

THE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS OF AMERICAN ELITES, 1930s to 1990s: A NOTE ON THE PACE OF DISESTABLISHMENT*

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This paper tests the "disestablishment thesis" that America's Protestant Establishment has declined over the course of the century, especially in the last 30 years. Using Who's Who data from 1930, 1950, 1970, and 1992, we examine the religious affiliations of American elites, and the extent to which religious groups are over- or under-represented among elites relative to their numbers in the total U.S. population. Results support claims that the Protestant Establishment has lost prominence over the years. The data also indicate that there are more Catholics, Jews, and Lutherans among elites. However, other Protestant groups (e.g., Baptists) and Catholics remain under-represented in Who's Who. Establishment groups and other elite religions (Unitarian-Universalists and Quakers) remain over-represented. Jews have gained relative to their numbers in the total population and are over-represented. We use a neo-Weberian framework to interpret the findings.

In recent years, a number of writers have claimed that America's Protestant Establishment is declining in significance (Schrag 1970; Roof and McKinney 1987; Christopher 1989; Hutchison 1989; Hammond 1992; Schneiderman 1994). According to these "disestablishment theorists," Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists — who dominated America's cultural and political landscape in the 19th and early 20th centuries — no longer have the prominence they once enjoyed, and Catholics, Jews, and other non-WASPs have gained in power, privilege, and prestige.¹

According to disestablishment theorists, there have been three periods of disestablishment. The first stage occurred in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when colonies in which the Congregational and Episcopal churches were established religions voted for disestablishment and freedom of religion. The second stage took place in the early 20th century and was propelled by a surge of non-Protestant immigration, increasing religious pluralism, intellectual changes, and developments such as the collapse of the Interchurch World Movement in 1920. These changes "helped open Protestants' eyes to the fact that they and their churches no longer commanded the authority, power, influence, or even respect which they had hitherto

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enjoyed in America" (Eldon G. Ernst quoted in Handy 1984, p. 169). The third stage has occurred in the last 30 years or so, and has been propelled by social and cultural shifts in the 1960s and 1970s, increasing religious privatism, and further decline in the cultural influence of colonial mainline denominations (Berger 1986; Hammond 1992). Christopher (1989, p. 41) points to the quickening pace of disestablishment when he notes that "within the last twenty years the de-WASPing of the ruling elite in America has proceeded at a breathtaking pace." Writing in a *Newsweek* special report on the New American Establishment, Reed (1988, p. 40) said, "On Wall Street, in the media and in politics, at universities and hospitals, those who most influence American life today represent a real break with their predecessors. Almost none of them are WASPS." Lerner, Nagai, and Rothman (1996, p. 23) note that "if we compare American elites with the general public, we find only a slightly higher proportion of Anglo-Saxon Protestants among the elite."

If this argument is correct, a longitudinal study of the religious affiliations of American elites should reveal a gradual trend line toward "disestablishment" between the 1930s and the 1970s, followed by a rather precipitous decline between the 1970s and the present. It also should show gradual gains by other religious groups between the 1930s and the 1970s, followed by more rapid gains in power, privilege, and prestige between the 1970s and the 1990s. While most proponents of the disestablishment thesis believe the lines are converging, it is not clear whether these lines have met or crossed. Some writers (e.g., Hammond 1992) seem to argue that the lines have not yet met or crossed, whereas others (e.g., Christopher 1989) seem to argue that they have.

The purpose of this research is to examine the pace of disestablishment using information about the religious affiliations of American elites in the 1930s, 1950s, 1970s, and 1990s. We ask two sets of questions. The first set concerns the religious affiliations of American elites over time. Has the percentage of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and members of the United Church of Christ (UCCs, formerly Congregationalists) among the elite declined since the 1930s? Has the pace of disestablishment quickened between the 1970s and the 1990s? Have other religious groups gained over the years? Have they gained most dramatically in the last 20–30 years?

The second set of questions compares the religious affiliations of American elites with the affiliations of the American population in general. There is no doubt that Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists were over-represented among the nation's elites relative to their numbers in the total population in the 1930s (Fry 1933a, 1933b; Davidson 1994; Davidson, Pyle, and Reyes 1995; Pyle 1996). Has the Protestant Establishment's over-representation among the nation's elite declined in the last 60 years? Has the decline been especially sharp in the last 30 years? Have other religions gained relative to their numbers in the population? Have their gains been especially dramatic in the last 20–30 years? Are the percentages of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, UCCs, Catholics, Jews, and other Protestants among the elite now comparable to the groups' distribution in the total population?

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

Disestablishment theorists have appropriately identified shifts in the cultural, economic, and political power of the Protestant Establishment over the years.

National policies and broad societal trends since the mid-20th century have contributed to the erosion of an older Protestant establishment and promoted greater diversity in the religious backgrounds of American elites. For example, the 1944 G.I. Bill of Rights helped break down ethnic barriers to college opportunity for many second- and third-generation Americans who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to attend college. World War II also contributed to a reduction in levels of anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism, as Protestants fought alongside Italians, Irish Catholics, and Jews. Ethnocentric religious barriers that previously limited the participation of non-WASPS in important economic, political, and cultural spheres have all but disappeared during the post-World War II era (Lipset 1987; Baltzell 1991). Catholics and Jews showed marked improvement in their socioeconomic standing after World War II. By the mid-1960s, Catholics had equaled Protestants on most socioeconomic measures (Glenn and Hyland 1967), and Jews surpassed Protestants in terms of their income, education, and occupational standing (Roof and McKinney 1987). After the 1960s, non-Protestants were increasingly represented in the president's cabinet (Mintz 1975), on prestigious policy commissions and cultural boards (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1982), and in the boardrooms of America's largest corporations (Baltzell 1991). Affirmative action policies and civil rights legislation, coupled with expansion of the professional workforce, helped open the way for greater ethnic diversity in an increasingly complex economy in the post-World War II era (Keller 1991).

In addition, two major features in American Protestantism which have appeared in the past 30 years lead us to surmise that disestablishment has quickened and that the distribution of power and prestige among elites has become more dispersed. First, we note that membership in mainline Protestant denominations has declined while, at the same time, conservative Protestant groups are growing (Kelley 1972; Hoge and Roozen 1979; Finke and Stark 1992; Roozen and Hadaway 1993; Hoge, Johnson, and Luidens 1994; Perrin, Kennedy, and Miller 1997). While this may not represent a complete transfer of social power and prestige away from mainliners (especially Presbyterians and Episcopalians), the social location of collective Protestant cachet may be less confined.

We speculate this transfer of numbers is socially consequential because of a second changing feature in American Protestantism: the emergence of the Religious Right as a force to be reckoned with in American politics (Hopson and Smith 1999). While religious leaders cannot endorse specific political candidates on behalf of their organizations (Davidson 1998), issue-oriented groups such as the Christian Coalition advance the cause of candidates such as Pat Roberston and are a major factor when Republicans and Democrats formulate their national agendas and put forward a platform.

Williams (2000) has noted that a trend of political "de-alignment" in American politics, in which the primary goal of political parties is reduced to fund-raising, has fragmented traditional geographic coalitions (e.g., "the solid South"). We would argue that it has also advanced the influence of organizations such as the Christian Coalition. Perhaps "de-alignment" in American politics is a parallel process to "disestablishment" in American religion, both serving to disperse the social location of power and prestige.

Thus we believe that the Protestant Establishment probably does not have quite as much control over American society as it used to. We expect that the Protestant Establishment and other religious groups are approaching parity among the elite relative to their numbers in the total population. We acknowledge the emergence of other groups into the social and political forefront, recognizing at the same time that difficulties remain in their gaining access to elite status. We suspect that Protestant establishment denominations will continue to be best represented in occupational spheres directly connected to the business-legal power structure, which has traditionally been marked by tightly woven social networks (Mills 1956; Domhoff 1998). A number of mechanisms, such as legacy admissions at elite schools, the power of appointment, and inheritance legislation perpetuate continuity in the social origins of elites in political and economic arenas. There are probably greater opportunities for newcomers to advance to high level positions in cultural, intellectual, and artistic fields, where ascriptive boundaries assume less importance and the quality of individual performance is more readily assessed (Blalock 1967). Thus we anticipate that the Protestant establishment will be especially well represented among elites in the business and political spheres, with nonestablishment groups making greater gains in cultural and intellectual spheres.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To examine these issues, we turned to the best single source of information about America's elites, *Who's Who in America*. Some listees (such as the president, vice president, members of the cabinet, federal judges, heads of major universities, principal officers in the largest corporations, and ecclesiastical leaders) are selected on the basis of the official positions they hold. Other — sometimes less known — persons are selected on the basis of achievements which have taken them to the top of their respective fields of endeavor. While *Who's Who* is not without its limitations (Lieberson and Carter 1979; Pyle 1995), many researchers agree that it is the best single roster of Americans with power, privilege, and prestige (Baltzell 1966; Priest 1982; Williams and Rodeheaver 1989).

We gathered information on people listed in four editions of *Who's Who*: 1930–1931, 1950–1951, 1970–1971, and 1992–1993. We used Fry's (1933a and 1933b) tabulation of every person listed in the 1930–1931 edition. For the other three time periods, we selected 1-in-20 systematic samples of listees ($N = 2,217$ in 1950–1951; 3,224 in 1970–1971; and 4,018 in 1992–1993).

Who's Who contains information on listees' religious preferences. We coded the religious preferences of each person who provided that information. Thus, we can analyze trends for specific faith groups and for larger religious categories. In this paper, we focus on the Protestant Establishment (a combination of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists [United Church of Christ]); other elites (Unitarian-Universalists and Quakers); Catholics; Jews; and Other Protestants (Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Lutherans, United Methodists, and members of the Reformed Church). Difference of proportion measures (based on Z scores) are used to indicate significant differences in the religious affiliation of *Who's Who* entries from 1930 to 1992. Indices of representation are used to gauge the extent to which elites were representative of the general population in terms of their religious affiliation.²

Fry's 1930-1931 analysis indicated that 56 percent of entries reported a religious affiliation. In the 1950 sample, 51 percent indicated an affiliation, as did 31 percent in 1970 and 34 percent in 1992. The declining rate of reporting a religion might be related to a general trend of secularization, but we believe that the decline is more likely related to a general trend of secularization, but we believe that the decline is more likely related to an increased tendency for elites to withhold personal information in public sources like *Who's Who*. The decline is consistent with a reduction in the reporting rate for other personal data, such as listees' home addresses, club memberships, and political affiliations (Priest 1982; Selth 1987; Pyle 1996).

To test assumptions about the religious affiliation of elites in political and economic versus cultural and intellectual spheres, we put each listee into one of two categories: power elite or cultural elite. Persons in the power elite are in fields related to the economy, politics, and law (e.g., bankers, CEOs, senators, attorneys). Cultural elites are in fields such as education, science, medicine, social service, entertainment, and the arts. Thus, in addition to examining the religious affiliations of all elites, we also can compare the religious compositions of power and cultural elites.

FINDINGS

The trend lines in Figure 1 provide a visual representation of the pace of disestablishment. The lines, which represent the denominational affiliation of *Who's Who* listees, are converging, providing evidence for disestablishment. While Protestant Establishment affiliates still comprise the largest percentage of elites, their numbers have fallen. Moreover, Catholics have eclipsed Other Elites and Other Protestants, while Jews have eclipsed Other Elites.

FIGURE 1
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF *WHO'S WHO* LISTEES — 1930-31, 1950-51, 1970-71, 1992-93

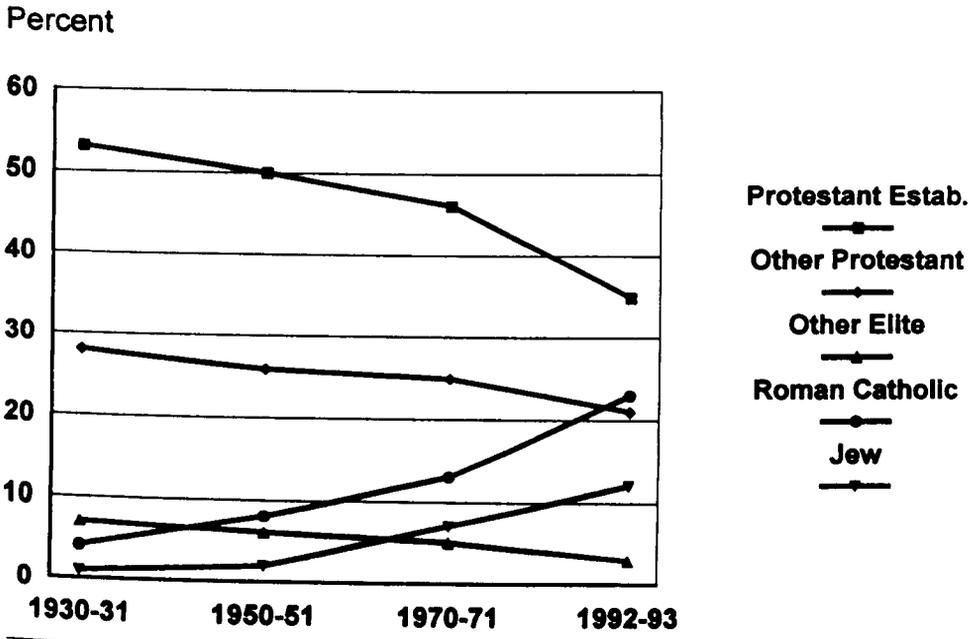


Table 1 shows the specific details of these trends. The Protestant Establishment accounted for 53 percent of *Who's Who* listees in 1930–1931, fell a bit to 50 percent in 1950–1951 and to 46 percent in 1970–1971, then dropped to 35 percent in 1992–1993. Episcopalians were the most stable of the three Establishment groups, comprising 22 percent of all listees in 1930–1931, 23 percent in 1950–1951, 20 percent in 1970–1971, and 18 percent in 1992–1993.

The trend for Presbyterians has been a bit more erratic. They were 20 percent of all elites in 1930–1931, fell slightly to 18 percent in 1950–1951, and rose again to 20 percent in 1970–1971, before falling to 14 percent in 1992–1993.

Congregationalists/UCCs had fallen the farthest and most consistently, from 11 percent in 1930–1931, to 9 percent in 1950–1951, 6 percent in 1970–1971, and only 3 percent in 1992–1993. Other historically elite groups (Unitarian-Universalists and Quakers) also have declined at a relatively consistent rate, from 7 percent in 1930–1931, to 6 percent in 1950–1951, 5 percent in 1970–1971, and 3 percent in 1992–1993.

TABLE 1
REPORTED RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF INDIVIDUALS IN *WHO'S WHO*
(Percentages)

Religious Group	1930-31 ^a	1950-51	1970-71	1992-93
Protestant Establishment				
Episcopalian	21.94	23.12	20.22	18.04*
Presbyterian	20.31	18.39	19.62	13.91*
Congregationalist/UCC	11.29	8.84	5.91	3.19*
Other Elite				
Unitarian-Universalist	5.98	4.03	3.60	2.39*
Quaker	1.09	1.75	1.50	.65*
Catholic	4.45	8.41	13.21	23.12*
Jew	1.31	2.54	6.91	12.32*
Other Protestant				
Baptist	8.97	6.21	5.11	4.71*
Disciples	2.05	2.36	2.20	.36*
Lutheran	2.41	2.71	3.70	6.01*
Methodist	14.50	15.50	14.21	9.57*
Reformed	1.00	.44	.30	.36
Other				
Mormon	.39 ^b	.27	1.10	1.52*
Christian Science	.69	.70	.60	.22
All Others	3.62	4.73	1.81	3.63
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
No Affiliation Listed	43.86	48.49	69.01	65.66

^aThe 1930–1931 figures are reported by Fry (1933a)

^bReported by Ament (1927)

* 1930–1992 difference significant $p < .001$

In accordance with the disestablishment thesis, Catholics and Jews have gained quite substantially over the years. Catholics were only 4 percent of elites in 1930–1931, but rose to 8 percent in 1950–1951, 13 percent in 1970–1971, and finally 23 percent in 1992–1993. Jews, who were only 1 percent of elites in 1930–1931, went to 2.5 percent in 1950–1951, 7 percent in 1970–1971, and 12 percent in 1992–1993.

The data show that other Protestants were 29 percent of elites in 1930–1931, 27 percent in 1950, 25 percent in 1970, and only 21 percent in 1992–1993. Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Methodists, and the Reformed Church have all declined; only Lutherans have gained ground.³

Table 2 shows the degree to which religious groups have been over- or under-represented among elites relative to their strength in the general population. All three Protestant Establishment groups were over-represented relative to their numbers in the total population in 1930–1931, and they remain over-represented today. There were 6.3 times as many Episcopalians among elites in 1930–1931 as there were in the total population. That ratio was 6.4 in 1950–1951 and increased to 7.4 in 1970–1971 and 7.0 in 1992–1993. In other words, relative to their numbers in the total population, Episcopalians were slightly more over-represented among elites in the 1990s than they were in the 1930s.

TABLE 2
RATIO OF THE PERCENT IN *WHO'S WHO* TO THE PERCENT
IN THE TOTAL POPULATION, BY DENOMINATION

Religious Group	1930–31 ^a	1950–51 ^b	1970–71 ^c	1992–93 ^d
Protestant Establishment				
Episcopalian	6.34	6.42 ^e	7.37	7.04
Presbyterian	3.35	3.18	3.88	2.75
Congregationalist/UCC	5.65	4.02	3.86	2.62
Other Elite				
Unitarian-Universalist	20.62	17.52 ^f	20.00	9.60
Quaker	4.78	12.50 ^f	9.38	6.50
Catholic	.13	.32	.49	.85
Jew	.73 ^g	.76	2.40	6.00
Other Protestant				
Baptist	.55	.30	.23	.22
Disciples	.67	.88 ^f	1.61	.32
Lutheran	.33	.37	.41	.83
Methodist	.88	1.07	1.02	.95
Reformed	.72	.86 ^f	.57	.93
Other				
Mormon	.33	.19 ^f	.64 ^h	.66
Christian Science	1.28	1.30 ^a	2.14	1.22
All Others	.64	.45	.15	.19

^a U.S. population figures are based on the proportion of members over 13 years of age reported in the 1926 census of religious bodies (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1930)

^b U.S. population figures are based on the 1957 U.S. Census survey of religion (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1958)

^c U.S. population figures are based on the proportion of General Social Survey respondents indicating a religious preference during 1972–1975 (Davis and Smith 1991)

^d U.S. population figures are based on the proportion of General Social Survey respondents indicating a religious preference during 1968–1991 (Davis and Smith 1991)

^e U.S. population figure is based on 1956 Gallup Poll data reported by Petersen (1962)

^f U.S. population figure is based on Whitman and Trimble (1956)

^g U.S. population figure is based on Ament's (1927) estimate of Jewish congregational membership

^h U.S. population figure is based on 1972 Statistical Abstract (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1972)

There were 3.3 times as many Presbyterians among elites in 1930–1931 as there were in the total population. The ratio was still 3.2 in 1950–1951, rose to 3.9 in 1970–

1971, then dropped to 2.7 in 1992–1993. Thus, compared to their numbers in the general population, and with only slight fluctuations between time periods, Presbyterians have been over-represented by a factor of three among the nation's elite since the 1930s.

The picture is somewhat different for UCCs. Their representation among elites is only about half of what it was in the 1930s. While there were 5.6 times as many UCCs (Congregationalists) among elites in the 1930s, there were only 4.0 times as many in the 1950s and 3.9 times as many in the 1970s. Their ratio dropped to 2.6 in the 1990s.

Although Unitarian-Universalists and Quakers have suffered the greatest losses since the 1930s, both groups remain over-represented among America's elite. Taken together, these two groups were over-represented by factors of 13.6 in 1930, 15.6 in 1950, and 15.0 in 1970. By 1992 there were 8.2 times as many Unitarians-Universalists and Quakers in *Who's Who* as one might expect.

Jews have gained not only in terms of absolute numbers, but also relative to their numbers in the total population. Their ascendancy has been most dramatic in the years since World War II. There were only .73 times as many Jews as one might expect among America's elite in 1930–1931. That ratio remained about the same (.76) in 1950–1951. Then it jumped to 2.4 in 1970–1971 and to 6.0 in 1992–1993.

While Catholics have gained both in terms of absolute numbers and relative to their numbers in the total population, they still have not attained parity. There were only .13 times as many Catholics as one might expect among the nation's elite in the 1930s. That figure rose to .32 in the 1950s, .49 in the 1970s, and .85 in the 1990s. At that rate, Catholics are likely to achieve parity shortly.

Other Protestants were under-represented among the nation's elite in the 1930s, and they remain under-represented today. Methodists have been close to parity over the years and remain so today (.95). The Reformed Church has always been under-represented among elites, but is close to parity (.93). Lutherans have gained both in terms of absolute numbers and relative to their numbers in the general population, but have not yet achieved parity (.83). Disciples gained relative to the population between the 1930s and 1970, but have lost ground since then (.32). Baptists have lost stature quite steadily over the years and are now furthest from parity (.22).⁴

The data in Table 3 show the religious affiliations of power elites and cultural elites since the 1930s. Episcopalians have been more prominently positioned among power elites than cultural elites in all of the periods. Congregationalists in the first half of the century were more highly positioned among cultural elites than power elites, but these differences have narrowed since 1950. Presbyterians over the years have been more prominent among power elites than cultural elites.

Unitarians have lost ground among the power elite from 1930–1992, but they still remain over-represented by a factor of 5. Unitarians and Quakers continue to be especially well represented among cultural elites. Jews have made dramatic gains in both spheres over the years, but they have made the greatest advances among cultural elites. Catholics by 1992 were more highly represented among power elites than cultural elites (.92 versus .74). Among other Protestants, Methodists have gained a bit among power elites during the period. Lutherans have gained ground among power elites and cultural elites, whereas Baptists and Disciples have declined in both spheres.

TABLE 3
RATIO OF THE PERCENT IN WHO'S WHO TO THE
PERCENT IN THE TOTAL POPULATION, BY DENOMINATION

Religious Group	1930-31	1950-51	1970-71	1992-93
<i>POWER ELITE</i>				
Protestant Establishment				
Episcopalian	7.87	8.42	9.05	7.41
Presbyterian	3.60	3.13	4.39	2.82
Congregationalist/UCC	4.49	2.53	3.95	2.57
Other Elite				
Unitarian-Universalist	18.24	13.18	7.83	5.11
Quaker	3.87	7.21	3.75	1.30
Catholic	.15	.38	.42	.92
Jew	.88	.98	2.67	5.17
Other Protestant				
Baptist	.46	.31	.19	.22
Disciples	.69	.75	1.03	.34
Lutheran	.24	.31	.31	.79
Methodist	.82	.89	1.02	1.04
Reformed	.48	1.00	.38	.88
Other				
Mormon	.50*	.36	.81	.54
Christian Science	1.96	1.87	2.14	2.09
All Others	.38	.29	.08	.15
<i>CULTURAL ELITE</i>				
Protestant Establishment				
Episcopalian	5.59	5.28	5.68	6.44
Presbyterian	3.23	3.25	3.33	2.62
Congregationalist/UCC	6.20	5.01	3.98	2.53
Other Elite				
Unitarian Universalist	21.62	19.43	31.50	14.81
Quaker	5.09	14.93	15.75	12.70
Catholic	.12	.28	.57	.74
Jew	.66	.58	1.98	7.23
Other Protestant				
Baptist	.60	.31	.25	.22
Disciples	.65	.88	1.99	.32
Lutheran	.37	.42	.53	.90
Methodist	.91	1.16	1.04	.82
Reformed	.81	.82	.79	.84
Other				
Mormon	.25*	.10	.49	.87
Christian Science	1.22	1.03	2.25	—
All Others	.71	.51	.21	.23

* Reported by Ament (1927)

CONCLUSIONS

This paper extends research on the religious composition of American elites. By comparing the religious affiliations of *Who's Who* listees over four time periods, we are able to reach the following conclusions. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and UCCs are not as prominent among the nation's elite as they used to be and, for the most part, the decline has been more rapid since 1970 than it was prior to 1970. Catholics, Jews, and Lutherans have gained considerable ground, especially since 1970. Baptists,

Disciples of Christ, Methodists, and members of the Reformed Church have lost ground over the years. These groups represent an even smaller percentage of all elites than they did in the 1930s.

Establishment groups — especially Episcopalians — remain over-represented among elites. Presbyterians and UCCs don't have quite as much stature as they used to, but both groups are still over-represented relative to their numbers in the total population. Unitarian-Universalists and Quakers have lost ground but still remain over-represented, especially among cultural elites. The most dramatic advances have been made by Jews, who have gained in terms of absolute numbers and are now over-represented among both the power elite and the cultural elite. Catholics and Lutherans have gained, but remain under-represented relative to their numbers in the total population. Baptists, Disciples of Christ, and Methodists have lost ground since 1970 and, along with members of the Reformed Church, are still under-represented among the nation's elite.

These findings offer partial, but not complete, support for the disestablishment thesis. Protestant establishment groups have lost ground among the elite, especially in the last 30 years. However, these groups continue to be over-represented at the highest levels of influence in a wide range of fields. Why is this? Perhaps a neo-Weberian (or modified fair shares) theoretical approach (Davidson 1994; Davidson et al. 1995; Pyle 1996) can help us interpret the findings. Such a perspective stresses the conflict between economic classes, political parties, and status groups (religious groups are status groups). This approach argues that, except for occasional periods of cooperation, conflicting values and interests have separated the historically high-status Protestant Establishment from lower-status religious groups.

Having gained a disproportionate share of the nation's power, privilege, and prestige during America's colonial period, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists shaped American society and culture according to their values and self-interests. Like most superordinate groups, these high-status groups attempted to preserve their privileged position over and against the wishes of subordinate religious groups. Occasionally, such as during the ecumenical movement of the 1960s, Establishment groups have promoted more cooperative relations with other religious groups.

Other religious groups have had worldviews and material interests that conflict with those of the Protestant Establishment. Catholics, Jews, and evangelical Protestants have attempted to live according to their own values and to maximize their own interests. They have built parallel structures (e.g., parochial or Christian schools) to protect themselves from religious prejudice and discrimination, and have fought for the freedom to worship as they pleased. Over the years, they have struggled to find a place in the larger society and to gain representation in positions of influence. From time to time (e.g., in the wake of Vatican II [1962–1965]), they reached out to the Protestant Establishment, trying to find common ground.

Catholics and Jews have been successful in securing a foothold in the power structure of society; however, conservative Protestant groups, despite their growing numbers and political influence, are not well represented in *Who's Who*. Based on the increasing political visibility of evangelicals, one might have expected a greater representation of conservative Protestant groups in *Who's Who*. Although not reported here, the number of individuals indicating an affiliation with groups such as the

Assemblies of God, the Churches of Christ, or the Nazarenes is minimal.⁵ Baptist representation has actually declined over the years. But the continuing over-representation of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and UCCs among elites suggests that disestablishment is an incomplete and slow process of change. Groups that had substantial political and economic resources just a few decades ago are able to use those resources to perpetuate their advantages. We believe that power, privilege, and prestige factors help explain the continuing influence of the Protestant Establishment during a time when non-Protestants have made significant advances. Further research may identify the mechanisms by which traditionally high-status Protestant groups are able to maintain their influence during a time of greater heterogeneity in the religious composition of elites.

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NOTES

1. Unitarian-Universalists and Quakers also have been prominent historically, but are not considered part of the Protestant Establishment. We treat these groups as "other elites."
2. The indices are based on a ratio of the percent in *Who's Who* to the percent in the general population claiming a denominational affiliation. Thus a ratio of 1.0 indicates that a religious group was represented in *Who's Who* in the same proportion as it was in the general population. A ratio of less than 1.0 indicates a smaller representation in *Who's Who* than in the general population, and a ratio of more than 1.0 indicates that a religious group was over-represented in *Who's Who*. Because the indices are influenced by the size of the group, it is easier for smaller groups (e.g., Unitarian-Universalists) to generate high indices than it is for larger groups (e.g., Roman Catholics). Nevertheless, the indices provide a good means of assessing change in the degree of over- or under-representation for individual denominations.
3. Among other groups, Mormons have gained, but Christian Scientists have declined.
4. Mormons have increased their representation, but have not yet achieved parity (.66). Christian Scientists remain slightly over-represented, a pattern which they have exhibited rather consistently since the 1930s.
5. It is possible that evangelicals have not substantially increased their representation in *Who's Who* because they only recently gained representation in elite pools. Their under-representation in *Who's Who* may indicate a lag effect, wherein changes in the characteristics of elites are not likely to show up in an index like *Who's Who* until several decades after they are first manifest.

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