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A popular belief in the exploding Pentecostal movement in the global South is the idea that if an individual has enough faith, God will bless them with financial prosperity. Although historically Pentecostalism has been identified as a religion of the poor, this study examines recent arguments that the current Pentecostal movement in Guatemala is a religion of the socially mobile middle and elite classes. Data from the Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life’s 2006 survey Spirit and Power: Survey of Pentecostals in Guatemala is used to conduct a logistic regression, in order to measure the effects of socioeconomic status on adherence to prosperity belief. Results suggest that, contrary to the current literature on Guatemalan Pentecostalism, prosperity belief is not necessarily concentrated among the upwardly mobile middle and upper classes, but rather is widely diffused across social strata, and in particular, among those that have lower levels of education. These findings have implications for the study of Pentecostalism in Guatemala and in the global South in general.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Importance of Study
1.2 Definition of Terms
1.3 Research Question

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Development of Pentecostalism in Guatemala
  2.1.1 Classical Pentecostalism
  2.1.2 Rise of National Leadership in the 1970s
  2.1.3 1980s Pentecostal Explosion
  2.1.4 Pentecostalism in Guatemala Today
  2.2 Prosperity Belief
    2.2.1 Income
    2.2.2 Gender
    2.3.3 Renewalists

## CHAPTER 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction
3.2 Turner’s Exegesis of Weber
3.3 Market-Friendly Religions

## CHAPTER 4. HYPOTHESES

4.1 Hypothesis 1
4.2 Hypothesis 2
4.3 Hypothesis 3

## CHAPTER 5. DATA AND METHODS

5.1 Description of Sample
5.2 Dependent Variable
5.3 Predictor Variables
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Methods</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6. RESULTS</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Bivariate Analysis</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Multivariate Analysis</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1 Model 1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.2 Model 2</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.3 Models 3, 4, and 5</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Discussion</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Future Research</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Variables and Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Percentage Distribution of Prosperity Belief by Gender</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Percentage Distribution of Prosperity Belief by Renewalist</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>$t$-Test Results Comparing Difference between Education in Prosperity Belief</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>$t$-Test Results Comparing Difference between Church Attendance in Prosperity Belief</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Logistic Regression Estimates Predicting Guatemalans’ Attitudes towards Prosperity Belief</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.1 Purpose and Importance of Study

Since the 1980s, Pentecostalism has been exploding in popularity in the global South, and scholars believe that it is becoming an economic and political force in several nations (Nolivos, 2012; Miller, 2013; Woodberry, 2013; Jenkins, 2002). In 2005, about 73% of the entire Latin American population was considered Pentecostal, and in 2006, an estimated 20% of the Guatemalan population was considered Pentecostal (Lugo et al., 2007). Pentecostalism, also referred to as neo-Pentecostalism, has experienced dramatic growth in Guatemala in comparison to other countries, and in fact, many traditional Protestant denominations and Catholic churches are losing members to the movement (Evans, 1991; Suazo, 2009b).

According to Guatemalan theologian, David Suazo, neo-Pentecostalism is “one of the most influential theological-ecclesial movements today in Latin America” (2009a, p. 1). While Pentecostalism is perhaps most known for its charismatic style of worship and speaking in tongues, little is known about its belief in prosperity. Considering that religious beliefs influence economic, political, and social attitudes, it is important to examine who adheres to this belief, and more importantly, their socioeconomic status. There is conflicting evidence as to whether prosperity belief has gained more ground among the middle and elite classes or among the poor (Chestnut, 2013; Miller, 2013; Nolivos, 2012). Therefore, this is an exploratory study to better understand the growing population of prosperity belief adherents in Guatemala.

Recently there has been an increase in research on prosperity belief by social scientists (Bowler, 2011, 2013; Mora, 2008; Koch, 2009; Schieman & Jung, 2012; Haynes, 2012). Case studies exist on congregations in Nigeria (Folarin, 2007), Zimbabwe (Maxwell, 1998), Zambia
(Haynes, 2012), Guatemala (Girard, 2013; McNeill, 2009), South Korea (Kim, 2012) and Brazil (Mora, 2003), but very few have used quantitative data (for examples in the U.S. see: Schieman & Jung, 2012; Koch, 2009). While case studies are suggestive, there are problems in generalizing from these studies. Furthermore, there is an elite bias (see Benford, 1997) because several of these studies focus on leaders, or on congregations of higher socioeconomic status, rather than on adherents of lower socioeconomic status churches. Again, this points to a need for quantitative studies to be conducted on this important socio-religious phenomenon.

1.2 Definition of Terms

Prosperity belief consists of the idea that if an individual has enough faith, God’s favor will manifest itself in the form of economic prosperity in that individual’s life (Suazo, 2009b). A concurrent belief is that if an individual has enough faith, God will heal that person of all their illness. A related contention is that poverty and sickness result from sin in an individual’s life, or from a lack of faith. In the United States, prosperity belief is also known as “prosperity gospel,” the “health and wealth” gospel, and the “name it and claim it” gospel (Mora, 2008; Koch, 2009). Another key term in this study is “renewalist.” Renewalist is the term used to identify individuals who have had Pentecostal experiences. The Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life’s 2006 Spirit and Power: Survey of Pentecostals in Guatemala defines “renewalist” as, “an umbrella term that refers to both Pentecostals and charismatics as a group,” or to those that speak or pray in tongues (Lugo et al., 2007). Roughly speaking, Pentecostals tend to be evangelical and Charismatics tend to be Catholic; however, both share Pentecostal-like religious experiences. Other important terms that appear throughout the present study are “indigenous” and “ladino.” Although there are others, these are the two major races in Guatemala. People who identify as
indigenous are considered to have descended from the Mayans. It is estimated that 60% of the population in Guatemala is indigenous, representing over 20 different ethnic groups. In contrast, individuals who identify as ladino are usually of both indigenous and Spanish descent.

1.3 Research Question

The primary research question guiding this study is, “What is the socioeconomic status of prosperity belief adherents in Guatemala?” The above description explained why this is an important question, and what follows reveals the contradictory evidence in the literature regarding this topic. While it is commonly asserted that prosperity belief is most prevalent among the socially mobile, middle-class and elite individuals (Miller, 2013; Murray, 2012; Freston, 2013; Girard, 2013; Samson, 2012), there is also literature indicating that it may be popular among poor, urban migrants as well (Nolivos, 2012; Murray, 2012; Hunt, 2000). Therefore, in the midst of the contradictions found in the literature, a theoretical framework constructed using Bryan Turner’s (1974) interpretation of Weber’s Protestant ethic proves invaluable to guiding the quantitative methodological approach. As is discussed in more detail below, Turner (1974) believes that Weber has been greatly misunderstood, and argues, specifically through his exegesis of Weber’s fourth thesis, that socioeconomic status does influence religious beliefs, and therefore, he more closely aligns Weber with Marx than have previous scholars. Furthermore, Haenni (1995) and Ignatow and Johnson’s (2012) research on market-friendly religions also point to the influence of economics on religious beliefs.

The research question is converted into three hypotheses which are used to make predictions about prosperity belief adherents regarding their socioeconomic status. To test these hypotheses, both bivariate cross-tabulation and logistic regression are used. It is hoped that the
results rendered by this study will provide useful findings that will contribute to the nascent scholarly research on prosperity belief.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Development of Pentecostalism in Guatemala

2.1.1 Classical Pentecostalism

Since prosperity belief has its origins in Pentecostalism, a historical look at the development of Pentecostalism in Guatemala is necessary in order to better understand this belief. Classical Pentecostalism is the first of three waves of Pentecostalism in Guatemala and was brought to the country in 1934 and 1935 by U.S. missionaries (Garrard-Burnett, 1998). These missionaries had been influenced by the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906-1908 (Smith, 2009) as well as by Pentecostalism in the mid-West, such as in Oklahoma. This wave of Pentecostalism can be classified as other-worldly.

According to Bastian (2001), Pentecostalism grew rapidly among the rural and urban poor in Costa Rica, and was seen as bringing hope to people living in desperate economic conditions. It can be surmised that the response was similar in Guatemala. According to Garrard-Burnett (1998), Pentecostalism was popular among indigenous populations due to glossalia, or speaking in tongues, which replaced indigenous utterances that signified contact with the divine. Speaking in tongues was highly valued in classical Pentecostalism. Furthermore, for the poor, Pentecostalism offered free entertainment and emotional outlets that soccer games, movies or other churches could not compete with. Churches that developed out of this movement were Assemblies of God, Foursquare Church, and the Church of Christ. Again, it can be surmised that in Guatemala, like in Costa Rica, in this wave, churches were usually led by U.S. missionaries and were greatly influenced by visiting pastors and musicians from the U.S. (Bastian, 2001).
2.1.2 Rise of National Leadership in the 1970s

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a transfer of leadership from the hands of U.S. missionaries to Guatemalans and many of these churches eventually became Pentecostal (Garrard-Burnett, 1998). For example, the neo-Pentecostal church Elim initially held the doctrine of the conservative, evangelical denomination of the Central American Mission, but in 1965 it became Pentecostal. By 1970, Elim had 1,000 members and satellite churches in neighboring departments (Garrard-Burnett, 1998). Many of these national leaders would eventually spearhead the neo-Pentecostal megachurches that are now located in the capital. While visiting pastors from the U.S. still influenced the development of Pentecostalism, there began to be a shift, creating a hybridization of U.S. influence and local influence in terms of music and an emotive worship style (Bastian, 2001). There was also a rise in Charismatic Catholics during this period (Agadjanian, 2012). Charismatic Catholics still adhered to Catholicism, but shared many similar religious experiences with Pentecostals.

2.1.3 1980s Pentecostal Explosion

Like in many other parts of the global South (Kim, 2012; Jenkins, 2002), Guatemala saw an explosion of Pentecostal growth during the 1980s. This is often considered “third wave Pentecostalism,” also called “neo-Pentecostalism” (Corten, 2001, p. 107). The use of high-tech media such as television and radio began to disseminate neo-Pentecostal messages and music. Pastors started to give the image of being a “professional” or an “executive” by wearing suits and dressing like businessmen (Bastian, 2001, p. 178), which lent them further credibility. In fact, personal charisma seemed to be more important than theological training in legitimating the authority of these neo-Pentecostal pastors (Miller, 2013; Chestnut, 2013).
It is difficult to identify the direct cause of this explosion. Historian, Garrard-Burnett (1998), believes that the rapid growth of Protestantism during the 1970s and 1980s was due to the breakdown of traditional Guatemalan society as a result of the militarization of the state, the increase in public violence, migration and the processes of development. Conversion, therefore, was “a way to re-create some sense of order, identity and belonging” in a society that was experiencing violence, migration, and processes of development (Garrard-Burnett, 1998, p. xiii). The earthquake of 1976 also spurred the arrival of many Pentecostal missionary relief workers (Gooren, 2001).

Nevertheless, it is also valuable to note that this explosion also coincided with the third wave of democratization that swept through Guatemala in 1986. Along with this, Guatemala started opening up to free trade and economic globalization after experiencing a stagnant economy due to the import substitution policy of the 1970s (Bulmer-Thomas, 2003; Taylor, 1998). In 1995, Guatemala joined the World Trade Organization and CAFTA-DR in 2005. While it cannot be proven that these political and economic policies were directly responsible for the explosion of Pentecostalism, it is important to note that at about the same time that economic liberalization was expanding around the globe, Pentecostalism was exploding in the global South.

2.1.4 Pentecostalism in Guatemala Today

Guatemala is thought to have one of the highest populations of Pentecostals, and according to some estimates they are 20% of the total population (Lugo et al., 2007). Smith (2009) argues that there are two major “brands” of Pentecostalism in Guatemala today. While there is still a shared emphasis on the Holy Spirit among all Pentecostal groups, and most groups
tend to remain morally and theologically conservative (Miller, 2013), Pentecostalism is not a monolithic group. Some groups continue to emphasize exorcisms and healings, while others do not (Kim, 2012). Some Pentecostals agree with prosperity belief, while others do not (Miller, 2013). One of the two main “brands” of Pentecostals is the version that follows classical Pentecostalism, such as speaking in tongues. This is most commonly practiced by poor, rural, and indigenous believers (Smith, 2009).

However, a second “brand” of Pentecostalism has developed in more recent years. This is often referred to as neo-Pentecostalism and is classified as being more popular among the urban and upwardly mobile (Miller, 2013; Smith, 2009). These individuals also tend to be ladino, rather than indigenous. This “brand” is relevant to the present discussion because it is most commonly found in the neo-Pentecostal megachurches of Guatemala City, where prosperity belief is often preached. Neo-Pentecostal church, Verbo, is largely a middle-class church (Martin, 1990) as are its main competitors, La Fraternidad Cristiana, La Mega Frater, Casa de Dios, and Familia de Dios. Neo-Pentecostal megachurches utilize advanced technology to create contemporary worship styles during services and to disseminate their messages through television, radio and internet. Congregants also read books on leadership (Miller, 2013). Here, speaking in tongues is “carefully orchestrated and confined to a few minutes…during Sunday morning services” (Miller, 2013, p. 12). Also, exorcism and healings sometimes occur in separate services so as not to alienate potential converts (Miller, 2013). In some sense, neo-Pentecostalism is looked upon as a modernizing agent by replacing traditional Pentecostal beliefs and promoting development through large, prominent church structures (Girard, 2013).

There is also evidence that neo-Pentecostal churches have been more politically active than classical Pentecostal churches. Francisco Bianchi, a secretary of former President Ríos
Montt, who also had ties with Verbo, was a presidential candidate in 1999 for the ARDE (Democratic Reconciling Action) Party. ARDE was not affiliated with a religious group, but did identify itself as a “party of biblical principles” (Samson, 2008, p. 74). Bianchi also participated in the organization, Asociación LIDER, a Christian political association targeting businessmen and religious leaders. More recently, in 2007, Harold Caballeros left the pastorate at El Shaddai to found a new political party, Visión con Valores, which emphasizes moral values as well as capitalism and free trade as solutions to Guatemala’s desperate economic situation. Furthermore, Steigenga (2007) found that neo-Pentecostals have less favorable evaluations of the poor than other Pentecostals and Christian denominations, and tend to be farther right, ideologically.

2.2 Prosperity Belief

As mentioned above, prosperity belief consists of the idea that if an individual has enough faith, God’s favor will manifest itself in the form of economic prosperity in that individual’s life (Suazo, 2009b; Schieman & Jung, 2012). In other words, prosperity, in terms of material resources, is given by God to those that have correct faith. In fact, God “desires financial prosperity” for “those he favors” (Kim, 2012, p. 53). Therefore, one’s position in society can be interpreted as a sign of God’s blessing (Samson, 2012). As mentioned above, a complementary belief is that if the individual has enough faith, God will heal that person of all their illness. Therefore, poverty and sickness could be the result of sin in an individual’s life or from a lack of faith.

One of the most common scripture passages used to support prosperity belief is “the law of the harvest” found in 2 Corinthians 2:9: “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.” A neo-Pentecostal
interpretation of this verse takes a material perspective and encourages believers to give to the church, often times above and beyond what they can afford, with the trust that God will bless them and multiply their donation (Girard, 2013). In response to the historical Catholic presence, it has been thought that Catholicism “shackled” progress and indigenous people have been lazy and lacked entrepreneurial spirit (Girard, 2013, p. 392).

A belief often accompanying prosperity belief is that of dominion theology. According to Freston, its “vision of dominion in which believers take power and remould society from above” (2001, p. 26). Freston further claims that dominion theology may be more attractive to the middle and upper classes, because the “rhetoric of empowerment” is attractive to elite and middle-class professionals (Freston, 2001, p. 279-280).

As mentioned above, prosperity gospel is not unique to Guatemala, nor to the United States, but is a transnational phenomenon found on almost all, if not all, continents. Nevertheless, the few studies that have been conducted recognize that it is most prolific in the global South, accompanying the spread of Pentecostalism in general. Furthermore, prosperity belief is not without its critics. C. Mathews Samson (2012) is critical of prosperity gospel, saying that it appears to uphold the status quo, despite the gross economic inequality that exists in Guatemala. According to Hunt (2000), prosperity gospel complements American individualism and materialism. Likewise, Kim (2012) believes that Pentecostalism is “tailor-made for the consumer culture” (p. 52) and upon examining a specific religious community in South Korea, makes the argument that this particular community is a “product of neo-liberal globalization” (p. 53).
2.3 Prosperity Belief Adherents

2.2.1 Income

The limited literature on prosperity belief suggests that it finds a market among the urban, socially mobile, middle class and elites (Miller, 2013; Murray, 2012; Freston, 2013; Girard, 2013; Samson, 2012; Smith, 2009). Another important observation is that prosperity belief is associated with the neo-Pentecostal megachurches of the urban areas (Miller, 2013). According to Steigenga (1999), Guatemalan neo-Pentecostals are generally more educated and also perceive themselves as having a higher social position, and as experiencing less religious discrimination and conflict in their communities. Literature reveals that neo-Pentecostals tend to be of middle or upper classes (Freston, 2001; Evans, 1991; Smith, 2009). In fact, in South Korea, neo-Pentecostal beliefs are popular among the middle class and provide adherents with tools for social mobility in a capitalist society by teaching them the values of Calvinist Protestantism coupled with the rhetoric of empowerment (Kim, 2012). This replaces traditional, or indigenous, traces of prosperity belief that were dependent on the rituals of shamans to convince ancestors and deities to grant prosperity.

The growing social diversification of Pentecostals in Guatemala, and around the world, includes professionals, entrepreneurs, sportsmen, artists and policemen (Freston, 2001). Furthermore, Girard (2013) found that neo-Pentecostal congregants in an underdeveloped area of rural Honduras often wore designer clothes and shoes, shiny jewelry and modern haircuts, and that the pastor drove a nice SUV. In the denomination’s branch in the more developed area of Guatemala City, the parking lot was filled with high-end cars such as Mercedes, BMW, and Lexus SUVs, signaling that the consumption of high-end and imported goods, as well as modeling the latest fashion, could be important social markers for prosperity belief adherents.
Although Pentecostalism still tends to be predominant among the poor, it has been rising in popularity among middle and upper classes since the 1980s. Furthermore, neo-Pentecostal churches tend to be located in suburban areas, or on the outskirts of metropolitan areas, far from impoverished urban areas. Casaus (as cited in Freston, 2001) found that the elite became closely involved in evangelical churches in the 1970s, starting out with Verbo church, and through this involvement have maintained dominance over Guatemalan society. According to Casaus (as cited in Freston, 2001, p. 263), “The oligarchy has not been displaced by power, but has recycled itself, presenting a new image,’ part of which is the evangelical link.” Furthermore, Casaus (as cited in Freston, 2001) argues that the return of these family networks to power takes place, in part, through the appeal of a new social sector, the evangelical Pentecostal groups, which give them a new social base for matrimonial and inter-class alliances, with the objective of maintaining hegemony and preserving their power. According to this perspective, neo-Pentecostal churches have become resources of social capital for the Guatemalan elite.

Although still popular among the rural and urban poor, neo-Pentecostalism has grown among the urban middle and upper classes perhaps due to the emphasis on technology. According to Bastian (2001), “This process of networking on an international level and the use of hypermodern communication techniques explain the spectacular gains of the evangelical and Pentecostal movement especially among the middle and even upper middle class” (p. 178).

However, it has also been argued that Pentecostalism provides social capital for those that are poor. In Chile, Pentecostalism has grown among individuals marginalized by modernization and globalization (Nolivos, 2012). The norms and values of Pentecostalism actually encourage adherents to adopt economic behaviors of initiative and independence, which in turn, help them to survive in the informal economy and poverty (Nolivos, 2012). Furthermore, Pentecostalism is
attractive to rural migrants to urban areas, because it helps establish a sense of community and belonging, as well as to make sense of their life situation (Nolivos, 2012; Murray, 2012; Miller, 2013; Smith, 2009).

Although most of the research on neo-Pentecostalism and prosperity belief focuses on the megachurches in the capital, rather than in rural areas, as noted above, Girard (2013) finds in his study in rural Honduras, congregants tend to imitate the consumption patterns of the socially mobile in the urban centers. Nevertheless, these consumption patterns are more restricted due to economic limitations. On the other hand, others have argued that classical Pentecostalism continues to be prevalent in the poor, rural areas (Smith, 2009). Therefore, it has been theorized that people could be attracted to this belief because it legitimates their pursuit of wealth, or because it gives the poor hope that prosperity is possible (Hunt, 2000).

2.2.2 Gender

While the focus of this study is the relationship between socioeconomic status and prosperity belief, the effects of gender on this religious belief cannot be ignored, especially as it relates to socioeconomic status. While Chestnut (2013) found that many of the members of Guatemalan neo-Pentecostal churches like El Shaddai and Verbo are upper-middle class men; it has been argued that there are more female adherents to Pentecostalism than males (Chestnut, 2013; Freston, 2013). In fact, there may be specific qualities of Pentecostalism that make it especially attractive for females. The main reason being is that scholars have argued that Pentecostalism undermines *machismo* and elevates the female in the public life of the faith community (Steigenga, 2007; Smith, 2009). This in turn may promote a type of gender equality not found in other faith communities (Drogus, 1998).
Brusco’s (1995) ethnographic work among Pentecostals in Colombia lends itself to better understanding this. In *The Reformation of Machismo* (1995) she argues that Colombian Pentecostalism is a form of female collective action. Many times after women convert to Pentecostalism, their husbands soon follow. The conversion of men to Pentecostalism results in what Brusco calls, “the domestication of men.” Whereas before it was common for husbands to run around with other women, drink, and smoke, the asceticism required of them by their religious conversion now makes these behaviors forbidden. In rejecting these activities, the husband now has more access to home and family life. Brusco concludes,

> Unlike Western feminism [Pentecostalism in Latin America], it is not attempting to gain access for women to the male world; rather, it elevates domesticity, for both men and women, from the devalued position it occupies as the result of the process of proletarization. It does serve to transform gender roles, primary by reattaching males to the family. (1995, p. 3)

Furthermore, not only does Pentecostalism communities undermine *machismo* in the private sphere, but it also undermines it in the public sphere by allowing women to hold leadership positions within the church. Neo-Pentecostal churches congregations allow for more female leadership than traditionally offered in other Protestant churches and in the Catholic Church (Dogus, 1998). The wife of megachurch pastors are usually considered a *pastora*, or a spiritual leader. Often times, the wife will be onstage with her husband leading worship, prayer, or preaching. This is certainly the case of Sonia de Luna, the wife of famous Guatemalan megachurch leader, Cash Luna. She travels with him for all of his Noches de Gloria and plays a major, visible role, on stage throughout the night. Furthermore, when Harold Caballeros stepped down from the pastorate to begin his political career, his wife, Cecilia de Caballeros, took over his position, and is the main pastor of the megachurch El Shaddai today.
Moreover, in her ethnographic research among Hispanic women in Denton, Texas, Re Cruz (2005) found that traditional gender roles were often upset by migration to the United States due to the economic hardship that families faced. Instead of staying at home, out of economic necessity women needed to seek out other sources of income. Their conversion to Protestantism symbolized not only a rebellion against the patriarchy of the Catholic Church, but also a rebellion against traditional gender roles, which in turn legitimized their economic activities. The Protestant church also provided them a social network that was supportive of their involvement in economic life. Therefore, based on the literature, it appears that Pentecostalism has qualities which makes it appealing to women.

2.3.3 Renewalists

It is likely that prosperity belief is strongest in Pentecostal and Catholic Charismatic churches since its roots are in Pentecostalism. It is estimated that 60% of Guatemalans identify as renewalists (Lugo et al., 2007). Furthermore, Steigenga (2007) found that neo-Pentecostals have higher rates of adherence to the prosperity belief and several megachurches of the capital city tend to be neo-Pentecostal. Nevertheless, although prosperity belief may be overrepresented among Pentecostals, there is evidence that it is a trans-denominational belief, in the sense that it is a salient religious belief among numerous Christian churches in the global South. For example, Steigenga (2007) found that there is a trend of “‘pentecostalization’ in religious practice, beliefs, and intensity cross religious affiliations in Guatemala” (p. 262). Likewise, Miller (2012) argues that “the line between Pentecostals and evangelicals is ‘blurring’” since many evangelical congregations have ‘Pentecostalized’ their worship (p. 7). Again, it has been said that there is an incredible amount of people who have experienced Pentecostalism (Smith, 2009). Therefore,
because the lines between Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal churches have blurred, the 2006 study conducted by the Pew Forum on Religious and Public Life focuses on renewalists. Nevertheless, although individuals in other denominations may have had some sort of Pentecostal experience, it is unclear whether prosperity belief may have been adopted by other denominations.

2.4 Why Study Guatemala?

While research on Pentecostalism is not lacking, there is certainly a need for sociological research to go beyond what has been done and to examine more specific beliefs and trends within Pentecostalism, such as prosperity belief. Considering that there is limited research on the effects of socioeconomic status on prosperity belief, the fact that there is an abundance of literature on Guatemala lends itself to Guatemala being the focus of this study. Moreover, as mentioned above, Guatemala may have the largest percentage of Pentecostals in the global South. Furthermore, Berger (1999) has stated that this religious trend is likely connected to the economic development that has recently been taking place there. This can be seen in his observation that Weber’s Protestant ethic is flourishing Guatemala (Berger, 1999). Lastly, as is discussed below, the recent research conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life is an excellent data source for such a study. Therefore, looking at Guatemala has both theoretical and methodological value.
CHAPTER 3
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

There has been a resurgence of religion in the global South (Berger, 1999; Jenkins, 2002), which has manifested itself in two major ways. One tends to be more reactionary and manifests itself in the form of religious fundamentalism (Jurgensmeyer, 1995). The second tends to be more compatible with global capitalism (Haenni, 2005; Ignatow & Johnson, 2012). While the former receives more public attention from the media, the latter is more prevalent. This study is interested in the latter.

3.2 Turner’s Exegesis of Weber

The theoretical framework for this study utilizes Turner’s (1974) exegesis of Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic*. Turner (1974) argues that Weber has repeatedly been misinterpreted in this monumental work. According to Turner (1974), four major theses or interpretations have been used to explain Weber’s argument for the relationship between the rise of capitalism in Western Europe and Protestantism. The fourth thesis is of particular importance here, because Turner argues that it is the only one that most closely aligns with Weber’s overall theoretical stance. It asserts that “to explain actions we need to understand the subjective meaning of social actions, but the languages which are available for describing and explaining actions are determined by socioeconomic settings” (Turner, 1974, p. 234). It is evident here that Weber actually held that “beliefs are shaped by socioeconomic context” (Turner, 1974, p. 231). Furthermore, as Turner mentions, Weber’s public lecture at Freiburg in 1896 revealed “a consistent Marxist undercurrent in Weber’s sociology” (Turner, 1974, p. 233). Contrary to what is most commonly accepted,
Weber was not arguing with the “ghost of Marx” (Turner, 1974, p. 233), but rather holds a theoretical stance more closely aligned to Marx than is given credit.

Based on the fourth thesis, Turner also utilizes Mills’ (1940) conclusion that groups “exercise social control linguistically by imputing good or bad motives to actions” (Turner, 1974, p. 234). The idea of motives is important here. Motives are justified when found to be socially accepted. Important to understanding motive is Weber’s *verstehen*, or interpretative understanding. Furthermore, Turner cites Walton’s (1971) interpretation of Weber, “the possession by particular actors or groups of vocabularies, phrases or outlooks, which, far from being rationalizations or mystifications of interests, act as motive forces for action itself” (1974, p. 234).

In applying these theoretical views, Turner does acknowledge that Weber believed the rise of capitalism was related to the Calvinist value of asceticism; however, Weber never claimed that asceticism was the cause of the rise of capitalism. Rather, drawing from Mills (1940), Turner (1974) argues that asceticism provided a religious motive that was congruent with the present socioeconomic system of capitalism. In other words, Weber did not necessarily argue that Calvinist beliefs caused the rise of capitalism, but rather there were “elective affinities” (Turner, 1974, p. 233) between those that were at the forefront of the capitalist movement and this particular set of religious beliefs. Turner argues that this concept of “elective affinities” actually aligns with Marx’s notion that beliefs were socially constructed by the “dominant economic interests” (1974, p. 233). In fact, Weber (1966) argued that was necessary to examine how ascetic motives were shaped by “the totality of social conditions, especially economic” (qtd in Turner, 1974, p. 234). Based on Turner’s argument, it can be theorized that the explosion of prosperity belief shares an “elective affinity” with the economic aspirations of the socially
mobile, middle class and elite individuals, not unlike the “elective affinities” between asceticism and capitalism in 19th century Europe.

3.3 Market-Friendly Religions

Haenni (2005) examines the relationship between capitalism and Islam in his analysis of recent religious movements in the Middle East, Turkey, and Southeast Asia. Haenni refers to these movements as *l’Islam de marché* (‘market Islam’) or “*religiosité* ‘market-friendly’” (2005, p. 59). Ignatow and Johnson (2012) argue that Haenni’s conclusions align with those of Mill (1940), Walton (1971), and the fourth Weber thesis. They expand on Haenni’s ideas by applying the concept of market-friendly religions to neo-Pentecostalism in Guatemala (Ignatow & Johnson, 2012). The areas within Guatemalan neo-Pentecostalism that Ignatow and Johnson (2012) specifically examine are: doctrine, organizational and communications strategies, adherents, political stance, and religious pluralism and democratization. Both studies demonstrate that recent religious movements have embraced a type of prosperity belief compatible, and even friendly, towards global capitalism and the aspirations of socially mobile, middle-class and elite individuals. Based on the theoretical basis given above, prosperity belief may serve to justify the economic prosperity of the newly emerging middle class. Alternatively, as was mentioned above, there is evidence to the contrary, that prosperity belief is popular among the urban poor (Nolivos, 2012; Murray, 2012). Therefore, this study seeks to better understand prosperity belief adherents within the context of Guatemala through the lens of this theoretical framework.
CHAPTER 4

HYPOTHESES

As mentioned in the introduction, the overall research question guiding the study is: what is the socioeconomic status of prosperity belief adherents in Guatemala? Therefore, based on the literature and the theoretical framework, the following hypotheses have been formed:

4.1 Hypothesis 1

There is a significant, positive relationship between prosperity belief and socioeconomic status, ceteris paribus. The literature indicates that prosperity belief is found among the elite and rising middle-class (Miller, 2013; Murray, 2012; Freston, 2013; Girard, 2013; Samson, 2012). It is thought that this belief may be used to justify the pursuit of wealth (Koch, 2009) and it encourages entrepreneurialism (Freston, 2013; Haynes, 2012; Hunt, 2000).

4.2 Hypothesis 2

It is predicted that the effects of socioeconomic status on prosperity belief will differ between males and females, ceteris paribus. While neo-Pentecostal churches may be attractive to upper-middle class males (Chestnut, 2013), due to the more equal status it gives women and to the value changes that it makes in poor families (Drogus, 1998; Re Cruz, 2005; Steigenga, 2007), it is predicted that prosperity belief will be more attractive to upper-middle class men and to poor females.

4.3 Hypothesis 3

It is predicted that the effects of socioeconomic status on prosperity belief will differ
between those who live in the capital city and those who do not, ceteris paribus. While there is evidence that points to the idea that prosperity belief is more attractive to the socially-mobile urban dwellers (Miller, 2013; Chestnut, 2013), there is also evidence that it can also influence consumption patterns among the rural poor, who seek to imitate the middle and upper classes (Girard, 2013).
CHAPTER 5
DATA AND METHODS

5.1 Description of Sample

The data set used to examine the demographic characteristics of prosperity belief adherents in Guatemala is Spirit and Power: Survey of Pentecostals in Guatemala, commissioned by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life in the year 2006. This is the only data set that has data related to prosperity beliefs in Guatemala. This is cross-sectional data and the total sample size is 1,005 (\( N = 1,005 \)). The units of analysis are Guatemalan adults age 18 and older. The sample is limited to people that responded that they belong to a religion or believe in God. In order to achieve a national probability sample, face-to-face interviews were conducted in Spanish. There is an oversample of renewalists. The margin of error for this sample is 3% for the general public, 5% for Pentecostals, and 4% for Charismatics. For this analysis, after excluding all missing values, including responses “don’t know” and “refused” through list wise deletion, the sample included 785 cases. Data was accessed online through the Association of Religion Data Archives’ website and analyzed using SPSS.

Since a large number of cases were excluded from the cases included in the original sample, an analysis using cross-tabulation and \( t \)-tests was completed to compare the final sample with those that were missing. The analysis shows that there is some bias in the sample. According to cross-tabulation, those that are more likely to be included in the sample are: those that agree with prosperity belief, people that reside in areas outside the capital, indigenous, and renewalists. \( t \)-Tests revealed that there is no significant difference between the missing cases in the variables of level of education, age and church attendance and the cases included in the final sample.
5.2 Dependent Variable

In order to identify prosperity belief adherents, a dichotomous dummy variable (PBELIEF) was created indicating whether a respondent agreed with the following statement, “God will grant material prosperity to all believers who have enough faith.” Table 5.1 shows that the original variable (PROSPER) was measured at the ordinal level with possible responses being completely agree = 1, mostly agree = 2, mostly disagree = 3, and completely disagree = 4, but was recoded in order to measure only whether the respondent agreed with prosperity belief or not. Therefore, “completely agree” and “mostly agree” were grouped together and recoded as 1. The reason for this is that since the research question examines adherence to prosperity belief, none of these answers indicate a negative attitude towards prosperity belief. Then “mostly disagree” and “completely disagree” were recoded as 0 to represent respondents that do not agree with prosperity belief. Therefore, the recoded dependent variable (PBELIEF) takes a value of 1 for respondents who adhere to prosperity belief and 0 for those that do not.

5.3 Predictor Variables

Table 5.1 also shows the predictor and control variables that were included in the model. The following predictor variables were selected: household income (I-INCOME) and highest level of education completed (EDUC_GUA). Control variables selected were: age of respondent (I-AGE), region of respondent (REG_GUA), sex of respondent (GENDER), race of respondent (I-RACE), respondent as renewalist or non-renewalist (RENEWLST), and frequency of church attendance (ATTEND).

The region where the respondent resided was also recoded into CAPITAL. Respondents who indicated that they lived in the capital city were recoded 1 and those who responded that
they lived in another region where coded 0. Respondent’s sex is recoded into MALE, a dummy variable where males are coded 1 and females are coded 0. Respondent’s race is recoded into, LADINO, a dummy variable where ladinos are coded 1 and indigenous are coded 0. Respondents’ identification as a renewalist is recoded into, RENEWLST1, a dummy variable where renewalists are coded 1 and non-renewalists are coded 0. In regards to church attendance the original categories were coded as more than one time a week = 1, once a week = 2, one or two times a month = 3, a few times a year = 4, seldom = 5, and never = 6. These were reverse coded into the variable ATTEND1.

Because research suggests that gender is associated with prosperity belief differently across social strata and regions, four interaction terms were created: two for socioeconomic status (income x gender and education x gender) and two for region (income x region and education x region). Interaction terms were created as additional independent variables for the analysis.

5.4 Methods

First, cross-tabulation was used to analyze the bivariate relationship between prosperity belief (PBELIEF) and the predictor and control variables of income (INCOME), region (CAPITAL), gender (MALE), race (LADINO), and renewalist (RENEWLST1). A t-test was used to determine the effects of education (EDUC), age (AGE1), and religiosity (ATTEND1) on prosperity belief (PBELIEF).

Logistic regression analysis was used. In Model 1, the dependent variable, prosperity belief, (PBELIEF) was regressed on socioeconomic status, operationalized by the predictor variables of income (INCOME) and education (EDUC). In Model 2, age (AGE1), region
(CAPITAL), gender (MALE), race (LADINO), renewalist (RENEWLST1), and religiosity (ATTEND1) were added as control variables. Religiosity was operationalized as frequency of church attendance (ATTEND1). In Model 3, two interaction terms were added to analyze the association of gender and prosperity belief among social strata (MALEINCOME, MALEEDUC). In Model 4, the previous interaction terms were omitted and two new interaction terms were added to analyze the association of region and prosperity belief among social strata (CAPTIALINCOME, CAPITALEDUC). Lastly, Model 5 is the full model.

A test for multicollinearity using the tolerance values was conducted as well as the Mahalanobis distance indicator in order to identify outliers. According to Allison (1999), tolerance values below .40 indicate a problem of multicollinearity among the independent variables. In Model 2, the tolerance values for the regression are between .711 and .973, the results indicate that there is not a problem with multicollinearity. Furthermore, using the Mahalanobis test recommended by Mertler and Vannatta (2010), the results indicate that there are no outliers. When all the variables were regressed on respondent ID number, the value of 25.599 was produced for the Mahalanobis distance indicator. Since this value fell below the corresponding chi-square value of 27.877 (df= 9), the results indicate that no outliers are present in the regression. It is important to note that these results are reflective of Model 2 and not Models 3, 4 and 5. As is discussed below, since the interaction terms were not significant and did not increase the fit of the model, the results from Model 2 were chosen to be used for the interpretation in this study. Moreover, there was evidence of multicollinearity and outliers when the interaction terms were added, further weakening the accuracy of Models 3, 4 and 5.
### Table 5.1

**Variables and Descriptive Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Variable</th>
<th>Dependent or Independent</th>
<th>Response Categories</th>
<th>Recoded name</th>
<th>Response Categories</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum Value</th>
<th>Maximum Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God will grant material prosperity to all believers who have enough faith. (PROSPER)</td>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>1 Completely agree 2 Mostly agree 3 Mostly disagree 4 Completely disagree</td>
<td>PBELIEF</td>
<td>1 Agree 0= Disagree</td>
<td>.747</td>
<td>.435</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income per month, in quetzals (I-Income)</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1. Less than 1,600 2. 1,601 to 3,200 3. 3,201 to 4,800 4. 4,801 to 24,000</td>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>1 Less than 1,600 2. 1,601 to 3,200 3. 3,201 to 4,800 4. 4,801 to 24,000</td>
<td>2.566</td>
<td>1.087</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest level of education completed (EDUC_GUA)</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1 No formal education 2 Incomplete primary school 3 Complete primary school 4 Incomplete secondary school: technical/vocational type 5 Complete secondary school: technical/vocational type 6 Incomplete secondary: university-preparatory type 7 Complete secondary: university-preparatory type 8 Some university-level education, without a degree 9 University-level education, with degree</td>
<td>EDUC</td>
<td>1 No formal education 2 Incomplete primary school 3 Complete primary school 4 Incomplete secondary school: technical/vocational type 5 Complete secondary school: technical/vocational type 6 Incomplete secondary: university-preparatory type 7 Complete secondary: university-preparatory type 8 Some university-level education, without a degree 9 University-level education, with degree</td>
<td>5.045</td>
<td>2.273</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
Table 5.1 (continued).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Variable</th>
<th>Dependent or Independent</th>
<th>Response Categories</th>
<th>Recoded name</th>
<th>Response Categories</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum Value</th>
<th>Maximum Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of respondent (I-AGE)</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1. 18-24</td>
<td>AGEI</td>
<td>1. 18-24</td>
<td>2.758</td>
<td>1.654</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. 25-29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. 30-39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. 40-49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. 50-59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. 60+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of respondent (REG_GUA)</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1= Capital City</td>
<td>CAPITAL</td>
<td>1= CAPITAL</td>
<td>.2778</td>
<td>.448</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2= Quetzaltenango</td>
<td></td>
<td>0= NON-CAPITAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3= Chimaltenango</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4= Escuintla</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5= Mazatenango</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6= Coban</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7= Puerto Barrios</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8= Chiquimula</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9= Jutiapa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex of respondent (GENDER)</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1= Male</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>1= Male</td>
<td>.505</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2= Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>0= Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race of respondent (I-RACE)</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1 Indigenous</td>
<td>LADINO</td>
<td>1= Ladino</td>
<td>.800</td>
<td>.400</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Ladino/mixed race</td>
<td></td>
<td>0= Indigenous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent is a non-renewalist, Pentecostal, or Charismatic (RENEWLST)</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1 Non-renewalist</td>
<td>RENEWLST1</td>
<td>1= Renewalist</td>
<td>.610</td>
<td>.488</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Pentecostal</td>
<td>1=0</td>
<td>0= Non-renewalist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 Charismatic</td>
<td>2=1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3=1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of religious service attendance (ATTEND)</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>1 +1 time per week</td>
<td>ATTEND1</td>
<td>1= Never</td>
<td>4.381</td>
<td>1.578</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Once a week</td>
<td>1=6</td>
<td>2 = Seldom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 1 or 2 times a mth</td>
<td>2=5</td>
<td>3 = A few times a yr</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 A few times a yr</td>
<td>3=4</td>
<td>4= 1 or 2 times a mth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 Seldom</td>
<td>4=3</td>
<td>5 = Once a week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 Never</td>
<td>5=2</td>
<td>6= +1 time per week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 785
CHAPTER 6
RESULTS

6.1 Bivariate Analysis

First, six bivariate cross-tabulations were performed between each of the following predictor and control variables: income (INCOME), age (AGE1), region (CAPITAL), gender (MALE), race (LADINO), and renewalist (RENEWLST1) and the dependent variable (PBELIEF) (N=785). Only gender (MALE) and renewalist (RENEWLST1) were significant. Income was not statistically significant, thereby partially rejecting the first hypothesis.

In regards to the cross-tabulation between gender (MALE) and prosperity belief (PBELIEF), it appears that there is a significant, negative relationship between prosperity belief and being male. Table 6.1 indicates that the obtained chi-square is 7.432, which is significant at the .01 level. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between adherence to prosperity belief and gender. The gamma value is -.222 which indicates that females are more likely to adhere to prosperity belief than are males, but this is a weak relationship. About 78.9\% of females adhere to prosperity belief compared to 70.5\% of males.

In regards to the cross-tabulation between renewalist (RENEWLST1) and prosperity belief (PBELIEF), it appears that there is a significant, positive relationship between prosperity belief and being a renewalist. Table 6.2 indicates that the obtained chi-square is 7.638, which is significant at the .01 level. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between adherence to prosperity belief and being a renewalist. However, the gamma value is .225 which indicates a weak relationship. About 78.1\% of renewalists adhere to prosperity belief in comparison to 69.3\% of non-renewalists.
Second, three independent-sample *t*-tests were conducted to analyze whether there is a significant difference in adherence to prosperity belief (PBELIEF) between levels of education (EDUC), in adherence to prosperity belief (PBELIEF) between age categories, and in adherence to prosperity belief (PBELIEF) between frequency of church attendance (ATTEND1) (*N* = 785). Age was not significant, but according to Tables 6.3 and 6.4, level of education and frequency of church attendance were significant. In Table 6.3, respondents that adhere to prosperity belief have a mean level of education of 4.870, which corresponds to an education level between incomplete and complete secondary school of the technical or vocational type while non-adherents have a higher mean education of 5.558, which is between complete secondary school of technical or vocational type and incomplete secondary school of university or preparatory type. This finding, coupled with the finding above regarding income, reject the first hypothesis that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between socioeconomic status and prosperity belief. Also, in Table 6.4, respondents that adhere to prosperity belief have a mean frequency of church attendance of 4.529, which corresponds to attending church between one or two times a month and once a week. This is higher than non-adherents who have a mean of 3.945, which indicates that they attend church on average about once or twice a month.

Table 6.1

*Percentage Distribution of Prosperity Belief by Gender, Guatemalan Adults, 2006*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prosperity Belief</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>(396)</td>
<td>(389)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² = 7.432, df = 1, p < .01
Gamma = -.222, p < .01

Table 6.2

**Percentage Distribution of Prosperity Belief by Renewalist, Guatemalan Adults, 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prosperity Belief</th>
<th>Renewalist</th>
<th>Non-renewalist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>(479)</td>
<td>(306)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\chi^2 = 7.638$, df= 1, p <.01

Gamma = .225, p <.01


Table 6.3.

**t-Test Results Comparing Difference between Education in Prosperity Belief**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PBELIEF</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Education</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t^a</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>4.870</td>
<td>2.264</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>5.558</td>
<td>2.226</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>.688</td>
<td>-3.748</td>
<td>347.030</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^a Based on the assumption that variances in prosperity belief are not equal between different levels of education.


Table 6.4.

**t-Test Results Comparing Difference between Church Attendance in Prosperity Belief**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PBELIEF</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Church Attendance</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t^a</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>4.529</td>
<td>1.544</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>3.945</td>
<td>1.602</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>.584</td>
<td>4.485</td>
<td>331.331</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^a Based on the assumption that variances in prosperity belief are not equal between different frequencies of church attendance. Source: Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Spirit and Power: Survey of Pentecostals in Guatemala, 2006.
6.2 Multivariate Analysis

6.2.1 Model 1

Table 6.5 presents the results of regressing whether respondents agreed or disagreed with prosperity belief on the predictor variables of income and education in Model 1. According to Model 1, the results indicate that as a whole the model is significant \( (\chi^2 = 13.908, df = 2, p < .001) \); however, the pseudo \( R^2 \) is .026 and therefore explains only 2.6% of the variance in adhering to prosperity belief. The analysis reveals that contrary to what was hypothesized, income does not have a statistically significant effect on prosperity belief. Furthermore, while education (WALD-chi-square = 12.314, \( p < .001 \)), has a statistically significant effect on whether a respondent agrees or disagrees with prosperity belief, Model 1 indicates that the odds of agreeing with prosperity belief are expected to decrease 13.4% with each additional level of education, controlling for the effects of income. A negative relationship between education and prosperity belief is the opposite of what was hypothesized; therefore, the first hypothesis is rejected.

6.2.2 Model 2

As indicated in Table 6.5, age (AGE1), region (CAPITAL), gender (MALE), race (LADINO), renewalist (RENEWLST1), and religiosity (ATTEND1) were added as control variables in Model 2. The model is significant \( (\chi^2 = 36.605, df = 8, p < .001) \). The results indicated that adding the control variables improves the fit of the model since the log likelihood decreased from 874.949 in Model 1 to 852.252 in Model 2. The pseudo \( R^2 \) increased slightly to .067, but still only explains only 6.7% of the variance in adhering to prosperity belief. Furthermore, Model 2 education continues to be negative associated with agreeing with prosperity belief when controlling for all other variables \( (p < .01) \). Therefore, Model 2 indicates
that the odds of agreeing with prosperity belief is still expected to decrease about 11% with each additional level of education, controlling for the effects of the other independent variables.

Furthermore, religiosity is also found to be statistically significant and has a positive effect on prosperity belief ($p < .01$). The odds of agreeing with prosperity belief is expected in increase about 20% with each increased level of church attendance.

6.2.3 Models 3, 4, and 5

As can be seen in Table 2, in Model 3, two interaction terms were added to account for the predicted interaction between socioeconomic status and gender. Likewise, in Model 4, the previous interaction terms were omitted and two interaction terms to account for the predicted interaction between socioeconomic status and region were added. Model 5 contains the full model. Nevertheless, none of the interaction terms were significant in any of the models, suggesting that the effects of socioeconomic status on prosperity belief do not vary among genders or regions. Therefore, Model 2 was determined to be the best-fitting model, and thus the results from this model were chosen for interpretation.

Table 6.5

*Logistic Regression Estimates Predicting Guatemalans’ Attitudes towards Prosperity Belief* $^a$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Odds</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>Odds</td>
<td>b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ratio</td>
<td>ratio</td>
<td>ratio</td>
<td>ratio</td>
<td>ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>.043 (.085)</td>
<td>1.044</td>
<td>.025 (.087)</td>
<td>1.025</td>
<td>.101 (.130)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUC</td>
<td>-.143*** (.041)</td>
<td>.866</td>
<td>-.116** (.044)</td>
<td>.891</td>
<td>-.098 (.064)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE1</td>
<td>-.001 (.054)</td>
<td>.999</td>
<td>-.001 (.054)</td>
<td>.999</td>
<td>.000 (.054)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPITAL</td>
<td>.237 (.193)</td>
<td>1.268</td>
<td>.250 (.194)</td>
<td>1.284</td>
<td>.507 (.590)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>-.315 (.175)</td>
<td>.730</td>
<td>.213 (.508)</td>
<td>1.237</td>
<td>-.310 (.175)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b Odds ratio</td>
<td>b Odds ratio</td>
<td>b Odds ratio</td>
<td>b Odds ratio</td>
<td>b Odds ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LADINO</td>
<td>-.225 (.229)</td>
<td>-.218 (.229)</td>
<td>-.224 (.229)</td>
<td>-.217 (.229)</td>
<td>.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RENEWLS1</td>
<td>.128 (.191)</td>
<td>.137 (.191)</td>
<td>.127 (.191)</td>
<td>.136 (.191)</td>
<td>1.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTEND1</td>
<td>.182** (.058)</td>
<td>.180** (.058)</td>
<td>.182** (.058)</td>
<td>.180** (.058)</td>
<td>1.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALEINC</td>
<td>-.137 (.174)</td>
<td>.872</td>
<td>-.134 (.174)</td>
<td>.874</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALEEDUC</td>
<td>-.032 (.085)</td>
<td>.969</td>
<td>-.032 (.085)</td>
<td>.969</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPITALINC</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.016 (.202)</td>
<td>.984</td>
<td>-.011 (.203)</td>
<td>.989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPITALEDUC</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.041 (.098)</td>
<td>.960</td>
<td>-.039 (.097)</td>
<td>.962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.716</td>
<td>1.062</td>
<td>.768</td>
<td>.983</td>
<td>.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2 Log likelihood</td>
<td>874.949</td>
<td>852.252</td>
<td>850.974</td>
<td>851.973</td>
<td>850.728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model $\chi^2$</td>
<td>13.908***</td>
<td>36.605***</td>
<td>37.884***</td>
<td>36.885***</td>
<td>38.129***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees of freedom</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>785</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p ≤ .05  **p ≤ .01  ***p ≤ .001

a Prosperity belief is coded 1 for agree and coded 0 for disagree.
Notes: The odds ratio is the antilog of B, and the standard errors are in parentheses.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

7.1 Discussion

Based on the analysis presented above, it can be concluded that in general, prosperity belief in Guatemala is widely diffused across social strata. Contrary to the hypotheses, it is not necessarily concentrated among the wealthy and the educated. In fact, as was seen above, it is actually negatively associated with education level, meaning that the less educated are more attracted to prosperity belief. Moreover, the relationship between prosperity belief and income was insignificant. Therefore, while much of the literature suggests that prosperity belief is popular among the upwardly mobile middle and elite classes, this appears not to be the case. Perhaps the argument could be made that prosperity belief functions as an important religious belief for individuals of various income levels, and especially among those with low education. As was mentioned above, this belief could be used to justify the pursuit of material wealth by the wealthy and could also give hope to the poor for experiencing tangible material wealth (Hunt, 2000).

Another interesting result is that the effects of socioeconomic status on prosperity belief do not vary among genders. While females tend to be more religious than males, it appears that prosperity belief widely attracts both males and females of various socioeconomic levels. Neo-Pentecostal churches tend to be associated with modernization (Girard, 2013) and value both gender equality and entrepreneurialism; thereby making it attractive to genders of all socioeconomic levels. Additionally, it was found that the effects of socioeconomic status on prosperity belief do not vary among regions. This could be because often the megachurches of the urban areas have satellites in rural areas, so while rural individuals may not be members of
the urban megachurches, the preaching and doctrine most likely will resemble that of the urban church. Furthermore, many of the megachurches use radio and television that is widely broadcast across the country, thereby providing an additional conduit for prosperity belief messages.

The analysis also reveals that prosperity belief is popular among those that are more religious; however, this is not surprising since it makes sense that religiosity would be positively related to religious beliefs in general. Interestingly, being renewalist, or having Pentecostal-like experiences, is not related to prosperity belief; again, suggesting that this belief is widely diffused among individuals of various religious groups. Considering that prosperity belief has its origins in Pentecostalism, this supports Steigenga’s (2007) argument that there has been a “pentecostalization” of other Christian denominations. The diffusion of prosperity belief messages through the use of technology could explain this. Guatemalans from other Christian denominations, while not identifying themselves as Pentecostal, or as having Pentecostal experiences, could also be influenced by the radio and television broadcasts produced by neo-Pentecostal megachurches.

Perhaps another reason why prosperity belief is so popular could be its ability to capitalize on national pride. Guatemala has long been perceived from outside, and from within, as economically dependent on more developed nations such as the United States. Furthermore, not only economically, but most, if not all, of the religions in Guatemala, apart from indigenous practices, have foreign origins. The Catholic Church was forced upon Guatemalans in the Spanish Conquest, early Protestant missionaries were invited in a political maneuver by President Justo Rufino Barrios, to weaken the political power of the Catholic Church in the late 19th century, and currently, thousands of short-term missionaries enter Guatemala every year for evangelization and social help purposes. So, even though the early roots of Pentecostalism and
neo-Pentecostalism may be foreign, the present-day megachurches have largely been established by solely Guatemalan efforts. Therefore, for megachurch pastors, like Jorge H. Lopez, pastor of La Mega Frater, to boast about the construction of their multi-million dollar church being funded completely by Guatemalans taps into national pride. Not only that, but these impressive church structures also provide tangible evidence of God’s favor with further legitimates prosperity belief (Girard, 2013).

7.2 Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study is the sample bias. This is mainly due to the large number of missing cases from the income variable. Not only did this result in sample bias, but it also reduced the overall sample size. As mentioned above, after comparing the missing cases and those that were included in the sample, it was found that those that agree with prosperity belief, people that reside in areas outside the capital, indigenous, and renewalists were more likely to be included in the sample; however, t-tests revealed that there is no significant difference between the missing cases in the variables of level of education, age and church attendance and the cases included in the final sample. The sample bias could be explained by the possibility that higher income people possessed greater self-efficacy and preferred not to reveal their income. Due to social inequality in Guatemala, higher-income individuals tend to live in the capital and be ladino. Therefore, perhaps these populations were more likely to be excluded from the sample, resulting in the sample bias of rural and indigenous individuals. Perhaps higher-income individuals tend not to be renewalists, resulting in a bias of renewalists. Moreover, due to the limited time and space allotted for this study, it was not able to be extended to examine
economic, political, and social attitudes. Nevertheless, as is shown below, these are important
topics that should be considered in future research.

7.3 Future Research

The findings that prosperity belief is very popular in Guatemala, and that it is widely
diffused among different social groups, point to the unique flexibility of this religious belief to
attract diverse populations of people. Therefore, these findings should urge sociologists to further
study the implications of how this religious belief influences other spheres of people’s lives as
well. Religion has a very powerful influence, not only on people’s spiritual and moral beliefs, but
on other important social attitudes such as political and economic beliefs. For example, as
mentioned above, the growth of neo-Pentecostalism in Guatemala in the 1980s and 1990s
corresponded with the country’s economic liberalization and democratization. Furthermore, in
more recent years, former megachurch pastor, Harold Caballeros, recently founded a new
political party, Visión con Valores, which tends to value economic liberalization. Therefore, it
would be worthwhile to study the relationship between prosperity belief and economic
globalization.

Moreover, it would valuable to study the relationship between prosperity belief and
democratization. According to Samson, “the sheer diversity of evangelical political actors in
Guatemala points to a vibrant and flourishing ‘civic community’” (2008, p. 66). However, the
literature is contradictory regarding the attitudes of prosperity belief adherents and
democratization. On one hand, Caballeros’ party Visión con Valores, tends to favor economic
goals which may encourage democratization. Nevertheless, former presidents, such as Ríos
Montt and Serrano Elías, also had ties to the neo-Pentecostal community, and in recent years
they have been accused of promoting state-sanctioned violence during the civil war that took place from 1960 to 1996, acts which certainly did not promote the healthy development of democracy. Moreover, the organizational structure of neo-Pentecostal churches tend to reflect a business-like model, with power centralized at the top with a charismatic leader (Smith, 2008). Therefore, while on one hand the political attitudes of recent neo-Pentecostals may promote democratization, the organizational structure of their churches do not reflect this value. Taking this into account, it would be worthwhile to study the relationship between prosperity belief and attitudes towards democracy, as well as political participation.

Thirdly, it would be beneficial to study the relationship between prosperity belief and attitudes regarding socioeconomic equality. There is little evidence for the idea that prosperity belief adherents would also support socioeconomic equality. Since prosperity gospel tends to believe that economic failure is the result of an individual’s sin, it is likely that adherents are more likely to view poverty as an individual fault, and thus not promote governmental social programs that would go to great lengths to help this population. Nevertheless, recently scholars are turning their attention to progressive Pentecostalism, which may be more supportive of socioeconomic equality (Miller, 2007, 2009).

Lastly, taking into account the flexibility of prosperity belief, it should not only be studied in the context of Guatemala, or Latin America, but studies should be extended to study its effects across the global South where Pentecostalism is growing at exponential rates (Jenkins, 2002). Quantitative studies on specific African and Asian countries, as well as comparative, cross-national studies should also be conducted. Continuing to research the causes and consequences of prosperity belief is necessary to understanding how this religious belief may influence future economic, political, and social trends.
REFERENCES


