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Religion and cultural capital in the UK today: identity, cultural engagement and the prevalence of multiple religious identities

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ABSTRACT
Scholarship on social class occupies a particular pedestal in British sociology. However, recent research into the connections between religion and social position is conspicuously absent. Using a UK-wide survey, I employ Bourdieu and various statistical methods to investigate the complex cultural capital compositions of various religious identities. The findings identify a four-group typology of cultural engagement. I also identify those holding multiple religious identities as a new and prominent religious identity in the UK today, one that is highly culturally active. I explain these results through neo-Bourdieusian theories of the reconfiguration of distinction in the forms of openness and cosmopolitanism, and through arguments for the importance of cultural and social variety in accumulating capital. The unique group that has these multiple religious identities is also a prime candidate for further research into how religious dispositions may operate as its own form of cultural capital.

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Introduction

The role of social class in societies has been particularly salient for sociologists, and continues to occupy a prominent place in the sociological imagination. This is especially true for scholars of the United Kingdom. The focus on social class, however, has not extended to analyses of religion in contemporary societies, which has been nearly absent and generally ignored (McCloud, 2007; McKinnon, 2017). This is even more true of the UK, perhaps representing an implicit argument for the UK's secularization past a point of primary interest. However, I assert that this lack of

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interest and research has tipped beyond equilibrium and the lack of consideration of religion in studies of class is now in need of remedy. Indeed, sociological theories of the twentieth century assumed economic growth as a product of declining social relevance of religion (Burchardt, 2020). However, this century has seen an increased critical examination of such theories (Burchardt, 2020; Burchardt et al., 2013), and empirical investigations of countries outside of Europe (e.g. Casanova, 2006; Hefner, 2000) suggest that those assumptions more accurately represent a Europe specific orientation (Berger et al., 2008).

However, I reconsider here a European context that is the UK and focus less on economic relationships of religion. I rather focus on understanding cultural capital orientations of religious identities. McKinnon (2017) does some work in conceptualizing the relationship between social class and its cultural capital manifestations in a Bourdieusian frame. It is thus the absence of empirically driven work in this vein that is especially stark. It is the general lack of consideration and empirical dearth in understandings of the relationship between religion and cultural capital that this research seeks to redress. The study of this paper thus fills important gaps in the existing literature and represents an answer to the call for novel investigations into 'new and hitherto underexploited resources for understanding the intersection of religion and social class' (McKinnon, 2017: 169).

I therefore seek here to be a prominent answer to the call for more empirical research in identifying the cultural 'affinity of particular class positions and particular religious identifications' (McKinnon, 2017: 161). The pursuit of this kind of work is absent not least because of the lack of large enough representative data sets in the study of religion generally (McKinnon, 2017). The study of this paper is able to offer a rigorous analysis from a nationally representative 2016 UK dataset of sufficient size for such an analysis ($n = 1303$, see also Data and Methods section). In analyzing this dataset, I first use latent class analysis to identify the cultural capital profiles and then regression analysis to assess how these profiles are associated with groups of religious identity. In doing so I seek to answer the following guiding research questions:

1. What are the relationships to cultural capital profiles for different religious identifications in the UK?
2. Do these relationships recognizably relate to particular social positions and if so, how?

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Religion, social class and cultural capital

Economic circumstances were often considered in theories of religion and society for classical sociology. While relatively dormant since (Smith, 2008; Tracey, 2012), research into the links between religion and economics has begun to inspire new scholarly work in these areas (e.g. Barro and McCleary, 2003; Davidson and Plye, 2011; Guiso et al., 2006; McCleary and Barro, 2006; Smith, 2008). Results of these studies have been mixed. They find both positive and negative relationships between religion and income. These relationships also can vary by religion, denomination, nature of involvement and national context. For instance, Bettendorf and Dijkgraaf (2010) find a positive effect of religion on income in high-income countries and a negative relationship for low-income countries. However, similar studies into religious orientations towards cultural hierarchies and cultural engagement are lacking. Pierre Bourdieu asserted that his sociology of culture, arguably Bourdieu's most influential contribution, is the sociology of religion applied to the secular world (McKinnon, 2017), echoing Durkheim's work (e.g. Durkheim, 1995). This paper focuses on Bourdieu's theories as they are most comprehensively laid out in his seminal work *Distinction* (1984). It is here that Bourdieu outlines the role of economic, and particularly cultural capital in manifesting and perpetuating social class inequalities.

Bourdieu (1984) argued that individual action is structured by a constellation of primary and secondary socialized constitutions that are informed by class position and that form a unified class-based disposition to the world. Early childhood is the site of primary socialization, while formal education, especially tertiary education, and professional trajectories are prominent sites of secondary socialization processes. A particularly operative site of these dynamics for Bourdieu is cultural taste and behaviour. Cultural choices are thus structurally patterned by this class-based disposition to the world, what Bourdieu calls one's 'habitus'. The habitus is thus formed by the type of primary and secondary socialization that is informed by a social class position commensurate to the level and mix of their capital possession. It is for this reason that, for example, those from working-class or upper-middle-class backgrounds may have different tastes. These tastes are ones that inherently reflect the milieu of social conditions within which they developed. In no small part because of these processes, cultural knowledge and behaviours can act as social assets which people own, accrue and exchange.

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The more of this 'cultural capital' one has, the more social advantages and other forms of capital they also may be able to accrue.

For his part, Bourdieu (1984) found differences in the cultural tastes and behaviours of French society. Those of higher educational, occupational and class status engaged in more 'legitimate' or 'highbrow' cultural forms – ultimately defining themselves against those of lower status engaging in more 'lowbrow' forms. Cultural taste and behaviour are thus a site where class relations play out. However, since Bourdieu, some have argued for a decreased social status of highbrow forms of culture (Van Eijck, 2000). Much of this decline is asserted as being a product of proliferations of new cultural forms (Savage et al., 2015), such as genres of music, numbers of festivals and other cultural offerings, the rise of social media, or even the proliferation of teams and leagues in sports. This recent proliferation of ostensibly 'pop culture' (i.e. traditionally lowbrow) cultural forms has been accompanied by increasing empirical observations of more pronounced generational differences in the consumption of culture (Bennet et al., 2009; Coulangeon, 2017; Lizardo and Skiles, 2015; Purhonen et al., 2011; Roose, 2015; Savage et al., 2013). While this observation is perhaps not universally the case, there is enough empirical evidence in enough contexts to suggest at least some type of generational restructuring in consumption patterns. These generational differences in consumption however, do not mean that newer cultural forms cannot enter the landscape as comparatively highbrow activities, for example, yoga (Gemar, 2020), or that younger generations do not engage in traditionally lowbrow cultural activities in distinguishing ways (Jarness, 2015; Savage et al, 2015). For instance, a cultural activity included in this paper is listening to rap/hip hop, which within both its genre and the wider musical worlds, certainly has its own share of 'snobs'. It is to provide space for this nuance that 'emerging' is preferred to 'lowbrow' to refer to one particular pattern of cultural behaviour, while acknowledging that activities in this group would be traditionally understood as 'lowbrow'.

Emerging culture is thus also accompanied by new types of cultural capital. Perhaps the most influential theory signalling a shift towards new types of cultural capital was Richard Peterson's theories of the cultural 'omnivore' (Peterson, 1992, 1997; Peterson and Kern 1996; Peterson and Simkus, 1992). The behaviour of the cultural omnivore traverses the line between highbrow and lowbrow, consuming on both sides. Because this behavioural profile was associated with higher-status persons, it thus represented a type of eclectic cultural

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capital possessed and exchanged by the upper strata of society. Similar to these types of assertions regarding the increased cultural capital of more varied profiles of cultural knowledge and behaviour, others have argued for cultural capital based upon the 'openness' (Bennet et al., 2009; Chan, 2019; Coulangeon, 2017; Gemar, 2019; Ollivier, 2008) or 'cosmopolitanism' (Cappeliez and Johnston, 2013; Chan, 2019; Emonstspool and Georgi, 2017; Prieur and Savage, 2013; Rossel and Schroedter, 2015) of cultural lifestyles. Higher education institutions also serve to institutionalize these types of cultural capital, both because these institutions affirm values of openness and cosmopolitanism and reaffirm these values due to the nature of attendees produced by unequal access to these institutions (Igarashi and Saito, 2014). This emphasis on eclecticism and openness can be seen in both the trend of the 'spiritual but not religious' (Watts, 2018), and in an increase in people 'accepting traditions and beliefs from a variety of religions', demonstrating 'buffet-style' belief by which 'people create an individualized religious practice' (Kuzma et al., 2009:7). Therefore, while these are not the only drivers of these trends in religious belief, they are prevalent ones that highlight how similar dynamics can reflect in a kind of religious omnivorism like that of other cultural domains and within inter-domain consumption patterns over a similar period of recent decades.

Some scholars have argued for a type of 'religious capital', defining it in more economic terms as 'a type of human and social capital that increases an individual's productivity and consumption value of religious goods' (McBride, 2015: 80), or as a form of cultural capital (Caputo, 2009), by which religious knowledge, expertise and ethos confers cultural capital within a religious field. Concepts of religious capital are also sometimes termed 'spiritual', 'faithful', or 'religious social capital' (Baker and Miles-Watson, 2010). Verter (2003) also argues that religious and spiritual dispositions can be regarded as a form of cultural capital, or 'spiritual capital' because religious choice is 'inclined and constrained' by one's societal position, education and social context (Verter, 2003: 169). Bourdieu himself (1991) argues that spiritual practices and religious identity can be their own forms of capital (e.g. Andrew and Otto, 2017; Burchardt, 2020; Swartz, 1996; Verter, 2003).

Although seldom considered in studies of culture, one can study religion much the same way as one can study other forms of culture (Guest, 2007; Lynch, 2012; McKinnon, 2017). McKinnon (2017: 164) also outlines an argument for how this is the case.

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> I could analyze the place of different kinds of religion just as one would different aspects of lifestyle (taste in art, music, clothes, entertainment, food, travel). Religious commitments would then take their place on the same grid, marking out devotees as people with high/low cultural, social and economic capital, corresponding to the different classes and class-fractions in a given society. Such an analysis would provide interesting answers to Weber's questions about the elective affinity of different classes and class fractions for different religious belief and practice in the contemporary period.

However, McKinnon (2017) laments the absence of secondary data to conduct such a study. This is reflected in the absence of quantitative studies considering these questions. McKinnon particularly laments the complete absence of data of any kind on religion within the Great British Class Survey (GBCS). Using a survey designed by academics supervised by some of the creators of the GBCS, the data used in this paper closely mirrors the GBCS data, while also redressing this omission. While the data used here is unable to fully capture the denominational variation that scholars of religion may want, I hope that the results of the analysis in this paper can provide an important starting point for answering 'the Bourdieusian (or Weberian) question of what affinity of certain religious identities and practices have with particular classes and class fractions' (McKinnon, 2017: 264).

Data and methods

This study uses a data sample from a 2016 academic and private market research firm partnered survey commissioned by the author and carried out by SurveyMonkey. The survey was distributed online by the market research company to a large, generally representative sample of the UK population (see Table 1, Figure 1) using quota sampling methods

Table 1. Comparison of key demographic characteristics of the sample used in the analysis of this paper compared to 2011 Census data for the UK.

	Sample (n = 1303)	UK Census
Age Group		
18–29	21.7%	20.6%
30–44	26.0%	26.0%
45–59	28.2%	24.8%
60 +	24.0%	28.5%
Sex		
Female	52.3%	51.5%
Male	47.6%	48.5%
Race		
Non-white ethnicities	8.0%	11.1%
White ethnicities	92.0%	88.9%

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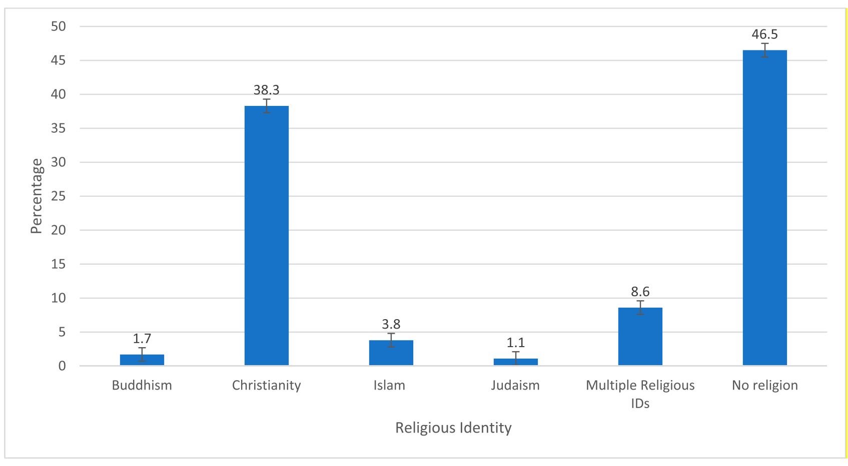

Figure 1. Relative frequencies for religious identity groups in the paper's sample, including 95% confidence intervals using 2016 UK population estimates (ONS, 2017b).

according to census data, with sex and age as the active quota variables.[1] The survey asked, 'Please choose any of the following religious traditions to which you identify yourself'. Although awkwardly and formally worded, the survey therefore uses the language and concept of religious identity adopted by many previous studies and surveys (e.g. Voas and Bruce, 2019). Provided with a list of common religions for the UK (and 'no religion'), respondents could choose more than one option, and could also write an alternative response. This was done to allow for the capturing of the potential increase in those who choose elements from various religious traditions for their own beliefs and practices. Those who chose more than one option, or who chose an option and also wrote in a substantively different religious identity were coded as having 'multiple religious identifications (IDs)'. In this way, it is different from most existing surveys of religion. Religion IDs with the smallest subsamples (e.g. Hinduism and Sikhism) are excluded because these subsamples have the largest margins of error and are also too small to expect a robust analysis that relies upon statistical significance. The sample size used for this paper's statistical analysis is therefore 1303.

Table 1 reports the percent of the sample that chose various religious identities. These frequencies differ some from the most recent (2011) UK census. Most notably, this is a much lower percentage of Christians than the last census (59.5%), and a much higher percentage of 'no religion'

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than the census (25.7%). The data show slightly higher percentages for Buddhism and Judaism, both 0.4% in the previous census, and a slightly lower percentage for Islam (4.4% in the previous census). These results, however, are much closer to a 2018 British Social Attitudes survey, which likely differs from the Census results because of different question wording (Voas and Bruce, 2019). The BSA survey also found 38% of the UK identifying as Christian, and a likewise much higher proportion of 'no religion' respondents (52%) than the 2011 census. Like the survey used in this paper, the BSA survey asked adults, rather than the census, which also includes children. These results may also represent the natural 2016 point on a religious trend line that has seen Christian identity declining and non-religious identity increasing, although prior BSA surveys have differed greatly from census data on these measures going back to 2001 (Voas and Bruce, 2004). The BSA survey also has a slightly higher percentage identifying with Islam (6%), fewer than 0.5% identifying with Judaism, and 3% identifying with all other non-Christian religions (Voas and Bruce, 2019).

The allowance of multiple religious identities likely explains differences with some of the few surveys on religion in the UK that do exist. However, I argue that this is an important inclusion. It is important because of the increasing tendency of people to partake in a 'buffet-style' (Kuzma et al., 2009; Tiemeier, 2010; Watts, 2019) or 'pick-and-mix' (Watts, 2019) style of religion, adopting elements of different religious traditions within their own worldviews and social profiles. Although there were many combinations of two or more religious identifications chosen (more than 20 of them), by far the two most common were those identifying with both Christianity and Buddhism (23.2% of this group, 2% of the total sample) and those identifying with both Christianity and no religion (18.8% of this group, 1.6% of the total sample). The former of these may reflect the strong adoption of Eastern religious practices, for instance in the form of meditative practice (Gemar, 2020) or New Age spirituality (Aupers and Houtman, 2006). The latter highlights the potential difference between upbringing or cultural identity and practice (Speed et al., 2018), and the general liminality of religion in many contemporary contexts (Lim et al., 2010). Thus this category is certainly one of the multiple religious identifications, rather than exclusively multiple religions. However, when one is able to navigate both religious and non-religious spheres it likely confers a similar or even greater amount of cultural capital and thus is a valid inclusion in this category. In this way, while these groups may arguably not be able to be

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analyzed together from a religious, or perhaps even sociology of religion perspective, they can be from a sociology of culture perspective through the theoretical lens this paper employs.

While a distant third (7.7% of this group, 0.8% of sample), the next most common multiple identification was with all religious categories, only not choosing the category of 'no religion'. This shows that some within this group may signalling an 'omnism', that is a belief, or at least a respect and recognition, of all religions, or a type of perennial philosophy – that there are truths in all religious traditions. This type of subcategory likewise highlights how this group of multiple religious identities may be related to categories of omnivorous cultural consumption.

The category of multiple religious identifications may also explain some of the undercounts in the most ethnically connected religions of Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism, as a non-negligible minority chose one of these religions alongside at least one other. This dynamic is potentially demonstrating the strong linkage between ethnicity and religion for some traditions, to the point where claims of religious identity may be even more so an expression of ethnic identity (Voas and Bruce, 2004). Indeed, Davenport (2016) finds that religion especially is associated with racial self-identification among biracial Americans. Therefore, some of those with multiple religious identifications may have multiple other identities that also influence their responses to religion that are not strictly about beliefs or practice, such as the children of mixed religious and/or biracial marriages in a time of increasing exogenous marriage in the contemporary UK. It is thus ultimately hard for this research to delineate between elements of belief-based identity and other ways, such as ethnicity, that one may come to identify with one or multiple religious identifications, or none at all.

While there are arguably also drawbacks with respect to the online and non-probabilistic nature of the survey (Yang and Banamah, 2014), because the composition of original survey so closely mirrors the census data, and is of requisite size for the population, it suggests that this survey is a valid sample of the UK population. Many scholars have also used such samples to good effect, including some upon which aspects of this study are modelled. For instance, Savage et al. (2013, 2015) utilized quota sampling to glean a similarly sized, but smaller (n = 1026) representative sample of Britain for their analysis of social class. While also ostensibly using a larger, non-representative online survey, the analytical force in developing new typologies of social class in these previous studies comes almost entirely from the quota sample

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(Mills, 2014; Savage et al., 2014, 2013). Particularly given that this paper does not attempt something quite so ambitious as developing whole new models for the British class structure, I argue that the size and composition of the survey data accessed for this analysis are sufficiently sound for our purposes.

This paper prominently deploys the statistical method of latent class analysis (LCA). Latent class analysis is a highly effective method of identifying typological groups within data. I use LCA in this paper to identify groupings of cultural behaviour. Within the context of the literature and theory on cultural consumption and behaviour, LCA is increasingly common and is particularly good at identifying omnivorous patterns that could be lost in aggregate tools such as MCA (multiple correspondence analysis). This is especially true if they are relatively smaller classes. A set of final logistic regression analyses will consider our profiles of cultural capital in a full regression model that also includes demographic variables. I use regression models for this analysis because they are able to control for and isolate variables that are most predictive for the dependent variable. In our case, the dependent variable is respondents' cultural capital profile, and I am concerned with isolating the most influential and predictive variables, controlling for other factors, with a particular focus on religious identity. Other variables include economic and cultural capital proxies of income and education, race/ethnic identity that are often bound up in religious identification, and age and gender, both of which could be key predictors of cultural activity profiles. While the use of education may not be optimal in a Bourdieusian sense (who would often rely on occupation), education is an oft – used proxy for cultural capital, and according to the Office of National Statistics (ONS, 2017a) has a strong influence on the occupational class that one belongs to in the contemporary UK.

Results

I investigate cultural capital profiles in this paper using measures of cultural behaviour. This measure includes both volume and composition of cultural engagement. Cultural choices are able to both reflect and accumulate cultural capital. Cultural capital can be exchanged in ways that can accumulate other forms of capital, namely social and ultimately economic capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986). The survey data obtained for this research followed the GBCS in presenting 15 cultural activity options for respondents to identify as 'sometimes or often' engaging.

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They reflect a representative mix of traditionally high and low status. These activities, along with their relative frequencies in the data, can be seen in Table 2. While most of the activities would be familiar or intuitive to readers, going to 'stately homes' may not be. Stately homes are often located in the country, on substantial plots of land, and are large and impressive dwellings formerly or currently occupied by aristocratic families. Activities that one may partake of at these homes include historical tours, afternoon tea, taking in the art and architecture of the dwelling, or other activities on the grounds. The majority of activities at stately homes would generally be classified as more highbrow activities. Table 2 also shows the resulting profile of a latent class analysis to identify groupings of cultural behaviour in the UK. This table suggests a four-class model of best fit, with the latent class groups I label emerging, inactive, highbrow and omnivore representing approximately 33%, 27%, 24% and 16% of the sample, respectively.

Table 2. LCA summary and group profile. The summary provides model fit and error statistics. The profile shows the likelihood that these LCA groups include those who participation in each activity. These are compared to their overall frequency in the sample.

Model summary		LL	BIC(LL)	CAIC(LL)	Class.Err
Model 1	1-Cluster	−11876,2434	23860,0732	23875,0732	0
Model 2	2-Cluster	−11201,0348	22624,4148	22655,4148	0,0761
Model 3	3-Cluster	−10961,5465	22260,197	22307,1970	0,1082
Model 4*	4-Cluster	−10816,0744	22084,0115	22147,0115	0,1557
Model 5	5-Cluster	−10757,859	22082,3396	22161,3396	0,1671
Model 6	6-Cluster	−10718,9879	22119,3561	22214,3561	0,1999
LCA Profile	**Emerging**	**Inactive**	**Highbrow**	**Omnivore**	**Overall**
Cluster Size	0.3279	0.2708	0.2388	0.1625	
Go to stately homes	0.218	0.1183	0.7724	0.6364	0.391
Go to the opera	0.0001	0.0192	0.2858	0.3459	0.130
Listen to jazz	0.1088	0.0884	0.2272	0.4705	0.190
Listen to rock/indie	0.6897	0.1568	0.266	0.9456	0.486
Go to gigs	0.5426	0.0476	0.205	0.815	0.372
Play video games	0.5378	0.1931	0.1317	0.4776	0.338
Watch sports	0.5854	0.3924	0.4067	0.571	0.488
Go to the theatre	0.4699	0.1788	0.7893	0.9185	0.540
Exercise/go to the gym	0.5147	0.2971	0.467	0.7318	0.480
Use Facebook/Twitter/Social media	0.8757	0.4482	0.4887	0.8486	0.663
Socialise at home	0.7529	0.368	0.5718	0.9284	0.634
Go to museums/galleries	0.5231	0.1633	0.8791	0.965	0.583
Listen to classical music	0.1347	0.1637	0.6699	0.7992	0.378
Watch dance or ballet	0.0257	0.0356	0.4141	0.3854	0.180
Listen to hip hop/rap	0.2292	0.0598	0.0002	0.2688	0.135

Note: LL = Log Likelihood, BIC = Bayesian Information Criterion, CAIC = Consistent Akaike Information Criterion.

*Model 4 is the chosen model because it presents a clear model of best fit for CAIC (lowest value) and also good BIC fit statistics.

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The first latent class is characterized by what could be termed more 'pop culture' activities. These include listening to rock/indie music, going to gigs, playing video games, watching sports, exercising/going to the gym, using social media, socializing at home, and listening to rap/hip hop music. This group of activities may also be constructively styled 'emerging' forms of culture (Prieur and Savage 2013; Savage et al 2015). This group is therefore monikered the 'emerging cultural capital' group. The use of 'emerging' is again preferred over 'lowbrow' here because of the potential for these activities to be done in distinguishing ways. Our subsequent analysis will also show if there are distinctive generational differences that mark this group from others.

Latent class two is characterized by low probabilities to participate in any of the cultural activities. For this reason, I label it the 'inactive' group. This group therefore has low levels of cultural capital as measured by cultural engagement. The next latent class, latent class three, is characterized by traditionally 'highbrow' cultural activities. These include going to the opera, stately homes, museums, theatre and ballet. They also include listening to classical music and jazz. I thus label this latent class the 'highbrow cultural capital' group.

The final latent class is characterized by its high likelihood to participate in all of the cultural activities. Indeed, only for the activity of going to stately homes (LC3), watching dance/ballet (LC3) playing video games (LC1), watching sport (LC1) and using social media (LC1) is the probability higher for another latent class group than for this final latent class. Therefore, latent class four has relatively equal or higher likelihood to participate in all of the cultural activities, both emerging and highbrow. For this reason, I label this group the 'cultural omnivore'. This moniker references the influential theories of Peterson (e.g. 1992, 1997; Peterson and Kern, 1996) that argue the paradigm of cultural consumption for persons of higher social position has moved from highbrow exclusive to more eclectic profiles. This could perhaps alternatively be labelled a type of eclectic, or cosmopolitan cultural capital. Therefore, there exists in our data emerging cultural capital, highbrow cultural capital, cultural omnivore and inactive, or low cultural capital profiles.

Religion and the overall make-up of cultural consumption groups

Our approach here includes conducting multinomial logistic regressions to understand the predictive force of religion for the four cultural profiles when other variables are also considered, with the inactive profile as

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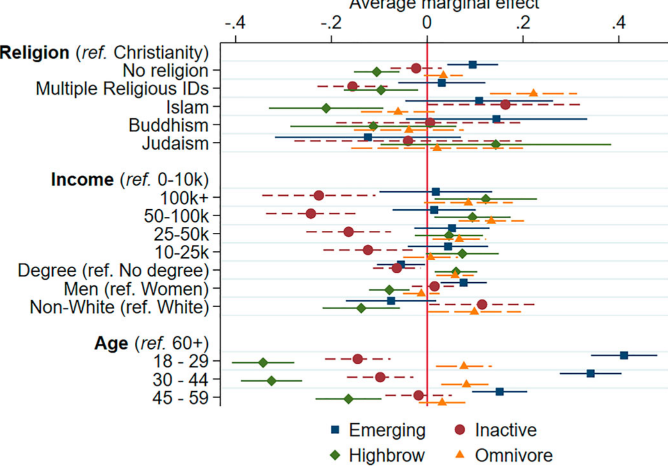

Figure 2. Average marginal effects (AMEs) of multinomial regression model for cultural activity group membership. Figure shows the average change in a cultural activity group's probability when a covariate increases by one unit, from multinomial model with the cultural activity group as the outcome: (1) emerging, (2) inactive, (3) highbrow, (4) omnivore. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

reference group. Figure 2 visualizes the average marginal effects (AME) of the full regression model (using replication code from Ellwardt and Prag (2021) as a guide), while the table in the online supplement reports odds ratios for these variables and their gross and net effects.[2]

All of the independent variables show statistically significant full model effects and thus predictive power for one or more of the cultural engagement profiles compared to the inactive group. All three are predicted by elevated income, while women and white ethnicities are predictive for highbrow cultural profiles, and elevated education for highbrow and omnivorous profiles. Younger age is strongly predictive of emerging cultural profiles, while older age groups and younger age groups are similarly predictive for highbrow and omnivorous cultural profiles, respectively.

In terms of religious identity, those who have no religion and have multiple religious identities are more predictive of an emerging cultural engagement profile than those who identify as Christians. However, Christian identity is much more predictive of a highbrow cultural profile than Islamic identity or those identifying as having no religion. Finally, those outlining multiple religious identities are highly predictive of having omnivorous cultural engagement profiles.

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Discussion and conclusion

I have in this paper tried to fill a prominent gap that is the consideration of religion in studies of social class by focusing on cultural capital, the most prominent of Bourdieu's three forms of capital that constitute class position. It is important to include considerations of the under-considered dynamic of religious identity because such religious identity and spiritual beliefs are some of the strongest drivers of worldviews and social action, even and especially in contemporary globalized societies. I fill this gap through an empirical investigation of the contemporary UK context. The analysis of this paper investigates religion in much the same way Bourdieusian-informed studies have proceeded for other areas of society. A secondary contribution is the survey used for this study itself. The data yield novel insights with respect to the current religious make-up on the UK. The primary of these contributions is being able to capture those who hold multiple religious identities. This is a previously under-captured group in surveys that seek to understand religion in society and under-considered in the current scholarly literature on religion, and even more so of social class. The results of this study show this group to be particularly important for the theoretical considerations of this paper.

The composition of cultural capital for the six groups of religious identity also gleans some prominent findings. First, Christian and non-religious identities represent near mirror opposites in their cultural capital profiles. Christians are most likely to have either highbrow cultural capital or be culturally inactive. The non-religious are more likely than Christians to be culturally omnivorous or have an emerging cultural capital profile than to have either inactive or highbrow cultural behaviour. There is thus a substantive difference in the cultural capital make-up of these groups. There are also stark demographic differences, with Christians older and those of non-religion younger, reflecting the generational decline in religion found in other studies (e.g. Voas and Chaves, 2016), with an observed generational religious 'half-life' of one generation (Voas and Crocket, 2004; Voas and Bruce, 2019). One issue here is that I cannot identify the intensity with which this group rejects religion. As a highly educated group, the omnivorism of the non-religious may well represent a reconfigured mechanism of distinction rather than true openness (Flemmen et al, 2017; Friedman and Reeves, 2020; Jarness, 2015; Khan, 2011; Lizardo and Skiles, 2012; Savage et al, 2015).

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For the four smaller groups of religious identity, there are a number of results that stick out. The first is that those with Muslim identity are particularly unlikely to have highbrow or omnivorous profiles of cultural engagement, and are rather more likely to have inactive or 'emerging' profiles. In a UK context, a lack of omnivorous or highbrow cultural engagement may contribute to, and be a result of, some of the widespread expressed feelings of general societal alienation (Wuthnow and Hackett, 2003) for those of Islamic identity. This can arise from a feeling that some forms of British culture are not welcoming environments because of prejudice and discrimination, or a lack of cultural diversity for those from communities who place lesser importance on, or have lesser socialized interest in, traditional Western forms of culture. However, because of the importance of such cultural knowledge bases in the workplace integration, cohesion and promotion (Erickson, 1991, 1996), this may be particularly true in work environs where studies show clear hurdles of workplace integration and employment inequalities for Muslims (Kogan et al., 2020).

The most original and perhaps most compelling findings of this paper come from the results of those asserting multiple religious identities. The survey data analysed for this study is, to the authors' knowledge, unique in including such a measure within a large-scale survey of the UK. This is true, even as many have observed the increase in people adopting elements of various religious traditions within their practices (e. g. Kuzma et al., 2009; Watts, 2019). Indeed, this has happened to the point that this type of behaviour could even be characterized as 'trendy' (Tiemeier, 2010). Therefore, the survey used for this study has the benefit of not circumscribing religious identities or practices dualistically. It is thus able to include these multiply religious, accounting for and capturing this more recent religious identity. It is indeed its increasing prevalence and its characterized trendiness that has perhaps the most theoretically salient ties to the findings of our study. This is because these characteristics could lead one to define it as an emerging form of culture, or as characteristic of new formations of cultural capital. It lends itself to theories of new configurations of cultural capital as openness (e.g. Bennet et al., 2009; Chan, 2019; Coulangeon, 2017; Ollivier, 2008) or cosmopolitanism (e.g. Cappeliez and Johnston, 2013; Emonstspool and Georgi, 2017; Prieur and Savage, 2013; Rossel and Schroedter, 2015), or even the consumption and knowledge of the 'exotic' (Johnston and Baumann, 2007), which some of these religions (or their elements) may signify in contemporary life.

That said, however, those with multiple religious identifications are even an even stronger positive relationship to cultural omnivorism.

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This makes logical sense as this group is omnivorous within their own religious behaviour, a trait that the data shows extends to other cultural domains. This group thus may indeed represent a specific form of religious cultural capital, as others have suggested (Andrew and Otto, 2017; McKinnon, 2017; Verter, 2003). At the very least it represents affinities between capital composition and religion, which reaffirms the ability of religion to be studied in similar ways as other elements of culture. This seems to be supported by the strong and predictive value for most religious identities in predicting cultural behaviour profiles, even controlling for other factors, and in the case of omnivorism, being most strongly predicted by multiple religious identities.

Limitations of this research include the reliance on online quota sampling survey methods. Although online surveys are increasingly becoming the 'dominate' method of public polling and market research firms (Kennedy and Deane, 2019), it is not considered the ideal method for academic research due to its non-probabilistic nature precipitated by its online platform, which is subject to online/offline biases of certain groups of people. This and other limitations also provide calls to future research. This study would particularly benefit from increased data on denominational or sect identities, along with more detailed data on religious and spiritual behaviour. There could be significant differences between denominational groups or those with more or less religious involvement. I am also unable to tease out whether or how different combinations of multiple religious identities affect cultural behaviour. These would allow for a more thorough investigation of numerous fractional class affinities in a pluralistic religious landscape. It would also allow a more fulsome investigation of elements related to 'spiritual' or 'religious' capital. While future research would include all of these variables and more, given the lack of empirical data to carry out such a study (McKinnon, 2017), I provide here a crucial starting point for scholars to take up such a challenge.

In conclusion, I set out in this paper to fill an empirical gap on the study of social class in religion, particularly in the UK. I did this through a deployment of Bourdieu's theories of capital, along with applying related theories such as emerging culture and omnivorism. The survey for this paper mirrors the increased prevalence of the non-religious highlighted in much prior research, while also showing multiple religious identities as a prominent form of religious identification in the UK today. While the complicated dynamics of personal faith and spirituality have been highlighted before, it is clear from the survey findings for this paper that these dynamics manifest in multiple religious

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identities more broadly than prior research suggests. I also find four styles of cultural engagement which mostly echo and confirm previous research done on the UK context. However, I innovatively analyse an oft-ignored component of social behaviour that is religion. Indeed, I find significant difference between religious identities in shaping cultural behaviour. With a wide gap between Christian and Muslim identity in engaging the traditionally highbrow cultural activities of the UK, the relatively new religious identities on the cultural scene of no religion and multiple religions show importance for predicting the relatively recent cultural profiles of emerging and omnivorous patterns of engagement. These two forms of religious identity are also those most likely to have omnivorous patterns of cultural engagement, with multiple religious IDs being the most predictive variables tested for such patterns of engagement thus showing a relationship between more eclectic religious and cultural profiles. I therefore lay out in this study the cultural capital compositions of various religious identities of the UK, and identify a brand new highly capitally possessed form of religious identity that is the multiply-religious. I explain this group through neo-Bourdieusian theories of the reconfiguration of distinction in the forms of openness and the importance of cultural and social variety in accumulating capital in contemporary society. This unique group may also be a prime candidate for further research into how religion may operate as its own form of cultural capital. Finally, these results show that differences in religious identity are a highly salient way of understanding differences in cultural affinities.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study has embargoed availability in Zenodo at DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.6665736. Data analysis replication information has open availability in Open Science Framework at DOI: 10.17605/OSF.IO/ARN79.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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