

**The Engagement of U.S. Congregations in
Global Philanthropy and Community Development**

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Abstract

Faith-based philanthropic networks in the United States are engaged in global development efforts through a variety of vehicles. However, our knowledge of the extent to and ways in which this engagement occurs is quite limited. In this paper, we build on theories of individual global philanthropy and refine them for the organizational context of faith-based congregations. We also provide a case-study example of congregational engagement in global development for context. We test these theories by applying them in our analysis of faith-based global engagement and the organizational factors which impact this engagement as exhibited in data from the National Congregation Study, a nationally representative sample of U.S. religious congregations. The effect of denominational affiliation, congregation programming, ideology measures, members' socioeconomic status, and the racial/ethnic composition of the congregation are tested concerning global engagement. Findings indicate that key theories for individual philanthropic engagement are reflected at the organizational level of congregations. Recommendations for future areas of inquiry are provided based on findings.

Key Words: Religion, Development, Congregation, Philanthropy, and Faith-based communities, Community, Civil Society

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Introduction

Religious congregations play a significant role not only in domestic civil society but also in global civil society through their philanthropic efforts and involvement in social services and community development. Since many of the world's religions teach values of altruism and caring for those in need and provide the institutional support to do so, it is unsurprising that religious organizations are so engaged and intertwined with civil society (Masters, 2020; Schnable, 2015). Our understanding of how these processes operate, however, is limited by a historic lack of in-depth attention by the academic community to the distinct role of religion in civic affairs (Byers, 2018). While there exists a large body of research on the relationship between personal religiosity and giving behaviors, this prior work is often focused on individual behaviors at the expense of understanding collective religious behavior (Mundey et al., 2019). While recent decades have seen a resurgence in studies of religion in civil society, there remains no comprehensive theory of organizational faith-based global engagement and philanthropy, as exercised through congregations, despite strong ideological implications and its prominence as a key form of foreign aid and global development.

Despite its exclusion from academic study, the global philanthropic engagement of Western congregations from multiple faith traditions has tangible impacts globally on individuals, communities, development organizations, and social and power dynamics more broadly. Congregations are engaged in a variety of globally focused activities such as sending members and financial resources abroad, running immigrant services and English language programs, hosting foreign clergy, etc., and in doing so control significant sources of funds and power in the global development sphere. Understanding the connections between religion,

philanthropy, and the civic sphere is especially important given the institutional and psychological resources religious institutions hold such as their teachings on altruism and responding to those in need, their power to shape lived experiences, their presence and strength in developing communities, and their relation to social capital (Bomstein, 2005; Byers, 2018; Corkum & Hunt, 2011; Grim & Grim, 2016; Jenkins, 2008; Krasnopolskaya et al., 2021; Masters, 2020; Rakodi, 2010; Thomas, 2004). However, as one scholar noted concerning their fundraising role, “Despite this designation as the leading philanthropic beneficiary, the financial state of congregations and their economic practices remain understudied” (Mundey et al., 2019). Better understanding the ways and extent to which congregations are globally engaged allows us to better assess how this engagement may impact services, power dynamics, and outcomes.

Scholarship over the past few decades on the links between religion, philanthropy, and civic engagement reinforces that religion, faith, and their organizational institutions continue to play a prominent role in the social structure and opportunities of many communities despite modernization theories to the contrary. The historic roots of this civic and philanthropic engagement in religious institutions run deep, with religious institutions serving as the primary social safety net for many communities throughout much of history leading up to the development of contemporary nation-states (Grönlund & Pessi, 2015; Queen, 1996; Tomalin, 2018). While the social context of many societies has since shifted, faith institutions continue to play an important role in both domestic and global civil society and social service provision (Clarke & Ware, 2015; Goodman & Herzberg, 2020). In fact, in many communities, religious institutions continue to be the primary providers of social and welfare services (Bäckström &

Davie, 2010; Neusner & Chilton, 2005; Pessi & Grönlund, 2012). They have also adapted to new practices in the field and employ approaches such as entrepreneurial philanthropy (Harvey et al., 2021). Religious organizations as a whole may be the largest, and often most well-organized, civil institutions in the world with 80% of the world's population professing faith across religious traditions (Heist & Cnaan, 2016).

The depth of the connection between religion and civil society can be seen in an assessment of philanthropic engagement of religious groups. Religious organizations, for example, continue to be the largest recipient of giving in the U.S., at 29% of total giving in 2019, double that of the next largest category of education (Giving USA, 2020). Studies have also found that religious identification positively correlates with a variety of prosocial behaviors at the individual level such as volunteering (Lam, 2002; Musick & Wilson, 2008; Yeung, 2004;), blood donation (Healy, 2000), and philanthropic giving to both religious and secular organizations (Clain & Zech, 1999; Krasnopskaya et al., 2021; Monsma, 2007). Prior research also indicates a link between religiosity and individual civic behaviors (Flanagan, 1991; Independent Sector, 2002). In their analysis of giving in Russia by Orthodox Church members, Krasnopskaya et al. (2021) state that these analyses of individual motivations, “have already revealed the importance of social, economic, cultural and personal factors the combination of which explains the frequency, volumes, and intentions to continued philanthropic activities” (p. 51). Religious institutions also serve as powerful framing forces for a significant portion of the population who subscribe to their teachings and in turn hold understandings of global affairs shaped in part by these institutions (Curtis, 2018; Schnable, 2015). These impacts are seen in recent work which indicates that religion not only impacts a person’s likeliness to give but also

influences the directions, issues, and values implicated in their philanthropic giving (Schnable, 2015). Given the significant depth of entanglement between religious institutions and the global philanthropic landscape (both financial and human resources), it is important to examine the nature of this connection.

When examining these trends on a global scale outside of the U.S. context, the links between religion, philanthropy, and civil society are equally prominent. This is especially true within the context of global development efforts where an estimated 59% of development organizations are considered faith-based organizations (Heist & Cnaan, 2016). As one scholar explains of modern development efforts, "Religion, rather than disappearing as may have been expected, is working alongside development, taking its ideas, structures, and concepts and thriving in this new world" (Selinger, 2004, p. 532). This is seen on an international scale both through engagement with faith-based development organizations as well as through global philanthropy networks. Data suggests that individual religiosity also has an impact on a person's likelihood to contribute to international causes, with 10% of households who contribute to religious organizations also contributing to international organizations compared to only 4% of households who donate exclusively to secular causes (Independent Sector, 2002). In fact, 86% of total international donations came from households that also donated to religious organizations (Independent Sector, 2002). Given its prominence in the global development sector as a main actor and funder, the impact of religion and faith-based organizations on global development, and by extension, global philanthropy, has begun to draw greater attention from scholars (Clarke & Ware, 2015; ver Beek, 2000; Mitchell, 2017; Schwarz & Lynch,

2016). Religious-based foundations have also gained prominence in the domestic sphere and have begun to receive academic attention for their role in civil affairs (Byers, 2018).

Despite its prevalence, however, there remains no comprehensive theory or framework to investigate how faith-based philanthropic networks in the so-called “developed world” impact the global development sector. This lack of insight is made more problematic when coupled with our limited understanding of the economic and financial practices of congregations, which is central to these philanthropic activities. Given its prominence, this lack of transparency and analysis is concerning from a power balance perspective. What we do know from prior work is that congregations face high levels of fiscal uncertainty (Lilly Endowment, 2015; Smith et al., 2008), tension in discussing financial matters within a faith context (Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 2018; Wuthnow, 1997; Zech, 2000), and lessening financial resources in recent decades (Indiana School of Philanthropy, 2013; Roozen, 2011). Munday et al. (2019) suggest several reasons for this lack of prior research including a lack of a representative sample and constraints of existing data sources and suggest that congregation-centric research is needed to better understand the processes and implications of organizational-level giving.

Power Dynamics and Historical Underpinnings

The prominence and history of religion in global affairs is long and has often been deeply problematic, with religious institutions contributing to or creating social problems instead of alleviating them. From the Crusades to colonial imperialism to modern extremism and religious nationalism, faith-based institutions have played a significant role in framing global conflict and international affairs and shaping the power dynamics within them. Looking

to the Western Christian tradition for example one quickly finds a depth and breadth of historical and contemporary criticism of the ways global “mission work” to gain adherents is often intertwined with imperialistic goals and nationalist philosophies (Deacon & Tomalin, 2015; Haustein & Tomalin, 2017; Manji & O’Coill, 2002; Tomalin, 2018). This is the dual nature of religious engagement in development, as both would-be savior and perpetrator. Tomalin importantly outlines the complicated nature of religious engagement in global development, writing:

Religious values and faith actors are important determinants in the drive to reduce poverty, as well as in structures and practices that underpin it...the fact that religions can be seen to support social structures and practices that contribute towards inequality and conflict, also underscores a role for religious traditions in creating conditions of poverty” (2018, p. 2)

Any theories or discussion of the role of religion in global development must be attuned to the inherent conflict between the espoused values of caring for those in need and the problematic structures and power dynamics that historically and contemporarily accompany religious engagement in global development. The development of theory is an essential step to understanding the ways that religious collectives may be contributing to the collective good as well as the unique challenges their engagement creates in global development work.

Research Approach and Positionality in Faith-Based Contexts

Research, by its very nature, is a political act (Vanner, 2015; Halse & Honey, 2005; Lather, 1991; Mohanty, 1988). The positionality of the researcher, their social background, their values, their experiences impact every step of the research process. Positionality impacts the way a researcher enters a space, the lens through which they view reality, and the social context in which research is conducted. As Malterud explained, “A researcher's background and

position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (2001, 484).

Scholars in multiple fields have begun to highlight the impacts of positionality on the research process. Logan and Huntley, for example, conducted a reflexive analysis of the research process and the impact gender and power had on the process and consequent conclusions. They explained that their case "demonstrates the critical effect of gender on the knowledge that can be produced by research." (623). Even when a researcher is intentional about reflecting on their positionality, the reality of social backgrounds is still impactful on the research process. In her analysis of positionality in her own research, Vanner (2015) notes, "The privilege that accompanies my social location as a White, upper class, Canadian, academic woman means that, despite good intentions, my efforts to support education in postcolonial contexts risk being patronizing, insulting, threatening, imperialist, and recolonizing" (624). Many feminist theorists and other critical scholars have called for critical self-reflective practices to make the implications of positionality visible in the research process Crossa, 2012; (Rose, 1997). This is a process which England (1994) explains as the "need to locate ourselves in our work and to reflect on how our location influences the questions we ask, how we conduct our research, and how we write our research" (97).

Considering the positionality of the researcher is an important reflective step in the research design process. Many have criticized the historical legacy of research which did not consider the positionality of the researcher but instead privileged one identity and framework as truth. Said (1985) for example was especially critical of "orientalism" research and called for

a shift that recognized the political, social, and historical context in which research is conducted. As Vanner explains, it is “a commitment to dismantling systems of domination and a heightened sense of the intellectual’s role in both defining a given context and in changing it” (2015, 2). This call requires researchers to consider their own positionality in any research endeavor. Ultimately, researchers across discipline and topic contexts should practice continual reflexivity in considering their own positionality throughout the research process.

In the case of research with faith-based organizations, there are several key areas in which positionality may be implicated. For the researcher working with vulnerable populations special attention to their own positionality is important (Shamim & Quereshi, 2013). For example, when working in postcolonial locales, where many international faith-based organizations operate, attention to the legacy of religious organizations in the colonial and neocolonial process must be recognized (Chidester, 2013). Further, when the researcher is from the background of a colonizing nation or a settler colonizing nation special attention must be given to their own positionality in this process. Similarly, positionality in other identity areas must be considered such as the researchers own connections to faith communities, or lack of, and the religious context of the organization being studied.

Reflecting on one's own position and considering the implications of this for the organization and community at the center of the research process is an essential responsibility of the researcher to ensure additional harm is not caused. Further, recognizing how one’s positionality impacts the lens through which the research is viewed, analyzed, and interpreted is important. In turn, specific steps in the research process can be taken to help highlight the voices of those closest to the issue, such as member checking, participatory research, utilizing

grounded theory and other means to be elaborated on further in this paper. As Vanner explains there is a duality to positionality, and privilege more specifically, in research. She writes, “Privilege and positionality make undertaking research in postcolonial contexts difficult and risky but also, for me, essential to contribute to the empowerment of those disadvantaged by the same systems that have advantaged me” (2). Researchers of faith-based organizations must confront this duality of positionality and be attuned to the way positionality impacts all research design and implementation choices.

Explorations in Philanthropy & Congregational Partnerships

There are two key areas of my professional life that most deeply inform my approach to this work and provide important context for my own positionality as a researcher and the broader frameworks of this study: my work in the classroom and my work in the community. These experiences, working as an instructor and working as a consultant with congregational partnerships, have taught me more than any number of articles or books can, and this work is dedicated to the many communities and people that opened their doors to me. I credit them for sparking my interest broadly in a critical analysis of how funds and resources are implicated in civil society and community welfare and providing me invaluable insights into these processes.

As an instructor, one of the undergraduate courses I enjoy teaching the most is an active learning course on philanthropy and civic engagement in which students have the tangible responsibility of granting \$50,000 to non-profit organizations over a semester. In one of the first lessons, we review the field of philanthropy including who gives, where they most often give, and trends in giving across time. In this lesson, we share a graphic that Giving USA

produces each year that outlines how philanthropic dollars are distributed across issue areas. We consider what this means for Arts organizations who must compete for a smaller piece of the pie, generally 4%, or the different ways donations marked for Education may be used in the field. Every year, however, I am left unable to fully explain to my students the single largest section of the philanthropy pie, Religion. This category of Religion consistently accounts for nearly a third of total donated dollars in the U.S. at roughly \$130 billion USD annually, nearly doubling the next highest area of Education. While trying to answer the questions of my students, I found that we really did not have a good grasp on how those dollars are distributed and implicated in communities.

Throughout the years of instructing this course, I have simultaneously conducted exploratory research and consulting work focused on the dynamics and evaluation of congregational engagement with global partners. Based on this exploratory work, I knew that this nearly 30% of total donated dollars were spent in such a myriad of ways that categorizing it under “religion” was almost meaningless. Having served as a congregational board member, I know how the distribution of those dollars also falls across nearly all the other categories captured by Giving USA, as much as it does religious-specific expenses. And I know that the dynamics of how this occurs are wholly misunderstood, not only by the academy but oftentimes by the people involved themselves in leadership and partnership at the congregational level. This misconnection between what I have seen in the field, and the lack of information I was finding to explain this phenomenon in my classes was what first sparked my interest in this topic. Regardless of the field, if it is constituting 30% of our total donated dollars, it requires a more critical and nuanced analysis of how that 130 billion USD is truly impacting

civil society. In addition, we should pay even more attention to this field not only for its size but because of the power it holds to shape paradigms of social care and community engagement.

Through my exploratory research on global partnerships within a U.S congregation, I have learned immensely from communities and organizations working directly in global justice and community development. I am appreciative to those who opened up to me about the good, the bad, and the hard parts of their work in global development and partnership with congregations. I am grateful for the honest conversation we shared on the reality of how religion intersects with their work. They reflected on the benefits that come from sharing their work, connecting with resources, and building a larger sense of community around the issues they focus on. They also shared the extra burdens these partnerships often place on them and the communities they work with. They reflect on how they must develop and hold strong to boundaries in order to protect their work outside of these global partnerships which is the work that sustains their organizations and impacts their community daily.

There is often a strong disconnect between the lived experiences of community members and nonprofit organizations compared to the congregation community's experience. For some nonprofit organizations, they choose to use the disconnect as a learning opportunity and invite their partners to challenge their understandings of global poverty and their own role in that system through the partnership. However, this learning is not always successful and development organizations often have to take a risk in developing partnerships with congregations that may hold differing philosophies from their own. Even when this type of educational partnership is effective, it is evident that this places a great burden on these organizations to help their global partners frame these issues for congregant members in a

community grounded way. Even congregations which seek to partner in an equitable way, must work hard to overcome cultural differences, communication practices, and the natural imbalance which develops in a funding relationship. I have also seen how these partnerships, especially those which are financial in nature, can cause great instability for global organizations and a power imbalance with congregational partners. Congregations in many cases may provide a substantial portion of an organization's budget, and these funds can often be changed at the whim of personalities and inner-congregation politics.

When I first began my exploratory research into the role of U.S. congregations in global development, I tried to maintain a healthy skepticism toward the potential benefits of this work as well as the potential pitfalls. Growing up in the South where there is a church on every corner, I knew that congregations hold immense sources of social and financial capital as well as the power to shape social narratives and norms within a community. In my research, I do not seek to argue if this is a good or bad form of civic engagement or partnership, because the reality is much more complex than this kind of assessment allows. For as many problematic faith-based organizations as there are in existence, there are also many deeply community-rooted faith-based organizations doing groundbreaking work and connecting people to resources in unique and powerful ways. However, this form of engagement is not immune to hosting problematic systems and should in fact be even more closely scrutinized because of its historical propensity and power to promote inequality. The diversity of philosophies, histories, and outcomes practiced in faith-based civic engagement limits my ability to make overarching claims on the usefulness of faith-based engagement in global development, both as congregational partners and nonprofit actors. What I can say with certainty is that religious

congregations and faith-based development actors are in deep partnerships that directly impact many communities around the globe in a way unique to other civic and community development systems.

The heart of this study is an analysis of the scope of congregational engagement in global affairs and the nature of the congregations which participate in this work. This means that a significant piece of the puzzle is not accounted for, the experience of partnering communities and organizations. The data set analyzed in this study does not permit us to ask questions about impact, type of organizations partnered, nature of partnership dynamics, or for that matter much of the recipient community or organization experience in this puzzle. This side of the dynamic deserves deep and dedicated attention since the experience of development organizations and more importantly the communities they serve should be at the heart of this work. Conducting mixed methods studies of these processes and dynamics, with community leaders at the head of that research design, is a necessary step to make applicable use of the results in this study. I can provide only one small piece of the puzzle here but would like to begin by recognizing that the picture is much bigger and more complicated than one study, or even a lifetime of work, can address.

To outweigh this glaring gap in the data set, it is important to first highlight how these partnerships work and some of the key dynamics at play in these U.S. congregation global partnerships. For those who have never interacted or worked with community congregations and their board leadership, the practices of these institutions and what their partnerships in global development look like can be at best vague and often mysterious. While these partnerships are greatly diverse in their history, practices and impacts, there are some general

practices that congregational civic engagement follows. The following case study example aims to provide more depth and context to this discussion of congregational global engagement. The following case study overview comes from my exploratory research and consulting work with a mid-Western U.S. protestant congregation of around 200 members which focused on evaluating existing partnerships and exploring new partnership opportunities in global development. While we cannot draw conclusions about this type of work from a case study alone, this example highlights some of the practices and challenges that appear in congregational global engagement.

Case Study: Evaluation and Practice in Congregational Partnerships

This case study focuses on a decades long partnership between a U.S. based congregation and a church in Alexandria, Egypt. This partnership aims to support the humanitarian and community development efforts of the church in Alexandria and provide opportunities for relationship development and learning for both partners. A key focus of the partnership is supporting a school run by the church for adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities from all faith backgrounds. To protect the identity of these institutions and their members, I will refer to the church in Egypt as the Alexandria Church and I will refer to the U.S. partner as the U.S. congregation. The purpose of my early research with this partnership was to explore the processes, impacts, and challenges of cross-cultural collaboration and solidarity partnership in an international context. Through this work I explored the ways that individual actors, global contexts, and cultural perspectives impact local efforts to address pressing community needs. This work also took a decidedly evaluation focus, primarily learning about the needs of the partner organization, evaluating successes and

challenge in the relationship, and planning strategically for the future after significant membership and leadership changes on both sides of the partnership.

Case Study: Organizational Partnership

The organizations and partnership at the center of this exploratory research provide a unique setting in which to study these processes. The Alexandria Church is well versed in cross-cultural collaborations and runs a myriad of social programs with the support of the local community and international “sister churches”. This model of “sister church” partnerships seek to go beyond financial contribution in order to build deep and real relationships between individuals and organizations. To accomplish this, members and leaders from both organizations often travel to meet with their counterparts and spend time developing lasting cross-cultural relationships. The vast majority of research on such partnerships focuses exclusively on the experience of U.S. participants. In my exploratory work, I intentionally focused on the non-Western perspective with the Alexandria Church and spent a month living onsite at the Alexandria Church run school for those with special needs and participating in daily life of the school community and the congregation. My approach was to study such relationships through a social-ecological lens tuned to critical power analysis in order to add to our understanding of inter-group relationships and community building and to provide invaluable insight into how we can continue to build connections and community across diversity. My primary goal was to understand the needs of the Alexandria community, and then based on my consulting work to strategically match up resources at the U.S. congregation in order to support those needs. In compiling my final report and with my continued consulting work with the U.S. congregation, we focused collectively on learning from our partners,

relationship building and capacity work, and invigorating support for community identified needs.

U.S. Congregation Context

At the time of the case study, the U.S. congregation was considered a medium-large congregation by the measures of this current study and had roughly 150-200 regular attendees with an annual budget of roughly \$750,000 USD. The church was first founded in 1850, though they have since moved locations, and is a central figure in its local community operating several key social service programs. The leadership structure was similar to a nonprofit foundation board with elected leaders on term. While all congregations differ and religious tradition greatly impacts the organizational structure, the common leadership model for U.S. congregations involves a board of lay people, either elected or appointed, who make decisions for the congregation. They may function on committees that focus on key areas, i.e., personnel, finances, partnership, grounds, worship, etc. In theory, this board functions much as a non-profit board and they are responsible for the leadership, strategic planning, and budgeting decisions. It is the board, sometimes referred to as Elders, session, or consistory, that leads all organizational decisions and often oversees the pastoral leadership (though this framework differs for more centralized traditions such as Catholicism).

When I first began this exploratory research and consulting work, the U.S. congregation was entering a time of what they called “discernment” where they were strategically planning and evaluating their approach to partnership with community organizations. This followed a time of large growth in the U.S. congregation with the membership changing to reflect more new members and young families. Many of the existing partnerships had been in place for

decades and strategic planning around these partnerships had been limited in recent years. I was able to join this process in a consulting and leadership role on the board and worked with key committees to design an equitable evaluation process that prioritized partners experiences and needs. Through a series of listening sessions with congregation members, surveys with existing partners, consulting with denominational leaders and conducting a series of exploratory visits, the U.S. congregation overhauled its partnership process and relationship development steps.

A key question I encouraged the congregation to ask during this process was “Why do we want to partner?”. When I first asked this question, I received a few questioning looks, but I encouraged the team to truly understand what the purpose was for the U.S. congregation in pursuing partnerships. Often in congregations, it is assumed that partnerships occur “because it is what we do”. But there are many different motivations, goals, and purposes that a congregation can have in pursuing partnership and these motives deeply impact the nature of those partnerships.

At the conclusion of my consulting work, the church unveiled a new partnership program that incorporated the key ideas we heard from congregation members and community partners. This new model of partnership focuses on the dual nature of learning and service in response to a religious call to live and serve in the world. This program recognizes the importance of responding to needs in the world with humility and recognizing a need for the U.S. congregation to first learn and challenge existing understandings and then to act on that learning through service and partnership. Partnerships now intentionally focus on building relationships and learning as the key purposes behind partnering. They have also organized

partnerships to address key areas of philosophical concern that match with the U.S. congregation's mission such as social justice, community development, and social services. These values are now highlighted in partnerships and used as measures to assess the fit of future partnerships. This focus is revolutionarily different from a classic congregation partnership model which takes a savioristic approach and often focuses on the U.S. congregation experience at the expense of partnering communities.

Alexandria Church Context & Programing

The Alexandria Church sits near the edge of the Mediterranean Sea in the urban sprawl of Alexandria, Egypt. Founded in the early 20th Century, the Alexandria church serves the small but vibrant community of protestant Egyptian Christians in Alexandria. While 15% of the Egyptian populace identifies as Christian, the vast majority are adherents of the Coptic Orthodox faith, making this protestant church a small and distinct minority in the community. Despite their marginal status, the Alexandria Church is known in the community for their engaged, diverse, and consistent community work. This work includes a free community clinic, women's empowerment and literacy programs, homelessness services, interfaith outreach, a daycare, and a school for children and adults with intellectual and development disabilities. The partnership between the Alexandria Church and the U.S. congregation has worked to support these diverse programs throughout the thirty-year partnership. This has included financial support, volunteer services, youth engagement, and supporting training for clinicians and educators who work in key program areas. Today, the Alexandria Church oversees the organizational and structural operations of each of these programs that take place throughout the city and surrounding areas.

In a country desperately in need of disability services, the school for children and adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities provides targeted educational and life skills training for children and adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities from all social and religious backgrounds. The school is known for bringing innovative techniques to Egypt and for accepting challenging students who have been denied access elsewhere. This school leads the way in bringing new technology and pedagogical practices to Egypt and is credited with creating the first Arabic language assisted communication system which allows non-verbal students to communicate through graphics and online systems. They also work to change systemic community views of people with disabilities by providing social-emotional support to parents and job placement training to local employers. Additionally, the school provides opportunities for developing interfaith coalitions with 80% of the students and families being Muslim. Given the religious tension that has at times been especially challenging in Egypt, the focus on interfaith support and services is an especially noteworthy element of this program. The school serves children through adults and provides diverse services and therapies targeted to meet the needs of each student.

The Partnership: Implications and Challenges

There are many reasons why organizations may develop partnerships across national and cultural boundaries. Some of the most touted reasons by participants in this partnership were relationship building, financial support, enhancing credibility, personal experience, and a passion for specific community and social projects. While there are many motivators, the financial component is an important one which should not be ignored and influences these partnerships to varying degrees depending on current conditions. Given recent financial

instability in Egypt at the time, enhanced by inflation and austerity measures, financial support from partners abroad is especially important. As one community member said, "The load is too much here, so there are many problems and challenges with financial resources to meet those problems." These organizations, however, seek for this financial component to not solely define the partnership. Participants on both sides repeatedly emphasized the non-financial elements. For example, one participant explained, "We want this to be more than a financial relationship. We want to share our struggles with you and have you share your struggles with us. Yes, there are things you can teach us, but there are many things we can teach you as well."

This case highlights several elements which are important in effective partnerships between U.S. congregations and global partners, and also offers avenues for potential future research to tease out the nuances in these dynamics. It is important to note that not all partnerships provide attention to these dynamics, and there are many partnerships in existence that highly privilege the U.S. congregation experience. As we outline the scope of global congregational engagement, we are not able to capture the extent to which these organizations develop intentional partnerships. However, we provide an analysis of best practice dynamics in effective partnerships in hopes of promoting more equitable practices in the field.

Leadership: Leaders of both organizations play a significant role in determining the culture of the relationship. As was the case in this partnership, transitions in leadership are also key turning points. The importance of leadership may be even greater in faith-based partnerships where high reverence and trust is placed in ecumenical leadership. In this case, it was also apparent that the history of the partnership often rests in the memory of organizational leaders, more so than lay members. In turn, at times of leadership transitions, it

is important for organizations to reach out and reaffirm connections if they wish to remain partnered with each other.

Personal Connections: While leadership is important, it is also apparent that personal connections form the lifeblood of these partnerships. Often, these connections are formed between lay members in both organizations and serve as the impetus for continued partnership. These relationships are sustained through trips to visit both organizations and have been made even easier through improvements in technology in both locations. Many participants noted relationships that have been passed through generations and have been sustained for decades. They conveyed how they share their personal lives with each other, such as watching each other's kids grow up through the years, and the significance of this connection. One Egyptian participant explained, "We have come to know their children, and they know our children. We think of each other often." These relationships help sustain the partnership and provide a larger historical and social context for the organizational elements.

Trust: Such partnerships require deep trust between members and organizations. This includes trust of care for those traveling to visit, trust of fiduciary responsibility, and trust of transparency. In this case, trust hinged on those personal connections and was formed through sustained communication and sharing. This trust was formed over time but is reinforced through in-person visits and open discussion of organizational goals.

Sustainability: What makes these partnerships, and this case specifically, unique is their long-term nature. These partnerships require more than a one-time visit or short-term commitment. Members see a strength of the partnership in the sustained nature of the commitment. In this case, this involves continued relationship building and connection despite

national crisis, challenging leadership transitions, cultural changes, and shifts in individual participation. Partnership is not viewed as a means to an end, but an action in and of itself. These organizations do not partner simply to fund a program, but the development of relationships and the partnership itself is a primary goal.

While these partnerships hold many promises for expanding perceptions, increasing community support, and developing important relationships, there are also many inherent challenges. Recognizing these challenges and potential pitfalls is essential in authentically partnering across organizations and cultures.

Power & Privilege: While it can be tempting to ignore the role of power in such partnerships, this should not be done. These relationships are deeply impacted by social, global, and financial power contexts. As noted earlier, the financial element of these relationships is important. The power that comes through that flow of financial resources, and the privilege it reflects, in turn, causes a potential pitfall in developing an equitable partnership. It is essential for partnering organizations, especially those with greater power in the relationship, to recognize this reality and ensure that opportunities for power transfer are incorporated. As one participant explained, "We want to make sure we are comfortable with the way our funds are managed, but we must be careful not to force them into Western ways, as if they are better." It is essential for partnering organizations to be cognizant of a savior complex and take steps to avoid such dynamics. In this case, this included intentional framing of the relationship as one in which both parties benefit equally and an authentic reinforcement through meetings and community gatherings of the values derived by the U.S. congregation from the Alexandria church.

Cultural Differences: In the case of international partnerships, cultural differences can present themselves in a myriad of ways. These cultural differences may include such things as miscommunications, differences in interpersonal interactions, and conflicting assumptions on business practices. Related to power, it is essential for members to recognize these various elements as differences and not assign value judgments to them. Effective partnerships are conducted from a place of authenticity and forgiveness, where members are provided space to make these cross-cultural mistakes but to learn together. One participant noted, "We don't always say the right thing or know what to do, but we are all trying".

Distance and Time: Despite goals of longevity and sustainability, it can be challenging for momentum to continue between visits. While this is made easier through technology, it requires a concerted effort on the part of both organizations to maintain ties outside of personal visits. To address this challenge, the partnership is incorporated into organizational life. In this case, such connection comes through newsletter updates, video calls and sharing about visits with other members at each organization. Additionally, participants continue to meet and plan events following trips to provide opportunities for sustained involvement outside of traveling.

External Factors: There are factors outside of participants' control that impact the viability of the partnership. For example, in this case, national stability following the Arab Spring significantly impacted the form and nature of the partnership. Fewer U.S. members were able or willing to travel during this time, and the work of the Egyptian organization was limited. While these elements cannot be controlled, organizations must work through them.

Individual to Collective: These partnerships exist on a variety of levels: individual, organizational, and group collective. According to participants, strong partnerships work on multiple levels by incorporating members across the organization and include the whole collective. One challenge that participants in these organizations face is sharing the passion and connection that is developed through personal visits with members of the organization who do not participate in such visits. Finding space and opportunities to share the stories of these visits with other members is an important step. Failing to do so effectively can limit the depth and longevity of the relationship. In this case, participants recognize this challenge and intentionally develop opportunities to engage other members of their home institution and move from individual to collective experiences.

Leadership Changes: As previously noted, leaders play an important role in shaping and sustaining these relationships. Consequently, when leadership changes, these partnerships may suffer. This challenge was reflected by participants who purposely traveled to meet with new leadership in Egypt. It was apparent, that this intentional reconnection trip was needed to maintain the partnership and develop new relationships. While it can be a challenge for members to develop new relationships, recognizing new leaders and authority in the organization is essential.

Through this exploratory research, it became apparent that these partnerships hold promises for breaking down stereotypes, challenging power dynamics, and supporting cross-cultural understandings. However, they take place in specific organizational, cultural, and national contexts which can at times limit their ability to meet their expressed goals. It is essential for participants in such partnerships to maintain an approach of authenticity and

reflexivity throughout the partnership if they want to conduct the partnership in light of equity. It is also essential to be aware of the historical legacy of such partnerships, which in some cases may be intertwined with painful histories and colonial enterprises. It is also essential for participants to be cognizant of the political and cultural context of the current day which may shape or influence such relationships.

As with any case study, I am not able to draw overarching conclusions regarding international cross-cultural partnerships between congregations. Not all partnerships are alike. In fact, this case highlights the importance of context and of individuals and specific leaders in shaping the form and nature of such relationships. However, despite the potential variation in such partnerships, there are key processes, opportunities, and challenges which likely cross contextual differences. There are lessons which can be learned from this case and applied across other organizational partnerships. In this particular case, participants reflect being intentional in the way they interact and connect with their partner organization. This intentionality may be one of the reasons behind the longevity of the partnership, which spans over 30 years. This case also highlights key challenges, which present themselves in intentional partnerships and philanthropic engagement.

In a fast-paced world with conflicting needs, agendas, and perspectives, finding the time to nurture such partnerships within an organizational context can be challenging. It requires the commitment of key individuals in both organizations who are willing to advocate for the partnership and sustain connections across space and time. In this case, it has been through the dedicated efforts of individuals both in the U.S. and Egypt who continue visits, provide opportunities for learning, and share their personal lives that the relationship has maintained

through tumultuous cultural and political times. In a climate of increased mistrust, xenophobia and fear of difference, these partnerships serve as an opportunity to connect individuals and organizations in a way that breaks down divides. As the Pastor of the Alexandria Church said, "Our vision for the partnership between our churches is to support and motivate each other, exchange experiences, and exchange visits. Pray for us, and we are praying for you".

Religious Philanthropy & Global Development

As is exhibited in the Egyptian case study, philanthropy, like many social endeavors, is increasingly becoming less tied to physical geographic boundaries. With continued globalization and technological development, transboundary and global philanthropy is at a historic high, and this private sector's global aid and investment are transforming the landscape of global development and foreign aid (Schnable, 2015). A Hudson Institute (2013) study of total global aid found that official government aid constituted only 16% of total financial aid flows, meaning that private sector aid in the form of investment, remittance, and philanthropy constitutes the great majority of foreign aid at 86%. While a large portion of this private sector aid comes in the form of private investments (54% of total flows), philanthropic giving constitutes a significant portion of the development sector at USD 64 billion globally (7% of total flows). U.S. philanthropy contributed USD 43.9 billion to global aid in 2013 alone, constituting 12% of total U.S. foreign aid. Of this total, USD 6 billion was contributed by U.S. religious organizations specifically to foreign aid causes (Marten & Witte, 2008; Schmid & Nissim, 2016; Schnable, 2015). Much like in the domestic philanthropic sphere, religious or faith-based philanthropy plays a significant role in global philanthropy, providing a key resource and frame for the work and goals of global development.

While scholars have come to recognize the significance of religion in the civic and development sector, the creation of related theories lags. This shortfall is reinforced by gaps in literature from both the global development field and the sociology of religion. For example, much existing research on the impact of religion in global development focuses on only two key areas of inquiry (Schnable, 2015). One strain focuses on the impacts of religious beliefs and attitudes on foreign policy beliefs as an extension of foreign aid (Hertzke, 2004; Kurtz & Goran, 2002; Mead, 2006; Wuthnow & Lewis, 2008). The second focuses on a comparative analysis of faith-based vs. secular aid organizations (Bomstein, 2005; Egan, 1988; Hearn, 2002; King, 2012; Miller & Yamamori, 2007; Whaites, 1999). Furthermore, much of the work on the connection between religion and civic engagement or philanthropy takes a decidedly individual focus, at the exclusion of the organizational and institutional context (Lincoln et al., 2008; Schnable, 2015). For example, in their literature review on religion and philanthropy, even when Lincoln et al. attempt to highlight group-level analyses on the topic such studies focus exclusively on the impact of organizational dynamics on individual giving to the congregation or certain causes. Consequently, while we have a solid idea of how religion impacts individuals' giving choices, we have a relatively limited understanding of how these religious institutions themselves participate in the philanthropic sector.

Given the exhibited links in individuals between religion and philanthropy broadly and between religious philanthropy and international giving specifically, the ways these connections are exhibited in their institutional and organizational counterparts should also be examined. Prior work has touched on or implicated these connections, but much of this work has not focused on the unique context of domestic congregations where lay people engage in these

global efforts. While some research has focused on how domestic corporations or foundations are implicated in foreign aid and global development, few scholars have turned this same lens on domestic religious institutions as global philanthropic actors. A significant exception to this is the more extensive research focused on the Catholic Church in international affairs, however, given the role of sovereignty in this case and their focus on political contexts such a line of inquiry is quite different from an analysis of congregational level global engagement (See Troy (2016) for a review of literature on the Catholic Church in International Affairs) Relatedly, some scholars have turned their attention to how faith-based organizations in the U.S. (such as World Vision or Catholic Relief Charities) are implicated in global development, as well as significant attention to the role of values in religious social welfare programs (Goodman & Herzberg, 2020), but again this is quite different from an analysis of congregational collectives.

Congregational Focus

No other work to our knowledge has assessed the nature and scope of engagement of U.S. religious congregations in global philanthropic efforts. Congregations offer a unique organizational context through which to study abstract religious forces in a concrete and socially contexed way that is distinctly different from other religious institutions. Given their diversity in terms of religious tradition, organizational structure, history, and social construction congregations also provide a useful lens to study the exercise of global engagement in various contexts and settings. It is at the congregational level that most framing, fundraising, and storytelling take place, making them key players in the global development landscape especially in terms of framing and defining key issues. In this paper, we lay the foundation to fill our gap in understanding by building on existing theories and outlining the scope of congregational global

engagement. We begin by outlining the connections between religious and secular explanations of individual transboundary or global philanthropy. We then build on these individualistic explanations and propose an organizational theoretical framework of processes, implications, and considerations in congregational transboundary philanthropy and global engagement. Given the limited work previously conducted in this field of study, we seek to propose a theory that can be tested in future studies while also providing the necessary intermediary step of outlining and understanding the scope of the field. To ground a more comprehensive theory it is important to first understand the nature of this engagement, how resources flow through these channels, and the organizational elements which impact these flows.

To understand these dynamics, we first outline key theories from the fields of development studies and sociology of religion which provide a foundation and may inform the development of a more comprehensive theory of organizational religious global engagement. These key theories inform our understanding of the motivations and nature of the relationship between religion, philanthropy, and global development and provide insights for theory development. We then utilize data collected through a nationally representative sample of congregations, the National Congregational Study (NCS), to outline the extent to which U.S. congregations are globally engaged and to assess the correlation between types of international engagement and key organizational factors. We rely on elements of the outlined theories to define international engagement and we include such activities as immigration services, English language classes, and visits from international clergy, given the strong connections between being exposed to a need and developing a sense of global civic responsibility (Schnable, 2015). We seek to understand the global activities religious

congregations are engaged in and to highlight organizational factors which might impact this engagement.

Theoretical Foundations

An appreciation for theory and theory building is at the heart of this study. The paradigms and theories that guide a particular research study provide a basis for what is observed in the study and how the data is interpreted (Babbie, 2011). As Mertens (2003) explains, “Who researchers talk to, what literature they read, and whose opinions are given privilege in the formulation of the research problem and approach have an impact on their ability to address an issue that has relevance to the least advantaged populations and to accurately represent the diverse voices of research participants” (142). Researchers who are attentive to the role of power in this process can direct their theoretical basis and literature review to include diverse viewpoints. This process of theory selection and literature review, however, is often far from equitable and requires researchers to be intentional in their approach. There are key challenges to conducting an inclusive literature review such as the privileging of quantitative research in the social sciences, lack of articles addressing oppressions within the research variables, and the elitist nature of published research that may ignore knowledge from less powerful communities (Mertens, 2003). Researchers must recognize the limitations of this research design step and be intentional in searching for diverse perspectives in the literature and incorporating knowledge outside of these spaces. For example, scholars of participatory research have highlighted the importance of incorporating and prioritizing the community perspective and knowledge in the review and design process (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000; Stanfield, 1999; Whitmore, 1998).

As they consider theories on which to found their work, researchers of faith-based organizations must recognize the lack of diversity in both theory and previous research. For example, much of the literature, at least the English language literature, prioritizes the study of Christian faith-based organizations. While some attention is given to other faiths (mainly Jewish and in a few instances Muslim), the vast majority of existing studies focus on the Christian context. Since theory development and research are so intertwined, it stands to reason then that many of the conclusions and theories that have been developed in the field have been formed with this faith context privileged. In deciding on a theoretical basis and conducting the literature review, the researcher of faith-based organizations must first recognize this lack of diversity of perspectives in the field. Seeking out studies that specifically look at other faith contexts and exploring non-academic resources on non-Christian faith-based organizations should be an important element of this research design step, especially for studies that aim to make overarching claims about faith-based organizations. Doing so helps to equalize the values and knowledge that is being prioritized in the academic community and ensure that ill-fitting assumptions and conclusions are not drawn across the board in faith-based organizations.

The research questions that a particular study asks are directly informed by the chosen theories and review of existing literature. If special attention is not given to power at this step, these research questions can be reflective of existing power dynamics or can reinforce existing power dynamics. The questions that a researcher chooses to address, and how those questions are framed, has significant ramifications on the conceptualization of the topic, on the researcher and participant relationship, and on the community of study (Agee, 2009). For example, Stanfield (1999) outlined how researchers studying the Black experience are often

socialized to ask more negative research questions about the community instead of asset-based research questions. This is significant because the questions we ask can frame and limit the solutions or interventions we propose through the research process. In her description of the transformative theoretical framework to research Mertens (2003) argues that research questions should be formulated to highlight what is needed for social justice change and to acknowledge structural frameworks and relations of power instead of relying on an inquiry into individual deficits.

In the study of faith-based organizations, researchers should ask questions that directly relate to the role of power, privilege, and positionality in these organizations and their larger social context. The socialization of views on religion and faith-based organizations is mixed. On the one hand, we are often socialized to view religion, and by extension faith-based organizations, as moral and overall good organizations. On the other hand, scientists are often socialized to view religion as backward or ill-informed. Given these socializations and Stanfield's argument on how socialization impacts the questions we ask, researchers of these organizations should give special attention to developing balanced questions. Questions should include more asset-based elements to solicit what might be areas of success but should also importantly include critical elements to ensure that disparities in power and organizational operations are not ignored. Questions should also be asked to solicit difference on various organizational levels including clients, participants, staff, and leadership. Asking questions that are critical and challenging while being intentionally nonjudgmental should be a goal of the faith-based organization researcher.

Theories of Individual Global Philanthropy

Looking across disciplines in the social sciences, several theories inform our understanding of congregational global engagement. While these theories are not exhaustive, they are the most relevant to the research questions of this study and were most often implicated in the literature of why people give internationally. These theories focus specifically on giving to the global context, albeit for individuals, and provide key ideas to understand motives and processes at the collective level. From a secular perspective, theories of transboundary philanthropy such as social exchange theory, identifiable victim effect, and identification theory inform our understanding of why people give globally. From a religious perspective, key theories highlight the ways congregational factors encourage participation in global philanthropy such as social norms, values (including altruism), and exposure to need inform our understanding of why individuals with religious affiliations are more likely to give globally. These foundational theories are outlined in Figure 1 and explained in more detail in the following section. While these theories normally exist siloed in the literature, we propose that there are important connections between them and propose in Figure 2 a theoretical framework for congregational global engagement that incorporates these theories with key variables in our study. Our key hypotheses are indicated by (Hn) throughout, and our theoretical connections are indicated by (Tn).

Figure 1: Existing Theories of Individual Global Philanthropy

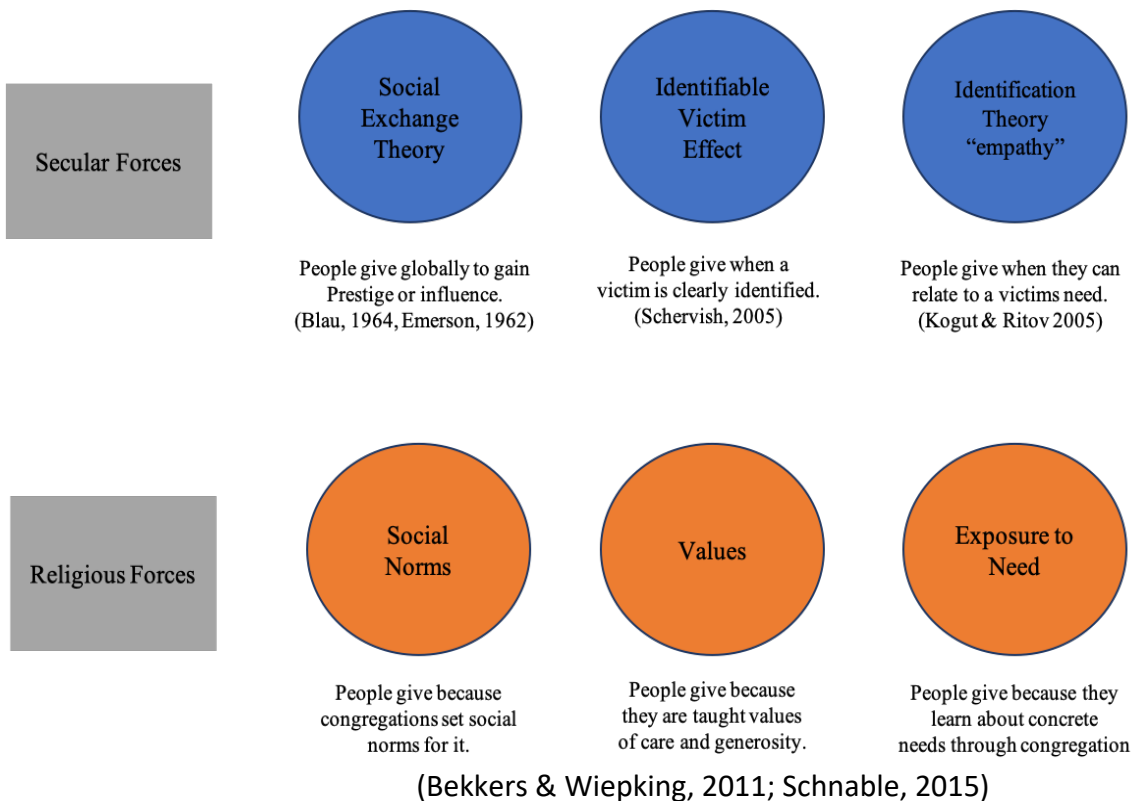
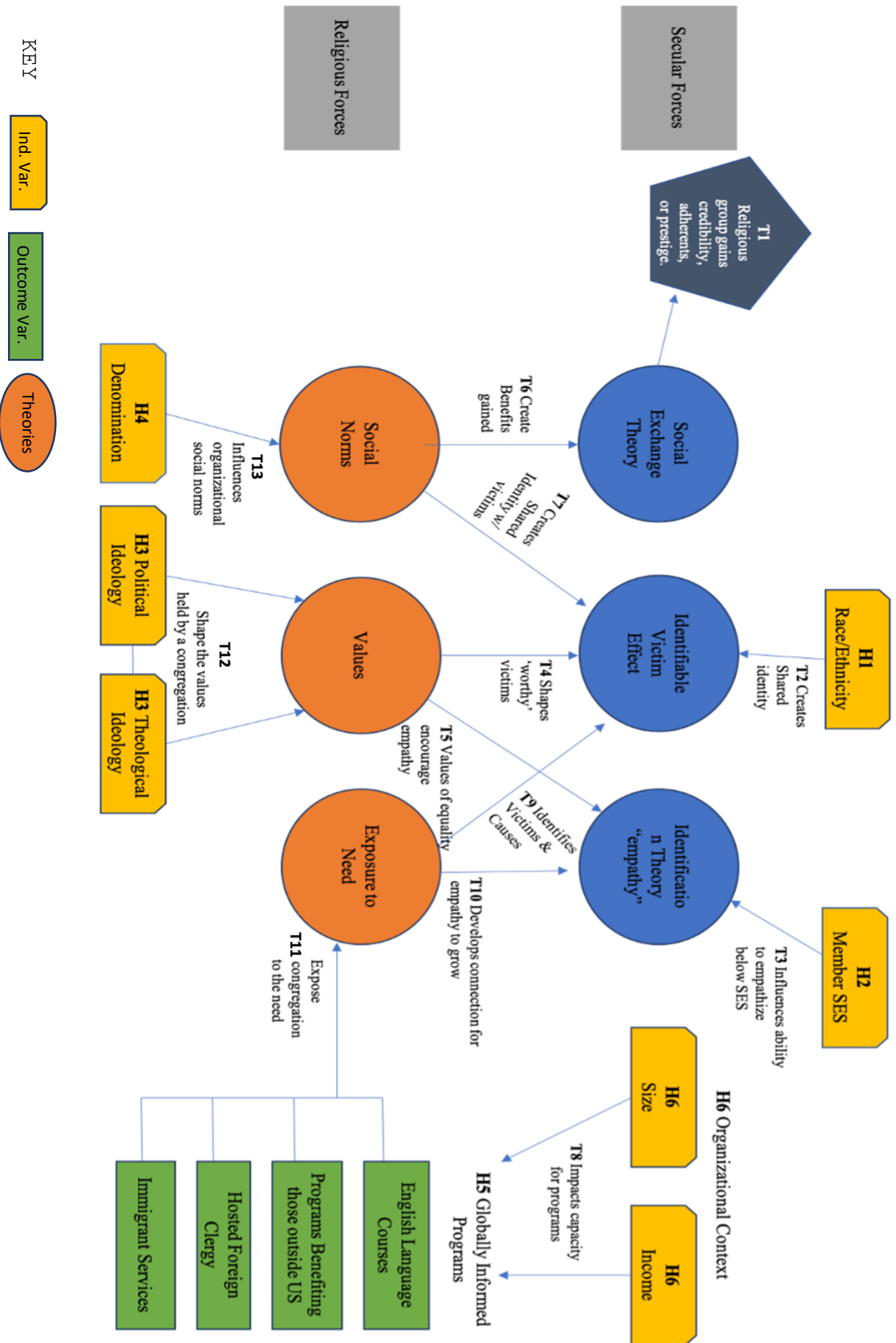


Figure 2: Organizational Explanations of Congregational Global Engagement & Philanthropy



Transboundary and Global Philanthropy Theory

Global philanthropy has seen a considerable increase in both its size and scope in recent decades with private philanthropists emerging as key actors in global giving and international affairs. This form of philanthropy often referred to as “transboundary” philanthropy, is the flow of resources through individuals, corporations, and institutions outside of their country of residence through the form of volunteering, in-kind giving, or financial contributions (Anheier & Themoudo, 2004; Metcalf-Little, 2010; Schmid & Nissim, 2016). In their review, Schmid and Nissim explain how foreign aid data indicates that “in every country, the amount of individual and institutional philanthropy was greater than the amount of corporate philanthropy – and together, both sources of support were greater than the amount of government assistance to developing countries” (2016, p. 163). Given the prominence of international or transboundary philanthropy, scholars have begun to question why individuals contribute to causes that seemingly have no direct implication or impact on their own or the surrounding community’s wellbeing. These prior research contributions on individual giving inform our understanding of why organizations, such as congregations, may also participate in similar work. In an attempt to explain the rationale behind such giving, Schmid and Nissim (2016) outline three theories that lend insight into transboundary giving, and which may inform our understanding of religious transboundary giving as well: social exchange theory, identification theory, and identifiable victim effect theory.

The precepts of social exchange theory suggest that international philanthropists engage in giving in order to gain benefits for themselves or their business through gaining recognition, prestige, and influence in the global arena (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1962; Homans,

1961). In other words, these philanthropists have a “desire to gain international recognition and prestige through their contributions, highlight the social value of their contributions, and position themselves as leaders or as influential forces in the international arena” (Schmid & Nissim, 2016, p. 163). This theory suggests that faith-based philanthropy may be rooted in a desire to increase global influence, gain new adherents, or increase the prestige of the religious institution as a whole (T1).

Identifiable victim effect theory reinforces a common understanding in the fundraising field that people give to people. This theory argues that those who have no personal connection to the issue or region are more likely to donate to transboundary causes when they learn about a specific victim who needs help (Kogut & Ritov, 2005). This theory suggests that congregational activities which highlight specific victims and causes may play an important role in encouraging transboundary giving. Such a desire to give may be further reinforced when the donor can associate the beneficiary with someone that they personally know, such as the case with remittance from immigrant communities (Schmid & Nissim, 2016). Such a theory suggests that the presence of immigrant populations within a congregation may be associated with greater global engagement because they provide a point of association. We hypothesize that differences in global engagement will be impacted by the immigrant populations showing higher global engagement (H1) given the increased odds of a fostering identification with the target beneficiary or “victim” (T2).

Identification theory on the other hand assumes that philanthropy is rooted in empathy for others and prioritization of others’ needs above one’s own (Schervish, 2005; Schervish & Havens, 1995). This theory most directly informs the giving of diaspora communities back to

their home countries and suggests that identification with the beneficiaries is an important step in giving. In the context of religious giving, this theory suggests that religious organizations may be more likely to give to co-religious organizations or communities with whom they identify. We hypothesize that differences in global engagement will be seen based on the social-economic status of members (as measured through personal income) (H2) which may impact the ability of an organization to empathize with the needs of those in vastly different situations (T3).

In their summary remarks, Schmid and Nissim (2016) outline how these three theoretical approaches collectively lend insight into the motivations behind transboundary giving. They write, “The philanthropists identify individual victims or communities and donate personally out of a sense of empathy with the ‘victims’. In so doing, the donors gain intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, prestige, or recognition for their contributions, and they position themselves in the arena of influential national and international philanthropists” (2016, p. 163). This suggests that similar elements may be at work in congregational giving to international causes, wherein some form of social capital is gained.

Religious Predictors of Transboundary Philanthropy

While the prior theories lend insights into why individuals generally give to international causes, we turn next to the work of Bekkers and Wiepking (2011), and subsequently, Schnable (2015) to inform our understanding of why religious adherents are more likely to engage in philanthropy than non-religiously affiliated people; and more specifically why they engage in international philanthropy. In their analysis of religious philanthropy, Bekkers and Wiepking theorize that 1) values, 2) exposure to need, and 3) the presence of social norms are the driving

forces in the philanthropic engagement of religious adherents. In their estimation, religion creates a code of values that include altruistic values on the importance of giving as well as values that define 'worthy' beneficiaries and causes. Second, they note that religious institutions are sites where individuals are often exposed to the needs of others and in turn solicited to contribute, making their engagement in philanthropy more likely (T4). Lastly, since individuals are more likely to give when others are aware of their giving, they suggest that religious institutions are sites where social norms encourage philanthropy.

While these theories provide a better understanding of why religious adherents might be more likely to give philanthropically, Schnable builds on these elements to explain the greater level at which religious adherents donate to international causes specifically. On the issue of values, Schnable (2015) argues that most major religions share common values of altruism, compassion, charity, and justice. Altruism is a value taught by many world traditions, and surveys across different cultural contexts show a link between religious affiliation and altruistic behaviors (Gill, 1999; Krasnopolskaya et al., 2021; Lynn & Smith, 1999; Saroglou, 2013). From almsgiving through *zakat* in the Muslim traditions and tithing in the Christian, to Buddhist belief in the inherent value and compassion for all beings and Jewish teachings of giving *maasar* or a tithe of 10%, many of the world's religions expose members to the needs of others and emphasize a duty to care for those needs (Schnable, 2015; Wuthnow & Lewis, 2008).

Importantly, however, while religion often teaches the values of giving and compassion, it also teaches particular beliefs and frameworks about giving and receiving which impact the practice and outcomes of those actions (Emerson et al., 2004; Hunt, 2002). For example, Hunt

found that Catholics and white Protestants are more likely to provide individualist reasons for poverty, while Jewish believers and Black Protestants are more likely to give structural explanations. In this case, we can see how these two beliefs about the nature of a social issue could lead to vastly different forms of engagement. As Schnable explains, “If differences among religious traditions about the role of government and private, faith-based charity extend to international assistance, we would expect that denominational affiliation will be associated with support for different types of aid organizations” (2015, p. 75). Hunt found this to be the case when assessing the individual giving of religious adherents to international causes, and with this foundation, we hypothesize that levels of global engagement will differ for congregations with differing values (H4). In building a comprehensive theory, we argue that values have two key implications in global engagement. First, values impact the identifiable victim effect by framing which victims are “worthy” of support (T4). Secondly, congregations may reinforce values of equality and care for those in need which set the groundwork for the empathy implicated in identification theory (T5).

The presence and enforcement of social norms may also play a significant role in the rate and direction of congregational philanthropy. Social scientists have found that people are more likely to give when their social networks normalize such behavior (Bekkers & Schuyt, 2008; Olson & Cadell, 1994; Schnable, 2015). Schnable suggests that based on this theory members may be more likely to support international causes when solicited through more social events such as public offerings during congregational meetings or volunteering for a service trip abroad (2015). Prior work indicates that the strength of ties within the congregant community, through close friends or small group engagement, also impacts one's likeliness to

give (Putnam & Campbell, 2010). Based on these theories, we use denominational affiliation as a means of grouping shared values given the prominence of shared theology and practices along denominational lines. We hypothesize that meaningful relationships will be found between denominational affiliation and global engagement given the impact of this affiliation on social norms (H4). From a theoretical perspective, we propose that social norms also serve to frame the benefits that might be gained from global philanthropic engagement as outlined in the Social Exchange Theory (T6). For example, religious traditions which emphasize conversion and growth as a social norm may show increased levels of engagement given the potential benefits within that framework of increased conversions. We also propose that social norms which emphasize cohesion within a religious tradition (i.e., a catholic sense of shared religious identity) impact the identifiable victim effect by reinforcing connections with co-religious members abroad, such as a shared sense of belonging and connection with co-religious adherents in developing or conflict contexts (T7).

The final theoretical element under analysis, exposure to need, is especially important in international giving and is seen by theorists as a prerequisite of giving (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Schnable, 2015). As Schnable explains, “While religion may cultivate the general values that predispose an individual to generosity, churchgoers are more likely to give when they are presented with specific information about the people, places, and conditions where assistance is needed” (2015, p. 76). Such exposure may take place in a variety of congregational contexts from foreign clergy visits and guest speakers to informative special giving calls, and in certain contexts through immigrant community members (Schnable, 2015). Relatedly, immigrants over time often increase the flow of resources (financial, talent, informational) from their country of

residence to their home country, suggesting that a larger immigrant population may result in increased transboundary philanthropy in congregations (Levitt, 2001; Portes, 2000). Wuthnow and Lewis support this theory as he notes how congregations with a large immigrant population may often take up aid projects in those specific countries from which their immigrant members originate (2008).

This theory, and the prior work of Wuthnow and Lewis, suggests that congregations shape members understanding of global needs through their activities and information raising work (2008). Based on these findings and theory, we hypothesize that congregations with a larger number of globally informed programming, as well as congregations with a larger immigrant population will show increased global engagement (H5). We also propose that exposure to need is an important precept for both the identifiable victim effect and the identification theory. Exposure to need serves to identify and highlight victims in need (T9) and serves to develop a sense of empathy and identification with the cause through personal connections developed or knowledge gained about a particular global issue (T10). This exposure to need takes place through global programming at the congregation level (T11)

In building on the theories of Bekkers and Wiepking (2011), Schnable summarized their theory-building arguments that “religion encourages generosity toward the poor in other countries by cultivating altruism, by providing a site for enforceable social norms that favor giving, and by using transnational connections to expose members to the needs of the poor in other countries” (2015, p. 77). While these theories focus primarily on the impact of religion on individual giving, we suggest that they can also inform our understanding of organizational giving and engagement. Based on this theoretical foundation, we also hypothesize that the

values taught in a congregation (such as theological leanings, denominational affiliation, and political ideology) will have an impact on giving (H3) and theorize that political and theological ideology shape these values (T12). We also hypothesize that the strength and prominence of social norms towards global giving, both within a congregation and within a denomination, may impact the likeliness of a congregation to engage in such efforts (H4). While our ability to test this fully is limited by our dataset, we can test this by proxy through comparing denominational affiliation as an identifier for overarching shared social norms within a congregation (T13). Additionally, we hypothesize that congregations that expose members to global needs will have increased global engagement (H5).

Data and Research Design

Data Source: The National Congregational Study (NCS)

To examine the scope of international engagement and the nature of participating congregations, we utilized data from the third wave of the National Congregational Study (NCS) (Chaves, 2012). The NCS offers a representative sample of U.S. congregations including churches, synagogues, mosques, and other places of worship. The survey, which is based on in-depth interviews with religious institution leaders, has been conducted over three waves in conjunction with the General Social Survey (in 1998, 2006/7, and 2012). The study collects information on a variety of topics including congregational leadership, social composition, organizational structure, activities, funding, and programs.

Before the first wave of the NCS, the lack of a representative sample of U.S. congregations limited the research avenues of those interested in religious life in America. To address this gap, researchers utilized hyper-network sampling to develop a representative list

for the NCS from the GSS (Chaves, 2012). This innovative sampling method connects organizational sampling to individual sampling noting that a representative organization list could be developed by a representative sample of individuals (McPherson & Miller, 1982). Through the GSS a representative sample of individuals is asked to name, if applicable, the religious institutions with which they are connected. Congregations mentioned in this process make up the national representative sample used by the NCS. Seventy-seven percent of informants on the survey were clergy, 93% staff, and 7% non-staff congregation leaders. In the third wave of this study, data was collected on a total of 1331 respondents each representing an individual congregation.

The dataset skews highly Christian, but in ways that reflect the U.S. demographics. The data set, for example, includes 13.5% non-Christian congregations compared to the U.S. population estimate that 13% of religious adherents in the U.S. identify with a non-Christian tradition (Pew Research Center, 2019). The data also parallels Christian demographics and includes data on all prominent traditions such as churches from the evangelical protestant, mainline protestant, Black protestant, Catholic, and other traditions. The phone survey conducted by NCS researchers collects information on multiple topics related to congregational life, leadership, social composition, organizational structure, activities, funding, and programs. The response rate for the survey was between 73-78% with a cooperation rate of 87%. The response rate was calculated using the conservative RR3 method with the sample which was nominated by participants in the General Social Survey (Chaves, 2012). We expect this may account for the high response rates.

A potential limitation of this data could lie in its use of single informants to collect data about an organization, possibly leading to bias in the response. The NCS study took this into account, however, through survey design and determining which questions should and should not be asked of only one informant to protect validity. These choices were informed by three key social science theories: 1. The “false consensus effect” in which an individual is likely to overestimate the extent to which others within a group agree with their own ideology (Krueger & Clement, 1994; Marks & Miller, 1987; Mullen et al., 1992; Ross et al., 1977). 2. A recognition in organizational theory that missions, goals, and identity of organizations are often not unified and are open to personal interpretation (Scott, 1992) and 3. Use of best practices in measuring composition characteristics of an organization which notes that leader-reported data is equally as reliable as direct canvas and can be interchanged for this method (Marsden & Rohrer, 2001; McPherson & Rotolo, 1995). To account for the possible limitations and considering these social theories, the NCS made every attempt to speak with clergy at each congregation, limit questions to those that were primarily observable aspects of a congregation, and avoided questions aimed at individuals’ lives, goals, or mission.

This area of research, especially at the congregational level, is relatively novel and there exist few figures on the scope of global engagement by U.S. Congregations. The variables analyzed in this paper are rooted in our review of theory, experience in the field, and the variables made available through the NCS Wave III Data. The purpose of this study is to explore if these variables related to individual and religious global philanthropy study may show a relationship at the broader organizational level. This paper provides data on the extent of

global congregational engagement, key demographic and organizational factors which show significant relationships, and highlight key areas on which to ground additional inquiry.

While the National Congregational Study (NCS) dataset provides valuable insights into the global engagement of US congregations, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Understanding these limitations is crucial for interpreting the findings and considering the generalizability of the results. The NCS research study does not seek necessarily to inform our understanding of global engagement specifically and was designed with much more detailed attention to the domestic sphere, likely given keen research and funding interests in these topics. The data collected by the NCS rely primarily on self-reports from congregational leaders or other informants. Self-reported data may be subject to bias, since respondents may have different perceptions, interpretations, or recollections of their congregation's global engagement activities. Moreover, respondents may feel inclined to present their congregation in a favorable light, leading to a potential bias towards reporting higher levels of engagement. Therefore, the accuracy and reliability of the data are subject to the limitations associated with self-report measures.

Global engagement is a dynamic field influenced by various factors, including geopolitical events, technological advancements, and shifts in religious or social landscapes. The NCS dataset's temporal limitations may restrict the examination of more recent trends or emerging patterns in global engagement among US congregations. Additionally, the NCS, like many survey-based datasets, provides valuable information on associations and correlations between variables. However, it is important to note that the dataset's nature limits its ability to establish causality. While the study may identify relationships between variables, it cannot rule

out alternative explanations. Therefore, caution must be exercised when interpreting the findings as causal relationships.

This dataset, while the most reflective study of U.S. congregations, does not allow provide much context on the nature of the engagement of these congregations outside of specific methods of engagement such as sending members or money abroad to other congregations. For example, the NCS does not ask about the specific area of global engagement, success factors, or program design or philosophy. The NCS dataset primarily focuses on quantitative data collected through surveys, which may result in a lack of rich contextual information. Understanding the nuances and complexities of global engagement in congregations often requires qualitative data that delve deeper into the motivations, experiences, and dynamics of congregational partnerships. The absence of qualitative data in the NCS dataset limits the depth of understanding that can be gained from the analysis. Based on my exploratory research, the deeper nature of partnership and engagement between US congregations and global congregations or nonprofits if the most impactful on a practical level. However, it provides the most comprehensive study of congregations within the United States, and consequently provides information on key variables of interest in this study. For this reason, this dataset has been used to inform our understanding of the scope of global engagement of congregations. Future research could address some of these limitations by employing alternative methodologies, such as longitudinal studies or mixed methods approaches, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics of global engagement in congregations.

This field of research is limited with few statistics or data available even on the scope of global engagement at the congregational level. There is anecdotal evidence of congregations engaging in global development, and research conduct on the mechanism of the global missional work as it relates to global colonial enterprises, however, little data exists at the congregational level leaving researchers and practitioners without the basic information on the number of congregations even participating in such efforts. The goals of this study are to describe the level of engagement of congregations reflected in the NCS Wave III study, and to test if relationships exist between key variables outlined in the theories. Providing a deeper understanding of the nature of congregations engaged in global development efforts provides substantial evidence on which a myriad of additional research questions may be asked.

Hypothesis and Theoretical Foundations

The variables of interest in this study were chosen based on their connections to principles outlined in the theoretical overview and our hypotheses about congregational global engagement. Figure 2 outlines how our measures relate to each other and to existing theories, recognizing that there are overlaps between these theories in practice. We have also incorporated into the theory, key elements of organizational context (i.e., size and income) which we contend impact the capacity of organizations to engage in globally focused work. The variables outlined in this figure and at the heart of our study represent important elements in individual global philanthropy and we test the extent to which they are applicable within the organizational context through our primary hypothesis:

- **Hypothesis 1 Identifiable Victim Effect:** Congregations with a higher level of immigrant populations are expected to have a greater involvement with global engagement. This

hypothesis is based on the identifiable victim effect, which suggests that individuals are more likely to respond empathetically and engage in helping behavior when they can identify specific victims. Since congregations actively engaging with immigrant populations can identify specific victims, they are expected to demonstrate a stronger commitment to global engagement.

- **Hypothesis 2 Identification Theory:** Differences in global engagement among congregations can be attributed to social background of congregants, as measured by individual income and race/ethnicity. According to identification theory, individuals tend to identify more strongly with and engage in activities related to causes that align with their social and economic experiences.
- **Hypothesis 3 Social Norms:** Differences in global engagement can be observed through denominational affiliation, which influences the social norms within congregations. These social norms are shared expectations and beliefs within a congregation that guide individual behavior. Different denominations may have varying levels of emphasis on global engagement, resulting in congregations affiliated with certain denominations exhibiting higher or lower levels of global engagement.
- **Hypothesis 4 Values:** Congregations with different values, as measured by political ideology and theological ideology, are expected to demonstrate differences in global engagement. Values play a crucial role in shaping individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Congregations with specific political or theological ideologies are expected to prioritize and engage in global activities that align with their values, resulting in variations in global engagement across congregations.

- **Hypothesis 5 Exposure to Need:** The presence of global programming within congregations influences their level of global engagement. Congregations with a greater number of globally informed programming, such as missions, outreach, or service projects, are expected to demonstrate increased global engagement. The hypothesis assumes that exposure to global needs and issues through programming encourages congregational members to engage more actively in global initiatives.
- **Hypothesis 6 Organizational Context:** Differences in global engagement can be attributed to the organizational context of congregations, specifically member income, and size. The organizational context of a congregation shapes its culture, resources, and social dynamics. Congregations with higher incomes, and larger sizes may have different capacities, motivations, and opportunities for global engagement, leading to variations in their level of engagement.

Measures and Variables

To measure the extent to which an organization is engaged in global development or aid efforts, we rely on two dichotomous measures: Sending Members abroad and Sending Money abroad. These variables are coded 0 and 1 to note a congregation's participation or lack of in each category. Given the nature of the dataset we do not have information on the level or nature of engagement within these categories. Within the NCS Sending Money abroad is captured through variable SENDMONEY which denotes a "yes" or "no" response to the question, "Does your congregation send money directly to any congregation outside the United States?". Sending Members is captured through a "yes" or "no" response to the question, "Within the past 12 months, have there been any groups or meetings or classes or events specifically

focused on the following purposes or activities: to travel to another country to provide assistance to people in need?”. The nature of the data set does not allow us to assess the extent of this financial or personal engagement, only if a congregation does or does not participate in each method of global engagement.

These methods are central ways in which organizations interact directly with the communities, organizations, and networks of global development. These two forms of engagement seem straightforward, but in practice may occur through a few vehicles. Most often, sending members involves trips similar to service trips or voluntourism abroad. Sometimes conducted individually, most of these engagements occur as small-medium size groups traveling together for short periods (usually 1 week or less) to conduct service projects with the partner organization and build a relationship and connection with the U.S. congregation. Sometimes these occur as skilled trips, with congregants that hold special skills visiting partner organizations to help with capacity building. When we discuss sending funds, this generally refers to the congregational level and dollars that are collectively donated by congregant members. Specific disbursement figures, timelines, and methods are generally determined by the congregational leadership board. The way these funds are distributed (set amounts, fluctuating, single disbursement, etc.) varies greatly based on the partnership and the organizational structure of both parties. While our ability to analyze the impact or outcome of this engagement is limited by our data, this approach does allow us to investigate the extent to which congregations are participating in key forms of global engagement, and the nature of those organizations which do or do not, participate.

The independent variables were chosen based on our hypothesis that meaningful relationships would exist between these elements and the extent to which a congregation engages in global work. Table 1 outlines the key independent variables of inquiry as they relate to our hypotheses and existing theory. We have also included specific wording and measure details from the NCS related to each key independent variable.

Table 1: Independent Variables & Associated Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Independent Variables	NCS Variable	NCS Question
H1: Identifiable Victim Effect	% of recent Immigrants	IMMPCT	What % of congregation is composed of recent immigrants to the United States?
	Hosted Foreign Clergy	HOSTCLER	In the last 12 months, has your congregation hosted a clergyperson or preacher who lives in another country?
H2: Identification Theory	Household Income High/Low	RICHPCT2 POORPCT2	% of adult participants who live in households with incomes over 140,000 per year % of adult participants who live in households with incomes under 35,000 per year
	% of regular adult participants from each demographic	WHITEPCT BLACKPCT LATINPCT ASIANPCT AMINDPCT	What percent of the regular adult participants in your congregation are: white and non-Hispanic?, Black or African American? , Hispanic or Latino? Asian or Pacific Islander? , American Indian? What percent are an ethnicity other than the ones I've mentioned?
H3: Social Norms	Denominational affiliation	DENOM	Please tell me the name of your denomination or other association.
H4: Values	Theological Tradition (Conservative, Central, Liberal)	THEOLOGY	Theologically speaking, would your congregation be considered more on the conservative side, more on the liberal side, or right in the middle?
	Political Ideology (Conservative, Central, Liberal)	LIBCON	Politically speaking, would your congregation be considered more on the conservative side, more on the liberal side, or right in the middle?

H5: Exposure to Need	English Language Courses	LRNENGL	Within the past 12 months, have there been any groups or meetings or classes or events specifically focused on the following purposes or activities: A class for people in your congregation to learn English?
	Hosted Foreign Clergy	HOSTCLER	In the last 12 months, has your congregation hosted a clergyperson or preacher who lives in another country?
	Programs benefitting those outside U.S.	SINTL12	Within the past 12 months, have there been any groups or meetings or classes or events specifically focused on the following purposes or activities: Programs targeting people outside the United States
	Immigrant Services	SIMMIG12	Within the past 12 months, have there been any groups or meetings or classes or events specifically directed at immigrants, migrants, or refugees
	Group to support immigrants	IMMSERV	Within the past 12 months, have there been any groups or meetings or classes or events specifically focused on the following purposes or activities: To offer services for immigrants, such as legal assistance, translation, English language instruction, or job placement?
H6: Organizational Context	Income - Organizational	INCOME	What is the total amount of money your congregation received in income from all sources during the recent fiscal year?
	Number of people associated with congregation	NUMREGLR	How many persons – counting both adults and children – would you say regularly participate in the religious life of your congregation – whether or not they are officially members of your congregation?

Methods for Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. As described in the NCS Weights Documentation, the NCS Data Set allows data to be weighted one of three ways: “two that allow users to analyze data at the congregation level (one that ignores duplicate nominations

and one that takes account of duplicate nominations) and one that allows users to analyze data at the attendee level” (Eckman, Pedlow and Chaves, 2020). Researchers who are interested in the average congregation experience should use the congregation level weighted data, and those interested in the experience of the average congregant should use the attendee level weighted data. Given our focus on organizational connections, this study utilized the data weighted to represent the experience of the typical congregation as opposed to the experience of the typical congregation member in order to better analyze religious traditions with smaller attendee numbers.

Missing data is specifically addressed by the NCS team. They write that there are several reasons that data may be missing: “the key informant declined to answer or did not know the answer, the question was skipped because of a response to a previous question, or the question was not asked in a particular NCS wave” (National Congregations Study Code Book, 2020). They also explain that “We sometimes imputed a non-missing response to a follow-up item if a particular response is implied by the answer to the stem question. Whether or not we did this usually is noted in the remarks to specific items, but users should be sure to check for themselves how responses to follow-up questions have been treated in this dataset” (National Congregations Study Code Book, 2020). There are cases where the NCS makes inferences for missing data based on previous responses. (NCS Codebook, p. 27).

To better align with existing terminology and categories in the field, and to make the results more meaningful to specific contexts, we transformed the variables of congregation size and income to categorical variables. There are accepted figures within the field to classify a congregation size from “small” to “mega”. These classifications are often studied as their own

phenomena, noting that the difference between an 80-person rural congregation and an 8,000-person suburban congregation are so large on a practical, organizational, and relational level that these different categories of congregations often operate within very different contexts. The organizational resources and processes are often determined by categorical designations within the larger religious organization system (small, medium, large, mega). For this purpose, we transformed the variables of size and income into categorical variables to make them more meaningful for analysis within the field of religious studies and followed the recently released National Study of Congregations' Economic Practices (2021) five category system for income and followed the Hudson Institutes Congregation Size (2013) four level classification for analysis. Other than these two variables which had pre-determined meaning in the field, we utilized the variables as they were collected in the study in order to run meaningful regression analysis and understand the predictive factors.

We tested for our key variables against the dichotomous variables of Sending Members or Sending Money abroad using binary logistic regression with each of the hypothesis variables. Descriptive statistics were also used to summarize the characteristics and the extent of international engagement occurring at the congregational level. Inferential statistics, such as regression analysis, were employed to explore relationships between congregational characteristics and the decision to send people and money abroad. This analysis aimed to identify significant predictors or associations between the variables of interest. The primary analytic method used in this study is regression analysis in order to understand the potential impact and predictive nature of our independent variables on the outcome variables of sending people or sending money abroad. This analytic method allows us to understand both the nature

of and the strength of the relationship between the variables. Missing data was addressed using mean imputation, as well as the steps taken by the NCS to address missing data in the original set which is outlined previously. Using a univariate analysis provided a preliminary understanding of the potential predictors and their association with the global engagement of congregations.

To examine the factors influencing why congregations send members and money abroad, regression analysis was employed on the collected dataset. This regression analysis allows us to identify the relationships between the dependent outcome variable of congregations sending members and money abroad, as well as key independent predictor variables. Binary logistic regression was used to identify the significant predictors of congregation's decisions to send members and money abroad. The independent variables analyzed included characteristics such as denominational affiliation, size, programming, member composition, and socioeconomic context, etc. The significance of the predictors was assessed using p-values, and the strength and direction of the relationships were determined by examining the regression coefficients and their associated confidence intervals. Additionally, effect sizes were calculated to quantify the proportion of variance in congregation's global engagement explained by the predictors included in the model. These effect sizes allow us to understand the overall predictive power of the regression model. This regression analysis was used to identify the significant predictors and understand the relationships between various independent variables and the decision of congregations to send members and money abroad. The analysis aimed to provide insights into the motivations and factors influencing congregation's global engagement and contribute to the existing knowledge in the field.

Results

While there are multiple levels at which a congregation may engage in global development efforts, two primary vehicles are sending members on service trips abroad and sending money to international organizations affiliated with the organization. Our analysis shows that 27.3% of congregations send members abroad, while 18% of congregations send funds abroad. We also found a correlation between sending money and sending members abroad with 35.71% of congregations that send members abroad also sending funds, while over half which send money (53.5%) also send members on trips abroad.

Hypothesis 1: Identifiable Victim Effect

To test for Identifiable Victim Effect, we ran regression on the two independent potential predictor variables of whether the congregation hosted a clergyperson from another country in the last 12 months and the percent of regular adult participants who have come to the United States within the past five years. Table 2 presents the results of the regression analysis examining the Identifiable Victim Effect on sending money abroad and sending members abroad. The overall logistic regression model for sending members abroad achieved a statistically significant fit ($\chi^2 = 140.373$, $df = 6$, $p < .001$), explaining 15.1% of the variance (Nagelkerke R^2) and correctly classifying 75.8% of cases. For sending money abroad indicated an overall accuracy of 82.5% in predicting whether a congregation would send money directly to congregations outside the United States. The Hosmer and Lemeshow test showed a significant chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 10.887$, $df = 4$, $p = .028$), suggesting that the model's goodness-of-fit was not optimal.

Regarding the variable of hosting a clergyperson or preacher from another country in the last 12 months, the results indicate a significant relationship with sending money abroad ($B = 1.597$, $S.E. = 0.154$, $Wald = 107.347$, $df = 1$, $p < .001^{***}$). Congregations that hosted such individuals were approximately 4.936 times more likely to send money directly to congregations outside the United States compared to those that did not. The constant term in the model was also significant ($B = 0.511$, $S.E. = 0.113$, $Wald = 20.277$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$), suggesting that the odds of congregations sending money directly to congregations outside the United States were significantly different from zero. Similar findings were observed for sending members abroad. Hosting a clergyperson or preacher from another country in the last 12 months significantly predicted sending members abroad ($B = 1.186$, $S.E. = 0.137$, $Wald = 74.537$, $df = 1$, $p < .001^{***}$). Congregations that hosted such individuals were approximately 3.275 times more likely to engage in sending members abroad compared to those that did not. These findings suggest that cross-cultural connections through hosting clergypersons or preachers play a role in shaping congregational financial practices in global engagement.

However, the percentage of regular adult participants who have come to the United States within the past five years did not show a significant relationship with the odds of sending members abroad ($B = -0.001$, $S.E. = 0.009$, $Wald = 0.009$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.923$). The constant term in the model was statistically significant ($B = 0.269$, $S.E. = 0.110$, $Wald = 5.953$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.015$), indicating that the odds of congregations sending members abroad were significantly different from zero. When looking at sending money abroad a similar impact is seen. The model's constant term was statistically significant ($B = 1.503$, $SE = 0.072$, $Wald = 434.093$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$), indicating that the odds of congregations sending money directly to congregations

outside the United States were significantly different from zero. Again, the percentage of regular adult participants who have come to the United States within the past five years did not significantly predict if a congregation sends money abroad.

Overall, these results suggest that hosting a clergy person or preacher from another country plays a significant role in shaping congregational behavior in terms of sending money and members abroad. The odds ratios indicate a strong positive association between hosting such individuals and engaging in both financial support and sending members abroad outside the United States. However, the percentage of regular adult participants who have immigrated to the United States in the past five years did not significantly predict either money-sending behavior or travel for assistance.

Table 2: Identifiable Victim Effect Results

Sending Money Abroad						
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
In the last 12 months, has your congregation hosted a clergy person or preacher who lives in another country?	1.597	.154	107.347	1	<.001 ***	4.936
Of the regular adult participants in your congregation, what percent would you say have come to the United States within the past five years?	.007	.010	.554	1	.457	1.007
Constant	.511	.113	20.277	1	<.001	1.667
Sending Members Abroad						
In the last 12 months, has your congregation hosted a clergy person or preacher who lives in another country?	1.186	.137	74.537	1	<.001 ***	3.275
Of the regular adult participants in your congregation, what percent would you say have	-.001	.009	.009	1	.923	.999

come to the United States within the past five years?						
Constant	.269	.110	5.953	1	.015	1.309

Note. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .005$, *** = $p < .001$

Hypothesis 2 Identification Theory:

To examine Identification Theory, regression analyses were performed to investigate the impact of socioeconomic and race/ethnicity backgrounds on the engagement of congregations in sending members or money abroad. The summarized results for both analyses are presented in Table 3. For sending members abroad, the overall model was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 55.378$, $df = 7$, $p < .001$), indicating a significant effect of the predictor variables on the outcome. However, the model's explanatory power was modest, with Cox & Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2 values indicating that approximately 4.8% and 7% of the variance in the outcome variable, respectively, were explained by the predictors. The model exhibited some lack of fit as shown by the Hosmer and Lemeshow test ($\chi^2 = 22.983$, $df = 8$, $p = .003$), indicating a significant difference between observed and expected values. The model achieved an overall correct prediction rate of 74.5%, indicating moderate accuracy.

Among the predictor variables, the percentage of individuals living in households with income over \$140,000 per year ($B = -.020$, $p < .001$) was statistically significant in predicting the odds of sending members abroad. However, the percentage of individuals living in households with income under \$35,000 per year ($B = .005$, $p = .100$) did not exhibit a significant association. Additionally, race/ethnicity variables, including the percentage of white and non-Hispanic individuals ($B = -.041$, $p = .019$), the percentage of Black or African American individuals ($B = -.036$, $p = .039$), the percentage of Hispanic or Latino individuals ($B = -.050$, $p = .005$), the

percentage of Asian or Pacific Islander individuals ($B = -.043$, $p = .017$), and the percentage of American Indian individuals ($B = -.002$, $p = .898$), demonstrated significant relationships with sending members abroad.

Regarding sending money abroad, the omnibus test of model coefficients revealed statistical significance ($\chi^2 = 26.912$, $df = 7$, $p < .001$). However, the model exhibited low explanatory power, with Cox & Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2 values indicating that only a small proportion of the variance in the outcome was explained by the predictors. The Hosmer and Lemeshow test indicated a lack of fit ($\chi^2 = 21.884$, $df = 8$, $p = .005$). The analysis showed that the percentage of individuals living in households with income over \$140,000 per year had a significant negative impact on congregations' decisions to send money abroad ($B = -.018$, $SE = .006$, $Wald = 10.655$, $df = 1$, $p = .001$, $Exp(B) = .982$). In contrast, the percentage of individuals living in households with income under \$35,000 per year did not demonstrate a significant association ($B = .001$, $SE = .003$, $Wald = .162$, $df = 1$, $p = .687$, $Exp(B) = 1.001$). The race/ethnicity variables included in the analysis did not show significant effects on sending money abroad.

These findings suggest that congregations with a higher proportion of members living in high-income households are less likely to send money directly to other congregations outside the United States, indicating the potential influence of financial resources on congregational decisions and providing an interesting avenue for additional explanatory research. However, it is important to interpret these results cautiously and consider the limitations of the study. Additional factors and further research are necessary to fully understand the relationship between income distribution and congregational financial decisions. Additionally, the lack of statistical significance for the percentage of individuals living in households with income under

\$35,000 per year does not imply complete absence of effect. Other unconsidered factors or contextual elements may play a role. Future research could explore this variable in more detail.

Table 3: Socioeconomic and Race/Ethnicity Results

Sending Members Abroad						
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
% Household annual income over \$140,000/year	-.020	.005	13.939	1	<.001	.980
% Household annual income under \$35,000/year	.005	.003	2.706	1	.100	1.005
% White (Non-Hispanic)	-.041	.018	5.467	1	.019	.960
% Black/African American	-.036	.018	4.241	1	.039	.964
% Hispanic or Latino	-.050	.018	7.920	1	.005	.951
% Asian or Pacific Islander	-.043	.018	5.668	1	.017	.958
% American Indian	-.002	.017	.016	1	.898	.998
Constant	5.151	1.771	8.462	1	.004	172.607
Sending Money Abroad						
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
% Household annual income over \$140,000/year	-.018	.006	10.655	1	.001	.982
% Household annual income under \$35,000/year	.001	.003	.162	1	.687	1.001
% White (Non-Hispanic)	.014	.017	.661	1	.416	1.014
% Black/African American	.018	.017	1.064	1	.302	1.018
% Hispanic or Latino	.005	.017	.077	1	.782	1.005
% Asian or Pacific Islander	.013	.018	.538	1	.463	1.013
% American Indian	.007	.017	.144	1	.704	1.007
Constant	.259	1.700	.023	1	.879	1.296

Hypothesis 3: Social Norms

Regression analysis as well as descriptive analysis was used to understand relationship between denominational affiliation and the odds of congregations sending money and members directly to congregations outside the United States. Table 4 summarizes the descriptive analysis and indicate that congregations in the Christian tradition are much more

likely to engage in financial global activities with only 5.3% of non-Christian congregations compared to 19.2% of Christian congregations sending funds abroad. However, non-Christian congregations send members at a similar rate as Christian (30.8% and 27.1% respectively). This figure, however, is highly skewed by Scientologist congregations of which 100% report sending members abroad. With Scientologist congregations removed, that figure drops to 8.7% for the non-Christian denominations. The sample size of non-Christian congregations is also much smaller (n=94), thus limiting our ability to make any overarching claims about this group and additional targeted investigation is warranted. Within the Christian denominations, we find that Pentecostal congregations donate financially at a much higher rate than nearly all other religious traditions. In terms of sending members abroad, conservative, and evangelical protestant congregations participate at the highest rate. We also find inner-denominational differences, with United Methodist Churches sending members at twice the rate of Black Methodist churches and three times the rate of other Methodist congregations.

Additionally, a regression analysis was conducted to test for the predictive power on global engagement. For denomination affiliation and sending members abroad, the overall model was statistically significant ($\chi^2= 279.154$, $df = 97$, $p < .001$), indicating a significant effect of the predictor variables on the outcome. However, the model's explanatory power was limited, with Cox & Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2 values of .244 and .351, respectively. This suggests that approximately 24.4% and 35.1% of the variance in sending members abroad was explained by denomination. The classification table showed an overall correct prediction rate of 77.3%. The coefficient for this variable was 115.584 ($p < .001$). However, the standard error for this coefficient was quite high (S.E. = 42427.353), indicating potential instability in the

estimation. The constant term in the equation was 3.490 ($p < .001$). However, due to the high standard error and the limitations of the model's explanatory power, caution is required when interpreting these results for sending members abroad.

However, denomination affiliation demonstrated a statistically significant association with the practice of sending money abroad. The overall model was highly significant ($\chi^2 = 268.399$, $df = 97$, $p < .001$), indicating a significant impact of the predictor variables on the outcome. The coefficient for this variable was 133.963 ($p = .008$). However, the standard error for this coefficient was quite high (S.E. = 42431.785), indicating potential instability in the estimation. The constant term in the equation was 7.280 ($p < .001$). However, the model's explanatory power was limited, with Cox & Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2 values of .236 and .375, respectively. These values suggest that approximately 23.6% and 37.5% of the variance in the outcome variable, respectively, were explained by the predictors. The classification table showed an overall correct prediction rate of 84.9%. These findings suggest a connection between congregational affiliations and the practice of sending money directly to congregations outside the United States. However, due to the high standard error and the limited explanatory power of the model, caution is needed when interpreting these results and further investigation is needed.

Table 4: Denominations and Global Engagement Activities

Denomination	Count (n)	% Send Money	% Send Members
Roman Catholic	63	22.2%	19.0%
Baptist			
<i>Southern Baptist Convention</i>	128	14.1%	37.5%
<i>Black Baptist</i>	46	8.7%	10.9%
<i>American Baptist Convention</i>	12	8.3%	18.2%
<i>Other Baptist</i>	115	13.0%	16.4%

Methodist			
<i>United Methodist Church</i>	114	14.0%	18.4%
<i>Black Methodist</i>	34	8.8%	40.0%
<i>Other Methodist</i>	15	60.0%	60.0%
Lutheran			
<i>Evangelical Lutheran Church in America</i>	34	20.6%	11.8%
<i>Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod</i>	18	27.8%	22.2%
<i>Other Lutheran</i>	7	0.0%	14.3%
Presbyterian/Reformed			
<i>Presbyterian Church (USA)</i>	40	15.0%	41.0%
<i>United Church of Christ</i>	19	5.3%	10.5%
Pentecostal			
<i>Assembly of God</i>	41	61.0%	15.0%
<i>Other Pentecostal</i>	105	34.3%	38.1%
<i>Various Church of God</i>	26	57.7%	22.2%
<i>Church of God in Christ</i>	7	42.9%	42.9%
Episcopal Church	28	14.3%	35.7%
Other mainline/liberal Protestant			
<i>Unitarian Universalist Association</i>	6	0.0%	14.3%
<i>Other Mainline/Liberal</i>	19	10.5%	10.5%
Other conservative/evangelical Protestants			
<i>Jehovah's Witness</i>	9	11.1%	44.4%
<i>Seventh Day Adventists</i>	13	23.1%	53.8%
<i>Evangelical</i>	11	18.2%	27.3%
<i>Christian and Missionary Alliance</i>	6	0.0%	66.7%
<i>Church/churches of Christ</i>	27	33.3%	19.2%
<i>Other Conservative/Evangelical</i>	17	11.8%	58.8%
Other Christian			
<i>Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints</i>	17	5.9%	5.9%
<i>Eastern Orthodox</i>	6	33.3%	16.7%
<i>No Denomination</i>	207	12.6%	29.1%
Other			
Jewish (Reform)	21	19.0%	50.0%
Other (Islamic, Hindu, Sikh)	9	0.0%	0.0%
Buddhist	16	6.3%	6.3%
Scientology	16	0.0%	100.0%

Table 5: Social Norms Results

Sending Members Abroad						
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Denomination			115.584	97	.096	
	17.895	42427.353	.000	1	1.000	59131300.3
Constant	3.490	4234.150	.000	1	.999	32.793
Sending Money Abroad						
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Denomination			133.963	97	.008	
	14.066	42431.785	.000	1	1.000	1284795.137
Constant	7.280	4277.538	.000	1	.999	1451.447

Hypothesis 4: Values

We also tested for impacts of values as exhibited in Theological and Political leaning through logistic regression on both sending money and sending members abroad. Descriptive statistics are summarized in Table 6 and regression results are found below in Table 7.

For sending members abroad, the omnibus tests showed that the coefficients in this step were statistically significant, indicating that these variables contribute to the model. The model's ability to explain the variation in the outcome was very limited, as indicated by the low Cox & Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2 values. This suggests that the theological and political leanings of congregations only explain a small portion of the odds of sending members abroad. The Hosmer and Lemeshow test, which assesses the goodness-of-fit of the model, did not show a significant lack of fit, implying that the model adequately predicts the observed frequencies of engaging in activities abroad. The variables in the equation included the theological and political leanings of congregations, but their individual effects were not statistically significant. The correlation matrix showed weak correlations between the constant term and the theological and political leanings variables. Overall, the results suggest that the theological and

political leanings of congregations have some influence on their odds of sending members abroad. However, these variables alone do not provide a strong explanation for the outcome, indicating that other factors might play a more significant role.

For sending money abroad, we saw similar results of limited significance, indicating that these factors may be less influential in global engagement than other factors. The results of the statistical analysis indicate that the model coefficients are not statistically significant (Chi-square = 4.414, $df = 4$, $p = .353$), suggesting that the variables included in the model do not have a significant impact on the outcome variable. The model summary shows that the Cox & Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2 values are both very low (0.003 and 0.006, respectively), indicating that the variables included in the model explain only a small proportion of the variance in the outcome variable. The Hosmer and Lemeshow test, with a chi-square value of 0.299 and $df = 3$, is not statistically significant ($p = .960$), suggesting that the model fits the data adequately. The classification table shows that the overall percentage of correct predictions is 81.7%.

In summary, the results of the analysis do not provide strong evidence to support the influence of the included variables on sending funds or members abroad. Further research and the inclusion of additional variables are recommended to gain a better understanding of the factors influencing the outcome variable. Several factors might contribute to this outcome. Firstly, the sample size used in the analysis may have been insufficient to detect significant relationships. A larger sample size might be necessary to uncover meaningful effects. Additionally, measurement issues could have impacted the results if the variables did not accurately capture the constructs they aimed to measure. The presence of missing variables is another possibility, as other unaccounted factors may influence the outcome variable.

Multicollinearity, the high correlation between variables, may have obscured the unique contribution of each variable. These factors should be considered when interpreting the lack of significant effects observed in this study.

Table 6: Values Measures (Political and Theological) and Global Engagement Activities

Measure	% Send Money	% Send Members
Theological		
More Conservative, n=835	19.3%	29.2%
Middle., n=315	16.8%	25.7%
More Liberal, n=162	14.2%	21.6%
Political		
More Conservative, n=835	18.9%	25.6%
Middle., n=315	19.5%	30.5%
More Liberal, n=162	13.5%	16.7%

Table 7: Values Measures (Political and Theological) Results

Sending Members Abroad						
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Theology - Conservative			1.506	2	.471	
Theology - Middle	.203	.169	1.446	1	.229	1.225
Theology - Liberal	.160	.263	.371	1	.543	1.174
Politically - Conservative			8.867	2	.012	
Politically - Middle	-.304	.156	3.796	1	.051	.738
Politically - Liberal	.427	.306	1.944	1	.163	1.532
Constant	1.037	.088	138.464	1	<.001	2.822
Sending Money Abroad						
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Theology - Conservative			1.630	2	.443	
Theology - Middle	-.161	.136	1.402	1	.236	.852
Theology - Liberal	.065	.138	.223	1	.637	1.068
Politically - Conservative			1.387	2	.500	
Politically - Middle	-.048	.146	.107	1	.743	.953
Politically - Liberal	-.155	.132	1.374	1	.241	.857
Constant	1.633	.105	243.238	1	<.001	5.117

Hypothesis 5: Exposure to Need

There are several globally focused programs and events that congregations run domestically and are captured by the NCS. This allows us to test for potential exposure to need in the congregation: Hosting Foreign Clergy, Immigrant Services Programs, English Learning Programs, Programs benefitting people outside of the U.S., Groups to work on Immigration. These are common ways that congregations engage with global efforts on a domestic scale. In our analysis, these are grouped as Globally Engaged Programming. We tested for connections between programs and congregational global engagement. Given its significance, we included hosting foreign clergy in these results to see the impact of this in a programming sense. Results indicate that congregations with no globally directed programming showed the lowest levels of engagement in sending money abroad. We see that 45.9% of congregations with 2 programs send money (compared to 11.7% of congregations with no programs), though this effect seems to have a drop-off point with only 22.6% of congregations with three programs sending money. Similar to sending funds, congregations with no programs show the lowest engagement percentage, with 64.3% of congregations with 2 programs sending members. We were also interested in multi-sector global engagement occurring to get a sense of the extent to which different forms of programming are practiced in conjunction. Nearly half of all congregations who send money (57.2%), or members (49.73%) abroad also host foreign clergy. Our data also shows that congregations with programs aimed to benefit people abroad, also send members and finances at a higher rate.

A multinomial logistic regression model was also run to test the predictive value of globally focused programming on global engagement of congregations. Variables for each of

the program areas are dichotomous noting engagement or no engagement in that form of programming. Program areas focused on in this study are those potentially implicated by theory (Identification and Exposure to Need specifically). Programs evaluated include Hosting Foreign Clergy, Immigration Services, English Language Programs, Programs Directed at Immigrants, Programs explicitly benefiting those outside of the U.S., and domestic programs for community development. A multinomial logistic regression was performed to create a model of the relationship between the predictor variables and global engagement in the three categories (No participation, Just Send Money, Just Send Members, Send Both). The fit between the model containing only the intercept and data improved with the addition of the predictor variables, $X^2(16) = 283.95$, $p < .001$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .222$, $p < .001$. A goodness of fit test returned a nonsignificant Pearson's value of $p = .874$ which indicates the data will fit the model well. With the predictive variable added the model predicts 65.7% of cases. Table 9 summarizes the odds ratios for each form of programming, and Table 10 outlines specific parameter estimates and significance levels for each form of programming.

The odds ratio test results demonstrated that hosting foreign clergy, engaging in immigration services, programs explicitly benefiting people outside of the U.S., and domestic programs for community development all increased the odds of congregational global engagement. However, having an English language program did not significantly predict engagement. This table shows checks for the contribution of each variable to the model. Based on this analysis all programs, with the exception of hosting an English Language program, showed statistically significant effects.

Table 8: Programing and Global Engagement Activities

Measure	% Send Money	% Send Members
Hosting Foreign Clergy, n=394	35.4%	45.9%
English Language Course, n=61	18.3%	36.1%
Immigrant services, n=123	21.0%	49.6%
Program benefiting people outside U.S., n=83	29.9%	52.9%

Table 9: Odds Ratio Test for Global Programming

Effect	Model Fit Criteria	Odds Ratio Tests		
	Odds Red. Model	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	189.657 ^a	.000	0	.
Hosting Foreign Clergy	352.507	162.851	3	<.001
Immigration Services	213.494	23.838	3	<.001
English Language Programs	192.850	3.193	3	.363
Programs explicitly benefiting those outside of the U.S.	220.730	31.073	3	<.001
Domestic programs for community development	237.181	47.525	3	<.001

Table 10: Globally Focused Programming and Global Engagement

Global Programming	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Send Money								
Intercept	-2.96	.980	9.119	1	.003			
Hosting foreign clergy	-.925	.216	18.37	1	<.001	.397	.260	.606
Immigration Services	-.356	.396	.809	1	.368	.700	.322	1.523
English Language Programs	.336	.540	.388	1	.533	1.400	.486	4.031
Programs benefiting ppl outside of the U.S.	1.325	.816	2.637	1	.104	3.762	.760	18.62
Domestic programs for community development	.540	.212	6.464	1	.011	1.716	1.132	2.601
Send Members								
Intercept	-.126	.471	.072	1	.789			

Hosting foreign clergy	-.864	.169	26.01	1	<.00 1	.422	.303	.588
Immigration Services	-1.18	.248	22.51	1	<.00 1	.308	.189	.501
English Language Programs	.301	.366	.676	1	.411	1.351	.659	2.771
Programs benefiting ppl outside of the U.S.	-.574	.290	3.917	1	.048	.563	.319	.994
Domestic programs for community development	1.128	.179	39.67	1	<.00 1	3.091	2.175	4.391
Send Both Members & Money								
Intercept	.568	.602	.892	1	.345			
Hosting foreign clergy	-2.61	.232	126.04	1	<.00 1	.074	.047	.116
Immigration Services	-.974	.366	7.069	1	.008	.378	.184	.774
English Language Programs	.877	.528	2.760	1	.097	2.405	.854	6.770
Programs benefiting ppl outside of the U.S.	-1.53	.317	23.322	1	<.00 1	.217	.117	.403
Domestic programs for community development	.516	.223	5.374	1	.020	1.675	1.083	2.591
a. The reference category is: No participation.								

Hypothesis 6: Organizational Context

We also investigated for the effect of congregation size and income (total organizational income funds) level on sending members or sending funds abroad. Table 11 outlines these descriptive statistics and the percentage of churches engaging in both sending money and sending members as a reflection of their size and their total income. A Cochran-Armitage test of trend was run to determine if a linear trend exists between the variables which showed statistically significant correlations for sending money and sending members, both, $p < .005$. For the purpose of our descriptive analysis, we follow the Hartford Institute for Religious Research guide and define small congregations to be those with less than 50 regular attendees, medium with less than 300 regular attendees, large with less than 2000, and mega-congregations as

over 2,000 attendees (Hartford Institute for Religious Research, 2010). Regarding income, we follow the five category distinctions outlined in the recently released National Study of Congregations' Economic Practices.

For sending members abroad, we found that both income and the number of regular participants play a significant role in determining the congregations traveling to aid people in another country. The model incorporating categorical groupings of income and the number of regular participants significantly predicted the occurrence of sending members abroad ($\chi^2 = 93.225$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$). Both categorical groupings of income ($p < .001$) and the number of regular participants ($p = .001$) had a significant effect on the odds of sending members abroad. The model accounted for a moderate amount of variance in the outcome, as indicated by Cox & Snell R^2 (0.087) and Nagelkerke R^2 (0.126). The Hosmer and Lemeshow test showed no significant association between the observed and predicted values for sending members abroad ($\chi^2 = 5.314$, $df = 5$, $p = .379$). The classification table revealed an overall correct prediction rate of 73.2%, with a low accuracy of 17.2% for identifying the occurrence of sending members abroad. The correlation matrix demonstrated a weak negative correlation between income and the occurrence of these groups or events ($r = -0.399$) and a stronger negative correlation between the number of regular participants and the occurrence ($r = -0.668$).

For sending funds abroad, we found that total congregation income has a significant impact on the odds of congregations sending money directly to other congregations outside the United States. However, congregation size did not show a significant association with this outcome. The model incorporating categorical groupings of income and the number of regular participants significantly predicted the odds of congregations sending money abroad ($\chi^2 =$

63.260, $df = 2$, $p < .001$). The model accounted for a small amount of variance in the outcome, as indicated by Cox & Snell R^2 (0.060) and Nagelkerke R^2 (0.098). The Hosmer and Lemeshow test revealed no significant association between the observed and predicted values for the direct sending of money by congregations ($\chi^2 = 6.005$, $df = 5$, $p = .306$). The classification table showed an overall correct prediction rate of 82.1%, with a complete accuracy of 100% in identifying cases where congregations did not send money abroad. Only income ($p < .001$) had a significant effect on the odds of congregations sending money abroad, while the effect of congregation size was not significant ($p = .979$). The correlation matrix indicated a weak negative correlation between income and the direct sending of money by congregations ($r = -0.469$), and a similarly weak negative correlation between congregation size and the outcome ($r = -0.295$). These findings suggest that congregational financial resources play a more influential role in determining the international financial support provided by congregations.

Table 11: Congregation Size and Income with Global Engagement

Measure	% Send Money	% Send Members
Congregation Income		
Cochran-Armitage test of trend	62.76***	81.19***
<i>Small (<\$100k), n=525</i>	10.3%	15.0%
<i>Medium Small (<\$250k), n=278</i>	20.1%	33.8%
<i>Medium (<\$500k), n=137</i>	33.6%	45.5%
<i>Large (<\$1 million), n=45</i>	28.9%	53.3%
<i>Extra Large (>\$1 million), n=41</i>	34.1%	58.5%
Congregation Size		
Cochran-Armitage test of trend	24.04***	53.39***
<i>Small</i>	13.5%	18.2%
<i>Medium</i>	20.4%	32.3%
<i>Large</i>	30.7%	47.5%
<i>Mega</i>	35.7%	46.7%

Note. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .005$, *** = $p < .001$.

Table 12: Organizational Context Results

Sending Members Abroad						
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
<i>Income – Congregation Tot.</i>	-.577	.137	17.657	1	<.001	.561
<i>Size – Regular Attendees</i>	-.494	.151	10.730	1	.001	.610
Constant	2.997	.242	153.697	1	<.001	20.016
Sending Money Abroad						
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
<i>Income – Congregation Tot.</i>	-.898	.160	31.463	1	<.001	.407
<i>Size – Regular Attendees</i>	-.005	.168	.001	1	.979	.996
Constant	3.351	.282	141.043	1	<.001	28.525

Discussion

Our results indicate that key theoretical elements of individual global engagement and transboundary philanthropy are also reflected at the collective organizational level of congregations. Our findings support the theoretical hypotheses we initially outlined and contribute to the development of a theory of institutional faith-based global engagement and philanthropy and findings provide new empirical evidence on which to base more intentioned inquiry. Overall, we find that congregations in the U.S. are engaged in a myriad of globally focused activities and that important associations exist between a congregation's activities, values, membership, context, and the extent to which they are globally engaged. Understanding the nature of organizations and institutions behind the work of faith-based global philanthropy and their engagement in this work allows us to begin developing insights into the why and how of their operations and impacts in the community.

Hypothesis 1: Identifiable Victim Effect

Theory suggests that congregations who can identify a specific individual or a particular group in need will be more likely to participate in transboundary philanthropy as outlined in the Identifiable Victim Effect theory. The results revealed that hosting a clergyperson from another country significantly influenced both behaviors. Congregations that hosted such individuals were more likely to send money abroad and engage in sending members abroad compared to those that did not. However, the percentage of recent immigrants among regular adult participants did not show a significant relationship with either behavior, suggesting that recent immigration experiences did not strongly influence congregational actions. It's important to note that the model's fit was statistically significant but not optimal, indicating the potential for further improvement in capturing the complexities of the Identifiable Victim Effect.

These findings highlight the role of hosting clergypersons from other countries in promoting congregational behaviors related to global engagement, specifically in terms of sending money abroad and sending members abroad for assistance. By hosting individuals from different cultural backgrounds, congregations establish personal connections and foster cross-cultural relationships. These connections likely evoke a sense of empathy and identification with the needs and challenges faced by individuals in other countries. As a result, congregations become more inclined to provide financial support and engage in travel for assistance, thereby demonstrating their commitment to global causes and extending their impact beyond their immediate community. This research underscores the importance of intercultural interactions within congregations and the potential for these interactions to shape congregational attitudes and behaviors related to global issues. Understanding the factors that facilitate congregational

global engagement can inform strategies for promoting cross-cultural relationships, empathy, and compassionate action within religious communities.

Encouraging and facilitating opportunities for hosting individuals from diverse backgrounds can enhance congregational awareness, empathy, and involvement in global issues. By recognizing the significance of personal connections and the Identifiable Victim Effect, religious organizations and leaders can effectively engage congregations in global initiatives, such as humanitarian aid, social justice causes, and sustainable development efforts. These results contribute to our understanding of the interplay between personal connections, empathy, and congregational practices. Future research can explore additional factors and mechanisms to enhance our knowledge of the Identifiable Victim Effect within congregational contexts.

Hypothesis 2: Identification Theory

Turning to another explanation of global philanthropy, Identification Theory suggests that people give abroad when they can empathize with the experiences of the recipients. Our findings shed light on the impact of socioeconomic and race/ethnicity backgrounds as one proxy to understand identification on congregations' engagement in sending members or money abroad. The results suggest that these factors do play a role, although their influence is relatively modest.

For sending members abroad, the analysis revealed that the percentage of individuals living in households with income over \$140,000 per year had a significant negative association with this behavior. Congregations with a higher proportion of members from wealthier backgrounds were less likely to engage in sending members abroad. On the other hand, the

percentage of individuals living in households with income under \$35,000 per year did not show a significant relationship with this behavior. This suggests that the income level of low-income households within congregations does not strongly influence their decisions to send members abroad. Additionally, the race/ethnicity composition of congregations was found to be associated with their engagement in sending members abroad. Specifically, congregations with higher percentages of white and non-Hispanic individuals, Black or African American individuals, Hispanic or Latino individuals, Asian or Pacific Islander individuals, and American Indian individuals were more likely to send members abroad. This suggests that congregations with greater racial and ethnic diversity are more inclined to participate in international activities.

For sending money abroad, the analysis revealed that the percentage of individuals living in households with income over \$140,000 per year had a significant negative impact on congregations' decisions to send money internationally. Congregations with a higher proportion of members from wealthier backgrounds were less likely to engage in direct financial support to other congregations outside the United States. This finding stands in contrast to general assumptions but reflects other findings on philanthropic giving that find those in the highest income brackets participate in philanthropy at a lower level than others (Giving USA, 2020). Conversely, the percentage of individuals living in households with income under \$35,000 per year did not exhibit a significant association with sending money abroad. It is important to note that while these findings provide valuable insights, the overall explanatory power of the models was relatively limited. This suggests that there are other factors, not accounted for in the analysis, that may also influence congregations' decisions to engage in international activities.

Hypothesis 3: Social Norms

We also hypothesized that denominational affiliation would correlate with global engagement given the social norms that are emphasized through denominational channels. Many denominations have specific departments and offices aimed at connecting congregations with global engagement efforts. For example, the Presbyterian Church USA has a separate department, Presbyterian Missions, which specifically works on global partnership and training congregations for global engagement (PC USA, 2020). The findings shed light on the influence of social norms within different religious traditions and provide insights into the factors that shape congregational behavior in this context.

The findings indicate that denominational affiliation is associated with variations in the odds of congregations sending money and members abroad. Christian congregations, particularly those in the Pentecostal and conservative/evangelical Protestant traditions, demonstrate a higher engagement in global activities compared to non-Christian congregations. Within denominations, there are further differences in engagement patterns. These findings suggest that social norms within religious traditions play a role in shaping congregational behavior regarding global engagement. The higher rates of financial donations and member sending among Christian congregations indicate a shared understanding or expectation within these traditions that encourages or supports such activities. These social norms may be influenced by theological beliefs, mission emphasis, or organizational structures within the denominations.

The results highlight the need for targeted investigation into non-Christian congregations' global engagement practices. The lower overall rates of engagement among

non-Christian congregations may reflect different theological perspectives, priorities, or structural limitations. However, the limited sample size of non-Christian congregations in this study restricts our ability to make definitive conclusions about this group. Further research should explore the unique factors influencing global engagement among non-Christian congregations. Additionally, results indicate that while denomination affiliation has a statistically significant impact on global engagement, its explanatory power is limited. This suggests that other factors beyond denominational affiliation also contribute to congregational decisions regarding global activities. Future studies should consider additional variables such as theological beliefs, mission orientations, demographic characteristics, and organizational factors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities underlying congregational global engagement.

Hypothesis 4: Values

The results of this study did not find significant effects of ideology (as measured through Political and Theological ideology) on congregations' engagement in sending members or financial support abroad. The findings of this study suggest that there were no significant effects of ideology on congregations sending members or providing financial support abroad. This may be due to several factors that should be considered when interpreting the results. Firstly, the sample size of the study might have been insufficient to detect meaningful relationships between ideology and international activities. With a larger and more diverse sample, it is possible that significant associations could emerge. Secondly, the measurement tools used to assess ideology and sending behavior may not have fully captured the complexity and nuances of these constructs especially within a religious setting. Ideology is a multifaceted

concept that encompasses various dimensions, including theological and political orientations. The instruments employed in this study might not have adequately captured the full range of ideological positions within congregations leading to an underestimation or misrepresentation of the relationship.

Additionally, the presence of multicollinearity among the variables included in the model could have influenced the results. If there were high correlations between the predictor variables (e.g., theological, and political ideologies), it may have obscured the independent effects of each variable on sending behavior. Given these limitations, it is important to interpret the findings with caution and recognize the need for further research. Future studies with larger and more diverse samples, improved measurement tools that capture the complexity of ideology, and comprehensive models that incorporate additional relevant variables are necessary to provide a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between ideology and international activities in congregations.

Hypothesis 5: Exposure to Need

We found that congregations without globally directed programming displayed the lowest levels of engagement in terms of sending money or members abroad. This supports the exposure to need theory and highlights the importance of implementing programs aimed at benefiting people outside of the U.S. in promoting congregational global engagement. Congregations that actively participated in such programs showed higher rates of both sending money and members abroad. The presence of programs targeting the well-being of individuals outside of the U.S., along with hosting foreign clergy, emerged as particularly significant factors associated with increased levels of engagement. These findings suggest that congregations that

prioritize global initiatives and foster cross-cultural relationships are more likely to be engaged in sending resources or people to address global needs. In contrast, the study found that the presence of an English language program did not have a significant effect on congregational global engagement. This suggests that language-based programs may not be as influential in motivating congregational involvement in global causes as programs explicitly aimed at benefiting people outside of the U.S.

These results emphasize the role of programming in promoting congregational awareness, empathy, and involvement in global issues and support the importance of exposing congregants to global needs as a supporter of engagement. By implementing programs that expose congregations to global needs, facilitate cross-cultural interactions, and focus on specific areas such as hosting foreign clergy or assisting immigrants, religious communities can effectively promote congregational engagement in global initiatives. These findings have practical implications for expanding the impact of religious communities beyond their immediate surroundings and enhancing their contributions to global causes by enacting practices of informing and engaging congregants.

Hypothesis 6: Organizational Context

We hypothesized that organizational context, as measured through congregation size and overall income, would show impacts on global engagement. These factors show important capacity and context elements for congregations and are key variables often used to differentiate congregations from each other (i.e., small vs. mega). These findings shed light on how these organizational factors shape the involvement of congregations in global activities. The results showed that both income and the number of regular participants had a significant

influence on the odds of congregations engaging in these behaviors. This aligns with our hypothesis and reinforces the importance of capacity in global engagement, as well as provides a better sense of the type of organizations most likely to engage in global efforts. They are generally larger, more well financed, and often more well organized. This is an interesting finding that should be explored in future studies to understand how these dynamics then impact the kind of work that congregations support.

The findings indicate that congregational financial resources, as represented by income levels, play a crucial role in determining the odds of sending funds abroad. Our model, incorporating income and congregation size as categorical groupings, effectively predicted the odds of congregations sending money abroad, although it accounted for a smaller amount of variance in the outcome. This suggests that congregations with higher income are more capable of providing direct financial support to other congregations outside the United States. On the other hand, the impact of congregation size on sending funds abroad was found to be non-significant, indicating that the number of regular participants does not significantly influence this behavior. Regarding the sending of members abroad, both income and congregation size showed significant effects. Higher income levels were associated with a decreased odds of sending members abroad, while larger congregations with more participants were less likely to engage in this behavior.

The model's predictions aligned well with the actual behavior of congregations, with a high overall correct prediction rate for identifying cases where funds were not sent abroad. These findings highlight the importance of financial resources and congregation size in determining the international engagement of religious congregations. This suggests that

congregations with greater financial resources may prefer to support international causes through financial contributions rather than sending their members directly. Additionally, larger congregations with more regular participants were less likely to engage in sending members abroad. This could be due to logistical challenges or a focus on other forms of engagement within the congregation. These findings suggest that congregations with higher income are more likely to provide financial support, while congregation size may impact the feasibility of sending members abroad. Understanding these factors can help religious organizations and researchers better comprehend the dynamics of global engagement within congregational contexts and inform strategies for fostering international involvement and support.

Implications for Community

This project is based on the theory that faith-based organizations are worthy of the same analysis, evaluation, and critical study that we have brought to other nonprofit organizations and funders. This study also recognizes that often discussions of social justice and community development are siloed from a discussion of religion and faith. For many communities, however, ignoring the role of faith and religion ignores the practical realities of social change. Similarly, within theological circles, there are discussions of social change which while rooted in faith, ignore the non-religious or non-theological elements of community development. Many secular theorists ignore the importance of religion and faith in many communities, and many non-secular theorists focus exclusively on the theological and sacred at the expense of valuable knowledge from the secular field. This study contends that if we want to support real and sustainable change, we must push ourselves on both sides (and in-between) to develop theory which exists in both of these worlds. We must develop theory, and practices,

which account for the secular and non-secular. In doing so, we recognize the practical realities and opportunities that exist when faith communities are tapped to be agents of change. We also can avoid the fallacies and problematic practices that can occur when faith-based organizations ignore secular realities or when the role of power and privilege is ignored within their operations.

Interestingly, nearly half of the organizations which send funds abroad do not send members abroad; and for those who send members only 35% send funds. Even in the highest church income level, only 42% of congregations who send members also send funds. This seems to suggest a disconnect between these two forms of resource flows and that exposure to need through direct engagement does not necessarily lead to financial support. This raises questions about the types of partnership that are developed, and how the sending of financial and human resources is conceptualized differently in congregations. Given the significance of religious-based philanthropy previously discussed, it is surprising to see the lower level of financial engagement when coupled with sending members.

Such data is especially interesting given the critiques of religious service trips which are levied from both within and outside of religious organizations. Such critiques are often rooted in the legacy of ties to colonial and imperial enterprises and the potential harm caused by unsustainable or ill-informed service engagement (Henama, 2019; Large, 2019). These critiques have been well discussed in the literature of not only religious engagement but also within the realm of volunteer tourism and service-learning activities (Deacon & Tomalin, 2015; Haustein & Tomalin, 2017; Tomalin, 2018). Our data shows that there continues to be a preference within the religious context to send members over financial resources. This surely has great

implications on the work of global organizations in their access to financial resources but also in the added time and expense required to host traveling delegations. These findings warrant further study and suggest there may be a disconnect between financial and human capital contributions to global development efforts.

With this research project, we seek to begin filling the gaps in our critical understanding of how faith-based organizations impact the philanthropic and civil society sector. While many avenues exist on how to achieve this goal, this project focuses specifically on the connections between US-based congregations and nonprofits or faith-based organizations working in the global development field as a piece of the larger picture of religious engagement in civil society. Such a focus allows us to begin unraveling the philanthropic processes at play in U.S. congregations while contextualizing that process in an analysis of globalization, power, and networks of privilege. In doing so, it contributes to a more comprehensive theory of faith-based organizations and a discussion of the practices and philosophies which may allow them to mitigate pitfalls and work towards community development and social justice. This project seeks to inform and challenge the work of faith-based organizations, the choices of funders, the practices of communities, and the potential impact of this large sector of civil society.

Our goal in conducting this study is to provide much-needed information and context on which to ground future investigations and bring the reality of faith-based philanthropy to light. In their review of religion in international affairs, Schwarz and Lynch contend that scholars need to move away from Enlightenment assumptions that view religion as a monolithic entity either inherently good or inherently problematic (2016). Instead, they encourage a move to contextual scholarship that recognizes and examines the connections between the “secular”

and the “religious” (Schwarz & Lynch, 2016). This is especially true in the study of faith-based organizations and global development. We must continue to develop a more comprehensive theory of how religion and faith impact the flow of resources and globalization networks in order to address problematic practices and to garner the potential of these organizations to work towards social justice and community development. Such research stands to inform the work of religious organizations, the choices of funders, the operations of development organizations, the practices of communities, and the potential impact of this large subsector of civil society.

Overall, these findings contribute to the literature on religious practices and global engagement by highlighting the role of social norms and denominational affiliation in shaping congregational behavior. They underscore the need for further research to explore the multifaceted factors that influence congregational decisions regarding global activities and to develop a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play. Such insights can inform policymakers, religious leaders, and scholars in their efforts to promote interfaith understanding, global collaboration, and social change through religious communities.

Contributions & Limitations

This study contributes significantly to our collective understanding of the engagement of religious institutions in the United States in transboundary philanthropy and its implications for global development. By examining the prominence of engagement and identifying key factors that influence or contribute to engagement levels, we shed light on the role of faith-based global philanthropic networks in the larger puzzle of global development efforts. However, it is

important to acknowledge the inherent limitations of this study and the need for further investigation to deepen our understanding of this complex phenomenon.

One of the primary limitations lies in the nature of survey research and the design of the survey we utilized as our data source. While surveys offer valuable insights, they have inherent limitations in capturing the full complexity and nuances of global engagement. The survey we used, while providing helpful information to address our research questions, was not explicitly designed to solicit detailed information on global engagement. Therefore, there may be certain aspects or dimensions of global philanthropy that were not fully captured or explored in our analysis. Furthermore, the data used in this study, derived from the National Congregations Study (NCS), also has its limitations. Although the NCS is a nationally representative dataset and provides a robust foundation for our analysis, it was not specifically designed to comprehensively examine global engagement. As a result, there may be constraints or shortcomings in the data that limit our ability to investigate the outcomes, forms, or specific focus of global engagement within religious congregations.

Additionally, it is important to note that our data primarily represents Christian traditions, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other religious traditions or congregational contexts outside of the United States. While the NCS dataset provides valuable insights into the forms of engagement on which it collects data, caution must be exercised when extrapolating these findings to other religious contexts. Furthermore, this study has focused on examining the extent of engagement rather than delving deeply into the motivations, historical factors, and social contexts that shape global philanthropy within religious congregations. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the implications of

this work and refine theoretical explanations, it is necessary to complement quantitative analysis with more qualitative and ethnographic studies. Such studies can provide a richer exploration of the multifaceted aspects of global engagement and its impact on global development.

In conclusion, while this study significantly advances our understanding of faith-based global philanthropy, it is crucial to acknowledge the limitations inherent in the survey design, the data used, the focus on specific outcomes, and the generalizability of the findings. Recognizing these limitations highlights the need for future research to delve deeper into the complexities of global engagement within religious congregations, considering diverse religious traditions and employing mixed-method approaches. By addressing these limitations, we can further refine our understanding and contribute to the development of a comprehensive theory of faith-based global philanthropy, ultimately enhancing our ability to support effective community development and social justice initiatives.

Future Research Directions

While this study provides valuable insights into the engagement of religious institutions in global philanthropy, there are several areas that warrant further investigation. These research directions aim to deepen our understanding and address the limitations of the current study.

- **Partner-Specific Surveys and Qualitative Measures:** To gain a more comprehensive understanding of global engagement, future studies should incorporate partner-specific surveys and qualitative measures to capture the experience of global partners. This approach would allow for a more holistic examination of the dynamics, motivations, and

goals of both congregations and nonprofit organizations in these partnerships.

Additionally, exploring the perspectives and experiences of partner communities would provide valuable insights into the impact and outcomes of such collaborations.

- **Mixed Methods Studies:** To better understand the nature of partnerships, their cultural dynamics, and the role of power and relationships, future research should employ mixed methods studies. By combining quantitative analysis with qualitative exploration, researchers can delve deeper into the complexities and nuances of these global partnerships. Such studies can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the social, political, and power dynamics at play.
- **Participatory Research Methods:** Intentionally participatory research methods, involving key stakeholders and community members as decision-makers, can contribute to addressing existing gaps in the literature. By including the perspectives and input of those directly involved in the partnerships, researchers can gain a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the social challenges, inequities, and best practices. It is important, however, to be aware of power differentials and researcher-participant relationships, ensuring reflexivity throughout the research process.
- **Historical Lens:** Taking a historical lens to examine these partnerships can provide valuable insights into their development and the global dynamics that influence them. Understanding the historical roots of these partnerships, whether they trace back to colonial enterprises or contemporary collaborations, can enhance our understanding of their unique characteristics and functioning.

- Development of a Global Engagement Scale: Further research can focus on developing a Global Engagement scale that quantitatively measures the extent of a congregation's global involvement. Such a scale could consider factors such as the quantity and types of engagement, issue focus, and financial contributions. Additionally, exploring predictive factors of congregational global engagement would contribute to a deeper understanding of the drivers and determinants of such involvement.

By addressing these research directions, we can further advance our knowledge and inform the development of best practices that promote equity, social justice, and effective community development within these partnerships.

Conclusion

This research study provides valuable empirical insights into the extent of congregational engagement in global development and philanthropy, shedding light on the organizational characteristics associated with such engagement. The findings underscore the significant role that congregations, as central organizing institutions within communities, play in shaping international affairs. While religious organizations have a long-standing history of providing aid and support to communities both domestically and abroad, their impact within the philanthropic and civil society sector has often been overlooked and lacks systematic critique. By bringing the reality of faith-based philanthropy to light and laying a foundation for future investigations, this study addresses the gap in our understanding of congregational global engagement. It outlines the scope of such engagement through a comprehensive overview using nationally representative data, emphasizing the need to explore the processes, motivations, and outcomes associated with this phenomenon.

To advance our understanding, it is crucial to move away from viewing religion as a monolithic entity and adopt a contextual approach that recognizes and examines the complex connections between the "secular" and the "religious" within the study of faith-based organizations and global development. Developing a comprehensive theory that considers how religion and faith shape the flow of resources and globalization networks is essential to address problematic practices and harness the potential of these organizations for social justice and community development. This study marks an important step in understanding the role of congregations in global development and philanthropy. It not only provides a comprehensive overview of their engagement but also serves as a call to action for further research. By advancing our understanding of the dynamics and implications of faith-based philanthropy, we can leverage the potential of religious organizations to contribute meaningfully to social justice, equity, and community development on a global scale.

The implications of this research extend beyond academia. By informing the work of religious organizations, funders, development organizations, communities, and civil society as a whole, this study has the potential to drive positive change and enhance the impact of the significant subsector of faith-based philanthropy in global development efforts. It serves as a call to action, laying the groundwork for future research that delves deeper into the processes, motivations, and outcomes of congregational global engagement. The findings of this study have the power to inform and guide the work of various stakeholders, ultimately facilitating positive change within this significant subsector of civil society.

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