohorts, but positively correlated for younger ones. The crossover occurred around those born in 1956. Interestingly, these individuals would have been 12 in 1968, one year after *Loving v. Virginia*.

the largest voluntary organizations in the nation (Ammerman, 2005; Chaves, 2004b), and they are a vital place where religious socialization occurs, especially child socialization (Stark & Bainbridge, 1996; Stark & Finke, 2000).

This suggests the negative relationship between religion and interracial relationships is more a result of one's social networks and preference for religious endogamy than religiously-informed attitudes (Kalmijn, 1998; Perry, 2014). Perhaps then religion in and of itself does not deter interracial dating. For example, individuals in interracial congregations are more supportive of interracial relationships (Emerson, 2006), and one would presume these religious individuals are open to participating in an interracial relationship, if their social networks allow them to interact with individuals of differing races. Park and Bowman (2014) revealed a similar effect with religiosity and a broader sense of cross racial interaction amongst college students. Their study found general religiosity was positively linked with cross racial interaction, while no significant effect was present between cross racial interaction and participation in religious groups on campus. These results remain consistent with Gordon's (1961, 1964) theory of assimilation, as he stressed the necessity of structural integration occurring prior to interracial marriage or dating.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature on interracial relationships. My results reveal a multifaceted relationship exists between childhood religiosity and participation in interracial relationships that varies for different cohorts. Consistent with previous studies on attitudes and participation in interracial relationships, I find partial support for my first hypothesis as childhood church attendance is negatively correlated with

interracial dating. Additionally, I reveal, contrary to hypothesis 1b, that childhood religious salience is positively correlated with interracial dating. However, my analyses fail to reject the null hypothesis of H2a and H2b.

This paper makes methodological and conceptual contributions to the literature on interracial relationships. Methodologically, the current study examines the relationship between religion and interracial relationships utilizing a national dataset, which few have previously done. Additionally, the use of childhood religiosity reduces the risk of endogeneity. Furthermore, the present study examines cohort effects on the relationships between religiosity and interracial relationships. Conceptually, this study reveals a multifaceted relationship between religion and interracial dating.

The present study also has implications for the sociology of religion as well. It supports the notion that religion consists of several unique dimensions that do not always work in unison with each other (Eggebeen & Dew, 2009; L. R. Olson & Warber, 2008). Therefore, future studies examining the effects of religion on relationships and family life need to account for multiple aspects of religiosity in order to fully encapsulate its various components. My ancillary findings also demonstrate that religious beliefs on some social and moral issues are not immutable. In fact, these results support the notion that societal trends influence the position of religious individuals and not necessarily the other way around (Putnam & Campbell, 2010). This pattern could exist for other social, political, and moral attitudes and behaviors. Religion plays a vital role in the American culture wars, and it generally has a strong and influential presence (Hunter, 1994; Wuthnow, 1989). However, these findings reveal that religious stances on highly contested social issues can and do evolve. It is likely that American religions would exude a similar trend

towards other social issues that garner clear societal support, and perhaps the beginning of this evolutionary process has already begun with regards to another highly contested social issue: gay marriage (see Bean & Martinez, 2014a). Future studies should examine how religions respond to other societal changes on moral and political issues.

Despite the contributions of this paper, it has limitations. First, given data constraints, these analyses are unable to make a truly causal argument. Additionally, it is impossible to know for certain whether or not the respondent accurately recalled their religiosity when they were twelve. However, some contend that this is a problem for church attendance in general, as individuals tend to not accurately report their rates of attendance in most surveys (Hadaway, Marler, & Chaves, 1993). Ideally, a multi-wave longitudinal dataset would exist that would allow us to test the effects of childhood religious socialization across different generations. Unfortunately, no such dataset exists. Another limitation of this study is that the dependent variable allows for a broad interpretation of interracial relationships from the respondents. The question asks respondents if they have ever “dated” or “been romantically involved” with an individual of a different race, but it does not specify a minimum duration of time spent in these relationships or provide parameters for what these terms mean. Therefore it is possible that the respondents could conceive of interracial relationships in a variety of ways, ranging from having a one night stand to marriage.

Additionally, the lack of variation across cohorts with regards to childhood salience appears to be explained by the religious tradition one affiliates with as an adult since this interaction is significant when these variables are omitted from the models. This unique relationship warrants further investigation into what specifically about one’s

religious tradition impacts their likelihood to interracially date. Ideally, the BRS would include measures of childhood religious tradition so that temporal religious consistency can be maintained. While one third of Americans experience religious switching in their lifetime, the vast majority of these remain within their same religious tradition (see Loveland, 2003; Sherkat, 1991; Sherkat & Wilson, 1995). However, it is possible that these results would match the ancillary findings if the BRS contained measures of childhood religious traditions. Future studies should examine if there are cohort differences in some religious traditions while others remain constant across generations.

In conclusion, an intricate relationship exists between childhood religious socialization and participation in interracial dating that is more dynamic than previously revealed, and it has evolved throughout the twentieth century. It appears as though religion's continuous negative correlation with interracial relationships is an indirect result of the social networks fostered by religious institutions. Historically, religious teachings have directly prescribed racial segregation; however, most modern religious institutions either promote racial reconciliation or are silent on the issue. Consequently, higher levels of childhood religious salience generate a greater likelihood to date interracially.

CHAPTER FOUR

General Strain Theory and Religiosity among Young Latino Americans

Introduction

Latino Americans are the largest racial or ethnic minority group in America, and they accounted for over half of the nation's population growth from 2000 to 2010. During this time period, the Latino population in America grew by over forty percent, which was four times the growth in the total population at ten percent. Latinos account for 45.2 percent of the non-white American population, which is 16.4 percent of the total population. Additionally, Latinos experience a disproportionate amount of criminal sentencing in America. In fact, in 2007 Latinos accounted for forty percent of all sentenced federal offenders, which at the time was more than triple their share (13 percent in 2007) of the U.S. adult population (Lopez & Light, 2009). Despite these facts, Latino Americans remain a relatively understudied group in criminology.

Utilizing general strain theory to understand Latino participation in deviant behavior, I propose that religion reduces deviance and buffers the effects of strain and negative emotions for Latinos. The negative group positioning of Latinos in the American racial hierarchy fosters high levels of strain for Latinos. These high levels of strain experienced by Latinos increase the likelihood that they would experience negative emotions and turn to crime and deviance in order to cope with these emotions. However, Latinos maintain a distinct religiosity that could serve as a viable means of coping with both strain and negative emotions, which would serve to attenuate the propensity to turn to crime.

General Strain Theory

Agnew's (1992, 2005) introduction of general strain theory (GST) created a resurgence in strain theory throughout the field of criminology. There are several ways GST expands upon traditional strain theories (Cohen, 1956; Merton, 1938). The first major way Agnew contributes to strain theory is by redefining the concept of strain. He broadly defines strain as "events or conditions that are disliked by individuals," and he notes that these strains can be experienced either objectively (a strain disliked by a number of people or a group) or subjectively (a strain disliked by a particular person) (2005, p. 4).

GST also posits that the motivation for deviance is a coping strategy derived from strain-generated negative emotions. According to Agnew, negative emotions, such as depression, anxiety, and anger are borne out of individuals experiencing strain. These negative emotions provide the motivation for committing acts of deviance unless an alternative, legitimate, and viable means of coping with these negative emotions exist. The extent to which negative emotions mediates the effect of strain on deviant behavior is critical to GST because the causal processes of social control and social learning could stem from the unmediated effects of strain (Agnew, 1995; Jang & Johnson, 2005). The final major addition of GST to traditional strain theories is that it accounts for individual differences in responses to strain by incorporating conditioning factors into the theory. Agnew notes that there are both internal and external factors ranging from individual problem solving skills to social support groups and access to economic resources that condition the effects of strain on negative emotions and consequently impacts deviant coping. These conditioning factors decrease the probability of one responding to strain

with negative emotions, and they increase one's ability to cope with both strain and negative emotions in a legal manner (Agnew, 1992, 2005).

Latinos and Strain

A number of studies have provided empirical and theoretical support for support for GST (Agnew, 1992, 2001, 2005; Agnew et al., 2002; Agnew & White, 1992; Brezina, 1996; Brezina, Piquero, & Mazerolle, 2001; Broidy, 2001; Broidy & Agnew, 1997; Jang & Johnson, 2003). While GST is a general theory that is not limited to any particular racial or ethnic group, it may be especially salient for Latino Americans who often report experiencing high levels of internal and external stressors and strain. Yet, Latinos have received little empirical attention within GST literature. According to contemporary racial stratification literature, the symbolic group placement of Latinos in America is towards the bottom of the American racial hierarchy where they encounter disproportionately lower access to economic resources and opportunities compared to those positioned towards the top of the hierarchy (Bonilla-Silva, 2004; Fiske et al., 2002; T. L. Lee & Fiske, 2006; Massey, 2007). Bonilla-Silva (2004) contends America is no longer comprised of a bi-racial order, and instead he argues that a tri-racial stratification system exists based largely on skin pigmentation, similar to the Caribbean-like racial order. This framework moves beyond the classical "black-white" ideology by articulating multiple group positions that account for other racial minorities. Bonilla-Silva's conceptualization of racial groups falls along a continuum with social inferiority on one end and social superiority on the other. Those at the top of the racial hierarchy experience greater access to society's structural resources, while those at the bottom lack quality access to structural resources. Latinos are a unique ethnic group in America because they

are comprised of several different ethnicities and nationalities. Consequently, Bonilla-Silva notes their positioning on the American racial continuum contains much variation, and he distinguishes Latinos based on their skin tone. While some Latinos enjoy a favorable group positioning, he convincingly argues the majority of Latinos are positioned near or at the bottom of the continuum that makes up the American racial hierarchy.

Latinos frequently experience interpersonal racism as well as structural inequalities and economic disadvantages that manifest themselves in several ways. Economically, Latinos earn on average the lowest wages of the four largest American minority groups (Census 2011), and about one quarter of the Latino population lives below the poverty line (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2014). Compounding this issue, certain regulations hinder Latino enrollment in public assisted programs. Some immigrants are barred from program participation, and these regulations tend to result in an underutilization of public assisted programs by eligible foreign and native born Latinos (Brown, 2013; Enchautegui, 1995). Thus, Latinos not only experience disproportionately high rates of economic strain from low wages and high poverty rates, but they also encounter distinct barriers when trying to utilize one the of the most legitimate forms of economic coping, public assisted programs, when compared to Anglos and African-Americans.

Moreover, approximately half of the Latino population views their current situation in America as deteriorating, as they report being worse off this year than the previous one (Lopez & Minushkin, 2008). Latinos frequently report experiencing difficulty finding and maintaining a job, being questioned about their immigration status,

worried about deportation (either for themselves or a friend), and expressed low levels of confidence in the criminal justice system.

While the societal landscape of America is perceived as difficult for some Latinos, these difficulties are heightened for Latino immigrants. The nation has experienced a growing concern over immigration in national opinion polls, which has consequently resulted in a large increase in state and local level legislation targeting immigrants and penalizing immigrant violators (Chavez & Provine, 2009). Foreign-born Latinos are seemingly cognizant of the effects of these structural inequalities, as they consistently are more likely to report encountering occupational difficulties, official questioning about their immigrant status, feeling worried about deportation, and expressing low levels of confidence in the criminal justice system than native born Latinos (Lopez & Light, 2009; Lopez & Minushkin, 2008).

Consequently, the current social environment that Latino Americans, especially immigrants, find themselves in is full of stressors that result in experiencing negative emotions, such as depression, anxiety, or anger. According to GST, these negative emotions increase the likelihood that Latinos would turn towards acts of crime or deviance as a coping mechanism.¹ However, the presence of legal and viable means of coping with these strains and negative emotions for Latinos should reduce the probability of coping through deviant behavior. As mentioned earlier, there are a variety of legal internal and external forms of coping that are effective. This study seeks to test the

¹ While GST is primarily a micro-level theory and focuses on the individual level mechanisms that lead to crime and deviance (such as negative emotions and personalized forms of strain), it does not overlook the structural mechanisms that contribute to crime and deviance. Traditional strain theory (see Merton, 1938) attributed crime and deviance to structural issues. GST (see Agnew, 1992, 2005) argued that the structural disadvantages and strain create negative emotions, which individuals try to cope with on a personal level. One method of coping is through crime and deviance.

impact of an understudied form of coping with strain and negative emotions that is both internal and external: religion.

Religion and Coping

Religion has received little attention as a coping mechanism within GST research, perhaps because Agnew (1992) did not include it in his list of proposed conditioning factors. However, religion has the potential to serve as a unique and effective means of both internal and external coping. Religion can serve as an internal means of coping through acts of personal devotion. Religious individuals oftentimes turn to their sacred texts, prayer, and meditation for guidance, direction, and comfort (Stark & Bainbridge, 1996; Stark & Finke, 2000). These internalized religious practices would prove especially useful in highly stressful times or during crises as they can alleviate the negative emotions associated with them. Pargament and his colleagues (2001; 2000; 1998) demonstrated religion's ability to internally cope with stressful situations such as plane crashes, the Oklahoma City bombing, major life stressors for college students, elderly hospitalized patients dealing with serious medical illnesses. Religion also provides external means of coping. Religious institutions and congregations provide communal forms of coping, as individuals are afforded access to social networks of people with a shared commonality. The social networks found within religious congregations foster real friendships and provide community networks, educational resources, and economic opportunities, which can alleviate the structural obstacles individuals face, especially racial minorities (Emerson, 2006; Stark & Finke, 2000).

Religious cultural contexts are associated with lower county-level violent crimes, and they moderate violence stemming from disadvantages within African-American

communities (Ulmer & Harris, 2013). Previous studies also have used religion as a viable means of coping with a number of stressful situations ranging from dementia caregiving (Connell & Gibson, 1997) to negative life events and dysphoria (Hettler & Cohen, 1998). Jang and Johnson (2003, 2005) utilized GST and found religion to be a viable means of coping with strain and negative emotions for African-Americans. They found religiosity significantly buffered the effects of negative emotions on deviance, and this buffering effect was more salient among women than men. The distinct religiosity of Latinos should produce a similar buffering effect for both strain and negative emotions.

Latino Religiosity

Latino Americans exhibit high levels of religiosity, which can function as a viable and legitimate means of coping with stressors. While various religious faith traditions contain Latinos, most American Latinos identify as either Catholic or Protestant, with the vast majority identifying as Catholic (D'Antonio et al., 2007). Latinos report high levels of personal piety, such as prayer, church attendance, and religious salience, and among Catholics, Latinos tend to be more devout than their Anglo counterparts (Putnam & Campbell, 2010). Latino religion in America is also heavily influenced through the charismatic movement, and over half of Latino Catholics and Protestants identify their religion as being spirit-filled. This continually growing charismatic influence stresses the importance of God's ongoing daily interactions with individuals, and depicts an image of God who is active in daily activities (Suro et al., 2007). The depiction of an active God coupled with high levels of personal religious devotion would foster a practical means of internal coping.

In addition to high levels of personal religiosity, Latino congregations, especially Catholic parishes, play a distinct role in the lives of their members. Predominantly Latino Catholic parishes differ from their Anglo counterparts, as they are more likely to be inwardly focused. Latino congregations focus more on providing for the needs of its members than those of the broader community, which is more common within Anglo parishes. Therefore, Latino parishes tend to cater to the cultural needs of Latinos and are especially sensitive to single parent families, and congregational members tend to be more involved in parish activities beyond weekly service attendance than Anglos (Espinosa, 2007; Palmer-Boyes, 2010).

These congregations play a vital role in the lives of Latinos in America and provide a number of social benefits to their members. Latino congregations impact family and civic life, as greater church attendance is correlated with healthy and happier parental relationships as well as higher rates of marriage (Espinosa, 2008; Wilcox & Hernández, 2007). Moreover, many Latino churches provide a setting for their congregants to develop ties that lead to increased job opportunities and social advancement. These congregations play a vital role in combatting the effects of poverty for Latinos by providing venues for community organizing as well as a sense of empowerment (Stevens-Arroyo, 1998). The unique focus of these congregations on the specific needs of its members would serve to reduce the amount of strain and negative emotions experienced by Latinos because they would have a reliable and accessible means of coping with the difficult situations they experience. Therefore, I propose that religion will have a direct effect on reducing deviance for Latinos, buffer the effects of strain on negative emotions and deviance, and mediate the effects of negative emotions on deviance, which leads to

my first three hypotheses. These hypotheses are listed below and Figure 4.1 provides a causal diagram of them.

H1: Following GST, strain is positively correlated with negative emotions for Latino Americans.

H2: Following GST, both strain and negative emotions are positively correlated with deviance for Latino Americans.

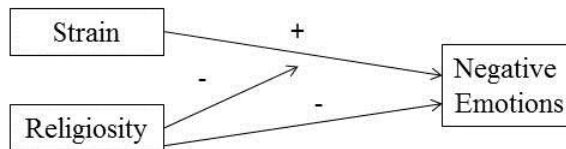
H3: Among Latino Americans, religiosity is negatively correlated with negative emotions.

H4: Among Latino Americans religiosity is negatively correlated with deviance.

H5: Religiosity buffers the effects of strain on negative emotions for Latinos Americans

H6: Religiosity buffers the effects of both strain and negative emotions on deviance for Latino Americans.

Causal Diagram of the Effects of Strain and Religiosity on Negative Emotions for Latino Youth



Causal Diagram of the Effects of Strain, Negative Emotions, and Religiosity for Latino Youth

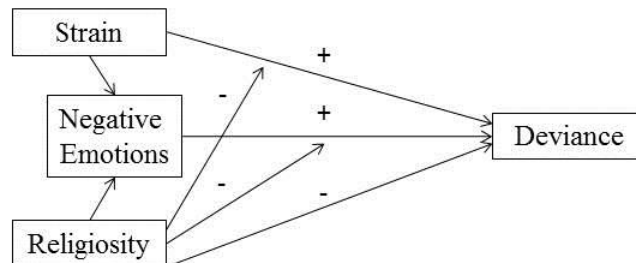


Figure 4.1. Casual Diagram of Hypotheses 1-6.

While religious congregations play an important role in the lives of American Latinos, they are especially vital for Latino immigrants. A number of studies reveal the importance of religious congregations for immigrants because they provide a means of maintaining their group identity, promoting group solidarity, and preserving cultural and ethnic traditions. Religious congregations also help support first-generation immigrants adjust to a new environment, and provide a source of identity to the children of immigrants, the second-generation (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000a, 2000b; Herberg, 1960; L. Peek, 2005; T. L. Smith, 1978; Warner & Wittner, 1998; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). These effects are especially salient for Latino immigrants, as many congregations specialize in helping them integrate into America and oftentimes serve as a haven for Latino immigrants (Deck, 1989). Therefore, the buffering effect of religion on strain and negative emotions would be stronger for Latino immigrants than native-born Latinos. This is especially crucial since foreign-born Latinos also would be more likely to encounter stressful situations and experience strain within their current environment.

H7: The direct negative effects of religiosity on negative emotions are stronger for foreign-born than native-born Latino Americans.

H8: The direct negative effects of religiosity on deviance are stronger for foreign-born than native-born Latino Americans.

H9: The buffering effects of religiosity (see H5) for negative emotions are stronger for foreign-born than native-born Latino Americans.

H10: The buffering effects of religiosity (see H6) for deviance are stronger for foreign-born than native-born Latino Americans.

Data and Methods

Data for this study come from the first and second waves of the restricted-use sample of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health). Add Health is a longitudinal nationally representative survey collected during the 1994-1995 school year with 18,924 student participants in 7th through 12th grade in the first wave, 13,570 of whom were also surveyed in Wave 2. Add Health contains an extensive array of survey items ranging from social, economic, psychological and physical well-being, including several questions on delinquency and alcohol use. Eighty high schools were systematically selected from over twenty-six thousand schools sorted by enrollment size, school type, region, location, and percent white and then divided into several groups for sampling. Every high school selected that did not contain 7th and 8th grades was asked to provide a list of middle or junior high schools that contributed to the schools incoming class. From this list of feeder schools, fifty-two schools were selected with each high school having no more than one feeder school included. Respondents were selected using a multistage, stratified, cluster sampling procedure of schools with a total of 132 total schools participating.

All students who were in attendance at these schools on the day of the interview in 1994 completed an in-school questionnaire. A sample of these students were also administered a follow-up in-home survey in 1995 using laptops, headphones, and audio-recordings in an attempt to encourage honest answers to the survey's more personal questions. These in-home surveys included an oversampling of students with certain racial and ethnic backgrounds, including specific Latino ethnicities, namely Puerto Ricans and Cubans (see Chantala 2006 for an in-depth look at the methodology and

sampling design used in the Add Health). Wave 2 data were collected from those who had not yet graduated high school from April to August of 1996. Given this study's focus on Latino Americans, the present sample only includes the 2,258 respondents who identified as being from Hispanic or Latino origins and were in both waves of the study. From this sub sample, 1746 or 76.01 percent are born in America, while 551 or 23.99 percent are foreign born.

Deviance

Deviance is measured using a combination of several items from Wave 2, which form two different scales measuring lagged deviance. First, in order to measure delinquency, respondents were asked how frequently they committed fifteen different delinquent acts in the past twelve months, and the provided answer choices ranged from 0 (never) to 3 (5 times or more). These fifteen items are: (1) "paint graffiti or signs on someone else's property or in a public place," (2) "deliberately damage property that doesn't belong to you," (3) "lie to your parents or guardians about where you had been or whom you were with," (4) "take something from a store without paying for it," (5) "get into a serious physical fight," (6) "hurt someone bad enough that they needed bandages or care from a doctor or nurse," (7) "run away from home," (8) "drive a car without the owner's permission," (9) "steal something worth more than \$50," (10) "go into a house or building to steal something," (11) "use or threaten to use a weapon to get something from someone," (12) "sell marijuana or other drugs," (13) "steal something worth less than \$50," (14) "take part in a fight where your group of friends was against another group," and (15) "were loud, rowdy, or unruly in a public place." These items were combined together to form a scale, which was log transformed on account of the positively skewed

distribution (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$). Several other studies have employed similarly constructed scales using various waves of Add Health (see Dornbusch, Erickson, Laird, & Wong, 2001; Gault-Sherman, 2011, 2013; Kort-Butler, 2008).

In addition to delinquency, I also utilize a two item scale measuring heavy drinking as another form of deviance. Respondents were asked how many days they (1) "drank five or more drinks in a row" (i.e. binge drinking) and (2) gotten drunk or 'very, very high' on alcohol" during the twelve months prior to the survey being administered. The possible responses range from 1 (never) to 7 (everyday). These two measures were summed forming a 13 point scale with a high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$). This coding is identical to that used by Jang, Ferguson, and Rhodes (2014).

Strain

I formulated three separate scales from Wave 1 to measure Agnew's (1992) three ideal types of strain. First, in order to account for strain originating from the presence or perceived presence of negative stimuli, a four item scale was created measuring a respondent's vicarious as well as experienced crime victimization. Respondents were asked to report the frequency they experienced the following incidents in the twelve months prior to taking the survey: (1) they saw someone shot or stabbed by another person, (2) they had a knife or gun pulled on them, (3) they were stabbed, and (4) they were jumped (Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$).² The possible responses included 0 (never), 1 (once), and 2 (more than once). Second, to measure strain stemming from the removal of positive stimuli from the individual, I summed two items assessing health/emotional strain.

² Since Agnew emphasized both the presence and perceived presence of negative stimuli as a form of strain, I have included measures of actual criminal victimization as well as vicarious victimization (witnessing someone else getting stabbed or shot).

Respondents were asked how often they had a health or emotional problem that caused them to miss 1) a day of school or 2) a social or recreational activity in the month prior to taking the survey. The possible answer choices ranged from 0 (never) to 4 (every day). The previous two scales measuring criminal victimization and health or emotional strain are identical to the measures employed by Jang and his colleagues (2014). Finally, as a measure of strain deriving from the failure to achieve positively valued goals, I summed whether or not (yes = 1) the respondent had ever (1) received an out-of-school suspension and (2) been expelled from school.

Negative Emotions

Negative emotions serve as both a dependent variable (Wave 2) and independent variable (Wave 1). The experience of negative emotions is measured using a nine item scale of variables measured on a scale of 0 (never) to 3 (most of the time or all of the time) that is similar to the scales used by other studies (see Jang et al., 2014; Kort-Butler, 2008). Respondents were asked how often the following things were true during the past week: (1) “felt that you could not shake off the blues, even with the help of your friends,” (2) “felt depressed,” (3) “felt fearful” (4) “felt happy” (reversed coded), (5) “felt lonely,” (6) “felt sad,” (7) “felt life was not worth living,” (8) “thought your life had been a failure,” and (9) “felt hopeful about the future” (reverse coded). These nine items form an additive index measuring negative emotions, that will subsequently be referred to as depression/anxiety (Cronbach’s = .77 in Wave 1 and .76 in Wave 2).

Religiosity

To measure religiosity, I constructed two scales accounting for both the communal and personal aspect of religion from Wave 1.³ Two items comprise the communal aspect (Cronbach's = .66), and both of these variables are measured using a four item scale ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (more than once a week). Respondents were asked how frequently in the past 12 months they (1) attended religious services and (2) took part in special activities at their congregation outside of regular worship attendance, such as classes, retreats, small groups, or choir. In order to account for the personal aspect of religiosity, two additional items are summed to form a separate scale (Cronbach's = .80). First, respondents were asked: "How important (if at all) is your religious faith to you?" Four answer choices were provided, ranging from 1 (not important) to 4 (more important than anything else). Next respondents were asked to indicate on a five point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (more than once a day) how frequently they prayed privately in a non-church setting. The bifurcation of religiosity into communal and personal aspects is especially salient for this study. Agnew (1992) stressed the importance of both internal and external factors for coping with negative emotions in a legitimate manner. As mentioned earlier, religion provides both internal and external support to its adherents and these two scales, subsequently referred to as personal and communal religiosity, capture these unique dimensions of religiosity.

Controls

Several potentially confounding factors are controlled for in all models using measures from the first wave of Add Health. These include a number of standard

³ The discussion section in Chapter Three highlights the importance of differentiating between corporate and individual forms of religiosity.

demographic measures such as: age (in years), gender (male =1), and whether or not the respondent was born in the United States (foreign born = 1). Social class is controlled for through parental education (0 = never went to school, 1 = 8th grade or less, 2 = less than a high school diploma but greater than 8th grade, 3 = High school diploma or GED, 4 = some college or vocational training post high school, 5 = college graduate, 6 = professional training beyond a 4 year degree). In addition to these demographic measures, I also account for whether or not the respondent is Catholic (1= Catholic) since Catholicism is the dominant religious tradition among American Latinos (D'Antonio et al., 2007)

Finally, as a measure of social bonding, I control for how close the respondents are to their parents. Parental attachment is consistently used as a measure of social control or bonding as it is a pivotal source of social support and socialization and expected to be correlated with all three dependent variables (Agnew, 1992; Agnew & White, 1992; Jang & Johnson, 2003). This variable is especially salient for Latino youth since *familia* plays an important role within Latino culture, and strong parental and family bonding are known to operate as protective sources against youth problem behaviors (Castro et al., 2007). Parental bonding is measured using the average of how close students felt to their mother and father individually on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).

Table 4.1 includes descriptive statistics and bivariate tests for all independent and dependent variables broken down by nativity. Results from bivariate analyses indicate that native born Latino youth are more deviant than their foreign born counterparts, as they participate in delinquent acts and abuse alcohol at higher rates ($p \leq .001$). This

difference aligns with prior findings suggesting lower rates of crime are associated with Latino immigrants (see Rumbaut & Ewing, 2007) There is no significant difference in depression/anxiety between native and foreign born Latino adolescents in Wave 1 or 2. With regards to strain, native born Latinos are more likely to experience criminal victimization than foreign born Latinos ($p \leq .001$), but both groups report comparable levels of strain resulting from health conditions or school suspensions/expulsions. Levels of personal and communal religiosity are also similar for both native and foreign born Latino youth. Additionally, native born Latinos have families of higher socioeconomic status and are younger than foreign born Latinos.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics for Native and Foreign Born Latinos

Variables	Range	Native Born	Foreign Born
<i>Dependent Variables (W2)</i>			
Delinquency***	0-4	0.96	0.51
Alcohol Abuse***	0-12	1.69	0.81
Depression/Anxiety	0-24	4.38	4.20
<i>Independent Variables (W1)</i>			
Strain			
Criminal Victimization***	0-8	0.85	0.49
Health	0-8	0.77	0.66
Suspended/Expelled	0-2	0.41	0.37
Depression/Anxiety	0-24	4.15	4.26
Personal Religiosity	2-9	6.65	6.97
Communal Religiosity	2-8	4.61	4.73
Socioeconomic Status***	0-6	2.81	2.28
Male ^a	0-1	0.52	0.49
Age**	12-21	15.48	16.19
Catholic ^a	0-1	0.55	0.61
Parental Bonding	1-5	4.45	4.49
N		1746	551

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$ (chi-square for cross-tabs, t -tests for means; two-tailed tests)

^a Row percentages reported

Analytic Strategy

I ran a series of multivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regressions to test my hypotheses. I utilize the sampling weight GSWGT2, for the longitudinal data to adjust for the complex survey format of Add Health. Additionally, I adjust for the complex sampling design in order to prevent the underestimation of the coefficient's standard errors by using the SAS procedure PROC SURVEYREG (Chantala, 2006). All missing cases are the product of listwise deletion.

I test the effects of strain (H1), religiosity (H2), and nativity status (H4) on negative emotions using a lagged longitudinal model (Table 4.2). I also employ two-way interaction terms involving religiosity and strain (religiosity x strain to test H3) and religiosity and nativity status (religiosity x foreign-born to test H5). I also utilize a three-way interaction term for nativity, strain, and religiosity (religiosity x strain x foreign born to test H5).

Moreover I test the effects of strain and negative emotions (H1), religiosity (H2) and nativity status (H4) on deviant behavior, using two measures of deviant behavior: delinquency (Table 4.3) and heavy drinking (Table 4.4). Once again I test these using a lagged longitudinal model (Wave 2 dependent variable). For all models of deviant behavior I employ two-way interactions of religiosity and negative emotions (religiosity x negative emotions to test H3) and religiosity and nativity status (religiosity x foreign born to test H5). Additionally, I use a three-way interaction term of religiosity, negative emotions, and nativity status (religiosity x negative emotions x foreign born to test H5).⁴

⁴ In ancillary analyses all interactions were run individually. The results were consistent with the models shown, and all significant differences are footnoted.

Results

Table 4.2 displays the lagged results from regressing depression/anxiety at Wave 2 on religiosity, nativity, strain, social bonding, and controls at Wave 1. Model 1, which does not contain interaction terms, reveals that higher levels of parental bonding are negatively correlated with experiencing depression or anxiety. Additionally, males are less likely than females to experience depression or anxiety. H1 finds support in Model 1 as all three measures of strain: criminal victimization, health strain, and being suspended or expelled from school are positively correlated with depression/anxiety. Consistent with H3, communal religiosity is negatively correlated with experiencing depression or anxiety. Consistent with the bivariate analyses, no significant correlation is found between nativity and depression/anxiety.

Models 2 and 3 tests the moderating effects of religiosity and strain on depression/anxiety for both native and foreign born Latinos, and no significant interactions are present.

Table 4.3 displays the lagged results from regressing delinquency at Wave 2 on religiosity, nativity, negative emotions, strain, social bonding as well as the control variables at Wave 1. Once again Model 1 tests the direct effects, and it reveals that age is negatively correlated with delinquency. Consistent with H2, students who reported experiencing strain in the form of criminal victimization or being suspended or expelled from their school at Wave 1 are more likely to report committing delinquent acts at Wave 2. Additionally, higher levels of depression or anxiety at wave 1 are positively correlated with delinquency at wave 2. Consistent with the bivariate analyses, foreign-born Latinos remain less likely to partake in delinquent acts than native-born Latinos when all the

controls are included in the model. No significant relationship exists between religiosity at Wave 1 and delinquency at Wave 2.

Table 4.2.

Unstandardized OLS Regression Coefficients Representing the Effects of Religiosity, Nativity, Strain, Social Bonding, and Controls at Wave 1 on Lagged Depression/Anxiety at Wave 2.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	4.774**	5.873***	5.802***
<i>Controls</i>			
Socioeconomic Status	-0.139	-0.161*	-0.157*
Male	-1.343***	-1.350***	-1.349***
Age	0.143	0.136	0.141
Catholic	-0.449	-0.462	-0.429
Parental Bonding	-0.500**	-0.495**	-0.502*
<i>Strain</i>			
Criminal Victimization	0.379***	0.376***	0.355***
Health	0.579***	0.576***	0.552***
Suspended/Expelled	0.471*	0.479*	0.498*
<i>Religiosity</i>			
Personal	-0.005	-0.126	-0.144
Communal	-0.132*	-0.178	-0.159
Foreign born	-0.354	-0.433	-0.468
<i>Two-Way Interactions</i>			
Pers Religion*FB		0.137	0.305
Comm Religion*FB		0.069	-0.010
Pers Religion*Victim		-0.026	-0.062
Comm Religion*Victim		-0.047	-0.013
Pers Religion*Health		0.019	-0.003
Comm Religion*Health		-0.009	-0.008
Pers Religion*Suspend		0.206	0.245
Comm Religion*Suspend		0.066	0.026
<i>Three-Way Interaction</i>			
Pers Religion*FB*Victim			0.245
Comm Religion*FB*Victim			-0.168
Pers Religion*FB*Health			0.185
Comm Religion*FB*Health			-0.005
Pers Religion*FB*Suspend			-0.242
Comm Religion*FB*Suspend			0.189
N	1873	1873	1873
R-squared	.1466	.1568	.1612

***p≤.001 **p≤.01 *p≤.05

Model 2 tests the relationship between religiosity and strain, depression/anxiety, and nativity on delinquency through the use of two-way interactions. Personal religiosity amplifies the effects for foreign born Latinos, as higher rates of personal religiosity at wave1 reduce the likelihood of juvenile delinquency at wave 2 for foreign born Latinos.⁵ Model 3 includes the three-way interaction terms between religiosity, nativity and strain/depression or anxiety, and no significant effects were found.

Table 4.4 reveals the lagged effects of religiosity, nativity, depression/anxiety, strain, parental bonding, and other controls at Wave 1 on alcohol abuse at Wave 2. Model 1 reveals that parental educational levels, age, being Catholic, and being male are positively correlated with abusing alcohol at Wave 2. Consistent with H2 those who reported witnessing or experiencing criminal victimization at Wave 1 are more likely to report abusing alcohol at Wave 2. Personal religiosity is negatively correlated with abusing alcohol, which provides support for H4, but communal religiosity is not significantly correlated with alcohol abuse. Foreign born Latinos report lower levels of alcohol abuse than native-born Latinos.

The interactions between religiosity and strain, depression/anxiety and nativity are displayed in Model 2. Interestingly, while personal religiosity does not have a direct effect on depression/anxiety (Table 4.2), it does buffer the effects of depression/anxiety on alcohol abuse for Latino adolescents in accordance with H6. Thus, among Latino individuals with high levels of depression/anxiety, those with high levels of personal religiosity are less likely to cope with these negative feelings by abusing alcohol than depressed/anxious Latino students with low levels of religiosity.

⁵ The coefficient in the model shown was not significant ($p=.202$). However, in the ancillary analyses run when individual and corporate religiosity were interacted with nativity, the coefficient was significant ($b=-0.65$ and $p=0.015$). Consequently, this interaction is marked as significant in the table.

Table 4.3.

Unstandardized OLS Regression Coefficients Representing the Effects of Religiosity, Nativity, Depression/Anxiety, Strain, Social Bonding, and Controls at Wave 1 on Lagged Delinquency at Wave 2.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	1.647***	1.951***	2.009 ***
<i>Controls</i>			
Socioeconomic Status	0.069**	0.067**	0.068
Male	0.078	0.084	0.083
Age	-0.083***	-0.084***	-0.087***
Catholic	0.076	0.075	0.077
Parental Bonding	-0.007	-0.011	-0.015
<i>Strain</i>			
Criminal Victimization	0.149***	0.148***	0.145***
Health	0.021	0.027	0.023
Suspended/Expelled	0.237***	0.237**	0.244**
Depression/Anxiety	0.030**	0.027*	0.028*
<i>Religiosity</i>			
Personal	-0.031	-0.031	-0.034
Communal	0.007	-0.017	0.007
Foreign born	-0.292***	-0.285***	-0.290***
<i>Two-Way Interactions</i>			
Pers Religion*FB		-0.051*	-0.038
Comm Religion*FB		0.014	-0.036
Pers Religion*Victim		-0.014*	-0.017*
Comm Religion*Victim		-0.011	0.005
Pers Religion*Health		-0.024	-0.030
Comm Religion*Health		-0.004	-0.002
Pers Religion*Suspend		0.026	0.033
Comm Religion*Suspend		0.044	0.021
Pers Religion*Depression		0.010	0.002
Comm Religion*Depression		-0.001	-0.001
<i>Three-Way Interaction</i>			
Pers Religion*FB*Victim			0.015
Comm Religion*FB*Victim			-0.035
Pers Religion*FB*Health			0.031
Comm Religion*FB*Health			0.005
Pers Religion*FB*Suspend			-0.018
Comm Religion*FB*Suspend			0.096
Pers Religion*FB*Depression			-0.004
Comm Religion*FB*Depression			-0.006
N	1831	1831	1831
R-squared	.1773	.1663	.1693

***p≤.001 **p≤.01 *p≤.05

Table 4.4.

Unstandardized OLS Regression Coefficients Representing the Effects of Religiosity, Nativity, Depression/Anxiety, Strain, Social Bonding, and Controls at Wave 1 on Lagged Alcohol Abuse at Wave 2.

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Intercept	-2.818*	-2.470*	-2.510*
<i>Controls</i>			
Socioeconomic Status	0.135*	0.138*	0.137*
Male	0.421*	0.431*	0.420*
Age	0.232***	0.233***	0.229***
Catholic	0.421**	0.447**	0.455**
Parental Bonding	-0.111	-0.105	-0.080
<i>Strain</i>			
Criminal Victimization	0.328***	0.313***	0.327***
Health	0.123	0.135	0.159
Suspended/Expelled	0.301	0.310	0.335*
Depression/Anxiety	0.021	0.016	0.014
<i>Religiosity</i>			
Personal	-0.080*	-0.038	-0.061
Communal	-0.003	-0.034	-0.019
Foreign born	-0.776***	-0.749***	-0.782***
<i>Two-Way Interactions</i>			
Pers Religion*FB		-0.159	-0.170
Comm Religion*FB		0.099	-0.054
Pers Religion*Victim		-0.014	-0.012
Comm Religion*Victim		0.013	0.039
Pers Religion*Health		0.034	0.058
Comm Religion*Health		0.020	0.024
Pers Religion*Suspend		-0.018	0.016
Comm Religion*Suspend		0.012	-0.023
Pers Religion*Depression		-0.025*	-0.028*
Comm Religion*Depression		0.006	0.003
<i>Three-Way Interaction</i>			
Pers Religion*FB*Victim			-0.144
Comm Religion*FB*Victim			-0.206*
Pers Religion*FB*Health			-0.163*
Comm Religion*FB*Health			-0.020
Pers Religion*FB*Suspend			-0.128
Comm Religion*FB*Suspend			0.191
Pers Religion*FB*Depression			-2.510
Comm Religion*FB*Depression			0.137
N	1851	1851	1851
R-squared	.1397	.1492	.1619

***p≤.001 **p≤.01 *p≤.05

Model 3 includes the three-way interaction terms and reveals that personal religiosity's moderating effect of depression/anxiety on heavy drinking is consistent for both native and foreign born Latino students. Additionally, among foreign born Latino youth, personal religiosity buffers the effects criminal victimization on abusing alcohol, while communal religiosity buffers health strain on alcohol abuse. Thus, the internal and external components of religiosity function in distinct ways for foreign born Latinos as they alleviate different forms of strain.

Discussion and Conclusion

The current work extends the growing body of literature on GST by applying the theory to an understudied minority group that is disproportionately represented in the nation's criminal sentencing: Latino Americans. Furthermore, this study proposes that religion serves as a viable and legitimate coping mechanism for Latino youth that directly reduces experiencing negative emotions and deviant behavior as well as buffering the negative impact of both strain and negative emotions. Additionally, I hypothesize that the buffering effect of religion for Latino youth would be stronger among those who are foreign born as opposed to native born.

Overall the results provide support for my hypotheses. GST is a general theory applicable for all racial and ethnic groups, but the heightened structural disadvantages Latinos face makes it especially salient for them. However, the application of GST for Latinos has received little empirical attention. My results contribute to understanding Latino rates of deviant behavior, and empirically demonstrates that GST is applicable among Latino youth, as strain is positively correlated with both negative emotions and deviance and negative emotions are positively correlated with deviance in a similar

fashion to other racial and ethnic groups (Agnew & White, 1992; Brezina, 1996; Brezina et al., 2001; Broidy, 2001; Jang & Johnson, 2003). Moreover, religiosity is negatively correlated with depression/anxiety and alcohol abuse, but not directly correlated with delinquency, which is similar to findings among African Americans (Jang & Johnson, 2005). Also, serves as a buffer for depression/anxiety on alcohol abuse. Therefore, religion legitimately provides a viable form of coping for Latino youth as it offers both an internal and external coping mechanism.

These findings also have implications for the sociology of religion. Religiosity is multifaceted and should not be treated as a generic concept. Similar to my findings in the preceding chapter, the various dimensions of religiosity do not work in unison with each other with regards to depression/anxiety and deviance. I find that different components of religiosity impact Latino youth in distinct ways. Specially, I find that communal forms of religiosity helps Latino youth cope with depression and anxiety and alleviates the negative impact of criminal victimization on deviance among foreign born Latinos. Conversely, personal religiosity directly and indirectly reduces alcohol abuse for Latinos students by buffering the effects the depression and anxiety, and lowers participation in delinquent acts for foreign born Latinos. Religion is both corporate and private, and by bifurcating religiosity, the specific beneficial mechanisms of religion on deviance are better teased out. Agnew discussed the importance of internal and external coping mechanisms for reducing deviance, and similarly, religion provides individuals with both types of coping mechanisms. Personal religiosity can enhance individual problem solving skills and morally convict individuals to cope with their negative emotions in a pro-social manner. Likewise, communal forms of religiosity provide individuals with social support

group as well as access to economic resources. Thus, future studies would do well to account for the different components of religion to fully understand its complex nature (L. R. Olson & Warber, 2008).

Interestingly, foreign born Latinos are less likely than native born ones to participate in both forms of deviant behaviors. Even though foreign born Latinos typically report worrying about finding a job, deportation, and being asked about their immigration status at higher rates than those who are native born (Lopez & Light, 2009; Lopez & Minushkin, 2008), Latino foreign born youth participate in delinquent behavior less than their native born counterparts. This is an important finding in and of itself. As mentioned earlier, public opinion, and consequently state and local legislature, believe foreign-born Latinos are more prone to crime than those who are native born (Chavez & Provine, 2009). This finding contributes to the notion that the higher crime and incarceration rates of foreign born Latinos are more the product of restrictive treatment from the criminal justice system than the difficulties that accompany immigration (Hagan & Palloni, 1999; Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2000; Stowell, Jr, & Cancino, 2012). Despite these lower rates of deviance, religiosity still provides a distinct buffer for health strain and criminal victimization on alcohol abuse and reduces delinquent behavior for foreign born Latinos, which supports H10 and highlights the important role religiosity plays in the lives of foreign born Latinos.

Future studies should determine what other venues of coping foreign born Latinos pursue instead of deviant coping. More work is needed to determine what other factors buffer strain and negative emotions for foreign born Latinos, and if there are consistent coping mechanisms for all immigrants, regardless of ethnicity. It would also be beneficial

for future research to explore if there are generational differences in coping strategies for minority groups. Portes and Zhou (1993) propose that among some minority groups, including Mexican Americans, the immigrant assimilation process is no longer an upwards trajectory from working class to middle class. Instead, immigration in the United States reflects a segmented pattern where new immigrants enter the nation at various socioeconomic starting points and experience upward, downward, or lateral mobility at varying rates. Consequently, second generation individuals can experience greater hardships and structural inequalities than first generation immigrants. Thus, the structural inequalities faced by the parents of native born, especially second generation, Latino youth could cause them to hold less optimism for their own upward mobility and look towards deviant forms of coping as a result. Conversely, foreign born youth who are less aware of the nation's structural hardships could more optimistically believe in the achieving the American dream through conventional and socially accepted means (Portes, Fernández-Kelly, & Haller, 2005; Zhou, Lee, Vallejo, Tafoya-Estrada, & Xiong, 2008). A recent study has displayed that some children of Mexican American immigrants do not succumb to patterns of segmented assimilation and are able to make impressive intergenerational gains despite their limited access to resources and negative stereotypes (J. Lee, 2013). The findings from this chapter suggest other important consequences arise for second and third generation Latinos, as native born Latino youth are significantly more likely to experience criminal victimization than foreign born Latinos. Additionally, native born Latinos exhibit higher rates of juvenile delinquency and alcohol abuse. Future studies should examine the other consequences of straining experiences for second generation Latinos, and if these second generation individuals employ various coping

mechanisms in response to these high levels of strain. Moreover, future studies should explore if these effects are consistent for other second generation immigrants, such as Vietnamese and Chinese immigrants who often experience high rates of economic segmented assimilation.

The present study also has implications for the burgeoning literature on the Hispanic paradox, which finds a relatively good health profile for Latino Americans despite their socioeconomic disadvantages (Markides & Coreil, 1986). Previous studies have found the presence of ethnic enclaves to contribute to these positive health outcomes (Eschbach, Ostir, Patel, Markides, & Goodwin, 2004; Stroope et al., 2014). My findings reveal communal religiosity impacts rates of depression and anxiety as well as alcohol abuse for young Latinos; two outcomes that have direct health implications. Moreover, the significant differences in delinquency and alcohol abuse between native and foreign born Latino youth supports the notion that the benefits of ethnic enclaves are stronger for immigrants than more acculturated Latinos (Zemore, 2007). Future studies need to tease out the other differences that exist between native and foreign born Latinos, and if they help account for the Hispanic paradox.

In conclusion the present study provides an empirical test of Agnew's GST (Agnew, 2005) for an understudied minority group. This study also finds that religion can serve as alternative form of coping for Latinos, reducing depression/anxiety and some forms of deviant behavior as well as buffering the effects of strain and negative emotions on both depression/anxiety and deviance. Furthermore, religiosity appears to benefit foreign born Latinos more than native born ones with regards to alcohol abuse, providing a legitimate means of coping that should be accounted for future studies in GST (Jang &

Johnson, 2005). Finally, I recommend future studies to further explore the various coping strategies employed by foreign Latino youth that makes them less to participate in deviant behaviors than their native born counterparts, and if second generation Latinos experience heightened strain as a result of segmented assimilation.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This final chapter expands on the findings and implications of the prior chapters' analyses and for the dissertation as a whole. I will also discuss directions for future research to potentially explore throughout this chapter. Finally, this dissertation will end with a comment on the relationship between race and religion in America, and how the intersection of race and religion could look throughout the twenty-first century.

Chapter Two examined the group differences of racial and ethnic minorities within predominantly white congregations. Results from multilevel modeling revealed distinct racial group differences within these congregations similar to the American racial hierarchy. Specifically, I found African-Americans and Latinos exhibited lower levels of belonging than whites in predominantly white congregations, yet higher levels of commitment. Conversely, Asian-Americans had lower levels of commitment than those in the white majority, but had higher levels of belonging. These findings identified distinct racial group differences within predominantly white congregations and stressed the importance of accounting for these differences when studying race within an organizational setting, such as congregations.

Chapter Three explored the cohort differences of childhood religiosity on participation in interracial relationships, and found the presence of a multifaceted relationship. Higher rates of childhood church attendance were negatively correlated with interracial dating, and these results were consistent across cohorts. Childhood religious salience, on the other hand, was negatively correlated with participation in interracial

relationships. I proposed that religious beliefs and teachings were no longer central to the negative correlation between religion and interracial relationships. Instead, I suggested the negative correlation was best explained by greater levels of church attendance restricting the social networks of attenders since the majority of congregations are racially homogenous and stress the importance of dating religiously similar individuals, thus limiting their potential dating pool.

Chapter Four applied General Strain Theory to Latino youth, an understudied minority group that is disproportionately represented in criminal sentencing. Results from lagged regressions demonstrated that General Strain Theory is applicable to Latino adolescents and presented religion as a viable and legitimate form of coping with strain and negative emotions for Latinos. Specifically, I found communal forms of religiosity directly reduced depression and anxiety for all young Latinos and buffered the effects of criminal victimization on deviance for foreign born Latinos. Additionally, personal religiosity reduced alcohol abuse for Latinos and ameliorated the effects of depression and anxiety on alcohol abuse as well.

Implications

The findings from the three preceding chapters have direct implications for race relations in the United States. Milton Gordon (1961, 1964) proposed a multidimensional model of assimilation over fifty years ago. In this model he stressed the importance of structural assimilation in achieving the desired goals of reducing prejudice, discrimination, and power imbalances in society. My dissertation examined the intersection of race and religion in contemporary America, and the role religion plays in the nation's race relations.

Historically, religious institutions served to Americanize immigrants and perpetuated the type of assimilation Gordon referred to as Anglo conformity (Stevens-Arroyo, 1998). This type of racial and ethnic interaction generally resulted in the forfeiture of non-Anglo cultures, implying that adaptation to the dominant culture was necessary for immigrants. Consequently, American religious institutions have a history of impeding race relations and condoning prejudicial attitudes by implicitly elevating one racial group and their culture above all others. However, many contemporary religious leaders have grown more sensitive to the racial and ethnic differences that comprise their faith traditions and have made pointed efforts to generate an environment conducive to cultural pluralism. For example, multiracial congregations are known to produce a setting where congregational members can transcend racial and ethnic differences through the formation of a shared religious identity (Emerson, 2006; Marti, 2005, 2009). This dissertation examined the relationship between race and religion, and asked two primary questions. First, do contemporary American religions help foster integration and alleviate racial tension or merely perpetuate it? Second, does religion alleviate the burdens placed upon racial and ethnic minorities in the United States or heighten them?

As mentioned earlier, Gordon stressed the importance of the structural integration in fostering assimilation and alleviating racial tension. Specifically, he emphasized forms of structural assimilation where primary relationships were forged and individuals of different races and ethnicities interacted with one another in an intimate environment. Gordon (1961) identified congregations as an optimal location to create such a setting. Chapter Two used predominantly white congregations as a venue of structural integration and examined the integration of African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Latinos into

these congregations. Results from this chapter suggested that white dominant congregations exhibit a racial hierarchy mirroring the American racial hierarchy for religious commitment and inverting this hierarchy in terms of commitment. Thus, the American racial hierarchy has implications for belonging and commitment within the majority of American congregations.

While Chapter Two is unique in examining the racial group differences within predominantly white congregations, future work is still needed to better understand the racial complexity of these organizations. Qualitative analyses could extend these findings by gaining more insight into the overall experience of racial and ethnic minorities in these congregations and their motivation for remaining in them. Additionally, a more detailed examination of specific congregations could tease out if the presence of multiple racial and ethnic minority groups within predominantly white congregations alters the findings highlighted by Chapter Two. Are the findings from this chapter heightened if a predominantly white congregation has African-Americans and Latinos but not Asian-Americans, or some other combination of racial groups? Examining the relational status of the minority members is another fruitful venue of study. Do interracial couples in predominantly white congregations exhibit different levels of belonging and participation than minority members who are single or in racially heterogeneous relationships? Future studies should also examine racial group differences in predominantly African-American, Latino, and Asian American congregations. Edwards (2008) contends whites still hold a favorable position within predominantly African-American congregations. Future quantitative analyses would do well to test if the benefits of the American racial hierarchy

can fully overcome numeric representation, as Chapter Two demonstrated that the nation's racial hierarchy heightens the disadvantages of numeric representation.

Gordon (1964) argued that after cross-racial or cross ethnic relationships were formed from successful structural integration that racial and ethnic exogamy would naturally occur. This form of racial interaction is generally seen as the last major step in the assimilation process prior to achieving the goal of reduced prejudice, discrimination, and power imbalances (Qian & Lichter, 2007). Chapter Three examined the role of religion in the most common precursor to racial exogamy: interracial dating and romantic relationships. This chapter revealed a multifaceted relationship between childhood religiosity and interracial dating. Religious salience at age twelve is positively correlated with interracial relationships. However, childhood church attendance, a form of communal religiosity, has a strong negative correlation with participating in interracial relationships that is consistent across all cohorts. This provides support for Gordon's theory of the progression of assimilation. Namely, the lack of racial integration or structural assimilation within congregations creates an environment where interracial dating (and presumably interracial marriage) is unlikely to occur.

Chapters Two and three provide support for the progression of Gordon's (1964) stages of assimilation. Interestingly though, religiosity has become less correlated with prejudice beliefs over the past fifty years (see Putnam & Campbell, 2010) despite the lack of integration within the majority of religious institutions. This is likely a result of the influence of greater racial acceptance and integration in America, as a whole. While the segregated nature of congregations has not stunted the reduction of prejudice beliefs, it does have an impact on racial assimilation by hindering participation in interracial

relationships. These findings have strong implications for racial policy. Congregations have remained free of government mandates for desegregation, and consequently have remained the most segregated organizations in the nation. Remaining consistently embedded in racially isolated organizations hinders interracial interaction, and while attitudes towards prejudice and discrimination may decrease, actual structural discrimination and power imbalances are unlikely to decrease (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Feagin, 2006, 2013). Recent educational policies and school zonings in some states have actually served to increase racial segregation within public schools (Flatow, 2013). If this trend continues and individuals have less interaction with members of different racial or ethnic groups then structural disadvantages and power imbalances will likely remain (Gordon, 1978).

Chapter Four asked if religion alleviates the burdens placed upon minority groups, specifically Latinos, in America or heightens them. Results from this chapter found that personal and communal forms of religiosity served as a legitimate and viable form of coping for Latino adolescents. Thus, religiosity can help alleviate the problems often created by larger structural inequalities. It is important to note that Latinos are less embedded in predominantly white congregations than the white majority, especially since greater forms of communal religiosity minimizes negative emotions and deviant coping for Latino youth. The weakened congregational friendship networks for Latinos in predominantly white congregations could weaken the benefits of communal religiosity for Latino youth. Future studies should explore if communal religiosity functions differently for young Latinos based upon the racial composition of the congregations they attend. Additionally, the findings from Chapters Two and Three suggest that religion

does not address the issues of structural inequalities directly, and in fact religion may actually amplify these problems. Can religiosity address the structural problems at the root of strain, negative emotions, and deviant coping? Future studies would benefit from exploring the answers to this question not only for its impact on criminal behavior, but also for its ability to minimize prejudice, discrimination and inequalities.

The results from Chapters Three and Four also have direct implications for the sociology of religion, specifically how social scientists measure and conceptualize religion. Oftentimes religion or religiosity is reduced to one or two variables with church attendance being the standard in most quantitative analyses. Chapters Three and Four reveal that the different components of religiosity function in distinct and even opposite ways. Thus, studies examining the role of religion in the social world should incorporate measures of the various dimensions of religiosity. Just as income or education do not fully encapsulate socioeconomic status, religion too is complex, and is best accounted for by more than a single measure. Future studies should at least be cognizant of the fact that personal and communal forms of religiosity work in unique ways and differentiate them as opposed to using one or the other as a catch all form of religiosity.

Conclusion

Religion in America has a unique position in society and has the ability to influence culture (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 2007; Edgell, 2012; Hunter, 1994), spur on social movements (Finke & Stark, 2005; Polletta, 2009), and influence political outcomes (Bean, 2014; Putnam & Campbell, 2010). It also has the potential to spur on social change and foster true racial integration that breaks down racial barriers (DeYoung et al., 2004; Emerson, 2006; Marti, 2005, 2009). However, with

regards to contemporary race relations, the findings of this dissertation confirm the trends described by Putnam and Campbell (2010); namely, the vast majority of religions in America and their followers are reactive instead of proactive. While the attitudes and beliefs of religious individuals have become more progressive over the past fifty years, communal forms of religiosity have not evolved much since the sixties when Martin Luther King Jr. identified churches as hosting the most segregated hour in the nation.

Nevertheless, a number of congregations, such as Mosaic in Los Angeles (see Marti, 2005) and Wilcrest Baptist Church in Houston (see Emerson, 2006), effectively facilitate the positive structural assimilation envisioned by Gordon (1964). Religious institutions such as these have the ability to create opportunities that could help disadvantaged minorities overcome the obstacles created by centuries of systemic structural inequalities. However, the findings from this dissertation suggest congregations like the ones mentioned above are outliers. While religiosity can and does serve as viable coping mechanism for the problems created by these structural inequalities (Chapter Four), it has the potential to contribute much more by addressing the root of these inequalities, as congregations like Mosaic and Wilcrest Baptist Church demonstrate. In order for this to occur religious individuals, leaders, and institutions must first recognize the problem and acknowledge that they have the potential to address racial issues at a structural level. Then religion in America, at both the personal and communal level, could create true structural integration capable of spurring on the next forms of assimilation outlined by Gordon.

The relationship between race and religion in the United States is vast and multifaceted, and this dissertation has barely scratched the surface of the intersection of

race and religion. Much more work is needed to understand the complexity of race and religion in America. This dissertation has perhaps raised more questions than answers, and it is my hope that the questions raised here would spur on future researchers to examine the evolving dynamics of the intersection of race and religion in this nation as well as others.

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