Secular Evangelicals:

Faith-Based Organizing and Four Modes of Public Religion

Wes Markofski, Brad R. Fulton, and Richard L. Wood

Forthcoming in *Sociology of Religion*

Secular Evangelicals: Faith-Based Organizing and Four Modes of Public Religion

ABSTRACT

We present four modes of public religion—secularist, generalist pluralist, particularist pluralist, and exclusivist—and discuss conditions under which white evangelicals employ these different modes. Ethnographic research on white evangelicals participating in multifaith initiatives in Los Angeles, Portland, Boston, and Atlanta indicates that they prefer the secularist mode that avoids religious expression. In addition, the research indicates that when white evangelicals do participate in multifaith contexts where religious expression is encouraged, they prefer the particularist mode that uses faith-specific language rather than the generalist mode that invokes interfaith language. Quantitative data from a national study of community organizing organizations confirms that white evangelicals are more likely to participate in multifaith initiatives that operate in the secularist rather than a religious mode of public engagement. We anticipate that our analytic typology describing four modes of public religion will be valuable for future studies that examine the public engagement of religious actors.

INTRODUCTION

How is religious faith expressed when evangelical Christians engage in civic action?[1] The public engagement of evangelical Christians began receiving significant scholarly attention more than two decades ago—initially focused on the United States (Emerson and Smith 2000; Liebman, Wuthnow, Guth 1983; Smith 1998, 2000) and Great Britain (Bruce 1983), and later expanding to include Africa and Latin America (Alvarez 1992, 2015; Freston 2008; Smilde 1998, 2007; Stoll 1990), the global South generally (Miller and Yamamori 2007), and Russia and China (Koesel 2014). Most of these studies portray evangelical public engagement as exhibiting exclusively Christian religious expression. However, recent research suggests that the modes of evangelical public engagement have diversified, expanding the ways evangelicals bring religion into the public sphere.

For example, Bielo (2011), Marti and Ganiel (2014), and Markofski (2015a) examine the "emerging church" and the "new monastic" movements popular among post-boomer generations of Euro-American evangelicals. Swartz (2012) and Steensland and Goff (2013) chronicle the "new evangelical social engagement" and the evangelical left. Wadkins (2017) analyzes the rise of socially progressive Pentecostals in El Salvador, and Lindsay (2006, 2008) characterizes evangelical penetration of elite power circles. Fulton and Wood (2012) document the involvement of evangelicals in faith-based community organizing. Finally, a series of contributors analyze the role of religion, including evangelical Christianity, in progressive activism (Fuist, Braunstein, and Williams 2017).

Our review of these literatures indicates that white evangelicals vary in their approach to public religion. However, up until this point, no one has constructed a typology that captures the varied modes of evangelical public engagement. In the absence of such a typology, perceptions

---

[1] On civic action and its frequent grounding in religion, see Lichterman and Eliasoph (2014)

of white evangelicals are shaped by assumptions from the past and from the movement's ostensibly rural roots. In this article, we thus make an initial foray into characterizing the varied modes of religious public engagement among evangelicals for one national setting—the contemporary United States. Given substantial differences in the public profiles of white and non-white evangelicals in the U.S., we focus our analysis on white evangelicals. Given the backward-looking and rural stereotypes of white evangelicals and our agenda to offer a broader typology of evangelical public religion, we focus the qualitative dimension of our analysis on more urban- and suburban-based evangelicals. The results offer some surprising findings: under certain conditions, white evangelicals prefer to engage in civil society in ways that downplay religious expression.

We first identify four fundamental "ideal-typical" modes of public religion in the contemporary U.S. Our analysis was sensitized by insights from several literatures: the sociology of political culture (Braunstein 2012, 2017, 2018; Eliasoph 1996, 1998; Fulton 2011; Swidler 1986; Williams 1996, 1999, 2002, 2007; Wood and Fulton 2015), particularly work on "group styles" and contextual approaches to religious and civic action (Lichterman 2005, 2012; Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014; Yukich et al. 2019); political sociology on the role of religion in public life over the course of U.S. history (Gorski 2017); and political science on church-state relations (Gill 1998; Wald & Calhoun-Brown 2014). After providing an overview of the historical relationship between evangelicalism and secularism in the U.S., we introduce our qualitative case studies and analyze them through the lens of our analytic framework. That analysis suggests that when white evangelicals participate in multifaith contexts, they are more likely to participate in a mode that downplays rather than emphasizes religious expression. In order to assess the generalizability of our findings, we then analyze data from the National Study of Community Organizing Organizations (NSCOO) (Fulton et al. 2011).

Four Modes of Public Religion

Of the four modes of public religion we identify, one discourages all public religious expression while the other three embrace such expression—but in different forms. We describe each mode in the context of civic organizations that engage the public sphere.

Secularist mode: For organizations operating in the secularist mode, the ideal—not always adopted in practice—is the systematic exclusion of religious expression from the public arena of policy debate. This mode is most evident in settings with strong state-sponsored secularism (i.e. governmental regimes in which religious voices and preferences may be tolerated as private expressions but are expected to be silent in the public arena) and in settings where society has become generally more secular. At times, the secularist mode has been adopted by religious actors to protect the rights of religious minorities by preventing other religions from dominating the public arena or to avoid conflict in religiously plural settings (e.g., following the religious wars in early modern Western Europe).

Generalist pluralist mode: Organizations that operate in the generalist mode welcome religious voices and religious reason into their internal deliberations and create opportunities for religious expression in the public arena. However, the generalist mode typically entails various—and often shifting—expectations that religious actors will welcome views from other faith traditions. Religious actors are thus expected to "translate" their religious reasoning into language accessible to those not of their faith. When different religions or non-religious people are present, each actor is expected to "tone down" their more particularistic religious language and generalize their symbolism by using more accessible or abstract references: for example "God" rather than "Christ." The aim of this translation is to avoid alienating people from other faith traditions or non-religious people in the public arena.

Particularist pluralist mode: As in the generalist mode, organizations that operate in a particularist

mode see religious actors and religious expression as holding a legitimate place in the public arena. The crucial difference is that in the particularist mode religious actors are not expected to tone down or generalize their religious language. Rather, they are invited to fully express the particular religious beliefs and corresponding value commitments underlying their policy preferences; non-religious actors are invited to do likewise in the value terms of democratic secularism. Those from other religious or secular traditions are asked to "translate" the speakers' language into terms meaningful within their own experience and worldview. The generalist mode and the particularist mode are thus similar in recognizing the need for translation across religious boundaries and the religious-secularist divide; yet they differ regarding who is expected to make that translation.

Exclusivist mode: Organizations that operate in an exclusivist mode eschew such translation. Rather, they affirm a unified solitary voice in the public arena and either stay silent on the legitimacy of other voices or actively seek to suppress them. Examples of the exclusivist mode exist across traditions, from those affirming that the U.S. is an (evangelical) Christian nation to those asserting that only Catholicism or Islam or Buddhism carries truth or validity for shaping public life.

Each mode has adherents in U.S. public life, and each brings advantages and disadvantages to public deliberation. The secularist mode prevents religious imposition of faith-based commitments over and against scientific knowledge or non-religious minorities (or majorities). It carries the risk, however, of so alienating religious believers that they withdraw from the public arena, move toward a more radical/intolerant version of the exclusivist mode, or, in the extreme, act violently against society. Of the two pluralist modes, the generalist mode fully incorporates religious voices, but does so at the risk of diluting actors' ability to explain the religious reasons for their public positions. As a result, some religious actors may feel unable to adequately express their religious beliefs and corresponding value commitments, experience public life as excluding them, and consider withdrawing from it. The particularist mode more fully mobilizes

religiously based values and passion into public life, allowing religious actors to speak in their first language rather than translating for others, but does so at the risk of overwhelming the public arena with mutually incommensurate religious and secular reasoning. Taken to an extreme, this mode risks undermining the collective public life of democracy. Lastly, the exclusivist mode embraces the belief that some traditions or worldviews are illegitimate interlocutors in the public arena. This view also risks marginalizing some designated "others" so fully that they withdraw and become anti-social actors.

For this study, we determine the modes in which organizations operate by examining how they approach religious identity and expression during meetings and public actions. Organizations operating predominantly in the secularist mode avoid or restrict prayer and other forms of religious expression. Organizations operating predominantly in the generalist mode adopt a more robust inclusion of religious expression through prayers, songs, and reflections, but ask leaders to pray only in vague, abstract, "interfaith" language. In contrast, organizations operating predominantly in the particularist mode encourage leaders to speak and pray in ways particular to their own faith tradition. Organizations operating predominantly in the exclusivist mode tend to be single-faith. Because this study is primarily concerned with multifaith contexts, we spent little time observing exclusivist organizations, but we acknowledge their broader prevalence.

We must immediately qualify this typology by noting that civic organizations rarely operate in a single mode of public religion (Lichterman 2012, Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014). Individuals and organizations practice different modes of civic action across different organizational contexts or social settings and in response to shifting practical necessities or strategic environments. As such, we conceptualize civic organizations' varied modes of public religious expression as dynamic, situational, and multimodal, rather than fixed, static, and unimodal. Furthermore, we conceptualize these modes as arising from interactions among the

religious identities and preferences of individual religious actors and the organizational and social contexts or settings in which civic action occurs (Lichterman 2012). When we do generalize regarding an organization's predominant mode, we do so on the basis of extensive ethnographic engagement by the first author in that organization.

Using this typology, our central findings can be stated more precisely. First, although most white evangelicals tend to operate in the exclusivist mode, we find that when white evangelicals do participate in multifaith contexts, they are—surprisingly—most likely to operate in the secularist mode of public religion. Second, despite this preference, when white evangelicals do participate in multifaith contexts that feature more explicit religious expression, they are more likely to operate in the particularist mode of public religion than in the generalist mode. Making sense of these findings requires both careful analysis of white evangelical behavior and some understanding of the U.S. context.

Secularism and Evangelicalism in the United States

In the United States, white evangelical Christianity is strongly associated with the religious right and conservative political activism (Markofski 2015a; Marti 2019; Smith 2000). Dominant expressions of evangelical public engagement tend toward the exclusivist mode of public religion: emphasizing the United States' Christian heritage (Smith 2000), rallying to varieties of ethnoreligious nationalism (Balmer et al. 2017; Jones 2016; Whitehead, Perry, and Baker 2018), pursuing legislative agendas based on "Judeo-Christian" values (Green et al. 2006), and drawing strong boundaries with regard to religious and secular others (Lichterman, Carter, and Lamont 2009; Smith 1998). Often cast as catalyzing participants in U.S. "culture wars" (Hunter 1991), evangelicals are known for practicing a combative, polemical, and sectarian style of public religion.

In its most ideal-typical form, U.S. culture wars pit "radical secularists"—spirited inheritors of Western scientific rationalism and staunch advocates of the "total separation" of religion from the

political realm—against ethnoreligious nationalists—spirited inheritors of the conquest-apocalyptic Judeo-Christian tradition and staunch advocates of "maximum fusion" of the political and religious spheres (Gorski 2017, 7-8, 17-18). Radical secularists eschew all forms of public-civil religion, envisioning a "naked public square" (Neuhaus 1984) purged of all traces of religious influence (Gorski 2017). Religious nationalists embrace Judeo-Christian influence in political and public life, envisioning a once-and-future Christian U.S. united by faith, blood, and soil (Gorski 2017). In this depiction, radical secularists and evangelical religious nationalists thus stand at opposite poles of public life in the U.S., like "two powerful clans" intent to "keep their bloodlines pure" (Gorski 2017, 18).

Despite popular perceptions and common portrayals, not all white evangelicals are ethnoreligious nationalists of the culture war variety (Smith 2000; Steensland and Goff 2013). The field of evangelicalism in the U.S. is an internally diverse and contested space, including moderate and progressive theological and political perspectives alongside more deeply conservative and combative views (Markofski 2015a, 2015b). Even ardent supporters of evangelical nationalist tropes tend to oppose institutionalized government support for particular religions (Delehanty, Edgell, and Stewart 2018). Still, suspicion of secularism runs deep among evangelicals, animating diverse movements from Christian home-schooling and higher education initiatives to Tea Party activism (Bean 2014; Braunstein 2017; Marsden 2006; Marsh 2008). Much white evangelicalism in the U.S. is characterized by a high-identity, high-intensity religiosity that draws strength from its distinctiveness and strong symbolic boundary-making against secular and religious others (Hunter 1987, 1991; Lichterman, Carter, and Lamont 2009; Markofski 2015a; Smith 1998, 2000). These dominant expressions of white evangelicalism in the U.S. thus tend to be the most salient carriers of the exclusivist mode of public religion.

Among the four modes of public religion, the vast majority of research focuses on white evangelicals participating in the exclusivist mode (Ammerman 1987; Bean 2014; Brint and

Schroedel 2009; Hunter 1987). However, the exclusivist mode is not the only way white evangelicals engage the public arena (Bielo 2011; Markofski 2015a, 2015b; Steensland and Goff 2013; Swartz 2012). When we examined instances of white evangelicals participating in multifaith contexts across the United States, we found that rather than emphasizing public religious expression as one would expect, white evangelicals in such settings tended to downplay it. Ethnographic observations of white evangelicals involved in multifaith contexts on the East coast (Boston), West coast (Los Angeles, Portland), and the South (Atlanta) reveal that they tended to operate in the secularist mode of public religion that avoided or restrained explicit religious talk, symbolism, ritual, or other forms of religious expression.[2] Secondarily, when white evangelicals were in multifaith contexts that encouraged religious expression, they tended to operate in the particularist rather than generalist mode. Quantitative analyses of white evangelical involvement in multifaith community organizing organizations across the United States corroborate our qualitative findings regarding secularist preference.

Nowhere in the analysis do we assume that white evangelicals (nor any group) statically or essentially prefer to operate in any one mode of public religion. Rather, their preferences and practices are context-dependent—that is, they depend on the situation and setting within which social action occurs (Lichterman 2012). Thus, we look specifically at evangelical preferences when participating in multifaith settings in light of the dearth of research on, and public significance of, this subject.

QUALITATIVE METHOD AND CASES

To assess whether white evangelicals participating in multifaith contexts are more likely to participate in efforts that emphasize or downplay religion, we analyze data collected through full-

---

[2] Earlier work (Markofski 2015a) explores similar new evangelical strategies of public engagement in the Midwestern United States.

time ethnographic fieldwork and interviews conducted by the first author in Los Angeles, Atlanta,

Portland, and Boston between August, 2011 and August, 2012. Participating intensively as a

volunteer with multiple organizations in each city, the first author observed culture in action and

interaction (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003; Lichterman 2012) across a wide variety of public and

private settings including organizational staff meetings, legislative testimonies, volunteer trainings,

fundraisers, community events, public meetings, religious celebrations, and informal gatherings.

In addition to gathering data through participant observation, the first author conducted

92 in-depth interviews lasting one to three hours with key organizational leaders, employees, and

volunteers; neighborhood residents; community leaders; and organizational partners and

opponents. The first author also conducted content analysis of the organizations' documents,

including annual reports, strategic plans, meeting transcripts, and promotional material.

Qualitative data are drawn from observations involving the following organizations. Table 1

provides the name, location, organizational type, organizational composition, and predominant

modes of public religion for each organization in the qualitative analysis.

[TABLE 1 HERE]

Hope Community Church / Together for Justice[3] (Los Angeles, CA)

Hope Community Church is a majority-white evangelical church with approximately 150

members located in a low-income, majority-Hispanic neighborhood in greater Los Angeles. Over

75 percent of Hope's regular attendees live within one mile of the church, having intentionally

relocated from other—often more affluent and white—areas. Hope is a founding member of

Together for Justice, an Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)-affiliated community organizing

organization that has 20 member institutions, one full-time organizer, and an annual budget of

$160,000. Together for Justice has been involved in initiatives ranging from job creation and

---

[3] All individual and local organizational names are pseudonyms.

new worker education programs to sustained grassroots political actions for increased

environmental and undocumented immigrant protections. Together for Justice is racially and

religiously diverse, consisting of predominantly white, Asian, and Hispanic Catholic,

evangelical, mainline Protestant, Jewish, and secular member institutions and leaders.

Peachtree Community Development Corporation (Atlanta, GA)

A pioneer in the "Christian community development" (Gordon 2011) movement, Peachtree

Community Development Corporation (PCDC) has evolved into an urban collective of distinct

but related community organizations, ministries, nonprofits, and housing initiatives working to

"create healthy places in the city where families flourish and the Shalom of God is present"

(Organizational Mission Statement, n.d.). With approximately 60 staff members, 14 divisions,

and a $6 million annual budget, PCDC is one of the largest Christian community development

organizations in the United States. A multiracial Christian organization, PCDC works by

invitation in disadvantaged majority-black neighborhoods. PCDC collaborates with a wide range

of partner organizations and institutions, including a large network of evangelical, mainline, and

black Protestant churches, local neighborhood associations, and city, state, and federal programs.

Neighborhood Partners (Portland, OR)

Neighborhood Partners is a small ($100,000 annual budget) community development

organization in southeast Portland, founded and staffed by white evangelicals: one director and

three part-time volunteers. The organization practices and trains individuals and organizations—

both secular and religious—in asset-based community development (ABCD) (Kretzmann and

McKnight 1993). The organization is involved in a range of programs and activities aimed at

developing collaborative partnerships for grassroots community transformation and education:

including free medical clinics, homeless outreach initiatives, internships and service-learning

classes for local college students, and an ABCD-based outreach program to low-income

residents. While the neighborhoods in which Neighborhood Partners works are more racially diverse and economically disadvantaged than the average Portland neighborhood, the large majority of the organization's partners, donors, and volunteers are white and middle class.

Christians for the Common Good (Portland, OR)

Christians for the Common Good (CCG) focuses on educating and uniting Christians in support of social-justice-oriented public policy at the state level, sponsoring or co-sponsoring state legislation on issues ranging from incarceration reform and expanded health care coverage for children and low-income adults to increased environmental protections and predatory payday loan regulation. It is a relatively small operation, consisting of one full-time director, two part-time staff, and a $100,000 annual budget drawn from a mix of personal donations, church contributions, and grants. Board members and volunteer policy committee members drawn from local churches supplement the efforts of organizational staff members to "seek God's justice and the common good in Oregon" (CCG brochure, n.d.). CCG is an overwhelmingly white organization working in majority white contexts in Portland and greater Oregon. Organizational staff, board members, and policy committee members are a mix of liberal mainline Protestants and moderate or progressive evangelicals. Externally, CCG collaborates with a wide range of secular, Christian, non-Christian, and interfaith groups and organizations in its advocacy efforts on behalf of "the poor, the sick, the environment, and the vulnerable" (CCG brochure, n.d.).

Serving the City (Portland, OR)

Initiated by a predominantly white group of evangelical pastors representing 50 evangelical churches in Portland, Serving the City began by asking the mayor of Portland how they could best mobilize the evangelical community to serve the city. Within months and at the mayor's request, Serving the City mobilized 26,000 volunteers from over 400 evangelical churches to participate in 278 city-designated volunteer projects, including public school maintenance and beautification

13

projects, services to the city's homeless population, and free meals and mentoring support for low-income students (Harris 2011). Serving the City has become an ongoing partnership that mobilizes over 25,000 volunteers annually from 500 evangelical churches to address a list of city-identified public concerns that has expanded to include street and gang violence, foster care, and human trafficking in addition to homelessness, hunger, health and wellness, and public education.

Neighborhood Solidarity (Boston, MA)

Neighborhood Solidarity—a hastily organized racially, religiously, and linguistically diverse coalition of faith and community leaders in East Boston—formed in opposition to a multimillion-dollar casino project and corporate lobbying campaign targeting East Boston neighborhood residents. A small, predominantly white group of evangelical young professionals living in East Boston joined the coalition and lent support through event planning and participation, postering and picketing, and social media campaigning. Neighborhood Solidarity involved Catholic, Muslim, mainline Protestant, Pentecostal, and religiously unaffiliated individuals, churches, businesses, neighborhood leaders, and community groups united in opposition to the casino project. After two years of organizing and political contestation, the casino project was defeated (only to be relocated just across the boundary line to an adjacent neighborhood with no organized opposition).

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The majority of organizations in our qualitative sample operated predominantly in the secularist mode; however, in some instances the organizations featured explicit religious expression. In these instances, evangelicals adopted the particularist rather than generalist mode of public religion. We focus first on these cases before turning to our key finding regarding evangelical preference for the secularist mode.

Rejecting the Generalist Mode: Interfaith Bridging Practices and Evangelical Exclusion

Recent studies of faith-based civic action can help us understand why evangelicals

participating in multifaith contexts that encourage religious expression opt for the particularist over the generalist mode. These studies highlight how religion can provide cultural resources for bridging social divisions and generating solidarity across different types of difference in the public arena (Braunstein, Fulton, and Wood 2014; Lichterman 2005; Smidt 2003). Faith-based community organizations (FBCOs), for example, deploy collective prayer and reflection as a type of "bridging cultural practice" that mobilizes religion to bridge race and class divides in internally diverse organizational settings and social contexts (Braunstein, Fulton, and Wood 2014). Although incorporating generalist interfaith practices can facilitate bridging across race, class, and religious difference, it can also "result in certain forms of exclusion"; for example, theological conservatives of various traditions "may not be comfortable with interfaith religious practices" while in secular contexts "prayer may not be considered appropriate or unifying" (Braunstein, Fulton, and Wood 2014, 721). This is one reason evangelicals are often absent from ecumenical and interfaith projects: they recognize their style of religious expression is unwelcome in such settings (Bean 2007) and worry that participating will compromise their theological and religious distinctiveness (Lichterman 2005, Perry 2017).

Embracing Religious Expression: A Particularist Evangelical Approach

Although most white evangelicals find the generalist mode of public religion problematic, we find that many are open to participating in multifaith contexts that operate in the particularist mode. Consider Naomi, a white evangelical neighborhood resident, nonprofit director, and organizing committee member of Together for Justice, who described the challenge of being a white evangelical in multifaith contexts:

> I've prayed and been asked to be more inclusive—you know, not use the J-word
> (Jesus)—in group prayers. But I've pushed back on that a bit … It's interesting…the
> [Hispanic] priest will sometimes say, "Let's pause for a minute in the presence of God,"

and he will use the J-word [Jesus], but it's more acceptable, there's more leeway, because

it's "cross-cultural." When I do it as a white person, I get dirty looks, like, "Didn't you

get the memo?" And I'm like, "Yeah, I did get the memo. I'm just choosing to ignore it."

As we will see below, Naomi and her fellow evangelical volunteers rarely engaged in overt religious

expression in the Together for Justice context. But as this quote exemplifies, when they found

themselves in multifaith settings marked by more explicit religious expression, they strongly preferred

operating in the particularist rather than generalist mode. In this setting-dependent preference,

Naomi and her co-religionists were similar to evangelicals in other multifaith contexts across the

country. They sought to participate in socially diverse, multifaith initiatives, but they wanted to do

so as evangelicals (rather than as generalist interfaith religious persons), maintaining their distinctive

religious identity, beliefs, and expression—while encouraging people from other religious or secular

traditions to do the same.

Naomi and other evangelical leaders cited the IAF's avoidance of the generalist mode as

a significant reason they were open to working with the organization and able to operate

effectively within it. Richard, a retired pastor and long-time champion of evangelical community

organizing work, explained:

I like both ways broad-based organizing is lived out in [the IAF]. The first is that the

organization itself consists of a wide spectrum of people's organizations. You've got

unions, you've got churches, you have Jewish synagogues. You can have Buddhists. You

can have the local rose-growers' society. And you even have businesses involved in it. …

The second thing I like about it is it doesn't operate under the [interfaith] principle of

least common denominator.

Richard gave the example of various IAF leaders speaking at a retreat about why they were

involved in organizing work. A Jewish rabbi, Catholic priest, and evangelical pastor converged

on the story of Exodus, explicating it from the perspective of their distinctive faith traditions. However, Jim, the head of the local teachers' union—who self-identified as Pagan—focused on the Declaration of Independence. For Richard, Jim's comments were "awe inspiring":

> He talked about the Declaration of Independence as his sacred text. That's the term he used … and in essence, exegeted [sic] it. And suddenly I understood Jim in a way I had never understood before—by having him share his depths. IAF organizing encourages that kind of sharing, not simply out of our commonalities but out of our particularities.

In this way, the embrace of religious particularity and difference in this setting appealed to Richard and other Together for Justice evangelicals' sensibilities.

Other cases followed a similar pattern, such as the Neighborhood Solidarity movement to defeat the casino project. At one rally, a Muslim imam invoked purity and family tropes to lament the possibility of "people coming here with their filthy money to try to ruin our lives, and our children's lives," a Catholic priest warned about "the collateral damage that will come from this casino" for "all God's children," and a white evangelical pastor asserted, "The casino is not good for families. It is not good for marriage. It is not good for the Gospel" (Markofski 2016). By fostering the expression of particularist religious language in a diverse multicultural setting marked by secular and religious plurality, the Neighborhood Solidarity movement was able to mobilize quickly and energetically against the casino project.

As exemplified in each of these instances, white evangelicals were willing to participate in multifaith initiatives that operated in a religious mode if (and to some extent *only* if) the mode was particularist (i.e. if it allowed for multiple, distinctive enactments of religious and non-religious expression).

Quiet Evangelicals, Loud Mainliners? Complicating the Public Religion Typology

Our four-fold typology also illuminates instances where organizations enact multiple modes

of public religion. CCG presents one such case. From an outsider point of view, CCG appeared at times to operate in the exclusivist mode, restricting membership to Christians and articulating political positions in strongly Christ-centered, bible-based, religious language. However, according to CCG's organizational members and partners, CCG operated predominantly in the particularist mode, bringing together evangelical and liberal Protestant individuals and organizations who did not see themselves as sharing a common religious or political identity. As Teresa (a thirty-five-year-old, white, evangelical, female former CCG executive director and current board member) expressed it, even when CCG appeared unified on an issue or identity position, the internal reality was that, "We're still diverse and we're still arguing about it [laughing]:"

> Different board members have different ideas about what it means to be a Democrat, a Republican, a liberal, a conservative, an evangelical, a mainline [Protestant]. …So, all these things come out. … We've got Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Adventists, evangelicals, … Democrats, Republicans, and Independents.

Moreover, unlike organizations that operate predominantly in the exclusivist mode, CCG also co-sponsored bills and partnered frequently with non-Christian organizations composed of secular, Muslim, Buddhist, and other non-Christian members.

CCG often used particularist religious language in its outreach literature, legislative testimonies, and organizational communication. When CCG participants gave public testimony in support of specific legislation at the state capitol, they began by saying, "When I look at the life of Jesus, it is absolutely clear that He cared for children," or, "My own commitment to the environment is rooted in my Christian faith. In [the biblical book of] Genesis, I read … ." Rather than toning down particularist religious expression in public settings, CCG explicitly and intentionally emphasized it in an attempt to influence public policy and challenge the religious right's hegemony over the public use and interpretation of Christian scripture. Legislators

commented that it was "refreshing" and "helpful" to hear biblical language being used to mobilize Christians in support of progressive policy objectives such as increased environmental protections and expanded health care for low-income children and families.

The complex characteristics of CCG make it a borderline case across our secularist, particularist, and exclusivist ideal types. But it is a borderline case that illuminates and buttresses, rather than undermines, both the typology and our central findings. Surprisingly, it was CCG's theologically liberal Protestant participants, not its evangelical participants, who pushed CCG to use more explicit, particularist religious expression in public settings (i.e., to operate in a more religious mode). During board meetings, retreats, and operational planning meetings, mainline Protestant members insisted that Jesus-centric biblical language and references remain front-and-center, while CCG's evangelical participants often pushed in the opposite direction (i.e., to operate in a more secularist mode), minimizing religious language and arguing that while CCG "does great with theological reflection, we need to work harder on our facts for legislators" (CCG Board Notes, March 15, 2010).

Even in its complexity, CCG thus supports both the utility of our typology of public religion and the context-dependent features of our central findings. When white evangelicals participate in multifaith contexts that emphasize religious expression, we find they tend to favor the particularist over generalist mode of public religion; however, they are even more likely to participate in the secularist mode. The CCG example also highlights how shifting organizational contexts and social settings (Lichterman 2012, Lichterman and Eliasoph 2014)—not just the religious identity and beliefs of individual actors—can elicit competing modes of public religion and produce unexpected outcomes, such as (in this case) mainline Protestant Bible-thumpers in tension with "quiet" evangelicals concerning the use of scripture and Jesus-talk in public settings (Wuthnow and Evans 2002).

Restraining Public Religious Expression: A Secular Evangelical Approach

Although we find that white evangelicals prefer the particularist mode over the generalist mode, our main finding is that white evangelicals in multifaith contexts, are more likely to operate in the secularist mode over both the generalist or particularist religious modes. Our qualitative data indicates that when white evangelicals participate in multifaith contexts, they tend to downplay rather than emphasize religious expression in their public engagement.

Consider this scene from a Together for Justice planning meeting that was part of a year-long battle against the construction of a regional trash facility in a poor, predominantly Hispanic neighborhood. The meeting was led by Naomi and Jenra (a white, female, mainline Protestant pastor and self-proclaimed evangelical). Also present was the head of the local teacher's union and volunteers from several other Together for Justice member institutions, which included a Hispanic Catholic church, Jewish synagogue, evangelical and mainline Protestant churches, local businesses, and secular nonprofit organizations. Despite being led by an evangelical nonprofit director and a Protestant clergy member, there was no prayer or spiritual reflection to open or close the meeting, nor was there any theological discussion or religious commentary on the means or ends of the organization's activities. There was no framing of movement goals or outcomes in religious terms, nor any plan to mobilize religious language or symbolism during the event itself. Instead, alongside practical event planning, there was talk about environmental and economic impacts of the facility, the questionable ethics of developers and city officials, and laments about the national political climate—all communicated in strictly secular, non-religious language.

This striking absence of public religious expression was the predominant feature of the organization's work across multiple group settings. At a training event attended by approximately 20 white, black, Asian, and Latinx individuals from mainline Protestant, evangelical Protestant, Jewish, Catholic, Buddhist, Quaker, and non-religious backgrounds, a brief 30-second exchange

20

(transcribed below) between Jon (a Buddhist senior organizer), Erik (a Protestant reverend), and

Dustin (an evangelical nonprofit director) constituted the full extent of religious talk at the event:

> Jon: "To me, politics is Jesus's command to love one another. [pause]. Is that
>
> blasphemous, Reverend?!"
>
> Erik: [*shifting focus away from religion and back to practical aspect of training people*
>
> *how to tell effective stories*] "Jesus settled a lot of disputes with stories; they make a
>
> greater impression than facts."
>
> Jon: "The whole Bible is a story…. You've got to do both [talk about facts and stories]."
>
> Dustin: [*also shifting focus away from Jesus talk and back to practical aspects of*
>
> *training*] "House meetings bring people into relationship who may not agree with
>
> each other. It humanizes issues beyond abstract concepts: 'I care about *you*, this
>
> *relationship*,' vs. 'I care about this *issue*'" (emphasis original).

Note how the evangelical nonprofit director and Protestant reverend—both prominent leaders in

the multifaith community organization—sought to quickly turn the conversation away from

religion and towards secular, strategic aspects of training community organizing leaders. Similar

to the planning meeting described earlier, this event was also conducted in the secularist mode.

White evangelicals participating in multifaith contexts across the country displayed a

similar pattern of tending to avoid or restrain explicit religious expression rather than center or

amplify it. At Neighborhood Partners' day-long ABCD training workshops in Portland—led by

white evangelical staff members but attended by religious and non-religious neighborhood

residents, nonprofit leaders, and local officials—language spoken during the workshops and in

training materials contained no explicit religious content apart from the presence of the

organization's mission statement on the back page of a training manual. Even there, religious

language was muted, avoiding "Jesus talk" while commending ABCD as "our recommended

common space modality for building inclusive relationships and partnerships where positive neighborhood impact can be accomplished."

Other public events—such as the Neighborhood Partners' annual benefit concert—were similarly lacking in explicit religious expression. The concert was sponsored by a wide range of community and corporate partners, both religious and non-religious. The vast majority of attendees, along with several musicians and poets who performed throughout the evening, were white, young professional evangelicals from one of the city's largest and most prominent evangelical churches. The keynote address, music, and secondary addresses, however, had no explicit religious content. Promotional materials sold the event as a "celebration of partnerships and neighborhood care," featuring "stories of partnership and collaboration for the enriching of impoverished neighborhoods." In these ways, Neighborhood Partners consistently embraced a secular style of public engagement that limited religious expression.

In settings that involved only evangelicals, however, Neighborhood Partners did not limit nor discourage explicit religious expression. For example, in a partnership of evangelical organizations to reach out to low-income apartment dwellers, trainings and promotional materials drew heavily on common evangelical themes, such as referring to the apartment complexes as "the mission field next door," encouraging "prayer ministry," and referring explicitly to Jesus as a model for "loving our neighbors."

Limiting religious expression in multifaith contexts was also a critical feature of Serving the City, which operated with a strict, self-imposed no-proselytizing policy that was generally supported by most of the evangelical pastors and participants. To explain the organization's reasons for restraining religious expression, the leaders held regular training sessions and vision-casting events, prepared short messages and videos to share in church settings, and fielded phone calls and one-on-one appointments with pastors who expressed disagreement or concern about

the policy. They also pulled aside volunteers who violated the "no proselytizing" policy to remind them of the initiative's purpose: to demonstrate God's love for the city through public service "with no strings attached." At the same time, Serving the City leaders, similar to the leaders of Neighborhood Partners, did not hide their identity *as evangelicals* nor their desire to share the gospel in other, appropriate, non-coercive contexts, such as revival meetings or one-on-one conversations amongst adults in non-program related settings.

In Atlanta, Peachtree Community Development Corporation participants typically refrained from proselytizing and explicit religious talk when in multifaith contexts. For example, during a progressive dinner event organized by community members, not a single word was uttered about Jesus, the gospel, Christianity, or religion, despite the active presence of nearly 20 evangelicals with significant ties to PCDC. This absence of religious talk was consistent with other observations and interviews with PCDC participants, who said during interviews that they intentionally avoided proselytizing discourse in multifaith contexts.

Of course, not all individuals followed informal or formal policies to restrict religious expression. These cases are also instructive. In one instance, a Neighborhood Partners intern repeatedly challenged his supervisor, Andy, with concerns about theology and orthopraxy (i.e. the orthodox practice of religious commitment). Over a period of many weeks, the intern questioned Neighborhood Partners' prioritization of *"listening"* to neighbors rather than simply *"telling"* them the gospel story, its focus on practical problem-solving and community development to the neglect (from his perspective) of individual religious conversion and growth, and its eagerness to work with secular and non-evangelical partners. Andy finally asked the intern whether he believed in Neighborhood Partners' mission enough to continue working with the group; when the intern continued to express concerns, Andy encouraged him to step down.

In another instance, volunteers from an evangelical church group became agitated when

the Neighborhood Partners staff encouraged them to refrain from proselytizing during short-term urban outreaches among Portland's disadvantaged and homeless populations. Such conflicts were a regular source of frustration among Neighborhood Partners staff, who nevertheless viewed the experiences as part of their organizational mission to help fellow evangelicals learn how to practice public religion in more humble, reciprocal, effective, and ultimately (from their perspective) Christ-like forms. As with other evangelicals observed in this study, Neighborhood Partners leaders' embrace of the secularist mode of public religion was born of a deep religious commitment to a particular understanding of Christ and scripture, rather than a lack of faith or loss of evangelical religious conviction.

In sum, our qualitative data suggest that when white evangelicals participate in multifaith contexts they tend to operate in the secularist mode of public religion that downplays religious expression, rather than modes that encourage religious expression. In the next section, we assess the generalizability of this finding by analyzing survey data from a national study of faith-based community organizations. We examine whether white evangelical congregations are more likely to participate in multifaith initiatives that operate in the secularist mode or engage in more explicit religious expression.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

To assess the generalizability of our ethnographic findings, we analyze data from the National Study of Community Organizing Organizations (NSCOO) (Fulton et al. 2011). The organizations in the NSCOO operate as community-based organizations that bring together individuals from their member institutions to address social, economic, and political issues that affect poor, low-income, and middle-class sectors of U.S. society. Each organization has paid staff and a board of directors consisting of representatives from its member institutions, which include religious congregations, nonprofit organizations, schools, unions, and other civic associations.

The NSCOO surveyed the entire field of these organizations by distributing a two-part survey to the director of each organization. Part one was an online survey that gathered extensive data on each organization's history, activities, and outputs. Part two consisted of customized spreadsheets that directors used to provide detailed demographic information about their institutional members, board members, and paid staff. This multi-level study achieved a response rate of 94 percent, gathering data on 178 of the 189 organizations in the country and demographic information on the 4,145 member institutions, 2,939 board members, and 506 paid organizers affiliated with these organizations (Fulton 2018).

When the directors provided information about their institutional members, they were asked to indicate for each institutional member its religious affiliation (if any) and the majority race/ethnicity of its participants. The analysis uses this information to construct the key dependent variable: whether at least one of the organization's institutional members is a white evangelical congregation. Twenty-five percent of the organizations have at least one white evangelical congregation as an institutional member.

To assess the relationship between an organization operating in the secularist mode and its likelihood of having white evangelical members, this study analyzes five variables related to an organization having a secular orientation. Three variables measure the secular composition of the organization: 1) the proportion of the organization's member institutions that are not religiously affiliated, 2) the proportion of organization's board members who are not clergy, and 3) whether the organization has at least one religiously unaffiliated organizer on staff. Two variables measure whether the organization downplays religious expression: directors were asked to indicate 1) how often their organization's activities included a leader praying to open or close the meeting and 2) how often their organization explicitly discussed religious differences in their planning meetings over the past 12 months. These ordered categorical variables had five

response options (never, rarely, sometimes, often, and always). These responses were used to construct the binary variables—*meetings are generally not opened or closed with a prayer* and *religious differences are rarely/never discussed in meetings*.[4] The analysis also controls for the organization's annual revenue and age, the number of its member institutions, and the number of different religious traditions represented among its member institutions. Table 2 displays descriptive statistics for the variables used in the quantitative analysis.

[TABLE 2 HERE]

The analysis performs a logistic regression for the binary dependent variable and uses maximum likelihood methods to estimate the change in the log odds of an organization having a white evangelical congregation as a member associated with a change in the independent variable. Table 3 displays the results of the multivariate regression model examining the relationship between an organization having a secular orientation and having white evangelical congregations as members.[5] The analysis indicates a positive association between having a greater secular composition and having evangelical members. Both the proportion of secular member institutions an organization has and the proportion of its board members who are not clergy are positively associated with the organization's likelihood of having white evangelical congregations as members.

[TABLE 3 HERE]

In addition, organizations with at least one religiously unaffiliated organizer on staff are three times more likely to have a white evangelical congregation as a member. The analysis also

---

[4] Because less than 4 percent of the organizations indicated "never" or "rarely" praying to open or close their meetings, the constructed binary variable includes the "sometimes" response among those that were coded 1. For discussing religious differences, "never" and "rarely" were coded 1 and the other responses were coded 0.

[5] Because this study surveyed the entire population of institution-based community organizing organizations in the U.S. and received responses from 94 percent of the organizations, a finite population correction factor $\sqrt{(N-n)/(N-1)}$ is applied to each analysis (Cochran 1977). The finite population correction factor is based on the 158 organizations (out of 189) that provided data for all of the variables used in the analysis.

indicates that not emphasizing religion is positively associated with an organization's likelihood of having evangelical members. Organizations that generally do not open or close their meetings with a prayer are twice as likely to have a white evangelical congregation as a member. Similarly, organizations that rarely or never discuss religious differences in their meetings are also twice as likely to have evangelical members. Thus, consistent with our qualitative analysis, we find that white evangelical congregations are more likely to join multifaith initiatives that do not emphasize religious expression. This finding holds even though these congregations likely emphasize religious expression within their own congregational contexts or single-faith settings.

Overall, the quantitative analysis indicates that having a secular composition and not emphasizing religion are positively associated with an organization's likelihood of having white evangelical congregations as members. The results provide strong evidence that white evangelicals are more likely to participate in multifaith initiatives that operate in a secularist rather than religious mode. Our qualitative data suggest this finding represents the preferences of evangelical actors themselves, rather than being merely an artifact of the characteristics of different multifaith community-based organizations.

DISCUSSION

If one asked a random individual to establish an evangelical preference ordering concerning the secularist, generalist, particularist, and exclusivist modes of public religion, the secularist mode would almost certainly be ranked at the bottom. The reasons for this expectation are overdetermined: longstanding evangelical antipathy toward secularism and radical secularists (Gorski 2017; Marsden 2006); strong commitments to evangelism, proselytization, and symbolic-subcultural distinctiveness (Smith 1998); Christian nationalist and culture war politics asserting the United States' "Judeo-Christian" heritage (Bean 2014; Hunter 1987, 1991, Whitehead, Perry, and Baker 2018); and tendencies toward a "pietistic idealism" that prioritizes

27

doctrinal purity and boundary-preservation over collaboration (Perry 2017).

Contrary to the expectation that evangelical Christians would eschew the secularist mode of public engagement, both our ethnographic and quantitative findings suggest that when white evangelicals do participate in multifaith contexts, they tend to operate in the secularist mode. We now consider some possible explanations for the surprising appeal of the secularist style of public religious engagement for these white evangelicals.

One explanation lies in the dynamics of social stigma. Despite gains in social status among white evangelicals in recent decades (Lindsay 2006, 2007, 2008), evangelicalism remains a stigmatized identity in many urban, educated, cosmopolitan contexts (Markofski 2015a). In such settings, white evangelicals represent the dominant, combative, and intolerant religio-political "other" against which a variety of progressive social and political movements and identities are constructed. Some evangelicals are acutely aware of this stigma and practice various forms of social identity repair and management (Goffman 1963). Take this example from the first author's fieldwork. In November 2011, *Christianity Today* (CT)—the flagship periodical of evangelical Christianity in the United States—launched a new multiyear initiative called "This is Our City" aimed at cultivating a new type of urban evangelical public engagement. The first author was conducting research in Portland—where CT launched the initiative—and was invited to attend an evening gala where CT senior executives and writers formally introduced the project. Listening to the eclectic program of inspirational speeches, poetry readings, video vignettes, and live interviews while mingling in informal conversation with the accomplished and enthusiastic guests around the room, it was striking how much these white evangelicals wanted to be seen as trusted participants and partners in civic life, rather than disengaged or combative culture warriors. Bothered by the reality and representation of evangelicalism in the public arena, such evangelicals see engaging in the secularist mode as a way to increase trust and connection with non-evangelical Americans.

This leads directly to our second point: namely, white evangelicalism in the U.S. is not a monolith consisting solely of political and cultural conservatives, ethnoreligious nationalists, or erstwhile religious right sympathizers (Markofski 2015a; Smith 1998). Our data centers on white evangelicals participating in multifaith contexts in predominantly urban and suburban areas; as such, our findings are not directly generalizable to the broader white evangelical population in the U.S. Additional research is needed to determine whether similar patterns occur in rural settings. However, our findings are nevertheless relevant to the broader white American evangelical population—and to American public and political life more generally—for several reasons. First, despite popular perceptions, more than half of white evangelicals live in urban or suburban—not rural—areas, which is also where the largest, fastest-growing, and most influential evangelical churches are located (Burge 2019). Second, evangelicalism in the U.S. is an internally diverse and contested social field in which evangelical actors argue over the legitimate representation of evangelical religious and political standpoints across the liberal-conservative spectrum (Markofski 2015a). As such, the preferences and practices developed by one subset of evangelicals frequently inform those of other subsets, resulting in complex patterns of cultural diffusion, reproduction, and resistance across different positions within the broader field of evangelicalism in the U.S. Consequently, developments in one subset of white evangelical actors (in this instance, white urban/suburban evangelicals in multifaith settings operating in the secularist or particularist mode of public religion) are highly likely to inform and interact with other types of evangelical actors, particularly if the actors possess sufficient amounts of field-specific cultural, economic, social, or symbolic capital (Markofski 2015a). Third, our sample does include many politically centrist and conservative evangelical individuals and organizations, suggesting that the secularist mode of public religion holds some broader appeal within the contested field of evangelicalism in the U.S. beyond narrowly progressive or

cosmopolitan evangelical segments. Prior research suggests politically conservative evangelicals are quite willing to adopt secularist styles of public religious expression for practical and strategic purposes (Smith 2009). Finally, in light of growing ethnoreligious pluralism and ethnoreligious nationalism in the U.S. (Jones 2016), white evangelical participation in multifaith settings is a matter of urgent social-scientific and public concern and interest (Markofski 2015b).

A third possible explanation is that engaging in the secularist mode of public religion might allow evangelicals to pragmatically avoid areas of deep difference and disagreement with religious and secular others while pursuing shared goals. Modes of engagement that would highlight such differences could threaten to undermine collaborative efforts to address social problems and pursue areas of common interest. To the extent that evangelicals both prioritize such efforts and hold controversial beliefs, engaging in the secularist mode of public religion appears to offer advantages: by avoiding contentious religious differences and restraining religious expression in multifaith contexts, the secularist mode may reduce the likelihood of conflicts and disagreements capable of derailing collaborative multifaith partnerships while increasing organizational effectiveness and intelligibility in the public arena.

CONCLUSION

There is no fixed or single mode of public religion; it varies tremendously based on its political, socioeconomic, and cultural settings. We have outlined a typology involving four distinct modes of public religion among white evangelicals: secularist, generalist, particularist, and exclusivist.[6] In the first mode, religious expression is discouraged in multifaith contexts; in the other three modes, it is encouraged—but in differing ways. Two key findings then emerged: First, when white evangelicals participate in multifaith contexts wherein religious expression is

---

[6] As discussed previously, we do not address the exclusivist mode here because it was mostly unobserved in our cases, because exclusivist evangelicals are the subject of a vast body of extant scholarship, and because of our interest in evangelicals participating in multifaith contexts.

prominent, they tend to prefer the particularist mode over the generalist mode. But, rather surprisingly, white evangelicals who participate in multifaith contexts are more likely to join efforts that operate in the secularist mode of public religion that avoids or restrains religious expression. To state it differently (and in reverse order), our findings indicate that when white evangelicals participate in multifaith initiatives, they prefer to operate in the secularist mode; but if, despite this preference, such settings do incorporate extensive religious expression, white evangelicals tend to prefer the particularist rather than the generalist mode. In light of previously observed differences in religious expression across regional and organizational contexts (Ammerman 1997; Silk and Walsh 2008), the consistency of our findings across a broad range of geographic locations and organizational settings increases our confidence in their robustness and substantive significance.

These findings suggest several further lines of research. The first would address whether this study's qualitative findings concerning evangelical preference for particularist rather than generalist modes of public religion are generalizable beyond the cases under qualitative investigation—a question that our own quantitative data are not equipped to answer as the NSCOO did not include items that would differentiate between generalist and particularist expression. A second question is whether evangelicals engaged in public settings associated with a broader range of multifaith initiatives might also prefer operating in the secularist mode of public religion, and, if so, under which conditions. Another question concerns how the secularist, generalist, particularist, and exclusivist modes of public religion may coexist and interact within and across different organizational, cultural, spatial, and temporal contexts beyond our cases.

Beyond their specific empirical contributions toward illuminating varieties of evangelical public religion, our findings also point to several more general implications for the study of public religion. First, they are a reminder that constructing "secular" and "religious" categorizations of

actors, settings, or practices as strictly self-contained and oppositional binaries is problematic.

Religious actors can and do engage in the secularist mode of public religion for any number of

reasons (Gorski 2017), while non-religious actors similarly can and do sometimes prefer the

particularist mode to the secularist mode (Habermas 2006). This nuance remains despite persistent

and ongoing attempts by "radical secularist" and "religious nationalist" culture warriors to reify

secular-religious binaries and villainize all those who stand across enemy lines (Gorski 2017; Hunter

1991). Second, our findings highlight the importance of attending to variation in the social settings

whereby religion and religious actors enter the public arena (Lichterman 2012). Modes of public

religion vary not only because there are different types of religious belief, practice, and identity,

but also because actors sharing common religious identities can (and often do) act differently

depending on the social and organizational contexts in which they are embedded. This study

demonstrates how a four-fold typology of secularist, generalist, particularist, and exclusivist

public religion can account for variation, generate unexpected findings, and illuminate complexity

in cases of white evangelical public engagement in the U.S. We anticipate future work that validates

the typology's analytic utility for understanding other spatial, temporal, and religious contexts.

REFERENCES

Alvarez, Carmelo. 1992. *Pentecostalismo Y Liberación: Una Experiencia Latinoamericana*, San

José, Costa Rica: Editorial Departamento Ecunémico de Investigaciones (DEI).

Alvarez, Miguel. (Ed.) 2015. *The Reshaping of Mission in Latin America*. Eugene, Oregon,

USA: Wipf and Stock Publishers/Regnum Books International.

Ammerman, Nancy T. 1987. *Bible Believers: Fundamentalism in the Modern World*. New

Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

———. 1997. *Congregation and Community*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Balmer, Randall, Kate Bowler, Anthea Butler, Maura Jane Farrelly, Wes Markofski, Robert Orsi,

Jerry Z. Park, James Clark Davidson, Matthew Avery Sutton, Grace Yukich. 2017. "Forum: Studying Religion in the Age of Trump." *Religion and American Culture* 27(1):2-56.

Bean, Lydia. 2007. "New Wine in New Wineskins: Social Justice Evangelism in a Post-Christendom Era." Unpublished manuscript.

———. 2014. *The Politics of Evangelical Identity: Local Churches and Partisan Divides in the United States and Canada*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bielo, James S. 2011. *Emerging Evangelicals: Faith, Modernity, and the Desire for Authenticity*. New York: New York University Press.

Braunstein, Ruth. 2012. "Political Cultures of Accountability: Practicing Citizenship across the Ideological Divide." Paper presented at the American Sociological Association, Denver.

———. 2017. *Prophets and Patriots: Faith in Democracy across the Political Divide*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 2018. "A (More) Perfect Union? Religion, Politics, and Competing Stories of America." *Sociology of Religion* 79(2):172-95.

Braunstein, Ruth, Brad R. Fulton, and Richard L. Wood. 2014. "The role of bridging cultural practices in racially and socioeconomically diverse civic organizations." *American Sociological Review* 79(4): 705-25.

Braunstein, Ruth, Fuist, Todd Nicholas, and Williams, Rhys. (Eds.). 2017. *Religion and Progressive Activism: New Stories about Faith and Politics*. NY: University Press.

Brint, Steven G. and Schroedel, J.R. (Eds.). 2009. *Evangelicals and Democracy in America, Volume One: Religion and Society* and *Volume Two: Religion and Politics.* NY: Russell Sage.

Bruce, Steve. 1983. "The Persistence of Religion: Conservative Protestantism in the United Kingdom." *The Sociological Review* 31(3):453-70.

Burge, Ryan. 2019, July 30. "Why do evangelicals support Trump? Blame the suburbs."

Religion News Service. Retrieved from https://religionnews.com/2019/07/30/why-do-evangelicals-support-trump-blame-the-suburbs/

Casanova, Jose. 1994. *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cochran, William G. 1977. *Sampling techniques*. NY: Wiley.

Delehanty, Jack, Edgell, Penny, and Stewart, Evan. 2018. "Christian America? Secularized Evangelical Discourse and the Boundaries of National Belonging." *Social Forces*

Eliasoph, Nina. 1996. "Making a Fragile Public: A Talk-Centered Study of Citizenship and Power." *Sociological Theory* 14(3).

Eliasoph, Nina. 1998. *Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life*. NY: Cambridge University Press.

Eliasoph, Nina and Lichterman, Paul. 2003. "Culture in Interaction." *American Journal of Sociology 108 (4):*735-794.

Emerson, Michael O. and Smith, Christian. 2000. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Freston, Paul, ed. 2008. *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America*, Edited by T. S. Shah. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Fulton, Brad R. 2011. "Black Churches and HIV/AIDS: Factors Influencing Congregations' Responsiveness to Social Issues." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 50(3):617-30.

———. 2018. "Organizations and survey research: Implementing response enhancing strategies and conducting nonresponse analyses." *Sociological Methods & Research* 47:240-76.

Fulton, Brad and Richard L. Wood. 2012. "Interfaith Organizing: Emerging Theological and Organizational Challenges." *International Journal of Public Theology* 6(2012):1-23.

Fulton, Brad R., Richard L. Wood, and Interfaith Funders. 2011. National Study of Community Organizing Organizations: Data file. Durham: Duke University.

Gill, Anthony James. 1998. *Rendering Unto Caesar: The Catholic Church and the State in Latin America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Goffman, Erving. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. NY: Simon & Schuster.

Gordon, W. L. 2011. "The eight components of Christian community development." Retrieved from http://www.ccda.org/philosophy.

Gorski, Philip S. 2017. *American Covenant: A History of Civil Religion from the Puritans to the Present.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Green J.C., Conger, K.H., and Guth J.L. 2006. Agents of Value: Christian Right Activists in 2004. 22-55 in The Values Campaign? The Christian Right in the 2004 Election. Green, J.C., Rozell M., and Wilcox, C. (Eds.). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Harris, Dan. 2011, December 25. "Evangelicals Team with Portland's Gay Mayor for Charity." *ABC News*. Retrieved from http://abcnews.go.com/US/evangelicals-team-portlands-gay-mayor-charity/story?id=15218876

Habermas, Jürgen. 2006. "Religion in the Public Sphere." *European Journal of Philosophy* 14:1-25.

Hunter, James Davison. 1987. *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 1991. *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*. New York: Basic Books.

Jones, Robert P. 2016. *The End of White Christian America*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Koesel, Karrie. 2014. *Religion and Authoritarianism: Cooperation, Conflict, and the Consequences* Edited by K. W. David Leege, and Richard L. Wood. NY: Cambridge University Press.

Kretzmann, J. P. and McKnight, J. L. 1993. *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. Evanston: Institute for Policy Research.

Lichterman, Paul. 2005. *Elusive Togetherness: Church Groups Trying to Bridge America's Divisions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 2012. "Religion in Public Action: From Actors to Settings." *Sociological Theory* 30:15-36.

Lichterman, Paul, Carter, Prudence L., and Lamont, Michelle. 2009. "Race Bridging for Christ? Conservative Christians and Black-White Relations in Community Life." 187-220 in *Evangelicals and Democracy in America: Religion and Society*. NY: Russell Sage.

Lichterman, Paul and Eliasoph, Nina. 2014. "Civic Action." *American Journal of Sociology* 120:798-863.

Liebman, Robert C., Robert Wuthnow and James L. Guth. 1983. *The New Christian Right: Mobilization and Legitimation*. Hawthorne, N.Y.: Aldine Pub. Co.

Lindsay, D. Michael. 2006. "Elite Power: Social Networks within American Evangelicalism." *Sociology of Religion* 67(3):207-27.

———. 2007. *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite.* NY: Oxford University Press.

———. 2008. "Evangelicals in the Power Elite: Elite Cohesion Advancing a Movement." *American Sociological Review* 73(1):60-82.

Markofski, Wes. 2015a. *New Monasticism and the Transformation of American Evangelicalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

———. 2015b. "The Public Sociology of Religion." *Sociology of Religion* 76 (4): 459-475.

———. 2016. "Race, Religion, and Ethical Democracy's Reflexive Imperative." Ph.D. diss., Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin—Madison.

Marsden, George M. 2006. *Fundamentalism and American Culture.* NY: Oxford University Press.

Marsh, Charles. 2008. *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Martí, Gerardo. 2019. "The unexpected orthodoxy of Donald J. Trump: White evangelical support for the 45th President of the United States." *Sociology of Religion* 80:1-8.

Martí, Gerardo and Ganiel, Gladys. 2014. *The Deconstructed Church: Understanding Emerging Christianity*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Miller, Don and Yamamori, Tetsunao. 2007. *Global Pentacostalism-the New Face of Christian Social Engagement*. Los Angeles/Berkley: University of California Press.

Neuhaus, Richard. 1984. *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Perry, Samuel L. 2017. *Growing God's Family: The Global Orphan Care Movement and the Limits of Evangelical Activism*. New York: NYU Press.

Silk, Mark and Walsh, Andrew. 2008. *One Nation, Divisible: How Regional Religious Differences Shape American Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield

Smidt, Corwin. (Ed.). 2003. *Religion as Social Capital: Producing the Common Good*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.

Smilde, David. 1998. "'Letting God Govern': Supernatural Agency in the Venezuelan Pentecostal Approach to Social Change." *Sociology of Religion* 59(3):287-303.

Smilde, David. 2007. *Reason to Believe: Cultural Agency in Latin American Evangelicalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Smith, Christian with M. Emerson, S. Gallagher, P. Kennedy, and D. Sikkink. (1998). *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

———. 2000. *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Smith, Rogers M. 2009. "An Almost Christian Nation? Constitutional Consequences of the Rise of the Religious Right." 329-356 in *Evangelicals and Democracy in America, Volume One: Religion and Society.* Brint, S.G. and Schroedel, J.R. (Eds.). NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Steensland, Brian and Goff, Philip. 2013. *The New Evangelical Social Engagement.* New York:

SECULAR EVANGELICALS

Oxford University Press.

Stoll, D. 1990. *Is Latin America Turning Protestant: The politics of evangelical growth*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Swartz, David. 2012. *The Moral Minority: The Evangelical Left in an Age of Conservatism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Swidler, Ann. 1986. "Culture in Action." *American Sociological Review* 51:273-86.

Wadkins, Timothy H. 2017. *The Rise of Pentecostalism in Modern El Salvador: From the Blood of the Martyrs to the Baptism of the Spirit*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press.

Wald, Kenneth D and Allison Calhoun-Brown. 2014. *Religion and Politics in the United States*: Rowman & Littlefield.

Wood, Richard L. and Fulton, Brad R. 2015. *A Shared Future: Faith-Based Organizing for Racial Equity and Ethical Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Whitehead, Andrew L., Perry, Samuel L., and Baker, Joseph O. 2018. "Make America Christian Again: Christian Nationalism and Voting for Donald Trump in the 2016 Presidential Election." *Sociology of Religion* (79)2:147–171.

Williams, Rhys H. 1996. "Politics, Religion, and the Analysis of Culture." *Theory and Society* 25(6):883-900.

———. 1999. "Public Religion and Hegemony: Contesting the Language of the Common Good." in *The Power of Religious Publics*, edited by W. a. J. W. Swatos: Praeger.

———. 2002. "From the `Beloved Community' to `Family Values': Religious Language, Symbolic Repertoires, and Democratic Culture." in *Social Movements: Identity, Culture, and the State*, edited by David S. Meyer, and Belinda Robnett. NY: Oxford University Press.

———. 2007. "The Languages of the Public Sphere: Religious Pluralism, Institutional Logics, and Civil Society." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 612(1):42.

Wood, Richard L. and Brad R. Fulton. 2015. *A Shared Future: Faith-Based Organizing for Racial Equity and Ethical Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wuthnow, Robert., and Evans, John H. 2002. *The Quiet Hand of God: Faith-Based Activism and the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Yukich, Grace, Brad R. Fulton, and Richard L. Wood. Forthcoming. "Representative group styles: How ally immigrant rights organizations promote immigrant involvement." *Social Problems.*

Table 1: Summary of organizations examined in the qualitative analysis and their mode of public religion

Organization Name	Location	Organizational Type	Organizational Composition	Secularist	Generalist Pluralist	Particularist Pluralist	Exclusivist
Neighborhood Partners	Portland	Community Development	White evangelical	Primary	-	-	-
Serving the City	Portland	Community Service	White evangelical	Primary	-	-	-
Peachtree Community Development Corporation	Atlanta	Community Development	White evangelical, mainline Protestant, Black Protestant	Primary	-	-	-
Together for Justice	Los Angeles	Community Organizing	Multifaith-Multiracial	Primary	-	Secondary	-
Christians for the Common Good	Portland	Political Advocacy	White evangelical & mainline	Secondary	-	Primary	Tertiary
Neighborhood Solidarity	Boston	Community Organizing	Multifaith-Multiracial	-	-	Primary	-

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the field of institution-based community organizing organizations

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Organization has at least one white evangelical member congregation	.25	.43	0.00	1.00
Proportion of member institutions that are not religiously affiliated	.14	.22	0.00	1.00
Proportion of board members who are not clergy	.69	.22	0.00	1.00
Has at least one religiously unaffiliated organizer on staff	.18	.38	0.00	1.00
Meetings are generally not opened or closed with a prayer	.07	.26	0.00	1.00
Religious differences are rarely/never discussed in meetings	.38	.49	0.00	1.00
Organization's annual revenue (x $100,000)	3.11	6.69	.11	75.00
Age of the organization	13.49	8.87	1.00	40.00

Number of institutional members	23.33	13.98	4.00	82.00
Number of different religious traditions represented among the organization's institutional members	4.52	1.71	0.00	9.00

Source: 2011 National Study of Community Organizing Organizations (N = 158)

Table 3: Logistic regression estimating the likelihood of an organization having at least one white evangelical congregation as a member

	Model 1
Proportion of member institutions that are not religiously affiliated	5.884*** (2.716)
Proportion of board members who are not clergy	5.089** (2.891)
Has at least one religiously unaffiliated organizer on staff	3.241*** (.840)
Meetings are generally not opened or closed with a prayer	2.289* (.765)
Religious differences are rarely/never discussed in meetings	1.950*** (.375)
Organization's annual revenue	.518*** (.069)
Age of the organization	.690** (.095)
Number of institutional members	.534** (.126)
Number of different religious traditions represented among the organization's institutional members	2.823*** (.240)

Coefficients reported as odds ratios; linearized standard errors reported in parentheses
Constants are not displayed; N = 158
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$