Chapter 15
Religion, Human Capital, and Economic Diversity in Nineteenth-Century Hesse-Cassel

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Abstract We document the religious diversity of the German principality of Hesse-Cassel in the mid-nineteenth century. Over 63% of the villages and towns were majority Protestant, and 13% were majority Catholic. Only 23% of Hessian villages and towns, however, were home to Jews, who typically made up less than 10% of the inhabitants in these places. Still, we find that Jews made up 2.6% of the principality, a larger percentage than has been estimated for Germany as a whole at this time. Our maps show the principality's extraordinary variety in the different principal Christian denominations, the Jewish population, and minority Christian enclaves. Protestant-majority communities were spread across most districts, as were communities with any Jews. Catholic-majority communities were clustered in two districts, while Christian minorities could only be found in Protestant-majority localities. Meaningful differences in the socioeconomic characteristics of communities existed, with majority-Protestant places a bit more urban than majority-Catholic ones and places with Jews the most urban. We document the occupations of the Jewish population, finding many traders, consistent with the literature, but a surprisingly large number of farmers and fewer moneylenders than might be expected. Hessians were segregated to a large degree by religion, and this was related to various economic, social, and demographic outcomes.

Keywords Christians · Hesse-Cassel · Jews · Occupations · Protestants · Religious diversity · Religious minorities · Religious segregation

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15.1 Introduction

In several papers, John Murray and co-authors examined how Shakers balanced the
use of market principles versus religious principles in making their organizational,
production, and allocation decisions, and the consequences of that balance (Coşgel
et al. 1997; Coşgel and Murray 1998, Murray 1995, 2000; Murray and Coşgel 1998,
1999). His work was an important contribution to the line of inquiry that asks, to
what extent do religious principle and practice influence economic outcomes?

We contribute to this literature by studying the German principality of Hesse-
Cassel, which was mostly Protestant in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but
was also home to a substantial mix of Jewish and Catholic citizens. Economically
Hesse-Cassel was known for its backwardness, poverty, and slow path to industrial-
ization: outdated guild laws remained in place until 1866, and the main sector was
agriculture (Bovensiepen 1909, p. 17; Frank 1994, p. 93; Kukowski 1995, p. 6;
Pedlow 1988, p. 11). Using a rich dataset on over 1000 Hessian towns and villages,
for about 75% of the Hessian principality (comprising almost 550,000 citizens),
collected in the mid-1850s from an *Ortsbeschreibung* (Community survey), we ana-
lyze the religious diversity along with the socioeconomic makeup for each commu-
nity.[1] These data provide us an opportunity to assess religious diversity for one area
of Central Europe 200 years after the Thirty Years' War and examine whether there
were links between religious practice and economic outcomes.

Our study generates a number of interesting results. First, we find that while
most villages and towns were predominantly Protestant, there were both entirely
Catholic and majority-Catholic communities as well. Further, most of the Hessian
communities had no Jews. Those with Jews typically had a population that was less
than 10% Jewish, while only one community was majority-Jewish.[2] We show that
majority-Catholic villages and towns were clustered together geographically, while
communities with Jewish populations were widely scattered across Hesse-Cassel.

We also document the prevalence of the different Protestant denominations. The
communities that were majority Reformed Evangelical and thus followed Calvinist
teachings dominated more than half of the 19 districts of the contiguous territory of
Hesse-Cassel. In contrast, other Protestant groups had a smaller presence.

The economic characteristics and the occupational structures of the villages and
towns differed by religion in some stark ways. Comparing such outcomes for these
three religions is an active area of research in the current economics of religion. For
example, Botticini and Eckstein (2012) show that religiously motivated increases in
Jewish learning in the eighth and ninth centuries influenced entry into highly skilled
occupations and contributed to Jewish economic success centuries later. Becker and

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[1] Noted historian of Germany Mack Walker considered towns to have at least a population of 750
people (Walker 1971, pp. 27, 30). We will do the same and use the term "towns" when we refer to
places with 750 or more in population and the term "villages" for places with less than 750 people.
The average population for a Hessian community was 600 people (Bestand H3).

[2] This was the village of Rhina in the district of Hünfeld.

Woessmann ([2009](#)) examine the effects on Protestant outcomes of Martin Luther's support of universal schooling to enable all Christians to read the Bible. They find positive effects for Protestants in nineteenth-century Prussia, and argue that the mechanism is the greater literacy of Protestants relative to Catholics, rather than the "Protestant work ethic."

The last section of our paper examines Jewish human capital in our data. The survey provides rich information for the Jews in each community and lists how they earned their living: common occupations included traders, butchers, artisans, and farmers. Some of these findings, e.g., the presence of farmers, are perhaps surprising given the occupational barriers Jews faced through the centuries in much of Europe including German-speaking areas, but Jews gained emancipation in Hesse-Cassel in 1833, and our findings may reflect an increased portfolio of opportunities available to Jews. Below we begin with some historical background and follow it with the analysis of our results.

15.2   The Principality of Hesse-Cassel: Religion and Politics

The Landgraviate of Hesse and with it the House of Hesse were established in 1264 with Henry I.[3] It was part of the Holy Roman Empire. Upon the death of Philip I in 1567, Hesse was divided among four sons, and the Landgraviate of Hesse-Cassel came into existence. Over 200 years later, in 1803, it gained the honorific of being made an electorate of the Holy Roman Empire. Napoleon Bonaparte dissolved the Empire in 1806 and made Hesse-Cassel a part of the new Kingdom of Westphalia and its capital city of Kassel the capital of this kingdom, installing his brother Jérôme Bonaparte as the ruler. This lasted until 1814, when the Vienna Congress reestablished the principality of Hesse-Cassel and made its ruler an Elector. In 1866 Prussia annexed Hesse-Cassel along with a number of other German states, a prelude to the nation-state of Germany established in 1871 under Otto von Bismarck. Over its 300-year history, the Electorate of Hesse-Cassel went through many territorial and border changes and covered a much larger geographic area in 1866 than in 1567.[4] In 1850 Hesse-Cassel bordered Thuringia and Saxony to the east, Hannover, Waldeck, and Westphalia to the north, Hesse-Darmstadt (Grand Duchy of Hesse) to the west and south, and Bavaria to the south. In addition, the Free City of Frankfurt, on the navigable Main River, bordered the Hessian district of Hanau.

Our research draws on the community surveys of Hesse-Cassel from the 1850s, carried out by the Historical Commission for Hesse.[5] A representative from every

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[3] The term Landgraviate is comparable to the term count, and signifies a noble with jurisdiction and sovereign rights over a large territory; it is a title used in the Holy Roman Empire.

[4] Maps presented in this paper show the boundaries in the 1850s. While Hesse-Cassel was technically an electorate between 1806 and 1866, we also use the term principality.

[5] This survey can be found at the Hessisches Staatsarchiv Marburg (HStAM), the Hessian State Archive in Marburg Germany. We refer to this survey as Bestand H3. Munter ([1983](#)), especially

village and town in the principality filled out this survey of 186 questions (some questions with several parts), divided across 17 themes. The questionnaire addressed the social, religious, geographic, and economic characteristics of each community. Typically a local mayor or teacher filled out this survey. We have gathered information about the religious makeup of the population of each community as well as their occupations.

Historically, local European rulers had great influence on which religious confessions could be practiced within their respective territories.[6] Thus religious history is intimately tied with political history. Before the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the dominant religion in German-speaking regions was Catholicism; those who practiced Judaism made up a small minority.[7] The start of the Reformation was marked by Martin Luther's 95 theses in 1517 and the Edict of Worms in 1521, both events that predated the establishment of Hesse-Cassel. During this time, in the 1520s, the Landgraviate of Hesse was ruled by Philip I (the "Magnanimous"), who was an early supporter of Protestant movements and sought to unite the different Protestant reformers: in 1529, in his own castle, he hosted the Colloquy of Marburg, which was attended by Martin Luther and the Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli. In 1527, he founded one of the first European Protestant universities, Philipps Universität Marburg (now public). Upon his death, the division of the Landgraviate of Hesse among the four sons led to the establishment of Hesse-Marburg, Hesse-Rheinfels, Hesse-Darmstadt, and Hesse-Cassel under William IV.

In subsequent decades, two of the four sons died leaving no heirs, and the lands of Hesse-Marburg and Hesse-Rheinfels were split between Hesse-Cassel and Hesse-Darmstadt. In the meantime, after 1567, each of the four sons wrestled with religious ideas, with most of them choosing Lutheranism; their own decisions on confession settled the religious question for their respective subjects. Throughout the 1500s, it is unclear how much the prospect of economic and political independence as opposed to religious ideas motivated these rulers. William IV at first supported uniting Protestant reformers, like his father Philip I, but ultimately decided on Lutheranism as the main religion for Hesse-Cassel. His son, Moritz (Maurice), the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel from 1592 to 1627, however, converted from Lutheranism to Calvinism in 1605. Doing so meant that his subjects were also now followers of Calvinism. With this conversion he faced opposition from his Lutheran subjects, especially those in the areas that were not part of the original Hesse-Cassel territory. Moritz was not to be deterred and produced a set of *Verbesserungspunkte* ("points of improvement"), which instructed Hessians in how to abide by Calvinist principles; in addition, and where he could, he replaced Lutheran pastors with Calvinist ones (Theibault 1995, p. 36-7).[8] He hired Calvinists into his court and

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Appendix B, provides documentation.

[6] Confession is used here with the meaning of a religious denomination.

[7] Evidence exists that Jews had lived in villages along the Rhine River from at least the fourth century. See *German Virtual History Tour (2021)*.

[8] It was not easy. Some pastors had to tread a path between the Calvinist Moritz and local Lutheran nobles.

established a college in his court as a way of influencing future diplomats (Collegium Mauritianum). Even though the main early centers of Calvinist thought were to the south in Zurich and Basel, Moritz succeeded in "making Kassel into a node of the international Calvinist network" (Gräf 1997, p. 1169).

On the eve of the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), a war over religious differences, the largest Protestant group in Hesse-Cassel were the Calvinists. Some of these Calvinists were probably reluctant ones, and the principality was also home to some Lutherans who blended in or were tolerated.[9] After the initial conversion from Catholicism to Calvinism, many communities switched a second time to Lutheranism: for example, Schönstadt in the district of Marburg switched to Calvinism in 1526 and then to Lutheranism in 1624; similarly, Dörnholzhausen in the district of Frankenberg became Calvinist in 1530 and Lutheran in 1624.[10] Hesse-Cassel was also home to Jews in areas designated by principality officials (Theibault 1995, p. 64). In Hessian communities, access to full village rights depended on whether one followed the local religion (Theibault 1995, p. 63). This was how outsiders, like Jews, could be excluded from certain village rights.

Very sadly, the Thirty Years' War, which was supposed to settle religious differences across the various German states and entities, turned out to be a disaster for the people of Hesse-Cassel, with about 40–50% of the populace dying during the conflict (Fox 1976, p. 19). In some parts of the principality, it appears the war was even more devastating, with some villages in the Eschwege district losing 65% to 75% of their populations (Theibault 1995, pp. 171–173). It did not help that the principality was at the geographic crossroads of Germany, in the middle of religious debates, and that the elector of Hesse-Cassel was in conflict with his counterpart of Hesse-Darmstadt.

Over the next two centuries, a few important changes occurred. Before 1833, Jews were required to pay protection money; in October 1833, Jews were fully emancipated (Pedlow 1988, p. 242; Deutsch et al. 1906). The principality acquired various territories: in 1736, Hanau became part of Hesse-Cassel, and at the 1815 Vienna Congress the former Bishopric of Fulda (secularized in 1803), and the territories of the former Archbishopric of Mainz in the Kirchhain district, were all made part of Hesse-Cassel (Pedlow 1988, p. 7).

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[9] Some Catholics may have lived in Hesse-Cassel in 1618, but probably they were a very minor group. Theibault comments on the northeastern part of the principality, "Catholicism had more or less disappeared from the region…" (Theibault 1995, p. 65). At this time, Hessians who wanted to worship as Catholics could move (in some cases) to the Catholic enclaves under the Archbishopric of Mainz (Fritzlar, Amöneburg, Neustadt) or to the Bishopric of Fulda. Both were states of the Holy Roman Empire until 1803 and thus not a part of Hesse-Cassel in 1618. Lutherans are discussed in archival records of the district of Eschwege from the early 1600s, but there is no census data on their numbers from this time. The district bordered on Saxony, a Lutheran state, so Hessians near the border could cross over to practice in a Saxon church (Theibault 1995, pp. 65–66).

[10] We found one village that switched three times. Bischhausen in the district of Eschwege, became Calvinist in 1535, converted to Lutheranism in the late 1620s and again converted back to Calvinism after that. These conversions are documented in the Landgeschichtliches Informationssytem Hessen (LAGIS) (2021).
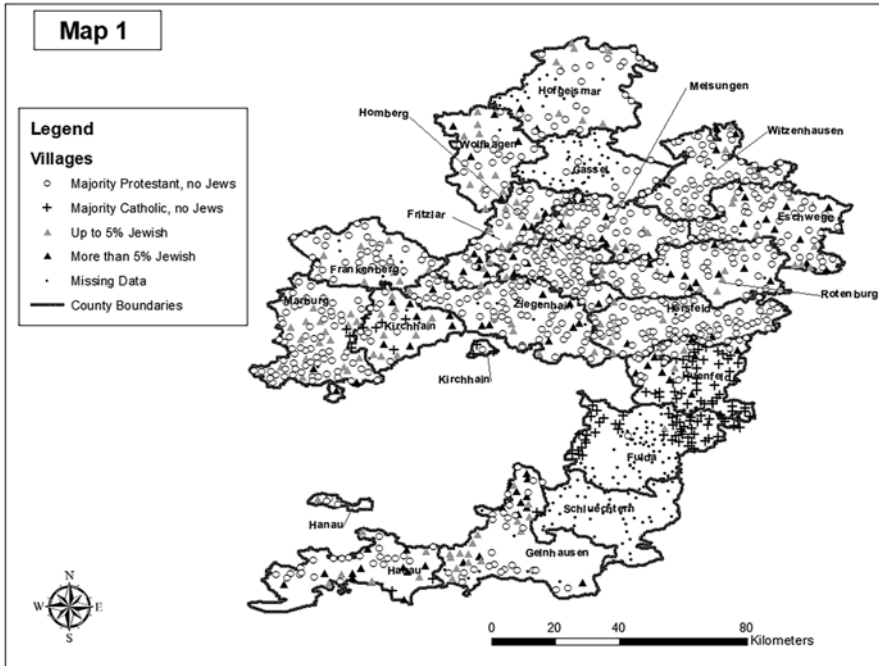
Fig. 15.1 Distribution of Protestants, Catholics and Jews by community. (*Source*: Community survey data: Germany, HStAM, Bestand H3)

By the 1850s, the principality of Hesse-Cassel consisted of 21 districts (*Kreise*), with 19 of them in the contiguous area shown in Fig. 15.1. From the community survey we know that Hessians practiced various faiths, including a number of Protestant confessions, Catholicism and Judaism.

15.3   The Geography of Religious Faith

15.3.1   *Where Did the Protestants, Catholics, and Jews Live?*

At this time in the 1850s a host of different Christians lived alongside Jews in the principality of Hesse-Cassel. Our data show that Protestantism predominated throughout Hesse-Cassel, with 82.4% Protestants, 15% Catholics, and 2.6% Jews overall (tabulations not shown). Estimates of the size of the Jewish population in 1850s Germany as a whole come from Botticini et al. (2019), who estimated the number of Jews in Germany at 1.04% in 1852 and 1.05% in 1861. They cite other scholars who assess the German-Jewish population at 1% as well.[11] In contrast, our

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[11] For discussion of their methodology, see the online appendix of Botticini et al. (2019).

data show that the percentage of Hessians who were Jewish in the 1850s was 2.6%, two and half times more. Our number is significantly higher. Several factors may have contributed to this higher percentage. First, the principality of Hesse-Cassel lay next door to the Free City of Frankfurt, a city with a sizable and thriving Jewish population; in this respect, the growing Jewish population in Frankfurt as well as the space limits placed on them by the Frankfurt City Council may have served as a source of Jews for nearby Hessian communities, with Jews drawn to the Hessian communities in the countryside near Frankfurt (Soliday 1974, pp. 196–97).[12] In this way it could be possible that the Hessian states had higher number of Jews relative to other German states. Secondly, our estimates are based on micro data, specifically individual community surveys and our specific knowledge of the Jewish population for 1016 of the 1376 communities in Hesse-Cassel. The figures Botticini et al. (2019) derive seem to be conservative guesstimates based on macro data from other scholars. Is it possible that Jews have been undercounted in nineteenth-century Germany overall? We do not know and can only comment on Hesse-Cassel. It is worthy of further investigation.

Despite the predominance of Protestants, the data show great diversity in the mix of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in the various towns and villages, and in the variety of confessions found among the Protestants. Table 15.1 demonstrates that religious distributions within communities vary in interesting ways. We find, as might be expected, that 85% of communities are largely Protestant – 49.3% entirely so and another 35.9% where Protestants lived alongside Catholics or Jews or both, but outnumbered them. However, predominantly Catholic places were a non-negligible 14.6% of the total, with 7.8% entirely Catholic, and 6.9% with Catholic proportions larger than the Protestant and Jewish proportions. Correspondingly, only 8% of localities had no Protestants, while 60% had no Catholics and 77% had no Jews. There are also meaningful proportions of the other possible configurations: communities with a mix of all three religions (13%); with Protestants and Catholics only (19.5%); and with Protestants and Jews only (10.3%). Only two (0.2%) villages had only Catholics and Jews.[13]

Table 15.2 conveys further information about the religious distributions within communities, showing the extent to which Catholics and Jews mixed with the majority Protestant population and each other. The rows show the count of communities in each percentage-Catholic category; the columns show the count of communities in each percentage-Jewish category; so the percentage-Protestant in the communities in each cell can be approximately inferred. For example, in row 1, column 1, the 524 places with zero percent Catholics and zero percent Jews obviously have 100% Protestants. Moving to the southeast, the cells along the diagonal

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[12] To restrain the growth of its Jewish community, the Frankfurt City Council imposed marriage and immigration restrictions. These laws were certainly active in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Soliday 1974, pp. 178–79, 196–97).

[13] From Table 15.1: percentage of communities with inhabitants of all three religions: 1.9% + 9.4 % + 1.1% + 0.6% = 13.0%; Protestants and Catholics only: 14.5% + 5% = 19.5%; Protestants and Jews only 10.2% + 0.1% = 10.3%; Catholics and Jews only = 0.2%.

Table 15.1 Distribution of communities by predominantly Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish

	$n = 1063$	(1)	(2)
(1)	**Predominantly Protestant (906 communities)**	0.852	**0% Protestant**
(2)	**100% Protestant (524)**	0.493	0.080
(3)	**<100% Protestant (382)**	0.359	(85)
(4)	*% Protestant > % Catholic > % Jewish (174)*	0.164	
(5)	% Protestant > % Catholic, 0 Jews (154)	0.145	
(6)	% Protestant > % Catholic > % Jewish (nonzero) (20)	0.019	
(7)	*% Protestant > % Jewish > % Catholic[a] (208)*	0.196	
(8)	% Protestant > % Jewish, 0 Catholics (108)	0.102	
(9)	% Protestant > % Jewish > % Catholic (nonzero)[a] (100)	0.094	
(10)	**Predominantly Catholic (156 communities)**	0.147	**0% Catholic**
(11)	**100% Catholic (83)**	0.078	0.595
(12)	**<100% Catholic (73)**	0.069	(633)
(13)	*% Catholic > % Jewish > % Protestant (14)*	0.013	
(14)	% Catholic > % Jewish, 0 Protestants (2)	0.002	
(15)	% Catholic > % Jewish > % Protestant (nonzero) (12)	0.011	
(16)	*% Catholic > % Protestant > % Jewish[b] (59)*	0.056	
(17)	% Catholic > % Protestant, 0 Jews (53)	0.050	
(18)	% Catholic > % Protestant > % Jewish (nonzero)[b] (6)	0.006	
(19)	**Predominantly Jewish (1 community)**	0.001	**0% Jewish**
(20)	**<100% Jewish (1)**	0.001	0.766
(21)	% Jewish> % Protestant, 0 Catholics (1)	0.001	

Source: Community survey data: Germany, HStAM, Bestand H3
Subsample sizes in parentheses
[a] Includes two communities with % Jewish = % Catholic
[b] Includes one community with % Protestant = % Jewish

Table 15.2 Distribution of communities by percent Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant

			(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
							Jewish			
			0%	<1%	1–<5%	5–<10%	10–<20%	20–<100%	100%	Total
(1)		0%	**524**	10	51	31	11	6	0	633
(2)		<1%	90	**6**	36	19	11	1	–	163
(3)	Catholic	1–<5%	47	2	**18**	13	3	1	–	84
(4)		5–<10%	11	0	1	**2**	1	0	–	15
(5)		10–<20%	4	0	1	1	**0**	0	–	6
(6)		20–<100%	55	1	13	7	2	**1**	–	79
(7)		100%	83	–	–	–	–	–	–	83
(8)		Total	814	19	120	73	28	9	0	1063

Source: Community survey data: Germany, HStAM, Bestand H3

show the communities with roughly equal proportions (in the same percentage category) of Jews and Catholics, with Protestants comprising the remainder (so decreasing as we go down the diagonal). Cells to the southwest of the diagonal

display communities with more Catholics than Jews – a sizeable number – 318 or 30%. Cells to the northeast show communities with more Jews than Catholics – a smaller but not inconsequential proportion – 194 or 18%. Most places had no Jewish population, but a quite a few had appreciable Jewish communities of up to 10% of the population; the modal category for Jewish population was 1–5% Jewish (120 communities). A few towns had between 10% and 20% Jews; very few towns had more than 20% Jews.

In Table 15.3, means are presented for communities stratified simply into three groups: majority Protestant (no Jews), majority Catholic (no Jews), and communities with any Jewish population. Means are statistically different at the 5% level (and often 1%) unless otherwise noted. Table 15.3 displays proportions Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish, giving us a more summary view relative to the detailed religious distributions in Tables 15.1 and 15.2. We see that the "typical" all-Christian communities were heavily dominated by either Protestants or Catholics: the average majority-Protestant community was 99% Protestant and 1% Catholic, while the average majority-Catholic community was the reverse, 99% Catholic and only 1% Protestant. The average community with any Jewish population was heavily Protestant (85%), but housed Catholics (9%) as well as Jews (6%).

Figure 15.1 shows the geographic distribution of communities with a slightly more complex stratification: majority Protestant, no Jews, denoted by empty circles; majority Catholic, no Jews, denoted by plus signs; communities with a Jewish population of up to 5%, denoted by grey-shaded triangles; and those with a Jewish population of greater than 5%, denoted by black triangles.[14] Communities for which we have no data are denoted by black dots.[15] We see that many of the majority Catholic communities were clustered in the districts of Fulda and Hünfeld, parts of which (mostly Fulda) had constituted the Bishopric of Fulda, a principality belonging to the Holy Roman Empire from the eleventh century until 1803. The Vienna Congress treaty transferred the Fulda Bishopric territory over to Hesse-Cassel in 1815. The district of Fulda was especially Catholic: most Fulda communities had no Jews as well as no Protestants living in them, which may reflect something about its Catholic past and the way the Bishopric had operated in terms of outsiders. The city of Fulda, one of the three largest towns in all of Hesse-Cassel, was the main exception: with 9547 residents, 80.4% were Catholics, 16.2% Protestants, and 3.4% Jews (tabulation not shown).

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[14] It can be seen in Table 15.2 that of the 110 communities with more than 5% Jews, (73/110)*100 = 66% were 5–10% Jewish, (28/110)*100 = 25% were 10–20% Jewish, and only (9/110)*100 = 8% were more than 20% Jewish. We disaggregate the geographic distribution of Protestant denominations below in Fig. 15.2.

[15] Some data are missing because the manuscripts went missing over the decades, which is the case for the districts of Kassel and Fulda. For the same reason 16 out of the 51 villages and towns in the district of Hofgeismar are missing as well. In the case of the district of Schlüchtern, we have not finished cleaning the data for its 52 communities. In terms of how this affects the results, we believe Catholics may be undercounted, given the sizable amount of missing data in Fulda.

Table 15.3 Community mean characteristics by religious category

Variable	Majority protestant communities (no Jews)	Majority Catholic communities (no Jews)	Communities with any Jews
# Communities[a]	678	136	249
Religion			
Proportion Protestant	0.99	0.01	0.85
Proportion Catholic	0.01	0.99	0.09
Proportion Jewish[b]	0.00	0.00	0.06
Elevation, landholding, living arrangements			
Elevation in Rhine feet	839	1062	735
Average landholding in acker	15.6	22.5	10.7
Family Size, 1858	5.3	6.2	5.1
Number Persons per House, 1858[c]	6.6	7.2	7.0
Families per House, 1858	1.26	1.17	1.38
Urban and rural characteristics			
Population, 1858[b]	347	339	1037
Density (persons per acker), 1858	0.24	0.18	0.39
#/% of these communities which have city designation[b]	3/0.4%	0/ 0%	43/17%
# Markets[b]	0.09	0.07	1.35
# Types of specialized artisans	0.6	0.4	3.6
Average land price	68.7	47.4	81.3
# Supported per capita[b]	0.019	0.018	0.024

Source: Community survey data: Germany, HStAM, Bestand H3; Population data: Hessen-Kassel (1843, 1860). *Kurfürstlich Hessisches Hof- und Staatshandbuch*
Means significantly different at the 5% level (usually 1%) unless otherwise noted
[a] Number of communities differs for some variables because of missing values
[b] Majority-Protestant communities not significantly different than Majority Catholic communities
[c] Majority-Catholic communities not significantly different than communities with any Jews

Other majority Catholic communities could be found here and there scattered around the principality, but mostly in the districts of Kirchhain, Gelnhausen, and Hanau. Most of the Catholic communities in these districts were originally part of the Archbishopric of Mainz, one of the three most important political entities of the Holy Roman Empire. That Martin Luther addressed his famous 95 Theses to the Archbishop of Mainz emphasizes this point. With the dissolution of the Empire in 1803, a few years later in 1815 the Vienna Congress assigned these districts (or parts thereof) to the principality of Hesse-Cassel.

In contrast to the clustering of majority-Catholic communities, those with any Jewish population are widely scattered across the principality. Localities typically placed stringent residency restrictions on all kinds of "outsiders," including Jews

(Knodel 1967; Lowenstein 2005, p. 99); this likely contributed to the patchwork of communities with any Jewish population across Hesse-Cassel. Lowenstein (2005, p. 95) remarks on the uneven distribution of Jews across the regions of Germany as well as within the neighborhoods of specific communities.[16]

15.3.2 A Diversity of Protestants

Figure 15.2 shows where the different Protestant groups lived, specifically which communities were Reformed Evangelical (Calvinist) majority, Lutheran majority, United Evangelical majority, or Catholic majority. The symbols for communities with Protestant minorities like Anabaptists, Mennonites, Pietists, Baptists, and Irvingians have a dot in the middle.[17] Smaller dots not sitting inside a shape signify communities for which we have no data. Clearly there are distinct geographic patterns. The Reformed Evangelicals, who followed Calvinist teachings, were the dominant group at this time (squares) and could be found in nine districts in the north and northeast of the principality.[18] Of our sample of over 1000 communities (out of a total of 1376 communities), those who followed Reformed Evangelism were 60% of the population. In contrast, Lutherans had strong holdings in only three districts and United Evangelicals in only two and perhaps three districts.[19] Lutherans were 12.2% of our sample population, and majority Lutheran communities could be found in the west in the districts of Marburg, Kirchhain, and Frankenberg. One of the largest towns in the principality was Marburg, with almost 8000 residents; it is here where Philip the Magnanimous established the first European Protestant university in 1527 with the goal of supporting Lutheranism, in terms of its faculties in law, medicine, philosophy, and theology. The United Evangelical church was the majority religion in most of the communities in the southern districts of Hanau and Gelnhausen and made up 12.0% of the population.[20]

Sometimes Hessians were living in a community that diverged from their own faith for what seem like mostly specialized occupational reasons, indicating that some Hessians had no issue with hiring other Hessians of different denominations:

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[16] Lowenstein (2005, p. 98) notes: Some "large village communities showed little segregation; five of 17 families in Schenklengsfeld, Hesse-Kassel, lived on the marketplace, and fewer than half of the Jews had immediate Jewish neighbors. . . . In towns with sparse Jewish population, Jews usually lived scattered among Christian neighbors."

[17] Anabaptists began with the teachings of the Swiss Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland in the 1520s. Today's Mennonites, Amish, and Hutterites trace their founding back to Zwingli. The Irvingian Church, named after Edward Irving, but also called the Catholic Apostolic Church, was started in Scotland in 1831.

[18] The district of Kassel, for which data are missing, was most likely Evangelical Reformed as well, which would bring the number to ten districts.

[19] The district of Schlüchtern may have been mostly United Evangelical, making it three, but we are not sure. We will know this when we have finished cleaning data for this district.

[20] A uniting or united church was the result of a merger of two Protestant Christian faiths.
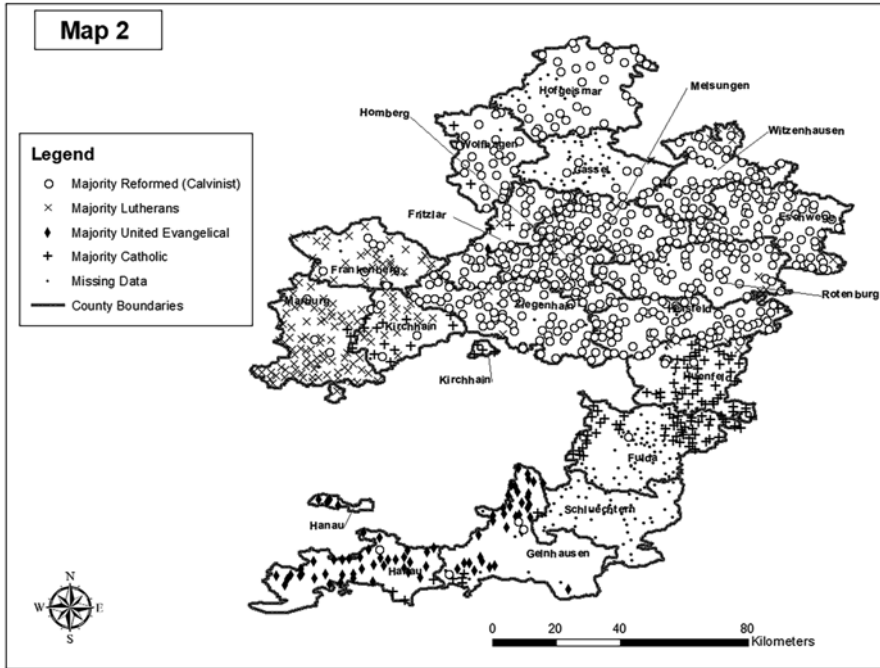
Fig. 15.2 Distribution of Christian confessions by community. (*Source*: Community survey data: Germany, HStAM, Bestand H3)

for example, everyone in the village of Ginseldorf (district Marburg) was Catholic except for the family of the forester; the Catholics in the Lutheran community of Treis an der Lumbde (district Marburg) were described as civil servants; the sole Catholic in the town of Rosenthal (district Frankenberg) was a lawyer; all in the village of Merzhausen (district Ziegenhain) were Reformed Evangelical except for a few servants who were Lutheran.

It is further interesting to note that we found not a single instance of a person following one of the Protestant minority confessions (Anabaptism, Mennonite, etc.) living in a majority Catholic community.[21] Any such followers were in majority Protestant communities. Perhaps this is not surprising, as such individuals had mostly splintered off from Protestant denominations and may have had a difficult enough time living among those who followed the mainline Protestant faiths. We found the use of the term "dissident" a few times in the records, as one referring to those not following the main (single) Protestant religion practiced in the community.

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[21] Fulda is the one large Catholic town with many different Protestants. It is possible that there were Christian minorities living in the town of Fulda, given the large number of Protestants living there, but it is not mentioned in the survey.

15.4 Hessian Communities and Their Diverse Socioeconomic Structures

We now turn to describing the main differences in communities by the simplest stratification into the three religious categories, majority-Protestant communities, majority-Catholic communities, and communities with some Jews. The means in Table 15.3 show that majority-Catholic communities were found at the highest average elevation, majority-Protestant communities at lower elevations, and communities with some Jews at the lowest. As seen in Fig. 15.1, most of the Catholic communities were in the mountainous *Kreise* of Hünfeld and Fulda, explaining their high elevation, while we suspect that the presence of Jews at lower elevations was because they likely clustered in communities that were more accessible to trade and migration routes.[22] Osmond (2003, p. 80) notes that Jewish presence was greater in market towns. Lowenstein (2005, p. 132) notes that Jewish traders traveled by foot, or by wagon if more prosperous, to sell their wares, in both rural and city areas. Traders divided up territories (*medinas* or *Gäue*) so as not to compete, which may have divided them geographically.

Table 15.3 also shows that majority-Catholic communities had the highest average landholding at 22.5 Acker per household (an Acker was 0.59 of an acre, U.S.), followed by majority-Protestant communities at 15.6, while communities with some Jews had the smallest average landholding of 10.7 Acker. In this pre-industrialized economy land was the major asset (Mendels 1972, p. 242), so this distribution indicates that Catholic communities were the wealthiest on average. Figure 15.3 adds further detail on the allocation of land across households in each type of community. Large farmers are those who own at least 20 Acker; small farmers up to 20. Homeowners are those who own just a house and garden with no other landholding, while renters rent their home and own no land. The proportion of citizens in each category tells us something about the social structure in the community as well as the wealth distribution, since landowners had the most status, while landless laborers and artisans were of a lower rank in society (Vits 1993). Majority-Catholic communities have the greatest proportion of large farmers and of farmers overall, with smaller proportions of homeowners and renters, compared to both the majority-Protestant communities and those with some Jews. These large farmers would have been well-to-do, and these majority-Catholic communities would have been the most agricultural in nature. Correspondingly, the communities with some Jews had fewer farmers and more homeowners and renters than the majority-Protestant communities, lending to their more urban character, discussed further below.

The survey respondents were asked to give the number of persons, houses, and families in the community, allowing us to glean a bit of detail about living arrangements. It is not surprising to find that majority-Catholic communities had the largest average family size (computed as number of residents divided by the number of

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[22] In addition, the former Bishopric of Fulda, the main source of Hessian Catholics in the nineteenth century, just happened to be at a higher elevation.
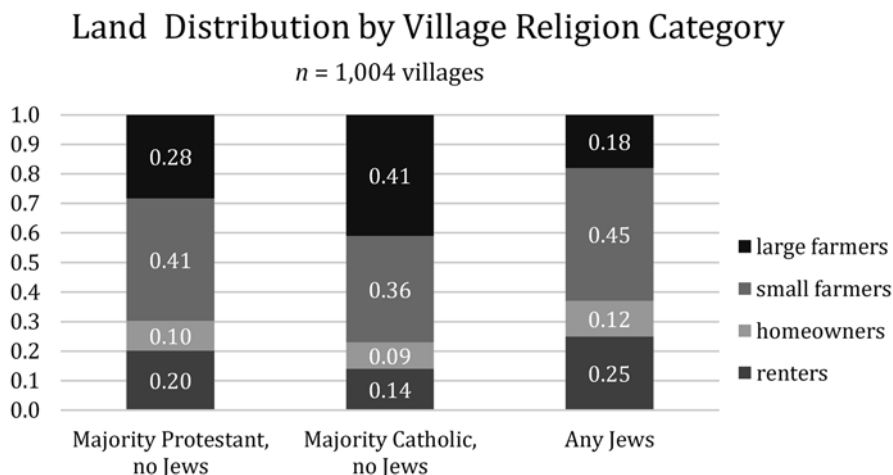
Land Distribution by Village Religion Category

n = 1,004 villages

Fig. 15.3 Land distribution by majority-Protestant, majority-Catholic, and any Jewish population. (*Source*: Community survey data: Germany, HStAM, Bestand H3)

families) of 6.2 persons, with family size in majority-Protestant communities and communities with some Jews essentially equal at 5.3 and 5.1.[23] However, both the majority-Catholic communities and communities with some Jews had more people living in each house, 7.2 and 7.0 (number of residents divided by number of houses) than did the majority-Protestant communities. It appears there were more, smaller families per home in the communities with some Jews at 1.38 (computed as number of families divided by number of houses), followed by 1.26 in majority-Protestant communities and 1.17 in majority-Catholic communities. Lowenstein (2005, p. 105), evaluating differences in living standards between German Jews and non-Jews in this period, notes, "What was probably specifically Jewish was the crowding into multiple dwellings caused by legal limitations on Jewish homeownership."[24] Communities with any Jews were also more urban in character, which could have contributed to a higher number of person per home even outside of Jewish households.

This urban character is illustrated in Table 15.3, where we see that communities with some Jews have a strikingly larger population average and higher density relative to majority-Protestant and majority-Catholic communities, where population averages are very close but density is a bit higher in the majority-Catholic communities, perhaps related to the larger family sizes. Breuilly (2003, p. 197) remarks more broadly on the presence of Jewish settlements in larger German towns. But while a certain population may have accompanied the presence of Jews in a town,

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[23] Hajnal notes that the average household size in pre-industrial Europe was five persons (Hajnal 1983, p. 65).

[24] Soliday comments on the growing Jewish population and the need for more space in the Free City of Frankfurt in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Soliday 1974, pp. 175–197).

they were not found in abundance in the largest German cities because of residence restrictions.[25] Lowenstein (2005, p. 97) notes, "Only a small minority of German Jews lived in large cities.… Some important Jewish communities were located in villages or smaller cities just outside large cities that excluded Jews." Forty-six of the Hessian communities in our data had the official designation of *Stadt*, which translates into English as "city" or "town." This term conferred rights to hold more types of markets and allow more types of high-skilled artisans to operate and thus designated more metropolitan communities with more complex economies (Bovensiepen 1909). The vast majority of these "cities," 43, housed some Jews, again indicating that Jews clustered in more urban places. We can see that the number of markets and the number of types of high-skilled artisans allowed in the communities with some Jews were accordingly higher than in the majority-Protestant and majority-Catholic localities.

The average land price was also higher in communities with some Jews, likely related to the higher density and a greater turnover in land, relative to the more staid Catholic-majority communities where families likely held on to land over the generations, with the majority-Protestant land price somewhere in the middle.[26] The number of poor supported by the town was higher in communities with some Jews, possibly reflecting the fewer landowners and a more unsettled population.

15.5   Occupation and Religious Identity

In the 1850s, the principality of Hesse-Cassel was known for its relative poverty (Kukowski 1995; 6). The three main occupations were farmer, artisan, and laborer, with large farmers occupying the highest status in most places (Vits 1993). Still at this time, in place were old-fashioned guild laws which permitted most localities only a narrow set of artisan professions, including ones like baker, smith, butcher, shoemaker, carpenter, and a few others (Bovensiepen 1909).

Our information on the occupations of Jews is uniquely detailed, because for localities with Jewish residents, the community survey asked an additional question about the kind of occupation or business Jews were involved in. We thus have occupational information for the Jews in the 255 Hessian communities where they resided. Table 15.4 lists the different occupations mentioned in the records.[27] All we know is whether an occupation was practiced by Jews. The figure of 25% listed in Table 15.4 for artisans does not mean that 25% of Jews were artisans. What it means

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[25] The three majority Protestant cities in Hesse-Cassel were Homberg in the district of Homberg and Lichtenau and Grossalmerode, both in the district of Witzenhausen. Remarkably, no Jews resided in any of these three officially designated cities.

[26] See Bestand H3, Community Survey.

[27] In addition, these occupations and/or life circumstances were mentioned once and for a single community: teacher, veterinarian, brewer, lawyer, miller, restaurant/bar owner, lives from own money, lives from support of relatives, and lives from support of sons in America.

Table 15.4 List of occupations for Jews

Occupation	#Communities found in	% of Communities with Jews
Trade (*Handel*)	192	75.3%
Trade, small trader (e.g., grocer)	38	14.9
Trade, distressed, petty trade (*Nothhandel*)	85	33.3
Rag picker	6	2.4
Artisans	65	25.5
Butchers	29	11.4
Seller of delicatessen/spices (*Speierei*)	17	6.7
Farming	66	25.9
Day labor	7	2.7
Factory workers	1	0.4
Brokers (*Mäkler*)	4 or 5	1.6 or 2.0
Lives from charity	3	1.2

Source: Community survey data: Germany, HStAM, Bestand H3

is that the occupation of artisan was mentioned as an occupation in which Jews were engaged in 65 of these 255 communities, specifically 25% of them.

The most common occupation was some involvement in trade. Surveys for a total of 192 communities, over 75% of the communities with Jews in our data, mentioned "trade" (*Handel* in German). In some cases this was a vague and incomplete statement and could mean a merchant, a businessman running a small store or a less prestigious form of trade, such as petty trade. In many other cases, it was better specified: at least 50 of these 192 communities mentioned trade in livestock, which could mean a bigger operation than peddling. As Stephen Lowenstein has noted, many Jews well-to-do enough purchased small amounts of land but although registered as farmers." spent the bulk of their time in the cattle trade" (Lowenstein 2005, p. 139). This seems to have been the case for Hesse-Cassel.

A number of communities were more explicit about the size of a trading operation and listed the presence of small stores (38 communities or 14.9%), butchers (11%), and the activity of petty trade or distressed trade, known as *Nothhandel* in German (85 communities, 33%). Trade is a common theme in the literature on Jewish history, and petty trade was a specialty of Jews.

Until the emancipations of the nineteenth century, European Jews had been blocked from engaging in many occupations. Various types of trade, though, had been accessible. Distressed trade involved peddling goods within communities or from village to village or selling goods at market stands; often traders employed credit. In the rural areas, peddlers traveled long distances by foot, or if better off, by wagon. Peddlers could be found in more urban areas as well. The emancipation of Jews made it possible for a transition from peddling or ambulatory trade to shopkeeping.[28]

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[28] Lowenstein (2005, pp. 132–135) provides an in-depth discussion.

Our comparison groups come from stylized facts other scholars have found about the occupations of Jews. Botticini and Eckstein (2012, p. 188) state the following, albeit for a much earlier period:

> In the Hebrew record from the second half of the tenth century onward, shopkeeping, local trade, long-distance commerce, toll-collection, minting, and money changing were the main occupations of German Jews. They also could and did own land, gardens, orchards, and vineyards, in which they employed Christian tenants and agricultural laborers. Soon thereafter, many German Jews became heavily engaged in lending money at interest.

Stephan Lowenstein's discussion is much closer in time to our analysis. He elaborates on the various changes for Jews in the nineteenth century, partly due to the many emancipation laws passed as well as the pressures stemming from the industrial revolution. He concludes the following (Lowenstein 2005, p. 143):

> Until about 1840, most Jews of Germany had to struggle to make a bare living, usually as ambulatory petty traders in the countryside. Some attempted to improve their lot by switching into crafts. A growing minority opened retail businesses selling a variety of goods. In the period from 1840 to 1870, as the Industrial Revolution took hold in Germany, the economic position of Jews changed more rapidly. Despite the continued existence of pockets of poverty, most German Jews moved in the middle class.

Both sets of authors mention trade as a common occupation, which is what we find as well. Lowenstein mentions the move into crafts, which aligns with our finding that *artisan* was mentioned as an occupation for Jews in a fourth of the Hessian communities they lived in.

A surprise in our data is the extent, at 25%, that farming shows up so frequently as an occupation for Jews. Other scholars have not found this. While Botticini and Eckstein mention Jewish ownership of land for the period from 1000 AD to 1492, they argue elsewhere, and in contrast, that a miniscule number of German Jews were working in agriculture in 1933, less than 1% of all Jewish workers in Germany (Botticini and Eckstein 2012; 65). Similarly, Kaplan (2005, p. 217) finds that in both 1895 and 1907, 1% of German Jewish workers were working in the agricultural sector; the comparable figures for non-Jewish German workers are 36% in 1895 and 29% in 1907.[29]

Another surprise, perhaps, is the lack of a large number of Jews involved in moneylending. We find only four or five communities where the term *Mäkler* is mentioned; most of these were found in villages in the district of Gelnhausen, near Frankfurt, and all with populations of 500 to 700 people. One money lender lived in the town of Langenselbold, a town with a population over 2600 people, in the eastern part of the district of Hanau, but a bit closer to Frankfurt than the other villages with moneylenders. We reason that the close proximity to the bustling city of Frankfurt helped moneylenders to run their businesses. We wonder if, with the rise in savings institutions and other banking enterprises in the first half of the nineteenth century, whether the demand for moneylending services had declined.

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[29] It is not clear from her work whether this counted both agricultural laborers and farmers (owners of land).

Lowenstein argues that moneylenders were a small percentage of all Jewish occupations. In addition, he explains that Jewish retailers, grocers, and cattle traders extended credit as well (Lowenstein 2005; pp. 132, 136).

15.6   Conclusion

During the sixteenth century, the principality of Hesse-Cassel was at the center of debates involving the Reformation. Geographically, it occupied a central location within the area that became Germany and thus lay to some degree at important political crossroads of Europe. Prince-Electors' personal decisions on which religion to adopt as well the aftermath of the Thirty Years' War determined the religious faiths for the majority of their Hessian subjects.

Skipping forward two centuries, to a time when Hessians had gained many civil liberties and could not really be considered subjects any longer, we document the variety of religions practiced in Hesse-Cassel by using micro data from an 1850s Hessian community survey. These data have established the religious makeup of over 1000 villages and towns across the contiguous area of the principality (see Figs. 15.1 and 15.2). We found that in the middle of the nineteenth century most mainline Christian groups were clustered, with the Evangelical Protestants dominating the northern and eastern districts, the Lutherans in three western districts surrounding the university town of Marburg, the United Evangelicals in two districts in the south close to Frankfurt, and the Catholics in former bishoprics, mostly in the east. In contrast, Jews lived in communities scattered across the region but only in about 23% of the communities in our sample. Protestant minorities were also scattered but in an even smaller number of places. In this analysis, a particularly noteworthy finding concerns the Hessian Jews. Based on our sample, Jews made up a much larger percentage of the Hessian population than other scholars have found for Germany overall.[30]

We examined the main differences between majority Protestant, majority Catholic, and communities with some Jews. This analysis produced several interesting and statistically significant results. Majority Catholic places were typically starkly different from those with some Jews living in them, while Protestant majority communities were in between the two. Catholics lived at higher elevations, while Jews lived at lower ones. The communities with the highest number of large farms were in Catholic places, while the opposite was true where there were Jews. The latter signifies more importantly that Jews lived in places that were more urban in character, essentially communities with larger populations, a greater variety of economic activity, more types of artisans, and more markets. Majority Catholic communities were on average the opposite. The differences were not just economic or geographical but also demographic: for example, majority Catholic towns had the

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[30] See Botticini et al. (2019).

largest average family size, whereas majority Protestant places and places with Jews both had much lower average family sizes.

Lastly, the community survey provided the most detailed occupational information for Jews, allowing us to document the variety of occupations that they engaged in. About one quarter of villages and towns with Jews listed them as engaged in farming and/or with some artisan craft, and the overwhelming majority mentioned trade as a main occupation.

We believe we have documented a relationship between religious beliefs and socioeconomic outcomes. While we do not make any causal claims, we provide evidence for mid-nineteenth century Hesse-Cassel that meaningful economic and social variation existed between communities that differed in terms of the dominant religion practiced. We plan to expand on our findings by exploring in future work what may have driven these differences.

Appendix: Wegge on Murray

Generous of heart and giving of his time and ideas, John E. Murray was truly a special person in the world of academia. For those of us in the field of economic history, he was a great listener, a careful thinker, and a fantastic role model. Scholars young and old flocked to him for professional advice and guidance on their research projects. Journal editors and other intellectual leaders sought him out for editorial board positions, referee reports, and book reviews. When I managed the economics panel for the internal grant competition at the City University of New York in 2009, John assisted me with several referee reports. Others have remarked that he was a superb colleague within his own home institutions and more widely within the economic history profession. His C.V. is a testament to the immense amount of academic service he was involved in, both at lofty and less glamourous levels.

It was a joy to work with John and to speak with him at conferences, partly because he was not only smart and gifted but also humble and approachable. He was a devout Christian, a person devoted to his family, and a person confident in his own gifts and talents. At least this is what I saw outwardly, and I like to think he had no need for more external rewards since well-researched and consummately written scholarship was the ultimate prize. Another reason I and so many other academics enjoyed being around John is that he loved learning, teaching, and writing, and always wanted to do more, whether it was in economics, religion, history, or languages, but especially in all of them at the same time. Over the very long run he found a way to improve his knowledge of math, philosophy, theology, history, and languages. He was always working on his tool kit. John was an academic's academic, and many of us wanted to be in his orbit and absorb something from the way he looked at the world and operated in it.

In his 26 years as a professor, post-Ph.D., and according to my own counting, John published three books, at least 37 refereed journal articles, numerous other articles in other outlets, and 28 book reviews. It is an admirable record! He had a

keen interest in special historical and often marginalized population groups, including the Shakers in Ohio, paupers in Early America, and orphans in Charleston. His research on the Shakers is noteworthy for several reasons. In a series of papers, many with co-authors (especially Metin Coşgel), John analyzed how a religious society that operated as a commune tackled production issues: he and his co-authors studied their production in dairying and swine and examined how they balanced their economic, religious, and cultural priorities, all in a commune. John was ahead of his time in studying the economics of religion and communes.

At the risk of being repetitive, John cared very much about great research, and his *Weltanschauung* was clearly interdisciplinary. Had he lived longer, I can imagine him being elected as president of the Social Science History Association (SSHA). He would be pleased at the way the Religion network at the SSHA has strengthened over the years and is now sponsoring many more sessions at the annual conference than 10 years ago.

I miss John, his friendship, his spirit, his ideas, and his contributions to academia. I hope that this volume would make him proud. I also hope that this book will bring some collective and communal solace to his colleagues, friends, and family, near and far, who miss him so dearly.

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