JEFFREY GUHIN

AGENTS OF GOD

BOUNDARIES & AUTHORITY IN MUSLIM & CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

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CHAPTER 1

Authority and Essence

Adam Morgan[1] is a tall man with dark hair and a debater's confidence. He teaches religion and Worldview at Good Tree High School, one of the four religious high schools where I did research in 2011 and 2012.

Mr. Morgan's courses prepared seniors for the spiritual dangers they might encounter once they graduate, entering a world less friendly to the Bible-believing Christianity they had, until then, largely taken for granted. The theory of evolution was one such worry, and teachers directly confronted the problem of evolution at both Evangelical schools, reminding students about the danger of doubting God's word. In a class I observed, Mr. Morgan was talking to his students about the Cambrian explosion, a sudden change in the fossil record in which various life forms emerged, seemingly out of nowhere. "Young Earth" creationists use this line from the fossil record as evidence of God's spontaneous creation. One piece of paleontology is thereby used to prove a literal reading of the Bible, despite the protestations of paleontologists.

Yet, using science to disprove science is not so easy to accomplish. One of the students, Sara, asked if the Cambrian explosion is a problem for short-day creationism or the belief, as some claim Genesis[2] teaches, that the universe was constructed in six literal days.

Mr. Morgan sat on a stool behind a podium. He leaned forward. "A lot of people defend a Biblical model of creation with the fossil record, and they are very pleased with the Cambrian explosion. There are no gradual changes from simple to complex forms going on, and also the fossils appear so suddenly."

Sara nodded.

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Brian, a popular student leader shouted out without raising his hand. "You know about long-day creationism?" Long-day creationism is the theory, less popular today among conservative Christians than it was a hundred years ago, that the "days" of Genesis should be interpreted metaphorically and can be understood to contain many billions of years each. Some go further to then suggest that such "long days" make space for Christians to accept evolution, sometimes even the evolution of humans.

Mr. Morgan shrugged. "Long day, short day, theistic evolutionism. There's a lot of them," he said looking around, listing the various ways Christians have sought to reconcile the Genesis account with the scientific evidence. Mr. Morgan, like virtually all teachers at both Christian schools, is a short-day creationist, believing the days described in Genesis are literal 24-hour days.

He paused and made eye contact with Brian. "Yes. I'm familiar with long day."

Brian said, "Because there's a passage in the Bible, I can't remember it, it's like about how time is different for God, so like, a day is—"

The teacher cut him off. "A day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day," he said citing 2 Peter 3:8, the same passage Good Tree's biology teacher had used to teach long-day theory in her class. "Here's the problem with that. . . . Here's a passage from another book and you take it out and apply it to this other passage from a different time period with a different author and a different context. That is *terrible*. You would never do that with any manuscript science or study of a document. It's just unwise. So that's the first problem. And the second problem is you read this text, and there's no evidence anywhere in scripture it's meant to be used as a primer or code for reading other parts of scripture, and the parts of Genesis it's used to read, there's no evidence those passages were meant to be understood symbolically. There are certainly parts of the Bible that are symbolic, but that's usually clear in the text. If it's meant to be symbolic, that's fine, but there's no indication the creation story is. And third, if you can use that passage to reinterpret other passages, then you can do it with anything, so what's to stop me from using it with Jesus and to say that actually Jesus wasn't dead for three days, he was dead for 3,000 *years*. And that means He hasn't even risen yet! Who are you to stop me from doing that?" He paused. "Do you understand the three responses? It's very dangerous."

Brian seemed a bit abashed. "I was just curious what you thought. I wasn't saying that I believe that stuff."

"No, I understand," replied Mr. Morgan. "You weren't saying you believe these things. You were just asking." And then class moved on.

I'll describe each of the schools I studied in more detail later in this introduction, but for now I'd like to explore how a central paradox unites each of them, a paradox revealed in this story about Brian and Adam Morgan. Mr. Morgan's class often encouraged free thought; I imagine that's part of why Brian felt free to ask his question. In our many conversations outside of class, Mr. Morgan regularly told me how important it was for students to think critically and really examine their beliefs. On the first day of school, he told his students,

> This is not a Bible class, this is not a propagandizing class . . . we're asking human questions that anyone anywhere would have asked. You were born in [this state] but you would ask the same questions if you were born in ancient Rome. We're talking about questions Christians try to answer, but so does every other philosopher . . . . But you might say, you're kind of leading us Mr. Morgan, the answer's sin and the solution is Christianity, but no, lots of people have seen these same problems and have identified very different solutions. It's not a Christian class, not a Bible class. We look at all the questions humans have always asked. Now I'm a Biblical Christian and your parents—at least one of them—are Biblical Christians who want you to be exposed to Biblical Christian perspectives and you will have those, but you will have many other perspectives as well . . . . [the class is] a chance to think about what's really real . . . it's a chance for you to say what you really think.

Yet if Mr. Morgan is so committed to free thinking, why did he respond so abruptly to Brian? Part of the answer, as is revealed in his lengthy response, might be that it wasn't only Mr. Morgan who was making this demand. It was Mr. Morgan's understanding of the bible's authority: how it must be read, understood, and carried out. The teacher's authority had been externalized to something else, so even though he awed a student into a denial of even considering another option, he was able to do so while making his practice of authority appear simply the carrying out of something bigger and more important than himself, the crossing of which constitutes something "very dangerous." External authorities helped all four of the schools I studied accomplish a central paradox at any religious school: compelling students into certain religious commitments while simultaneously insisting these commitments are freely chosen, rooted in an appreciation of the commitments' almost self-evident correctness. In this sense, certain "external authorities" became agents of God, compelling and requiring particular actions in the world.

These external authorities are not only agents of God. They could be agents of all sorts of things. While this book will focus on religious schools,

it would be wrong to assume that these "external authorities" are simply religious phenomena, leftovers from the superstitious days before rational, scientific modernity. Especially in the United States, a society at least notionally focused on democratic equality, directly demanding something of someone else can feel too coercive: it is instead better to insist that it is not one person that demands something of another but rather "medicine" or "the law" or even "the Constitution" that makes certain demands.[3] These external authorities are then narrated and experienced as relatively autonomous entities that have an authority all their own. They are felt and described as agents, as entities that say and do and make demands. And the reason they are able to do so is because they exist within certain bounded communities in which such an understanding makes sense. Those communities might well be religious, but they could just as well be marked by any other social distinction. This book is a study of external authorities in religious schools, as well as the boundaries that help to constitute those authorities, yet its theoretical ambition is not limited to religion.[4]

SCHOOLS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONS

Why do religious schools work? Why do children who graduate from them more or less agree with the parents who put them there and the teachers who instructed them? Recent research shows that children and youth are quite capable of creatively adapting what their elders have given them; young people are not nearly as beholden to ironclad rules as previous theories of socialization might have claimed.[5] Nonetheless, youths' options for cultural expression are not infinite, and their limitations are often formed by the adults in their lives and the organizations in which those adults have placed them. Schools—like the ones I studied—are perhaps the most important of these organizations.

But what about peers? After all, many scholars consider peer groups as important or even more important than parents and schools in forming young people's identities. Indeed, parents who send children to private schools are deeply aware of that sociological insight: choosing children's neighborhoods, schools, and after-school activities helps to situate this influence as well, ensuring that young people's peers are more likely to be the peers that parents have chosen for them.[6]

Sociologists often call schools "organizations," and while I will rarely use the term, I draw upon a literature that examines schools as locations in which adults *organize* students' lives and moral commitments with better or worse success.[7] The organizational study of schooling in sociology has

a tradition extending all the way back to one of sociology's founders, Émile Durkheim, especially in his study of *Moral Education*. Building off of Durkheim, John Meyer and his various coauthors showed how schools' organizational forms interacted with *institutions*, a term with about as many definitions as uses.[8] Yet for the sake of simplicity, an organization can be understood as a formalized group of people, and an institution as a set of rules regarding particular social things. For example, the high school I attended, Creighton Prep (the Jesuit high school of Omaha, Nebraska) is an organization. At the same time, Creighton Prep must contend with certain institutions, perhaps most important among them the institution of *schooling*, that is, the often-unwritten though sometimes legally formalized rules of what a school is supposed to be, what it's supposed to look like, and how it's supposed to be experienced. In other words, schools are organizations that conform themselves to various institutions, not least among them the institution of schooling itself.

Institution is such a capacious term that I will not be using it often, mostly to avoid confusion about what an institution actually is. (For example, isn't Creighton Prep also an institution?) Instead, I'll focus on two concepts that are kind of like institutions, but which have a bit more analytical purchase: *boundaries*, a term already quite used in the sociological literature,[9] and *external authorities*, a term I am developing here.

There are other terms I'll be introducing as I go, but one that is especially important to this book is *practices*, as I'll be arguing that both boundaries and external authorities are ultimately rooted in the practices that people do. The word *practices* is notoriously vague, and here I define the term more narrowly than is sometimes done. For example, the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre provides medicine as an example of a practice; the kinds of practices I am interested in are more like a physical exam for a general practitioner or the examination of X-rays for a radiologist. They are specific, habituated, and bodily. Thus, I am not interested in religion as a practice but rather very specific sorts of religious practices—not just prayer or reading, but specific kinds of prayer and reading.[10]

EXTERNAL AUTHORITIES

The definition of external authority is a bit more complicated. By external authority, I refer to an old tradition in sociology that extends back to one of our other founders, Max Weber. Weber's use of terms could be somewhat complicated, but Weberians tend to distinguish between outright domination and agreed-upon authority by looking for legitimacy: in other

words, if I ask you to do something and you do it without physical coercion, then I have *authority* over you. If I force you to do something against your will, then I might have *domination* over you, but that domination is not legitimate. Weber divides "legitimate domination" into three types of authority: legal authority (seen most clearly in bureaucracies), traditional authority (seen most clearly in patrimonial rulers), and charismatic authority (seen most clearly in religious prophets).[11]

The pages in which Weber developed these concepts have been debated for nearly a century with Talmudic intensity. One useful conversation has developed Weber's study of charismatic authority to explain how people understand and experience institutions. For Weber, charisma is a revolutionary and somewhat chaotic force: it is opposed to all rules and economic considerations, gaining its legitimacy, somewhat tautologically, from "as long as it receives recognition."[12] Yet what happens when a prophet—whether St. Francis or Steve Jobs—dies? Weber argues that a charismatic figure's administrative staff, driven by their own material or ideological interests, shift their community into one of the other forms of authority, whether legal or traditional, all while maintaining the veneer of that original charisma in another individual, or a role, or even the community itself.

Building on Weber, John Meyer and his colleagues have shown how such charismatic succession can apply to institutions as well as individuals. In a long string of studies within the framework of what they call "sociological institutionalism," Meyer and his coauthors show how institutions like education and science function with a kind of charismatic authority within organizations and around the world.[13] In his classic 1977 article on the effects of education as an institution, Meyer argues that regardless of what we might believe about schooling individually, its "myths" are so powerful that we "carry out our parts in a drama in which education is authority."[14]

In a similar way, Meyer and his coauthor Brian Rowan show how organizations can use "myths" of rationalized order to structure their operating rules and best practices. In certain kinds of organizations, especially schools, these rules can become separated (or "decoupled") from what actually happens in the organization: for example, what a teacher and students do in a classroom all day might not have all that much in common with what a school claims to be doing or what a society says about schools. That decoupling leads to a focus on "ceremonial" assumptions of good faith without real inspections or evaluations of whether certain myths are actually carried out. Meyer and his coauthors argue that a myth about schools' "rational purpose" contains a kind of charismatic authority more powerful than what actually occurs in schools, an insight that has proven quite fruitful for scholars of organizations and education.[15]

I build on these "neo-institutionalist" insights by shifting the focus of analysis from the broad and organizational to the individual and interactional, paralleling sociologist Timothy Hallett and his coauthors' efforts to "'inhabit' contemporary institutionalism with social interactions."[16] Meyer and his colleagues are especially interested in the diffusion of certain institutions across "world society" and the effects these institutions have on organizational practices and other institutional spheres around the world. While Meyer and his coauthors are implicitly concerned about how such institutions have an agentic capacity to affect social life, they do not usually show how the institutions are themselves narrated and experienced as agentic authorities in communities.[17] For example, what does it mean when someone says that the Constitution has authority, or that the psychiatrists' manual of mental disorders (the DSM) actually "says" something?[18]

The second half of this book is about these external authorities, a term I am using in place of "institutions." I am interested in how scripture, prayer, and science function as semi-autonomous sources of authority, allowing people in the communities I studied to solve problems, make decisions, and develop meaningful, coherent lives. Each of these terms—scripture, prayer, and science—is often described as the subject of its own sentence, as when people in the schools told me that prayer changes things, that science shows something, or that scripture gives us wisdom. Prayer, scripture, and science are *external* because they are not contained within any one individual or even any one organization, and also because that externality is to some degree the source of their authority, in the same way that a lever gains strength when its fulcrum is farther from the effort applied. While there are some social theorists who insist on the agency of non-human objects and ideas, I am not making such a provocative claim. In other words, I am not claiming that prayer, scripture, or science actually *do* things, at least not in a sense that's parallel to the way humans do things. However, I am claiming that scripture, prayer, and science (among other things) are *felt* to do certain things, and the experience of and belief in that authority gives people tools to solve problems and interpret their lives.

This argument builds on Meyer and his coauthors' study of the mythic power of institutions in daily life, though it is much more rooted in the interpersonal and interactional experience of people's narration and understanding of how external authorities like prayer, science, and scripture solve problems, pose challenges, and accomplish tasks. In an article published in 2000, Meyer and Ronald Jeppeson wrote about how agency itself is an institution that has diffused across society. However, while Meyer and his coauthors have examined agency as an institution, they have not

looked, at least not explicitly and interactionally, at how institutions are narrated and experienced as agentic, even if this is an implicit assumption of their work all the way back to the 1970s.[19]

Nonetheless, even if Meyer and Jepperson's article does not analyze how institutions function as agents in their study of the "cultural construction of social agency," they do show how *individuals'* agency has come to be understood as free from others' coercion and as thereby making each individual capable of making free, conscious choices. I found this emphasis on autonomous agency in all four schools, with both teachers and students alike insisting on the importance of not *forcing* religious ideas or practices.

Such an insistence has old roots. Evangelical Protestantism, many historians argue, comes out of the same time period in European history as modern liberalism and what we now think of as individualism, or a commitment to individual autonomy and self-expression. The famous Lutheran idea of every man being his own priest is an early (patriarchal) expression of this commitment, later influencing Enlightenment ideas about the integrity of the (male) self.[20] Contemporary American Evangelical Protestants have taken that commitment to the individual even further than Luther would have intended, with much less of a focus on trained ministers and a growing insistence first, that communal sacraments are not required for salvation (thereby decreasing the necessity of attending church), and second, that the Bible can be easily approached by anyone with a sincere desire to know God (thereby diminishing the training often required to understand scripture).[21]

Similarly, in both Muslim schools, students and teachers quoted a famous passage from the Qur'an, verse 256 of al-Baqara, containing the phrase, "let there be no compulsion in religion." The phrase has a complicated history in Islam, given how certain Muslims (like certain Christians) have been punished, sometimes by execution, for leaving the faith. Yet many contemporary scholars believe the line is a lodestone toward religious equality and tolerance, both for Muslims in the West and for religious minorities in Muslim-majority nations.[22] Relatedly, and in parallel with the Evangelical democratization of Protestantism, Muslims around the world are increasingly suspicious of religious leaders, arguing for each individual's capacity to read holy texts all on their own.[23]

While not usually as individualistic as it can be for Evangelicals, there is nonetheless a commitment to an individual's relationship with God within Sunni Islam that Protestants might recognize as similar to their own, one that goes all the way back to the Qur'an itself, even if that relationship to God is much more than simply the content and experience of texts. Unlike Catholicism (and in different ways, Shia Islam), Sunnis and certain kinds of

Protestants do not need anyone else to mediate or navigate their salvation. As one of the science teachers at Al Haqq told me, “There is a certain guardianship up to a certain age . . . you instill within your kid certain morals, certain ethics, certain ideologies. And then when they get to a certain age it’s on them whether they’re going to follow through with that.”

In a related way, Tomas Lopez, a Bible teacher at Apostles, was discussing cults with his students, contrasting his way of teaching the Bible with theirs: “Imagine if I only taught you half of what’s in here,” he said, picking up the Bible and patting it, returning to his typical sermon-like perambulation at the front of the classroom. “I just taught you what I wanted you to hear, not what Jesus wants you to hear. I’d be leading you astray. Ultimately where would I be leading you?”

“Hell!” called out a student.

Mr. Lopez nodded, smartly pointing his finger at the student as if to say, *exactly*. “Where’s Jesus Christ in all of this?” he asked. “Imagine these young kids, young girls, young boys, and all these older men, in cults like this. How many of you work well being forced?”

A boy raised his hand, and the teacher seemed surprised. “You work well being forced?” he asked the student.

“I work well under pressure.”

“Pressure and force aren’t the same thing,” Mr. Lopez responded. “I could give you lots of deadlines but I’m not saying do this or else.”

The student nodded, and the class moved on.

The ironies here are rich and important. Mr. Lopez is threatening hellfire but then insisting he is not coercing. He is necessarily only giving the students part of the story (he cannot possibly read the whole Bible each class), yet he castigates those who tell the story they want, not what Jesus wants. This is not to claim that Mr. Lopez was never challenged by his students. He told me in a private conversation that many of Apostles’ students are preachers’ kids, bringing certain previous commitments to the classroom. He said he generally responded to such disagreements by telling students, “Well, I’m not going against your father. I’d ask you just to keep reading the word [the Bible] and let it act on you.”

Contained within this story are many of the questions I’m interested in exploring in this book, especially the problem of force, the containment of boundaries, and the strength of external authorities. These are not, however, entirely separate questions, and how they link together forms much of my overall argument. In brief, boundaries provide the setting in which communities and individuals can establish their identity. That identity is then experienced as real through certain practices, and those practices and boundaries are maintained via certain “external authorities.”

These external authorities are critically important, in that they are at once practices themselves and the institutionalization (what some might call reification) of these practices, things that people do (read the Bible, pray, invoke science) but *at the same time,* things that seem to exist above and beyond any individual person and seemingly with the ability to act on people themselves. As I will describe more in the conclusion, this focus on practices and boundaries as helping with the "reality maintenance" of certain social communities builds upon the phenomenological insights of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, especially their focus on institutions and reification. However, unlike Berger and Luckmann, I am much more explicitly focus on habituation and embodied practices as they are revealed within boundaries and what I'm calling external authorities.

These external authorities are important for any community, but especially for those with a strong commitment to individual autonomy. If, like Mr. Lopez, I can believe it is the Bible (rather than me) which acts on you, then I can institute a situation in which authority compels certain actions and beliefs without me being the one who does the compelling. As Mr. Lopez insisted, "I'm not saying do this or else." In Mr. Lopez's framing, the Bible does the heavy lifting here, not the people. Yet this is not simply a religious story. One can imagine a similar way of describing the Constitution, or even a category as amorphous as "medicine" that shows, does, and demands quite a lot.

Such external authorities are numerous and varied in the life of any school or any individual. Think of a mother who asks her young girl to take a certain pill. That mother is not arbitrarily imposing her power on the child but is instead acting on the behalf of someone else, someone the sociological theorist Isaac Reed would call a *rector*.[24] In this case, that rector is the child's doctor, who asked the mother to get the child to take the pill. Building on the work of Julia Adams, Reed shows how such interactions form "chains of power" through which various people or groups function as rectors sending people to do certain actions in their name, at which point those actors might themselves become rectors, sending others to act, and on and on. Schools are easy enough places to see such chains, with a school board sending a principal to, for example, encourage greater school spirit, at which point the principal sends a teacher, the teacher sends a student, and the student might well send another student, and so on.

One of this book's theoretical contributions builds upon Reed's argument by suggesting that external authorities enable and legitimize rectors' ability to get actors do what they want, and they do so through externalizing the authority that makes such demands intelligible.[25] Such externalization

is especially helpful in democratic or quasi-democratic contexts, in which few have the *right* to force someone to insist someone do something else simply because of who they are.[26] As such, to return to the example, it is not a doctor sending a mother to get a child to take certain pills, but rather *medicine* that tells the doctor and then the mother and then the child what they ought to do—just as a cop pulling over a driver can argue the action was not his own capricious exercise of power but rather the mandate of the *law*. And, to return to both Mr. Morgan and Mr. Lopez above, they can insist that their demands on their students are simply what the Bible demands from them. In this sense, these external authorities are actors in the world functioning as agents of God.

Yet, what is key about each of these examples is that the external authorities I am describing—medicine, law, the Bible—are all, in fact, human constructions, containing within them certain practices, beliefs, symbols, and emotional expectations, all of which are historically contingent and subject to change. The doctor could have prescribed a different medicine, the cop did not actually have to pull anyone over, and Mr. Lopez might well have read the Bible in a different way. What makes external authorities so powerful is that they are understood within certain bounded communities as being relatively fixed entities with a legitimate power all their own. Of course, people within those communities can still disagree about what such authority actually means and what carrying out its commands might entail, but one of the key boundaries of the community itself is a common agreement about the importance of this or that authority. In other words, to the extent we share a commitment to a certain external authority, then we are bounded together into a commitment to that authority's relative coherence and stability. We can then understand and narrate both our individual lives and our communities as maintained and moved forward through time via certain practices—practices that are both contained within and commanded by authorities seemingly entirely external to us, even if, in sociological reality, it is our continual commitment to these authorities that both maintains them and gives them their legitimating power.[27]

In this book I focus exclusively on the pragmatic pay-off of external authorities, that is, how they help people solve or avoid problems for themselves and their communities.[28] It doesn't actually matter whether *I* argue that scripture, prayer, and science (the respective subjects of Chapters 5, 6, and 7) are really real entities with their own autonomous authority. What is instead important is that my respondents argue they are, and they understand, practice, and feel these authorities as meaningful actors within their lives.

Each of those three words is important. First, people *understand* external authorities as actors with real authority in their lives. That understanding occurs through a process of habituation that necessarily requires regular *practice*, which is the second key word. In contrast to earlier understandings of socialization, especially those often attributed to sociologist Talcott Parsons,[29] I am not arguing that cultural understandings are "downloaded" into community members, with those internalized ideas and values then motivating action. Following the pragmatism of John Dewey,[30] I suggest the process is much more dialectical: people develop certain practices and then those practices habituate them to certain understandings, and also certain emotions and values—values often felt within oneself through a certain affective response.[31] Feelings are the third key piece of this account: people can become aware that a certain practice is effective and that a certain external authority is powerful not only because of what they *understand* about it but because of certain *feelings* they experience. While social psychologists have developed a complicated set of defining characteristics that separate emotions, feelings, values, and identities from each other, for the purposes of simplicity I will primarily focus on the act of feeling itself and its role in establishing a sense of the real. Finally, while I am indebted to Isaac Reed's and his interlocutors' subtle analysis of the meanings of "power," for my purposes here I use the word *power* simply to mean any kind of capacity to impose a will (or a perceived will) upon a person or the world. In contrast, and in the Weberian tradition, I refer to *authority* as the socially legitimate form of that power.

A brief example might be helpful here. While I will discuss this more in the chapter on prayer, my respondents often identified their feelings as the method through which they could adjudicate prayer's success and effectiveness. In a discussion with Shane McNulty, a Bible teacher at Good Tree, I asked him how a Christian would understand the answer to a prayer, using the example of a student choosing which college to attend. "Certainly even some kids here will be like, 'Yeah, I feel like God told me to do this,'" he told me. He went on:

> Most kids, by the way, don't say that. Most kids would say, "I was reading scripture, and the passage spoke to me." . . . And I've certainly had that experience. And I don't know if these are people misspeaking or if they truly think that God has told them something. Again, are we now putting too much into words and semantics of what is said? You know, God spoke to me. I don't know if God does speak. I've never heard him speak directly; I've never heard the Word of God. But I've felt it. . . . Are you attuned to it? Or, are you thinking and processing and

> doing logical formulations of pros and cons and coming to your own determination of what's right?

There are three things worth pointing out here. First, Mr. McNulty explicitly contrasts feeling to thinking, with feeling winning out. One senses the effectiveness of a practice, as well as the power of an external authority, through feelings as much as (if not more than) through understanding. Second, he speaks to an "attunement" achieved through practice and careful work, something quite similar to Dewey's model of habituation. Finally, he describes God acting through prayer and scripture, yet there is something interesting in the sentences themselves. Note how both scripture (a Bible passage) and the phrase "Word of God"—which can be understood as either scripture or an answer to prayer—are described as themselves capable of action, the first of which is capable of "speaking" and the second of which is capable of being heard and felt.

It is important to remember that both Evangelical Christians and Sunni Muslims believe that prayer and scripture are ultimately from God. However, it is nonetheless the case that prayer and scripture come to have a certain power understood and felt as relatively autonomous from God, even if God is always the originator and most important element. Such distinctions are not unique to religious experience. Think about how often people discuss the Internet or Twitter as things in themselves even though Twitter and the Internet are seemingly only vessels for separate individuals to post content, add comments, and reply to tweets, not to mention the many other possibilities for hope and despair the Internet provides. Yet, through the repeated use of these practices, people develop certain understandings and emotions of relatively autonomous entities that are felt and experienced as separate from the various people tweeting, commenting, and posting. Of course, Twitter is itself a part of the Internet, and this gets to another important point: external authorities can be subcategories of even larger external authorities, just as organizations and institutions can be parts of larger organizations or larger institutions. The important question, though, is not whether the external authority is larger or smaller but a much more pragmatic one: is it experienced as an authoritative entity in itself whose agency has real effects?

Of course, "real effects" does not mean "total effects." As I will show throughout this book, schools are generally not as effective as they intend to be. Students complain, teachers don't buy into the mission, principals disagree with parents, school board meetings erupt into chaos. Yet such disagreement is not necessarily evidence that external authorities lack power, especially if the disagreements are *about the authorities themselves.* In his

effort to develop an anthropology of Islam, Talal Asad helpfully shows that any tradition is often marked by disagreement, yet what holds the tradition together is that people agree with each other about the content of their disagreement.[32] A similar distinction can be made about Bourdieu's concept of a field: what links those on the field is not their total agreement but rather the agreed basis of their contestations. In the communities I studied, people often disagreed about scripture, prayer, science, gender, sexuality, and politics. Yet very few disagreed that these were things with a power in their lives, whether as an authority that drives particular actions (science, prayer, scripture) or as a boundary that separates them from the rest of the world (politics, gender, evolution, and also prayer and scripture). Levels of commitment unsurprisingly varied, as I will discuss in the chapters that follow, and there was an occasional student who admitted to me in a private interview that they didn't believe any of it. Yet, perhaps because these are private schools with parents who select their students into conservative religious environments, these disagreements were generally regarding questions of degree and implementation rather than salience and relevance. Almost everyone agreed about the stakes, and that common agreement is part of what bounded them from the rest of the world.

BOUNDARIES

When I say boundaries, I mean the ways these communities differentiate themselves from the rest of America as well as from others. As with my study of external authorities, these boundaries are practiced and made real and relevant through both conscious and subconscious habituation. In this sense, both boundaries and external authorities are practiced and gain much of their power, as Dewey describes, through the power of ongoing habit.[33]

Boundaries become important because they distinguish us from those to whom we are in some sense near, whether physically or in some other sense. Boundaries are therefore not quite the same as differences. For example, there is a near infinity of possible physical differences between France and Spain, but there is only one physical boundary. Similarly, symbolic boundaries develop not because of a need for difference but rather because of a need for *distinction*.[34] Just as physical boundaries firmly establish whose property ends where, so symbolic boundaries establish the nature and extent of a particular social group. It is proximity and similarity that create a need for boundaries rather than difference and variety. The difference between a pen and a pencil is usually more important than the

difference been a pen and an eggplant. Like external authorities, boundaries gain their strength via repeated practices that develop an implicit habituation, although toward a different end. While external authorities come to be felt and understood as relatively autonomous means of *maintaining* a particular identity, boundaries come to be felt and understood as a means of *differentiating* that identity. Boundaries and external authorities thereby have a mutually constitutive relationship, with boundaries identifying and distinguishing a community and external authorities driving that community's identity forward through time. The external authorities help to legitimatize the boundaries, just as the boundaries help to demarcate the external authorities.

I build upon some of my previous work in these chapters to describe the content of these boundary contestations, looking at what I'm calling "sites of boundary contestation." For example, if *gender* is the boundary that separates us from the outside world, then what is it about gender? As I will describe below, I find that the Muslim and the Evangelical schools I studied distinguished themselves from the rest of the world through their practice of gender but in quite distinct ways. The Evangelicals I worked with tended to emphasize ideological distinctions from the concept of feminism, and the Muslims I worked with tended to emphasize more specific practices such as gender separation and clothing. Looking at the sites of boundary contestation helps us to recognize with greater specificity how and toward what ends communities distinguish themselves from others.

In three chapters on, respectively, politics, gender, and sexuality and the Internet, I will show how these boundaries help to constitute and distinguish these communities. However, such distinctions are never complete: they are, as Christian Smith has described in his study of American Evangelicals, examples of "distinction with engagement."[35] That commitment—to be in America but not entirely of it—is especially clear in the first chapter on politics, in which I show how both the Christian schools and the Muslim schools are deeply committed to a certain kind of American project. These schools distinguished themselves from what they thought of as unholy and unwholesome, yet they had no desire for complete separation from America, a nation they thought of very much as their own. The difference is as much temporal as religious: conservative Christians believe they have lost an America that was once theirs, while Muslims (conservative or not) believe they could gain an America that holds promise if only it would cease its Islamophobia.

I conducted this research in 2011 and 2012, during the Arab Spring and Obama's reelection campaign. It was well before Trump as a presidential candidate, let alone as a president. Times were different than when

I completed this book in 2020, especially for Muslims, but not altogether different: as many scholars of American religion have argued, what we see under Trump is a difference of degree rather than kind. White American Evangelicals were already deeply invested in the Republican party and Christian nationalism. Muslims were already targets of fearmongering and bigoted attacks.[36]

Nonetheless, despite these political polarizations, the people I worked with thought of themselves as distinctly and unquestionably American. Indeed, this was a source of some generational tension in the Muslim schools, with immigrant parents sometimes describing customs or practices as "American" rather than "Muslim" and their children insisting that, because *they* are Muslim and American, then whatever they do must be both as well. These tensions within the American Muslim community are already well established, and I will discuss them further in Chapter 2. I noted a similar generational shift in Evangelical students' disagreements with their parents, although more about sexuality and gender than about national identity, something I will discuss in Chapters 3 and 4.

In all of these cases, my respondents insisted that their distinctions from the rest of America were only partial critiques rather than wholesale condemnations. While they did not use this Aristotelian language, they would have identified their disagreements with the rest of America as "accidental" rather than "essential." For example, it might be the case that most American women do not wear hijab, yet for my Muslim American respondents, a covered head is still *essentially* American, just as, say, a blue house would essentially be a house, even if its color were to change. To use Aristotle's terms, the house's blueness is accidental, and the house's *houseness* is its essence, just as, for the Muslims I talked to, not wearing a hijab is accidental to American identity, while something like being committed to democracy is considered much more essential.[37] As I will discuss more in the next chapter, I am most assuredly not making the claim that anything in social life is actually essential or accidental: I am instead building upon work in the psychology of social cognition[38] to understand how people think about their own social worlds, with some parts essential and others accidental.[39]

For my purposes, what matters is the sociological construction of these categories, that is, how social groups decide together what is accidental and what is essential to a particular identity, both in the broad sense of national identities and in the more specific sense of religious and communal identities. Boundaries—and especially sites of boundary contestation—help communities to establish what is essential and what is accidental.

These boundaries are both dualistic and multifaceted, sometimes emphasizing an "us" as distinct from the rest of the world and other times emphasizing smaller distinctions from similar groups, as when all four schools, each of them religiously conservative in its own way, separated themselves from more liberal co-religionists. That "boundary work" is never entirely self-directed: each of the four schools was worried about how the rest of the world felt about them. In conversations—both those I overheard and those in which I took part—I heard about how "they" think about "us," with that *they* often assumed to be a generically secular United States public, one suspicious of religion, sexually liberal, and altogether too permissive. Yet they also understood America as a place full of economic opportunity and freedom for self-expression. These opportunities had their limits, and the Evangelical schools felt their freedom to express their beliefs was fading, just as the Muslim communities felt like their chances to be themselves had not yet fully appeared. As such, all the schools were interested in correcting stereotypes and often saw me and my eventual book as a way to set the record straight.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS BOOK AND A GENERAL OUTLINE

This book contributes to a few different conversations in sociology and related disciplines, especially religious studies and cultural anthropology. The primary contributions are to the sociologies of religion and culture, though with additional contributions to the sociologies of education, science, emotions, gender, and morality, as well as an ongoing dialogue with sociological theory throughout the text.

The Basis of Comparison and the Question of Orthodoxy

This book adds to growing conversations in religious studies, cultural anthropology, and the sociology of religion about American Islam and American Evangelicalism,[40] two important areas of study that are rarely explicitly compared, particularly not in qualitative work.[41] Additionally, there are few studies of these communities' private religious schools, and none (that I am aware of) that compares them.[42] Of course, simply because something has not been studied is not a reason to study it. This comparison is useful not simply because it exists but because the study of these

two different groups provides analytical leverage to better understand boundaries, authority, and differing forms of religious practice.

The categories of American Evangelical Christians and Sunni Muslims provide a tenable comparison because, in the United States context, both are coherent religious subcultures.[43] One potential problem with this comparison is that American Evangelicals—especially white American Evangelicals—tend to be much more politically conservative than their fellow Christians and much more conservative than their fellow Americans. Only 28 percent of Evangelicals identify with the Democratic Party while 56 percent identify with the GOP; when considering white Evangelical Protestants, a full 90 percent support Donald Trump's presidency, indicating an even deeper conservatism. In contrast, two-thirds of American Muslims identify with the Democratic Party, even if, like Evangelical Democrats, they tend to be slightly more conservative on social issues like the acceptance of gays and lesbians.[44] In this case as well, Muslims as a whole are less conservative than Evangelical Protestants: in 2014, 36 percent of Evangelicals believed "homosexuality should be accepted by society" as compared to 45 percent of Muslims.[45] While the Muslims with whom I worked in these schools revealed a wide range of politics—as Chapters 2 through 4 should make clear—they were nonetheless generally more conservative than most American Muslims. Ethnographic work on other Muslim American communities—especially Justine Howe's study of "suburban Islam" and Muna Ali's analysis of "young Muslim America"—reveal the much greater political diversity within American Islam.[46] Nonetheless, even if the people at the Muslim schools where I worked were more conservative than most American Muslims, their theological conservativism was complicated and sometimes hard to classify, and their political conservatism was rarely if ever expressed by voting Republican. At all four schools, one way they were more conservative than most other (middle-class) Muslim and Evangelical Americans was in their decision to *conserve* their identities through private schooling. While private schooling is a choice only possible for those with the necessary financial and social capital, it is nonetheless a choice most middle-class Muslim and Evangelical parents could make but choose not to. Additionally, the point of the comparison is not looking at two *conservative* religious subcultures but rather simply two religious subcultures.

A political problem with this comparison might be that I am recapitulating an old Western scholarly habit of comparing every other religion to Protestantism. The fact that I am personally a Catholic, a religion whose focus on practice and ritual seems to have more in common with Islam, might mitigate this a little bit. Yet I am still a Christian (even if one conservative Christians might not recognize as such), and there is therefore

a real risk I will only view Muslim experiences through a Christian lens and hold them to a Christian standard. As someone who has written an article about why sociologists should engage Edward Said, I take such concerns about the politics of scholarship very seriously. I can only hope that I have not reproduced any misrecognitions or forms of empistemic violence in this book.[47]

If anything, I have tried to underscore the degree to which Protestantism is more like Sunni Islam than many Protestants might be comfortable admitting. I take from Islam (and Catholicism) an emphasis on practices, arguing throughout this book that even Evangelicals' ongoing commitment to *right belief* (or orthodoxy) is itself a form of practice, or orthopraxy; to make it a maxim, *orthodoxy is a form of orthopraxy.* As I hope to show in this book, Evangelical Protestants are much more orthoprax than they might normally describe themselves.[48] As such, while there are more specific contributions to the social-scientific study of religion in each individual chapter, one of my broader goals in this book is to show how orthoprax religions (such as Islam) can help give us a much better way of understanding *all religions*, including and especially the ostensibly orthodox ones.

This distinction is complicated by the degree to which recent scholars of Islam—most famously Talal Asad and his interlocutors—have emphasized the "orthodoxy" of Islam, yet by this phrase they often mean something somewhat different from the focus on *right belief* alongside a suspicion of practices that I will describe later. In Asad's words,

> It is therefore somewhat misleading to suggest, as some sociologists have done, that it is *orthopraxy* and not *orthodoxy,* ritual and not doctrine, that matters in Islam. It is misleading because such a contention ignores the centrality of the notion of the "correct model" to which an instituted practice—including ritual—ought to conform, a model conveyed in authoritative formulas, in Islamic traditions as in others.

He goes on to distinguish his understanding of orthodoxy from those who claim Islam is best characterized by a focus on correct doctrines: "orthodoxy is not a mere body of opinion but a distinctive relationship—a relationship of power to truth. Wherever Muslims have the power to regulate, uphold, require, or adjust *correct* practices, and to condemn, exclude, undermine, or replace *incorrect* ones, there is the domain of orthodoxy."[49] Asad's theory of orthodoxy here is an intriguing one, though it is much more all-encompassing than I intend here. Indeed, as Wilson writes in his critique of the over-use of the term *orthodoxy* in Islamic Studies, Asad's use of *orthodoxy* appears "to be a purely sociological concept which simply

means 'conventional,' 'established,' or 'correct' for a particular context, its configuration of power, and its current understanding of the discursive tradition."[50]

The concept of orthodoxy for Asad, therefore, bleeds into his broader concept of a discursive tradition, with orthodoxy appearing to indicate the current power configuration which establishes the "correct" way that this discursive tradition is to be put into practice. As such, I have no problem acknowledging that Islam is orthodox in the sense that Asad articulates (as is any religion lived in communities). Yet, more important for my argument, this orthodoxy is lived out via *practices*. Indeed, even the establishing of *what to read and how* is itself a series of habituated practices. As a result, the question of which precedes which, orthodoxy or orthopraxy, teachings or practices, can become entirely perspectival, a problem of chicken and egg.

Yet my perspective, drawing from sociologists Michael Strand and Omar Lizardo's insistence that beliefs are themselves a form of practice, shows how even the most orthodox of actions is nonetheless *an action*. For example, in contrast to classic introductions of Islam that characterize Muslims as more orthoprax than orthodox, Islamic Studies scholar Norman Calder argues that it is ultimately belief rather than actions that will keep a Muslim from hell: "The Muslim jurists are careful to distinguish between those who fail . . . to pray five times a day—they do not cease to be Muslim—and those who deny the incumbency to pray five times a day who might be apostates."[51] Yet note how both of these theological outcomes are still rooted in the act of saying or believing. This focus on practices is not therefore a denial that beliefs or teachings matter or have real theological weight; it is simply an insistence that we as sociologists look at how those beliefs are declared, denied, enacted, or habituated via actions in the world that can become habituated practices.

Culture and the Problem of Power

Throughout this book I will gradually develop what I hope can be described as an advancement of various conversations in cultural sociology. As described briefly above, this book is about how boundaries and external authorities work together to maintain a community's identity while simultaneously managing the problem of power. By "the problem of power" I refer to an ongoing debate well outlined in Isaac Reed's recent work on the rector-actor-other triad and Amy Allen's powerful synthesis of German critical theory and French poststructuralism. Yet there are many important voices in this conversation, not least Julia Adams, Steven Lukes, Judith

Butler, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michel Foucault.[52] What I take from each of these often quite different thinkers is a concern about what Bourdieu might call "symbolic violence," that is, a social group's ability to make a certain way of experiencing the world feel obviously and self-evidently correct, or at least generally so.

Some of the most important works in the sociology of culture—among them Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* and Berger and Luckmann's *Social Construction of Reality*—have generally downplayed the importance of power in explaining how and why the world comes to be experienced as it does. In contrast, scholars like Foucault and Bourdieu are accused of thinking too much about power, reducing much of what is valuable about culture into, in the final instance, just another "hermeneutic of suspicion."[53] I try to chart a middle way here, showing how social life is necessarily infused with power, but that such power cannot be its ultimate explanation. Indeed, as I (and others) argue, power can sometimes be a *problem* in that in certain contexts, there is a normative commitment not to impose commitments upon others but to help them to come to those positions on their own.

Far from a hermeneutic of suspicion, Foucault and two of his most careful readers, Talal Asad and Saba Mahmood, are excellent at showing how power in these contexts is just as much *constitutive* as it is constraining, in that certain kinds of impositions form the possibilities for further kinds of action.[54] I build upon these insights in poststructural theory and the anthropology of religion to show how boundaries and what I am calling external authorities are integral elements of communal socialization. I use the word *socialization* with some trepidation in that the term has been generally avoided in cultural sociology due to its alleged Parsonian baggage. I hope this book helps to reinterpret the concept in the Deweyan sense of ongoing, active habituation which I use here.[55]

Finally, it is worth pointing out that my use of the term *external authority* bears certain important similarities to other cultural sociologists' use of the word *institution*. Because *institution* is such a capacious term, it might well be the case that external authority, as I understand it here, is also an institution. However, when I say external authority, I mean something subtly different from how the "institution" is often used by sociologists, especially cultural sociologists. I refer specifically to a social entity that is felt and understood to have a certain kind of agency and authority in the community itself, an agency and authority that is maintained through practices, experienced through emotions and identities, and understood through beliefs. What matters for me is how these communities experience the world, and I bracket the questions about these external authorities' *real* agency for

philosophical debates which largely depend upon certain priors. What is important for my argument is that they are *understood*, *felt*, and *narrated* as agents, and that these understandings, feelings, and narrations help actors both to maintain their traditions and to shift the problem of explicit coercion into an experience of external authorities above and beyond them.

Sociology of Morality

In many ways, this book is centrally about the sociology of morality, albeit in a more broadly Aristotelian sense of the way a life ought to be lived. However, despite a recent and burgeoning interest in an explicitly self-described sociology of morality, both the sociology of culture and the sociology of religion have been interested in these questions virtually since their beginning, and so this book is also quite squarely within already existing traditions in the sociologies of culture and religion.[56]

By *moral* I do not necessarily mean the explicit study of what is right and wrong, and neither do I mean my own description of the best action at an any given moment. Instead, I refer to a much broader and more diffuse sensibility, a vague and hard-to-articulate sense that someone is living life the way it ought to be lived. This sense of morality is rooted not in explicit rules and careful deliberations but in subconscious habits and the maintenance of everyday emotional expectations, similar to what Gabriel Abend calls "the moral background" and what Charles Taylor calls a "moral imaginary." Morality, for my purposes, is therefore less important as a series of discrete questions about particular actions and more relevant as a way to frame what a good life resembles, generally through a series of habituated practices.[57]

If morality is lived out in practices, then those practices are often supported by and adjudicated through emotions. There is debate among moral philosophers about how much emotions *should* matter in morality,[58] yet it seems clear as a social-scientific claim that people's moral sense is deeply guided by their emotions, an insight within sociology at least as old as Durkheim's study of the elementary forms of religious life.[59] This is not to deny that morality has a rational element: arguments can and often do change people's minds about the right and the good. Yet even if arguments can and do matter in moral experience, they often matter less than the resonant experiences through which unconscious moral expectations align with everyday interactions with people, objects, and events, or else the dissonant experiences in which someone feels an emotional struggle,

generally through a sense of disgust, fear, annoyance, or regret—similar to what Lukes, borrowing from Galen Strawson, calls "reactive attitudes."[60]

People might not be able to articulate precisely why they feel these emotions or attitudes, or their explanations might be inconsistent with some of their other commitments or claims. Yet this inarticulacy does not necessarily mean that people are basically immoral or that their morals totally change in each new context. It can simply mean that their moral life is complex, with a variety of often competing commitments, some of which people want to achieve even if they are not always able to do so. More importantly for my purposes, it shows how moral life is *situated* via certain boundaries and external authorities, and that people are often able to check on the relative power of these boundaries and external authorities not only through their ongoing understandings of them but also through their feelings regarding them, as well as potential threats to them.

Indeed, threats form a key part of this story, both actual dangers and, much more often, their potential occurrence. Following Dewey's focus on interrupted habits, it is exactly such dissonant interactions that force people to reflect on their moral experience, sometimes adapting to new contexts and sometimes digging in to pre-existing boundaries and authorities. This book builds on work that connects the sociology of morality to the sociology of emotions and the sociology of culture,[61] arguing that we come to our moral identities through boundaries and external authorities, and we often come to recognize the relevance of those boundaries and authorities through our feelings.

Sociology of Education

While this is a book about religious schools, its overarching themes—external authorities, boundaries, and the diffusion of power—could easily be found in other contexts, including public schools. Studies of religious education provide excellent cases for broader studies of subcultural communities that seek simultaneously to construct and contest boundaries with the outside world.[62] Also, while schools are often noted for their "loose coupling" of what administrators or districts might want and what actually happens in the classroom, religious schools are noteworthy for tightly coupling commitments to certain moral commitments and the day-to-day practice of instruction. This book is therefore one attempt among others at a sociology of education not squarely focused on socioeconomic inequality,[63] one with roots all the way back to Durkheim's

study of moral education and Du Bois's concern about African American students' development as citizens.[64]

Politics and the Internet

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 examine how these schools distinguished themselves from the rest of America. There is a thriving literature on religion and politics in the United States, with a good amount of it about Evangelicals and Muslims. Chapter 2 builds on these conversations and generally supports a common finding: all four schools I studied are suspicious of America, partially for its secular values and hedonistic dangers, but also because of what Evangelicals feel they have lost and what Muslims feel they have yet to be given. I leverage the book's comparative angle to fine tune these distinctions, also using the schools' identities *as schools* to study two key sources of distinction: in Chapter 2, public schools provide a sense of who the schools are not, and in Chapter 4, the Internet provides a constant source of danger requiring a continual need to reaffirm what is actually essential about the schools' identities. While much has changed about online life since 2010 and 2011, many of today's concerns already existed at that time.

Sociology of Gender and Sociology of Sexuality

Chapters 3 and 4 examine gender and sexuality as boundaries in the schools I studied. I build on important works in the sociology of religion, especially those examining Muslims and Evangelicals.[65] Yet I also develop some of the ideas in these works through the comparison itself, showing how a site of boundary contestation can vary between religious communities. In some ways, Chapter 3 is the most challenging to my argument about orthodoxy and orthopraxy in that the stereotypes appear to be true. I found that the Evangelical schools are more troubled by feminism, a challenge to their orthodoxy, while the Muslim schools were more concerned about students not wearing the hijab, a challenge to their orthopraxy. While there is truth to this simple summary, I use this chapter to show how orthodoxy and orthopraxy—and by sociological extension, beliefs and practices—are much more interpenetrated than they may at first appear. It is the Evangelical *practice* of rejecting feminism that matters in these communities, and it is the relative flexibility of *beliefs* about the hijab that allow some latitude about gender in the Muslim schools. In each

of these three chapters on boundaries, I also emphasize the concepts of "essence and accident" as helpful tools that sociologists could adapt from psychology and philosophy. Describing distinctions as essential and accidental can help sociologists not only to describe how people distinguish themselves but also how some of those distinctions become much more important than others.

Scripture and Prayer as External Authorities

Chapters 5 and 6 are about scripture and prayer, both relatively understudied topics in the sociology of religion, despite their importance to religious communities.[66] My study of how scripture and prayer function as external authorities and, more specifically, how certain ways of praying or reading scripture work as sites of boundary contestation build upon my study of gender to challenge easy distinctions between the orthoprax and the orthodox. These chapters also stand on their own as broader analyses of how scriptures and prayers help religious actors to distinguish themselves from both co-religionists and the rest of the world. Once those boundaries are established, I am better able to show how scripture (Chapter 5) and prayer (Chapter 6) are understood as having an agency and authority all their own. That "external authority" exists because it is maintained through practices and boundaries, working together to make people both feel and believe in the authority of scripture and prayer.

Science as an External Authority

The book's seventh chapter is about science, and its analysis of science differs from most contemporary sociological studies of science in two ways. First, and perhaps most relevantly, it builds on a growing set of conversations about the relationship between science and religion.[67] Yet the chapter is also an engagement with an older tradition in the sociology of science, one that is less interested in the work of scientists in the lab (sometimes called the sociology of scientific knowledge) and instead focuses on how non-scientists engage and understand science as an external authority with real power in their lives. Working scientists and those who study them might well be skeptical of a coherent thing called science, yet whether or not such a thing exists in the lab, it very much existed in the schools I studied. This chapter is therefore more along the lines of ongoing work in the public understanding of science, albeit with a more explicit

focus on how religious people and organizations consume, understand, and experience scientific knowledge and expertise.[68] Most importantly, I argue that the authority of science is networked among a variety of nodes, especially teachers, tests, and textbooks, and so its external authority is felt less intensely than that of scripture or prayer. The one exception to this distinction is when my respondents, nearly all of whom were creationists, took it upon themselves to engage science with science, proving evolution wrong and creationism right. It was in these moments of practical activity that science also functioned as an external authority in the ways I have been describing it.

THE SCHOOLS AND THEIR CONTEXT

Private religious education is quite old in the United States, although Muslim and conservative Protestant schools are generally much younger. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there were 49,522,000 students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools in the United States in 2011, while 5,268,000 were enrolled in private schools of some form.[69] In a 2011–2012 survey of the "private school universe,"[70] the Department of Education found that 607,130 students were in unspecified Christian schools (much like Good Tree) with another 309,558 in schools run by theologically conservative denominations (Assemblies of God, Baptists, Calvinists, Church of Christ, Church of God in Christ, and Church of the Nazarene). That total of a little more than 900,000 students is still not even two-tenths of a percent of the total number of American students, and it is a number much lower than conservative Protestants' share of the population, usually estimated at around 25 percent, though that number is subject to some debate.[71] In that same 2011–2012 study, the Private School Universe Survey identified 229 Islamic schools with 32,478 students, an even smaller fraction of one percent of the total student population. There are far fewer Muslim schools, and most Muslims do not attend them. In 2009, Islamic educator Karen Keyworth argued that around 4 percent of Muslim school-age children attend Muslim schools, based on 2007 Pew data. Muslims make up around one percent of the United States population, according to Pew.[72]

There is some debate about the origins of conservative Protestant education in the United States, which became much more common in the 1950s through the 1970s. Conservative Protestants themselves identify their origin as related to an increased focus on secular science and a decreased tolerance for religious practices like school prayer. While these

changes are certainly real, it is also hard to ignore the marked correlation between school integration and the development of largely white conservative Protestant private schools, especially in areas with forced integration, whether via legally mandated busing programs or through the dismantling of Jim Crow segregation.[73] However, despite the racially exclusionary origins of conservative Protestant schools, many, especially in the North, are nonetheless often marked by a relative diversity in their student body and the maintenance of a color-blind ideology, that is, the belief that racial inequality can be explained by individual and cultural differences rather than structural inequalities.[74]

Muslim education in the United States, like the experience of Muslim Americans in general, is bifurcated between a much older tradition of Black Islam and a much more recent tradition of immigrant Islam, with those immigrants usually (but by no means exclusively) from the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. As far back as the 1930s, Black Muslims developed separate institutions for primary and secondary schools, and, as the Nation of Islam coalesced under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad, a broad network of "University of Islam" schools developed in cities across the country, called "universities" because of the universalism of their intention. In the 1970s, after the death of Elijah Muhammad, his son Warith Deen Muhammad shifted from his father's more heterodox teachings, renaming the Nation of Islam the American Muslim Mission to reflect their more orthodox Muslim theology. Warith Deen Muhammad changed the names of the schools as well, honoring his mother, an important teacher and leader in the movement, by calling them Sister Clara Muhammad schools.[75] Sister Clara Muhammad schools remain important educational institutions for Black Muslims across the country, sometimes educating immigrant Muslims as well.

Immigrant Muslim schools are often much more recent stories. Most, like the schools in my study, are no more than 30 years old. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act radically changed the sources of immigration in the United States, ushering in a new era of American diversity. The initial post-1965 Muslim immigrants tended to view America as a largely foreign country, a place of conflict and chaos as described by Mucahit Bilici, a sociologist of American Islam.[76] Yet over time the Muslims themselves came to change their mind about America, and new immigrants shared their optimism. So did the immigrants' children, both those born in the United States and those who came here young enough to consider themselves more American than anything else. As Bilici describes it, immigrant American Islam has shifted from visitor to citizen in the past 50 years, and developing schools was a key part of that process, even if it can also be

understood as a rearguard maneuver to protect children from the potentially pernicious influences of public schools.

To be clear, the vast majority of American Muslims (like the vast majority of American Evangelicals) send their children to public schools. These Muslim young people might well find no tension among their many non-Muslim fellow students: after all, not all Muslims wear hijab, just as not all Muslims take time out of the day to pray. Yet for those Muslims who do take these practices seriously, many find effective strategies to maintain their identity, even if others feel afraid public school is forcing them to lose key elements of their religious life.[77] However, certain parents—and students—worry that these strategies will not be sufficient, making a separate Muslim school, at least in their eyes, a religious necessity.

Choosing the Schools

I began my dissertation planning to compare one Muslim and one Evangelical high school in New York City area to one Muslim and one Evangelical high school in Amman, Jordan. For my first two (New York City) schools, I wanted to find a school within commuting distance of central Manhattan for reasons both methodological and personal. Methodologically, I considered the "New York City area" to end at the outer limits of its commuter line, an effective even if somewhat arbitrary means of establishing a border in the Eastern megalopolis that extends from metropolitan Washington DC to metropolitan Boston. This limit was also effective for personal reasons, as I lived in Manhattan and did not have a car, requiring me to find a way to commute to the schools each day via public transportation.

In November of 2010, I sent letters with Yale letterhead to eight Evangelical schools in commuter range of New York City and, within a month, I had heard back from only one school, The Good Tree Christian Academy, whose secretary put me in touch with the school's principal (I later got a voicemail from another school saying they were too busy). I was invited to campus to discuss my project. Meanwhile, a contact familiar with New York City Muslim schools gave me the names of some schools I could contact and recommended that, rather than sending a letter, I should phone ahead and then set up a conversation over the phone. I called 24 different schools, and after a few tries with each, I finally got someone who was willing to see me. When I called Al Amal, I was put in touch with the school's guidance counselor who, upon finding out I was from Yale, invited

me to come to the school's college fair to represent Yale, at which I could talk further about my project with the school's principal.

While doing my fieldwork, I decided the original goal of an international comparison would have too many moving pieces. I was also asked to leave Al Amal early, and so I decided that I needed to study another Muslim school, at least for a semester. For purposes of symmetry, I decided to look for another Christian school as well. In consultation with my advisors, I realized that this would actually make the study much more thorough in that I could check that what I had discovered in the first two schools was also the case in similar schools that differed in certain key ways. Because the first Christian school did not take state exams for biology and was in a suburban area, I sent letters to Christian schools that did take state exams for biology, focusing particularly on schools in urban areas (though, because there were not that many conservative Christian schools, I cast my net fairly wide). Because *Al Amal* did take state exams for biology, I sent letters to Muslim schools that did not, hoping that I would find a school that was in a suburban area.

I sent ten letters each to Muslim and Protestant schools on Yale letterhead, making regular phone calls to administrators at each of the schools. I eventually received interest from one of the Protestant schools and one of the Muslim schools. After talking with the Protestant school principal, he decided he would not have time for me to work there and that it would be too much of a burden on the faculty and staff (though I could not shake the suspicion he was also uncomfortable with the fact that the study involved Muslim schools). The Muslim school, *Al Haqq*, invited me to come over to talk with them in December and agreed to begin letting me do research there. I found *Apostles* by simply going to the attached church and asking the pastor after worship was over if I could do research at the school.

The Good Tree

In early November of 2010 I rented a car and drove to The Good Tree, a complex of former army barracks surrounded by government buildings on the right and left and, across the street, a neighborhood of modest homes. The train station I would eventually use each day was about two miles away, connected to the school by a state highway with strip malls of diners, convenience stores, and the ubiquitous Dunkin' Donuts. There are buses available to the students, but many get a ride or drive. The school is on a side road from a state highway.

The school's eight buildings are all U-shaped, with a courtyard in each center. There were two buildings with their centers filled in: one for a chapel and the other for a cafeteria. The school also built an impressive gym with male and female locker rooms, a stage, and offices for athletic staff. The chapel—which doubles as a grade-school gym—is sparse in the Calvinist fashion. I asked the principal, Brenda Forrest, about this, and she told me "it wasn't intentional," and this lack of consciousness about the Calvinist roots of the school's theology showed up regularly in my fieldwork. Ms. Forrest is a former student whose name graces the gym wall for scoring over 1,000 points as a high school basketball star.

The school was founded in the mid-twentieth century, and many of its parents and teachers are former students. There are approximately 350 students in the school, with around 200 students in the high school. Students in the high school have to sign a statement of faith. In a survey I gave to all but three of the approximately 200 students in the high school, a little less than half the students identified as white, 10 percent as Black or West Indian, 7 percent as Latino, 25 percent as Asian, Asian-American, or Arab, and 10 percent as mixed race. In that same survey, I learned that there was a tremendous diversity among the students' religious views, though the overwhelming majority are Protestants. The varied Protestant denominations within the school might reflect the fact that the school is neither affiliated with a denomination nor a specific religious community. Around 5 students in each class were Asian students (usually Chinese) who were not necessarily Christian but were primarily there to learn English (and pay full tuition). These were the only students who were not Christian. Leaders of local congregations were involved in various leadership roles in the school, but its principals and its superintendent are laypeople.

I started doing fieldwork a month and a half after my first visit, in early January of 2011. I was given a desk in the high school office right next to Ms. Forrest's administrative assistant, Marie Shumacher, to whom I became very close over the year and a half I spent at the school from January of 2011 until graduation in the spring of 2012.

Al Amal

Also in early November of 2010, I got on a series of trains to get to the middle of an urban section of greater New York to represent Yale at Al Amal's college fair. As I walked the few blocks from the train to the school, I passed posters for a drag show, a bus of Orthodox Jews, and various twenty-somethings with tight pants and fashionable facial hair. The

school's front face is a large building, boxy and architecturally plain, with Arabic and English text written on its outside wall. There is a set of temporary one-story buildings in the back lot, and between them the students play basketball during their breaks. Right away I noticed the girls wearing hijabs and *abayas*, the separation of students into boys and girls, and the subtle looks and nods the students used to circumvent their segregation.

After waiting a few minutes, I met with the principal. It appeared almost a moot point that he would have me work at the school. He was much less defensive than any other high school principal I've approached. Through talking to the teachers at the college fair going on that day, I learned that the school was about 20 years old and that it had been only a grade school but had gradually become a high school as well. The school had about 300 total students, with around 200 in the high school. All classes are gender segregated except the advanced placement courses, though most teachers teach both genders. While I did not give a survey to students at any school except Good Tree, my sense of Al Amal was that about two-thirds of its students had Middle Eastern or North African ethnicity, and about a third was ethnically South Asian, a figure I checked with teachers.

When I came back to the school to start my fieldwork in January, I walked into the school office, and the principal, Brother Naguib, was walking out of the office when he saw me and welcomed me. I sat down in his office and changed out of my snow boots. The books on his back shelf were a combination of Arabic-language reference texts and many white binders of what appeared to be forms. We went over the letter he would eventually send to the parents at the school. I agreed with everything he said, trying to be amenable. And then he took me to class. I did not realize that Brother Naguib would be abruptly fired shortly before the start of the following school year, and that my relationship with the new principal would be much more tenuous. That more difficult relationship—along with concerns that I spent too much time with female students—led the board to ask me to leave the school, a topic I discuss briefly in Chapter 3 and in the methodological appendix, and more extensively in a separate piece.[78] I was at Al Amal from January to October of 2011.

Al Haqq

Al Haqq School is in a suburban neighborhood full of religious diversity: the place feels a bit like Jerusalem, as the women in hijabs and men in yarmulkes wander among those wearing more secular clothing. I rented a car to be sure I would make the appointment in time (though I would

ride a combination of trains and buses during my fieldwork) and was pleasantly surprised at the ample parking. Like Good Tree, Al Haqq is in a quiet area surrounded by residential homes and local shops. Unlike Good Tree, though, the shops around Al Haqq feel a bit more "towny," slightly more upscale with fewer homogenously suburban chain stores (even if, as with all three other schools, Dunkin' Donuts coffee appeared to be the primary form of currency). The school has around 180 students in its high school (it also has a junior high). Its student population, like Al Amal's, has a majority of students from the Middle East and North Africa, with a substantial South Asian minority and a few students of African and Southeast Asian ethnicity.

I was welcomed into the principal's office, which looked cleaner and more organized than any of the others I had seen. A Palestinian woman who had worked in Jordan, Sister Saida had something of an accent as she told me about her position at the school and her passion for her work. She appeared to be in her mid-50s with a serious demeanor and a kind smile. I noticed later that she was the only adult at the school who went by her last name, although, like almost everyone else at both Muslim schools, her title was "Sister" (the men go by "Brother"; in both schools, I was always "Brother Jeff" or just Jeff).

The principal looked up from all the forms she had printed from my e-mail and said, "I could have gone two ways with this [request to do research] because there are all kinds of things people are saying about Muslims, and I didn't want to add to that—media are always calling me for interviews, and I never call them back. But then I thought, we are American, and we should try to fight these stereotypes." I thanked her and said I would do my best. I was at Al Haqq for the spring semester of 2012.

Apostles

In early December of 2011, I went to a large church in an urban part of the New York City area. There were taxi lots, mechanic shops, and bodegas as I walked from the train to the church/school complex. The church had a warm reception area and a massive altar that stretched maybe 200 feet across with about a 50-foot ceiling. There were huge projection screens on the right and left side of the altar, with a podium and altar-piece in the center. As with many contemporary Christian churches, an impressive array of sound equipment, musical instruments, and, later, actual musicians stood at the altar performing praise and worship songs. In front of the altar were two floors of chairs that I estimated could seat around

2,000. Like a lot of Protestant churches, there was not much ornamentation, though there was an altar and a communion celebration the day I attended (grape juice and unleavened bread were distributed by ushers).

At the end of the service, I walked up to the church's main pastor, a man in his 70s with remarkable energy and bright white hair. I waited patiently for him to finish his line of conferees and then told him I had sent him a letter asking if I could work at the school. He said, "We'll do whatever we can to help you." He told me he'd have to talk to his daughter and then get back to me, and I said that would be fine. "So it's a family outfit, huh?" I asked. He smiled, paused, and touched my shoulder like an old political pro. "Brother, it's the best kind. I've seen them all, and it's the best kind."

I was at Apostles for the spring semester of 2012, on the two days a week I was not at Al Haqq (also two days a week) or Good Tree (at that point, one day a week for student interviews). On my first day there, I noticed a huge map of the world on the wall next to the elevator in the school's entryway. The map had pins in each place where students were from. There were more tacks than space for Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, and then lots of pins in Brazil as well. There were many more, though none as concentrated, in other parts of Latin America and then the rest of the world, though it looked like the biggest single area besides the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico was South Korea. I learned that Apostles has around 200 students in its high school (it has grades K–12 on the campus), with a large minority of white students, a plurality of Latinx students, and substantial numbers of Asian Americans and African Americans as well. Also, like Good Tree, Apostles had around 15-20 non-Christian students from Asia (usually China) who wanted to be at an American high school.

I asked the principal, Sue Simons, about how the school admits non-Christians (the only school in my study to regularly admit non-members). She said that for a while she thought about being more aggressive about trying to convert her students, but she realized that if she and the teachers lived a Christian lifestyle, then that would not be necessary. "It just happens that most of our seniors, by the time they get out of here, they're saved," she told me. "But we don't set out to do that. We really don't." She said that one Korean student came up to a teacher after Bible class and said, "I'd like to get saved." She smiled.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. All names of individuals and organizations have been changed. To reflect how names worked at the schools, I usually identify teachers at the Christian schools by their title and then their last name, and I identify teachers at the Muslim schools by Brother or Sister (and sometimes Sheikh) and then their last name. I identify students by their first names. I include students' last names and teachers' first names when I first introduce them in the text, but only if they appear often in the book. I have also indexed those individuals who appear often, with parentheses after each name in the index that indicate the person's role in the school.
2. Genesis is the first book of both the Christian and Hebrew Bible. I will describe Young Earth creationism more extensively in Chapter 7.
3. Of course, the United States is actually far from equal, and outright coercion happens all the time, often along lines of racial and sexual difference. Yet there is nonetheless an ongoing thread in American life—even preceding De Tocqueville—that understands equality as perhaps the central social good (Kloppenberg 2016).
4. Guhin 2014.
5. The old sociological model of socialization tended to draw from the mid-century sociologist Talcott Parsons (1937, 1959, 1964, 1970, Parsons and Platt 1970), whose work emphasizes a process of internalization through which people's values and orienting commitments tend to resemble those around them, with these values themselves then driving further action. Among other important critiques, Wrong's classic 1961 study of the "oversocialized conception of man in modern sociology" led to a gradual movement away from this focus on internalization toward a more careful analysis of power, agency, and heterogeneity. A few decades later, DiMaggio's (1997) and Swidler's (1986, 2001) work helped to show that action is much less driven by internalized teleologies than some might claim. However, there is a middle ground here, as articulated by Vaisey 2009, Lizardo 2017, and Luft 2015, showing how people's cultural expressions and experiences are actually multifaceted, with some more embodied and baked in, and others more declarative and contingently held. Using work from Chapter 6, my coauthor Daniel Winchester and I (2019) show how a Deweyan (2002) understanding of practices can help us to understand and explain how socialization works via pragmatic habituation. This is just as true for religious socialization: a "tradition" is never blindly passed down from one generation to another. Even the most conservative form of "traditionalism" necessarily makes adaptations to the environment at hand (Gorski 2017, Roy 2004, 2005). In this way, my study of habituation

via engagement has much in common with Asad's (1993, 2003, 2009) fusion of Foucault and MacIntyre, though more via Bourdieu and other sociologists in the practice tradition. I am also grateful for, though less able to engage, recent leaders in the sociology of religion who have centered the importance of practice, especially Nancy Ammerman 2020 and Roberth Wuthnow 2000.

6. The study of peer and neighborhood effects as opposed to family and school effects is a long-standing and particularly challenging problem for scholars of youth and education. Van Ham, Mankley, Bailey, Simpson, and Maclennan (2012) have an excellent edited volume disentangling neighborhood effects from other causes (though see also Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley 2002). The study of peer cultures and children's own capacity for agency (Corsaro 2017, Calarco 2018, Pugh 2014) is especially important in showing how socialization, as described above, is always an agentic and mediated process.
7. The classic study of schools as organizations remains Bidwell's 2001 programmatic statement. The organizational study of schools has been important for both education and organization scholars (Corwin 1975, Hallett 2010, Meyer and Rowan 1977, Meyer, Heinz-Dieter, and Rowan 2006, Sergiovanni 1994, Weick 1976).
8. Durkheim 1961 and Durkheim 1995, Meyer and Rowan 1977, Meyer 1977.
9. The study of boundaries in the sociology of science (Gieryn 1983, 1999, Star and Griesemer 1989), the sociology of culture (Lamont and Molnár 2002), the sociology of ethnicity (Barth 1998, Wimmer 2013), and the sociology of religion (Lichterman 2005, Tavory 2010, 2016, Yukich 2010) have all been extremely helpful in developing this book. Following Lamont and Molnár, my use of boundaries is more along the lines of their distinction of "symbolic boundaries" (as opposed to "social boundaries"), but I will describe how that does not exactly fit in Chapter 2.
10. This paragraph is taken from Guhin 2016: 154. See Schatzki 1996, Turner 1994, and MacIntyre 1984 for other definitions of practice and especially Camic (1986) for the overlap with the study of habit.
11. Weber's (1978: 215) study of authority and legitimacy remains classic, even if somewhat vague (Cohen, Hazelrigg, Pope 1975, Matheson 1987).
12. Weber 1978: 244.
13. Meyer 2009.
14. Meyer 1977: 75–76.
15. Meyer and Rowan 1977.
16. Hallett and Ventresca 2006: 214; Hallett 2010. While Hallett and his coauthors' study of "inhabited institutions" gets quite close to what I'm describing in terms of how various institutions are habituated and practiced in day-to-day interactions, they do not focus, as I do here, on how these institutions become understood as autonomous "external authorities" with agency to make demands and declarations.
17. Meyer and Jepperson 2000 describe how power in the world has shifted from religious and natural sources into individuals themselves. Intriguingly, the argument does not describe how such agency is felt to inhere within institutions like, for example, science, even though the argument appears implicit in some of Meyer et al.'s earlier work. This is perhaps best analyzed in their book, *Science in the Modern World Polity* (2002). See Chapter 7, note 4.
18. For more on the Constitution and DSM as, respectively, powerful semi-autonomous entities, see Fallon 2004 and Fried 2005 alongside Strand 2011, as

well as a "formal theory of scripture" I outline as one example of religion "as a site" (Guhin 2014).

19. Meyer and Jepperson 2000.
20. See especially Taylor's *Sources of the Self* (1989) and *A Secular Age* (2007), though also note Seigel 2005, Siedentop 2014, and Trilling 2009.
21. For a historical view on how American Evangelicals go much further than Luther might have intended, see Hatch 1989 and Noll 2002. For a contemporary view on how many modern Americans, including and especially Evangelicals, tend to center the individual experience as the ultimate barometer of God's presence, see, among many others, Bellah et al. 2007, Ammerman 1997, 2013, and McGuire 2008.
22. Khaled Abou El Fadl emphasizes an "Islamic ethic of noncoercion and the principle of nonaggression" rooted in, among other Quranic citations, al-Baqara 256 (2014: 399–405). Crone 2016 and 1977 argues such readings of the line can be anachronistic; see also Schirrmacher 2016.
23. See especially Grewal 2013, Mahmood 2011, and Zaman 2010 and 2012. Jonathan Brown 2015 argues that the Salafi insistence on the democratic access to the meanings of texts is a rhetorical tactic against mainstream Sunnis rather than a general practice.
24. Reed 2017 and Meyer and Jepperson 2000 make similar though distinct arguments about the role of agents.
25. There are interesting philosophical questions about whether such external authorities are then really real, that is, whether we can talk about an ontological emergence to social forces as Margaret Archer (2000, 2003) and critical realists describe, or in an opposite though interestingly parallel approach, whether nonhumans and non-individuals can be understood as actors (and actants) via the "flat ontology" of Bruno Latour (2005) and other proponents of actor-network-theory. For the purposes of this book, I mostly bracket these questions, though obviously my approach gives external authorities an emergent quality that has more in common with Meyer's institutionalism than Latour's theory.
26. For a similar social paradox on the role of authority in schools, see Swidler 1979.
27. Reed's recent work (2013, 2017, 2019) shows how power takes on a necessarily relational quality, drawing especially from Adams 1996 and 2011. In different ways, both Foucault (1990, 1994, 1995) and Berger and Luckmann (1967) describe institutions in this semi-autonomous quality, even if Berger and Luckmann are clearer about them. It seems nonetheless to be the case that semi-autonomous institutions exist for Foucault between the level of the individual and the level of society itself: power-knowledge might well be exerting a kind of autonomy, but so are things like "the prison" or "the clinic." My project here uses the term *external authority* to emphasize the reified, agentic quality of these authorities in the communities I studied.
28. Whether the power of external authorities proves they are "real in their effects" or whether the only real reality is individual actors making individual decisions, I leave to the philosophers (at least for now). While I will mostly be leaning on Dewey as the pragmatist underpinning of this book's argument, James's model of empiricism (1975: 31–32) is helpful here: the important point is that a kind of extra-personal agency has "cash value" in these communities and might well not elsewhere. My hunch, of course, is that my description holds in other contexts, and what I am describing here is a much more broadly generalizable argument, something I will describe more in the book's conclusion.

29. Though to be fair to Parsons, his work can often be quite caricatured and presented as a straw man. For example, in *The Social System* (1964), Parsons is quite insistent that all socialization is relational and necessarily interactive, even if he does not pay much attention to practices.
30. Dewey 1925, 1935, 1997, and 2002.
31. I am indebted to a variety of writings on emotions for this project, especially Katz 2001, Nussbaum 2003, Sharp 2010, Stets and Turner 2014, and Turner and Stets 2005. I have also benefited from Hitlin and Piliavin's 2004 study of values, particularly the distinctions between values, traits, and emotions. The emphasis on "feeling" is especially indebted to Damasio 1999. I agree with Stets (2010: 265) that work remains to be done "beyond the general idea that culture sets up expectations regarding what feelings should be experienced and expressed in situations."
32. Asad 2009.
33. Lichterman 2005, Tavory 2010 and 2016, Lamont 1992 and 2009, Gieryn 1983 and 1999.
34. The classic work on distinction is, of course, Bourdieu's (1984), but Lamont (1992, 2009) provides an excellent example of showing how boundary-making as a practice of distinction need not be considered a zero-sum game of field competition.
35. C. Smith 1998.
36. Much of the work on American Islam written in the past 40 years—even before September 11, 2001—described prejudice experienced by Muslims, albeit different kinds of prejudice experienced by immigrant Muslims and Black Muslims. See especially Braunstein 2017, GhaneaBassiri 2010, Grewal 2013, Khabeer 2016, and Rouse 2004. See also Norris and Inglehart 2012. For more on Christian nationalism and Trump's "unexpected orothodoxy", see Whitehead and Perry 2020 and Martí 2019.
37. Aristotle 1963 and 1994. See also Gill 1991. Alexander's 2006 study of how the civil sphere changes its requirements for membership over time does not engage Aristotle's metaphysics directly, but its argument is more or less about how something once considered essential (race, gender, religion) can come to be accidental. While Brubaker's "Ethnicity without groups" (2004) also does not directly engage Aristotlian essentialism, his concept of "common sense groupism" as a folk category captures much of what I am intending here, though I am more interested in how community-level processes drive distinctions about what is necessary for a group's identity versus what is optional. Like Brubaker and his coauthors, I am interested in how, as a sociological question, such group definitions are shifted via both cognitive and broader social processes (see also Luft 2020).
38. See Mahalingam's work (especially 2007) for how actors "essentialize" social categories. The study of social essentialism is a growing research site within psychology and anthropology (Gil-White 2001), though not really in sociology. However, much of the work in psychology tends to emphasize ethnicity or gender as the category of essentialization. My work here is obviously more expansive.
39. Different psychologists who study essentialism are more or less explicitly indebted to Aristotle's essence/accident distinction, but some of the most cited works make the influence quite clear: see Gelman 2004 and Medin and Ortony 1989.
40. This book pulls from growing literature in both the study of American Evangelicalism and American Islam, the vast majority of which will be cited in later endnotes. However, most influential have been Ali 2018, Bielo 2009b, Bilici 2012, Elisha 2011, Grewal 2013, Howe 2018, and Worthen 2013. Also, it

is important to acknowledge that many sociologists of religion would call the Christians with whom I worked "conservative Protestants" (Woodberry and Smith 1998) rather than Evangelicals. I continue with the word *Evangelical* because many in the schools called themselves Evangelicals. The more common terms respondents used to describe themselves were actually Christian or Bible-Believing Christian (Smith with Denton 2009), but this causes some conceptual confusion because I often distinguish these Evangelicals from other Christians. I also call both schools Evangelical because they fit the broad understanding of the term in both theological and sociological literatures: these were conservative Protestants committed to the literal truth of the Bible and eager to be a part of broader American culture, even as they also sought to differentiate themselves from it. I refer to the Muslim (rather than, for example, Sunni) schools as Muslim because that is how they referred to themselves. Also, as Muslims are such a pronounced minority in this country, there is considerably less conceptual confusion in referring to the people with whom I worked as Muslims.

41. See especially Bartkowksi and Read 2003 and Ali et al.'s 2008 comparison of Muslim and Evangelical women. While not in sociology, there is a very old tradition of theological comparison of Christianity and Islam.
42. See note 62, this chapter.
43. The most immediate objection to this comparison might be a lack of symmetry: Evangelicals are commonly understood to be a subcategory of Protestants, themselves a subcategory of Christians, while Sunnis are the largest 'denomination' within Islam. However, the Protestant–Catholic division does not map at all neatly onto the Sunni–Shia divide (let alone the various other groups in both Christianity and Islam, such as the Orthodox and Sufi respectively), and Sunni Muslims, unlike, for example, Catholic Christians, rarely refer to themselves as Sunnis except when explicitly contrasting their ideas to those of other Muslim groups. When I talked to Sunnis at the schools I studied about the difference between them and Shia Muslims, the majority insisted they were all simply Muslims. And, again, the point is not a global comparison of Sunnis and Evangelicals but a comparison of Muslim Americans and Evangelical Americans, who are broadly comparable as religious subcultures in the United States.
44. Pew Research Center, https://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/political-and-social-views/. Accessed October 31, 2019. For both Evangelicals and Muslims, however, these attitudes have become much more open in the past 10 years.
45. Pew, https://www.pewforum.org/2015/11/03/chapter-4-social-and-political-attitudes/. Accessed October 31, 2019.
46. Ali 2018, Howe 2018.
47. Guhin and Wyrzten 2013.
48. This is not a new argument in the anthropology of Christianity. See especially Coleman 1996, Maffly-Kipp, Schmidt, and Valeri 2006, and Bielo 2009a and 2009b. For more on the difficulty of these terms, especially considering Asad's 2009 study of Muslim "orthodoxy," see Wilson 2009. For the closest thing to a parallel argument in sociology (one to which I am indebted), see Brophy's 2016 study of how certain conservative Protestants turn orthodoxy into a "project."
49. Asad 2009: 21–22, italics his.
50. Wilson 2009: 179–185; quote from page 185. While Asad might reject the comparison (2003: 2–5), I understand his use of orthodoxy as similar to Taylor's conception of social imaginaries or Bourdieu's concept of a field, albeit more centrally

built upon the role of key texts than the other authors' understanding, and much more sensitive to power than Taylor is generally understood to be.

51. Strand and Lizardo 2015, Calder 2001: 67.
52. Allen 2013, Adams 1996 and 2011, Bourdieu 1990 and 1991, Butler 1997, Foucault 1995, Lukes 2004.
53. The phrase is Riceour's (1970, 1981). Jeffrey Alexander's discussion of *The Civil Sphere* is a powerful rejoinder to what he calls "the tradition of Thrasymachus" (2006: 39) a similar rejection of a study of culture that boils all meaning down to powers and interests. Whether or not such critiques are universally true of Foucault, Bourdieu, and others inspired by Nietzsche's genealogical method and "hermeneutics of suspicion" is material for another book, though, to put my cards on the table, I think that reading of Foucault is too reductive and that reading of Bourdieu is not entirely fair, though it does have merit (Alexander, 1995, Guhin and Klett 2019). And of course, the necessary role of power in instituting a sense of what is true goes all the way back through Rousseau to Augustine and Plato, though these earlier authors (and even, to some degree, Nietzsche) often understand such power as guiding toward the Truth rather than toward an arbitrary configuration of power.
54. Mahmood's (2005) *Politics of Piety* draws especially from Asad's work (1993, 2003), particularly Asad's synthesis of Foucault's study of power and MacIntyre's concept of tradition (1984, 1988, 1999).
55. See note 2, this chapter.
56. The new sociology of morality can be seen most clearly in Hitlin and Vaisey's 2010 and 2013 work, though see also Abend 2014, Bargheer 2018, Brophy 2014 and 2016, Luft 2015 and 2020, and Tavory 2011, among many others. While this point is already acknowledged at various points in Hitlin and Vaisey's edited collection, it is worth repeating that Weber, Durkheim 1995, 1961, and Du Bois 2007 were all deeply concerned about the sociology of morality, as were many important mid-century thinkers, among others Parsons, Berger, and Luckmann; Goffman 1959, Bellah 1991, and, including anthropologists who read and were read by sociologists, Douglas 2003 and Geertz 1973. Studies of religion—especially qualitative work—were almost always about moral life, most famously seen in Bellah and Berger but in many others as well.
57. Abend 2014 is influenced by Taylor (see 2007, though much else) in his description of the moral background. My understanding of morality is neo-Aristotelean as articulated by Taylor 1989 and MacIntyre 1984 and 1988, both influenced by Anscombe 1958. This is also a very Deweyan book, which I do not see as a contradiction. I am not the first to argue that Dewey can be understood as a kind of virtue ethicist (Carden 2006, Teehan 1995).
58. There is a massive literature on the role of emotions in moral philosophy. For a good review, see Bagnoli's 2011 edited volume.
59. Durkheim 1961.
60. Lukes 2010: 549–560; see Strawson 1962 for citation. See also Tavory 2011 for how any sociology of morality must be sensitive to emotions.
61. See especially Collins 2014, Summers-Effler 2010, Xu 2017.
62. While religious schools are significantly understudied in the sociology of education, there have been more important works in religious studies and the anthropology of religion. For Muslim schools, see Khan and Siddiqui 2017, Hefner and Zaman 2007, and Zine 2008. For Evangelical schools, see Rose 2017, Wagner 1990, and Peshkin 1988. For a more general study that includes studies of Evangelical and Muslim schools, see Hunter and Olson 2018.

63. See especially Brint 2013, Guhin and Klett 2018, Mehta and Davies 2018, and Stevens 2008.
64. Two of the classic articles on schools as loosely coupled are Weick 1976 (though see also Orton and Weick 1990) and Meyer and Rowan 1977. For more on Du Bois on citizenship, see Westbrook's 2013 edited collection. In forthcoming work (Guhin 2021), I explore the counterfactual of a sociology of education more rooted in questions of culture, politics, and moral life, drawing from the educational writings of Durkheim, Dewey, and Du Bois.
65. The study of gender and sexuality as they intersect with religion forms many broad and important conversations, certainly in religious studies and the anthropology of religion, but increasingly in the sociology of religion as well. While I will cite more work in Chapters 3 and 4, key influences for this book are Ahmed 1992, Avishai 2008, Burke 2016, Gallagher 2003, 2004a, and 2004b, Griffth 1997 and 2017, Irby 2014a and 2014b, Mahmood 2011, and Perry 2019. It is worth pointing out here that words like gender, sex, and sexuality are complicated and much debated within sociology, in other academic disciplines, and in the world at large. Throughout this book, I use the word gender rather than sex, especially in reference to the Muslim schools' focus on gender separation, for two reasons. First, this is the word the schools themselves used. Second, as I understand the terms, neither sex nor gender are inherent or biological, but gender is generally the more obviously interpretable self-presentation, and it was the means by which community members sorted each other. Within these communities (and society at large), gender is largely binary (man/woman, boy/girl). I heard no reference to transgender and genderqueer identities at these schools, but clearly that does not mean nobody at the schools had such identities. I use the language of gender without intending to erase people who do not identify with either gender, or with the gender to which their community assigned them. I am especially grateful to Kelsy Burke for help in making and articulating these choices, and even the wording of this very footnote!
66. Scripture and prayer are generally understudied in the sociology of religion. However, there is significantly more work in the anthropology of religion and religious studies, as will be described in Chapters 4 through 7. This book is especially influenced by Bielo 2009a and 2009b, Luhrmann 2012, Smith 1993, and Sharp 2010, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, and 2013b.
67. See especially Ecklund 2010, Evans 2011, 2013, and 2016, Hameed 2015, Harrison 2015, Guhin 2016, Numbers 2006, and Roos 2014.
68. For more on science as a social category relatively autonomous from scientists themselves (even if they have a role in it), see Epstein 1996, Jasanoff 2012, Moore 1996, and Shapin 1994 and 2008, among others. See especially Drori et al. 2003.
69. https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d16/tables/dt16_208.20.asp?current=yes. Accessed January 15, 2019.
70. https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pss/tables/table_2011_02.asp. Accessed January 15, 2019.
71. See Pew's (2015) "America's Changing Religious Landscape."
72. See Keyworth 2009 and Khan and Siddiqui 2017. See also Pew's ongoing work on Muslims Americans, especially the contemporaneous http://www.people-press.org/2011/08/30/muslim-americans-no-signs-of-growth-in-alienation-or-support-for-extremism/ (accessed January 2019) and Pew 2015.
73. Nordin and Turker 1980, Carper 1983, Laats 2010.
74. For more on color-blind ideology (Bonilla-Silva 2017) in white Evangelicalism, see Emerson and Smith 2000.

75. Rashid and Mohammad 1992.
76. Bilici 2012. See also Hammer and Safi 2013 and Marzouki 2017.
77. Ahmad and Szpara 2003, El-Haj 2015.
78. See my working paper, "On Being Kicked Out of a Fieldsite" http://jeffguhin.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/On-Being-Kicked-Out-of-a-Fieldsite.pdf.

CHAPTER 2

1. There is a growing literature on the Islamophobia that colors media descriptions of Islam. See, among many others, Bail 2014, Beydoun 2018, Braunstein 2017, Cainkar 2009, and Marzouki 2017. For initial references to the massive literature on American Evangelicals and politics, see Schwadel 2017, FitzGerald 2017, and Gorski 2019.
2. For example, in Peshkin's 1988 classic study of the "total world of a fundamentalist Christian school," politics and right-wing mobilization is just about everywhere. In contrast, while the Christians with whom I worked were largely politically conservative (Brint and Abrutyn 2010, Steensland and Wright 2014), they often distinguished themselves from those who aggressively politicized their religion (Hunter 1983).
3. Chowdhury 2014.
4. The term *politics* usually refers in some sense to the State (this is true for Aristotle as well), though often (as also for Aristotle) with a broader sense of how people relate to each other and organize their common lives. Many political theorists share this more expansive sense: see, among countless others, W. Brown 2015 and Wolin 2016.
5. See Aristotle's *Politics* (2013) and Plato's *Republic* (2016). See also Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (1997) and an excellent collection of DuBois's educational writings edited by Randall Westbrook (2013).
6. Lamont and Molnár 2002: 168. The literature on boundaries is far too large to engage here. See especially Barth 1998, Tilly 2004, Gieryn 1999, and Wimmer 2013, and Wang, Piazza, and Soule 2018.
7. Avishai 2008, Burke 2012, and Rinaldo 2013 have all done impressive work to show how complicated gender boundaries are in conservative religion. See also Kate Manne's work on patriarchy, discussed more extensively in chapter 3, footnote 12.
8. Bourdieu's study of symbolic power is an important theme throughout his work; see especially *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991).
9. Luker 1985 describes a similar tension.
10. These debates are controversial in philosophy, and, again, for my purposes whether or not essences are really real is actually not important. For a grounding in the philosophical work, see Cohen 1978 and Nussbaum 1992.
11. There is a massive literature on the critique of religion as a category. See especially J.Z. Smith 1998, Guhin 2014, and Masuzawa 2005.
12. Durkheim 1961.
13. The question of "what is a nation" is an ongoing and still difficult-to-answer question in political science and sociology, though see Hobsbawn 2012, Gellner 1983.
14. Love 2017.
15. Roy 2014: 23–56.
16. See especially Bilici 2012, Grewal 2013, Marzouki 2017, Ahmed 2010.
17. Mamdani 2005.
18. Cainkar 2009, Maghbouleh 2017, Selod 2013, 2015.