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The Production of Judeo-Christianity in New York City Public Schools: Religion, Race, and Moral Education, 1950-1969

Ribovich, Leslie

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THE PRODUCTION OF JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY IN NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

RELIGION, RACE, AND MORAL EDUCATION, 1950-1969

Leslie Beth Ribovich

A DISSERTATION

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OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

This dissertation is a history of the religious and racial aspects of moral education in 1950s-1960s New York City (NYC) public schools. The project has implications for how scholars understand the relationship between Cold War religious ideologies and the Civil Rights Movement, as well as the history of religion in public schools. First, I study three areas of programming through which school officials taught what they called the "Judeo-Christian ethic" in attempts to make students moral: moral and spiritual values curricula, juvenile delinquency prevention and treatment, and racial integration programming. Then, I examine two events that challenged the universality of schools' "Judeo-Christian ethic" and revealed its narrow, assimilationist vision of racial and religious coexistence: the debate about government aid to parochial schools during the 1967 New York State Constitutional Convention and the 1967-1968 struggle for community control of schools in Brooklyn and Harlem. I connect early Cold War religiosity and the northern Civil Rights Movement by showing that the Civil Rights Movement in NYC public schools responded in part to the racialized nature of the universalist ideas of Judeo-Christian religious liberalism.

Using uncommon sources in American religious history, such as public school policies and curriculum guidelines, I contribute to the histories of public education, Judeo-Christianity, and the northern Civil Rights Movement. First, I challenge the notion that public schools became or should have become secular after early 1960s Supreme Court decisions ruling school prayer and Bible-reading unconstitutional. I suggest that religion in public schools appeared as ideas about morality, not only as contained moments that could be inserted or removed from schools. Second, I claim that the particular iteration of Judeo-Christianity in NYC public schools allowed

school officials to express support for positive notions of racial coexistence while simultaneously avoiding policies for which parents of color advocated. Third, I argue that because the Judeo-Christian repertoire concealed assimilationist meanings behind inclusive terms, it motivated demands for community control in NYC. Taken together, these contributions demystify the public school as a site to study religious practice and relay the significance of ideas about Judeo-Christian pluralism to the northern Civil Rights Movement.

For my maternal grandmother, Pauline (Woldenberg) Hersh Shulman, 1931-1992

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Finally, I dedicate my dissertation to my maternal grandmother, Pauline (Woldenberg) Hersh Shulman, James Monroe High School, Bronx, NY, class of 1949. As of March, she has been gone for twenty-five years. May this project honor her life and memory.

Abbreviations

Organizations, Projects, Terms

AJC: American Jewish Committee
AJ-Congress: American Jewish Congress
ATA: African American Teachers Association
The Board: The New York City Board of Education
CEF: Citizens for Educational Freedom
CORE: Congress on Racial Equality
CURB: Citizens United for Repeal of Blaine
CUSA: Christians and Jews United for Social Action
EHPP: East Harlem Protestant Parish
ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act
FCC: Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America
HPC: Harlem Parents Committee
JDEP: Juvenile Delinquency Evaluation Project
MES: More Effective School Programs
NCCJ: National Conference of Christians and Jews
NEA: National Education Association
NYBR: New York Board of Rabbis
NYC: New York City
NYCLU: New York Civil Liberties Union
NYTN: *New York Teachers News*
OAAU: Organization of Afro-American Unity
PEA: Public Education Association
PEARL: Public Education and Religious Liberty
PRS: Puerto Rican Study
P.S.: Public School
The Regents: New York State Board of Regents
TU: New York City Teachers Union
UFT: United Federation of Teachers
UPA: United Parents Associations

Archives

Archives of the Archdiocese of New York

Francis Cardinal Spellman Collection, Collection 007; Archives of the Archdiocese of New York, St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie (Spellman Collection)

Chancery Office, Collection 021; Archives of the Archdiocese of New York, St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie (Chancery Collection)

Brooklyn Public Library

Brooklyn Yearbook Collection, Brooklyn Public Library – Brooklyn Collection (Yearbook Collection)

Columbia University Library

Wiltwyck School for Boys Records; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library (Wiltwyck Records)

George Washington University

Educational Policies Commission Series, National Education Association Records, Special Collections Research Center, George Washington University (NEAR)

New York City Municipal Archives

New York City Board of Education Records (NYCBER) (includes United Parents Associations Records)

New York City Public Library, Manuscripts and Archives Division

Ernst Papanek Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division. The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations (Papanek Papers)

David Spitz Papers. Manuscripts and Archives Division. The New York Public Library. Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations (Spitz Papers)

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

Ella Baker Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (Baker Papers)

Preston Wilcox Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (Wilcox Papers)

Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries

National Conference of Christians and Jews Records (NCCJR)

New York University

United Federation of Teachers Records; WAG 022; Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University (UFTR)

Introduction

"What passes for identity in America," James Baldwin told an in-service training session of about 250 primarily white teachers at the predominantly black and Puerto Rican P.S. 180 in Harlem on October 26, 1963, "is a series of myths about one's heroic ancestors. It's astounding to me, for example, that so many people really appear to believe that the country was founded by a band of heroes who wanted to be free."[1] Although Baldwin delivered this message in the urban north at the height of the civil rights movement, he did not discuss the *de facto* school segregation that existed in the north due to residential segregation or its relationship to the *de jure* segregation that the United States Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* had declared "inherently unequal" in 1954. Instead, Baldwin critiqued the substance and structure of what schools taught. He spoke on the subject "The Negro Child—His Self-Image" and argued that the myth of American identity was entangled in school history lessons. Schools, he suggested, perpetuated the myth through the notion that America was a "Christian nation."[2] This, he said, rang false: "My ancestors and I were very well trained. We understood very early that this was not a Christian nation. It didn't matter what you said or how often you went to church. My father and my mother and my grandfather and my grandmother knew that Christians didn't act this way."[3] Above all, Baldwin claimed that the myth of American identity, forged in American history through the idea of the Christian nation, created a sense of natural belonging in America for people who saw themselves in the legacy of the white Christian men who signed

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[1] James Baldwin, "A Talk to Teachers," *The Saturday Review*, December 21, 1963, delivered as "The Negro Child—His Self-Image," P.S. 180, Harlem, October 16, 1963, richgibson.com/talktoteachers.htm. Mirroring the New York City (NYC) public school teacher demographics of the time, even in predominantly black and Puerto Rican neighborhoods, the audience was likely predominantly white.
[2] Sara Slack, "Baldwin Hits White Liberals," *New York Amsterdam News*, October 26, 1963, 21.
[3] Baldwin, "A Talk to Teachers."

America's founding documents. Students of color who did not claim such a legacy or who critiqued it, Baldwin implied, would logically arrive at the conclusion that schools did not believe that such students belonged in America or its schools.

In other words, Baldwin seized upon the occasion of addressing Harlem teachers to talk about the role schools played in producing a sacred myth of whiteness. The myths of white American identity, in Baldwin's view, were more than falsities. They also meant something profound to the white Americans to whom he spoke. According to Baldwin, white liberals, even those who taught in Harlem schools, believed in these falsities as their ancestry and identity. And they wanted all children to believe them, too, including the children of African and Hispanic descent who had begun increasingly to populate public schools in the previous decades due to (im)migration from Puerto Rico and the Caribbean and the Great Migration of southern African Americans to the north.[4] When teachers taught students about America's "heroic ancestors" and their pursuit of freedom in tandem with teaching that "he ["any Negro"] has never contributed anything to civilization – that his past is nothing more than a record of humiliations gladly endured," teachers made, used, and delivered a myth of national identity formation to teach students that to be American was to be white, or at least to buy into the myths of whiteness.[5]

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[4] Lorrin Thomas, *Puerto Rican Citizen: History and Political Identity in Twentieth-Century New York City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010); Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2010).

[5] In Jonathan Zimmerman's book on the "history wars" and the "religion wars" in twentieth-century U.S. public schools, Zimmerman argues that debates over history curriculum rarely challenged the notion of American consensus, while the debates over religion in schools did. He suggests that the "myth" of American history prevailed in history curriculum throughout the twentieth-century, and that in the "history wars," "the combatants rarely subjected America itself to analysis: even as different groups struggled to insert their own heroes into the national story, they rarely challenged that narrative's broader contours and themes." By starting the dissertation with Baldwin's speech to Harlem teachers, I aim to forefront that in NYC public schools in the mid-twentieth century, black and Puerto Rican parents and community members frequently challenged the "narrative's broader contours and themes." Baldwin's argument here that American history and the world belong to black children is not merely asking for a seat at the table, but a claim to belonging in a different American narrative than the mythological one. Zimmerman suggests that he is challenging the mythological narrative by arguing that "the infusion of 'diversity' into American textbooks—however laudable in its own right—actually delayed rather than promoted the critical dialogue that a healthy democracy demands." However, by looking at the ways that the "history wars" and "religion

Baldwin delivered his message about American identity in the midst of concurrent tides in New York City (NYC) public education: those that historians typically situate with regard to race—stalled efforts at school desegregation, ensuing school boycotts, influxes of students of color—and those that historians typically situate with regard to religion: changing laws on the role of religion in public schools, and efforts for interfaith cooperation. Baldwin's statement was clearly a critique of white America. However, because Baldwin did not expressly reject school prayer or Bible reading—two practices that the Supreme Court had only recently deemed unconstitutional for establishing religion in public schools in *Engel v. Vitale* in 1962 and *Abington v. Schempp* in 1963—what may be less evident is that his critique named the role of religion in public schools as complicit in the myth of white American identity.

When Baldwin critiqued the myth of white American identity, he sounded like he could have been speaking directly to a specific NYC Board of Education (the Board) and superintendents statement on "moral and spiritual values" because its version of American history, identity, and freedom included the qualities that Baldwin claimed "happen[s] not to be true."[6] The Board had adopted a statement on moral and spiritual values in 1956 instead of adopting the New York State Regents' Prayer, the prayer at issue in *Engel*. The statement included an introduction on the role of moral and spiritual values in schools and a curriculum guide for enacting them in all school subjects. Its integration of values in public education

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wars" were not always so separate in NYC public school moral education curricula, I suggest that people on the ground also challenged the American myth and the "Judeo-Christian" values that school officials claimed went with it. In other words, ideas about religion shaped and perpetuated the mythical idea of America about which Zimmerman speaks. Zimmerman does quote Baldwin's testimony before Congress regarding a proposed National Commission on Negro History and Culture to suggest that reckoning with who belongs in American history is really a question of what narrative of American history schools tell. However, Zimmerman suggests that this conversation is separate from the conversations about religion *and* that views such as Baldwin's do change his overall argument about challenges to American history. By placing critiques of an American myth of history and values front and center in this dissertation, I show that there was not consensus on the nature of American identity either. Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America?: Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 8; 129.

[6] Ibid.

reflected a spike in governmental displays of religiosity in 1950s America. During this religious boom, in addition to an increase of activities among religious communities,[7] the U.S. government, led by President Dwight Eisenhower, quite literally stamped its devotion to a monotheistic, "Christian" or "Judeo-Christian" God on its currency and wrote it into the Pledge of Allegiance.[8] Drawing on ideas circulating during the religious boom, the Board and superintendents' statement shared its educational mission for American history curricula as it related to what it called the "Judeo-Christian ethic":

> A guiding principle in the teaching of American history has always been to emphasize anew for each generation of pupils the highlights of our country's history, to instill in pupils a wholesome sentiment and idealism for our traditions, to kindle in them that spark of patriotism which carried our forefathers through deprivations, hard work and suffering to glorious achievement, and to inspire them to become good citizens and patriots dedicated to the task of preserving and enriching their country's heritage.[9]

Sounding remarkably similar to Baldwin's distillation of the myth of American identity, the statement's depiction of the American past illuminated that the myth of which Baldwin spoke not only passed for identity, but also for official history. The Board described an educational landscape where schools transmitted what Baldwin called a myth to students as historical fact to instill what the Board called American identity and the Judeo-Christian ethic in students.

In the statement's introductory section, the Board and superintendents claimed to have an expansive view of who counted as an American and who participated in the "Judeo-Christian ethic." Inspired by the trend to consider viewpoints other than those adopted by Protestants, the

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[7] Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

[8] Anne Blankenship also suggests that the roots of this religious boom are in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration's incarceration of Japanese Americans. As I do, she explores the tension between the government's simultaneous emphasis on religious inclusion and practice of racial exclusion. Anne Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice, and the Japanese American Incarceration* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 5.

[9] "The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools," adopted by the NYC Board of Education on October 4, 1956, Folder 120, Box 14, Series 668, New York City Board of Education Records, New York City Municipal Archives (hereafter cited as NYCBER).

Board and superintendents aimed to help "the teacher and the schools in discharging their responsibility for developing moral and spiritual values to the end that all boys and girls, regardless of their special abilities and skills, will become strong in character and worthy citizens of their country."[10] Even as the historical narrative mirrored Baldwin's discussion of the myth of white American identity, the Board and superintendents suggested that students of "all races and creeds" could lay claim to school officials' narrative of American history and identity.[11]

As scholars note that the mid-twentieth century concept of the "Judeo-Christian nation" excluded religions beyond the Protestant-Christian-Jew trifecta, comparing Baldwin's talk with the moral and spiritual values statement reveals that the concept also concealed white New Yorkers' concerns about students of color, despite the statement's claims to inclusiveness.[12] To Baldwin, the myth of American identity and Christian America embodied the efforts of people he identified as white liberals to erase their wrongdoings and hide their fearful sense of superiority, as he stated that "well-meaning white liberals place themselves in great danger when they try to deal with Negroes as though they were missionaries."[13] For Baldwin to tell teachers that they might hypocritically missionize black students suggested that the 1956 statement's narrative of God, American history, and identity permeated public schools. The implication of the putatively inclusive language, Baldwin went on to say, was that not only were black students not free within the public school system, but neither were white students. According to him, white students were developing their identity based on a myth—the myth of Judeo-Christianity.

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[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice, and the Japanese American Incarceration*, 155-156; Kevin Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promis*e (New York: Oxford University Press). Terry Todd also notes that the "tri-faith model" "was driven by a politics of exclusion" in J. Terry Todd, "The Temple of Religion and the Politics of Religious Pluralism: Judeo-Christian America at the 1939-1940 New York World's Fair," in *After Pluralism: Reimagining Religious Engagement*, ed. Courtney Bender and Pamela E. Klassen (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). K. Healan Gaston's article directed me to Todd's article and quotation. K. Healan Gaston, "Interpreting Judeo-Christianity in America," *Relegere* 2:2 (2012): 291-304, 297.
[13] Baldwin, "A Talk to Teachers."

Although Baldwin criticized the identity promoted in public schools, he also sought to reclaim American history for black students in order for those students to cultivate their identities. At Harlem's P.S. 180, Baldwin delivered his oft-quoted statement: "American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it." That utterance was located in a longer sentence, within a paragraph where Baldwin told the teachers that if he "were a teacher in this school, or any Negro school," he would teach "each child" about the myths of white identity and black America. His full sentence went: "I would try to make him know that just as American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it, so is the world larger, more daring, more beautiful and more terrible, but principally larger – and that it belongs to him."[14] Baldwin's assertion was not just a diagnosis of American history, but a lesson that Baldwin said he wanted black students to learn in school. According to Baldwin, if black children learned the beautiful and terrible dimensions of American history, beyond what schools taught, they might come to see that the world belonged to them, and that they need not try to understand themselves in relation to a narrow narrative of history, such as the one in the Board's statement, because a larger world and history existed. Although the white, Judeo-Christian myth of American belonging could lead a black child to believe that he did not belong in American history, and therefore question if he could lay claim to any particular history as his own, Baldwin offered an alternative narrative of history, identity, and belonging to black students.

[14] Ibid. See also Imani Perry's book for how the beauty and terror in American history has produced what she calls today's "post-intentional racism": *More Beautiful and More Terrible: The Embrace and Transcendence of Racial Inequality in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 21.

Arguments and Scholarly Contributions

Baldwin's talk to teachers, especially in conversation with the Board's Moral and Spiritual Values curriculum, raises the dissertation's central tension: the disjuncture between white school officials who claimed to include everyone in their vision of moral, Judeo-Christian, American identity and people of color who criticized the schools for failing to include students of color in their vision and practice of American public schooling. I show that white school officials came to genuinely believe that they supported a diverse public school system through the mechanism of a repertoire of terms they developed under the umbrella they called "Judeo-Christianity," and that various people—including Catholics of various racial backgrounds, and black and Puerto Rican New Yorkers of various religions—challenged the Judeo-Christian repertoire with their own narratives of American belonging. Instead of starting the story of religion and public schools with the *Engel* and *Schempp* cases on prayer and Bible reading, studying narratives of American identity and history implicit in the debate about moral education contemporary with prayer and Bible reading reveals that on the ground debates about religion in public schools contended with competing notions of American belonging and peoplehood.

This dissertation is a history of the religious and racial aspects of moral education in 1950s-1960s NYC public schools, a history that has implications for how scholars conceptualize the relationship between Cold War religious ideologies and the Civil Rights Movement, as well as the history of religion in public schools. Scholars have written about pluralistic religion in Eisenhower's 1950s and in the Civil Rights Movement.[15] Scholars have also suggested that the

[15] Jonathan P. Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer: Stories of Faith and Civil Rights* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Barbara Dianne Savage, *Your Spirits Walk Beside Us: The Politics of Black Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*; Clarence Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door: Milton A. Galamison and the Struggle to Integrate New York City Schools* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), among others.

conservative nature of Cold War 1950s education either led to the revolutions of the 1960s, and eventually the rise of the Religious Right, or set the wheels in motion for anti-progressive public education for the remainder of the century.[16] I connect early Cold War religiosity and the northern Civil Rights Movement by studying religion and moral education in a local context, which shows that the movement for civil rights in NYC public schools was not merely a reaction to political or familial conservatism but also to the universalist ideas of religious liberalism.[17] I also show that black and Puerto Rican New Yorkers' engagement with such universalist ideas had its own intellectual tradition of cultivating a space of natural belonging in the American context, a separate understanding from the heroic white myths that school officials propounded in moral education programming. "Natural" belonging here is a statement of presence, experience, and ownership. It is the notion that people of African descent have been in the United States since before it was the United States and that Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory, that black Americans and Puerto Ricans have shaped and experienced the country's infrastructure and identity, and that, therefore, they claim ownership to their own visions of the country.

By moral education, I mean programs that school leadership—whether the school board, administrators, or teachers—claimed would make students moral. I focus on three types of moral education programs: moral and spiritual values curricula; juvenile delinquency prevention and

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[16] Kevin Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (New York: Basic Books, 2015). Andrew Hartman marks the Cold War era in education as a shift away from the century's early Progressive Era reforms in public education. I show how religion in education during this period actually drew from liberal religious thought to address issues that Hartman relates to Cold War conservative capitalism, such as juvenile delinquency and desegregation. Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). Martha Biondi connects the early Cold War and early Civil Rights Movement by focusing on the postwar period but does not examine religion in depth. Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

[17] Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Kruse, *One Nation Under God.* Dudziak argues that the governmental language civil rights were more about presenting an image of tolerance during the Cold War than actual action from the government, which mirrors my conclusion that the repertoire of Judeo-Christianity did not result in action on civil rights. I add to her analysis with my focus on religion.

treatment; and programming on teaching students the value of school integration, including on topics such as brotherhood and assimilation. Although juvenile delinquency prevention and treatment and integration programming did not have "moral" in their titles, the Board and its Division of Curriculum Development made clear that the purpose of these programs was to make students moral. Thus, the dissertation illuminates: what did the school officials mean by making students moral? Which students? Why do they need to become moral? How did they think this could be done?[18]

The argument of this dissertation has three parts. First, I challenge the secularization narrative of public schools made popular by historians and public figures alike. This narrative claims that religion largely "disappeared" from public schools following the early 1960s Supreme Court decisions ruling school prayer and Bible-reading unconstitutional, except when the Religious Right "inserted" religion in public schools. By looking at moral education programs, I argue that religious norms undergirded moral education programs in NYC public schools that addressed the city's most pressing educational issues of the day—juvenile delinquency and *de facto* school segregation—both before *and* after the Court's decisions.

Second, I identify the content of those religious norms as a repertoire of terms that school officials developed and drew upon about religious and racial coexistence that they labeled "Judeo-Christianity" to address NYC's *de facto* school segregation and juvenile delinquency. The repertoire included positive terms—such as brotherhood, love of neighbor, tolerance, and human relations—as well as negative terms—such as prejudice, bigotry, and intolerance. The officials consulted the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) and other interfaith and human relations organizations to develop this repertoire. I argue the broadness of the

[18] In a different context, Anthony Petro also asks about morality in *After the Wrath of God: AIDS, Sexuality, and American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

repertoire's terms allowed school officials to generally support positive notions of coexistence while simultaneously avoiding policies for which civil rights activists and parents of color advocated. In particular, school officials' NYC education-specific version of Judeo-Christianity used broad terms to describe assimilationist ways of understanding religious and racial coexistence—i.e., assimilating to a preconceived myth of American identity as Baldwin describes.

Third, I argue that by concealing specific meanings behind general terms, the Judeo-Christian repertoire contributed to the failure of public schools to educate students of color and motivated subsequent demands for community control in NYC. The repertoire increased tensions between white school officials and NYC civil rights activists, who included many parents and community members of color, because the language expressed positive views of coexistence as universal while masking white school officials' comfort and complicity in the status quo.

Taken together, these arguments demonstrate that religion was a source of contention in mid-twentieth century NYC public schools, though not only in the ways that scholars have usually indicated. Instead of focusing on the fraught debates about whether religion ought to be in schools and what it ought to look like, I attend to how it *was* in NYC public schools.[19] As we will see, this project is situated in American religious history, particularly in debates about mid-twentieth century Judeo-Christianity. American religious historians have not focused on the role of religion in mid-twentieth century public schools, so this project also speaks to the history of education, and religion and law, where more scholars have discussed the role of religion in public education. It also contributes to debates about desegregation in northern public schools within the history of the northern civil rights movement. By bringing these three distinct

[19] Zimmerman studies "*what* the curriculum would contain" regarding religion, but I differ by looking at what the curriculum contained regarding morality, and I look beyond the curriculum to the schools' articulation of their purpose. Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 137.

conversations together—the ones about religion in mid-twentieth-century public education, Judeo-Christianity, and northern civil rights—I aim to demystify the public school as a site to study religious practice (as opposed to debates about the role of religion in public schools). In doing so, I suggest that cross-pollination among these fields can strengthen our understanding of the intersections of religious pluralism, race, and public education in the mid-twentieth century.

I. Against the Secularization Narrative of Public Schools

Historians and the public have inherited a history of religion in U.S. public schools that goes something like this. Horace Mann founded common schools in the nineteenth century on Protestant principles that he claimed were for everyone.[20] Throughout the country, students practiced prayer and Bible-reading in public schools from Mann's time until the early 1960s. Due to a 1947 Supreme Court ruling that allowed both of the First Amendment's religion clauses to apply to the states, the court was able to render all state-sponsored prayer and Bible-reading unconstitutional in 1962 and 1963 decisions.[21] Since those decisions, religious practices have largely been absent from public schools, except in places within the Bible Belt, where abstinence only education rules and every few years a story about the Texas State Board of Education trying to teach students that America was founded as a Christian nation makes headlines.[22]

The story that the historian of religion and education has inherited is a secularization narrative, mired in the liberal-conservative binaries of the culture wars. Historians of education

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[20] Hilary J. Moss shows that schools were not actually as all-inclusive as Mann claimed in *Schooling Citizens: The African American Struggle for Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 10.
[21] *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 U.S. 1 (1947); *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962); *Abington v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963).
[22] Russell Shorto, "Founding Fathers?" *New York Times Magazine*, February 14, 2010, accessed May 27, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/14/magazine/14texbooks-t.html; "Texas State Board of Education," list of articles in *Huffington Post*, various dates, accessed May 27, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/topic/texas-state-board-of-education. Zimmerman proposes a narrative similar to this about post-*Engel* and post-*Schempp* religion in public schools in *Whose America?* By "Bible Belt," I refer to parts of the southern United States characterized by the centrality of their particular reading of the Bible to their religious practice.

describe the history of religion and public education as an ongoing debate that highlights a lack of consensus on the role of religion in public schools. They frame the history as a series of debates about whether various iterations of religion (prayer, creationism, abstinence-only education, to name a few) belong in public schools or not.[23] From these stories, we learn that the actions by state boards of education to introduce certain religiously-motivated curricula threaten the liberal vision of a "secular," universal public school. We also learn that conservatives argued that public schools began to fail in their duty to raise moral citizens after the 1960s, so they began new measures to return religion to the schools. While it is true that there have been debates about the role of religion in public schools, even the scholars who claim that division characterizes the history of religion and public schools still conceive of religion as something that can be lifted out of or dropped into public schools. In other words, they still buy into the notion that public schools can be secularized.

The narrative of secularization in public schools does not hold up to scrutiny. The narrative assumes consensus about the nature and effects of religion in public schools before the 1960s. It assumes that religion meant a particular practice or moment, rather than an overarching educational ideology or vision of morality. However, religious practice took on many meanings, including the notion that religious practices and ideas guided the entire school day. Disagreements also existed about the effects of religion in schools, from correcting for an

[23] See Bruce Dierenfield, *The Battle Over School Prayer: How* Engel v. Vitale *Changed America* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2007); James W. Fraser, *Between Church and State: Religion and Public Education in a Multicultural America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Zimmerman, *Whose America?*. Fraser claims that the notion that religion left public schools after the prayer and Bible reading decisions is false, and he describes an underlying civil religion; however, his argument takes a normative turn, as he suggests that various ethnic and racial groups can come to find meaning in American symbols. In this way, his normative approach to civil religion mirrors the ever-expanding sphere of tolerance that Gaston describes of Judeo-Christianity, which I discuss in part II of the arguments section. Gaston, "Interpreting Judeo-Christianity in America," 293-294.

absence of religion in the home after World War II to indoctrinating children into a religion that differed from the religion parents taught at home to teaching children to avoid stealing.[24]

This conception of religion leads the narrative to suggest that religion in public schools disappeared after 1963, except in ways defined by the Religious Right. There is a sense that religion in public schools is, *and has always been*, the domain of southern conservative evangelicals. Even as most of the mid-century religion clause and public education cases began in the north, other regions dominate the scholarly and popular narrative of religion in public schools before and after 1963 on account of the Religious Right-focus of the post-*Schempp* narrative. Forgotten is the history of Jews, Protestants, and Catholics advocating for the teaching the "brotherhood of man, under the fatherhood of God" in NYC public schools.[25]

It also makes the more recent iterations of religion into concrete practices that can be inserted or removed. If we are to believe that religion primarily looked like prayer and Bible-reading before 1963, it continued to look that way afterward—either as rogue expressions of prayer and Bible reading, or as similar to it in form, for instance in the insertion or removal of creationism. By positioning religion in public schools as ideology and vision before the cases on prayer and Bible-reading, I aim to make room for such expressions of religion in public schools after the cases as well, in ways that may or may not mirror the ideologies of the Religious Right.

The narrative has meant that few scholars think about public schools as sites of religious practice beyond their legal or political contours and implications.[26] By studying lived religious practice, the ideas, practices, and terms that historical actors engaged on the ground, I offer an alternative conception of what religion in public school looked like in the particular context of

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[24] Coontz, *The Way We Never Were*. Also see debate on the Regents' Prayer in chapter one of this dissertation.
[25] This is a NCCJ phrase. Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, 65.
[26] Kathleen Holscher critically examines religious practice in public schools in *Religious Lessons: Catholic Sisters and the Captured Schools Crisis in New Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). She remains invested in the legal conversations, but primarily for how religious practice and law interact.

NYC to the one that historians of education and law describe.[27] I do not assume that anything necessarily changed after *Schempp* and *Engel*, but highlight continuity while noting explicit changes. Thus, I decenter legal definitions of religion and instead look for how people understood religion.[28]

Decentering legal definitions of religion does not mean ignoring legal scholarship. My project builds on recent work on law and religion that has argued that "religion" and "religious freedom" are constructed, political categories with a colonial history.[29] It also builds on work that claims that historical actors have meant different things when they deploy legal categories about religion, such as "religious freedom."[30] This work has denaturalized legal categories of religion, but it nevertheless operates within the framework of the establishment and religious freedom clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Influenced by the work of these scholars in denaturalizing legal categories, I instead decenter legal categories by studying how religious ideas affected public school policies, beyond how people argued that the policies related to the religion clauses of the First Amendment. Attention to policy that was never brought to court and the myriad ways historical actors debated it expands our understanding of the relationship between religion and law. It also speaks back to the legal scholarship by suggesting that assimilationist understandings of religion on the ground in public schools may have affected legal decisions. Certainly, public schools have been particularly vulnerable to legal dictates, due to their position as heavily regulated entities and

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[27] On "lived religion," see: David D. Hall, *Lived Religion in America: Toward a Theory of Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).
[28] Ibid., In this, I join Holscher.
[29] Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007) and *Prison Religion: Faith-Based Reform and the Constitution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Tisa Wenger, *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009). For a recent review article, also see Charles McCrary, "New Directions in the Study of American Religious Freedom," *Symposia,* 8 (2017): 33-42.
[30] Finbarr Curtis, *The Production of American Religious Freedom* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

their special status teaching children, but I am emphasizing a direction—the local development of religion—in a dynamic, fluid relationship between religion and law. If we want to know how the religious practice shaped the law in addition to how the law shaped religious practice, as Sarah Barringer Gordon suggests we do, we can examine non-religion clause influences on definitions of religion used in public school policy on issues such as desegregation and juvenile delinquency prevention and treatment.[31]

My anti-secularization narrative is not "good news" that religion is still thriving and so religion scholars still have something to study, as John Lardas Modern characterizes many anti-secularization narratives.[32] Rather the narrative I present begins with people who were not bound by post-*Schempp* and *Engel* understandings of religion and public schools, of people who thought that they were making students moral by teaching them religious concepts. Sometimes secularization narratives need to be directly challenged in order to get at what people were doing, who they were, and the effects of their doings. Correcting a secularization narrative by showing the religious discourses at play and their material and intellectual effects on people's lives does not assume that people are free actors, as Modern argues. In fact, in this dissertation, my correction of the secularization narrative shows that historical actors made arguments that they were free actors at the same time that the overwhelming conditions of educational bureaucracy shaped their approaches.

My approach differs than the one that scholars such as Modern and Tracy Fessenden have recently taken to study spaces that are not colloquially thought of as religious.[33] These scholars

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[31] Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Spirit of the Law: Religious Voices and the Constitution in Modern America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010), x.
[32] John Lardas Modern, "My Evangelical Conviction," *Religion* 42:3 (2012): 439-457. Although I challenge a secularization narrative, I aim to observe Modern's categories: *poesis*, framing the people I study, and discourse.
[33] Tracy Fessenden, *Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Modern, *Secularism in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). Also: Janet Jakobsen and Ann Pellegrini, *Secularisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

name the space of the non-religious "secularism" and argue that the dominant religious forces of any given society shapes the secularism practiced there. Scholars have recently noticed that, while useful, when applied to contexts outside Modern's and Fessenden's examples, the notion that secularism *is* Protestantism can over-determine other contexts.[34] Instead of identifying secular governance, the atmospheric quality of secularism, or the subjects the schools produced, I focus on the terms the people I study used, which, other than a few instances, excluded the term secularism. Thus, my project is not situated in secularism studies, but I also ask questions about assumptions undergirding places that are not obviously religious.

Furthermore, I bring attention to an important confusion in the debate around religion and public schools, and church and state more generally. The separation of church and state has sometimes been taken to mean the separation of politics and religion, when in fact the constitution indicates a separation of government and religion. The interplay of politics and religion has always thrived in the United States, and presumably, the men who wrote the constitution wanted it to. Yet the role of religious politics in relation to the state has made church-state debates messy. I dive into the messiness by studying a political religious discourse in arguably the most highly contested space for church-state debates in U.S. history—public schools—and the ways that such discourse manifests in classroom practices, civic actions, and municipal inertia. I argue that political discourse is inseparable from government action or inaction in the moral education programs and corresponding policies that I study.

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[34] Charles McCrary and Jeffrey Wheatley, "The Protestant Secular in the Study of American Religion: Reappraisal and Suggestions," *Religion* 47:2 (2017): 256-276. Chad Seales argues that in the southern town he studies, secularism is not a continuum of Protestantism, but people belonged to religious and secular spaces, thus the religious and secular were spatially configured. A regional view of the religious ideas I study matters because many school officials were Catholic and Jewish, so centering Protestantism is over-deterministic. Chad Seales, *The Secular Spectacle: Performing Religion in a Southern Town* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

I am not saying that because politics and government are intertwined here, they ought or ought not to be intertwined. Rather, in this particular moment in history in this particular place, the government did disseminate in classrooms and did employ in official settings a religio-political discourse that governed its policies on religion and race. My research shows that "religion and government" was not separable from "religion and politics" during this period, regardless of legal rules on the separation of church and state. To study religious practice in public schools, one must first wade through these legal debates, as misconceptions about religion, government, and politics shape the secularization narrative of public schools.

II. The Judeo-Christian Repertoire of Religious and Racial Coexistence

The history of moral education in NYC offers a specific alternative to the secularization narrative because of the religious discourse that thrived among NYC public school officials, which they termed "Judeo-Christianity." Their version of Judeo-Christianity involved a repertoire of terms about positive and negative religious and racial coexistence that was assimilative in nature. It allowed them to valorize racial and religious inclusion in already existing programs and narratives of the country, while they simultaneously excluded students of color from equal access to school resources.

Scholars argue that the idea that the United States participated in a "Judeo-Christian tradition" began in response to totalitarian regimes in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, as well as in response to the New Deal's public works initiatives.[35] I show that the people on the ground in NYC produced and used Judeo-Christianity differently. In particular, I reveal that the literature

[35] Gaston, "Interpreting Judeo-Christianity in America"; Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*; Kruse, *One Nation Under God*; Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*.

on Judeo-Christianity—viewing it in relation to the New Deal and the Cold War—has overlooked the relationship between Judeo-Christianity and race, with few exceptions.[36]

The NYC public school officials' version of the Judeo-Christian repertoire borrowed terms that they did not create, but nevertheless took on specific, local meaning. It was a local expression of a national public language. Borrowing from and sometimes working with the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ), school officials cultivated meanings of terms associated with Judeo-Christianity that fit the particular local context and issues they were encountering, specifically those surrounding race—juvenile delinquency and residential segregation. In the local expression, the Judeo-Christian repertoire represented a binary set of values about how to get along and how not to get along with people who schools and society racialized as "others" from each other. Positive terms included brotherhood, tolerance, love of neighbor, and intergroup cooperation; negative terms included bigotry, prejudice, intolerance, and hatred. Getting along meant not judging, but more importantly, it meant finding out how the racial "other" fit into a pre-conceived concept of white Christian America. The officials comfortably added "Judeo-" to "Christian" in part because many Jewish teachers in NYC public schools had adopted the narrative of American diversity. To school officials, getting along poorly meant saying intentionally hateful things about someone from a different assigned race than oneself or to suggest that one did not want all races to live and be educated together.

By studying this education-based iteration of a national discourse, I contribute to four threads in the literature on Judeo-Christianity. First, I focus on what Kevin Schultz calls the "civic" rather than the "theological" version of the "Judeo-Christian tradition," because the

[36] Anne Blankenship is a recent exception to this, as she describes how "Exclusion within a garb of inclusivity intensified racial and religious discrimination" even as "white and Nikkei Buddhist and Christian clergy stood together within the barbed wire of incarceration centers." Blankenship, *Christianity, Social Justice, and the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II*, 156. Schultz does consider race, but he mostly considers the Judeo-Christian idea to promote inclusivity, rather than to exclude. Schultz, *Tri-Faith America,* 179-197.

public school officials were less interested in the relationships between the biblical texts than they were in creating a public tradition.[37] I nevertheless take the "civic" iteration seriously as religious practice deriving not from the debates of professional theologians, but rather from the consensus-creation of educational bureaucrats. Second, I attend to an aspect of Mark Silk's original discussion of the Judeo-Christian tradition that K. Healan Gaston notes few scholars have attended to—the idea of internal disagreement about what Judeo-Christianity was.[38] By looking at civic critiques of Judeo-Christianity, I suggest that attempts at consensus did not necessarily mean consensus prevailed. Third, I contest Gaston's and Schultz's claim that the Civil Rights Movement operated within the "idiom" of Judeo-Christianity, as I show that many of the parents and activists in Harlem challenged the schools' Judeo-Christian repertoire.[39] Finally, I suggest that the kind of religious exchange that Matthew Hedstrom argues was possible in the NCCJ's Religious Book Week was not possible in the regulated public school setting, and so in that context, the interfaith language stymied rather than encouraged the exchange of ideas.[40]

This project sits within competing scholarly understandings of "liberal" and "conservative." As Gaston points out, scholars have typically characterized the Judeo-Christian tradition as "liberal" by pointing toward efforts to promote tolerance among proponents of the Judeo-Christian tradition.[41] Gaston writes that her own research challenges "a linear narrative that treats the rise of Judeo-Christian formulations as evidence of an ever-widening sphere of tolerance," writing that "Historians are just beginning to explore these alternative meanings of

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[37] Gaston, "Interpreting Judeo-Christianity in America," 298; Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, 59.
[38] Gaston, "Interpreting Judeo-Christianity in America," 299, citing Mark Silk, "Notes on the Judeo-Christian Tradition in America," *American Quarterly* 36: 1 (1984): 65-85, 67-68, 77. Gaston says she studies internal disagreement in her dissertation work.
[39] Gaston, "Interpreting Judeo-Christianity in America," 292; Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, 179, 183.
[40] Matthew Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 142.
[41] Gaston, "Interpreting Judeo-Christianity in America," 293, referring to Schultz and others. Blankenship also refers to "the newly conceived Judeo-Christian tradition" as an iteration of "liberal Christianity" in *Christianity, Social Justice, and the Japanese American Incarceration During World War II*, 154.

the Judeo-Christian tradition, which strongly prefigured today's uses by conservatives."[42] Echoing Gaston's suggestion that Judeo-Christianity may have non-liberal meanings, Kevin Kruse says the idea of a Christian nation was actually founded by conservative clergy and businessmen.[43] Also claiming material I study might be conservative, Andrew Hartman joins Clarence Taylor in pointing out that anti-Communism in New York education attacked teachers who supported black students.[44] Some of the teachers may have been Communists but many were not. New York Communists were largely not associated with totalitarian regimes abroad. Because the Board and state education officials targeted teachers invested in socially progressive civil rights issues, Hartman identifies their strand of anti-Communism as conservative. By conservative, he means the attitude toward social issues, rather toward government type.

The terms liberal and conservative in this dissertation do not strictly apply to political party affiliation; rather they refer to religious attitudes toward states and social issues. I identify the iteration of Judeo-Christianity in NYC public schools—the Judeo-Christian repertoire of religious and racial coexistence—as liberal in this project because of its stated attitudes toward social issues, unity, and democracy. This understanding of liberal relies on the notion that many mid-century Americans contrasted a liberal democracy with fascist totalitarianism, and Matthew Hedstrom's point that one strand in liberal religion is an emphasis on social issues, tolerance, and creating unity.[45] However, people of diverse political and religious affiliations, as well as actions on civil rights, used the repertoire, so this understanding of Judeo-Christianity as liberal does not play into the narrative of "an ever-widening sphere of tolerance" against which Gaston cautions; rather, it considers what the people who used Judeo-Christianity understood themselves to be

[42] Gaston, "Interpreting Judeo-Christianity in America," 293-294.
[43] Kruse, *One Nation Under God*.
[44] Biondi, *To Stand and Fight*; Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*; Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door*.
[45] He refers to this strand as "ethical liberalism," which he distinguishes from "laissez-faire liberalism." Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion*, 9, 142.

doing. Because I am attending to what school officials said they meant and how they used the terms, I am not referring to school officials who used the term as collectively either "liberals" or "conservatives." Rather, I am invested in how they used a language, within what scholars have identified as a liberal tradition, to avoid creating opportunities for people of color. This is not to say then that they are therefore actually conservatives or Judeo-Christianity is actually conservative, or even ultimately liberal. It is rather to point out something more fundamental: that the claims for consensus around tolerance that used the language of Judeo-Christianity excluded people and ignored civil rights efforts. [46]

The term Judeo-Christianity and the other terms in the repertoire, as used by NYC school officials, were broad, but they were also powerful. Although Kevin Schultz characterizes "Judeo-Christianity" as "bland" due to its scope, in NYC, the Judeo-Christian repertoire was generic in the sense of being general, but it was not bland, nor was it necessarily vague.[47] Bland implies that it lacked power, and vague suggests that the people who used it did not know what they were talking about. However, NYC public school officials had an idea of what Judeo-Christianity was. They saw it as an assimilative mode of distinguishing positive and negative racial and religious coexistence. They also saw Judeo-Christianity as universally applicable.

In NYC, Judeo-Christianity reflected a "morality play"-mentality of human relations, where public school officials assumed there were widely accepted "good" and "bad" ways for

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[46] My thinking here is shaped in part by Jeffrey Stout's discussion of secularization, in conversation with Sally Haslenger's idea of "the common ground." Stout argues that "secularization" is the process of the points of common vocabulary and concepts that a group of people can assume as people of different religious commitments enter a conversation. Haslanger suggests that such spaces of "common ground" can leave out people who are not in the majority group. I do not consider Judeo-Christianity a "secularization," as it was the creation of a new religious ideology, and I note that "common vocabulary" and "consensus" are not the same, but Judeo-Christianity marks in part the kind of common vocabulary that Stout discusses, the shared value of which is challenged by Haslanger's analysis of the "common ground." Thinking through these concepts, though they differ from the ones I study, helped me arrive at my analysis here. Sally Haslanger, *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 446-478; Jeffrey Stout, *Democracy and Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 97.

[47] Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, 45, 79, 123.

diverse groups to interact. Instead of producing a binary of good and evil players in the Civil Rights Movement retrospectively, northern whites were already forming "good" and "bad" ways to think of racial interactions.[48] NYC public school officials understood black, Puerto Rican, and white students to belong to distinct racial groups. Within the category of white, they saw various ethnic groups, such as Polish, Italian, and Irish. When calculating racial percentages, however, they would identify the white ethnic groups and then fall back on the categories of "Negro" and "Puerto Rican," without making room for the diversity of black migrants and immigrant backgrounds that also comprised black New Yorkers, or the fact that Puerto Ricans were not the only Spanish-speaking New Yorkers. In addition to seeing clear cut racial groups, without taking into account long histories of migrations (many forced) and changing national boundaries, NYC public school officials expressed a limited understanding that relations among groups could only be good or bad, and consequently employed a repertoire of negative and positive terms.[49]

They developed this repertoire partially by drawing on NCCJ materials, which had originally been primarily oriented toward interreligious relations, rather than interracial relations.[50] Applying the NCCJ's interreligious framework to race relations proved incongruous. The NCCJ's argument for mutual respect of distinct religious groups caused little turmoil because religious practitioners often agreed that differences in religion existed among religious groups. While separate but equally worthy religions worked in the NCCJ context, the separate but equally worthy construct did not work for race relations, and parents of color noticed.

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[48] Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008), xiii. Sugrue says that historians and history curriculum have written the southern civil rights struggle as a morality play of good and evil. By focusing on the north, he aims to challenge that. I show that the morality play mentality was also entrenched in what some northern whites taught students during the movement itself.

[49] On white "colorblindness" in education leading up to *Brown v. Board of Education*, see Zoe Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom: How American Schools Taught Race, 1900-1954* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[50] In his forthcoming work, *A Theology of Brotherhood*, Curtis Evans shows that the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America (FCC) was interested in interracial relations as well, but I show that the NCCJ, which came along after the FCC, had distinct goals from it.

I consider both the whiteness of Judeo-Christianity, as well as the ways that proponents of Judeo-Christianity racialized social issues as only pertaining to black and Hispanic New Yorkers. Whiteness often operates as unmarked assumptions of moral superiority.[51] When we pay attention in curricula and programming to whom school officials were lifting up as heroes of the Judeo-Christian tradition and whom they were suggesting was a threat to it, it becomes clear that they assumed that moral superiority of white historical and contemporary actors.

NYC school officials applied the Judeo-Christian model of religious pluralism to juvenile delinquency and segregation because they wanted to introduce students to modes of coexistence that they perceived to have worked in the context of religion. By examining the interactions between Judeo-Christianity and race, I show not only that there were distinct, context-specific discourses of Judeo-Christianity during the 1950s and 1960s, but also that the Judeo-Christian discourse in NYC public schools was deeply racialized. Through this discourse, school officials tried to teach students and parents of different racial backgrounds how to live together under the schools' own vision of race and morality but failed to create new opportunities for students of color. The responses of people of color to the school officials' approach suggested that integration was not necessarily the most desirable approach to them, because of the heavy-handed moralizing involved in it. Instead, they produced alternative visions of human relations, beyond the integration and separation binary.[52]

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[51] Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010).

[52] For work looking at segregation, integration, and separation in NYC, see: Biondi, *To Stand and Fight*; Jennifer de Forest, "The 1958 Harlem School Boycott: Parental Activism and the Struggle for Educational Equity in New York City," *The Urban Review* 40:1 (2007): 21-41; Matthew F. Delmont, *Why Busing Failed: Race, Media, and the National Resistance to School Desegregation* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); Charles S. Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville: A Teacher's Education, 1968-69* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014); Heather Lewis, *New York City Public Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg: Community Control and Its Legacy* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2013); Brian Purnell, *Fighting Jim Crow in the County of Kings: The*

III. Judeo-Christianity and Community Control of Education

The third piece of my argument is that school officials' concealment of a particular vision of public education behind the general terms of the Judeo-Christian repertoire contributed to the failure of public schools for children of color in NYC and led to demands for community control. Historians of NYC public schools locate the origins of demands for community control in the failure of school desegregation, which it certainly was.[53] However, black and Puerto Rican community control activists also critiqued the language of racial inclusion in the Judeo-Christian repertoire, which shifts the origins and periodization of community control toward the history of the "Judeo-Christian tradition." As I will show, in the fight over government aid to parochial schools that occurred at the same time as the battle over community control, New York Catholics had found that the Judeo-Christian repertoire preserved a vision of the public school as a bounded laboratory of religious and racial diversity, where the participants came from diverse backgrounds but were supposed to share values of religious and racial coexistence with the school. These Judeo-Christian values, however, did not include the demands of New York Catholics of diverse racial backgrounds fighting for aid to parochial schools, nor of black and Puerto Rican parents and community members seeking quality education for children of color.

This project sits within a history of central and local control of public schools. In the Progressive Era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, NYC was a leader in public education. The city responded to education reformers' calls to centralize the school system, as reformers understood the local system to be failing "to satisfy the educational needs generated by

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Congress of Racial Equality in Brooklyn (Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 2013); Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*; Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door*.

[53] Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*; Lewis, *New York City Public Schools*.

immigration and economic development."[54] Leading the way for other large urban school systems, the NYC school system became centralized in 1901. This meant that borough school boards dissipated and a central school board and superintendent of schools managed the entire school system throughout the five boroughs. By the 1950s, the central school board was in charge of the over one million students in the school system.

In the 1950s, the Board and the Regents, the central educational body in the state, were bit with the Red Scare and fired numerous teachers suspected of Communism, many of whom were fighting for progressive social issues.[55] Then, community members of color, led by Kenneth Clark, demanded that the Board address the issue of desegregation following *Brown*.[56] The Board established the Commission on Integration but implemented few actual policies based on the findings. Parents and community members of color boycotted and threatened to boycott again.[57] The Board then implemented various plans failed plans, which in theory addressed integration, but in reality, further separated white students and students of color.[58] Increasingly frustrated by the Board's failure to offer substantive plans for integration and by the continued poor quality of education for students of color, parents of color began expressing interest in controlling hiring and curriculum in their own community schools. With funding from the Ford Foundation, three "demonstration" or experimental districts were established. In a stand off between community members in the demonstration districts and the United Federation of

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[54] David Ment, "Board of Education," in *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, ed., Kenneth Jackson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 137. Also see Lewis, *New York City Public Schools*, 15-17. Lewis is careful to point out that centralization happened because "Progressive Era reformers perceived local school boards as politically corrupt," emphasizing the perception of reformers, rather than valorizing them.

[55] Biondi, *To Stand and Fight*; Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 81-84; Clarence Taylor, *Reds at the Blackboard: Communism, Civil Rights, and the New York City Teachers Union* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

[56] Kenneth B. Clark, "Speech at Negro History Week-Brotherhood Month Dinner," February 15, 1954, Folder 52, Box 69, Subseries 10, Series 911, NYCBER.

[57] Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door.*

[58] For example, education parks, or large campuses that aimed to bring students from various neighborhoods together. Ansley T. Erickson, "Desegregation's Architects: Education Parks and the Spatial Ideology of Schooling," *History of Education Quarterly*, 56:4 (2016): 560-589.

Teachers, which wanted control over discipline, hiring, and curriculum, there were huge city-wide teacher strikes. This eventually led to the decentralization of the entire school district.

By situating community control in the school officials' articulation of the Judeo-Christian repertoire and the alternative educational models provided by parents of color, I demonstrate the importance of the Judeo-Christian repertoire to the history of the NYC civil rights movement. Historian Martha Biondi argues that, in NYC in the ten years after World War II, "Civil rights, meaning the right to due process and equality before the law, was an important movement goal, but the struggle for black rights did not begin in pursuit of civil rights alone. Nor was it a simple quest for integration; the movement aimed to change mainstream institutions and practices in order to increase opportunities for black people."[59] I argue that the school officials who used the Judeo-Christian repertoire in the 1950s and 1960s were *not* invested in increasing opportunities for black people, and used the repertoire as a way to present support for inclusion without having to take action to increase opportunities. I suggest that this dynamic continued beyond the immediate postwar period and into the battle over community control of schools. In other words, the Judeo-Christian repertoire allowed school officials to fashion themselves as open-minded. It took the people toward whom they claimed to be open-minded to call them out on being close-minded for the terms of art to be contested. School officials' claims of inclusivity in moral education amidst exclusive actions also contributed to the failure to create opportunities for students of color. Community control advocates specifically sought to offer a different vision of public education and American history and values to the schools' Judeo-Christian one.

We do not and cannot know if the Board and teachers intentionally concealed specific values by using generic terms in their repertoire. They claimed that those values, such as

[59] Biondi, *To Stand and Fight*, 16. Biondi argues that the civil rights movement in NYC began ten years before *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Montgomery bus boycott.

brotherhood, stood for improving school policy with respect to race relations and integration. Yet the Board and teachers ignored school policy changes being called for by people of color. That they ignored these calls for action suggests that no matter what the Board and teachers meant by positive terms within the repertoire, the consequence of using those terms was to conceal the underlying and unresolved policy issues. The concealment is relevant to studies of the northern civil rights movement and Judeo-Christianity alike because it suggests that public education was a mechanism for the propagation of an exclusive liberal religion that obscured difficult issues of race.[60] In the hands of bureaucrats, the language reflects how the Board and the teachers avoided addressing nuanced views on the most pressing issues of race and public education of the day.

Methods and Sources

Methodologically, this dissertation is a history of ideas about religion and morality and how those ideas intersected with the social issues relating to race with which NYC public school participants were grappling on the ground. It is not a political history in the sense that I am not engaged in every particular alliance or policy. Instead, my method has been an archival excavation of local understandings, meanings, and practices.[61] I have tried to understand what school officials and community members meant when they said a program or policy was "moral" or could teach students to be "moral."[62] I hypothesized that when I took this approach, I would find references to religious texts, rituals, and such authorities nearby, and I was correct. In analyzing what school officials meant by "moral education" and how stakeholders responded to

[60] Biondi shows that some white liberals in the north were racist, and I am suggesting that the Judeo-Christian repertoire highlights the role of religion in perpetuating a racially exclusive view of coexistence. Biondi, *To Stand and Fight*. I see public education as a mechanism similar to Hedstrom's suggestion that books and book cultures were mechanisms for liberal religion. Hedstrom, *The Rise of Liberal Religion*, 4.
[61] I draw on the methods of lived religion. Hall, *Lived Religion in America.*
[62] In this, I also differ from Zimmerman, who connects the teaching of morality primarily with clearly delineated examples of religion in schools. Zimmerman, *Whose America?*.

moral education, a constellation of other terms have emerged that I have tried to understand in context, such as "Judeo-Christian," "moral and spiritual values" and "brotherhood."

In addition to trying to understand what people meant by these concepts, I have tried to understand what people said they thought the concepts could do, and to narrate how people responded to and used the concepts in particular situations for particular purposes. I show that the terms were powerful in that some historical actors used them to conceal difficult realities and others responded to them with admiration, exaltation, or frustration. I do not presume that the terms themselves were actors; instead I am interested how people related to the concepts.

Rather than genealogy, which has its own set of terms, my methodology reflects that of scholars who have looked for the moral valences of ideas about religion in spaces outside of religious institutions. Judith Weisenfeld's work on understanding how films have relayed moral values about race and Anthony Petro's work on the production of types of moral citizens through religion during the AIDS epidemic have influenced my thinking in this regard.[63] I have tried to understand the moral world of the school board and other school officials, as well as the moral worlds beyond them among people who cared about education. Many of my sources are not held in the archives of religious institutions and are not necessarily about traditionally religious topics or from religious leaders. I do cite material from religious groups and archives, but I have primarily used the archives of educational bureaucracies to tell a history of religious ideas.

Although education archives such as the NYC Board of Education Records are unusual in the field of American religion, historians of education have employed them.[64] I was also looking for something different in the archives than historians of education do. I was looking for the

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[63] Petro, *After the Wrath of God*; Judith Weisenfeld, *Hollywood Be Thy Name: African American Religion in American Film,1929-1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

[64] Among others, see: Burkholder, *Color in the Classroom*; Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*; Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*; Lewis, *New York City Public Schools*; Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door*.

history of moral education and, as the project developed, especially the history of the production of terms in the Judeo-Christian repertoire. I have encountered and engaged the main players in the history of NYC public schools, but I have analyzed their service in producing this repertoire, not necessarily their other political work, except where their political contributions touched on policies relating to implementation of the repertoire.

I engage a diverse set of sources, drawing on archival records from over nine repositories throughout the country and numerous online databases, as well as material culture sources. My sources include curriculum guidelines; correspondence, minutes, and statements from parent, teacher, religious, and civic organizations; social scientific research; instructional films; photographs; criminal records; court cases; newspapers and media coverage; and students' work. These sources challenge the idea that public schools have been devoid of religion.

A Note on Perspective

When I have presented my work at conferences, scholars have sometimes interpreted my work as offering a normative perspective on moral education. This is likely because the ideas and categories that I study in historical context are laden with normative weight, and situating them specifically and historically requires precision for which I strive. However, the project is not prescriptive; it is a descriptive history of how people produce and practice ideas on the ground. In other words, I am not taking a stance on whether a religiously-informed moral education ought to be taught in public schools; I am showing that that debate has a surprising history, which suggests that the question is not whether it is religiously informed, but how it is religiously informed. In this dissertation, I have tried to describe the ideas and categories at hand, and the relevance of these ideas to the history of religion, race, and education in the mid-

twentieth century United States. That said, all scholars have perspectives that shape our hypotheses. Given the sticky territory of moral education, I will make mine explicit.

First, I hypothesized that when I saw claims to morality, references to religion would be nearby, given that my periodization began in the religious boom, and what I had read about Judeo-Christianity.[65] This appeared truer than I realized, and it serves to challenge the public school secularization narrative. I am not arguing that claims regarding morality are necessarily connected to religion, although my research does show that in these historical moments, arguments about morality in the public school involved religion—whether because they were also arguments about the role of religion in the public schools, or because they used language of religion to offer moral authority, even without much specific traditional theological content.

Second, I was committed to listening to the voices of people who were involved in school politics at many levels, including people of diverse religious and racial backgrounds, and allowing them to change my story. As a result, the critiques by Catholics of the broader public schools system's narrow approach to diversity and the critiques by people of color of the school system's exclusivity reveal something about the concept of Judeo-Christianity itself. If at times I call Judeo-Christianity exclusive and particular rather than universal, it is not because of a pre-conceived notion about what it is, it is because of what I have learned from my sources.[66]

Third, I believe that ideas matter because they shape how people understand, respond to, and create their situations. For this reason, I have tried to illuminate how people on the ground understood certain ideas. At times, I have allowed their ideas to take precedence over traditional

[65] This hypothesis came in part from how scholars frame the religion debates in schools. Zimmerman, for instance, refers to the religion debates as relating to morality; however, I hypothesized the opposite—that morality related to religion. Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 135-159.
[66] In the dissertation's conclusion, I offer further reflection on my sources.

narratives about historical events and alliances. This is not to say that on the whole I think that ideas are more important than events and alliances, but rather that ideas affected history, too.

New York City Public Schools and Leadership and Terms

The time period I study in this dissertation goes from curriculum choices immediately after the expulsion of teachers suspected of communist sympathies to decentralization. During this time, the Board of Education had nine members. The first centralized school board in 1901 consisted of 46 members. By 1917, there were seven members—all appointed by the mayor, two from Manhattan and Brooklyn, and one from the Bronx, Queens, and Richmond. In 1948, the Board grew to nine members, still all appointed by the mayor, two from all the boroughs except Richmond, which had one member.[67] Decentralization in 1968 and 1969 further changed the shape, size, and power of the board, with the result in 1969 being a central board of five members, "one appointed by each borough president" and "32 school districts each hav[ing] one community school board with nine members, to be popularly elected in special school elections from 1970."[68] This structure remained generally the same until 2002.

Under the centralized structure of the New York City public school system, which lasted until the community control efforts, the closing chapter of this dissertation, the central school board and superintendents oversaw curriculum and policy throughout the city. Thus, statements by board members and superintendents offered the leadership's position on educational matters, which becomes important as they make statements on the moral quality and content of issues such as juvenile delinquency and segregation. On curriculum development in particular, one

[67] As an aside, in 1961, a scandal involving school construction funds led to the replacement of the entire nine-member board by the mayor, even though no single board member was involved in corruption. This is relevant insofar as new individuals populate the narratives in this dissertation after 1961.
[68] Ibid., 138. In 1973, the central board expanded to seven members, two appointed by the mayor, and one by each borough president. Ibid., 139.

associate superintendent led the Division of Curriculum Development, which would recommend curriculum material to the Board of Superintendents in order to implement it. In some instances, such as the moral and spiritual values program discussed in chapter one, the Board of Education would also have to approve the curriculum.[69]

The leadership of NYC public schools and the city is relevant in so far as some shifts in administration heralded in large-scale changes in the city, while others did not. The majority of this project takes place under the mayoral tenures of Robert F. Wagner, Jr. (1954-1965, Democrat) and John Lindsay (1966-1973, Republican), with the early parts of chapter one taking place under the leadership of Vincent R. Impellitteri (1950-1953, Democrat and Experience Party). The shift from the Wagner to the Lindsay administration saw Lindsay's connections to the Ford Foundation lead to the three community control demonstration districts. The Presidents of the Board of Education during the 1950s and 1960s were, in order: Andrew Clauson, Charles H. Silver, Max Rubin, James B. Donovan, and Lloyd Garrison. Some of the shifts in power were relatively seamless for the purposes of the history of moral education, as for example, the shift from Clauson to Silver, where Silver continued to uphold Clauson's support of the moral and spiritual values program. William Jansen was the Superintendent of Schools from 1947-58. Jansen was known for trying to root out Communist teachers early in his tenure, writing a racist geography textbook about the "backward" "native people of Africa," and his reluctance to desegregate schools.[70] The other superintendents in this period were John J. Theobald, Bernard E. Donavan, and Nathan Brown, some of whom appear as spokespeople about moral education.

At times throughout the dissertation, I speak of "school officials." In these instances, I refer mostly to the Board of Education and the superintendents, and, in some instances, teachers

[69] David Ment, "Guide to the Records of the New York City Board of Education," July 30, 2008, accessed May 27, 2017, http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/archives/guide.pdf, 99.
[70] Hartman, *Education and the Cold War*, 84.

as well. The phrasing "school officials" may sound vague. I intentionally want to convey a sense of the foggy power of educational bureaucracy, especially when it came to ideas[71]. Fog obscures clarity of vision. It blankets everything in sight. Parents must have felt this heavy obscurity when they encountered ideas about morality and religion in their children's schooling.

Amidst the fog, it is important to point out that there are different actors in positions of power throughout the dissertation. In chapter one, the educational bureaucracy is mostly the NYC Board of Education and the NYC Board of Superintendents, inspired by the New York State Regents. In chapter two, the educational bureaucracy is the Board of Education and the city's Youth Board, but the social scientists who influence these two bodies also wield significant power. In this chapter, we also see examples of social scientists from universities testing films on juvenile delinquents, and a psychologist who is the head of a training school. The courts also loom as a punitive authority in this chapter. In chapter three, the educational bureaucracy is the Board of Education again, but it has many limbs: the Puerto Rican Study, a study with financing from private institutions to help the Board create policies and programs for the increasing number of Puerto Rican students in the schools; the help of the National Conference of Christians and Jews in organizing Brotherhood Week; and policies such as open enrollment.

In the second part of the dissertation, the center shifts, in part because community and civic groups the members of which express frustrations at the educational bureaucracy are often directing their attention to a general sense that public schools are not meeting their needs. In

[71] Courtney Bender writes that "Studying spirituality thus appears akin to shoveling fog" in the *New Metaphysicals: Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 182. With my statement that the educational bureaucracy has a foggy power, I do mean to invoke Bender, to say that it can appear difficult to study the ideas of intertwined bodies of power. I also mean to describe how the historical actors in this study became frustrated by an overwhelming sense that the conditions of their children's education were predetermined, when they could not even see how the conditions came to be or what exactly the conditions were.

chapter four, the educational bureaucracy that Catholics come up against is a combination of politicians throughout the city and state who disapprove of government aid to parochial schools and private organizations that support the Board and teachers' union. In some sense, this is actually an example of people who have challenged the board in various ways on church and state issues (NYCLU, teachers unions, AJC, AJ-Congress, PEA, UPA) now *supporting* the very educational system that created the moral and spiritual values programs that they challenged. In chapter five, the educational bureaucracy is predominantly the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), but it is clear that the UFT is carrying out the vision of the Board with regard to Judeo-Christianity. Furthermore, even as the UFT was the specific problem in chapter five or as the Blaine Amendment was the specific problem in chapter four, community control advocates and Catholics expressed broader frustration with the school system as a whole and its failure to educate their children with adequate resources.

Chapter Overview

Part I. Moral Education Programs and the Production of the Judeo-Christian Repertoire

In the first three chapters, I explore how school officials produced the Judeo-Christian repertoire through three types of moral education programs in NYC public schools: programs on moral and spiritual values, juvenile delinquency prevention, and racial integration. In these chapters, I uncover emerging tensions between white school officials and concerned parents and community members of color who challenged the claim that Judeo-Christianity was universal.

Chapter One introduces the Judeo-Christian repertoire of religious and racial coexistence through the debate about the moral and spiritual values curriculum in NYC public schools. Drawing on curricula, correspondence, and news coverage from the National Education

Archives, the United Parents Association Records, the United Federation of Teachers Records, the Board of Education's Division of Curriculum Development, the Brooklyn yearbook collection, and more, I examine the debate about and revisions to Board curricula on teaching moral and spiritual values in 1950s NYC public schools. As the Board responded to calls by parent and Jewish organizations to remove the language of God in the guidelines, the programming on moral and spiritual values increasingly emphasized narratives of whiteness through versions of American history and daily life. As the first thorough examination of moral and spiritual values curricula outside of their relevance to court cases, this chapter aims to re-orient readers to analysis of religion in public schools, as well as to the history of Judeo-Christianity by putting race and narratives of American history and daily life at its center.

Chapter Two examines deployments of the Golden Rule, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," in NYC school juvenile delinquency prevention and treatment. Although scholars have studied race, gender, and culture in relation to delinquency, almost none have examined religion. By showing how schools used the command in public school anti-delinquency clean up parades, films shown in special schools for delinquent students, and in the underlying philosophy of a private school for delinquent boys, I argue that schools taught students to "love thy neighbor as thyself" because they thought religion as distilled in this command could cure delinquency. With the command, school officials aimed to turn delinquents into good neighbors, who on the schools' view were clean, patriotic, and law-abiding, by contrast to delinquents.

Chapter Three examines the conflicting views held by school officials and community members of public school racial desegregation that were embedded in curricula on racial integration. The chapter gathers archival material from diverse resources, from the NCCJ's Brotherhood Week to the Board's Puerto Rican Study, an assimilationist study about recently

arrived migrants. I argue that school officials tried to assimilate black and Puerto Rican students *into* "the morality" of what they called the "Judeo-Christian tradition" through teaching particular values, such as brotherhood, and through publicizing desegregation initiatives. By contrast, black and Puerto Rican parents and community members who supported integration understood it as equal access to resources in shared spaces. They taught moral norms about valuing the humanity of children and cultivating new communities and hoped that school integration would create the conditions for those values.

Part II. Political Tests for, and the Limits of, the Judeo-Christian Repertoire

By chapters four and five, the tensions are fully present. The final two chapters explore the limits of the Judeo-Christian repertoire by examining two political events that challenged the repertoire's universality and inclusivity—the debate about government aid to parochial schools during the 1967 New York State Constitutional Convention and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville community-controlled school district and subsequent teacher strikes in 1967-1968. When Catholics sought to establish a space for religious particularity within public education, and when black and Puerto Rican parents sought to create a space for racial particularity, school officials criticized the very religious and racial groups they claimed to include in Judeo-Christianity.

Chapter Four focuses on Catholic arguments for government aid to denominational schools during the 1967 New York State Constitutional Convention, an underexplored event. Catholics seized upon the occasion of the convention to try to expand the unit of measurement of diversity within Judeo-Christianity from students in a public school to schools in a community, thus allowing Catholic schools to participate. Where school officials claimed diversity happened in public schools, Catholics thought a broader conception of the public could include both public

and denominational schools. They used the Judeo-Christian repertoire, but for different ends than school officials. Ultimately, Catholic use of the Judeo-Christian language did not succeed in achieving aid to denominational schools. Nevertheless, the Catholic arguments tested the boundaries of what constituted universal, public space in the Judeo-Christian repertoire.

Chapter Five examines how black and Puerto Rican parents and community members in a Brooklyn neighborhood who advocated for community control of schools offered a moral critique of the Judeo-Christian repertoire of positive religious and racial coexistence. By studying the parents' critiques and intellectual influences, I argue that the community control experiment and the subsequent teachers' strikes of 1967-1968 responded to and challenged the Board's claims about the universality of the Judeo-Christian repertoire. Instead, Ocean Hill-Brownsville parents and community members expressed their own narrative of natural belonging in America through interpretation of power structures, humanity, and black unity. Thus, another limit of the Judeo-Christian repertoire was claims for recognition of racial particularity by people of color who felt excluded from the vision the Board claimed was universal.

This story begins in the thick of the post-World War II religious revival in the United States, when NYC public school officials began to develop a repertoire of religious and racial coexistence that they identified as Judeo-Christian. In the debates over which values were universal in the conversation of moral and spiritual values, we will already begin to see modes of exclusion operating simultaneously with claims of inclusion. This is the tension that characterized NYC public schools during the 1950s-1960s, a tension that we can best understand by examining the on the ground production of the Judeo-Christian repertoire. Through that repertoire, school officials came to present an image of themselves and their country that black and Puerto Rican community members questioned, challenged, and reimagined.

Part I. Moral Education Programs and the Production of the Judeo-Christian Repertoire

Chapter One "The Minds, the Hearts, and the Souls of Our Youth": Moral and Spiritual Values Curriculum

It was the height of a religious boom in America. Not only were religious communities funding programs that had been on hold during the Depression and World War II, but there was also a sharp increase in government expressions of religiosity, with President Dwight Eisenhower at the helm.[1] In 1954, Eisenhower signed a bill that added "One Nation Under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance, and in 1956, Eisenhower approved the addition of "In God We Trust" to currency.[2] For a person living in the 1950s United States, it was difficult to avoid the notion that America was a "Christian nation" or a "Judeo-Christian nation."[3]

This was especially true for anyone involved in public schools—as a student, teacher, administrator, parent, or concerned community member. Since their nineteenth-century origins, public schools had been embroiled in debates about religion.[4] In particular, in the years leading up to the religious boom, the United States Supreme Court (the Court) had heard cases on government aid to parochial schools and released-time programs, which allowed students to leave public school premises to receive religious instruction during regular school hours.[5] School

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[1] Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).
[2] Jeffrey Owen Jones and Peter Myer, *The Pledge: A History of the Pledge of Allegiance* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books St. Martin's Press, 2010); Richard J. Ellis, *To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of Allegiance* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 2005).
[3] Kevin Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), xvi.
[4] Tracy Fessenden, *Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Steven K. Green, *The Bible, the School, and the Constitution: The Clash that Shaped Modern Church-State Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Kent Greenawalt, *Does God Belong in Public Schools?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), among others.
[5] *Everson v. Board of Education* 330 U.S. 1; *McCollum v. Board of Education* 333 U.S. 203, others.

prayer and Bible-reading, especially prayer, emerged as methods through which administrators thought that schools could teach reverence for and obedience to the Judeo-Christian nation.[6]

When the Court decided in *Engel v. Vitale* in 1962 that state-sponsored school prayer violated the First Amendment's establishment clause and in *Abington v. Schempp* in 1963 that all school prayer and Bible-reading did the same, the end of school prayer and Bible-reading became topics of national discussion. However, the particular school prayer at issue in 1962 points to an underexplored local story, in New York State broadly and in New York City (NYC) specifically. The prayer was the New York State Regents' Prayer: "'Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our Country.'"[7] In 1951, representatives from "the three major faiths" of Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism had helped the New York State Board of Regents (the Regents), the governing body of education in New York State, write the prayer specifically for New York State. Although scholars have begun to study the Regents' Prayer as an intentional expression of Judeo-Christian unity, they have not fully explored the prayer's pedagogical origins in "moral and spiritual values" programs,[8] or the importance of these programs for how New Yorkers understood the concept, "Judeo-Christianity."

Moral and spiritual values programs were far more widespread than the Regents' Prayer. Only about ten percent of districts in New York State ever implemented the Regents' Prayer and the prayer was actually merely one component of the Regents' larger program on "Moral and

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[6] Kruse, *One Nation Under God*, 95-126; Kevin Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promis*e (New York: Oxford University Press), 118-137.
[7] "The Regents' Statement on Moral and Spiritual Training in the Schools," Meeting Minutes, February 7, 1952, Folder 484, Box 29, Series 281, New York City Board of Education Records, New York City Municipal Archives (hereafter cited as NYCBER).
[8] Some scholars do mention the programs, but not in relation to Judeo-Christianity or in depth: Bruce Dierenfield, *The Battle Over School Prayer: How* Engel v. Vitale *Changed America* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2007), 70-71; Kruse, *One Nation Under God,* 170-78; Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America?: Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 155.

Spiritual Training in the Schools."[9] However, moral and spiritual values programs flourished throughout the country. The National Education Association (NEA) published and distributed widely a pamphlet on moral and spiritual values. The American Association of School Administrators' 19,000 educators voted on a resolution stating that "the teaching of moral and spiritual values in public schools is 'indispensible to the perpetuation of the American way of life." [10] Educators from across the country discussed the importance of teaching moral and spiritual values at conferences held at Teachers College and Union Theological Seminary in NYC. At the Teachers College conference, educators prepared to present a case for moral and spiritual values education to the White House because they held that "the 'intangibles' of present-day living, such as training for citizenship, cannot be overlooked."[11] Public schools from Florida to San Diego cultivated guidebooks and curricula on moral and spiritual values.[12] Given the prevalence of moral and spiritual values programs, they stand to reveal something about the production of ideas about the "Judeo-Christian nation."

The concept of "moral and spiritual values" was notoriously open-ended. The most common definition came from the NEA's Educational Policies Commission in its widely distributed 1951 report on "Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools": " 'By moral and spiritual values we mean those values which, when applied to human behavior, exalt and refine life and bring it into accord with the standards of conduct that are approved in our democratic

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[9] Arthur Levitt to the Members of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools, October 20, 1952, Folder 42, Box 48, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER; "The Regents' Statement on Moral and Spiritual Training in the Schools," Meeting Minutes, February 7, 1952, Folder 484, Box 29, Series 281, NYCBER. "Districts" is the right term here because other municipalities in New York State went by "districts" rather than the NYC model of a "school system" comprised of smaller districts. Due to a decision made by the centralized Board of Education, all of NYC decided not to adopt the prayer. If individual districts in the NYC school system had adopted the prayer, the overall percentage might be higher.

[10] "Religion In Schools Is Still a Controversy," The Religion News Service, Folder 135, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.

[11] Benjamin Fine, "Education in Review: Regional Discussions Are Preparing the Way For the National White House Conference," *The New York Times*, June 26, 1955; Alfred E. Parker, "Consensus on Religion in the Schools,," *The Phi Delta Kappan* 38:4 (Jan., 1957): 145-147, 147.

[12] "Religion In Schools Is Still a Controversy;" Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 155.

culture.'"[13] The NEA listed values including human personality ("*the basic value*"), moral responsibility, institutions as the servants of men, common consent, devotion to truth, respect for excellence, moral equality, brotherhood, pursuit of happiness, and spiritual enrichment.[14] Under the NEA's definition, when humans applied the values to their own behavior, they exalted a democratic form of life. Some religious leaders dissented from this definition—such as Secretary of Education for the Archdiocese of New York Rt. Rev. John J. Voight, who argued that *moral* values related to human behavior and *spiritual* values related to the supernatural.[15] Nevertheless, the NEA's widespread definition gave humans the power to make their "democratic" behavior meaningful beyond the realm of human action.[16]

Similarly placing the emphasis on human action, the NYC Board of Education (the Board) defined "moral and spiritual values" as summarized by the command "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The "moral" component related to human behavior and "spiritual" related to something transcendent. This definition appeared in the text of the NYC Board's own "moral and spiritual values" statement and curricula guidelines, which, along with the singing of the song "America," the Board had adopted instead of the Regents' Prayer. The Board's desire to avoid controversy by not adopting the Regents' Prayer proved fruitless, however. Debate about the "moral and spiritual values" program and "America" exploded, and the Board ended up revising its statement on "moral and spiritual values" to downplay the role of a creator God in it.

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[13] "Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools," Folder 3, Box 1050, Educational Policies Commission Series, National Education Association Records, Special Collections Research Center, George Washington University (hereafter cited as NEAR). Also quoted in Judah Goldin, "Public Education and Spiritual Values," *Religious Education*, January 1, 1953 (48): 81-84, 83; and Rt. Rev. John J. Voight, "Moral and Spiritual Values in Public Education," 92-114, 2.

[14] "Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools."

[15] The following identifies that his appointment was for the Archdiocese of New York: "Program Twenty-Second Annual Convention The American Catholic Sociological Society. Fordham University Campus Center, Fordham Road and Third Avenue Bronx, New York 58, New York, August 31 - September 2, 1960," *The American Catholic Sociological Review* 21:2 (1960): 167-72, 167.

[16] Voight, "Moral and Spiritual Values in Public Education," 2.

In the final version of the Board's moral and spiritual values statement, it defined "moral and spiritual values" this way (and called them "moral and spiritual *ideals*" rather than "values" on the recommendation of a Rabbi friend of a Board member):

> Although there may be differences of opinion concerning the precise terms in which moral and spiritual ideals may be defined, and the application of these ideals to specific acts, there is fortunately agreement concerning the substance of what is meant by the phrase moral and spiritual ideals. For Western civilization moral and spiritual ideals stem in the main from the Judeo-Christian ethic. They find their expression in the Ten Commandments, which are succinctly summarized: 'Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might---, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Even those who reject the idea of obligation to God, and love of God, accept as a prime moral and spiritual ideal the love of neighbor, and they seek to find a philosophic base for their acceptance of this ideal apart from God. The ideal of love of neighbor finds expression in the golden rule: 'As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them.'[17]

Whether or not a person believed that God sanctioned the ideal of love of neighbor, the Board understood that "moral and spiritual ideals" came from "the Judeo-Christian ethic." In its definition of "moral and spiritual ideals," the Board foregrounded obligation to God for those who believed, but then suggested that *human* action toward one's neighbor, i.e., how one treated other people, was the universal component of "moral and spiritual ideals."

Through its program on "moral and spiritual values," the NYC Board of Education began to produce ideas about Judeo-Christianity as a local educational expression of the religious boom. In the hands of the religiously diverse NYC Board of Education, "moral and spiritual values" conveyed a set of ideas about how to get along with other people, such as "love thy neighbor," brotherhood, and human relationships. The matter of how students ought to treat each other was particularly live in the NYC public school context. The schools had become increasingly religiously and racially diverse in previous decades due first to immigration from

[17] "The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools," adopted by the NYC Board of Education on October 4, 1956, Folder 120, Box 14, Series 668, NYCBER.

Eastern Europe, followed by immigration and migration from the Caribbean, Puerto Rico, and the southern United States. In NYC public schools, "Judeo-Christianity" would come to not only be about fighting Godless Communism or the influence of corporate America.[18] The Board of Education would come to produce a repertoire of terms about religious and racial coexistence that it fit under the umbrella of "Judeo-Christianity." Although it is hard to know exactly how many schools implemented the moral and spiritual values program, the fact that the Board wholeheartedly approved it in 1956 speaks volumes about how the city's educational leadership understood the purpose of public schools with regard to moral education.

This chapter introduces an early and important phase in the production of the "Judeo-Christian" repertoire in NYC public schools. In it, I look at the local debates about the NYC Board's proposed moral and spiritual values program, as well as the content of the original and revised NYC program. *As local debates broadened the definition of "moral and spiritual values," and because the Board and Superintendents saw the Judeo-Christian ethic's "moral and spiritual values" as universal, ideas about "moral and spiritual values" became a powerful force for producing and sanctifying whiteness through a narrative of American history and a portrait of American daily life that set the terms for students' interactions with each other*. The Board and Superintendents also wanted students to learn that they ought to revere this narrative of history and life through exalting its values. Against the backdrop of changed and changing racial demographics in NYC schools, the particular history emphasized the heroism of white men, and the program promoted a crime-free life away from communities that supposedly encouraged crime, as well as traditional notions of women caring for the values of the home and men laboring outside the home. In this way, we can see that the anti-Communism inherent in the

[18] K. Healan Gaston, "Interpreting Judeo-Christianity in America," *Relegere* 2:2 (2012): 291-304; Jonathan P. Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Kruse, *One Nation Under God*; Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*.

statement's promotion of God and democracy as antidotes to purportedly Godless and anti-democratic Communism went hand in hand with the Board's production and sanctification of whiteness (and traditional gender roles). When some of the anti-Communist language was removed because Jewish organizations, teachers unions and the United Parents Association rejected the prevalence of "God" in the program, what remained was a vision for how children ought to behave, based on this particular understanding of "the Judeo-Christian ethic." Precisely because NYC public schools were wrestling with issues of how students ought to treat people from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, they used the "moral and spiritual values" program to cultivate their own iteration of "the Judeo-Christian ethic" with an emphasis on students' *interactions with each other*.

Despite the underlying racial and socio-cultural assumptions at play in the discussion of moral and spiritual values, the conversations about moral and spiritual values were not explicitly about race, as was the case with segregation, and to some degree, juvenile delinquency, the topics of following chapters. Furthermore, the absence of organizations advocating specifically for people of color in the moral and spiritual values debate speaks to the fact that advocates for students of color's rights to quality education were dealing with what they saw as more pressing matters, such as explicitly racist textbooks and school zoning.[19] However, by paying to attention to how the Board and district superintendents' understood racial and socio-cultural dynamics at play in the city in their discussion of moral and spiritual values and Judeo-Christianity, I show the seeds of how the Board explicitly framed desegregation and juvenile delinquency prevention in relation to race, and how they approached children of color.

This reading involves re-orienting ourselves toward the time period. We can read "Judeo-Christian" language not only as expressions of religious unity at home and abroad, but also as

[19] See Chapter Three of this dissertation.

filled with clues about how school officials viewed the diverse student body and some of the main educational issues of the day: desegregation and what they called "juvenile delinquency."[20] Additionally, we can read the Regents' Prayer—and other pedagogical practices that may or may not have ended up in court—outside the teleology of court decisions in order to understand how people on the ground understood the relationship between religion and law.[21] These re-orientations allow us to see that "Judeo-Christian" language and the Regents' Prayer were bound up in local conversations about socio-cultural and racial norms.

The Regents' Prayer in NYC, and the Emergence of Moral and Spiritual Values

NYC's statement on "moral and spiritual ideals" would not have existed without "The Regents' Statement on Moral and Spiritual Training in the Schools." The Regents' 474-word statement included the text of the Regents' Prayer, which NYC chose not to adopt. However, the Regents' Prayer was merely one component of a larger program for teaching moral and spiritual values in schools. The Regents' statement, including the Regents' Prayer, was a direct response to recent raids on teachers that the state and city had perceived as being Communist. Clarence Taylor has shown that while they were concerned about Soviet spies infiltrating schools, New York State and City administrators accused many teachers of being Communists because the teachers advocated for social change on issues such as racial and socio-economic inequality.[22] The New York State Senate had instituted hearings in the early 1940s, known as the Rapp-Coudert hearings, targeting teachers suspected of Communist sympathies, and the Feinberg Law,

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[20] Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex*; Kruse, *One Nation Under God*; Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*.
[21] Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Spirit of the Law: Religious Voices and the Constitution in Modern America* (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press, 2010).
[22] Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 73-90; Clarence Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door: Milton A. Galamison and the Struggle to Integrate New York City Schools* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997)

which went into effect in 1950, "specif[ied] that current membership in a subversive organization is sufficient cause for dismissal, while past membership was presumptive proof of current membership unless a full break with any such organization could be proven."[23] Using the Feinberg Law, NYC Board of Education member George Timone put forward the 1950 "Timone Resolution," which faced opposition but ultimately was successful, "banning the TU [Teachers' Union] from operating in the schools"[24] and "declaring the Board would not negotiate with the TU."[25] With these laws in place, the Board investigated over 1,100 teachers and dismissed over 400 whom it suspected of Communist sympathies.[26] Undergirding these dismissals was not only strong anti-Communism, but also, because that strong anti-Communism reflected a rejection of liberal attitudes toward racial and socio-economic equality, an effort to refine which values leaders in New York thought were distinctly American.[27]

To address not only possible Soviet Communism, but also the array of racial and socio-economic issues that some left-leaning teachers addressed in schools, the Regents wanted their "Statement on Moral and Spiritual Training" to teach students reverence for a heroic vision of American history and encourage them to imagine themselves in the lineage of the white men who founded the country. Few people in NYC took issue with this vision of American history, but many—especially Jewish and parent groups—contested the role of formal religion, such as reference to God and formal prayer, in the Regents' statement. As a result, the NYC Board

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[23] Clarence Taylor, *Reds at the Blackboard: Communism, Civil Rights, and the New York City Teachers Union* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 131. On p. 335 n8, Taylor explains that in *Adler v. Board of Education* in 1952, the Feinberg Law was considered constitutional and not a violation of teachers' First Amendment rights. It was not until 1967 that the Feinberg Law was ruled unconstitutional. See Taylor's accompanying website for quotation: "Timeline," Dreamers and Fighters: The NYC Teacher Purges, http://dreamersandfighters.com/history/timeline.aspx.

[24] Taylor, *Reds at the Blackboard*, 6.

[25] "Timeline."

[26] "Clarence Taylor's History of the Teachers Union," Dreamers and Fighters: The NYC Teacher Purges, http://dreamersandfighters.com/history.aspx

[27] Andrew Hartman discusses the Teachers Union as explicitly anti-racist and the Board, especially Jansen, as racist due to textbooks that NYC educational authorities had written in *Education and the Cold War*, 81-84.

adopted two resolutions. One included singing the song "America" and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and proved controversial because it too mirrored formal religion to some New Yorkers. The second introduced the city's statement on moral and spiritual values, which spoke directly to the Regents' broader moral and spiritual vision for public schools.

As the Regents' statement and prayer emerged in direct response to fear of progressive teachers, the statement and prayer served to preserve the unmarked whiteness of school officials' visions of moral superiority. For, when the Regents stated that belief in and dependence on God was "the best security against the dangers of these difficult days," they referred to both the danger of Soviet Communism *and* racialized concerns over youth at home.[28] To the Regents, moral and spiritual superiority began with a reverence for a particular vision of God, as well as a particular vision of American history. But how did the various components of the statement strive to paint a vision of moral and spiritual excellence that was shaped by unmarked whiteness?

The Regents aimed to inculcate moral and spiritual values by making reverence for God and America part of the rhythm of the entire school day and of children's entire physical and intellectual experience. As scholars have argued that experiences of prayer and motivations for praying can cultivate people's ethical consciences, the Regents suggested that through prayer, belief in God, and an interpretation of American history as sacred, students would develop an ethical framework that would lead them to act morally.[29] For example, the Regents' statement opening line—"Belief in and dependence upon Almighty God was the very cornerstone upon which our Founding Fathers builded"—suggested that students' moral behavior ought to follow the legacy of the "Founding Fathers." Through belief in and dependence on God, the Regents

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[28] "The Regents' Statement on Moral and Spiritual Training in the Schools."

[29] See, for instance, Don Seeman's work in the project "Reverberations: New Directions in the Study of Prayer," The Social Science Research Council, http://forums.ssrc.org/ndsp/category/projects/; Saba Mahmood, "The Subject of Freedom" in *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

believed that students could become heroic themselves in the tradition of the "Founding Fathers."

Yet, it was not just moments of prayer that the Regents believed could have such an effect; they thought that a providential vision of America ought to shape the entire school day:

> We believe that the school day thus started [with the Regents' Prayer] might well include specific programs stressing the moral and spiritual heritage which is America's, the trust which our pioneering ancestors placed in Almighty God, their gratitude to Him from Whom they freely and frequently acknowledged came their blessings and their freedom and their abiding belief in the free way of life and in the universal brotherhood of man based upon their acknowledgement of the fatherhood of their Creator, Almighty God, Whom they loved and reverenced in diverse ways.[30]

The Regents saw schools as responsible for teaching not just American *history* but a history of America's values that they thought should be valorized and incorporated into students' own lives. In their framing of the brotherhood of man and fatherhood of a creator God, they drew on one of the major interfaith organizations in the country, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the materials of which frequently stated that the organization sought "the Brotherhood of Man based on the Fatherhood of God" to suggest the universality of their vision.[31]

In New Rochelle, NY, the district adopted not only the Regents' Prayer, but also the Regents' suggestion to make the deified patriotism part of rituals throughout the school day. Just north of the Bronx in Westchester County, the New Rochelle public schools adopted an extensive plan for assemblies and daily classroom activities on February 5, 1952, just a little more than two months after the release of the Regents' Statement. The plan included reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, singing patriotic songs, reading from the Bible, and singing the

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[30] "The Regents' Statement on Moral and Spiritual Training in the Schools."

[31] For example, see "Suggestions for Speakers and Discussion Leaders," Box 5, Series 4, National Conference of Christians and Jews Records, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries (hereafter cited as NCCJR).

fourth stanza of "America."[32] Describing New Rochelle's resolution to all members of the professional staff, Superintendent Donald K. Phillips wrote that "You will note that the attached statement seeks to convey three distinct thoughts: (1) An affirmation of belief which parents are urged to teach to their children in terms of their own creeds; (2) A commendation and approval of the professional staff of the New Rochelle Public Schools for the ways in which they have been teaching moral and spiritual values to the public school children; and (3) A specific authorization to strengthen the present program."[33] Phillips conveyed the importance of moral and spiritual values in yearbooks as well, sending off the high school class of 1958 with the message, "The New Rochelle Class of 1958, like its immediate predecessors and the classes that will follow, will go out into a world which demands from each person an interest in and a deep concern for the survival of basic principles—matters of moral, spiritual, civic, national, and world behavior."[34] New Rochelle schools aimed for these principles to shape children's behavior to align with the Regents' particular national vision.

Similarly, in NYC, most New Yorkers who followed the Regents' statement and prayer supported students' emotive and ritualistic expression of patriotism, the goal of which was to develop a reverence for nation and place themselves within the historical legacy of the founders. However, a number of organizations, including the TU, the United Parents Associations (UPA), and the New York Board of Rabbis (NYBR), an organization "representing all branches of Judaism,"[35] strongly opposed the formal expression of religion that the prayer represented. They agreed that some sort of moral training was necessary due to postwar changes in home life, after

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[32] Resolution, City School District of New Rochelle, February 5, 1952, Folder 145, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.
[33] Donald K. Phillips to All Members of the Professional Staff, February 7, 1952, Folder 145, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.
[34] *Rochellean Yearbook*, New Rochelle High School, New Rochelle, NY: 1958, E-Yearbook.com, http://www.e-yearbook.com/sp/eybb?school=82027&year=1958&up=1&startpage=12, 12.
[35] "Statement adopted by the New York Board of Rabbis on Wednesday, December 26, 1951," Folder 144, Box 55, Series 911, NYCBER.

women who had been working during the war returned to tending to the morality of the home, as well as demographic changes in NYC, but they expressed that a *prayer* went too far. The NYBR claimed to "applaud the motives of the New York State Board of Regents in seeking to develop the moral and spiritual fibre of our children; but we of the New York Board of Rabbis cannot approve the recommendation there be daily prayer in the public schools."[36] The metaphor of "moral and spiritual fibre" implied that, like the Regents, the NYBR thought that prayer and educational programming could shape the way children behaved and believed from within their physical bodies. Because of this, something as formal and specific as a prayer could prove problematic to the NYBR.

To the NYBR, prayer conveyed a connection with God, something that required mediation and that public schools could not sanction. The NYBR worried that the method of prayer violated the sanctity of specifications about prayer in Jewish law and practice, including that it should be done at home or at the synagogue, and that in some Jewish traditions, there were clothing requirements for prayer.[37] The NYBR expressed that as public spaces, public schools ought not sponsor the formal religious practice of prayer, as the mode of accessing God through prayer required a specific process for Jewish communities.

Specific religious challenges to the general prayer led President of the Board of Education Andrew G. Clauson, Jr., who was Protestant, to announce on March 6, 1952 that NYC public schools would not open the day with the Regents' Prayer.[38] Nevertheless, the question

[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] "For Immediate Release, March 6, 1952," Folder 144, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER; "For Immediate Release, February 7, 1952," Folder 144, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.

remained: how would the city address the Regents' call to incorporate "moral and spiritual values" in the curriculum, if at all?[39]

Board member Colonel Arthur Levitt had an idea for how to teach students values in line with a vision of American democracy that promoted reverence to country. Levitt, who was Jewish but whose suggestions differed from Jewish organizations' positions, offered, "I propose no compromise with the wholesome objectives of the Regents. My purpose, indeed, is to achieve their very aims." [40] He suggested that instead of the Regents' Prayer, NYC schools ought to open the day with the Pledge of Allegiance and the singing of the first and fourth paragraph of "America," also known as "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." Levitt argued that singing the two stanzas and reciting the pledge would fulfill the Regents' statement's objectives, "emphasizing the need for strengthening adherence to the moral and spiritual values upon which our democracy is founded."[41]

Levitt understood the singing itself to perform reverence to a higher power, calling it "an Act of Reverence to God." [42] The lyrics of the song also narrated dedication to the country, especially by the European settlers in New England—"Land where my fathers died/ Land of the pilgrims' pride." Through the shared vocalization of the two verses, Levitt thought students would cultivate the perspective the Regents wished for them: "Let us reflect upon its singular poetic beauty and upon its soul-stirring appeal, at once religious and patriotic. Who has not derived inspiration from hearing the first and fourth stanzas sung? Who, indeed, has not felt a

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[39] Schultz provides a very brief overview of the "America" alternative in *Tri-Faith America*, 123-24.
[40] Levitt to the Members of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools.
[41] Ibid. "America" was penned by Andover Theological Seminary student Samuel Francis Smith in 1831 and performed by children at the 1831 Independence Day gathering at Park Street Church in cooperation with the Boston Sabbath School Union. The underlying religious content is not surprising given its history. Since Smith wrote the song, it has also been used in grassroots political movements. Robert James Branham and Stephen J. Hartnett, *Sweet Freedom's Song: "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and Democracy in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 56-65.
[42] Ibid.

surge of emotion and fervor in joining in its singing?"[43] As Rachel C. Donaldson has argued about progressive folk songs during the Cold War, which countered the ideals in patriotic songs like "America," the act of singing itself was thought to shape students' behavior by affecting them internally.[44] Emotion, fervor, and inspiration could stir what Levitt thought of as students' souls in ways that would form them into religious, moral, and patriotic beings. Through singing, they would become the kind of anti-Communist Americans the Regents wanted—reverent to God and to a legacy of New England settlers.

Levitt's proposal found more support than the Regents' Prayer in NYC, but the fourth stanza proved a point of contention because Levitt sought for the stanza to cultivate not only reverence to country, but also reverence to God. The lyrics read:

> Our Fathers' God, to Thee,
> Author of liberty,
> To Thee we sing:
> Long may our land be bright
> With freedom's holy light;
> Protect us by Thy might,
> Great God, our King.[45]

Reflecting on the stanza's structure and lyrics, the *New York Teacher News (NYTN)*, the publication of the TU called the stanza itself a prayer on January 10, 1953: "*Col. Levitt had suggested the singing of the FIRST AND FOURTH stanzas of 'America' as a 'compromise' on the Regents' Prayer proposal. Some groups that favor outright prayers in school are willing at this point to settle for the fourth stanza, which is a prayer, insisting that the first stanza be omitted to point up the religious nature of the singing.*"[46] The *NYTN* opined that the Board

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[43] Ibid.
[44] Rachel C. Donaldson, "Teaching Democracy: Folkways Records and Cold War Education," *History of Education Quarterly*, 55:1 (2015): 58-81.
[45] "The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools."
[46] "4th Stanza of 'America' Subterfuge For Introducing Prayer in Schools," *New York Teachers News,* January 10, 1953, Folder 145, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER. Italics in original.

actually wanted to fulfill the Regents' objectives with the same method the Regents had proposed—a prayer—which the *NYTN* article saw as problematic because its author saw it as a very specific method for teaching reverence to God, one that excluded people who did not believe in a creator God, and violated the separation of church and state.

Five days after the *NYTN* publication, despite uproar over the Levitt proposal from additional organizations such as the UPA, the NYC Board of Education went ahead and adopted a version of Levitt's proposal, with the fourth stanza but not the first.[47] The decision in effect sanctified a historical narrative of the "founding fathers" as guided by God. Clauson responded to the UPA's "deep shock" about the adoption of the Levitt proposal by emphasizing the good that the patriotic rituals would do for students: "By their action, the Board members indicated that they do consider the proposal to be in the best interests of the City's children and, after all, the final decision is in their hands."[48] Thus, if a visitor walked into a NYC public school first thing on a weekday morning for almost a decade after February 1, 1953, she would have been met with a chorus of students' voices singing the fourth stanza of "America" to the tune of "God Save the King." After singing in unison, the students would have recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, right hands covering the left side of their chests. Students might have had their eyes glued to the flag, or they might have been distracted.[49] Yet, in these moments at the beginning of the school day, children experienced the embodied methods the Regents and Board hoped would produce people who practiced and held what in their understanding were American, pro-democratic, and anti-Communist "moral and spiritual values," supposedly in the tradition of the founding fathers.

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[47] Lillian Ashe to Clauson, January 21, 1953 Folder 145, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER; Meeting Minutes, January 15, 1953, Folder 484, Box 29, Series 281, NYCBER.
[48] Clauson to L. Ashe, January 23, 1953 Folder 145, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.
[49] For instance, see the photographs in Zim, "Pledge of Allegiance," June 7, 2012, History By Zim, http://www .historybyzim.com/2012/06/pledge-of-allegiance/.

The Board also adopted a second resolution that spoke even more directly to the Regents' call to teach a heroic vision of the "Founding Fathers" throughout every aspect of the curriculum, at first with little fanfare. The second Board resolution called for review of how curriculum throughout the school day addressed values, stating that the Superintendent of Schools was " 'requested to review the curriculum of the schools in his charge with a view towards insuring that such curriculum includes appropriate programs of instruction emphasizing the spiritual interest and patriotic motivations of our pioneering ancestors; the devotion and self-sacrifice of the Founding Fathers and their abiding belief in the principles of democracy.' "[50] The resolution elevated the "Founding Fathers" as exemplars of democratic citizens with a deep belief in country. Perhaps because there was no mention of God and no particular guidance as to how moral and spiritual values would be taught, the second resolution seemed like an afterthought to many—it seemed like it would do what groups such as the NYBR and UPA who had rejected the prayer or "America" nevertheless thought that public schools should do—shape children's moral behavior. But when the Board released the statement and guidelines that emerged as a result of this resolution two and a half years later, it became anything but an afterthought.

Moral and Spiritual Values in NYC

On June 14, 1955, the Board of Superintendents took up the second resolution's call by unanimously approving "Moral and Spiritual Values and the Schools: A Guiding Statement for Supervisors and Teachers."[51] As Superintendent of Schools, William P. Jansen, who had been responsible for firing teachers suspected of Communist sympathies and had written a racist

[50] Meeting Minutes, January 15, 1953; Andrew G. Clauson to Interested Organizations, Folder 134, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911.
[51] "Moral and Spiritual Values and the Schools," Office of the Superintendent of Schools, Board of Education of the City of New York, June 14, 1955, Folder 135, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.

textbook, likely played a large role in drafting or overseeing drafting of the statement.[52] In order to be distributed, the Board of Education would also have to approve the statement. Hoping that they could persuade the superintendents to change the statement before the Board voted, religious and civic groups voiced extreme opposition to the language of God and the notion that religion and God sanctioned moral behavior in public schools. The conversation around the statement exploded, with local TV stations and newspapers covering the story.[53] With so much attention, the superintendents eventually revised the statement and gave it a new title: "The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools."[54] The Board of Education then approved the revised statement on October 4, 1956.

In the revised and published 15-page version of the statement, the superintendents incorporated aspects of the critiques, toning down the God language in certain places. However, "God" was merely one component of the statement's anti-Communist language, which also spoke to an entire interpretation of American history and daily life, which the religious and civic groups largely shared with Boards. In their shared assumptions about history, daily life, and values, the Board and its challengers produced ideas about what Judeo-Christianity was.

The Matter of God

Following the release of the 1955 statement, Board President Clauson distributed a memo "To Interested Organizations" in which he assumed that everyone viewed the existing curriculum as he did. Like the conservative clergy and businessmen who Kevin Kruse has argued claimed

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[52] "Jansen Suspends 4 Teachers, Clerk," *New York Times*, November 21, 1952, Folder 145, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.
[53] "On Television," *New York Times*, September 8, 1956.
[54] The name change was on the suggestion of a Rabbi friend of one of the Board members, who saw ideals as more open-ended than values. NYC Board of Education Meeting Minutes, October 4, 1956, Folder 120, Box 14, Series 668, NYCBER.

that America had always been a Christian nation, Clauson similarly claimed that the statement reflected values already present in the curriculum. He wrote that "I feel that there is a widespread misconception of the nature and purpose of the statement." With a "desire to point out the following facts," Clauson drew attention to the second resolution the Board of Education adopted back in January 1953, making clear that this current statement was the result of the Superintendents' review. In addition to logistical reasons, Clauson addressed the statement's content: "[The statement] reaffirms the goals of education which refer to character training and the American Heritage, and makes explicit the moral and spiritual values which have always been implicit in the curriculum," he wrote, concluding, "It is not a new Course of Study, Syllabus or program of studies."[55] Clauson implied that the statement reflected values and approaches natural not only to the existing programs, but also to public schools themselves. He took his argument too far for some.

Many "interested organizations" rejected the idea that God was a natural part of the existing curriculum. Organizations including the UPA, TU, the Teachers' Guild, and NYBR expressed frustration that the 1955 statement claimed that all school subjects could "lead" children to God because teachers would convey to students that God was responsible for everything the students learned. The UPA returned Clauson's letter with a list of objections, which included strong critique of the prevalence of references to God in the statement:

> As representative instances of these objectives, the Statement proposes that in social studies children be 'led' to appreciate the references to God in some of our historical speeches and documents; in the language arts, that good literature owes its greatness to its allusion to Providence and the religious motivations of its characters; in science and mathematics, that these studies must lead 'to humbleness before God's handiwork'; that in music 'the religious motif is most often prominent'; in the section on industrial arts it asks that the child be brought

[55] Clauson to Interested Organizations, November 10, 1955, Folder 134, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.

> to speculate about 'the marvelous working of a Supreme Power' from his observation of the wonders of the compositions of metals, wood and electricity. [56]

For the UPA, the problem was not just that the statement indicated that God was real or that students ought to believe in God, although it was that—the problem was that this portrait of God as sanctioning historical speeches and documents, science and mathematics, literature, and industrial arts offered a particular interpretation of God's work in the world. They took issue with the attempt to make God central in school subjects: "Where we disagree is in its assumption that moral and spiritual values must, in the schools, be anchored in the area of religion." [57] In addition to asserting that this statement "is flagrantly violative of the Constitution and of one of the most sacred principles of our democracy—the separation of church and state," the UPA argued that this particular interpretation could offend a wide range of people: "We feel it will offend many believers, and outrage all disbelievers."[58] Furthermore, the UPA worried that all school curricula would be evaluated on ability to teach this particular understanding of Godliness. To the UPA, the statement represented a new curriculum with a vision of universal values that the UPA did not share as authoritative.

Among other teachers' unions that argued that the "introduction of the teaching of religion in public schools" remained the statement's "basic defect," the New York Teachers Guild took the critique of God's sanctions a step further, arguing that in learning school subjects, students could be directed to ends other than belief in God and peaceful interactions.[59] For instance, the Teachers Guild's Legislative Representative, Abraham Lefkowitz, asked:

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[56] UPA to The Board of Education of the City of New York, Re: "A Guiding Statement for Supervisors and Teachers" on "Moral and Spiritual Values and the Schools" adopted by the Board of Superintendents on June 14, 1955, November 21, 1955, Folder 134, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.
[57] Ibid. Underline in original.
[58] Ibid.
[59] "Churchmen Back New School Code."

> How can we teach about religion without an examination of tradition and interpretation?...if you introduce teaching about religion, how can teachers avoid pupils from asking about the burning of heretics; religious wars that covered Europe in blood; religious opposition to science and progress, interference with though and disapproval of basic democratic ideas and support of mankind's worst enemy, brutal dictatorships?[60]

He suggested that in learning about history, students might not come to see God as responsible for all good in the world. Rather, Lefkowitz argued, turning the claim that religion in schools could teach students to treat each other better, they might come to see God and religion as responsible for conflict. If religion was taught as instruction rather than history, he implied, students might be inspired to fight with each other rather than coexist peacefully.

Furthermore, the particular sections of the statement that the Teachers Guild opposed implied that the Teachers Guild advocated for content. The Guild particularly objected to statements that suggested that students should learn science to submit to a creator rather than for some other end—such as learning about science or becoming a scientist. They particularly critiqued the following statements: "the concept of infinity cannot do other than lead to humbleness before God's handiwork" and that "The function of the schools is to supplement 'the training of the home, ever intensifying in the child that love of God, for parents and for home, which is the mark of true character training and the sure guarantee of a country's welfare."[61] In reference to these sections of the statement, the Teachers' Guild was critical of a particular interpretation of God's sanctions, but the Teachers' Guild emphasized what children missed out on by focusing on being led to God in a field such as science, and the power of instructional subjects such as history in guiding students to ends other than belief in God.

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[60] Abraham Lefkowitz, "The Guild Protests the Report on 'Moral and Spiritual Values and the Schools"; United Federation of Teachers Records; WAG 022; Box 61; Folder 1; Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University (hereafter cited as UFTR).

[61] Specific quotations from "Moral and Spiritual Values and the Schools," critiques in: "Teachers Fight Spiritual Code: Their Guild Favors Teaching Moral Values but Objects to Proposed Method," *New York Times,* September 14, 1956, 14; Lefkowitz, "The Guild Protests the Report on 'Moral and Spiritual Values and the Schools."

By contrast to parent and teacher groups, various Catholic organizations supported the statement precisely because it offered a particular theological interpretation of God. Many Catholic organizations supported the presence of explicit religion in public spaces, because the exclusion of religion from public spaces had historically been an implicit way to exclude Catholics from public space.[62] Whereas the Archdiocese of New York had strongly rejected the NEA's 1951 program on moral and spiritual values due to the absence of reference to God, the Archdiocese vocally supported New York's statement.[63] Catholics who spoke up about "moral and spiritual values" found them to be religious in character *and* necessary in any form of education, including public education. In January 1956, the Catholic Teachers Association of Brooklyn supported the guide and urged that it be adopted quickly: "Dr. Bernadette M. Garvey, president of the Brooklyn Catholic teachers' group, called the proposed guide a continuation of a traditional emphasis. 'It does not presume to teach specific religions, nor—at the other extreme—to kill religion through a subtle process of intellectual attrition,' she said."[64] To Garvey, that "moral and spiritual values" were religious was a good thing for public schools.[65]

The Protestant Council of New York City, the city's ecumenical council of Protestant Churches, supported the revised statement after the superintendents changed the position on God

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[62] Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002). Schultz might interpret the Catholic support as Catholics trying to become part of the "majority" in a "bland" Christianity for the first time in American history. Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, 45, 79, and 123*;* and Schultz, "Religion as Identity in Postwar America: The Last Serious Attempt to Put a Question on Religion in the United States Census," *The Journal of American History* 93:2 (2008): 359-384.

[63] Right Rev. Msgr. Frederick G. Hochwalt to Most Rev. Francis P. Keough, September 4, 1951; Francis Cardinal Spellman Collection, Collection 007; Box S/C-17, Folder 1; Archives of the Archdiocese of New York, St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie (hereafter cited as Spellman Collection).; "Religion Declared Basic in Schooling," *New York Times*, March 5, 1956, 17. For more on the Catholic position on the NEA's pamphlet, see all of Spellman Collection; Box S/C-17, Folders 1-4. Hochwalt calls the NEA's booklet "a best-seller in educational literature."

[64] "City School Guide Stirs New Debate: Moral and Spiritual Values Statement, Under Revision, Is Backed and Assailed Views of Teacher Group," *New York Times*, January 30, 1956, 29.

[65] Garvey was eventually promoted to Executive Assistant to the Deputy Superintendent of Schools for the city, which indicates that her views may have influenced public school politics from within the public school institution as well as from a Catholic school perspective. New York St. Joseph's College, *Alumnagram*, Volume 32-33, http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/new-york-st-josephs-college/alumnagram-volume-32-33-ojt/page-8-alumnagram-volume-32-33-ojt.shtml.

to include people who did not believe in God, which happened during the last revision, as we will see shortly. The Council's emphasis on *belief or non-belief* in God, rather than interpretation of God' presence in the world, suggested a distinctly Protestant interpretation of the statement's breadth, as Protestant religiosity prioritized individual belief in a personal God. The Protestant Council had urged revision of the original document "to 'take proper account' of rights of persons holding a 'non-theistic position.'" [66] Unlike Catholics, who supported the statement because they thought religion in public life was theologically sound, the Protestant Council thought that the statement's depiction of religion was nonsectarian. Rev. Sidney Menk, chairman of the Council's Department of Christian Education, spoke on behalf of the Council: " 'While there was some expression of concern that this statement is not as strong as some might wish it to be, it is felt that it will prove generally acceptable to the diverse elements of our religious communities.' "[67] The Council stated that the revised statement took into account these concerns, and the new statement " 'has removed certain dogmatic statements and implications as set forth in the previous document of 1955 which were subject to great misunderstanding, and it has preserved throughout this present statement the atmosphere of permissiveness in the teaching of moral and spiritual values.' " [68] The revision had satisfied the Protestant Council largely because it addressed the Protestant theological frame for diversity belief and non-belief.

Whereas Catholics and Protestants eventually both supported the statement because of how it positioned God, the NYBR opposed the particular theological position on grounds similar to the UPA and Teachers' Guild. Multiple articles phrased the NYBR's complaints as the

[66] "Churchmen Back New School Code: Protestant Council of City Endorses Report on Which Hearing Is Slated Today," *New York Times*, September 17, 1956, 28.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.

statement was "vigorously opposed by the New York Board of Rabbis."[69] The NYBR articulated that public schools were offering a theological position that was an "intrusion of the state—through the public school," and it was "clearly neither desirable nor welcome."[70] The articles drew the NYBR into sharp contrast to other religious groups, implying a fundamentally different orientation to the pamphlet than Catholics and Protestants who ultimately approved the presence of God in the statement.

Perhaps what made the NYBR's complaints "vigorous" was that the views expressed in them stood in sharp contrast to the Board's views—such sharp contrast that the Board seemingly deliberately scheduled the meeting to discuss revisions to the statement immediately prior to important Jewish holidays, as well as Labor Day weekend.[71] Many groups expressed that this made it impossible to attend, effectively eliminating the possibility for a public discussion. as "twenty-eight requests from individual and organizations" had asked for postponement.[72] Among the requests for postponement was one from the American Jewish Congress, pointing out that meeting on August 30, a Thursday, was not well timed for Jews.[73] That year, Rosh Hashana began the following Wednesday, September 5, and Yom Kippur began Friday September 14. As late as August 13, a letter to UPA Executive Council members informed them that the date had

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[69] Currivan, "New School;" Stanley Rowland, Jr., "School Spiritual Guide Approved by 2 Faiths, Opposed by Rabbis," *New York Times*, November 25, 1955, 1.
[70] Rowland, "School Spiritual Guide."
[71] "Schools Alter Their Code on Moral Values," *New York Times,* July 29, 1956, Folder 134, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.
[72] Leonard Buder, "Hearing Put Off On School Code," *New York Times*, August 23, 1956; "Summary of Contacts with Organizations Re The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools," August 20, 1956, Folder 134, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER; Siegel to Hon. Charles Silver, Telegram, July 27, 1956, Folder 135, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER; For Release, Re: Board of Education's Statement on Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools, July 30, 1956 Folder 134, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER, among others.
[73] "American Jewish Congress In Brief," *Jewish Advocate*, September 22, 195[6?], 3. Note, the date indicates 1955, but this does not make sense chronologically.

not been changed and they should be prepared for a hearing then.[74] On August 23, a week before the scheduled meeting, the Board changed the public hearing to Monday, September 17 at the Board of Education offices in Brooklyn.[75] Though still two days after Yom Kippur and two days before Sukkot, there were no further complaints. Nevertheless, the scheduled meeting seemed to deliberately avoid opponents' presence, including Jewish, teacher, and parent organizations.

In the end, many of the revisions to the statement related to the specific complaints about mention of God. For instance, the language in Industrial Arts changed the notion that the sciences, mathematics, wood working, and electricity "invariably give rise to speculation about the planning and the orderliness of the natural world and the marvelous working of a Supreme Power" to simply "give rise to serious thinking about the wonders of the natural world."[76] The section on teachers removed the statement that the teacher "is in a position to exemplify…belief in God," and the section on the purpose of the public school removed the statement that "the public schools must reinforce the program of the home and church in strengthening belief in God" and replaced it with "One of the commonly accepted objectives of the public school is building and strengthening the moral character of our children."[77] By taking away the emphasis on God, the school's responsibility to shape children's moral behavior stood out in the revision.

Among further similar changes, the statement of who the American people were still mentioned God, though in a qualified manner that emphasized religious pluralism. Instead of "The American people are, characteristically, a religious people who derive their accepted moral and spiritual values from religion. These values are inherent in the Hebraic-Christian tradition.

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[74] Isadore Fried to Executive Council Members, August 13, 1956, Folder 134, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.
[75] Gladys Harburger to "President," August 24, 1956, Folder 135, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.
[76] Comparing "Moral and Spiritual Values and the Public Schools" to "The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals," as well as referring to Judith Crist, "Schools' Code of Ideals is Revised," *New York Herald Tribune*, Folder 134, Box 55, NYCBER.
[77] Ibid.

They presuppose the existence of a Supreme Being," the revised statement published: "Although religious pluralism characterizes American life, the great majority of Americans believe that God is the Author of the moral code to Whom each individual is ultimately responsible. Most people find in religion the basic and fundamental sanction for right conduct, justice and decency."[78] This revision essentially said the same thing as the original, but instead of making it a specific statement about particular religions, it claimed to be making a general statement about "the great majority of Americans."

Some groups still felt that the statement made broad assumptions about religion throughout. However, even reports from the UPA and teachers organizations following the release of the moral and spiritual values statement did not challenge these statement's broad conceptions of human behavior and coexistence. They agreed that moral and spiritual values were necessary to address student behavior, and it seemed that they shared the approach of teaching some form of human interaction. Thus, even as the conversations about the statement had largely centered on the role of God, there was tacit if not explicit agreement that teaching values such as brotherhood, love of neighbor, and democracy would improve student behavior.

In addition to agreement on this issue, there was also a practical reality to the revised statement: as the superintendents and Board toned down the references to God, other features of the statement stood out more, especially the emphasis on student relations and behavior. In the absence of as much explicit God language, there was more room for interpretation and more ambiguity about who or what sanctioned values and why or for what or whom students should treat each other as brothers, as neighbors. However, the superintendents' and Board's meaning did not change. While certain features were removed, their argument and the shape of moral and spiritual values generally stayed the same.

[78] Ibid.

Although the main disputes over the statement related to the depiction of God sanctioning school subjects and the idea that studying school subjects would lead students to God, there was little dispute over the notion that moral and spiritual values programs were necessary. Nearly every organization that issued objections to the pamphlet also endorsed the broad idea of teaching moral and spiritual values. For instance, the UPA had stated that "Some of these suggestions are all the more deplorable because they are interspersed among some excellent proposals for building moral and spiritual values—and because their manner of introduction into the curriculum is furtive and indirect."[79] The Teachers' Guild began their complaint "We, of the New York Teachers Guild believe, as do right thinking citizens, in stressing moral and spiritual values in our teaching."[80] Given these statements, if the opposing organizations thought that devoting attention to God was not the way to achieve moral and spiritual values, what did they think was? Did they share assumptions about other features of the Board's program? And, why did they maintain that moral and spiritual values were necessary? If such values did not cultivate devotion to God, on the view of these organizations, what ends did they believe they served?

Shared Assumptions

There was little controversy about the narrative of history that the statement conveyed or the statement's approach to students' interactions with one another. Organizations that had rejected the emphasis on God tacitly agreed that proper orientation to American history and peer relationships could teach students moral and spiritual values by raising no objections to these aspects of the statement. There seemed to be some consensus among the predominantly white groups involved in the discussion that moral and spiritual values were necessary because student behavior needed attention, especially due to changing demographics and postwar changes in

[79] UPA to The Board of Education of the City of New York, November 21, 1955.
[80] Lefkowitz, "The Guild Protests the Report on 'Moral and Spiritual Values and the Schools."

home life. As the language of God was downplayed in the revised statement, other aspects of the statement became more prominent, especially concerns about students' interactions with each other based on their diverse socio-cultural, neighborhood, and racial backgrounds. By looking at the shared assumptions about history and social interactions between the two versions and across supporters and challengers of the statement, we can see the unstated whiteness of the "moral and spiritual values" that the Board wanted schools to teach. The Board saw their Judeo-Christian vision as universal in the sense that the Board wanted to include everyone in it, but that in addition to being bounded by a particular vision of the religion their students could engage, the vision was also bounded by a particular conception of their students as belonging in the legacy of a mythic, white America.

History

In the statement, the Board and Superintendents presented a particular understanding of history as central to the cultivation of moral and spiritual values. The statement was a direct response to the Board's resolution that the Superintendent of Schools was " 'requested to review the curriculum of the schools in his charge with a view towards insuring that such curriculum includes appropriate programs of instruction emphasizing the spiritual interest and patriotic motivations of our pioneering ancestors; the devotion and self-sacrifice of the Founding Fathers and their abiding belief in the principles of democracy.' "[81] The entire curriculum was supposed to continue the legacy of the "Founding Fathers," which, to the Board and superintendents, invoked an emotional and reverent attitude toward the country. Thus every aspect of the curriculum had a goal for students' moral behavior.

[81] Meeting Minutes, January 15, 1953; Andrew G. Clauson to Interested Organizations, Folder 134, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911.

The curriculum's moral goal in relation to the legacy of the Founding Fathers was particularly evident in the Board and Superintendents' articulation of the teaching of social studies as a subject. Since the 1910s, educators had aimed for social studies curriculum to promote loftier goals than teaching chronological events of the past—they had sought to produce good citizens and social awareness through the teaching of the past.[82] However, in NYC's statement, the Board and Superintendents went further by indicating that students could participate in the tradition of the people who had come before them. As I cited in the introduction to this dissertation, history was supposed to stir students' emotions toward the country:

> A guiding principle in the teaching of American history has always been to emphasize anew for each generation of pupils the highlights of our country's history, to instill in pupils a wholesome sentiment and idealism for our traditions, to kindle in them that spark of patriotism which carried our forefathers through deprivations, hard work and suffering to glorious achievement, and to inspire them to become good citizens and patriots dedicated to the task of preserving and enriching their country's heritage.[83]

Again, the statement's authors framed its perspective as reaffirming something that had always been true—in this case, that teaching history ought to make students patriotic. Students were supposed to become bearers of the country's history by learning its "highlights." "Highlights" meant not only the most visible moments, but it implied that students ought to learn about what the Board and superintendents saw as the country's best moments. In other words, history was not about learning about the past to develop a social awareness of human struggles; history was about learning about heroism so that students could model heroic behavior.

In the revised statement, the Board and Superintendents broadened their vision of "heroic" figures that students ought to aspire to become like beyond the Founding Fathers;

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[82] M. Beddow, "The Ambivalent Role of Social Studies and History Education: An Historical Overview," *Social Studies Review,* 50:1 (2011), 32-33. Zimmerman also addresses the political and identity debates about history curriculum in *Whose America?*.

[83] "The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools."

however, the purpose of mentioning historical figures remained to offer students figures to worship, to care about, to humbly try to emulate. As historian of education Jonathan Zimmerman has said, changes such as this "concerned the roster of eligible patriots, not the patriotism itself."[84] The goal of introducing historical figures such as Daniel Boone, Lewis and Clark, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, Horace Mann, William Lloyd Garrison, Booker T. Washington, Susan B Anthony, Jacob Riis, and Jane Addams was to "stir the imagination of our boys and girls and arouse their faith and devotion to our great ideals." Unflattering aspects of American history, such as slavery, were merely alluded to, and framed in relation to the saving actions of the "humanitarian striving" of figures like William Lloyd Garrison and Dorothea Dix. The teaching of history was supposed to create a template of behavior for students through cultivating care and devotion for a heroic version of American history.

In other words, the Board and superintendents' interpretation of these historical figures as heroes fighting for their country was supposed to sanction students' behavior. Although, as we will see, the emphasis came to be placed on how students treated other students, each student was supposed to see him or herself as an independent actor who, by treating others a particular way, could become an American hero. Even if the statement no longer retained traces of the idea that God directly sanctioning students' behavior, it elevated historical figures to the level of deities. Students could follow in their path through devotion and faith. They could try to emulate the figures, though the Board and Superintendents framed the figures as too perfect, too good to ever truly be emulated.

[84] Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 7.

Daily Life and Behavior

In addition to forgoing critiques of the narrative of history the statement presented, civic and religious organizations tacitly accepted the daily life and behavior that the statement put forward. The statement advocated that traditional gender roles could lead to better interactions with other people. It also drew attention to certain failures of student interactions, particularly behavior that it called "juvenile delinquency," which generally meant some sort of youth violence or crime. These features of daily life and behavior remained unchanged in the two versions of the statement, such that the statement's view of proper modes of coexistence with others was especially prominent after some of the language of God was removed.

In the statement, the Board and Superintendents argued that schools could teach values relating to coexistence by helping students cultivate a particular way of life. In fact, the statement argued that subjects such as Home Economics provided students—most of whom would likely have been girls and young women—with the experiences and skills they needed to cultivate relationships with other people around shared ideals, particularly in family relationships:

> To assist in improving the quality of home living is indeed a task of the highest moral and spiritual order. The teacher's task is to help the child to become a better member of the family and of society. The teacher endeavors to improve the quality of relationships among the members of the family by emphasizing the child's obligation to honor, love and respect his parents, by showing where individual responsibilities begin, and by teaching the fine art of cooperative living.[85]

The statement suggested that the home could be a model of moral and spiritual order, meaning a model for students to learn their own individual responsibilities, appropriate deference and hierarchies, and, most importantly, interactions with people—"the fine art of cooperative living." The statement emphasized that home life was important for teaching students how to interact in spaces beyond the home. As mothers were often seen as primarily responsible for home spaces

[85] "The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools."

during this time period, the statement's emphasis on the importance of the home not only called upon the teacher to teach students about proper home life, but also called upon mothers to embody it for their children. It aimed to teach female students how to perpetuate a mode of daily living where the home taught students proper social relations.

If Home Economics generated cultural norms for girls and young women, Vocational Education promoted cultural norms for boys and young men, especially regarding men's financial progress and community contributions. In Vocational Education, the relationships of significance were at work and in the community, not at home: "As a prospective wage-earner and member of society, the student learns to appreciate his role as a producer contributing to the economic strength of his community and to the stability of his country." [86] Paired with the description of Home Economics, the description of the subjects implied that men were responsible for values in the community and women were responsible for values at home. In these responsibilities, students learned, both men and women could cultivate proper social interactions.

Students acquiesced to this gendered mold to varying degrees. High school yearbooks from the period tell competing narratives about female high school students' goals after graduation. Many of the female students identified romance and marriage as primary interests, even jokingly. Many claimed they wanted to be secretaries. Few claimed they wanted to be professionals. For instance, at Bushwick High School, a predominantly white school at the time, Frances Ann Crovino wrote "looks forward to undemanding office work with would allow time for chief ambition—marriage,"[87] and Madeline Girgenti indicated that "Madeline is chiefly

[86] Ibid.
[87] *The Oriole* 1955, Bushwick High School, Brooklyn Yearbook Collection, Brooklyn Public Library – Brooklyn Collection, 30.

interested in Marty but also enjoys dancing and swimming."[88] Ruthann Kardas, who went by "Ruth," "wants to work in the agricultural field," while Joan Kellerhal's "ambition is to be a medical assistant."[89] By contrast, male students in yearbooks certainly voiced the importance of becoming wage earners. At Bushwick High School, for instance, Frank Manfredi "dreams of someday being a rich business executive,"[90] and other male students wanted to be millionaires. These aspirations are important because they suggest that students learned in school not only what kind of careers they could aspire to, but, if the schools succeeded in the statement's calls, then they also learned that these particular family and career roles performed a moral and social function in human interactions.

In addition to broad support for traditional gender roles, there was explicit broad agreement among the Board, superintendents, and their challengers that environmental factors contributed to juvenile delinquency and that moral and spiritual values—whether by example or lesson—could serve as an antidote to juvenile delinquency. However, they suggested differing approaches to this issue. The UPA, for instance, took a very practical approach, suggesting that there were logistical ways that adults could change their behavior to address juvenile delinquency:

> We must plead also that the program be implemented by providing adequate school facilities...Let us first look to the fulfillment of our own adult moral and spiritual values, let us first give to the children what is their due—so that we can with a clearer conscience speak to the children of their moral and spiritual values. Adult delinquency in failing to provide adequate schools may be a contributor to juvenile delinquency.[91]

The UPA also suggested that "By attributing the lack of moral development to the failure to teach religion, we overlook the consequences of inadequate facilities, over-crowded classes, lack

[88] Ibid., 36.
[89] Ibid., 41.
[90] Ibid., 44.
[91] UPA to The Board of Education of the City of New York, November 21, 1955.

of guidance personnel and remedial teachers," and critiqued the statement's silence on mental health and Bureau of Child Guidance role.[92] The UPA thought adults could best exemplify "moral and spiritual values" by providing students with individual attention and adequate learning space to prevent juvenile delinquency. The UPA suggested that causes of delinquency might be located in children's environments, for which adults were in part responsible.

Vito Lanza, a member of the Board of Education, claimed that delinquency needed to be combatted by schools, rather than collectively addressed. At the hearing to approve the revised statement, Lanza stated in a long speech that the Board was responsible for addressing issues such as delinquency:

> The action of a public agency at a time of crisis is nothing new in this country…Isn't this, therefore, the most opportune time for the public schools to step in with a positive and effective course of action combatting the present malignant situation with regard to juvenile delinquency. Surely the salvation of the minds, the hearts and the souls of our youth, is a dire emergency of almost serious nature.[93]

In his framing, children's salvation could solve delinquency and so the action the Boarded needed to take was moral training, not facilities and logistics. Furthermore, in Lanza's view, public schools were bearers of the moral code, as given to them by God:

> Our entire moral code is taken directly from the Ten Commandments given to us by God. Its emphasis and constant reiteration will do much to keep us ever on the alert. Our nation stands in need these troublesome times, of a unity of purpose by all God-fearing people regardless of the particular type of religious worship to which each person may belong. All of the major religious faiths in this country recognize God. All of these faiths believe in the brotherhood of man, which brotherhood is a meaningless term unless the relationship of brothers is understood to be that of sons of a common Father…[94]

[92] Ibid. Underline in original.
[93] Meeting Minutes, October 4, 1956.
[94] Ibid.

Surely, not everyone would have agreed with Lanza's interpretation of morality coming from God, *but* the notion that schools could address community problems such as delinquency through moral education shone through in the revised statement.

Specifically, in the statement, public schools not only were supposed to teach students ways that the Board and superintendents thought that students should interact with each other; they also thought that schools should teach students how *not* to interact with each other. The Board and superintendents particularly worried that in certain communities, students might not gain the moral and spiritual values that they need to learn:

> It should be noted that all forces operating in a community affect for better or worse the behavior and attitudes of the people living in it. The standards of a community mirror its moral and spiritual conscience. What the community is willing to tolerate, condemn, or sponsor has a direct influence on the lives of boys and girls. Newspapers, magazines, books, comics, the radio, television, the theatre, sports, advertising, and various other institutions play their part in shaping the ideals, character and attitudes of people. Community indifference to vice, lawlessness, low standards of recreation, health, morality, family life, and general welfare is bound to produce higher incidence of anti-social behavior and attitudes than is found in a community consciously striving to maintain an environment which supports and encourages the highest moral and spiritual aspiration.[95]

The statement framed schools as being able to raise students' consciousness so that they would care about and try to prevent things like "vice, lawlessness, low standards of recreation, health, morality, family life, and general welfare." Discussion of such "anti-social behavior" was merely one paragraph in the entire statement, but it presented the clear problem to which the shared values could serve as an antidote. Although the UPA suggested that adults working in schools may contribute to students' behavior and the Board was reluctant to take concrete responsibility for it, broad agreement existed that students' environments lacked an example of strong moral values. The Board and its challengers nevertheless agreed that teaching moral and spiritual

[95] "The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools."

values could teach students how to interact and not to interact with other people in their home communities.

Values

The revised statement emphasized moral and spiritual values to support the Board and superintendents' aspirations for students' interactions with each other. Without mentioning God explicitly, the revised statement added the assertion that: "Thus, there is common acceptance of the moral and spiritual ideal of the worth and dignity of each individual, and its many corollaries—the ideal of equality, the ideal of brotherhood, the ideal of charity, both in its primary sense of love, and in its secondary sense of a willingness to be of service and help to others."[96] The "moral and spiritual ideals" about which there the statement claimed there was "common acceptance" related to relations with other people through practice of—equality, brotherhood, and charity. In stating these values as commonly accepted, the statement produced ideas about religious and racial coexistence as central to what it called the "Judeo-Christian ethic." In addition to brotherhood, democracy and "love thy neighbor" were also prominent concepts that entered the repertoire of terms that schools suggested that schools could use to teach students "Judeo-Christianity" and "moral and spiritual values."

Brotherhood

The concept of brotherhood extended beyond Lanza's suggestion, through invocation of the NCCJ at the hearing on the moral and spiritual values curriculum, that humanity formed the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. The program on moral and spiritual values suggested that teaching brotherhood across school subjects was a way to foster meaningful

[96] Ibid.

relationships with people and cultures that were unlike oneself. The discussion of brotherhood remained consistent between the two versions, and there were no complaints specifically about the language of brotherhood. Although some critics were frustrated by the presence of religion throughout the statement, the fact that brotherhood was not identified as an example of religious over-stepping suggested that the concept itself was not contentious.

According to the statement, the school subjects of music, language studies, and art could teach pupils the values that were meaningful to people across social, racial, and cultural differences. Learning about such meanings and coming to appreciate them was what the statement conveyed that "brotherhood" meant. In highlighting the moral and spiritual values that such subjects taught, the statement read "The teacher of art or music utilizes opportunities to teach the concept of brotherhood. He tries to develop an appreciation of the hopes and dreams of all peoples, races, and cultures as expressed in their music and art."[97] The statement indicated that there were distinct "peoples, races, and cultures" with the word "all" and the plural formulation of "peoples, races, and cultures." The notion that each people, race, and culture had its own music art came across in the phrasing of "their music and art." Not only that, but the distinct "peoples, races, and cultures" had their own "hopes and dreams." If the structure of that sentence were not enough, the statement continued: "Beautiful and inspiring songs and the great creations of art are constant illustrations and reminders of the contributions made by different races and cultures, and promote common understanding and good will among men."[98] Thus, the statement suggested that students could learn about what was most important to people from different races or cultures than they were, as well as how these people had "contributed" to the

[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.

world, through music and art.[99] The statement suggested that merely learning about such differences could create "common understanding" and "good will." It thus implied that any divides were a problem of lack of information.

The statement made the claim that education could lead to tolerance even more explicit in its discussion of the study of foreign languages because it suggested that there was something about embodying an aspect of another culture that could lead students to appreciate it. According to the statement, "The study of a foreign language … helps pupils to appreciate the contributions of various peoples to the world's total culture and thus leads to a better tolerance and understanding of other times, other peoples and other customs."[100] The statement suggested that lack of appreciation for and tolerance of difference came from a lack of understanding. It implied that understanding could be reached through actually speaking the language, not just reading about the culture. In this way, foreign language study was like the study of art and music in that the statement suggested that learning to perform a musical piece or create a piece of art in the style of another culture could lead to tolerance and appreciation.

However, this understanding of brotherhood retained a conception of "the world's total culture," which seemed to be distinctly American and white. The notion of "contributions" was friendlier than earlier ways of framing other cultures, but it was still assimilationist in nature. It presumed an unchanging whole onto which other cultures could make their mark without changing its absolute structure. In this way, even though the phrasing of brotherhood lost the notion of "brotherhood of man, under fatherhood of God," there was still a sense that brotherhood implied an appreciation and tolerance of other cultures under a broad umbrella of white American culture.

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[99] This may be drawing on the earlier cultural gifts movement, see Diana Selig, *Americans All: The Cultural Gifts Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
[100] Ibid.

Democracy

In the statement, the Board and superintendents exalted American democracy, the value of which it took to be that because all individuals had rights, all individuals ought to be dedicated to a collective American project. Even in the revised version, the statement indicated that all Americans received their rights from God: "The underlying philosophy of American Democracy is based upon the premise that the individual possesses God-given rights which the state can neither give nor take away."[101] Although not everyone would have agreed that the rights were God-given, challengers did uphold the notion that people have rights beyond the state-sanctioned ones. In discussing social studies curriculum, the statement also indicated that in addition to rights, pupils would learn that they had obligations to their country and to democracy itself: "The pupil comes to realize that he has duties and obligations as well as rights, and that the efficient functioning of our democracy demands the loyal service and support of all citizens." The statement argued that students ought to revere American democracy. Although not everyone agreed about what American democracy entailed, the statement's challengers nevertheless supported the idea that American democracy had sacred elements, such as "the separation of church and state." [102]

Additionally, the school board expounded on the value of democratic practice in describing interactions among the participants in the moral and spiritual values debate, despite the fact that the Board had initially sought to avoid the very exchange of ideas that it came to laud as representing the Board's democratic ideals. After seventy-four organizations presented or filed briefs in response to the original statement, the Board reluctantly held the rescheduled

[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.

meeting about the statement on September 17, 1956.[103] Representatives of organizations had a lot to say. Even though the speaking time for each group was limited to three minutes, the 3:30pm meeting lasted for five hours, meaning that groups went over their allotted time.[104] The Board was facing serious pushback.

Even though the Board had initially sought to hold the meeting over Labor Day weekend and Jewish holidays, the now Board of Education President Charles Silver articulated that the exchange of ideas at the meeting itself represented a democracy. He framed the debate as a positive example of a value in the statement, democracy: "The presence of so many civic-minded New Yorkers here today is, to my mind, a tribute to the vitality of the democratic principle." [105] Drawing on the statement's particular view of American history grounded in the Founding Fathers of New England and the mid-Atlantic, he continued, "Here, in short, is the embodiment of that American institution, the Town Hall Meeting, as effective and as alive today in this 20th Century metropolis of eight million souls as it was in the tiny New England settlements of 200 years ago." [106] Even disagreements were part of a tradition, Silver argued: "We may disagree among ourselves here today, but no one will, I am sure go home thinking that another's opinion is not worthy of respect or of a fair hearing. This, indeed, is democracy." [107] Referring to the date change, he went on: "This Public Hearing was postponed until today in order that a better opportunity might be afforded for people to be heard."[108] Silver argued that hearing from diverse views helped to support strong relations among people with different opinions and backgrounds.

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[103] Currivan, "New School." For example, Gladys Harburger delivered a statement, September 6, 1956, Folder 135, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.
[104] Harburger to "President," August 24, 1956; John J. McCuen, "Board Approves Teaching Guide on Moral Values," October 5, 1956, Folder 135, Box 55, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER; Meeting Minutes, September 17, 1956, Folder 484, Box 29, Series 281, NYCBER.
[105] Meeting Minutes, September 17, 1956.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid.

Many of the representatives who were present at the meeting might have laughed at the notion that the Board was open to hearing critiques, given that it was only after significant complaints that the Board changed the dates. Nevertheless, it was telling that the groups wanted to participate in such an exchange of ideas and that Silver claimed that the exchange embodied democracy. The Board claimed to value democracy, and the people with opinions about the statement sought to embody democracy. Although they might not have agreed that the Board's initial actions were democratic and so might have found Silver's statement to be a cover-up, the UPA and others repeatedly emphasized the importance of democracy in the context of moral and spiritual values. The execution of democracy may have remained somewhat tenuous, but in theory, democracy and its attendant practices were shared values among the Board, superintendents, and their challengers.

Love Thy Neighbor

In line with the switch from the notion that "Americans area a religious people" to the notion that America is primarily marked by religious pluralism, a significant change between the two versions of the statement was the framing of the entire statement within "the Judeo-Christian ethic." To the superintendents and Board, "the Judeo-Christian ethic" was a form of religious pluralism. Importantly, the biblical command "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" was central to the Judeo-Christian ethic. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, this phrase was significant because it suggested the importance of student interactions with and behavior toward people other than themselves as a key feature of the Judeo-Christian repertoire that schools were producing. The Board and superintendents framed the command to appeal to

Christians and Jews, to instruct students how to behave without necessarily modeling the behavior themselves, and to apply a framing they saw as Judeo-Christian to other traditions.

The statement offered its own interpretation by emphasizing the notion of love of neighbor as grounded in both Jewish and Christian sacred texts.

> For Western civilization moral and spiritual ideals stem in the main from the Judeo-Christian ethic. They find their expression in the Ten Commandments, which are succinctly summarized: 'Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might---, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Even those who reject the idea of obligation to God, and love of God, accept as a prime moral and spiritual ideal the love of neighbor, and they seek to find a philosophic base for their acceptance of this ideal apart from God.[109]

While the notion of loving one's neighbor was common to both Judaism and Christianity, as it appears in Deuteronomy and Leviticus as well as the gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke, the claim that love of neighbor was a summary of the Ten Commandments (which were themselves very popular in the 1950s) highlights a very particular interpretation.[110] It suggests that in this context "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" conveyed the meaning of negative command, as the Ten Commandments framed its commands as "Thou shalt not…" In other words, instead of the more common understanding of loving thy neighbor as an opening oneself to an other, here it was a behavioral instruction of how to behave and how not to behave.

In the statement, the Board and Superintendents also claimed that notion of loving thy neighbor and commitment to the Ten Commandments were universally shared across cultures. In doing so, the new statement took the idea of a Judeo-Christian tradition as the basis of what it called "Western civilization," and positioned the Bible as the authoritative text for that civilization. It continued:

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[109] "The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools."
[110] Frank Johnson, "10 Commandments Fight Has Deep Seated Roots," *Newsday*, February 7, 1957, 1C.

> The ideal of love of neighbor finds expression in the golden rule: 'As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them.' Other great religious systems give expression to the same ideal. Thus, for example, 'Minister to friends and families by treating them as one treats himself.' (*Buddhism*); 'What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others.' (*Confucianism*); 'Let no man do to another what would be repugnant to himself.' (*Hinduism*).[111]

These formulations were not all exactly the same as the Golden Rule, with some framed affirmatively and some negatively, but the superintendents and Board nevertheless maintained that they were all shared features. More importantly, the statement suggested that other religious traditions shared something *with* the authority of the public schools: grounding in Judeo-Christianity. The statement made clear that the Judeo-Christian tradition was at the root of the public school, not Buddhism, Confucianism, or Hinduism. The Judeo-Christian tradition also took on racial elements in this explanation, suggesting that the argument about which tradition was authoritative went beyond religious traditions to racial and ethnic populations. Buddhism, Confucianism, and Hinduism were framed as "other" traditions, differentiated from mainstream American society. Thus, the command to love thy neighbor was distinctly American and distinctly assimilationist.

Conclusion

The debate over moral and spiritual values curriculum highlights an early phase in the production of the Judeo-Christian repertoire of religious and racial coexistence in NYC public schools. As the superintendents and Board members formulated this repertoire, they promoted terms such as "brotherhood" and "thou shalt love thy neighbor" in the moral education program. After the Board and superintendents received more and more backlash about the role of God in the original statement, they revised it to emphasize "religious pluralism" and "the Judeo-

[111] "The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools."

Christian ethic." Thus, a statement that had in fact participated in the anti-Communism of the Regents' statement increasingly became about students' behavior. This happened in part because the discussion of students' behavior present in the original version became even more apparent as the language of God was taken away, and in part because the superintendents played up the interactions of students in a diverse space in the revision. Throughout both versions, emphasis on a heroic, white narrative of American history prevailed, as did a vision of American daily life characterized by whiteness and traditional gender roles. The statement came to argue that the particular version of American history and life it promoted could sanctify students' moral behavior. The implications of this framing become even more apparent in the moral education programs and debates over juvenile delinquency and integration.

Chapter Two "Thou Shalt Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself": Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Treatment

Boys and girls don't be a vandal
Such deeds are just a social scandal.
You know you are wrong
In the things you have done.
Do you really and truthfully think
They've been fun?
So live more closely to the
Golden Rule
And take more pride in your
community and school.[1]

The New York City (NYC) Board of Education (the Board)'s 1953 city-wide Clean Up Campaign against vandalism included jingles such as the one above instructing students to follow the Golden Rule, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," instead of vandalizing property. The campaign also sponsored three-thousand-student-deep parades where students marched through the Lower East Side and Harlem holding up mops, brooms, and American flags. As part of the school system's project to prevent what school officials called the "great evil" of juvenile delinquency,[2] the jingle and march presented a tangle of ideas about the presumed causes and cures of delinquent behavior: the jingle suggested the Golden Rule could serve as an antidote to students' violations of social norms; it commanded students to care for their communities and schools and avoid vandalism. To the Board, the parade marked the physical space of the neighborhood as ground that could symbolize students' morality—when

[1] "[] Fights, Vandalism," Folder 5, Box 3, Series 521, New York City Board of Education Records, New York City Municipal Archives (hereafter cited as NYCBER).
[2] *Juvenile Delinquency Evaluation Project of the City of New York: Final Report No. II: Delinquency in the Great City*, Princeton University Library, Public Administration Collection, July 17, 1961, 32.

broken glass or detritus littered it, the Board saw students responsible for the dirt and destruction as delinquent; when they picked up after themselves and respected property, the Board saw them as good stewards of the neighborhood. The mops and brooms carried alongside flags did not spark offense that America should be swept away like dirt; instead, the household implements embodied cleanliness as an American value. These two pieces of evidence from the Clean Up Campaign address the complex logics that led the Board, superintendents, as well as teachers and other school leaders, to mobilize a delinquency-specific understanding of "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" as part of the Judeo-Christian repertoire and to draw upon it in delinquency prevention and treatment.

Influenced by broader sociological and religious trends to achieve its meaning, the NYC public schools' delinquency-specific iteration of "love thy neighbor as thyself" indicated that school officials aimed to turn delinquents into good neighbors. Specifically, they hoped to morally reform students from what they saw as dirty, destroying property, reckless, law breaking, and having no pride in their neighborhood or country, into clean, respecting property, self-controlled, law abiding, and patriotic. They indicated that these latter qualities would lead to positive coexistence among neighbors. On their view, good neighbors were the model citizens they imagined to embody traits on the positive side of the Judeo-Christian repertoire.

The notion of coexistence in loving thy neighbor was not necessarily explicitly racial, as notions of coexistence were in integration programming.[3] However, it was racialized because school officials drew on sociology suggesting a correlation, if not a causation, between high delinquency areas in NYC and what they called "slums," as well as neighborhoods with large populations of black and Hispanic New Yorkers. In basing programs on this research, school officials suggested that residents of those areas were not good neighbors. Against the backdrop

[3] See Chapter Three of this dissertation.

of *de facto* school segregation due to residential segregation, the command for how to relate to one's neighbors was inherently racialized, as the neighborhoods themselves tended to fall along racial and ethnic lines.

In school programs, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" also reflected a central tension in the schools' Judeo-Christian repertoire: the phrase sounded inclusive and may have had a reciprocal meaning in religious or interfaith contexts, but school officials used it as an instruction to students and parents to conform to social interactions in the specific way that school officials sought. In developing this context-specific use of the term, schools tapped into religious and sociological trends suggesting that religion could cure delinquency. While sociologists tended to see religion almost as a pill that delinquents could swallow to improve their behavior, religious leaders suggested that not only did students need to love their neighbors, but the places of worship needed to love delinquents in order for them to reform. In the public school context, however, the relationship was not reciprocal, even if school officials intended it to be or intended for it to sound that way. Instead, "love" was a one-way command from school officials to students and parents, instructing them how schools wanted their social interactions to be. Though there were other models of delinquency treatment in NYC educational institutions outside public schools, even private schools that aimed to offer a reciprocal iteration of loving thy neighbor nevertheless sent students mixed messages about where they belonged because they identified students' homes and communities as problems.

Historians have studied culture, media, gender, and race in relationship to juvenile delinquency.[4] They often mention religion in passing, but the role of Judeo-Christian notions of

[4] Victoria Getis, "Experts and Juvenile Delinquency, 1900-1935," in *Generations of Youth: Youth Cultures and History in Twentieth Century America*, edited by Joe Austin and Michael Nevin Willard (New York: New York University Press, 1998); James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Sherrie A. Inness, Ed., *Delinquents and Debutantes: Twentieth*

coexistence in proposed solutions for improved social relations for delinquents remains unexamined. By studying how school officials developed and used an idea from the Judeo-Christian repertoire—love of neighbor—to treat and prevent delinquency on the ground, we learn that school officials aimed to transform children they diagnosed as delinquent into what they considered good neighbors through teaching loyalty to neighborhood and country and rejection of territorial rivalry. The so-called juvenile delinquency crisis in NYC appeared not just in the media as a moral panic about gender and race, but in school prevention and treatment as the distillation and adaptation of a biblical command.

Furthermore, the lessons on neighbors and neighborhoods suggest that school officials used the Judeo-Christian repertoire to address social issues at home in addition to totalitarianism abroad. While school officials claimed to believe that positive aspects of the Judeo-Christian repertoire could have a transformative role in the lives of children who engaged in what school officials understood as negative social behaviors, schools themselves offered few changes to delinquency prevention and treatment. In other words, the term "love thy neighbor as thyself" operated as a kind of mask for school officials to tell themselves that they cared about solving delinquency without taking responsibility for any role they may have played in it.

In this chapter, I first offer a portrait of the juvenile delinquency "crisis" in NYC and the surrounding debate. Then, I examine the two most relevant strands of thought with respect to understandings of the relationship between religion and juvenile delinquency prevention in NYC schools: the religious and social scientific idea that religion could be an antidote to delinquency and the social scientific concept of the "high delinquency area." Next, I show how city and school officials engaged these strains of thought in delinquency prevention and treatment

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Century American Girls' Cultures (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Whitney Strub, *Perversion for Profit: The Politics of Pornography and the Rise of the New Right* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), among others.

programming in three institutional settings: regular public schools, a public "600" school for "problem" students, and a private school for boys where courts sent students deemed delinquent.

A Note about Terms in this Chapter and Delinquency Procedures

"Juvenile delinquency" was a social construction, and those who used it notoriously saw students they called "juvenile delinquents" in a negative light. Legally, juvenile delinquency meant youth crime and referred to behaviors such as vandalism, auto theft, burglary, assault, and narcotic sale and use by people sixteen years old and under.[5] Social scientists also understood delinquents to violate general social norms and moral standards, such that delinquency included other behaviors, from truancy to littering. For instance, the city focused on vandalism in the Clean Up Campaign. Whereas sociologists and criminologists usually located the cause for delinquency in neighborhoods, psychologists also looked to children's psyches and home life.[6]

In response to upheaval around delinquency and the schools, the Sunday, February 16, 1958 *New York Times* produced a graphic titled "How New York School System Handles Delinquents."[7] It detailed how, upon suspension, a principal could send a child to court through the police or to a hearing with the Assistant Superintendent of Schools. With the latter option, the Assistant Superintendent could reassign the child within the school system back to a regular school or to a "600" School, a public school the *Times* called "a special school set up for problem children." "600" schools arose because "According to the New York State Education

[5] N.Y. Fam. Ct. Act § 712 (McKinney).
[6] Dennis Doyle argues that racial liberals in Harlem advocated for the notion that there was no biological difference between black and white psyches, an important statement in the 1940s when some psychologists tried to argue that there was. Dennis Doyle, *Psychiatry and Racial Liberalism in Harlem, 1936-1968* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2016).
[7] "How New York School System Handles Delinquents," *New York Times,* February 16, 1958, Folder 108, Box 53, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER; "The '600' Day Schools," Juvenile Delinquency Evaluation Project, April 1957; United Federation of Teachers Records; WAG 022; Box 6; Folder 18; Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University (hereafter cited as UFTR).

Law, all children must attend school up to seventeen years of age, or until graduation from high school," with a few exceptions.[8] The Assistant Superintendent could also decide to expel the student, at which point the student would head to court, as did students whom principals referred to the police. Once in court, the judge would usually decide among several "training" institutions. There were state-supported training schools, which provided 24-hour care for delinquents, and private institutions, similar to state institutions but run by private organizations. In addition to regular public schools, this chapter engages programming in two locations where a school administrator or a court would have placed students who had come before them: a public "600" school and the private Wiltwyck School for Boys.

The "Juvenile Delinquency Crisis" in New York City

Juvenile delinquency was a matter of national concern in the 1950s. Some indicate that the attention that juvenile delinquency received constituted a moral panic, as the combined force of the media, social sciences, and law enforcement created concern over issues such as comic books.[9] For example, in 1953, the United States Senate established a Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, which in 1954 held hearings on the impact of comic books on juvenile delinquency. The National Education Association sponsored an in-depth evaluation of juvenile delinquency prevention programs in all fifty states.[10] Instructional films taught students to avoid delinquency. Juvenile delinquency—especially the idea of it—was seemingly everywhere.

Even as the image of the juvenile delinquent became especially prominent in the 1950s, juvenile delinquency treatment was not new, especially in NYC. The first reform house in the

[8] "The '600' Day Schools."
[9] Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage*; Strub, *Perversion for Profit*.
[10] See the "Juvenile Delinquency Project" in the Educational Policies Commission Series, National Education Association Records, Special Collections Center, George Washington University.

United States for juvenile delinquents, the House of Refuge, opened in NYC in 1825.[11] The Children's Court in NYC opened in 1922 and the Bureau of Child Guidance in 1932. In Harlem in 1940**,** a Special Unit of the Bureau of Child Guidance worked to treat delinquents in four particular public schools. However, due to the slow pace of public institutions, Justice Justine Wise Polier, Fredric Wertham, and others invested in the city's youth helped support private institutions for delinquency reform.[12] The city also created the Youth Board, which began to serve youth needs and offer relevant activities in 1947.[13]

In the fall of 1957, events at schools made the panic especially urgent in NYC. Following an incident where "a truant 17-year-old boy tossed a bottle of lye into a classroom at the Thomas Jefferson High School in Brooklyn, partly blinding another student and splattering several others, including a teacher," a special grand jury convened in Kings County (Brooklyn) to discuss juvenile delinquency. [14] The special grand jury caused uproar, particularly because it recommended requiring police in schools. Community members of varying racial and religious politics opposed the recommendation, including Superintendent of Schools William Jansen, Police Commissioner Stephen P. Kennedy, and the United Parents Associations, among others.[15] Following the recommendation, the city saw verbal fights, arguments that police had been in

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[11] Additionally, Social reformers Jane Adaams and Julia Lathrop lobbied for the first juvenile court in the United States, which opened in 1899 in Cook County, Illinois. "Child or Adult? A Century Long View," Juvenile Justice, WGBH Educational Foundation, last modified 2014, accessed March 1, 2015, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages /frontline/shows/juvenile/stats/childadult.html; David B. Wolcott, *Cops and Kids: Policing Juvenile Delinquency in Urban America, 1890-1940* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005), 2.
[12] Doyle, *Psychiatry and Racial Liberalism in Harlem*, 56-57.
[13] "A Brief History of Justice: The Evolution of New York State's Family Court System," New York Law School, accessed February 3, 2016, http://www.nyls.edu/diane_abbey_law_center_for_children_and_families/wp-content/uploads/sites/136/2013/07/DALC-NY-Family-Courts-Pamphlet-2012-v1r5.pdf.
[14] Gene Currivan, "Proposal for a Policeman in Every School Is Strongly Resisted by the Board," *The New York Times*, December 15, 1957, Folder 107, Box 53, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.
[15] Ibid.

schools for years, and the controversial but short-lived ruling that resulted in the "wholesale suspension" of 644 pupils without any discussion of future care.[16]

In response to the chaotic turn of events, in February 1958, the Board of Education released a delinquency program, which laid out immediate changes the city would make. Among these changes, a project called the Juvenile Delinquency Evaluation Project (JDEP) would be instituted. At this opportune moment for stating a position on delinquency, the Board said:

> The problem, and its solution, are the joint responsibility of the entire community: the family, the churches, the school, the government at all levels, the social agencies and of every individual citizen. Together these can solve the problem provided there is full recognition by the whole community that there is no substitute for the principles of religion and morality.[17]

The Board's statement spoke to two important aspects of juvenile delinquency prevention and treatment: the notion that the community played a role in delinquency and its eradication, and the notion that the delinquent required religious and moral intervention. Beyond the Board, many NYC religious figures and social scientists alike agreed that communities—especially communities understood as distinct geographical spaces known as neighborhoods—created delinquency, and that delinquents required religious and moral intervention. Although the Board indicated that the cure for delinquency would be a joint effort among schools, the government, and communities, they placed the onus on communities to transform to meet their moral standards. The approach they took mirrored what scholars have referred to as the element of domination in humanitarian efforts.[18] They stated that they wanted to help, but mostly offered

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[16] Judith Crist, "Mayor Calls Top School Officials," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 1, 1958; "How New York School System Handles Delinquents"; Lou Schwartz, "School Board in City Attacks Jury's Probe," *Newsday*, January 31, 1958, 3.
[17] "Full Text of Board's Delinquency Program," *New York World-Telegram,* February 5, 1958, Folder 108, Box 53, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER.
[18] Doyle, *Psychiatry and Racial Liberalism in Harlem*, 55, 188n3. Doyle draws on Benjamin Reiss here.

help in the form of moral platitudes. To make sense of their perspective, they reached to ideas in circulation about religion, neighborhoods, and delinquency.

Theorizing Neighborhood, Religion, Delinquency

When NYC schools taught students to love their neighbors in order to treat and prevent delinquency, they drew on two strains of thought: the notion that religion was an antidote to the social problem of delinquency and the concept of the "high delinquency area." The sociological category of the "high delinquency neighborhood" or "area" posited that neighborhood conditions—such as poverty, multifamily homes, and poor health—caused delinquency. Theories of high delinquency areas pointed out that higher rates of delinquency and crime occurred in neighborhoods with higher proportions of black and Hispanic people, and lower socio-economic status. As for religion, social scientists and religious leaders alike agreed that if children and adolescents practiced or followed religion, they would not become delinquents, or they could stop being delinquent because delinquency and religion represented opposing sets of moral values. Schools distilled religion for consumption in legally regulated public schools into the command to love thy neighbor, which was also racialized. They suggested that if delinquents only behaved as schools commanded, the problems of delinquency would dissipate. In general, religious leaders were more invested than school leaders in reciprocating love of neighbor by treating students as worthy of dignity. However, because churches and social scientists alike used the language of loving thy neighbor to convey that religion could cure delinquency, when we see later that schools employed the notion of love of neighbor, they used the rhetoric of the discussion among religious leaders, which aimed to be reciprocal and inclusive, while offering a one-way command. Taken together, the theories about religion as a cure to delinquency and

about the "high delinquency area" suggested that religion could cure and prevent delinquency, which was the result of conditions in predominantly black and Hispanic neighborhoods.

In different ways, these two strains of thought resembled early twentieth century ideas about criminality, the environment, and race.[19] Early-twentieth-century theories of crime explored both nature and nurture as ways to improve society and cure crime.[20] By the 1950s, social scientists and religious leaders were focusing even more on nurture, specifically how the conditions of poverty and family attitudes might cultivate delinquency as much as, if not instead of, biological tendencies. Based on this, NYC public schools introduced delinquents to the notion that their neighborhood had nurtured them to be delinquent, thinking that this information could help cure them, and taught non-delinquent students to respect their neighborhood, believing this would prevent such students from becoming delinquent.

"The decisive instrument in combatting delinquency on the neighborhood level"

As in early twentieth century approaches to crime, mid-twentieth-century social scientists and religious leaders alike argued that religion could mitigate delinquency. In and around NYC, they put forward the notion that religious values opposed delinquent ones. This resulted in many assumed opposing values of good and bad: clean and dirty, vandal and respecter of property, reckless and careful. Although they did not indicate that children inherently had regressive or progressive traits, they did suggest that children could hold values that would lead the neighborhood to regress or progress. If religion could take hold in some way, then children could be led away from the evil of delinquency.

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[19] Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Christine Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[20] Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics*.

Although religious leaders and social scientists agreed that religion could be an antidote to delinquency and that religious and delinquent values opposed each other, religious leaders emphasized that they also had to love their neighbors by loving delinquents, whereas social scientists aimed to give delinquents religion as a medicine to teach them how to love their neighbors. In other words, religious leaders aimed to model love of neighbor and offer a reciprocal relationship, while social scientists did not.

As an example of a broader trend in social sciences at the time, leading juvenile delinquency scholar William C. Kvaraceus assumed that the absence of religion led to delinquency. A psychologist, education researcher, and leader of the NEA's country-wide Juvenile Delinquency Project, Kvaraceus posited that church attendance might prevent delinquency in the very questions he asked in his influential 1945 *Juvenile Delinquency and the School*.[21] Kvaraceus does not claim that his study is primarily about religion. Yet assumptions about what religion in public life looked like and the relationship between religion and juvenile delinquency informed how Kvaraceus suggested schools should approach delinquency prevention. In a chapter focused on the relationship between church attendance and delinquency, Kvaraceus's study concludes that church attendance had little impact on delinquency rates. At face value, the results might suggest that Kvaraceus was indicating to future social scientists and school leaders that religion and juvenile delinquency had little to do with each other.

However, the study's design itself implies that in fact Kvaraceus was opening the door for schools and researchers to further consider the relationship between religion and delinquency.

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[21] William C. Kvaraceus, *Juvenile Delinquency and the School* (Yonkers-on-Hudson, NY: World Book Company, 1945). Kvaraceus headed the National Education Association's Juvenile Delinquency Project in the late 1950s and later wrote about intersections of poverty, race, and education, particularly black students' "self-concept" and alienation from school. I previously posted aspects of these paragraphs in Leslie Ribovich, "On Interdisciplinary Religious History: Thoughts on Studying the Past Productions of Academic Disciplines," *History of Christianity Blog*, June 3, 2015, http://www.churchhistory.org/blogs/on-interdisciplinary-religious-history-thoughts-on-studying-the-past-productions-of-academic-disciplines/.

Kvaraceus and his research team used the term "church" to mean site of religious worship. In the category of "church," they included the synagogue, meaning that he assumed Christian supremacy as a moral influence. Furthermore, he indicated that "church attendance" signified the most important part of religion, even though the study mentioned that the Jewish tradition found many activities at home to be as sacred, if not more sacred, than services. This indicated that there was something about merely showing up in a place that taught religious values could prevent delinquency. Although he did not say it, Kvaraceus seemed to suggest that the school might have to take on the role of the church in teaching students to be moral. Finally, the very fact that the study pitted church attendance against juvenile delinquency indicated that Kvaraceus presumed that the church fostered behavior that would prevent delinquency. Kvaraceus characterized delinquency as a deficit in students' moral behavior that a church—or a church substitute, like a school—might fix.

In NYC, religious leaders, especially Protestant leaders of various denominations, were even more explicit that religion could help delinquents become good neighbors, but they thought that they and their institutions could model good citizenship for delinquents by treating them with love. In the opposing sets of values that religion and delinquency represented, they saw an opportunity for transformation, because they believed that delinquents could fundamentally change if given the opportunity—they were not destined to delinquency. Union Theological Seminary theologian and Arthur L. Swift, Jr. wrote in a *Union Seminary Quarterly* article called "Gangs and the Churches" that "To bring church to gang or gang to church is to perform a miracle in the conjunction of opposites. So it seems to many. And because this ought not and need not be so this article is written."[22] Swift argued that churches were meant to help people like juvenile delinquents, and that delinquents may in fact get a great deal from the church.

[22] Arthur L. Swift, Jr., "Gangs and the Churches," *Union Seminary Quarterly* 11:4 (May 1956): 43-50, 43.

Robert Lee, another liberal Protestant, also described religion and delinquency as "the conjunction of opposites," and argued that the church needed to reflect on its own mission to serve people in need. Lee wrote in an article titled "Delinquent Youth in a Normless Time" for *The Christian Century* arguing that "[Churches] have become so respectable that to bring the church to the delinquent or the delinquent to the church is to perform a miracle in the conjunction of opposites." He continued, "We must confess that we are indeed a delinquent church," by which he meant that to become "so respectable" as to not help youth in need was to become delinquent in their function as a church.[23] Lee went further to suggest that the cause of juvenile delinquency was not individual actors, but rather community's actions: "The fact is that 'doing something about delinquency' means that the community at large must do something about itself."[24] Lee placed the church within the community, and suggested that churches ought to model the values that they taught by treating delinquents with respect. Whether or not churches were actually doing this at the time, the rhetoric was one of reciprocity.

J. Archie Hargraves took the argument that churches should and could help delinquency in communities a step further, claiming that churches were ideally located to help solve delinquency because they participated in the same environments that fostered delinquency. By changing the environment through religious care, delinquency could be minimized. Founder of the East Harlem Protestant Parish and the West Side Christian Parish in Chicago, and pastor of the Nazarene Congregational Church in Brooklyn, Hargraves wrote: "Juvenile delinquency is a neighborhood problem because it involves flesh-and-blood people who live next door or across the street. Ideally, the local church can be the decisive instrument in combatting delinquency on

[23] Robert Lee, "Delinquent Youth in a Normless Time," *The Christian Century* 79:49 (December 1962): 1475-1478, 1475.
[24] Ibid.

the neighborhood level."[25] He described the theological significance of the church's involvement: "It [the local church] has to seek a new community orientation that implies it will cease existing for itself and will come to share its particular concerns, techniques and love with the whole neighborhood so that all may advance together." [26] His model emphasized a reciprocal version of loving thy neighbor where the church showed the delinquent love in order for the community to progress.

Like Hargraves, other religious leaders emphasized that if delinquency was a problem of environment, the solutions to it also lay in the environment—specifically in the home and community. These religious leaders were as much offering guidelines for themselves as for the children. For example, *The Reconstructionist* published suggestions from Rabbi Milton Matz, who claimed that "churches and synagogues can perform vital services in combating delinquency," because "Unlike most other social institutions, they deal with individuals as family units. The membership unit is the family, not the individual."[27] In other words, religious institutions could address delinquency as a matter of nurture and environment because they were connected to children's home lives. Matz reified the notion that because environments contributed to delinquency, religious institutions could be actively involved in delinquency prevention on a personal level.

On a national scale, the best-selling NYC adventure tale *The Cross and the Switchblade* offered an account of religious transformation that was especially clear about the evils of delinquency and the potential of delinquent youth. The book, by and about David Wilkerson,

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[25] J. Archie Hargraves, "The Local Church and Juvenile Delinquency," *Christianity and Crisis* 17:28 (January 1958): 180-183, 180. Hargraves also went on to develop racially inclusive school curricula. See his role in chapter three.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Milton Matz, "How Religious Institutions Can Combat Juvenile Delinquency," *The Reconstructionist* 21:15 (December 2, 1955): 17-19, 17.

tells the story of the conservative evangelical pastor from rural Pennsylvania who trekked to Harlem to serve its youth upon receiving a calling from God. In Wilkerson's descriptions of young people and himself, he offers a description of Christianity and delinquents as having opposing values, which, to him, paved the way for salvation. He portrayed young people with foul mouths, active sex lives, and unrelenting violence, such as Nicky, with his "rock-hard gaze," "sixteen stabbings to his record" and reputation "as a vicious knife-fighter not only to the Brooklyn kids but to the gangs in Manhattan and the Bronx as well."[28] By contrast, Wilkerson described himself as "a country preacher," who found meeting Nicky and what Wilkerson took to be a near gang fight "the worst two minutes of my life."[29] Nevertheless, Nicky became one of his most successful converts, eventually going to seminary and gathering his own following.[30] The example of Nicky conveyed that anyone could be transformed, and religion really was the answer to even the seemingly most severe cases of delinquency. Wilkerson's commitment to Nicky and the other Harlem children, while voyeuristic in certain respects, suggested that he believed their nature could be changed with guidance, care, and attention, and through enough people with changed natures, the community as a whole could change. In other words, he saw the community as shaping people's natures and believed that when Christians went into communities, all parties could be saved.

With the understanding that religious leaders saw religious transformation as a possible approach to treating delinquency because religion offered positive values that opposed delinquency, it is begins to become clear why the NYC schools would come to emphasize the

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[28] David Wilkerson, *The Cross and the Switchblade* (New York: Penguin, 1962), 76-77.
[29] Ibid., 7, 78.
[30] "Teen Challenge," World Challenge, last modified 2014, accessed February 5, 2016, https://www.worldchallenge.org/page.aspx?pid=458; *The Cross and the Switchblade,* Film, directed by Don Murray (1970; Lansdale, PA: Gateway Films). Wilkerson's ideas about opposites as an opportunity for salvation carried even greater weight as his Teen Challenge grew and a film version of the book starring Pat Boone and Erik Estrada was released in 1970.

idea of loving thy neighbor. They were invested in the transformation of delinquents and formation of nondelinquents in a manner that prevented delinquency, and religious leaders had conceptualized religious and moral formation as a decisive approach to (trans)formation, especially in neighborhoods. Hargraves and others suggested that the problem and cure for delinquency resided in neighborhoods, and that communities could work together to solve the issue. However, NYC officials ended up taking the notion of moral transformation in a different direction when they reached to social science on delinquency and geography.

"The High Delinquency Area"

The sociological category of a "high delinquency neighborhood" or "area" drew on theories about "mass society," "social disorganization," and "cultural transmission." In the first half of the twentieth century, sociologists grappled with changing values—religious and otherwise—in what they called a "mass society." "Mass society" represented the change after the Industrial Revolution brought together groups of people who previously would have lived in separate spaces. Whereas anthropologists traditionally studied such separate spaces, calling them "villages," and positing that they contained isolated ethnic groups, sociologists became interested in questions about having many different "villages" interfacing in their own backyard. Most early sociology dealt with new arrivals to cities: first European immigrants, and then African Americans from the south. Some University of Chicago sociology school "observers saw such cities as inherently 'disorganized' and beset with 'deviance' and 'anomie.'"[31] In particular, Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay developed Edwin Sutherland's theory of "social disorganization," arguing that a lack of clear social structure could cause crime. They went

[31] "An Invitation to Urban Ethnography" in *The Urban Ethnography Reader,* edited by Mitchell Duneier, Philip Kasinitz, and Alexandra Murphy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 6.

further to describe "cultural transmission," whereby people living in the same "disorganized" area would pass down the rules or norms of that area to whomever lived there next.[32]

Ideas about "cultural transmission" in "disorganized areas" as a result of "mass society," significantly affected how NYC school officials understood the values of students living in areas understood to be "high delinquency." The process of development of moral and religious norms in areas where people frequently moved in and out was seen as "disorganized." In "mass society," some neighborhoods fostered good neighbors, while others created delinquents. This distinction paved the way for the Judeo-Christian concept of loving thy neighbor to resonate in delinquency prevention and treatment.

Much of the research on "high delinquency areas" suggested a correlation between neighborhood and delinquency and between race and delinquency without proving that neighborhoods or racial background caused delinquency. Nevertheless, the rhetoric that schools used emphasized that delinquency and other behaviors were "problems" and that delinquent students were "problem students." To address "problem students," they offered an approach to coexistence with racially diverse people in neighborhoods through the concept of loving thy neighbor. In other words, the rhetoric presumed that neighborhood conditions in predominantly black and Hispanic neighborhoods caused delinquency, even though the research merely suggested correlation. Although it did not prove causation, the research's tone was so critical of neighborhood conditions that it seemed to encourage prejudicial assumptions of causation.

Top researchers of juvenile delinquency used "social disorganization" and "cultural transmission" theories to explain the causes of delinquency in NYC. Mayor Robert Wagner announced the Juvenile Delinquency Evaluation Project (JDEP) on January 1, 1956 as a way to

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[32] Clifford R. Shaw, *Delinquency Areas: A Study of the Geographic Distribution of School Truants, Juvenile Delinquents, and Adult Offenders in Chicago* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1929).

study delinquency in the city following the mass suspensions discussed earlier.[33] Headed by New School for Social Research sociologist Robert MacIver, the project lasted for four years and produced many reports on individual issues and institutions. The final report characterized "the still increasing volume of juvenile delinquency"—a statistic it called problematic—as "a great evil the City has so far failed to overcome."[34] The report used "disorganization" theory to conclude that neighborhoods were to blame for delinquency. Summarizing Shaw and McKay, the report stated: "The constant factor was the nature of the slums themselves, not the ethnic origin of the people living there." Thus, the city understood delinquency to a problem of environment, rather than birth.

The report identified the same physical locations in the city as both "slums" and "high delinquency areas"—Central Harlem, East Harlem, Fort Greene, Bedford-Stuyvesant, the South Bronx, and the Lower East Side. However, "slum" and "high delinquency area" had different technical meanings. "Slum" referred specifically to the housing and living conditions in a concentrated area, such as "dilapidated dwelling units, high population density, old buildings, and insufficient park and play ground facilities, and termed 'substandard and unsanitary.'" [35] The word "slum" conveyed both physical conditions, as well as a moral sense of uncleanliness and insufficiency.

By contrast to the physical conditions and general impression of an area that defined a "slum," a "high delinquency area" meant a place where a high concentration of delinquent acts occurred. The distinct definitions matter because they highlight the correlation that the city

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[33] "The City of New York Juvenile Delinquency Evaluation Project, A Progress Report, January 1958," Reports, Juvenile Delinquency Evaluation Project, NYC Folder, Box 11, David Spitz Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations; "What Is the Juvenile Delinquency Evaluation Project of the City of New York?," Folder 12, Box 6, UFTR.
[34] *Final Report No. II* . 32
[35] Ibid.

identified between neighborhood conditions and delinquency, though not necessarily the causation the city sometimes implied. The JDEP report gathered information about delinquent acts by tracking rates of arrests and cases in certain locales, using Children's Court cases (ages 6-15), referrals to the Youth Division of the Police Department (ages 6-20), and Police Arrests (ages 16-20). By "area," the JDEP report referred to districts that the city had designated for other purposes. Though the report included one map with a different calculation of area,[36] the primary definition of "area" that the report used to collect statistics was "areas known as 'health center districts.'" The JDEP report explained "health center districts" in the following way: "There are 30 such districts in the City, and the Health Department has made available much statistical material concerning each. For this reason, and also because they seemed of suitable size for our purposes, health center districts were chosen as units for the rate analysis."[37] Even though the report went on to acknowledge the possible fallacies of using "health center districts"—such as that an area of delinquency might be only in one section of the district—the report nevertheless defended the utility of using these as the main unit of analysis because the Health Department had collected a number of other statistics about these districts that the report found relevant to delinquency.

In particular, the JDEP tracked statistics about health, welfare, and ethnicity as a means of associating the conditions of "slum" neighborhoods and the people living in them with delinquency. The report published tables comparing the rate of delinquency with "Indices of Health and Certain Related Problems," "Indices of Certain Economic Problems," and "Certain Indices of Ethnic Origin." "Health and Certain Related Problems" ranked each district from 1-30 in recent rates of admissions to New York State "mental hospitals," termination of psychiatric

[36] Ibid., 12.
[37] Ibid., 11.

clinics active cases of tuberculosis, infant mortality, and out of wedlock births, as well as the Health Department's designation of placement on a socio-economic index. "Indices of Certain Economic Problems" included ranking each district from 1-30 in recent rates of public assistance cases, aid to dependent children, home relief cases, and the department's socio-economic index. Finally, "Certain Indices of Ethnic Origin" included just two indices: "Births to Puerto Rican Mothers as Percentage of Total Live Births 1959" and "Non-White Births as Percentage of Total Live Births 1959." The ranking of each district 1-30 by rates of "Delinquency 6-20 Years 1958" appeared as the first column. Again, these were matters of comparison rather than data highlighting causation.

The neighborhoods the study identified as "high delinquency areas" also had many of the characteristics they associated with "slums." Central Harlem ranked first in each index on each table, except "Births to Puerto Rican Mothers as Percentage of Total Live Births 1959," where it ranked 16. Mott Haven in the South Bronx ranked first for births to Puerto Ricans, and East Harlem ranked second. Although results varied by index, other generally high-ranking "health center districts" in areas of health problems, economic problems, and non-white ethnic origins included East Harlem, Mott Haven and Morrisania in the South Bronx, and Bedford and Fort Greene in Brooklyn. Although the report was clear to state that "This might lead some to the hasty conclusion that Puerto Ricans and Negroes are by nature more prone to delinquency than members of other groups," but "No reputable social scientist would accept this conclusion."[38] The report nevertheless associated ethnic newcomers to the city with living in "slum" areas because they were poor. The report reasoned: "Later, they adapt to city life, become more prosperous, move to better neighborhoods, and show a constantly diminishing proportion of

[38] Ibid., 24.

delinquents."[39] The report then mentioned Jamaica East in Queens as an example of this assimilative process.[40]

The indices themselves conveyed strong moral ideas of what "problems" were. "Out of Wedlock Live Births" were considered a health issue. Receiving aid from the government was considered an economic problem on the individual level. The report associated delinquency with certain neighborhoods where non-white ethnic populations lived, high percentages of poor mental and physical health, and economic dependence on the government. It relayed a general impression of these neighborhoods as "substandard," "unsanitary," and "dilapidated." As delinquent children also become known as "problem" children in school lingo, the definition of "problem" was strongly moralizing.

With this extreme suggestion that neighborhoods were the problem with, if not the cause of, delinquency, and with Harlem as an area of interest, the NYC Youth Board focused on schools in Harlem through the organization's implementation of the controversial Glueck Social Prediction Tables. The Glueck Tables were controversial precisely because they implied a causal link between the conditions of neighborhoods and the backgrounds of delinquents and delinquency.[41] The Youth Board, a city institution separate from the Board of Education and

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Lila Corwin Berman and Khalil Gibran Muhammad both describe how Progressive Era social scientists constructed theories of assimilation by which ethnic whites were able to assimilate. Muhammad argues that this was in stark contrast to African Americans, while Berman describes how Jewish sociologists conducted much early sociology about Jewish assimilation that was later applied inaccurately and to the detriment of black and Hispanic populations. Lila Corwin Berman, *Speaking of Jews: Rabbis, Intellectuals, and the Creation of an American Public Identity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009); Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*, 6-7.

[41] The Gluecks' predictive approach drew much disapproval. A two-part critique of the Gluecks' work was published in the September 1951 issue of the *American Journal of Sociology*, the first part by Sol Rubin and the second by Albert J. Reiss, Jr. Both Rubin and Reiss felt that the study could not determine causation since it was retrospective, not prospective. Many agreed with this critique. Rubin also felt that matching delinquents by age, residence, race, and general intelligence did not "exclude residence in underprivileged neighborhoods as a causative source," but rather suggested that the study presented examples of factors at play within neighborhoods. Sol Rubin, "Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency. I. Illusions in A Research Project Using Matched Pairs," *The American Journal of Sociology* 57:2 (1951): 107-114, 108. Against those who questioned the role of causation in their methodology and sought a more mathematical approach, E. Glueck defended their approach, saying simply "it works." Eleanor T.

founded after WWII to serve the needs of the city's youth, intentionally selected the neighborhood of focus for this work in relation to race: "In choice of schools and neighborhood, the study group, by design, includes high proportions of Negro and Puerto Rican children."[42] The Glueck Tables came from husband and wife criminology team Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, who had conducted a ten-year study of 500 delinquent and 500 nondelinquent boys, pairing delinquents and non-delinquents with the same general age, race, neighborhood type, body type, and general intelligence. The Gluecks began their work with a question they believed remained unanswered in that literature: why most children living in delinquent areas did not "succumb to the evil and disruptive neighborhood influences."[43] To determine this, they surveyed a range of factors, from whether children attended church to how many people they lived with. The Gluecks argued, among other things, that certain physical characteristics, such as body build, were potential predictors of delinquency.[44] Following extensive surveying, they also concluded that relationships with parents were the biggest predictors of delinquency, specifically: "Discipline of boy by father, Supervision of boy by mother, Affection of father for boy, Affection of mother for boy, Cohesiveness of family."[45] The Youth Board thus took an interest in parents, race, and communities in studying NYC delinquency.

Glueck, "Status of Glueck Prediction Studies," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science* 47:1 (1956): 18-32, 18.

[42] Ralph W. Whelan, "An Experiment in Predicting Delinquency," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Policy Science* 45:4 (1954): 432-441, 436

[43] Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1950), 5.

[44] In particular, they drew on William H. Sheldon's work, which scholars later critiqued as racially prejudicial as well as unethical, since he used photos of naked students from different research without their consent. Glueck concluded "that twice the proportion of delinquents as of non-delinquents were of predominantly mesomorphic physique," which, according to Sheldon, "means relative predominance of muscle, bone and connective tissue. The mesomorphic physique is normally heavy, hard, and rectangular in outline. Bone and muscle are prominent and the skin is made thick by a heavy underlying connective. The entire bodily economy is dominated, relatively, by tissues derived from the mesodermal embryonic layer." Eleanor T. Glueck, "Body Build in the Prediction of Delinquency," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science* 48: 6 (1958): 577-579, 5-6 and 577; Patricia Vertinsky, "Physique as Destiny: William H. Sheldon, Barbara Honeyman Heath and the Struggle for Hegemony in the Science of Somatotyping," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* (24:2): 291-316.

[45] Gluecks, *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency*, 261.

Unlike the Youth Board's adaptation of the Glueck Tables, which focused on black and Puerto Rican children, the racial categories the Gluecks employed focused on white racial groups, which they saw as correlated directly to religion. They listed: "English (including English-Canadian, Scotch); Italian; Irish; American; Slavic (including Polish, Lithuanian, Russian); French (including French-Canadian); Near Eastern (including Greek, Syrian, Turkish, Armenian); Portuguese, Spanish; Scandinavian, German, Dutch; Jewish; and Chinese."[46] Furthermore, the Gluecks explained that "Since religion is very largely related to ethnic origins, our findings concerning the religion of the boys and their parents are presented here as a matter of interest…As for the boys themselves, 81.2% of the delinquents and 71.6% of the non-delinquents were Roman Catholic; 15.9% and 23.6%, respectively, were Protestant; 2% of each group were Hebrew; and 1% and 2.8%, respectively, were of other faiths."[47] The Gluecks identified the delinquent primarily as a white ethnic Catholic whose religious identity did not have a positive effect on their moral actions.

When the NYC Youth Board applied the Glueck Tables to high proportions of black and Puerto Rican children with the goal of predicting delinquency, the Youth Board associated criminality with neighborhoods, parental affection, and non-whiteness. By transferring the racial group away from white ethnic groups, the Youth Board participated in constructing the delinquent in NYC as not only non-white and tied to a particular neighborhood, but also lacking the values of religion, as the white ethnic Catholics of the original Glueck study had done.

Thus, without definitive evidence of *causation*, the NYC Youth Board and Board of Education implied that the strong correlation between delinquency and certain neighborhoods meant that neighborhood conditions and morals caused delinquency. However, given that what

[46] Ibid, 38.
[47] Ibid., 40.

the Board called "slum" neighborhoods were also what it identified as "high delinquency areas" largely populated by black and Hispanic New Yorkers, the city's educational bureaucracy also insinuated a racial element to their understanding of delinquency. Given their logic, if they wanted to cure this problem, they would have to change neighborhood conditions in predominantly black and Hispanic neighborhoods, or the attitude that the people living there expressed toward their neighborhood.

Here, school officials agreed with the religious leaders and social scientists who concluded that delinquency was a community problem, but their solution was different. Rather than viewing delinquents as worthy members of the community, and rather than involving themselves in changing the neighborhood conditions as religious institutions aimed to do, they aimed to teach students what sorts of neighbors and citizens they ought to become. They did not necessarily model this citizenship, but rather drew on a popular religious phrase to create a context-specific term in the Judeo-Christian repertoire that became shorthand for how school officials wanted students in "high delinquency areas" to treat each other. These dynamics played out in delinquency prevention programs on the ground.

Delinquency Prevention in Action

When NYC public schools entered the web of ideas in circulation about religion, neighborhoods, and delinquency, school treatment and prevention programs sent students conflicting messages about who they were and where they belonged. Schools drew on the concept that delinquents could come to see themselves as good neighbors and responsible citizens with a sense of respect for the neighborhood at the same time that they were focusing on neighbors and neighborhoods because of prejudicial, inconclusive data. Some of the programs

were explicitly or subtly punitive. Even those that were not punitive nevertheless criticized students' home neighborhoods and sometimes their families. As a result, no educational space existed for non-punitive, community building in neighborhoods. Even as schools borrowed the idea of loving thy neighbor from religious groups, their critique of the neighborhoods themselves represented an assimilative approach to curing delinquency. They encouraged students and parents to beautify high delinquency areas and to feel responsible for the upkeep of their neighborhoods in order to fit school officials' vision of responsible citizens, without school officials having to treat delinquents or students any differently than they already did.

Schools' approaches differed from each other, but we can see from the following three examples that schools wrestled with trying to make students feel like they had a responsibility toward their community not to harm it, at the same time that they wanted students to recognize aspects of their communities that they perceived to produce negative social interactions. As a prevention program, the public school Clean Up Campaign against vandalism drew on the rhetoric of patriotism already familiar to students in schools to engender loyalty to a neighborhood. In public "600" schools for students already deemed delinquent—schools that were supposed to emphasize treatment—teachers focused on teaching students that they were neighbors, not rivals, and therefore they should treat their neighborhood and the people in it with respect. At the Wiltwyck School for Boys, a private school especially meant to treat delinquent boys, they sought to treat students by offering a new idyllic neighborhood, where they could learn to be good neighbors away from the "problems" that the school saw as causing the delinquency. Wiltwyck was explicitly non-punitive and aimed for students to reimagine what responsible citizenship in an idyllic model neighborhood would look like. Nevertheless, Wiltwyck required students to leave their home neighborhoods, where the social scientists

running Wiltwyck believed a source of their delinquency may have been. Although the programs differed in terms of prevention, punishment, and treatment, in all of them, students were meant to imagine different neighborhoods than the ones where they already lived.

Clean Up Campaign

The citywide 1953 Clean Up Campaign against school vandalism aimed to make students feel responsible for the upkeep of their neighborhoods. The Campaign used the idiom of loyalty to country and community, as well as the physical act of cleaning and gardening, to convey that cleanliness and respect for property conveyed positive coexistence, whereas dirt and shattered glass conveyed negative coexistence. To spread the word to all schools in all districts of the school system, the Superintendent of Schools William Jansen and Board of Education partnered with the Department of Sanitation. The Department of Sanitation itself had been founded in 1881 as a way to rid NYC not only of smell, but also of supposed vices such as crime.[48] Again in 1953, the Department of Sanitation took on the role of morally reforming the city, this time through students. As the jingle at the beginning of this chapter indicates, students were told to "take more pride in your community and school" and given the tools to embody that pride in events such as the clean up parades.[49] In offering students the opportunity to fulfill schools' vision of responsible citizenship, the schools hoped to make students good neighbors. Through beautifying, marching, tying trash bags, writing essays on patriotic values, and removing litter, the Board hoped that students would learn to respect their neighborhoods, and that through this respect, they might prevent the neighborhood conditions that generated delinquency.

[48] Robin Nagle, *Picking Up: In the Streets and Behind the Trucks with the Sanitation Workers of New York City* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), 102.
[49] "[] Fights, Vandalism."

The Campaign conceived of vandalism and dirt as part of the same problem. Because city officials understood dirt to represent "slum" neighborhood conditions that produced delinquency, the campaign treated litter as indicative of vandalism. Years before social scientists James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling introduced the "broken window theory" in a 1982 article, arguing that keeping up the appearance of buildings could prevent larger crimes in urban areas, the Board of Education literally counted the number of broken glass incidents in each school in NYC.[50] The Office of the Superintendent of Schools sent each district a form to fill out that tracked the "Location of Broken Glass" ("Outside Windows, Stairwell, Other Inside Windows"), when it happened ("School Hrs., Other Times, Weekends") and "Cause of Breakage" ("Unknown, Accident, Malicious").[51] After collecting this data, Superintendent Jansen released a circular introducing the "City Wide Clean-up Campaign."[52]

The Clean Up Campaign placed the onus on children and parents to solve the problems associated with school facilities that were falling apart and teacher turn over in "high delinquency areas." Although the campaign was city-wide, certain activities, such as the parades and litter removal, were focused on "high delinquency areas." Because of the focus on particular neighborhoods, cleanliness was not a neutral value—it conveyed that there was something to clean up, and that people in high delinquency neighborhoods were not doing it on their own. As a value, cleanliness also conveyed the moral weight of whiteness and sacredness.[53] That students and parents were supposed to become moral through cleaning up again emphasized the

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[50] George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson, "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety," *The Atlantic Magazine*, March 1982, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/.
[51] Boxes 1 and 2, Series 521, NYCBER.
[52] See responses in Folder 5, Box 3, Series 521, NYCBER.
[53] Practices from clothing to dwelling have suggested race and class status by way of tying civility to cleanliness. See the bibliographic essay in Kathleen M. Brown, *Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 431-436. In addition to history, the sociology of cleanliness is also relevant here. Mary Douglas drew on Durkheim's theory of the sacred and the profane to discuss social boundaries, and explore how some things are seen as clean, as pure, as sacred, and others are seen as dirty, impure, and profane. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (New York: Routledge, 1966), 142.

assimilative nature of school delinquency programs—the idea that children and parents needed to change their home neighborhoods in order to meet the schools' demands.

The city's clean up parades emphasized that cleanliness was an expression of patriotism. At least two parades took place in the city in May 1953—one in Harlem, and one on the Lower East Side—two neighborhoods the city considered relatively "high delinquency." At the Lower East Side parade, students embodied the message that cleanliness was patriotic through the symbol of the American flag. A photograph shows students from P.S. 110, an elementary school on Delancey Street, carrying signs in the parade reading "THIS IS YOUR CITY PLEASE TRY TO KEEP IT CLEAN!," "P.S. 110 KEEP N.Y. CLEAN," and "CLEAN UP' OUR CITY!" with a picture of a garbage can labeled "D.S." for Department of Sanitation, and a broom, as well a cut out of the NYC skyline.[54] All wearing white tops and dark slacks or skirts, children who were not carrying signs held brooms and mops from the bottom up, with the cleaning tools at least doubling the children's heights. In front of the sign- and broom-wavers stood a female student, holding an American flag, much like the smaller children behind her carried the cleaning items. Her stance ahead of the others suggested the importance of the flag to their mops, brooms, and D.S. signs. That the brooms and flag took on similar visual roles in the picture implied that avoiding vandalism by cleaning up the city would make children good American citizens, in the eyes of school officials, i.e., good neighbors. The students marching through the streets of their neighborhood announced the patriotism of cleanliness and the anti-vandalism it represented from the perspective of the Board of Education and Department of Sanitation. The flag operated as a sacralizing symbol, as it imbued the mops and brooms with the schools' portrait of American values.

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[54] "Photo Book, J.H.S. 188, Man., Clean Street Parade, May 1953," Folder 4, Box 3, Series 521, NYCBER.

Some clean up programs were even more explicit that cleanliness was an American value, and vandalism was not. For instance, P.S. 138 at 253rd Street and Weller Avenue in Rosedale, Queens showed films on citizenship. The school also hosted "Know Your America" and "Flag Day" Programs, where the Mothers' Club awarded prizes to winners of a 5th and 6th year contest for an essay on vandalism at this assembly "because vandalism and lack of respect for the property of others are un-American and are the mark of the poor citizen."[55] At P.S. 23, another elementary school in Queens, students from kindergarten up engaged in various activities, including school plays—such as "How To Be a Good Citizen." [56] The school taught that values associated with America and the flag contrasted with vandalism.

In addition to suggesting that cleanliness was patriotic, the parades aimed to engrain loyalty to and love of the neighborhood itself by involving the students and adults in the parades. On the Lower East Side, three thousand children from neighboring schools participated in this parade, marching from Houston to 13th Street in order "to publicize the city campaign" [57] to clean up the city. A float from the NYC Department of Sanitation traveled the streets, reading "Pull Together for a Cleaner New York." The float held cardboard drawings of four people dressed in clothes ranging from a suit to an apron pulling a broom away from a cut-out of the city. At the end of the broom was a collection of thistles dripping down with the word "DIRT" written atop it. Behind the float, junior high schoolers, dressed in ties, looked ahead. Led by the band of Junior High School 188 on Houston Street in Manhattan's East Village, "This activity involved the school Art groups and the special music classes as well as the general school population. Classes developed costumes, posters, slogans and songs. Preparations resulted in intense

[55] "Report: Vandalism and Clean-Up Campaign," Folder 5, Box 3, Series 521, NYCBER.
[56] "Report on Vandalism, P.S. 23," Folder 5, Box 3, Series 521, NYCBER.
[57] Joseph Schroff, Principal, "Clean-Up Campaign, P.S. 188, Manhattan," June 16, 1953, Folder 4, Box 3, Series 521, NYCBER.

discussions of cleanliness as pupils worked to get the message across to the 'public.'"[58]

Onlookers of the Harlem parade made clear that these parades were full of energy and involved people throughout the community:

> Rollicking music, colorful floats, gracefully gyrating drum majorettes thrilled laughing, cheering throngs on May 27. The [] parade delighted hundreds of spectators from 109 St. to 96 St. south on Columbus Avenue and north on Amsterdam. The Joan of Arc Junior High School Band under police escort led the way followed by Sanitation Department floats. Children wearing caps and aprons marched along carrying mops and brooms. Gay striking posters created by our junior citizens accented the spirit of the parade. Twenty-five children each from P.S. 179, 166, 165, 118, 93, 54, 75, 9 and the band and drum majorette of J.H. 118 formed the colorful line of march.[59]

The parades aimed to instill a sense of belonging—both to the country, but also to the neighborhood itself—in the students. However, the message was a bit conflicting because they suggested that cleanliness was patriotic, but that the neighborhoods were not yet clean.

Patriotism and neighborhood belonging were joined by other mechanisms for creating student loyalty to the neighborhood; for instance, one school's Clean Up Campaign also developed pledges to encourage students to commit to cleaning their neighborhoods. Students and a block committee from near P.S. 72 on 104th Street at Lexington Avenue in (lower) East Harlem went to Times Square on May 6, 1953, which had been designated "Repair and Modernize Day." *The New York Times* reported: "the clean-up crew will descend on the Forty-second Street area, to remind the throngs there to refrain from littering the streets and to use the trash baskets provided."[60] The same block committee worked to clean up a "badly littered vacant lot adjoining the school." The school sent commitment pledges to the neighborhood stating in both English and Spanish, "[I swear] that I will help clean up the empty lot on 104th Street near

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[58] Ibid.
[59] "Citizenship Project-Schools North of West 82nd Street," Folder 4, Box 3, Series 521, NYCBER.
[60] "Clean-Up Drive Opens in Upper Manhattan," *New York Times,* May 6, 1953, Folder 4, Box 3, Series 521, NYCBER.

Public School 72." ["Yo juro que ayudare a limpiar el lote vacio en la calle 104 cerca de la escuela 72."] Volunteers could check two boxes: "I will work [Yo trabajare]" and "I will bring a shovel or rake [Traere pala y rastrillo]."[61] The commitment pledge not only helped organizers plan how many people would show up, it also served to further develop a sense that the students and parents themselves were responsible for cleanliness (rather than the city), as the event itself would teach.

Furthermore, the efforts at 104th Street demonstrated that schools aimed to engage adults, as well as children, through the campaign. In a summary report of the campaign, the school principal outlined five essential steps to the success of the "school committee of pupils and a block committee of parents": "Interest was aroused," "Good will was created," "The block has become litter-conscious," and "Parents have won the increased respect of the school," "Campaign has carried over into the school," and "Many groups cooperated in the campaign."[62] In each step, the parents of the block were important players, joining the school in teaching students about litter, and also learning themselves. Parent training appeared in many school programs. At P.S. 34 in the Bronx, students wrote a letter addressed to "Dear Neighbors," with a list of action steps for people who lived near them, among them the call to "Train your children (that is us) to do the same [Put all litter (papers, wrappers, and other odds and ends), into the wire baskets provided by the Department of Sanitation or into your own cans.] The school is doing a grand job, but the school can't do it alone."[63] The students thus became messengers for the city and schools to teach their neighbors how to responsibly care for their neighborhoods. In spreading the message, students would also come to feel a loyalty to their neighborhoods, the school implied.

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[61] P.S. 72, Manhattan Commitment Pledge, Folder 4, Box 3, Series 521, NYCBER.
[62] "The Clean-Up Campaign'-P.S. 72, Manhattan," Folder 4, Box 3, Series 521, NYCBER, underline in original.
[63] The Children of Public School 34 to Neighbors, Spring 1953, Folder 4, Box 3, Series 521, NYCBER.

School gardens were another example of students embodying clean up. For instance, at P.S. 4B in Brooklyn, "The School Garden Boys (4) were supplied with belts and Clean City League buttons. These boys stood on guard at the garden during entrance and dismissal time. They assisted the Custodian in keeping the garden free of litter, and the plants and bushes watered. They took pride in their work. The garden never looked better."[64] The combination of beautifying and getting rid of dirt again suggested the process of transformation—not only should neighborhoods rid of the bad, the campaign wanted them to replace it with the good.

In addition to patriotism, neighborhood loyalty, pledges, and beautifying, some schools explicitly discussed God. Parents at P.S. 27 in Queens at 122nd Street and 14th Avenue—another "low delinquency area" learned about promoting their children's cleanliness and preventing their vandalism through talk of neighbor love and God. For instance, at a parents' meeting, school officials asked parents: "Do you set the example in the home of going to church, and then in turn of teaching them the word of God and making them go to church at least on occasion?"[65] The phrase "at least on occasion" was telling. It acknowledged that there may have been less regular church attendance than there once was and suggested that a little religion was better than no religion. The school also sent original poems home to parents, including one that included the line: "Teach him to really understand his neighbor he must love/And when is bewildered to ask help from God" and concluded "Create within your very home an atmosphere of love./Ask God to help you in your task; He sees all from above."[66] The school saw love of neighbor as a general way for students to learn to respect the people and places around them.

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[64] "Neighborhood Cleanup Campaign P.S. 4B Statement," Folder 2, Box 3, Series 521, NYCBER.
[65] "Program for Participating in Independent Anti-Vandalism and Care of Neighborhood Plan, P.S. 27, April 1953," Folder 5, Box 3, Series 521, NYCBER.
[66] Ibid.

The citywide Clean Up Campaign aimed to prevent vandalism by improving neighborhood conditions to convey the moral value of cleanliness. The campaign understood teaching students and adults about improved neighborhood conditions as a process of transformation from dirty and vandalized to clean and patriotic through an embodied lesson about respecting one's neighborhood. The campaign used a number of methods, but most specifically, the campaign taught students to "love thy neighbor," both directly, as a lesson from God, and in embodied practices of tending to neighborhood litter and parading American flags and brooms.

"Neighbours"

The confluence of the idea that delinquency originated in poor, ethnic neighborhoods and the idea that students deemed delinquent ought to take responsibility for their neighborhood and their roles as neighbors also appeared in school lessons to "600" school students. The city housed five "600" day schools: two in Manhattan, and one each in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn.[67] Such public schools "to deal with problem children" had existed in some form since the late nineteenth century.[68] Since the 1930s, the "600" schools had theoretically been treatment programs, but they had few resources to address the needs of their students, many of whom had "emotional" issues.[69] Even the Board-supported JDEP report on "600" schools found the program lacking, suggesting that further attention to students' treatment needs and learning development, as well as the investment and quality of teachers could improve the schools.[70] As the Assistant Superintendent would only send students to "600" schools after the students had

[67] "The '600' Day Schools."
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

been suspended, and school officials admitted that treatment at the schools was inadequate, the schools occupied a liminal space between treatment and punishment.

An activity at one of the "600" schools shows how teachers and researchers understood the students there as rivals with each other—possibly due to ethnic conflict—rather than neighbors. They hoped to transfer what they saw as student aggression into what they saw as positive, neighborly interaction. In the 1957-58 academic year in NYC, students at the all-boys school P.S. 614 in Manhattan watched a series of films as part of a study by the NYC Board of Education's "600" program and New York University's Film Library. P.S. 614 was one of the public "600" schools for students determined by school authorities or courts to be "delinquent" or otherwise "socially maladjusted."[71] A five-story walk-up, with a "depressing exterior[]" and an interior "generally kept in good condition," P.S. 614 housed many who teachers reportedly never left their classrooms until the end of the day for fear of further interactions with students.[72] The goal of the study was "to determine whether" the school's students "could relate to and identify with the content of mental hygiene oriented films, whether attitudes could be restructured and behavior changed."[73] The series began with the eight-minute 1952 film *Neighbours* and continued with films about mountain goat aggression, nomad families in Malaya, jewel thieves, beaver and bear family habitats, and the Polish foster system, all topics relating to aggression, lawfulness, and home and community environments. [74] The primary researcher wrote that the project began by showing films that displayed "aggressive, hostile behavior—to be followed by films which would increasingly emphasize cooperation and

[71] Carol Cordes Smith, "Using Films in Group Guidance With Emotionally Disturbed Socially Maladjusted Boys" *Exceptional Children* 24 (1958), 206.
[72] "The '600' Day Schools."
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.

consideration of others."[75] This meant that the first film showcased the level of aggression with which researchers imagined the boys to enter. With the film, adults hoped to lower boys' aggression, to teach them how to treat their neighbors—which was calmly and cooperatively.

Neighbours, the first film the students viewed, represented violent interaction between two male neighbors over staking their own turf. The controversial film won an Academy Award in 1953, and Canadian director Norman McLaren intended for it to convey a strong anti-war message, influenced by his visit to China during the Korean War.[76] Using pixilation, a technique that employs live actors as objects of animation to produce a fast-paced effect, the film opens with both men seated on their lawns, reading newspapers, one with the headline "Peace Certain if No War;" the other headlined "War Certain if No Peace." Shortly after sitting down to read, both men notice a flower growing between their houses. Each motions that he believes the flower belongs to him. Then, the men build fences, each indicating that the flower is on his property. Next: the fighting begins. At one point in the fight, each man tears the other's house down and kicks his wife and child out of the screen, murdering them. In the end, each man dies from the fighting, and the fences they built rearrange to form crosses over their graves. A saying flashes in many different languages, finally landing on the English: "Love Thy Neighbor."[77]

In the context of the screening at P.S. 614, the researchers implied that as the film represented that the men's fight resulted from a territorial rivalry, students should therefore not fight over territories, and should view their neighbor as like them. The research project concluded that showing the films would do away with student conflict, as it "can and will induce the initial discharge of conflict necessary as a beginning point in the rehabilitation of emotionally

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[75] Ibid.
[76] *Neighbours,* Film, directed by Norman McLaren (1952; Montreal: National Film Board of Canada), https://www.nfb.ca/film/neighbours_voisins/; Albert Ohayon, "Neighbours: The NFB's Second Oscar Winner," NFB/blog, February 27, 2011, http://blog.nfb.ca/blog/2011/02/27/neighbours-the-nfbs-second-oscar-winner/.
[77] *Neighbours.*

disturbed, socially maladjusted boys."[78] Specifically, it could rehabilitate the boys through teaching them the message of loving their neighbor. The film conveyed the idea that the message of "Love thy neighbor" was universal, with the message printed in different languages. For the researchers to suggest the universality of this message to "600" school students suggested that they felt that in order for the students to *really* get along, and in order for them to *really* readjust, all cultures and neighborhoods needed to cooperate with each other non-violently.

Again, the researchers and teachers indicated that schools could teach students lessons, but students were ultimately responsible for changing their attitudes and becoming good neighbors. According to the report on the film activity, the students adopted the view that the film represented territorial conflict: "Their main reactions to this film were: the actions of the characters were all out of proportion to the provocation; in a 'grudge' fight no one really 'wins'; the needless cruelty to the mothers and babies was the result of loss of self-control." [79] The students had internalized the message that the researchers aimed to instill in them—that fighting with neighbors was harmful and that self-control was good. Not only did the report suggest that students ought to bear the responsibility of changing their behaviors, the report indicated that students may have already felt that weight.

In the example of showing *Neighbours*, the researchers aimed for "love thy neighbor" to teach the students the difference between positive and negative coexistence in a neighborhood. Territorial attitudes, violence, and aggression were negative, while cooperation, calmness, and agreement were positive. They indicated that delinquency often resulted from territorial fighting, possibly based on ethnic or racial difference, as the film showed the final saying in multiple languages. In connection with Clean Up Campaign's use of the "Golden Rule" to love thy

[78] Smith, "Using Films," 208.
[79] Ibid., 206.

neighbor as thyself so as not to destroy property and to take pride in one's community, the categories of "neighborhood" and "neighbors" became models for proper coexistence in a diverse city. Not only public schools engaged the idea of assimilating students into a particular conception of neighbors and neighborhood. The concept shaped curricula in a special private school for delinquent boys from Harlem as well.

The Wiltwyck School for Boys

"There are no bars on the windows at Wiltwyck, no locked doors. There is not even a locked gate. Corporal punishment is forbidden," read a February 26, 1950 *New York Post* article about the Wiltwyck School for Boys in Esopus, NY titled "No Bars, No Gate—Only Love at School."[80] The New York Protestant Episcopal Mission Society founded Wiltwyck in the 1930s specifically for black boys from Harlem, although the school later broadened the racial and neighborhood background of students. When the NYC Children's Court determined that boys ages eight to twelve no longer belonged in public schools, judges had the option of sending them to Wiltwyck, located one hundred miles north of the city. Wiltwyck explicitly aimed to be a non-punitive environment, where children of all races were equals.

Unlike the public school options, Wiltwyck did not assume that children were responsible for their diagnosed delinquency or their rehabilitation. Instead, Wiltwyck staff aimed to model positive coexistence for students by playing games with them, listening to them, and offering significant therapy. Wiltwyck staff participated in a version of "loving thy neighbor" that was

[80] Henry Beckett, "No Bars, No Gate—Only Love at School," *New York Post,* February 26, 1950, Box 18, Ernst Papanek Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations (hereafter cited as Papanek Papers).

less assimilative and more about seeing everyone as worthy of love and care, regardless of their status as a delinquent or their racial background.

Even though Wiltwyck staff aimed to treat students with dignity, they did ultimately believe that the children ought to change into moral, good citizens. They believed they could help the children change by offering them a country home outside of their neighborhoods and homes. The school's mission was:

> To administer for neglected, abandoned, destitute, delinquent and pre-delinquent children, without discrimination as to race or color, a constructive program of moral and spiritual enlightenment, character development, correction of behavior problems, education and training for good citizenship; and as part of the foregoing program, to conduct a home for such children.[81]

That Wiltwyck highlighted that delinquent children may have been "neglected," "abandoned," or "destitute" suggested that the children may have become delinquent due to their familial and neighborhood environments. Thus, Wiltwyck officials did not express that children had to internally change themselves from bad to good; they were not bad to begin with. Instead, they needed a new environment so that the fact that they were neighbors worthy of love could shine. Thus, although Wiltwyck staff demonstrated more care for the individual student as a human child rather than as a "problem," Wiltwyck's structure nevertheless suggested that students could only learn to be responsible, cooperative citizens in the country, away from their city neighborhoods and especially from their families. In this way, students still received mixed messages about where they belonged, where they were supposed to love their neighbor, and who their neighbors were.

Wiltwyck emphasized care for the individual student as an important feature of delinquency treatment because the school understood delinquency in relation to students'

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[81] "By-Laws of Wiltwyck School for Boys, Inc."; Wiltwyck School for Boys Records, Box 1, Folder 7; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library (hereafter cited as Wiltwyck Records).

individual psyches. Even if their neighborhood or family conditions had contributed to their delinquency, it was their individual psyche that was damaged and could be cured through therapy. In the 1940s, Wiltwyck Board members Justice Justine Wise Polier and Dr. Viola Bernard wanted to make the case that black children had the capacity to suffer from the same psychological issues that white children did and they did not have biologically different psyches. Although their motivation was primarily one of image and public relations, as they wanted to make a case for why the type of treatment Wiltwyck offered was important, the commitment to racial equality and individual psychological treatment characterized Wiltwyck. Upon Austrian-born Ernst Papanek's entrance as Executive Director in 1949, the school aimed to treat the boys' psyches through community building. Prior to Papanek, two outside surveys had suggested that Wiltwyck's method was not therapeutically successful in part because the surveyors suggested that Wiltwyck was "mainly a custodial institution," rather than a "treatment institution."[82] However, after his arrival, studies suggested that Wiltwyck was successful precisely because of the school's attention to individual care and community cooperation.[83]

Under Papanek, Wiltwyck developed a reputation for being unusual among training schools due to its communication-based, anti-authoritarian, non-punitive, approach. In his memoir *Manchild in the Promised Land*, Claude Brown recalls his disappointment upon arriving at Wiltwyck. He thought the courts had sent him to Warwick, a state training school where many of his friends were:

> I didn't see anybody I knew. I asked a man sitting next to me, "Ain't this Warwick?"
> He said, "No, this is Wiltwyck."

[82] Doyle, *Psychiatry and Racial Liberalism in Harlem*, 98.
[83] Joan McCord and William McCord, "Two Approaches to the Cure of Delinquents," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science* 44:4 (1953): 442-467.

> I was numb for a while; all I could feel was a warm tear starting down my face on its way to my chin.[84]

Though initially sad to be alone, Brown came to find Wiltwyck more supportive than other schools he had attended, largely thanks to director Papanek.[85] He explained that "I tried to make life real sad for Papanek. This became harder and harder as time went by, because I grew to like him more and more, just like everybody else."[86] Papanek made an effort to connect with students, as Brown's observations suggest.

Adults also noticed Papanek's effect on students; however, some were initially suspicious of his anti-disciplinarian approach. Starting in 1942, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt served on Wiltwyck's Board of Directors. Roosevelt noted in 1954 that Papanek had changed the students' behavior for the better: "Dr. Ernst Papanek, who is now the head of the school, was thought at first by some people to be a little too casual with the boys and not quite enough of a disciplinarian. I can only say that he seems to have done a most remarkable piece of work with them."[87] Roosevelt's surprise at the boys' behavior pointed to assumptions about the innate immorality of delinquents. Unlike Papanek, she characterized them as a "problem" that needed to be solved, but was ultimately pleasantly surprised at the effectiveness of his approach.

Wiltwyck's methods also captured social scientists' attention because instead of emphasizing discipline and punishment in correcting delinquency, the school focused on treating the children with dignity and care. Criminologist Joan McCord and sociologist William McCord compared Wiltwyck's methods to those of the New England Training School. They presented "sociograms," or graphics of how children and adults related at both schools. The result for

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[84] Claude Brown, *Manchild in the Promised Land* (New York: Touchstone, A Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1965), 62.
[85] Ibid., 75.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day," Folder 1.2, Box 1, Papanek Papers.

Wiltwyck was a "spoked wheel," where everyone was connected and in communication. At New England, there were many isolated groups. Furthermore, the McCords addressed the role models for students at each school: "At Wiltwyck, the 'male ego ideal' is seen as a loving person. At New England, the ideal is a disciplinarian."[88] They concluded:

> The Wiltwyck School emphasizes psychological therapy, non-punishment, and a loving environment. The New England School, typical of American training schools, centers around formal education, strict discipline, and vocational training…Wiltwyck's therapy decreases prejudice, anxiety, and authoritarianism. New England's program does not affect (or, actually increases) prejudice, anxiety, and authoritarian tendencies. Neither school significantly reduces aggressiveness.[89]

The McCords supported moving away from discipline because "Wiltwyck's successful experiments in reformation bring new hope, and possibly, new directions to the training movement."[90] As Roosevelt did, the McCords supported Wiltwyck because of its success at treating *delinquency*. On the other hand, Brown had identified that students liked how Papanek treated *delinquents*. Brown's interpretation may have emerged because Papanek made an effort to get to know students.

Papanek's view that solving delinquency began with caring for children's individual psychologies rather than their deeds represented a departure from public schools. Writing that "All environmental and psychological factors are therapeutically important," he prioritized helping students therapeutically in addressing the larger social issue of delinquency.[91] With regard to treatment itself, he explained that "…The immediate treatment goal is to make the child accessible to re-education by lessening his inferiority feeling and anxieties, by relieving his tensions—created by hostile social pressure—by decreasing his hostile and destructive

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[88] McCord and McCord, "Two Approaches to the Cure of Delinquents, 464.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ernst Papanek, "Some Factors in the Treatment of Juvenile Delinquency," *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 7:3 (1961): 212-221, Box 18, Papanek Papers.

behaviour, and by removing internal and external causes of emotional disturbance…"[92] Although Papanek was concerned with the social issue of delinquency—"juvenile delinquency must never be regarded only as a psychological but always also as a social deviation"[93]—he began treatment with the child. "Treatment as well as education must enable human beings to develop more than reflexes, reactions and repressions of instincts and drives. They must help the unsocialized child or adult to become a happy, independent, understanding, self-reliant, responsible and co-operative part of human society. Punishment cannot achieve any of these goals."[94] Papanek's goal mirrored the public schools in that he wanted the children to become responsible and cooperative, but he thought this was only possibly by figuring out how to make them happy and independent, rather than punishing them or treating them as the sum of their supposedly delinquent acts.

Papanek also reached to biblical stories to convey that difficult rivalries have existed since time immemorial, but that contemporary psychologists were in a better position than anyone had ever been to address the moral issues such rivalries presented. In particular, he often compared juvenile delinquency to the biblical story of Cain and Abel.[95] His article "Some Factors in the Treatment of Juvenile Delinquency" began: "When Cain slew Abel and when Jacob's sons sold their brother to the Egyptians, the percentage of juvenile delinquents in relation to the total population may well have been higher than the horrifying figures we read today…"[96] In the context of juvenile delinquency prevention, Papanek suggested that "When man knew little about his own psyche or how to apply his knowledge to induce social acceptable behaviour,

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[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.; "Statement of Ernst Papanek, Executive Director of Wiltwyck School," Box 30, Papanek Papers; "The Approach to Juvenile Delinquency: Its History and Development," Box 28, Papanek Papers.
[96] Papanek, "Some Factors."

retributive punishment played a highly important role … But the truth is that reward and punishment have always been, and today are more than ever, unreliable and unsatisfactory." [97] In other words, Cain and Abel might not have struggled so much had they had the tools of psychology. Papanek and others could try to understand the psyches of delinquents in order to produce social behavior based on understanding rather than reward and punishment.

Papanek and other Wiltwyck staff saw race relations as an area where students could learn positive social interactions in a controlled environment. Consonant with the school's original goal to serve black boys from Harlem, in December 1944, the "school population [consisted] of 75 colored and 5 white children."[98] However, when Papanek took over as director in 1948, the school aimed to broaden the populations it served. A September 1949 meeting of the Board of Directors indicated that "The Committee also proposed that efforts should be exerted to make Wiltwyck a truly interracial school by increasing the percentage of white boys in our care."[99] In doing so, their goal was to serve a broader range of students, but also likely to teach positive social interactions outside of the city space.

In publicity materials, Wiltwyck certainly represented their environment as one that encouraged interracial interactions and friendship as key to positive social cooperation. An image on the cover of a promotional booklet called "The Wiltwyck Story" shows a white student and a black student, both shirtless, seated on the same tree swing.[100] The students face each other and look to the direction from which the other boy has just swung. The image aimed to convey that at Wiltwyck, students from different racial backgrounds were friends and understood where the other one had been. Further images in the pamphlet show white and black students playing

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[97] Ibid.
[98] "Minutes of Meeting of Directors, December 19, 1944," Folder 52, Box 3, Series I, Wiltwyck Records.
[99] "Meeting of Board of Directors, September 29, 1949," Folder 55, Box 3, Series I, Wiltwyck Records.
[100] "The Wiltwyck Story," Box 18, Papanek Papers.

volleyball with adults in mixed-race teams. In another picture, a black and white student each sit, arms draped around each other, as they pet kittens in their laps. Through the photographs, Wiltwyck officials contributed to a photographic tradition of picturing black and white child friendship to further liberal white visions of racial amity.[101] Their publicity materials seemed to convey that at Wiltwyck, students would learn positive racial coexistence through learning to love their neighbors.

Despite Papanek's and Wiltwyck's attempts to see the students as full individuals, other adults' assumptions about the boys' potential for violence and uncouth sexuality loomed behind descriptions of them. For instance, a 1958 *Reader's Digest* article called "Wiltwyck: Home of the Wild Ones," played on Laslo Benedek's 1953 feature film starring Marlon Brando as a juvenile delinquent, *The Wild One,* the documentary film about Wiltwyck, *The Quiet One*, and the Dutch meaning of "Wiltwyck," which translated to "home of the wild ones."[102] The article stated that:

> Many of these boys come to Wiltwyck loaded with anger and frustration, apt to erupt into violence at any time...The 17 male counselors who live with and guide the boys have been attacked with bats, knives and crowbars. The seven women counselors have to contend with juvenile forms of sexual exhibitionism.[103]

The article went so for as to say: "Wiltwyck's aim is to take these sneering, snarling young savages and, in a period of one to four years, make useful, responsible citizens of them."[104] The

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[101] Katharine Capshaw, *Civil Rights Childhood: Picturing Liberation in African American Photobooks* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 5-6.
[102] In fact, Peter Stuyvesant had changed the name of the town where Wiltwyck was from Esopus to Wiltwyck in 1661, meaning " 'the place of savages [wild men],' " a derogatory reference to the Warranawongkong Munsee who lived there. In the nineteenth century, the name returned to Esopus; nevertheless, the article's negative and racialized stereotypes were particularly pointed due to Esopus's history. Evan T. Prichard, *Native New Yorkers: The Legacy of the Algonquin People of New York* (San Francisco: Council Oak Books, 2007), 243.
[103] "Wiltwyck: Home of the Wild Ones," *Reader's Digest*, February 1958, Folder: Articles on Wiltwyck School, Box 18, Papanek Papers.
[104] Ibid.

article offered a negative, racialized portrait of Wiltwyck students—exactly the kind of image that Wiltwyck staff aimed to correct.

Though Papanek specifically wanted to change the notion that the students were "wild" and "savages," the idea that the boys needed to leave their neighborhoods in order to become responsible citizens came across in Wiltwyck's own materials. In a promotional pamphlet called "Children's Fists Strike Out," the school framed Wiltwyck's location as a salvific alternative to the city: "At Esopus, New York, in the wooded foothills across the Hudson from Hyde Park, our neediest children begin to learn that not all adults are cruel and heartless…that not all the world is bleak and cold like the city streets from which they came. In Wiltwyck's fieldstone cottages, eighty boys are finding a new life."[105] The school framed Wiltwyck as a new beginning, away from the city. The pamphlet contrasted the new life with the students' home lives, using negative, accusatory language when it referred to the adults in students' lives as "cruel and heartless" and the city streets as "bleak and cold." A 1947 staged documentary film about Wiltwyck, *The Quiet One*, interpreted Wiltwyck as racially progressive for having positive black role models and recognizing the depth of black students' psychological distress; however, the criticism the film did receive was due to the fact that it blamed children's home lives for their delinquency, seeming to afford empathy only to the children and not to their parents or communities.[106] In this depiction, the communities themselves in the boys' home neighborhoods

[105] "Children's Fists Strike Out," Wiltwyck School for Boys, Box 18, Papanek Papers.
[106] *The Quiet One* also plays with the idea of the bleak city and salvific country school, largely through lighting. *The Quiet One*, Film, directed by Sidney Meyers (1948; New York: Arthur Mayer and Joseph Burstyn). With regard to Doyle's argument in his chapter on Wiltwyck, despite Polier and Bernard's desire to remove the sense of Harlem as a problem from the film, and despite Mosse's criticism of this approach, the film itself nevertheless, through filmic elements such as lighting, conveys the curative, transforming nature of being removed from the neighborhood. Furthermore, as Doyle suggests, "Lafargue clinicians [from Harlem's Lafargue Clinic] criticized Bernard and *The Quiet One* for blaming juvenile delinquency on gender dynamics and black families rather than on structural factors." Doyle, *Psychiatry and Racial Liberalism and Harlem*, 12, 96-116.

constituted the problem in the boys' lives, the influence from which they needed to be saved through Wiltwyck's loving environment.

Wiltwyck allowed students the freedom to express their own opinions in a monthly student newspaper; however, student opinions relayed mixed evaluations of Wiltwyck. According to students, Wiltwyck was only somewhat successful at making them like they belonged, as students reported varying degrees of liking school. Students in the "newspaper group" wrote and printed the monthly student newspaper, *The Wiltwyck Star*, on 8 ½ x 11 inch colored construction paper, with articles typed. The publication regularly published students' opinions on topics such as "Who is your best friend?" and "Who is your worst enemy?," as well as their opinions about schools and teachers.[107] In articles that were "ORIGINAL AND UNCENSORED," according to the editor, students discussed "hate" and "enemies"—language in contrast to the school's rhetoric of love. [108]

A frequent question was "Why do you hate school?," indicating that students expected each other to hate school, as Brown expected to dislike Papanek. The answers for one class read:

> I hate to learn……[student name]
> A certain teacher…..[student name]
> I do not hate school….[student name]
> Too much work……[student name]
> Because-----…….[student name]
> There are no girls…..[student name]
> It's no good…..[student name]
> I don't like Wiltwyck School….[student name]
> Because it is filthy…….[student name].[109]

The general statements "I hate to learn" and "Because" suggest that the students may have expressed dislike of any school. However, the specific details about Wiltwyck—"A certain teacher," "I don't like Wiltwyck School," and "Because it is filthy" suggest that Wiltwyck's

[107] "Mr. Brown's Class," *The Wiltwyck Star,* March 1, 1952, Box 18, Papanek Papers.
[108] Masthead Page, *The Wiltwyck Star*, April 1953, Box 18, Papanek Papers.
[109] "Mr. Brown's Class." I have removed students' names because they were minors.

approach did not necessarily reach all students. Perhaps the students' attitudes toward school generally were too negative to overcome, or, perhaps, their experiences at Wiltwyck were confusing or alienating.

Due largely to Papanek's influence, Wiltwyck's goals, treatment, and self-representation differed from other training schools and reformatories by emphasizing love and communication rather than punishment and discipline. The school aimed to show children love and to teach them to love other people. However, Wiltwyck still indicated that students could not become productive members of society in their home communities. As a result, the ideas about and expressions of love did not always ring true to the students, many of whom reported that they missed their homes,[110] those same neighborhoods that Wiltwyck officials saw as "bleak and cold" with "heartless" adults. In this depiction, the city community constituted the problem in the boys' lives, the influence from which they needed to be saved. Wiltwyck framed the physical removal of the boys from the city as a transformative process, one in which they left the "slum," "high delinquency area" they called home, and, in a natural setting, were exposed to teachers who modeled care for them, in the hopes that they would then model care for their community in return. The question must have remained for students: which community would they care for? The one they learned had caused their problems, or the Wiltwyck one they would have to leave at age twelve, when they surpassed the school's age limit?

Conclusion

Drawing on sociological and religious ideas in circulation about delinquency and neighborhoods, NYC public schools cultivated their own delinquency-specific meaning of "thou shalt love they neighbor as thyself." In the context of NYC public school delinquency prevention

[110] Throughout *The Wiltwyck Star,* Box 18, Papanek Papers.

and treatment, “love thy neighbor” was a command to turn delinquents—whom the schools understood as dirty, law-breaking, property-destroying, and untied to their homes—into good neighbors, whom the schools understood as clean, law abiding, respectful of property, and committed to the responsibility of cleaning their neighborhoods. This term participated in the Judeo-Christian repertoire because it served to instruct students how they ought to get along with each other. It drew on a more reciprocal understanding of loving thy neighbor as expressed by religious leaders in the city, but the city did not see itself as responsible for also showing delinquents love; rather it had to teach delinquents how to behave. As in the instances of moral and spiritual values and integration programming, the broadly inclusive language masked school officials’ inaction, and in this case, their more sinister attitudes toward students they deemed delinquents. Although “loving thy neighbor” was not as explicitly about race as the upcoming curriculum and programming on racial integration was, this earlier model of teaching positive coexistence relied upon inconclusive and racially prejudicial social science. Even programs at Wiltwyck designed to be more inclusive nevertheless sent students mixed messages about where they belonged and where they ought to be good neighbors. This tension—between attempts to make students good neighbors, responsible for treating others respectfully in their communities, and a disdain for or indifference to those neighborhoods themselves also appeared in programs on racial integration in schools. As we turn to examine school programming on brotherhood, human relations, and racial integration, we will see how the call for racial and religious unity took place against the backdrop of efforts to and resistance against desegregating the very neighborhoods the city identified as “high delinquency.”

Chapter Three "The Morality of Our American Heritage and of Our Judaeo-Christian Tradition": Integration Programming

In the waning days of summer vacation in 1960, New York City (NYC) Board of Education President Charles Silver and Superintendent of Schools John Theobald delivered a Joint Statement to the press on the racial desegregation of public schools. As with other northern school systems, the law did not racially segregate NYC public schools, but NYC was residentially segregated, leading to *de facto* public school segregation. The 1954 Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education* had not prohibited *de facto* segregation, but the NYC Board of Education (the Board) nevertheless felt compelled to comply with the decision's spirit.

At the press conference, Silver and Theobald introduced a new policy: open enrollment. In open enrollment, parents of black or Puerto Rican students could request to transfer their children from schools with "a heavy concentration of Negro and Puerto Rican students" to schools with more white students.[1] The schools with more students of color were designated "sending schools" and assigned to particular "receiving schools." Silver and Theobald alternately referred to the program's goal as "assimilation" and "racial integration."[2]

To explain their goal, Silver and Theobald said that "the blending of minority groups of all races and creeds into the American way of life" was "a natural consequence of the morality of

[1] "Joint Statement by Mr. Charles H. Silver, President of the Board of Education, and Dr. John J. Theobald, Superintendent of Schools (2 P.M. Wednesday, August 31, at press conference in office of Superintendents of Schools, Room 1016, Board of Education Headquarters, 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York)," Folder 88, Box 71, Subseries 10, Series 911, New York City Board of Education Records, New York City Municipal Archives (hereafter cited as NYCBER).
[2] Ibid.

our American heritage and of our Judaeo-Christian tradition."[3] Despite Silver and Theobald's situating of open enrollment in the lofty values of the "Judaeo-Christian tradition," historians have widely recognized that the Board failed to desegregate the schools.[4] In fact, the Board created open enrollment to placate desegregation activists, who, in 1964, led by Reverend Milton Galamison and the Parents Workshop that he ran, went on to stage one of the largest school segregation boycotts of the Civil Rights Movement in NYC.[5] Given the seeming contradiction between Silver and Theobald's zealous support for integration and the failure of the Board's desegregation programs, Silver and Theobald's statement offers a window into conflicting ideas about racial desegregation of public schools in NYC, particularly the role ideas about Judeo-Christian religious pluralism played in shaping the Board's perspective.

While other scholars have argued that Judeo-Christianity emerged in order to create a powerful image of American religious pluralism to face Communism abroad,[6] or for businessmen and clergy to fight the New Deal's progressive policies,[7] a different story emerges when we examine how school officials and parents on the ground in NYC engaged the idea of the "Judaeo-Christian tradition" throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s. I argue that school

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Jennifer de Forest, "The 1958 Harlem School Boycott: Parental Activism and the Struggle for Educational Equity in New York City," *The Urban Review* 40:1 (2007): 21-41; Matthew F. Delmont, *Why Busing Failed: Race, Media, and the National Resistance to School Desegregation* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); Charles S. Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville: A Teacher's Education, 1968-69* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014); Heather Lewis, *New York City Public Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg: Community Control and Its Legacy* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2013); Brian Purnell, *Fighting Jim Crow in the County of Kings: The Congress of Racial Equality in Brooklyn* (Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 2013); Clarence Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door: Milton A. Galamison and the Struggle to Integrate New York City Schools* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

[5] Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*, 6-12; Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door*, 102-113.

[6] K. Healan Gaston, "Interpreting Judeo-Christianity in America," *Relegere: Studies in Religion and Reception* 2:2 (2012): 291-304; Jonathan P. Herzog, *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Kevin M. Schultz, *Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[7] Kevin M. Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

officials tried to assimilate black and Puerto Rican students *into* "the morality" of what they called the "Judaeo-Christian tradition" through teaching particular values, such as brotherhood, and through publicizing desegregation initiatives, including open enrollment. The moral norms of the "Judaeo-Christian tradition" included valuing tolerance, brotherhood (a concept we will discuss shortly), cleanliness, nuclear family structures, and safety. School officials saw the "Judaeo-Christian tradition" as distinctly American, and the process of obtaining Judeo-Christian values was, in their eyes, also a process of assimilation into a particular view of American culture. Thus, the Board and other school officials understood *integration as assimilation*.

Although school officials claimed to include people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, their attempts to assimilate students of color aligned the "Judaeo-Christian tradition" with whiteness. Like so many examples of whiteness, the whiteness of the "Judaeo-Christian tradition" was invisible to the white people who produced it, but visible to people who were not white.[8] To communities of color, when school officials spoke of integration, it sounded more like a message to make white people feel better than a plan to desegregate schools.

In particular, black and Puerto Rican parents and community members' understanding of integration differed from school officials' assimilationist approach. Parents and community members had long understood school integration as entailing equal access to resources in shared spaces, the values of which would transform as various groups populated them. The fact of integration was not necessarily the goal of all black and Puerto Rican public school advocates in NYC. Rather, the educational opportunities and changed values that many thought would only come from integration were goals. Galamison, Kenneth Clark, and the Parents Workshop were among those who believed that integration was the best way to achieve quality education. As we

[8] On the invisibility of whiteness, see for example: Richard Dyer, *White* (London: Routledge, 1997); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010).

will see later in the discussion of community control, not all black and Puerto Rican community members advocating for change in public schools fought exclusively for integration. This chapter focuses on those who did, as well as those who offered educational opportunities outside of schools based on alternative models of moral education to meet children's learning needs in ways the schools were not.

With some drawing on Christian concepts such as loving thy neighbor to explain integration, black and Puerto Rican parents and community members taught moral norms about valuing the humanity of children and the benefits of cultivating new communities. For some community members, this vision of students learning together was explicitly Christian; for others, it provided the opportunity to teach students about natural black belonging in the United States. In turn, many black and Puerto Rican New Yorkers rejected the Board's vision of integration as assimilation into Judeo-Christian moral norms because of its assimilationist approach, not, as some might expect, because of First Amendment issues. Parents and community members of color conveyed that they felt that programs such as open enrollment put the burden on them to change the situation.

The white school officials' and parents and community members of color's conflicting understandings of integration reveal that the Board's concept of "integration" and school programs that aimed to teach positive racial coexistence produced a Judeo-Christian repertoire of terms about religious and racial coexistence. Although the Board and community members did not always use the language of "Judaeo-Christian" as Silver and Theobald did in their statement, as we have seen, that the Board claimed that its mission was to promote the "Judeo-Christian ethic" in schools through moral education programs.[9] This chapter focuses on how the Board

[9] "The Development of Moral and Spiritual Ideals in the Public Schools," adopted by the NYC Board of Education on October 4, 1956, Folder 120, Box 14, Series 668, NYCBER. See Chapter One of this dissertation.

looked to models of religious pluralism to teach students about its vision of racial integration. In particular, schools turned to the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ), the NYC-based interfaith organization that created and spread a concept of Judeo-Christianity beginning in the 1930s, and whose mission sought to deploy Judeo-Christian pluralism as a way to fight totalitarianism. As we will see, NYC public schools took up celebrating the NCCJ's Brotherhood Week and looked to the NCCJ for funding on assimilative school projects, such as the Puerto Rican Study. Through this relationship, and the Board's own fumbling to make universal statements about integration, the Board added positive concepts to its Judeo-Christian repertoire of coexistence—such as brotherhood, integration, tolerance, respect, and understanding—as well as negative concepts—such as bigotry, prejudice, and intolerance.

As with the moral and spiritual values programming examined in Chapter One and the juvenile delinquency prevention programming in Chapter Two, the Board members framed curricula and statements about racial integration as universally moral. Scholarship has shown that the assimilation of religious and racial "others" into moral norms that public school officials have called universal has historically privileged the culture's dominant religious and racial groups.[10] In this case, the Board literally labeled non-white students "others" when collecting data on racial composition, and aimed to assimilate students labeled as "others" into Judeo-Christianity, which was a dominant religious discourse.[11] Thus, despite the positive language of brotherhood and the like, the school officials' use of Judeo-Christianity contrasted with the goals of communities who fought for civil rights in the north.

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[10] Tracy Fessenden, *Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 84-107.
[11] "RE: Open Enrollment Program – September 1963," Folder 4, Box 66, Subseries 10, Series 911, NYCBER.

With few exceptions, historians of the northern Civil Rights Movement have all but ignored ideas about religious pluralism.[12] When we look at ideas about religious pluralism in NYC's school segregation crisis, we see that the concept of Judeo-Christianity did not further the goals of the Civil Rights Movement in NYC schools, as one historian suggests it did in the larger movement.[13] Rather the ideas and practices of the "Judaeo-Christian tradition" impeded activists' demands for civil rights and equal opportunities in NYC schools.

In the chapter, I first outline the historical development of the NCCJ and its annual celebration of Brotherhood Week in NYC schools. Then, I examine two Board efforts to assimilate black and Puerto Rican students into Judeo-Christian values: the Puerto Rican Study and open enrollment. Third, I analyze examples of black parents in Harlem resisting the schools' assimilationist morality by creating alternative educational spaces for their children. Taken together, these examples suggest that despite the Board's assimilationist efforts, "integration" of public schools remained a collection of ideas rather than a practice in NYC. The interfaith origins of the Board's imaginative landscape begin our story.

"Am I My Brother's Keeper?": Brotherhood Week and the Assimilationist History of Judeo-Christianity

Ideas about Judeo-Christianity proliferated in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. In particular, the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) advocated for religious tolerance in workshops around the country. The NCCJ disseminated a concept of Judeo-Christianity as the true American tradition in which Protestants, Catholics, and Jews

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[12] Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Jason Sokol, *All Eyes are Upon Us: Race and Politics from Boston to Brooklyn* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008).
[13] Gaston, "Interpreting Judeo-Christianity in America," 292; Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, 179, 183.

worked together for religious tolerance. Formed in 1929 by Everett R. Clinchy, the NCCJ began an annual celebration of Brotherhood Week as Brotherhood Day in 1934 (it became a week in 1939) to create goodwill amidst the rise of totalitarianism in Europe.[14] Brotherhood Week focused on a range of awareness-raising advertisements, radio spots, and lesson plans for churches, synagogues, and public schools. The NCCJ understood brotherhood as the mutual appreciation of religious tolerance by different religious groups. Over time, the NCCJ applied the concept of brotherhood to racial, as well as religious, relations. The group also increasingly emphasized shared values during Brotherhood Week rather than simply tolerating religious difference. However, despite the prevalence of Brotherhood Week in public schools, few scholars have examined the celebration in that context.[15]

The practice of Brotherhood Week in NYC public schools exemplifies how the schools approached racial integration programming. In particular, the NCCJ's concept of shared respect for distinct groups shaped integration programming. In conjunction with the NCCJ's shift to focus on race as well as religion, NYC public school officials focused primarily on the idea that everyone should *share* the values of brotherhood and tolerance, rather than the NCCJ founders' original focus on respect for difference. By using Brotherhood Week to promote not just religious tolerance, but also racial tolerance, public schools actually promoted an assimilationist vision, where they expected black and Puerto Rican students to adopt the schools' value of brotherhood. School officials expected people of all racial and religious groups to honor the idea of tolerance that proponents of the Judeo-Christian view supported, even amidst the backdrop of continued school segregation.

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[14] Ibid., 65-67.
[15] Matthew Hedstrom discusses Brotherhood Week, but not in public schools, in *The Rise of Liberal Religion: Book Culture and American Spirituality in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 142-171.

Before considering how ideas about Judeo-Christianity permeated NYC public schools through an examination of Brotherhood Week, we turn to the history of the NCCJ and its roots in the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America (FCC)'s view of religious tolerance. The FCC and NCCJ used the term "brotherhood" to cultivate an ideal into which churches could assimilate. In the United States, FCC first employed the term "world brotherhood" as an understanding of differences and recognition of shared humanity during the global conflict among nations in World War I. In this context, "brotherhood" was distinctly Christian, but the FCC hoped to include Christians across denominations, as the NCCJ would later hope to connect Americans across religious traditions.

The FCC aimed to create "a Christian social order"—distinct from churches' individual agendas—for all churches to support. The FCC's 1919 pamphlet "From World War to World Brotherhood," emphasized that churches could shape the United States' social order, and possibly the world social order. The pamphlet identified four crucial areas where churches could apply brotherhood: "first, a more effective proclamation of fundamental verities; second, a new sense of world responsibility animating all departments of church life…Third, a resolute effort to understand what a Christian social order in America should mean, and to secure it…Fourth, a swiftly increasing co-operation among the Churches."[16] In the FCC's framing, "a Christian social order" would shape the United States' political decisions through cultivating relationships among different churches. "World brotherhood" was the organization's name for this "Christian social order."

Everett R. Clinchy, a young Presbyterian minister who worked as the FCC's Executive Secretary in the late 1920s, found inspiration in the FCC's ideas about brotherhood. The ideas

[16] "Changed Task of Christianity," *The Chinese Recorder*, August 1, 1919. In his forthcoming book, Curtis Evans argues that brotherhood was a "liberal theology." If it was like other liberal movements, it is unsurprising that it proclaimed to promote inclusivity while enacting inequality.

contributed to his own thinking about cooperation among Catholics, Protestants, and Jews for national peace.[17] When the Ku Klux Klan demonstrated anti-Catholicism during the presidential campaign of Alfred E. Smith, Clinchy began a new organization devoted to brotherhood among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews.[18] Working with Chief Justice Charles Evan Hughes, business executive Roger W. Straus, and educators, Clinchy founded the NCCJ as the National Conference of Jews and Christians in 1929.[19] The NCCJ educated people about the predominant religions in America with the goal of producing tolerance and eliminating prejudice.

The NCCJ's original mission described relations among adherents of certain religious traditions, not noting other identity markers. The mission read: "to promote justice, amity, understanding and cooperation among Protestants, Catholics and Jews, and to analyze, moderate and finally eliminate intergroup prejudices which disfigure and distort religious, business, social and political relations." While the mission only specified Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, it expanded beyond religious spaces. The NCCJ's founders were interested in how religious prejudice affected public spaces, as well as private places of religious worship.

The NCCJ promoted education as the vehicle for spreading the conference's mission to wide audiences. Clinchy helped organize an interfaith seminar for leaders and laypeople of all three religions and delivered his message to colleges.[20] He also participated in what the press playfully dubbed the "Tolerance Tour" of "Tolerance Trio" Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron, Father John Elliot Ross, and Reverend Clinchy. The Trio traveled to thirty-four states to discuss

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[17] Everett R. Clinchy, *All in the Name of God* (The John Day Company, 1934); Schultz, *Tri-Faith America,* 15-17.
[18] "Everett R. Clinchy, One of the Founders of Ecumenical Unit," *New York Times*, January 24, 1986, A17.
[19] Ibid. It was originally named the "National Conference of Jews and Christians," but later changed its name. Deborah Dash Moore, "Jewish GIs and the Creation of the Judaeo-Christian Tradition," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 8:1 (1998), n18, 51.
[20] " '500' of Three Faiths Will Meet in Seminar," *The American Israelite*, January 21, 1932, 1; "A Campaign Against Intolerance," *Jewish Advocate*, September 19, 1933, B5; "Students to Study Group Differences," *Daily Boston Globe*, February 28, 1930, 12; "Symposium on Religion Spreading at Colleges," *The American Israelite*, April 23, 1931, 1.

tolerance in the early 1930s.[21] To Clinchy, education could end bigotry. Education was so important to him that, out of deference to what he felt was his true vocation of education, he requested that people avoid calling him Reverend or Doctor, since he saw his work as educational, and instead just refer to him as "Mr. Clinchy."[22]

In his understanding of tolerance, Clinchy defended religious uniqueness. For example, he ardently opposed missions to Jews. When his colleague John R. Mott stated in 1931 that " 'missionary work among Jews was a duty,' "[23] Clinchy sent the following telegram to the *New York Times*:

> Personally I do not want to see Jews proselyted to Christianity. Nevertheless I realize that Dr. Mott has a perfect right to tell the whole world about what he believes to be his miracuously delivered message from God. Apparently, however, Dr. Mott is not aware of the bad social consequences of his stand. When a missionary conclave determines a program of proselyting Jews the psychological effect upon Jews is that of declaring war upon Jewish culture. Mistrust, fear, hatred and a fighting spirit are aroused. Jews, like Protestants and Catholics, identify their culture with their very lives. When Christian churches campaign for individual Jews Christians virtually are attacking the existence of Judaism. For Christians to talk about expressing good-will toward Jews and at the same time planning to annihiliate Judaism shows a total ignorance of the anthropological laws of human behavior.
>
> Moreover, I hold that if Christians sincerely want to prove to Jews the values of their faith they had better re-examine their conduct toward Jews, for in many respects it is altogether unbrotherly.[24]

Clinchy's description of missionizing Jews as "unbrotherly" signaled why tolerating religious difference was important to him. Making different religious groups the same erased the beliefs, identity, and tradition of an entire people, he expressed. To Clinchy, religious difference was central to his understanding of brotherhood because he understood religious sameness as erasure.

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[21] "Protestant, Catholic, Jew Report on Tour of U.S.," *New York Herald Tribune*, January 23, 1934, 3; "Rabbi, Priest and Protestant Cleric Plan Tour of Country," *The Sun*, October 29, 1933, 20; "Tour to Urge Tolerance," *New York Times*, August 30, 1933, 8. Schultz also talks about the "Tolerance Trio" in *Tri-Faith America*, 35-41.
[22] "Everett R. Clinchy, One of the Founders of Ecumenical Unit."
[23] "Rev. Clinchy Denounces Missionary Speech: Joins With Jewish Leaders In Condemning Address By Dr. John R. Mott," *The American Israelite*, January 22, 1931, 1.
[24] "His Reply to Dr. Mott: The Rev. E.R. Clinchy Warned Against Mistrust and Hatred," *New York Times*, January 18, 1931, 36. Original spelling.

Through the creation of Brotherhood Week in the 1930s, the NCCJ brought attention to a monumental erasure: the annihilation of Jews in Nazi Germany.[25] The NCCJ's leaders believed they could use Brotherhood Week to promote the belief that Judaism deserved dignity. Even years later, the NCCJ annually reiterated the organization's belief that religious groups could maintain their distinctiveness and remain equally worthy of respect when stating "Some Basic Beliefs" about brotherhood:

> "NCCJ believes that brotherhood is giving to others the same dignity and rights one claims for himself. NCCJ believes that brotherhood can be made a normal and natural part of everyday living. NCCJ believes that brotherhood can be achieved without seeking a union of religious bodies and without weakening the loyalties or modifying the distinctive beliefs of any creed."[26]

To the NCCJ, each religion was distinct, and brotherhood maintained the separation. However, something new emerged when the NCCJ initiated a week dedicated to brotherhood. In addition to highlighting respect for difference, the NCCJ also promoted brotherhood as a new value to share across traditions. The mutual support that brotherhood represented ended up dominating the celebration of Brotherhood Week instead of the particularities of different traditions. Brotherhood Week did not intend to erase particular religious or racial groups but effectively glossed over religious and racial uniqueness.

For example, a 1950 Brotherhood Week celebration sponsored by P.S. 168's Parents Association (PA) in Brooklyn, NY promoted the idea that religions were separate but all groups should support brotherhood. The PA recognized religion and race as similar markers of difference, a trend that reflected the NYC public schools' racial integration curricula. The PA

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[25] Everett R. Clinchy, "The Strange Case of Herr Hitler," (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1933). This book was sent to NCCJ members. Also, Schultz*, Tri-Faith America*, 65-67.

[26] "Fact Sheet," Brotherhood Week 1955, Box 5, Series 4, National Conference of Christians and Jews Records, Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota Libraries (hereafter cited as NCCJR).

hosted "an international buffet supper"[27] to "Eat Brotherhood," where the parents displayed distinct cultural creations across a buffet table.[28] When the women posed for a picture for the newspaper, the sign behind them read "Brotherhood." The PA likely got the idea for the supper from the NCCJ. During Brotherhood Week, the NCCJ recommended that at "Women's Shows," schools throughout the country could "Illustrate brotherhood through food." According to the NCCJ, "Most menus reveal all sorts of racial and religious contributions."[29] P.S. 168's gathering earned the *New York Times* headline "Brotherhood Nourished by P[T]A." The event featured what the newspaper identified as diverse culinary options: "Italian spaghetti, Jewish gefulte fish, Southern fried chicken, Russian, German, Norwegian, Spanish and New England delicacies."[30] Through the display of food, the PA's event presented each race and religion as discrete, with something distinctive to offer a shared public space. In the image of women standing under the "Brotherhood" sign, the *Times* reader identifies the message that everyone in the group valued the concept of tolerating religious and racial diversity. They were embracing a shared respect for brotherhood, as the prominent "Brotherhood" sign suggested that the shared value was the gathering's purpose.

Sometimes, the focus on the shared characteristic of brotherhood outweighed the attention to particular groups in NYC school programming. For example, the juxtaposition of Negro History Week and Brotherhood Week illustrates how schools prioritized the value of brotherhood more than the needs of particular racial groups. Each year, Brotherhood Week followed Negro History Week, but the aims of the honorific weeks differed. Negro History Week

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[27] "Brotherhood Nourished by PTA," Folder 93, Box 52, Subseries 8, Series 911, NYCBER. The article suggests that both parents and teachers were involved but someone in the archives has crossed out "PTA" and written "PA." "PA" is likely more accurate because there were many Parents Associations and not as many Parent Teacher Associations.
[28] "Brotherhood for College and Adult Groups," Brotherhood Week 1955, Box 5, Series 4, NCCJR.
[29] "Suggestions for Programming Brotherhood Week," Brotherhood Week 1955, Box 5, Series 4, NCCJR.
[30] "Brotherhood Nourished by PTA."

aimed to celebrate African American history and highlight African Americans' contributions to diverse fields. During Negro History Week, students learned, among other things, that "the Negro participates in all phases of American life, e.g., in medicine, science, teaching, literature, art, music, factory work, agriculture, public service." Students also might have "Learn[ed] a poem by a Negro author (Teacher should select a poem free from dialect)."[31] Negro History Week's focus thus acknowledged that African Americans' contributions to American life were often overlooked and deserved particular recognition.

By contrast, Brotherhood Week itself overlooked African Americans' particular contributions by positing that all people had different traditions that were equally worthy of respect. During Brotherhood Week, schools directed students to learn about "the need for developing and for strengthening the bonds of friendship among all peoples."[32] The theme emphasized togetherness without addressing the history of inequality, or why friendship among all peoples might be difficult. In addition to reading books about brotherhood, possible activities included "reporting personal anecdotes in pupils' experiences in the home, school, or neighborhood which illustrate the ideal of brotherhood and of helpfulness," "preparing assembly program, e.g., dramatizing scene from a story or poem illustrating theme of brotherhood, preparing an original play based on services people have rendered to mankind," "singing songs of many lands and learning dances," and "reciting appropriate selections in choral arrangements."[33] If Negro History Week taught students that African Americans contributed to diverse spaces, Brotherhood Week played down the significance of African Americans' contributions. Brotherhood Week taught that all contributions to American life were equal, but it

[31] "Resource Units, Grade 4, 1956," Folder 45, Box 3, Series 550, NYCBER.
[32] Ibid.
[33] For example, "Resource Units, Grade 7," Folder 48, Box 3, Series 550, NYCBER.

did not address the historical importance of African Americans' contributions or the racist history of the country.

As it played out in NYC public schools, the NCCJ's concept of brotherhood promoted assimilationist ideology because brotherhood championed respect for difference without providing students the framework for how to respect difference in light of the historical contributions and experiences of specific groups. This approach came out of the particular NYC context, but it also drew on how the NCCJ was presenting brotherhood in the 1950s. For example, imagine you had turned on the radio between February 20 and 27, 1955 anywhere in the country. The NCCJ would have wanted you to hear the following weather report:

> There's a thaw in store for us today, according to the Weather Bureau, so go prepared for puddle-jumping. And, since this is BROTHERHOOD WEEK, go prepared to meet your fellow Americans with a nice thaw of understanding in your heart and spirit toward people of other races, religions, and nationalities. As Americans all, LET'S GET TOGETHER! ... FOR BROTHERHOOD![34]

In its splashy presentation of the opportunity for brotherhood even in playful puddle jumping, the spot conveyed that each "race[], religion[], and nationalit[y]" could share in the unified goal of brotherhood by physically jumping together. Here, brotherhood became the central goal, rather than the particular experiences of people due to their racial, religious, or national history.

In the 1950s, the NCCJ also used a variety of social, bodily, and cultural metaphors to explain brotherhood as an antidote to the negative aspects of the Judeo-Christian repertoire. For example, brotherhood represented the human family, where brothers were separate creatures equally worthy of dignity because they shared a creator: "it [the NCCJ] seeks the Brotherhood of

[34] "Brotherhood Week Spots For Your…Weather Reporter," Brotherhood Week 1955, Box 5, Series 4, NCCJR. The phrasing "Americans All" may have referred to the 1938 and 1939 radio program "Americans All, Immigrants All," produced by "Federal officials at the Office of Education in Harold Ickes's Department of the Interior," which Barbara Dianne Savage says aimed to "create a state-sanctioned narrative of American history that made immigrants, African Americans, and Jews visible," but, "Built around an all-encompassing myth of success, this narrative construction ultimately failed to fit any of the groups it sought to represent." Barbara Dianne Savage, *Broadcasting Freedom: Radio, War, and the Politics of Race, 1938-1948* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 21-22. Similarly, the brotherhood narrative misfired in its attempts to represent individual groups.

Man based on the Fatherhood of God." As brothers were related but physically separate, races and religions could share values but occupy independent bodies. The brothers metaphor was broad, and came to apply to diverse groups within a single nation, where each group was a brother, the nation was the family, and God remained God. This version of the metaphor appeared in the 1955 Brotherhood Week's theme "One Nation Under God."[35]

References to the biblical story Cain and Abel typified the uses of the metaphor of brotherhood as family. During the 1955 Brotherhood Week, President Dwight Eisenhower said:

> The spirit which lies behind our observance of Brotherhood Week is as old as our civilization. It goes back to the answer given to the first man who asked, 'Am I my brother's keeper?'
> Through thousands of years there have been many noble answers to this same question, answers which bravely affirm that all men -- of all religions, of all colors, of all languages -- are in fact brothers, that no man can live alone.[36]

As each sitting U.S. president did, Eisenhower served as the honorary chairman of Brotherhood Week. Presidents gave the occasion special gravitas. For instance, Eisenhower tapped into his own promotion of Judeo-Christian values as a weapon to fight the Cold War. He also highlighted the Christian origins of brotherhood by pointing to a Christian story of "the first man who asked, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' " as an example of religious tolerance among all religions. Echoing Eisenhower, that same year, one newspaper editor argued that brotherhood meant responding affirmatively to Cain's question "Am I my brother's keeper?"[37] To Eisenhower and those who supported his vision, these Christians origins situated current U.S. conversations about religious tolerance in the beginnings of "our civilization," suggesting that he viewed the United States as inheriting the legacy of biblical history and values.

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[35] Kevin Kruse discusses the NCCJ's 1955 theme of "One Nation Under God" as exemplifying the relationship between businessmen and conservative clergy in his book *One Nation Under God,* 111. In addition to the uses Kruse describes, it conveyed the idea of a shared value across religious and racial differences.
[36] "Suggestions to Speakers," Brotherhood Week 1955, Box 5, Series 4, NCCJR.
[37] Carl M. Saunders, "And Who Was Cain?," Brotherhood Week 1955, Box 5, Series 4, NCCJR.

The NCCJ imagined brotherhood as a curative antidote to prejudice: as medicine, as shield. In almost every NCCJ poster, brotherhood was a light set in contrast to dark mindsets. By using visual metaphors such as an anthropomorphic medicine bottle whose head was bloated with "discrimination," "intolerance," and "prejudice," the NCCJ showed how it thought brotherhood worked.[38] The NCCJ thought teaching about brotherhood could combat intolerance. The group expected people's perspectives to change through the medicinal antidote.

In a 1955 Brotherhood Week poster, a globe represented world brotherhood. A man named "History" with long white hair, wearing a dark robe and glasses stared at the brotherhood globe. He mused: "I'd Never Have to Record Another War."[39] Here, the poster presented world brotherhood as a hypothetical to be attained. Old Man History had not yet seen world brotherhood. As with the possible affirmative answer to Cain's question, brotherhood remained conjectural: What *if* everyone understood himself or herself as his or her brother's keeper? What *if* everyone valued assimilation into the "Judaeo-Christian tradition," regardless of race or religion? In consultation with the NCCJ, the NYC Board of Education tried to find out. The Board and the NCCJ brought ideas about religious and racial coexistence in the "Judaeo-Christian tradition" into the schools not just through Brotherhood Week, but also with other programs aiming to assimilate Puerto Rican and black students into the NYC public schools.

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[38] See posters including "Lift Away!," "Good for What Ails You," "Forging: One Nation Under God," "Sometimes the Torch Needs a Shield," in Brotherhood Week 1955, Box 5, Series 4, NCCJR. Beyond the imagery, Clinchy believed that brotherhood had true medical effects. For Brotherhood Week in 1952, he reportedly said " 'prejudices, animosities and hostilities lead in the direction of physical breakdown.' " In particular: "More attractive personalities belong to people free of animosities, Dr. Clinchy maintains, because high blood pressure, heart diseases, glandular upsets, headaches and ulcers are correlated with hate." "Prejudice Leads to Bad Health Says Dr. Everett R. Clinchy, President of Nat'l Conference of Christians and Jews," *Jet Magazine*, February 28, 1952.

[39] "I'd Never Have to Record Another War," Brotherhood Week 1955, Box 5, Series 4, NCCJR.

School Desegregation as Assimilation

Responding to criticism from parents and community members advocating for civil rights for students of color, the NYC Board of Education released several desegregation plans in the 1950s and 1960s, yet offered few concrete changes. The plans suggested that Board members understood desegregation as the right course of action morally. For example, in the final report of the first city-sponsored desegregation effort, the Board's 1955-1958 Commission on Integration, the Board indicated that "Educationally, as well as morally and socially, the only remedy for the segregated school is its desegregation."[40] Facing pressure from black and Puerto Rican New Yorkers, the Board initiated the Commission to "survey the problems" of *de facto* school segregation and "prepare a general blueprint for their solution."[41] Board President Charles Silver, and former Board President Arthur Levitt chaired the commission, and committee members included Board member Vito Lanza (who had said that schools ought teach moral and spiritual values to prevent delinquency because "the salvation of the minds, the hearts and the souls of our youth, is a dire emergency of almost serious nature"[42]), NAACP representative Ella Baker, and psychologist Kenneth Clark. In this report and at other times when the Commission or Board provided reasons for desegregating schools, they referred to desegregation as a moral imperative for public schools.[43] For example, the Commission's report reprinted the Board's statement that the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown* decision was " 'a legal and moral reaffirmation of our fundamental educational principles,' " suggesting that Board members believed that

[40] "Toward the Integration of Our Schools: Final Report of the Commission on Integration," Folder 24, Box 13, Ella Baker Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (hereafter cited as Baker Papers).
[41] Ibid.
[42] NYC Board of Education Meeting Minutes, October 4, 1956, Folder 120, Box 14, Series 668, NYCBER. See Chapter One of this dissertation.
[43] For example, also see the plan for the 1963-64 year referring to the "moral front" as the first front for the Board to address on integration: "Plan for Integration," Folder 59, Box 70, Subseries 10, Series 911, NYCBER.

"integration," as they called it, was a value they already held.[44] Although the report did not explicitly identify to whose principles "our" referred, the notion that integration was a moral value in a tradition suggested that the tradition was the "Judaeo-Christian" one within which the Board frequently placed itself. The Board's framing of integration—as a moral principle that it *already held*—demonstrates how its desegregation programs were assimilationist. The Board members thought that the city already valued integration. Instead of reorganizing school enrollment or distributing resources across all schools, many of the Board's desegregation efforts tried to acculturate students into Judeo-Christian norms that prioritized white students while teaching the idea of shared respect for difference.

Two examples of the Board's efforts are the 1953-1957 Puerto Rican Study (PRS) and the open enrollment program that Silver and Theobald had introduced with "sending" and "receiving" schools.[45] The PRS helped the Board "develop policies, programs, and curriculum appropriate for the increasing number of students arriving from Puerto Rico."[46] In the words of its organizers, it aimed to develop "effective ways and materials for teaching English as a second language to Puerto Rican pupils" and "technics [STET] with which the schools can promote a more rapid and more effective adjustment of Puerto Rican parents to the community and of the community to them."[47] While the PRS was not explicitly a desegregation effort, it was explicitly an assimilation project, involving the Board, outside researchers, teachers, principals, and the NCCJ.[48] Because open enrollment used a similar model to the PRS, and because some of the

[44] "Toward the Integration of Our Schools," quoting the Board's statement.
[45] I discuss Silver and Theobald's statement at the beginning of this chapter.
[46] David Ment, "Guide to the Records of the New York City Board of Education," July 30, 2008, accessed May 25, 2017, http://www.nyc.gov/html/records/html/archives/guide.pdf, 85.
[47] "General Circular No. 27 1953-1954," Folder 6, Box 1, Series 550, NYCBER. Original spelling.
[48] Although Madeleine E. López argues that the PRS challenged social scientific racial stereotypes of Puerto Ricans rooted in the "cultural poverty thesis" by offering progressive bilingual education to Puerto Rican students in NYC, my research suggests that the PRS illuminates the Board's vision of assimilating Puerto Rican students into Judeo-

same administrators were involved in each project, looking at the programs in conjunction with one another suggests that the Board understood integration as assimilation of black and Puerto Rican students into a pre-conceived norm. Pairing the projects also reiterates that in NYC, school desegregation referred not only to white and black students but existed because of "the residential segregation of Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and other minority groups," according to the Commission.[49]

The PRS's stated goal was to help Puerto Rican students assimilate into NYC schools. With the Board's perspective on the moral purpose of public schools and the NCCJ's involvement, the assimilation addressed both culture and morality. To achieve its goals, the PRS created curricula specifically for Puerto Rican students, reached out to Puerto Rican parents, and also organized workshops in Puerto Rico for PRS and other school personnel. For example, sponsored by the NCCJ's human relations efforts, the Ford Foundation's Advancement in Education Funds, and the NYC Board of Education, over thirty NYC schoolteachers and administrators traveled to Puerto Rico in July 1957 for a five-week Puerto Rican Workshop, a program affiliated with the PRS. There, they took regular (though not daily) Spanish language classes; toured Old San Juan; visited a housing project, a health center, a local public school; and attended an opening cocktail reception.[50] In Puerto Rico, the participants were supposed to gain a better understanding of their NYC students.

Due to the increasing Puerto Rican student population, the Board gave significant funds to the PRS to develop curricula for students and help the city and Board leaders. As of October 1958, estimates suggested the Puerto Rican student population comprised about 15% of the

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Christian norms. Madeleine E. López, "Investigating the Investigators: An Analysis of the Puerto Rican Study," *Centro Journal* 19:2 (2007): 60-85.

[49] "Toward the Integration of Our Schools."

[50] "Tentative Program and Calendar of Puerto Rican Workshop, Summer 1957," Folder 14, Box 1, Series 550, NYCBER.

entire school system student body. 137,000 Puerto Rican students were enrolled in NYC public schools, 17% of whom the report estimated did not speak English.[51] Many Puerto Rican students and parents lived in Manhattan, particularly in East Harlem.. To achieve the goal of aiding school professionals, the city invested substantial funds in the PRS—half of the $1,000,000 the program cost, with the Ford Foundation supplying the other half. The Board also received funding from the NCCJ upon request to supplement the costs of the summer workshops.[52]

Leaders of the program were committed to their own idea of the American way of life, which they hoped to share with Puerto Rican students. Educational researcher J. Cayce Morrison ran the program. He had previously been Assistant Commission and Coordinator of Research for the New York State Education Department. The Migration Division of the Department of Labor of the Common Wealth of Puerto Rico helped approve the project.[53] Theobald, the superintendent who described "our Judaeo-Christian tradition," was also involved.[54] Morrison and his team were set on helping students assimilate to a pre-existing notion of American life.

Even the study's subtitle, "A Report on the Education and Adjustment of Puerto Rican Pupils in the Public Schools of the City of New York" imagined Puerto Rican students as requiring "Education and Adjustment."[55] Repeatedly, the PRS suggested that schools should "acquaint students" with "the contributions of different races" and "nations." The PRS assumed that distinct racial groups assimilated into a whole, the whole being shared values in the "Judaeo-Christian tradition." Yet, the PRS assumed the whole to already exist in the "Public Schools of

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[51] "Not for Advance Publication, Release After Press Conference Monday April 6, 1959," Folder 8, Box 1, Series 550, NYCBER.
[52] "Conference on Organization of Workshop in Puerto Rico, Summer 1957, February 7, 1957," Folder 12, Box 1, Series 550, NYCBER; Herbert L. Seamans, "Report on the 1957 Workshop," Folder 12, Box 1, Series 550, NYCBER.
[53] "Puerto Rican Study Final Report, 1953-1957," Folder 67, Box 5, Series 550, NYCBER; Joseph Monserrat to Clare C. Baldwin, May 7, 1958, Folder 5, Box 1, Series 550, NYCBER.
[54] "Not for Advance Publication, Release After Press Conference Monday April 6, 1959."
[55] "Puerto Rican Study Final Report, 1953-1957."

the City of New York." Students were not to be integrated with each other on an equal plane, but rather Puerto Rican students were to be integrated *into* the schools and their moral values.

In PRS director Morrison's 1931 work, *Character Building in New York Public Schools*, he argued that the moral aspects of Judeo-Christianity shaped public school norms. He suggested that schools devote each month to virtues, including kindness, obedience, and cleanliness.[56] He cited George Washington's Farewell Address to demonstrate that religion could undergird public school morality without being sectarian. In fact, he cited the lines that sociologist Robert Bellah claims exemplified "civil religion," which include the sentences: "And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."[57] Bellah argues that "civil religion" is not Christian but derives from Christianity.[58] Similarly, Morrison's version of "National morality" grew from a Christian tradition. The PRS later taught Puerto Rican students values reflecting those Morrison thought public school students should embrace as a "National morality."

Despite Morrison's inclusive intentions, some Puerto Rican students felt that the schools' pre-existing concept of morality prevented teachers from getting to know them. For example, a sixteen-year-old student, "Under the supervision of his teacher" wrote a class report for "his English 4 class at Morris High School" in the Bronx in May 1955. The student offered a harsh critique of the public school system's treatment of Puerto Rican students. He resolved that "If people could of get together and understand each others by looking for the facts and not pre-

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[56] J. Cayce Morrison, *Character Building in New York Public Schools: An Analysis of Practices Reported by Teachers and Supervisory Officers for the School Year 1928-29* (Albany: The University of the State of New York Press, 1931), 11.
[57] Ibid., 4.
[58] Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96:1 (1967), 1-21.

judging. This problems wouldn't of come up this and way. By caring and helping this people with their problems we can improve them and avoid discrimination." He concluded: "with your help, understanding and paciencss we can destroy discrimination for ever to exist and live all united in good will."[59] From his view, good will was a goal, not a present reality. He described how he "especially came here attracted by an old Porto Rican rumor about the U.S. been an exajurated place" but "was so discouraged when I saw the real thing." "[A]gain I was discouraged" when attending school because "The teachers in this school did not considered me, they were harsh and they made me feel like a complete stranger. They even told me to go back to where I came from. Although I couldn't speak English I understand every thing they ment. And all this I shall never forget it."[60] He researched Puerto Rico's economy and politics, summarizing "we are just as good 'American citizens' as you are."[61] As his critique demonstrates, the student experienced public schools as alienating. He did not think he needed to adapt to anything. Rather, he wished for teachers to treat him with dignity.

Nevertheless, PRS leaders believed that Puerto Rican students did need to adapt. The PRS leaders thought the moral norms of "America" were superior to Puerto Rico's (even though Puerto Rico was part of America). Dr. Clare C. Baldwin, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, conveyed in a speech at the National Education Association's 1954 Annual Meeting in NYC that "it matters not whether one comes from Italy or China or Kansas or Georgia, he has to go through a process of adjustment before becoming an adopted son or daughter of the big city."[62] At the same time, Baldwin identified particular challenges for Puerto Rican students:

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[59] Class Report, May 1955, Folder 3, Box 1, Series 550, NYCBER. Original spelling. Name withheld to protect anonymity of minor.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Clare C. Baldwin, "The Education of Puerto Rican Children in the Schools of New York City," Folder 1, Box 1, Series 550, NYCBER.

> Those who left La Perla or El Fanguito have found their counterparts in the slums of New York. Many Puerto Rican families have been crowded together into cramped living quarters with inadequate ventilation and sanitary facilities, and a lack of ordinary housekeeping equipment. Frequently, the family unit does not consist of mother, father, brothers and sisters, but a mixed assortment of relatives, albeit there is a strong family bond which binds them together. The streets are the playground of the children. There exist hazards to health and morals in trying to bring up children under these conditions.[63]

When Baldwin expressed that Puerto Rican students lived under conditions that negatively affected their "morals," he did not take into consideration that migrant families often travel in waves, nor was he open to a more inclusive sense of family extending beyond the biological. Rather, he prioritized a particular vision of a nuclear family that subscribed to Judeo-Christian moral values. To him, there was something wrong with Puerto Rican culture that only adjustment to cultural values as promoted in public schools would fix.

To develop a curriculum for Puerto Rican students, the PRS worked with principals to test lessons in fifteen schools throughout Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx "in the development of a body of materials that would provide for consistent, systematic instruction of Puerto Rican pupils in English."[64] One principal selected by PRS was Principal Leonard Covello of J-172, who had previously designed "progressive" human relations curricula at Franklin High School.[65] He also served as an educational consultant to the Migration Division of the Department of Labor for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico on English language acquisition.[66] In addition to intensive language programs, some PRS lessons drew on previously developed

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[63] Ibid.
[64] "Resource Units for Classes with Puerto Rican Pupils, Secondary School Orientation Stage," Folder 49, Box 3, Series 550, NYCBER. Three "Experimental Junior High Schools," J-65, J-101, and J-11, were in Manhattan, and one, J-52, was in the Bronx. There were also eleven "Pilot Junior High Schools," J-3, J-43, J-54, J-159, J-171, and J-172 in Manhattan, J-55 and J-60 in the Bronx, and J-6, J-50, and J-263 in Brooklyn.
[65] Lisa M. Rabin, "The Social Uses of Classroom Cinema: A History of the Human Relations Film Series at Benjamin Franklin High School in East Harlem, New York City, 1936-1955," *The Velvet Light Trap* 72 (Fall 2013): 58-71, 63.
[66] Leonard Covello to Clare C. Baldwin, September 4, 1956, Folder 5, Box 1, Series 550, NYCBER.

social studies programs. However, a bulk of the PRS programming was experimental and directed specifically at Puerto Rican students and parents' lifestyles and moral norms.

PRS units aimed to introduce students to city neighborhoods, suggesting that the PRS saw Puerto Rican students as out of place in the city and that they would be lost without an introduction to the basics of living in an urban neighborhood. The lessons aimed to "orient" students to their surroundings, stating learning goals, such as:

- To acquaint pupils with various types of dwellings found in the neighborhood
- To point up the benefits of living in an apartment house, e.g., heat, hot water, access to washing machine
- To familiarize pupils with the types of rooms in homes and the functions of each
- To increase pupils' understanding of the responsibilities and rights of tenants
- To acquaint pupils with the unique features of their neighborhood.[67]

To enact the objectives of the lessons, students identified dwellings and created a map of the school district with "construction paper, crayons, paints, [and] paste," "flat pictures of different types of houses and of various rooms in a house," "wedgies of members of family," and a "summary of regulations regarding sanitation and fire prevention in multiple dwellings."[68] The nature of the activities the curriculum promoted reveals how the PRS assumed that Puerto Rican students were foreign to their environment and would have difficulties adjusting.

The lesson plan also called for students to "dramatize" inhabiting the neighborhood in order to learn its etiquette. This had moral implications, as the plans frequently implied that Puerto Rican students would be unclean or unruly. To demonstrate "the correct way to cross the street," a few students might have stood before the class and pretended they were on the street corner. When one student vocalized that the light had turned to the walk sign, all the students

[67] "Resource Units, Grade 7."
[68] Ibid.

would have turned their heads one way, then the other. One might have commented, "All clear." Then they would have walked across the front of the classroom. To dramatize a "dialogue between old resident and new resident in neighborhood," students engaged stereotypes about Puerto Rico, such as those having to do with dress. One Resource Unit described how parents needed to clothe their children, because, the unit said, children did not always wear clothing in Puerto Rico.[69] Finally, perpetuating a stereotype that certain neighborhoods were dirty because residents did not clean them, students would dramatize "The correct and incorrect way of disposing of garbage."[70] The PRS presumed that, left to their own devices, Puerto Rican students would arrive at school unclean and unclothed. In this way, the morality of the Judeo-Christian tradition had clear etiquette associated with it.

Furthering the notion that Puerto Rican students lived in areas with a different moral code than the one the schools promoted, one unit covered telephone use and police and fire departments to teach students that law enforcement was only a short call away. Although not explicitly mentioned, the implication was clear: the PRS researchers believed that Puerto Rican students lived in crime-ridden areas. Students rang the emergency responders on fake telephones. They played with toy police cars. They wrote comic strips called "Our friend, the Fireman," and "Our friend, the Policeman." They read "stories of heroism of fireman and policemen." All of this was in the same unit where they developed "directions for correct use of the telephone" as a class. [71] The unit conveyed that police and fire people were accessible to Puerto Rican students, which was necessary given what PRS researchers assumed about the students' living situations.

Furthermore, the PRS agenda included labor and citizenship as important themes to develop Puerto Rican students' self-actualization as American citizens through Judeo-Christian

[69] "Resource Units, Grade 2, 1956-1957," Folder 42, Box 3, Series 550, NYCBER.
[70] "Resource Units for Classes with Puerto Rican Pupils, Secondary School Orientation Stage."
[71] Ibid.

values. The lesson plan units encouraged students to get jobs. The units detailed how to get the necessary papers for an employer to hire someone under the age of eighteen and described why social security cards were useful to secure employment. Employment itself was important, but more than that, the units conveyed that it was an honor to hold the citizenship required to get certain jobs.

Each resource unit the PRS produced concluded with long lists of instructional films, the content of which highlighted that the PRS wanted Puerto Rican students to adopt moral values generally deriving from a white, Judeo-Christian culture. The films were generic citizenship, morals and manners, and social studies films filled with white actors and produced by companies such as Encyclopedia Britannica and Coronet Films. Topics ranged from "Are Manners Important?" to "Cleanliness and Health" to a film on the "Airport." Puerto Rican students were not the films' particular target audience; the companies wished for the films generally to be shown in schools. However, their placement after each unit suggested that the PRS thought Puerto Rican students needed to assimilate to the norms of white American middle-class life.[72] Many schools stocked the films in their libraries, and each borough also had repositories for the films. The choice of Puerto Rican students as an audience suggested that the PRS believed that the films could assimilate students who, the researchers presumed, were unfamiliar with "American" manners.

PRS activities also aimed at parents' moral assimilation. The study wanted to offer tools to assimilate parents and to teach parents how to better raise their mainland children. To do this, access to parents proved essential. Special occasions worked to bring parents to schools. At "Open School Week," parents observed how and what their children were learning at school. The PRS thought parents could learn to rear their children better by seeing how *schools* taught

[72] See lists at the end of resource unit publications in Boxes 3 and 4, Series 550, NYCBER.

children. Although Open School Week welcomed all family members, schools particularly reached out to mothers.[73] According to the PRS, scheduling a day where "Mother Comes To Visit" could: "foster good home-school relationships by acquainting parents with the child's life in school and value of the school's objectives;" "show children the cooperation between home and school"; "help the children to learn social skills"; and "give children the opportunity to show and explain their school life to family."[74] PRS lesson plans demonstrated a commitment to teaching parents what the schools did as a way of promoting a particular set of values.

Lastly, schools oriented school personnel to Puerto Rican students. The schools used a more affirming tone with personnel than with students and parents. Instead of presenting a comprehensive lifestyle, the materials focused on teachers' ability to communicate with Puerto Rican students. For instance, a publication titled "Interviewing Puerto Rican Parents and Children in Spanish" was designed "to help school personnel communicate with and achieve greater rapport with the Spanish-speaking child and parent."[75] The publication covered basic greetings and how to ask students' ages and addresses. It also comforted school administrators: "Don't be afraid or embarrassed to use the Spanish you know. After all, you are not a native, and you have not devoted years of study to conversational Spanish. For the most part you have been working along with Spanish and have done your best to pick up a few words or phrases to do your job more effectively."[76] The PRS did not seem to extend the same sympathy to non-native English speakers.

The publication also informed readers about aspects of "Puerto Rican culture," again suggesting that the PRS thought Puerto Rico was foreign to the Judeo-Christian culture of the

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[73] "Resource Units for Classes with Puerto Rican Pupils, Secondary School Orientation Stage."
[74] "Resource Units Grade 1, 1956-1957," Folder 42, Box 3, Series 550, NYCBER.
[75] "Interviewing Puerto Rican Parents and Children in Spanish: A Guide For School Personnel," Board of Education of the City of New York, Folder 64, Box 5, Series 550, NYCBER.
[76] Ibid.

schools. It introduced Spanish family names structures. A section on "Extended Family" also described how many Puerto Ricans who lived under the same roof considered themselves families but were not necessarily biologically related. The publication indicated that Puerto Rican families took in other families' children if a family faced trouble supporting a child or children. Diagnosing such arrangements as an economic problem, the publication noted that Puerto Ricans did not stigmatize support of other Puerto Rican families, as unfamiliar as the familial and financial arrangements may have been to school personnel. The publication then comforted the school personnel by letting them know that they needed only be so familiar with Puerto Rican culture, because the PRS would adjust Puerto Rican students to the Judeo-Christian culture with which personnel were familiar. A tape recording available for loan at numerous city locations accompanied the publication to assist school administrators in their assimilative roles.[77]

The PRS materials rarely mentioned religion explicitly, focusing more on values and behaviors, but one brochure assembled by the Council of Spanish-American Organizations and the American Jewish Committee that landed in the PRS files suggested that the PRS might have acknowledged that Puerto Rican students had access to the underlying values of Judeo-Christianity. This was due in part to the religious demographics of Puerto Rico, as the brochure estimated that 80 percent of the population in Puerto Rican was Catholic and 20 percent was Protestant.[78] Furthermore, the brochure argued that religion transmitted values to Puerto Ricans: "After hundreds of years of want and degradation, the Puerto Rican is an outstanding example of a person with strong family ties, generosity and warmth, pride of heritage, and a high standard of values."[79] It continued: ".., the Church can point with pride to its accomplishments in nurturing

[77] "Audio-Visual Resources For Use In Classes With Puerto Rican Children in Junior High Schools, December 1956," Folder 65, Box 5, Series 550, NYCBER.
[78] "Puerto Rico and the Puerto Ricans," Folder 66, Box 5, Series 550, NYCBER.
[79] Ibid.

the people's finer qualities over centuries of heart-breaking adversities."[80] This brochure suggested that Puerto Ricans had already begun assimilation to church values in Puerto Rico and could possibly translate those values to the NYC public school interpretation of Judeo-Christianity. Although the PRS did not further emphasize this point, the materials certainly conveyed the notion that Puerto Ricans could assimilate to school values.

As the PRS materials demonstrate, the Board saw integration as a process of assimilating groups of "others" into a pre-existing way of understanding of Judeo-Christian morality. The PRS framed Puerto Rican students and their parents as foreign, unclean, unable to clothe themselves, ignorant of city living, and having unusual family structures. It reassured school personnel that they did not need to adapt to students, but rather the students would in time adapt to them. As the Board repeatedly framed schools' morality within the Judeo-Christian tradition, and given the NCCJ's involvement, the PRS makes clear that assimilation into Judeo-Christian norms characterized how school officials understood integration.

The Board's assimilative framework also applied to school system desegregation policies, such as the open enrollment program the Board began in the fall of 1960. Historians have assessed open enrollment as a bureaucratic failure, but the program's assimilative framework itself also illuminates the assumptions about race and morality inherent in it.[81] As noted earlier, parents with black or Puerto Rican children in junior high school who wanted their children to attend a desegregated school had to fill out an "Application for Transfer For Children." Parents supplied their child's name, class, school, and "Regular District Junior High School," and affirmed the statement "I request admission for my child to one of the following

[80] Ibid.
[81] Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*, 9-11; Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door*, 102-113.

Junior High Schools."[82] Parents could list three choices and had the option to note any other child[ren] attending an out of district junior high school. They then sent the application to the Board of Education's Central Zoning Unit, which would permit or reject the transfer.[83]

Rather than a swap, the transfer only went one direction—students of color moved to predominantly white schools. Open enrollment included "sending" and "receiving" schools. Parents with children at junior high schools (and later elementary schools) with 85% or more black or Puerto Rican students (90% for elementary schools) could voluntarily apply to "send" their children to pre-selected predominantly white schools that would "receive" them. The Board transported or funded public transportation for students. The program immersed a limited number of students in an integrated environment, but many glitches overwhelmed the program: rejected applications, schools with just under the 85% cut-off whose students could not transfer, the program's voluntary nature, and the exclusion of high schools.[84] Because the transfer went one way, the program typified how schools understood racial integration as entailing the assimilation of students of color into predominantly white schools.

The Board prioritized white "receiving" school students, demonstrating that it understood white students to already be part of the norm into which students from "sending" school students needed to assimilate. Open Enrollment was a "right," not a "privilege," according to Associate Superintendent of Elementary Schools John B. King and of Junior High Schools Joseph O. Loretan.[85] However, if students from "sending" schools had behavioral or health conditions, they had to obtain special permission to transfer to a "receiving" school. The policy explained: "If children are or have been under the care of guidance agencies, such as the Board's Bureau of

[82] "Application For Transfer For Children," Folder 4, Box 66, Subseries 10, Series 911, NYCBER.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door*, 102-113.
[85] "Open Enrollment Program," Folder 4, Box 66, Subseries 10, Series 911, NYCBER.

Child Guidance, the principal, the parent and the social worker involved should discuss the advisability of transferring the child. Such transfers will be authorized only if approved by the agency involved."[86] Regarding health, the policy continued: "If children have serious physical conditions, such as diabetes, epilepsy or rheumatic fever the parent should be referred to the school doctor for advice. Transfers of such pupils should be authorized only if approved by the school doctor."[87] The Board also repeated: "Transfers will be authorized if space permits and if applications are postmarked no later than June 30, 1962."[88] The Board did not make open enrollment easy for parents. The policy framed "sending" school students as possibly contaminating "receiving" schools, whose white students the Board believed already embodied the Board's norms.

Although the Board used the elevated language of morality to describe the necessity of desegregation, the Board's plans for including black and Puerto Rican students in public school life were assimilationist. The plans assumed that the Board, the city, and white students already valued shared respect for difference, so black and Puerto Rican students would benefit from adopting their values. However, as we will see, black and Puerto Rican parents and students felt the strong differences between what they thought "integration" meant and the assimilative project they experienced. They responded with educational programs for students of color that critiqued the public schools' message and offered an alternative morality to ideas about Judeo-Christianity.

[86] "For Release: Tuesday (PM)-Wednesday (AM), December 5-6, 1961," Folder 4, Box 66, Subseries 10, Series 911, NYCBER.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.

"The more important and subtle human problems": Harlem's Alternative Schooling

At an Urban League of Greater New York celebration of "Negro History Week" during "Brotherhood Month" at Hotel Theresa in February 1954, Dr. Kenneth B. Clark delivered a speech about the history of African American education in New York State that inspired the Board's first official statement on integration.[89] Co-founder of the Northside Center for Child Development in Harlem with psychologist Mamie Clark, his wife, Clark had recently testified before the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which the court had yet to decide at the time of his speech. He had testified about the negative effects segregated schools had on black children's psychology, based on his and Mamie Clark's research. He would go on to chair the Board of Education's Educational Standards and Curriculum Sub-Commission of the Commission on Integration, and become the first black New York State Regent and president of the American Psychological Association. At this relatively early moment in his career, he said: "While there might be a problem of increasing the number of schools and modernizing old schools, I would like to direct your attention to the more important and subtle human problems which are inherent in the existence of segregated schools," such as its impact on psychology, academic standards, and labor.[90] Pointing to ebbs and flows in city segregation, he continued: "Seen from an historical perspective, the picture of the education of the Negro in New York City is not one of consistent progress. It is, however, a challenging picture. We must meet this challenge successfully for the welfare of our children and all children."[91] Clark's view of integration differed from the understanding the Board developed of integration as assimilation.[92]

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[89] Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*, 3; Taylor, *Knocking at Our Own Door*, 52-55.
[90] Kenneth B. Clark, "Speech at Negro History Week-Brotherhood Month Dinner," February 15, 1954, Folder 52, Box 69, Subseries 10, Series 911, NYCBER.
[91] Ibid.
[92] It is worth noting that the Clarks sent their own children to private schools because, Kenneth Clark said, the children only got one education and he was not sure they would get the highest quality education in public schools. His statement speaks to his position that the schools were failing students of color. Nikole Hannah-Jones's recent

By contrast, Clark indicated that he believed that integration must mean equal access to shared spaces that improved the material conditions of students of color.[93] To him and many other black New Yorkers, equal access and opportunities for quality education were the goal, and integration seemed to them the way to achieve it. Because of this difference, he and other black parents and community members in Harlem created their own alternative spaces for educating local youth, participating in a longstanding tradition within black communities.[94] These spaces aimed to embody what many—even those who did not prioritize integration itself—saw as the goals of public education for students of color. Black Harlemites resisted assimilation into Judeo-Christian norms and instead taught moral norms based on recognizing the humanity of students, their right to quality education, and the creative possibilities of diverse communities. Some, like the East Harlem Protestant Parish, situated their understanding in an alternative Judeo-Christian, or simply Christian, tradition, while others, like Amy Olatunji, made an argument about alternative versions of American belonging.

Although both black and Puerto Rican parents promoted racial justice, I focus on black parents and community members in Harlem in this section. Black parents were more directly involved in desegregation efforts, while Puerto Rican parents were involved in issues such as Hispanic representation on the Board of Education, "tracking" Puerto Rican and black students

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New York Times article about school segregation in NYC offers interesting analysis of parents' personal choices and school desegregation. Nikole Hannah-Jones, "Choosing a School for My Daughter in a Segregated City," *New York Times*, June 9, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/12/magazine/choosing-a-school-for-my-daughter-in-a-segregated-city.html.

[93] Clark, "Speech at Negro History Week-Brotherhood Month Dinner."

[94] Among others, see: Leslie Etienne, "A Different Type of Summer Camp: SNCC, Freedom Summer, Freedom Schools, and the Development of African American Males in Mississippi," *Peabody Journal of Education* 88:4 (2013): 449-463; Jon N. Hale, *Freedom Schools Student Activists in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), " 'The Student as a Force for Social Change': The Mississippi Freedom Schools and Student Engagement," *The Journal of African American History* 96:3 (2011): 325-347, and with William Sturkey, *To Write in the Light of Freedom: The Newspapers of the 1964 Mississippi Freedom School Movement* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2015); Heather Andrea Williams, " 'Clothing Themselves in Intelligence': The Freedpeople, Schooling, and Northern Teachers, 1861-1871," *The Journal of African American History* 87 (2002): 372-389.

to vocational schools, and community control of schools.[95] The results of the efforts of black parents and community members were not exclusive to black students—they were open to all youth within the local community, most of whom were students of color. Alternative schooling for students of color responded to what community members identified as the failure of both the school system in general to actively provide students of color quality education in integrated settings *and* ideas about Judeo-Christianity to bring people together in a way that honored all participants. Parishes, parents, and community organizations explicitly aimed to meet students part way in the educational process by listening to their perspectives. They tried to learn from students' experiences and promote students' reflections on their own lives. The expansive approach to educating a community cultivated spaces where students reported excitement about learning.

Not only parents of color and the Board, but also white and black parents often understood integration differently. For instance, a local parent association in Brooklyn at a mostly white school held a meeting explicitly on the topic of brotherhood to discuss the recent influx of black students to the neighborhood. The parents association invited clergy, and white and black parents attended. An educational consultant visiting the meeting reported that "It seemed important, in view of the past history of group feeling, to avoid inspirational generalities and to try to bring into the open the real concerns of the parents, so that they would not avoid facing next steps for more cooperative action."[96] Black parents noted that "they had not been included in parents association committees and did not feel free to speak at meetings."[97] On the other hand, "white parents stated their fears that the neighborhood would become 'more Negro';

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[95] Lorrin Thomas, *Puerto Rican Citizen: History and Political Identity in Twentieth-Century New York City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 216-217.
[96] Gladys Meyer, "Parent Action in School Integration: A New York Experience," Folder 56, Box 69, Subseries 10, Series 911, NYCBER.
[97] Ibid.

that school standards 'might' decline."[98] Tensions at the meeting highlighted that, like school officials, white parents prioritized spreading a message of integration but were afraid about the lived reality of desegregated schools. By contrast, the black parents at this local parents association meeting emphasized acting on a message of integration—creating the physical conditions of integration—based on an understanding of students' human dignity.

Of primary concern to parents and community members throughout Harlem was their concern that public schools were failing students of color. For instance, the Harlem Parents Committee (HPC), a progressive coalition of Harlem parents, indicated that "Parents feel, and rightly so, that the Board of Education is NOT to be trusted by itself to set up an effective curriculum program any different from the usual 'program of retardation' now present in the ghetto schools."[99] For them, integration and brotherhood were not necessarily good in and of themselves, they mattered in so far as they created the conditions for schools to provide quality education to children of color.

Some parents adopted a mode of teaching about American diversity as an alternative to the Judeo-Christian one, a mode based in the understanding of black belonging in the United States and its history. During Brotherhood Week 1966, some parents explicitly disagreed with their children's school programming. One parent, Amy Olatunji, thought the week should focus on black accomplishments. She wrote a play called "Panoramic View of Famous Negro Personalities, 1965-1966" for the students to perform. Olatunji, who was married to the Nigerian scholar and drummer Michael Babatunde Olatunji, lived on West End Avenue and sent her

[98] Ibid.
[99] "Harlem Parents Committee Freedom School Summer Program," *Views,* July 1966, Folder 25, Box 13, Baker Papers.

children Folashade and Kwame, ages 6 and 8, to a school in Harlem.[100] She wanted the integrity of black accomplishments memorialized in their own right. She expressed frustration that Brotherhood Week valorized outdated national narratives of tolerance instead of acknowledging and taking steps to rectify the erasure of black Americans from national historical narratives.

New York Amsterdam News columnist Sara Slack captured Olatunji's passion: "What does a mother of tiny tots do when her school plans a Brotherhood Week celebration that doesn't please her?/ She sits down and writes a play that pleases her." Slack elaborated:

> The drama, which will be staged at the school Friday morning by 5th and 6th graders, is set in the year 1990. In addition to parts spoken by students who remain on stage for the entire performance, a narrator sits atop a time capsule filling in supplementary descriptions.
>
> Young pupil thespians, who wrote some of their own lines, portray such luminaries as, Mrs. Constance Baker Motley, Mrs. Indira Ghandi, Solicitor General Thurgood Marshall and fifty other distinguished personalities.
> Of her initial effort, Mrs. Olatunji said: 'It was sheer delight working with so many wonderful, adorable children at the school. The faculty members were very kind and considerate.'
>
> 'Also, it was heartwarming seeing children so interested in doing and learning, especially when they were assigned to do their research on great individuals of color.'[101]

Instead of watching Brotherhood Week teach students the value of integration without addressing the challenges integration presented, Olatunji created a scenario that embraced black people and other people of color who had thrived in a world of racial inequality and imagined a future in which the figures had become part of the historical narrative. Also, perhaps drawing on ideas from the Freedom Schools, where students improvised plays based on reading, Olatunji encouraged students to write their own lines.[102] Though more scholars have written about Ella Baker's Mississippi Freedom Schools in 1964, the HPC also organized Freedom Schools. With

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[100] Sara Slack, "Reading Writing & Arithmetic: Mom Writes a Play," *New York Amsterdam News*, February 19, 1966, 13.
[101] Ibid.
[102] "Summary of Freedom Schools Curriculum," Folder 2, Box 9, Baker Papers.

funding from a federal grant, the HPC held a 10-week Freedom School Summer program in "Afro-American Folklore" and "Commercial Art Instruction" for young people in Harlem during the summer of 1966.[103] The HPC and Olatunji's recovery, sharing, and perpetuation of African American history allowed students to explore alternative moralities to those of the public schools. The Harlem parents resisted the assimilation of black children into a norm of uncritical celebration of tolerance by encouraging students to share their thoughts and embody figures important to black history.

For some who created alternative schooling, the goal of integration was to cultivate new communities based on the notion of loving thy neighbor, rather than have one group join another group's existing community. This too was an alternative to the assimilative approach of loving thy neighbor, as it instead suggested that all parties ought to join in love of neighbor. For example, the East Harlem Protestant Parish (EHPP) offered alternative summer schooling opportunities for neighborhood kids in the mid-1960s. Talking about juvenile delinquency prevention, as discussed in relation to conversations about juvenile delinquency in NYC, EHPP co-founder J. Archie Hargraves described the need for each local church: "to seek a new community orientation that implies it will cease existing for itself and will come to share its particular concerns, techniques and love with the whole neighborhood so that all may advance together."[104] Hargraves's language of community conveyed a togetherness that transcended possible differences. To him, love of neighbor was internal to a community, not necessarily a racial group. Communities cared for each other for the good of the whole community, according to Hargraves.

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[103] "Harlem Parents Committee Freedom School Summer Program."
[104] J. Archie Hargraves, "The Local Church and Juvenile Delinquency," *Christianity and Crisis* 17:28 (January 1958): 180-183, 180.

To enact Hargraves's vision of neighbor love through schooling, the EHPP tried to make education relevant to students. In the late 1960s, the parish sponsored a reading program as "ONE RESPONSE TO THE FAILURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION."[105] The epigraph to the EHPP newsletter's article on its summer reading program raised issues of power dynamics in education:

> "What a dangerous activity reading is; teaching is. All this plastering on of foreign stuff. Why plaster on at all when there's so much inside already? So much locked in? If only I could get it out and use it as working material. And not draw it out either. If I had a light enough touch it would just come out under its own volcanic power." (Teacher by Sylvia Ashton-Warner)[106]

The quotation resonated with the experiences of Harlem's public school students, students who often felt that course material was "foreign." In contrast to the public schools, "The Reading Program, however, has opted to perch itself on the very edge of the volcano. We have opted to start with the child himself, with his world."[107] By starting with the child, the parish demonstrated that it was aware that public school lessons could be alienating. Acknowledging this alienation, the EHPP thought it could show students *why* reading mattered in a program that connected to their lives.

Through the reading program, older teenagers selected and taught books to connect with students on a personal level, suggesting a moral education that honored the students' experiences. Instead of assimilating students into prejudicial norms, the program allowed teacher and learner to each shape the educational experience. Students read Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land*, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley*, James Baldwin's *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, and Sammy Davis Jr.'s *Yes, I Can*, among others. According to the

[105] "East Harlem Protestant Parish Newsletter," Folder 49, Box 69, Subseries 10, Series 911, NYCBER.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.

parish's newsletter, the teenagers' "method of teaching, though not 'professional', smacked of the stuff of life for their young pupils." For example:

> One teenager used Claud [stet] Brown's Manchild in the Promised Land as his 'primer'. The reading was difficult for the boys, but the eagerness with which they worked indicated an interest which no other book had evoked before. They were overcome that a Negro had written a book about their lives--a book that was moreover a best-seller. Their interest in the book made it easy for the tutor to work on vocabulary, phonics, writing, debating, drama. They chose new vocabulary words, they wanted to learn. They wrote letters to Claud Brown and their own autobiographies. One youngster said, 'If Claud Brown, a boy like us, did it, so can I.' They enacted being picked up by the police. The brought in a former addict to talk to them about drugs and addiction. The words was made flesh in a very real way to them. Reading had something to do with life![108]

The program successfully made reading relevant to students. Even though the program was an alternative to public schooling, some of its features mirrored ones students might have encountered in public schools. They learned the meanings of vocabulary words and dramatized life lessons. However, the approach to students differed from the public schools' approach because it engaged them in active dialogue with the text: they wrote letters to the author to engage the subject material, adopted the genre of the assigned reading in a writing activity, and brought in a guest as a real life example of issues the reading raised. In turn, the students became more engaged with the material because the curriculum connected to their own experiences. The parish space explicitly welcomed students. It did not evaluate students' familiarity with public school habits. The parish's approach, the newsletter reported, helped students become genuinely excited about the lessons because they had the opportunity to be leaders and idea-exchangers. When students took ownership of lessons, when they found a personal connection with the material, they learned about the conditions of the world and gained the skills to change it, the

[108] Ibid. Spelled "Claud" in original newsletter. Given the newsletter's combination of general and male-specific language, the program was likely separated by boys and girls.

parish hoped. The parish cultivated a norm of education that involved students' life experiences in the learning process.

In addition to teaching academic skills, Harlem programs promoted racial integration as involving shared resources and cultivating new communities. The East Harlem Summer Festival, which also sponsored reading and arithmetic programs, brought students of diverse backgrounds together in activities such as dancing. The festival's four goals suggest that the program aspired to interracial cooperation through activities that focused on reaching youth: "to promote interracial understanding among East Harlem's youth; to provide opportunities for cultural growth; to rehabilitate presently and not fully utilized community facilities; and to involve the youth in stimulating and exciting activities." The program specifically hoped to draw on teen dancing, "one of East Harlem's plentiful resources," to "evaporate inter-cultural and inter-group barriers," particularly to promote strong black and Puerto Rican relations.[109] As opposed to assimilating the groups into an existing norm, the East Harlem program wished to stimulate new growth and relationships.

Although black and Puerto Rican parents involved in education generally agreed that the city schools had failed to desegregate the schools by the 1960s, community members such as Kenneth Clark and civil rights activist Ella Baker had earlier participated in Board of Education endeavors and had attempted to improve the educational context for students of color. For example, Clark and Baker had both served on sub-commissions for the Commission on Integration in the 1950s. Other members included Board of Education members Vito Lanza and Andrew Clauson, who simultaneously spearheaded the conversation about moral and spiritual

[109] "East Harlem Summer Festival For Youth, 1960," Folder 2, Box 19, Preston Wilcox Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (hereafter cited as Wilcox Papers).

values.[110] Baker served on the Zoning Sub-Commission, a unit that examined the role residential and school zoning played in school segregation. With Ethel Schwaber, Baker carefully edited the sub-commission's interim report to enforce greater accountability for the suggestions.[111] Baker and Schwaber each insisted that they would not approve the report unless the changes were implemented. In this way, Baker tried to make community opinions known to the Board.

Clark similarly tried to improve the experiences of students of color by working with the Board to change textbook content in his role as chair of the Sub-Commission on Educational Standards and Curriculum. In that role, he changed some textbook materials, though not as many as the sub-commission would have liked, likely because school administrators had written some of the texts. Among the sub-commission's tasks, it investigated curricula for racist content. The sub-commission collected a report titled "Texts on the 1950-1951 Board of Education Approved Textbook List Containing Objectionable Material Against Minority Groups."[112] The document included sections on "stereotypes," "distortions regarding slavery," "distortion of emancipation and reconstruction," "improper presentation of colonial peoples," and "questionable pictures and cartoons in."[113] Under each category, the document listed book titles and objectionable phrases. Concerns included portraying slaves as happy and using offensive language about black people. As part of this project, the sub-commission offered a detailed analysis of a "compendium of so-called 'jokes,' anecdotes, etc." that was "approved for use in libraries in the secondary schools of New York City." Noting that the book also characterized Jewish, Chinese, Italian, German, and Irish Americans with stereotypes, the analysis continued: "The most vicious treatment is

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[110] See Chapter One of this dissertation.
[111] Ella Baker and Ethel Schwaber, "Interim Report Sub-Commission on Zoning," Folder 25, Box 13, Baker Papers.
[112] "Texts on the 1950-1951 Board of Education Approved Textbook List Containing Objectionable Material Against Minority Groups," Folder 32, Box 4, Series 261, NYCBER. Andrew Hartman discusses this document briefly to point out the Board's racism because "Some of the texts skewered by the report were authored by higher ups in the city's school administrative offices." Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 84.
[113] Ibid.

reserved for the Negro. There are, by actual count, no less than eighty-six 'jokes' dealing with Negroes. In them their speech is ridiculed; they are pictured as being ignorant, simple-minded, cowardly, superstitious, thieving, wife-beaters, etc. – as people lacking in real human feeling and dignity and worthy of being only servants and menials."[114] Clark tried to correct the undermining of African Americans' dignity with his sub-commission, but the sub-commission findings did not result in as many concrete changes as Clark would have liked. Although the results disappointed him, Clark nevertheless sometimes worked with the Board to fight for change.

In addition to Clark and Baker, Black New Yorkers continued to approach educational change using many channels of advocacy. For instance, Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. served as the congressional representative from Harlem and became chairman of the Education and Labor Committee in 1961. In 1967, Congress voted him out of that position. In the district he represented, the HPC's newsletter, *Views,* referred to Congress's action as a "legislative lynching" because Powell was "a friend to all who believe uncompromisingly in racial equality as a fact of life." [115] The HPC felt that Powell's "committee, Education and Labor, had enough power to change America; and the whites know it." [116] *Views* continued: "Robert Weaver doesn't have a tenth of the power Powell had as the chairman of that committee of Congress. And overnight, as though they were never really sure it had happened, the House or Representatives stripped our legally constituted leader of his elected power, lynched him with a rope of [lies]."[117] The cover of the newsletter depicted Harlem parents fighting over a single dollar bill labeled "Harlem Community Corporation" and "War on Poverty Control" before the U.S. capitol building. To the right, people dressed in Klan robes—presumably House representatives—were

[114] "Analysis of the Insulting Anti-Negro, Anti-Semitic, Anti-Minority Group Book: 'Toaster's Handbook (Jokes, Stories, and Quotations),' " May 1951, Folder 32, Box 4, Series 261, NYCBER.
[115] "Adam Clayton Powell and HPC," *Views*, 1967, No. 1, Folder 50, Box 69, Subseries 10, Series 911, NYCBER.
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.

burning a cross. The cover depicted them carrying Powell away by a noose. The caption read "The Great Society—Uptown." Powell had already worked hard to change schools. The HPC saw Powell's removal from his position as a sign that Congress did not prioritize solving racial inequality in schools and it used Klan and lynching imagery to critique the Judeo-Christian tradition that removed Powell from his post. In fact, the HPC suggested that the Klan and the U.S. government's Judeo-Christian morality participated in the same white supremacy. To the HPC, the government disguised white supremacy with programs such as Johnson's "Great Society." Powell's removal threatened the HPC's vision of integration as racial equality. It suggested to the Harlem community that the U.S. government was much more interested in assimilation and ideas about change than the desegregation of schools or providing children of color with quality education.

The HPC, Freedom Schools, the EHPP's reading program, and Olatunji's play demonstrate the alternative educational approaches that black parents in Harlem took in response to the Board's slowness to offer opportunities for students of color. They offered various alternatives to the Judeo-Christian assimilative framework, including teaching students about black belonging in the United States, and about loving thy neighbor in a shared community. They taught children that at its best, integration related to respecting students and cultivating communities, and understood alternative educational spaces as fulfilling what they saw as the outcome of integration—offering students of color quality education, a goal that surpassed the idea of unity that schools promoted. The efforts resisted assimilation into a conception of Judeo-Christianity that presumed that people of color needed to adopt white people's ideas about tolerance. The Board taught students to call the police, and employed a generalized vision of sharing and respect that did not pay any attention to inequality. By contrast, the actors in these

examples created programs that sought to engage students. They taught content and skills, but their main goal was to honor the humanity of children whose schools, the parents thought, were failing the children educationally and morally.

Conclusion

Although school officials and community members both claimed to value integration, their conflicting views of integration are readily apparent when seen through the lens of ideas, such as brotherhood, and activities, such as Brotherhood Week, about Judeo-Christianity. The NYC Board of Education understood integration as assimilation into a Judeo-Christian norm of whiteness, safety, nuclear family structures, and cleanliness, while many black and Puerto Rican New Yorkers understood integration as a vehicle for access to opportunities and material resources that honored students' humanity and cultivated creative communities. For them, integration was a means to the end of quality education, rather than a moral goal in and of itself.

In cooperation with the NCCJ, the Board produced Judeo-Christianity through a repertoire of terms on positive and negative expressions of religious and racial coexistence. The Board understood Judeo-Christian views of coexistence as universal, allowing ideas such as brotherhood and "One Nation Under God" to permeate the public school space. Yet, the Judeo-Christian ideas about racial coexistence did not help desegregate the schools because the ideas were assimilative. Instead, they stimulated further separation and heightened conflict between the white school officials and parents of color. We will see these tensions develop further in the following chapters, which explore the limits of this conception of Judeo-Christian universality.

Part II. Political Tests for, and the Limits of, the Judeo-Christian Repertoire

Chapter Four "An Instrument of Justice for All Our Citizens": Government Aid to Parochial Schools and Religious Particularity

Two political confrontations between 1965 and 1969 revealed limits of school officials' understanding of "Judeo-Christian" religious and racial coexistence. Following the examination of the challenge posed by black parents in Harlem to the school board's understanding of integration, we will turn to two explicit challenges to the notion that public school moral education programs promoted universal values. In this chapter I consider Catholic arguments for government aid to parochial schools, and their case for religious particularity within Judeo-Christianity that New York City (NYC) school officials rejected. In the following chapter I consider the case of black and Puerto Rican parents and community members who argued for community control of schools, making a case for racial particularity outside of Judeo-Christianity, which NYC school officials also rejected. Together, these two chapters reveal that school officials were committed to their own understanding of religious and racial diversity at the exclusion of others', which sheds light on the limits of this expression of liberal religion in this particular local context. As seen in these two chapters, NYC school officials excluded the very religious and racial groups that they wished to include in Judeo-Christianity.

After New Yorkers voted in November 1965 to hold a constitutional convention in 1967 to revise the New York State Constitution, Catholics seized upon the occasion of the convention to advocate for government aid to parochial schools. The constitution included a prohibition against government aid to denominational schools, Article XI, Section III, also known as "the

Blaine Amendment" after the nineteenth-century Senator James Blaine, who proposed a failed federal constitutional amendment prohibiting government aid to parochial schools. Other states had similar prohibitions in their constitutions, and Catholics around the country were fighting to remove such prohibitions, claiming that they discriminated against Catholics because they prevented Catholic parents from sending their children to the school of their choice. With recent federal government aid programs to enable individual students below the poverty line to attend nonpublic schools, as provided in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Catholics saw an opportunity to construct their own vision of Judeo-Christian pluralism in education.

While Catholic school and public school proponents alike agreed that Americans valued Judeo-Christian pluralism, they disagreed about how to apply pluralism to education. Public school officials argued that everyone should be combined together in public schools. Catholics argued that support for different types of schools represented Judeo-Christian pluralism. Catholics imagined schools as the units that made up the whole of pluralistic society, whereas public school proponents of pluralism understood individual students and their religions as the units that made up the whole of the public school, which stood in for the pluralistic society.

Catholics understood a religiously pluralistic educational system to be friendly to different types of educational institutions. They said that they thought public schools did not always fulfill the needs of a religiously diverse country. For this reason, they claimed to believe that the government ought to recognize the value of religious education to a religiously diverse society. In particular, they argued that the government should support denominational schools financially, especially Catholic schools. To Catholics, financial support of schools that were committed to particular religious teachings symbolized an American commitment to Judeo-Christian pluralism.

Catholics' use of the inclusive, universalist language of Judeo-Christianity could seem at odds with their hopes for recognition of religious particularity within the public sphere. However, they did not see it this way. They argued that educational spaces for teaching theological specificity belonged in an American tradition of Judeo-Christianity. For Catholics, Judeo-Christianity recognized what separate religious institutions contributed to American society at large. Because of their interpretation of Judeo-Christianity, Catholics drew on many of the same concepts that NYC school officials did when producing the Judeo-Christian repertoire of ideas about coexistence. They described values such as brotherhood as being essential to education in NYC and New York State. One reading of Catholics' claims could be that their use of the Judeo-Christian repertoire was strategic—an attempt to ingratiate themselves into the dominant trends in order to get what they wanted: funding for Catholic schools. However, even if some strategy was involved, it is worth taking their claims seriously as a vision of religious pluralism as well, because when we do, we can identify the bounded nature of their vision of Judeo-Christianity and see the limits of its applicability in varied contexts.

Because the role of Catholic schools in American society became the central issue of the 1967 constitutional convention, the convention reveals how Catholic views on Judeo-Christian pluralism challenged the School Board's understanding of Judeo-Christianity.[1] Although the Board itself is not a major player in the events, we see civic groups (some of whom had challenged the Board's God-centric views in the moral and spiritual values debate of the 1950s) upholding the Board's conception of public schools as a site for the production of universal Judeo-Christian values. By constructing a previously untold narrative of the 1967 convention through newspaper and archival research, I show that the debate at this convention revealed the

[1] To my knowledge, no historians have written in depth about the 1967 New York convention, likely because the proposed new constitution did not end up passing, and there have been more legally significant cases on aid to parochial schools and more obviously culturally significant instances of school choice.

degree to which the particular Judeo-Christian repertoire in NYC public schools was one side in a contested battle, rather than a universally agreed upon set of values. I look beyond the educational framing of school choice or the legal framing of free exercise to show the conceptual boundaries of claims to universal values.

In this chapter, I argue that by looking at Catholic arguments for aid to parochial schools, we can see that the Catholic vision of pluralistic education challenged the universal nature of public school officials' Judeo-Christian repertoire, and in doing so, revealed that public school proponents viewed Judeo-Christianity as only possible in the public school's controlled environment. Because of the physical boundary of the public school as the space where pluralism occurred, in public school officials' understanding of Judeo-Christian pluralism, there was also a theological boundary—public school officials' wanted Judeo-Christian values to represent the shared values among religions, whereas Catholics wanted Judeo-Christian values to represent shared respect for and even support of particular theologies and religious practices. This is important because it suggests that the Judeo-Christian repertoire excluded a religious group it aimed to include, and one that willingly, enthusiastically, and perhaps strategically, used its terms of art.

Race and religion did not always structure priorities in the debate on aid to parochial schools. While there is a story about race to be told about white flight to Catholic schools within the city, what is particularly striking here for this argument is that there are not clear racial lines. Many city Catholics, including Catholics of color, supported aid to parochial schools, while other people of color do not. Those who did not, including Rev. Milton Galamison, directed their arguments at the exclusive structure of the public school and at white people who may have been Catholics, not necessarily at Catholics as Catholics.

In this chapter, I first provide contextual background on constitutional conventions in New York State, the "Blaine Amendment," and the 1967 convention in New York State. I then outline the Catholic arguments for and action in support of aid to parochial schools. Next I look at the backlash Catholics received for their expressed views. Finally, I reflect on what it means that the status quo was preserved.

Background

A Convention in New York State

Adopting a new constitution is quite the ordeal in New York State. Every twenty years, New Yorkers are asked whether they wish to hold a constitutional convention.[2] A constitutional convention calls together delegates from the state to rewrite the constitution as a whole over the period of several months. New Yorkers then vote whether to accept or reject the changes. In between conventions, New Yorkers can amend particular aspects of the constitution, but constitutional conventions, when they happen, give New Yorkers the chance to revisit the entire constitution.[3]

The 1967 constitutional convention was an off-year convention. New Yorkers had declined to hold a convention in 1957, but there were enough pressing issues that Governor Nelson Rockefeller signed the bill to place a referendum on whether to hold a constitutional convention in 1967 on the ballot. At the time, the most recent convention had been held in 1938, though that convention did not adopt a new constitution. Since then, New Yorkers had voted on

[2] Article 19 § 2.
[3] New Yorkers will vote this year on whether to hold a constitutional convention: "The New York State Constitutional Convention Clearinghouse," accessed May 24, 2017, http://www.newyorkconcon.info/.

around 100 amendments to the New York Constitution, adopting over 80 amendments.[4] However, the New York Constitution had last been significantly changed at a convention in 1894.

The 1967 convention took place over the course of five and a half months inside the "Gothic Assembly chamber at Albany"[5] and produced close to ten thousand pages worth of transcript. There were 186 delegates. The delegates discussed the entire constitution and numerous new issues, not just the Blaine Amendment, the constitutional prohibition on government aid to denominational schools. The delegates were divided into 15 committees that focused on particular aspects of the constitution. Representatives from those committees would make proposals for how to change the constitution. At the convention itself, when a delegate had a proposal, Anthony Travia, Democratic Speaker of the New York State Assembly and President of the constitutional convention, would ask the delegate to speak, and then call on other delegates to respond with their opinions. After everyone who wished to speak had expressed their views on a proposal, the proposal would go to a vote. The final proposed constitution was the summation of these votes. Upon the convention's close in September, voters had six weeks to mull over the constitution before voting on it themselves.

Article XI, Section 3, or The Blaine Amendment

The constitutional prohibition on government aid to denominational schools carried national significance. The prohibition bore the official name of Article XI, Section 3 of the New York State constitution and the colloquial misnomer of the "Blaine Amendment." The "Blaine Amendment" was a misnomer because Article XI, Section 3 was neither an amendment, nor did

[4] Jim Hadjin, "'67 Delegates Can Rewrite Constitution," *Newsday*, November 8, 1965, 7.
[5] George H. Favre, "New York scrap due over new constitution," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 4, 1967, 4.

nineteenth-century Maine senator James G. Blaine directly influence New York's provision. Blaine had proposed a no-funding amendment to the federal constitution in 1876. Subsequent state no-funding principles became associated with his name, and thus "baby Blaines," as some call them (and some resist calling them), were scattered throughout the country.[6] However, many such principles had as much to do with earlier no-funding principles as with Blaine's own proposed federal amendment.[7] For instance, in New York, the most recently successful constitutional convention, which occurred in 1894, had approved Article XI, Section 3, adopting the section from an 1824 no-funding statute.[8] New Yorkers' wrestling with the role of no-funding principles reflected debates happening about no-funding principles throughout the country due to the related issues of school desegregation, the War on Poverty, and federal jurisdiction over church-state actions.

In particular, New Yorkers were negotiating what it meant for a state to prohibit direct and indirect aid to denominational schools, except for transportation,[9] when the broader federal religion clauses of establishment and free exercise could now be applied to the states, thanks to the 1947 ruling *Everson v. Board of Education*. Article XI, Section 3 of the New York State Constitution read:

> Neither the state nor any subdivision thereof shall use its property or credit or any public money, or authorize or permit either to be used, directly or indirectly, in aid or maintenance, other than for examination or inspection, of any school or institution of learning wholly or in part under the control or direction of any religious denomination, or in which any denominational tenet or doctrine is

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[6] Steven K. Green, "The Insignificance of the Blaine Amendment," *Brigham Young University Law Review* 2 (2008): 295-333, 297.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Letters to the Editor of the Times, April 11, 1967.
[9] The original Article XI, Section 3 did not allow for transportation, but the 1938 constitutional convention had amended the provision to include the final clause about transportation. "For Immediate Release: The 'Blaine Amendment' 1894 to 1967," April 6, 1967; Chancery Office, Collection 021; Box CH-30, Folder 4; Archives of the Archdiocese of New York, St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie (hereafter cited as Chancery Collection).

> taught, but the legislature may provide for the transportation of children to and from any school or institution of learning.[10]

The prohibition was more restrictive than the First Amendment religion clauses. It specifically targeted religious schools, whereas the First Amendment prohibited the more general concept of "the establishment of religion." This restrictiveness had the potential to seem prejudiced against religious schools, especially Catholic schools, which constituted the largest body of religious schools in the country.

In addition to the changing application of the federal religion clauses, the federal 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) complicated the matter. As part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" and as the most expansive federal education legislation in U.S. history, the ESEA allowed for funding for materials for individual "needy" students, regardless of what kind of school they attended. Some politicians, including Governor Nelson Rockefeller, thought that the government ought now to be able to provide support for non-religious materials in denominational schools, and he wrote a law allowing for New York state to pay for textbooks. The program was being adjudicated in the highest state court and the U.S. Supreme Court throughout the duration of the constitutional convention.[11] In the state, there had been some increased friendliness toward religious schools.[12]

The relationship between government aid to private schools and the segregationist tendencies of such schools worried some New Yorkers. Segregation academies were booming in

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[10] Article XI, Section 3 (the "Blaine Amendment"), New York State Constitution.
[11] "Excerpts From State Court Opinions," *New York Times*, June 2, 1967, 44; "Ask Ban on Tax Aid to Parochial Schools," *Chicago Tribune,* September 29, 1967, 2. After the convention ended, in 1968, the Supreme Court upheld the textbook loan law as constitutional in *Board of Education v. Allen*, 392 U.S. 236: "Textbook Loan to Parochial Schools in N.Y. Is Upheld," *Chicago Tribune*, June 11, 1968, 3.
[12] Among others, see: Rebecca E. Zietlow, "The Judicial Restraint of the Warren Court (and Why it Matters)," *Ohio State Law Journal* 69:2 (2008), 255-301.

the southern United States and white flight to the suburbs was sweeping the country.[13] Catholic school enrollments were increasing in New York, which presented a puzzle for the government aid debate.[14] Many presumed that the enrollments were due to white flight from desegregating public schools, but parents from Harlem pointed out that parents of all racial backgrounds were taking their children out of public schools, because of the failure of public schools to education children.[15] Catholic parents may also have resisted the absence of devotional exercises following the Supreme Court decisions on school prayer and Bible-reading. All of these factors that may have contributed to rising enrollments in Catholic schools in NYC concerned those New Yorkers who had spent more than a decade working to successfully desegregate schools.

In the 1960s, New York's "baby Blaine" proved to be a lightning rod for New Yorkers to discuss nationwide concerns over religion and race in education. The New York state context made for a complicated and high stakes debate. Dominant church-state and interfaith organizations operating out of NYC, such as the National Council of Christians and Jews and Public Education and Religious Liberty (PEARL); the fresh memory of the north's largest school segregation boycotts in NYC; and the ever tense and rarely deferential relationship between New York State and NYC made for a complex assortment of players with disparate interests in the debate about Article XI, Section 3.

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[13] Kevin Kruse and Matthew Lassiter describe similar desegregation phenomena: Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

[14] This was happening despite the common notion that the Warren Supreme Court was an "activist" court, promoting church-state separation. Among other places: "News Release," Folder 1 and Terry Ferrer, "Crisis in the Catholic Schools," *New York Herald Tribune*, May 1961; Chancery Collection; Box CH-30, Folder 3.

[15] "Whites Flee—Says The Board of Education," *Views, Harlem Parents Committee*, July 1966, Folder 25, Box 13, Ella Baker Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (hereafter cited as Baker Papers).

1967: Convention Repeals Blaine; Voters Retain It by Rejecting Proposed Constitution

In November 1965, New Yorkers voted to hold a constitutional convention to revise their state constitution. In November 1966, they elected delegates to the convention. The convention addressed many issues important to New Yorkers, including welfare, redistricting, financial regulations, the environment, and the constitution's length. However, the question of whether to repeal the misnamed "Blaine Amendment," a nineteenth-century constitutional prohibition on government aid to denominational schools, proved to be "controversial"[16] and "the most emotional issue"[17] surrounding the April-September 1967 Albany convention.

Before the convention began, and even before delegates were elected, civic and religious groups lobbied for and against repeal of the Blaine Amendment. The group Citizens for Educational Freedom (CEF), a national and interfaith, though predominantly Catholic, group that had "cut its teeth in New York State on the textbook loan issue,"[18] organized informational gatherings on the convention and focused on the Blaine Amendment. The group then polled all delegate candidates on the Blaine Amendment, and found that a majority of candidates supported repeal; in other words, they supported aid to parochial schools.[19] A more limited, borough-based poll by the United Parents Associations, an organization that opposed repeal (meaning they opposed aid to parochial schools), suggested some contradictory statements by the same

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[16] Called "controversial" in, for example: Homer Bigart, "Roosevelt Opposes Church School Aid," *New York Times*, October 18, 1966, 1; Bernie Bookbinder, "Candidates 2-1 for Parochial School Aid," *Newsday*, October 31, 1966, 15; Bernie Bookbinder, "Survey Indicates End of Blaine Amendment," *Newsday*, November 5, 1966, 11; "Write-In Votes Seen Winning Javits a Place at Convention," *Newsday*, November 19, 1966, 17.
[17] Richard L. Madden, "State Ban on Aid for Parochial Schools Is Debated Hotly at Charter Hearing," *New York Times*, October 5, 1966.
[18] Bernie Bookbinder, "Who's Who in the Blaine Debate," *Newsday*, October 14, 1967, 8W. The New York State Federation of CEF fought for aid to private schools, specifically in a debate planned with PEARL. Gene Currivan, "Debates Planned on Aid to Schools: Opposing Groups Will Argue Use of State Funds," *New York Times*, May 11, 1967, 57.
[19] Bernie Bookbinder, "Survey Indicates End of Blaine Amendment," *Newsday*, November 5, 1966, 11.

candidates.[20] Other groups that got involved included PEARL, which officially opposed government aid to parochial schools.

By the convention's end, elected delegates voted to remove the constitutional prohibition on aid to denominational schools and replace it with language practically identical to that of the First Amendment religion clauses of the United States Constitution. Anthony Travia was pleased, as his interest in being convention president rested in part on his hope of repealing the Blaine Amendment. Delegates had submitted other proposals to replace Blaine that the convention rejected—including a proposal to vote on the Blaine Amendment separately from the rest of the constitution, which many groups supported. The convention vote rejecting the Blaine Amendment in favor of First Amendment language defied party lines, as Democrats and Republicans voted on both sides.[21] One journalist suggested that if there was a pattern to the delegates' votes, it was geographic, with high delegate votes for repealing Blaine from three "parts of the state there is a strong commitment to parochial education:" the outer boroughs of NYC; "the suburban Nassau, Suffolk and Westchester;" and "the upstate cites of Albany, Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse."[22] The journalist stated that 80 percent of delegates noted some religious membership in the delegate directory, with somewhat lower representation of Catholics, Protestants and Jews than there were throughout the state. All 65 Catholic delegates voted for repeal, nearly two thirds of the 34 Jewish delegates voted for repeal, and nearly two thirds of the 47 Protestant delegates voted to keep Blaine.[23] In addition to the new religion clause language, the proposed constitution stipulated statewide taxes for welfare, added anti-

[20] Ibid.
[21] Andrew Hacker. "The 'Blaine Amendment'—Yes or No?," *New York Times*, October 1, 1967.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.

discrimination clauses, provided for sweeping environmental protections, and enacted redistricting.

However, when New Yorkers went to the polls in November 1967, they rejected the proposed constitution in order to keep the prohibition on aid to parochial schools, a fate that seemed increasingly inevitable as opposition to the constitution amassed.[24] Groups including PEARL, the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) and the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) vocally opposed the proposed constitution.[25] Most leading New York politicians, including Senator Jacob Javits who had been a delegate and Mayor John Lindsay, rejected the proposed constitution, except Governor Rockefeller, who cautiously supported it.[26] Even some upstate Catholics who were frustrated that the proposed constitution would tax people throughout the state to pay for welfare that they perceived to be primarily for the city, voted against the constitution.[27] After all of the labor and debate surrounding the convention, New Yorkers were left with the same constitution with which they had started, largely because voters rejected the possibility of government aid to parochial schools that repeal of the Blaine Amendment in favor of First Amendment language represented.

The press, civic organizations, and politicians came to frame the proposed 1967 constitution around whether they supported government aid to parochial schools. In fact, the proposed constitution did not actually legislate aid to parochial schools; it removed the prohibition on aid to parochial schools and deferred to the federal religion clauses of non-establishment and free exercise. Nevertheless, New Yorkers had reason to worry that the proposed constitution would lead to aid to parochial schools. Rockefeller had recently signed

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[24] Leroy F. Aarons, "N.Y. Charter Backers Glum," *Washington Post*, November 5, 1967, E1; Bernie Bookbinder, "Outlook is Pessimistic for Backers," *Newsday,* October 26, 1967, 2.
[25] "Congress of Racial Equality Nixes NY State Constitution," *New York Amsterdam News*, November 4, 1967, 15.
[26] "Lindsay Raps NY Charter," *Newsday*, October 24, 1967, 2.
[27] Ronald Maiorana, "Upstate Catholics Split," *New York Times*, November 4, 1967, 22.

legislation to gift textbooks to parochial schools, which inspired legal action. Rockefeller also went on after the convention to sign legislation allowing for various types of financial aid to nonpublic schools, including a grant for maintenance and repair of school serving many low-income students, tuition reimbursement for low-income parents, and tax relief for other parents, which PEARL challenged in cases all the way up to the Supreme Court's *Nyquist*.[28] With all of this legal and legislative action, the debate about Blaine came to be about arguments for and against aid to parochial schools. However, it is important to keep in mind that the proposed constitution was merely less restrictive on the issue of aid to parochial schools than the constitution in force at the time.

Catholic Arguments for Government Aid to Parochial Schools

In their claims to the right to teach a specific theology within a Judeo-Christian American society, NY Catholics also made a number of arguments in support of government aid to denominational schools. First, they argued that the prohibition on aid to denominational schools was itself prejudiced, meaning that it went against the positive Judeo-Christian view of coexistence. They also made arguments for freedom of religion, for children's welfare, and for the broad concepts of equality and justice. Taken together, these arguments suggested that Catholics generally accepted the Judeo-Christian repertoire's value of coexistence, but they spoke of expanding the repertoire to a wider social arena—one that included religiously diverse types of schools rather than only religious diversity within public schools.

[28] *Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty v. Nyquist,* 413 U.S. 756 (1973). The Supreme Court decided that all sections of Chapters 414 of New York's Education and Tax Law under review (sections 1-5) violated the establishment clause.

Prejudicial and Antiquated

The Catholic argument that denying aid to denominational schools was prejudiced signaled that the Blaine Amendment was therefore emblematic of negative examples of religious and racial coexistence in the Judeo-Christian repertoire. After President John F. Kennedy, Jr. had opposed federal aid to nonpublic schools, New York Cardinal Francis Spellman had issued a statement in support of government aid to nonpublic schools that suggested that denying aid to denominational schools went against American values of positive coexistence. He said: "As an American citizen interested in the welfare of the nation, I feel that the failure to do justice and to avoid discrimination in the field of elementary and secondary schools is contrary to the best interests of our country."[29] By arguing that prohibitions such as New York's Blaine Amendment were unjust and discriminatory, Spellman suggested that they were un-American, and outside the (distinctly American) Judeo-Christian tradition.

Furthermore, the argument against the Blaine Amendment also embodied a Catholic subversion of the stereotype that Catholicism was an antiquated religion.[30] Catholics argued not just that the Blaine Amendment was prejudiced against Catholics, but that it was old and antiquated because it was prejudiced. For example, at a hearing before the commission, "a spokesman for the Catholic Charities of Buffalo" called the Blaine Amendment " 'this

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[29] "Statement of His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Spellman, On Federal Aid to Education," March 13, 1961; Francis Cardinal Spellman Collection, Collection 007; Box S/C-77, Folder 1; Archives of the Archdiocese of New York, St. Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie (hereafter cited as Spellman Collection). Kennedy's opposition to aid was complicated by his role as the first Catholic President of the United States. It followed from his position that one's own religion should be kept private, which he articulated in his famous 1960 campaign speech on religion. "Transcript: JFK's Speech on Religion," December 5, 2007, *National Public Radio*, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=16920600. See also Randall Balmer, *God in the White House: A History: How Faith Shaped the Presidency from John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 7-48.

[30] Tracy Fessenden, *Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

unfortunate relic of a less enlightened past.'"[31] Using a classic anti-Catholic phrase—relic—the Catholic Charities spokesperson framed the Blaine Amendment as old, not just because it was from the nineteenth century, but because of its mindset. He offered a narrative of progress by which people have become more "enlightened," which seemed to mean less prejudiced. In another example, a Catholic representative emphasized that people in the past had fears that Catholics would dominate education were the government to give aid to denominational schools. Charles J. Tobin Jr., secretary of the State Catholic Welfare Committee, told a gathering for the Temporary State Commission on the Revision and Simplification of the Constitution in Albany "that the Blaine Amendment was adopted 'at a time in our national history (1894) in which the proponents of universal education were fearful that major governmental support of religious elementary and secondary schools would prevent the development of a broad, well-financed system of public education. Such a fear has long since disappeared, but the amendment lingers on.'"[32] In front of the committee, Tobin associated the Blaine Amendment with the past, as he indicated that the fears and concerns of early proponents of public education were no longer relevant. Not only was a broad system of public education already instated, but by describing the past actors as "fearful," Tobin indicted that they were afraid of Catholic domination in public education. Tobin and the Buffalo spokesperson both suggested that the Blaine Amendment was antiquated and outdated due to anti-Catholic prejudiced origins.

Freedom of Religion

The Catholic argument for government aid to parochial schools also rested on support for freedom of religion. On this interpretation, freedom of religion meant the freedom for Americans

[31] Richard L. Madden, "State Ban on Aid for Parochial Schools Is Debated Hotly at Charter Hearing," *New York Times*, October 5, 1966.
[32] Bernie Bookbinder, "Catholics Start Aid Push," *Newsday*, October 4, 1966, 9.

to practice their religion without government prohibition of religious practice. Because the Blaine Amendment was a prohibition of sorts, Catholics interpreted it as impeding the freedom of religion. This was a nuanced argument, as freedom of religion has also meant the freedom to practice religion *without* government interference. Catholics did want government interference of a particular sort—they wanted funding. In this way, Catholics sought freedom of religious practice in education on par with freedom for public schools to discuss their views, which Catholics saw as only possible with government aid for education.

In order to make the argument that government aid for parochial schools enabled the freedom of religion, Catholics and others who supported repeal of the Blaine Amendment specifically framed the Blaine Amendment as a prohibition. In a letter to the editor of the *New York Times*, the Rector of Episcopal Schools in Long Island wrote, "It would merely remove this ancient handcuff and allow the people's representatives to vote freely the will of the people."[33] Without even having to endorse government aid, he suggested that people were not allowed to even express their opinions on aid to parochial schools because the Blaine Amendment prohibited the free expression of religious beliefs.

Catholics also argued that education could be a form of religious practice, such that freedom of religion in this instance meant the freedom of religious people to choose which type of school one's children attended. The advocacy group CEF placed the concept of educational freedom at the center of its mission, naming themselves "Citizens for Educational Freedom." CEF claimed that educational freedom was an expression of religious freedom, because some Americans wanted their children to learn religion alongside school subjects. As an expression of religious freedom, CEF argued that educational freedom ought to be an American right. This

[33] Frederic Underwood, "For Repeal of School Aid Restriction: Letters to the Editor of the Times," *New York Times*, June 3, 1967, 30.

right could only be practiced with further financial support. Because the organization saw educational freedom as an expression of religious freedom, an American right, CEF claimed that the government ought to give aid to denominational schools.

The Catholic argument also suggested that support for Catholic freedom of religion would promote other positive aspects of Judeo-Christian coexistence, such as tolerance. The Very Rev. Msgr. Edgar P. McCarren, Director of the Research Institute for Catholic Education at the Diocese of Rockville Centre, wrote to *Newsday* to suggest that as freedom of religion was a democratic principle, the implementation of freedom of religion through aid to Catholic schools would allow other democratic principles to flourish: "Investigation revealed that the Catholics who attended Catholic schools and colleges were more tolerant, more favorable toward civil liberties, less anti-Negro and less anti-Semitic."[34] This was not just an argument for Catholic schools, although it was that. It was an argument that allowing for the flourishing of alternative educational modes in denominational schools would promote tolerance toward alternative visions more broadly.[35]

American Democracy

Cardinal Francis Spellman, the Archbishop of New York, implied that aid to parochial schools would embody an American democracy that God sanctioned. On April 4, 1967, the opening session of the New York State Constitutional Convention began inside the "Gothic

[34] Rev. Msgr. Edgar P. McCarren, "Role of Catholic Schools in a Democracy," *Newsday*, June 30, 1967.
[35] Not only Catholics made this argument. For instance, although many Jews were against aid to denominational schools, some Jews favored it, with some Orthodox Jews participating in CEF, and a professor from the Conservative branch-affiliated Jewish Theological Seminary of America writing that: "Education for all children is too important to be crippled by dogmatism" and that politicians supporting repeal of Blaine should be "congratulated by all—Catholic, Protestant, Jewish and nonreligous." Seymour Siegal, "Letters to the Editor of the Times: Aid to All Schools," *New York Times*, May 3, 1967, 43.

Assembly chamber at Albany" with an Invocation from Spellman.[36] Speaking prior to welcoming addresses by New York's political leaders, Spellman called upon God to allow the democratic process to prevail at the convention: "With grateful remembrance we acknowledge the industry and sacrifice of our forebears, who labored at so great a price to give us as our birthright the democratic process of government to which this meeting renders witness. We beg You that this process may ever flourish in our land."[37] Although Spellman did not specifically mention the Blaine Amendment in his invocation, he was a long time supporter of aid to denominational schools.[38] Seen in light of his previously stated views that denying aid to denominational schools infringed upon parents' rights of religious freedom and educational choice,[39] Spellman would later acknowledge[40] that he had the particular injustice of Article XI, Section 3 in mind when he had told the convention: "Send Your spirit of wisdom to abide with them, so that their discussions may be free from needless contention and center on the task at hand: to forge with equity and fairness an instrument of justice for all our citizens."[41] Spellman seized on the opportunity that serving as the sole voice of religious leadership on the convention's first day afforded him. He suggested that when all religions were included in and supported by the public sphere—as he was at that moment—justice, freedom, equity, and true democratic practice could prevail.

Even as it was framed as a request for the convention itself to proceed democratically, Spellman's language drew upon the Judeo-Christian repertoire of religious and racial

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[36] George H. Favre, "New York scrap due over new constitution," *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 4, 1967, 4.
[37] "Invocation and Excerpts From Speeches at Opening of Constitutional Convention," *New York Times*, April 5, 1967, 32.
[38] "Statement of His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Spellman, On Federal Aid to Education," March 13, 1961; Spellman Collection; Box S/C-77, Folder 1.
[39] Ibid.
[40] "Statement of His Eminence, Francis Cardinal Spellman on the Closing of the Constitutional Convention," September 26, 1967; Chancery Collection, Box CH-30, Folder 1.
[41] Ibid.; "Invocation and Excerpts From Speeches at Opening of Constitutional Convention."

coexistence—in discussing equality, fairness, and justice—to pray for a vision of American democracy that would include government funding for denominational schools. At and beyond the convention, some Catholics would expand upon Spellman's notion of American democracy. They would imagine a broad public sphere that allowed for an education system that included Catholic schools in the joint pursuit of providing quality education for children. They especially made this point because they believed that Catholic schools already did provide children, especially poor children and children of color, with quality education they were not receiving in public schools.

Quality Education

Some Catholics, especially black Catholics, argued that aid for denominational schools could help poor students and students of color learn and thrive. At the convention itself, Hulan E. Jack (Democrat, New York County) the former Manhattan Borough President and current Democratic Party Leader, supported repealing the Blaine Amendment to allow for government aid to parochial schools because he believed that quality education should be made available to all children, especially poor children and children of color. A black Catholic himself, Jack conveyed that providing quality education for students of color sometimes meant "join[ing] hands with the Catholic schools." He began with a note of admiration for the diversity of the convention itself which showed his commitment to diversity as a positive mode of coexistence: "I think all of us were moved that here with a cross section of so many of us of various religious faiths, various racial strains, we must look forward to a situation in which all of us are joined together to achieve a common purpose, to do the greatest good for the greatest number of our

children."[42] Addressing the concerns put forward by Rev. Milton Galamison and others that the Blaine Amendment would promote white flight within the city from city public schools to city Catholic schools, Jack said that he "sought some information to find out if there was truly any segregation in the Catholic schools."[43] He found that, he reported, this was not the case. Instead, to Jack, Catholic schools included racially diverse student bodies that promoted quality education. For example, he described:

> The Catholic secondary school known as Rice High School in the heart of Harlem has nine hundred thirteen students, and let us carefully listen to this. Of these three hundred twenty-four are Negro and Spanish-speaking boys. More than five hundred white boys from white neighborhoods come into Harlem each day to get an education in this secondary school.
>
> Now may I just ask all of us, in the spirit of the times, that as we move ahead we are not seeking division, we are not seeking different methods, we are seeking to unite and work together to better our school conditions for our children, and if we think in these terms it ill behooves us to state that the repeal of the Blaine Amendment will bring about the doom of the public schools, because let me say to you there is great ferment in Harlem, there is great ferment in the – Stuyvesant area, there is great ferment in the areas labeled ghetto.[44]

Based on his own research and experiences, Jack sought to refute the stereotype that students in areas that had been labeled as "ghetto" were less interested or less capable of thriving in quality schools. Jack had even chosen to send his own daughter to Catholic school because of the quality of the education. Jack's emphasis on quality education over type of education suggested that the religious affiliation or lack thereof of schools was less important to some Catholics than any given school's commitment to its students and their education.

In the conclusion of his speech, Jack made a case for a broader vision of education in America that included Catholic schools. He expressed that such an educational system would embody the American value of working together across differences and would serve all children:

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[42] Ibid., 802.
[43] Ibid..
[44] Ibid.

"And if need be, let us join hands with the Catholic schools, let us join hands with the authorities of the parochial schools and develop the kind of educational system, realistic, if you please, which will give to all our children the God given opportunities of a great future on the basis of our American tradition and our American society."[45] Drawing on features of Judeo-Christian coexistence such as the idea of joining hands, or of "our American tradition," Jack made the case that aid to parochial schools would help all students, including students in need. To him, an educational system dedicated to all students would be truly American.

In another example, social workers James R. Dumpson, and Aminda Wilkins founded the predominantly black Catholic organization Citizens United for Repeal of Blaine (CURB) shortly after the convention concluded to convince voters that Catholic schools could provide quality and safe education to students in poor neighborhoods. With Wilkins' Jamaica, Queens home as CURB's headquarters, CURB sought to promote repeal of the Blaine Amendment among people whose primary concern was the education of children of color and poor children.[46] Dumpson argued that the Blaine Amendment ought to be repealed to allow for aid to parochial schools because "Denominational schools will continue to be the choice of many of the poor in the ghetto, because these schools have served nobly in both secular areas and in perpetuating value systems."[47] Wilkins, Dumpson, and their fellow CURB members suggested that Catholic schools could work toward improving the quality of education for poor students, many of whom were students of color. They saw Catholic schools as offering quality moral education, as well as

[45] Ibid.
[46] Wilkins shared her home with her husband, Roy Wilkins, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.
[47] C. Gerald Fraser, "Negroes to Fight School-Aid Ban," *New York Times*, September 26, 1967.

quality academics. Dumpson also added that: "No state law should be more restrictive than the Federal Constitution,"[48] especially if it limited educational opportunity.

Rather than grounding their argument in the first Amendment, they prioritized students in the argument that the government ought to give aid to denominational schools because Catholic schools promoted children's welfare. In doing so, Jack and the CURB members also advocated for a broad vision of education in America, one that included Catholic schools in the American tradition. They drew on concepts from the Judeo-Christian repertoire both to explain why this vision was worthwhile—such as the notion of joining hands with Catholic schools—as well as to show the value of Catholic schools—for instance, that Catholic schools taught value systems. Jack's and CURB's arguments did not receive as much press as some of the other Catholic arguments. When CURB was featured in newspapers it was usually because the press found the racial composition of the group surprising, since journalists primarily associated black New Yorkers with opposing aid to parochial schools. However, Jack's and CURB's arguments explicitly and clearly described the broad educational system that many Catholics sought.

A Broad Vision of American Education Wins at the Convention

Catholics were not alone in using concepts from the Judeo-Christian repertoire of religious and racial coexistence to support the repeal of the Blaine Amendment. At the convention itself, the winning proposal repealed Blaine and replaced it with language very similar to the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The state constitution that emerged from the convention said that New York could not pass any laws establishing religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The convention delegates who had written and lobbied for the winning proposal used Judeo-Christian terms to invoke the broad vision of an American

[48] Ibid.

education system that included Catholic schools. Although in championing First Amendment language and rejecting the Blaine Amendment, the delegates did not necessarily profess outright support for government aid to denominational schools as Catholics did, they made a strong case that a diversity of educational options was distinctly American.

The group of delegates who supported the First Amendment language came from Manhattan, and made strategic use of their leader, Blossom Graubard Saxe. Saxe herself was a model of American diversity and assimilation into Judeo-Christian norms. Saxe was the daughter of a working-class Jewish father born in Romania and a Jewish mother born in Austria, both of whose native language was Yiddish.[49] By the time of the convention, she was a well-known attorney in NYC. With thirty years experience in government and community work, Saxe represented the 24th Senate District (New York County) as a Democrat, sat on the convention's Committee on Bill of Rights and Suffrage, and served as the secretary for the Legislature Committee.[50] Through her position on the Committee on Bill of Rights and Suffrage, she was prepared to present an article to the entire convention that would use the language of the First Amendment religion clauses in place of Article XI, Section 3. Her proposal had been building momentum, as Manhattan Democrats led by Julius C. C. Edelstein, past executive assistant to former NYC Mayor Robert Wagner, had been talking about using First Amendment language since before delegates were even elected.[51] Saxe's argument for the federal language rested on a positive vision of religious and racial coexistence flourishing and negative religious and racial coexistence—prejudice, bigotry, etc.—fading away. Likely due to her own authority as someone

[49] 1920; Census Place: Manhattan Assembly District 2, New York, New York; Roll: T625_1186; Page: 7A; Enumeration District: 138; Image: 791. Saxe's father's job industry was listed as "lunch room" on the 1920 census.
[50] *The New York State Constitutional Convention Directory of Delegates and Staff*, Vol. 1, 90, 1967, 12 vols., *The Making of Modern Law: Primary Sources*, Web, 12 March 2017.
[51] Maurice Carroll, "Democrats Favor Wider School Aid," *New York Times*, September 24, 1966, 18.

who could speak to the positive and negative aspects of religious and racial coexistence, Saxe and her supporters were eager for Saxe to deliver her proposition.

However, convention delegates would have to wait to hear Saxe's vision of diversity and pluralism. Saxe fell ill and was hospitalized shortly before she was scheduled to present her much-anticipated proposal. Saxe's proposal lingered in the Albany assembly chamber air as day after day, a delegate would request delaying presentation of the proposition on her behalf, with something to the effect of:

> Mr. President, Mrs. Saxe, who everybody knows has been ill for these last two or three weeks is hospitalized and is now on the road to recovery. She telephoned this morning and said that she would like to lead the debate for her proposition. She expects that the doctors will allow her to appear here to at least read a statement on Monday. Accordingly, on her behalf, I ask this be laid aside until Monday.[52]

Convention President Travia granted the postponement at each request, so that Saxe could lead her own proposal. For weeks, Travia repeated that Saxe's proposal was "Ready and laid aside" until she returned.[53] If Saxe's proposal had not been the most highly anticipated proposal of the convention before she became ill, it certainly was now.

Upon her return, Saxe wasted no time framing her own experience in relation to the kind of community that she imagined the replacement of the Blaine Amendment with First Amendment language would foster. Responding to the delegates' applause and welcome back speeches, Saxe thanked the delegates for the care they had shown her. "At the outset I would like to thank you for the warm welcome which you gave me today which touched me deeply. I would also like to thank all of my colleagues who were so kind as to send me innumerable flowers, notes and cards, and to inquire about my health. Your concern was a great help to me during my

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[52] *The New York State Constitutional Convention Proceedings*, 1967, 12 vols., *The Making of Modern Law: Primary Sources*, Web, 12 March 2017, Vol. 2, 674.
[53] Ibid., 611, 674, 741.

hospital stay and during my extended convalescence. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart."[54] Saxe highlighted that at this moment she saw the delegates practicing her ideal of positive coexistence: the idea of people of different religious and racial backgrounds coming together in common support of caring for someone.

The moment had finally come for Saxe to present her proposal. As she did, she drew on the binary we have seen in moral education programs—the idea that schools ought to promote positive concepts of religious and racial coexistence, such as diversity and brotherhood, and they should prevent negative concepts of religious and racial coexistence, such as prejudice and bigotry. She argued that the state constitution should replace the current prohibition on aid to denominational schools with First Amendment language, reasoning that all children would be better off with well-funded and diverse school options. In particular, she wove together threads from both sides of the Judeo-Christian binary on coexistence: the value of diversity and the repudiation of prejudice.

Saxe first introduced diversity as a fact in the district she represented to suggest that people of diverse religious and racial backgrounds wanted to repeal the Blaine Amendment, and so they had elected her. "The district I represent, in which I campaigned, runs from the Chelsea docks through Greenwich Village, Mulberry Street, the Fulton Fish Market, Orchard Street, the East Village and Tompkins Square, to staid Stuyvesant Town," she said. "We have all the religions—Catholic, Protestant and Jewish. We also have Coptics, Ukranian and Greek Orthodox. Longshoremen, Fifth Avenue society folk and hippies live there. You name it and we have it. And in that area I pledged my voice on this issue."[55] With this opening, Saxe made multiple moves. She appealed to the Judeo-Christian repertoire to suggest that diversity was a

[54] Ibid., 763
[55] Ibid., 763.

positive form of religious and racial coexistence. She also suggested that the Blaine Amendment was not welcoming to diversity, given the diverse residents' support for repeal of the Blaine Amendment. Finally, her mode of describing her district mirrored the broad vision of American education that might include Catholic schools—as a shared space where divergent religious and racial groups all practiced their beliefs.

Saxe elaborated on her insinuation that the Blaine Amendment opposed diversity by describing how the Blaine Amendment fell on the negative side of the Judeo-Christian repertoire of coexistence. She described the history of the Blaine Amendment as part of the motivation behind her proposition: "In essence, this proposition substitutes the first Amendment of the Constitution of the United States for Article Eleven, Section 3, the so-called 'Blaine Amendment', which was included in our State Constitution by a convention rife with fear and filled with bigotry and prejudice against the minorities migrating to this country."[56] By situating her argument in relation to immigration, Saxe suggested that the Blaine Amendment's prejudice and bigotry was not merely religious, but that prejudices toward Catholics were also prejudices toward racial groups. Her narrative of the Blaine Amendment's historic prejudices were bound up in the Judeo-Christian repertoire because she understood concepts such as prejudice as immoral and un-American. This was significant given that she saw her own proposition as uniting people across religious and racial differences as a model of American morality.

Continuing to echo the binary of positive and negative coexistence, Saxe went on to argue that diversity was not merely a fact of coexistence in her district, but ought to be an educational value in the form of diverse types of schools. "In a competitive world, always requiring more knowledge, the existence of different types of schools will, through competition, diversity and freedom of choice, tend to raise the quality of all education. Quantity and quality

[56] Ibid., 763-64.

education combined may be."[57] Here, Saxe combined Catholic arguments for quality education and diversity of educational institutions. She took her argument one step further by arguing that denying aid to students for exercising their diverse options of school choices defied the value of diversity: "Presently, we insist by law, on a certain excellence and quality of teaching in all schools—private and public. In the fields of education, common to all schools, we should also insist that no child should be deprived of aid and opportunity because of his creed."[58] Although she did not outright support aid for parochial schools, she implied her support of it by speaking of significance of public and private education to her conception of America.

Finishing her statement, Saxe stepped beyond the Judeo-Christian binary; she suggested that the country's laws and institutions would support her Judeo-Christian vision of coexistence. She concluded that: "Reason and hard economic practicalities, faith in the wisdom of our Legislature and Courts, and love for all of God's children demand the passage of this proposition."[59] In other words, she believed that the federal religion clauses would provide for the peaceful coexistence of "all of God's children." She also suggested that her Judeo-Christian vision was reasonable and economically practical in light of increased Catholic school enrollment, playing to what she saw as other American virtues. With her statement, she summarized that the Blaine Amendment was prejudiced and negatively impacted religious and racial diversity, whereas her new proposition promoted diversity and "love for all of God's children," which she thought the courts and legislature would surely support.

As a non-Catholic whose story embodied the values of Judeo-Christian inclusivity, Saxe was able to speak not only to Catholics but also to people who themselves connected to the notion of positive coexistence. For example, Herman Badillo (Democrat-Liberal, Bronx), a

[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.

lawyer and accountant serving as Bronx Borough President, explained that his opposition to the Blaine Amendment and support for Saxe's proposition came from a place of empathy that was situated within the shared experience of prejudice. He explained that as a Puerto Rican Protestant, he was a minority who had experienced prejudice: "There are many legends about the Badillo family in Puerto Rico. One of them is that the Badillos smuggled the first Protestant Bible into Puerto Rico. Another one is that the Badillos were mostly ministers and lawyers; the ministers would practice the Protestant religion and the lawyers would get them out of jail."[60] He continued: "You may wonder how from that heritage you get to a point of supporting a proposition that would repeal the Blaine Amendment," as the stereotype in the American context was that Catholics supported repeal and Protestants opposed it. However, Badillo found his experience of receiving prejudice as a Puerto Rican Protestant made him empathize with Catholics: "I am only telling you that when you are a minority within a minority, and that gets further complicated into other minorities, you get to a point where you have a special sensitivity to anything that smacks of prejudice towards a particular group and you seek perhaps a little deeper to root it out. In my judgment, the present Blaine Amendment, the present Section 3 of Article XI, is a brutal provision…"[61] Unlike other Saxe supporters, Badillo's reasoning for voting to repeal the Blaine Amendment had little to do with supporting aid to Catholic schools or even a diverse American educational system. Rather, he made the claim that all legal provisions ought to be free from prejudice, and that he was in a position to recognize prejudice.

That a version of the Catholic argument for aid to parochial schools won in the hands of a woman with her own assimilation story is not entirely surprising. Perhaps it could only win when made in the context of the broader values of diversity and repudiation of prejudice. The

[60] Ibid., 830.
[61] Ibid.

conversation that took place outside the convention itself certainly suggested that was the case. As we will soon see, advocates of the Judeo-Christian repertoire understood Catholic arguments and Saxe's provision as decidedly un-American because they went against the separation of church and state and sought religious domination over an aspect of the government. There was another argument, too, that black Protestants in particular made: that government aid to denominational schools would encourage white flight from the city's public schools to the city's Catholic schools. While some other church-state advocates tacked this argument onto their own, it was clear that it was merely an add-on; the white church-state advocates' central concern was about keeping Judeo-Christianity within the bounds of the public schools, where they could control the messages of coexistence that emerged.

Arguments Against Aid to Parochial Schools

As I have shown, the Catholic vision of American education that emerged in the debates about government aid for parochial schools framed schools as the units of diversity within a pluralistic American society. For the government to support diversity in American education, Catholics believed that the government should give aid to denominational schools. At the convention, the Catholic vision of education prevailed and the Blaine Amendment was replaced with First Amendment language, largely because non-Catholics proposed and supported repeal. I now turn to the perspectives of people who opposed government aid to parochial schools and argued that the Blaine Amendment should remain in the constitution. They rejected the proposed constitution as a whole because it was a package deal and they so strongly opposed aid to parochial schools.

Unlike Catholic participants in the debate, the proponents of public education understood students as the unit of diversity within the bounded space of the public school. However, within the public school vision of American education, proponents placed emphasis on different reasons why the bounded space of the public school mattered. Some emphasized the importance of the separation of church and state, which on their view prohibited government aid to parochial schools. Others worried that government aid to parochial schools would take money away from public schools. Still others argued that aid to parochial schools would promote white flight to Catholic schools. They thought that by expanding the understanding of diversity beyond the public school, the government would open the possibility for racial segregation between white Catholic schools and black and Puerto Rican public schools. Taken together, these positions opposed not only government aid to parochial schools, but also the Catholic vision of diversity in American education. They spoke to the durability of public schools' understanding of diversity.

Whereas proponents of aid to parochial schools were predominantly Catholic, people of diverse religious, racial, and political backgrounds were furious at the prospect that government aid might contribute to parochial schools. Jewish organizations, Protestant organizations, black organizations, civic organizations, and numerous politicians from across the political aisle opposed repeal of the Blaine Amendment and subsequently opposed the proposed constitution because it repealed the Blaine Amendment. The widespread nature of the opposition made it unsurprising that New Yorkers ultimately nixed the proposed constitution. Even as diverse groups could map their own meanings onto concepts within the Judeo-Christian repertoire, a majority of New Yorkers seemed to agree that the boundaries of public education were finite.

Vision of Public Schools

At the convention, the vision of American education where the student population of public schools represented diversity of the whole society was, to some, "the very heart and soul of our American life."[62] Donald Szantho Harrington (Liberal-Democrat, Delegate-at-Large) offered an ultimately unsuccessful proposal to amend Saxe's proposition to include both the First Amendment language and the Blaine Amendment language. He told the convention that "Should this repeal succeed, I predict that we will shortly find our historic way of life itself materially altered."[63] To Harrington, "our historic way of life" was marked by a number of factors, including "the future of the American Public School, free and open to all, which has been the backbone of American democracy as the meeting ground of all the various groups which constitute our conglomerate people."[64] Even though his proposal did not pass, his description of the public school put into words the vision of the public school that many who opposed government aid to parochial schools assumed.[65]

To defend this vision of public schools, one argument that emerged was the need to protect public schools from Catholic schools. A *New York Times* article outlining the various positions pointed out that opponents to government aid "also fear that state aid to parochial

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[62] Ibid., 768.
[63] Ibid., 768.
[64] Ibid., 768. Harrington was an influential and divisive figure in New York State. A Unitarian-Universalist Co-Minister at The Community Church of New York with his wife Vilma Szantho Harrington and chairman of the Liberal Party of New York State, he had been Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr.'s running mate for lieutenant governor in the 1966 gubernatorial election a few months prior. That election had "split the Democrats" and re-elected incumbent Rockefeller. *Directory*, Vol 1, 52. Sam Roberts, "Donald S. Harrington, 91, Liberal Crusader, Dies," *New York Times*, September 20, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/20/nyregion/donald-s-harrington-91-liberal-crusader-dies.html. It is possible that as Harrington delivered his agenda for bringing students together in public schools, delegates could not help but remembering the role he had played in tearing a political party apart.
[65] Harrington went on to say urge rejection of the constitution because he had come to believe that the whole convention was about turning over the Blaine Amendment. He also told his congregation that he and two other liberal democrats voted to submit the constitution as a total package in a last minute decision so as not to deadlock the convention. George Dugan, "O'Connor, Backing Proposed Charter, Warns on 'Religious War' Over State Aid to Church Schools," *New York Times*, October 9, 1967, 38.

schools would be a threat to the public school system."[66] Mayor Lindsay made a similar argument, as he "warned that the new constitution's repeal of the Blaine Amendment's existing constitutional ban on state aid to church-supported schools posed a serious threat to the public school system."[67] The threat to public schools seemed to be two-fold. First, government aid to parochial schools threatened the vision of public schools as *the* model of American diversity because it offered support for a different vision. Second, government aid to parochial schools threatened public school funding. PEARL argued in an informational pamphlet on Blaine fittingly titled "Protecting Our Public Schools" that "aid to parochial schools will drain funds available for public schools."[68] Thus, many who opposed government aid to parochial schools understood such aid to threaten their vision of American education, intellectually and financially.

Separation of Church and State

In order to uphold the vision of public schools as representations of American diversity, a popular argument among opponents of government aid to parochial schools was that government aid to parochial schools violated the separation of church and state, a principle they argued must be maintained to avoid government endorsement of a particular religion. PEARL was among the most vocal opposition groups that emphasized separation. An umbrella organization for like-minded civic groups, PEARL's membership roster included twenty-five groups, including numerous Jewish organizations and the United Federation of Teachers, led by Albert Shanker, a former math teacher who went on to be one of the biggest critics of community control (see chapter five). An informational guide on PEARL featured separation as an American principle:

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[66] George Dugan, "O'Connor, Backing Proposed Charter, Warns on 'Religious War' Over State Aid to Church Schools," *New York Times*, October 9, 1967, 38.
[67] "Lindsay Raps NY Charter," *Newsday*, October 24, 1967, 2.
[68] PEARL, "Protecting Our Schools"; United Federation of Teachers Records; WAG 022; Box 155; Folder 26; Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University (hereafter cited as UFTR).

"We believe, as did the authors of the Bill of Rights, Madison and Jefferson, that religious freedom requires the 'wall of separation' between church and state."[69] To PEARL's Executive Co-Chairman William F. Haddad, separation meant that "Public funds, raised by public taxes, must be confined to public schools operated by public officials who are responsible to all the people."[70] PEARL's rejection of government aid was grounded in the notion that separation protected a diverse, open public.

PEARL was far from alone in arguing that separation of church and state was a true American principle. One letter to the editor claimed that "If we are to give money to support parochial and private schools, then we will destroy the principle of the separation of church and state. It is because the child is taught religion, that makes such support wholly undesirable and unjust, contrary to the First Amendment of the United States Constitution."[71] The Protestant Council of the City of New York, the American Jewish Congress, and the American Jewish Committee also expressed the view that separation of church and state was an essential principle.[72]

The New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) was so committed to the separation of church and state that it "reluctantly opposed" the proposed constitution, which included other sections that it supported. Dr. Sheldon Ackley, the NYCLU chairman, expressed support for provisions that "his organization succeeded in having written into the document, includ[ing] the right of felony defendants to preliminary examinations or review of grand jury minutes, tighter wiretap controls, jury trials of New York City misdemeanor defendants, modification of religious

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[69] "Questions & Answers about Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty," Folder 11, Box 85, UFTR.
[70] William F. Haddad, "The Organization of PEARL: A 25-Group Coalition to Protect Public Education and Religious Liberty," Folder 11, Box 85, UFTR.
[71] Joseph Lewis, "Fundamental Principle," Letter to *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 10, 1967, 20
[72] George Dugan, "O'Connor, Backing Proposed Charter, Warns on 'Religious War' Over State Aid to Church Schools," *New York Times*, October 9, 1967, 38.

matching in adoptions, a ban on disclaimer loyalty oaths for public employees and an ombudsman-type review of abuses by state agencies."[73] Nevertheless, separation of church and state was such a fundamental a principle for the NYCLU that Ackley stated " 'We believe that these gains, although significant, are overridden by the real threat to separation of church and state posed by repeal of the Blaine Amendment."[74] In essence, the NYCLU was forced to decide between separation of church and state and the other provisions they had developed. For the NYCLU, separation was such a significant American principle that their commitment to it ultimately outweighed their commitment to other civil liberties issues in the proposed constitution.

Taking a direct stab at the CEF and Catholic understanding that educational choice was an expression of American pluralism, spokesmen for the American Jewish Congress indicated that the choice of where to send one's child to school was not representative of American diversity. Arguing that the Blaine Amendment helped protect religious freedom and separation of church and state, the AJ-Congress spokesmen claimed, " 'Parents undoubtedly have the right to send their children to the schools of their choice, but they have no right to demand use of the public purse to finance that choice.' "[75] For the AJ-Congress, educational choice was a right separate from the vision of diversity in the American educational system. Making a similar point from a personal perspective, the above letter to the editor put it this way: "If a parent wants his or her child taught religion, he or she should pay for it. I do not want to pay to teach children a religious system that I do not subscribe to, nor would I expect someone else to support schools

[73] Bernie Bookbinder, "Civil Liberties Unit Raps NY Charter," *Newsday*, October 12, 1967, 7.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Mary Hornaday, "N.Y. debates church-school proviso: Views aired," *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 12, 1966, 4.

that taught children a religion that he or she does not believe in."[76] Separation of church and state, the AJ-Congress and the letter writer indicated, allowed individuals to avoid paying for religious education in which they did not believe. Although they did not directly say it, it was clear that they rejected the notion that religious education could be a component of the diverse American society that everyone supported—at least financially.

Rev. Arthur W. Mielke, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Buffalo understood government aid to parochial schools to detract from the diversity of the public schools. He argued that the Blaine Amendment posed a "threat[]" to "the principle of separation of church and state" because " 'We would be in the ironic position of giving support with one hand to religious segregation at the very time we are trying to overcome segregation by race with the other.' "[77] Mielke suggested that his understanding of public school diversity rejected both aid to parochial schools and racial segregation because they each opposed a diversely populated public school. Similarly, the author of one letter to the editor of NY *Newsday* highlighted the importance of integration:

> We have been told time and again about the educational values inherent in integrated schools, that these educational benefits attach to all groups—minority, majority, white, black, etc. And so they do. Getting to know one another is one of the great educational experiences and is, unfortunately, available in very few places, since there is a tendency for people to clan together by ethnic origin, skin color or religion. This, we have been told, is the real worth of integrated education. And so it is.
> Now, by what inverse reasoning, and for what esoteric purpose, do these same people champion a cause that would do so much damage to integration?[78]

[76] Joseph Lewis, "Fundamental Principle," Letter to *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 10, 1967, 20
[77] Richard L. Madden, "State Ban on Aid for Parochial Schools Is Debated Hotly at Charter Hearing," *New York Times*, October 5, 1966.
[78] John Fautz, "Politically Motivated," *Newsday*, October 25, 1967, 32.

Like Mielke and the letter-writer, other opponents would also reject government aid to parochial schools because of its potentially segregationist elements, but they would argue that instead of merely being religiously segregationist, aid to parochial schools was racially segregationist.

Quality Education for Students of Color and a Threat to Integration

Another argument against aid for parochial schools emerged: that aid to parochial schools would increase white flight from public schools to Catholic schools in NYC and other municipalities. Black critics who were actively involved in efforts for quality education for students of color in poor neighborhoods were especially concerned because they thought that public education money might go toward private schools when public schools were already depleted of funds *and* that the plan might offer white parents a way to leave public schools without leaving the city. Their argument did not promote the vision of public schools as wonderfully diverse spaces. Instead, it was based on the reality that students of color predominantly populated public schools. They argued that government aid to parochial schools would negatively affect students of color in public schools because there would be even less funding for students in those schools.

By contrast, some white opponents who supported the separation of church and state also claimed that government aid to parochial schools would create white flight to Catholic schools. However, when they made these claims, it was merely an addition to their overall view that public schools ought to be racially and religiously diverse. Their main concern appeared to be protecting their idea of religiously and racially diverse and friendly public schools, not promoting quality education for students of color.

Rev. Milton Galamison was one of the most vocal opponents of repealing the Blaine Amendment on the basis that he believed that repeal would be racist. He grounded his argument in what he called being "realistic" about who would be affected by it—students of color. In light of his work as a leader of the school segregation boycotts in NYC just a few years earlier, Galamison wrote in a letter to the *New York Times:* "It is time for black people to be realistic about the issue of repealing the 'Blaine amendment.' By realistic, I mean analyzing it in terms of how it affects black parents and black children. We cannot look upon this simply as a controversy within the white community or as a conflict between competing religious forces. Whichever way it is resolved, the main effect will be on the next generation of blacks and Puerto Ricans, who are an ever-increasing majority in this city's public school system..."[79] He elaborated his point in the *African American Teachers Forum*, the newspaper of the African American Teachers Association that began in part to support the community control movement:

> Except for people who are still hung up on antiquated anti-Catholicism, this is not a religious issue. But every day that passes makes it more and more a racial issue. The real religion of America – the one with the most serious and devout following – is racism. No matter how serious the political, religious or economic differences among whites, the one thing on which whites generally seem to agree is how to deal with blacks. It has long been the practice in parts of this country to use public funds to support racially exclusive private schools. We all know, or should know, that the use of public funds for non-public schools in this state will result in two separate tax-supported educational systems – one for the white and well-to-do controlled by whites; the other for the black and poor, also controlled by whites…[80]

Galamison's statement was primarily a critique of white Catholics, who sought one form of freedom (religious and educational choice) while preventing another (racial and educational quality). His play on words—"antiquated anti-Catholicism"—suggested that he thought it was not Catholicism that was antiquated, but Catholic claims that they were subjects of persecution,

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[79] Milton A. Galamison, "Implications of 'Blaine Amendment,'" *New York Times*, October 21, 1967, 30.
[80] Rev. Milton A. Galamison, "If Blaine is Repealed," *African-American Teachers Forum,* September-October 1967, Folder 11, Box 24, UFTR.

when to Galamison, the students who stood to lose from this debate were students of color. Galamison did not position himself in relation to other anti-repealers such as PEARL either. Freedom from religion was a distraction from what he saw as the more pressing issue of a new outlet for segregation.

Galamison was not alone in worrying about white flight to private schools and the subsequent depletion of funds for public schools where students of color would attend. Lincoln Lynch, Assistant National Director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), called nonpublic schools "a sanctuary for those who don't want their children sitting with black children in the schools" and said that public aid would be "supporting segregated education."[81] Galamison and Lynch were worried about what they saw happening in Catholic school enrollments and feared that there would be a dual school system not for people with different religious beliefs, but again for white students and students of color, and that that the public schools for students of color would be depleted of funds.

Marietta Tanner, writing for the *New York Amsterdam News* emphasized the argument that repealing the Blaine Amendment would only hurt the quality of education for students of color. She claimed that "This all should be of special interest to quality public school education fighters. These parochial school practice de facto segregation, since there is definitely no bussing." To Tanner, de facto segregation was a problem because it perpetuated unequal access to school resources. One feature of quality education would be attaining quality teachers, but she worried that "In the ghetto, the teacher shortage will become more acute once teachers in the parochial schools are on par with public schools salarywise."[82]

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[81] Bernie Bookbinder, "Rocky Hits RFK Plan To Appoint Atty. Gen.," *Newsday*, June 22, 1967, 31.
[82] Marietta J. Tanner, "The Community Conscious," *New York Amsterdam News*, October 7, 1967, 6.

Tanner also situated her critique within broader educational failures of New York's leaders, joining other people of color who did the same. She pointed out that many of the delegates who supported repealing Blaine "were, by and large, the same old stalwarts of the anti-bussing measures,"[83] suggesting the issue was entrenched in the city's racial issues. James Springer from the Bronx also turned to existing frustrations with the city's public schools, when he wrote a letter:

> I urge all the black voters of New York State to reject the new constitution. The repeal of the 'Blaine Amendment' contained in this proposed constitution is nothing more nor less than an attempt to strengthen the existing lily white 'Private and Parochial' schools and to encourage the creation of new ones.
>
> This will be financed by the taxes of the black people of the state. The religious question is a smokescreen to disguise the true purpose of the article. Whether you believe in the education of black children through integration or separation, the article can only result in an even more inferior education for these children, as difficult as that may be to imagine.[84]

Springer's letter suggested that he was worried about a NYC version of "segregation academies," where white students would flock under the auspices of religious freedom. He also pointed out that the issue was not integration or separation, but rather quality education, which he felt got left behind in the arguments about the Blaine Amendment.

While for black New Yorkers like Galamison, Lynch, Tanner, and Springer, the racial aspect of government aid to parochial schools portended the denial of quality education to students of color, a number of predominantly white New Yorkers focused on the damage repealing Blaine would do for integration efforts. Some of the opponents of government aid to parochial schools who were primarily concerned about violating the separation of church and state tagged on the argument that government aid to parochial schools would perpetuate school segregation. For instance, PEARL listed many reasons against aid to parochial schools and added

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[83] Ibid.
[84] James Springer, "Pulse of New York: Letter to the Editor," October 21 1967, 16

as a final point that "Another result would undoubtedly be an end to racial integration of the schools…If public funds are poured into these private schools, an even faster exodus of middle-class white children to private schools may be expected." [85] PEARL was primarily concerned about protecting public schools from religion; white flight to private schools was merely "another result"—PEARL did not foreground it as Galamison or Tanner did.

Another opponent of government aid to parochial school wrote a letter to the *Times* that also argued for improved public education for black children, but only did so in the context of "maintaining and improving public education…for *all* children, black and white."[86] Misreading Galamison's letter to the *Times*, William P. Volin responded "The fact is that a vast number, if not a majority, of white persons are against repeal of the 'Blaine amendment' because of the serious harm that will surely result to the system of public education, and intend to vote 'no' on the question of the proposed Constitution. It cannot be viewed as a black-against-white question but rather as one of maintaining and improving public education—not controlling it—for all children, black and white."[87] By shifting the focus of the conversation Galamison began from black children to all children, Volin claimed to support the education of black children, while disregarding one the city's biggest activists for black children's education.

Another version of the anti-segregation argument against government aid to parochial schools was to highlight integration as an American value. Harrington's unsuccessful convention proposal articulated that aid to parochial schools might forestall desegregation. One of the features of what Harrington called "our historic way of life" was "the racial integration of our neighborhoods and schools."[88] Harrington had a classic NYC public school official perspective

[85] PEARL, "Protecting Our Schools," Folder 26, Box 155, UFTR.
[86] William P. Volin, *Letters to the Editor of the Times*, October 28, 1967, 30. Italics added.
[87] Ibid.
[88] *Proceedings*, Vol. 2, 768.

on integration, as he understood a pre-existing America into which various groups could integrate. He argued that "This will represent the final, moral bankruptcy of all of us who have used the American public school system which we found here when we came successfully to integrate ourselves and our ethnic groups into the mainstream of American life only to abandon it when the time came through it to integrate our darker-skinned brothers and sisters."[89] Harrington suggested black and Puerto Rican New Yorkers ought to integrate *into* "the mainstream of American life," as though "the mainstream of American life" were a pre-determined entity.[90] Harrington more actively expressed that black and Puerto Rican students should be included in that vision than the Board did, though he did not indicate that that vision might need to face radical revision in order to meet the needs that Galamison and others demanded. In this version of the anti-segregation argument, segregation was a problem because it did not include people of color in a pre-determined ideal of America, not necessarily because it denied students of color quality education. Harrington, like PEARL and many others, folded the concerns of black New Yorkers into their overriding vision that only in public schools could diversity thrive.

New Yorkers opposed government aid to parochial schools for diverse reasons. Many offered a vision for American education where the public school alone was supposed to represent the religious and racial diversity of the state. This vision did not welcome government support for parochial schools as an expression of diversity. For many, this was because government support of parochial schools violated the separation of church and state, which could protect the public school—both their vision of it and its financial security. Other critics of government aid to parochial schools believed the religion issue was a "silkscreen" because their primary concern

[89] Ibid., 771.
[90] I discuss this more in chapter three, the previous chapter.

about the Blaine Amendment was that it would create two separate school systems—one for white students and one for students of color—and it would further deplete resources from the public schools that served students of color. This was a different argument than the one that some public school supporters made that the Blaine Amendment would further segregation, because for those supporters, integration was the value, not necessarily quality education.

Conclusion

It is hard to pinpoint exactly which of these arguments took the strongest hold to defeat the ones Catholics made in support of repeal. Suffice it to say, there was enough variety of arguments among the opposition to the constitution based on the Blaine Amendment alone to defeat it. When combined with other aspects of the constitution, it seems that the best summary may have come from a "weathered political veteran," who said: "'What Tony Travia forgot,' … 'was the likelihood of the thing having something in it to offend everybody. And that's the way it seems to have worked out.'"[91]

The particular political machinations and calculations that led to the constitution's defeat aside, what is most important about the convention for our story is the way that it revealed a genuine limit of public school proponents' concept of Judeo-Christian religious and racial pluralism. While not an example necessarily of the Board's particular perspective on Judeo-Christianity, the convention was a clear exaltation of support for public schools as spaces that could represent the diversity of the state and city, an argument the Board made regularly. Even as Catholics tried to be included in the Judeo-Christian vision, their understanding of the scope and units of diversity fundamentally differed from that of public school proponents.

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[91] Richard Dougherty, "Something To Offend Everybody: N.Y. Constitution Battle Makes Strange Allies," *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 1967, E1.

In November 1966, the inaugural issue of the *Negro Teachers Forum* (which by the May-August 1967 issue had been renamed the *African-American Teachers Association Forum*)[92] printed an article titled "Beware the Church-State Issue," warning about the dangers of government aid to parochial schools for students of color.[93] Much of the rest of the issue was dedicated to three city districts that were experimenting with community-controlled school boards at the exact same time that the issue about government aid to denominational schools was erupting, a debate discussed in chapter four.[94] Although the *Forum* article cautioned that government aid to denominational schools could perpetuate white flight to Catholic schools and leave the public schools with fewer resources than they currently had, the African-American Teachers Association's allies on opposition to government aid would prove to be the association's foes on community control. Specifically, the same public school advocates who saw the diversity only within the public school framework, not the broader society inclusive of denominational schools, had much overlap with the teachers' union members who wanted centralized control of public school curriculum, the right to suspend students without review, and did not want evaluations by parents or administration. While the teachers' union saw centralized public schools as having the absolute power to integrate diverse peoples and values, the African American Teachers Association and parents and community members in the three school districts would come to show another limit of Judeo-Christianity, this time in an argument for racial particularity. In other words, participants in the demonstration school districts brought attention to power structures within the Judeo-Christian worldview.

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[92] "Name Changed," *African-American Teachers Forum*, September-October 1967, Folder 11, Box 24, UFTR. "Due to the lack of space in the last issue, we were unable to notify our readers that the name of the organization was changed from 'Negro Teachers Association' to the 'African-American Teachers Association' by a majority vote to the active membership. It has been a long struggle to educate people that the word 'Negro' means nothing. But like so many other things, it takes time to re-educate those who profess to be educated. Keep in mind the fact that there is a difference between education and indoctrination."

[93] "Beware the Church-State Issue," *Negro Teachers Forum*, November 1966, Folder 11, Box 24, UFTR, 4.

[94] *Negro Teachers Forum*, November 1966, Folder 11, Box 24, UFTR.

Chapter Five "WE MUST EDUCATE OURSELVES OR PERISH": Community Control and Racial Particularity

The 1960s public school desegregation crisis saw many visions of what public schools ought to look like. Beyond notions of "integrated" and "segregated" schools, prominent voices for civil rights and black liberation offered alternative visions. Such visions drew not only on mainstream civil rights figures like Martin Luther King, Jr., but also on figures in Black Power movements, such as Malcolm X and Amiri Baraka, and John Dewey's ideas about education and democracy. In New York City (NYC), community control emerged as a prominent idea for public schooling in the late 1960s. As articulated by Columbia University School of Social Work Professor and member of one of the test community control district's ad hoc parent advisory committees, Preston Wilcox, as well as by teachers, parents, and community members on the ground, the vision of community control of schools stood outside the separation v. integration debate—i.e., community control was neither an entirely black separatist nor integrationist movement. Many New Yorkers across racial backgrounds interpreted community control as radical for the audacity of community control advocates to think outside the status quo. For its advocates, the approach entitled the community to make decisions about children of color's overall educational experiences, from control of personnel to control of curriculum because they believed that people from the community cared about the children there and their education. It was an alternative vision of what education for children of color could be.

NYC was at the epicenter of debates about community control of public schools, and one of the few places where it was actually enacted. Following school boycotts and an onslaught of

critiques for the Board's failure to enact a successful desegregation plan, in 1967, the NYC Board of Education received a grant from the Ford Foundation for three "demonstration districts" that would test community control of schools: the newly created Ocean Hill-Brownsville in Brooklyn, the IS 201 complex in Harlem, and the Two Bridges District in the Lower East Side. Creation of the demonstration districts in and of itself signaled a departure from the Board's self-proclaimed commitment to the Judeo-Christian "integration as assimilation" model discussed in chapter three. It suggested that the Judeo-Christian model may not have been working as school officials hoped it would. The conflict with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), boycotts, teachers' strikes, and animosity that ensued in relation to the demonstration districts offered white school officials a mirror to hold up to their stated value of togetherness.

While other historians of the northern civil rights movement have traced the New Deal and World War II era roots of Black Power, I instead trace the more contemporary intellectual influences on Black Power and focus on its role in public education. I analyze the contextual meaning of the intellectual vision for community control specifically, as well as the direct and implicit critiques of white school officials' vision for the schools—Judeo-Christianity—inherent in community control.[1] By doing so, I show that community control advocates had broad intellectual and religious influences, as well as critiques of religion, particularly in relationship to structures of power. Community control advocates' critiques of the UFT spoke to their anger at the UFT over specific negotiations, but they also spoke to larger frustrations with the entire

[1] Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006); Robin D.G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994); Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008).

school system—the looming fog of educational bureaucracy and the Judeo-Christianity with which the bureaucracy hoped to envelop everyone.

I also build on recent work on Ocean Hill-Brownsville to focus on the grassroots democratic organizing involved in community control.[2] Until recently, most histories of Ocean Hill-Brownsville not only considered community control a failure, but also implied, or even explicitly stated, that the claims of community control advocates were anti-democratic.[3] Even historians of the northern civil rights movement have painted it as a fringe, extremist effort.[4] Historian Heather Lewis and journalist, historian, and former Brownsville teacher Charles S. Isaacs have recently re-narrated the history of community control in Ocean Hill-Brownsville and the other demonstration districts as examples of grassroots democracy. Though from different perspectives, they each argue that the parents and community members in the demonstration districts mobilized their communities to create change through democratic actions that had lasting impacts on their communities. Rather than repeat their important correctives, I instead offer insight into the intellectual influences and visions of a few players in the movement—especially Preston Wilcox, teacher Edwina C. Johnson, and community board member Dolores Torres, among others—and specifically the role of religion in their actions and critiques. I focus in particular on how Malcolm X, Amiri Baraka, Maulana Karenga, and John Dewey influenced their activism.

By taking this approach, I argue that religious and humanist values, ideas about democracy and education, as well as a critique of Judeo-Christianity, combined to form another

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[2] Charles S. Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville: A Teacher's Education, 1968-69* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014); Heather Lewis, *New York City Public Schools from Brownsville to Bloomberg: Community Control and Its Legacy* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2013).
[3] Jerald Podair, *The Strike that Changed New York* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004); Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars: A History of the New York City Public Schools* (New York: Basic Books, 1974); others mentioned in Lewis, *New York City Public Schools*, 149 n33 and n34.
[4] Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 352 and 475-476.

important form of democratic action in NYC's battle for community control: a vision of natural belonging in the United States with its own rituals and myths. This vision of natural belonging in the United States deliberately placed people of African descent in positions of power in U.S. institutions and narrated American history with people of African descent at the center. Proponents of black natural belonging in the United States also drew on transnational pan-African networks and ideas about blackness as sources of sustaining their radical vision. I show that community control advocates' claims to racial particularity challenged the school officials' claims that Judeo-Christianity was universal. Community control advocates expressed that the Board of Education and the UFT's white, Judeo-Christian vision for public schools dictated a vision of religious and racial unity without allowing people of color to have any control over what that vision looked like. They argued for racial particularity in curricula and school personnel because they made the case that people of color had already contributed to various school subjects and that people of color populated the community; they were responding to white people's attempts to erase their natural belonging. At the same time, some of the proponents of community control suggested that within black-controlled schools, students ought to learn a morality based on pan-African principles of blackness rather than on Judeo-Christianity. To them, learning about African and African American history and having black-controlled schools was an expression of pan-African principles of blackness within the U.S. educational context.

The figures I focus on are not relegated to one particular district or role within the community control debate. Rather I focus on those who expressed an opinion—in writing, speech, or action—about the value of community control. Because of this, the prolific Wilcox plays a big role in the chapter, as he more than anyone else articulated a vision of community control in writing. Other major figures I look at are teachers who advocated for community

control or a particular vision of black education in the *African American Teachers Forum*, such as the well-known African American Teachers Association (ATA) President Albert Vann and Leslie Campbell, who served various roles in the ATA, and the lesser known Edwina C. Johnson. I also attend to the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Board's actions in particular, and the reflections of some of its members, such as Dolores Torres, because it was in that district where the UFT conflict erupted. By taking this approach, I show how community control drew on various intellectual influences, including the anti-Christian, pan-African, Black Power, and democratic with regard to education, and defied the binary notion that integration and segregation were the only ways to understand race in public schools. This allows us to see that religion shaped approaches to public schooling beyond the First Amendment religion clauses, especially those related to arguments of national belonging.

The main figures in this chapter are African American, Caribbean American, and Puerto Rican teachers, parents, and community members, men and women.[5] Although the perspectives of the UFT and the Board were important in the broader stand-off over community control, their views have been well documented. Joining Lewis and Isaacs, this chapter focuses in on the community members of color, and their intellectual visions of natural belonging in the United States. By placing this episode in NYC education history in a project concerned largely with the Board of Education's moral vision, I also demonstrate that the community control vision was not merely a response to the UFT's failure to meet their demands, it was also a response to what they

[5] Through author interviews and access to previously untouched and private archival materials, Lewis has shown us the degree to which African American, Caribbean, and Puerto Rican women were central to the on-the-ground efforts for community control, despite media coverage and later scholarship that has emphasized male contributions In this chapter, I attend to both men and women who were involved in the community control movement, with awareness of the gendered dimensions of the labor—i.e., privileging the intellectual content of men's thought over women's labor because there is more written material on record from men about community control than women. I try to give attention to both men and women throughout the chapter and also to point out gendered dimensions of their arguments. Lewis, *New York City Public Schools*, 36-40.

considered the broader failure of the school system to meet their children's educational needs, all the while claiming to promote diversity in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The vision of community control also often had an explicitly masculinist dimension to it, when both men and women invoked it. While not the main feature of the vision that I discuss, it is worth noting because it implies that the alternative examples of American belonging offered here followed traditionally masculinist views of Black Power. If anything, this should speak to the notion that community control advocates saw education as an important space for enacting Black Power, in all of its various dimensions.

Importantly, there was sometimes a tension between the diversity of the people involved in the community control movement and prominent black leaders' emphasis on black control. At times Wilcox's vision for *community control* is framed only as a vision for black children, and at times he frames it more broadly as *multicultural control*. Black control would include African American and Caribbean people, but not necessarily Puerto Rican not of African descent participants, such as Dolores Torres. However, while Wilcox and other African and Caribbean Americans did not necessarily consistently incorporate Latino students into their vision, this was not out of active exclusion.

In practice, community control advocates were invested in control by the diverse people of color who populated the community, including Puerto Rican and Asian American community members. For instance, the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Board appointed NYC's first Puerto Rican principal, Luis Fuentes, and first Asian American principal, David Lee.[6] Community control advocates' engagement with religion is important for understanding the deep critique of Judeo-Christianity at play in community control advocates' vision for schools, even as they

[6] Ibid., 44.

inconsistently described who precisely was in control of the community, meaning whether they emphasized black, multicultural, or general community control.

In this chapter, I will first offer a brief history of community control in NYC and focus in on the major players in Ocean Hill-Brownsville and Harlem. Then I will analyze three key characteristics in advocates' vision of community control—power structures, humanity, and unity. In the final body section, I will look at various direct and indirect critiques of Judeo-Christianity by community control advocates.

Community Control in NYC: A Brief Summary

As I have shown in previous chapters, the NYC Board of Education did not successfully desegregate schools or reduce youth violence.[7] Parents, teachers, and community members of color grew increasingly tired of unfulfilled promises and benevolent racism. In 1964 Rev. Milton Galamison and Thelma Hamilton led some of the largest school boycotts in the civil rights movement. Parents sought other options for schooling their children, including summer freedom schools. When boycotts for integration still did not seem to change the Board's minds, communities of color began advocating for control of schools to address what they saw as the abject failure of the Board in educating their children.

The community control position was controversial for many reasons, not least because it went against NYC's history of Progressive Era Reform. The Board had taken over central control of local school boards in 1901, "when Progressive Era reformers perceived local school boards as politically corrupt and stripped them of most of their important powers over hiring and school supervision."[8] Sixty-five years later, Board members still worried that returning control to

[7] See Chapters Two and Three of this dissertation.
[8] Lewis, *New York City Public Schools*, 15.

local districts would promote corruption. Thus the Board continued to control hiring and curriculum throughout the school system. However, community control advocates perceived the centralized Board to be abusing its power and ignoring the interests and demands of local districts.

Discussed in cities throughout the country, community control became a reality in NYC. Following tension surrounding Harlem's IS 201 parents wishing to appoint a principal of their choice, the Ford Foundation stepped in. The Ford Foundation's president, McGeorge Bundy, was an ally of NYC Mayor John Lindsay, and according to Heather Lewis, offered to fund the districts to help Lindsay deal with the crisis he faced. So, the Ford Foundation funded and the Board authorized three demonstration districts: one in East Harlem that included IS 201 and its four feeder elementary schools, Ocean Hill-Brownsville, which combined the Ocean Hill and Brownsville neighborhoods of Brooklyn, and Two Bridges on the Lower East Side. As Lewis argues, "The demonstration districts were a major accomplishment for black, Puerto Rican, and Asian parents and community leaders who, through long-term organizing and coalition building, had forced both city officials and a major national foundation to respond to demands for community control of schools in underserved communities."[9] In July 1967, the grant was issued, and the demonstration districts began.

In each district, governing school boards were appointed. For example, in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, seven parents (one from each school in the district), five community group representatives, seven teachers, two school principals, and one college professor made up the local board. After much debate, Rhody McCoy became the unit administrator. Many within the community saw McCoy as relatively moderate when it came to community control because he was willing to work with the Board of Education; he also struck the press as a "safer" choice as

[9] Ibid., 26-27. Lewis indicates Asian rather than Asian American.

the other candidate for the position, Herman Ferguson was suspected in a murder case that has been called a "conspiracy".[10] The parents—all women—included Wilda Henderson, Angus Hanson, board Vice President Clara Marshall, Blanche Pile, Lillian Davis, Hattie Bishop, and Elaine Rooke. Lewis explains how these African American, Caribbean, and Puerto Rican women conducted tests, organized elections, and worked hard on the ground for their vision of community control. The teachers included Colene Blenman (PS 87), Theodore Fletcher (IS 55), Alberta Loften (PS 137), and Ronald McFadden (JHS 271). Stephen Lockwood from Brooklyn College was the professor. Luis Fuentes (PS 155) and Percy Jenkins (IS 55) were the principals. The five community members were Rev. C. Herbert Oliver (chair of the board), Walter Lynch, Rev. John Powis, Dolores Torres of CUSA, and Assemblyman Samuel Wright (who quit in July 1969). Together, this interracial and interreligious group made demands of the UFT and enacted their control over the schools in pursuit of what they saw as the best education for their community's children.

Although demands for community control began over East Harlem residents' investment in IS 201's next principal, it was the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district, not the East Harlem one, that would disrupt the Board so much by exercising control. When the governing board recommended the removal of 13 new teachers and 6 administrators (5 assistant principals and 1 principal) in May 1968, the UFT was furious. The governing board exercised this control because the Board and the UFT had failed to meet the governing board's previous demands—for some control over "disruptive students" (i.e., students that teachers saw as likely to become "delinquents"), for continued supervision of teachers even after the initial three years, and against the UFT-initiated and Board supported "More Effective School" (MES) program, which

[10] Paul Hoffman, "Ferguson Hails Brownsville People for Support," *New York Times*, September 3, 1967, 42; Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 323, 352-353. Ferguson was also the chair of the OAAU's Education Committee before leaving the country, "unwilling to do time in jail for a crime he claimed he had not committed."

emphasized reduced class size and more teacher preparation for schools with predominantly black and Latino students. The community board opposed the MES program because it still ran out of the centralized board, so communities still could not set teachers and curriculum.

The UFT began the 1968-1969 school year with 36 days of teacher strikes throughout the entire city. Only 10 percent of schools were open, including all of those in Ocean Hill-Brownsville. In Ocean Hill-Brownsville, police occupied the schools to "protect" teachers who had chosen to come and due to the large UFT picket line outside.[11] Governing board members and community members were frequently referred to as "militant," a racially coded label, despite reports by people involved that anyone was welcome at the meetings and that there was relatively little physical confrontation, and none from the Board itself.[12] Governing board member Torres noted that they were all parents and did not want to see violence.[13] Nevertheless, the striking UFT and the supposedly "militant" governing board became the headline.

Although the framing of the governing board as militant symbolized the fear of Black Power among the city's media and educational bureaucracy, conflict did ideologically pit the predominantly black and Puerto Rican community against the predominantly white, specifically predominantly Jewish, United Federation of Teachers (UFT), led by former math teacher Albert Shanker, the Board of Education, and Mayor Lindsay. Prominent civil rights activists fell on both sides of the community control issue. Galamison, who had put so much effort into organizing for integration, came to see community control as the best and only option for students of color.[14] On the other hand, Bayard Rustin did not. Rustin had been instrumental in

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[11] Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*, 60-62.
[12] Lewis, *New York City Public Schools*, 51; Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*, 88-93. For example on framing the governing board as militant, see Murray Schumach, "Residents Support Decentralization, Militants Say," *New York Times*, December 4, 1968, 41.
[13] Paul Hoffman, "Parents Aim to Bar 19 Ousted Teachers*, New York Times*, May 12, 1968, 1.
[14] Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*, 110.

organizing the 1964 school boycott with Galamison and Hamilton, as well as the 1963 March on Washington. A supporter of Shanker's due to Shanker's earlier civil rights work, Rustin supported the UFT because he saw the UFT as "fighting so that parents will have the determining voice in what happens to the so-called disruptive children."[15] Unlike Wilcox and Galamison, who saw the UFT as sharing the same vision of Judeo-Christian unity as the Board, Rustin understood the Board as the main problem in preventing quality education for black and Puerto Rican children because the Board had resisted integration. Less well known civil rights activists also emerged. Those who had been actively work for housing and welfare rights in their home neighborhoods, such as Dolores Torres, strongly supported and enacted community control. Professor, social worker, and former basketball player Preston Wilcox also became one of the most prominent voices in articulating the intellectual framework behind community control.

By 1969, the Board decentralized the school system. Decentralization was not community control. Local school boards still hired teachers and administrators based on a centrally administered test. The 1969 decentralization law allowed for 20-22 local school boards, with no less than 20,000 students each, meaning that the law thrust smaller communities together. Importantly, decentralization disbanded the original demonstration districts, such that the new law sent a clear message that the type of community control that demonstration district boards advocated was not what decentralization would look like. Although the experiment in community control ended, Lewis argues that community control advocates and activists nevertheless put the wheels in motion for future grassroots organizing for education for children

[15] Bayard Rustin, "Why I Support the UFT," *New York Amsterdam News*, September 23, 1967, Folder 16, Box 10, Preston Wilcox Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (hereafter cited as Wilcox Papers); Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*, 73.

of color.[16] As James Baldwin put it, "The experiment was discontinued after three years, not because it failed but because *it did not fail*."[17] The community had taken control, and the city powers had tried to take it back.

With this history in mind, I now turn to the community members' vision of community control. As I stated earlier, my goal here is not to re-narrate the entire history of community control in NYC with all of its particular political players and maneuverings. Instead, I analyze the ideas and actions put forward by communities who advocated for their own control of the schools. I show how their case for recognizing racial particularity within the public system challenged the Board's vision of public schools promoting Judeo-Christian positive religious and racial coexistence.

A Vision of Racial Particularity

Community control advocates in NYC made an argument for curricula and pedagogy that responded to racial particularity within the public school system. They argued that people of color from the community where children lived should control children of color's education. Their argument was not about innate superiority or hierarchy; it was about control, as they expressed that white school officials and teachers had failed to educate children of color. In some versions, especially written explications of community control, advocates such as Wilcox blurred the line between *community* control and *black* control. However, in all cases, community control advocates argued for the necessity of putting people of color in charge of their own children's education, given the structural power dynamics at play in education.

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[16] Lewis, *New York City Public Schools,* 55-58.
[17] Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*, 244, citing James Baldwin, Foreword to *The Chasm: The Life and Death of a Great Experiment in Ghetto Education*, by Robert Campbell (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), xvii.

Community control advocates' vision of racial particularity in public education drew on ideas circulating about Black Power and the Black Nation, especially ideas put forward by Malcolm X and Amiri Baraka.[18] However, unlike Malcolm, Baraka, or Karenga this vision of community control did not put forward an argument that black people or people of color generally were superior, nor did it offer a teleological, religious narrative of liberation.[19] Scholars have noted that Wilson "was perhaps the first to translate the call for Black Power into institutional form"[20] and that "Unlike the Black Power movement, whose leaders worked outside established community organizations, the community control movement sought control over a venerable historic institution—the public school and its school board."[21] Whether or not Wilcox was the first to translate Black Power into institutional form (Malcolm X after all advocated for black run institutions in the Founding Speech of the OAAU in 1965),[22] Wilcox's call to recognize the pre-existing fact of racial particularity in public school curricula offered public schools as a mechanism for achieving *his* goal for Black Power: liberation through education, with liberation looking something like opportunity.

In addition to drawing on ideas relating to Black Power and Nationalism, some community control advocates and black activists involved in education were inspired by John Dewey's ideas about education as a potential vehicle for cultivating democratic communities. In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey argues that education is the means by which "beliefs, ideals,

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[18] Malcolm X was assassinated in 1965 and had converted to Sunni Islam in 1964. Wilcox, Johnson, and the others who cite him draw as much on his ideas from after he had converted to Sunni Islam as they do from when he was in the Nation of Islam. This is important because it suggests that Wilcox's and Johnson's ideas were broader than simply lifting from a Nation of Islam rhetoric. Baraka was still heavily involved in Black Nationalism and had converted to Islam by the late 1960s, though he would distance himself from Black Nationalism in the 1970s.
[19] Thinking about Judith Weisenfeld, *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity during the Great Migration* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 59 here.
[20] Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*, 21.
[21] Lewis, *New York City Public Schools*, 28.
[22] Malcolm X, "Organization for Afro American Unity Founding Rally Speech," Audubon Ballroom, New York City, February 19, 1965, http://www.panafricanperspective.com/mxoaaufounding.html.

hopes, happiness, misery, and practices" are transmitted and continue within a social group.[23] Education occurs through experience of the social environment, according to Dewey. It does not require a school; however, Dewey says, schools do control the environments in which students learn and thus shape children's behavior, thinking, and feeling.[24] Dewey was also critical of some aspects of formal education in the time he was writing for not creating environments that respected the full humanity of students. For Dewey, schools could lead students toward behavior that respected the diversity of experiences in a community.

Both of these ideas—the notion that schools could direct students to particular ways of understanding and acting in the world and the critique of formal education for not producing environments that allowed students to learn and grow to their fullest potential as members of a community—were attractive to some black community activists involved in education. Dewey's ideas spoke to the activists' experiences of their children's education in the current school system, while also offering a way forward within the institution of the public school.

Thus, influenced by a range of thinkers, including Dewey, Malcolm X, Baraka, and Karenga, black education advocates sought control of black children's educational destinies to allow their children to grow, learn, and experience the world because they saw a broad vision of education as essential to a flourishing community. In learning about subjects including the narratives, values, and power structures in black history, black children might find some version of liberation, community control advocates articulated. Furthermore, they claimed to hope that children would access an environment that was friendlier to creativity and exploration if people who treated the children humanely were in control.

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[23] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (Simon & Brown), 5.

[24] Ibid., 14. Dewey says that schools "control[] the environment in which they ["the immature"] act, and hence think and feel. We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of environment." In this sentence, "they" refers to "the immature." By "immature," Dewey means someone who has not received education from the community, someone who is less experienced.

This section examines some of the features of community control that characterized advocates' claims to racial particularity as a pre-existing fact that spoke to the natural belonging of people of color in American history, school subjects, and positions of leadership in schools—especially power, humanity, and unity. These features differed from the Judeo-Christian vision that had undergirded the NYC school system's approach to educating students of color, as the Judeo-Christian vision had not assumed that students of color already belonged in public school life. In her study of community control in NYC, Lewis emphasizes self-determination as the key feature of community control advocates' position. Through exploring the additional themes of power, humanity, and unity in community control advocates' writings, speeches, and actions, we gain a robust understanding of community control advocates' intellectual vision.[25]

Power Structures

Community control advocates understood the school system to present an unequal power structure regarding race that prevented students of color from receiving quality education. They saw the people in control—the predominantly white (and specifically, predominantly Jewish) teachers and centralized Board of Education—as not caring about students of color. The way to address this problem, community control advocates argued, was not to try to make the people currently in control care, because that seemed like an impossibility given the current power structure. Instead, the way to address it was for black and Puerto Rican community members and parents to take control of their own children's education. They proposed flipping the power structure by allowing those on the margins of educational control to take over the center.

The community governing board members in Ocean Hill-Brownsville made clear that they were the people out of power in this situation. In a newsletter to the parents and community

[25] Lewis, *New York City Public Schools*, 35.

of the district of 8,800 students, the governing board indicated its understanding of power as central to its existence: "This board has fought and taken on the whole power structure. But we haven't been given any power at all. We have been used as a buffer between the power structure and you, our brothers and sisters. / Don't condemn us—we don't have any power."[26] Their point of origin in a power structure made their challenge to the power structure a genuine threat, because they stood disrupt business as usual. However, they communicated to the gathering, their disruption had not yet given them any actual control over the lives of people in the room. It had merely brought into relief the degree to which a centralized bureaucracy dominated the education of local school districts populated by people of color.

Community control advocates claimed to believe strongly that the teachers and administrators in charge of the education of children of color did not care about the children. They analyzed the lack of teacher care as a result of structural power dynamics. To explain the dynamics, one frame that they used was colonialism. Wilcox called the systematic process of testing and the use of crime statistics by which black students came to be seen as inferior to white students in public schools the "*scientific colonialism* by white America."[27] By "*scientific colonialism*," he meant that white people were applying their own modes of calculating success and value onto black students, as we saw in Chapter Two. The colonial structure was pervasive. According to historian Heather Lewis, Charles Wilson, educational director of the experimental Harlem district, also described the schools as "shot through with colonialism,"[28] though not just in the context of scientific understandings of black students' behavior, but in nearly ever facet of the school day. From the predominantly white teacher body in schools with primarily students of

[26] C. Gerald Fraser, "Members of Troubled School Board Tell of 'Agony,'" *New York Times*, May 17, 1968, 37.
[27] Preston Wilcox, "Education for Black Humanism: A Way of Approaching It," in *What Black Educators Are Saying*, ed., Nathan Wright, Jr. (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1970), 8.
[28] Lewis, *New York City Public Schools*, 28.

color, to the white teachers' disciplining of students, to their lessons on a predominantly white and heroic version of American history, Wilson identified that the schools tried to teach students of color a white narrative and moral framework as the best and only lifestyle. In other words, Wilson understood what school officials called the Judeo-Christian tradition as not only promoting a white version of American history and lifestyle with an assumed set of moral norms, but as actively imposing those moral norms on students of color, with consequences for students' bodies, minds, and senses of self.

Although she did not use the specific frame of colonialism, teacher and activist Edwina C. Johnson also suggested that the curriculum suffered from lack of black input. She suggested that the version of history and heritage that children learned reflected what Wilcox or Wilson might have called a historical colonialism. She wrote to Martin Luther King, Jr. to express her concerns about curriculum: "The appalling crisis in the country is due very largely to what is recorded as 'The American Heritage' and its continued debasement of African and Africa and African descendants, through all media of communication, particularly in public school textbooks which are paid for with our tax money. Teachers of African descent who know their heritage find this situation overwhelmingly defaming and know it to be crippling to ALL people—black and white because it leads to distorted [ideas?] and complexes."[29] As a teacher of African descent, she saw the problem as not only about treatment of children, but about the content of their education.

Because community control advocates understood the problem as one of power, they addressed it by acknowledging power dynamics. Wilcox suggested that addressing the educational issues of children of color would require a re-ordering of values among adults of

[29] Edwina C. Johnson to Martin Luther King, Jr., date unknown, The King Center, http://www.thekingcenter.org /archive/document/letter-edwina-c-johnson-mlk#.

color. This approach recognized the problematic power dynamics and offered a solution based on knowledge of them. On the issue of power dynamics specifically, Wilcox advocated for what he called "functional marginality": "Black people must replace their *need to belong* with a sense of *functional marginality* as it relates to their membership in this society."[30] He suggested that trying to become a part of white culture was not the goal, but rather figuring out how to survive in society as it was was a necessary step in the re-ordering of values. Functional marginality was an argument for natural belonging of a very specific sort—not of belonging with white people, but of belonging in the space they occupied. Eventually, he argued, re-ordering values toward acceptance and action based upon functional marginality could lead to liberation.

Additionally, community board members and individual teachers worked hard for personnel changes so that people of color could actually be in charge. The idea of being in charge was not domination of teachers, but rather control over how children would be treated and educated. To address the issue of teachers not caring for students, community board member, founder of Christians and Jews United for Social Action, and parent to four children in the district (mother to three, aunt to one who was living with her) Dolores Torres reflected that the central concern of the community board was making sure that they hired people who thought that black and Hispanic children could be educated and that they were willing to be creative in their pedagogy. Twenty years later, she described the interview process in the community school district:

> Well, when we were interviewing these teachers that wanted to come in to teach in our district. We wanted to know where they came from, ah, we asked them all for qualifications, we asked them how did they feel about teaching in a school were the majority of the children were not White. What did they feel about coming to work in a neighborhood that was predominantly Black and Hispanic? Ah, did they feel that our children could learn as well as anybody else's children, in say a White neighborhood, an affluent neighborhood? Um, we wanted to know, did they have, did they feel, especially

[30] Wilcox, "Education for Black Humanism," 14-15.

> that if a child wasn't able to learn a subject one way, could this teacher, would she be willing to teach it an al--alternative? If a child could not, ah, say grasp math, in the way it's supposed to be taught, could she find another way to teach this child? We also wanted to know about writing, we wanted to know did this particular teacher, would she give the children a lot of work that consisted of writing. Because our children, at the time, where not writing well, they were not reading well. And in order to do math, they would have to know how to read and write, so we would have to take and have reading in a math class. And a lot of the teachers were agreeable, they felt that if you couldn't teach a child one way, then try something else, but that all children could be taught.[31]

Torres's observation that many of the teachers were agreeable spoke to the nature of control. The community board was not interested in dominating the teachers' every move, nor was the board trying to explicitly exclude white people, as Wilcox suggested critics of community control thought when he defended IS 201's choice to elect a black principal: "Critics of the local I.S. 201 educational activists have accused them of 'reverse racism' because they have dared to believe that a black male principal could help to lead their children out of the canyons of educational despair."[32] Rather, they wanted to have control over the personnel because they wanted teachers committed to teaching students of color and who were on board with trying new tactics. As Wilcox explained of IS 201, "That Harlem parents seek a black male principal to help build healthy self-concepts within their children is at least a *positive* minority group action. It infers a minority rejection of negative definitions deriving from the dominant community. The systematic exclusion of blacks—teachers and principals—from predominantly white schools is negative dominant group action."[33] Referring back to his concept of functional marginality, Wilcox suggested that control of personnel was one way to address the power dynamics that community control advocates felt were unjust.

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[31] "Interview with Dolores Torres," October 31, 1988, Eyes on the Prize II Interviews, http://digital.wustl.edu/e/eii/eiiweb/tor5427.0273.162dolorestorres.html.
[32] Preston R. Wilcox, "Black Male Principal," *Renewal*, October-November 1966, Folder 18, Box 10, Wilcox Papers.
[33] Ibid.

Johnson, the teacher who had written to King, expressed a vision of natural belonging in her proposal to make the school calendar reflect black history and culture, a vision that was an alternative to what she saw as the unjust power dynamics in the schools' idea of the Judeo-Christian tradition. By contrast to the Judeo-Christian, patriotic calendar that laid aside time to honor former U.S. presidents, the flag, brotherhood, and Christmas, she sought a civil religion that memorialized and ritualized the way black people had shaped America. With the programming, she aimed to instill a sense of belonging in black students, who learned from the public schools that they did not *naturally* or *already* belong in the Judeo-Christian tradition with its white heroes, though school, theoretically might allow them to integrate into it. Johnson was concerned that it was not only white teachers, but also black teachers, who were teaching black students that they did not belong, because "Black educators are not teaching them anything to help bring about self-love, self-acceptance, and self-respect."[34] She hoped that her approach to the school calendar could foster self-love, self-acceptance, and self-respect.

Johnson penned a September 1969 article for the *African American Teachers Forum* titled "Teacher, Put Some Black on That Calendar!" that offered "An in-depth analysis of the sorry efforts made to nullify America's banishment of black achievements from textbooks—A Handbook for Action."[35] The article was based on her in-depth research into black history and public school curricula on black history, which she detailed in the article:

> In 1961, I wrote a Guide to Teachers on Black history. I ran all around New York City, servicing schools, organizations, churches, received a grant form the Jamaica Branch N.A.A.C.P. for initial publication, and by 1962 I had personally serviced 225 schools in the New York City system. Then the Board of Education of New York City called me in for some meetings,--my work had stamina,--could it be an official document? That was a consideration which was squelched by some very well-executed Uncle Tomming. In

[34] Edwina C. Johnson, "Teacher, Put Some Black on That Calendar!," *African-American Teachers Forum*, September 1969, 1; United Federation of Teachers Records; WAG 022; Box 24; Folder 11; Tamiment Library/Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University (hereafter cited as UFTR).
[35] Ibid.

> 1963 thousands of educators had received the Guide the Guide for Teachers on Contributions of Afro-Americans to the American Culture. The N.A.A.C.P. grants came to an end. So I went into business. My, friend, I have reached 32 out of the 50 states in this country—from a small office which is in my home. Now, if one teacher can reach 32 states, an organization can reach the world. Look now at the school calendar: [36]

Following a thorough argument for rethinking the curriculum, Johnson detailed opportunities for teaching black history in each month of the school year. Among Johnson's suggestions were, in "September we can celebrate *Owijira*, the West African New Year. September we can dramatize *Jesse Owens'* Olympic feats. September we can present *Hiram Revels*, the first Afro-American Senator, and *James Forten* who was an inventor and an abolitionist. September we can discuss *Alain Locke* and the Harlem Renaissance. These are a few examples of how dates can be commemorated, taking a birth date of an important Afro-American and weaving the lessons and activities around that person's life."[37] She continued in similar detail for each month. As Wilcox and Torres discussed inequity in personnel, Johnson identified it in the curriculum and offered instead to teach students of the difficulties and celebrations that black people had faced in America. Her approach to injustice was research, advocacy, and dissemination of her vision of natural black belonging in America through ritualized school events.

Community control advocates such as Wilcox, Wilson, Torres, and even Johnson (who was not as involved in community control, but was more broadly invested in addressing the power dynamics in schools) often received the critique that their understanding of power was "reverse racism." On the opening page of a paper he presented at Claremont Colleges in October 1969 about "Black Studies as an Academic Discipline," Wilcox quoted Malcolm X from a speech at Harvard Law School five years earlier: "If we react to white racism with a violent reaction, to me that is not Black racism! If you came to put a rope around my neck and I hang

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.

you for it, to me that's not racism. My reaction is the reaction of a human being, reacting to defend himself and protect himself."[38] Wilcox's quotation of Malcolm suggested that he recognized that Black Studies might feel like violence to white school officials, but that a re-orientation toward understanding race relations was necessary in order to understand the violence of racism. In a volume of educational and training material to confront white institutional racism, Wilcox stated that: "White institutional racism nurtures and produces and legitimates white racists. White racists are involved in multiplying themselves and destroying humanists—black and/or white. To become a humanist is to confront white institutional racism and white racists. To confront white institutional racism is to confront oneself."[39] In this discussion, Wilcox spoke to one of his larger intellectual points—that black humanism was the necessary position of black people involved in education. For Wilcox, power in the hands of the wrong people and institutions could destroy humanity, and preserving humanity was an ultimate good. We will see how Wilcox's ideas about black humanism, as well as depictions of humanism and humanity from other community control advocates, offered a vision of schooling that prioritized students' learning.

Humanity

The first point in Wilcox's essay "Education for Black Humanism" asserted that "All black children are human and educable."[40] Wilcox's essay was widely circulated, and he also disseminated his ideas about black humanism at conferences on Black Power and public

[38] Preston R. Wilcox, "Black Studies as an Academic Discipline: Toward a Definition," Presented at Claremont Colleges, November 21, 1969, Folder 23, Box 10, Wilcox Papers. This Malcolm X quotation from December 1964 came about nine months after Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam. This suggests that Wilcox was inspired by Malcolm's ideas about race but not necessarily his ideas about religion when he was part of the Nation of Islam.
[39] Preston R. Wilcox, "Confronting White Institutional Racism: A Bibliography of Educational and Training Material," October 14, 1971, Folder 20, Box 11, Wilcox Papers.
[40] Wilcox, "Education for Black Humanism," 11.

education and in guidelines for confronting institutional white racism.[41] The claim that all black children were human and educable spoke to the notion that schools were failing to help students learn because of white school officials' understanding of black students. His statement implied that the public school system had made black students suffer through school days under the control of white educators and the centralized Board of Education to whom, Wilcox insinuated, the humanity of black children was not obvious.

For Wilcox to assert that black children were human and educable was to suggest that education was a human right that black children were still being denied, as it historically had been. Although some white people, especially in New England, sought for theological reasons to educate African Americans, under enslavement, formal education for black children was rare.[42] Even when Horace Mann cultivated the notion that common schools were for everyone, his ideology "did little to ensure that black people would be included—let alone included equally—in public schools."[43] In those two words, "human" and "educable," Wilcox invoked a history of the denial of black children's humanity and of black children's human rights through their access, or lack thereof, to formal education.

In addition to discussing black children's humanity and rights as humans, Wilcox suggested that community control could benefit humanity as a whole. Wilcox drew on Malcolm X's ideas about humanity and power from Malcolm X's *Autobiography*. For example, Wilcox opened a paper, "Black Control of Schools: Selected Viewpoints" with a quotation from Malcolm's autobiography: "I'm for the truth no matter who tells it, I'm for justice, no matter

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[41] Preston R. Wilcox, "Discussion Stimulator: Some Thoughts on Black Humanism," July 26-27, 1969, Folder 20; and Wilcox, "Confronting White Institutional Racism."
[42] Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The African American Struggle for Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 10; Heather Andrea Williams, " 'Clothing Themselves in Intelligence': The Freedpeople, Schooling, and Northern Teachers, 1861-1871," *The Journal of African American History* 87 (2002): 372-389.
[43] Moss, *Schooling Citizens,* 13.

who it is for or against. I'm a human being first and foremost, and as such I'm for whoever and whatever benefits humanity as a whole."[44] Importantly, this quotation in the autobiography comes following Malcolm's "new insights into the American black man's struggle and his problems" after returning from Mecca, once he had converted to Sunni Islam.[45] The moment speaks to Wilcox's complex view of integration. Wilcox did not necessarily think that integration should never happen; he thought that people of color needed to be in control of who was teaching their children and what their children learned. Wilcox was not alone in speaking of "humanity" in relation to public education for black students.

In his article "Humanizing Our Schools," scholar, Episcopalian minister, and Black Power advocate Nathan Wright, Jr. drew on Dewey's understanding of education to advocate for black students' education as a form of growth and to critique current formal school practices for their "structured inhumanity."[46] Though not specifically about community control, Wright published this essay in his edited volume *What Black Educators Are Saying*. The volume collected over twenty essays by black educators on the state of black education, with community control and Ocean Hill-Brownsville as its anchoring topic of inquiry, and many who had been involved in NYC community control as contributors. In this essay, Wright focused on the themes of learning and self-directed growth in education that Dewey explored in depth to understand and advocate for changes in the education of black children. Wright's principle argument was that the schools had become inhumane because of teachers' failure to teach black students. As

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[44] Preston Wilcox, "Black Control of Schools: Selected Viewpoints," Folder 13, Box 10, Wilcox Papers.
[45] Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X as Told to Alex Haley* (New York: Ballantine Publishing Group, 1964), 373.
[46] According to his obituary, "As a young minister in Boston, he befriended a young parishioner named Louis Walcott who later changed his last name to Farrakhan, and he influenced Martin Luther King Jr. when King was a student at Boston University." Wright also was republican and supported both Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon. Douglas Martin, "Nathan Wright Jr., Black Power Advocate, Dies," *New York Times*, February 24, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/24/obituaries/nathan-wright-jr-black-power-advocate-dies-at-81.html?_r=0.

Wilcox did when quoting Malcolm X, Wright also saw the inhumane treatment of black students as bad for humanity as a whole.

Wright argued that the failure of public schools to educate black students in NYC spoke to the moral corruption of anyone who allowed it to happen. He wrote that advocacy by black students and educators to reveal how schools had failed black students had shown that "we have also created unwittingly a demon which incidentally demeans and destroys in some measure the lives of us all." In suggesting that the failure of schools had created a demon, he suggested that education was a fundamental human experience, and to use formal education to perpetuate inequality denied black students their human right to learn, and in doing so, denied them a piece of their humanity. Saying that the demon affected "the lives of us all," he implied that denying humanity to one group of students reflected poorly on the humanity of anyone who perpetuated such treatment of black students. In other words, the failure of schools to teach black students was a smear on humanity as a whole.

Wright situated his own arguments in Dewey's calls to make education more humane. He suggested that Dewey recognized the inhumane nature of education in his own day: "The late professor John Dewey of Columbia University, spent several generations encouraging—and warning—Americans to make our nation's educational enterprise far more humane than it was even in his day."[47] Whereas Wilcox made the explicit claim that black students were human, Wright emphasized that schools did not treat black students *humanely*. He spoke of education as needing to be more humane: "It has remained principally for a growing number of black educators and black student protesters—all working for the betterment of the nation's life—to

[47] Nathan Wright, Jr., "Humanizing Our Schools," in *What Black Educators are Saying*, ed., Nathan Wright, Jr. (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1970), 36, originally in the *Newark Star-Ledger*, May 4, 1969.

give John Dewey's work some ready promise of substantial fulfillment."[48] He suggested that teachers were behaving in an inhumane manner in not treating black students with the dignity that they deserved as human beings. To give Dewey's work fulfillment would mean to focus on black students' learning, rather than thinking of black students as problems the school faced.

He instead suggested that some current school practices were the problems in education. As an example of inhumane treatment in schools, he described the structure of student testing:

> In no aspect of the American educational process is a doubtless unconscious but deeply structured inhumanity more evident than in our longstanding approaches to pupil progress.
>
> The basic purpose of education is to help pupils to learn. Yet the overwhelming and growing evidence over the years points to the fact that we place a disproportionate emphasis upon testing in relation to teaching. What testing actually measures, in the most devastatingly revealing way, is the capacity or incapacity of our teachers to help pupils to learn.[49]

Wright's narration of what testing "devastatingly" revealed suggested that he recognized the practice as inhumane. Wright's discussion of "structured inhumanity" spoke to both the inhumane way he believed that teachers were treating students because of how they measured student progress, as well as the resulting smear on humanity, and harming of all humans in the very structure of assessment of learning.

As a corrective, Wright offered an alternative approach to "structured inhumanity"—a vision of a "civilized nation" that recognized the experiences of particular Americans. Rather than the assimilative language of brotherhood that accorded every religious and racial group the same status and experience, Wright drew on Dewey to advocate for recognizing particular experiences and the humanity of everyone as essential to a democratic vision of education:

> In all of our schools—from kindergarten through graduate school—this thoroughly humane and deeply thoughtful spirit needs to be revived. This—in essence—is what John Dewey meant when he sought to train educators who would give shape to a

[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid., 37.

> civilized and civilizing nation. This also is no less than what our black students and educators are asking for. Suburbanites and urbanites, both black and white, would benefit from it. In so doing, the nation as a whole would prosper. Further, what better way to honor—even at this late and urgent hour—a mighty prophet among us who saw education in the noble way that we should see it?
>
> We are thus challenged to see education FOR ALL IN OUR SOCIETY TODAY as the great humanizing and fulfilling force in a national community of men and women whose destiny for its every part it is to be both great and free.[50]

In this section, Wright used "human" in an additional way. In addition to claiming that schools denied black students their human right to learn, schools being inhumane in their treatment of black students, and schools propagating the structural inhumanity of assessment, at the end of his essay, he described education as having the possibility to be "the great humanizing and fulfilling force in a national community of men and women whose destiny for its every part it is to be both great and free."[51] As Dewey saw the public school as a space that could "create[] for all a new and broader environment" by bringing together people of diverse backgrounds and experiences,[52] Wright saw public schooling as an opportunity to humanize both those who had dealt inhumane treatment and those who had received it by focusing on students' learning. In the spirit of Dewey, he concluded optimistically with respect to the "human" because he looked to the future as opportunity for growth in a community.

Wilcox and Wright each spoke to the treatment of black students as inhuman, the inhumane treatment of black children, and the smear on humanity that such treatment made by suggesting that learning was a human right that public schools ought to promote. They articulated steps forward by first revealing the failure of public schools and then trying to resolve it by reorienting schools' depictions of black students and challenging the contemporary public

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 16.

school model. One of the main ways they and others took action was through coalition-building based on the concept of unity, specifically black unity.

Unity

To community control advocates and other community members advocating for black education, unity meant unity among people of African descent in the U.S. public school context. In some instances, this was expanded to include Hispanic and Latino children as well, but when advocates explained unity, they were interested in African and African diaspora connections, and usually focused on a pan-African unity, meaning unity of all people of African descent. Unity meant the understanding and cultivation of shared values, history, and culture based on shared experiences. Teacher Edwina C. Johnson described it as: "Self-love, self-acceptance, self-respect were the total commitment of the late Malcolm X whose depth of knowledge and projection of black unity sprang from his having learned black history that is, African and African-American history. The late Malcolm X said very beautifully, 'Never mind what the white man has to say, let us integrate with one another.'"[53] Unity also enabled control over which values and history were taught. Although advocates of unity may have situated it differently—some emphasizing black contributions to the United States and others emphasizing transnational pan-African values—unity in this sense was not a reaction. It was a vision of black life separate from the white gaze.

Yes, this understanding of unity embraced an understanding of power structures where white culture dominated. However, black unity was not for white people, it was for black people, and to some extent, for other people of color similarly effected by white racism. Unity was an intellectual vision, and it could also be used as a political method for enacting that vision.

[53] Johnson, "Teacher, Put Some Black on That Calendar!"

Community control advocates and some in the African American Teachers Association saw public schools as sites that required unity, given how teachers treated children of color, and also as sites that could promote unity, if controlled by people who cared about children of color. In this way, unity offered a way forward, based on community members' experience of power structures as unjust and the inhumane treatment of children of color.

Although unity did not serve the purpose of relating to white culture, it can bring into relief the limits of a white Judeo-Christian vision of religious and racial coexistence. The school board understood Judeo-Christian coexistence as a type of unity. However, the unity among community control advocates in NYC suggested that the Judeo-Christian, dominant white liberal vision of unity as assimilation into dominant white values did not work for everyone because it failed to account for power structures into account. In failing to understand power structures and histories of oppression, Judeo-Christianity continued to perpetuate inequality and injustice. The vision of black unity that emerged among community control advocates, during and immediately after the Ocean Hill-Brownsville controversy, revealed that many community control advocates believed that attention to Black Power and black history was necessary in the school system.

In particular, community control advocates drew on Malcolm X's Organization for African American Unity (OAAU) and Maulana Karenga's Seven Principles of Blackness (especially as developed by Amiri Baraka) to develop their understanding of unity. Although some of the material I cite was generated after the teachers' strikes and decentralization, it shows a continuous approach with what was being taught in the demonstration district itself and also a continuing vision of black education based in the community control model.

Malcolm X began the OAAU after he converted from the Nation of Islam to Sunni Islam. He intended for the organization to be primarily secular.[54] Malcolm X modeled the organization after the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was an umbrella organization for 53 African Nations that sought to offer a voice for black Africans, especially in recently decolonized nations. His goal was to bring together black people across the country to not only recognize their African heritage, but to see their African heritage as a source of strength in the political battles over economics and education facing black Americans.[55]

The community control advocates adopted from the OAAU the notion that black people should control the failing schools of NYC as an expression "Afro-American" unity. At the Founding Rally Speech for the OAAU, held at the Audubon Ballroom in Washington Heights on February 19, 1965, Malcolm X made NYC public schools the center of his discussion of education. He argued that "Our children are being criminally shortchanged in the public school system of America" and "The Afro-American schools are the poorest-run schools in the city of New York."[56] This was because, he said, "They don't understand us, nor do they understand our problems; they don't."[57] An example he gave was one of curriculum—"When we send our children to school in this country they learn nothing about us other than that we used to be cotton pickers"—as well as policy—"The Board of Education's integration plan is expensive and unworkable; and the organization of principals and supervisors in New York City's school system has refused."[58] He pointed out that the Board said that "even with its plan there are 10

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[54] Lucy Burnett, "Organization of Afro-American Unity (OAAU) 1965," *BlackPast.Org*, accessed May 25, 2017, http://www.blackpast.org/aah/organization-afro-american-unity-oaau-1965.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Malcolm X, "Organization for Afro American Unity Founding Rally Speech."
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.

percent of the schools in Harlem and the Bedford-Stuyvesant community in Brooklyn that they cannot improve."[59] His solution? Black control of schools:

> This means that the Organization of Afro-American Unity must make the Afro-American community a more potent force for educational self-improvement.
>
> A first step in the program to end the existing system of racist education is to demand that the 10 percent of the schools the Board of Education will not include in its plan be turned over to and run by the Afro-American community itself.[60]

In the context of education in America, and in NYC public schools specifically, Malcolm X argued that a way to act upon unity was for black New Yorkers to have control of their children's educational destinies. His vision of unity could be, and given current circumstances, he argued, ought to be, enacted in public institutions.

As quoted above, Edwina C. Johnson was inspired by Malcolm X's idea of integration among black people, particularly when it came to history and curriculum. She argued for curriculum that reflected African and African American history and contributions to the United States context, as an alternative form of civic education. Johnson asserted that the integration of black people with each other would allow for a decentering of white narratives in public schools. She characterized black participation in white narratives as "effeminate[]," using masculinist language to convey that her curricular vision had strength:

> When we get integrated with one another as Brother Malcolm pleaded that we do, we will no longer have white people taking over our creative ideas and plans to deliberately and successfully destroy them, with the help of bearded or un-bearded Uncle Toms. We will be swinging our own parades down the avenue, not effeminately attempting to be in somebody else's parade. We will be presenting 'Mansa Musa and his Caravan' on the stage instead of the 'Pinafore Story'. In the home economics classes the girls will be making an African blouse (the Yoruba buba, for example) as well as the shirtwaist blouse. In the kindergarten, the children will be singing "Kum-Ba-Ya" as well as "Mary had a Little Lamb". In the literature classes the students will be interpreting 'We are Beautiful People', by LeRoi Jones as well as the 'Charge of the Light Brigade' by Alfred Lord Tennyson. Students will play 'Wari' as well as checkers and chess. On the walls of

[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

> the school buildings there will be paintings of the Boston Massacre, of the 54th Massachusetts in the Sphinx with the flat nose restored as well as the European cherubs and European monarchs going out to take over the world's land. As a matter of fact, not only will we have a holiday in Newark, New Jersey on March 5th to celebrate Crispus Attucks Day, we will have a holiday all over the country with schools celebrating Malcolm X Day on May 19th. That will be when we get integrated with ONE ANOTHER, when we have what Brother Malcolm called Unity. [61]

Johnson's argument here could be interpreted as an expression of some of the Judeo-Christian terms of coexistence such as brotherhood, for she suggested that traditional Euro-American curricula could continue alongside lessons on black history and culture. However, Johnson was saying something different than advocates of Judeo-Christianity were. Johnson was not necessarily suggesting the benefits of learning about diverse cultures, but rather she was assuming that white history and culture would be represented no matter what, and it was only through unity that any aspect of black history and culture could also be represented. Her goal was the representation of black history and culture, not the presentation of diversity.

She also emphasized that teaching a united vision of black history and culture would require black people to look to each other for resources. She wrote that:

> We have enough resource people around the country they are represented at any conferences. *There are talented, knowledgeable black educators WHO KNOW OUR HISTORY and who are not being recognized by us because they are not recognized by white people due to their unswerving, uncompromising attitudes.* There is enough material called units or lesson plans written already by black people for us to put into our home libraries this forthcoming summer, pour over, and get going with a banging in September, 1968. Waiting for the Boards of Education or for the Bureaus of Curriculum or Title Projects to initiate action is to wait for the line-up to crematorium. Forget it.[62]

Johnson envisioned unity as a pooling of collective resources. She suggested looking outside of white institutional structures for learning about and teaching black history. Her vision of unity

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[61] Johnson, "Teacher, Put Some Black on That Calendar!" Note that LeRoi Jones, mentioned here, is Amiri Baraka.
[62] Ibid. Italics in original

involved black educators teaching a broad vision of black history *and* looking to each other for resources on such lessons.

Other educational visions of unity emphasized teaching values. At the Third Annual Black Power Conference in Philadelphia in late August and early September 1968, immediately before the teachers' strikes, Preston Wilcox wrote that "Blackenization or Africanization should pervade the entire educational experience in descriptive, analytical, historical and intellectual terms. The spiritual and human qualities of the experience and the search for a relevant set of values can not be separated from this process. There is no such thing as a value-free course or curriculum."[63] Wilcox claimed that black educators needed to be explicit about the values they taught, which involved becoming specific about what they valued. In the year or two following the teachers' strikes, Wilcox and others who had been involved in the fight for community control turned to teaching Maulana Karenga's "Seven Principles of Blackness," as expanded by Amiri Baraka, as the essential values of black education and a black curriculum.

Written while Baraka considered himself Muslim and a Black Nationalist, his text *A Black Value System* interpreted Karenga's pan-African value system as relevant to black Americans because it contrasted with "the practiced morality of Euro-American civilization."[64] Karenga outlined the Nguzo Saba (Seven Principles) when he created the pan-African holiday Kwanzaa in 1966. Baraka and Karenga worked together throughout the late 1960s in an "East Coast-West Coast synergy."[65] In *A Black Value System*, Baraka analyzes the Nguzo Saba as a value system, the Kawaida:

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[63] Preston R. Wilcox, "Report of Education Workshop #1: Control of Schools Within the Black Community," Third Annual Black Power Conference, Philadelphia, PA, August 30-September 1, 1968, Folder 21, Box 11, Wilcox Papers.
[64] Imamu Amiri Baraka, *A Black Value System* (Newark, NJ: Jihad Productions, 1970), 5, accessed through Black Thought and Culture Database.
[65] Molefi Kete Asante, *Maulana Karenga: An Intellectual Portrait* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2009), 107.

> Kawaida, or the doctrine of Maulana Karenga, is the measure of that "better" life. It is African, because we are African, no matter that we have been trapped in the West these few hundred years. But by the quality of what our lives meant we have transformed the West, even transformed the white man. The value system, especially as the Nguzo Saba begins to focus it, can give us the identity, purpose and direction to move to that better life. At each level it is a contrast to Euro-American morality, because first it is based on teachings that are superior to the practiced morality of Euro-American civilization. It is also a value system beneficial to black people. And there is no reason for the practiced value system of Euro-America to be beneficial to black people, quite the contrary, it has always been absolutely detrimental to black people.[66]

Baraka demonstrated how the Seven Principles could offer an alternative morality to black people, especially those living under the "practiced morality of Euro-American civilization." The Seven Principles suggested that a transnational, pan-African sense of unity could help black people live better lives.

Wilcox's argument for community control was rooted in Malcolm's sense of unity as black-run educational institutions, but he argued that in those institutions, students should learn of their blackness in relation to Baraka and Karenga's pan-African principles. In "Criteria for a Black Educational Methodology," Wilcox outlined what he called some basic assumptions, including the previously discussed idea "that all Black children are human and educable," and the idea that "the education of Black students wherever it takes place should be controlled by Black people." In addition to these points, the other two also related to the idea of unity. Wilcox stated that his second assumption was "that Black children must be educated as members of a Black family and as members of the Black community." In this concept, Wilcox emphasized that black people needed to care for black children as a united force against white people and white-controlled institutions that did not appear to care.

Wilcox also drew on Baraka's *A Black Value System* to provide an explanation for what children should learn in black-run schools. Wilcox wrote that "the educational experience should

[66] Baraka, *A Black Value System*, 5-6.

be organized around the Seven Criteria of Culture and guided by the Seven Principles of Blackness: The Double Sevens." Wilcox wrote out the following and cited Baraka:

Criteria of A Culture

1. Mythology
2. History
3. Social Organization
4. Political Organization
5. Economic Organization
6. Creative Motif
7. Ethos

Seven Principles of Blackness

1. UMOJA -- Unity
2. Kujichagulia – self-determination
3. Ujima – collective work and responsibility
4. Ujamaa – cooperative economics
5. Nia – purpose
6. Kuumba – creativity
7. Imani – faith[67]

Baraka explained that *Umoja* (Unity), the first principle, was "To strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race."[68] In this explanation, unity was relevant in and beyond the U.S. context. Baraka continued by making the connection to the Judeo-Christian tradition of the Ten Commandments explicit:

> The 7 principles are "10 commandments" yet more profound to us -- US because they are pre and post 10 commandments at the same time. If there is Umoja, for instance, thou cannot kill, steal, bear false witness, commit adultery, or any of the things the western world thrives on. The commandments are fulfilled by the initial need of blackness for unity -- oneness.
>
> But unity is political too. The meaning vibrates as a totality. Spiritual unity is the needed completion of physical and mental unity. (The doctrine is made up of the 3 sides of the ancient pyramid -- physical, mental and spiritual -- in each of its statements. The three pyramids of the US symbol meaning "our traditional greatness," and by this, our traditional understanding.) The 7 principles are solutions to the political dilemma of

[67] Preston R. Wilcox, "Criteria for a Black Educational Methodology: A Think Piece," December 1971, Folder 23 Box 11, Wilcox Papers.
[68] Baraka, *A Black Value System*, 1.

> Black people. I would say solutions to the political dilemma of all men, but I recognize we are different by virtue of our concerns and the context of our lives.[69]

Baraka's notion that the Seven Principles were more expansive than the Ten Commandments spoke to the prevalence of the Ten Commandments as a representation of "the practiced morality of Euro-America," as well as the Judeo-Christian tradition of public schools. In Baraka's view, unity could replace the Ten Commandments and also be used for political purposes. Wilcox drew on this notion by suggesting that children in black-run institutions ought to learn a morality about blackness and pan-African identity, rather than Judeo-Christianity.

Such a model was not only proposed by Wilcox at the Black Power conference, but also taken up at the public school Uhuru Sasa (meaning "Freedom Now" in Swahili), which Leslie Campbell founded in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn in 1970. Campbell and Uhuru Sasa taught the Seven Principles as a way to speak to black values, not just react to the problems in white schools. Campbell had been one of the most vocal advocates for community control. An article in the *African American Teachers Forum* in December 1970 reflected on Campbell's experience at Uhuru Sasa:

> The beginning of Uhuru Sasa was not considered a failure, but instead a learning experience. From it was realized the fact that anything which is based on reaction will last only as long as what it is reacting to is in existence. Re-actions are also determined by the enemy's actions. After some very critical and realistic evaluation Les stopped and changed direction. He realized that the purpose of education in the enemy's schools is to create subservient attitudes, to encourage the individualistic instincts of African People, to perpetuate the idea that any knowledge worthwhile must come from a book, to set the so-called 'educated' apart from the community and create an attitude of intellectual arrogance. A search began for the type of education need for African people, and two examples emerged: One was the Nation of Islam and the other, the Educational System of Tanzania. Both had as their purposes the building and maintenance of a nation.
>
> They also had certain other important purposes: A. To create an attitude of working and living together for the common good of African people. B. To create an attitude of total commitment to the African community. C. To have students accept values appropriate to their future and not those of an oppressed past. D. To prepare

[69] Ibid., 2. By "US," Baraka is referring to Karenga's US organization, rather than the United States. However, because he is speaking of the Ten Commandments, his argument is relevant to the Judeo-Christian tradition.

> students for the work they will have to do in and for our society. E. To develop an inquiring mind. F. To learn from others."[70]

As Baraka indicated, unity had spiritual and scientific elements that educators Wilcox and Campbell saw as necessary for black education. Whereas Johnson had sought to highlight black history and contributions to the United States and community control advocates had wanted black control of institutions as arguments for natural black belonging in the United States, the actual pedagogical content and approach for some community control advocates was trans-historical pan-Africanism. This might have differed from Johnson's immediate argument, but it was not inconsistent with Wilcox.

It is also significant that the UFT's resistance to such curricula was not about separation of church and state. Instead, the resistance focused on the notion of "black racism." As Sarah Barringer Gordon has noted, black Islam were often criticized as political groups rather than a religious groups.[71] However, in the context of a history of religion in NYC public schools, the underlying religio-political apparatus of the post-*Schempp* and *Engel* public schools becomes even more apparent. It was the Judeo-Christian values that the Board of Education saw as religious, even if universally so.

That said, as Baraka pointed out, unity was political. In the context of NYC public schools, the political goal of unity was control. Even those who did not necessarily draw explicitly on Baraka or Malcolm X spoke of unity. At a meeting about the ousted teachers held during the teachers' strikes, "Enthusiasm was evident in the response to speakers' pleas to 'stay united' and 'stand firm' behind the governing board and the community control concept."[72] In

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[70] "Mwalimu," *African American Teachers Forum*, December 1970, Folder 11, Box 24, UFTR.
[71] Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Spirit of the Law: Religious Voices and the Constitution in Modern America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010), 97.
[72] Nancy Hicks, "Ocean Hill Parents and Teachers Voice Their Unity," *New York Times*, October 1, 1968, 36.

being united for one purpose, they could achieve control, which would lead to even greater unity, according to advocates like Wilcox and Leslie Campbell.

For Wilcox, control of schools was a necessary first step to attain unity. Only after people who cared about black children and black education and black history were in control, could unity begin to form. Among other iterations of his point, he said:

> Black children must be educated as members of a Black family and as members of the Black community. White-controlled institutions have approached Black students as individuals from pathological families and communities from which they should be removed. Blacks perceive their own children as being full participants and future contributors to the nation-building process. The school becomes an extension of the home, the existence of the home and community becomes the basis for the existence of the school.[73]

In other words, he understood that through control of the schools, black people could together be united for all aspects of black life. As much as white-controlled schools were a problem, black-controlled schools could be a vehicle for building further black unity.

Taken together, power structures, humanity, and unity represented three important features of community control advocates' intellectual arguments. A reorientation to power structures and humanity through unity created a new vision for education based on what they had learned from the failure of NYC public schools to attend to the education of children of color and on the notion that focusing on the learning experiences of children of color could promote a stronger community. It also helps us understand more of the intellectual vision behind the self-determination that Lewis emphasizes. Finally, claims of Judeo-Christianity's universality did not include community control advocates' claims to racial particularity as a pre-existing fact that relayed their natural belonging in school curricula and leadership. Board members and the UFT claimed that community control advocates were racist or separatist; they ended up rejecting

[73] Wilcox, "Criteria for a Black Educational Methodology."

people of the very racial backgrounds they claimed to want include in their vision of positive racial coexistence, because community control advocates did not want to be included in that particular vision. Community control advocates' critiques of white culture and of Judeo-Christianity in particular further show how community control stood outside the white school officials' Judeo-Christian vision.

Critiques of Judeo-Christianity

In addition to offering their own portrait of what education for black children could be, community control advocates critiqued what they took to be something they called "white culture." In doing so, spoke to various iterations of this white culture: the WASP ethic, white nationalism, and Jewish assimilation. In this section, I show that Judeo-Christianity was among the iterations of white culture that the community control advocates critiqued, both directly and indirectly. It is important to include Judeo-Christianity among the iterations of white culture for two reasons: first, because white school officials understood their worldview as Judeo-Christian; and second, the community control advocates or the sources that they drew on sometimes directly critiqued the Judeo-Christian worldview. Thus when community control advocates critiqued other iterations of white culture, such as white nationalism or the WASP ethic, the people whom they were critiquing might not have identified with the name that community control advocates gave to their culture. However, the people they were critiquing—at least in a school setting—likely identified with Judeo-Christianity. Seeing Judeo-Christianity as an iteration of white culture allows us to see how community control advocates understood Judeo-Christianity, like other iterations of white culture, as a systematic vision of exclusion.

Critiques of White Culture

In their understanding of power dynamics, some community control advocates, especially Preston Wilcox, critiqued aspects of white culture. In particular, he critiqued what he called "the WASP ethic" or "the WASP quality" and what he called "white nationalism" because they sought to change rather than listen to and learn from people of color. His critiques of "the WASP ethic" and "white nationalism" contributed to community control's broad critique of Judeo-Christianity as a feature of white culture that excluded people of color.

Although the term WASP could have been an innocuous synonym for "white," Wilcox's repeated use of "WASP" to describe assimilationist behavior and an overarching ethic or worldview suggests that "Anglo-Saxon" and "Protestant" were also relevant features of Wilcox's critique. Specifically, by including "Anglo-Saxon" and "Protestant," Wilcox spoke to a longer history of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant dominance and cultural myth in the country. Although teachers writing for the *African American Teachers' Forum* would go on to critique Jews for participating in assimilationist and oppressive behavior, the critique of Jews was not (for the most part) their Jewishness, but their adoption of WASP values, given their history, as we will shortly see. Wilcox's critique of "the WASP ethic" also spoke to the repeated ethical justification for missionary and other types of behaviors among Anglo-Saxon Protestants.

By "the WASP ethic," or "WASP quality," Wilcox meant that the concept of "WASP" was not merely a description of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants, but that WASP described the mentality of dominant white culture that assumed that everyone else would want to assimilate to WASP culture as well. In a collection of various viewpoints on School Control, Wilcox asserted: "The documentns [STET] reveal a common thread: an effort to redefine and control public educational institutions serving Black People and to eliminate the WASP quality which requires

Black to become culturally white inside; to not disturb the chains on their minds; and to participate in their own miseducation."[74] Wilcox did not think that the WASP quality helped black people because it only tried to make black people value the same ideas that WASPs did. Elsewhere, Wilcox spoke again to this assimilative approach, when he critiqued the assimilationist nature of the "melting pot" idea: "The 'melting pot' which presumably never took place according to Glazer and Moynihan (Beyond the Melting Pot) is undergoing a re-definition. If it failed to materialize, it was precisely because it required the hyphenated American groups to play the game of 'Follow the WASP'. Most hyphenated American groups have over-subscribed to 'Wasp behavior' as appropriate public behavior; they have clung to cultural imperatives as private and ethnic group behavior…"[75] Wilcox understood the WASP ethic not just to encourage everyone to adopt WASP values, but also to leave behind other cultural values. Wilcox continued: "The deliberate crushing of views that are culturally radical to the WASP ethic by the public school system appears to be part of an effort by white America to make equality a myth and white supremacy a reality." [76] On Wilcox's view, what he called "WASP culture" not only aimed to assimilate people into a particular mentality, but in doing so, aimed to erase various ethnic and racial groups. To Wilcox, WASP values were dangerous because of the eradication he claimed that they entailed.

Wilcox and others also critiqued "white nationalism" as a feature of white culture. By "white nationalism," he referred to the narrative of American history where white people are heroes defending a just nation, as well as national practices of inclusion and exclusion. Wilcox suggested that "the public school system has been teaching white nationalism since time immemorial. The Supreme Court Decision of 1954 served essentially to grant 'full student

[74] Wilcox, "Black Control of Schools: Selected Viewpoints." Original spelling.
[75] Preston R. Wilcox, "Black Power and Public Education," Folder 22, Box 10, Wilcox Papers.
[76] Wilcox, "Black Control of Schools: Selected Viewpoints."

status' to black Americans. Prior to that time it would be difficult to document a legitimate intent of our nation to educate black Americans."[77] He saw the failure of schools to state any intent to educate black Americans as a form of white nationalism. To him, white nationalism was as much a practice of exclusion and omission as a specific agenda.

For the most part, Wilcox and other community control advocates did not explicitly critique "Judeo-Christianity." However, one of Wilcox's biggest influences, Malcolm X, did so within the context of public institutions. Although Wilcox often quoted the post-Mecca Malcolm X rather than the Nation of Islam Malcolm X, Malcolm X's critique of Judeo-Christianity remains important in the development of his ideas and Wilcox's and Johnson's adoption of them. Wilcox's comfort critiquing "the WASP ethic" for its worldview as constitutive with a Protestant nationalism, as well as his general critique of white culture, suggests that he would have offered a similar critique of Judeo-Christianity. Furthermore, because school officials identified their own worldview as Judeo-Christian and Wilcox and others wanted to critique the worldview of school officials, Malcolm X's critiques of Judeo-Christianity are relevant.

Malcolm argued that the only way for black people to become free was to reject white Christianity and white society, made "white" by the people in control of institutions who implicitly or explicitly privileged white lives and contributions. Malcolm was critical of white Christianity for oppressing black people and argued that Islam was the true religion of people of African descent—in Islam, people of African descent could be free from their white oppressors. In an interview with Kenneth Clark, the psychologist from the *Brown* case and co-founder of Harlem's Northside Children's Center with fellow psychologist Mamie Clark, his wife, Malcolm criticized black efforts for integration and white Christianity. However, in Malcolm's conversation with Clark, Malcolm did not just critique white Christianity. Instead, he identified

[77] Wilcox, "Black Power and Public Education."

something that white people were calling "Judaic-Christian society," and made clear that he thought "Judaic-Christian society" and white Christianity were susceptible to the same criticism because they were in fact the same:

> "CLARK: I'd like to go back just a little to your life in prison. What was the basis -- how did you --
> MALCOLM X: Crime. I wasn't framed. I went to prison for what I did, and the reason that I don't have any hesitation or reluctance whatsoever to point out the fact that I went to prison: I firmly believe that it was the Christian society, as you call it, the Judaic-Christian society, that created all of the factors that send so many so-called Negroes to prison. And when these fellows go to prison there is nothing in the system designed to rehabilitate them. There's nothing in the system designed to reform them. All it does is -- it's a breeding ground for more professional type of criminal, especially among Negroes. Since I saw, detected, the reluctance on the part of penologists, prison authorities, to reform men and even detected that -- noticed that after a so-called Negro in prison trys to reform and become a better man, the prison authorities are more against that man than they were against him when he was completely criminally inclined, so this is again hypocrisy. Not only is the Christian society itself religious hypocrisy, but the court system is hypocrisy, the entire penal system is hypocrisy. Everything is hypocrisy. Mister Muhammad came along with his religious gospel and introduced the religion of Islam and showed the honesty of Islam, showed the justice in Islam, the freedom in Islam. Why naturally, just comparing the two, Christianity had already eliminated itself, so all I had to do was accept the religion of Islam. I know today what it has done for me as a person."[78]

For Malcolm, Judeo-Christianity was a product of white Christian society, meaning that it was hypocritical and systematically oppressive at the level of institutions. His naming "Judaic-Christian society" as "Christian" is important for his critique, because it foreshadows the critique of Jewish assimilation into Christian culture that some community control advocates made. Malcolm suggested that "Judaic-Christian society" was just a new form of "white Christian society." And, when Malcolm says that "Everything is hypocrisy," he suggests that all aspects of white Christian society are hypocrisy. Community control advocates picked up the notion that public schooling in its current form was hypocritical.

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[78] Kenneth Clark, "The Negro Protest: James Baldwin, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Talk With Kenneth B. Clark," (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 22.

However, Wilcox did not go as far as Malcolm did in relation to integration. Wilcox's central concern was that white people controlled integration: "3. The white control of integrated education as merely a tool to avoid integration of the curriculum content and to redistribute control over curricular matters. A multicultural control over the discrete cultural aspects of the program itself. As resolved at the Third International Black Power Conference…"[79] Wilcox and others on the community board did not argue for separation, rather they argued for *control*, and in this case, *multicultural control*, meaning that Wilcox's primary concern in that instance was triumphing over *white* control, not necessarily obtaining black control.

This concern over white control also appeared in some teachers' critiques of Jewish assimilation. Especially given the pre-World War II alliance of elite black Americans and Jews in black educational advancement and civil rights, many of the community control advocates were frustrated because they thought that Jews had adopted aspects of the Judeo-Christian in tradition and left black students behind.[80] In their critiques of Jewish assimilation, black teachers expressed wariness at the path that some Jewish educators had taken to establish a place in American life.[81]

Critique of Jewish Assimilation

Some community control advocates criticized the UFT leaders and Board of Education's actions as particularly problematic because many of the UFT leaders and Board members were Jewish. For the most part, those who wielded the criticism were not the main advocates of or

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[79] Wilcox, "Education for Black Humanism," 6.
[80] Earl Lewis, "The Need to Remember: Three Phases in Black and Jewish Educational Relations," in *Struggles in the Promised Land: Towards a History of Black-Jewish Relations in the United States*, eds., Jack Salzman and Cornel West (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 231-256, especially 241.
[81] Ibid., 247. Lewis analyzes the struggle for community control as a struggle where Black and Jewish migration histories "converged more than merged," as he argues: "For those Black and Jews, ancient prejudices found new meanings as they struggled to maintain or secure their place in American life."

participants in community control. They included two teachers who wrote single articles for the *African American Teachers Forum* and a fifteen-year-old high school student, whose poem teacher and community control advocate Leslie Campbell read on a radio show.[82]

The scholarly conversation on community control usually focuses on whether the black teachers or Sia Berhan, the student who wrote the poem, were anti-Semitic.[83] My task here is different. Rather than evaluating whether they were anti-Semitic, I analyze their critiques of Jews in the UFT and on the Board in order to understand how these negative expressions toward Jews spoke to the limits of the Judeo-Christian repertoire. The Judeo-Christian repertoire could not address the concerns of those who critiqued what they saw as Jewish assimilation into a white Christian norm.

As a result of these flashpoints, the community control movement was accused of anti-Semitism. The phrase "Black Anti-Semitism" was not far from many critics' lips. Critics had to look no further than influences on Wilcox, especially Malcolm X , Karenga, and Baraka, to find what they saw as evidence that community control was in fact anti-Semitic, as Malcolm and Baraka had received similar charges.[84]

However, community control advocates denied claims that they were anti-Semitic, some because they did not see anti-Semitism occurring in the movement, and some because they thought that as black people, they could not be racist because of their position of power in the American context. When asked if anti-Semitism played any role in how parents involved in community control felt toward teachers, Dolores Torres reflected years later: "I don't think there was any kind of racial, ah, ah, hard feelings there. I mean, every teacher that we, we, had wasn't

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[82] Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*, 185.
[83] Isaacs, *Inside Ocean Hill-Brownsville*, 183-212. Lewis is an exception in "The Need to Remember."
[84] Melani McAlister, "One Black Allah: The Middle East in the Cultural Politics of African American Liberation, 1955-1970," *American Quarterly* 51:3 (1999): 622-656.

Jewish. Ah. All of the nineteen that we reassigned, they weren't all Jewish. I don't think there was any kind of anti-semitism."[85] Offering a different take on community control advocates not being anti-Semitic, John F. Hatchett, a teacher at PS 68, which was part of Harlem's demonstration district, penned a particularly controversial article titled "The Phenomenon of the Anti-Black Jews and the Black Anglo-Saxon: A Study in Educational Perfidy" for the *African American Teachers Forum*.[86] In the piece itself, he preemptively acknowledged that he might be accused of anti-Semitism:

> Some readers may want to accuse me of racism or as some white liberals are fond of saying often—a Black racist. That's fine, except that a contradiction of terms is involved. I cannot be a racist, especially a Black racist, since *racism connotes power and Black people in white America are clearly powerless;* hence, I a Black man cannot possibly be a racist! It's high time that all white folk and some of my (Negro) brethren assimilate and understand this basic fact of life. Racism in this country wears only one face—be it ethnic, religious or otherwise. Hate? Yes![87]

Charges of anti-Semitism, regardless of whether they were founded, did not get to the heart of Hatchett's point, which was that black people in white America were powerless, and that assimilating into what he understood as white values was not, he expressed, an effective way for black people to obtain power over their education.

Certain black teachers and students' primary criticism of Jews was a criticism of Jews for abandoning other people who, like they had, had been oppressed, and for assimilating into a predominantly Christian culture instead of challenging it. This criticism took two forms: attention to the Jewish history of being oppressed, especially in the Holocaust, and explicit and implicit critique of Jewish assimilation into white Christian culture. It is not altogether surprising that a community of color that opposed dominant white society would be critical of assimilation.

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[85] "Interview with Dolores Torres."
[86] John F. Hatchett, P.S. 68, "The Phenomenon of the Anti-Black Jews and the Black Anglo-Saxon," *African American Teachers Forum*, November-December 1967, 1 and 3, Folder 11, Box 24, UFTR.
[87] Ibid.

Historians of American Jewish history have argued that Jews have consistently been among the most politically liberal ethnic groups, supporting the civil rights movement and the New Deal, but note that points of conflict in Jewish liberalness have come when Jews must decide between their own assimilation into American culture and liberal values. Marc Dollinger argues that at such points of tension, such as around issues like affirmative action, Jews have chosen assimilation over social liberalism.[88] When Hatchett, Berhan, or others writing for the *African American Teachers Forum* were critical of Jews, they essentially agreed with this scholarly point—that Jews sometimes chose assimilation over their otherwise liberal values—but instead of just making the observation, they explained why they thought Jewish assimilation was especially hurtful to students of color.

Hatchett and others suggested that Jewish school leadership, in cooperation with a select group of black people, was thwarting black children's educational opportunities, and that he could identify that Jews were responsible because they were in control of the school system. In the *Forum* article, "The Phenomenon of the Anti-Black Jews and the Black Anglo-Saxon: A Study in Educational Perfidy," even Hatchett's choice of the word "perfidy" suggested that he thought that "Anti-Black Jews and the Black Anglo-Saxon" were deceiving children of color by appearing to care for children and share in similar histories, when in fact, they were an enemy to children of color. Hatchett described "the systematic coming of age of the Jews who dominate and control the educational bureaucracy of the New York Public School system and their power-starved imitators, the Black Anglo-Saxons."[89] Hatchett made clear that he was not "singling out" Jews, especially because he also discussed "the Black Anglo-Saxons," or black people who, in

[88] Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); also see Beth Wenger, *History Lessons: The Creation of American Jewish Heritage* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012).
[89] Hatchett, "The Phenomenon of the Anti-Black Jews and the Black Anglo-Saxon."

Hatchett's mind, had also assimilated into white culture and were perpetuating its values. Rather, in Hatchett's perspective, "it is a statistical fact (even though the Board of Education refuses to release the data), that Jewish teachers comprise between 80-85% of the teaching staff of this system and if you break it down on the supervisory level, e.g., assistant principals and principals, the percentages would rise to approximately 90-95% respectively. In educational or political language this degree of representation inevitably means control." Because of what he identified as the fact of Jewish control,[90] Hatchett therefore saw Jews as responsible for the problems facing black education: "It is the avowed thesis of this paper that this coalition or collusion or whatever one chooses to call it [of "the Anti-Black Jews and the Black Anglo-Saxon"], is one of the fundamental reasons why our Black children are being educationally castrated, individually and social devastated to the extent that they are incapable of participating in, and carrying through to a reasonable conclusion, any meaningful educational experience."[91] Hatchett named statistical facts to describe the power dynamic he saw at play. On his reading, because black parents and community members were not in control of their children's education, the children were facing an oppressive system.

Furthermore, Hatchett suggested that the history of the oppression of Jews ought to compel Jews to be sympathetic with the parents of color who were witnessing the school system's treatment of their children. In particular, Hatchett alluded to the Holocaust when he explained what he saw Jewish teachers and administrators doing to black children: "I hate the misery, degradation, racism, and cultural genocide daily practiced against my people by a group

[90] It is hard to say what the exact numbers were since the Board of Education would not release statistical information about the religion of its employees. However, there seems to be consensus that a majority of the teachers and administrators were Jewish.
[91] Hatchett, "The Phenomenon of the Anti-Black Jews and the Black Anglo-Saxon."

of people whose entire history should have told them no, this is morally and spiritually wrong."[92] Although Hatchett did not draw a direct connection between the Holocaust and the "cultural genocide daily practiced against my people," his point lay in the connection between these two atrocities. He thought that Jews were systematically eradicating educational opportunities for black children and therefore systematically eradicating black children's future *en masse* in a manner that he saw as comparable to the genocide of the Holocaust. The notion that black children in NYC were facing an "educational genocide" circulated among community control advocates, with Preston Wilcox offering "An Alternative to Black Educational Genocide" and the *Forum* publishing an article titled "Needed: A Responsible Jewish Voice" that asked: "How long shall we tolerate the unholy conspiracy of the teachers the principals, the Board of Education, the superintendent of schools, the custodians and Mayor Lindsay to crush the splendid effort of the community of Ocean Hill-Brownsville to reverse the established patterns of Black educational genocide?"[93] In an even more explicit comparison between the UFT and the Holocaust perpetrators, parents reportedly called the UFT President "Adolf Shanker" rather than Albert Shanker to comment on the authoritarian nature of the UFT.[94] In the attention to a Jewish history of oppression, especially in relationship to the Holocaust, Hatchett, parents, and other control advocates indicated that the Jewish history of oppression ought to prevent Jews from oppressing black children. By making comparisons to the Holocaust, they intended to remind Jews of their traumatic history so as to indicate why they wanted predominantly Jewish leadership to give them control of schools.

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[92] Ibid.
[93] "Needed: A Responsible Jewish Voice," *African American Teachers Forum,* Folder 9, Box 24, UFTR; Preston R. Wilcox, "An Alternative to Black Educational Genocide," Folder 4, Box 10, Wilcox Papers.
[94] Nancy Hicks, "Ocean Hill Parents and Teachers Voice Their Unity," *New York Times*, October 1, 1968, 36.

Because of Jews' history of facing oppression, Hatchett and others were particularly critical of Jewish assimilation into white Christian America, which they considered racist and oppressive. After saying that Jews should behave differently given their history, Hatchett continued:

> But I labor under no illusions. Morality and spirituality are games some people love to play. The prime motivation behind the educational charade being played with Black children is racism—raw naked contempt for Black folk as a people without the Book and therefore without culture or a history and therefore not really human and therefore all that is done is right—because things are made to be manipulated and in the eyes of white America we Black folk are objects be used, not human beings fully entitled to justice and freedom and knowledge…[95]

Hatchett saw Jews as participating in the racism of white America. He critiqued the ways that he saw that Jews had assimilated into white America and perpetuated its Judeo-Christian values because they excluded people of color.

In another example, an author wrote an article titled "The Unholy Sons of Shylock" for the *Forum* that used extremely volatile language to argue that Jewish assimilation meant Jewish control, which was in direct conflict with black control.[96] The author wrote:

> The political objective of black people is power: power to control our own destiny: power to run our own lives: power to run our police force: to operate our own schools, to deal with our own problems of delinquency, to drive white slumlords out of our community, to build and renovate our own houses and to organize our own trade and commerce. / These objectives run counter to Jewish interests. Our communities are sucked dry and exploited by a Jewish Mafia, which has its tentacles in our groceries, our dwellings, in our schools, indeed in every area of our lives. These shylocks are the principal instruments of suffering and privation in our black communities.[97]

To this author, control could not be shared, and Jewish control meant no black control. Jewish control, in the authors' eyes, had also reflected how little Jews cared about black people. The use

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[95] John F. Hatchett, P.S. 68, "The Phenomenon of the Anti-Black Jews and the Black Anglo-Saxon," *African American Teachers Forum*, November-December 1967, 1 and 3, Folder 11, Box 24, UFTR.
[96] "The Unholy Sons of Shylock," Folder 9, Box 24, UFTR.
[97] Ibid.

of the word "Shylock" and the description of Jews as monstrous of course contributed to charges of anti-Semitism. However, "Shylock" in this context took on a similar critique as "genocide" or "Adolf Shanker" had. Shylock was a stereotypically greedy and cheating Jewish character of Shakespeare's, where Shakespeare suggested that all Jews were greedy and cheating. To use the "Shylock" stereotype in this situation served to remind Jews of the stereotypes they had faced and use that against them to explain why black control was necessary given the perceived failure of Jewish control to help children of color.

Even with such language in the air, a junior high school production suggested that the Brownsville kids were less concerned about anti-Semitism than about feeling like strangers in their own home. In one of those "you can't make this up" moments, an Italian American drama teacher at a school on the border of Brownsville, JHS 274, decided to put on a production of *Fiddler on the Roof* with the students in the hopes that learning about Jewish heritage would help Black-Jewish relations. Dramaturge and theatre scholar Alisa Solomon argues that the students of color related to the characters they played in *Fiddler on the Roof*, rather than relating more to their Jewish teachers. Her argument echoes the community control advocates' critiques.[98] The students said that they related to the experience of being kicked out of their home, of searching for identity in a changing neighborhood. The heart of the black critique of Jews was that Jews had forgotten the past oppression they had experienced and were now oppressing black and Puerto Rican students, systematically and ideologically. As the children who played Tevye, Fyedke, and Chava saw the oppression their characters faced in being forced to leave Anatevka, the community control advocates wanted school leaders to recognize their arguments for control.

[98] Alisa Solomon, *Wonder of Wonders: A Cultural History of* Fiddler on the Roof (New York: Picador, 2013), 258-290.

When we think about community control advocates'—even those on the peripheries—critiques of Jews as fully fleshed arguments, we see that their main critique was that given the history of Jewish oppression, Jews ought not oppress others, as community control advocates believed they were oppressing children of color. The racial language and intense emotion contributed to an argument about the limit of Judeo-Christianity when dynamics of power were taken into consideration. However, not everyone critiqued Jewish assimilation specifically or Judeo-Christianity so explicitly. Others critiqued the current educational situation by embodying alternative ways of being in community and in control.

Alternative Examples of Interfaith Work

In addition to public critiques of white culture and critiques of Jews and Jewish assimilation, some community control advocates offered an implicit critique of Judeo-Christianity by organizing interfaith coalitions to advocate for community control. Critique operated at the level of embodiment and action as well.

There were two primary ways that these coalitions embodied critiques of Judeo-Christianity. First, they were interracial in addition to being interfaith, which coalitions of school officials and the NCCJ were not for the most part. Second, they were united for direct action rather than public pronouncement. In fact, it is hard to find much in the way of public statements about the purpose of their coalitions—instead, when members spoke publically, they described the work that they were doing. Two groups exemplified this embodied action: first, community board member and parent Dolores Torres's group Christians and Jews United for Social Action (CUSA), and second, the community school board itself as an interracial and interreligious body.

Dolores Torres was a founder of CUSA, which served as an organizing base within the community control movement. The group had already organized for years to advocate for social change on issues such as housing within the community:

> At the time we had an org--organization that was called CUSA, it was Christians United for Social Action, and we dealt with problems in the community: with housing, with welfare, with the schools, with drug addiction. Anything that pertained to the community, any problem that was there. And more and more people were coming in and complaining not only about this, what was going on in 144, what was going on in other schools in the district. And, ah, we decided to go into a local school board, and present our case to them. We went into the local school board that represented, supposed to represent, our district. We found not one person on that board lived in our district. Most of that people on that board were White, we were a district of mostly Hispanic and Black families. The ones that did have children in public schools went to public schools in good neighborhoods. We were a poor neighborhood. We found a lot of the teachers were in agreement that we needed to do something to get the kids switched over to 191 because the teachers were having it hard also. As a result of this part time school, they, a lot of the children, had to go to summer school, to try and make up. Which they did thankfully, we continued to go down to 110 Livingston Street, to the Board of Education, present our case, and they kept telling us to go to the local school board, and these people, we felt, did not represent us. They had no children in the schools in our district, we felt they weren't paying any attention to us because we were the ignorant people, these were the educated people, these were the people with all kinds of degrees, and we felt that they didn't care about us and or our children.[99]

In going to the Board of Education on 110 Livingston Street in Brooklyn to make their case, CUSA was a deliberately interfaith group that mobilized for just actions. Although they were organized around actions and left few traces of a particular mobilizing philosophy, CUSA nevertheless embodied an alternative approach to interfaith organizing—it was not about tolerating the other but about working together on issues of injustice.

The governing board of the demonstration district, itself composed of people of diverse religious and racial backgrounds, embodied an alternative interreligious and interracial politic. Father John Powis, a white priest, Herbert Oliver, a black minister at Westminster Bethany United Presbyterian Church, and Torres of Christians and Jews United for Social Action, worked

[99] "Interview with Dolores Torres."

alongside one another and the other members of diverse backgrounds. They did not explicitly bring a critique of Judeo-Christianity to the fore, but the goal was not just recognizing some form of equality they expected to already exist. The goal was to work together to fight for what they believed to be right.

Conclusion

Although they did not all necessarily agree on each specific point, community control advocates articulated an intellectual vision of community control to address what they understood as the utterly dire situation facing children of color in NYC public schools. They articulated values such as unity and sought creative solutions to reorient the power structure and attitudes toward children of color. This involved confrontations with the UFT and Board of Education, but to the parents, such confrontation was worthwhile, given the overwhelming rejection and erasure they felt from both parties. As the *African American Teachers Forum*'s tagline said, "WE MUST EDUCATE OURSELVES OR PERISH."[100] To those who supported community control, control over children's educations was not about integration or segregation, it was about having a say in what children's futures looked like, because in the hands of the white-controlled school system, they felt like no opportunities lay in their future or their children's future.

The vision of community control showed a limit of school officials' vision of Judeo-Christian universality. It showed that not everyone wanted to be part of that vision. Communities of color advocating for community control saw the school officials' position as essentially assimilationist and offering them no control over what relations among people of various religious and racial backgrounds would look like. By offering a power structural analysis of

[100] See all issues of the *African American Teachers Forum* in Folder 11, Box 24, UFTR.

Judeo-Christianity and viewing it as part of white culture, the community control advocates claimed that the school officials' vision of inclusion had actually left them systematically excluded.

For scholars of the iteration of liberal religious pluralism known as "Judeo-Christianity," how does attending to historical, on-the-ground critiques that the Judeo-Christian framework was limited and exclusive help shape scholarly interpretation of the concept of "Judeo-Christianity"? It means that we ought to look at Judeo-Christianity in relation to critiques of power and racial exclusivity because there were historical actors who critiqued Judeo-Christianity on these grounds and who offered alternative moral visions for the racial dilemmas facing the city and the country. It also means that it is important to remember that what school officials said about wanting to respect all racial and religious groups did not always conform to what they did.

Conclusion

Religion did not disappear from public schools after the Supreme Court declared school prayer and Bible-reading unconstitutional in 1962 and 1963. Focusing on New York City (NYC) public schools in the 1950s and 1960s, I have shown instead that by looking at curricula and communication where the school board, teachers, or administrators claimed to be teaching students to be "moral," the invocation of a religious text, phrase, or authority was not far away. This was true not only of the Cold War religious revival-era "moral and spiritual values" programming, but also of programming on juvenile delinquency prevention and treatment and on teaching students how to understand the concept of racial integration. Thus, not only was reference to religion rarely far from moral education curricula or claims about the moral responsibility of public schools to student, but neither were social issues relating to race—especially segregation or what school officials called juvenile delinquency.

In fact, the predominant religio-political discourse in NYC public schools in the mid-twentieth century was what I have called the Judeo-Christian repertoire of religious and racial coexistence. The repertoire was a collection of positive terms—such as brotherhood, love of neighbor, and tolerance—and negative terms—such as bigotry, prejudice, and intolerance—about coexistence that school officials used and placed under the umbrella of what they called the "Judeo-Christian tradition," a tradition that they presumed was universally shared across religion and race. Schools produced the terms of this tradition by teaching students about "heroes" in American history, having students sacralize city streets with cleaning supplies in an effort to show they loved their neighbors and neighborhoods and so would not vandalize them,

and by teaching students and parents alike that "all nations" could share a mutual appreciation for brotherhood.

The repertoire was powerful. Whether or not they earnestly believed that everyone shared the Judeo-Christian tradition, school officials used these terms to perpetuate myths about the whiteness, universal values, and religiosity of American history and government. When they used the terms, I argue, the universalist nature of the terms also concealed the particularity of school officials' vision. Challenges from Catholics throughout the state over government aid to parochial schools and black and Puerto Rican New Yorkers over community control of schools revealed that public school officials imagined the public school as a bounded laboratory for religious and racial diversity, even as they failed to actually desegregate the schools. Thus when parents of color sought community control of schools, they were not necessarily responding to the failure of the schools to integrate, but rather the failure of schools to offer quality education to children of color, despite school officials' claims to support racial diversity.

In addition to situating the cases on devotional exercises in relation to local struggles about American belonging, I also offer a new pre-history to NYC school decentralization. In this version of the story, the ongoing production and transmission of ideas about moral whiteness as universal through the vehicle of the Judeo-Christian repertoire contributed to the alternative vision that parents of color created in their fights for community control. This history importantly highlights the robust intellectual vision of public school reformers of color in NYC and how their vision was shaped by their own religious commitments as well as their rejection of the religio-political discourse of Judeo-Christianity.

Implications for History

This piece of history can shape our understanding about religion and public education, as well as about race and public education, by showing how in the mid-twentieth century NYC context, religion and race were intimately connected through ideas about morality. We can see that the public school is a site for social reproduction of ideas about the moral content of race through religious concepts. For social scientists, the notion that schools are sites of social reproduction is old news.[1] However, my work shows that racial inequality is not the only feature of society that schools have reproduced. Rather, through contact, curriculum, and culture, schools also have reproduced ideas about the moral status of histories, lifestyles, and cultures.[2] In this historical instance, they did so through the Judeo-Christian repertoire of ideas and practices of religious and racial coexistence. Thus, public schools are not just spaces for battles over religious rights, but they are spaces for battles over how religious ideas will shape children and who children will become.

When we look beyond integration and segregation through the lens of the production of religious ideas, we can see that the civil rights movement in northern public schools was not just about integration or separation, but rather about people of color standing up to white dominated systems and trying to obtain control over their own and their children's destinies. This view can help open up ways for us to look at ideologies and structures of power, and alternative visions for public life in the northern civil rights movement. In other words, we can look beyond moments

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[1] Ann Ferguson, *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001); Ken McGrew, "A Review of Class-Based Theories of Student Resistance in Education: Mapping the Origins and Influence of Learning to Labor by Paul Willis," *Review of Educational Research* (2011) 81:2, 234-266; Kathleen Nolan, *Police in the Hallways: Discipline in an Urban High School* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2011; Angela Valenzuela, *Subtractive Schooling: U.S.-Mexican Youth and the Politics of Caring*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999); Paul Willis, *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), among others.

[2] Drawing on Karl Marx and Louis Althusser, Andrew Hartman concludes that education reproduced conservative Cold War capitalism after the Cold War, writing that "In general, progressive education became beholden to the false consciousness of the Cold War ideological structure." Although Hartman is looking at Cold War capitalism and I am examining religious ideas of coexistence, we agree that education is a vehicle for the reproduction of ideas. Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 201.

of challenge to government power to what those moments reveal about narratives of belonging in the American context.

Reflections on Sources

This project uses some sources that are novel in the study of American religion. They are novel because of their topic and location, and sometimes their genre. My sources address public education, and many of them are located in education and government archives—the Board of Education archives and the National Education Association archives, for instance. When I have written about sources from my visits to the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, I have analyzed papers on juvenile delinquency, community control, or desegregation rather than churches. When I have gone to the Main Reading Room of the New York Public Library, I have found more useful material in Ernst Papanek's papers from his time as Executive Director on the Wiltwyck School for Boys than in papers of religious leaders.

The genre of my sources is sometimes novel in American religion—public school curricula, for instance—but not always. However, correspondence, public speeches, and published and unpublished writing on important issues are not new in American religion. What makes them unusual in my case is that the correspondence is often between two educational bureaucrats, and the speeches and writing are often by people whose religious lives seem tertiary to their political and educational ones. From the experience of quite literally looking for religion in sources not explored for religion, I have written a history that raises methodological questions in both the history of education and the study of religion.

Before I explain why, let me first say that there are models for looking for religion in "unexpected" places in American religion. Especially in studies of secularism, we are trained to

look for and find secularism instead of religion. These studies are particularly helpful for their focus on the production of religious ideas in spaces that are not traditional institutions of worship.[3] However, the relationship between what the scholars are finding is being produced—secularism, for instance—and the archival sources is not always obvious.

Two examples that do make the connection between evidence and what is being produced clear are Tracy Fessenden and Curtis Evans.[4] Fessenden's analysis arises from clear interpretation of what the aims and uses of her sources. She demonstrates how important literature is for history; however, for the historian trying to assemble boxes of paper scattered through the country, it is difficult to adopt her precision and clarity. Evans works with social scientific material masterfully, analyzing the structures of inequality and racism that social scientists wrote into science through religious differentiation. Fessenden and Evans are excellent models of deriving analysis about religion from primary sources that may not obviously be about religion. However, even Fessenden and Evans use sources that are in some way clearly about religion, even if they are not from obviously religious archives.

I did look for whatever sources were about morality and religion to put them in conversation with other types of sources. I also visited some traditional religious archives—the Archives of the Archdiocese of New York, the National Conference of Christians and Jews Records—and searched scholarly databases on religion for the perspectives of religious leaders—such as ATLA Religion—to shape parts of the story. However, for the most part, my research was done in untraditional archives for the study of religion.

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[3] Kathryn Lofton, *Oprah: The Gospel of an Icon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); John Lardas Modern, *Secularism in Antebellum America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).
[4] Curtis Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 105-140; Tracy Fessenden, *Culture and Redemption: Religion, the Secular, and American Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 60-83;

By looking in educational and governmental archives for a project about religion, I made certain assumptions. I assumed that I would find religion there, and that there was possibly something different about the religion that I found there than religion one might find elsewhere. I was correct in the first assumption. From quotations of biblical scriptures to ritualized parades to weeks inspired by interfaith groups, religion was present in textual, social, and relational forms.

However, my research dispelled me of my second assumption, that there would be something qualitatively different about religion in this public space. If it was different, it was different in that people were more guarded about expressing specific religious ideas than they might have been as representatives of a religious tradition. But what I found could be found in so many spaces—production, meaning making, social structures. Even as the Judeo-Christian repertoire was specific to NYC public education of the time, it was not qualitatively unlike other examples of religion, which scholars of religion know seep into many aspects of daily life. In other words, because religion in public schools has been framed as something that can be inserted into and removed from public schools, I thought that religion in public schools might be more coded than it was. I found that what was "different" about religion in my site of study was not the religion itself, but that attending to it required getting out of the scholarly, legal, and media assumptions about how church and state affected public school space, as well as my own assumptions in this regard.

So what do I mean when I say that this study raises methodological questions for historians of education and scholars of religion? For historians of education, much of the ground I have covered is not new. Neither is the general tension between NYC's Progressive Era centralized school system and its failure to desegregate schools. I have sought to introduce the production of ideas about religion into this field. Not just religious affiliation and motivation—

i.e., not the fact that Milton Galamison was a pastor and how this shaped his efforts for integration.[5] I have sought to offer the history of ideas about religion and morality as they developed on the ground. In doing so, the relevant historical actors, events, and pieces of evidence have shifted. For instance, what becomes important to this history about the open enrollment program discussed in chapter three is not its bureaucratic failure, but rather how its framers understood integration on a structural level as assimilation, and how assimilation mirrored the structure of pluralism in the school board's depiction of the Judeo-Christian tradition. And, what becomes important to this history of community control is not whether community control advocates were anti-Semitic, but how their narratives of Jews related to their critique of the assimilative nature of the school system. My project asks historians of education to attend to a history of ideas with a new cast of characters and terms.

For scholars of religion, my approach to the production of religion asks scholars how we might derive our arguments from the role of religion as presented in the primary sources and still speak to theoretical ideas from our own religious studies lexicon. In other words, I am concerned that we might sometimes stray too far from how people themselves understood religion. To address my approach and concern, I situate the production of religion within historical work on Judeo-Christianity but not within the genealogy of secularism. I could have situated the production of religion in public schools within the genealogy of secularism. I could have thought about the assimilative framework of Judeo-Christianity mirroring the assimilative framework Fessenden describes in the Thomas Nast cartoons and called it secularism. But the terms of genealogy from religion scholars do not necessarily offer the right set of terms for the educational bureaucracy with which I was dealing. Instead, the terms I studied had specific roots

[5] Clarence Taylor has done this in *Knocking at Our Own Door: Milton A. Galamison and the Struggle to Integrate New York City Schools* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

in the 1920s and 1930s anti-totalitarianism. Those terms may have then been used in ways similar to how secularism as a political regime operates, but how to actually align the evidence to make that magic happen? Is it true to my sources? What I have tried to show scholars of religion is that looking for religion in unexpected places does not necessarily mean that one has to find a pre-conceived idea of secularism there. We can have a history of ideas about religion and morality in specific places with terms that people who lived there used.

Reflections on Paying Attention to Who Was There

In this project, I have paid, and will continue to pay, attention to who was there. By this I mean that I tried to show multiple perspectives on the curricula and events. Instead of just looking at the white or Protestant perspective, I engaged the narratives of people of color, as well as of Jews and Catholics, from the beginning, and allowed all the perspectives to shape my narrative and argument. I sometimes centered one perspective over another—focusing on the Board's perspective in chapter one, Catholic perspectives in chapter four, and community control advocates' perspectives in chapter five, for example. However, I made an effort (not always successfully) to note who was there and who was absent. From this commitment, I learned to shift my focus, both in relation to the descriptions I used and my practical methodology.

Paying attention to who was there shifted the terms from my scholarly toolkit of the "Protestant secular" to the term they used, "Judeo-Christianity," which has its own body of scholarship. There were too few Protestants in educational leadership and too few instances of them calling any moral education secular for the "Protestant secular" to feel appropriate. Sure, the legacy of the NCCJ's influence gets to the Protestant roots of "Judeo-Christianity" in some instances, but by paying attention to the language that Jews and Catholics used, I became

convinced that calling Judeo-Christianity part of the "Protestant secular" was over-deterministic and reified the very power structures that scholars of the Protestant secular aim to critique. It matters that Jews and Catholics were taken by the language of Judeo-Christianity in public schools because it suggests that they were searching for belonging and framed their belonging not as secular but as Judeo-Christian.

My practical methodology also shifted in order to look for who was there, as I was committed to telling a story about parents and students of color, as well as about the predominantly white school board. If the Schomburg Center for Research and Black Culture did not have any files on "moral education," the NCCJ, prayer, or Bible reading, I would look for different things. If the board said that integration required moral education, or that prayer could stop juvenile delinquency, I looked for sources on integration and juvenile delinquency at the Schomburg. In such sources, I found ideas about moral education, both the Board's and community's. By looking at a diverse range of archival holdings and digging within them, the story I told went from being one simply about the inseparability of religion and morality in public schools to one about how the inseparability of religion and morality in public schools promoted visions of religious and racial pluralism that concealed the narrow view of race and religion school officials held.

I plan to further allow who was there to shape my arguments in future versions of the project, especially in two instances. First, I would like to provide evidence for how communities of color approached the problem of juvenile delinquency, as well as additional evidence for how churches and interfaith groups approached delinquency, in chapter two. Second, I would like to go beyond noting the presence of Jews in educational leadership roles. I would like to better understand the role that Jews played in producing ideas about religion and morality and how

their presence can help us better understand the production of liberal religion and Judeo-Christianity in the NYC public school context. Being comprehensive is not my goal, nor is adding religious or racial groups simply for the sake of calling the project diverse. Rather, if I want to understand how actors in a particular space produced particular ideas, the various actors who were present in that space and their relationship to the ideas matters for understanding what happened.

Implications of My Methodological Reflections for Scholars

I hope that my methodological reflections on sources and paying attention to who was there might resonate with other scholars of American religion. I hope that the reflections can help us recognize that legal ideas about the separation of church and state have caused us to create our own barriers between the sacred and profane. With the few shining exceptions of Fessenden or Kathleen Holscher, the public school is profane space in the study of American religion.[6] I mean profane not in the sense of secular that many take it to mean, but in the sense that Durkheim meant it—as ordinary, and so dangerous, space. We Americanists in religion do not go there. What other places are that way, and how might we approach studying them?

I also hope that the voices of people in this story show that it is possible to allow the people who are present to populate our narratives. I may not always do a good job of this, but a project that was originally going to be about the lived experience of the separation of church and state became a story about the failure of racial integration precisely because in this context, the history of the lived experience of the separation of church and state *was* a story about the failure of racial integration.

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[6] Fessenden, *Culture and Redemption*, 60-83; Kathleen Holscher, *Religious Lessons: Catholic Sisters and the Captured Schools Crisis in New Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

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