CLERGY IN ACTION:
RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN RESPONSE TO SOCIAL CRISES

Senior Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

On May 1st, 2006, hundreds of thousands of people across the United School skipped work, school, and regular commitments to protest pending immigration policies. Called “A Day Without Immigrants,” this nationwide economic boycott united immigrants and native-born participants alike in efforts to demonstrate the power of the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the U.S. in 2006 (Archibold 2006). Since the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, issues of immigration rose to national attention, rallying both supporters of increased immigration to the U.S. and supporters of strict regulatory policies behind their respective positions (Archibold 2006). Much activism in the mid 2000’s on immigration was in direct response to complex immigration legislation introduced by both the United States House and Senate, seeking to address issues surrounding immigration to the United States, particularly by those who arrived without legal documentation (Archibold 2006). Two such pieces of legislation, proposed in 2005 and 2006, led directly to the May 1st protests.

The controversial Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act of 2005, or H.R. 4437, was passed in the United States House of Representatives (National Conference of State Legislatures 2005) just over a year before the Day Without Immigrants. H.R. 4437, more colloquially referred to as the Sensenbrenner bill after its sponsor, House Judiciary Chairman Representative James Sensenbrenner, sought to “address illegal immigration” through criminalizing the presence of undocumented immigrants, redefining illegal entry to the U.S. as an aggregated felony, allowing undocumented immigrants to be listed in a national crime database, and allocating significant funds to construct a border fence between the U.S. – Mexico Border (National Conference of State Legislatures 2005). The passing of H.R. 4437 caused national outrage amongst undocumented immigrants and immigrant-rights activists,
who viewed the bill as gravely harmful to tax-paying, hard-working immigrants (Archibold 2006). Under pressure from activists and democratic opponents to H.R. 4437, the U.S. senate developed its own legislation, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006, or S.2611. This legislation maintained some policies from H.R. 4437, such as its border enforcement mechanism and additional funding to incarcerate undocumented immigrants (National Conference of State Legislatures 2006). However, S.2611 was considered to be more comprehensive and supportive of immigrants because it provided three options for undocumented immigrants in the U.S. to gain some form of legal status, one of which was a pathway to citizenship (National Conference of State Legislatures 2006). While S.2611 passed in 2006, components of its policy conflicted with statements in H.R.4377, which offered no such pathway to citizenship. Due to this, both bills needed to be “reconciled,” or merged, before they were signed by then President George W. Bush.

Expressing their frustration with these contentious policies, national organizers of the Day Without Immigrants looked to unite undocumented immigrants, most of whom at the time were Latino, with legal residents and people of various ethnicities to demand more comprehensive, rights-oriented legislation (Archibold 2006). Their efforts made an impact across the nation, with major protests in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, and Seattle, and other boycotts and protest events occurring in 70 cities (Hamilton 2006, Archibold 2006). In Chicago alone, up to 90 percent of students at predominately Latino high schools did not attend school (Hamilton 2006). Businesses with large numbers of immigrant workers were affected, with 70 percent of goods in the port of Los Angeles being stalled in delivery due to trucker protests (Archibold 2006). An estimated 400,000 people were in attendance at a Chicago rally calling for better legislative options than H.R. 4437 and S.2611. Amongst those protesting, in Chicago and
nationally, were individuals, community organizations, school and education groups, policy specialists, and immigrants themselves.

One group of individuals seemed to be particularly involved in and motivated by the events of A Day Without Immigrants. At events all over the nation, clergy of various religious traditions and faiths made statements of support for the plight of immigrants, participated in protest activities, or amended their own practices to better include the interests of immigrants. In Cleveland, Evangelical Minister Max Rodas called for coalition-building amongst Latino immigrants and African Americans to better “organize our neighborhoods from the ground up” for change (Hamilton 2006). Detroit-based Reverend Tomas Sepulveda held a rally from his pulpit at Saint Anne Church, where hundreds of supporters gathered to call for change (CBS News 2006). Rabbi Karen Bender of Tarzana, California, took her children out of school to attend the Los Angeles rally, citing her Jewish values as inspirational in her decision to participate (Martinez 2006). In statements to various news outlets, each of the above-mentioned clergy-people spoke of how they felt religiously compelled to stand up to immigration laws and policies they found to violate their religious convictions (Hamilton 2006, CBS News 2006, Martinez 2006). For the Minister, the Reverend, and the Rabbi, immigration was an issue that called upon them as religious people to take action.

Clergy not only participated in Day Without Immigrants events as individuals; they also mobilized organizations in which they held membership to take action in response to the national boycott of immigrant labor. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago released a statement prior to May 1st calling upon its parishioners to attend a rally in Grant Park to “march for human dignity, for new laws that recognize the valuable contribution of immigrants to our nation and communities” (Lendon 2006). By releasing this statement, the Archdiocese intended to mobilize
its membership and condoned action against what they considered to be unfair immigration social policies and pieces of legislation. Following the Day Without Immigrants, both the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Unitarian Universalist Association, governing bodies of their respective clergy, released public resolutions, committing to take action to support undocumented immigrants. The Central Conference of American Rabbis resolved to condemn punitive treatment of immigrants, join in interfaith efforts for advocacy of immigrant rights, and prioritize the humanity of “illegal immigrants” in actions their members take (Central Conference of American Rabbis 2006). In their “Action of Immediate Witness to Support Immigrant Justice,” the Unitarian Universalist Association noted their tradition’s belief that no one is “the stranger,” and applauded Day Without Immigrants events as inspiration for their commitment to “support just immigration reform,” “oppose attempts at all levels of government to further criminalize or demonize immigrants and the people who give them humanitarian aid,” and “urge all Unitarian Universalist congregations and their members to continue providing services and fellowship to undocumented individuals,” regardless of the legality of their actions (Unitarian Universalist Association 2006). In their resolutions and statements of encouragement, clergy took a clear, unified religious stance on immigration that called to welcome immigrants as equal and contributing members of society.

The events of the Day Without Immigrants and subsequent actions of religious leaders represent a pattern of clergy participation in social action. In periods across American history, clergy from all political backgrounds have taken part in or led action. Across issues, clergy have mobilized their communities to act towards social change (Olson 2011), whether through policy, influencing public perception, or preaching. Much of current published scholarship questioning clergy’s participation in social action over the past 50 years explores politically right-wing, or
Republican, clergy. This action includes their attempts to address and respond to legislation around issues including abortion and birth control and marriage for same-sex couples (Olson 2011:271). Within sociology, studies of politically progressive clergy have only recently emerged, however, there is a clear history, particularly since 2000, of progressive clergy taking action in the U.S. (Olson 2011). Clergy’s participation in the Day Without Immigrants actions serve as only one example; clergy have also become involved in issues of hate speech.

Seven years prior to the Day Without Immigrants, Northwestern University basketball coach Ricky Byrdsong was walking outside of his Skokie, Illinois home with his two young children on July 2nd, 1999. Byrdsong, an enigmatic community member, was well known for his passionate coaching and often impassioned outbursts at basketball games (Kloehn 1999). Miles away from where Byrdsong enjoyed the Fourth of July weekend weather with his family, white supremacist Benjamin Smith drove through northern Chicago, attempting to kill as many people of color and Jews as possible (Almer 1999). Along his route, he shot nine people, including Orthodox Jews and Asian-Americans (Almer 1999). Smith then traveled to Skokie, drove down Byrdsong’s block, and shot and killed him in front of his children, solely because of the color of his skin (Smietana 2003:24). Byrdsong’s murder, considered by police to be a racially-motivated hate crime (Smietana 2003), shocked the surrounding community. Skokie, a community with a significant number of Holocaust survivor residents and home to religiously and racially diverse populations, was the site of a 1977 march by Neo-Nazis who carried flags emblazoned with Swastikas, a hate symbol (Grossman 2017). However, few violent hate-motivated events had been reported in Skokie between 1977 and 1999, and many members of the community considered their suburb to be safe and welcoming (Grossman 2017).
In the days that followed the murder of Ricky Byrdsong and the wounding of nine others, local clergy came together to organize in solidarity with Byrdsong’s family and the community at large. A local Rabbi gathered one hundred Orthodox Jews to attend Byrdsong’s funeral and pray for his family (Kloehn 1999). Twelve Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Catholic, and Protestant clergy formed a delegation to “make a case against racial hatred” in Skokie to honor the life and legacy of Ricky Byrdsong (Kloehn 1999). An auxiliary bishop from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago called upon his fellow clergy to take a stand against hate crimes and hate speech following Byrdsong’s death (Kloehn 1999). Across Illinois, clergy organized to hold mass vigils against hate, uniting people of various faiths to “increase tolerance and understanding” (Benoit 1999). In one such vigil, Reverend David Anderson, the executive director of the Illinois Conference of Churches, called upon listeners to take action against hate speech, where he cited the power of the religious community to mobilize as essential in turbulent times (Almer 1999). At the same vigil, Illinois State Representative Jeff Schoenberg, himself a religious Jew, commented on how his faith calls upon believers to pursue justice (Almer 1999). Together, these religious leaders helped unite a distressed community after hateful tragedy.

Clergy not only consoled community members following Byrdsong’s murder; they also mobilized to create social change through action. A contingency of clergy, in partnership with Byrdsong’s widow, Sherialyn Byrdsong, were instrumental in lobbying for the passage of Illinois House Bill 136, an “anti-hate-crime law covering crimes based on animosity towards religion, sexual orientation, national origin...” race, and other categories (Smietana 2003:24). The National Council of Churches, a multi-denominational umbrella group of hundreds of thousands of U.S. churches, worked in partnership with seven religious groups from Jewish, Protestant and Catholic traditions to co-sponsor a “comprehensive campaign to combat hate groups in America”
(National Council of Churches 1999). Together, this interfaith initiative helped expose hate-crimes and speech incidents in communities across the U.S. and brought these instances to the attention to the U.S. Justice Department, which then continued to investigate (National Council of Churches 1999). While much of this action was mobilized in the months and years following Byrdsong’s death, its impact is still present today. Sherialyn Byrdsong runs an active nonprofit foundation to educate local children on tolerance practices and the dangers of hateful speech, and her organization still partners with area clergy to teach lessons and guide discussions (Smietana 2003:24). Every summer, in nearby Evanston, Illinois, the Ricky Byrdsong Memorial Race Against Hate, a 5K/10K walk or run event, helps raise money for the Evanston YWCA’s racial justice and violence prevention programs (YMCA Evanston/North Shore 2018). At the Race Against Hate, a group of community clergy lead attendees in a remembrance prayer and a call for tolerance and love, reminding them of Byrdsong’s death and the action they can take to prevent like events (YMCA Evanston/North Shore 2018). In June 2018, the Race Against Hate will celebrate its 19th anniversary and will continue to provide community members an opportunity to stay involved in anti-hate measures.

In the twelve years since the original Day Without Immigrants and the nineteen since Ricky Byrdsong’s death, society has vastly changed, in terms of both immigration and hate speech. In a 2000 U.S. Census publication, authors reported 26.4 million foreign-born people resided in the United States as of March 1999 (Gireco et al. 2012:1), which then represented 9.8 percent of the total U.S. population (Brittingham 2000:1). The largest immigrant populations in 1999 came from Latin America, including Mexico and Central America, as well as from Asia (Brittingham 2001). A similar report released in 2012 shows, between 1999 and 2010, the number of foreign-born people in the U.S. grew exponentially, from 26.4 million to 40 million
people, representing 13 percent of the total 2010 U.S. population (Grieco et al. 2012: 2). While immigrants from Latin America still represented the largest contingency of foreign-born people in the U.S. in 2010, numbers of immigrants from Asia and Africa vastly increased since 1999 (Grieco et al. 2012). The Center for Immigration Studies, a non-partisan research organization, attributed the 4.8 percent increase in foreign-born immigrants to a variety of factors. While recessions in 2000 and 2008 caused a net loss of jobs in the US between 2000 and 2010, the Center for Immigration Studies argues increased immigration could be attributed to causes outside labor-market conditions (Camarota 2011:7). During this period, the Center for Immigration Studies suggests immigration was driven by the promise of political freedoms in the U.S., available social networks of friends and family already in the United States, and flexible or unenforced immigration policies (Camarota 2011:7).

While immigration continually increased throughout the decade, hate crimes and hate speech in the U.S. reached a peak in 2001. Hate crimes, or violent “bias-motivated criminal incidents” based on protected classes including race, religion, and sexuality (FBI National Press Office 2001) reported to the FBI increased from 8,063 in 2000 to an all-time high of 9,730 in 2001, spiking immediately after the September 11th terrorist attacks perpetrated by al-Qaeda (Keng Kuek Ser 2016). More specifically, hate crimes against Muslims increased from 28 incidents in 2000 to 481 occurrences in 2001 (Keng Kuek Ser 2016). While the number of hate crimes reported to the FBI has seemingly decreased since 2001, the number of hate crimes reported against Muslims has remained around 150 since 2002, showing an overall increase (excluding the post 9/11 spike) (Keng Kuek Ser 2016). Furthermore, since Donald Trump was elected President in November 2016, reported hate crimes against Muslims have increased by
twelve percent (Cohen 2017). These elevated instances of immigration and religion-related hate crimes provide a complex political landscape to examine in an academic context.

This thesis will build upon previous scholarship to examine progressive clergy and their participation in social action today. I explore how religion and action intersect with one another and what that intersection means for progressive religious communities. This work is centered around the following research question: How have clergy who identify as politically progressive responded to political and social events following President Donald Trump’s election? What have they done, how have they thought about it, and why? This work will investigate the role of religion in social action on issues related to immigration and speech, issues I will show are currently relevant through qualitative interviews with Boston-area clergy in Jewish, Protestant, and Unitarian Universalist faith communities. I explore how clergy interact with their congregants and community organizations to take action as both individuals and faith community leaders with hopes of contributing to lacking scholarship on progressive clergy in action today.

In my exploration, I will focus on clergy’s thoughts on immigration and speech-based action, the actions they participate in and the community partners they collaborate with, as well as their aversion to conflict and how it affects their actions and outcomes. I find clergy in my sample do not express vastly different opinions or participation in action based on religion or denomination. Instead, clergy find a clear connection between immigration and various religious scriptures, allowing them to define immigration and immigration reform as religious issues. Clergy participated in religious coalition-based action on immigration, and immigration issues caused little conflict between clergy and their congregants. In contrast, clergy struggled to identify a connection between scripture and speech issues, leading to a diminished, less uniform participation in action surrounding speech. Furthermore, issues of free and hate speech caused
clergy to be in conflict with their congregants, which clergy eventually avoided through compromise of their personal ideals. In summary, although immigration and speech are both nationally relevant issues in 2018, progressive clergy in Boston have a more vested religious interest in immigration as a faith-based imperative, which positively affects their participation in immigration-based action and negatively impacts action on speech. This dichotomy may be explained by the complex, constitutional nature of free speech as an issue, by the lack of religious coalitions taking action on free or hate speech in the Boston area, or by the conflicts that arose around speech issues for several clergy. My central argument here is this: Clergy were more easily able to act on immigration issues because they understood these issues as religious, immigration was acted upon by their peers, and clergy could harness the social capital available to them in their position (due to lack of congregational conflict), than they could act on speech.

Collectively, the actions interviewees took focused on changing public opinion rather than changing legislative policies for immigrants or those experiencing hate speech. If clergy are looking to create significant local or national change, they should continue to harness their social capital to bring about social change; their current action is helping some individuals and makes a difference for their congregants. Clergy also have an opportunity to become more involved in legal and legislative policy action. In politically unsteady times, clergy have proven they can mobilize their communities to take action as religious people, and whether the impact of that action is vast or minor, it is worth examining further.
METHODOLOGY

As this project began, I first needed to operationalize “progressive” to narrow the scope of potential clergy to interview. After examining literature on progressive clergy and the religious left, I struggled to find a cohesive definition of progressive clergy. Some scholars found all clergy were generally more socially and politically left-leaning than the general population (Jeffries and Tygart 1974:317), and others found a correlation between progressive political values with liberal interpretations of scripture (Nteta and Wallsten 2012:894). Even within political written discourse, I struggled to find a clear definition of the word “progressive.” The Oxford Dictionary defines progressive as, “Favoring or characterized by innovation or reform of an individual, policy, or party: advocating or working towards change or reform in society, especially in political or religious matters; committed to progress, forward-looking” (Oxford American Dictionary 2010). Throughout American history, this definition has been tweaked and twisted by different groups and movements identifying themselves as “progressive.”

Historian Gabriel Gherasim explains that the term “progressive” has historically referred to the American progressive movement, beginning during the post-Civil War Reconstruction period. During this period, progressives adopted a doctrine that supported the role of the government in “promoting a legal framework that would protect the less privileged classes” (Gherasim 2011:123). The American progressive movement differed from populism and socialism, but often adopted similar social positions advocating for more government regulation, cultural pragmatism, and social service efficiency (Gherasim 2011:128). Great thinkers of the progressive movement included John Dewey, James Harvey Robinson, Charles Beard, Walter Lippmann, and Herbert Croly (Gherasim 2011:136). In its modern context, Gherasim cautions that the colloquial use of the term “progressive” does not often refer to the American progressive
movement. Instead, he argues the term progressive has become aligned with the more liberal values of the Democratic party, particularly in areas of social reform (Gherasim 2011:136).

For the purposes of this thesis, I will adopt Gherasim’s later definition of progressive, where I define progressive as politically left-leaning and aligning with beliefs in social reforms moving towards equitable treatment of all peoples. Recognizing the discrepancies between modern definitions of progressive (Gherasim 2011:136), I was careful to let each interview subject self-identify as progressive. Because I did not ask them why they identified as progressive or what that term meant to them, a personal oversight in my interview guide, I did not gather data to devise a collective definition of progressive. In my subject recruitment, however, I was careful to specify that all subjects should self-identify as progressive, and if a potential subject did not identify as progressive, they should voice that in our preliminary conversation, which no one did. In fact, many respondents clarified their political positionality and mentioned their progressive identity during our interviews, so I am confident this project achieved a self-identifying progressive sample.

In my study, I utilized qualitative research, interviewing, and analytic techniques. As part of the Research Track of Brandeis’s Sociology Major, I have completed courses on Qualitative Research Methods, where I became familiar with interview guide design, document analysis, and participant observation. Before beginning any research on human subjects, I submitted a protocol to the Brandeis University Committee for Protection of Human Subjects’ Institutional Review Board (IRB) to gain permission. My protocol was accepted by the Brandeis IRB on September 19th, 2017, and only after that point did I begin looking for subjects to participate in my study. I utilized convenience sampling, an approach to “obtaining a sample of respondents” where researchers “accept pretty much whomever” they can gain access to (Weiss 1994:24). I sought
subjects who were located geographically close to Brandeis University, either in Boston or the surrounding suburbs, because it was convenient for me to travel to collect interviews in the area.

While I chose Boston as a location focus due to convenience, Boston has unique qualities that set it apart from other cities I could have studied. Boston is located on the waters of the Massachusetts Bay of the Northern Atlantic Ocean, with several ports of entry for immigrants arriving by boat or by air (U.S. Customs and Border Patrol 2018). In stark contrast to other port cities, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York, all cities with populations over two million people (U.S. Census Bureau 2016: Quick Facts), Boston has a significantly smaller population of 673,184 (U.S. Census Bureau 2016: Massachusetts). Possibly due to its smaller size, Boston has more houses of worship per capita – approximately one per 1,107 people – than any other port city in the U.S. (Speiser 2015). For my research, which centers around clergy working within religious institutions and houses of worship, having a larger number of houses of worship per capita provides added opportunity to investigate religious prominence within the city.

Furthermore, the presence of religious life in Boston adds an additional element to the cultural landscape which I found unique to Boston based on preliminary reviews of religious life in other cities. Though I chose Boston for convenience, it also provided a unique climate in which I could study issues relating to this project.

By utilizing a convenience sample, I also used my social capital and connections with religious leaders at Brandeis to gain access to their colleagues. To contact subjects, I used a method called snowball sampling (Weiss 1994:25), where I contacted a few clergy in the Boston area who were recommended to me by religious staff at Brandeis and asked them if they had any colleagues who self-identified as progressive clergy and might be willing to participate in this
study. Beyond those preliminary four contacts recommended by Brandeis staff, I was able to reach all nine other subjects through snowball sampling.

Snowball sampling as a methodology offers several benefits and drawbacks. As a student, I am not immersed in the world of progressive clergy. Clergy were a “hidden population” to me (Weiss 1994), meaning I was unfamiliar with their community structures and work within and outside of those structures. Through contacting most clergy through snowball sampling, I was exposed to clergy in hidden communities doing work relevant to my study, and I likely would not have become aware of their work through my own research alone. However, this point is also a weakness; clergy referred through snowball sampling often knew each other, were part of insular communities, and occupied similar social spaces. For example, twelve of thirteen of my subjects identified were white. Through a different methodology, I might have been able to seek out a large racial diversity in my sample, but for this project, I simply contacted anyone I could, thus skewing the sample. Furthermore, because my sample came from an insular group of personal and professional references, I was unable to determine whether it would be representative of any larger groups and populations. However, snowball sampling worked as a functional methodology for me to seek out clergy, and therefore it was a good practice for me.

While considering a potential study sample, I thought about what type of comparison groups I would want to interview. Comparison groups consist of subjects with identities or identity-components that are different from one another to provide a comparison for study findings (Weiss 1994:30). While I knew, due to the lack of scholarship on progressive clergy, I wanted to concentrate my study on clergy who identified as progressives, I still sought difference within the progressive clergy umbrella. On the advice of my advisor, Professor Wendy Cadge, I decided to try to recruit individuals from three different religious traditions to participation in
action changed based on faith. I decided to focus on Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic clergy who were faith leaders in their respective houses of worship. In order to have enough data for comparison, I decided to interview five Jewish clergy, five Protestant clergy, and five Catholic clergy (see APPENDIX A.1: Denominations Represented, page 132). After receiving clergy’s email, either from snowball sampling or from staff at Brandeis, I reached out to them via email, asking if they would be interested in participating in my project (see APPENDIX B.1: Recruitment Materials, page 134).

Through snowball sampling, I initially emailed 20 people: seven Jewish clergy, nine Protestant clergy, and four Catholic clergy. I received responses from five Jewish clergy and five Protestant clergy via email, all of whom expressed intent to participate, which satisfied my sample. None of the Catholic clergy responded after seven business days, so I sent them a follow up email (see APPENDIX B.2: Follow Up Email, page 135), noting that I would wait until the following week for them to respond. If they did not respond by that date, I stated I would call their office to see if they would participate. After stating I would call, I received responses from all four clergy I had contacted asking not to participate. Later, I received a call on my cell phone from a senior member of the Boston Catholic community, who told me it would be difficult to find any Catholic leader willing to speak with me due to restrictions on the community’s participation in studies after past controversies (see Boston’s Religious Landscape: Protestants, Unitarians, and Catholics, page 39). After receiving that call, I reconnected with Professor Wendy Cadge, and we decided together to explore a different religious denomination as a third comparison group. Due to their progressive history in the United States, I decided to reach out to Unitarian Universalist clergy. I contacted eight Unitarian Universalist clergy, three of whom responded and interviewed with me.
Within my sample, I wanted as much variation as possible in denomination, race, and gender of clergy, but because I utilized a convenience sample through snowball sampling, that was unlikely. My sample ended up being mostly evenly split on gender with 54% male (seven subjects) and 46% female (six subjects). Subjects were also denominationally split, with three Jewish denominations [Reform, Reconstructionist, Non-Denominational] (out of five subjects) and four Protestant denominations (out of five subjects) represented, in addition to three Unitarian Universalist subjects (see APPENDIX A, page 132, for chart breakdowns of gender and denomination). For all subjects, I used the same interview guide (see APPENDIX C: Interview Guide, page 136), which I developed in consultation with Professor Cadge and the Brandeis IRB. The interview guide was written with a one-hour time in mind, and most interviews lasted from 45 minutes to one hour. My interview guide asked questions in five sections about clergy’s congregational history, their perspectives on immigration and free and hate speech, and miscellaneous issues. I also collected occupational and demographic data, such as clergy title and gender. Each section in the interview guide was prefaced with a brief section summary. Interviews were conducted between November 2017 and January 2018, both in person and over the phone, due to scheduling difficulties.

In my research, progressive clergy varied in their understandings of issues including immigration and free speech, however, this variation was not evident across religious lines. Prior to analyzing my data, I assumed my analysis would differ across religions, where Protestants would align in thought most closely with other Protestants, regardless of denomination, Jews with Jews, and Unitarian/Universalists with Unitarian/Universalists. Despite my hypothesis, I found that the progressive clergy I interviewed displayed homogeneity in ideas across religious denominations and faiths. I found little religious division in my data, where Jewish clergy spoke
similarly to Protestant clergy, and Protestant clergy spoke similarly to Jewish clergy, and so on.

In my preliminary consideration of division by religion, I failed to account for the possibility that shared progressive political ideals and religious texts would illicit similar answers from clergy, regardless of religion. This argument is recent but not entirely new; scholar Robert Wuthnow claimed in his 1988 book, *The Restructuring of American Religion*, and in his subsequent 1996 article, *Restructuring of American Religion: Further Evidence*, that since the 1950s, differences between religious denomination identity have diminished as new alignments formed around religious political affiliation, suggesting that politically progressive Christians and progressive Jews would be more ideologically aligned than a progressive Reform Jew and a politically conservative Orthodox Jew (Wuthnow 1996:304).

According to IRB policies and to protect my subjects, all subjects were given a consent form prior to beginning any interviews. The consent form (see APPENDIX D: Consent Form, page 139) explicitly outlines the limited benefits and risks to a subject and allows them to give their express consent to the interview. Subjects had the opportunity to ask questions at every stage in the interview process, to walk away at any time, and to give or withhold permission to record the interview. Every participant consented orally to the interview and through signing the consent form, and they all consented to have their interview recorded. Following their interviews, I transcribed the recording through Trint.com, thanks to a grant from the Brandeis Senior Thesis Fund. I then coded all 13 transcripts for analysis using ATLAS.ti software. I stored all data from interviews, including audio recordings, coded transcripts, and analyses, in separate password-protected folders in a password-protected Box.com account. No handwritten notes were taken in the interview process. Also, per IRB policies, I will use pseudonyms for each interview subject and his or her house of worship name (see APPENDIX A.3: Clergy and
Congregation Pseudonyms, pg. 133). Throughout each step of the process, I have taken the upmost care to protect the identity of my subjects, and I consciously chose these methodologies to do so as well.
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

For sociologists and sociologists of religion, the current state of political affairs provides a plethora of opportunities to engage their theories and research. Following the November 2016 election of President Donald Trump, communities all over the U.S., both religious and secular, have mobilized in protest of new policies. As a scholar living and learning during this turbulent period, I feel empowered that I am able to use my knowledge to study and explore topics of sociology and religion. Motivated primarily by the lack of research on progressive clergy, in conjunction with the result of the 2016 election, I decided to conduct my senior research thesis on Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic clergy in the Boston area to explore their action-based responses to the policies and practices that have arisen since the election, particularly in the areas of immigration and speech.

In reviewing literature with hopes of answering my guiding research question, I have asked the following guiding questions of the literature: What are sociologists and sociologists of religion studying and concluding about progressive clergy and their involvement in social movements? What preliminary research are they citing/what research preceded this and serves as a backbone? Who is researching? In what areas? Are they issue-specific? Location-specific? Denomination-specific? In the process of conducting preliminary literature searches and reviews, I found a significant basis of literature on these topics to be concentrated within the sociological field, particularly written by social movement theorists or sociologists of religion. I will also integrate works from political and historical discourse. Because my research question explores the intersection of politics and religion, many of the sources I explore are interdisciplinary in

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1 While I initially considered studying Muslim clergy as well, I determined there was not a sufficient sample of Muslim clergy working in houses of worship inside the City of Boston, proper. After conducting preliminary research, I discovered there were only two mosques in Boston proper (The Pluralism Project 2018), which would not constitute an adequate sample of clergy working within religious institutions.
nature. In the following literature review, I will inform my reader about the current state of sociological research on religion, social movements, clergy, progressive clergy, and their participation in social action, with hopes of examining commonalities and discrepancies in findings across various fields. Here, I define religion for the purposes of this project and find clergy to have a vast history of involvement in social movements, mobilizing for progressive and conservative causes alike. I also explore demographic data around Boston to better understand the religious and immigrant landscape of the city.

Through conducting my literature review, I sought to first define religion and social movements and to then explore clergy’s role and historical participation in these movements. I found a significant amount of research investigating clergy’s involvement in social movements in the United States. Scholars writing in this area examine clergy’s work through a variety of lenses, including resource mobilization theory, race, and scripture. However, much of this research is concentrated amongst politically conservative clergy. While some scholars, such as Laura Olson, have begun to investigate progressive clergy and their involvement in social movements, this literature is underdeveloped and requires additional research. Furthermore, scholars have only recently begun to research clergy’s participation in Sanctuary movements (social movements organized by clergy to protect undocumented immigrants). There seems to be little scholarship on religious action on speech, which I define as statements, public or private, that support an ideology or belief. These holes in the literature are particularly important because of recent events under the Trump administration, such as the threatening of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protective Status (TPS) legislation, two policies which support undocumented immigrants in the US who arrived as children and under traumatic circumstances, respectively, and the Neo-Nazi march on Charlottesville, VA. To best
analyze the subsequent progressive clergy response to these issues, it is essential to recognize foundational pieces of literature, which provide context and meaning to clergy’s action in Boston today.

PURPOSES OF RELIGION

In text exploration of themes relating to religion, I first sought to define religion itself. Sociologist of religion Christian Smith explained religion as “a system of beliefs and practices oriented towards the sacred or supernatural, through which the life experiences of groups of people are given meaning and direction” (Smith 1996:5). Smith argues that humans seek meaning in all actions, and religious beliefs provide them with a purpose for their existence (Smith 1996:5). Smith then continues to explore religion as a meaning system and argues that religion is a socially constructed form of culture, or “a social group’s conglomeration of shared codes, norms, values, beliefs, and symbols that tell its members what to do with their lives and why” (Smith 1996:5). Sociologist Margarita Mooney defines religion similarly to Smith, stating that religion provides individuals with “tools to make sense of the world” and operates as “a way to order chaos and construct a meaningful picture of reality’ (Mooney 2009:45). In her interviews with religious Haitian immigrants to the United States, Mooney found that many of them sought faith from their religious practice and turned to God because belief in a higher power somehow brought them strength to overcome their life circumstances (Mooney 2009). These immigrants did not turn to religion to find meaning in their lives but instead used it as a structure with which to motivate themselves to persevere through difficult experience, thus using religion as a meaning system.

While Mooney and Smith conclude that religion serves as a meaning system for individuals in society, who turn to religion to seek reason and explanation for the inexplicable,
sociologist Rhys Williams problematizes this meaning-system rhetoric. Williams describes religion as a market for its participants, describing a framework commonly adopted by sociologists. In the religious economy, providers (religious organizations) offer services (prayer services, spiritual counseling, community building) that consumers seek, creating a supply-and-demand system like any other economy, though this one deals directly with spirituality and belief (Williams 2007:24). This framework, pioneered by scholars such as William Sims Bainbridge, Roger Finke, and Rodney Stark (Williams 2007:24), allows scholars to examine religion as a market to explain the fluctuation between religious participation and lack of involvement in religious institutions.

Other scholars posit religion provides its followers with a moral compass and sense of right and wrong. In her studies of social movements surrounding immigration policy, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotello notes that religion provides a “moral justification and motivation for action,” centering altruism in religious teachings (Hondagneu-Sotello 2008:19). Smith calls this religious moral justification, “transcendent motivation” (Hondagneu-Sotello 2008:19). Hondagneu-Sotello writes that transcendent motivation calls each believer to the “higher law” of God, and that he or she may feel compelled by their sense of morality, grounded in scripture and religion, to rectify social injustices and stand up for what is morally just (Hondagneu-Sotello 2008:19). These concepts, including righteousness in the Jewish faith, zakat (charity) in the Muslim tradition, and kinship in Christian teachings, ground their corresponding faiths in moral action, which, transferred to believers through scripture or prayer, entices moral behavior for listeners (Hondagneu-Sotello 2008). Smith, although in agreement regarding religion as a moral social institution, also notes that transcendent motivation can serve to disrupt social norms, providing the context to question and critique unfair social structures that are perpetuated throughout
society (Smith 1996:7). The above-mentioned scholars continue in dialogue throughout their works, citing one another’s research as they continue to investigate the purposes of religion.

After conducting research on the meaning of religion, in addition to my previous knowledge, I considered my own conceptualization of religion. I noticed several scholars (Mooney, Hondagneu-Sotello) identify religion as a source of morality, while others (Smith) recognize the power of religion to give meaning, in and outside of moral frameworks. While I recognize Williams’s and other scholars’ framework of religion as a marketplace, that definition plays less of a role in how I define religion for the purposes of this project. Moving forward, combining definitions from Smith, Mooney, and Hondagneu-Sotello, I define religion as a belief system informing faith and cultural practices, uniting communities in moral motivations, belief in God, and cultural celebration of rituals. While this working definition may not apply to every case (i.e. an individual who identifies as Christian but does not believe in God), I find it to encompass several scholars understanding of the purpose and benefits of religion for its diverse believers.

RELIGION AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

On a most basic level, religion brings people together. Whether for prayer, a meal, celebrating a milestone or commemorating a passed life, the shared meaning in religious tradition can foster trust and community amongst virtual strangers (Smith 1996:7). In the United States, a secular nation founded on the principle of separation of church and state, religion is pervasive throughout the nation’s history and philosophy, as our civil life is defined by a “civil religion” which enables “Americans to see their country through the lens of religious legitimation and righteousness” (Hondagneu-Sotello 2008:7). In a more macro sense, Smith sees religion is not just a gathering unifier or as an institution in the modern United States, but as a
social movement itself. Although he has written extensively about religion as a disruptive social movement, Smith notes the lack of research viewing religion through the lens of social movement discourse and theory, which he attributes to three factors: prevalence of secularization theory, structural functionalism, and the fragmented nature of social science research (Smith 1996). In searching for research on the role of religion in social movements, I concur with Smith; definitions of social movements and social movement theory were vastly different based on the school of social science to which their author belonged, showing the fragmentation of this field.

From a sociological perspective, a social movement can be defined as “a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure” (McCarthy and Zald 1977:1217). In sociology, social movement theory, pioneered by Ted Gurr, Ralph Turner, Lewis Killian, and Neil Smelser, explained the existence of social movements as “based upon aggrieved populations which provide the necessary resources and labor… social movement leaders use bargaining, persuasion, or violence to influence authorities to change” (McCarthy and Zald 1977:1216-7). More recently, sociological scholars have adopted the resource mobilization perspective as a more functional social movement theory (McCarthy and Zald 1977:1217). Smith’s above critique of scholars of religion failing to use social movement theory to examine religion is crucial to note for my research. While I will investigate religious social movements, acting on secular issues, not religion as a social movement, Smith’s argument signifies a hole in the existing literature, where social scientists fail to examine religion and social movements in intersection. While there is little scholarship exploring religion through social movement theories, scholars across the sociological discipline investigate the role of religious institutions and religious actors in social movements. Below, I explore their findings and theories on religion in intersection with social movements,
clergy and their role in religious and social institutions, progressive politics and its intersection with clergy, issues of immigration and speech, and religious movements surrounding these issues.

Religious Institutional Involvement in Social Movements

From black churches supporting the Civil Rights Movement to evangelical Christian groups gathering in anti-abortion protests (Beyerlein and Chaves 2003:230), clergy and their congregants have been important actors in social movements. Outside of the self-reliance/collective responsibility framework, Rhys Williams posits this connection is easily made because of the entrenched ethos of volunteerism within religious institutions (Williams 2007:24). Due to the separation of church and state, houses of worship in the United States do not receive funding from the government, meaning their funding is provided by private donations (Williams 2007:24). Williams states religious institutions survive in the U.S. due to “the willing and voluntary labor of people committed to (their) faith” (Williams 2007:24), and this ethos of volunteerism continues outside the church or synagogue. Brown similarly notes that religious Americans’ voluntary involvement in church is likely to lead to increased voluntary involvement in social movements (Brown 2006:1581). Laura Olson adds that social networks found within religious congregations can effectively mobilize for social and political change (Olson 2011:278). While some houses of worship, like those mentioned by Williams, Brown, and Olson, are subliminally socially active, others are more explicitly political. In his research on politicized black churches, Eric McDaniel defines a politicized church as a church “that holds political awareness and activity as salient parts of its identity” (McDaniel 2008:11). He continues to classify most religious institutions as hybrid organizations, meaning they hold myriad identities, though he specifies that politicized churches hold salvation as their primary identity and political
involvement as a close secondary identity (McDaniel 2008:11). In McDaniel’s concept, politicized churches, or other houses of worship, could subscribe to other major identities but are set apart because of the sincerity with which they approach political or social action.

In their participation in social movements, religious institutions offer beneficial resources to the social movement itself. Expansive social networks are not the only resource at hand for religious institutions. Religion provides a plethora of “powerful symbols, rituals, icons, narratives, songs, testimonies, and oratory,” all expressive practices which Smith notes are beneficial to social movements to help “construct… collective identities, to nurture solidarity…and to draw inspiration and strength in difficult times” (Smith 1996:11). These icon- and narrative-based tools, rooted in religious practice, foster increased communication amongst activist and social movement communities. Religious institutions also have extensive, established communication networks for more traditional communication. This infrastructure, often built through “newsletters, bulletins, weekly announcements, telephone directories, magazines, television and radio programs, address lists, journals, synods, presbyteries, and councils,” help work in a timely manner to dispense important information quickly (Smith 1996:15). This existing communication infrastructure can transmit information efficiently for social action purposes as well as religious ones, lending itself to foster a joint relationship between religious institutions and social movement actors. Finally, religious institutions and organizations often possess or have the potential to collect large amounts of financial capital, through both the dues and voluntary giving of their members to the congregation, which Smith notes can “funnel, directly and indirectly, into social-movement activism” (Smith 1996:14). In 2016, The Giving Institute, a national center on philanthropic giving, reported donations of $122.94 billion across faith traditions in the U.S. to religious organizations, including
congregations, denominational bodies, and religious media organizations (The Giving Institute 2016). Delehanty notes much of this funding is given through “direct charitable assistance to people in need” from members of religious communities (Delehanty 2016:42). Together, these religious resources can be utilized, under resource mobilization theory, for social action and movement purposes.

**Clergy: Social Movement Actors**

As leaders in their respective religious institutions, clergy are often on the “front lines” of religious social movement involvement. When defining the role of clergy, scholars differ in their assessment. Djupe and Gilbert and Yukich and Braunstein concur in their works and see clergy as organizational actors in both their congregations and larger social movements (Djupe and Gilbert 2008). Djupe and Gilbert write that clergy hold the responsibility of gathering members and maintaining their membership, almost as if they were entrepreneurs sustaining a business (Djupe and Gilbert 2008:48). Yukich and Braunstein differ slightly, noting that clergy not only serve as leaders of their congregations but also of related social movements (Yukich and Braunstein 2014:794). Other scholars write of clergy’s responsibility to and representation of their congregants. In their renowned study of clergy and political action following school integration in Little Rock, Arkansas, Ernest Campbell and Thomas Pettigrew write that clergy are responsible to their congregational public, and this responsibility exists within three systems: self-reference, professional reference, and membership reference (Campbell and Pettigrew 1959:513). They determine that these three systems influence behavior of clergy, from their personal expectations of themselves in their self-reference system, to their professional colleagues’ expectations within the professional reference system, to their congregants’ expectations within the membership reference system (Campbell and Pettigrew 1959). Here,
Campbell and Pettigrew show that clergy hold themselves to not only their standards but also the collective standards of their congregation, highlighting their responsibility to their body of congregants.

Djupe, Burge, and Calfano complicate Campbell and Pettigrew’s systems of responsibility with their representational theories regarding clergy. Djupe, Burge, and Calfano write that some clergy are representatives of their larger organization in external social arenas, where they act as both delegates who make decisions on behalf of their congregants and as agents who represent a set of principles held by the larger group (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016:3). These social arenas can include social movements, charitable organizations, or interfaith gatherings. The authors note that a large minority of clergy take on a representational role outside their congregations, often in connection to political issues based on their religious value orientations (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016:17). Djupe, Burge, and Calfano argue that politically active clergy are greatly influenced by the political consensus within their congregation and take action with that consensus in mind (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016).

However, they also point out that clergy as political representatives of their congregation are understudied and difficult to measure, as clergy often feel caught between their personal beliefs and the beliefs of their congregants, the body they represent (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016:2).

In the past, clergy have used their pulpit for political statements or to forward social movements, despite its questionable legality. In the U.S., the Johnson Amendment limits religious institutions and all other tax-exempt (501(c)3) organizations from indirect or direct political endorsement of candidates for public office (Gjelten 2017). While the Johnson Amendment limits religious institutions from collecting funds for a political campaign and prevents clergy from endorsing a candidate from the pulpit, “pastors are free to preach on social
and political issues of concern” (Gjelten 2017), and they frequently do so. One pastor Grace Yukich interviewed in her research stated that “politics and religion are intertwined,” and, while that pastor’s “politics were not the totality of her religion,” “they were an important part of living out her Christianity” (Yukich 2013:126). McDaniel noted that, when a church becomes involved in political activity, pastors and clergy often rise to become the “face of the organization” as both religious and political elite actors, meaning they devote themselves “to some aspect of politics or political affairs” within their religious work (McDaniel 2008:13). In fact, one study found over 70% of Protestant clergy in the U.S. were approached by congregants to discuss political issues (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016:8), suggesting these congregants view their clergyperson as a political representative. In Djupe’s earlier research with Gilbert, he classified political speech by clergy to fall into either social justice or moral concern categories, with social justice aligning closely with reforms of the welfare state, while the moral concern category consists of restricting sexual politics and social vices, such as illicit substances and gambling (Djupe and Gilbert 2002:598).

Clergy have historically taken leadership roles in social movements. Clergy were integral in passing anti-alcohol legislation during the Prohibition of the 1920s, where they actively lobbied local and national bodies of government to ban alcohol, citing their religious doctrine as moral imperative in the cause (McDaniel 2008:13). During the Civil Rights and Anti-Vietnam War Movements, clergy were literally on the front lines of protests, marching to make a change. When the first high school was integrated by black students in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957, the students were walked passed barricades of protesters by local Protestant clergy members, who linked arms with the students to protect them (Campbell and Pettigrew 1959:510). In the March on Washington, white and black clergy marched arm in arm, from different religions and
racial backgrounds, to listen to the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. speak for equality (Olson 2011:279). Later, in the 2000s, politically conservative clergy were leaders of the respective movements to prevent legalized same-sex marriage and to restrict abortion access across the country (Olson 2011:280). In each of these instances, clergy used their religious background as capital for their social protest, bringing an additional level of commitment to their respective movements from a religious perspective.

The most common trend I found across sources on clergy related to their restricted speech and action. Several scholars reported clergy felt limited in their capacity to speak or physically act based on the wishes of their congregants. Campbell and Pettigrew write that the administrative role of the minister is to increase membership of his church as well as encourage additional annual giving from congregants, and political action can serve against those roles if controversial (Campbell and Pettigrew 1959:515). Djupe and Gilbert find congregants play a significant role in shaping clergy’s political behavior, where “approval of activity may allow clergy to act” but “opinion differences will shape the issues on which they can be acted” (Djupe and Gilbert 2002:605). In these cases, when clergy’s personal opinion differs from their congregants on social issues, they may be unable to publicly support their own political or social opinion in their capacity as a clergy person.

Sometimes, this restriction creates immense conflict between the clergy and their congregants. Djupe, Burge, and Calfano describe this conflict, where clergy believe their role is to set a social example outside of their religious institutions and congregants seek to attend church where their own beliefs are reaffirmed (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016:4). They argue that clergy facing this dilemma have two choices: to exit their religious post and advocate for their personal beliefs as a trustee, or to silence their own personal beliefs and keep their clergy
role as a delegate (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016:4). Often, clergy value their post over their personal opinions, and take on a delegation role (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016:6). The trend of restriction is essential to my research, as clergy may feel unable to act on issues they personally care about, such as immigration or speech, due to their congregant’s opinions. Clergy participation is not just influenced by their congregants; personal identity also plays a role.

Race and Gender Influence on Clergy Participation

In the process of reviewing the literature, I noticed several scholars found discrepancies between clergy’s level of involvement in social movements based on their various identities. McDaniel, Djupe, Burge, and Calfano all find black pastors to be more politically engaged than their white counterparts. McDaniel sites black American clergy’s rich history of involvement in politics, beginning with the Revolutionary War to the Civil War to the Civil Rights Era to post WWII activism to Reverend Jesse Jackson’s rights work in recent years (McDaniel 2008:14). Djupe, Burge, and Calfano explain black clergy are more involved than white clergy because historical legal and cultural opposition “prevented other, competing institutions from developing within the black community,” meaning black churches formed as community centers of social, religious, and political gathering (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016:6). Across two different studies, Djupe cites gender as an important factor and finds female clergy to be more politically active than male clergy. With Gilbert, they found “female clergy talk significantly more on the social justice issues, gay rights, and the environment” than male clergy (Djupe and Gilbert 2002:606). Djupe, Burge, and Calfano later note female clergy’s increased participation, writing that not only do female clergy speak more about political issues than male clergy but they also are more likely to focus on social justice topics, while male clergy are more likely to bring up topics of social reform (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016:5). These findings are equally essential
to my research as those on restriction. Due to my sampling methods, I spoke with twelve white clergy and one African-American clergy person. I interviewed an even split of women and men, but I will use these findings to investigate any possible race- or gender-based influence in clergy motivation.

Scripture as Motivation

Many sources I consulted discussed scripture as a source of motivation of clergy’s social action. In 2005, when President George W. Bush was considering the Sensenbrenner Bill to limit charity to undocumented immigrants, the archbishop of Los Angeles wrote a letter, stating:

The underlying basis for our service to others, especially the poor, is the examples, words, and actions of Jesus Christ in the Gospels. The 25th chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel does not simply invite us to serve others in the name of Jesus but offers such service as a requisite to the Kingdom of God (Yukich 2013:29).

The archbishop’s citation of the Gospels as reason for social action is echoed by other clergy across religious traditions. A Protestant clergyperson, also interviewed by Yukich, remarked that immigration was a scriptural issue, stating, “You know, Jesus in Matthew says, ‘When I was outside, you let me in.’ It’s very clear. It could say, When I was an immigrant, you let me in” (Yukich 2013:41). Hondagneu-Sotello remarks on stories from the bible that teach “hospitality and to welcome the stranger and that encourage identification and compassion with the poor” as moral authorities guiding clergy in social action and practice. Lichterman found several of his interview subjects to cite scripture as inspiration for social action, including one pastor who saw Jesus as a figure of peace and unity between religions and ethnicities, particularly in the following passage: “For he (Jesus Christ) is our peace, who has made the two (Gentile and Jew) one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility” (Ephesians 2:14–16)” (Lichterman 2008:90). Jesus is frequently noted as “a model of both social action and personal sacrifice for the common good” (Hondagneu-Sotello 2008:33). Even Davis, whose research was
conducted over 80 years ago, found over half his 100,000 subjects were motivated to support underprivileged individuals by their scripture (Davis 1936:109). Constant throughout various passages in scripture are themes of acceptance, welcoming the stranger, supporting those less privileged, and love and peace, all of which I plan to explore through questions on immigration and free speech.

PROGRESSIVE CLERGY

After investigating the influence of responsibility systems, conflict, race and gender, and scripture in clergy’s participation in social movements, I began to look for political divides amongst clergy. Because I sought to interview self-identifying progressive clergy people, I needed a foundation of literature on progressive clergy to inform my research. However, few published reports I have explored thus far address progressive congregations’ role in social action, focusing instead on conservative or traditional houses of worship and clergy. Much of the research I uncovered discussed the role of clergy and religious people in action for the “religious right.” This group emerged during the turbulent period between 1960-1980, where groups of traditional Christians concentrated their political activism on issues of abortion and homosexuality (Olson 2007:54). United in their opposition to issues they saw grounded in scripture, like homosexuality and abortion, American religious conservative leaders felt embraced by and sought a “mutually fruitful relationship” with the Republican party, thus forming what scholars today refer to as “the religious right” (Olson 2011:271).

United under charismatic leaders with commanding personalities, the religious right did not slow down. In response to shifting presidential leadership - from Ronald Reagan’s and George H.W. Bush’s conservatism to Bill Clinton’s democratic leadership - the religious right once again mobilized to elect and reelect President George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004 (Olson
In exit polls following Bush’s 2004 reelection, 22 percent of voters reported they saw Bush as offering a prophetic vision representative of their conservative Christian values (Olson 2007). Mobilized on issues from gay marriage to abortion to “family values” to school prayer, the religious right has played a prominent role in American politics since the 1980s.

*The Religious Left*

While searches through the Brandeis library provide hundreds of books and articles on the religious right, explorations of religious progressives and their work in social movements produces much more sparse results. Laura Olson is, to my knowledge, one of the few scholars, in addition to Grace Yukich and Ruth Braustein (Yukich and Braustein 2014) doing work on progressive religious clergy and their involvement in social movements. Her research, therefore, will serve as foundational for my exploration into progressive clergy in Boston. In her work, Olson explains how the religious left is harder to define than the religious right (Olson 2011). Beginning with the rise of the Social Gospel movement in the United States from the late nineteenth century leading into the 1920s, progressive Protestants became active in poverty alleviation and discrimination prevention efforts (Olson 2011:272). American progressive Catholics and Jews also have rich histories of social and political action, including antipoverty work and demanding equality for racial minorities (Olson 2011:272). The Civil Rights era brought about the most successful mobilization efforts from religious progressives, where leaders “engaged in bold, highly publicized protest activities,” utilizing “material resources, communication networks, and space: to mobilize for civil rights (Olson 2011:278).

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life finds religious progressives come from a wide variety of religious denominations and traditions and are not always in agreement regarding the above listed issues, particularly issues with religious contexts, such as gay and lesbian
marriage, due to their differing theological backgrounds (Olson 2011:280). Olson additionally defines the religious left as a social movement, as religious progressives utilize a culture of “symbols, rituals, narratives, icons, and songs” to draw together individuals from different backgrounds, as well as take advantage of institutional resources such as financial and social capital (Olson 2011:275). However, Olson is critical of the religious left, which she notes has been “conspicuously absent from the American political landscape” in comparison to the religious right (Olson 2011:274). This lack of cohesion may explain why scholars have avoided publication on the religious left – with no unified body to study, scholars are left scrambling to find subjects to study or groups to compare. This issue, preventing scholars from investigating religious progressives, also affects the issues scholars can and do study.

CONGREGATIONAL CULTURE IN CONFLICT: A PLACE FOR CONGREGATIONS

Regardless of clergy’s political identity (be it progressive or not), clergy may come into conflict with their congregants or individuals occupying an institution they are a part of. In broader literature, scholars have explained this phenomenon regarding clergy purposefully avoiding conflict. In a 1999 study, Penny Edgell Becker explored instances of conflict at 23 Chicago-area churches and synagogues of various denominations (Edgell Becker 1999). Edgell Becker described conflict, particularly in the congregational setting, as an instance involving “two or more parties who perceive their interests to be incompatible and engage in action oriented to the defense of their own interests” (Edgell Becker 1999:37). After assessing various types of conflict occurring in her sample, Edgell Becker concluded that conflicts within each institution she studied linked back to the content or implications of what she calls “congregational models” (Edgell Becker 1999:18). Congregational models are patterns in which congregations “develop distinct cultures that comprise local understandings of identity tasks and
legitimate ways of doing things” (Edgell Becker 1999:7). In other words, these models represent
the accepted social norm of behavior as part of or within each religious organization. Edgell
Becker found four main congregational models that both examine how religious communities
interact with in- and out-group members through engagement in civic life (Edgell Becker
1999:8).

Each of the four models Edgell Becker describes has its own priorities and operational
goals. Congregations in the house of worship model primarily act as providers of “religious
goods and services” through education, ritual performance, and spiritual practice (Edgell Becker
1999:13). Family model congregations foster close-knit relationships for members primarily,
while also providing worship and religious education (Edgell Becker 1999:13). Community
congregations emphasize shared values through its programs that “express the values and
commitments of members regarding social issues” (Edgell Becker 1999:13). The last model,
leader congregations, act from the official tenets of their tradition to change the world through
social action, where members’ feeling of belonging is given less importance (Edgell Becker
1999:13). In her primary thesis, Edgell Becker argues each conflict within a congregation links
back to the model itself and how the organization promotes its values. For example, Edgell
Becker finds community congregations report almost twice the amount of conflict than other
models because organizations under the community umbrella welcome more discourse on values
and moral issues than other models (Edgell Becker 1999:117). Regardless of the nature of the
conflict, which Edgell Becker divides into personal disagreements between two or more people
and moral conflicts surrounding issues and values (Edgell Becker 1999:117), Edgell Becker
states that they link back to fundamental disagreements of the parties involved in how the
congregation should operate (Edgell Becker 1999).
Other scholars have additionally written on clergy’s responsibility to and representation of their congregants. Authors Campbell and Pettigrew explain clergy are responsible to themselves, their professional colleagues, and their membership, and these stakeholder groups may view clergy’s roles differently (Campbell and Pettigrew 1959). Djupe, Burge, and Calfano found clergy to take on a representative role, in which they represent their congregation and congregants in larger community events, which may lead to further conflict (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016). While Djupe, Burge, and Calfano argue clergy often believe their role in congregations is to set a moral example (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016), fitting Edgell Becker’s Leadership model. In contrast, they see congregants as seeking consensus and affirmation of belief within their congregation (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016), a cross between Edgell Becker’s Family and Community models. Both Djupe, Burge, and Calfano and Edgell Becker’s work identify conflict as relating to different interpretations of the role of clergy as well as the role of congregations themselves.

CLERGY IN BOSTON

*Boston’s Religious Landscape: Protestants, Unitarians, and Catholics*

As stated in the Methodology section, I decided to concentrate my research in the Boston area because of its convenient geographical location. However, upon further research, I determined there is a lack of scholarship on clergy and religious history in Boston. I found it difficult to find books or online journal articles covering a religious history of Boston across religions. The Pluralism Project at Harvard University has extensively explored world religious communities in the Boston area, and it was through their materials that I was able to gage the religious history and diversity within Boston.
As one of the first cities in the United States, Boston was founded by British Puritans, a group of Protestant Pilgrims who sought to “purify the Church of England” in 1630 (Eck and Pierce 1998:36). The oldest prayer meeting in North America is still located today in Cambridge at Harvard University Memorial Church (Eck and Pierce 1998:36). As more settlers arrived in New England, the religious landscape of Boston slowly began to change, much to the chagrin of the Puritans. When Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dyer attempted to establish new religious traditions, they were banished from Boston, with Dyer being hung in the common due to her views (Eck and Pierce 1998:37). However, following the Revolutionary War, a new sense of liberalism arose with the founding of what is now known as the Unitarian Church in Boston in 1776 (Eck and Pierce 1998:37). The arrival of slaves in the 1780s ushered in the creation of the African Baptist Church in Boston, as well as other black churches (Eck and Pierce 1998:38). Churches continue to split denominationally, and by the mid 1800s, Boston was home to a variety of Protestant houses of worship, including Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, and Baptists.

In the early 1800s, the Roman Catholic Church established a Boston diocese to build their presence in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Eck and Pierce 1998:39). The Catholic community in Boston was historically shaped by Catholic immigrants from Ireland and Italy (Eck and Pierce 1998). With a mass immigration of 4.5 million Irish immigrants between 1820 and 1920, a conservative Irish Catholic contingency began to call Boston, home (Eck and Pierce 1998:39). Later in the 19th century, Irish immigrants moved into the North End of Boston and created their own Catholic churches (Eck and Pierce 1998:36). Today, Catholics comprise one of

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2Because of my snowball sampling methodology, which relied on already existing social contacts of Brandeis staff, my sample did not include a significant number of (more than one) clergy who are black or work in black churches. In retrospect, this was a missed opportunity to understand various community’s involvement in action, and another sampling methodology may have rectified the racial imbalance of my sample.
Boston’s largest religious communities, which is why I initially sought to interview five Catholic clergy. I also found a significant historical literature on the presence of Catholics in Boston. Many of those works I found discussed scandals within the church, which may explain why Catholic clergy were so reluctant to speak with me. In 2002, after a tumultuous period in American Catholic life post Vatican-II and *Roe v. Wade*, the *Boston Globe* uncovered a national scandal of Catholic priests covering up sex abuse of their peers (McGreevy 2003:288-9). The scandal surrounding the sexual abuse of young boys by prominent clergy and priests within the Catholic Church took center stage in Boston, where Cardinal Bernard Francis Law, then Archbishop of Boston, was found to be complicit in these events by covering up priest abuses and transferring accused priests to other parishes rather than addressing their abuses (McGreevy 2003:290). It is possible, following the events of the early 2000s, that greater restrictions have been placed on Catholic clergy in the Boston area by the Archdiocese, so I accepted the reality that I should seek a separate population. I chose Unitarian Universalists because they have a historical connection to Boston, like the Catholics.

*Boston’s Religious Landscape: Jews and Other Religious Traditions*

Like the Protestant landscape of Boston, the Boston Jewish community was also greatly shaped by immigration. Several Jewish immigrants were thought to have tried to establish homes in Boston during the late 1600s and early 1700s, only to be expelled or “encouraged” to leave by the Puritans (Eck and Pierce 1998:89). While some Jews did live in Boston during the 18th century, the first Jewish community to call Boston home and establish religious institutions arrived in 1840 from Germany (Eck and Pierce 1998:89). The German Jewish contingency established one congregation that eventually split into three – one Reform, one Conservative, and one Orthodox (Eck and Pierce 1998:90). In the 1880s, rising anti-Semitism in Europe caused a
mass influx of Russian and other Eastern-European Jews to immigrate to Boston (Eck and Pierce 1998:91). Today, much of the Boston Jewish population is Eastern-European, and a significant Conservative contingency still resides in the area. Large Orthodox communities also live and worship in Brookline and Cambridge (Eck and Pierce 1998:1992). While I concentrate my research on Protestant, Jewish, and Unitarian communities, Boston is also home to various world religions, including Baha’i, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Sikhism, and Taoism. Because much of these communities were shaped by religious immigrants to the United States, I remain confident in my choice to work within the Boston area, a place where religion and immigration exist in intersection.

**Boston Clergy in Action**

Despite the rich religious history of Boston and its surrounding cities, academic sources exploring clergy’s participation in social action in Boston were scarce. Most searches I conducted using keywords including “Boston,” “clergy,” and “social action” resulted in sources covering scandals in the Boston Catholic Church, including the previously mentioned sex abuse scandal. Many of the sources I explored in the literature review process involved individual clergy participating in one action event at one time and did not analyze their participation or explore other clergy’s similar action. While I was initially frustrated with this (lack of a) finding, it proves important in the literature review. Because it was difficult for me to find a summary study or historical analysis of clergy in Boston’s participation in social action, I know there is a hole in academic scholarship on this subject. Therefore, my findings are important to explore how a group of clergy in this geographical area are responding to social action issues. With little literature to compare to, I chose topics of investigation, here which are immigration and speech, based on current events rather than their previous study in literature.
The Sanctuary Movements

After deciding to focus on immigration and speech as issues of action for Boston area clergy, I began to explore scholarship on progressive action on these issues. In Grace Yukich’s research on the Sanctuary Movements, she frequently discusses support of immigrants as a progressive religious issue. Several individuals she interviews echo this sentiment, speaking of their religion’s deep connection to supporting the immigrant. One clergyperson stated, “We read in Hebrews that those of us who provide hospitality have entertained angels unaware. To offer sanctuary is to recognize that the strangers in our midst are blessing us, in clear and mysterious ways” (Yukich 2013:43). Here, supporting the immigrant is linked to welcoming angels as a Judeo-Christian value of hospitality. While, in a recent survey of American religious people, only seven percent of respondents cited religion as the most important influence on their views of immigration, clergy in Yukich’s writings often connect religion to their theological beliefs (Yukich 2013:2). Nteta and Wallsten recall the rich history of religious people supporting immigrants in the U.S., even from more politically conservative sects. For example, the Vice President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, a frequently conservative aligning group, spoke in front of the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law to support immigrants coming to the United States, regardless of their immigration status legally (Nteta and Wallsten 2012:891). However, Hondagneu-Sotello notes the religious right has not been actively involved in the immigration restrictionist movement, while the religious left has historically supported immigrants through the old and new sanctuary movements (Hondagneu-Sotello 2007:5).
Yukich and Hondagneu-Sotello, writing in 2013 and 2007-8, respectively, published seminal works on the role of progressive clergy in the Old and New Sanctuary Movements, two social movements organized by religious people to support undocumented immigrants in the United States. The original Sanctuary Movement began in 1981, when civil wars were rampant across Central America, leading to thousands of refugees attempting to enter the U.S., where most of their immigration or refugee claims were denied (Hondagneu-Sotello 2008:144). In response, a group of Jewish, Quaker, Catholic, and Presbyterian clergy in Tucson, Arizona, formed the Tucson Ecumenical Council Task Force on Central America to support detainees at the border (Hondagneu-Sotello 2008:144). Although President Jimmy Carter had signed the 1980 Refugee Act, allowing immigrants to seek political asylum in the United States when fleeing persecution of their religious beliefs, political beliefs, or race, immigration authorities were not following the policy, choosing instead to deny almost all applications for asylum (Hondagneu-Sotello 2008:145). Clergy in the task force, along with their congregation members, devised a solution; they would shelter Central Americans seeking asylum in “sanctuary” in their homes or houses of worship, protecting them from immigration authorities (Hondagneu-Sotello 2008:145). Technically, these individuals were “deliberately challenging U.S. federal laws by harboring illegal aliens,” but many used scripture to justify their actions, claiming they were obeying the higher law of God (Hondagneu-Sotello 2008:146). Throughout the tenure of the Sanctuary Movement, which collectively protected hundreds of immigrants in the 1980s from deportation, sanctuary was used as a tactic by movement activists to reach their goals of supporting immigrants seeking asylum and protecting them from laws the actors found unjust (Yukich 2013:6).
Over time, the number of Central Americans seeking asylum slowly decreased, and the Sanctuary Movement became smaller and smaller. Two decades passed until 2006, when a church in Chicago protected undocumented woman Elvira Arellano from deportation and separation from her U.S.-born son (Yukich 2013:3). Following this event, a group of religious activists in Chicago, L.A., New York, San Diego, and Seattle held press conferences where they declared themselves “the New Sanctuary movement,” a “national interfaith network of local activist coalitions working for immigrant rights” (Yukich 2013:6). Differing from the original Sanctuary Movement, which welcomed asylum seekers, the New Sanctuary Movement specifically focused on providing sanctuary to “mixed-status families,” where the parents were immigrants, but the children had American citizenship, to prevent separating families from each other (Yukich 2013:6). The families seeking sanctuary in the New Movement were not new arrivals; they often held community ties and had careers and homes, and frequently sought legislation to help them continue living in the U.S. rather than “a place to hide” (Yukich 2013:16). The New Sanctuary Movement aimed to “be a religiously and ethnically diverse group of faith communities standing up for the rights of immigrants in a post 9/11 United States,” both reflecting the religious identities of immigrants they were supporting and to provide the type of support that was most needed (Yukich 2013:6-7). I will focus my research efforts on participants in the New Sanctuary Movement, which is still occurring today. Due to the nature of this in-progress movement, little research has been published on clergy’s role in the movement, so I hope to contribute positively to sociological scholarship with my understanding of Jewish, Protestant, and Unitarian clergy working in the Sanctuary movement.

*Immigrants in Boston*
As one of the first colonized cities in the U.S., Boston has an extensive history of immigrants settling in the area. While I previously discussed the Irish Catholic, Italian Catholic, and Eastern European Jewish communities and their immigration history to Boston, the immigrant landscape of Boston has vastly changed since the mid 1800s and early 1900s. In contrast from the previous mass immigration waves of white or white-passing immigrants\(^3\), including the Irish, Italians, and Eastern-Europeans, immigration to Boston since 1960 has been mostly by non-white people from a diverse pool of countries (Johnson 2015:5). The largest immigrant communities in Boston today are from Haiti, the Dominican Republic, China, Brazil, Vietnam, India, and El Salvador, as well as several countries in North and East Africa (Johnson 2015:5). Since their arrival, these “new immigrants” have reshaped the landscape of Boston, including the labor economy, political communities, and racial and religious diversity (Johnson 2015). During periods of national political upheaval, such as the Civil Rights Movements, black, Latino, and Asian immigrants in Boston were often participating in the front lines of protests and social movements for change (Johnson 2015:194). Latino immigrants to the Boston area were particularly mobilized around issues of anti-poverty in the late 1960s, gentrification and urban renewal in 1967, educational access in 1970, and political representation in the 1980s (Johnson 2015:195-200). Latino clergy were important actors in these movements and community mobilization efforts, such as pastors from St. Stephen’s Church, who helped gather resources to fight Latino tenant displacement in the 1960s (Johnson 2015:197).

With an estimated immigrant population of roughly 200,000 in 2010, Boston has been central for several immigrant-based movements, including the original Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s (Johnson 2015). During the human rights crises in El Salvador and Guatemala, large

\(^3\) Meaning individuals who appear to be white but may be mixed-race or hold another identity, however, due to their appearance, they often benefit from white privilege.
numbers of undocumented Salvadorian and Guatemalan immigrants arrived in Boston and Cambridge, leading a local nun and a human rights attorney to create an organization to address the housing and deportation concerns of these individuals, in partnership with local clergy (Johnson 2015:219). Following the passing of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, a larger coalition was formed by faith leaders, community organization workers, and labor unions to lobby for immigrant rights in the Massachusetts statehouse (Johnson 2015:221). Following the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, anti-immigration policies have increased local detentions and deportations in the Boston area, particularly due to its concentrated geographic location and the known concentrated volume of undocumented immigrants (Johnson 2015:221). Both Boston’s immigration and immigration activist history, as well as increased deportations within the last two decades, show the relevance of immigration policies in Boston and the importance of studying the religious response to these policies.

**Defining Speech**

I decided to write about speech issues, particularly free and hate speech, because of their media prominence, particularly following the march on Charlottesville in August of 2017 (see page 51). Before embarking on a literature review of scholarship on religion and speech in intersection, I first must lay the groundwork by defining speech, at least in relation to the American body politic. Speech in the United States seems to exist on a continuum between free speech, defined as “The right of any person to express their ideas or views without the threat of official censure” (Chandler and Munday 2016) and hate speech, or “communications that emphatically deny the basic status of other members of society as free and equal citizens” (Lepoutre 2017:853). In the United States, free speech is protected under the first amendment of the Constitution, which explicitly prevents Congress from “prohibiting the free exercise thereof
or abridging the freedom of speech” (United States Constitution 1789). However, what can be considered free speech is contentious. Some speech that is deemed, either by public opinion or by the government in a court ruling, to be harmful, may be excluded from protection under the Constitution due to its classification as “hate speech” (Muldoon 2017). Speech that is harmful may be prohibited or even criminalized by the U.S. government if it causes harm to a citizen, and private organizations can determine their own regulations regarding what types of speech are allowed or prohibited (Muldoon 2017). For the purposes of this project, when I refer to speech, I do so with the operating definition that speech is an action, statement, or communication that promotes a specific idea or belief (that may or may not be harmful to specific populations).

Arguments against prohibiting hate speech come from scholars across the political spectrum. Some argue the line between free and hate speech is too blurry, and to legislate some speech is to set a dangerous precedent for outlawing speech that one person could consider harmful, but another may objectively disagree (Muldoon 2017:332). Others note that hate speech, particularly against disadvantaged classes, also creates a dangerous cultural environment where harmful language is normative and may lead to physical violence (Braddon-Mitchell and West 2004:438). There is no clear dominant position on speech in the American cultural landscape, and scholars further complicate the issue of speech through integration of ethical theory, philosophy, and other schools of thought. In navigating issues of free and hate speech in this project, I will acknowledge these subjects’ complex definitions in my work.

*Speech and Religion*

When reading books and articles with hopes of learning about speech, I struggled to find any sources that discussed free speech or hate speech in a religious or sociological context. Jeffries and Tygart spoke briefly of free speech in relation to value orientations, writing that both
collective responsibility and self-reliance outlooks should advocate for free speech, where collective responsibility should tolerate ideas that may be “inappropriate or extreme” based on freedom of collective participation, and self-reliance would allow individuals “the freedom to pursue unacceptable or dangerous ideas” on their own terms (Jeffries and Tygart 1974:313). A second source I consulted, by David Fredrickson, examined free speech through the lens of Pauline theology in the Christian faith, explaining that Paul’s political theology advocates for any and all speech, even if harmful, because silencing one peer is more harmful to the “Spirit’s justifying and transforming presence” than censorship would be (Frederickson 2000:197). Unfortunately, all other sources I consulted failed to reflect upon free speech, even when I searched specifically for scholarship on this topic, trying several different search terms. It is possible that sociological scholarship on religion has not previously discussed the topic of free speech, or that the body of work available was so small that it was difficult to find. I used this lack of data to motivate myself to seek answers from my research subjects on free speech, so as to best contribute to the sociological academy with my original research.

WHY NOW? THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2016 ELECTION

Issues of progressive clergy participating in social movements on immigration and speech are not only academically interesting: they are relevant now, as immigration and speech issues rise to the forefront of national politics. During the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, candidates Hillary Clinton, Democrat, and now President Donald Trump, Republican, were at odds over immigration policy. President Trump’s immigration plan was a major component of his campaign platform and had huge sway in his primary win against other Republican candidates (Corasaniti 2016). Trump’s immigration plan called for a massive border wall to be built along the U.S.-Mexico border, forcible deportation of 11 million undocumented
immigrants, increasing Immigration and Customs Enforcement power through additional funding and hires, banning Muslim immigrants from entering the United States or making them take “ideological certification” tests to prove their values upon arrival, and creating a path to legal immigration for undocumented immigrants if they leave the U.S. and legally apply for re-entry (Corasaniti 2016). President Trump also gave statements or speeches where he promised to “curtail the refugee flow” into the U.S., cancel the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program adopted by President Obama, and expand detention centers on the Mexican border (Preston 2016). On November 8, 2016, President Trump won the presidency in an election the New York Times called a “stunning repudiation of the establishment,” shocking many Democratic voters and pleasing Republican, white working-class voters who largely voted for President Trump (Flegenheimer and Barbaro 2016).

Since his inauguration in January 2017, President Donald Trump has ended the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, threatening 800,000 children and young adults who entered the U.S. as children with deportation (Shear and Davis 2017). In addition to ending the Temporary Protected Status program, which gave humanitarian protection to Salvadorian and Haitians (Jordan 2018), Trump has ordered Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers to vastly increase arrests of undocumented immigrants, which rose by almost one thousand people in Boston between 2016 and 2017 (Johnson 2018). For the over 35,000 undocumented immigrants living in Greater Boston (Passel and Cohn 2017), the threat of deportation is imminent.

Immigration is not the only issue rising to national attention. An increased in hate-speech, bias crimes, and hate events has been documented by and covered in the media. The Southern Poverty Law Center reported over 900 hate or biased events in just 10 days following
the November 2017 election (“Post-election spike” 2017). In July, members of the Ku Klux Klan, a hate group, demonstrated against the removal of a statue of confederate general Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville, VA, chanting “white power” and “we will not be replaced” (Spencer and Stevens 2017). On Sunday, August 10, 2017, a subsequent white nationalist march in Charlottesville, caused national uproar when a white supremacist killed a counter-protester and wounded 34 others (Astor, Caron, and Victor 2017). These events show the collective urgency of my research; immigrants are being threatened now and hate speech is on the rise. My exploration of how clergy respond to these changing policies and events through their participation in sanctuary and anti-hate speech movements is essential to better understand the events occurring today through a sociological perspective.

CONCLUSION

In this literature review, I explored topics of religion, social movements, clergy and their leadership, scripture, progressive clergy and the religious right, immigration, free speech, and current political events related to these issues. Throughout my research process, I found several gaps in the literature. Primarily, I found only three scholars investigating the role of progressive clergy, specifically, in social movements, as most of the scholarship is saturated with research on the religious right. No writings I read discussed speech issues from a religious perspective, which struck me as intriguing, since several of my interviewees mentioned places in scripture where speech is restricted. Furthermore, it was extremely difficult to find information on the religious, and particularly the progressive religious, history of Boston in academic sources. A lack of data in these areas shows not only that my research will occupy new space in the sociological literature but also implies that scholarship has not yet caught up to current events. Due to publication times in peer-reviewed journals, no scholar would have been able to conduct a post-
2016 election study and publish it by now, however, the period of political change we are living in provides ample opportunities for research in religious action. It is impossible to know how religious communities are reacting to current events without asking them, so I encourage other scholars interested in this area to investigate these topics further. After conducting this literature review, I am left questioning what the Trump administration means for religious activism, how clergy’s experiences have changed in religious social action since the election, and whether speech issues can be classified as religious, even in the absence of scholarship. I hope to explore these questions through later chapters, which summarize my interviews with clergy in conversation with the literature presented here. Moving forward, I will interact and dialogue with scholars who have come before me within the greater sociological community.
1. WE, THE PEOPLE, WELCOME THE STRANGER: IMMIGRATION AND SPEECH IN SCRIPTURE

“WE WERE THE ORIGINAL SLAVES”

On a chilly day in early December 2017, I picked up the phone to call the Reverend Dr. Elijah Davis, M.D. Rev. Dr. Davis, the Senior Pastor at Mount Zion African Methodist Church, was an important interview. His illustrious careers as a local doctor, minister, and community activist were captivating; after graduating from Harvard College and Harvard Medical School and pursuing emergency medicine, Rev. Dr. Davis felt called to ministry, and returned to Harvard, this time for Divinity School. In addition to serving as the pastor of Mount Zion A.M.E., Rev. Dr. Davis, who told me he prefers to be called Pastor Eli, sits on the boards of ten different community organizations, ranging in issue area from education to community development. I was particularly interested in interviewing Pastor Eli because Mount Zion was widely lauded as the first Black church to join a Boston-area sanctuary coalition – tell us what it is-, and I wanted to learn more about his perspective. When Pastor Eli spoke, his cool voice was calming, even through the shrill distortion of the phone. He was humble, brushing over his accomplishments to ask me about my education. Pastor Eli was also clearly learned and passionate; he recited scripture verbatim from memory with ease, and his interview was one of the longest in my sample.

Pastor Eli’s knowledge of scripture was most evident when I spoke to him about immigration and free speech. When I asked him about issues of immigration and if his religious scripture shed light on them, he cited the story of the Good Samaritan from the New Testament, noting that the Bible calls him to treat others with respect and the “love of the neighbor,”
regardless of who they are. Pastor Eli spoke extensively about the root of Christianity in the Jewish tradition. He stated, “there’s this whole idea in Christianity, and, again, continues from the traditions of the Jewish…is this notion of…a consternation with the forces of good and evil, and that not only in the social sphere, but also in our own selves, right?” Pastor Eli continued to describe the scriptural struggle between good and evil in terms of fear of the other, which he noted every person grapples with. He drew several connections here to immigration, stating that the immigrant “is a compelling example” of our human tendency to other those we fear. In the Bible, Pastor Eli stated, there is a rich history of the most powerful taking advantage of or scapegoating the least powerful in society, and he argued that practice has continued throughout American history and is particularly evident now, in President Trump’s immigration policies. Although he recognized the human disposition towards othering, Pastor Eli cited scripture that explicitly says othering is wrong and Christians are called to stand up to those who other unjustly.

Pastor Eli also explored the theme of slavery in his discussion of immigration in relation to scripture. He mentioned the passage in the Hebrew Bible which reminds readers that they were slaves and strangers in Egypt as a call to welcome and care for the stranger. For him, the immigrant is the stranger of today, a visitor to a new land, and Pastor Eli spoke of the importance of welcoming immigrants home in a political climate that is divisive and adversarial towards them. For Pastor Eli, whose congregation is comprised of mostly African-American and African members, slavery is not just a biblical memory. When citing the passage, “We were slaves in Egypt,” he remarked, “for historical and cultural reasons, that resonates with us, because we know what it is to be slaves and to be other.” Pastor Eli told me that many of his members can trace their ancestry back to slaves in the United States, a practice he decreed as wholly un-
Christian. For Pastor Eli, his commitment to action surrounding immigration “flows very much out of a theological context and a historical context,” both because of the call of his faith to welcome the stranger as well as the reminder to avoid othering and stand up for those who have less power. Historically, the memory of slavery still affects his congregants, and he noted they are motivated by their own history to support those who are discriminated against, especially immigrants, who today face a brute force of verbal assault from the public, the White House, and people in positions of power.

Although Pastor Eli spoke with ease about the theological context in which advocating for immigrants is located, he struggled to similarly address free speech. Later in our interview, when I asked him to explain how he understood free speech and its relationship to hate speech, Pastor Eli took several whole minutes to think. After his elongated pause, he then remarked, “You know, it’s interesting, because…I think, in some way, the religious (connections) are harder to draw. I would say I’m probably more influenced by…the history of our country and constitutional principle. But theologically…I can’t really think of a lot.” He paused again, then amended his statement. Pastor Eli told me there were several places in scripture that remind readers to be careful what they say, and that they must answer to God for what they say. However, he struggled to find a passage in the scripture he knew, including the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and various responses and interpretations to those books, that states how speech ought to be regulated. Later, Pastor Eli mentioned “the famous ruling…you’re not allowed to yell fire in a crowded theatre,” referring to the Opinion delivered by Justice Oliver Holmes Jr. in the U.S. Supreme Court case Shenck v. United States, where the court ruled against speech that would cause public distress being classified as hate speech (Holmes 1919). This reference to constitutional rulings by the highest court in America frames free speech as a
constitutional issue, rather than a religious one. Pastor Eli elaborated, explaining to me that he understood hate speech as a subcategory of free speech, but that hate speech was demonstrably related to a negative action. Later, he explicitly acknowledged the constitutional lens with which he views free speech, noting that he feels “more influenced...by constitutional principles rather than by theological” when it comes to free speech.

Pastor Eli’s understanding of immigration and free speech demonstrated a significant elective affinity between his faith and belief in scripture and his understanding of immigration as an issue. He linked messages from several passages from scripture, such as “we were slaves in Egypt” and the story of the Good Samaritan, to his understanding of immigration, speaking about the importance of treating the immigrant with respect as a Christian value. In contrast, Pastor Eli’s understanding of free speech was separated from his religious background. That Pastor Eli, who had studied scripture for over forty years, failed to identify a single passage in scripture addressing free speech or hate speech, is representative of the larger trend within my data in this chapter. Specifically, clergy frequently defined immigration as a religious issue, but more easily framed free speech as a constitutional one. While there were some outliers to this trend, many clergy associated free speech as a state-regulated issue.

In this chapter, I will expand upon Pastor Eli’s experience to explore clergy’s understandings of immigration and speech from a religious lens. I argue the vast majority of clergy I interviewed see immigration through a range of religious resources and classify as a religious issue, while they understand free speech instead as an element of the state. In this chapter, I will use German sociologist max Weber’s concept of elective affinity as a lens with which to view my findings. Weber describes his concept of elective affinity as two elements relating to or intersecting with one another to varying degrees (Howe 1978:381). Weber
primarily used this term in his writings to describe the connections he found between Protestantism and the Protestant Work Ethic with capitalism (Howe 1978). Applied to other settings, elective affinity can signify how one system of thought causes believers, or actors, in that system to understand a second, related system of thought (Scott and Marshall 2009). For clergy I interviewed, the strength of the elective affinity between immigration and their religious scripture is significantly stronger than the affinity between free speech and religious scripture. Subjects I interviewed struggled to identify a religious connection to free speech, showing their weakened affinity between these two variables. In this chapter, I also examine how progressive clergy in Jewish, Protestant, and Unitarian/Universalist faith traditions understand and think about immigration and free speech. Evident in the data was a division of thought in issues, rather than by religion, and I argue this phenomenon is likely due to the strengthened elective affinity between religious frameworks and immigration issues.

IMMIGRATION: A RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE

Every single clergy person I interviewed found connections between their scripture or creed and their beliefs on immigration. Although varied in religious practice, each religious leader cited some passage or idea from one of their holy books as a guiding source of thought in relation to immigration issues. Regardless of their religious differences, several clergy cited the same story or passage. This may, in part, be due to the religious traditions I chose to interview. Both Jews and Protestants use the Hebrew Bible as one of their holy books, explaining why several cite the same story. While Unitarian/Universalists follow a creed rather than scripture exclusively, they also use both the Hebrew Bible and New Testament as sources of inspiration, even if they do not believe them to be the word of God. Several clergy across religious traditions spoke of the same stories or ideas from scripture, five of which I will address here. For other
clergy, scripture was particularly resonant due to the current political climate, and they felt compelled to act based on scripture they considered to be temporally relevant. Throughout various passages and interpretations, clergy describe their strong affinity between understanding immigration issues and their religious background.

Strangers in the Land of Egypt

Like Pastor Eli, clergy of all religions repeatedly turned to the idea that “we were slaves” or “strangers in Egypt” to describe and explain their views on immigration. Five Rabbis and one Reverend told me they felt moved by the line “we were strangers in the land of Egypt,” sometimes quoted as “we were slaves in the land of Egypt,” that is present in the Hebrew Bible 36 times. Reverend Bob Walker, the Unitarian/Universalist pastor of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church, spoke that he felt driven to offer hospitality to immigrants because of the “famous passage about welcoming strangers” because “we were the strangers.” Rev. Walker told me he thinks about immigration as a religious issue, especially because Jesus, a figure and “exemplar” he considers as paramount to his religious practice, “welcomed the outsiders, the strangers, the sort of rejected of society.” Although the Rabbis I interviewed did not find the same solace in the actions of Jesus, who they do not consider to be their messiah, they shared similar sentiments to Rev. Walker regarding their religious reminder that they were once strangers. Rabbi David Abrams, the Senior Rabbi at Temple Jerusalem, a Reform Jewish congregation, considers the narrative of being strangers and slaves in the land of Egypt as “central to the Jewish people.” Rabbi Abrams told me he feels compelled to act on immigration because God took mercy on the Jewish people when they were strangers. He said, “God heard our suffering, God responded with liberation, and therefore…the way to remind ourselves that we have obligation to others as well, we have to do for them what God did for us.” He finds a
strong affinity between immigration and Jewish scripture, where the conditions facing today’s immigrants remind Rabbi Abrams of how the Jewish people struggled in Egypt, and thus shape how he views immigration as a social issue.

Rabbi Shira Caplan, of Temple Dorshei Emet, a Reconstructionist shul, expanded upon Rabbi Abrams’s statements. Rabbi Caplan, without being prompted to speak about immigration, began our interview by talking about the prevalence of social issue rulings and lessons in the Torah. In her denomination, where tikkun olam (repairing the world) is of upmost importance as a Jewish act, she told me she feels guided towards socially just action by the Torah. She explained that the phrase “You should welcome the stranger, for you were once strangers in the land of Egypt” is stated 36 times in the Torah, which amounts to more than any other rule of any kind, including what to eat, what to wear, or how to pray. Like Rabbi Abrams, Rabbi Caplan characterized the reminder to treat strangers with hospitality as “the central story of the Jewish people” that is “part of every story (and is) engrained in us.” Similar to Rev. Moore’s discussion of Jesus, Rabbi Caplan named several patriarchs from her religious tradition, including Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, who she saw as immigrants; “They’re all stories of people who are moving from one place to another, or escaping oppression, or seeking a new home.”

Three other Rabbis I interviewed discussed the idea of being strangers in Egypt in less depth, but they discussed it nonetheless. Rabbi Rebecca Kline, a non-denominational Rabbi at Temple B’Nai Tzedek, mentioned the Jewish “obligation to remember that we were slaves in Egypt” and the subsequent “obligation to help the stranger.” I interviewed Rabbi Rebecca Kline’s husband, Rabbi Paul Kline, who is a Reform Rabbi at Temple Shalom Boston, who spoke similarly to his wife. Rabbi Paul Kline told me “because we were…strangers in the land of Egypt,” “we have to be particularly empathetic and reach out to those who are in need,” which
he also identified as immigrants. Finally, Rabbi Aviva Ertzen, a Reconstructionist Rabbi from Congregation Oseh Shalom shared she felt the calling to care for immigrants came from “pretty deep in Jewish values.”

*Mary and Joseph: The Original Refugees*

For two participants, the story of Jesus’s birth is particularly resonant in relation to immigration. Reverend Jim Harris, the pastor of St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, spoke of how the Hebrew Bible repeats over and over the importance of “hospitality for the stranger…about helping those who are different from ourselves, connecting others as brothers and sisters, independent of borders and barriers that society puts up between us, or we put up ourselves.” In our conversation, Rev. Harris frequently reflected upon what he referred to as the “barriers” our society creates to separate ourselves and his perception of messages from the Hebrew Bible and New Testament in response to that. Rev. Harris said the connection between scripture and how he thinks about immigration is explicit; he argued Christians are “fundamentally…called to welcome the stranger, from an immigrant/refugee standpoint.” For Rev. Harris, welcoming the immigrant has been historically pertinent since the beginning of religion itself. He told me, “for Christians, our founding family, Mary and Joseph, were refugees, and we are called to welcome the stranger and welcome those who are different than us…and so, biblically, certainly our Christian faith leads us to be involved in sanctuary and working for immigration and refugee issues.” Here, Rev. Harris spoke about how intrinsically linked his scriptural understanding is to his views on immigration, as his faith and holy books “call” him to welcome immigrants today, as Christians have for centuries. Reverend Rob Moore, a minister from Church of the Cathedral, a United Church of Christ congregation, also cited the stories of Mary and Joseph as important in determining his views on immigration. Rev. Moore told me that
he felt compelled by the Christmas story of Joseph and Mary traveling to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus. He stated this story is “connected to the immigration and narrative story, because they have to travel, they have to go through these hoops because they are immigrants.” Rev. Moore told me he feels commanded by his scripture to “walk with those who are alienated, who are marginalized,” and that today, one of the most vulnerable, marginalized population in his community are immigrants.

A Relationship with God

In addition to calling upon specific scriptural passages to explain their thinking on immigration, clergy also expressed sentiments found in scripture as equally important. Several clergy felt their relationship with God, either as his “children,” or through a tacit agreement to follow his will, led them to think about immigration as a religious issue. For Pastor Harris, “What it means to be a United Methodist is putting our faith into action.” When asked about immigration restrictions placed on Muslim individuals by President Trump, Pastor Harris commented: “we are children of God…that includes relating to everyone as children of God, understanding the magnitude of God’s love for all people, no matter where they come from…no matter what their faith is.” Pastor Harris told me he sees himself and all other humans as part of the same human family under God, and therefore he feels that supporting those who come to the U.S. from other nations to be a Godly action. Rabbi Rebecca Kline mentioned she conceptualizes her role in advocating for immigrants as part of “the tacit agreement of partnership with God” to live in his image and do good by all peoples. Rev. Andrew Williams also mentioned he felt “the call of God…the call of justice and humanity and love” when he thinks about social inequalities between immigrants and native-born Americans. Rev. Bob Walker similarly told me, when he thinks about immigrants to the U.S. today, he is concerned that they are “not being given a fair
shake…they’re being viewed as outsiders or inferior or criminals or they’re judged falsely for people who want to come here and have a good life and work and raise families and be part of American society.” He further explained that view to be “backed by (his) belief that God is a God of justice and equality” and he feels “we’re working in concert with God when we fight for opportunities and justice for “immigrants.”

The pervasive sentiment of connection with God my interviewees expressed reflect previous findings in sociological literature regarding clergy and conceptualizing religious social action in relation to immigration. In her work on interviewing clergy protesting at the U.S.-Mexico border, Pierette Hondagneu-Sotello found several to evoke the idea that immigrants and native-born Americans alike are children of God and should thus be treated with the same love, respect, and kindness (Hondagneu-Sotello 2008). Hondagneu-Sotello’s subjects drew upon similar findings in scripture as my subjects, where both were thinking about immigration from a religious standpoint. In Paul Lichterman’s research on religious social action groups, he also found the “children of God” rhetoric to be a uniting sentiment across religious traditions for social action (Lichterman 2008). While Lichterman did not expressly note his subjects were acting on immigration, this finding is still of import, as it reflects a prevalence of this rhetoric in clergy’s understanding of social action.

*Matthew 25*

A second example of scripture cited by both my interview subjects and others in scholarship comes from Reverend Rosemary Rossi, of St. Alban’s Episcopalian Church. Rev. Rossi expressly linked her thoughts on immigration issues, to religious scripture, telling me that all her thoughts and actions are “founded in liturgy.” When we spoke about immigration, Rev. Rossi expressed her repulsion with the religious messaging coming from the current President
and his administration. She told me, “I find…our current administration, ostensibly calling itself Christian, to be utterly incoherent. I cannot square anything they’re doing with anything I know about Jesus Christ.” Her frustration grew as she spoke about immigration policies coming from the Trump Administration. Rev. Rossi continued to tie her thinking on immigration to scripture, citing one passage in particular that shaped her views. She told me Matthew 25, “in which Jesus says, if you have reached out to the least, the last, the lost, and the littlest, you have reached out to me” inspires her to support immigrants as a way to connect to Jesus.

Rev. Rossi was the only clergy person I interviewed to bring up Matthew 25, but she was not the first clergy person in religious or sociological scholarship to do so. Grace Yukich, in her research on progressive clergy and their involvement in immigration movements, found several clergy to cite Matthew 25 as a guiding passage in their conceptualization of immigration. One man Yukich interviewed said, “Jesus in Matthew says, ‘When I was outside, you let me in.’ It’s very clear. It could say, When I was an immigrant, you let me in’” (Yukich 2013:41). Similar to Rev. Rossi, Yukich’s interview subject found a pro-immigrant message pervasive in his religious texts, and thusly acted upon them. For Rev. Rossi, her scripture is a driving force in her life and influences all actions, especially those on immigration.

Scripture in Political Context

Many clergy I spoke with specified their increased connection with scripture due to the current political climate. President Trump’s messaging around immigration has been particularly controversial (see WHY NOW? THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2016 ELECTION, pg. 49), and for the clergy I interviewed, this rhetoric inspired them to turn to scripture for guidance. Rev. Andrew Williams mentioned how “disgusted” he was “by the xenophobia, by the language being used, the portrayal of immigrants,” and that during this turbulent time, he returns to his religious
roots. Rev. Williams told me the pervasive message that we are all children of God and the importance of “seeing each other that way…and not other or demonize” is elevated due to Trump’s comments. David Abrams told me his connection to scripture has been motivated by what he felt was a level of complacency prior to the election. He said, immediately following the election, there was a “deep sense” in his congregation that “we need to be engaged more actively in the resist movement, and that he looks to his religious background to direct that engagement.

Bette Sharpe explained that her congregants didn’t always think of their religion as political, but after Donald Trump became President, there was a profound shift in their thinking. She told me her congregants actively sought political messages in their religious tradition due to the political climate. This affinity, for clergy, between immigration and religion shows what Grace Yukich calls an “overlap discourse,” in which a political message is contained within a religious sphere or vice versa (Yukich 2013:127). The overlap discourse between religion and politics leads religious leaders to find messages hidden in their scripture to be political, such as interpreting the welcoming the stranger passage as a call to support specific legislation or to change larger social perception of immigrants. In speaking about the political relevance of their scriptural teachings today, clergy I interviewed affirmed the overlap discourse between religion and politics as well as the affinity between scripture and immigration.

SPEECH-LESS: FREE SPEECH AND RELIGION?

In stark contrast to my interviewees’ religious understanding of immigration, their thinking on free and hate speech was not religious or scriptural. In my interview guide, sections on immigration and free/hate speech posed similar questions, which initially asked clergy how they understand issues of immigration or free and hate speech, then probing into the religious context, if any, of these issues. Despite this, very few clergy could easily draw a connection
between their scripture and how they understood free speech or hate speech. This shows a weakened elective affinity between how clergy understand free/hate speech and scripture together. Instead, the majority of clergy I spoke with seemed to understand free speech and hate speech as a legal issue, through the lens of the state, which is, in this case, the American government. Eight clergy interviewed explicitly mentioned the word “constitution” in their explanation of free speech and hate speech, and three others alluded to the legal context of issues of free and hate speech. Like Pastor Eli, Rev. Andrew Williams mentioned *Shenck v. United States* and the “fire in a crowded theatre” phrase as a key regulation in defining free speech. Rabbi Paul Kline specifically highlighted the First Amendment as the pinnacle law on free speech. However, most other clergy who mentioned constitutionality spoke more generally, not about specific sections of the Constitution or other legislation. Rev. Bob Walker mentioned that “free speech is something that is enshrined in our Constitution.” Rev. Rob Moore recognized free speech as a “constitutional right.” Likewise, Rabbi Shira Caplan noted “Free speech is protected by the Constitution as a way to allow people to speak their mind, particularly in their response to the government, so the government doesn’t shut down or censor different opinions and different backgrounds and ways of thinking.”

Rabbi Caplan went on to define hate speech as “a choice that someone makes that targets a person or group to inspire terror and fear in people.” When asked to define hate speech, clergy gave a variety of answers. Some, like Rev. Moore, Rabbi Rebecca Kline, and her husband Rabbi Paul Kline, and Rev. Harris, defined hate speech in the context that it insights violence or hateful acts. Most clergy struggled to state a clear definition to hate speech. Unlike the frequent similarities found in clergy understandings of immigration issues, the only similarities amongst definitions of free speech lay in defining speech as a constitutional issue. In determining the
definition of hate speech, and particularly where the line between free speech and free expression and hate speech lies, clergy seemed stumped. Rabbi Rebecca Kline mentioned how difficult it is to define hate speech because, despite some speech leading to violence, banning any speech seems “anathema to what this country stands for.”

Rev. Rob Moore also recognized the difficulty in defining hate speech, where he pondered whether shutting down speech that could be deemed as hateful towards some would be seen as an infringement of free speech for others. Rev. Bob Walker additionally struggled to define hate speech and paused frequently when asked about it. He eventually commented on his idea of hate speech, which he acknowledged came from a political, legal American context, which he interpreted as speech that directly attacks an individual or group. Rabbi Rebecca Kline also called free speech a “political issue.” Few clergy spoke of scripture when defining or exploring topics of free and hate speech, while scripture was readily used to describe immigration issues. Jim Harris summed the segmentation between free/hate speech and religion when he said, “Relative to the line between free speech and hate speech, I’m not sure our faith provides that wisdom.”

In fact, the most prevalent theme across clergy definitions of free and hate speech, besides constitutionality, was a confusion and difficulty in response. Four clergy used the phrase “I don’t know” when describing their definitions of free and hate speech. Two others took extemporaneous pauses during questions about free speech that were inconsistent with their regular speech pattern. One clergy even asked to skip a question she didn’t know how to answer in the section regarding free speech. In clergy’s understanding of free and hate speech, religion is rarely mentioned. The connection between faith and free speech is segmented, if at all present. I pose this is due to a weakened elective affinity between clergy’s religious background and their
CLERGY IN ACTION

understanding of free speech. Instead, clergy interpret free speech to be a mechanism of the state, not of any religious institution to which they belong or framework to which they subscribe. In using rhetoric centered around American values, legal works, and constitutionality, clergy center their understanding of free speech within the constraints of the American legal system, one that is free from religion and consciously secular. These occurrences highlight not only a lack of cohesion between respondents but also the complexity of free and hate speech as issues themselves.

A Lack of Data

I gathered significantly less data on free speech than immigration, which was surprising to me, as I asked the same amount of questions of what I considered to be equal or similar depth for both issues. On average, clergy spoke for seven minutes more about immigration than they did about free or hate speech, taking longer to answer questions on immigration due to the amount of data they had to share. One clergy person spoke for almost 45 minutes about immigration, which took up so much of the interview questions that I had to rush through the free speech questions so as to get through my interview guide before he had to leave the interview. This lack of data is data in and of itself and may signify a larger empirical finding. My lack of data on free speech could highlight several issues. First, there is the possibility that I failed to design a balanced interview guide, or that my questions on immigration were somehow more thorough or prescriptive than those on free speech. Second, the lesser dataset could link to a larger difficulty for the general populous, and, in this case, clergy, to define free speech at all.

While free speech has been significantly present as an issue both in the Trump Administration and in subsequent media coverage, it is still possible that clergy and the general public do not have a clear understanding of speech as a concept, regardless of any framework through which it
is viewed. Third, as religious experts, clergy may be able to better comment on immigration because it is spoken and taught about in scripture, whereas free speech may be less so. Any of these explanations on their own or some combination of the three could explain the lesser amount of data collected on speech in comparison to immigration.

Despite my own disappointment in any possible methodological research failings on my part, this lack of data is reflective of a larger trend shown in the literature; free speech and hate speech have rarely been studied in sociological, sociology of religion, or religious studies scholarship. After conducting a thorough literature review across sociological, religious studies, and political disciplines, I failed to find any prominent scholar or body of work that assessed speech from a religious lens or even connected religion to free speech. This could be due to my own research errors, however, I spent two months combing over library shelves and computer databases, with help from Brandeis Sociological Librarian Maric Kramer and Professor of Sociology Wendy Cadge. Collectively, the only resource we could find on free speech and religious interpretation came from political scholar David Frederickson in an anthology on progressive religion. This work addressed free speech in Pauline theology, which relies on the works created by Paul the Apostle as doctrine (Fredrickson 2000). Frederickson analyzed Pauline writings and concluded that, in relation to free speech, Paul would advocate staunchly for freedom of speech, regardless of whether or not said speech was harmful or came from a place of hate (Fredrickson 2000). However, no clergy I interviewed referenced Pauline theology, which seems to be studied, based on Frederickson, by a niche group of clergy and secular scholars. The lack of scholarship exploring scripture and its connection to free speech shows a hole in scholarship, an area where scholars have previously failed to research or investigate. My difficulty collecting data may be reflected by other scholars’ lack of publication; perhaps issues
of speech and religion are not easily linked by anyone. It is also possible that my framing of speech is new to sociological scholarship; while sociologists have studied immigration extensively, there is less of a sociological framework with which to study speech. Without a significant body of literature to which to compare my data, it is difficult to understand why I encountered the phenomenon where speech and religion are not easily connected, however, the lack of literature on this topic is still important to note.

*Outliers: Speech is Religious*

While the vast majority of my interview subjects identified speech as a constitutional issue, two outliers drew a religious connection between speech and scripture. Aviva Ertzen and Shira Caplan, both Rabbis, found a connection to speech in their scripture. Rabbi Ertzen stated, “I think Judaism is quite clear what is abhorred and what is not…it’s been clear to me that Judaism has specific rules about what you can say and can’t say. There’s a lot of Jewish wisdom about speech.” Rabbi Ertzen’s assertion seems to contradict other clergy, including other Rabbi’s, understanding of speech as a purely constitutional or legal issue. Rabbi Caplan spoke similarly to Rabbi Ertzen, remarking, “Judaism has a lot to say about not harming people with words.” However, in comparison to the affinity between immigration and scripture, which was explicit, no outlier described an explicit passage from scripture defining or ruling on speech. For example, the Hebrew Bible lists 36 times how Jews were strangers in Egypt and therefore must welcome the stranger, a clear call to support and welcome the immigrant. In contrast, both Rabbi Ertzen and Rabbi Caplan cited general ideas that Judaism shares regarding words that are harmful, which may link to defining hate speech, but fails to do so clearly. Even Rabbis Ertzen

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4 In Jewish scripture and tradition, the concept of *lashon hara*, or derogatory speech, is forbidden by Jewish law. While I am personally familiar with this concept, none of the Rabbis I interviewed mentioned it by name or referred to Jewish law restricting or influencing speech, which was interesting to me.
and Caplan, two religious scholars very familiar with scripture, failed to mention specific passages addressing regulation on speech, particularly whether speech should be free, or what constitutes hate speech. While Rabbi Ertzen mentioned “specific rules,” she failed to further identify any rules or their content that address speech. Rabbis Ertzen and Caplan stand out as outliers from the majority trend amongst my interview subjects to define speech as a constitutional, not religious issue. However, their outlying contentions are only somewhat connected to defining speech and are weak connections in comparison to the scriptural connection with immigration brought up by every single interviewee. Therefore, I acknowledge these subjects lie outside the general trend, but also contend that their points require an interpretive creativity to link scripture and speech, particularly in comparison to immigration.

CONCLUSION

For my subjects, immigration was significantly easier to define as religious, while the affinity between religion and free speech was strained. Speech was like the corner piece of a puzzle where religion was a round piece from a completely different puzzle. While both scripture and speech can be considered to be puzzle pieces of the clergy’s understanding of social issues, they don’t easily fit together. They are from two different boxes, or, in this case, schools of thought: one religious, one political. While Grace Yukich used overlap discourse theory to show how religion and politics can intersect, the overlap between free speech and a religious framework is thin at best. Linking back to Weber’s elective affinity, the lack of fit between scripture and speech is akin to a weakened affinity between the two. Based on clergy’s knowledge, core biblical teachings, from three different religious traditions, touched frequently on immigration, but failed to address or only indirectly commented on speech. In the puzzle of
affinity, stronger affinities occur when pieces of the puzzle fit together, which, in my research, occurs between scripture and immigration, but not immigration and speech.
2. UNITED IN ACTION?

INTERFAITH RELIGIOUS COALITION WORK VERSUS INDIVIDUAL INITIATIVES

“THEY WANTED TO DO SOMETHING”: REVEREND WILLIAMS’S STORY

For Reverend Andrew Williams, the Senior Minister of Hope Unitarian Universalist Church, the election of President Donald Trump was instrumental in influencing his community to take social action. When we spoke, Reverend Williams told me of his mostly liberal, 400 household congregation, many of whom were frustrated with social inequalities long before the election. He noticed a “growing anger and motivation to do something” about immigration particularly amongst his members during the campaign season immediately preceding the November 2017 election. Reverend Williams told me he was approached by one of his members who was appalled by the language being used by then Presidential Candidate Trump surrounding immigrants and refugees. This member told Reverend Williams she wanted to “be able to do something” (his vocal emphasis), so he helped connect this congregant and several other leaders in the congregation with a refugee resettlement program. Together, Reverend Williams, the woman who came to him, and other leaders in the congregation helped to establish three teams of eight people to welcome refugee families to the Boston area. The 24 volunteers from Hope Church helped families from Somalia, Syria, and the Congo acclimate to the United States through “socializing, taking them to a baseball game, (and) practicing English with them.” Reverend Williams spoke proudly of his congregants involved in this initiative, including one group who planned a traditional Thanksgiving dinner with the Somali family. Many of Reverend Williams’s descriptions were peppered with support and praise, thanking his congregants and congregation as an institution for standing up on immigration.
In addition to the welcoming committee action, Hope Church participated in several initiatives to support immigrants and refugees. Ranging from physical participation in action to raising money for organizations working with these populations, Rev. Williams told me Hope Church’s work is varied and continuous, or at least has been since the 2016 election. Hope has supported asylum seekers financially in fundraisers and through teach-ins, where an asylum seeker or recipient speaks to the congregation at large about their experience. Part of their welcoming initiative includes collecting household items, such as canned foods and children’s backpacks, to present to refugees when they first enter their new home. Rev. Williams reported congregants participating with particular enthusiasm in this collection, gathering enough supplies to support 46 families, a staggering 43 more than expected.

Rev. Williams also told me of how his congregation has rallied behind and in support of the sanctuary movement. Two congregants created a proposal for Hope Church to establish themselves as a Level Two sanctuary congregation, meaning they would take part in a sanctuary cluster, meaning a group of congregations committing to participate in the Sanctuary Movement together, as secondary support but would not house undocumented immigrants on their property directly (Yukich 2013). The parish board of directors reviewed the proposal and approved of the initiative. Hope Church then joined in a cluster of congregations in its geographical vicinity, in which Reverend Williams noted they act as support to two Level One sanctuary congregations. Congregations participating at Level One status will host families on their property, with additional volunteers from Level Two and Three participants stepping in to guard the property, spend time with those in sanctuary, and offer social, emotional, and physical support in distressing times (Yukich 2013). As a Level Two congregation, Reverend Williams told me volunteers from Hope Church are “activated” when the Level One congregations need additional
support, whether that be an urgent situation “in case ICE\(^5\) shows up” or an every-day need, such as to “provide food (or) rides to medical care.” After the board voted to become a sanctuary congregation, teams of volunteers from the congregation joined the effort, offering to participate in every capacity needed.

When I asked Reverend Williams how his congregation organizes social action, he explained actions or issues are frequently brought to the attention of the general congregation by one individual. With the welcoming team effort, the individual who brought the action to Reverend Williams’s attention was “sickened by and angered about the language that was being used around immigrants and wanted to do something that…would help (immigrants) know there were people who welcomed them and cared about them.” With the sanctuary movement, one of the congregants behind Hope Church’s initial proposal was an immigrant herself and felt deeply close to the issue. After each individual brings a proposal to the board of the congregation, the board will approve of or disapprove of any action based on interest from the general congregation. Following action approval by the board, Rev. Williams said individuals who make proposals often act as *de facto* leaders in organizing action, like the woman who took the lead on Hope’s sanctuary work.

Reverend Williams told me his congregation’s participation in the New Sanctuary Movement was motivated by several factors, but it primarily linked back to their religious beliefs. He told me, “the call of God, as well as the call of justice, humanity, and love,” pushed him to take immediate action on behalf of his congregation. In regard to the vast turnout of volunteers surrounding immigration issues, Reverend Williams told me he thinks the enthusiasm with which his congregants volunteered for the sanctuary efforts was motivated by a “greater

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\(^5\)Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the branch of the United States government that enforces immigration and deportation legislation.
determination” to connect to his congregants’ religious roots to support immigrants post-election. While the actions around immigration were initially organized by one individual, many congregants felt motivated by both their religious background and the political climate. He told me the stories of biblical figures like Abraham, Moses, and Mary and Joseph were particular sources of inspiration as he and his congregants thought about immigration as a religious issue. Reverend Williams’ congregants turned to the scriptures and to their faith when faced with the President’s adversarial comments and policies on immigration, which he stated vastly increased interest in participating in the Sanctuary Movement. The interest of the congregants led the Church to support the action as a collective congregational effort, where the Church would both officially sponsor an initiative and volunteers from the congregation would participate in said initiative.

In contrast to Hope Church’s many actions surrounding immigration issues since November 2017, the congregation did not seem to act on issues of free or hate speech, another topic I explored in my interviews. When I asked Reverend Williams about his congregation’s action on free or hate speech, he struggled to remember specific action the congregation condoned or sponsored. Reverend Williams told me he spoke out against hate speech several times from his pulpit, but he specified his congregation as a group had not taken specific action on free speech or hate speech. I asked Reverend Williams about the Boston march on August 19th, 2017, in response to the Neo-Nazi march in Charlottesville, VA, an event other interviewees identified as an action against hate speech. Rev. Williams explained that, while he and approximately 30 of his 400 congregants attended the march, they did not attend in representation of their entire congregation. Instead, most congregants from Hope Church attended with their families and participated as individuals, not specifically as members of Hope
Church. Other than the Boston march on August 19th, Reverend Williams could not recall any community actions on free or hate speech, whether for or against either.

Reverend Williams’s and his congregants’ variance in social action on immigration and free/hate speech is emblematic of the larger trend I will explore in this chapter. I found the majority of my subjects to report active participation in immigration action, frequently through joining a partnership or coalition community, such as participating in the sanctuary movement or working with the Interfaith Clergy Community of Boston (ICCB), a community organizing collective of interfaith clergy. On immigration, clergy and their congregations tended to act collectively as an organization and made long-term, community commitments to participating in action. On free and hate speech issues, the clergy I interviewed did not seem to organize or be a part of any collective action. Significantly less clergy reported their congregation took action on free or hate speech than on immigration, and most actions mentioned in relation to free or hate speech were one-time, short term commitments. No clergy person mentioned a comparable free speech or hate speech faith action coalition comparable to the sanctuary movement or the ICCB.

I will argue the phenomenon, in which immigration was more frequently acted upon by my interview subjects, for extended periods of time, with more outreach to community partners and coalitions, is partially due to my findings in Chapter One, where I argued immigration is more easily defined as religious that free or hate speech. Within the Boston interfaith clergy community, there are already structures in place for clergy to join on action for immigration issues from a religious lens. These structures, including the sanctuary movement and ICCB, can be categorized as faith-based community organizing coalitions and promote the pervasive message that immigration is a religious issue. Free and hate speech, however, are less conducive issues to religious community organizing, as described by Delehanty (2016) and Wood (2002),
because of their complex definitions which vary between clergy, thus limiting coalition building in this area. Furthermore, I will highlight how clergy and congregational action on immigration was collective, emphasizing a shared opinion or ideology across congregations, where action free speech was a more individual, divisive issue.

SANCTUARY IN SANCTUARIES

Earlier, I summarized the Old and New Sanctuary Movements, clergy’s role in organizing them, and their impact on immigrant communities. In comparing the two movements, Grace Yukich differentiates their strategies towards supporting immigrants. In addition to serving different populations, where the Old Sanctuary Movement sought to protect new arrivals and the New Sanctuary Movement supported “mixed-status families” with existing ties to the community (Yukich 2013:6), the movements differed in their strategy. Yukich describes the New Sanctuary Coalition as a crossover strategy, meaning it engages both political and religious institutions (Yukich 2013:78). She also classifies the New Sanctuary Movement as a multi-target social movement, or a movement organization that “simultaneously seeks to change multiple institutions – in this case, both religious and government institutions” (Yukich 2013:3). The New Sanctuary Movement also differed from the old in its challenge of both cultural change and policy change, as it unified clergy and congregants to “keep immigrant families united and to change the hearts and minds of religious people, turning them toward a religious worldview that embraces all people as members of one divine and human family” (Yukich 2013:9). In different cities, the New Sanctuary Movement coalitions took different forms. L.A. took on a cluster model, where host congregations (Level One) had families living on their property while other local congregations (Levels Two and Three) would offer support (Yukich 2013:17). In contrast, the New York coalition partnered one to three congregations with a family to offer moral, legal,
and religious support (Yukich 2013:18). Both strategies actively sought to change cultural perceptions of immigrants in their respective locations through additional advocacy efforts (Yukich 2013). Today, the New Sanctuary Movement is still active in several cities.

Sanctuary in Boston

Bostonian clergy have been active in both the Old and New Sanctuary Movements. As great numbers of immigrants from El Salvador and Guatemala settled in greater Boston in the 1980s, they were at high risk for deportation, despite their escaping human rights abuses (Johnson 2015). In Boston at that time, a group of clergy formed a nonprofit organization and worked together to provide social services to these immigrants, including sanctuary housing and legal clinic offerings (Johnson 2015:219). Today, in Boston and the surrounding metropolitan suburbs, several active New Sanctuary Movement coalition groups operate within the cluster-model. When I asked clergy in the Boston area about action they take surrounding immigration, 12 out of 13 mentioned founding or joining a cluster of sanctuary congregations as a main component of their action work. Both Pastor Eli Davis and Reverend Jim Harris reported founding a sanctuary coalition in their geographic location. Pastor Eli told me that he first became interested in the sanctuary movement because his daughter, also a pastor at Mount Zion AME, brought it to his attention. Similarly to Reverend Williams’s and Hope Church’s process of becoming involved in the Sanctuary Movement, Pastor Eli and his daughter brought a proposal to the steward board of Mount Zion AME, a group of elders holding esteemed positions in the church. The steward board approved Pastor Eli’s proposal. Together with peer faith leaders, Pastor Eli formed the Inner Boston Sanctuary Network (IBSN), a cluster with nearby congregations situated in neighborhoods in and outside city limits. When it became apparent no other congregations in the IBSN could host families in physical sanctuary, Pastor Eli brought the
issue back to the parishioners of Mount Zion for an open discussion. Following that event, the steward board also approved Mount Zion’s Level One commitment, and they took a man into sanctuary soon after. Emerson Church, led by Rev. Jen Livingston, works in partnership with IBSN as a Level Two congregation, supporting the individual currently in sanctuary at Mount Zion AME.

With his congregation, St. Paul United Methodist Church, Pastor Jim Harris also co-founded a sanctuary coalition, called the Boston-Cambridge Sanctuary Cluster (BCSC). Pastor Harris told me he felt forming the sanctuary group was a “direct result of some of the potential policies or statements that (President) Trump” made regarding immigrants. For him, President Trump’s inflammatory statements “rallied the troops” to stand up and support immigrants. Concentrated within Boston and Cambridge, BCSC works in partnership with several of the clergy I interviewed, including Rev. Rob Moore, Rabbi Rebecca Kline, Rev. Rosemary Rossi, and Rev. Bob Walker, all of whose congregations support BCSC at a Level Two or Level Three commitment. Some congregations, like Rev. Walker’s All Saints Unitarian Universalist Church, takes action as part of the Sanctuary Movement through fundraising or collecting materials for those in sanctuary. Others, such as Rabbi Rebecca Kline’s Temple B’nai Tzedek, Rev. Rossi’s St. Alban’s Church, and Rev. Moore’s Church of the Cathedral, have volunteer contingencies supporting those in sanctuary, through keeping them company, driving them to appointments, and protecting the building where they are housed from ICE or other deportation authorities.

I also interviewed clergy involved in different sanctuary efforts outside of the IBSN and BCSC. Rabbis Aviva Ertzen, David Abrams, Shira Caplan, and Reverend Bette Sharpe did not name their coalitions or clusters in our interviews, but each specifically mentioned their congregations’ involvement in the sanctuary movement. Reverend Sharpe mentioned a suburban
sanctuary coalition in the process of forming, which she says she is ready to participate in as soon as a family needs sanctuary. Rabbi Aviva Ertzen told me how enthusiastic her congregants were about participating in the sanctuary movement because of the temporal “concern about what’s going on with immigrants” related to President Trump’s suggested policy changes. Despite the drive to participate, Congregation Oseh Shalom didn’t have the capacity to host or directly support a host congregation, Rabbi Ertzen said. However, she mentioned Oseh Shalom has joined a new cluster, also forming in the suburbs, and like Reverend Sharpe is waiting to be activated when an individual or family comes into sanctuary.

Across almost all interviews, participation in the sanctuary movement was a common thread. Clergy identified a number of ways they participated, including volunteering time, hosting, and fundraising. In our discussions on sanctuary, I found the pervasive theme of frustration with the current political climate surrounding immigrants leading to an increased drive to participate. Even Rabbi Paul Kline, the only clergyperson who did not mention participating in any sanctuary activities during our interview, expressed empathy towards immigrants today, who he noted are facing “truly reprehensible…heinous…misguided” treatment due to their nationality or legal status. In addition to the motivating factors mentioned in the previous chapter, clergy mentioned how engaged their congregants felt in sanctuary actions. Several congregations, including Emerson Church and Temple Dorshei Emet, brought the issue of sanctuary to their congregants for a vote and received an overwhelmingly positive outpouring of support. Like Reverend Williams’s experience with packing 43 extra boxes of items, these congregations had more volunteers than they knew what to do with. Because of this increased motivation, Dorshei Emet along with Mount Zion AME, St. Alban’s, Church of the Cathedral, Temple Jerusalem, and Congregation Oseh Shalom all continued their immigration
work outside of sanctuary commitments, either through partnering with local social services agencies, providing funding or items to families in need, or through hosting vigils and policy-based action to lobby for immigration policy change.

ICCB: INTERFAITH COALITION IN ACTION

The Interfaith Clergy Community of Boston

Clergy representing Dorshei Emet, Mount Zion AME, St. Alban’s, Church of the Cathedral, Temple Jerusalem, and Congregation Oseh Shalom all mentioned their participation in immigration action with the Interfaith Clergy Community of Boston, or ICCB, a community faith-based organizing group of clergy working to advance issues of social justice through religious action. With 39 member organizations and many additionally affiliated clergy, ICCB has a history of mobilizing interfaith religious leaders and people to take action on issues including affordable housing, criminal justice, gun violence, and immigration. Many actions organized by ICCB operate in the intersection of issues, such as a campaign to support Haitian health care workers being mistreated at work, an action addressing immigration, labor rights, and health care reform. ICCB’s work is mainly driven by the board, membership organization clergy, and volunteers; ICCB has only two paid staff members. Both Pastor Eli Davis and Reverend Rob Moore served on the ICCB Board of Directors in 2016, and other clergy mentioned holding leadership positions on various actions organized by ICCB. ICCB is also affiliated with a national network of interfaith action organizations and recently celebrated its 20th year in operation.

ICCB Action

Six of the thirteen clergy I interviewed spoke about their involvement with ICCB initiatives. Many of these subjects spoke highly of ICCB actions, which they identified as broad-
reaching, empowering, and coalition-building. Rev. Rob Moore, a member of the ICCB Board of Directors, told me his congregation felt inspired by the coalition structure of ICCB and takes their membership in ICCB seriously. He told me his congregation, as a dues-paying member of the coalition, frequently finds out about issues or actions through ICCB. His congregants count a large number of Haitian-Americans and Haitian immigrants among their numbers, and when ICCB organized an action around support for Haitian health care workers, congregants at Church of the Cathedral became actively involved. Rev. Moore told me he feels ICCB operates in an empowering way because they are committed to what he called, “the Iron Rule: don’t do for others what they can do for themselves.” He later explained to me that he feels strongly that his role is to guide his congregants to participate in action that empowers underserved communities and to steer them away from actions that operate with a savior, pedantic complex. For Rev. Moore, committing to be part of a coalition means showing up no matter what they need, even if it is not the first priority of the congregation. He mentioned several instances where ICCB organized a collective action that did not directly affect his congregants, but they “showed up and brought numbers to events with at attorney generals or governors, to say we stand here with our…brothers and sisters, (even if) we didn’t choose that issue.”

Rabbi Aviva Ertzen echoed Rev. Moore’s congregational commitment to ICCB. Her synagogue, Congregation Oseh Shalom, has been a member of ICCB for 18 years. For Rabbi Ertzen, ICCB provides an “avenue for taking action on multiple issues” from a religious perspective. Rabbi Ertzen also mentioned her congregants’ support of ICCB issues, even if the actions do not relate directly to them. She mentioned, “I think, with ICCB, it’s less about the issues and more about what’s being acted on in the organization.” Rabbi Shira Caplan also shared this sentiment, noting that her congregation’s participation in ICCB action helps foster
work that is “sustainable and collaborative” that provides “a variety of ways of participating, so that individuals can draw on their strength and draw on their resources, whether it’s time or money, and feel that they’ve done something meaningful.” For Rabbi Caplan’s congregants, acting through a larger organization helps them feel their skills are best utilized, because there are different opportunities to participate. Rabbi Caplan told me congregants have plugged into ICCB action at various levels, including through fundraising for the organization’s greater activities, participating in lobbying efforts, and co-hosting an interfaith dialogue event between Muslim and Jewish communities. Rabbis Caplan and Ertzen reflect a sentiment shared throughout all my interviews with ICCB-involved clergy; all five shared their appreciation of ICCB’s multi-issue actions.

A Communal Issue: Immigration Action in Literature

The organizing model of ICCB as well as the IBSN and BCSC Sanctuary Movement groups fit a coalition model for community religious organizing. In his research, scholar John Delehanty names such religious coalitions as “faith-based community organizing” groups, which he defines as “regional community organizing coalition whose member groups are mostly or exclusively religious congregations” that “work to build and deploy two main cultural narratives: first, that faith communities can successfully challenge systemic injustice through sustained political engagement; second, that social justice activism is indispensable to religious commitment” (Delehanty 2016:39). Both ICCB as well as IBSN and BCSC fit under Delehanty’s definition of a religious coalition, where each group provide a larger umbrella organization to unite interfaith chaplains and clergy, based on geographic location, to take action on issues that transcend religious difference. On ICCB’s website, they explicitly list their value in uniting
interfaith organizations to “fight for social justice,” which they find “transcend” religious and cultural divides, thus satisfying both cultural narratives Delehanty identifies.

In Robert Wood’s book *Faith in Action: Religion, Race, and Democratic Organizing in America*, Wood examines faith-based community organizing through the lens of a coalition based in Oakland, CA. Wood finds that faith-based community organizing coalitions can facilitate issue-based actions through community social services, policy reform, and volunteer organizing (Wood 2002). Wood finds faith-based community organizing coalitions have been extremely effective in their work across history in the United States, which he asserts is due to their members’ “shared membership in a moral community,” which fosters cultural ties between members and motivates them to work collaboratively (Wood 2002:140). Djupe and Gilbert complicate Wood’s idea of moral community. Djupe and Gilbert find that issues clergy take action on fall into a category of moral community issues, as Wood suggests, such as gambling, sexual politics, or alcoholism, or into a second category of “social justice issues,” based on reforming social inequalities in issues such as civil rights, gender, and the environment (Djupe and Gilbert 2002:598). Djupe and Gilbert find that politically conservative clergy are more likely to act on moral issues, while progressive clergy are more likely to act on social justice issues.

Using Djupe, Gilbert, and Wood’s characterizations of faith-based community organizing and clergy action, the clergy I interviewed displayed characteristics of faith-based coalitions focused on social justice issues. My interviewees, all of whom identified as liberal or progressive, mentioned action on many issues in our interviews, including the environment and climate change, immigration, race and racism, LGBTQ issues, and others. When speaking specifically about immigration, ten clergy I spoke with explicitly defined immigration as a “social justice issue.” These ten clergy also frequently used similar language as Djupe and
Gilbert used when describing social justice issues, including framing immigration as an issue of “social inequality” between peoples of different nationalities (Djupe and Gilbert 2002:58). While my interview subjects did not use language aligning immigration with moral issues, they did form what Wood called “moral communities” through building and joining coalitions. The ICCB as well as both Sanctuary clusters provided opportunities for clergy across religion to unite in action with a religious root, branching to address social justice issues of temporal importance. The existence of these faith-based community organizing coalitions facilitated action on immigration for clergy and their congregants through combining efforts. The use of coalition groups to facilitate immigration-based action by almost all of my interviewees signals this model of community and faith organizing is conducive to acting on immigration and immigration issues.

Because I did not study the formation of the ICCB and various Sanctuary coalitions, it is difficult to ascertain whether the groups themselves caused increased clergy action or whether coalitions formed as a consequence of action that was already occurring. In the cases I studied, however, this difference was clear. For clergy who participated in the Sanctuary Movement, their motivation was primarily the action, which caused them to form the coalition. This is evident in the case of Pastor Eli and Reverend Harris, both of whom became interested in working to keep immigrants from being deported and, after further research, founded Sanctuary coalitions in their area. While the previous framework the Sanctuary Movement coalition structure provides helped these clergy form their own local movements, they were interested in the action, and, therefore, their Sanctuary coalitions formed as a consequence of that action. In contrast, clergy I interviewed who took part in ICCB action first joined the coalition, then committed to taking action with peers in their larger community. Reverend Moore specifically highlighted his
commitment to the ICCB, even if coalition actions are not the first priority of his congregants. For him, membership in the coalition came first, and because he felt motivated by the coalition structure, he then took part in its actions. Here, the coalition caused the action by uniting clergy and their resources to take action in areas of priority for the coalition as a whole, even if they were outside of the individual priorities of individual members. This cause-effect relationship between clergy and their coalitions facilitated significant action on immigration and other issues, whether driven by the clergy or the coalition. This was not the case with speech action, which took place outside of coalition organizing groups.

SPEECHLESS, CONTINUED: A LACK OF ACTION ON SPEECH

Several authors in sociological and political leadership identify clergy’s speech as action. Djupe and Gilbert found 90 percent of their studied sample of Episcopalian clergy to speak about social justice issues from the pulpit (Djupe and Gilbert 2002:598). Nteta and Wallsten build upon Djupe and Gilbert’s research, finding that American citizens tend to be highly influenced by the political and social stances of “elites,” of which they include clergy (Nteta and Wallsten 2002:894). However, issues of free and hate speech perplexed my interviewees. Speech was once again in contrast to issues of immigration, of which clergy took coalition-based action through ICCB and Sanctuary clusters. In sections where I asked clergy to identify whether their congregations had taken action on free speech, in periods both before and after the 2017 election, six clergy paused or asked for time to think of their answer. Two clergy asked me what I meant by “action on free speech” and asked me to further define what that action could look like, and four clergy initially claimed their congregation had not taken any action on speech. These pauses and additional questions were emblematic of two possible issues – either my questions were not thorough enough, or participants did not fully understand the issues of free and hate speech and
therefore struggled to conceptualize what action on those issues looked like. While it is entirely plausible that my questions were incomplete, I did consult with Professor Wendy Cadge regarding my interview guide several times during the interview process, while I was having difficulty collecting data on free speech action. It seems more likely that clergy’s difficulty in naming action on free speech is related to their lack of understanding of speech as a religious issue as well as their subsequent lack of action on the issue itself.

Only after I prompted these clergy with questions regarding a specific action, the protest march that took place in Charlottesville, VA by neo-Nazis on August 19, 2017, and subsequent protests that followed (Astor, Caron, and Victor 2017), did clergy respond with examples of action on free speech. The action clergy spoke about in regard to free or hate speech can be divided into two distinct categories: protests or marches, and sign-hanging. As discussed in Defining Speech, I struggled to find a religious context for speech itself. I am using the working definition of speech as a statement or action that promotes a specific belief, and I will refer to speech below mostly within a continuum of free and hate speech. Despite the lack of literature on speech and religious communities, there is a significant history of action along the continuum of free and hate speech in the United States. In my introduction, I remarked on the rise of hate crimes, or violent incidents provoked through or enacted because of a hateful sentiment. Additionally, I explored the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which allows each citizen their right to speak without government interference. Speech, in relation to the Constitutional definition, can take many forms, including writing, through protest, public statements, and other avenues of action. However, I specifically chose not to prompt clergy with my working definition and understanding of speech to see their authentic reactions.
Clergy’s commentary on marching and sign-hanging actions built upon previous questions of free speech, where most clergy did not identify free or hate speech as a religious issue. When clergy identified marching action or sign-hanging efforts, they specified said actions were taken by individuals and not by the congregation as an organizational whole, in almost all cases. In this section, I will explore the action clergy and their congregants took on speech issues, within what structures or with what organization they took said action, and how that compares to their coalition-based efforts on immigration. I will also argue that speech issues are not only not conducive to religious frameworks, as stated in Chapter One, but that they are also not conducive to a faith-based community organizing coalition action model because they do not align with other issues acted upon in that model.

The Saints Go Marching In: Marches on Free/Hate Speech

When asked about their participation in any marches either defending the rights of free speech or standing up against hate speech, seven of the 13 clergy I interviewed mentioned they or their congregants did march. Reverends Jen Livingston and Rosemary Rossi as well as Rabbi Aviva Ertzen noted contingencies from their congregation attended the Women’s March, either in D.C. or in Boston, in January 2017 (Hartocollis and Alcindor 2017). All other clergy mentioned congregants who attended the march on Boston Common in response to the events in Charlottesville, VA, as Reverend Williams also discussed (Astor, Caron, and Victor 2017). Rabbi Shira Caplan explained to me that the Boston Common event was “the most obvious time when Boston rose up” against hate speech. Pastor Eli Davis, Reverend Jim Harris, and Rabbi Shira Caplan used similar rhetoric to describe the march, all stating that “a number of” their congregants attended and participated in the Boston March against hate speech, but that that action was not organized through their respective churches. Both Rabbi Aviva Ertzen and
Reverend Rosemary Rossi emphasized their congregants’ autonomy in attending marches on speech issues; Reverend Rossi told me that while there were congregants from St. Alban’s Church in attendance, it was “their individual choice, whether they attend or not.” All of these statements link to Reverend Williams’s comments earlier in the chapter, where he clearly stated his congregants attended the event, but it was not a collective effort from or on behalf of Hope Church.

In thinking about marching as a medium of action, Reverend Rob Moore grappled with the idea of action on speech aloud. He told me, “You could say the…rally (march on Boston Common) was one event that was standing up against hate speech. That’s exactly what it was for, that is what it was about.” Reverend Moore, who was a board member of the Interfaith Clergy Community of Boston (ICCB), also mentioned that ICCB helped organize a vigil event prior to the Boston march to give religious people a space to process recent events and “raise an interfaith voice against such hate speech and such white supremacy.” While this event seems to contrast my assertion that action on speech issues taken by clergy was not through a coalition organization, Reverend Moore was the only clergy person I interviewed who mentioned this event. Even though five other clergy claimed involvement with ICCB, they did not mention their participation in the vigil Reverend Moore cited, leading me to conclude that they either did not participate or did not associate the vigil event with action on free or hate speech.

In summary, when clergy spoke to me about marches as action on free speech, including the Women’s and Boston marches, their comments were contingent upon several factors, primarily the emphasis that any march action was organized by individuals and not their congregation as a whole. Clergy who spoke about marches repeatedly emphasized their congregations’ lack of communal effort behind these issues through their insistence that they
were not supported or organized by a larger congregational body. Perhaps clergy’s congregants disagreed on issues of speech and did not want to collectively support action on speech. This is emblematic of the larger confusion around free and hate speech as non-religious issues I found in Chapter One.

A Sign from God: Sign-Hanging as Action

In addition to participation in marches as action surrounding free speech, three clergy discussed hanging signs outside their houses of worship with messages against hate speech, two of which I discuss here. When I interviewed Rabbi Rebecca Kline, she pointed out one such sign outside of the main entrance of Temple B’nai Tzedek. Temple B’nai Tzedek’s sign says, “We are all immigrants” on the American flag, in the blue section where stars are usually placed, and this message is translated into 13 different languages across each stripe of the flag. Rabbi Rebecca Kline told me her congregation wanted to put up the sign immediately after the election to “have something very visible on the front of the temple that said we are not happy with the situation” regarding immigration policy in this country. She characterized the sign not as taking a stance for or against policy but as standing up for humanity and against the hateful rhetoric about immigration coming from the President and his administration.

Reverend Bette Sharpe’s congregation, Shepard Community Church UCC, put up a similar sign in front of their congregation. Also in front of Shepard’s main entrance, this sign states, “Christians, Jews, Muslims, Immigrants, Refugees, Undocumented, LGBT, People of Color: We Are All God’s Children.” Reverend Sharpe’s congregation created this message together, also following the election, when several congregants came to her with their frustration with the harmful speech they observed for the above-mentioned populations. She told me she felt strongly that placing this sign was a way to “make a statement to the community and anybody
who drives by that this is where we stand.” For Reverend Sharpe’s community, putting a sign up outside their congregation was a quick way to take a strong, religious stance against hate speech and towards love. However, Reverend Sharpe told me about this sign in the introduction section of our interview, not in the portion about free speech or hate speech action. In fact, during that section, Reverend Sharpe told me she hadn’t heard of any action from her congregants or congregation on speech. This is likely due to the discrepancy between speaking out against hate speech and taking physical action oriented towards or against supporting free or hate speech.

While Reverend Sharpe was proud of the sign, she did not identify it as a form of action on speech during our interview, once again signaling a confusion over the definition of free speech as well as on what action on speech is.

It is important to note the contrasting underlying messages of Rabbi Rebecca Kline’s sign and Reverend Sharpe’s sign. Although both signs show inclusivity towards vulnerable populations, one is intrinsically political while the other is religious. The American Flag, the background of Rabbi Rebecca Kline’s sign, is a political symbol of the United States. It evokes national pride and thought of country and nationhood. In contrast, Reverend Sharpe’s sign is religious; it references the biblical rhetoric that all people are related to and in the family of God, are made in his image, and are his children. This language, referenced by clergy across religious traditions in the last chapter, is rooted in scripture and links social justice issues of inclusion based on group identity (Djupe and Gilbert 2002:58) to religious narratives. Rabbi Rebecca Kline and Reverend Sharpe’s signs reflect the political and religious frameworks discussed in the past chapter. In Rabbi Rebecca Kline’s case, placing a sign outside her synagogue was an exercise of free speech, while the speech itself was about immigration. The intersection between the frameworks of religion and politics, dubbed the “overlap discourse” by Grace Yukich
(2013:137), has only become more evident throughout clergy’s experiences. The overlap
discourse is one example of the complexities of the issue of free speech, and I explore others in
the following analysis.

SPEECH IN ACTION: AN ANALYSIS

While clergy I interviewed clearly identified instances, within the New Sanctuary
Movement and through ICCB, where they took action on immigration through a religious,
interfaith community, this was not the case with issues of speech. In Chapter One, I explored
how clergy conceptualized issues of speech as more of a constitutional, political issue than a
religious one through the concept of elective affinity. This finding partially explains clergy’s lack
of cohesive action on speech issues. In conceptualizing speech as political and not religious,
relating less so to scripture and more so to a framework of constitutionality, clergy essentially
separated themselves from action based on speech. As religious leaders, clergy saw their
responsibility as primarily religious, and if speech is not a religious issue, their role would not be
to lead action in this area. Common in the last chapter was also a lack of cohesive definitions of
speech, both free speech and hate speech, amongst clergy. Because there was no consensus
across clergy interviews on definitions of free and hate speech from a religious perspective, this
confusion contributed to less organized communal action and efforts for speech issues.

When clergy recalled themselves or their congregants taking action on speech, they took
action as individuals, not on behalf of their congregations.\(^6\) Immigration was an issue conducive
to the faith-based community organizing coalition model because it gathered interfaith clergy
together in moral communities to advocate for a social justice cause. In contrast, almost no
clergy reported taking part in coalition-based action on speech. Based on the definitions of faith-

\(^6\) With exception of Reverend Moore’s participation in an ICCB vigil, however, this participation seemed to be a
one-time incident and no other clergy involved in ICCB cited the vigil as action on free speech.
based community organizing by Wood, Djupe, and Gilbert, speech seems incompatible with the faith-based community organizing model. First, clergy did not define speech as an issue related to religion. Their contrasting definitions prevented unifying action, especially because each clergy person seemed to explain free speech and hate speech differently. Without a clear definition of the issue at hand, it follows that leaders cannot mobilize communities towards action when the fundamental issue the action is on is left unclear.

Second, the issue of speech does not fit in either the moral issue category or the social justice issue category provided by Djupe and Gilbert. For example, using Rabbi Shira Caplan’s definition of free speech, I tried to apply the concept of speech to moral and social justice categories. Rabbi Caplan defined free speech as “protected by the Constitution as a way to allow people to speak their mind, particularly in their response to the government, so the government doesn’t shut down or censor different opinions and different backgrounds and ways of thinking.” In her definition, free speech would not align as a moral issue, which Djupe and Gilbert describe as “restricting sexual politics and social vices” (2002:598). In fact, promoting free speech would be the antithesis of restricting individuals’ choices, as the moral issue category seeks to do. Free speech or hate speech would also not fit in the social justice issues category, which Djupe and Gilbert define as “aligning with reforms of the welfare state” (2002:598). Promoting free speech allows citizens to speak in contrast to the welfare state and stand against its action, which would not easily lead to reformation.

In addition to speech not fitting the issue definition within faith-based community organizing coalitions, clergy I interviewed did not identity more than one body, institution, or structure taking action on speech. Aside from Reverend Moore’s citation of the vigil on Charlottesville organized by ICCB, no clergy mentioned any organization or coalition they were
a part of taking part in speech action. This was starkly different from their experience with coalitions and immigration, in which clergy listed several already-existing organizations, such as the ICCB and the Sanctuary coalitions, that they joined to take action. No overarching coalition groups mentioned by clergy in this project took action on free or hate speech. There was no comparable “Sanctuary Movement” on speech mentioned by any clergy or that I could find across sociological literature. Furthermore, clergy did not mention their congregations collectively supporting march-based action on speech, while clergy frequently discussed voting procedures for congregational support on immigration. This lack of data on speech is once again emblematic of a confusion and lack of cohesion on the issue, as well as a lack of existing organizations to facilitate said action.

For social movements to be successful, they must unite actors with like opinions towards a concrete action of change (McCarthy and Zald 1977). Social movement success is predicated on effective leadership at every level; participants, organizers, and community partners must effectively utilize their existing resources to mobilize for change (McCarthy and Zald 1977). The successful model of a social movement relies on these hierarchies to work in partnership, allowing all actors to participate to the best of their ability (McCarthy and Zald 1977). However, when a social movement framework does not exist, it can be difficult for actors to find their strengths within the movement and effectively plug in to advance a cause. This is the case with speech here; without an existing movement structure, actors are left without existing frameworks of action to utilize. They must act on speech without guidance from others, which can cause

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7 This may also be due to the issue of social movement frames, in which a social movement actor presents an issue based on a “meaning… or interpretation of reality” by using rhetoric and messaging that will ring true to their audience (Benford 1997:410). For clergy in my sample, framing immigration as religious was significantly easier than framing free speech. Even in instances when religious traditions had rulings on speech issues (i.e. lashon hara in Judaism), clergy did not make the connection by using religious messaging to define speech.
confusion and does not take full advantage of the potential of the group. While the Sanctuary coalition and ICCB structure aided the cause of actors on immigration, the lack of social movement structure was a hindrance for actors on speech.

To confirm these assertions, I examined several issues outside of immigration and speech were acted upon in faith-based community organizing coalitions in literature. In the early 1920s during prohibition, Eric McDaniel wrote of clergy who formed groups to lobby congress to ban alcohol due to its temporal link with domestic violence (McDaniel 2008:13). McDaniel argued that clergy perceived alcoholism to cause domestic violence, which they found morally repulsive and in violation of their religious principles (McDaniel 2008:13). Although the clergy McDaniel cited came from various sects of Protestantism and not from different religions per se, they still united across their differences in practice to advance a moral cause, aligning with the functional definition of faith-based coalitions Delehanty and Wood provided. Here, fighting alcoholism also fits within Djupe and Gilbert’s moral issue category. Scholars including Grace Yukich, Laura Olson, Paul Djupe, and Christopher Gilbert all found coalitions were used for racial justice advocacy and support efforts by interfaith clergy during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Laura Olson wrote of the religious leaders in the Civil Rights Movement who came from Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish backgrounds and united in faith-based community groups or cross-congregational coalitions to lead volunteers in action to support African Americans and their fight for equality (Olson 272). During the Civil Rights Movement, these coalitions took action on a social justice issue, racial equality, and formed interfaith moral communities to do so, which Wood deemed necessary for faith-based community organizing groups.

In my research, I found the model of faith-based community organizing extends beyond the progressive sphere of action. The religious right has mobilized using faith-based coalitions on
issues including same-sex marriage and abortion. During the early 2000s when advocates for gay marriage began lobbying for the right to legally wed, evangelical Protestants, Mormons, and conservative Catholics formed faith-based coalition united in opposition to the legalization of same-sex marriage, an issue they took moral opposition to (Olson 2016:297). This action on moral issues also brought together religious people and leaders from various faiths to forward their agenda, fitting the definition of a faith-based organizing group. The presence of faith-based organizations for action across political lines shows the model has been successful for many issues, however, speech is not one of them. In fact, speech was a divisive issue for already existing organizations, such as congregations, that the clergy I interviewed described interacting with. Speech is not only inaccessible through a faith-based community organizing mode but is also puzzling as an issue to religious leaders in both conception and action.

CONCLUSION

Clergy vastly differed in their actions on immigration and speech. For immigration, clergy took part in the Sanctuary Movement and various faith-based community organizing efforts, such as with the ICCB. On speech, clergy mentioned individual participation in marches against hate speech or hanging signs outside their houses of worship to make a statement, however, little action on speech was collective or unified. Speech, as an issue, is not easily defined nor acted upon, and does not fit within the framework of faith-based community organizing. Building on Chapter One, the findings from Chapter Two show clergy’s conceptualization of issues as religious or political has an impact on their action related to those issues. When an issue, such as speech, is not easily defined as religious, it is difficult for clergy and their congregants to take action in religious institutions or frameworks on that issue. In the next chapter, I will expand upon this finding and describe how, because of its clear definition,
immigration was a unifying factor for clergy’s congregations, while arguments on speech created organizational conflict and further frustrated clergy.
3. DIVINE DIVERGENCE:
CLERGY AND CONGREGATIONS IN CONFLICT

From choosing a new color to paint sanctuary walls to discussions about participating action, the decisions clergy and congregations make are not without various degrees of conflict. This chapter will explore cases of clergy in contention with their congregants and potential instances of conflict, all of which clergy avoided, to understand how and why conflict occurs within congregations, particularly between congregants and their clergy. I do so in conversation with the literature on broader issues of clergy in conflict and with the issues of speech and immigration, which I have previously explored. Based on the literature, I argue here that the clergy I interviewed made choices to avoid conflict in order to preserve the comfort of their congregants. These instances of sacrifice, where clergy put aside their own personal wishes for the congregation and differed to majority opinion, could be due to clergy’s desire to avoid conflict, preserve a “moral community” within their organization, or from fear of losing their job. I will investigate several clergy people’s experience avoiding conflict with their congregants through the lens of the literature to explore issues of congregational conflict with clergy, its causes, and conflict avoidance, particularly related to immigration and free speech. My findings reflect Penny Edgell Becker’s framework for understanding congregational conflict, which explains how clergy and their congregants interact in conflicting circumstances.

In this chapter, I will use Edgell Becker’s framework, along with support from Djupe, Burge, and Calfano (see CONGREGATIONAL CULTURE IN CONFLICT, page 37) as a lens with which to evaluate instances of conflict in my sample. Conflicts between clergy I interviewed and their congregants can be explained by each group’s differing understanding of their religious organization’s institution. In multiple examples, congregants perceived their
congregation to belong to a family or leader congregation, where they saw the role of clergy as facilitating personal relationship building or bringing together likeminded voices, in a representative capacity. In contrast, clergy often viewed their congregations as leaders and preferred to have a less representative role, instead seeing themselves in their position as clergy as potential agents of social change. These conflicting understandings of congregational dynamics eventually limited action by clergy and pushed them to acquiesce to the preferences of their congregants. Furthermore, through limited action, clergy are unable to utilize the social and financial capital they hold in their position to effectively cause change. Reverend Jen Livingston’s story shows this tension and its potential to prevent or limit action.

A SIGN OF CONFLICT: REVEREND LIVINGSTON’S EXPERIENCE

When I spoke to Reverend Jen Livingston of Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church, her enthusiasm was clear. We chatted by phone in December 2017, and although it was dreary and cold outside, our conversation was lively and impassioned. Reverend Livingston shared a vivid picture of her church’s socially active history with me, from the church naming themselves after Ralph Waldo Emerson, a staunch abolitionist during the Civil War, to a minister in the 1960s who left the pulpit for a week to march with Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in Selma, Alabama, to the recent creation of the Emerson Racial Justice Task Force to address issues of racism within and outside the congregation. Despite Emerson’s rich commitment to racial justice and equity work, not all congregation collective action was easy to encourage, Reverend Livingston told me. During the election of 2016, Reverend Livingston noticed few conservative voices spoke out in community forums or events. Though she doubted there were any Emerson congregants who voted for President Trump, Rev. Livingston did acknowledge the spectrum of political identities present at Emerson, conservative included. She explained she did her best
during the turbulent political climate of the election to foster a space of conversation to focus on
morality, which she told me seemed to bring a more unified attitude towards respect of different
opinions amongst her congregants.

Immediately following the election, Reverend Livingston noticed what she described as
“shock and dismay” from the majority of her congregants. Feeling motivated to take action,
Reverend Livingston suggested to her congregants that the congregation place a “Black Lives
Matter” sign in front of the congregation. To Reverend Livingston, making that statement was an
action against what she felt was hate speech and hateful rhetoric coming from the new President
Elect against people of color. She felt that hanging a sign would not only make a statement to
Emerson’s neighbors but would also show Emerson’s black congregants as well as black people
in the community that they had an ally in Emerson Church. At Emerson Church, any public
statement from the congregation must be approved by the congregation at large. Reverend
Livingston told me she thought the congregation would agree to the sign, which she called a “no
brainer”; making a statement in support of Black Lives Matter, the movement which seeks to
“build local power and to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and
vigilantes” (Black Lives Matter Global Network 2018), as well as to protect the literal lives of
black people in Emerson’s community, was completely in line with Emerson’s racial justice
work.

However, many congregants, including self-proclaimed progressives, responded
apprehensively. Congregants spoke out in public meetings and came to Reverend Livingston
privately, expressing concern about the repercussions of such a sign in the community. Emerson
Church is located in a racially and politically diverse suburb located west of Boston. Rev.
Livingston said groups of congregants expressed concerns about reaction from the large number
of first responders, mainly police and firefighters, living in the area who may feel targeted by such a sign. Rev. Livingston shared her congregants framed their concerns as not wanting to offend their neighbors or “put things in the face of their neighbors that might be harmful.” Despite the disagreement, Reverend Livingston believed the sign was important, so, after pressure from her congregants, she met with the police union to explain the sign as “not a statement about them.” However, even after that meeting, when Rev. Livingston called for a vote to hang the sign, there were still voices in dissent. Rev. Livingston told me, “there were not a small number of people in our congregation who didn’t want this banner to go up.”

Instead of hanging the sign, Reverend Livingston took a step back, asking the congregation to vote to be committed to the “ongoing work of racial justice.” After a community gathering, one hundred percent of attending congregants voted yes to that proposal. Reverend Livingston took this vote to affirm the congregants’ unity towards supporting people of color in the community, even if they didn’t hang the sign, which she told me was her priority in the first place. Later in the year, after churches in the area held forums on Black Lives Matter, Emerson’s congregants once again voted to hang the sign, which they agreed to with 87 percent voting yes. This entire process took almost a year: Reverend Livingston began the conversation around a Black Lives Matter sign shortly after the November 2016 election, and the sign was hung in October 2017.

When Reverend Livingston explained Emerson’s debate over the Black Lives Matter sign, she mentioned it was not the first time the congregation had disagreed with a sign she proposed to hang. Several years before the election, an environmental crisis occurred in the suburb where Emerson was located, and Reverend Livingston became very involved in the anti-fracking movement to prevent a gas pipeline from being built in her town. She was arrested for protesting
the pipeline, which she said was inspirational to some congregants and extremely distressing to others. Following her arrest, Rev. Livingston suggested to Emerson Church that they hang a sign outside their main entrance speaking out against the pipeline, but in a vote, the majority of the congregation did not support such a sign. In that instance, Emerson did not hang a sign. She explained the pipeline sign issue to me as similar to the Black Lives Matter sign. Both times, Rev. Livingston was involved in a timely campaign which she saw needed support. She brought the issue to her congregants, and both times they either voted against the initiative completely or delayed it for an extended period of time.

When describing the instances of avoided conflict she experienced, Reverend Livingston mentioned her drive to push her congregants towards progressive action may have been premature, as she didn’t believe her congregants were ready for such action. She told me she is “willing to put (her) body in the places that will help (Emerson congregants) learn about, understand, and work towards change.” Reverend Livingston told me she knows her congregation will not always be comfortable with her decisions, and sometimes when she feels compelled to take action, her role is to educate those in her congregation who may not fully understand an issue. She mentioned to me her congregants seemed much more educated on issues of immigration rather than the issues of the pipeline or BLM sign. Comparably, they could map out the repercussions of participating in the Sanctuary Movement, where they were fearful of unknown community reaction from the sign-hanging. Despite her own wishes to hang signs and use her congregational power to make a statement, in all cases Reverend Livingston differed to her congregant’s choice. While she recognized her own voice is important and necessary to guide congregants towards action she finds important, Rev. Livingston ended our discussion by
emphasizing how she knows she represents a larger group and often has to put aside her own politics to support the general wish of her larger community.

Reverend Livingston’s experience in avoiding conflict reflects Edgell Becker’s findings. For Rev. Livingston, social issues occurring outside her congregation, such as the hateful language coming from the President and the threat of environmental change in her community, led her to encourage her congregants to take action by hanging a sign. Here, Reverend Livingston was acting as if her congregation fit within the leadership model, where she, as a clergy person, had a responsibility to seek social justice action outside the walls of her congregation from a religious lens (Edgell Becker 1999:13) Reacting to the shock of her congregants, Rev. Livingston thought the issue of hanging a Black Lives Matter sign would be a simple way to take a stand against bigotry. However, her congregants disagreed, arguing a Black Lives Matter sign would support a movement, which they felt was inappropriate for their organization. This sentiment reflects Edgell Becker’s community congregation model, where institutional values are of the upmost importance. Rev. Livingston’s congregants believed it was not their place, as a religious organization, to support a political movement, and therefore they disagreed about hanging Reverend Livingston’s sign. While Reverend Livingston eventually deferred to her congregants to avoid conflict, the potential for conflict here is important to note. Fundamentally, Reverend Livingston had a different view of her and her congregation’s role in social action than her congregants. Even though Rev. Livingston wished to push her congregants to take action, she prioritized her representative responsibility (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016), to be a voice for the majority of her congregants. Her responsibility to support her congregants overtook her personal wishes to take action as a community leader, showing that Rev. Livingston eventually acquiesced to the community model orientation her congregants preferred. While they
may not have referred to their ideas of how their congregation operates instructionally with Edgell Becker’s language, Reverend Livingston’s experience with conflict limited her capacity to mobilize the vast resources at her disposal and prevented her action from fully occurring.

CONGREGATIONS: ENGAGED ACTORS OR PASSIVE PARTICIPANTS?

Reverend Livingston’s experience in disagreement with her congregants is emblematic of trends I found across my data, where clergy advocated for a social action and then withdrew their advocacy (or apologized) to avoid conflict in their congregation. In three cases, that conflict involved a clergy person suggesting their congregation, while three others involved written or professed speech from a clergy person. Rabbi Shira Caplan spoke about her congregation’s decision not to hang a “Black Lives Matter” sign in front of their synagogue, which, like Reverend Livingston, she encouraged. In their opposition, many members of Temple Dorshei Emet expressed their concern that hanging a sign stating “Black Lives Matter” would be understood as endorsing the Black Lives Matter movement, rather than making the statement that it is important to protect the lives of black people. Like the congregants at Emerson Church, Dorshei Emet members expressed discomfort with their synagogue endorsing a political organization, which they felt the Black Lives matter sign would do. Rabbi Caplan told me several congregants told her they felt that endorsing political ideas or campaigns is “not what we do.” Temple Dorshei Emet also held meetings on this issue, like Emerson Church, and Rabbi Caplan told me it “took some time to clarify what the issues were and to hear from different points of view.” Following several member forums on the issue, the congregation decided to compromise and put out a sign stating, “Justice, Justice, You Shall Pursue,” a more general statement that a large majority of the congregation expressed supported the same sentiment as the Black Lives Matter sign without supporting any political or activism organization. Although
Rabbi Caplan had initially supported posting the Black Lives Matter sign, she, like Rev. Livingston, differed to the majority decision of her congregants. Following the decision, Rabbi Caplan received negative and positive feedback, with some congregants praising the choice to hang any sign at all while others criticized the “weak compromise” message the congregation decided to promote. In our conversation, Rabbi Caplan expressed to me that it was impossible to please all her congregants, and while the conflict amongst her congregants, herself, and other contingencies of congregants was uncomfortable, it led to “fruitful conversation,” which she said is important.

Rabbi Caplan’s potential conflict with her congregants over their Black Lives Matter sign also shows an essential variance in how each group of stakeholders saw their role in their organization and the role of the organization as a whole. Rabbi Caplan valued the position her pulpit gave her to make an impact on local and widespread social issues. Some of her congregants disagreed and argued their religious organization should not be involved in politics. A third group felt that Rabbi Caplan’s choice to acquiesce her original Black Lives Matter sign campaign to a more politically neutral message was not taking strong enough of a position on a social issue they saw as intrinsically important for their organization to act upon. Using Edgell Becker’s framework, this conflict also links to different opinions regarding the purpose of a congregation and its role in community action. When we spoke, Rabbi Caplan seemed to prioritize her congregants’ values as a community, indicative through her compromise to change her initially proposed sign. Her congregants who disagreed with the Black Lives Matter sign, but supported the “Justice, Justice” sign, also seemed to believe Dorshei Emet to be within the community model of congregations; they prioritized the congregation’s institutional role in a community where they did not want to endorse political organizations, but they also acted upon
their values in placing a less political, more moral sign on their lawn. Those who disagreed with the “Justice, Justice” sign preferred a community that took leadership in social action by taking a strong stand. While this conflict was, on the surface, regarding sign placement, its roots linked to disagreement about the role of a congregation in a community, and the role of a clergy person in that congregation.

Although both conflicts here were avoided, each potential instance of conflict caused a change in a potential action. For Reverend Livingston and Rabbi Caplan, they compromised their original intended actions for less evocative ones. Therefore, their level of participation in community affairs, from their position in their respective religious organizations, was limited. While their congregants seemed appeased by their change in action, and both clergy recognized the importance of their congregants’ opinion, they had to put aside their own wishes due to their occupation. The conflicts themselves were rooted in confusion about the role of their congregations. While their congregants felt less comfortable being what Edgell Becker calls a leader congregation, Reverend Livingston and Rabbi Caplan were either unaware of this preference or had a lapse of communication between their ideas for their congregation and their congregants’. Edgell Becker argues that clergy and congregants can prevent or delay conflict through candid, open communication about the purpose of their organization (Edgell Becker 1999). For the clergy discussed here, coming to consensus with their congregants on their congregation’s role could help them set better expectations in terms of how much social action work they can promote from their pulpit and how much needs to be done outside of the workplace. This may have avoided these conflicts all together, or at least made them less divisive.
In addition to Edgell Becker’s congregational model framework, focusing on the role of congregations for their communities, I examine the role of clergy themselves and how they operate. I argue clergy’s role in religious institutions is limiting their social action potential, as they often act on behalf of a larger body rather than for their own interest. Historically, clergy have taken a variety of roles from the pulpit, including as a congregational representative or as a congregational leader. Across literature, authors argue in order to be most successful leaders in community action, clergy require job security and the autonomy to make decisions on behalf of their congregation (see pages 32-33). However, clergy have historically mitigated consequences of taking action and found ways to participate in social movements, both inside and outside of their congregational role.

With clergy’s rich history as leaders of social movements and action, it may seem surprising that, in a current time of political change and crisis, Reverend Livingston and Rabbi Caplan were unable to take action, or at least to the full level of action they originally intended. However, these clergy were fundamentally working to serve their congregants, some of whom have the power to fire clergy from their positions. In their renowned study of clergy and political action following school integration in Little Rock, Arkansas, Ernest Campbell and Thomas Pettigrew write that clergy are responsible to their congregational public, and this responsibility exists within three systems: self-reference, professional reference, and membership reference (Campbell and Pettigrew 1959:513). They determine that these three systems influence behavior of clergy, from their personal expectations of themselves in their self-reference system, to their professional colleagues’ expectations within the professional reference system, to their congregants’ expectations within the membership reference system (Campbell and Pettigrew 1959). Here, Campbell and Pettigrew show that clergy hold themselves to not only their
standards but also the collective standards of their congregation, highlighting their responsibility to their body of congregants. For the clergy I interviewed, their personal reference system drove them to take action, while their membership reference system held them from doing so through congregational votes or expressing dissent. In the cases of Reverend Livingston and Rabbi Caplan, both clergy reported the need to defer their personal preferences for the collective desire of their congregants, showing their membership reference system was paramount in influencing their decision to take action on speech issues.

Djupe, Burge, and Calfano also comment on clergy’s role in action and congregants influence in their decisions. These scholars argue that politically active clergy are greatly influenced by the political consensus within their congregation and take action with that consensus in mind (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016). This was certainly the case for the clergy I interviewed who experienced conflict in their congregation. Many already had institutional policies regarding how their membership decides to adopt an initiative, such as voting to majority or taking the issue to a board of elders or social action committee. Because of these existing policies, clergy have little control over their action, as they sit in a role which is representative of a larger body of people, not just their own personal opinions. Furthermore, in cases when clergy’s personal opinion differs from their congregants on social issues, they may be unable to publicly support their own political or social opinion in their capacity as a clergy person. Djupe, Burge, and Calfano argue that clergy facing this dilemma have two choices: to exit their religious post and advocate for their personal beliefs as a trustee, or to silence their own personal beliefs and keep their clergy role as a delegate (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016:4). Often, clergy value their post over their personal opinions, and take on a delegation role (Djupe, Burge, and Calfano 2016:6).
Both clergy in this chapter, Reverend Livingston and Rabbi Caplan, took on a delegation role within their organizations, despite their desires to be a trustee and a leader in community action. In a third case, another clergy person I interviewed found a medium between his role as a trustee and his role as a delegate. Rabbi Paul Kline told me certain congregants of his expressed frustration with an email he sent out to the congregation the day after the election. In the email, which Rabbi Paul Kline told me was intended to encourage unity after a result he believed most of his congregants would find shocking, a picture attached included Rabbi Paul Kline and several senior staffers of Temple Shalom Boston watching presidential candidate Hillary Clinton’s concession speech. Following that email, Rabbi Paul Kline received many emails in return expressing frustration and disagreement that the picture was included because it seemed to endorse one political candidate over another. Despite his notion that most, if not all, of his congregants voted for a Democratic or Independent candidate in the 2016 election, those who expressed dissenting opinions were more aggravated that their clergy person would publicly make what they considered to be a political statement. He told me this instance caused him to re-evaluate his political speech, and he released a statement apologizing for his accidental messaging, but not apologizing for the emotion of dismay he displayed in the photo.

Rabbi Paul Kline said in his 20 years at Temple Shalom Boston, few individuals had disagreed with his actions, but that he also makes the conscious decision not to endorse candidates or support a piece of legislation from the bima, or from his position in his pulpit. Rabbi Kline told me he had no problem, however, talking about moral issues from his pulpit, such as the importance of welcoming immigrants or stopping gun violence, as Jewish issues. He told me that, because of these guidelines he keeps, he feels comfortable and safe in his position as Rabbi, and that no one has expressed sentiment that he should be fired in his entire career at
Temple Boston. These “guidelines” are important to note; Rabbi Paul Kline sets restrictions on his behavior in his role as a clergy person, recognizing that his congregation has certain expectations of him. However, it seems that Rabbi Paul Kline has more autonomy in his role as clergy person at Temple Shalom Boston because of the restrictions he places on himself, allowing him to be part trustee, part delegate. By setting guidelines that satisfy both his desire to be a leader in social action and a delegate to his community, Rabbi Paul Kline is able to take action the way he wants to, while also pleasing his congregants. Because his role is more ambiguous, Rabbi Paul Kline has more flexibility to take action on a moral issue related to his community than Reverend Livingston or Rabbi Caplan, who are limited to their delegate role.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have explored both the role of religious institutions in community action and the role of clergy within those institutions. I found, based on Penny Edgell Becker’s research, that when there is a discrepancy between how clergy and congregants view their organization and its role in social action, the action the organization can take is limited. Additionally, clergy frequently put aside their own interests related to action to act as a delegate for their congregants, representing their needs rather than clergy’s individual agenda. While this altruistic role is admirable and shows leadership, it also limits the capability of the clergy people and their institutions to participate in action. In order for action to take place and be the most impactful, clergy and congregants must first communicate and come to consensus about how

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8Discussion of legal restriction of political alignment of clergy, due to the Johnson Amendment and religious institutions 501(c)3 tax status, was interestingly absent from the restrictions Rabbi Paul Kline mentioned. In fact, none of the clergy I interviewed acknowledged this legal restriction as limiting to them in their action from the pulpit. Several clergy mentioned being cognizant of not endorsing specific candidates in order to welcome members of all parties, however, they did not cite legislation as their motivation for this action. Perhaps clergy in my sample are unaware of these legal restrictions or they go unenforced in the areas they practice social action and religion in intersection. Regardless, this absence is an important point to note, especially because I previously anticipated this topic would be common throughout interviews and it wasn’t mentioned at all.
they want their congregation to participate in social action. A frank and open discussion between clergy and congregants regarding which model (house of worship, family, community, leader) their congregation fits best would help avoid further confusion and set both religious and social action priorities. Clergy can also clarify their role within the congregation to better understand where they should defer to congregants or where they have the executive decision to take action. Additionally, congregants should specify how much autonomy clergy have within their contract, so they can act without fear of being fired. With these changes in place, perhaps clergy action can be more impactful and create a larger difference in the community, therefore helping not only the congregational body, but the body politic at large.
CONCLUSION: THE POWER OF EMPOWERED CLERGY

Eleven years after the original “Day Without Immigrants,” thousands of Americans gathered once again across the nation to call for change, this time in response to a different president with different immigration policies. The faces of the protesters looked different; in addition to the contingencies of Latino immigrants and their allies participating in 2006, the “Day Without Immigrants” on February 16, 2017 was led by Latino and Muslim immigrants alike, in protest of statements by President Donald Trump about immigrants from Mexico and Muslim-majority countries (Robbins and Correal 2017). In Boston, major restaurants closed down when their staff, most of whom were immigrants, participated in the general strike and did not attend work (Buell 2017). The Davis Art Museum at Wellesley College covered or removed any artwork created by an immigrant, amounting to over twenty percent of their vast collection (Robbins and Correal 2017, Buell 2017). Popular Boston restaurant Anna’s Taqueria and the Prudential Center-based Eataly Boston Italian marketplace published statements of support for local immigrants, including their staff members, who chose to participate in the day’s events (Buell 2017). While a decade had passed since the first “Day Without Immigrants,” the inflammatory statements of President Trump, calling to “build a wall,” ban Muslims, and claiming Mexican immigrants are rapists fostered a hostile national environment for immigrants (Vacarro and Conti 2017). With its growing immigrant population (Johnson 2015), the Boston community was not immune to these statements or changing policies, and President Trump’s election served as an important catalyst to encourage action in response to these changes.

Simultaneously, in the period between the 1999 murder of Ricky Byrdsong and 2017, hate crimes have become more complex and have likely increased. In 2000, the Federal Bureau
of Investigation reported a total of 8,063 “bias-motivated criminal incidents,” more colloquially known as hate crimes, with over 53 percent of those crimes being racially motivated (FBI National Press Office 2001). While the FBI reported just 6,121 bias-motivated criminal incidents in 2016, a decrease since 2001, this data is largely questioned as compromised (Barrouquere 2017). The U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics contends the FBI’s finding in a 2017 report that notes over 54% of hate-motivated violent crime is never reported to police (Langston and Massucci 2017:5). In stark contrast to the FBI’s report, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported an astounding 250,000 hate crime events in 2016 (Langston and Massucci 2017:1). Because the U.S. Government does not gather information on hate speech incidents, likely because they are difficult to track unless a violent crime has occurred, it is impossible to know how speech has specifically changed. However, the Bureau of Justice Statistics found 99 percent of violent hate crimes to involve the use of hate speech, estimating hate speech use had vastly increased since 2004 (Langston and Massucci 2017:3). In addition to this increase over time, 900 hate-based incidents were reported in just ten days following the 2016 election, and 1,094 additional crimes were tracked in the month proceeding President Trump’s win (North 2017). Incidents of hate speech have also increased since the election, with large protest events run by hate groups, flier distribution at schools, and even incidents perpetrated by U.S. government employees on the rise (North 2017).

For clergy in Boston, the election was a pivotal event that encouraged their increased participation in action on immigration and speech issues. When I began this project in September 2017, I had only a minimal understanding of clergy’s history of leading and participating in social action in the United States. After conducting a literature review and interviewing 13 clergy from three religious traditions and eight denominations, I was able to better examine the role of
clergy in social action today. For the clergy I interviewed, social action was sometimes, but not always, framed religiously. In the first chapter, I explored how progressive clergy conceptualized social action from a religious lens, where I found clergy more aligned their religious beliefs and holy books or scriptures with immigration issues than free speech. I built upon this finding in my second chapter, where I investigated clergy’s participation in action around speech and immigration. Because clergy could clearly identify immigration as an issue with religious roots, their participation in religiously-informed action on immigration was plentiful and often in collaboration with religious peers in the form of faith-based community organizing coalitions. In contrast, clergy’s struggle to find a connection between their religion and speech issues deterred them from religious action on speech. Finally, I turned to clergy’s own houses of worship to see how they influenced their action on any issue, where I found clergy in my sample to be influenced by the wishes of their congregants, and therefore they are limited in taking action that may be at odds with the majority of their members.

In evaluating the impact of the action work my sample is involved in, it became apparent that their participation in action was indirect. Instead of challenging immigration policies directly at the statehouse or mobilizing voters to pass a ballot measure, much of the action clergy were involved in consisted of providing human and social services to those directly affected by said policies. This action addressed changing social policy and perception, rather than written policy and legislation, which likely reflects the Johnson Amendment and 501(c)3 tax restrictions placed on houses of worship (Gjelten 2017). Harboring a family in sanctuary or collecting supplies for new immigrants to the United States is providing services for several immigrants themselves and addresses issues of immigration at a human level, rather than a political, legislative one. I do not imply here that the clergy I interviewed are not making an impact or a change for immigration
issues; I merely argue that any change they are making is less focused on legislative policy. Due to this approach clergy’s impact is limited in that they are only affecting a few people. Only one family can be in sanctuary at a level one congregation, and level two and three congregations do not host families at all. While the Sanctuary Movement has made a significant difference for the families in sanctuary, who otherwise would have been deported, it is important to consider how many resources are clergy dedicating to helping one family and why. At a religious level, many clergy felt they were called to do something on immigration, and the Sanctuary Movement became a way to get involved.

Here, I posit that clergy’s participation in action may be less impactful nationally or globally, but it is making a difference for one family in their community. Perhaps that action is the most clergy can commit to with their other religious and social justice commitments. Perhaps congregants continue to limit clergy’s participation in more impactful or radical action. I did not collect specific data on clergy’s action-based impact in their community because it did not seem measurable though qualitative means. As I consider the broader meaning of my research and the experiences of my subjects, I see the importance of evaluating impact to define success. If clergy seek to be successful in action, they must define success for themselves. Is making an impact helping one family? Gathering five hundred voter signatures? Passing a bill? Attending marches and rallies? As a scholar, not an activist, it is not my role to set these metrics. However, for clergy’s action to be most powerful to them and to the communities they serve, defining metrics of success is essential. Clergy can work with community partners, faith-based organizing coalitions, and peers to create the most successful opportunities for action, where their work will make an impact in the manner they determine as most effective.
Additionally, it is important not to discredit the power of religious communities. While clergy’s pulpit role may be limiting, in that their congregants shape their action participation, it is also powerful for the sake of organizing for action. Clergy had to refrain from action due to the needs and wishes of their congregants; however, their role as pulpit clergy gives them a voice with which to advocate for causes they find important. Depending on congregation size, clergy have access to resources for possible mobilization for social action, including their voice but also the voices and manpower of their congregants, who also have the capacity to join social movements as actors. While clergy struggle to be representative delegates of their congregation, they can also gently guide congregants towards important actions or events, bringing further resources to community partners than if clergy were to participate in said action outside of their congregational role.

Religious communities also have access to creating change where like-minded secular organizations are limited. In a conversation with a former employee of a large international financial organization, she told me of her Chief Executive Officer who refused to meet with human rights nonprofits but met weekly with his Catholic priest. When the priest suggested the issues of the human rights advocates could be framed in a Catholic lens, the CEO became much more amenable to meeting with nonprofits and listening to their suggestions. This story is not just anecdote; it describes an important niche that religious communities can fill. Clergy have the capacity to change someone’s mind by reframing social issues as religious and drawing a connection between politics and religion. In addition to having access to mobilization resources, clergy often have the ears of very important community leaders across sectors who may attend their services or belong to their congregation or participate in weekly Bible Study. Because of their position, clergy sit at the intersection of religion and social issues. If they have the capacity
to preach and to then change one person’s opinion, their preaching could create a mass ripple effect of greater change.

For these reasons, the activist community should not discount the power of clergy and their religious resources. In addition to their vast resources within their congregation, clergy are motivated, learned individuals who bring a nuanced view to community activism. The clergy I spoke with all reflected a vast knowledge of theology and history, including not only the history of their own denomination but also of secular and community events. Even when social issues may not be easily viewed through religious lenses, such as speech was here, clergy still can and do participate in community action, such as the march on Boston Common against white supremacy. Furthermore, clergy have important community organizing skills. They have formed or served as leadership in coalitions, such as Sanctuary Movement clusters and the Interfaith Clergy Community of Boston. These skills can and should be utilized by activists, working in partnership with clergy, to unite religious and secular people in social action. To maximize the power and impact of their movement, activists can unite with local area clergy to mobilize their communities and employ their skills in action.

While my data is not representative of all clergy or even all clergy in Boston, these findings connect in their telling of a story of 13 progressive clergy living and working in the Boston area during a politically turbulent time. For these 13 people, seeking to navigate life as both pulpit clergy and progressives, their religious and organizational commitments have been complicated to navigate. Because of my capacity as an undergraduate researcher, my research and findings are limited by the scope of my project. However, there is still much to learn about the role of clergy in social action, especially around speech issues, today. For future scholars, these findings present an opportunity to embark upon new research. It is not clear from my
findings that speech is an issue that is understood collectively, let alone collectively as a religious issue. I see a large hole in sociological research on speech and the intersection between the state, religion, and action on this issue. Scholars do not yet understand how speech can be framed religiously in relation clergy’s participation in action. There are also holes where scholars fail to summarize clergy’s collective impact in their community, a study that may be more suited towards quantitative methodology. In addition to investigating speech through a religious framework, scholars could conduct a qualitative study of clergy on a larger scale. The massive social change the United States is undergoing, in part due to President Donald Trump’s changing policies, has created mass movements on several issues, including immigration, the movement for Black Lives/Black Lives Matter, and others. Researchers could study the role of clergy in social action across the United States, both on immigration and other issues, to better understand trends of clergy action and explanation of that action as religious. This opportunity for additional research exists not only in the field of sociology but also for political, religious studies, and social movement scholars. Senior scholars in these areas could conduct mixed method qualitative-quantitative studies on clergy’s action on speech and their messaging around it to produce representative data, which in turn could help clergy and activist communities alike in changing their action to maximize impact. The growing, changing landscape of clergy action provides a window into issues of religion and social action, and I call upon future scholars to explore these important topics.

For the past six months, I have studied clergy in Boston and their understanding of, participation in, and limits around social action. I focused on issues of immigration and free speech because of the turbulent political climate that was reaching a plateau as I mapped this project. While I initially intended to better understand religious communities, due to my limited
initial background on their history, the power of the data I collected transcended any of my expectations. Working with 13 clergy to recognize the complexities in their participation in action changed how I view clergy themselves, religious communities, and my own commitments to activism as a secular individual. Conducting this work taught me the importance of communal support, open conversation, and coalition-building. In moving forward, I can see myself working within an activist community to strengthen their partnerships with area clergy to facilitate action, which is a need I did not recognize before. My findings here reflect the power clergy possess in their respective communities. I hope this work will help clergy and community activists alike harness that power to create lasting, impactful change.
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United States Constitution. 1789. Amendment I.


### A.1 Denominations Represented

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### A.2 Clergy Gender

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### A.3 Clergy and Congregation Pseudonyms (Alphabetical Order)

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<th>Congregation Denomination</th>
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<td>Reform</td>
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<td>Reconstructionist</td>
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<td>African Methodist Episcopal</td>
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<td>Congregation Oseh Shalom</td>
<td>Reconstructionist</td>
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<td>Rabbi Paul Kline</td>
<td>Temple Shalom Boston</td>
<td>Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbi Rebecca Kline</td>
<td>Temple B’nai Tzedek</td>
<td>Non-denominational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Jen Livingston</td>
<td>Emerson Church, UCC</td>
<td>Unitarian Universalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Rob Moore</td>
<td>Church of the Cathedral, UCC</td>
<td>United Church of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Rosemary Rossi</td>
<td>St. Alban’s Church</td>
<td>Episcopalian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Bette Sharpe</td>
<td>Shepard Community Church, UCC</td>
<td>United Church of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Bob Walker</td>
<td>All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church</td>
<td>Unitarian Universalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverend Andrew Williams</td>
<td>Hope Unitarian Universalist Church</td>
<td>Unitarian Universalist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B.1 Recruitment Materials:

“Dear Name, I hope you are having an excellent day. My name is Ruby Macsai-Goren and I am a senior at Brandeis University conducting a senior research thesis in partial fulfillment of the honors requirement of my Sociology major. For this project, I am exploring progressive Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant congregations’ responses to social and political unrest following the election of President Donald Trump. I learned about your congregation, [name of congregation], through [personal contact, webpage, etc.].

I’m writing to see if you would be open to a short interview (45 minutes-1 hour) about your congregation and work. I’m hoping to learn how your congregation aligns politically, what type of actions you take as an institution, and your response to immigration and free-speech issues and events. I’m interested in learning about your congregation’s specific reactions to current events. I can send you a list of my questions in advance if you would prefer. Your name and the name of your organization will not be mentioned in the thesis or related documents that result from our interview. I will say in written reports that the study was conducted in Boston.

I appreciate your consideration of this request and would be happy to meet at a time and place that is convenient to you, or speak on the phone if you would prefer. If you are not able to participate for any reason but have colleagues at other progressive religious houses of worship you believe would be interested, please pass along their names or forward this email to them. Thank you for your consideration.

Best wishes, Ruby Macsai-Goren”
B.2 Follow Up Email:

Hello (name),

I hope you are doing well. I wanted to follow up regarding my thesis project to see if you would be willing to speak with me for one hour about your work. If you are unavailable, I absolutely understand and just need to know if you cannot participate for my records. If I don't hear from you via email by Monday, I will try to reach you by phone sometime early next week to see if you are available to schedule an interview. If you prefer not to be contacted, please just let me know and I will proceed respecting your preference. Thank you very much and have an excellent day.

Best wishes,

Ruby
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Title: Clergy in Action: Religious Leaders in Response to Social Crises

Thank you for participating in this interview. I’m hoping to learn more about your religious institution and the work you have done in response to political and social issues. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Section 1: Congregational History

I will start our conversation by asking about your congregation and the history of your involvement in political and social events.

1. Can you give tell me about the history of your congregation? Can you tell me about the demographics of your congregants?
   a. What racial, socioeconomic, and education backgrounds do they come from?
2. Has your congregation participated in social and political action in the past?
   a. If answered: What role do God and religion play, if any, in social/political actions?
3. Are there social issues that your congregation has repeatedly acted on?

Section 2: Current Events

Now we will move into discussing current events and your congregation’s involvement or reaction to issues that have occurred locally and nationally since November 2016.

4. Can you help me understand the current political and social climate in your congregation since the election of President Donald Trump?
   a. What issues are currently on your mind?
5. Has your congregation changed its political or social actions in the past 8 months following the election of President Donald Trump?

Section 3: Immigration and Muslim-Ban

In recent months, issues relating to immigration have risen to the forefront of national conversation. In learning about your congregation’s social involvement, I am interested in exploring your reaction to issues surrounding immigration policies and debate. I will now ask you a series of questions surrounding immigration issues.

6. Are any of your congregants or members immigrants to the United States?
   a. If so, roughly how many?
7. Has your congregation participated in past social or political action around immigration issues?
8. When you take action around immigration, what is your action motivated by?
9. Why did you choose those specific actions?
10. Tell me how you speak to your congregants about immigration. Have you preached/spoken to your congregants/done any education on this issue?

11. If you act on or speak about immigration, do you find inspiration in scripture or scripture interpretation? If so, what does your scripture state about immigration?

Several immigration policies and discussions during the past few months have centered around Muslim immigrants from a variety of countries. As a non-Muslim person and organization of faith, I am interested in your involvement and opinions surrounding these issues. I will now ask you a few questions regarding Muslim immigrants specifically.

12. As a non-Muslim organization, can you tell me about your thoughts on immigration to the United States by Muslim people?

Section 4: Free Speech and Hate Speech

Another issue prevalent under the Trump administration has been free speech and its differences and discrepancies from hate speech. I will now ask you several questions surrounding these terms.

13. How do you understand these terms (hate speech and free speech)?

14. Has your congregation participated in social or political action around free speech or hate speech issues since the election of President Trump?

15. Did your congregation react in any way to the protest in Charlottesville, VA, on August 11, 2017?

16. Did your congregation react to the Free Speech Rally and/or counter protest in Boston on August 19?

17. Do your religious beliefs inform your actions in relation to free/hate speech?

18. Has your congregation ever experienced a hate crime?
   a. If so, when did this occur?
   b. What happened?

Section 5: Misc.

Thank you for your answers thus far. The following questions are miscellaneous, and we are close to completing the interview.

19. How does your congregational community organize social/political actions?
   a. Who does it? How is it communicated? What resources do you use? Do you connect with community partners?

20. Does your congregation offer religious education to children that informs students of social issues? Why or why not?

21. How do you see your own role in relation to social and political action?

22. Have members of your congregation ever disagreed with an action relating to free speech and/or immigration?
   a. What happens if congregants disagree with leadership or vice versa?
Demographics:
- Name
- Clergy title
- Gender
- Congregation Name
APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

Title of study:
Clergy in Action: Religious Institutions in Response to Social Crises

Names and affiliations of investigators:
Student Investigator:
Ruby Macsai-Goren
Undergraduate Student, Brandeis University

Primary Investigator:
Wendy Cadge
Professor of Women and Gender Studies and Sociology

Purpose of this research:
The goal of this study is to explore Boston progressive Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant congregations’ response to general social unrest and specifically immigration and free speech following the election of President Donald Trump. I focus my research on clergy at these congregations who work as both secular and religious leaders for their members and congregants. I will ask you a series of questions about your congregation’s history in social and political action and your actions within the past year. We will talk about your congregation’s political alignment, policies, and actions, and how your religion informs these. I will use this information to inform my undergraduate senior thesis for honors in the Brandeis University Sociology department. All the information shared with me will be completely confidential and protected to the full extent allowed by the law.

Subject selection criteria:
You were selected for this study because you were referred to me as a Jewish, Protestant, or Catholic clergyperson working with a liberal or progressive congregation in Boston. Subjects in this study are selected through snowball sampling, meaning I am identifying clergy through contacting my existing contacts who fit the above criteria or through other clergy I interview who then recommend their colleagues.

Study procedures:
As a participant, this study asks you to complete an in-person or over-the-phone interview. I will first give you this consent form and encourage you to ask questions about your rights, participation, and/or the study itself. You will have the opportunity to consent to audio recording of this interview. If you do consent to audio recording, I will begin using the recorder after you sign the consent form. If you do not consent to audio recording, I will take handwritten notes beginning after you consent. You will then have the opportunity to consent to the study. If you do not consent to the study, you will be free to leave. If you do consent to the study, I will ask you a series of prewritten questions about your congregation and social action. Our interview will take approximately 45 minutes-1 hour to complete. Following the interview, I will turn off the recorder and you will be free to go. You can voluntarily stop the recording or the interview at
any time. This interview will be your only participation in the study, unless you have further
comments. If so, you can reach me via email or phone (see details below).

Potential risks and discomforts:
The risks for participating in this project are minimal. You may experience social discomfort if
you feel you cannot answer a question. You can pass or not answer a question at any time if you
do not wish to answer. You can also withdraw your participation at any point in this project,
including before, during, and after your interview.

Potential benefits:
There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study, although I hope the information
you share will help myself, academics, and the broader public understand how clergy and their
congregations react to social and political unrest, particularly in the past ten months.

Cost and compensation:
The only cost to you, the subject, will be the time spent in travel to and throughout the duration
of our interview. There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:
All the information from the interview will be kept confidential. I will say in my report that I
interviewed clergy from Boston, but will not specify any further details regarding your location.
Your name and identifying information as well as the name and identifying information of your
congregation will not be stored with the information you share in the interview. I will give you
and your congregation pseudonyms and will keep the list containing these pseudonyms of both
you and your congregation as well as the real names in a separate password protected file with a
unique password in a password protected Box.com cloud storage account on a password
protected computer. If you consent to have your interview recorded, I will keep the audio file in
a separate password protected folder with a unique password in a password protected Box.com
cloud storage account on a password protected computer. You are able to turn off or stop the
audio recording at any time during the interview. If you do not consent to audio recording, I will
take notes by hand, which will then be typed up and saved on Box.com in a password protected
folder. While hard copies of handwritten notes exist, I will store them in a locked desk drawer in
a locked room where only and Professor Wendy Cadge will have access to both keys to the room
and desk drawer. The original handwritten notes will then be shredded as soon as notes are
typed. I and my primary investigator, Wendy Cadge, will be the only people who have access to
your information. All the information you share will be destroyed at the end of this research
study.

Participation and withdrawal:
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at
any time, no questions asked.
Contact Information:
Should you have any questions about this project, please contact Ruby Macsai-Goren or Wendy Cadge, Ph.D.:

Student Researcher:
Ruby Macsai-Goren
(847) 722 7886
rmacsaig@brandeis.edu

Professor/Primary Investigator:
Wendy Cadge
(781) 736-2641
wcadge@brandeis.edu

If you have questions about your or rights as a human research subject, please contact the Brandeis Institutional Review Board at irb@brandeis.edu or (781) 736-8133.

Subject Consent:
I have read, or had read to me, the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received satisfactory answers to my questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my participation at any time without penalty. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Please check the box corresponding to your answer regarding audio recording.

☐ I do ☐ I do not give the researcher permission to make audio recordings of me during this study.

By signing below, you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Your Name (printed): __________________________________________________________

Your Signature: __________________________ Date: __________

Researcher Signature: __________________________ Date: __________