

When to Preach About Poverty: How Location, Race, and Ideology Shape White Evangelical Sermons

JEFFREY GUHIN 
Department of Sociology
University of California, Los Angeles

MIRYA HOLMAN 
Department of Political Science
Tulane University

TRAVIS COAN
Department of Politics
University of Exeter

CONSTANTINE BOUSSALIS
Department of Political Science
Trinity College Dublin

Social scientists have long been interested in how intergroup contact or elite messaging can reduce or eliminate racial biases. To better understand the role of religious elites in these political questions, we show how a church location's income and racial characteristics interact with racial and economic ideologies to shape the political content of sermons. Testing our theories through both quantitative and qualitative analysis of an original data set of more than 102,000 sermons from more than 5200 pastors, we show that contact is only effective as a means of decreasing prejudice to the extent that actors—in our case, pastors—are ideologically capable of reconciling their potential role in economic inequality. White Evangelical pastors rarely preach about issues of poverty or racial justice overall, but the context of the preaching matters. We find that the greater the share of Black population there is in a church community, the less likely White Evangelical pastors are to mention issues of poverty or racial justice, and when they do mention it, they hold to ideological commitments that avoid blaming systems for racialized economic inequality.

Keywords: sermons, race, poverty, pastors, location, evangelicals.

INTRODUCTION

How and why are sermons political? Using an original data set of more than 102,000 sermons from more than 5200 pastors, we argue that the content of sermons can be explained at least in part by the church's racial and economic location alongside the pastor's religious ideology. Examining sermons through quantitative and qualitative approaches provide an avenue for understanding more about how religious elites model and speak about prejudicial behavior (Price, Terry, and Johnson 1980).¹ Clergy provide one of the most common sources for elite cues about acceptable behavior, delivered in an environment where boundary setting is not only tolerated, but expected (Boussalis, Coan, and Holman 2021; Brown, Eschler, and Brown 2021; Djupe and Gilbert 2003; Oldmixon, Calfano, and Suiter 2011).² Sermons are also a key element of liturgy,

Acknowledgments: We are grateful to the editors and reviewers at the Journal for Scientific Study of Religion for helpful comments on this article. Travis G. Coan's contribution was supported by an Economic and Social Research Council [ES/N012283/1] Methodological Innovation grant.

Correspondence should be addressed to Mirya Holman, Department of Political Science, Tulane University, 316 Norman Mayer New Orleans, LA 70118. E-mail: mholman@tulane.edu

¹We alternate between religious leaders, clergy, and pastors in the remainder of the article.

²Many religious traditions—including Christianity—would seem especially apt for such messaging, given their traditions' commitments to helping the marginalized (Beyerlein and Chaves 2003; Beyerlein and Hipp 2006; Blouin, Robinson, and Starks 2013; Curry, Koch, and Chalfant 2004; Tanner 1992). And yet, studies of individual attitudes find little evidence

religious formation, and identity maintenance (Brown, Brown, and Jackson 2021; Hirschkind 2006; McClendon and Riedl 2019; McClure 2007).

Although elite messages have long been studied for their role in shaping boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable prejudicial behavior (Domke et al. 2000; Gabel and Scheve 2007; Scheufele and Tewksbury 2006), scholars know less about what shapes the content of these elite messages. In other words: why do elites emphasize what they do? In this article, we theorize the role of religious elites' messaging on maintaining prejudicial behavior, particularly regarding issues of economic inequality and racism. We argue that pastors' sermons are constrained by their ideology (Bonilla-Silva 2003) and their location. This article is primarily about what White Evangelical pastors talk about in their sermons, with some discussion of sermons from Mainline Protestant pastors.³

We test our theory through a quantitative textual analysis and a qualitative content analysis of an original data set of more than 102,000 sermons from more than 5200 pastors. Using these data, we argue that contact is only effective as a means of decreasing socioeconomic prejudice to the extent that actors are ideologically capable of reconciling their potential role in the inequality such contact might reveal. In doing so, we suggest that location and ideology play a large role in determining whether pastors can use their political capacity to advocate for marginalized groups.

How individual and group-level prejudices can be reduced or eliminated via intergroup contact or elite messaging remains an ongoing question in sociology (Abascal 2015; Abascal and Baldassarri 2015; Edwards 2008; Edwards, Christerson, and Emerson 2013), psychology (Paluck and Green 2009; Paluck, Green, and Green 2018; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006), political science (Adida, Lo, and Platas 2018; Brown et al. 2016; Djupe and Calfano 2013; Putnam 2007; Szewcyk and Crowder-Meyer 2020), and economics (Boisjoly et al. 2006). Social scientists no longer believe that simple contact with an outgroup will cause people to decrease their prejudice and hostility toward that group (Paluck, Green, and Grek 2018) and they increasingly recognize how leaders "frame" the nature of the interaction thereby reducing (or increasing) intergroup animosity (Dyck and Pearson-Merkowitz 2014; Hamburg, George, and Ballentine 1999).

Contrary to a certain kind of contact thesis (Jones 2016), we anticipate that Evangelical pastors will be *less* able to discuss issues of poverty and race overall and as their locations become more diverse, given the often-racialized framing of poverty in the United States. Given their ideological commitments (Emerson and Smith 2000), these pastors do not change what they say; they simply say it less often. Using an innovative geographic-information-systems approach to map neighborhood characteristics around each church, we build upon research on the racialized nature of framings and discussions of poverty and socioeconomic inequality in the United States (Gilens 2009; Hunt, Croll, and Krysan 2022; Somers 2008; Wilson 1996) to show that White Evangelical pastors who preach in churches in less white and more Black communities are *less likely* to discuss issues of poverty in their sermons, contrary to what one might expect in a certain kind of "contact" thesis (see also Abascal and Baldassarri 2015; Cobb, Perry, and Dougherty 2015). We then engage in a qualitative evaluation of the sermons that these pastors do give to show that they fit with broader ideological commitments from Evangelicals, including frames of individualism, the deserving poor, and a colorblind approach to understanding society. Our research points to the failures of relying on pure racial contact, elite messaging, or religious environments to remedy racial segregation and discrimination.

that religious Americans are less racially or ethnically prejudiced than other groups (Galen 2012; Hall, Matz, and Wood 2010; Johnson, Rowatt, and LaBouff 2010; Rowatt and Franklin 2004). In fact, conservative Christians might well be more prejudiced (Perry and Whitehead 2015a, 2015b).

³Although Evangelicalism is an expansive term with a variety of definitions not always overlapping with conservative Protestant (Woodberry and Smith 1998), our understanding of the term fits within the standard RELTRAD classifications of American religion; hence we used the RELTRAD category of "Evangelical" here (Shelton 2018; Smidt 2019; Steensland et al. 2000; Woodberry et al. 2012).

Race and Religion

Scholars often point to contact between groups as a key mechanism of reducing out-group hostility and prejudice (Jones 2016), although the consensus now is that mere contact alone is not enough to eliminate these attitudes and behaviors. Sociologists of religion have used multiracial congregations as the site to examine these questions, with varying conclusions (Edwards 2008; Edwards, Christerson, and Emerson 2013; Emerson 2010; Marti 2009; Perry 2013). Although Yancey (1999, 2007) found that whites' racial attitudes were unaffected by residential contact, they did express fewer racist attitudes in multiracial congregations. Ethnographic studies of multiracial and multiethnic churches and groups have shown how specific practices, such as prayer, community service, or liturgy, have facilitated the experience of felt solidarity and have sometimes led to a greater awareness in whites of social structural explanations for poverty and racial inequality (Becker 1998; Braunstein, Fulton, and Wood 2014).

In response to more optimistic portrayals of multiethnic congregations, Cobb, Perry, and Dougherty argue that this only occurs "under the right conditions" (2015:195). Instead, they generally find few differences in how white people in multiracial congregations (versus white congregations) view racism and social causes as the source of Black/White inequality. Others have shown how even multiracial churches can still reproduce situations in which whites have greater access to resources and leaderships positions (Pitt 2010b), alongside reproducing individualist, or "colorblind" accounts of racial inequality (Hall, Matz, and Wood 2010), paralleling similar processes for white parents in racially diverse schools (Lewis and Diamond 2015). The role of ministers in these processes is often only one part of a much larger study of congregational experience, especially in the sociological literature (but see Pitt 2010b; Edwards and Oyakawa 2022).

Nonetheless, ethnographic studies of multiracial and economically diverse churches have shown the importance of ministers in establishing cultural expectations as well as the enduring frame models for how racial and income inequality ought to be understood (Edwards 2013; Elisha 2011). Missing from these discussions are considerations of not just the composition of the church, but also the composition of the community more generally. Also missing from discussions of multiracial congregations is an evaluation of the role of pastors and their choices in whether and how to discuss issues of poverty, discussions that, at least in the United States, are almost inevitably racially imbued. We argue that understanding that proximity to racial diversity in the community shapes evangelical elite behavior, as measured through their sermons.

Racial and Economic Ideology Among White Evangelicals

Ideology is recognized as such given its relationship to power (as opposed to more neutral terms like cultural system, frame, or worldview) and its relative rigidity (as opposed to the more adaptable terms like toolkit or repertoire). As Swidler describes it, "an ideology is an articulated, self-conscious belief and ritual system, aspiring to offer a unified answer to problems of social action" (2001:96). An ideology, she argues, "defines a community...help[ing] members differentiate themselves from the surrounding society" (2001:97).

In focusing on the ideological framework of pastors, we draw on a long tradition within and beyond Marxism of using the concept of ideology to explain how people understand the causes and solutions to poverty (Hunt and Bullock 2016; Wilson 1996; Zucker and Weiner 1993) and how such ideological commitments relate to religion (Hunt 2002). Ideology is also a helpful term to examine racism and its effects. As Bonilla-Silva argues, "a more fruitful approach for examining actors' racial views is the notion of *racial ideology*, or *the racially based frameworks used by actors to explain and justify* (dominant race) or *challenge* (subordinate race or races) the *racial status quo*" (Bonilla-Silva 2003:65; see also Mueller 2020). Ideology helps to provide simple answers to complex questions, with those questions usually understood to be broadly political (Swidler 2001).

Similarly, scholars studying racial attitudes and racism within religious communities and traditions draw on the concept of ideology to understand both how individuals make sense of a racialized world and how they act within it (Baker, Perry, and Whitehead 2020). Indeed, as Mayrl points out in his article, the ideological is inextricably bound up with both the practical and the relational: “While the white church lends legitimacy to white supremacy both directly (through formal support) and indirectly (through silence and inaction), it also structures relationships between racial groups in ways that perpetuate inequality...” (2022:17). This article is a study of both that inaction (when racism and poverty are not mentioned at all) and, via our qualitative analysis, the legitimation of the present racial system (Omi and Winant 2014) and individualist accounts of its causes.⁴

Recent study of racialized politics in the sociology of religion have also used the concept of ideology to make similar points. Whitehead and Perry describe Christian nationalism as “an ideology that idealizes and advocates a fusion of American civic life with a particular type of Christian identity and culture” (2020:ix–x). Similarly, Gerardo Marti’s recent writing on White Evangelical support for Donald Trump makes use of the term ideology in a wide variety of contexts, most looping back to the “White Evangelical ideology” (2019:246) that supports Trump’s policies and the character himself.

White churches engage in a wide set of activities to uphold, maintain, and reinforce white supremacy. W.E.B. Du Bois identifies six mechanisms that help explain how white churches maintain white supremacy: legitimation, revisionism, inaction, segregation, missionary work, and charitable giving (Mayrl 2022). Although each of these are potentially related to questions of ideology and specifically racial ideology (Mueller 2020), the first three (legitimation, revisionism, and inaction) are especially important for our analysis here.

In this article, we build from Emerson and Smith’s classic description of White Evangelical racial ideology. They argue that three important tools limit the ability of (usually white) evangelicals to understand racial inequality: “‘accountable freewill individualism’, ‘relationalism’ (attaching central importance to interpersonal relationships), and ‘antistructuralism’ (inability to perceive or unwillingness to accept social structural influences)” (2000:76). Based on our reading of the sermons themselves, we extend Emerson and Smith’s analysis to center three key components: (1) antistructural individualism, (2) a distinction between deserving and undeserving poor, and (3) white racial colorblindness.⁵ We discuss each of these in the section that follows. We argue the combination of these components forms a racial ideology that prevents certain white conservative pastors from preaching about poverty generally, especially when contact with Black people increases around their church. And then, when they do preach about poverty, they do in ways that emphasize individualism, colorblind racism, and the difference between the deserving and undeserving poor.⁶

⁴Of course, white Evangelicals are not a monolith, and even their overwhelming support for Donald Trump can read a variety of ways (Gorski 2019). Yet while work on the “new Evangelicalism” (Stensland and Goff 2013) shows that Evangelicals can disprove stereotypes and engage in social action in heterogeneous ways, it is also important to recognize that the ideology described here is consistent with both qualitative and quantitative work on White Evangelicalism cited throughout this text (though see in addition Du Mez 2020; Gorski 2020; Gushee 2019; Margolis 2020). Note, for example, how Gerardo Marti’s excellent book with Gladys Ganiel on the emerging church and “New Evangelicals” (2014) can be read alongside another of Marti’s books, *American Blindspot: Race, Class, Religion, and the Trump Presidency* (2019).

⁵This third trait can be replaced by a more extreme form, that of white ethnic nationalism (Gorski 2017, 2019; Perry and Whitehead 2015a, 2015b). Although all of these bear some similarities to recent work on Christian Nationalism (e.g., Whitehead and Perry 2020), our ideological analysis refers specifically to race and racism and their relationship to poverty, issues that overlap questions of national identity but which are also distinct from them.

⁶There is a way to read pastors’ decisions here via Bourdieu’s theory of the field, in which white pastors seek to maintain their dominant social position against potential threats that seek the “symbolic power” (1991) pastors can have in their interpretations of the social world. We largely agree with such a Bourdieusian interpretation, but we find our emphasis here on ideology is more straightforward and does not necessitate bringing in all the moving pieces of Bourdieu’s arguments.

Antistructural Individualism

White Evangelicals' theological suspicion of extraneous structures in an individual's relationship to God (like a saint's intercessions) can make them equally suspicious of extraneous structures to help an individual's life chances (like government programs). Emerson and Smith found their respondents "had difficulty seeing anything other than an individual problem" even when explicitly confronted with "systemic, institutionalized aspects of race problems" (2000:79). Research on White Evangelicals' opinions on racial and socioeconomic inequality often find a resistance to the ideas of structural solutions to racial inequality (Brown 2009; Cobb, Perry, and Dougherty 2015; Elisha 2011). Evangelicals are not completely unwilling to acknowledge the importance of structures in social life, though they will often describe large organizations (especially the government) as more a source of problems than potential solutions (Franz and Brown 2020). This normative commitment is reflected in a tendency to emphasize individual solutions to structural problems. To the extent that poverty seems intractable (that is, not solvable individually) or else linked to broader structures of racial segregation, then it might be easier for White Evangelical ministers not to mention it at all. And, as Tranby and Hartmann have argued, even forms of individualism and antistructuralism that appear racially "neutral" but are rather "part of a vigorously defended majority white culture and identity" (Tranby and Hartmann 2008:341).

Deserving Poor Versus Undeserving Poor

The distinction between "deserving" and "undeserving" poor is well-researched in political science and sociology (Applebaum 2001; Clawson and Trice 2000; DeSante 2013; Katz 2013; Moffitt 2015; van Doorn 2015), including how the concept intersects with religion (Kahl 2005; Loseke 1997; Regnerus, Smith, and Sikkink 1998). Katz describe rhetoric about the undeserving poor as rooted in "poverty as a problem of persons" (2013:3), with talk about the undeserving poor framing poverty as a moral distinction between individuals rather than a problem of political economy (Kreitzer and Smith 2018). Such distinctions are often racially coded (Albertson 2015; Clawson and Trice 2000; DeSante 2013; Gilens 2009), and they link well into an already existing evangelical commitment to individual accountability, both for evangelicals themselves and more broadly for a country deeply influenced by their thoughts (Bellah et al. 2007; Curtis 2018; Regnerus, Smith, and Sikkink 1998). This normative commitment is reflected in a tendency to separate kinds of poverty, generally emphasizing a theology of uplift and faith in God that pays less attention to contingent and inexplicable suffering (Bean 2014; Brennehan 2013; Lin 2020).

It is also important to recognize how poverty and discussions of poverty are racialized in the United States, especially regarding distinctions between deserving and undeserving poor (Gilens 2009), with experimental tests revealing that white recipients of aid are privileged over Black recipients in a variety of ways. Even seemingly principled, "neutral" concerns like fixing deficits are related to racial resentments (DeSante 2013; see also Hunt and Bullock 2016; Wilson 1996). Members of Evangelical churches engage in cognitive dissonance when confronted with messaging that is counter to their identity (Pitt 2010a; Pitt 2010b). To the extent that more of the poor are undeserving than one might have expected, white ministers might simply say nothing, or might describe such poverty in terms related to individual experiences of salvation and grace (Curtis 2018; Lin 2020). And given the connections between poverty and racial minorities, pastors confronted with a diverse population may be even more unwilling to discuss poverty because they lack the tools to explain the systematically racist nature of the U.S. political system (Mayrl 2022; Tranby and Hartmann 2008).

Colorblindness or Ethnic Nationalism

Finally, White Evangelicals often tend to emphasize a “colorblind” commitment to racial reconciliation (Bonilla-Silva 2017), with an extension to “colorblind” explanations of poverty. This colorblindness emphasizes an individual’s current lack of explicit racial animus while refusing to recognize the role of historical processes and social structures in reproducing racial inequalities (Bracey and Moore 2017; Cobb, Perry, and Dougherty 2015; Garces-Foley 2008; Lichterman, Carter, and Lamont 2009; Ray 2022). For example, Lichterman, Carter, and Lamont describe how certain white conservative Christians consider “race-bridging” as successful “when one no longer ‘saw’ race or felt a racial identity” (2009:205). One key element of racial colorblindness is its nonsubtractive quality: rather than consider the privileges or benefits whites have earned at the expense or exclusion of others, colorblindness emphasizes that privilege is not the problem, thereby seeking explanations for prolonged inequality in cultural deficiencies or deficits (Hunt et al. 2022; Valencia 2012). However, when that privilege is more robustly attacked, criticized, or even simply acknowledged, white conservatives can sometimes evince a more aggressive form of racial chauvinism (Gorski 2017; Perry and Whitehead 2015a, 2015b). White Evangelicals often manifest a kind of white supremacy that ironically accompanies alleged colorblindness, not specifically demeaning Black people as much as presuming a normative white experience as the standard or “supreme” version of Americanness and American Christianity (Ince 2022; Perry and Whitehead 2015a, 2015b).

Sermons and Pastors

Although a significant portion of the scholarship on religion and politics focuses on the political and religious experiences and attitudes of individuals (Jelen 1993), churches and clergy remain central to the study of politics and religion (Wilcox and Larson 2006, Wald, Owen, and Hill 1998). Within any religious tradition, especially those that emphasize “the word” (Guhin 2020), sermons are central platforms to convey issue salience in a religious community, priming congregations to view certain issues as important, framing complex issues within religious terms, and constructing the barriers for appropriate behavior. For all of their importance in the Protestant world, the importance of the pastor and of the sermon remain deeply understudied in the sociology of religion. Much of the research on sermons examines the *effect* of sermons on congregant behavior (Brooke, Chouhoud, and Hoffman 2022, Butt 2016; see also Trinitapoli 2009). The research that does examine sermons is often ethnographic, examining a single pastor or church at a time (Ammerman 1987; Becker, 1998, 1999; Edwards 2016; Harding 2018; Hashem 2010; Hirschkind 2006; Pattillo-McCoy 1998; Williamson and Pollio 1999). Less is known about broader trends in sermons or about how the community context of the church shapes the content of sermons (though see McClendon and Riedl, 2019, 2021).

We do know that pastors are constrained in their behavior and cannot simply preach about whatever they want, when and wherever they want. Pastors have to be careful about how they preach because their congregants might simply go somewhere else. The easy permission to move between churches makes pastors keenly aware of the consumerism of modern North American Protestantism (Bielo 2011; Metzger 2007; Richey 2013; Warner 1993), thereby constraining their behavior to attract or keep a congregation (Djupe and Gilbert 2009). Consequentially, a pastor might be inclined to discuss some issues and avoid others.

A focus on inequality represents a key area where pastors may choose to increase or decrease their discussions of the issue. Surveys and observational data reveal wide variation in how much clergy address issues relating to inequality. Using surveys of clergy, Djupe and Gilbert (2003) find that almost all religious leaders indicate discussing social justice concerns like poverty and hunger (98 percent of clergy) and civil rights (90 percent of clergy). In observations of 95 difference worship services, Brewer, Kersh, and Petersen (2003) find high levels of political activism around

social justice themes. Boussalis, Coan, and Holman (2021) use texts from more than a hundred thousand sermons to examine political discussions and find that a quarter of pastors gave a sermon relating to welfare and one in five discussed civil rights or race related issues. However, such talk varies widely between different kinds of denominations, and it is often a source of tremendous stress for the pastors themselves (Edwards, 2013, 2016). Research that evaluates how often people remember discussions of issues in sermons finds that Black and Hispanic congregants recall more discussions of poverty, even as discussions of poverty are more impactful on white attitudes about poverty (Brown et al. 2016).

Clergy often view their own role as primarily that of tending the flock, serving and preserving their congregation, including pleasing and serving existing members of the church and attracting new members (Djupe and Gilbert 2003). From this perspective, clergy should only engage in political action when and if their congregations support it. This interest-based analysis assumes that all pastors in all places have the capacity or interest to frame issues in particular ways, or to decide to address the issue at all. Although it is clear that location matters for shaping religious and political experiences, we know much less about how the physical location of a church and the demographic and economic characteristics of the community might shape the behavior of pastors. Here, we remedy this absence by examining the substance (or lack thereof) of sermons through quantitative and qualitative approaches, tying the sermon to the location of the church.

DATA AND METHODS

To examine the influence of location on messaging by clergy in sermons, we rely on quantitative and qualitative analyses of a data set of more than 102,000 sermons and 5200 pastors collected from SermonCentral.com, an online community for Christian pastors. This data set was originally introduced in Boussalis, Coan, and Holman (2021). On SermonCentral, pastors post the text of their sermons or comment on the sermons of other pastors. Sermons are often—but not always—tagged with descriptive labels by both the posting-pastor and other pastors commenting on the sermon. Each pastor on SermonCentral also has a profile page that includes basic information about themselves, including denomination, the name and address of their church, and more. These profiles, moreover, are linked to each sermon posted on the platform and thus it is possible to connect the content of sermons to the basic demographic and geographic information included in each pastor profile. The remainder of this section outlines the methods used to collect the data employed in the current study, the representativeness of our sample of pastors, as well as the qualitative and statistical approaches used in the analysis.

A central objective of this study was to establish both the level and type of discourse present in messaging by Christian pastors, as well as the racial and economic environment in which clergy preach. To do so, we rely on quantitative and qualitative analyses of the full text of 102,778 sermons derived from an original dataset produced by Boussalis, Coan, and Holman (2021). The authors collected these sermons from SermonCentral.com in September and October 2015.

Race and gender information about the clergy was obtained through two routes: first, 1499 clergy uploaded a photo to their profile on SermonCentral. Using those photos, we asked five online workers to identify the race (white or non-white) and gender (women or men) of the clergy person. Of the 3760 pastors who had not provided profile images to SermonCentral, we selected pastors who posted at least 50 sermons to SermonCentral ($N = 140$) for further coding. Two researchers searched for photos of these pastors online and coded their gender and whether they are white or not following the procedure developed by Shah, Gonzalez Juenke, and Fraga (2022).⁷

⁷The distribution of uploaded sermons among pastors without a profile was highly skewed (Median = 9, Mean = 44.6). To economize time and resources while preserving as much of the initial data set as possible, we chose to manually code pastors who had posted at least 50 sermons (3.67 percent of the pastors with no profile picture). This allowed us to retain

This second round of coding resulted in the successful identification of the gender and race of 107 pastors who were then added to the first set, resulting in a total number of 1606 clergy and 80,871 sermons. To determine if there are meaningful differences between the pastors with and without a profile picture on SermonCentral, two researchers selected a simple random sample of 259 pastors (20 percent) without a profile picture and coded their gender and race. Using a two-sample difference in means test, we found no statistically significant difference between these samples with respect to women ($M_{\text{picture}} = 3.45$ percent, $M_{\text{no_picture}} = 4.25$ percent, $p = .52$) and white pastors ($M_{\text{picture}} = 80.98$ percent, $M_{\text{no_picture}} = 81.85$ percent, $p = .74$). We also assessed race and gender of names of pastors using Sumner's (2018) categorization algorithm and found remarkable similarity between the classification processes.

We acknowledge that the SermonCentral sample is a convenience sample, but comparisons on observable factors like denomination, gender, race, and location are similar to national data. The SermonCentral sample of pastors looks similar to the national composition of Christian pastors in the United States: comparing our data to the 2012–2013 National Congregations Study (NCS), 65 percent of our pastors belong to evangelical denominations, compared to 67 percent of the NCS.⁸ Pastors belonging to mainline Protestant denominations make up 19 percent of our pastors, compared to 20 percent of the pastors in the NCS. Our sample is 81 percent white and 3.4 percent women while the NCS sample is 74 percent white and 7 percent women. We also found that the locales of our pastors are, by and large, similar to typical locales found in the United States. The Appendix in the Supporting Information includes benchmarking comparisons between the counties of the pastors in our sample and all U.S. counties (see Appendix A in the Supporting Information). In short, we find that our counties are very similar to typical U.S. counties in terms of income, demographics, religiosity, and partisanship; with the only major difference that the median population of our counties is greater than the national county-level median.

We engage in two evaluations of these data: a *quantitative* examination that uses quantitative text analysis and statistical modeling, and a *qualitative* examination of the content of sermons about poverty and race. For our *qualitative* evaluation, two of the authors read all the sermons with a high poverty-propensity score by white pastors in predominantly (two standard deviations above the average) white and black neighborhoods. We combine this work with a reading of at least 10 percent of the remaining sermons in each of the other standard deviations. Here, we look for common patterns, organizations, and connections within those sermons. As we read, we coded the sermons inductively, then went back and checked these codes against the other sermons in our qualitative analysis. It is from that analysis that we developed the description of the ideology described above.

Identifying Poverty and Civil Rights Discussions in the Corpus

With the SermonsCentral corpus in hand, the next step is to operationalize speech related to poverty and civil rights among our sample of sermons. As described in Boussalis, Coan, and Holman (2021), given the size of the corpus, manual content analysis is infeasible option and a simple lexicon-based approach is problematic given the issue of polysemy.⁹ As an alternative, we developed a computational approach that makes use of SermonCentral's user-generated tags to

13,965 sermons, while losing 21,907 sermons from pastors who had posted less than 50 sermons or from whom no picture could be found online.

⁸Evangelical and Mainline Protestant denominations are defined consistently with NCS. See the Appendix in the Supporting Information for a list of denominations including the conservative and mainline categories.

⁹For instance, if we wished to identify civil rights-related discussions in the text using this approach, the term "race" itself could relate to race-relations, a political race, a physical race, or a race to the finish.

estimate the presence of civil rights or poverty-related discussion in sermon content. The remainder of this section outlines the rationale and implementation of this approach.

Standardizing SermonCentral's user-generated labels. Although the user-generated tags offer valuable information on the main topics or themes present in a sermon, these tags are unstandardized and various labels are used to refer to the same theme (e.g., sermons tagged with “Martin Luther King” and “Martin Luther King Jr.” are clearly related). Our first goal was thus to identify and standardize labels relevant to the issues of civil rights and welfare. We achieve this objective using the following three-step process (see Appendix B in the Supporting Information for detailed information on this procedure). First, we utilize a popular crowd-sourcing platform to narrow down the user-generated tags to only those that are politically relevant. This reduced the number of labels from over 19,000 unique labels to just over 500 relevant labels. Second, we read a sample of sermons (up to 5) for each label to determine that the smaller set of 500 labels were indeed political, while also collapsing synonymous labels. This reduced the total number of potentially relevant labels to just 231. Third, we further classified the remaining labels based on whether they were related to civil rights or social welfare. Specifically, the labels were coded into aggregate categories independently by the co-authors, resulting in a reliability score (Cronbach's alpha of 0.92). Differences were reconciled via committee. Finally, a research assistant, blind to the hypotheses, replicated the coding process, resulting in a reliability score of 0.89.

Learning relevant speech using a supervised Latent Dirichlet Allocation model. After identifying the relevant labels, the next question centers on how one should use these labels to learn about relevant speech in religious text. The simplest approach would be to directly use the standardized labels to measure communication by, for example, counting the number of times a particular label appears in the corpus. However, this approach is problematic: based on an extensive reading of the sermons corpus, the observed labels often fail to be attached to politically relevant sermons. For instance, a sermon entitled “A Christian Response To Poverty” is clearly about poverty, as a passage makes clear:

“Sometimes, the actions; the immoral actions, of others causes poverty. There are those who have lost their businesses, or their homes, or their savings because of the actions of others. We are all aware of those in our society who prey on the weak, the kind and the trusting. Some people are led to poverty through phone solicitations, unscrupable salesmen, and e-mail scams. Others are led to poverty because of the lawsuits of people trying to get rich at the expense of others. There are many other examples, but, injustice causes some poverty.”

Yet, the only generic tag on the sermon is “Christian Disciplines.” Put simply, while sermons tagged with relevant labels virtually always contain relevant content, the converse is not necessarily true: just because a sermon does not have a welfare-related tag does not mean it does not contain welfare-related content, which required that we adopt a strategy to identify sermons that discuss relevant themes but are not labeled as such.

Following previous work on using text analysis to categorize sermons (i.e., Boussalis, Coan, and Holman 2021), we rely on a generative model to infer missing labels from observed labels, employing a supervised extension of the well-known latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA; Ramage et al. 2009). The model uses the relevant social welfare and civil rights labels to learn the words associated with each label and offers an estimate of the proportion of a particular sermon that is associated with these themes (see Appendix C in the Supporting Information for a detailed description of the computational model). Critically, these estimates offer a means to determine the sermons likely to discuss topics related to social welfare, poverty, and civil rights.

Linking Community Demographics to Sermon Content

In what environment do these pastors preach? To evaluate how the racial composition in the community shapes discussions by pastors, we needed to ‘build’ a neighborhood around each church. While using data at the county level would certainly be the easiest approach, counties

vary dramatically in size and demographics. Instead, we geocode each church's address and use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to construct a 10-mile buffer around each church. We then use Census block-level information and average over those areas to determine the racial context of the church. After geocoding each church's address, we used GIS to construct two variables: church "neighborhood" and "community." Based on transportation statistics from the U.S. Department of Transportation 2009 Household Travel Survey (Santos et al. 2011:13), we estimate that the majority of congregants will travel no more than 10 miles to attend church and thus set this distance as the geographic boundary of a given church's "neighborhood." Specifically, we define each church's neighborhood as the set of block groups (for Census data) or precincts (for election data) and average over these areas to arrive at our independent variables of interest. Next, as churches with overlapping "neighborhoods" are, by definition, statistically dependent, we need a way to incorporate this dependence when examining the correlates of speech. To achieve this objective, we construct a variable to capture each church's "community" and cluster on this variable when estimating the relationship between political, economic, and demographic factors and sermon content in the main text. We define a church "community" as the union of overlapping neighborhoods. See Section D of the Appendix in the Supporting Information for a visual representation of the church neighborhoods and communities. Overall, our data set combines information on the sermons that pastors give, the characteristics of those pastors, and the racial composition of the communities in which they preach.

Which Pastors are More Likely to Discuss Poverty?

To evaluate the influence of pastor and community characteristics on discussions of poverty and civil rights, we use the proportion of the words of each sermon that relate to each of these topics, which were generated by the topic modeling approach described above. These topic probabilities are employed as dependent variables in a series of statistical models. Specifically, to ease the interpretation of the statistical models, our dependent variables are binary measures taking on a value of 1 if more than 5 percent of a sermon's words are devoted to social welfare or civil rights, and zero otherwise.¹⁰ To test our hypotheses, we rely on a Bayesian multilevel logit model with a random effect for pastors, geographic neighborhood, and year. We examine pastor denomination, community characteristics (including race, measured by percentage white in the area around the church, politics, measured by the percentage of the 2012 presidential election vote received by the Democratic candidate, and income, measured by median income of the surrounding community), and controls for Southern churches and the size of the church overall. The models are estimated based on the subset of white pastor's sermons ($N = 70,499$).¹¹

We expect that Evangelical pastors will be less likely to discuss both social welfare and civil rights issues, given the way that ideology structures their handling of these issues. As shown in Table 1, Mainline Protestant pastor identification is associated with higher levels of discussion of both social welfare and civil rights. To ease interpretation of the model findings, we calculate predicted probabilities based on the logit coefficients and express these estimates as a percentage. Mainline Protestant pastors are 1.02 percent more likely to discuss social welfare when compared to the reference category of Evangelical pastors and 1.4 percent more likely to discuss civil rights.

We also expect that the composition of the community itself might shape the discussions of social welfare and civil rights in sermons. In this context, we expect that Evangelical pastors will be more likely to discuss civil rights and social welfare when their communities are less diverse.

¹⁰As discussed in Boussalis et al. (2021), the largest share of words in a typical sermon relate to religion-specific topics. Although a threshold of 5 percent may seem small, it is in fact quite a significant share of politically relevant words.

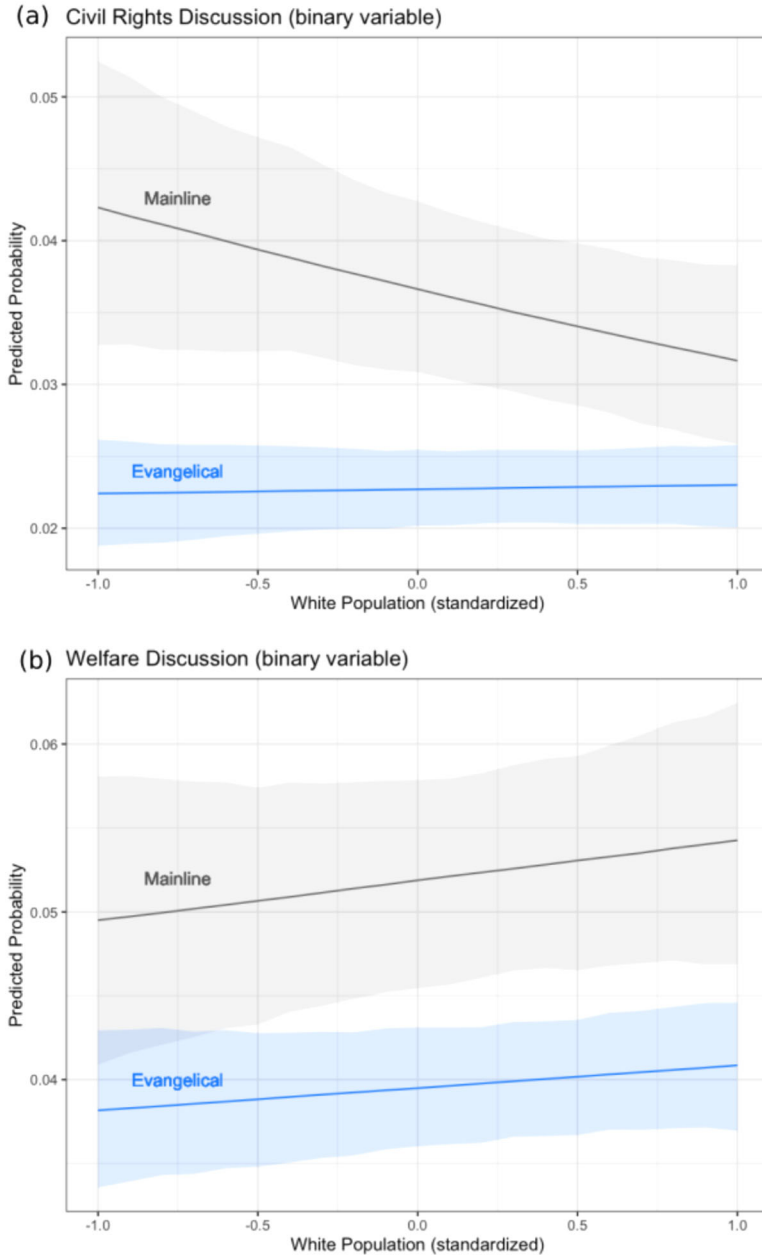
¹¹Unfortunately, we lose a number of pastors due to missing observations among our independent variables.

Table 1: Civil rights and social welfare discussions in sermons

	Civil Rights			Social Welfare		
	Posterior Median	Lower 90% CI	Upper 90% CI	Posterior Median	Lower 90% CI	Upper 90% CI
Mainline Pastor	0.4995	0.3376	0.6522	0.2850	0.1714	0.3940
Other denomination Pastor	0.5075	0.1900	0.8296	0.2770	0.0451	0.5191
% White in community	-0.0296	-0.1108	0.0604	0.0372	-0.0225	0.0955
Female Pastor	0.4270	0.0242	0.8558	0.1009	-0.2305	0.4379
Church size	0.0721	0.0170	0.1266	0.0288	-0.0097	0.0692
% Democrat in community	0.0404	-0.0513	0.1320	0.0289	-0.0352	0.0927
Income in community	-0.0038	-0.0653	0.0529	-0.0212	-0.0661	0.0226
South	-0.0461	-0.2219	0.1313	0.1299	-0.0013	0.2531
Intercept	-3.8957	-4.0589	-3.7375	-3.2380	-3.3569	-3.1184
N	70,499	70,499	70,499	70,499	70,499	70,499

Note: Bayesian multi-level logit model. Estimates are posterior medians of the log odds for each variable. Evangelicals are the baseline denominational category. Population values are mean-centered and standardized.

Figure 1
Probability of discussing civil rights and social welfare by denomination and community
whiteness [Color figure can be viewed at [wileyonlinelibrary.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jst.12822)]



To test this expectation, we interact pastor denomination and the share of the surrounding population that are white and evaluate the effects on the likelihood that a pastor discusses civil rights and social welfare. We present the results of the interaction between denomination and white population in Table 2 and Table 3 while also presenting the predicted probabilities of the interaction models in Figure 1a (civil rights) and Figure 1b (social welfare). To further aid interpretation of the marginal effects plots below, we provide a formal comparison of the predicted probability

Table 2: Interactive denomination and community characteristics

	Civil Rights			Social Welfare		
	Posterior Median	Lower 90% CI	Upper 90% CI	Posterior Median	Lower 90% CI	Upper 90% CI
Mainline Pastor	0.491	0.339	0.650	0.284	0.169	0.393
Other denomination Pastor	0.462	0.138	0.773	0.272	0.034	0.514
% White in community	0.013	-0.082	0.100	0.036	-0.032	0.096
Mainline Pastor * % White	-0.164	-0.315	-0.009	0.012	-0.102	0.126
Other Pastor * % White	-0.375	-0.674	-0.071	-0.051	-0.271	0.200
Female Pastor	0.353	-0.070	0.764	0.106	-0.234	0.440
Church size	0.070	0.017	0.125	0.029	-0.010	0.070
% Democrat in community	0.034	-0.056	0.126	0.028	-0.035	0.095
Income in community	-0.006	-0.066	0.053	-0.020	-0.064	0.024
South	-0.059	-0.235	0.112	0.130	0.003	0.254
Intercept	-3.879	-4.036	-3.720	-3.238	-3.356	-3.118
N	70,499	70,499	70,499	70,499	70,499	70,499

Note: Bayesian multi-level logit models. Estimates are posterior medians of the log odds for each variable. Evangelicals are the baseline denominational category. Population values are mean-centered and standardized.

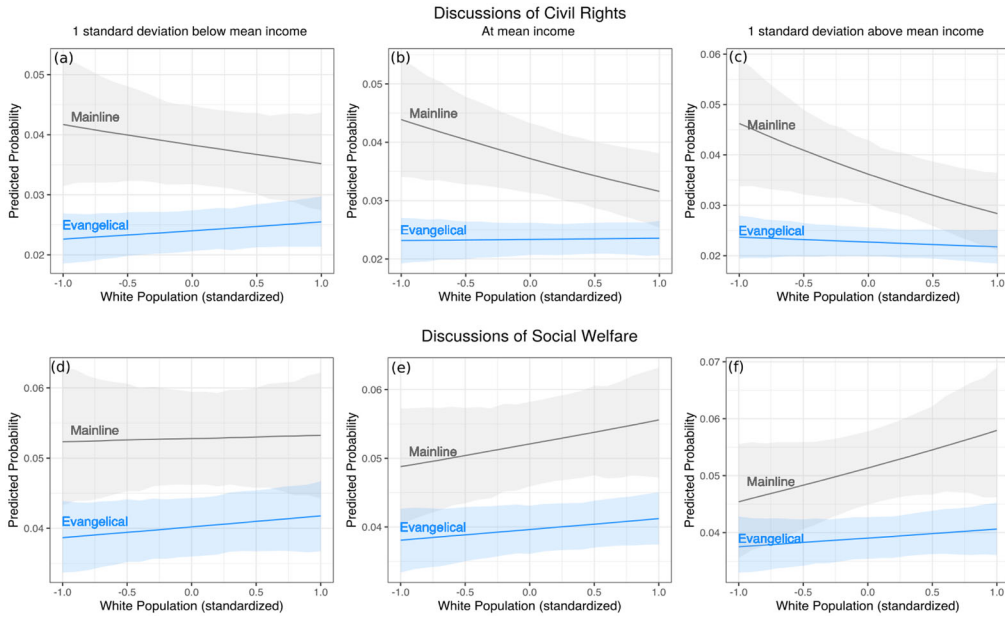
Table 3: Interactive denomination and community characteristics

	Civil Rights			Social Welfare		
	Posterior Median	Lower 90% CI	Upper 90% CI	Posterior Median	Lower 90% CI	Upper 90% CI
Mainline Pastor	0.4809	0.3232	0.6306	0.2867	0.1761	0.3939
Other denomination Pastor	0.4537	0.1351	0.7822	0.1996	-0.0567	0.4539
% White in community	0.0088	-0.0797	0.1034	0.0413	-0.0252	0.1059
Female Pastor	0.3331	-0.0701	0.7752	0.1376	-0.1820	0.4844
Church size	0.0709	0.0164	0.1259	0.0306	-0.0098	0.0698
% Democrat in community	0.0339	-0.0608	0.1233	0.0353	-0.0300	0.0999
Income in community	-0.0296	-0.0927	0.0355	-0.0150	-0.0625	0.0300
South	-0.0601	-0.2499	0.1070	0.1435	0.0231	0.2773
Mainline Pastor * % White	-0.1787	-0.3285	-0.0184	0.0273	-0.0825	0.1447
Other Pastor * % White	-0.3537	-0.6772	-0.0159	0.1059	-0.1835	0.3849
% White * Income	-0.0521	-0.1138	0.0122	-0.0003	-0.0457	0.0437
Mainline Pastor * % White * Income	-0.0293	-0.1724	0.1079	0.0594	-0.0610	0.1699
Other Pastor * % White * Income	0.0886	-0.2895	0.4394	0.3677	0.0589	0.7181
Intercept	-3.8740	-4.0388	-3.7236	-3.2493	-3.3735	-3.1369
N	70,499	70,499	70,499	70,499	70,499	70,499

Note: Bayesian multi-level logit models. Estimates are posterior medians of the log odds for each variable. Evangelicals are the baseline denominational category. Population values are mean-centered and standardized.

Figure 2

Probability of discussing civil rights (top panel) and social welfare (bottom panel) by community income, denomination, and community whiteness [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]



curves across Mainline and Evangelical denominations.¹² Following the approach outlined Long and Mustillo (2021:13), we assess whether the slope of the marginal effects curves in Figures 1 and 2 are parallel across denomination by examining discrete changes in the predicted probability of civil rights or social welfare discussion at representative values of community whiteness (for more information, see Appendix F in the Supporting Information).

Turning first to discussion of civil rights, we find evidence that as communities become more white, Mainline pastors become less likely to discuss civil rights, suggesting that Mainline pastors are responding to community interests in their sermon construction when compared to Evangelical pastors. Conversely, we find little evidence of a moderating effect of the proportion of white residents on the effect of pastor denomination on social welfare discussions. In other words, the proportion of community whiteness has no meaningful effect on the relationship between pastor denomination and the probability of including social welfare themes in their sermons.

The possibility exists, however, that in measuring whiteness, we are simply providing another measure of income in the area—after all, poverty is deeply racialized in the United States and whiteness and income are highly correlated. To evaluate this question, we engage in a three-way interaction between denomination, percentage white, and whether the community is one standard deviation below the national median income, at the median income, or above the median income. We present the substantive effects in Figure 2 for both civil rights (top panel) and social welfare (bottom panel).

Generally speaking, our results suggest that income has a minimal impact on the moderating effect of community whiteness on the relationship between denomination and social welfare or civil rights discussion. This being said, the interactive effect on civil rights discussion that is displayed in Figure 1a only holds in moderately wealthy (mean income) and more affluent areas

¹²We wish to thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this additional analysis.

(1 *SD* above the mean income). However, we do not find any evidence to suggest that income levels affect these moderating relationships for social welfare discussions.

Qualitative Analysis of the Sermons

Our qualitative study of the sermons helps to illustrate some of the patterns we have identified and theorized from the quantitative data. In particular, we looked for patterns of how pastors in white and Black neighborhoods explain, justify, or probe the existence of racism and poverty. Our reading of the sermons confirms our theory of ideological rigidity.

For example, in a sermon by a white Evangelical minister in a predominantly Black neighborhood, the pastor begins by acknowledging “the most segregated house in America is 11:00 on Sunday.” He goes on to lament the existence of prejudice, though always doing so in a way that highlights its status as *personal sin* with *personal solutions*, manifesting a commitment to *declaring* and then *living out* both colorblind racism and antistructural individualism. The sermon ends by asking “If we’re going to worship in eternity with people different from us, why are some opposed to doing that on earth?” Note how, again, prejudice is a hindrance not so much from justice but from living as Christ intended people to live (Lichterman, Carter, and Lamont 2009) and that the problem of racism is cast in the “suppressive frame” of “racial reconciliation” rather than a more straightforward acknowledgement of systemic prejudice (Oyakawa 2019). Interestingly, the sermon insists that God is “of all nations” and “not an American god” and again, this call for solidarity is rooted in a Christian logic: “We must view those of all nations—even those who hate us and our God—as people for whom Christ died and people who need the Gospel as badly as we did... We cannot overcome our national pride and prejudice until we understand God as the God of all nations.”

This is certainly not the ethnic nationalism described by recent scholars (Gorski 2017), but neither is it necessarily a radical Christian cosmopolitanism: note how the use of the pronouns *us* and *our* still frames America as a Christian nation, though its fundamental differences from the rest of the world are moral rather than ethnic or racial, a distinction central to colorblind explanations of difference (Bonilla-Silva 2015). Indeed, in the words of another sermon, this one from a White Evangelical pastor in a neighborhood 2.9 standard deviations above the mean: “The Body of Christ is a unique ethnic group in and of itself. We are the children of God. We are part of one family by the new birth.”

That latter sermon contains a story about shipwrecks that itself a fascinating contrast with more progressive, mainline denominations. Preaching about how locals in the area of the shipwreck begin to provide services to those left stranded by the ships, the story parallels a common progressive Christian story about the difference between service and justice. In the common progressive story, there are babies found drifting in a river and people keep developing more and more elaborate services to help those children, until many years and many buildings later, someone asks whether they might go upriver to ask why the babies keep being abandoned into the river. This distinction between service (helping those in need) and justice (seeking to fix the causes of that need) is *not* found in the sermon about shipwrecks: instead it is a story about identity, as the group of “life savers” became a club with increasingly fancy accommodations, finally rejecting its original identity, leaving someone else further down the shore to begin the process again. “History continued to repeat itself, and if you visit that coast today, you will find a number of exclusive clubs along that shore.”

The lesson from history here is very different than the babies in the river story: instead of raising questions about justice and the *causes* of suffering, it raises questions about the inevitability of sin and the need to come back to a founding mission instituted by Christ. If Christ truly unites us, this argument goes, then thinking too much about ethnic differences or the causes of those differences only further separates us from Christ’s mission: “The only ethnic roots that should be emphasized in the church is that of the Body of Christ. There is a lot of emphasis on

ethnicity today. We are told to be proud of our ethnic heritage. We become ethnocentric when we emphasize our ethnic roots over others. When we emphasize differences, we promote division. When we emphasize our oneness in Christ, we promote unity.” Note that this is a message in a predominantly Black neighborhood that is also 2.6 standard deviations below the mean white population. The “ethnic heritage” being referred to here is most likely not European. Note also that to the extent racism is a problem, it is a problem of *persons* giving the wrong emphasis to their identity, rather than a problem of *structures* reproducing inequality. This framing implies a kind of symmetry between communities of color showing communal pride and explicit white racism, and it also helps to make clear why White Evangelical pastors in low-income, Black communities might choose to say nothing at all about the ongoing causes of racialized socioeconomic inequality.

Similarly, sermons about poverty emphasize the difference between the deserving and the undeserving poor. A white male Evangelical minister from an area two standard deviations above the mean of Black residents emphasized the importance of the “poor in spirit” as a means of understanding how Jesus talked about poverty, contrasting his claim to “a very popular belief held among Roman Catholics, neo-Evangelicals, modernists and socialists”:

the truth is that economic destitution does not necessarily make someone right with God. There are many people who are in financial crisis who are at the same time opposed to Christ and opposed to the Gospel...throughout the Bible we find that some types of poverty are actually condemned by God. The poor person who is poor because of his laziness is not blessed, but rather called down for their wickedness.

The pastor goes on that “these passages do not teach that God thinks economic poverty is wonderful or that Jehovah favors socialism, which is based on theft and statism, but that God will defend and avenge the righteous poor who are oppressed.” So, who exactly are the righteous poor? It is never really clear, as the pastor focuses on emphasizing how the rich can be righteous, making clear that the real challenge is spiritual pride. As with the previous example, there is an intriguing parallel to more progressive Christianity, in that the pastor calls congregants to be less focused on the self and more committed to their dependence on God. The difference with more progressive versions of Christianity is that, instead of emphasizing people’s dependence on God *and* others, including social structures and historical processes, the only dependence that matters is the individual’s utter depravity before God. The end of the sermon emphasizes the problems with modern self-esteem culture both in and outside of Christianity. As with the other sermons already listed, the sermon calls congregants toward difficult spiritual effort, but at an individual level that does not challenge broader social structures or the individuals’ privilege within them.

These sermons—and a wide set of others in our data set—generally come to the same kind of avoidance, an avoidance already described by W.E.B. Du Bois in his analysis of the white church (Du Bois 1910; Mayrl 2022): these white pastors avoid discussing structural causes of poverty and racism and they also avoid advocating structural responsibilities. It is this avoidance that is actually the most important for our argument, as our quantitative data show above. We argue that an ideological rigidity leads white Evangelical pastors to avoid discussing poverty when in low-income neighborhoods and especially in low-income, predominantly black neighborhoods. When they do speak about these issues, as we have shown, they tend to do so in ways that maintain the ideology we have described.

CONCLUSION

We are far from the first scholars to identify evangelical leaders as an obstacle to racial equality in the United States. In his book, *The End of White Christian America*, Robert Jones (2016) focuses on how White Evangelical leaders have become increasingly aware of (and apologetic about) their white supremacist past. He also argues that whites’ failure to understand or appreciate

Black protests of police brutality and other examples of structural racism is related to location. Emerson and Smith (2000) argue that these network closures and patterns of self-exculpation led to further segregation, including the continued separation of Protestant congregations into racially distinct groups, a finding Jones noticed nearly 20 years later. Similarly, Blanchard (2007) argues that White Evangelicals' network closure can explain their residential segregation (see also Merino 2011), especially considering how White Evangelicals tend to emphasize volunteering in their own church communities rather than with those who are different from them, perhaps leading them to their suspicion of government assistance programs. Perhaps the solution, Jones suggests, is one of greater interaction: "[Whites'] core social networks—the space where meaning is welded onto experience—tend to be extremely segregated... This effectively closes the door to interactions with people who might challenge what feels like a natural and 'commonsense' perspective on the events they see on cable television" (Jones 2016:160).

Our data give us reason to be suspicious of this kind of solution, at least in and of itself. We instead find that White Evangelical ideological commitments make it hard for them to acknowledge structural causes of poverty and racial inequality, thereby choosing simply not to engage. As we show in a qualitative study of the sermons, even when White Evangelicals *do* engage questions of poverty and race in predominantly non-white and low-income neighborhoods, they do so in ways that are more affected by commitments to (1) antistructuralism, (2) a distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor, and (3) colorblindness rather than by sensitivity to structural causes of poverty and racial inequality they may have gained from their locations. Using geographic information, we also show that location matters in this account: if you are not ideologically prepared for an interaction, instead of changing in response to it, you might simply choose not to react at all. These findings suggest that evangelicals invest deeply in a 'color-blind' approach, leading to a strategy of avoidance. As a result, those attending Evangelical churches can easily avoid any difficult discussion of racial or economic equality and are deprived of learning any tools for navigating these questions in their daily lives. As Evangelicalism is increasingly intertwined with Republican partisanship and Christian Nationalism in the United States, the long-term consequences of this silence may bleed over to non-Church politics. A partisan strategy of silence and avoidance on racial inequality from the Republican Party (Sue 2016; Ray 2022) thus reinforces these patterns.

Because of White Evangelicals' commitment to a religious, racial, and socio-economic ideology, ministers are rendered unable to say anything at all about inequality, helping us to explain why the percentage of sermons on poverty decreases in diverse and low-income areas. As a consequence, evangelical opposition to systematic efforts to address inequality (Jelen 1990; Schwadel 2017), including racial equality (Wong 2018) goes unchallenged by their religious environment. Unless Evangelical pastors dramatically change their ideological commitments (which they are unlikely to do, given that these are rooted in broad worldviews), these churches are unlikely to ever been sites for challenges to inequality. As White pastors continue to hold the vast majority of leadership positions among evangelicals (Oyakawa 2019), we do not anticipate these individuals learning new tools to discuss inequality via their private lives and communities.

Future work (including our own) should better engage other political questions in sermons. We need better data for racism and civil rights, particularly in the post-Ferguson BLM era, and we would love to see more data as well on gender or sexuality, especially as affected by proximity to locations with large LGBT communities or areas that have a higher-than-average percentage of women with graduate degrees. Our sample did not have a large number of Black pastors, but we would be interested in how Black, Asian American, and Latinx Evangelical pastors handle such questions differently. There is also a whole universe of comparative questions, examining Catholic homilies, Muslim khutbahs, and Jewish derashas. We hope that the quantitative and qualitative tools used here provide scholars the opportunity to ask questions about how and when (or if) pastors can be tools for change.

REFERENCES

- Abascal, Maria. 2015. Us and them: Black-White relations in the wake of Hispanic population growth. *American Sociological Review* 80(4):789–813.
- Abascal, Maria, and Delia Baldassarri. 2015. Love thy neighbor? Ethnoracial diversity and trust reexamined. *American Journal of Sociology* 121(3):722–82.
- Adida, Claire L., Adeline Lo and Melina R Platas. 2018. Perspective taking can promote short-term inclusionary behavior toward Syrian refugees. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115(38):9521–6.
- Albertson, Bethany L. 2015. Dog-Whistle Politics: Multivocal Communication and Religious Appeals. *Political Behavior* 37(1):3–26. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-013-9265-x>.
- Ammerman, Nancy Tatom. 1987. *Bible believers: Fundamentalists in the modern world*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Applebaum, Lauren D. 2001. The influence of perceived deservingness on policy decisions regarding aid to the poor. *Political Psychology* 22(3):419–42.
- Baker, Joseph O., Samuel L. Perry and Andrew L. Whitehead. 2020. Keep America Christian (and white): Christian nationalism, fear of ethnoracial outsiders, and intention to vote for Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election. *Sociology of Religion* 81.3:272–93.
- Bean, Lydia. 2014. Compassionate conservatives? Evangelicals, economic conservatism, and national identity. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 53.1:164–86.
- Becker, Penny Edgell. 1998. Making inclusive communities: Congregations and the “problem” of race. *Social Problems* 45(4):451–72.
- Becker, Penny Edgell. 1999. *Congregations in conflict: Cultural models of local religious life*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bellah, Robert N., Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven M. Tipton. 2007. *Habits of the heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Original edition, 1985.
- Beyerlein, Kraig and Mark Chaves. 2003. The political activities of religious congregations in the United States. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42(2):229–46.
- Beyerlein, Kraig and John R Hipp. 2006. From pews to participation: The effect of congregation activity and context on bridging civic engagement. *Social Problems* 53(1):97–117.
- Bielo, James S. 2011. *Emerging evangelicals: Faith, modernity, and the desire for authenticity*. New York: NYU Press.
- Blanchard, Troy C. 2007. Conservative protestant congregations and racial residential segregation: Evaluating the closed community thesis in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties. *American Sociological Review* 72(3):416–433.
- Blouin, David D, Robert V Robinson and Brian Starks. 2013. Are religious people more compassionate and does this matter politically? *Politics and Religion* 6(3):618–45.
- Boisjoly, Johanne, Greg J. Duncan, Michael Kremer, Dan M. Levy and Jacque Eccles. 2006. Empathy or antipathy? The impact of diversity. *American Economic Review* 96(5):1890–905.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2003. Racial attitudes or racial ideology? An alternative paradigm for examining actors’ racial views. *Journal of Political Ideologies* 8(1):63–82.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2015. The structure of racism in color-blind, “post-racial” America. *American Behavioral Scientist* 59(11):1358–76.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2017. *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America*, 5th ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. *Language and symbolic power*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Boussalis, Constantine, Travis G. Coan, and Mirya R. Holman. 2021. Political speech in religious sermons. *Politics and Religion* 14(2):241–68.
- Bracey, Glenn E. and Wendy Leo Moore. 2017. “Race tests”: Racial boundary maintenance in White evangelical churches. *Sociological Inquiry* 87(2):282–302.
- Braunstein, Ruth, Brad R Fulton and Richard L Wood. 2014. The role of bridging cultural practices in racially and socioeconomically diverse civic organizations. *American Sociological Review* 79(4):705–25.
- Brenneman, Todd M. 2013. *Homespun gospel: The triumph of sentimentality in contemporary American evangelicalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brewer, Mark D, Rogan Kersh and R Eric Petersen. 2003. Assessing conventional wisdom about religion and politics: A preliminary view from the pews. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42(1):125–36.
- Brooke, Steven, Youssef Chouhoud and Michael Hoffman. 2022. The Friday effect: How communal religious practice heightens exclusionary attitudes. *British Journal of Political Science* 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123422000138>.
- Brown, Ronald E., R. Khari Brown, Davin Phoenix and James S. Jackson. 2016. Race, religion, and anti-poverty policy attitudes. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 55(2):308–23. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12258>.

- Brown, R. Khari, Edwin Eschler and Ronald E. Brown. 2021. Political congregations, race, and environmental policy attitudes. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 60(2):309–31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12701>.
- Brown, R Khari. 2009. Denominational differences in support for race-based policies among white, black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48(3):604–15.
- Butt, Ahsan I. 2016. Street power: Friday prayers, Islamist protests, and Islamization in Pakistan. *Politics and Religion* 9(1):1–28.
- Clawson, Rosalee A and Rakuya Trice. 2000. Poverty as we know it: Media portrayals of the poor. *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 64(1):53–64.
- Cobb, Ryon J, Samuel L Perry and Kevin D Dougherty. 2015. United by faith? Race/ethnicity, congregational diversity, and explanations of racial inequality. *Sociology of Religion* 76(2):177–98.
- Curry, Evans W, Jerome R Koch and H Paul Chalfant. 2004. Concern for God and concern for society: Religiosity and social justice. *Sociological Spectrum* 24(6):651–66.
- Curtis, Heather D. 2018. *Holy humanitarians: American evangelicals and global aid*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- DeSante, Christopher D. 2013. Working twice as hard to get half as far: Race, work ethic, and America's deserving poor. *American Journal of Political Science* 57(2):342–56.
- Djupe, Paul A and Brian R Calfano. 2009. Justification not by faith alone: Clergy generating trust and certainty by revealing thought. *Politics and Religion* 2(1):1–30.
- Djupe, Paul A and Brian R Calfano. 2013. Religious value priming, threat, and political tolerance. *Political Research Quarterly* 66(4):768–80.
- Djupe, Paul A and Christopher P Gilbert. 2003. *The prophetic pulpit: Clergy, churches, and communities in American politics*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Djupe, Paul A and Christopher P Gilbert. 2008. Politics and church: Byproduct or central mission? *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47(1):45–62.
- Domke, David, Taso Lagos, Mark LaPointe, Melissa Meade and Michael Xenos. 2000. Elite messages and source cues: Moving beyond partisanship. *Political Communication* 17(4):395–402.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. 1910. The souls of white folk. *The Independent* 69:339–42.
- Du Mez, Kristin Kobes. 2020. *Jesus and John Wayne: How white evangelicals corrupted a faith and fractured a nation*. New York: Liveright Publishing.
- Dyck, Joshua J and Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz. 2014. To know you is not necessarily to love you: The partisan mediators of intergroup contact. *Political Behavior* 36(3):553–80.
- Edwards, Korie L. 2008. *The elusive dream: The power of race in interracial churches*. New York: Oxford University Press OUP USA.
- Edwards, Korie L. 2013. Role strain theory and understanding the role of head clergy of racially diverse churches. *Sociology of Religion* 75(1):57–79.
- Edwards, Korie L. 2016. The space between: Exploring how religious leaders reconcile religion and politics. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 55(2):271–87.
- Edwards, Korie L, Brad Christerson and Michael O Emerson. 2013. Race, religious organizations, and integration. *Annual Review of Sociology* 39:211–28.
- Edwards, Korie Little and Michelle Oyakawa. 2022. *Smart suits, tattered boots: Black ministers mobilizing the Black Church in the twenty-first century*. New York: NYU Press.
- Elisha, Omri. 2011. *Moral ambition: Mobilization and social outreach in evangelical megachurches*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Emerson, Michael O. 2010. *People of the dream: Multiracial congregations in the United States*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Emerson, Michael O and Christian Smith. 2000. *Divided by faith: Evangelical religion and the problem of race in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Franz, Berkeley and R. Khari Brown. 2020. Race, Religion and Support for the Affordable Care Act. *Review of religious research* 62(1):101–20.
- Gabel, Matthew and Kenneth Scheve. 2007. Estimating the effect of elite communications on public opinion using instrumental variables. *American Journal of Political Science* 51(4):1013–28.
- Galen, Luke W. 2012. Does religious belief promote prosociality? A critical examination. *Psychological Bulletin* 138(5):876–906.
- Garces-Foley, Kathleen. 2008. Comparing Catholic and evangelical integration efforts. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47(1):17–22.
- Gilens, Martin. 2009. *Why Americans hate welfare: Race, media, and the politics of antipoverty policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Goffman, Erving. 1959. *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday.
- Goffman, Erving. 1974. *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Gordon, Leah N. 2015. *From power to prejudice: The rise of racial individualism in midcentury America*. University of Chicago Press.
- Gorski, Philip. 2017. *American Covenant: A history of civil religion from the Puritans to the present*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gorski, Philip. 2019. Why evangelicals voted for Trump: A critical cultural sociology. In *Politics of meaning/meaning of politics: Cultural sociology of the 2016 U.S. presidential election*, edited by Jason L. Mast and Jeffrey C. Alexander, pp. 165–83. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gorski, Philip S. 2020. *American Babylon: Christianity and democracy before and after Trump*. New York: Routledge.
- Guhin, Jeffrey. 2020. *Agents of God: Boundaries and authority in Muslim and Christian schools*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gushee, David P. 2019. 2018 AAR presidential address: In the ruins of White Evangelicalism: Interpreting a compromised Christian tradition through the witness of African American literature. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 87(1):1–17.
- Hall, Deborah L, David C Matz and Wendy Wood. 2010. Why don't we practice what we preach? A meta-analytic review of religious racism. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 14(1):126–39.
- Hamburg, David A, Alexander George and Karen Ballentine. 1999. Preventing deadly conflict: The critical role of leadership. *Archives of General Psychiatry* 56(11):971–76.
- Harding, Susan Friend. 2018. *The book of Jerry Falwell*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hashem, Mazen. 2010. The ummah in the Khutba: A religious sermon or a civil discourse? *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30(1):49–61.
- Hirschkind, Charles. 2006. *The ethical soundscape: Cassette sermons and Islamic counterpublics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hunt, Matthew O. 2002. Religion, race/ethnicity, and beliefs about poverty. *Social Science Quarterly* 83(3):810–31.
- Hunt, Matthew O. and Heather E. Bullock. 2016. Ideologies and beliefs about poverty. In *The Oxford handbook of the social science of poverty*. Ed. David Brady and Linda M. Burton. Ppp. 93–116. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hunt, Matthew O., Paul R. Croll and Maria Krysan. 2022. Public beliefs about the black/white socioeconomic status gap: What's "upbringing" got to do with it? *Social Science Quarterly* 103(1):82–89.
- Ince, Jelani. 2022. "Saved" by interaction, living by race: The diversity demeanor in an organizational space. *Social Psychology Quarterly*. 85(3): 259-278.
- Jackson, James S., Brown, R. Khari and Brown, Ronald E. (eds.). 2021. *Race and the power of sermons on American politics*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Jelen, Ted G. 1990. Religious belief and attitude constraint. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29(1):118–25. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1387036>.
- Jelen, Ted G. 1993. The Political Consequences of Religious Group Attitudes. *The Journal of Politics* 55(1):178–90. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2132235>.
- Johnson, Megan K, Wade C Rowatt and Jordan LaBouff. 2010. Priming Christian religious concepts increases racial prejudice. *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 1(2):119–26.
- Jones, Robert P. 2016. *The end of white Christian America*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Kahl, Sigrun. 2005. The religious roots of modern poverty policy: Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed Protestant traditions compared. *Archives Européennes de Sociologie/European Journal of Sociology/Europäisches Archiv für Soziologie*: 91–126.
- Katz, Michael B. 2013. *The undeserving poor: America's enduring confrontation with poverty: Fully updated and revised*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kincheloe, Joe L, Shirley R Steinberg, Nelson M Rodriguez and Ronald E Chennault. 2000. *White reign: Deploying whiteness in America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kreitzer, Rebecca J and Candis Watts Smith. 2018. Reproducible and replicable: An empirical assessment of the social construction of politically relevant target groups. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51(4):768–74.
- Lewis, Amanda E and John B Diamond. 2015. *Despite the best intentions: How racial inequality thrives in good schools*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lichterman, Paul, Prudence L Carter and Michele Lamont. 2009. Race-bridging for Christ? Conservative Christians and black-white relations in community life. *Evangelicals and Democracy in America* 1:187–220.
- Lin, Tony Tian-Ren. 2020. *Prosperity Gospel Latinos and their American dream*. UNC Press Books.
- Long, J. Scott. and Mustillo, Sarah A. 2021. Using predictions and marginal effects to compare groups in regression models for binary outcomes. *Sociological Methods & Research* 50(3):1284–320.
- Long, J. Scott and Sarah A. Mustillo. 2021. Using Predictions and Marginal Effects to Compare Groups in Regression Models for Binary Outcomes. *Sociological Methods & Research* 50(1):1284–1320.
- Loseke, Donileen R. 1997. 'The whole spirit of modern philanthropy': The construction of the idea of charity, 1912–1992. *Social Problems* 44(4):425–44.

- Margolis, Michele F. 2020. Who wants to make America great again? Understanding evangelical support for Donald Trump. *Politics and Religion* 13(1):89–118.
- Marti, Gerardo. 2009. *A mosaic of believers: Diversity and innovation in a multiethnic church*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Marti, Gerardo. 2016. “I was a Muslim, but now I am a Christian”: Preaching, legitimation, and identity management in a Southern Evangelical Church. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 55(2):250–70.
- Martí, Gerardo. 2019. *American blindspot: Race, class, religion, and the trump presidency*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Marti, Gerardo and Gladys Ganiel. 2014. *The deconstructed church: Understanding emerging Christianity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mayrl, Damon. 2022. The funk of White souls: Toward a Du Boisian theory of the White Church. *Sociology of Religion* <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srac009>
- McClendon, Gwyneth H. and Rachel Beatty Riedl. 2019. *From pews to politics: Religious sermons and political participation in Africa*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- McClendon, Gwyneth and Rachel Beatty Riedl. 2021. Using sermons to study religions’ influence on political behavior. *Comparative Political Studies* 54(5):779–822.
- McClure, John S. 2007. *Preaching words: 144 key terms in homiletics*. Westminster: John Knox Press.
- Merino, Stephen M. 2011. Neighbors like me? Religious affiliation and neighborhood racial preferences among non-Hispanic Whites. *Religions* 2(2):165–83.
- Metzger, Paul Louis. 2007. *Consuming Jesus: Beyond race and class decisions in a consumer church*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Moffitt, Robert A. 2015. The deserving poor, the family, and the US welfare system. *Demography* 52(3):729–49.
- Mueller, Jennifer C. 2020. Racial ideology or racial ignorance? An alternative theory of racial cognition. *Sociological Theory* 38(2):142–69.
- Newman, William M. 1993. *The meanings of the merger: Denominational identity in the United Church of Christ*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press.
- Oldmixon, Elizabeth, Brian Calfano and Jane Suiter. 2011. Clergy as Political Elites. Working Paper Available at <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1919335> or <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1919335>
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 2014. *Racial formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge.
- Oyakawa, Michelle. 2019. Racial reconciliation as a suppressive frame in evangelical multiracial churches. *Sociology of Religion* 80(4):496–517.
- Paluck, Elizabeth Levy and Donald P Green. 2009. Prejudice reduction: What works? A review and assessment of research and practice. *Annual Review of Psychology* 60:339–67.
- Paluck, Elizabeth Levy, Seth A Green and Donald P Green. 2018. The contact hypothesis re-evaluated. *Behavioural Public Policy* 3(2):129–158.
- Pattillo-McCoy, Mary. 1998. Church culture as a strategy of action in the black community. *American Sociological Review* 63(6):767–84.
- Perry, Samuel L. 2013. Racial diversity, religion, and morality: Examining the moral views of multiracial church attendees. *Review of Religious Research* 55(2):355–76.
- Perry, Samuel L and Andrew L Whitehead. 2015a. Christian nationalism and white racial boundaries: Examining whites’ opposition to interracial marriage. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38(10):1671–89.
- Perry, Samuel L and Andrew L Whitehead. 2015b. Christian nationalism, racial separatism, and family formation: Attitudes toward transracial adoption as a test case. *Race and Social Problems* 7(2):123–34.
- Pettigrew, Thomas F and Linda R Tropp. 2006. A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90(5):751–83.
- Pitt, Richard N. 2010a. Fear of a black pulpit? Real racial transcendence versus cultural assimilation in multiracial churches. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49(2):218–23.
- Pitt, Richard N. 2010b. ‘Killing the messenger’: Religious black gay men’s neutralization of anti-gay religious messages. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49(1):56–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01492.x>
- Pitt, Richard N. 2012. *Divine callings: Understanding the call to ministry in black Pentecostalism*. NYU Press.
- Price, Dennis L., W. Robert Terry and B. Conrad Johnston. 1980. The measurement of the effect of preaching and preaching plus small group dialogue in one Baptist church. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 19(2):186. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1386252>.
- Putnam, Robert D. 2007. E pluribus unum: Diversity and community in the twenty-first century—The 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture. *Scandinavian Political Studies* 30(2):137–74.
- Ramage, Daniel, David Hall, Ramesh Nallapati and Christopher D. Manning. 2009. Labeled LDA: A Supervised Topic Model for Credit Attribution in Multi-Labeled Corpora. In *Proceedings of the 2009 Conference on Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing*, 248–56.
- Ray, Victor. 2022. *Critical race theory: Why it matters & why you should care*. New York: Random House.

- Regnerus, Mark D., Christian Smith and David Sikkink. 1998. Who gives to the poor? The influence of religious tradition and political location on the personal generosity of Americans toward the poor. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37(3):481–93.
- Richey, Russell E. 2013. *Denominationalism illustrated and explained*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Rowatt, Wade C and Lewis M Franklin. 2004. Christian orthodoxy, religious fundamentalism, and right-wing authoritarianism as predictors of implicit racial prejudice. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 14(2):125–38.
- Scheufele, Dietram A and David Tewksbury. 2006. Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. *Journal of Communication* 57(1):9–20.
- Schleifer, Cyrus and Mark Chaves. 2016. The price of the calling: Exploring clergy compensation using current population survey data. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 55(1):130–52.
- Schwadel, Philip. 2017. The republicanization of evangelical protestants in the United States: An examination of the sources of political realignment. *Social Science Research* 62:238–54.
- Shah, Paru R., Eric Gonzalez Juenke and Bernard L. Fraga. 2022. Here comes everybody: Using a data cooperative to understand the new dynamics of representation. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 55(2):300–2.
- Shelton, Jason E. 2018. Is RELTRAD still the gold standard? *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 57(4):817–26.
- Smidt, Corwin E. 2019. Reassessing the concept and measurement of evangelicals: The case for the RELTRAD approach. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 58(4):833–53.
- Smith, Christian. 1998. *American evangelicalism: Embattled and thriving*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Somers, Margaret. 2008. *Genealogies of citizenship: Markets, statelessness, and the right to have rights*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Sumner, Jane Lawrence. 2018. “Gender Balance Assessment Tool (GBAT).” <https://jlsunmer.shinyapps.io/syllabustool/>.
- Steenland, Brian, Lynn D. Robinson, W. Bradford Wilcox, Jerry Z. Park, Mark D. Regnerus and Robert D. Woodberry. 2000. The measure of American religion: Toward improving the state of the art. *Social Forces* 79(1):291–318.
- Steenland, Brian, and Philip Goff. (eds.). 2013. *The new evangelical social engagement*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sue, Derald Wing. 2016. *Race talk and the conspiracy of silence: Understanding and facilitating difficult dialogues on race*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Swidler, Ann. 2001. *Talk of love: How culture matters*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Szewczyk, J. and Crowder-Meyer, M. 2020. Community income inequality and the economic gap in participation. *Political Behavior* <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09621-6>
- Tanner, Kathryn. 1992. *The politics of God: Christian theologies and social justice*. Fortress Press.
- Tranby, Eric and Douglas Hartmann. 2008. Critical whiteness theories and the evangelical “race problem”: Extending Emerson and Smith’s Divided by Faith. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47(3):341–59.
- Trinitapoli, Jenny. 2009. Religious teachings and influences on the ABCs of HIV prevention in Malawi. *Social Science & Medicine* 69(2):199–209.
- Valencia, Richard R. 2012. *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice*. Routledge.
- U.S. Census. 2017. Summary of travel trends: 2017 National Household Travel Survey, Washington, DC.
- van Doorn, Bas W. 2015. Pre-and post-welfare reform media portrayals of poverty in the United States: The continuing importance of race and ethnicity. *Politics & Policy* 43(1):142–62.
- Wald, Kenneth D, Dennis E Owen and Samuel S Hill. 1988. Churches as political communities. *American Political Science Review* 82(2):531–48.
- Warner, R Stephen. 1993. Work in progress toward a new paradigm for the sociological study of religion in the United States. *American Journal of Sociology* 98(5):1044–93.
- Whitehead, Andrew L and Samuel L Perry. 2020. *Taking America back for God: Christian nationalism in the United States*: Oxford University Press.
- Wilcox, Clyde and Carin Larson. 2006. *Onward Christian Soldiers: The Religious Right in American Politics*. 3rd ed. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Wilson, George. 1996. Toward a revised framework for examining beliefs about the causes of poverty. *Sociological Quarterly* 37(3):413–28.
- Williamson, W. Paul and Howard R. Pollio. 1999. The phenomenology of religious serpent handling: A rationale and thematic study of extemporaneous sermons. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 38(2):203–18.
- Wong, Janelle. 2018. The evangelical vote and race in the 2016 presidential election. *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics* 3(1):81–106.
- Woodberry, Robert D. and Christian S. Smith. 1998. Fundamentalism et al: Conservative Protestants in America. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25–56.
- Woodberry, Robert D., Jerry Z. Park, Lyman A. Kellstedt, Mark D. Regnerus and Brian Steensland. 2012. The measure of American religious traditions: Theoretical and measurement considerations. *Social Forces* 91(1):65–73.
- Wuthnow, Robert J. 2011. Taking talk seriously: Religious discourse as social practice. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 50(1):1–21.

- Yancey, George. 1999. An examination of the effects of residential and church integration on racial attitudes of whites. *Sociological Perspectives* 42(2):279–304.
- Yancey, George. 2007. *Interracial contact and social change*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner.
- Zucker, Gail Sahar and Bernard Weiner. 1993. Conservatism and perceptions of poverty: An attributional analysis. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 23(12):925–43.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information may be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of the article.

TABLE A.1 Benchmarking our sample against U.S. counties

TABLE B.1 Community-generated labels used to identify civil rights and welfare-related speech

TABLE F.1 Comparison of marginal effects across groups for Figures 1 and 2