

Early Barnard Trustees: note on early trustees' religious affiliations (1889-1914)

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HIST4491 - Prof. McCaughey

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Background information

- New trustees are elected by Board Members
- Residents in New York City
- Same neighbourhood clusters
- College graduates
- Wealthy members with economically prestigious occupations or from socially prestigious families
- They show an openness to women higher education

Research focus

- Early Trustees' religious affiliations
- Hypothesis: since the early trustees appear to have been a tight socially connected group, it is likely that they will be equally homogeneous in terms of religious affiliations.

Methodology

- Location of the funeral (or the burial) used as a proxy for religious affiliations
- Primary sources: digital archives and Barnard Archives and Special Collections
 - New York City local newspapers- 'Obituary' section
 - Biographical files

Data

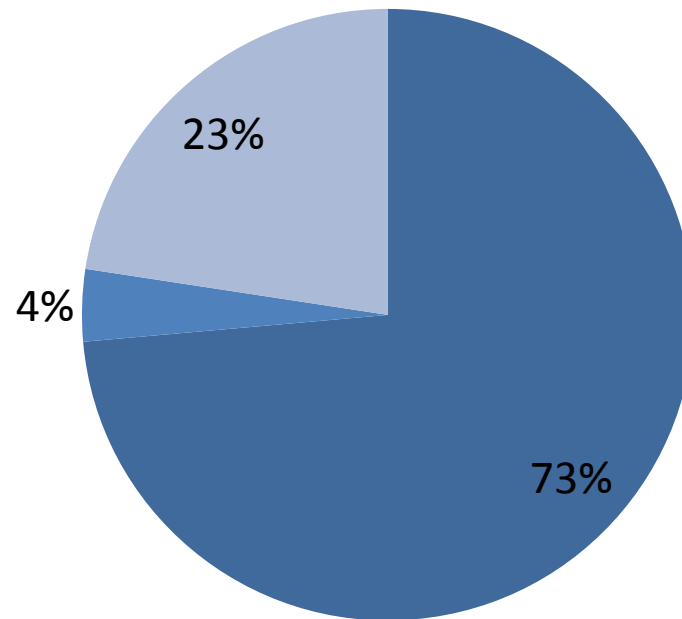
- N = 53
- 22 = Original Board Members (OBM)
- 31 = Subsequently elected to life terms (LBM)
- 3 = elected as alumnae representatives to 4-year terms (ABM)
- 1 = alumnae representative/then elected to life term (Florence Colgate Speranza) (ABM/LBM)

Data/2

Religious affiliations 1889-1914		Obs	%	Among protestants	%
<u>Christian</u>					
	Catholic	2	3.8%		
	Protestant	37	69.8%		
	<i>Episcopalian</i>			17	46.0%
	<i>Presbyterian</i>			8	21.6%
	<i>Unitarian</i>			3	8.1%
	<i>Baptist</i>			3	8.1%
	<i>Assumed Protestant</i>			6	16.2%
				(N = 37)	100%
<u>Jewish</u>		2	3.8%		
<u>Unknown</u>		12	22.6%		
		(N = 53)	100%		

Data/3

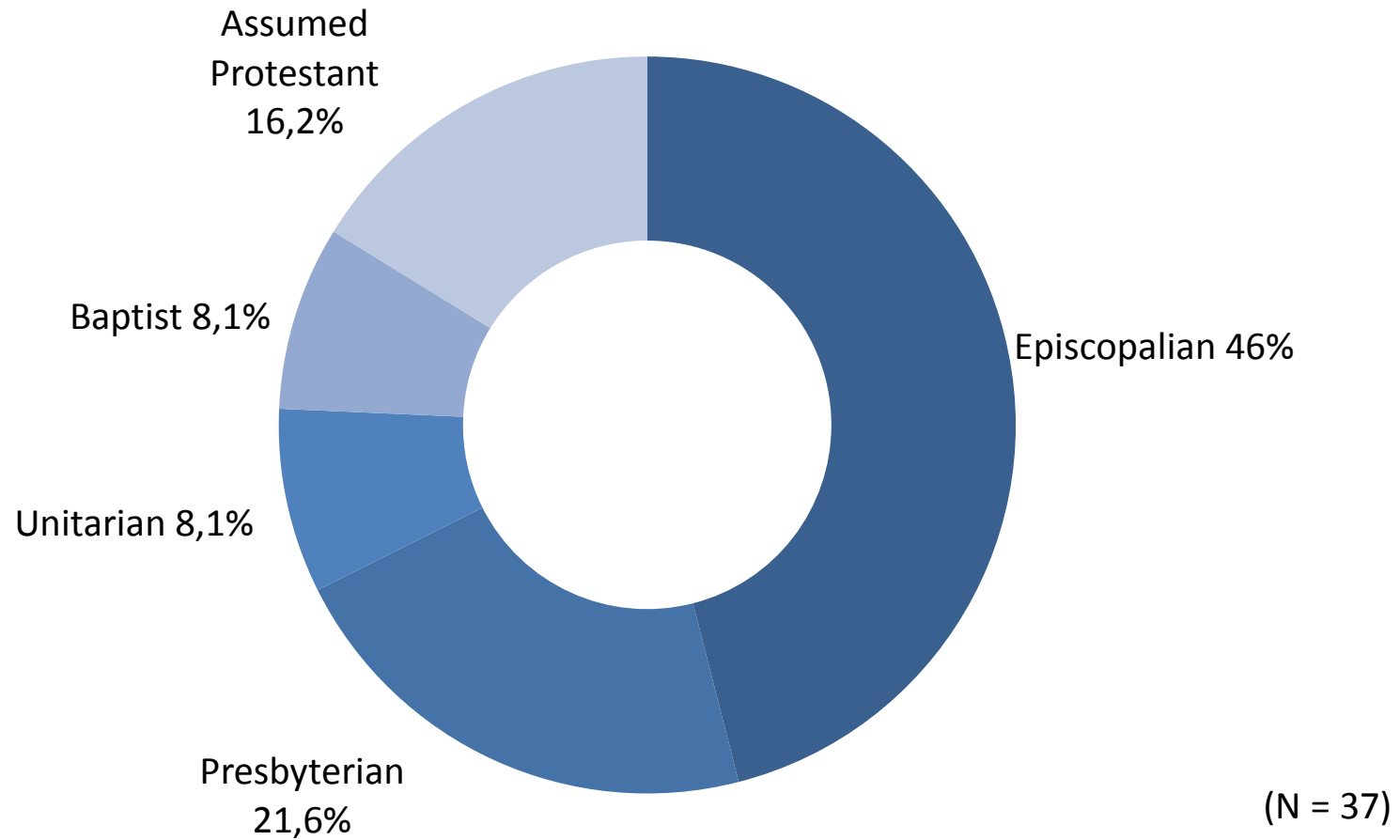
Religious affiliations



■ Christian ■ Jewish ■ Unknown (N = 53)

Data/4

Protestant affiliations



Preliminary findings

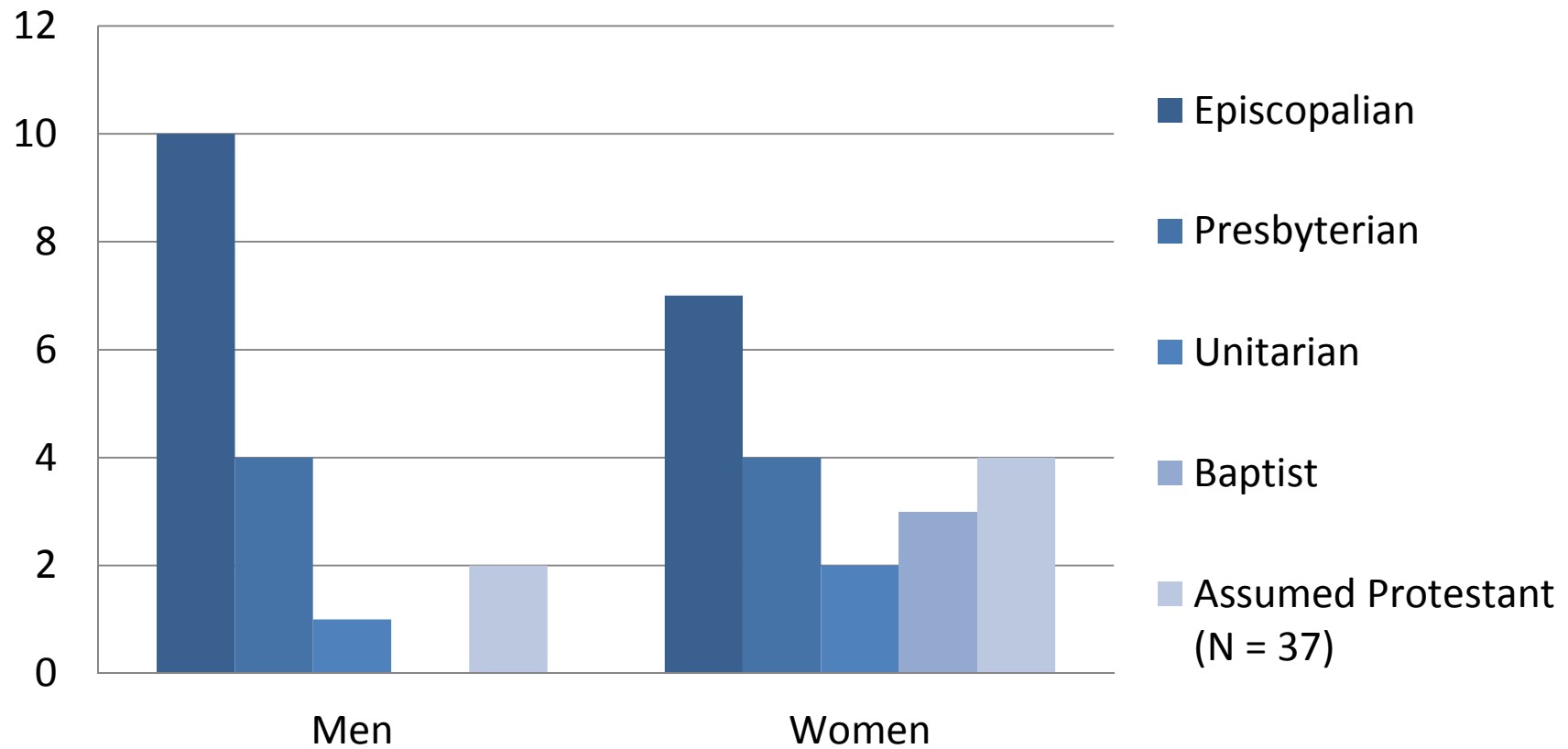
- Of the 53 trustees, 39 (73%) belonged to a Christian denomination. Only 2 of them had a Jewish affiliation
- Of the 39 Board Members close to a Christian creed, only 2 of them were Catholic. The vast majority appears to be Protestant.
- Of the 39 Protestants, 17 (46%) were Episcopalians, 8 (21,6 %) were Presbyterians and 3 (8,1%) were either Unitarians or Baptists.
- Of the 53 trustees, there was no information about 12 of them

Research focus/2

- By sorting the population by gender, an equal distribution is found: of the 53 early trustees, in fact, 26 were men and 27 were women.
- Would the protestant affiliation follow a similar pattern across the two groups or would they show substantial differences?

Data/5

Protestants affiliated by gender



Conclusions

- Even though additional twelve observations (missing values) would make a significant difference, the preliminary findings appear to support the initial hypothesis, for it Barnard early trustees were socially homogeneous in terms of religious denominations.
- Regarding the second research question on a gender-based difference, the findings appear to dispute that, for it male and female early trustees did not show significant differences in their protestant church affiliations.

Further research

- Out of several insights that this circumscribed research could lead to, one of them may be of a particular relevance.
- Given the availability of resources, it would be interesting to shift the research focus from a cross-sectional study like this, to a retrospective time series research. In other words, if early trustees' religious denominations could be traced back, it would be possible to map and highlight potentially relevant phases in each of their biographies (family of origin, religious institutions, marriage, etc) in order to reflect on which factors might have well had a great influence on their final church affiliations.