

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study aims to provide an exploration of the extent to which religion influences childrearing practices among white mothers in contemporary Johannesburg.

It proceeds from a description and analysis of different religions, and the degree to which people commit themselves to them; in other words their levels of 'religiosity', in order to analyse their childrearing attitudes.

Therefore, the study attempts to describe the attitudes and practices of childrearing, in terms of the person's religiosity. Religiosity levels in this context are then tested in order to observe the extent to which secularisation has affected these women's religious lives.

Psychology has long been concerned with childrearing, and more specifically, the mother-child relationship, influences during childhood, and other related issues.

On the other hand in this study, using a sociological perspective, childrearing can be analysed from different perspectives and approaches derived from fields such as Sociology of the Family, Cultural Sociology, or disciplines such as Anthropology or Population Studies. Here, childrearing is seen as a social practice that parents engage in, within a particular socio-cultural context.

Stuart Hall defines cultural identities as "those aspects of our identities which arise from our 'belonging', to distinctive ethnic, racial, linguistic, *religious*, and national cultures". In our contemporary modernity, he argues, there has been a "powerful revival of ethnic nationalism, fuelled by ideas of both racial purity and religious orthodoxy" (Hall, 1992). More specifically, religion "has continued to be a central part of human experience, influencing how we perceive and react to the environments in which we live" (Giddens, 1993:456).

In this context, although we acknowledge the fact that childrearing is influenced by many spheres of social life (the structure of the family, the media, the economy), this

dissertation focuses particularly on the role of religion. Religion has been a major component of social life across all cultures in one form or another. It organizes people into communities with rituals and prayer, provides faith and belief in a greater power, and also teaches morality. All major religions have always been concerned with the regulation of sexual activity between couples, with reproduction, family planning, and family life in general.

Religion is a major component of people's identities, with a very important role to play in terms of childrearing. Giddens acknowledges the changes in the Western family structure in the last few decades: broken families, the rise in divorce, lone parents, cohabitation, single parents, gay parenting, etc. (1993). These new patterns of family life and the liberation of sex have put religion into the difficult position of having to assume new roles in trying to adapt to these changing times (the influence of mass media, globalisation, internet), while at the same time providing the spiritual guidance and moral support it always has.

Childrearing does not only entail physical care of a child, but also the provision of his education, his social identity, and his values. Religion might have a major role to play, at least, in informing these aspects of childrearing.

In the context of South Africa, a particularly odd consequence of apartheid is that of the perpetuation of the old racial classification in many recent studies. For example, the South African Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)¹ provide a comprehensive picture of the national fertility situation and health awareness, much needed after the socio-political changes experienced in 1994 with the return of democracy. However, the study only reflects four major racial groups, Blacks (African), Whites, Coloureds, and Asians, conveniently based on the previous 1996 Census classifications. In this case, 'whites' are taken to be a homogeneous racial group, which is also the case for the other three major racial categories:

¹ Part of the series of DHS conducted around the world.

“Generally, ethnic identity is a way of distinguishing culturally distinct members within a particular population. Thus, English, Dutch, Germans, French (Huguenots), and Afrikaners are ethnically or nationally different, yet all have been considered white, European; inhabitants, or Christians, within official statistics of the Republic of South Africa” (Zuberi and Khalfani, 1997:5).

Caldwell and Caldwell also acknowledge this limitation:

“Until recently all statistics have been divided by race, a recognition of great differences in socio-economic levels and legal and political status in South Africa. Yet this division conditioned the way that those interpreting change in South Africa perceived demographic phenomena. They saw the four racial groups as four societies with parallels to the demographic behaviour of whole nations elsewhere in the world (Caldwell and Caldwell, 1993:232).

Both whites and blacks have been treated in a fairly homogeneous way throughout South African history. This history, which was ‘racialised’ in every possible aspect of social life, produced two major groups that lost, in a sense, their own defined *ethnic* components to become, mistakenly, two masses of people. We are presented, then, with a particular niche that has not been sufficiently explored. This study wants to explore, as well, some of the features that make whites distinct from one another. For example, whites can be separated into defined ethnic groups, ranging from Afrikaners and English to Mediterranean descent, and so forth. But here we will concentrate on religion and religiosity as key social features amongst whites.

In short, the motivation for this study is to engage white mothers with issues of religion (how they perceive it, and how they are affected by it), and childrearing practices (how they raise their children, what informs those practices) in a context of a modern, and supposedly increasingly secular society.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1: Introduction

The intention of this chapter is to situate this study in relation to the relevant areas of the literature on the Sociology of Religion, especially as they bear on the question of childrearing and on the concept of 'religiosity' which I use as an analytical tool.

2.1.2: Defining Religion

Religion remains a central issue for Sociologists. In Giddens' words, "Religion has continued to be a central part of human experience, influencing how we perceive and react to the environments in which we live" (1992:456). As he attempts to define what religion is, mainly by finding characteristics common to most varieties of religions, he concludes that it involves a set of symbols, invoking feelings of reverence or awe, that are linked to rituals or ceremonials engaged in by a community of believers. It does not necessarily involve a 'God', but it usually involves some form of being or object, which inspires reverence (1993:458).

The first sociological understanding of religion actually came from classical sociological theory and the forefathers of sociology: Durkheim, Weber, and Marx. Durkheim focused his attention on what he described as 'sacred' and 'profane' forms of religion, representing what was to be revered and feared; and the 'ceremonial' and the 'ritual', representing what would bind people of a community together (in Giddens, 1971:186, and 1992:465). His main concern, as well, was to specify the functional role of religion as the basis for solidarity in traditional societies (1971:350).

Durkheim identifies religion as a crucial social phenomenon, since it can be traced as the original source of all the moral, philosophical, scientific and juridical ideas of evolved societies (Giddens, 1971:105). In his study of totemism, he describes the functional character of religion in societies, by isolating religious beliefs and symbols

that can be classified as either “sacred” or “profane”, ultimately arriving at a definition of religion as:

“A unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things...beliefs and practices which unite into a single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them” Durkheim in Giddens, 1971:107

Religion in Durkheimian thought is created and re-created through ritual and ceremonial. Especially in primitive societies, unity and a strong collective conscience imply a sense of belonging to the group. Ritual re-asserts that belief in the collective and reproduces the mechanical solidarity on which the community rests (112).

Weber, on the other hand, was mainly interested in religions as far as they show how they can provide particular ethics that can account for economic activities and on their relation to social change, as both shown in “Economy and Society” and “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism” (1971:277 and 1992:467). Weber famously accounted for the role of Protestants in the early growth of capitalism by pointing out how the Protestant ethic generated a very distinct set of behaviours from those generated by Catholic faith (125). Since the spirit of capitalism entails the creation of wealth through economic activity and the avoidance of using income for personal pleasure, Weber finds a strong link (elective affinity) between the ascetic principles of rationality of protestant groups (such as Calvinists), and the rise of capitalism (130). Weber’s view of religion, emerging from his observations of increasing rationality in society and the presence of religious beliefs that coexist with economic activity, led him to further study the field by creating typologies of different religions. He makes the point to differentiate religion, which includes prayer and worship to divine entities, from magic, which is subordinated to human needs (171). It is rationality which makes men to move away from magic.

Marx presents a more radical approach to religion; he considers it to have an ‘illusory’ and unreal character, which is measured in relation to the historical development of the alienation of men (referring to the capitalist system and its class formations). As much as the state is an agent for domination of men through the reproduction of class structures and the exploitation of workers, religion is a form of alienation that

enslaves men. Marx's radical understanding of religion, however, has also left its mark in history. Thus, his famous statement "religion is the opiate of the people", for religious beliefs serve to legitimise a position of subordination of a dominated class (1971:355).

According to McGuire, "Religion is one of the most powerful, deeply felt, and influential forces in human society. It has shaped people's relationships with each other, influencing family, community, economic, and political life. Religious beliefs and values motivate human action...". Thus, it becomes of interest to sociologists (McGuire, 1992:3). The sociological approach to religion focuses on the social aspects of religious belief and practice, while acknowledging the fact that religion is both social and individual (pg. 7).

McGuire's 'sociological perspective on religion' also looks at the significance of religious belief, ritual, experience, community, the individual, and the family, and at religiosity. In terms of religious belief, the author explains that in every religion there is a cognitive aspect, meaning that religion shapes what the adherent knows about the world. These beliefs should be treated as empirical knowledge, because they are real in the believer's mind, and therefore real in their consequences to that person. Those religious beliefs also inform the individual about what is wrong and right, good and desirable, or bad and avoidable (1992:16).

Ritual, on the other hand, is the enactment of religious meaning. Beliefs of the religious group give meaning and shape to ritual performances, while rituals strengthen and reaffirm the group's beliefs (pg. 17, Durkheim, 1965:420). In terms of religious experience, McGuire explains that it refers to "all of the individual's subjective involvement with the sacred", and although mostly a private experience, people feel it and express it through communal religious rituals. The author argues that the intensity of the experience varies across different people, with feelings such as peace, harmony, joy, to terror, anxiety, or even fear (pg. 18). These religious experiences, when experienced through a ritual, can also include an awareness of belonging to a group, thus, the appearance of the religious community and its uniting power.

McGuire's sociological approach to religion is quite useful for this project's purposes. She reminds us of the ever-present structure-agency question in sociology (the debate on whether society is dominated by structures as a driving force, or by agency) by approaching religion as both social and individual. This is adequate because this study is a descriptive analysis of attitudes and perceptions of individuals. Her characterization of religious belief, ritual, and experience is also valuable. Religious belief in this study can include any religious morality a person may or may not have. Adherence and participation in rituals, on the other hand, could show how those beliefs are encouraged or how important they can be for the person who holds them.

However, one has to be careful, for many people attend rituals for reasons other than religious, such as for socialising, meeting people or wanting to belong, without necessarily believing in the religious content of the experience. One might find in the religious experience that feeling goes beyond a mere set of rules and commandments organised by a religious institution. This is where the personal factor of emotion and perception comes in. Faith aside, if a person feels deeply religious and experiences religion in such a way, then a religious commitment can be more easily found, and the motivation for certain behaviour (e.g. childrearing) can be better explained.

Social Sciences have long been debating the relation between social structure and agency, trying to determine which one is more active and powerful in shaping society. In this regard, McGuire acknowledges the fact that although religion is socially constructed, it is basically experienced by individual social actors who internalise and attach meanings of their own to it. Even if social groups influence the individual, there is no deterministic correlation between what the religious group believes, and what the individual does (McGuire, 1992:53). Moreover, the author argues, the "individual's religion is not a static entity, but it develops and changes over time, especially during a child's socialisation. In early childhood, a child begins to learn a sense of belonging to a particular group (family, religion, ethnic group, society) with a particular set of norms and values, and either through formal religious education (in this case) or simple imitation of adults or joint participation in communal rituals" (pg. 54). Therefore, the first main socializing institutions of the family, community, and school become so important. In many families, parents value some form of religious socialisation, whether formal or informal. The *family* is often a primary religious

group, and at the same time, religion has historically legitimised the family through rituals celebrating family unity, and provided norms and social controls to protect such institution (pg. 56-57). In terms of the wider community, McGuire does not only refer to religious communities, but they can be a tribe, or an ethnic community as well. A lot of people's choices that do not have their source in religion, can easily be drawn from their ethnic identity (pg. 57). When it comes to marriage, religion often regulates and determines what the ideal marriage should be, and has been closely linked with the regulation of marriage, family life, and sexual behaviour (pg. 63).

Finally, McGuire acknowledges the fact that a broader approach to the influence of religion on childrearing is needed, and she raises the question of "how religion shapes the attitudes of men and women toward children" as an interesting but neglected area of study (pg. 65); a gap that in some way we intend to start covering.

Classical Sociology and the Concept of Secularisation

Probably the most interesting contribution to the study of religion and its influence on society has to do with secularisation that is the (supposedly) declining influence of religion in modern societies. Weber sees this process as part of a wider process of rationalisation, a disenchantment of the world, and the advance of scientific knowledge. Marx focuses on the advance of capitalism as a whole. Marx sees religion as an alienating force that separates men from nature; as capitalism and modernity increase their domination over nature, so do religious illusions loose their grip and begin to fade away. In terms of the future, Marx expected religion to disappear completely with the appearance of Communism (Livesey, 2004). Durkheim also believed that in moving from more primitive societies into industrialised and modern ones, through increased division of labour, so society becomes more secularised. However, according to Livesey, the decline of religion was probable in Durkhemian thought, "it would only decline in significance if other institutional mechanisms arose in society to take-over its basic functions" (2004).

Secularisation: an ongoing debate

According to Hamilton, there are such varied views about secularisation, its meaning, and the extent of the influence of religion in modern life that is hard to determine if secularisation is merely a product of modernisation and industrialisation, a specific phenomenon of western societies, or even a particular characteristic of Christianity (1995:182). Recent theorists, such as Bellah (1971), Glock (1977), Luckmann (1967), Martin (1991), and Stark and Bainbridge (1985), have argued against any simple argument for secularisation, in the light of the emergence of new religious forms and the rise of fundamentalism. Certainly, religion has a functional role to play in society, as much as it did in the past, although it now has to change and transform in order to fit in contemporary social life (Hamilton, 1995:166). Much of the disagreement lies in definitions. Functionalists will reject a secularisation wave, as opposed to those who use more substantive definitions. According to Inglehart and Norris (2004), “functionalists emphasize that religion is not simply a system of beliefs and ideas, it is also a system of actions involving formal rituals and symbolic ceremonies. These rituals played an essential function for society as a whole, as Durkheim suggested, by sustaining social solidarity and cohesion, maintaining order and stability, thereby generating collective benefits”. Accordingly, religion might have changed its form and shape, but its core role has not.

On the other hand, if religion is understood as simply a way in which people give meaning to their existence, then secularisation would entail a crisis of identity (pg. 170). The reason for this is that since religion cannot provide meaning as it used to do, in a secularising world, people would have to find alternative ways of creating new meaning in their lives. Another alternative would be to change the way religion is practiced, and adapt it for the needs of a new world.

Shiner (1966, in Hamilton 1995) views secularisation as part of a six-way process: first there is a decline of religion through the loss of prestige of previously accepted religious institutions, doctrines, and symbols; second there is an acceptance of the natural world, as opposed to the religious “super-natural”; third, religion dissociates from the social sphere and turns increasingly more into a private matter of life; fourth,

religion loses its institutional grounding to become a human endeavour of creation and responsibility (the anthropologised religion); fifth, there is a loss of sacred character of religion in the world, becoming a rational activity of mankind; finally, secularisation means a move away from sacred traditional values to the acceptance of change, making decisions rational and utilitarian.

In a simplified version, there are two major perspectives on secularisation: the “demand-side” theories, which suggest that “as societies industrialize, almost irrespective of what religious leaders and organizations attempt, religious habits will gradually erode, and the public will become indifferent to spiritual appeals”. And on the other hand, the “supply-side” theory, which emphasizes that “the public demand for religion is constant and any cross-national variations in the vitality of spiritual life are the product of its supply in religious markets” (Inglehart and Norris, 2004).

The question remains: if this is an acceptable definition, then is secularisation a permanent process? Or is secularisation occurring at all?

These are not easy questions to answer, since it is so hard to measure the extent to which religion is losing its significance, or if in fact, it has mutated into different forms of influence. Attendance rates at places of worship or membership to churches, for example, are unreliable indicators, as are surveys (1995:169). According to Stark and Bainbridge (1980, 1985), secularisation is not something new, since it is part of a constant cycle of religious development, and therefore permanent in its nature. Science in modernity still cannot fulfil all the needs and desires of humans, ultimately always having a role to play in society and people’s lives (in Hamilton 1995:176).

Luckmann, on the other hand, argues that contemporary societies do not need overarching religious values, religion thus becoming an aspect of private life and individual choice (in Hamilton 1995:176). Similarly, Fenn acknowledges this individualistic position by defining secularisation as “a process of struggle, dispute, conflict, or negotiation, involving social actors who attempt to press their own claims and views of reality and not an automatic and evolutionary process” (in Hamilton 1995:179). According to Berger, there is only evidence of a changing role for religious institutions; even if “scientific rationalism has clearly triumphed over

religion in some areas, religious values, ideas, norms and so forth still provide people with moral guidelines by which to live their lives” (in Livesey, 2004). Berger argues strongly that religion has become pluralistic (competing religious organizations) and privatised (a matter of individual choice), so then religion has only changed in form and it is still an indispensable part of social life; concluding that there is inconclusive evidence for secularization (ibid.)

In a way, both arguments might have space in contemporary societies: the functionalist approach, as argued by those who focus on the rise of recent religious revivals and fundamentalists, gives religion a relevant role to perform, minimising versions of high secularisation in modern life; equally, those who argue that religion loses its social character to move into the sphere of the individual actor who uses religion as means of creating meaning and identity can be useful too, especially in trying to explain why certain people who do not subscribe to religious institution, still choose to lead a religious life.

Livesey, following Berger’s arguments, suggests that studying secularisation methodologically needs to take into account that religious belief and experience can only be understood interpretatively (in terms what religion means to people). Quantitative evidence can only provide data relating to religious practice (attendance, ritual, etc.) and organisation, but it is insufficient to determine if secularisation is occurring (2004).

This can be a good exercise for our purposes, as the dissertation will classify subjects in terms of their religiosity, this can also be measured against levels of secularisation. The data analysed in this study responds to both dimensions of religious practice, and belief in terms of meaning attached by the agent. Clearly religion fulfils different needs, so it might be interesting to see what degrees of secularisation will manifest in our sample of what I shall call High, Medium, and Low religiosity people (as identified in the analysis of section 4.2.2).

Is there no secularisation at all with very religious people? Do more secular people become more private in their religious life? Are highly secular people irreligious, agnostic, or atheists? These are some of the questions worth exploring.

Gender and Religion

The rise of gender studies and feminism began to shed a new dimension into the sociological study of religion.

Protesting against patriarchy and male dominated discourses, feminism has been raising debates around male and female social roles for over a century. In its latest form, feminist theories have been arguing that gender differences are not only complex and multifaceted, but also constructed entities (Woodhead, in Fenn, 2001). According to Scott, “gender is a constructive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power”; as well as religion being a term embedded in historical struggles of domination and resistance (in Castelli, 2001).

The latest wave of feminism seems to coincide with the latest shift in the study of religion, focusing more on the microlevel spheres of religious life, including a number of gender-focused approaches to religion. As King explains, gender-sensitive research is about drawing attention to ‘women’s experience as expansion or alternative or corrective to the historical prevalent male-based lenses’ (King, 1995:41). Clearly, religion and gender are no neutral categories, opening spaces for critical feminist theory to analyse the role of women in religion as radically different from men.

Woodhead suggests that classical sociology of religion, as well as the common discourses of secularisation, arguing that religion retreats from its public sphere into the private sphere, both come from a male-dominated perspective and ignore the different gender roles involved in the two spheres. Women have largely been excluded from that “public” sphere, remaining in the private sphere, as their natural domain, making the study of religion (whether in the public realm where women have

only recently taken a more influential role, or the private sphere where they have always had a crucial presence) much more complex. There is especially a need to re-conceptualise what “privatisation of religion” means, by considering as well the “feminisation of religion” (Woodhead, in Fenn, 2001:77).

According to Beck and Beck:

“One cannot any longer define the relationship between the sexes just in terms of what they seem to involve – sex, affection, marriage, parenthood and so on; one has to include everything else such as work, profession, inequality, politics and economics...anyone discussing the family has to include jobs and income, and anyone talking about marriage has to look into education, opportunities and mobility, and in particular into how unevenly these are distributed, despite the fact that by now women often have the same qualifications as men” (1995:13)

Feminism suggests a number of points that cannot be ignored when studying religion. Historically and socially, men and women fulfil roles, exercise power, and create identities which are qualitatively different. Religion, in its role of moral organiser, has a great deal of influence in reproducing gender roles. This is certainly something we need to consider when researching how women experience religion.

In terms of childrearing, gender-sensitive issues also come to light. Motherhood is still the strongest tie to the traditional female role. However, the advances in contraception and decision making power for women means that now they can co-decide whether, when and how many children they want to have, as well as share the responsibility of their care (Beck and Beck, 1995:30). Before, it was taken for granted that marriage for women meant renouncing a career, taking care of the children, and agreeing to move whenever the husband’s work demanded it. Although now that both want or have to earn a living, there are still vital factors to deal with, such as agreeing on how many children one wants and their arrival times, who looks after them, and dividing chores (Beck and Beck, 1995:35). As we will be able to observe, religion permeates and influences in all these decisions to some extent, apart from having to agree on what type of religious lives the couple wants to lead. The Becks even argue as well that in modern society we face a strong individualisation

process, and as secularisation gains ground, new living patterns emerge and value systems and religion compete for “people’s minds” (Beck and Beck, 1995:46).

This is why we should expect to see highly individualised forms of childrearing, differentiated by patterns of identity constructions, including personal religious adherence, as well as tensions at the parenting level, especially in the planning and implementation in raising children.

2.1.3: Defining Religiosity

The main aspect that concerns this study in relation to religion, as mentioned earlier, is the level of “religious commitment”, or “religiosity” people present. According to Miller, the most often used conception of individuals’ religious commitment was first proposed by Glock and Stark, arguing that all religious institutions make certain demands on their members, and the extent to which one meets these demands indicates the extent of one’s religiosity (Miller, 1990:38). Glock and Stark name mainly five dimensions, which comprise religious commitment: *belief* (ideological dimension, belief in the prescribed precepts of the religion), *practice* (ritualistic dimension, such as church or synagogue attendance, special holy days, prayer, etc.), *feeling* (experiential dimension, mainly the subjective feeling that is produced by belief or fear in the religion), *knowledge* (intellectual dimension, mainly the amount of information that people have about the basic tenets of their faith and rituals), *effects* (consequential dimension, mainly the affected behaviour, such as sexual, or abstinence from alcohol, disapproval of divorce, abortion, etc.) (Glock and Stark, 1965). However, according to McGuire the most serious shortcoming of this process is the quantitative study of individual religiosity (McGuire, 1992:103).

Religiosity can be operationalised and measured in many ways, ranging from attendance (attendance at church, synagogue, and mosque) to communion, circumcision, and other rituals. However, it is actually the effects of that commitment (or lack of it) on childrearing that concern this research. Religiosity, in itself, can be a tricky concept, often misrepresenting actual religious commitment. Some times one could find people who believe in God, attend church, but might not be religious in a

strict sense (Cardwell, 1980). 'Membership' to a determined religion, sect, or denomination, is clearly not enough to measure religiosity (Giddens, 1992). This is why religiosity has to be carefully measured, taking into account its use, but at the same time its limitations.

In order to measure religiosity we believe that although membership, attendance, and participation in rituals; are all valid and useful indicators, they are not enough to determine religiosity, unless faith in the religion and commitment to the religious precepts can be added to the equation. Being part of a religion and attending religious services is not proof enough of faith and commitment. Thus, levels of religiosity can be drawn up by enquiring if, apart from the participatory process, the person feels religious, experiences religion, believes in it, and therefore is committed to it. This approach basically refers to Glock's dimension of belief, and McGuire's account of religious belief as the defining factor for religiosity: a person either believes or not. A useful way to observe this might be through childrearing: parents, who are religious in this way, will probably want their children to be religious as well, providing the necessary education for it.

2.2: Religion, Childrearing, and Whites in South Africa

In terms of religious composition in South Africa, one can find a melting pot of Christians (both Protestant and Catholics), Muslims, Hindus, and Jews, to mention just some of the major faiths that the majority of the population ascribe to. If we focus mainly on 'whites', we can observe a variety of religious tendencies and identities, although most whites happen to be Christians. According to Stegen "Approximately 80 percent of South Africa identifies with Christianity. The idea that we are a pluralistic, multi-faith society is not justifiable when one considers that Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Bahai and Buddhists together compromise less than 5 percent of the population" (Stegen 1993:125, in Kilian 1993). The aspect of diversity and 'white religion' is contested, however, by Lubbe:

"The unique aspect of religious diversity in South Africa, however, is not to be found in the relatively large number of faiths represented here. The striking fact is rather that, with

the exception of a relatively small number of Jews, white Buddhists and white Muslims, all adherents of religions other than Christianity are black (that is, African, coloured or Indian)” (Lubbe 1993:147, in Stegen 1993).

Although the last South African Census was conducted in October 2001, the data has not been fully processed or disclosed at the time of this analysis, so we can mainly guide ourselves by the 1996 Census numbers and its’ estimates for 2001. We can see that out of a +/- 43 million population (this figure has increased in the last few years), 68% are Christian (including most of the whites, who comprise 13% of the total population), 2% are Muslim, 1.5% Hindu, and 28.5% are animists or practice indigenous beliefs (World Fact Book, 2002, based on the 1996 estimates from the South African Census).

But the overwhelming majority of white Christians are divided into various Church denominations ranging from Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) and other Dutch Reformed Churches (NGK), to Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Pentecostal, to name just a few. In the Apartheid years, the Dutch Reformed Church was very much linked to the government’s nationalistic programme by congregating mainly Afrikaners; this would actually contribute to its’ further separation from the English-speaking churches that were against Apartheid (Villa-Vicencio, 1988). South Africa’s particular history of racial segregation put churches in a complex struggle between their ideals and religious commitment to the people, and the political and social context. This history and each church’s stand in regard to Apartheid helped to shape today’s racial composition within them. However, there is a tendency in much existing writing to view religious diversity amongst whites in South Africa as relatively uninteresting, since the vast majority subscribes to one overall faith, Christianity.

But one has to be cautious; whites from different cultural and ethnic origins adopt different forms of Christianity. Today in South Africa one can find a plethora of Christian varieties ranging from Protestantism with the Anglican Church (popular among people of English descent), forms of Calvinism mainly manifested in the Dutch Churches (for example the DRC, and a popular choice among Afrikaners), the Orthodox Church (concentrating a large number of South Africans from Greek or

Cypriot origin), the Roman Catholic Church (a common choice amongst the Italian and Portuguese community). Other whites might be Jewish, agnostics or atheists, or even subscribe to other religions such as Hinduism, Islam, or a vast selection of gospel churches, cults or sects, available today in this country.

‘White religion’ in South Africa cannot be reduced only to Christianity without understanding the complexities of each religious tendency. In trying to explore how these religious factors influence childrearing, certain distinctions have to be made. Orthodox Jews, for example, have a religious mandate to have as many children as possible, while more secular Jews actually ignore this (Epstein, 1967). However, if they had been taken as a homogeneous group (both subscribing to Judaism), the data would have reflected a mistaken account of the facts.

Evidence from elsewhere also reinforces the need to look more closely at religion as a factor in contemporary identity, especially in the area of marriage. Hout and Goldstein provide an explanation of “white demographic growth” in the United States by looking into aspects of ethnic composition, religious tendencies, and intermarriage:

“Religious creed is a critical component of ethnic identification and necessarily, intermarriage. The association between husbands’ and wives’ religions before marriage is probably stronger than the association between ethnicities” (Johnson, 1979, in Hout & Goldstein, 1994:71).

Although intermarriage ‘per se’ is not a major concern of this study, the concepts of “religious and social homogamy” developed by the authors are worth highlighting. In terms of intermarriage in the United States, “groups that are affiliated with the same religion, have similar socio-economic status, and live in the same parts of the country have much higher intermarriage than groups that differ in religion, education, and region” (1994:79). When dealing with religion in South Africa one might encounter mixed-marriages and families where different religions come together. Especially among whites, where similar socio-economic backgrounds can be found, intermarriage across religions might not be so surprising.

Ethnicity, in particular, is not a central part of this project's focus; however, it does play a role in any social study in South Africa. Fenton defines ethnic identities as those that are "articulated around ancestry, culture and language which are subject to change, redefinition and contestation. We should understand ethnicity as a social process, as the moving identities which people, collectively and individually, draw around themselves in their social lives" (1999:10).

This definition may apply to our situation in South Africa where one can find blacks and whites from different 'ethnic' origins. A very good example is the case of the Afrikaners: in racial terms they may be taken as whites, but they surely comprise a distinct ethnic group, with its' own language (Afrikaans), ancestry (Dutch, German, French, Asian, and African descent), and culture (set of shared practices, traditions, and norms). Clearly, the Afrikaner ethnic identity can be set aside from the English ethnic identity, which does not share the same ancestry, language or culture.

What is central to this dissertation is the question of motherhood. In this area, Richardson is concerned with what childrearing options are given to women, and how these influence their lives as women, wives, and mothers. According to this author, women are expected to give birth, provide childcare and rear their children; it is a social norm. However, the modern woman is presented with a number of choices, including part-time or even fulltime jobs, other forms of childcare such as nannies and nurseries, single motherhood, and even choosing not to have children at all (Richardson, 1993). In her focus on the experience of motherhood, the author suggests that by having children, there is a social status attached to having children. Motherhood carries femininity, a sense of security and belonging, a rite of passage that says you are a real woman at last. Along with it, the expectation that mothers will embrace childrearing out of duty and love. These seemingly rewarding expectations create contradictory feelings in many women, of both love and fulfilment, but many times of anger and frustration as well. Let us be reminded that the burden of childcare and childrearing almost entirely resides in the hands of the mothers (even if they do have jobs), which require the woman to put her children's interests before her own. It is still very common for men, husbands, and fathers, to leave these responsibilities up to the women, who, whether having full-time jobs or not, usually organise the

household, the meals, create the groceries list, take care of the children's clothing, and similar tasks (1993:13-16).

In terms of religion influencing childrearing, a study in the United States looking at the changing American parent, suggests differences between religious groups such as Catholic and Protestant. The researchers interviewed mothers about the means and content of their children's moral instruction, in order to determine its relationship to their religious moral ideologies. The study also measured church attendance, and observed a number of childrearing practices. They arrived at a range of differences in childrearing practices between Protestants and Catholics, from views of how to discipline a child, to how free a child can be to solve its own problems (Miller and Swanson, 1958).

Although this study was conducted almost fifty years ago, its interests and methodology are similar to this one. Differences in childrearing are expected across religious denominations. Since we are also interested in mother's experiences and attitudes towards childrearing, as Richardson highlights, by interviewing mothers.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study required specific methods and research tools that could be sensitive to its needs and limitations. Triangulation between qualitative and quantitative methods represented the most reasonable way to obtain the data fit to answer our questions. However, the core of the data was generated by the qualitative stage, for qualitative techniques are the best way to enquire into and explore ‘perceptions’ or ‘attitudes’, by giving the participants a chance to identify and express themselves in a more dynamic way.

The research was divided into two stages: a survey, using short questionnaires, and; in-depth interviews using a flexible schedule (see samples in Appendices 1 and 2).

3.1: Survey

The survey was the best way to create a sampling frame for a qualitative sample. A decision was made to conduct the survey over a period of time, where the physician handed out questionnaires to mothers (see criteria of inclusion) who came into the rooms during the data collection period².

3.1.1: Data Collection

The data collection took place in the paediatric rooms of a private Johannesburg clinic. The people who attend the rooms are mainly mothers who bring their children to see the paediatrician.

Over a period of 5 months, 150 questionnaires were handed out to the mothers accompanying their children on their visits to the doctor. The questionnaires were filled by the respondent on site (either before in the waiting room, during the

² The clinic’s database was never accessed, due to doctor-patient confidentiality.

appointment, or after the appointment). Once completed, a nurse or the doctor himself collected them. I came to collect them once a week, and entered them into a database. Out of the 150 questionnaires, 13 were excluded because they did not meet the criteria of inclusion, leaving us with a sample of 137 participants.

The criterion of inclusion was self-identified white³ mothers (women who have at least one child).

The criterion of exclusion was fathers, and mothers who do not identify themselves as white⁴.

The questionnaires were 3 pages long, and took approximately 10 minutes to be filled in (please refer to Appendix 1).

3.1.2: Analysis

The analysis of questionnaires was undertaken with the assistance of the SAS⁵ statistical software. It mainly consisted of descriptive analysis: running distributions and frequencies by religious group, age, marital status, number of children. Depending on the data, some association analysis was also done (to measure association between variables).

3.1.3: Function of the Survey

The survey was designed to function as a framework for the project. Since there was no access to the clinic database, the survey provided mainly a demographic profile of the population in question. Other useful information such as family composition, religion, language spoken at home, and some preliminary questions on childrearing

³ The fact that they need to be “white” was not for me or the doctor to determine. This is an issue of self-identification. If a black woman, for example, identifies herself as white, she has to be taken into account. This is one of the functions of the questionnaires: to enquire racial and religious identities.

⁴ However, this can only be observed once the questionnaires have been answered.

⁵ SAS 8.02

(see Appendix 1) was also sought in the survey. This quantitative data, once analysed, was compared and integrated with the data obtained from the interviews.

The questionnaires also served another purpose: they presented a covering page containing a detailed introduction to the study, an invitation for the patient's participation and a clear explanation of her voluntary status, anonymity, and an informed consent form that they had to sign prior to the filling of the questionnaire (please refer to the "ethics" section for further details on this matter). This written introduction was also accompanied by a verbal one by the doctor, inviting his patients to participate, expressing his support for the overall project, but also making clear the fact that whether they participated or not, it would not affect the treatment of their children in any way.

The questionnaire was also aimed at seeing exactly how many people were available for the interviews. At the end of the questionnaires volunteers were asked to participate in the interview section (on voluntary basis).

3.1.4: Sampling

The criterion of inclusion was that subjects were self-identified white mothers (at least one child).

Excluded were non-white mothers who did not identify themselves as white, patients not currently attending the rooms (at the time of the data collection), fathers attending the rooms. Note that it is the participant who defines her own ethnic identity.

This is a purposive sample where white mothers are targeted. These particular types of cases are selected for in-depth investigation (Neuman, 1997:206). The first sample comes out of all the mothers who attended the rooms during the determined fixed period and answered the questionnaires. The second sample is a sub-sample in which a number of those mothers agreed to participate in the interviews.

According to Neuman (1997), *sample size* depends on the degree of accuracy required, the degree of variability or diversity in the population, and the number of different variables examined simultaneously in data analysis (pg. 222). In terms of accuracy, an exploratory study of this kind does not require a large sample. However, in terms of diversity, the population in question ranges across different religious and ethnic groups (according to general estimations by the paediatrician). This is why a larger sample is needed, in order to be in a position to gain representation of these groups⁶.

In the interview section, there is overrepresentation of Jewish women. This is due to the fact that, interviews were voluntary, and more Jewish women agreed to participate, while women from other religious denominations did not as much. As we can see in table 1, it does not necessarily reflect the overall sample, only the people who agreed to be interviewed.

Table 1: Sample Religious denomination

Religion	Number of people	Percent %
Catholic	24	17.52
Protestant	42	30.66
Judaism	57	41.61
Other	14	10.22
Total	137	100

3.2: In-depth Interviews

Since the exploration of people's 'attitudes' represents the focus of this study, in-depth interviews are the best way to conduct this enquiry. They can provide a unique insight into the subject's upbringing, and her family and religious life, which is useful when one contrasts them with her current family status. This is an exploratory study and the interviewees were allowed to express themselves freely and to share their

⁶ Unfortunately, nothing ensures variety in a sample that is drawn during a fixed period of time; it could be the case that only Catholics showed up at the rooms during that period, for example. Since the focus of this project is on religion in general, rather than particular religious denominations, this does not come as a limitation, although richness in the data could be lost in such an extreme case.

ideas, feelings and thoughts. Although in terms of religiosity one might be able to measure features such as church attendance; or observance, real religious commitment can be difficult to quantify. This is why it was necessary to rely mainly on the interviews to enquire how deep the commitment really is.

The interviews were designed to cover all the main topics pertaining to this study, ranging from previous and current family composition; cultural upbringing; religious adherence, identity, practices; and compliance, ideas around childrearing and practices (see Appendix 2).

3.2.1: Data Collection

Nineteen in-depth interviews were conducted, through a period of two months. At the end of the questionnaire the respondents were invited to participate in the interviews. The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 1:30 hours. The locations where the interviews were held also varied between an office at the doctor's rooms; to the interviewees' own homes, and even the interviewer's house on one occasion, to accommodate the interviewees' needs.

3.2.2: Analysis

The interviews, all but one of them were taped (with written consent by the interviewee), and transcribed into text format. Then themes were identified and categories developed (open coding⁷). After that comparisons were made between answers, themes, and categories (axial coding⁸), as well as the data from the surveys. Finally, conclusions were reached (selective coding⁹). These are subjected to further analysis in terms our previous assumptions, and put into context in our discussion.

⁷ Neuman, 1997:422

⁸ Neuman, 1997:423

⁹ Neuman, 1997:424

3.3: Ethics

This project has been approved by the Committee for Research on Human Subjects (Medical), University of the Witwatersrand. A brief comment is required on the ethical considerations, which have to be taken into account.

Informed Consent

Informed consent forms were provided to all participants (attached after a covering page explaining the nature of the study), as a requirement to take part of the study. Another separate form for consent to be taped was also provided to the interviewees.

Confidentiality

The issue of confidentiality and privacy is also very important. Names and identities were changed to protect the participant, and findings were only in the form of general conclusions about groups and not individuals. Only my two supervisors and I had access to the collected data. No medical records were accessed by us at any time, and no medical information was requested during the study.

Voluntarism

Participation in this study was solely on voluntary basis. All participants willingly signed consent forms for participation and for being taped (tapes will be destroyed after a period of two years). At all times, participants were able to contact the researcher for enquiries, and were free to leave the study.

3.4: Limitations

Different subjects react differently to the conditions of the enquiry carried out in a study. In this case we can take account of issues of reactivity on many levels. Firstly, there is the issue of the researcher being a male, while participants were all mothers of

different ages. Secondly, the subject of religion, which is to some people a sensitive topic.

On another level, we have to consider the limited scope of the study. This is an exploratory study. Its' aims are limited to exploring some issues and trying to build on the existing body of knowledge of the social sciences. There is also the limitation of mainly using religiosity as a measure to observe the effects of religion on childrearing. There are certainly other variables to consider (such as age, education, economic status, and the media).

The size and shape of the sample have to be considered. This is a small purposive sample, ideal for its accessibility, and we have no intentions of raising any 'representative' claims, only to describe and observe. In terms of socio-economic stratification, the fact that the research was conducted in a private suburban clinic entails that at least patients have either a medical aid, or cover themselves the costs. This is an important indicator that suggests high economic standards for the population in question.

Note that we would have liked to compensate for the overrepresentation of Jewish women in the interview sample, in order to enrich the analysis. However, this was done on voluntary basis (subjects came forward in order to participate), and we had no control over the process. The study remains focused on religiosity, mainly across religions, although it sometimes highlights specific study cases.

Finally, in terms of class, we have to emphasise that although our main focus is on religion, the sample represented in this study mainly reflects middle to high income families. Social class and economic status are important indicators, however, not crucial in this instance, choosing to highlight the role of religion over other social features.

Chapter 4: Analysis

Exploring differences and similarities in childrearing practices, through the lens of religion, implies drawing from two different sets of data. The survey provides not only a framework of demographic information in which the women of our study are located, but a set of useful indicators that speak to practices of religion and childrearing as well. The bulk of the analysis, however, derives from the set of in-depth interviews with white mothers.

On the basis of superficial appearances one might be inclined to think that religion does not play a serious role in the lives of white people in South Africa; in other words that there is a high level of secularisation. But our data suggests a different scenario: it is precisely by focusing on religion that differences in childrearing practices become more apparent. People, in this case, seem to rely to a large extent on different forms of religion, which inform how to bring up their children, how best to educate them, and to what values will serve them better in life. Religion not only influences spheres of marriage, ethics, and faith, but it seems to fulfil a number of roles when it comes to family life and the rearing of children, suggesting a relationship with childrearing worth exploring. Religions and denominations already divide whites into different groups, and therefore may be expected to play an important role in differentiating approaches to these issues across the sample.

Since this is an exploratory study, we want to see how religion influences people's lives, with specific interest in childrearing; however, it is clear that this study cannot explore all possible influences of childrearing. There might be other mitigating factors that have a role to play, such as economic status, educational level, or even age.

In order to examine the relationship between religion and childrearing attitudes and practices, we will examine different levels of religiosity. Religiosity refers to the degree of commitment and belief a person places on religion. By determining this degree of religiosity, we can begin to inquire about the way in which a person is influenced by her religion, as applicable to her childrearing practices. Religiosity is the key analytical tool that is used as an indicator for religion, which is permanently

analysed in contrast to the attitudes, behaviour, and practices that our participants show. The relationship between levels of religiosity and secularisation will be examined later.

In this way, we are trying to shed some light on questions such as:

What differences and similarities can be observed in women's childrearing? What sets these women apart? How does religion affect them?

4.1: Structure of the Analysis

The analysis of the data is structured through a typology. A typology is basically a classification where the researcher combines two or more simple concepts in order to create new complex ones (Neuman, 1991). This typology identifies three categories of religiosity (which cut across religious denominations), and four types or components of childrearing practices that came out of the analysis, namely *attitudes towards education, attitudes towards the family, attitudes towards the children's future, and the role of the partner in childrearing*. The three categories that run across are levels of religiosity identified in our data, allocating the different participants to these clusters. This is what the typology will look like:

Components of Childrearing

Religiosity Levels	Children's Education	Family Life	Expectations for Children	Role of the Partner
High				
Medium				
Low				

These three levels of religiosity are a useful way to achieve a good descriptive analysis of childrearing attitudes and practices for a number of reasons: they capture the different types of religious degrees found among our participants, they allow us to

observe differences in behaviour between the participants, and they go beyond mere distinctions of religious denominations. However, where applicable, we do look at certain differences between religions, but these three categories allow us to group people from different religious backgrounds in terms of their similarities in religiosity, rather than their origin.

The degree of comparability in each category across religions (for example the extent to which one could classify a highly religious Catholic with a highly religious Protestant) is solely based on similarities in their religious commitment and belief, and a similar level of practice of the religion. By no means are we trying to say that they are the same; rather, that even though they subscribe to different religions, they have a similar relation to the importance of religion in their lives. This provides a useful basis for our analysis.

What will be addressed and undertaken in the different chapters is an analysis and identification of patterns of behaviour related to these three categories of religiosity. For example, what are the attitudes to children's education of mothers with High Religiosity?; and so on.

Thus, the first section of the analysis deals with the *definition of religiosity and the criteria for analysing religiosity*, in which we identify *degrees of religiosity* (to which each interviewee will fall into)(4.2). Then, in the second half, three *case studies* will be presented, each illustrating one of the three levels of religiosity, and the types of links that exist between religiosity and childrearing behaviours (4.3). In this half, childrearing will be analysed in relation to the whole sample across the four dimensions of childrearing identified earlier.

There is a section that deals with the different trends of behaviour that High, Medium, and Low religiosity present when it comes to attitudes towards *children's education* (4.4). The next section deals with the different trends of behaviour that High, Medium, and Low religiosity people present when it comes to attitudes towards *family life* (4.5). The following section deals with the different trends of behaviour that High, Medium, and Low religiosity people present when it comes to attitudes towards their *children's future* (4.6). Then there is a section that deals with the different trends of

behaviour that High, Medium, and Low religiosity people present when it comes to *role that their partners* play when in their children's upbringing (4.7).

The last section is devoted to bring us back to the "secularisation debate" introduced earlier, by locating our analysis of religiosity in the context of secularisation, and evaluating the extent of this process in our sample (4.8).

4.2: Religiosity

This section tries to identify observable differences in religious observance, or 'religiosity'. Religiosity refers to the level of religious belief and commitment of a person. Attending church, for example, is not a direct expression of beliefs or ideals held by the person considered (Giddens, 1993).

This commitment is evaluated through analysing a number of attitudes and practices expressed by the participants in the interviews, as well as the survey. As an essential part of the proposed typology, different levels of religiosity suggest different forms of behaviour.

In order to measure 'religiosity', we first try to combine indicators from both the survey and the interviews, with a more in-depth look at certain case studies that can help us better illustrate what 'religiosity' means to an individual.

In order to place ourselves in the context of this study, we have to look at the diverse religious denominations present in this study. From the 137 participants in the survey, almost 42% say they are Jewish (57), almost 31% Protestant (42 participants divided into Methodists, Anglicans, Dutch Reform, Presbyterians, Baptists, Pentecostals, and Jehovah's Witness), 17.5% Catholics (24), 2.5% Muslims (3), 2% Hindus (2), 1% Native American Indian (1), and 4% Agnostics (5). In terms of our qualitative data, the interviewed sample shows: 10 Jewish, 5 Protestants (2 Anglican, 1 Pentecostal, 1 Methodist, and 1 Presbyterian), 2 Catholics, and 1 Native American Indian. However, this analysis is not concerned with forms of representativity, only an exploration of

views and practices. For purposes of this research, note that Protestants were grouped together.

What comes out of the interviews is that no matter what religion a person subscribes to, the level of religiosity seems to affect behaviour in certain consistent ways. This will be seen with particular clarity when we look at our Jewish participants. Later in the dissertation, we will also observe how levels of religiosity actually relate to levels of secularisation.

4.2.1: Criteria for Analysing Religiosity

If we look at our survey following Glock's dimensions of religiosity, focusing in this case, on three variables; namely Religious Importance (how important do people consider their religion to be), Attendance (how often they attend a place of worship), and Prayer (how often do they pray); we should have a better understanding of how committed to religion people are, and in a better position to measure 'religiosity'.

Religious Importance

If we take the three largest faiths in our population, we can observe that most of the participants admitted that religion is either "important" or "very important" in their lives: 88% of Protestants, 92% of Catholics, and 93% of Jews, while 89% of the total population placed itself in one of these two categories¹⁰.

This suggests that religion seems to be quite important in people's lives. What remains; is see to see to what extent this is unfolded.

¹⁰ However, in terms of considering religion "very important", 55% of Protestants agreed, while only 33% of Catholics and 46% of Jews did.

Attendance to place of worship

As we mentioned earlier, 'attendance' to church, synagogue, or any place of worship seems to be an important issue. Our study cases suggested that it is important to a religious Jew, but not so much to a traditional one or a Catholic. We certainly cannot generalise from that, but it would be interesting to see what a larger sample shows.

In terms of attendance, 44% of the total population mainly attend on festivities and important dates, followed by 33% who attend once a week.

If we look at different religions, 31% of Protestants attend church once a week, while 29% only attend on festivities and 19% do not attend at all. More Catholics attend Church on festivities (46%) than those who attend once a week (33%), with 12.5% who never go.

We can see how important attendance is to Jews with almost 50% attending synagogue on festivities and a 42% who go once a week, with only 7% never attending. This means that 92% of the sampled Jews attend at least on festivities, or more often.

Prayer

Half of the population admitted praying to at least once a day, followed by 23% who pray once a week (from which most are Jews and Protestants, possibly while attending synagogue and church). The issue of prayer is quite personal, an action that requires calmness and spiritual connection, although many people admit that they only pray when they attend religious services.

Prayer seems to be more important to Protestants and Catholics, with 64% and 71% of them praying at least once a day respectively. Jews were more evenly spread, with 33% praying at least once a day, and another 32% praying once a week, probably on Fridays or Saturdays at Shul.

Religiosity Index

As suggested earlier, one route to measure religiosity; is to create an index.

This index based on three of Glock's categories using our quantitative data from the survey, would have to be complemented at a later stage with our qualitative data from the interviews. The idea is to identify three levels of religiosity, ranging from High religiosity, through to Medium, and Low.

High Religiosity would comprise people who consider 'religion' to be 'very important', who attend a place of worship at least once a week, and pray at least once a day. Medium would stand for people who consider religion to be 'important', attend their place of worship mainly on festivities, and pray once a month or less. And Low would indicate people who find religion 'hardly important', attend places of worship once a month or less, and pray once a month or less.

The problem with this approach is that someone who says religion is 'very important', does not necessarily have to actually pray a lot or attend church even. As we have seen already, certain religions seem to place more emphasis on prayer or attending the place of worship instead.

What happens then to the people in between these categories which are not mutually exclusive?

In order to have a better idea we wanted to see how many people who initially answered "very important" to the question of religion, actually prayed a lot and attended their places of worship regularly.

Out of the 23 Protestants who said religion was very important to them, for example, only 11 (less than half) pray once a day and attend church once a week, while 3 others pray the same but only attend church once a month, and the rest vary between different timing for praying and church attendance.

So less than 50% of Protestants would actually fall under High religiosity. With Jews it is even less: 9 out of 26 said religion is ‘very important’, pray once a day and attend Shul once a week. Meanwhile, the remaining 7 actually attend once a week and pray once a week, as we said before, probably at Shul when they attend; however, they still consider their religion to be very important.

In the case of Catholics, there are 5 out of 8 ‘very important’ answers that coincided with weekly attendance and daily prayer. The remaining 3 participants said they mainly attend on festivities.

This suggests a major clash with the Medium religiosity category. If we look at the people who said religion is ‘important’ we find that from those 14 Protestants, 7 said they mainly attend church on festivities, but 4 pray once a week and 3 once a day.

18 Jews mainly attend on festivities and consider religion important, but there is considerable variance when it comes to praying (6 once a week, 5 never, 3 once a month, 3 once a day). This reflects the weight of attendance, once more.

Finally, only 4 out of 6 Catholics attend church on festivities, and just 4 of them pray once a day.

This analysis suggests two things: the index’s categories are flawed, because they are not sensitive to the subtle differences between what makes religion important, and what does not. Evidently, some people can consider their religion ‘very important’, but hardly ever attend synagogue or church, or even pray. This directly connects to the second reason: religiosity is not a simple thing to measure. Many more variables should be included. Thus, qualitative data is needed in order to unpack what ‘important’ might mean to a person. In our interviews, we have seen how certain people highlight ‘spirituality’ or ‘faith’, organised prayer and attendance, to name just one example.

This is why we have to go back to our interviews and dig deeper into what makes a person less or more religious, how many children they may have, as well as how that 'religiosity' is impacting on their childrearing practices.

In order to classify our participants in terms of their religiosity, we have to look at each case on its own, but mainly focusing on indicators from our survey (attendance, prayer, and importance) as well as how the person understands and unpacks 'importance of religion', and her experience of religion in particular (data originated from our interviews).

This leaves us with our 19 women divided into our 3 categories of 'religiosity': 6 High religiosity women (5 Jewish, 1 Protestant), 10 Medium religiosity (4 Protestant, 4 Jewish, 1 Catholic, 1 Native Indian American), and 3 Low religiosity (1 Protestant, 1 Catholic, 1 Jewish).

An example of each category might be helpful to see the process of classification:

Linda (High Religiosity)

Linda is Jewish, attends synagogue once a week and also prays once a week. Her husband goes to synagogue every day. This probably means he is quite religious, because attending synagogue is mainly for Friday evenings at the beginning of the Sabbath, and Saturdays for the reading of the Torah. Attending daily prayers during the week is also limited to men, most of whom are quite 'religious'.

Now Linda says religion is very important to her. She backs this up by stating that it is important "in everything, any major decision we have to make...from bringing up my children to every aspect of my life, my religion is first and foremost. We always look at what the Torah says and follow that...I feel closer to A'shem when I'm learning".

This level of commitment and belief would suggest a high level of religiosity, coupled with a set of rituals that are performed weekly, as well as a family life ruled by religion. Virtually all five dimensions posed by Glock are present: belief, practice,

feeling, knowledge. There is also a 5th dimension, “effects” (consequential dimension, the resulting behaviour). In this case we can already observe how Linda’s religiosity impacts on what she does. From bringing up her children, her family life, how men treat woman (once again informed by religion), the learning of Torah, spending more time with each other, gathering for festivities, etc. The effects seem to have a correlation with the causes.

Jade (Low Religiosity)

Jade is Anglican, she attends church mainly on festivities, and never prays. Her husband is a Methodist, and also attends on festivities. Religion is hardly important to her, but she highlights the fact that she wouldn’t say she is “not religious”: “I have my moral values but I don’t go regularly to church or anything like that. I’ve christened my child, my other one not yet...religion, well, I don’t make it a way of my life. It’s a part of my life, but not my whole life”.

Jade seems to have more of a low level of religiosity; religion is not that important to her, she attends church on festivities mainly because of family commitments (she argues she wouldn’t go otherwise), but she still manages to christen her child and believes in the moral framework her upbringing and her religion gave her. That also manifests in how she treats other people and the way she raises her children. It is interesting the point that religion is part of her life, but there are other things that are important to her as well, very similar to arguments seen in the Medium religiosity category.

Nadia (Medium Religiosity)

Probably the trickiest category has to do with all the people ‘in the middle’, those who’s lives do not revolve only around religion, but still have strong beliefs and commitment that also inform certain areas of their daily living.

Nadia is Jewish, she attends synagogue mainly on festivities, never prays, while her husband attends once a week. To her, religion is important. She explains that:

“It’s definitely not ‘not important at all’, and it is certainly not ‘very important’ to me. It’s important in our lives. I’m proud, I’m very proud at being Jewish, I love the fact that I’m Jewish, I do enjoy going to Synagogue, I love being part of a community. Do I feel closer to God? I don’t, I’m not there. One day I would be, sure I believe in God...But right now, no, it’s important but it’s not the most important thing in our lives. In my life, I would say my husband is far more practising than I am. Every Saturday morning he takes the children to Shul, and says to me come on, come with us, but I don’t feel like it, I’ve got things to do”.

This seems to be a case where the ritualistic dimension is not important, and the belief is not crucial either. The elements suggested as important, have to do with issues of identity and sense of belonging.

However, there is still some form of “effect” that suggests importance on other areas of practices:

“...you know on a Friday night my girls would light Shabbat candles, I would never think of going to a restaurant, to a movie, to a party, it wouldn’t cross my mind. Shabbes is family time, I think from that point of view it does influence our family life, from the Jewish holy days point of view, you plan ahead, like Pesach, you get together, people come from overseas”.

The notion of family unity is a very important one: religion does enforce, in a way, the need to get together, celebrate, mourn, and share. It also seems to influence her children’s upbringing:

“I hope always to give them a Jewish education. I think Jewish education is important, although on the other hand I actually wish there would be a school today where they could have both very comfortably (religious education and secular education)...On a daily basis, my children are in a Jewish school, I suppose it does influence my family life. I don’t live and revolve my entire life around religion though”.

There are many elements, in deed, that are valuable to Nadia; something worth giving to her children, something that shouldn't be lost, as part of a well rounded formation. This is where education and schooling take a major role, taking further and formalising a religious instruction that might not be strong at home. This is a major point that will be analysed in more detail in another section, as a specific type or component of childrearing (see "attitudes towards children's education").

An interesting element (present in many cases of Judaism at this level) is that of 'reproducing' the religion:

"And I hope one day my children will come home and bring nice Jewish husbands one day, and practise and continue our Jewish family, and Judaism will continue and be passed through like that. I would hope that they would".

It is clearer from this quote as well, that for a "not so committed" Jewish woman, Nadia seems to retain elements of her religion that are quite important at a certain level. She acknowledges the identity component to be important, as other similar cases of traditional Jews. However, it was suggested that her husband is more religious than she is, therefore translating a more rigorous religious approach to her children's upbringing than she would actually like. This is an interesting issue that we will tackle under a different theme (see "role of the partner in childrearing").

Now that we have all our participants classified into categories of religiosity, we can look in more detail at how those three approaches to religion (High, Medium and Low Religiosity) interact with different components of childrearing, divided into types of behaviour. We have identified four major components emerging from the data: attitudes towards children's education, attitudes towards family life, expectations for children, and the role of the partner in childrearing.

Let us be reminded that although most of these white mothers present a similar number of children (a rough average of 1.8), their childrearing attitudes and practices show differences. As an analysis tool, we are concentrating on the variable of religion,

measured through religiosity, in order to determine to what extent it actually influences these practices.

4.3: Case Studies

Here we examine several case studies, by not only looking at different levels of religiosity, but also exploring in a more in-depth way the kinds of social mechanisms that impact on childrearing.

“I grew up in a traditional Jewish home, as opposed to a very religious Jewish home”: Diana’s case¹¹

Diana is a 35-year-old registered nurse currently working at a clinic in Johannesburg. She is married and has a 6-year-old boy and a 2-year-old¹² girl. She has a brother and a sister.

Diana expands her initial statement by saying that Orthodox Judaism (referring to ‘traditional’ Judaism) “...is really opposed to reform. In SA we have two (actually more than two, but mainly two) predominant approaches, Jewish Orthodox and Jewish Reform. The Reform is far more lax in their rules. The Orthodox is a stricter set of rules that I followed”.

Now, being “orthodox” or “traditional” seems to entail a number of religious practices, certainly different from “reform” practices, and “very religious” practices. While growing up, Diana says she would adhere to all the important festivals and try to attend synagogue on those important dates, but living on a farm meant being far away, making it almost impossible to go for Friday and Saturday services.

Although being “kosher” does not seem as important for “traditional” Jews, some form of it is often practiced. In Diana’s case she says she keeps the “basic principles”: does not eat pork, does not eat seafood, does not mix milk and meat, “But I’ll use

¹¹ Name has been changed to protect the interviewee’s identity.

¹² All ages were recorder at the time of the data collection.

regular tomato sauce and tooth paste, things like that; you know, there are different levels” (Diana).

Shul attendance and religious education are also important practices:

“Friday nights my husband and daughter go to Shul. I have a baby so I tend to stay at home with him. We go to Shul for all the big festivals and the small ones...I light candles every Friday night, we have a Shabbat supper every Friday night, we won’t go out on a Friday night, except to people for supper. We certainly won’t go to a restaurant. We don’t watch TV. My daughter knows that Friday night is Shabbat, it’s special. Same thing goes for Saturday, we won’t go shopping or anything”.

It is interesting how the subject of “roots” comes up, usually linked to heritage and reproduced through education:

“My daughter is now at King David [school]. I think your religion is part of your roots and part of who you are, so we try to instil that in my daughter. She’s obviously going to have the freedom to decide which way to go, but I think it is very important for her to know where she comes from and being Jewish is part of where she comes from. So we are very traditional in that respect”.

As we can observe, religion is not only personal, but it also influences family life and education as well. There are certainly different levels of importance, such as the element of history and roots Diana just referred to, something essential for her daughter’s upbringing, as well as knowing from a young age the value of the Sabbath.

When confronted more on a personal level about her interpretation of what religion means to her, Diana explained her religious life in a particular way:

“Mostly in terms of spirituality, almost every minute of every day is affected by it; more than by my religion as such. Yes, my Judaic part of my life is punching the card, lighting the candles on a Friday night, Pesach go to Shul, Rosh a Shana, Yom Kippur go to Shul, from that perspective. But from a personal perspective, spirituality, my whole life and the way I live it, especially because of my experiences I am a very spiritual person”.

This distinction between “punching the card” and being spiritual or having faith seems quite common among “traditional” Jews like Diana (even among Christians that were not very religious). The other element that often comes out is the one of roots and identity, which is linked to the Jewish history and the religion:

“I want them [my children] to have a Jewish education, I want them to know what their roots are, where they come from and what it means to be Jewish, I feel that’s very important”.

Diana could be classified as a ‘Medium Religiosity’ woman, where religion is important, but only as a part of one’s identity, and only among other things in life. However, this classification can only be achieved through further analysis, complementing this type of data with the survey’s data on attendance of places of worship and praying, as we will see later on, where we will be in a position to have a clearer picture of how to classify in terms of degrees of religiosity.

Diana’s differentiation between “traditional” and “religious” Jewish can be exemplified as well with a case study of a more “religious” Jewish woman, where we can start to observe considerable differences in religiosity, as well as in childrearing attitudes.

“Religious Jewish Frum, living in a religious community”: Flora’s case

Flora’s case can be used to better illustrate how important religion is in the life of a religious Jew, as well as to observe the differences in practices and roles with more traditional Jews such as Diana.

Judaism for religious Jews is not just part of their identities, it is who they are, what they do, how they think, in short, is a way of life, a whole lifestyle.

Flora is a 24-year-old teacher, married with two children, a 3-year-old girl, and a 1-year-old boy. Flora was born in Brooklyn, New York, and grew up in a “*totally*” Jewish religious environment.

Now this environment and lifestyle seem to be maintained throughout her entire life, applying to her practices even to this day:

“My husband goes to Shul three times a week, but I mainly go on Shabbes (to Torah Academy). He tries to go everyday before work, but he doesn’t always make it. He davens everyday, though”.

Here we can observe how crucial Shul attendance is, as well as regular prayers.

A more observable influence of her religion can be seen when it comes to her children’s upbringing:

“We teach them from a young age blessings for food, whatever we can, whatever they can understand, we take them to Shul, we expose them, that they see what its all about, that they enjoy it. We enforce it whenever we can. Like this is kosher in the supermarket, we can have this, we can’t have that, explain to them, to set an example and they learn from you”.

Once again we can see how important the aspect of kashrut (laws regarding food preparation and intake) can be, something that is reinforced by a strong religious education at school; they got to “*Torah Academy, they follow Chabad (very religious group)*”. The education topic arises again during the course of the interview when dealing with the children’s future, based on their lifestyle as well:

“You hope they can further their education, both secular and religious. That’s important. Hopefully they will go to a Yeshiva and study more [intern school for Torah studies] either here or overseas. That’s how we grew up, you finish school and then you go to a Yeshiva to further your Jewish studies...”.

One of the most interesting points that came out of the interview with Flora, had to do with her desired “level” of religiousness that she expected from her own children once they become adults:

“Like ours, religious, but not fanatic. People may think we are fanatic, but you know, middle...for some people we look as fanatics, for others we are not religious enough, depends where you’re coming from”.

Flora was referring again to the lifestyle her family leads, based on religious mandates, eating specific foods, incorporating specific prayers and blessings, dressing a certain way. However, as other religious Jews did during their interviews, she admitted that the “close community” in Johannesburg is great, and that they are very involved in it. In terms of schooling, kosher shops, and synagogues, Johannesburg provides a range of choices as well as covering every need a religious Jew may have.

Flora could be classified in our typology as a ‘High Religiosity’ person, where a deep commitment and rigorous lifestyle is embedded in religion, which brings about a particular set of childrearing attitudes and practices.

As we can see, probably the main difference between traditional and religious Jews, in this study, has to do with understanding religion as part of a cultural identity, as opposed to a form of living. Religion, in Diana’s life, is important as far as heritage, identity, and spirituality are concerned, but she does not devote her entire life to it. Meanwhile, Flora’s life is ‘religion’, where what she does, when she does it, and more importantly, how she does it, is prescribed by her religion and her beliefs.

In both cases, the beliefs and approaches to religion (and the corresponding lifestyles attached to them) filter, or rather inform, the childrearing of their children. They both have two children, but Diana won’t have more (two are enough), and Flora is happy for now with two, but she says she’ll probably have more in the future, as religious Jews should ‘multiply’ as much as possible¹³. However, in our survey sample there is no one with more than six children.

Still, if differences in religiosity and lifestyles emerge within the same religion, even more differences should be expected across religions. Let us look into a different case.

¹³ Some women start having children at young ages and continue even up to thirteen or more.

“I grew up in a very traditional Catholic family”: Belen’s case

Belen is a 35-year-old economist working as a division director for a pharmaceutical company. She is married and has two children, a 3-year-old girl and 6-year-old boy.

She refers to her upbringing in a particular way:

“My mother is very Catholic and a firm believer, but she was the one that has been the most flexible. It is my father the stricter one, from the point of view of the rituals. Since I was very young, he actually forced us to go to church, and those things... I was sent from the age of three till matric to a very Catholic school, initially only girls, and then mixed. We had Eucharist every week, some confessions once in a while, we had every morning 15 minutes to reflect. So that was the combination between my home and school”.

As in the case of religious Judaism, we can clearly observe the level of strictness in this specific case of Catholic upbringing. However, Belen’s understanding of her religion has more to do with identity and message, rather than ritual, similar to the case of traditional Jewish:

“Although I consider myself Catholic, I don’t consider myself a strict Catholic, I have my ideas. To me religion is the practical / ritualistic side of what is your faith. The most important thing to me is to have faith, faith in something that is larger than you, something that you cannot essentially explain, and you either believe it or not... I’ve always placed more importance on the New Testament, rather than the Old; and in reference to that, the most important thing for me is the humanistic and ethical side of it. These are also the fundamentals that my mother would follow. To me, that has always been more important than going to church every week. I, for example, pray every day, either by thanking God or something else, but the ritualistic side has never been too important in my life... the New Testament is book that has been written by people, and it has a lot of background of the history of that time, the beliefs of that time, the superstitions of the moment, so it might be something you follow, but always to a certain degree. To me, interpreting literally what it says, doesn’t suit me at all, because I interpret myself, the Ten Commandments Jesus’ attitudes, but at the end of the day what it meant to me was the message behind, not so much the details.”

An interesting feature here is “attendance” to church. Belen claims she “isn’t very ritualistic”; that aspect of religion is not very important, especially to listen to advice about life and how to raise children from a priest who’s never been married or had any children. She argues that many people go to church because it is expected of them, similar to Diana’s “punching the card” term.

Belen also has two children, and she does not want to have any more, arguing that her career is also important to her.

As we can see, although there are differences in levels and religious denominations, there are also similarities that cut across religions, highlighting other mitigating variables in childrearing, such as economic status and career, age. Still, the issues raised in these case studies are worth pursuing, especially the relationship between “religiosity” and childrearing.

4.4: Attitudes towards Children’s Education

As a component of childrearing that emerged from the analysis, we try to observe how people in the three Religiosity categories express themselves about this issue.

When it comes to education, religion seems to have quite a significant role, not only informing most formal and non-formal education of children, but also becoming in many cases, a necessary part of a child’s curriculum. Since education is a major component of childrearing, we try here to analyse how religion influences attitudes in terms of schooling, extra-curricular activities, as well as instruction at home.

The first category of this ‘type’ corresponds to people with **High Religiosity**. They clearly opt for a religious day school, where religious studying and praying comprise a central part of the curriculum; even secular subjects are also guided by a ‘religious’ ethos. In most Jewish schools, the laws of kashrut are upheld, and all schools break according to religious holy days and festivities. One of the main arguments for choosing this type of schooling is that ‘at home’ they do not get enough religious

education, and it should be complemented with a more formal approach, day by day. However, in most cases, this was not even questioned; schooling and religion are not two separate instructions, but part of the same religious lifestyle.

Flora, for example, has a clear idea of how important religious education is to her children:

“Well, you hope they can further their education, both secular and religious. That’s important. Hopefully they will go to a Yeshiva and study more [intern school for Torah studies] either here or overseas. That’s how we grew up, you finish school and then you go to a Yeshiva to further your Jewish studies...My husband started like that...My children could become rabbis, but we give them the choice so they can follow both (secular degrees or religious careers, we’ll see how it goes)”.

We can see how religious schooling in this case; does not stop at secondary level, but is expected to continue throughout life. The interesting thing is that it seems to be a matter of lifestyle and tradition: this is how the mother did it, and this is what is expected from her children as well. Amongst religious Jews the study of Torah never stops, whether you follow a religious career or not. This is why attendance at Shul is also so important for men, where they get together and read out loud, pray, and socialise. Of course religious instruction at this level of commitment and lifestyle starts at home:

“We try different religious things. We teach them (the children) from a young age blessings for food, whatever we can, whatever they can understand. We take them to Shul, we expose them that they see what it’s all about, that they enjoy it. We enforce it whenever we can. Like this is kosher in the supermarket, we can have this, we can’t have that, explain them, to set an example and they learn from you” *Flora*

We can observe here how well complemented is the overall ‘religious childrearing’, covering almost every moment and situation that arises. It seems clearer that it is a matter of lifestyle, and not another subject studied at school. It extends to life rearing, to basic understanding of social behaviour in a religious context such as the Jewish

‘frum’ community in Johannesburg: how to eat, what to wear, what is right, what is wrong, and even who to marry.

When it comes to **Medium Religiosity**, attitudes seem different. Religious education is still important, but for other reasons. The issue of roots, identity, and moral education; surface once again. This is why children can benefit by attending religious schools (less strict in the instruction than very ‘religious’ schools; usually half secular – half religious) or attending a secular school during the week and complementing with either Sunday school or extracurricular classes, and community activities around church or Shul.

Note that these religious private day schools happen to be quite expensive, such as King David, Yeshiva College, or St. Mary’s, costing roughly around R3000 per month for a child attending primary school, and R4000 for a child in high school¹⁴. This suggests that this chosen education path by the parents must be of crucial importance, because they are not necessarily affordable. If one cannot afford them, there are limited scholarships and financial aid, although most people do pay full fees.

In terms of a fully rounded education, mothers brought up the need for at least some form of formal instruction to complement whatever is taught at home. The idea in many cases is to provide some sort of ‘base’, whether the stress is on God’s presence, moral values, or roots, a religious component must be present. Even outside of school, religion and religious values for the children, such as knowing that they can “count” on God or that prayer will help them, are also useful life-tools.

In the case of the few people with **Low Religiosity**, religious education still plays a role. Actually, in both low religiosity cases, children do attend schools with some religious component. The argument, certainly similar to those with **Medium Religiosity**, is that this type of school still provides some element of religion that is valuable for their children’s upbringing, be it morals and roots. The difference is that the parents, with really basic or non-existent knowledge of religion, and certainly not

¹⁴ Rough figures for King David and Yeshiva College.

much commitment or interest in it, do not provide any instruction of the kind at home; then the school should be the responsible for doing so.

Perhaps these women's own experience of schooling and education serves as a background for their present attitudes. Most women who choose to provide religious education; had some form of religious instruction themselves while growing up. Among Jews with **High Religiosity**, almost all of them attended very religious schools, with the exception of those who became more religious later in life, although they did have some formal religious instruction on occasion. The interesting thing, in this case, is that it is argued that their children get much more religious instruction than their mothers ever did, or ever will.

Religious Catholics and Christians also used to attend at some point either Convent schools, or Sunday classes.

If we go back to the wider educational context in which these women are framed, we can see that our survey sample shows that only 8 % of women couldn't finish high school, and a further 26 % got their Matric certificates. However, there are 26% who got diplomas and tertiary degrees, while 23% have Bachelor degrees, 12% Honours, and 4% with Masters and PhDs, showing a high level of educational achievement. The partners of these women (husbands and fathers of these children) present similar levels of education, as well as well-paid occupations. It is quite common to expect children of parents with high degrees of education to go on to equal those, or even go further. In the case of mothers who did not get the chance to go to university, many highlighted the fact that their children actually should; making it a priority in their future education. As we can see, the education of the parents can play an influential role in the children's own education, and certainly the means to afford it must be available, as in most of the cases we have encountered.

Probably an interesting case can be seen with Nadia; a **Medium Religiosity** Jewish mother married to a man who seems to be more religious than herself, an issue with consequences for their children's schooling:

“I hope always to give them a Jewish education. I think Jewish education is important, although on the other hand I actually wish there would be a school today where they could have both very comfortably, something like Crawford, where there’s Jewish studies if you want to take them. But my husband would be totally against it; he wants them at a Jewish school. It is much more important to him, than it is to me. I think it’s important for children not only to be brought up with Jews, to have different nationalities, to have different religions... I wish they would go not to an only Jewish school... There is no discussion. The options are King David Linksfield, King David Victory Park, or Yeshiva College, and Yeshiva for me is too religious, for the lifestyle that I want to lead at the moment... I feel it would be too religious for me”.

We can certainly begin to observe the difference between attitudes of a highly religious person and a more secular one. Nadia clearly wants to provide a Jewish education for her children, but not at the expense of other important things. This was precisely the point made by **Medium Religiosity** people, that religion is important, but only as a component of the make up of a person, among other things, while more religious people do not really make that distinction; religion is the way of life and life itself.

“...principles I want to install in my children. The Word says whatever foundation you install in your children is what they will carry to adulthood” Darla

Summing up, almost every woman interviewed, whether very observant or not observant at all, admitted providing some sort of religious education for their children, ranging from very religious day schools, to schooling with some content of religious education, to complementary or after-school studies such as Sunday school.

Some Anglican and Catholic women brought up the powerful influence of education in terms of ethics and morals, as we mentioned before. The fact that they get a chance to go to church, as well as to start and end the day praying to the Lord was also raised (as a stronger supplement to whatever religious upbringing they were actually receiving at home).

Amongst Jewish women, different reasons were presented for sending their children to religious schools: the more secular ones referred to the fact that knowing about their roots, history, and identity is very important. Some of these women admitted not having gone to religious schools themselves, and therefore wanting to provide their children with the opportunities that they were denied. Consequently, their children bring home more material and knowledge than the mothers can handle, so they end up learning from their children as well. In most of these cases, the mothers recognize that their children might end up being more religious (mostly because of the intense religious routine at school) than themselves.

More religious and observant Jews referred to their children's formal religious education as part of their religious lifestyle, the importance of knowing God, of studying Torah, and some even the wish for them to continue studying further after school (at a Yeshiva, centre for the study of Torah and religion). However, we can start to observe differences in attitudes towards childrearing, according to our three levels of religiosity, being able now to fill the first three spaces of our first column in the typology grid, for High, Medium, and Low Religiosity women seem to have distinct approaches to the education and schooling of their children.

4.5: Attitudes towards Family Life

Another component of childrearing worth looking into is what kind of approach towards the family can be found when dealing with religion. From all childrearing attitudes, practices, and behaviours analysed here, this is the one that is almost entirely the same for all women interviewed.

The common argument that runs across is that religion encourages family life; it brings the family together.

For example, Linda argues that it was in fact the role that the family takes in religion that got her more into it:

“I think that’s what drew me into becoming more religious, family life. Spending Shabbes together, especially the way men treat women, of course I’m generalising, this is what I was exposed to in family, husbands spending a lot more time with children, family life being so much more important, for example not going shopping on a Saturday but being with your family, reading Torah with your son, and playing with your children, the closeness”.

As we can see from this quote, religion caters for the family; it places it at the centre of religious community life, and makes a point of encouraging time spent with loved ones. This is a reference to the so important ‘social’ dimension of religion, surfacing here; and not so much the personal experience of religion that interviewees mention so often.

In Diana’s case, it is more about the religious festivities bringing everybody together:

“...you know on a Friday night my girls would light Shabbat candles, I would never think of going to a restaurant, to a movie, to a party, it wouldn’t cross my mind. Shabbes is family time, I think from that point of view it does influence our family life, from the Jewish holydays point of view, you plan ahead, like Pesach [Passover], you get together, people come from overseas”.

Religious festivities seem to bring families together, they gather for religious services as well as dinners and celebrations, from Jewish holydays such as Sabbath, Passover and Rosh a Shana, to Christian baptisms, Easter and Christmas. A number of women stressed the fact that not only their religion (namely Anglican and Judaism) encourages family time, but ‘quality’ time with the family. On the other hand, a few Jewish women were grateful for the fact that their husbands were encouraged to spend more time with the children, as well as taking the children along for a number of religious rituals, from going to Shul together, to studying Torah. The Sabbath, from Friday evening to Saturday evening, to observing **High Religiosity** Jews, means that they do not work, watch TV, or go out, but study Torah and pray, as well as spend most of that time with the family, something especially important for most religious women interviewed in this study. Church on Sundays for both **High** and **Medium Religiosity** Christians means taking the children along, praying and singing together. In other cases, the experience of religion is part of the family at home, reading Bible

stories, or even saying grace and praying before going to bed with the children. **Low Religiosity** women also highlighted the fact that an element of religion that can be rescued has to do with the family coming together. Note that even if they happen to be highly secular, it does not follow that the extended family is the same; usually they are more religious; so religious festivities are in fact reuniting.

In short, the issue of religion creating the space for the family to be together seems a crucial component of childrearing: it certainly brings about a sense of security to these mothers, where they know that certain dates are for certain rituals where the family unites; other practices entail that the husbands must take a more active role and lead the children; while it also teaches values and brings morals into married life.

In this case we see less variation across levels of religiosity or even across different religions, making family life a common ground for denominations as well as degrees of religious commitment. Whether certain dates for festivities, special religious occasions such as baptisms, christenings, or bar mitzvahs, attending church as a family, or simply reading Bible stories at home, *the family* seems to be at the centre of religious life, even more than the personal need for faith and spirituality; it is the social and almost ritualistic aspect of religion that brings and binds people together.

4.6: Expectations for Children

“Religion influencing my life? Well, by way of my upbringing. The way I live my life. Your expectations of life” Jade

One of the most interesting types of attitudes we had to face refers to what the future might hold for these women’s children. This is an aspect of childrearing that opens the door, in many cases, not for what might happen to them, but for what the mothers ‘expect’ of them. Now although expectations may give room for a number of issues, religion seems to be a priority in many instances, and can clearly inform and influence expectations of life, such as Jade’s.

The main features that came across in virtually every interview were: hope for children to turn into good, moral people, who can be happy and have strong values such as compassion for others, respect, and a helping nature. Many women put these values within a religious context, hoping that their children, by leading a religious life, will absorb all these positive ethics of behaviour and spiritual balance.

If we look more closely at people with **High Religiosity**, as we did earlier, it is perhaps not surprising that future expectations for their children have to do with continuing and reproducing the religion. For example, Hilla makes this a clear point:

“Certainly nothing less than we do. If they choose to become more religious, that’s fine”.

This quote represents an interesting aspect of how strong religious people feel about their beliefs and their way of life, which certainly influences the way they educate their children. Although nobody knows what the future will look like, these religious Jewish children have their future almost mapped out, including what and where they are going to study, what they are going to eat and wear, whom they are going to interact with, and most of the time, who they will marry¹⁵. In many ways it happens like Flora mentioned earlier in the education section; this is how they grew up, so this is what is expected from the children when their turn comes. Not only a Jewish education, in this case, must be continued, but the door is open to following a religious career as well. It follows, of course, that they are also expected to marry within the religion, and so reproduce it this way.

When referring to the actual social context in which their children have to grow, mixed feelings came to the surface. On one hand, the role of the Jewish community in Johannesburg was praised, as one of the best places where a religious Jew can live, with a range of Shuls, kosher eating places, and community life. On the other hand, there is growing concern about crime and anti-Semitism from the media and other sectors. Crime itself, was argued to be the major concern at the moment (most

¹⁵ Although arranged marriages are decreasing in fashion, matchmaking, short boyfriend-girlfriend relationships, and getting married at a young age and having children almost immediately, are very common practices amongst religious Jewish people.

families seemed to be enjoying a respectable economic well being), to the point that some families were entertaining the idea of emigrating. In terms of the children specifically, a number of mothers complained that they were hijacked in front of their own houses with the children in the car, or that their teenage sons and daughters were robbed at gun point. Stories about fathers being killed leaving the wife with young children to support also came up.

However, most women in this case, even facing the issue of crime, acknowledged that the advantages of the community here, including their economic position and the help they can get with their children in terms of maids and nannies, cannot be found anywhere else (more than enough reason to stay for a number of women).

In terms of less religious people, the expectations for their children vary considerably. **Medium Religiosity** mothers are much more open about the role of religion in their children's future. They just hope that they are happy, and in that regard trust them to make up their own minds about a range of issues, including what kind of religious life (if any) they want to lead.

Lana illustrates this point quite clearly:

“All we can do is offer them guidance. I just have opinions, but they are free to disagree or even to prove me wrong. There are no right or wrong answers. I can teach them common sense and hope for the best”.

This shows a firm belief in the children's judgement and self confidence based on their upbringing, trusting that the values and lessons taught during their life will help them mature and choose their own road.

Diana also provides a similar 'liberal' approach to her religious expectations for her children:

“I would like them as adults to be Jewish, but if the bottom line is what makes them most happy is that they are not, that's it. They will get a Jewish education; they will have that

background, what they choose to do with it is entirely up to them. At least I know I've done my best".

Once again, there is a "freedom" of choice for the children that does not have a space among more religious people. It is all about establishing a strong base, but letting them make their minds up, provided always that their decisions make them happy. However, a point must be made that children are expected to still identify with 'their' religion in first place. Perhaps Belen can illustrate this better:

"I don't believe in that extremism of liberals that showcase all the religions and then let their children decide what they like and what to follow. I would like to be able to identify with my children, and ethical, cultural, and values identification is crucial. I find it incredibly positive that they have the opportunity to learn that there are people that are different, so from the tolerance point of view and the knowledge point of view, that's very important".

The level of religiosity the children choose is one thing, but preferably, within the same faith. The issue comes down to 'tolerance' and openness, having knowledge of other religions and respecting them, but always knowing one's identity, who you are, but most importantly (and linked to life expectations), where you are going to.

When it came to the environment, a more optimistic look of South Africa came through, although the 'liberal' characteristic in this group made room for the children leaving and seeking better education and job opportunities overseas. Some mothers acknowledged that if their children left, they would follow, but others recognized that this is their place, where they were born and that they would never leave.

Finally, **Low Religiosity** women highlighted expectations of good values, but also stressed the need for a strong identity and the importance of not marrying outside the religion, although it would be entirely up to their children.

This type of analysis is very useful when looking at childrearing, since it brings to light; not only how things are, but how things should be, if possible. All mothers want their children to succeed in life and be happy, but the crucial thing here is 'in what

way?’. This is where particular views of the world and religious values surface; prioritising and informing ‘how’ things should be done, how to conduct oneself in life seeking good advice (from following God’s word, reading the Bible, or trusting the foundation given by the family with all its values, beliefs and experience).

One of the components present in this discourse was prayer: mothers pray for their children’s safety, pray for their success, pray that they will follow a righteous and godly path, pray that they stay away from drugs.

What do these expectations of children tell us about the future of South Africa?

First and foremost, that the quality of living standards is still very high compared to other countries and even communities in the rest of the nation. Whites (at least in this context, not necessarily in general) here seem to have an excellent standard of living, making childrearing so much easier: good private education, a range of private and public schools both secular and those providing different levels of religious instruction, good institutions for higher education, diverse churches and synagogues catering for different religious denominations and levels, food stores and restaurants catering even for the strictest of kosher persons, large suburban housings or secluded townhouses and clusters with security, affordable help in the house (nannies, maids, cleaners, gardeners) and so on.

In terms of what kind of people we can expect these children to be in the future, it is hard to tell; but it seems that they will be grounded in moral and religious values, and hopefully contribute to the new South Africa. Children who attend religious schools might be more aware of their religious identity and rooting, and might follow this through by leading some sort of religious life. Others in schools where there is a range of ‘races’ and religions might have a better sense of diversity and tolerance. However, there seems to be a discourse of tolerance and respect, but always with a strong sense of one’s self-identity, and mindful of integration; perhaps up to this new generation. Unfortunately, as we will see in the next section, being brought up a certain way does not necessarily entail ending up the same way.

One thing is apparent, that expectations have to do with the parent's background. Their religious and moral beliefs inform their expectations of their children, for their education, their future, as well as their religious life. Perhaps here we can observe a more clearer connection to the three levels of religiosity: High Religiosity parents expect High Religiosity in their children, while those of Medium and Low Religiosity, expect Medium and Low Religiosity respectively; although these last two are more open, leaving it up to the children to make up their minds.

4.7: The Role of the Partner in Childrearing

Introduction: Changing ideas and practices in religion

A common feature in people's religious life seems to be a not so coherent flow of practices and opinions across their lifetime. This includes a number of variations of attitudes towards religion, and consequently changes and shifts in their practices. As people grow up, learn more and experience new things, they also develop new ideas and make sense of their religious life in different ways. This dynamic process can be traced in our interviews following the mothers' religious practices from childhood to adulthood.

Trying to make sense of why people want to become more religious (or less), if they are willing to marry outside their original religion, or want to change to another religion, becomes crucial to understanding what role they want religion to play in their lives, and how that affects childrearing.

As expected, religion is not as clear-cut as one would like for analysis purposes. It is complex, dynamic, changing, and even some times contradictory. We are dealing with people who have not necessarily confronted these issues the way social scientists do; many admitted trying to make sense of them more thoroughly and consciously when we asked them to. This is why, if we are serious about exploring childrearing practices and religion, and how different white people can be, we have to also explore the changing nature of their religious lives, as well as the role of their partners (adding a social dimension) in t.

As mentioned earlier, perhaps it is normal that as a process of growing up, we first follow what our parents do, and as we become more independent and have the power to make our own choices, we start to evaluate what is best suited for ourselves.

It seems that in many cases, “being raised” a certain way, does not ensure that that person will end up following that same religion, or keep up the practices. This dynamic and social process of growing up; also applies to religion, which has to grow with the person. In this case we can observe how it is not only a matter of personal choice, but also of a joint agreement and consensus between partners in a couple. This is an important issue, since the role of the partner can be crucial, both in religious life, and especially in childrearing.

In one of our case studies, the issue of “enforcing” religion on the children was raised, in the context of a **High Religiosity** family. Here we can see how a source of changes in religious life often has to do with it having been enforced by parents during childhood. This is particularly the case in strict Catholic households such as Eva’s and Belen’s:

“I grew up in a family, in many ways very traditional Catholic. My mother is very Catholic and a firm believer, but she was the one that has been the most flexible. It is my father the stricter one, from the point of view of the rituals. Since I was very young, he actually forced us to go to church, and those things. Especially with my sister and brother, many fights when it came to that... I suppose that the fact that it was in a bit imposed, distanced them in a way” *Belen*

There seems to be almost a sense of ‘rebellion’ against the strictness of parents in terms of religious discipline, in this case. Later on in life, they choose a more secular approach to religion, and try to be much more open about their children’s religious upbringing. Their approach now is much more moderate than their parents’ religious strictness:

“I don’t consider myself a strict Catholic, I have my ideas. To me religion is the practical / ritualistic side of what is your faith. The most important thing to me is to have faith... the humanistic and ethical side of it [New Testament]... that has always been more

important than going to church every week... but the ritualistic side has never been too important in my life” *Belen*

Eventually, this new approach is filtered through to their children as well through childrearing practices, and they concentrate on transmitting the values and practices that they consider to be important now.

The element of doing “as much as one feels comfortable with”, keeps coming up, especially in **Medium Religiosity** mothers. As we have seen, even if there is an organised form of religion, there are many branches, communities, houses of worship, ministers, and readings, to choose from. Different people; adhere to religion in many different ways, with a tendency to always do whatever seems right to them (and even these change across time).

In Lana’s case, she looked somewhere else (outside her birth religion) for the answers to her questions until she found a set of teachings she was comfortable with; others look for new communities within the same religion, different churches or synagogues, different approaches, other religions, or raising their level of religiosity through commitment, lifestyle and practices.

Now she raises her children in a way that they can enjoy the freedom she was initially denied, allowing for them to share her views, as well as disagreeing when needed. Even if they are curious about other religions, Lana is willing to provide the necessary elements for them to learn about them.

Virginia, after rediscovering her religion says that:

“To me now comes God first, then him (husband), then the children, and last the business”

According to Darla:

“...for the last 9 years Jesus has been the savoir and lord of my life. It changed my life, what can I say...and it became my life, part of my everyday”.
Darla is a charismatic Christian, but her husband, she says:

“[He] hasn’t committed to anything... I aspire for the lord to play a certain part in my life. I find that quite difficult, because I single-handedly aspire to do that. I don’t have the backing of the male figure in the home, and I’m a firm believer that spiritual guidance, spiritual headship comes from the father and the husband. So in terms of that we are not getting the headship”

We can see how religion becomes in certain cases a source of conflict. Darla would really like her husband to take part in her religious life, especially when it comes to their children:

“The church is in Parkmore... called Cornerstone... services are really early, so I don’t always manage to get the children ready. I single handedly have to get them organised...”

These last quotes illustrate Darla’s pain and frustration of wanting to lead a more religious life than her husband allows her to. It becomes particularly difficult, because she really wants to provide a religious base for her children, as well as bringing God into their lives. This is hard to explore for her, because she is alone in the endeavour, and even finds opposition to it, with its sad consequences for her childrearing.

In other situations, a consensus is achieved, but that entails at least one of the parties making concessions. When Jewish couples differ in their level of religiosity, for example, sometimes a common level must be met:

“He is much more frum than me...he would be unhappy if I didn’t raise up to his level of religion... I’m doing what I can” *Hilla*

Hilla comes from a more traditional Jewish background. Religion to religious Jews involves a defined lifestyle, as we were able to appreciate earlier, something that she also had to learn. This “raising up” to the partner’s level was quite common among traditional Jews who married religious Jews. It seems that ‘matching’ someone else’s religiosity is hard work, and entails a particular commitment. In this case, it represents a whole new lifestyle, something that has to be upheld day by day.

At times, differences in religiosity become a source of disagreement. Some people are happy doing less, while their partners do more, or vice versa:

“We never disagree on issues of religion, he respects what I am, I respect what he is”

Nadia

However, the issue can become contentious when it deals, once again, with the rearing of the children. Remember Nadia’s frustration with her children attending a very religious institution (following her husband’s wishes), while she prefers a more secular one.

4.7.1: The Role of the Partner

“I met my husband, who is religious, so I became more religious”

This quote suggests that religion is not only a matter of personal experience, but a social practice, especially for the couple and with consequences for the family and childrearing.

As we mentioned earlier, something particularly interesting is how much weight the husband’s religion and level of observance plays in these women’s lives, and in the upbringing of the children. Although it came out strongly throughout the interviews, we did make provision in our survey for data on the partner.

From the very beginning we knew that both religion and childrearing are not necessarily experienced alone, but as part of a family where two people make decisions, where there are always issues of power, compromise, learning, love, disagreements, and so on. This is why we decided to try to get a better understanding of how much influence the partner exercises in this case.

Before we can tackle their role in childrearing, we have to evaluate where they stand in terms of religiosity. However, since we have limited data on partners (given solely by the women interviewed), we decided that in order to present a picture of their

religious status, a descriptive analysis according to the three major religious denominations present in our sample would be better. When we do attempt to place them according to our three categories of religiosity, it is only based on a few indicators.

If we start by comparing the attendance levels of the partners (husbands, boyfriends, etc.) to the ones of the women, we find that Protestants have similar levels of attendance with 33% of them attending once a week (with 31% of their wives), and 36% on festivities (to 29% of their wives).

A similar pattern can be found in Catholics, with 50% attending church mainly on festivities, and 46% of their spouses doing the same; while an almost identical number of men and women attend once a week (32% and 33% respectively).

Although church attendance is not enough to determine religiosity, it is a good indicator of how much of a 'social' experience religion can be. In this case, both Protestant and Catholic couples seem to be on a similar level of religious commitment, at least in terms of going to church together.

The partners of our Jewish respondents present a slightly different picture. Apart from the usual ones that attend on festivities (31%) and the weekly 'synagogue goers' (28%), there are 26% who attend every day, suggesting high commitment. This feature also came up during the interviews with religious Jewish women, who explained that only men are meant to attend during the weekly mornings. Now their spouses are divided between almost 50% who only attend on festivities, and 42% who attend once a week, once again highlighting how important Shul attendance is to Jews. We could also assume that a fair number of men, in this case, are in fact more religious perhaps than their wives. This claim can be corroborated in a number of cases where religious interviewees argued that their husbands were actually much more "frum" than they.

This suggests that there are many couples where the wife and the husband differ in their levels of religiosity, an interesting situation that might have particular effects on their childrearing practices.

Comments such as “he is certainly more religious than I am” or “I think he would like me to do more things” or “he would be unhappy if I didn’t rise up to his level of religion”, were quite common in this case.

Picking up on Hillary’s situation, she says her husband “...is much more frum than me...he wears a yamacha, he goes to Shul every day”. When confronted with these differences, Hillary explains that “...women’s role in religion (Judaism) isn’t really that much active. We take care of the children. He is definitely stricter than I am...He knows this is what you have to do, and not that”.

The issue of gender and social roles comes up again at the end of the interview with Hillary, when she says she’d like to have up to four children or more, but preferably girls: “Girls are more with you; they help around the house, and spend more time with their mothers. Sons are interested in other things”. Her reason for wanting four children is that as they grow older, they start leaving home (quite early, around 20 years) either to study or they get married young.

In this case, the process of socialisation is completely different between men and women, shaping Hillary’s attitudes in such a way that she prefers to have girls to boys, something with material consequences for childrearing. Religion, in many cases, determines gender roles as well, as we can clearly observe in Hillary’s situation, where males are more dedicated to religion and the study of Torah (remember we are talking about a **High Religiosity** Jewish family), while women raise the children and spend more time amongst women.

This is precisely what our central argument is trying to highlight, the way religion, in different cases, influences childrearing practices.

Mixed-Religiosity Couples and Childrearing

Now when differences in religiosity within couples are present, the question is not only if there is a common set of practices and beliefs the couple shares, but how those differences affect the children’s upbringing.

In a few cases, the husband agreed to let the wife decide the children's religious upbringing, such as Laura's, who wanted to take her children to Rhema instead of the Methodist Church her husband usually goes to. Similarly, Gail's husband, who is not Jewish, agreed to raise their daughter in Judaism (even against his family's wishes).

In Virginia's case, she adopted a child but "It was really *his* choice, he makes the decisions...He understood that God intended for us to take care of him... At home it is not my place to decide, the father is the head. It had been difficult to learn that he has the last word. I come from a family where women have a lot to say".

It is clear that childrearing is a joint venture between husband and wife, but in many cases, there is still more weight in the hands of the man. Similarly, childrearing decisions happen to be made the same way: some women argued they would like to have more children, but their husbands do not, and there is little argument there.

This analysis serves the purpose of contextualising religion and childrearing within the sphere of the family, and more particularly, the couple. The suggestion is that religion and childrearing attitudes are much more complex than they seem, and that many factors actually influence and shape them. This sort of exercise (slightly different from the other three components of childrearing and attitudes in our typology) is particularly useful because it positions our findings in a framework where other variables might be as important as religion. We mainly focused on religion as an interesting research approach to childrearing, and by no means place all the weight on this one variable.

Perhaps we should explore, not in too much detail, what role other variables can have in childrearing or even childbearing as well.

Religion is certainly not the only possible variable that might have effects on childrearing. Others such as socio-economic status or even age can also play a determining role.

In order to have some idea of our participants' socio-economic status, we can look at a few indicators from our survey. Occupation could facilitate in this case: although almost 20 % of the women are housewives, almost 40 % are women in professions ranging from administrators to teachers and salespersons. A further 36 % represent a group of highly skilled professionals (doctors, lawyers, psychologists) as well as women in high level positions such as bank managers, directors, consultants, and IT specialists. However, many women argued that after the first child; they either quit their jobs, or worked part-time. This is why we should also look at the kind of occupations their partners have.

37 % of the partners are either self-employed, own their businesses, or are administrators and technicians. However, almost a 60 % actually hold high level positions (CEOs, managers, consultants, directors) or are professionals such as engineers, architects, doctors, lawyers and advocates.

This suggests (on average) a fairly good (even quite well off, in some cases) economic status. Note that a number of interviews were held at the interviewees' homes, in suburbs that are tending to be increasingly more expensive, especially around the private schools the children attend.

For example, women in our sample who did not want to have more children argued for the high economic cost of raising children, that they were too old to have more, or that two (in most cases) and three children were more than enough.

Age is another interesting variable: the age in our sample ranged from 20 to 42 years, with an average age of 33. The average age of women with one child was 30 years, with two children 33 years, and with three 36 years.

This suggests that whether a mother has one, two, or three children, she is likely to be (in this case) in her thirties, and not in her twenties, an age that provides more time to keep bearing children.

In terms of the women who do not want to have more children, they present an average age of 35, while that of who said they did, was 31, making the case of the age variable stronger.

4.8: Secularisation and Religiosity

A simplistic argument that secularisation becomes prominent in modern societies would assume that religion in the context of this study would be weak and insignificant. We know this is not the case here; most of the participants agree that religion in their lives is either important or very important, while even the ones who find it insignificant show signs of it still being functional for them in some ways. However, there are no simplistic arguments when it comes to the complexities of the debate around secularisation, as we were able to see. Clearly religion as it was practiced last millennium has little to do with how it is practiced today. Whether becoming more private and less public, or transforming itself into new and extreme forms of religious fundamentalism, or into new sects and varieties, religion seems to still have an important role to play in society.

If religiosity refers to a complex degree of commitment to religion, then the assumption will be that the higher the religiosity in a person, the less secular that person will be, and the more secular a person is, the less religiosity will be observed. So if we lay secularisation and religiosity side by side, with the categories developed in this study, this is what we should see:

High Secularisation	Medium Secularisation	Low Secularisation

Low Religiosity	Medium Religiosity	High Religiosity

High Secularisation / Low Religiosity

“I never pray, not even in Shul in Yom Kippur...religion in terms of tradition is important to me...you show your children where their roots are from, definitely...we keep on telling them, they know very much they’re Jewish and what it means, and tell them about the history, the background...they go to King David, so they get it (religion) from there even more than here... they pray more than I do, more than I ever did”

Religion in this case is very much related to identity: it is about who you are, where you come from, and where you are going. Clearly highly secular, since the prescriptive side of religion (attendance to synagogue, prayer, belief, etc.) does not seem to be present. However, it seems hard to separate tradition and roots from aspects of religion and history that are intertwined in Judaism, to the point that it is important enough to send the children to a Jewish day school (where both history and religion are taught), and attend synagogue once a year (even if no prayer is involved) for atonement day.

“I wouldn’t say I’m not religious, I have my moral values but I don’t go regularly to church or anything like that...(church only on festivities) but actually I even do not want to go to those, but there’s family, you have to make them happy...(religious expectations for my children) it doesn’t worry me, at the moment they are going to a religious school, the older one, where he’s getting some religious upbringing, in an Anglican school” *Jade*

Jade presents a similar situation: she seldom attends church; it is all about moral values that come through religious upbringing, something she does value and wants to give to her children.

Although highly secular, these two cases show that one does not have to be totally irreligious to appreciate certain aspects of religion. Moral values and identity are crucial features of social beings, even if they do not care or agree with priests, rabbis, church or synagogue. Praying and believing in a prescriptive religion that tell you what to be clearly of little concern for these people, however, religion is not something to be discarded completely: their children can perfectly go to religious schools, learn about religion, and make up their minds.

Low Secularisation / High Religiosity

“The spiritual and physical are quite interlinked, (religion) it’s a very important part of my life, of my everyday, it covers every aspect of my life” *Lorraine*

“(Religion) in everything, any major decision we have to make...From bringing up my children to every aspect of my life my religion is first and foremost. We always look at what the Torah says and follow that” *Linda*

As we can observe here, High Religiosity people present either low or non existent levels of secularisation, religion is not only a part of their lives, it is life itself. It is not something that one does, it is all that is done, because there is no separation, it is a way of life, the reason and the way things are done the way there are.

“...the way we grew up, the lifestyle that we kept. Now we understand it more, we see that its important when you have kids to have a focus, a direction, guidelines... we teach them from a young age blessings for food, whatever we can, whatever they can understand, we take them to Shul, we expose them...we enforce it whenever we can; like this is kosher in the supermarket, we can have this, we can’t have that...set an example and they learn from you... hopefully they will go to a Yeshiva and study more...that’s how we grew up, you finish school and then you go to a Yeshiva to further your Jewish studies” *Flora*

This level of religiosity is reproduced all the time and across time: the same way one was brought up, is the same way one’s children will be brought up. The same rules that apply to the parents are applied to children, and the moral and spiritual guidelines that direct the parent’s lives will also help them direct their own children as they grow up. Life has rules, life has meaning, and direction.

“people can see that I’m religious, that I’m covered up. You have to behave a certain way, it is something you are expected to do. A’shem is watching you from above and he expects you to behave a certain way. I think this is good because you are thinking all the time about what you do and say...I am not the kind of person that questions for example if the Torah is true, I know it is...for Jewish people there is a good life, the community is really strong...(children’s religious education) instruction actually starts at home, but at school they can get an all-round education” *Hillary*

“I believe in a set of rules that can help govern your life which are very important... without a religion there is no framework in which to live... We are quite involved with the Shul, my husband goes there twice a day. And there are also all the activities related to the various festivals, which we would attend” *Hilla*

Rules, guidelines, even faith are hardly ever questioned. But not only God expects you to behave a certain way, the community that surrounds you has expectations of its own. Community involvement is clearly high, especially in the Jewish community. It is mainly centred around Synagogue life, festivals, holydays, but also on schooling and education (from teaching Kabala, bible, to Hebrew, etc.), sports and recreation, as well as charity. Active members of the community are expected to participate and attend community activities, as well as contribute financially and support the infrastructure. This is another aspect that people enjoy about their religion, but it can also amount to a lot of pressure to perform. People that incur forms of sin, deviation from the accepted rules, or simply challenging the system, cannot get away with it without someone knowing about it or judging it (for example a highly religious Jew being seen in a non-kosher restaurant). It comes down to a matter of choices, but in such restrictive and small communities, there are not so many options to choose from. This is why there is so much tension with people who changed their level of religiosity, or couples who share different levels (See Conflict section in Medium Religiosity / Secular).

What we are able to observe is that there is hardly any space for any form of secularisation amongst High religiosity people. Religion and life itself is highly regulated, covering every possible aspect of daily life, from what to wear, what to eat, how to pray and when to do it, to how to bring up you children.

Clearly, there is a high degree of institutionalisation: religion and community life are interlinked, making it easier to be religious. At the centre of this is the place of worship, church or synagogue, where a powerful figures such as priests or rabbis impart knowledge and interpret how rules should be obeyed (with probably little opposition or questioning). However, it seems that it is in fact the community of people that reproduce the way of life and the guidelines by putting pressure on each other and keeping itself in check.

It is this prescribed religion and its embodiment in its structures which maintains a form of status quo where religion is lived a certain way, and secularisation cannot be present, for it would not be functional to the social system. Critical thinking and questioning the religious system and how it is organised could even be seen as an attempt to undermine it.

Medium Secularisation / Medium Religiosity

This is certainly the most complex type of category, since we should expect a degree of secularisation, mixed with a degree of religiosity.

“I think your religion is part of your roots and part of who you are, so we try to install that in my daughter, she’s obviously going to have the freedom to decide which way to go...so we are very traditional in that respect...(my religion affects me) mostly in terms of spirituality, almost every minute of every day is affected by it, more than by my religion as such. Yes, my Judaic part of my life is punching the card, lighting the candle on a Friday night, Pesach go to Shul, Rosh a Shana, Yom Kippur go to Shul, from that perspective. But from a personal perspective, spirituality, my whole life and the way a live it...I know there’s a power that is God all around us, but I don’t know if my idea of God is actually Jewish as opposed to just as a higher being” *Diana*

It is clear that religion, in this case, is completely different from our previous two categories, which could be argued as more distinct levels of secularisation. Here we find a lot of tension in what religion means to a person, and how it is experienced. The idea of “roots” and identity remains crucial at this point, especially when it comes to the children’s upbringing. However, “free choice” comes as a logical and common feature, where the child will eventually decide what kind of life, and particularly what kind of religious life he or she will lead.

An interesting feature has to do with the “punching the card” concept, in reference to the institutional and prescriptive side of religion. One is supposed to go to Church or Synagogue, once is supposed to adhere and maintain certain rituals, but even if some

of those are followed, it is clear that the real value of religion is in what each individual finds useful, in this case “spirituality”, something very personal, as opposed to the public nature of rituals. Similarly, others take the “message” carried in religion, or “faith” and “values”, and the only way to do so in a more secular way is to be highly “critical” of one’s religion, and lead a religious life in one’s own terms, and not those imposed by others.

“I myself have always been very critical, from a young age...although I consider myself Catholic, I don’t consider myself a strict Catholic, I have my ideas. To me religion is the practical / ritualistic side of what is your faith. The most important thing to me is to have faith, faith in something that is larger than you, something that you cannot essentially explain, and you either believe it or not...the most important thing for me is the humanistic and ethical side of it. These are also the fundamentals that my mother would follow. To me, that has always been more important than going to church every week. I, for example, pray every day, either by thanking God or something else, but the ritualistic side has never been too important in my life...As for everything, the New Testament is book that has been written by people, and it has a lot of background of the history of that time, the beliefs of that time, the superstitions of the moment, so it might be something you follow, but always to a certain degree. To me, interpreting literally what it says, doesn’t suit me at all, because I interpret myself...To me it is very hard to follow advice from someone who hasn’t experienced it (priest). On thing is to have faith and belief, but another is to have experience, to be a father, a mother, to have children, it is very different when it is experienced to when it is not” *Belen*

Medium religiosity people have proven that religion is something they create themselves, adapting what has been taught to them to suit their daily needs. Most of these women work and have active jobs that they treasure as much as their religions. They approach religion critically, and open to disagreement and change. One striking feature is that they really rebel against religious authorities who dare to tell them what to think and how to do things; this is why a recurrent theme is to try and “cut the middle man” (priest, rabbi, etc.) and try to independently interpret religion how they feel, whether through spirituality, faith, or moral values.

Seemingly, there is a strong tendency to recreate religion around their identities, to fit coherently with their principles and how they lead their lives. This appears to fit into

the argument that in presence of more secularisation, it is not the case that religion disappears completely, but that it retreats from the public realm where churches and institutions dictate and reproduce religion, to the private space of one owns' house and life. Religion is in fact reproduced, but now as a private matter, without necessarily having to "punch the card", instead, as a personal interpretation, as personal faith, as a relationship between God and one self. Some even argue that they do not need a "building" or a specific time to pray; God ultimately judges you.

A degree of secularisation is certainly present, but not religion as it is experienced and lived by High religiosity people. Religion here is still very much important, but more as part of their identities, among other things. It is not as formal, since it is not linked so much to institutions and community, but to self-identity, to faith, to family values. A woman in this case can be at the same time a mother, a friend, a worker, a sportswoman, and a Catholic. This almost post-modern construction of identity puts the focus on the actor, who negotiates its way through life.

Conflict

As we were able to observe, people in this cluster engage in active construction of identity, and critical and personal approach to religion. However, following the conclusion suggested in the Low Secularisation / High Religiosity section, religion and its institutional embodiment, as well as the community life that is linked to it, are hard to separate. Medium religiosity women seem proud to be able to keep them apart, or at least reduce the importance of "punching the card", but it certainly comes at a high price.

"My sister became very religious, and her children are very religious. She has three children, they were shteitl (wig), and they wouldn't even eat at my home. They are newly religious. I found people who aren't born religious, and become religious are fanatic, there's no medium, they are completely extreme...it tore my family apart. We always used to be together on Jewish holydays, Friday nights, but no longer. My mother is the one that suffers the most, cause her grandchildren won't eat at hers" *Dianna*

Clearly, there is a lot of friction in this type of situation, which seem quite common. Progressive parents can opt to lead any religious life they want, but since they value a number of features that come embedded in religion (such as moral values, or cultural identity, etc.), they often send their children to religious schools. How secular can religious schools be is perhaps debatable, but they seem to quite strict when it comes to religious instruction, so children often come out of them much more religious than their parents, and this has material consequences for everybody's lives.

Another area of conflict can be often found between couples who do not share the same religion, or have different religious levels.

“In my life, I would say John, my husband, is far more practicing than I am. Every Saturday morning he takes the children to Shul, and say to me come on, come with us, but I don't feel like it, I've got things to do... I hope always to give them (my children) a Jewish education. I think Jewish education is important, although on the other hand I actually wish there would be a school today where they could have both very comfortably, something like Crawford, where there's Jewish studies if you want to take them. But my husband would be totally against it, he wants them at a Jewish school. It is much more important to him, than it is to me. I think its important for children not only to be brought up with Jews, to have different nationalities, to have different religions...there is no discussion: the options are King David Linksfield, King David Victory Park, or Yeshiva College, and Yeshiva for me is too religious, for the lifestyle that I want to lead at the moment...I feel it would be too religious for me” *Nadia*

Seemingly, there is no middle ground in the Johannesburg Jewish community when it comes to religious education. Even if one chooses to live a more secular life than High religiosity people, it is not easy, since religious institutions such as schools, appear to be dominated by a non-secular force that does not offer much flexibility. It is either that, or living in the borders of what is prescribed, risking isolation, or even discrimination.

In conclusion, what this exercise suggests is that secularisation as a debate is a useful and current one in this context. Religion as such is certainly relevant, in different ways and degrees, to all the participants of this study.

At a High religiosity level it does not seem to be relevant at all, being religion the cause and goal of life itself: we see a strong presence of uncritical faith, strong ritualistic features, and prominent active dominance of institutions and community life.

At Low religiosity, secularisation is very much present, reducing religion to certain values usually attached to some form of morality and cultural identity. However, there is virtually no role for institutions, or even faith and commitment for that matter.

Medium religiosity definitely shows signs of some secularisation: it represents a complex stratum where religion is invented and reinvented constantly, where faith and spirituality are very much present, but most crucially in a critical and personal way, while the role and importance for the institutional side of religion is minimised. It is also an area of contestation and identity formation: values and principals are put to the test, not without opposition from oneself and the community.

What seems to be an emerging thesis is that when religiosity and secularisation are put together, the spectrum moves from a highly religious and prescriptive scenario where institutions and people are intertwined (public religion), through an arena of lesser commitment and institutional role where faith and values are highlighted (private religion), to a highly secular space where only some attachment to an ethnic or cultural identity remain. So in a way, this is what our diagram would look like:

High Secularisation	Medium Secularisation	Low Secularisation
Low Religiosity	Medium Religiosity	High Religiosity
Ethnic / Cultural Identity	Ethnic / Cultural Identity	Strong Institutions
	Faith / Spirituality	Religious Identity
	Private Religion	Public Religion

Chapter 5: Discussion

This research raises interesting issues about religion, more specifically religiosity, and childrearing attitudes of mothers. It is fascinating the way they describe themselves, their conceptualisation of the issues, as well as their hopes and dreams embodied in their children. This is why I would like to highlight a number of points around the experience of religion, motherhood, and childrearing.

The use of ‘religiosity’ as an analytical tool has been of immense value. Religiosity, by itself, presents a number of limitations, as seen in reference to the index of religiosity, and the difficulties for measuring it. However, we were able to combine the dimensions of religiosity; with quantitative indicators, but more importantly, with people’s self-descriptions and insights into religion. Referring precisely to this comprehensive approach to Glock’s “religiosity”, Swatos explains that:

“Currently, social scientists are in general agreement that religious commitment varies across all religions, and that religious commitment may manifest itself in different ways within the same religious tradition. Good research attempts to “triangulate” belief, practice, and self-perception in determining the relative effect of “religiosity” on behavioural and attitudinal measures” (Swatos, 2004).

What this exploratory study suggests is that religion matters. As expected, it matters more to some, and less to others. The interesting focus of this research is in ‘*how it matters?*’.

In terms of the four components of childrearing identified in the analysis, we observed that most of our participants admitted providing some sort of *religious education* for their children. The arguments focused on the powerful influence of religious education in terms of ethics and morals; a valuable reference to roots, history, and identity; and the unquestioned relevance of education as part of a religious lifestyle.

However, the levels of religious instruction of children seemed to depend, on the three different levels of religiosity their parents presented (the more religious, the stricter religious education had to be).

The issue of religion creating a space for the *family* to get closer seems a crucial component of childrearing: bringing about security, routine, and rituals. It also imposes schedules for family time, provides longer presence of the ‘father-figure’, and acts as a socialising agent, where values can be taught.

However, less variation across religiosity or even across different religions could be found. Family life seems to be a common denominator for all religions, as well as across levels of religious commitment. The family seems to be at the centre of religious life, even more than the personal need for faith and spirituality; it is the social and ritualistic aspect of it that brings and binds people together. This social dimension of religion is a constant reference in Durkheim’s work. Religion, in this sense, is socially constructed and, through rituals, it creates a solidarity that binds people together.

McGuire also acknowledges the distinction between the two dimensions of religion, but highlights the social dimension, especially because of its structural power. In terms of a child’s growth, the family then becomes the first agent of socialisation, as well as the primary religious group for the child. This is why, although the child will internalise religion as an individual, the influence of belonging to a group and taking part in rituals is placed in this social realm (McGuire, 1992). Since religion, to the author, is one of the most powerful, deeply felt, and influential forces in human society, it shapes and influences the family and childrearing.

When it comes to *parents’ expectations* of their children, a revealing feature is that it had a lot to do with their own background. Their own religious and moral beliefs seem to inform their expectations of their children, with regards to their education, their future, as well as their religious life. Perhaps here, we can observe a clearer connection to the three levels of religiosity: High Religiosity parents usually expect their children to be similar to them, while those of Medium and Low Religiosity expect similarities in their children’s choices as well.

In terms of '*mixed-religiosity*' families and the *role of the partner*, we can see how complex and contested religion can be. But when it comes to childrearing, it is clear that it is a joint venture between husband and wife, even if there is still a lot of weight in the hands of the man.

A limitation of the project, unfortunately, had to do with the interview sample, which over represents Jewish women. Our analysis could have been more interesting if we could have found a more even distribution across religions. This should not undermine in any way, however, the findings of the study, where even on a descriptive level, remain relevant.

Probably the most salient observation has to do with the fact that religion, and its numerous aspects of life it can influence, is very much present and alive in this context. Secularisation as such, can be stronger or weaker according to the level of religiosity, although even in the most secular of cases, some connection to the religion was still found. Religion has certainly come a long way since the days where religious institutions such as the Church would have a strong control over people's lives. However, the world in which we live in seems to require religion just as much, only in different ways, creating more space for the individual to make informed choices about what kind of religious life he wants to lead.

Finally, we want to stress again, that religion is certainly not the only possible variable that can have effects on childrearing.

Concluding Remarks

In terms of religion, sociologically speaking, one of the most interesting features that emerged from the study has to do with the contrasting nature of the personal and social spheres. As a common form of justification for their views, these women argued for the way in which they view and ‘feel’ their religion. Whether they pray, attend church, or talk to God, a personal experience was highlighted. On the other hand, and essentially when it came to their children and husbands, their religion took on more of a social approach. This is where family life, togetherness, and quality time were prioritised, as much as the need for good values provided by religion.

The other relevant feature that emerged from the analysis has to do with mothers’ experiences of childrearing. As Richardson explains, the modern mother has to deal with a range of complex tasks, and becomes responsible for the rearing of children (expected of women who bear children), whether she likes it or not. This situation which creates mixed feelings that range from love for her children to stress and frustration for not being able to do other things, or even a certain jealousy of her partner’s “freedom”, came across during the interviews. Out of the ones who had jobs, once they had children, they either reduced themselves to working on a part-time basis, or gave up working altogether. Others argued that their identities as mothers and working women were equally important, both providing crucial fulfilment. Another area of tension was around the husbands’ role in childrearing. In their limited capacity and bearers of childrearing duties, they did sometimes place, heavy expectations on their wives. However, women argued for religion as an encouragement for a more active role in that regard. Richardson’s argument is that it is society’s process of socialisation according to gender that creates this unequal set of roles and unjust burden on women: a burden to be feminine, to get married, to bear children, to raise them, to give up careers. Her suggestion is an anti-sexist childrearing process, whereby children are not brought up from different places of power, and are able to challenge traditional beliefs and expectations of men and women. In terms of religious upbringing in this study, we see a similar pattern, where boys and girls fill different roles, and the expectations of them vary as well.

This descriptive analysis of religion and childrearing provides good insights into attitudes and practices of childrearing, and how they vary across levels of religiosity amongst women.

Challenging the discourse of secularisation among white middle and upper class, this study suggests that to a large extent, religion is quite important in people's lives (at least within this group of people). It not only deals with issues of faith, morality, spirituality, and rituals, but it also informs, to different degrees, childrearing. Family life also takes guidance from religion, by setting up rules of behaviour. The rearing of children; is not alien to this process, where religious moral precepts, the search for a balanced spirituality, education, and enactment of socialising rituals; all provide enrichment and direction to an already difficult task. Mothers, in their complex role as caregivers, nurturers, educators, and also as wives, workers, and women, have to rely on human support as much as mental and spiritual support. Their religion, whether a matter of lifestyle, or mere tradition, is an intrinsic part of their lives, something that provides balance and develops identity; still, is part of who they are, and becomes a part of their children's identity too.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

To be filled out by white mothers attending paediatric rooms, as part of Mr. Libhaber's research. Please tick the appropriate box and answer the questions in the space provided

Demographic information on mothers:

1) Please state your age: _____

2) Place of birth: _____

3) Occupation: _____

4) Marital status: _____

5) How many times have you been married?

Once ☐ Twice ☐ More than Twice ☐ Never ☐

6) What was the highest level of education you reached? _____

7) How many children do you have?

One ☐ Two ☐ Three ☐ Four ☐ Five ☐ More than 5 ☐

8) What is/are your child/children's age/ages?

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

9) What is/are your child/children's gender?

Male ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Female ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10) What language do you currently speak at home? _____

11) What language did you use to speak at home when you were growing up? _____

12) How many brothers and sisters do you have? _____

Religious and Childbearing preferences:

13) What religion or religious denomination do you subscribe to? _____

14) How often do you attend your common place of worship (could be a Church, Synagogue, Mosque, Temple, for example)?

Every day ☐ Once a week ☐ Mainly on festivities ☐ Never ☐

Other, state how often: _____

15) How often do you pray?

At least once a day ☐ At least once a week ☐

At least once a month ☐ I never pray ☐

16) How would you rate the importance of religion in your life?

Very important ☐ Important ☐ Hardly important ☐

Not important at all ☐

17) Would you like to have more children? YES ☐ NO ☐

If YES, when do you want to have them? _____

Do you have any gender preferences? State which _____

18) If you answered NO to the previous question, please state why you do not wish to have more children: _____

19) Do you expect your children to support you when you are old?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Information on your partner/husband:
(You should also fill in this section yourself)

20) Please state your partner's age: _____

21) Partner's place of birth: _____

22) Partner's occupation: _____

23) How many times has your partner been married? _____

24) What is your partner's highest level of education achieved?

25) What language did your partner use to speak at home when growing up? _____

26) How many brothers and sisters does your partner have?

27) What religion or religious denomination does your partner subscribe to? _____

28) How often does your partner attend a common place of worship (could be a Church, Synagogue, Mosque, Temple, for example)?

Every day ☐ Once a week ☐ Mainly on festivities ☐ Never ☐

Other, state how often: _____

In order to follow up on this questionnaire's issues, we have designed an interview to be conducted sometime in the next two months, always respecting your time and needs. This interview is also voluntary.

Would you like to make yourself available for a possible follow up interview? YES ☐ NO ☐

If your answer is NO, then thank you very much for taking part in this study. Your time and help are greatly appreciated.

If your answer is YES, please write your name and contact number so I can reach you and organise the interview. I will make the outmost to accommodate to your schedule so that this short interview does not take much of your time. Your help and time will be very much appreciated.

First Name _____ Contact Number _____

Appendix 2: In-depth Interview Schedule

Topics to be covered: Religious background, Family composition, Childrearing practices.

Interview Structure

Family background: siblings, childhood years and growing up, location and language, religious practices at home, community life.

Current Family background: composition, location and language at home, religious practices, community life, childbearing practices involving education and recreation.

Childrearing issues: ideal family size, desired number of children, ideal timing, gender preferences, husband's position, hopes and expectations for their children's future, their children in the context of South Africa, motherhood and their role in their children's life.

Questions on religious influence: degree of commitment, adherence, faith, meaning, interviewee's personal opinion.

Room for interviewee's final remarks and questions to the researcher.

Greetings and thanks to the interviewee.

Guidelines for the researcher: stress on understanding of meaning, looking for the explanatory arguments (the Why?), and subjective view of the interviewee.