CLASSIQUES
GARNIER

THE ESTABLISHED AND THE NEWCOMERS

A Weberian-Bourdieusian View of Congregations in the Swiss Religious Field*

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Abstract : *Using the Weberian/Bourdieusian field theory and a representative National Congregation Study (NCS), we measure and compare the activities and resources of established and newcomer congregations across all major religious traditions in Switzerland. As expected, establishment status is linked to strong privileges for the established groups. Other than expected, established groups do not seem to compete with newcomer groups by using exclusion strategies, but explicitly seek ecumenical and interreligious contacts and are very tolerant concerning individual social and religious diversity. We suggest that this does not contradict the Weberian/Bourdieusian field theory, but can itself be seen as a strategy by established groups to preserve their threatened establishment status.*

Résumé : *En recourant à la théorie webero-bourdieusienne des champs et à une étude représentative des communautés religieuses en Suisse, les activités et les ressources des communautés établies et nouvelles venues dans toutes les traditions religieuses majeures de Suisse sont ici mesurées et comparées. De manière prévisible, le statut institutionnel est lié à de solides privilèges pour les groupes institués. De manière inattendue, les groupes institués ne semblent pas entrer en compétition avec les groupes nouveaux venus en recourant à des stratégies d'exclusion, mais sont explicitement en quête de contacts œcuméniques et interreligieux et se montrent très tolérants quant à la diversité sociale et religieuse individuelle. Il est suggéré que cela ne contredit pas la théorie webero-bourdieusienne des champs, mais peut être considéré comme une stratégie adoptée par les groupes établis pour préserver leur statut institutionnel menacé.*

I. INTRODUCTION

At least since the work of Max Weber[1] and Pierre Bourdieu[2], scholars have claimed that religious groups may compete for public

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* NDLR : Dans cet article, le format des nombres suit les usages anglo-saxons (point comme séparateur décimal ; virgule comme séparateur de milliers).
[1] Weber, 1978 [1920].
[2] Bourdieu, 1971a.

recognition and resources in religious fields[3]. According to this theory, established groups will enjoy a variety of privileges and will try to exclude not established groups from these privileges with the help of various strategies.

Remarkably, even though the religious field concept rests in important ways on the competitive relationships and power struggles *between religious suppliers* (leaders, congregations), there have to date been very few quantitative studies that describe such fields on the congregational level[4].

One important reason why the established/newcomer structure has not yet been empirically described in detail in respect of religious fields has been the absence of appropriate data. The Swiss National Congregations Study (NCS), conducted in the winter of 2008-2009, allows us to assess key nationwide differences between established and newcomer congregations concerning their resources as well as their intergroup behaviour.

We can therefore treat a *central question* that Weberian-Bourdieusian field theory suggests : Are established religious congregations in the Swiss religious field privileged when it comes to resources and if so, do they defend these privileges by excluding newcomer congregations ?

This article seeks to contribute to (a) the general literature on the empirical description of established/newcomer structures and religious fields, (b) the general literature on interreligious contact and dialogue between religious groups, and (c) the specific literature on the religious situation in Switzerland. Our main point is that the field concept and the established/newcomer structure lend themselves very well to a description of the religious situation in Switzerland, but that established groups – in a very central point – do not behave as expected. That is, they do not exclude, but include, competitors in order to keep their privileged position.

The *plan* of the paper is as follows : After an introduction, we describe the theory and hypotheses (part 2), the method (part 3), and the context (part 4). In our results section (part 5) we show how established congregations are privileged concerning resources, even when various background variables are taken into account, and demonstrate that established congregations try to maintain their privileged status not by excluding, but by including competitors. A discussion (part 6) is followed by concluding remarks (part 7).

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[3] Swartz, 1996 ; Rey, 2004 ; Bastian, 2007 ; Schultheis, 2007 ; Vincent, 2007.
[4] See, however, Körs, 2017.

II. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Generally speaking, "establishment" refers to preferential treatment of one or more religious groups, their members, or their institutions. If such preferential treatment is afforded by the state, we speak of *legal establishment*. This may take many forms, including paying clergy salaries, collecting church taxes, harassing religious competitors, or giving preferential access to positions in schools, hospitals, media, or the military. If the preferential treatment is afforded by society (without explicit legal backing), we speak of *de facto establishment*[5]. This is the case when groups are given special rights because they seem to "naturally" belong to the place, e.g. because of a long tradition of incumbency, or because they are in the majority. *De facto establishment* may also involve negative stereotyping and discrimination of groups that are not *de facto* established.

An important body of sociological literature has suggested that the relationship between established and non-established religious groups can be seen as a social *field*. The idea itself – though not the term – goes back to Max Weber[6], who described how "priests" (the "religious establishment") would combat both "prophets" and "magicians" (the "newcomers"). Weber saw "priests" as keepers of religious tradition who deliver an official religious message on the basis of an "office" in an often bureaucratically organized "church"; "prophets" as preachers of a new religious message on the basis of personal revelation and charisma who lead a small group of believers – a "sect"; and "magicians" as solving individual problems in miraculous ways on the basis of personal charisma, often without a religious community. This insight was generalized into the idea of "social fields" by Bourdieu[7], who saw social (political, artistic, philosophical etc.) fields everywhere in social life. Bourdieu also applied the field concept to the religious sphere[8]. According to Bourdieu, fields are "structured spaces of positions" around a common goal *(enjeu)* and including different types of symbolic capital, in which there is a battle going on "between the newcomer who tries to break through the entry barrier and the dominant agent who will try to defend the monopoly and keep out competition[9]". Thus in both the Weberian and the Bourdieusian versions of the religious field, established ("orthodox") groups and actors defend

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[5] Beyer, 2013.
[6] Weber, 1978 [1920], p. 424f., 439 f., 1158f.
[7] Bourdieu, 1980, 2000 [1972].
[8] Bourdieu, 1971a, 1971b, 1987, 1994a ; Bourdieu – Saint Martin, 1982.
[9] Bourdieu, 1994b, p. 67.

their privileged position and try to exclude newcomer ("unorthodox") groups from different positions in the field.

Established groups may try to defend their privileged position against newcomers in various ways. A first possibility is to *limit contact with the newcomers* in order to prevent them from participating and enjoying the established groups' privileges. Norms of social closure are set up, and members of one's own group who transgress these norms are seen as traitors or as people who have been contaminated by contact with the outsiders. In the famous community study by Elias and Scotson, the established group "excluded all members of the other groups from non-occupational social contact with its own members [10]". Means of social control ("blame-gossip") were used to keep the established group's own members in line. A second possibility is to *create a negative social image of the outgroup and a positive social image of the ingroup*. The outgroup is said to have all kinds of negative attributes contrasting with the positive attributes of the ingroup. It is then argued that one could not possibly extend the privileges of the ingroup to the outgroup as well. Again, the Elias and Scotson study is a good example : the established group was convinced that the newcomers (who were sociologically exactly the same, only they had arrived later) were unclean, not well educated, poor and unsocial, and called them by names such as "evacuees", "refugees", and "cockneys" [11]. A third possibility is to *appeal to the state and the officials in power*, to show them the importance of the established group for the state and society. The goal is to convince the state and its officials to continue to grant legal establishment [12].

Introductory texts routinely describe Weberian and Bourdieusian religious field theory as holding great promise for sociological analysis – but they have trouble in pointing to concrete studies that actually apply the concept at the level of inter-group competition [13].

We define the term *congregation* as "a social institution in which individuals who are not all religious specialists gather in physical proximity to one another, frequently and at regularly scheduled intervals, for activities and events with explicitly religious content and purpose, and in which there is continuity over time in the individuals who gather, the location of the gathering, and the nature of the activities and events at each gathering [14]". This

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[10] Elias – Scotson, 1994 [1965], p. XVI.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 96 f.
[12] Fligstein – McAdam, 2011.
[13] Dianteill, 2003 ; Rey, 2004 ; Swartz, 1996.
[14] Chaves, 2004, p. 1-2.

definition covers the groups historically established in Europe, as well as those in the process of implantation.

Based on the literature, we try to gain focus by concentrating on two hypotheses :

1. That the established groups have more income, staff and property than non-established groups, even when various background factors and the numbers of participants are used as statistical controls.

2. That the established groups seek ecumenical contacts mainly among themselves, thus excluding newcomer groups from privileged positions in the field.

When we have presented the following analyses at conferences and panels concerned with interreligious dialogue, we have sometimes met with the criticism that field theories wrongly assume strategic thinking and power interests in a domain where the overall goal is precisely the opposite, namely understanding, peace, and the unmaking of power differentials. In response to this criticism we answer that – in a sociological perspective – no domain should a priori be seen as free from strategic interests (or, for that matter, completely dominated by them). In our view, it is an *empirical* question if, and to what extent, establishment has the effects predicted by our hypotheses.

III. CONTEXT

Switzerland is an appropriate country in which to study the established/newcomer structure, because in the course of its history a very clear case of religious establishment has emerged.

The Reformed and Roman Catholic denominations are established in what may be called an *intermediate church-state system* (Landeskirchentum) [15]. In such a regime, the churches are not part of the state, but are recognized by the state to be separate – although still state-regulated – institutions under public law. The political and the religious territorial community (Gemeinde) are most often completely identical. Such "Landeskirchen" or "Cantonal Churches" have special rights in that they have privileged access to state officials, are permitted to offer pastoral care in public institutions such as hospitals, schools, state-controlled media, universities etc., and may receive state subsidies and be allowed to use public buildings free of charge and to levy an obligatory church tax. They also have duties in that they have to introduce democratic

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[15] Pahud de Mortanges, 2007.

governance and lay open their finances. The strength of legal establishment is extremely different in the various cantons, ranging from very strong to very weak [16] ; but even in the cantons with the weakest church-state relations (Geneva and Neuchâtel), the Reformed and Roman Catholic denominations enjoy at least some kind of public recognition and privilege.

Religious groups that are not established often came much later : non-established Christian groups split off from the established churches or immigrated in the 19th or 20th century, while most non-established non-Christian groups immigrated only from the 1960s onwards [17]. The non-Christians who have been in the country the longest are the Jews, whose communities can be traced back to the Middle Ages and who were granted full citizenship in 1866 [18]. These newcomer groups have remained – with very few exceptions [19] – without public recognition.

In public discourse, the legal establishment of the Reformed and Roman Catholic Churches is strongly legitimated by several arguments, the most important being that these churches (1) have a long history in Switzerland and preserve the Christian heritage of the country ; (2) embrace the vast majority of the population ; and (3) offer a kind of "public service" (welfare, help for the needy) not only for their own members but for everybody [20]. This legitimation has come under increasing pressure, especially because points (2) and (3) seem to be less and less true [21]. Since ever greater numbers of individuals are either without any religious affiliation or are members of non-Christian religions, it is increasingly difficult for the established Christian churches to argue that they represent the whole population and that their services are important for everybody. Thus several cantons (e.g. Basel Stadt, Vaud, Fribourg) have changed their constitutions to allow public recognition of newcomer groups as well.

The main points here are (1) that in Switzerland there has been a historical development of a clear established/newcomer structure ; (2) that the establishment of the established groups is currently

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[16] Schweiz. Steuerkonferenz, 2009.

[17] Bochinger, 2012.

[18] Kupfer – Weingarten, 1999.

[19] By 2008 there were other groups that enjoyed some form of public recognition. Christ Catholics enjoy strong establishment, comparable to the Reformed and Roman Catholic Churches, in nine cantons, while specific Jewish congregations have some kind of recognition in six cantons. All these groups are small and for the sake of clarity we exclude them from our analysis. Non-established Jewish congregations are included. Our results are similar with or without this exclusion.

[20] Winzeler, 2005.

[21] Stolz – Ballif, 2010, p. 49.

threatened ; and (3) that we have representative data on congregations of all religious traditions.

IV. METHOD

The National Congregations Study Switzerland (NCSS) was conducted in 2008-2009[22]. It was modelled on the National Congregations Studies conducted in the United States in 1997-1998, 2006-2007 and 2012[23].

1. Sampling and data collection

In order to create the sampling framework, a count of all local religious groups in Switzerland was conducted between September 2008 and September 2009. This was done by combining all available sources of information, including existing lists of local religious groups produced by churches and religious federations ; existing lists (published or not) drawn up by scholars ; existing lists appearing on institutional websites or in directories or databases ; and interviews with informed individuals within the religious milieus. All this information was collated and reviewed to identify local religious congregations. A congregation was retained in the final list only if it appeared in two independent sources of information. From the resulting list of 5,734 congregations of all religions in Switzerland, a sample of 1,040 religious congregations, stratified to over-represent religious minorities, was chosen. For every chosen congregation, one key informant (in most cases the spiritual leader) was interviewed by telephone in 2008-2009 in one of the three national languages. The approximately 250 questions focused on concrete and verifiable congregational practices as well as on the tangible characteristics of the organization for which the respondent could provide reliable information. The response rate was 71.8 %.

2. Operationalization and data analysis

Our key independent variable is a seven-step measure combining *religious tradition and a dummy variable measuring whether the religious tradition is legally established or not*. The variable distinguishes "Christian established", "Christian non-established", "Jewish", "Muslim", "Buddhist", "Hindu" and "Other". The "Christian established" category includes only Reformed and Roman Catholic

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[22] Monnot, 2013 ; Stolz – Chaves – Monnot – Amiotte-Suchet, 2011.
[23] Chaves – Anderson, 2008.

congregations. The dummy variable measuring establishment captures whether a religious tradition was publicly recognized as an institution of public law or of public interest in 2008 or not.

De facto establishment was conceptualized in terms of the duration of the presence of the congregation and majority status. *Duration of presence* of the congregation was measured by asking the key informant what year the local religious group was founded in. *Majority status* was measured as the percentage of the population of Switzerland / the canton concerned according to the Census 2000[24]. We used the information on *de facto* establishment not as a separate independent variable, but to provide a further description of the establishment situation in Switzerland.

A first set of dependent variables focuses on the "success" of the rituals of the religious traditions by looking at different types of members, at the age and gender of attenders, and at changes in attendance over the last 10 years. The number of *official members* in established groups was calculated according to the Census 2000 following Bovay[25]. Further information on *membership structure* was gathered by asking the key informant how many persons were associated in any way with the religious life of the congregation ("members with any link"), how many persons participated regularly in the religious life of the congregation ("regular members"), and how many persons were present at the last regular religious celebration ("attenders"). *Change in attendance* was measured by asking the key informant on a 5-point scale whether the number of regular participants, as compared to 10 years earlier, had grown by more than 10 %, grown by 10 % or less, stayed stable, shrunk by 10 % or less, or shrunk by more than 10 %. *Social attributes of attenders* were measured by asking the key informant what percentage of participants at the last ritual were individuals in the age ranges 18-35, 36-60 and 60+. Similarly, the percentage of female participants was asked.

A second set of dependent variables concerns the *resources* of the congregation in respect to wealth, staff and type of building. *Congregations' income* was measured by asking the key informant to specify the total amount of congregational income from all sources during the past year. This variable was logged (log 10) in our analyses. *Spiritual leader's income* was measured by asking the yearly salary of the spiritual leader. *Staff attributes* were measured using three variables. Two dummies indicated whether or not the spiritual leader was paid and whether or not this person was

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[24] Bovay, 2004.
[25] *Ibid*.

working full-time for the congregation. A third variable measured the number of part-time and full-time staff. *Building attributes* were measured with three dummies indicating whether or not the building in which the ritual took place was built for religious purposes, whether or not the congregation was the owner of the building, and whether or not the building was subject to any kind of protection or preservation for historical reasons.

A third set of dependent variables concerned relationships with other congregations and exclusivism. *Relationships with other congregations* were measured by asking whether or not the congregation had organized joint rituals with other congregations, whether or not the congregation(s) joining in those rituals belonged to the same religious tradition as the surveyed congregation, and, if this was not the case, what kind of religious tradition the other congregation(s) belonged to[26]. This is, of course, only a limited measure of the possible relationships between congregations since congregations can be linked in many other ways (e.g. joint social and political activities ; joint membership in overarching organizational bodies ; ecumenical and/or interreligious talks etc.). Nevertheless, we argue that joint ritual is a valid and central dimension of inter-congregational contact.

Exclusivism was operationalized with four dummy variables. Two dummies measured whether congregations would accept individuals as fully-fledged leaders if they lived in an openly gay relationship and if they lived in cohabitation without being married. A third dummy variable asked if the congregation had a group that discussed other religions (yes/no). A fourth dummy – only for Christian congregations – asked if the congregation considered the Bible to be the literal and inerrant word of God.

Finally, three *control variables* are included in our models. The *size of the community* where the congregation is located was measured by an 8-level variable, based on Swiss government data, ranging from 1 (fewer than 1,000 inhabitants) to 8 (100,000 or more). The *traditional denomination of the canton* was measured by two dummy variables where 1 denotes respectively the existence of a Catholic or Reformed tradition in the canton. If both dummies are zero, this means that the canton has a mixed denominational tradition. The canton's denominational traditions were coded according to Pfister[27]. *Strength of regulation* in the different cantons is measured with a version of the scale described in Chaves and Cann[28],

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[26] This last question permits multiple responses.
[27] Pfister, 1984.
[28] Chaves – Cann, 1992.

adapted to capture as much of the inter-canton variation as possible[29].

V. RESULTS

1. Duration of presence in the canton and (threatened) majority status

As mentioned above, much of the legitimation of the legal establishment of the Reformed and Roman Catholic Churches rests on their historical importance and their majority status. In what follows, we will analyse the extent to which these arguments can be backed up empirically. We will also see that the reasons for legal establishment are coming increasingly under pressure.

Let us first look at the *duration of presence* in the country.

Figure 1   *Year of foundation, by religious tradition*
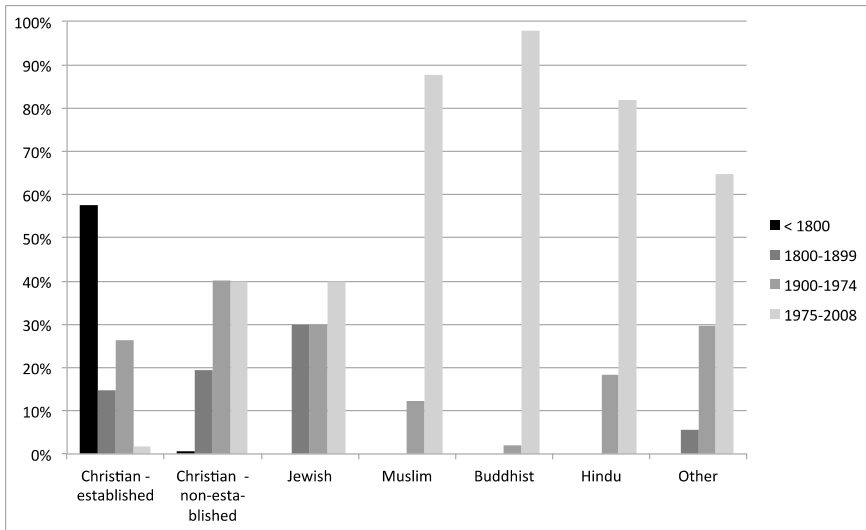
Note:
Differences are significant where p < .001.

As can be seen in Figure 1, more than 55 % of established congregations were founded before 1800 : indeed, the median established Christian congregation was founded in 1690 ! By comparison, Christian non-established and Jewish groups are much younger, with median foundation years of 1950 and 1971 respectively. Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Other groups are much younger still.

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[29] See Stolz – Chaves, 2017 for details of the scale.

Most of them have been founded since 1975 (median foundation years : 1992, 1997, 1991 and 1987 respectively). We are truly faced with a situation of established and newcomer congregations.

Turning to *majority status*, Table 1 shows that the Reformed and Roman Catholic denominations together make up roughly half of all the congregations in Switzerland (NCS 2008) and 74.8 % of the resident population (Census 2000). All other groups are much smaller and have both fewer congregations and fewer members. The majority situation differs according to canton : rural cantons are traditionally Roman Catholic, while urban cantons are traditionally predominantly Reformed [30] [31]. But the overall finding is that, taken together, the two established denominations are in a majority position, especially when it comes to official members.

Table 1   Numbers of congregations and their official members, by religious tradition

	Congregations [1]		Individuals [2]	
	N	%	N	%
Reformed	1,094	19.1 %	2,408,049	33.0 %
Roman Catholic	1,750	30.5 %	3,047,887	41.8 %
Christ Catholic	35	0.6 %	13,312	0.2 %
Evangelical	1,423	24.8 %	60,253	0.8 %
Orthodox Christians	58	1.0 %	131,851	1.8 %
Other Christians	399	7.0 %	115,207	1.6 %
Jewish	33	0.6 %	17,914	0.2 %
Muslim	315	5.5 %	310,807	4.3 %
Buddhist	142	2.5 %	21,305	0.3 %
Hindu	189	3.3 %	27,839	0.4 %
Other	296	5.2 %	7,982	0.1 %
None	--	--	809,835	11.1 %
No indication	--	--	315,766	4.3 %
Total	**5,734**	**100.0** %	**7,288,010**	**100.0** %

Notes:
[1] NCS Census 2008, according to Stolz – Chaves – Monnot – Amiotte-Suchet *et al.*, 2011.
[2] Census 2000 according to Bovay, 2004.

Our main point here is that Switzerland is an almost textbook example of a country where there are two established religious groups – Reformed and Roman Catholic – while (almost) all other groups are non-established. The established position of these two groups, however, is threatened because of waning numbers of official and attending members.

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[30] Bovay, 2004.
[31] Swiss cantons have either a Reformed, a Roman Catholic or a mixed religious tradition.

2. Resources

Our first hypothesis claimed that established groups would have more resources than non-established groups – regardless of the success of their religious rituals. In this section we look at the first part of the hypothesis, the resources.

The results are very clear. What is striking is not so much the direction of the covariations, but their magnitude. Established Christian congregations have on average far more resources than non-established congregations. This is true of income, staff, and type and ownership of buildings.

The median established Christian congregation has an *annual income* of 400,000 CHF ; this is more than 3 times what the median non-established Christian congregation collects, about 17 times more than the median Muslim congregation receives and more than 50 times what Buddhist, Hindu or Other congregations live on. The richest non-Christian congregations are Jewish with a median income of 200,000 CHF.

These differences in income are partly reflected in substantial differences with regard to *staff*. Of established Christian congregations, 97.5 % have a paid spiritual leader, in 72.1 % of the cases this spiritual leader works full time. The percentages are again much lower for non-established congregations. Thus only 62.7 % of non-established Christians pay their spiritual leader and only in 45.4 % of the cases is this person employed full time. For all other religious traditions, the percentages are much lower still – except, again, for the Jews. Looking at the numbers of paid staff (part-time and full-time), we find that the median established Christian congregation employs five paid staff, the median non-established Christian congregation only one – and the median Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Other congregations none at all !

Table 2   *Financial resources, staff and type of building by religious tradition*

	Christian established	Christian non-established	Jewish	Muslim	Buddhist	Hindu	Other
Financial resources							
Annual income of congregation [1][2]	400,000	130,000	200,000	22,500	7,250	7,000	2,450
Income of spiritual leader [1]	95,000	50,000	67,500	0	0	0	0

	Christian established	Christian non-established	Jewish	Muslim	Buddhist	Hindu	Other
Staff							
Paid spiritual leader	97.5 %	62.7 %	88.9 %	33.9 %	6.5 %	10.3 %	9.8 %
Full-time spiritual leader	72.1 %	45.4 %	44.4 %	30.5 %	0.0 %	3.4 %	7.3 %
Paid staff (part-time and full-time) [1]	5	1	2	0	0	0	0
Building							
Religious building	97.9 %	58.6 %	72.7 %	28.8 %	8.0 %	5.6 %	8.5 %
Owner of building	84.6 %	56.4 %	81.8 %	37.9 %	18.0 %	11.4 %	14.3 %
May use building free of charge	13.1 %	9.7 %	0.0 %	13.6 %	20.0 %	11.4 %	28.6 %
Rents building	2.3 %	33.8 %	18.2 %	48.5 %	62.0 %	77.1 %	57.1 %
Protected heritage building	72.4 %	17.3 %	30.0 %	10.3 %	14.3 %	0.0 %	9.3 %

Notes:
All differences are significant where p < .001.
[1] We use the median.
[2] We calculate the income regardless of whether the cost of spiritual leaders appears in the budget or not.

Concerning *buildings*, almost 100 % of established Christian congregations have the use of a building built explicitly for religious purposes. In 84.6 % of the cases they are the owners of this building, and in 72.4 % of the cases it is a protected heritage building. Again, the differences from non-established Christians (58.6 % buildings built for religious purposes ; 56.4 % owners ; 17.3 % protected heritage buildings) are important and the differences as against Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and Others are huge. In this area once again, it is the Jewish congregations that resemble the established Christian congregations most closely.

These differences between established and non-established congregations *cannot be attributed to other underlying variables*. In fact, the findings are robust and highly significant even when we check for the influence of cantonal regulation, the size of the political community, the denominational tradition of the canton, or even the number of regular participants or participants with any link to the religious congregation.

The striking differences in resources between established and non-established congregations are evidently rooted both in legal and *de facto* establishment. It is legal establishment, with its possibility of levying an obligatory church tax even from members who

are completely without any other link to the congregation, that creates such a large income for established Christian congregations and that accounts for such high percentages with paid full-time and part-time staff. And it is because of *de facto* establishment that they almost all have their own churches at their disposal – often ancient buildings worthy of protection.

3. Relationships

Field theories are built on the assumption that the established will try to preserve their privileges as against newcomers. This is the second hypothesis we attempt to test in our special case by looking at the actual behaviour of Swiss congregations. Do established congregations exclude non-established groups in order to preserve their threatened privileges ?

The most noteworthy result of our paper may be that this hypothesis fails (Table 3). Established Christian congregations do *not* seem to try to exclude other religious groups. On the contrary, they are both very inclined to be open to engaging in ecumenical and interreligious contacts, and comparatively tolerant concerning the religious and social diversity of their members. In the past year, established Christian congregations have engaged in a joint ritual with another congregation more often than any other religious tradition (83.3 %). In roughly 70 % of the cases, this other congregation was of a different religious tradition from theirs (against 56 % for non-established Christians). In most cases, this common ritual was with another Christian congregation, in roughly 1/3 of the cases with another non-established congregation. In comparison, these numbers show somewhat more openness to ecumenism and interreligious dialogue than among non-established Christians and clearly more openness than among all the other religious traditions (at least when it comes to the items used here). These results remain highly significant when controlling for other variables (confession of the canton, regulation regime, size of the congregation). In Figure 2, these same findings are presented graphically. A yet other way of visualizing this finding is shown in Figure 3a/3b. Here, the left hand side shows what might have been expected in a situation where established groups had completely excluded not established groups from joint worship (our hypothesis). The right hand side shows the actual relationships, where links are weighted by the mean of the number of joint rituals. Again, we see strong relationships among established groups, but also relatively high numbers of links between established and not established groups.

In a similar vein, we find that established Christian congregations do not stand out with regard to different items that may be grouped under the heading *"exclusivism"*. Compared to non-established Christians, they are about as likely to have a discussion group on another religion, they are much less likely to believe the Bible to be inerrant (27.8 % for established Christians against 80.6 % for non-established Christians) and they will strikingly more often accept gays and cohabiting unmarried persons as their members and leaders (in the table we show only data for leaders). While some religious traditions seem to be even more open in some of these respects (especially Buddhists and Hindus with regard to liberal views on homosexuality and cohabitation), it is fair to say that Christian established congregations cannot be described as particularly exclusive. Again, this finding is stable when controlling for other variables.

Table 3   Joint rituals and exclusivism according to confession

|	Christian established	Christian non-established	Jewish	Muslim	Buddhist	Hindu	Other
Joint ritual with							
any other congregation (own tradition or other)	83.3 %	73.9 %	45.5 %	56.1 %	59.2 %	38.9 %	50.0 %
with other tradition	68.4 %	56.0 %	27.3 %	42.4 %	30.6 %	19.4	30.0 %
what other tradition: establ. (mult. resp.)	57.1 %	33.2 %	18.2 %	31.8 %	12.0 %	13.9 %	20.0 %
what other tradition: not establ. (mult. resp.) [1]	25.6 %	16.9 %	9.1 %	27.3 %	14.0 %	16.7 %	23.3 %
Exclusivism							
Discussion group on another religion [2]	43.2 %	42.1 %	45.5 %	48.5 %	30.0 %	25.7 %	43.3 %
Bible inerrant	28.8 %	80.6 %	--	--	--	--	--
Acceptance of Gays (as leaders)	[3] 57.1 %	8.7 %	40.0 %	14.5 %	97.8 %	66.7 %	44.6 %
Acceptance of cohabiting non-married couple (as leaders)	89.4 %	21.8 %	50.0 %	48.4 %	97.8 %	85.7 %	56.1 %

Notes:
All differences are significant where p < .001, unless noted otherwise.
[1] Not significant.
[2] Significant with p < .05.
[3] Concerning acceptance of Gays, Reformed are significantly more open than Catholic congregations.

Figure 2   *Ecumenical/interreligious rituals of established and not established congregations*
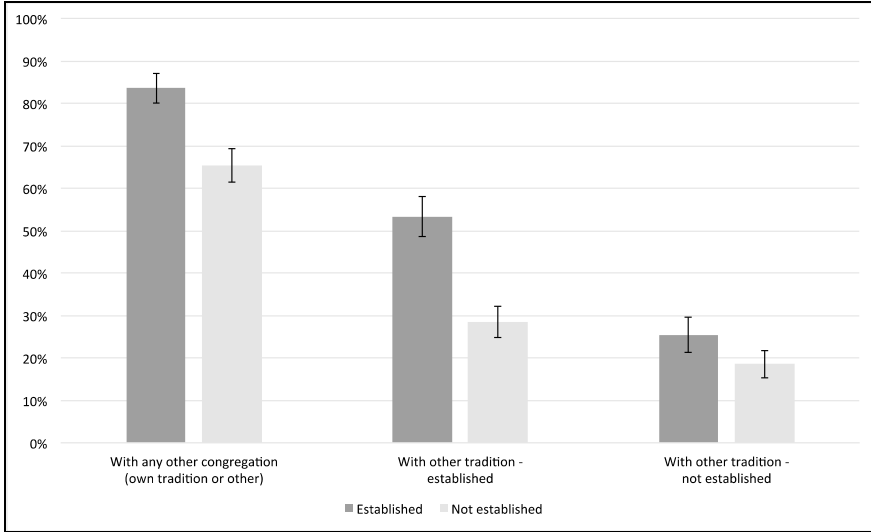
Figures 3a/3b   *Ecumenical/interreligious rituals between different religious traditions*

a. expected relationships
under exclusion hypothesis

b. actual relationships*
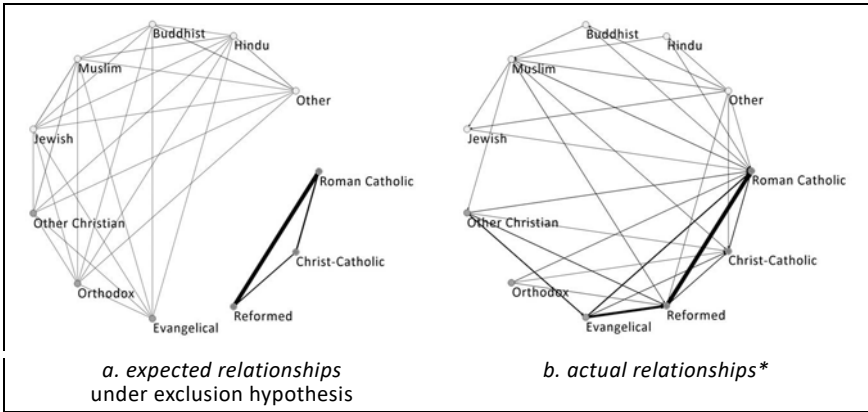
* Links are weighted by the mean of the number of joint rituals as reported from both partners. We multiplied all weights by 0.8 and omitted weights below 2 for better visual clarity. We introduced (established) Christ-Catholics for this graphic.

VI. DISCUSSION

The findings in the preceding section pose the question if the Weberian-Bourdieusian theory should be rejected. After all, established congregations are immensely privileged, but do not engage in exclusion strategies and power struggles with congregations of other religious traditions.

In our view, rather than reject the Weberian-Bourdieusian field theory, one should better adjust it, so that is able to explain our findings. This is easily done when we recognize that established groups *can try to preserve their privileges not only by exclusion, but also by inclusion strategies*. They will choose inclusion rather than exclusion strategies if this seems to be furthering their interests in a more efficient manner – given the socio-political context.

Already a short look at the current Swiss context shows that it does indeed seem to be more rational for established congregations to turn to inclusion strategies. Exclusion strategies such as criticism or denigration of other religious groups are seen in a very negative way by both the society and the state officials[32]. In such a situation, established congregations may turn to inclusion strategies.

In fact, established groups may use inclusion strategies first, in order to reach again a kind of majority status. While losing members themselves, they can create a coalition of large religious groups. Second, they may thus present themselves as organizers of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, thereby demonstrating their important function for society. Third, they may in this way motivate the state to opt for an extension of public recognition of religious groups rather than a separation of church and state.

There is much socio-historical evidence that corroborates this interpretation. To give just three examples :

(1) In various Swiss cantons (e.g. Vaud, Fribourg) established churches have actively helped to put into place new constitutions that allow other religions to be publicly recognized. Establishment for new groups is however planned to be less far-reaching than establishment which already exists for the Roman Catholic and Reformed congregations[33]. Established congregations thus appear to include other groups while at the same time preserving a considerable comparative privilege.

(2) Established churches have also engaged in important ways in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue and have shown themselves to be the central organizing actors of these endeavours[34][35]. Many churches even put a certain percentage of work for ecumenical and interreligious practices into the job descriptions of their

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[32] Stolz – Könemann – Schneuwly Purdie – Englberger – Krüggeler, 2016, p. 109 ff.
[33] Loretan – Weber – Morawa, 2013.
[34] Könemann – Vischer, 2008.
[35] For a recent overview of ecumenic activities in France see Willaime 2011.

clergy [36]. These activities have helped the churches to gain a positive social image in society [37].

(3) The example that shows the strategic aspect of this interreligious dialogue best is probably the foundation of the "Council of Religions" in 2006, with six members representing the Reformed, Roman Catholic, Christ Catholic, Jewish and Muslim faiths. This council was founded in order to furnish politicians with a partner for dialogue that represents the most important religious voices in Switzerland. When founded, it had the (at least implicit) goal of winning back the leadership in public discourse for the established churches [38].

We do not mean to say that established churches engage in ecumenical and interreligious activity *only* for strategic reasons. Quite clearly, a genuine belief in the inherent importance of such endeavours is often involved [39]; also, the theology of established congregations has been very dialogue-minded since the 1960s [40]. Nevertheless, in our view, strategic considerations are normally *also* involved.

To add another disclaimer, we do *not* wish to say that established congregations *never* engage in exclusion practices. For example, there exist undoubtedly certain exclusion practices concerning interreligious dialogues. Some more conservative Jewish or Muslim groups or new religious movements like LDS (Mormons), Raelians or Scientology are rarely or never invited. Also, Reformed and Roman Catholic theological faculties have in the past lobbied in order to convince the state not to accredit evangelical theological faculties.

However, on the whole, and in the light of our quantitative data, we can say that established congregations clearly seek to use inclusive rather than exclusive means in order to further their strategic interests.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this paper we have tested a hypothesis suggested by Weberian-Bourdieusian field theory, namely that established religious groups will try to hold on to their privileges by excluding not established religious groups.

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[36] Bürgisser, 2009, p. 52.
[37] Winter-Pfändler, 2015.
[38] Baumann – Stolz, 2007, p. 368.
[39] Bürgisser, 2009, p. 51.
[40] Bernhardt, 2008, p. 52.

We were able to address this question as we had the first National Congregation Study in a European country to hand, and since the Swiss religious field may be seen as an almost textbook example of the both legal and *de facto* establishment of Reformed and Roman Catholic congregations, while (almost) all other congregations are not established.

We found that established congregations in Switzerland are indeed strongly privileged and have much more plentiful resources than non-established congregations – even though they have relatively low and shrinking attendance and an ageing attender structure. Other than expected, established groups do *not* seek to keep their threatened status by using exclusion, but by inclusion strategies. They try to hold on to their privileges by engaging in ecumenical and interreligious contacts and rituals and by showing themselves to be tolerant concerning individual social and religious diversity.

Our contribution has been to apply one of the central theoretical tools of the sociology of religion – the religious field concept and more specifically the established/newcomer structure – to the religious situation in a whole country, and to show that Weberian-Bourdieusian field theory has to be extended in a specific but important way : Established groups may use privilege-maintaining inclusion strategies.

We welcome further studies in other countries, in order to see whether similar differences between established and non-established congregations can be observed and whether established congregations equally seek to strengthen their situation by including rather than excluding newcomers.

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