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The article by Rachel Ellis demonstrates the complex relationship that religion has to other social constructs. Ellis focused on female inmates, who are at the intersection of race, class, and gender, making them one of the most vulnerable populations in the United States. At a surface level, prison appears to be far from anything sacred. Some might find it hard to believe that inmates practice religion in prison. Viewing religion as a totalizing identity, as in the words of Ammerman, they might assume that because the inmates have once committed crimes, they are not really religious. However, Ellis shows that religion is a key element of the everyday lives of many female inmates. The religious sermons in prison reflect Ammerman's argument that the sacred and secular sometimes sit next to each other.

There were religious services offered for a variety of religions, including Protestantism and Islam. I was personally astonished that the prison catered the religious services to groups other than Protestants, who comprise the majority of female inmates. The diversity of services offered reminded me of the religious economic model. I wondered if religious participation would have been achieved to the same level if only Protestant services were offered. Another interesting aspect about religious participation was the distinct racial compositions of each group. For example, the Sunni Muslim groups consisted entirely of black inmates and the Jewish group consisted entirely of white inmates. Wilde noted how earlier sociological research demonstrated that one's social standing could almost be predicted by their religious denomination. The religious affiliation of the female inmates could certainly narrow down their race if not their income, thereby revealing their social standing. I perceive social standing as a product of their race, gender, and socioeconomic status, determining the degree of inequality they experience in their lives.

The female inmates interact with religious volunteers, who are mostly middle-class African American women. The Protestant volunteers preached about female submissiveness and finding a “man of God” after leaving the prison. Ellis explained how those are near impossible for the female inmates to achieve and how the inmates constructed their religious identities based on those ideas. In reference to Waldo, Ammerman pointed out how religion and religious study are tailored to white male population. Ellis’ example strengthens that argument. Not only are women perceived in the way that benefits men, the disparity in socioeconomic status is not considered. I thought future research on the female inmates after they are released would be interesting. To what extent do they continue to adhere to the principle of finding a “man of God” despite their economic hardship? How does the failure to do so affect their religious identity? Do they abandon their religion, or persist in striving for the virtues despite potential psychological and physical harms?

I was also curious about the background of the volunteers. While their class standing would make finding a “man of God” much easier than the female inmates, they had built their religious identity around female subordination. Ellis believed that an individual's religious identity is constructed and performed similarly to gender norms. In gender inequality, power dynamics play a huge part. I wondered what the power structures and authority figures pushed the middle-class women to justify their submissiveness and exclusion from activities or rights as religious virtues.