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# Essays on Religion and Political Behavior: How Religion Facilitates Political Development and Change

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ESSAYS ON RELIGION AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR:  
HOW RELIGION FACILITATES POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

by

Sky L. Ammann

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## ABSTRACT

### ESSAYS ON RELIGION AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR: HOW RELIGION FACILITATES POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

by

Sky L. Ammann

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2014

Under the Supervision of Professor Kathleen Dolan

This dissertation investigates several unexplored topics regarding the influence of Americans' religion on their political attitudes and behaviors. First, it posits that religious socialization enables and constrains the development of a child's party identification and moral issue attitudes over time. Using the Youth Parent Socialization Panel Study, three indicators of a parent's religion are employed to predict a child's politics early in life, over time, and across generations. The results show an evolving role of parental religious socialization on individuals' party identification and moral issue attitudes. In particular, for newer generations, parental religious beliefs have supplanted historical, religious-belonging-based religious measures in predicting their child's political attitudes. The results provide a possible mechanism for the newly emerging religio-political conflicts observed today. Second, there is an analysis of how changes in individuals' religiosity of beliefs and behaviors relate to changes in their political attitudes and behaviors over time. Theories of social identity and cognitive consistency imply that if an individual changes one of these factors, they should also update the other. Continuing to employ the Youth Parent Study, the results show that as individuals become more religiously traditional they

are more likely to be affiliated with the Republican Party and take increasingly conservative positions on moral issues. Whereas, individuals who become religiously secular gravitate toward the Democrats and take increasing liberal positions on moral issues. But the connection between religiosity and political attitudes only emerged starting in the 1980s. These results challenge research that argues religio-political sorting primarily happens for the youngest generations. Finally, this research explores the well-cited association between religious attendance and political participation. Three separate theoretical possibilities are considered: a direct, indirect, and null relationship. The analysis shows that individuals who regularly attend religious services are more likely to engage in both civic and political activities than occasional or infrequent attenders. But the relationship between religious attendance and political participation is primarily indirect, via civic engagement, and far weaker than stated by earlier literature. Taken together, each of these topics fills a significant gap in the literature by exploring some of the processes in which religion affects politics early in life and over an individual's lifecycle.

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This project started during my Master's research and has substantially evolved over the past several years. My motivation for studying religion and American political behavior comes from my own religious and political evolution. I wished to understand if the changes I recognized in my own life applied to other Americans. These analyses have answered many of my questions, but also, generated many new questions for future inquiry.

I am very grateful for Professor Kathleen Dolan's guidance, encouragement, and critiques throughout graduate school and the writing of my dissertation. I would also like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee, Assistant Professor David Armstrong, Associate Professor Sara Benesh, Professor Thomas Holbrook, and Assistant Professor Paru Shah, for their helpful comments, suggestions, and critiques. Additionally, I would like to thank the entire UWM Political Science Department's faculty and fellow graduate students for their advice, support, and encouragement. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family for their support during the writing of my dissertation as well as throughout graduate school.

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## CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

### Introduction

Religion, in particular Christianity, continues to thrive in America today.<sup>1</sup> Roughly 92 percent of American adults believe in God or a universal spirit, just fewer than 80 percent identify with some form of Christianity, 56 percent believe religion is very important, and approximately 40 percent attend religious services once a week or more (Pew 2008). While the number of religiously unaffiliated and secular individuals has grown in recent years, to nearly 20 percent in 2012, a majority of unaffiliated respondents continue to believe in God (68 percent), many have spiritual tendencies, and some behave religiously (Pew 2012).

Because of the importance of religion in the United States, scholars across a wide variety of academic fields have explored the influence of Americans' religious preferences on numerous different individual-level attitudes, opinions, orientations, and behaviors. The overwhelming consensus across these fields is that Americans' religion is clearly associated with many of their attitudes, opinions, orientations, and behaviors (e.g., Argyle 2000). Because different religious groupings convey a unique set of values and beliefs,

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<sup>1</sup> In the 1800s, Alexis de Tocqueville was surprised by the importance placed on religion in American life, believing that the absence of public funds for religion would deplete religious tendencies (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2011:19). Others, including Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, argued that industrialization, urbanization, and economic growth would lead to religious decline (Argyle 2000:215).

individual-level differences in religion are related to distinctly different worldviews, affecting how Americans evaluate economic, cultural, social, and political aspects of their daily lives (Leege 1993; Wuthnow 1988, 1989).<sup>2</sup> Leege (1993:9) writes: “[r]eligious worldviews give transcendental meaning to the mundane. Religious worldviews consist of values that lay unique claim to truth while rationalizing social relationships and community objectives.”

The specific topic for this dissertation is how religion helps us better understand American political behavior. Generally speaking, individuals who share religious profiles tend to share values and beliefs that lead them to the expression of similar political attitudes and behaviors (Fowler et al. 2010; Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Smidt et al. 2009; Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2011). And the relationship between

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<sup>2</sup> It is important to acknowledge that studying religion in the U.S. is distinct from studying it in other contexts. America’s history, culture, and even politics have defined the religious choice and preferences of Americans (see Fowler et al. 2010; Leege 1993; Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2011). Christianity has been the primary religious identity throughout American history. But the smaller number of non-Christian religious identifiers and individuals who are classified as non-religious are a very important part of the study American religion and politics. These individuals tend to account for important variance in religious beliefs and behaviors in the United States. Without at least some variance in religious beliefs and behaviors measures there can be no observed relationship between different aspects of religion and politics.

Americans' religion and their politics is well documented. In particular, the literature focuses much attention on describing how measures of religion, of which there are many, are linked to political attitudes or behaviors (e.g., Campbell 2007; Green et al. 2007; Guth 2009; Guth and Bradberry 2013; Guth et al. 2006),<sup>3</sup> how other social characteristics, such as race, gender, age, income, or region, or informational aspects mediate these relationships (e.g., Gelman et al. 2008; Green, 2007; Layman 2001; Kaufmann 2004; Kelly and Kelly 2005; McDaniel and Ellison 2008),<sup>4</sup> or explaining how and why the relationship between these factors has changed over the past several decades (e.g., Kohut et al. 2000; Layman

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<sup>3</sup> These studies examine the role of religion in the 2004, 2008, and 2012 presidential elections.

<sup>4</sup> For example, in terms of race, McDaniel and Ellison (2008) find that Biblical literalism, employed regularly by scholars as an indicator for religious beliefs, has become most correlated with movement toward the GOP for Anglos. Whereas, Biblical-literalist Latinos have gravitated only slightly toward the GOP over time and more toward partisan independence. African American Biblical-literalists saw no movement in their partisan tendencies over the 1980s to early 2000s. In terms of information, for example, Layman (2001:283) finds that the link between religious and political attitudes is stronger among politically aware individuals than those who are less politically aware. See Green (2007) for a discussion of other sociological characteristics that mediate the relationship between religion and American politics.

2001; Campbell 2002; Jennings and Stoker 2007; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Wuthnow 1988, 1989).<sup>5</sup>

Recently and most important for this research, there have also been analyses focused on understanding the causal nature of the relationship between individuals' religion and political attitudes (Hout and Fischer 2002; Patrikios 2008). Specifically, Hout and Fischer (2002) argue that because of the increased connection between conservative Christians and Republican Party during the 1980s and 1990s, these two factors have become synonymous in the minds of the mass public, resulting in changes in stated religious preferences of survey respondents. Using cross-sectional survey data, Hout and Fischer (2002) find that individuals who recognize the association between conservative Christianity and the Republicans are increasingly likely to state that they have no religion. Using panel data and structural equation modelling, Patrikios (2008:386) builds on the

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<sup>5</sup> For example, Layman (2001) finds that political activists (delegates at national political conventions) have grown increasingly religiously divided since the 1980s. Republican activists have become more evangelical and Democrats more likely to identify with minority a religious group or secular. In turn, through the process of conflict extension, the mass public have recognized and replicated these religio-partisan changes. Expanding Layman's work, Campbell (2002) finds that it is the youngest members of the electorate that have become increasingly religio-politically sorted, supporting the idea of generational replacement as one mechanism for the growing religious differences between Republicans and Democrats since the 1980s.

work by Hout and Fischer, finding that “[w]orshiping in a theologically conservative church seems to eventually function – at least in part – as a symbolic expression of conservatism and Republican partisanship, whereby, other things being equal, conservatives and Republicans tend to attend church because they see this practice as confirmation of ideology and partisanship and as demarcation from the out-group (liberals and Democrats).” Overall, this literature focuses on the role of politics in shaping religious expression (Hout and Fischer 2002) and what Patrikios (2008) suggests is a reciprocal relationship between religion and politics.

But a review of the literature on religion and American political behavior reveals that scholars have not examined the causal nature of the relationship between religion and politics by modelling the relationship in a manner that tests the central finding in the subfield – religion shapes an individual’s political attitudes and behaviors.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, reviewing the literature reveals that very little work focuses on understanding the process by which religion has an instrumental influence on the development of an individual’s

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<sup>6</sup> This is not to say that politics cannot influence religion; it can (Hout and Fischer 2002). But this analysis is focused on exploring the more regularly cited pattern where measures of religion are the independent variables and political attitudes and behaviors are the dependent variables.

politics (see Pearson-Merkowitz and Gimpel 2009; Wald and Wilcox 2006).<sup>7</sup> As a result, the point of departure for this dissertation is that the literature has overlooked a fundamental step.

This dissertation fills the gap by asking three broad questions. First, when and from where does the relationship between religion and politics develop? To answer this question, Chapter 2 explores how early parental religious socialization – defined as the process by which parents transmit and teach their children about religion and the role of religion in society – influences a child’s political attitudes. The analyses in Chapter 2 focus on understanding the influence of a parent’s religion on their child’s political development early in life, over time, and across generations. In an attempt to imply a causal process where religion facilitates political development, the analyses examine how measures of parental religion predict a child’s party identification and moral issues attitudes, specifically abortion and gay rights attitudes, even after controlling for other social and political characteristics of parents and a child’s own religious attributes.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> There are a very limited number of exceptions, Braungart (1971), Green and Guth (1993), Jennings and Stoker (2007), and Percheron (1982). Each of these works is discussed in more detail throughout the dissertation.

<sup>8</sup> These political variables are regularly predicted by religion and American politics scholars (see Campbell 2007; Green et al. 1996; Layman 1997, 2001; Legee and Kellstedt 1993).



In addition to the focus on the influence of religious socialization on political development, this dissertation also analyzes the political consequences of individual-level religious changes over time. Do changes in an individual's religiosity – the religious beliefs and behaviors associated with an individual's religious lifestyle (Green 2007; Green et al. 1996; Kohut et al. 2000; Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Layman 2001; Smidt et al. 2009) – correlate with changes in their political attitudes over time? Chapter 3 explores the association between changes in Biblical views and religious attendance and changes in party identification over time, as well as between changes in these religious variables and changes in abortion attitudes over time. If an individual's religiosity is truly linked to their political attitudes, these factors should change together over an individual's lifecycle. Because individuals do not stop learning about the world after their formative years (Popkin 1991) and religious and political affiliations are increasingly linked (Hout and Fischer 2002; Patrikios 2008), any change in one orientations should result in a change in the other. Therefore, the perspective taken in this chapter is that religious re-orientation and change likely leads to changes in political attitudes and behaviors over time.

Finally, continuing to focus on individual-level religious changes, do changes in an individual's religious attendance over time relate to changes in their political participation over time? Chapter 4 focuses on the regularly cited positive correlation between religious attendance and political participation. If attendance at places of worship actually generate more political participation, as many scholars have suggested (see the discussion below and in Chapter 4), we should see changes to an individual's religious attendance relate to changes in their political participation. However, alternative patterns of association are also

possible. Specifically, religious attendance may be indirectly related to political participation through other factors highly correlated with political participation, such as political interest, partisan strength, or civic activity. Or political participation might simply be a habitual act. Thus, in this case, decreases in religious attendance would not lead to decreases in political participation because individuals have become indoctrinated to participate politically.

Each of these topics is discussed in more detail below. But before turning to a discussion of the literature and theoretical development of each topic, it is important to say a few words about the conceptualization and operationalization of religion used throughout this dissertation.

#### The Three-Bs of Religion

Religion is a multifaceted phenomenon with a wide variety of doctrinal, institutional, and behavioral components (Corbett 1997; Corbett and Corbett 1999; Layman 2001; Smidt et al. 2009:4; Wuthnow 1989:23; Wald and Wilcox 2006; Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2011). Substantively, religion is an “integrated system of beliefs, lifestyles, [and] ritual activities” orienting individuals toward what they take to be holy, sacred, or of ultimate value (Corbett 1997:7; Corbett and Corbett 1999). It includes the formal and informal “institutions by which people give meaning to (or find meaning in) their lives” (Corbett 1997:7; Corbett and Corbett 1999), such as places of worship, prayers, and religious texts. In terms of its function, religion provides individuals explanations for existence, the meaning of life, how we got here, where we are going, why the universe is

the way it is, how it ought to function, and guidance about individuals' roles and obligations in that universe (Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Smidt et al. 2009:4).

Because religion is a complex concept, in order to simplify religion, scholars of religion and American political behavior regularly employ the three-bs classification scheme – religious belonging, religious believing, and religious behaving – to summarize the important components of religion (Green et al. 1996; Kohut et al. 2000:12-13; Layman 2001:55; Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Smidt et al. 2009; Wald and Smidt 1993). The recent adoption of the three-bs of religion framework stems from two religious perspectives, the ethnoreligious perspective and the religious restructuring perspective.

First, the ethnoreligious perspective is historically linked to the writings of Emile Durkheim and focuses on group-oriented aspects of religion, referred to as religious belonging. Measures of religious denomination or religious tradition tend to be used to summarize ethnoreligious political differences (Green et al. 1996; Kellstedt and Green 1993; Layman 1997, 2001; Mockabee 2007; Steensland et al. 2000). Many Americans belong to a religious tradition. Scholars typically combined religious denominations, specific institutions of member churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples into seven religious traditions based on historical and doctrinal similarities. The most common classification used today includes evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, Black Protestants, Catholics, Jewish individuals, identifiers of other minority religious traditions, and unaffiliated/secular individuals (Alwin et al. 2006; Green et al. 1996:188-189;

Kellstedt and Green 1993; Mockabee 2007:242-243; Steensland et al. 2000:314-316).<sup>9</sup> For the concept of religious belonging to have meaning, it is assumed that different religious traditions make up homogenous groups with similar interests, experiences, and preferences. But at the same time, different religious traditions, even those who are unaffiliated or secular, also have different interests, experiences, and preferences from each other.<sup>10</sup> The key to the ethnoreligious perspective is summarized by Layman (2001) who writes:

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<sup>9</sup> There are other operationalizations of religious tradition available. For example, some scholars also separate Hispanic Catholics, Hispanic mainline Protestants, and Hispanic evangelical Protestants from white Catholics, white mainline Protestants, and white evangelical Protestants (e.g., Kelly and Kelly 2005). However, there are too few Hispanics in the data used for this research to differentiate Hispanics and whites. Other scholars also combine religious belonging with religious beliefs and behaviors (e.g., Green 2007). But the data used here are also too limited to employ this technique.

<sup>10</sup> There are a few substantive critiques of the concept of religious tradition. Some might question whether the unaffiliated/secular individuals can be classified as a religious tradition. It is assumed that a lack of religion shapes an individual's views about the world in a similar manner as having a defined religious preference does. In this way, the absence of religion is a social identity which generates a set of values that can be classified within a religious scheme. However, this category is certainly different from other categories of religious tradition. Unaffiliated/secular individuals are not typically a part of organized

Traditionally, political scientists and historians examining the religious bases of partisan politics have emphasized religious affiliation. From this perspective, the most politically important religious factor was association with a family or religious denomination and organization—a religious ‘tradition’—and the key political differences were between Protestants, who outside of the South tended to identify with the Republican party, and Catholics and Jews, who were largely affiliated with the Democratic party (54).

On the other hand, the religious restructuring perspective is historically linked to the writings of Max Weber and focuses on the capacity of different religious belief systems, even among members of the same ethnoreligious groups (e.g., Protestants, Catholics, Jews), to guide secular life (Layman 2001; Wald and Smidt 1993:32). The growing popularity of this perspective is partly motivated by the “culture wars” literature, which views competing religious views as driving cultural and political divisions in America today (e.g., Abramowitz and Saunders 2005; Frank 2004; Hunter 1991; Wuthnow 1988, 1989). And religious restructuring primarily view differences in religiosity of beliefs and behaviors as central to explaining cultural and political conflicts observed today (Layman 2001; Smidt et al. 2009).

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religious institutions (e.g. churches). That said, there are actually a few institutions known as “atheist churches.” Additionally, the classification of “other minority religious traditions” has been utilized by scholars for reasons of convenience and inclusiveness (Alwin et al. 2006; Green et al. 1996; Kellstedt and Green 1993; Mockabee 2007; Steensland et al. 2000). The small number of respondents from minority denominations in survey samples forces researchers to include a wide variety of dissimilar denominations into an “other” category. Although, many individuals classified as “other” are from non-Christian traditions.

The second of the three-bs, religious belief, is the doctrinal or theological component of religion (Kohut et al. 2000; Layman 2001; Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Smidt et al. 2009). While measures of religious tradition underscore differences in theological and doctrinal beliefs, survey research also reveals variance in individual level responses to theological questions among individuals from the same religious tradition (Wuthnow, 1989:24). Stark and Robinson (2009:650) argue that the importance of understanding theological beliefs is that it focuses on “people’s beliefs about whether God or individuals constitute the ultimate basis of moral order.” Many studies employ two indicators to measure theological beliefs, beliefs about the Bible and whether a respondent is a “born-again” Christian (Kellstedt and Smidt 1993; Layman 1997, 2001; Layman and Green 2005); although there are certainly other measures available.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, religious behavior is the active or participatory aspect of religion (Kohut et al. 2000; Layman 2001; Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Smidt et al. 2009). It is the commitment an individual has to practicing their religion or the frequency with which they act out their faith. When individuals act out their faith and view it as important to their daily lives,

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<sup>11</sup> In addition to these variables, other scholars have employed measures that seek to gauge similar opinions: questions about the existence of an afterlife, views of “the divine,” view surrounding evolution, and beliefs about heaven or hell (see Green et al. 2007). The heavy focus on Christianity is partly a product of Christianity being the dominate religion in the United States, which likely leads to questions about Christianity being focus of major social science surveys (e.g., ANES, GSS).

religion has more of an influence on how individuals view society. Largely, religious behavior has been measured by examining questions about an individual's frequency of attendance at religious services, frequency of prayer, the amount of guidance religion provides in one's life, or by constructing an index of these types of questions (see Campbell 2002; Guth and Green 1993; Layman 1997, 1999, 2001; Mockabee 2007). For example, measures of religious attendance have been employed to represent a wide variety of religious aspects such as religious traditionalism, religious salience, and associational membership.

Different combinations of religious beliefs and behavior make up one's religiosity of beliefs and behaviors. Although believing and behavior are not exactly the same, scholars have grouped individuals based on these two indicators into competing groups, religiously traditional, orthodox, or conservative as opposed to religiously secular, progressive, or liberal (see Campbell 2007; Green 2007; Green et al. 2007; Kohut et al. 2000; Layman 2001; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Smidt et al. 2009).<sup>12</sup> And scholars who subscribe to the religious restructuring perspective see political differences not between "Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, but between the members of those groups who have conservative, or traditional, religious beliefs and their counterparts who have liberal, or

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<sup>12</sup> Measures of both religious beliefs, such as Biblical views, and behaviors, such as religious attendance, have been employed to summarize political differences based on the religious restructuring perspective (Green 2007; Kohut et al. 2000; Layman 1997, 2001; Mockabee 2007).

modern, beliefs and moral outlooks” (Layman 2001:54). Layman (2001:54) writes “religious conservatives tend to identify with the Republican party, while religious liberals tend to be Democrats.”

These two perspectives, a combination of these perspectives, and others not discussed here have generated a large and diverse literature on religion and American political behavior. Primarily using cross-sectional survey data, a large body of literature shows a strong association between these three indicators of religion and political variables, such as partisan attachments and choices (e.g., Abramowitz and Saunders 2005, 2008; Brint and Abrutyn 2010; Djupe 2000; Green 2007; Green et al. 2007; Guth 2009; Guth and Bradberry 2013; Guth and Green 1993; Kellstedt and Green 1993; Kellstedt and Guth 2011; Kohut et al. 2000; Layman 1997, 2001; McDaniel and Ellison 2008; Miller and Shanks 1996; Mockabee 2007; Olson and Green 2006; Starks and Robinson 2009), as well as cultural or moral issues, including abortion attitudes, gay-rights attitudes, stem cell research, pornography, and euthanasia (e.g., Abramowitz and Saunders 2005, 2008; Bolzendahl and Brooks 2005; Campbell and Monson 2007, 2008; Ellison et al. 2011; Evans 2002; Hillygus 2007; Hunter 1991; Jelen 2009; Olson et al. 2006; Sherkat et al. 2011; Smith et al. 2006; Wilcox 1990, 1992).<sup>13</sup> While all of the directional relationships

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<sup>13</sup> Additionally, religion has also been found to be associated with numerous non-moral issues such as economic issues, environmental issues, discriminatory social policy, and immigration attitudes because individuals also may evaluate these issues through a



between each of these measures of religion and each of these political variables are too numerous to detail here, generally speaking, evangelical Protestants, and to a lesser extent Catholics, as well as individuals who subscribe to traditional Biblical beliefs and are frequent attenders, have grown increasingly Republican and conservative in their moral issue attitudes since the late-1970s and early-1980s. Whereas, other religious traditions have either remained more moderate and independent in their views and partisan attachments, or grown increasingly liberal and Democratic. And religiously secular individuals have become pitted against the most religiously traditional members of society, shifting toward the Democrats and holding more liberal positions on moral issue attitudes (see Guth and Kellstedt 2011; Layman 2001; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Smidt et al. 2009 for a review of the religion and politics literature).<sup>14</sup>

In addition to political attitudes, numerous studies have also shown the link between religious behavior, specifically religious service attendance, and political participation (e.g., Brady et al. 1995; Brown and Brown 2003; Gerber et al. 2008; Green et al. 2007; Harris 1994; Houghland and Christenson 1983; Jamel 2005; Jones-Correa and Leal 2001; Liu et al. 2009; Macaluso and Wanat 1979; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Peterson 1990, 1992; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba et al. 1995; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). The general consensus is that religious attenders are more likely to be politically active than

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religious lens (see Smidt et al. 2009 and Jelen 2009 for a review). However, this research only focuses on partisan and moral attitudes.

<sup>14</sup> These patterns are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

their infrequently attending counterparts because places of worship provide attenders the resources necessary to participate in these non-religious activities (Peterson 1990, 1992; Verba et al. 1995).

In sum, the three-bs of religion, which incorporates both the ethnoreligious and religious restructuring perspectives, has become a useful framework over the past several decades, helping scholars to better understand the patterns of association between different aspects of religion and political behavior in the United States.<sup>15</sup> Because religion has long been theorized to be so closely intertwined with the politics of Americans, specifically party identification, moral issue attitudes, and political participation, it is important to understand how the three-bs of religion facilitate and generate changes to individuals' political attitudes and behaviors early and later in life. To understand these processes, we must first turn to a discussion of socialization.

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<sup>15</sup> But, while significant patterns between religion and political attitudes exist, to be clear, the substantive findings are often less convincing than other explanations for variance in political attitudes, such as race, economic class, or even gender (see Gelman et al. 2008; Kaufman and Petrocik 1999; Manza and Brooks 1997). And partisanship is by far the strongest predictor of issue attitudes in the United States (Bartels 2002; Campbell et al. 1960; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Miller and Shanks 1996). The “religion gap” in political attitudes has been found to be the most similar and comparable to the “gender gap” in political attitudes (see Kaufman and Petrocik 1999).

### The Influence of Early Religious Socialization on Political Attitudes

The generally accepted theory of the development of patterns of association between religion and politics observed today comes from Layman (2001) who suggests that political elites and activists are to blame for the recent religio-political sorting observed in America today (also see Layman 1999; Layman and Carsey 2002; Layman et al. 2006, 2010). Layman's (2001:24) "process of partisan religious change" model suggests political elites and activists have influenced how the masses think about the connection between religion, public policy, and political parties. Specifically, Layman (2001) writes:

The influx of secular activists into the Democratic party in the early 1970s established a beachhead for cultural liberalism within the party, and the movement of committed evangelical activists into the Republican party in the 1980s helped push the party away from the moderate cultural stands it espoused in the 1970s. The continued increases in the presence of secular activists in the Democratic party and of devout evangelical activists in the GOP propelled further increases in polarization of parties' cultural positions in the 1990s. Moreover...changes in the religious characteristics of party activists provided an important link between the cultural polarization of the parties' elites and the reshaping of the religious composition of parties' mass coalitions (307).

But Layman's approach, while certainly informative, is largely about macro-level processes between political elites and the mass electorate. But how is religion and American politics connected at a micro-level? Specifically, when, and how, does the relationship between an individual's own religion and their political attitudes and behaviors become connected? To understand this process, we must look more closely at the developmental forces underlying an individual's political development.

Understanding individual-level political development starts by examining early life socialization, specifically the central role of parents (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960; Hyman 1959; Jennings et al. 2009). Much literature has analyzed the potential influence of parents' religion on their child's socialization in terms of sexuality, education, personality, and other

sociological and psychological attributes (e.g., Brown and Gary 1991; Eirich 2012; Felson 2011; Krause and Ellison 2007; Levitt 1995). For example, among others, Krause and Ellison (2007) link parental religion to a child's self-esteem, finding that individuals who have parents who are more religiously active during their childhood are more likely to have a higher self-worth later in life.<sup>16</sup> Felson (2011) finds a clear influence of parental religion on their child's sexuality, showing that children raised by conservative, Christian parents are less likely to state they have homosexual attraction than children raised by secular parents. And Brown and Gary (1991) as well as Eirich (2012) model the relationship between parental religion and children's educational attainment, finding positive consequences of having religiously active parents on a child's educational attainment.

However, surprisingly, there is very limited work on the influence of parent's religion on their child's political development (Pearson-Merkowitz and Gimpel, 2009:180).<sup>17</sup> Pearson-Merkowitz and Gimpel (2009:172) write "though there have been studies on political socialization and other studies on religious socialization, little work has been done to relate the two." The limited literature in this area is unexpected given the proliferation of literature on religion and American political behavior since the late 1970s, as well as the recent interest in exploring the "causality" between religion and political attitudes (e.g., Hout and Fischer 2002; Patrikios 2008). To my knowledge, there is only

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<sup>16</sup> The term parental religious socialization was adopted from Krause and Ellison (2007).

<sup>17</sup> For a summary of the additional theoretical and empirical works broadly connected to this topic, see Pearson-Merkowitz and Gimpel (2009).

one work that explores the influence of parental religious socialization on the development of political attitudes of children (Percheron, 1982), and only a few known works on political socialization that incorporate religious measures into multivariate models that estimate the political attitudes of children (Braungart 1971; Jennings et al. 2009).

First, using a representative sample of French parents and children, Percheron (1982) examines the influence of parental religious socialization on a child's political ideology. Percheron (1982) theorizes that a parent's religion influences both their child's religion and political ideology because a parent's religion helps anchor their child to social groups with similar shared, religious values. Shared values are the underpinning for identity politics (Percheron 1982:14). Percheron finds that a parent's religion, being irreligious or regularly practicing (largely Catholicism), reinforces the successful transmission of political ideology. Percheron (1982:21) writes "comparison of the transmission of ideological preferences and of degrees of religious integration has revealed points of convergence between irreligion and Left preferences and between regular practice and Right preferences: they seem to appear together in the same families."

This study provides a significant theoretical and empirical starting point for this research because it attempts to directly connect parental religion to a child's politics. But, while this study is the most similar to the questions of interest here and provides evidence for the possibility of a relationship between parental religion and a child's political attitudes in a Western democratic context, this study has limitations. In particular, the data are specific to France. In addition, the study employs unsophisticated estimation techniques

and estimates only one political orientation, Left-Right preferences, which is not analogous to American partisan and ideological configurations.

Next, using a sample of American college students, Braungart (1971) finds a correlation between a measure of parental religion and student politics. Braungart shows that students who have Protestant parents are more likely to be active in student political groups than students who have Catholic, Jewish, or nonaffiliated parents. However, no justification was given for using measures of a parent's religion to predict student involvement or the direction of a student's politics (Braungart 1971:111-112). Additionally, Braungart finds that parental religion is a substantively important predictor of the direction of a student's political identification, even after controlling for other factors, such as the political preferences of parents.

This study, like Percheron (1982), also provides some evidence that parental religious socialization may influence a child's political attitudes. But, as with Percheron (1982), there are limitations. Braungart surveys students, not parents, to ascertain parental values, uses inappropriate measures of religion, and employs complicated measures of party identification.<sup>18</sup> Overall, Braungart (1971) was not attempting to test questions

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<sup>18</sup> In regards to religion, Braungart (1971:117) measures parents' religion as "four rank categories from low to high status based on minority-majority membership" with nonreligious parents as lowest, then Jewish (one or both parents), then Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox (one or both parents), and finally Protestant parents as highest. This measure is problematic because it only considers one rather minimalist indicator of religion

specific to the analysis in this Chapter, but rather, was looking at a variety of predictors of student protest politics during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Though there is a limited literature on the specific topic of interest here, studies of political socialization are far from new. Much early work focused on the direct transmission of political dispositions from parents to children (see Chapter 2 for a discussion). Only recently, however, have scholars considered the potential for other social milieu, beyond the political attributes of parents (e.g., race, income, education), to directly influence the political development of children (Jennings et al. 2009). Jennings et al., (2009:790) write “children may resemble their parents via status inheritance and a shared social milieu, independently of transmission processes.” They continue by giving this example: “children growing up in poor households...may be drawn to the Democrats via their reputation as the party serving the poor and working class, regardless of their parents’ point of view” (Jennings et al. 2009:790-791). This means that political dispositions are not developed in isolation of other social environmental characteristics, such as socio-

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and operationalizes it in an unconventional manner, as categorical instead of nominal. In addition, religiosity of beliefs and behaviors of parents were not included. In regards to political identification, it was “scaled from revolutionary Left to revolutionary Right, based on the conceptual scheme...(1) Gus Hall, (2) Mario Savio (revolutionary radicals)...(15) Robert Welch, and (16) George Lincoln Rockwell (revolutionary radicals)” (115-116). This is not interchangeable with measures of Americans’ party identification or political ideology today.

economic status, racial background, or religion. Thus, social milieus, which are also largely defined by parents, may serve as filters of political information during political socialization.<sup>19</sup>

Attempting to look beyond the direct transmission of political and non-political attributes from parents to children, Jennings et al. (2009) tests how multiple social and economic environmental characteristics influence a child's political socialization. They operationalized these other non-political environmental factors as a parent's social and economic characteristics. Estimating multivariate hierarchical models for several political attitudes (i.e., party identification, political trust, political knowledge, racial attitudes, and attitudes regarding school prayer) and non-political attitudes (i.e., religiosity) for children, Jennings et al. (2009) find that one's non-political environment may influence political development. However, parental religious measures were not included in the political models. They did include a measure of religious attendance of a child into their political models as a control. However, it is unclear how substantively important this variable is to the models or if it is statistically significant because there was no discussion of this influence of this variable in predicting political outcomes. In addition, this study did not set out to test the influence of religious socialization on political attitudes and does not

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<sup>19</sup> This is the assumption made by behavioralists who include individual-level variables such as income, education, race, and the like into models estimating party identification, issue attitudes, and vote choice. The sociological characteristics of individuals are not random, but rather, they are products of one's upbringing and environment.



theorize why a parent's religious preferences would be important to their child's politics. However, Jennings et al.'s multivariate approach is a fruitful starting point for understanding the influence of the early parental religious socialization on an individual's political attitudes.

Expanding on Jennings et al. (2009), this research posits that in forming political attitudes, children, undoubtedly influenced by their parents' political views, are also likely to be influenced by their parents' religion independent of their parents' politics. Thus, while clearly about the transmission of religious values from parents to children, parental religious socialization is also about shaping the cultural and political contextualization of those religious values by parents (Argyle 2000; Bengsten et al. 2009; Connell 1972; Cornwall 1987; Desmond et al. 2010; Sherkat 2003; Wuthnow 2007). Parents largely determine what types of messages and experiences children encounter when young (Glass et al. 1986; Grusec and Davidov 2007; Pearson-Merkowitz and Gimpel 2009; Sherkat 2003). The religious values of parents play a role in defining these choices (Alwin and Felson 2010; Argyle 2000; Desmond et al. 2010; Sherkat 2003). Therefore, because religion, political attitudes, and policy positions, specifically policies with a clear moral component, are socially connected and have been throughout American history (see Campbell et al. 1960; Djupe 2000; Green et al. 2002; Hout and Fischer 2002; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Patrikios 2008), parental religious socialization is theorized to serve as a filter of political information, enabling and constraining a child's ability to develop psychological attachments to political parties and to take specific positions on moral issues.

In showing this process, three questions guide the analysis in Chapter 2. First, does early life parental religious socialization influence a child's party identification during their teenage years and through adulthood? Because political party identification is such a strong political disposition that shapes evaluations of other political objects and leads to vote choice (e.g., Bartels 2002; Campbell et al. 1960; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Miller and Shanks 1996), it is important to establish the role of parental religious socialization in shaping this fundamental political variable. We need to better understand when the link between religion and party identification begins as well as if early in life religious constraints have a persistent influence on party identification over time.

Second, does parental religious socialization influence how children evaluate moral issues during their teenage years and through adulthood as new issues emerge and become politically salient? Much literature has focused on the role of religion in shaping evaluations of moral public policy issues (see Jelen 2009 for a review). Some scholars believe religious evaluations of moral issues are the driving force behind the emergence of contemporary cultural divisions known as the "culture war" (Abramowitz and Saunders 2005, 2008; Green et al. 1996; Frank 2004; Hunter 1991; Kohut et al. 2000; Layman 2001; Wuthnow 1988, 1989). But how exactly do individuals come to hold such policy positions? And do religious forces from one's early socialization shape attitudes regarding newly salient moral issues later in life? To answer these questions, three different moral policies are considered: school prayer, abortion, and gay rights. The first issue, school prayer, was salient during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and continues to remain at least marginally important today. Abortion and gay rights, however, became salient more recently, during the 1970s

in response to a growing backlash of the 1960s sexual revolution (Fowler et al. 2010; Putnam and Campbell 2010). Using a parent's religion to predict moral policy attitudes that emerge much later in life, the analysis will hopefully inform us about the processes behind the emerging cultural conflicts we observe today. I expect that individuals' attitudes regarding politically relevant moral issue attitudes are linked to their religious upbringing.

Lastly, is there a similar influence of early in life parental religious socialization on a child's political attitudes across generations? As discussed below, because the data used for this analysis are multi-generational, two generations of children, one coming of age in the mid-1960s and the other coming of age in the early to mid-1990s, can be compared. Different generations may experience remarkably different religio-political environments (Campbell 2002; Hout and Fischer 2002; Jennings and Stoker 2007; Layman 2001; Putnam and Campbell 2010). Thus, for different generations, different aspects of religious socialization, religious belonging as opposed to religious beliefs and behaviors, might matter to a child's political development. Specifically, over the past four decades, religiosity of beliefs and behaviors (the religious restructuring perspective discussed above) is thought to have supplanted religious belonging (the ethnoreligious perspective discussed above) in defining political cleavages (see Green 2007; Layman 2001; Legee and Kellstedt 1993; Smidt et al. 2009).

The analysis in Chapter 2 suggests an important and evolving role of early parental religious socialization on a child's political development over time. In particular, the results establish a long history between parental religion and a child's political attitudes, as well

as imply an important role of parental religion in shaping some of the new religio-political cleavages observed by scholars today.

### Does Changing Religiosity of Beliefs & Behaviors Lead to Changing Political Attitudes?

By using measures of religion as independent explanatory variables, most scholars make assumptions about the causality between religion and American political behavior. However, the primary condition needed to imply causality is time.<sup>20</sup> But very few studies use longitudinal data to test the patterns of association between religion and politics over time (the exception is Jennings and Stoker 2007). And no studies analyze how changes in religiosity of beliefs and behaviors relate to changes in political attributes.

But there is some evidence that religious changes over time influence political changes over time. Using cross-sectional data, Green and Guth (1993) conclude that individuals who change their religious tradition (evangelical, mainline, Catholic, and unaffiliated/secular categories of religion) also change their political attitudes and behaviors (i.e., party identification, political ideology, abortion attitudes, vote choice, and voter turnout). But this book chapter is only descriptive, focusing very little on theoretical development and providing no statistical tests. In addition, the analysis is limited because

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<sup>20</sup> There are certainly several additional methodological conditions needed to imply causality. The only method accepted by the scientific community that allows us to imply causation is a randomized, controlled experiment. However, the estimation techniques used in Chapter 3 are assumed to provide us with evidence of a causal process between religiosity, party identification, and abortion attitudes.

it is solely based on the influence of changes in religious tradition, finding weak substantive changes in political attitudes and behaviors based on changes in religious tradition. Finally, it is also based on cross-sectional data with limited sample sizes and poorly worded questions. For example, the religious change measures are based on questions that ask respondents to recall their childhood religious tradition rather than questions that ask about religion at different points in time.

Employing the Youth Parent Socialization Panel Study, Jennings and Stoker (2007) analyze two theoretical possibilities for the growing religio-political divide in the United States: generational replacement and individual-level religio-political change. They find that both generational replacement and individual-level religious sorting have contributed to the “political polarization of religion” (37). They write: “though sharing the same national political context and moving through time together, Gen 1 and Gen 2 differed markedly in how they brought their religious commitments to bear on their political views. Gen 2...were much more responsive to emerging cultural conflict...and...more likely to hold political positions that reflected their religious preference” (22). They show that individuals who became either evangelical or secular were the most likely to shift into the conservative or liberal political positions on cultural issues, respectively. While this work is undoubtedly important to understanding the religio-political transformations of the past several decades, like Green and Guth (1993), it also only explores changes in religious belonging, not beliefs or behaviors. Additionally, the models include no controls to rule out the influence of changes in other important life circumstances (e.g., education, income, race, gender).

Finally, one additional work attempts to imply the influence changing religion on political attitudes from their cross-sectional results. Wald et al. (1988) explore how an individual's own personal theological beliefs as well as the aggregate theological views of an individual's place of worship influence political outlooks. In a multivariate analysis, they find that the religious beliefs of one's place of worship, not one's personal religious beliefs, influences an individual's political views. In their conclusion, they take their findings to suggest the following statements.

Consider the case of a theological conservative who found his or her way into a mainline church where most members subscribe to liberalism in theology and politics. To the extent it can be generalized, our evidence suggests that the liberal political messages emanating from the congregation would move individuals away from the conservative political beliefs implicit in traditionalist theology – even as the personal theology was maintained without change. By the same token, a theological liberal in a religiously conservative congregation would respond by embracing more conservative political positions than personal theology would otherwise dictate (545-546).

But they make this conclusion without testing the influence of an individual switching their place of worship or switching their own religious beliefs. Ultimately, there is no component of time involved in this study.<sup>21</sup>

In sum, no known literature has actually explored the connection between changing religiosity of beliefs and behaviors and changing political attitudes, looking directly at panel or longitudinal data. And none of the literature models the influence of religious changes considering the appropriate controls to rule out the effect of other changing life

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<sup>21</sup> Additionally, Wald et al. (1988) is limited to twenty-one Protestant churches in the Gainesville, FL metro area, does not explore very many religious or political measures, and employs unsophisticated estimation techniques.

circumstances. Jennings and Stoker (2007) is most similar to the analysis here, but their focus on only religious belonging is incomplete given that the religio-political realignments centered on the increasing influence of divisions based on religiosity. While religious belonging remains important, since the 1980s, for example, there are much wider political differences between individuals who have religiously traditional beliefs and behaviors and secularists than different sects for Christianity (e.g., Brooks and Manza 2004; Kohut et al. 2000; Layman 1997). Overall, this chapter attempts to fill the gap in the research. An analysis of the association between religion and political change over time will help us better understand how religious reorientation and change later in life may serve as an impetus for political change.

Specifically, Chapter 3 explores the role of changing religiosity of beliefs and behaviors on changing political attitudes. If religion (or politics) is actually influential on individuals' politics (or religion), these two factors must change together over time (see Hout and Fischer 2002). The theory posited here is that because religion is fundamentally about shared group norms and values, when we update our religion, we also update our norms and values, an action that likely has important social and political consequences. Individuals do not simply stop learning about politics once they leave the home. Political learning is a product of our everyday lives (Popkin 1991), and for many Americans, religion is a large part of their everyday life. According to theories of social identity and cognitive consistency discussed in Chapter 3, when individuals make adjustments to their religion, they should also feel pressure to bring their religious views in line with other social and political views connected to their set of religious norms and values (Festinger

1957; Hoge and de Zulueta 1985; Smidt et al. 2009). Thus, the primary expectation is straightforward; changes to one's religiosity should generate changes to political attitudes, or at least the two factors can be said to be linked over one's lifecycle (Hout and Fischer 2002; Smidt et al. 2009:20).

Chapter 3 demonstrates, as expected, religiosity and political attitudes move together over an individual's lifecycle. But the context also matters. Changing one's religiosity has only recently become an influence on changing political attitudes, suggesting that social norms might have pressured individuals to match their religiosity with the "appropriate" corresponding set of political attitudes only recently (Hout and Fischer 2002). In addition, there is also evidence that religiosity of beliefs and behaviors, regardless of individual-level change in religiosity, has become more politically sorted over time. Thus, this chapter, unlike Chapter 2, plays a fundamental role in connecting Layman's (2001) macro religious change theory to micro-level religio-political processes. It is likely political elites and activists shape new religio-political norms (Layman 2001; Layman et al. 2006, 2010), but individuals must actually choose to follow these new alignments. Though this analysis cannot truly determine if it is religiosity causing political attitudes or political attitudes causing religiosity, it is a starting point for better understanding where micro-level, religious changes fit into the mix of factors that influence Americans' religio-political orientations.

#### Does Going to Church Really Lead to Political Participation?

In addition to exploring the role of changing religiosity on Americans' political attitudes, this research also analyzes the well-cited relationship between religious



attendance, the most common indicator of religious behavior, and political participation. Scholars regularly refer to the positive consequences of attendance at places of worship, such as building civic skills, generating social capital, increasing attachments to the wider community, or accumulating information, all prerequisites for political participation (e.g., Brady et al. 1995; Brown and Brown 2003; Calhoun-Brown 1996; Harris 1994; Jamal 2005; Jones-Correa and Leal 2001; Liu et al. 2009; Peterson 1990, 1992; Putnam 1995, 2000; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba et al. 1995; Wielhouwer 2009). For example, Verba et al. (1995) explains:

Even when church activists pursue endeavors with no demonstrable political content . . . they have opportunities to develop skills that are relevant for politics. These skill-endowing opportunities can serve a compensatory function, enhancing political resources among church activists whose educational and occupational levels might otherwise predispose them to political quiescence (4).

In addition, Wielhouwer (2009) states “immersion in a congregation where politics is a topic discussed openly... appears to be baptism into political activism” (415) because places of worship “can be a resource for information acquisition and serve as crucibles for developing civic skills useful in politics” (409).

However, no known works directly test the association between religious attendance and political participation using individual-level longitudinal data. Thus, a fundamental question remains: are increases in religious attendance associated with increases in political participation and decreases in religious attendance associated with decreases in political participation over time? We simply do not know. The appropriate longitudinal data must be employed to determine if religious attendance “causes” political participation. This analysis attempts to fill the gap.

Chapter 4 tests several theoretical possibilities regarding the relationship between religious attendance and political participation. As posited and estimated by many scholars, going to a place of worship may directly lead to increased political engagement (Houghland and Christenson 1983; Macaluso and Wanat 1979; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). But there are also alternative theoretical possibilities. First, individuals might only be more likely to attend religious services and participate politically as they age, leading to a spurious relationship between religious attendance and political participation. Or there may simply be no influence of declining religious service attendance on political participation because individuals may become “habitual” participators after entering into the political arena (Gerber et al. 2003; Plutzer 2002). In addition, the mechanism linking religious attendance to political participation might be indirect (Peterson 1990, 1992; Verba et al. 1995). Religious attendance may only be positively related to other variables that are highly associated with political participation, such as political interest, partisanship, or civic participation, leading to the appearance of a direct influence of religious attendance on political participation.

The analysis in Chapter 4 finds only a very minor role of religious attendance in generating civic and political action. And religious attendance is primarily indirectly related to political participation through civic activity. But, to a much more limited extent, there is also some evidence for a direct influence of religious attendance on political participation. But the substantive effects of these relationships are far from the strength of those found using cross-sectional data (e.g., Houghland and Christenson 1983; Macaluso and Wanat 1979; Peterson 1990; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). And these results continue

to conflict with aggregate patterns of association observed in society today, such as the severe drop in aggregate religious attendance and increase in voter turnout. Thus, this analysis is only a starting point in thinking about the current role of places of worship in generating civic and political engagement. It encourages future work to think about the role of places of worship as important motivators of participatory behavior in light of increasing secularization and non-traditional worship practices (e.g., online services).

#### Describing the Data: The Youth Parent Socialization Panel Study

One of the primary reasons for the limited literature regarding the development of the relationship between religion and American political behavior is the lack of appropriate data. There are very few longitudinal surveys, fewer that ask questions to both parent and child samples, and still fewer that inquire about religious and political attributes. But one classic study does meet these necessary criteria.

Therefore, this dissertation employs the Youth Parent Socialization Panel Study (Youth Parent Study), which was originally fielded by Kent Jennings in 1965.<sup>22</sup> These data are appropriate for analyses of socialization processes and individual-level changes because members of the original child sample, high school seniors in 1965, were contacted three additional times over three decades, in 1973, 1982, and 1997. Additionally, in 1965,

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<sup>22</sup> This data combines ICPSR studies #7286 (1965 Youth-Parent data), #7779 (1965-1973 Youth-Parent data), #9553 (1965-1973-1982 Youth-Parent data), #4037 (1965-1973-1982-1997 Youth data), and #4024 (1997 Youth-Offspring data). For details visit <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu>.

1973, and 1982, one or both of the parents of the child sample were interviewed. One third of the child sample had their mother interviewed, one-third had their father interviewed, and one-third had both parents interviewed. Finally, in 1997, during the final wave of the study, data were obtained for some of the offspring of the original child sample.<sup>23</sup> Most importantly, the survey asks all respondents questions about their religious and political attitudes and behaviors (see Jennings and Niemi 1968, 1974, 1981; Niemi and Jennings 1991; Jennings et al. 2009).

Since these data are multigenerational, from this point forward, the original parent sample will be referred to as “pre-Boomers,” the original child sample as “Baby-Boomers,” and the offspring sample as “post-Boomers” (see Putnam and Campbell 2010).

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<sup>23</sup> The original child sample includes a national sample of 1,669 high school seniors distributed across 97 public and nonpublic schools from the graduating class of 1965. The sample was chosen proportionately to the size of the school (Jennings and Niemi 1974). In 1973, information for 1,348 respondents from the original child sample (retention rate of 80.8%) and 1,179 parents (retention rate of 75.5%) were obtained. In 1982, the 1965-1982 retention for the original child sample was 68% and for parents was 57%. By 1997, the 1965-1997 retention was only 56% for the original child sample, but considering thirty-two years elapsed since the original interview, maintaining over half of the sample is impressive. Also, in 1997, 769 out of 1,435 possible offspring of the original child sample (age 14 and older) were contacted.

Also, due to the nature of these data, like many other socialization studies, the unit of analysis for all of the empirical models is child-parent pairs (Jennings et al. 2009).<sup>24</sup>

#### *Data Limitations*

There are some limitations to these data. First, generalizations can only be made for these specific generations. And, since the Baby-Boomer sample was drawn from a universe of high school seniors, school drop-outs in the age cohort (roughly 26 percent for this time period) were eliminated (Jennings and Niemi 1968, 1974, 1981).<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the sample excludes an important group of individuals. As a result, these data have selection biases.

Second, non-response across waves cannot be assumed to be completely random. There are likely systematic reasons for non-response across the waves. Consequently, imputation techniques would be inappropriate. Thus, for the analyses, all available data for each wave is employed, meaning the sample from which I draw my conclusions changes over each of the waves of the study. Though it would be useful to use these data as a longitudinal panel, pre-Boomer parents were not asked questions in the final wave of the

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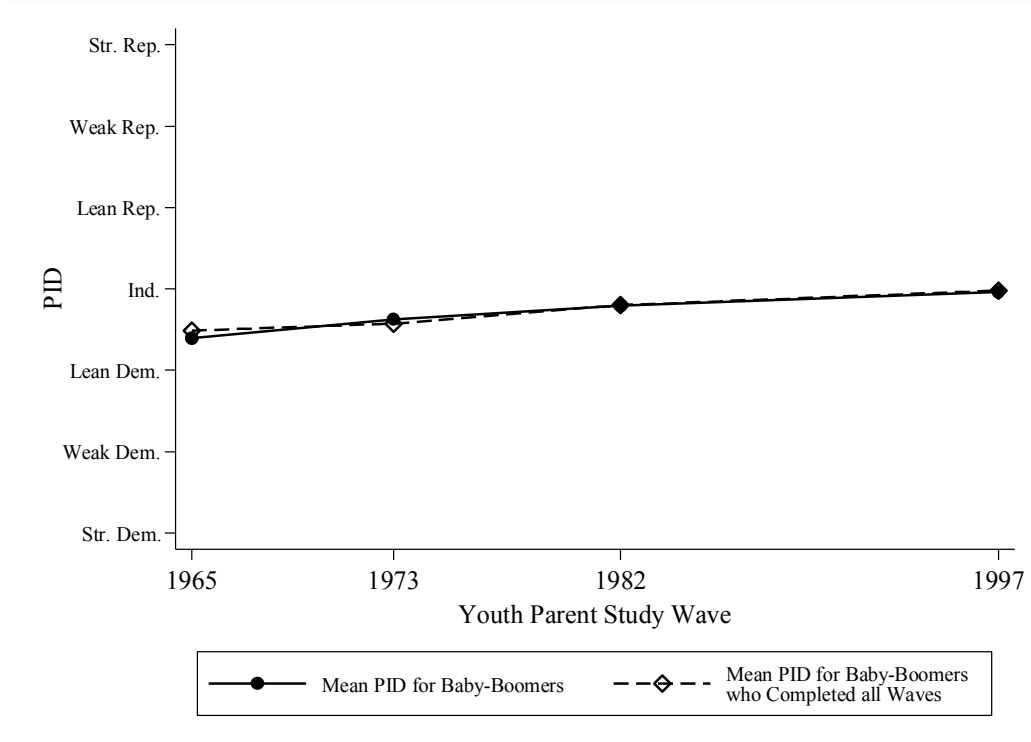
<sup>24</sup> Mother-father-child triad combinations are not used as the unit of analysis because this would eliminate a large portion of the sample. If one were to use secondary information about spouses, the triad approach may be a useful unit of analysis. However, questions were not asked about spouses' religious preferences during any of the waves of this study. Therefore, this approach is not applicable for the present analyses.

<sup>25</sup> This limitation is a significant one, but also one that cannot be avoided.

study, which means the data cannot be used in long-form. Because this research is interested in socialization (Chapter 2) and constructs variables that summarize changes across waves of the study (Chapters 3 and 4), this is not problematic at the present time. Also, limiting the sample to only youth-parent pairs who answered all questions across all waves of the study severely diminishes the number of observations. Thus, it is assumed there is more to learn about the research questions when including the maximum number of observations from each wave of the study.

Figure 1 attempts to justify this assumption. Figure 1 compares the mean party identification of two samples of Baby-Boomers: (1) all Baby-Boomers from each wave, and (2) only Baby-Boomers who completed all four waves of the study. Examining two sample t-tests, the differences over time in these two samples' party identifications were not statistically significant. This finding provides support for the idea that the two groups are not significantly different in terms of their party identification over time. In addition, examining Biblical views (all t-values  $< |1.40|$ ), religious attendance (all t-values  $< |0.62|$ ), standardized quartile measures of income (all t-values  $< |0.18|$ ) and education levels (all t-values  $< |1.35|$ ), two sample t-tests also revealed no significant differences between these two samples of Baby-Boomers.

Figure 1. Comparing Mean Party Identification across Baby-Boomer Samples



Notes: Data come from the Youth Parent Study. In 1965, N = 1,646. In 1973, N = 1,335. In 1982, N = 1,089. In 1997, N = 922. Baby-Boomers who completed all waves, N = 883. A comparison of mean party identifications between the two-samples reveals no statistically significant differences (1965,  $t = 1.19$ , 1973,  $t = -0.72$ , 1982,  $t = 0.05$ , and 1997,  $t = 0.16$ ).

Next, in an attempt to be dynamic in approaching a longitudinal panel design, the principle investigators changed the question wording for several questions as well as added and removed several questions over the Youth Parent Study. One of the goals of the Youth Parent Study was to incorporate new questions that highlighted important time-period changes (e.g., the addition of a question about abortion attitudes in 1982, the addition of questions about gay and lesbian rights in 1997). These changes in the survey instrument may lead to question ordering and question wording biases that cannot be accounted for by these analyses.

Finally, these data are also limited with regard to racial and religious diversity. In 1965, roughly 90 percent of both the pre-Boomer parents and Baby-Boomer children were white. In 1997, 93 percent of the post-Boomer children identified as white. In terms of religion, in 1965, just fewer than 90 percent of pre-Boomer parents identified as a part of one of the major Christian religious traditions: evangelical, mainline, Black Protestant or Catholic. Also in 1965, 90 percent of the Baby-Boomer children were Christian. But, by 1997, only 69.6 percent of post-Boomer children identified as part of one of the major Christian traditions. And nearly 18 percent of post-Boomer children were unaffiliated/secular identifiers in 1997. This pattern, along with the increase in the religiously unaffiliated/secular Baby-Boomer children from 1.7 percent in 1965 to 8 percent in 1997, shows that there is a growing number of unaffiliated/secular identifiers over time not only driven by generational replacement, but also by religious change.



Though there is limited racial and religious diversity, I argue that it is important to not limit the sample to only white Christians, a practice in the subfield of religion and American political behavior (e.g., Patrikios 2008). This is the case of two reasons. First, eliminating non-white and non-Christian respondents significantly reduces the variance in responses to other religious questions (e.g., Biblical view and religious attendance). And it would also eliminate a significant group of parents who socialize their children to hold a different set of non-religious or not as religious values and beliefs, specifically the unaffiliated/seculars. Second, I argue that the theoretical underpinning for each of the chapters is argued to be applicable to individuals outside of Christianity and for non-whites. All religion and non-religious classifications of parents inform us about the socialization environment of children. Therefore, limiting the sample to only white Christians would be methodologically inappropriate in this circumstance. However, it is important to recognize that several of the religious variables used in the course of this dissertation, specifically Biblical views, place a strong emphasis on Christian doctrine.

Overall, these data reflect the nation and time in which they were collected. But, with these limitations in mind, the Youth Parent Study remains the best source of available data. Most importantly, they include religious and political questions, ask questions to both parents and children, and ask the same or similar questions over time. Because of the importance of the research questions, I believe that these data provide a creative, as well as constructive, starting point for inquiry into these topics.

## Conclusion

Taken together, each of the three empirical chapters for this dissertation focuses on examining how religion helps facilitate Americans' politics. The questions attempt to test the central assumption of the subfield: religion generates Americans' political attitudes and behaviors.

But it is important to provide a disclaimer. The analyses presented here are not causal, because the causal ordering between sociological factors, partisanship, candidate evaluations, political issue positions, and voting behavior has not been conclusively determined. As Bartels (2008) writes, "pending stronger theory, or better data, or both, the search for causal order in voting behavior seemed to have reached an unhappy dead end" (27). Because the real world does not take place in a laboratory in which we have maximum control over the sequence of events, when we study human behavior using survey research, we are limited in our ability to make causal inferences. Arguments about time and the sequence of events, those made at present, may be as close to causation as social scientists using survey data can get. With this in mind, these analyses are an attempt to imply and understand what a causal process between Americans' religion and politics might look like.

## CHAPTER 2: THE INFLUENCE OF EARLY PARENTAL RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION ON POLITICAL ATTITUDES

### Introduction

Even though individual-level measures of religion have been operationalized in a remarkably large number of different ways over the years (see Green et al. 1996; Layman 2001; Smidt et al. 2009; Stark and Robinson 2009; Steensland et al. 2000), using cross-sectional survey data, research regularly finds a statistically significant influence of individual-level religious variables on individual-level political variables (see Chapter 1 and the next section). Nevertheless, at no point have scholars considered how we know that religion should appropriately be placed on the right-hand-side of the regression equation and political orientations on the left. And even some of the literature discussed in Chapter 1 challenges this view (Hout and Fischer 2002; Patrikios 2008). Consequently, social science lacks a model exploring how an individual's religion logically, and more importantly empirically, shapes their political orientations. As a consequence of the gap in the literature, this chapter explores how the religious milieu of one's adolescent years, operationalized as a parent's religion, may influence their political development as they move from pre-adulthood into adulthood. Do individuals who are raised by parents who have different sets of religious values have different political party identifications and moral issue attitudes? If yes, it would provide support for the idea that religion becomes correlated with politics very early in life through socialization processes, which is an important factor in understanding the association between religion and politics observed in society today.

### A Large Religion & Politics Literature

Several of the earliest American behavioralists documented that religious belonging corresponded with political choices (Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et al. 1960; Lazarsfeld et al. 1944). These and other seminal works observed clear political divisions between the ethnic majority religious group in the United States, White Protestants (analogous to combining both white mainline and evangelical Protestants), and ethnic-minority religious groups such as Catholics and Jewish individuals as well as other racial and ethnic categorizations, including Blacks and Italian-Americans.<sup>26</sup> During the 1950s and 1960s, White Protestants, especially those who lived in the North (most similar to white mainline Protestants today), were more likely to vote for Republicans than Catholics, Jews, or other ethnic and religious minority groups who were largely Democratic supporters (see Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et al. 1960; Layman 2001; Menendez 1977; Nie et al. 1976).

Today, scholars have shown some dramatic shifts in the group-based religio-political coalitions over the past four decades. There is much evidence that since the late 1970s, Black Protestants and Jewish individuals have largely remained, or even strengthened their identification as, Democrats and consistently voted for Democratic candidates. Mainline Protestants and secular segments of the electorate have moved away from the Republican Party and candidates, while Catholics and evangelical Protestants have moved into the Republican electoral coalition (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006;

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<sup>26</sup> Religious and racial comparisons were often combined in these early studies.

Brooks and Manza 2004; Green 2007; Green et al. 1996; Guth 2009; Guth and Bradberry 2013; Guth et al. 2006; Kellstedt and Green 1993; Kellstedt and Guth 2011; Kohut et al. 2000; Layman 1997, 2001; Manza and Brooks 1997; Miller and Wattenberg 1984; Steensland et al. 2000; Wuthnow 1988, 1989).<sup>27</sup>

In regards to moral issues, very few early writings talked about the relationship between religious belonging and moral issues. But we know from more historical works that evangelicals have long taken conservative stances on morality policy, but only became increasingly outspoken during the 1970s and 1980s in response to the sexual culture and widening separation between Church and State during the 1960s (Fowler et al. 2010; Putnam and Campbell 2010:115). During this time, politically active leaders of the Christian Right, such as Rev. Jerry Falwell, played a large role in stimulating conservative political action among white evangelicals (Fowler et al. 2010). In particular, issue positions

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<sup>27</sup> The best data on the changes in different religious traditions' party attachments is presented in a conference paper by Kellstedt and Guth (2011). They show that between 1940 and 2008 evangelical Protestants became 46 percent more Republican, mainline Protestants 13 percent more Democratic, Black protestants 64 percent more Democratic, Latino Protestants 30 percent more Republican, white Catholics 37 percent more Republican, Latino Catholics 14 percent more Republican, Mormons 48 percent more Republican, Jews 23 percent more Democratic, other religions 35 percent more Democratic, and the unaffiliated 16 percent more Democratic (Kellstedt and Guth 2011:37).

dealing with morality and family values, like allowing school prayer, were widely supported by many members of conservative white Christian denominations during the mid-twentieth century (Jelen 2009). Today, evangelical Protestants, Black Protestants, and Catholics (as well as Mormons) also tend to hold the most conservative attitudes over a wide range of moral and cultural issues, such as issues dealing with abortion and homosexual rights (McDaniel 2007; Steensland et al. 2000; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2011).

Religiosity of beliefs and behaviors have recently been increasingly employed to define political cleavages in response to the argument that these religious factors have supplanted religious belonging as the dominant measures of social and political distinction (Hunter 1991; Wuthnow 1988, 1989). While the historical patterns between religious beliefs and behavior and political attitudes are not well known, Putnam and Campbell (2010:374) do show that, beginning in the 1980s and increasing even more in the 1990s, Republicans gained an advantage among the most religiously traditional parts of the electorate. And, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the current reality in America is that religiously traditional, conservative, or orthodox individuals tend to be Republican, conservative ideologically, and to take conservative stances on many morally-oriented, public policy issues. Alternatively, individuals who have religiously liberal, progressive, or secular orientations are likely to be Democratic, liberal ideologically, and liberal or moderate on many morally-oriented, public policy issues (Layman 1997; Layman 2001:55-57; Smidt et al. 2009). For example, Layman (1997:306) finds:

Doctrinal conservatives are becoming increasingly more likely than doctrinal liberals to vote Republican and to identify with the GOP. In fact, the differences in the voting behavior of doctrinal

conservatives and doctrinal liberals have come to rival those between Jews, Catholics, and mainline Protestants.

### A Brief Overview of the Role of Socialization

At the turn of the twentieth century, social scientists became greatly interested in the early development of political as well as other social-psychological attitudes (see Bender 1967; Hyman 1959; Niemi and Hepburn 1995; Niemi and Sobieszek 1977 for a review of the early literature). The consensus of much of this literature is that early in life socialization processes help shape individuals' identities, beliefs, values, and attitudes.<sup>28</sup> Especially during one's formative years, individuals learn which identities, beliefs, values, and attitudes are acceptable to their family, social groups, and society (Argyle 2000; Bender 1967; Connell 1972; Hyman 1959; Niemi and Hepburn 1995; Niemi and Sobieszek 1977).

Scholars focus much attention on the role of "agents of socialization," examples of which include family, the media, peers, and primary and secondary schools, in shaping children's views of the world and society (Bender 1967; Bengston et al. 2009; Campbell

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<sup>28</sup> There are several different conceptualizations of socialization available from the literature. For example, Hyman (1959:25) writes that socialization is about "learning of social patterns corresponding to his [her] societal positions as mediated through various agencies of society." Bender (1967:392), in a review of early work on socialization, adds that "socialization is a process through which individuals internalize...relevant attitudes, beliefs, and values."

et al. 1960; Connell 1972; Cornwall 1987, 1989; Hughes et al. 2006; Hyman 1959; Niemi and Sobieszek 1977). Parents are viewed as dominant agents of socialization. They have a resilient influence on the actions of their children during preadult stages of development and throughout life (Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et al. 1960; Hyman 1959; Jennings and Niemi 1968, 1974, 1981; Niemi and Sobieszek 1977). Children learn from their parents through direct teaching, indirect observation (Achen 2002; Glass et al. 1986), or they may simply perceive and project that their own views are similar to their parents (Westholm 1999). As a result, in terms of religious and political attitudes, the literature shows moderate to strong correlations between parents and children, suggesting a direct, transmission process between parents and children (e.g., Acock and Bengston 1978; Beck and Jennings 1975, 1991; Jennings and Niemi 1968, 1974; Niemi et al. 1978).

Numerous works have shown that individuals' predispositions are associated with their parents' predispositions. For example, in an observation of American society, West (1945:85) writes that "a man is born into his [her] political party as he is born into probable future membership in the church of his parents." Starting with West's later observation about religion, several scholars have found that a child's religious preferences, such as the religious tradition, religious beliefs or religious behavior, are directly transmitted and learned from their family, specifically their parents (Acock and Bengston 1978; Argyle 2000; Bengston et al. 2009; Brader and Desmond 2006; Cornwall 1987; Desmond et al. 2010; Glass et al. 1986; Jennings et al. 2009; Myers 1996; Smith and Denton 1995). Like other scholars of socialization, Desmond et al. (2010:248), using social learning theory, finds support for the idea that parents "provide models for adolescents to observe and



imitate and positive and negative reinforcement (rewards and punishments) for religious behaviors.”

Similarly, scholars have shown a strong impact of socialization on how people develop their politics (e.g., Berelson et al. 1954; Hyman 1959; Jennings and Niemi 1968, 1971, 1978; Merelman 1969; Beck and Jennings 1975; Tedin 1980; Niemi and Jennings 1991; Jennings et al. 2009). Specifically, scholars have found that parents and their children have a moderate to high association in terms of party identification (Baker 1974; Beck and Jennings 1991; Connell 1972; Dalton 1980; Jennings et al. 2009; Tedin 1980). However, party identification tends to have a higher parent-child pair correlation than other political measures, such as issue attitudes (Dalton 1980; Jennings and Niemi 1968, 1974, 1981; Tedin 1980). But this research has been limited to a few specific issues because of data limitations. The data on which several socialization studies are based, the Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study, as mentioned in Chapter 1, starts in 1965 and only asked respondents a few time-period specific issue questions, such as racial integration and school prayer. The correlation between parent and child on these issues is lower than for party identification, but these correlations remain statistically significant and substantively important (Jennings and Niemi 1968, 1974, 1981; Jennings et al. 2009).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Only one known paper examines generational differences in regards to moral issues, specifically, abortion attitudes and gay-rights attitudes (Jennings and Stoker 2007). However, Jennings and Stoker (2007) did not focus on parent-child correspondence

In addition to the direct influence of parents in shaping their children's religious and political attitudes, it is also important to recognize that both religion and political understandings start to form at an early age. These developmental processes are taking place simultaneously. Religious (or non-religious) values and beliefs of the family are explained to children by parents at a very early age (Argyle 2000; Bengston et al. 2009; Connell 1972; Cornwall 1987; Desmond et al. 2010; Sherkat 2003).<sup>30</sup> Connell (1972:330) writes "as children, we may gain from our "parents some idea for the range of acceptable [religious] opinions" (also see Bengston et al. 2009). And partisan understanding also starts very early in life (Greenburg 1970; Greenstein 1970; Hyman 1959). Discussing politics with elementary-aged children, Greenstein (1970:57-58) finds "from an early age, party

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regarding these attitudes, but rather, focused on questions regarding generational replacement.

<sup>30</sup> For example, in a Christian family, children most likely attend Sunday school at a young age, learn what religious symbols mean during holidays like Easter and Christmas, and are taught to pray before they sleep and eat. Whereas, even for non-religious families, such as an Atheist family, parents may still have to explain to children why they are not attending Sunday school or church, what religious symbols the child may encounter mean, and potentially why individuals who are believers of religion are incorrect. Thus, religion is not absent in non-religious homes because American society is on average highly religious. Parenting involves explaining the acceptable range of views. In this case what it means to be religious and not religious.

preferences are available for shaping issue and candidate preferences, and more generally for perceiving the world of politics.” Thus, there is some evidence of political opinions starting to take shape quite early in life (also Niemi and Sobieszek 1977), making it difficult to truly separate religious from political socialization processes.

That said, the religion and political attitudes of parents are likely well-formed by the time before they have children and certainly before they begin to teach their children about religion, politics, and the relationship between these two factors. Thus, early life parental religious socialization is posited to serve as important antecedent predictor of their child’s religious and political preferences, allowing for the appropriate causal ordering between the religious and political development of children.

#### The Influence of Early Parental Religious Socialization

Early parental religious socialization is the process of transmitting as well as contextualizing religious values from parents to their children (Argyle 2000; Bengsten et al. 2009; Connell 1972; Cornwall 1987; Desmond et al. 2010; Wuthnow 2007).<sup>31</sup> As Jennings et al. (2009) suggests with a wide range of social and economic parental characteristics, aspects of one’s early life religious environment is posited to shape many different social and psychological, individual-level attributes. Of interest here, is the role of early parental religious socialization in shaping a child’s party identification and moral issue attitudes.

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<sup>31</sup> If it is unclear, the term “early parental religious socialization” is about the influence of parent’s religion in socializing their children not the socialization of parents.

As primary agents of socialization and dominant figures within the home, parents play an important role in determining the messages and experiences of their children (Bader and Desmond 2006; Glass et al. 1986; Grusec and Davidov 2007; Pearson-Merkowitz and Gimpel 2009; Sherkat 2003). Pearson-Merkowitz and Gimpel (2009:166) write that “not only can parents largely determine what messages are communicated to the child early in life, but they are able to select or screen many of the other socializing agents that might affect their children.” And Bader and Desmond (2006) find that when parents send regular and consistent religious messages to their children, religious transmission is more likely to occur. Consistent religious messages are also posited to influence the development of other dispositions, in this case political ones (Jennings et al. 2009).

Parents are also able to directly structure political conversations with their children (Glass et al. 1986; Valentino and Sears 1998), which are assumed to begin at a later age than religious discussions. For example, Glass et al. (1986:685) writes: “children learn their parents’ values, beliefs, and attitudes through both direct teaching and indirect observation, as part of the information and guidance that children either actively seek out (in the Piagetian sense) or passively accept (through social conditioning) in maneuvering their way through life.” In terms of direct communication, for some parents, religion likely guides social and political conversations associated with morals and values. For example, in regards to partisan development, parents may directly explain to their children the ways in which religious values are attached to broader political group identities. Although there are no studies that look at this topic directly, Hoge et al. (1982) find that parents influence

their child's religious values by talking to them directly about religion. And it is likely that these conversations are not separated from other social and political discussions.

Non-political social groups, in this case religious groups, have long been closely aligned with political parties (Berelson et al. 1954, Campbell et al. 1960). When considering what political party to support, it has been theorized that we consider where we fit into the social configurations between non-political social groups and political parties (Green et al. 2002). I argue that parental religious views help children clarify and understand where they fit into these group alignments (Percheron 1982; Jennings et al. 2009). And, in terms of moral issue attitudes, religious values are certainly aligned with normative moral issue positions. For example, Jelen (2009:233) writes "religious values such as Biblical literalism, or...moral traditionalism, must compete with more secular regime values" in framing moral issues. I argue here that parental religious values help make clear to children the "appropriate moral issue attitude" based on how a parent's religion guides their view about a specific moral issue.

Taken together, this chapter posits that the religious values of parents play an important role in defining choices about the messages, experiences, and overall social milieu their children are exposed to when young (Alwin and Felson 2010; Argyle 2000; Desmond et al. 2010; Jennings et al. 2009; Percheron 1982; Sherkat 2003). For example, the religious values of parents shape choices about other agents of socialization, and they are likely to influence the direct political conversations parents have with their children. Parents may select the schools, media, and even influence their child's friends based on

their religious values.<sup>32</sup> Because religion and politics are socially connected (Green et al. 2002), these choices have political consequences because other agents of socialization the child might encounter also have religious and political preferences that could influence the child. Therefore, the parental choices are a constraint on a child's socialization. This analysis is particularly interested in the constraints parental religion has on political development.

### Hypotheses

Parental religious socialization is posited to help anchor a child's religious identity to their political attitudes because a parent's religion helps structure their understanding of the arrangement between religion and politics. A parent's religion serves as a guide for children to adopt the "most appropriate" political party identity or moral issue position because a parent's religious values act as a filter for the partisan and issue-based messages and experiences the child might encounter. As a result, parental religious socialization likely enables and constrains a child's politics. From this reasoning several specific expectations can be expressed.

First, *Hypothesis 1* suggests that measures of a parent's religion (belonging, beliefs, and behaviors) from a child's adolescent years should predict a child's political party identification and moral issue attitudes even after controlling for other major influences on a child's politics, including the parent's political views, other socio-demographic controls,

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<sup>32</sup> For example, Alwin and Felson (2010) find that religion is important to childrearing styles.

and the child's own religion.<sup>33</sup> Finding a relationship between a parent's religion and a young person's political party identification and moral issue attitudes under these strict conditions will provide some evidence of an underlying influence of parental religious socialization on the development of a child's politics. I do not expect any extreme directional deviations from the patterns between religious belonging, beliefs, and behaviors described in Chapter 1 and above. Parental religious values should act in a manner that conforms to previous directional relationships between the three-bs of religion and partisans attachments and moral issue attitudes.

#### *A Diminishing Influence of Parental Religious Socialization*

As children move from adolescence to young adulthood to adulthood, they leave the home environment, where parents have a significant monopoly on their socialization experiences. Over time, parents become less influential socializers because their children are more likely to experience new social, religious, and political stimuli that may shape their religion, politics, and the connection between these two factors. A diminishing influence of parents on their child has been clearly observed when considering the direct transmission of the political orientations. Niemi and Jennings (1991:972) show that individuals are highly influenced by their parents when they are teenagers, less so in their early/mid-twenties, and the influence is stable thereafter.

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<sup>33</sup> A child's religion can be different from their parents. See the results section for the percentage similarity between a parent's and child's religion and political attributes.

However, since children are likely to retain at least some of the experiences from their childhood, measures of parental religious socialization may continue to be correlated with their political views as they age. Thus, *Hypothesis 2* suggests that the influence of a parent's religion on a child's political party identification and moral issue attitudes should be stronger during pre-adult stages of life than during adulthood. But the relationship should not necessarily completely disappear.

*Changes in the Link between Religion and Politics and Generational Change*

Since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, social scientists have switched their focus from classic religious belonging-based political cleavages to political cleavages defined by religiosity of beliefs and behaviors. This shift in the literature comes as a result of the writings of Wuthnow (1988, 1989) and Hunter (1991) who posited that there were increasingly theologically and culturally polarized worldviews based in religiosity of beliefs and behaviors in American society. Recent literature suggests that different religious beliefs and behaviors lead to political tensions that have “escalated into a full-scale culture war” where the religiously conservative, orthodox, and traditional battle with religious liberals, progressives, and seculars to shape and define American society and politics (e.g., Layman 1999). In this world, all of the members of the former group are conservative Republicans and the latter group identify as liberal Democrats. Other scholars, however, are less convinced by the culture war thesis because, on average, American adults tend to hold moderate political views (e.g., Fiorina et al. 2008). But most admit that political differences between people who have different religious beliefs and behaviors have increasingly



supplanted political differences between people who belong to different religious traditions (e.g., Brint and Abrutyn 2010; Layman 1997, 2001; Layman and Carmines 1997).

The standard theoretical argument is that during a realigning period is that the impact of religion on political attitudes is most pronounced among the younger generations due to the process of generational replacement (Campbell 2002; Jennings and Stoker 2007; Putnam and Campbell 2010). This perspective attempts to connect Layman's (2001) "process of partisan religious change" model, discussed earlier, to the mass electorate. The youngest members of the electorate are posited to be most susceptible to the process of elite-driven religio-partisan conflict extension discussed by Layman (see Campbell 2002). Using cross-sectional survey data, Campbell (2002) finds that the strength of the correlations between conservative Protestantism, religiosity, and partisanship have grown over time, but only for the youngest members of the electorate. However, this line of research does not explore the potential of parents to influence their child's religio-political alignments.

Since the data used here are multi-generational, we can test to see if the different aspects of a parent's religion influence a child's political attitudes differently across generations and over time. Because the Baby-Boomer sample starts in 1965, *Hypothesis 3* states that patterns of association between a pre-Boomer parent's religion and a Baby-Boomer child's politics should resemble those observed by early political behavioralists, the ethno-religious perspective, discussed in Chapter 1 and above, which focuses on political divisions based on religious belonging. Alternatively, the relationship between a Baby-Boomer parent's religion and their post-Boomer child's politics should conform to

the religious restructuring perspective, discussed in Chapter 1 and above, which focuses on political divisions based on religiosity of beliefs and behaviors.

However, it is also clear from the literature that religious belonging remains an important predictor of political attitudes today (e.g., Campbell 2007; Green 2007; Layman 2001; Smidt et al. 2009). Thus, *Hypothesis 4* suggest that for post-Boomer children, a Baby-Boomer parent's religious belonging may be an important predictor of their political attitudes, but the relationships should be different from those observed for the Baby-Boomer generation. Specifically, evangelicalism should be increasingly aligned with Republican and conservative tendencies for the newest generation. In addition, since the data also include waves in 1973, 1982, and 1997, for later waves, Baby-Boomers may also recall different religious aspects of their early parental socialization in shaping their political attitudes later in life. Thus, a pre-Boomer parent's religious beliefs and behaviors may become more influential to a Baby-Boomer child's politics as religio-partisan conflicts become realigned during the 1980s and 1990s than during the 1960s and 1970s.

In addition, different moral issues have been important at different times. During the 1970s, with *Roe v. Wade*, a growing importance of issues regarding sexuality, and the rise of the Christian Right, moral issues related to "pelvic politics" became increasingly salient (Jelen 2009). Thus, for these newly emerging issues, there may be a different influence of pre-Boomer parental religion on a Baby-Boomer child's moral issue attitudes. The patterns may conform to the new religio-political trends when the issues become salient. Thus, these emerging moral issues may bring to mind the religiosity of beliefs and behaviors associated with a Baby-Boomer's childhood rather than religious belonging-

based political conflicts, which have less to do with how the new issues are framed by political elites and activist (Layman 2001).

### Variables & Methods

Because this analysis is interested in early life socialization, values for the parental variables are from the wave of the study in which their child is the youngest. Therefore, a pre-Boomer parent's religion, political attitudes, and demographic controls in 1965 are used to predict their Baby-Boomer child's political party identification and moral issue attitudes in 1965, 1973, 1982, and 1997. For generational comparison, a Baby-Boomer parent's religion, political attitudes, and demographic controls in 1997 are used to predict their post-Boomer child's political party identification and moral issue attitudes in 1997. However, it is important to recognize that the analysis is not a perfect generational comparison because post-Boomer children's ages range from 14 to 38, with a median age of 23. Whereas, the median Baby-Boomer child age in 1965 was 18 years old because they were all high school seniors.

### *Dependent Variables*

First, studying political party attachments has become a staple of every (or nearly every) subfield of American political behavior. In particular, party identification is developed when a person is young and represents an individual's psychological attachment to a political party (Bartels 2002; Campbell et al. 1960; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008; Miller and Shanks 1996). Party identification is relatively stable over time and it is a "pervasive dynamic force shaping citizens' perceptions of, and reactions to, the political world" (Bartels 2002:138). As such, this analysis uses the standard, seven-point, party

identification variable (PID) measured from “strong-Democrat” to “strong-Republican,” including separate categories for leaning Independents and weak partisans. PID variables are constructed separately for (1) the 1965 pre-Boomer sample, serving as a measure of political socialization, (2) each wave of the Baby-Boomer sample, serving as dependent variables, and (3) the post-Boomer sample in 1997, serving as a dependent variable. Table 1 shows the distributions for each of the PID variables employed here. There is a significant amount of variance in PID over time and across generations.

In addition to party identification, this analysis is also interested in individuals’ opinions regarding moral issue attitudes. Individuals hold political opinions about numerous social and economic policy areas. Moral issues tend to be those that are considered “easy,” symbolic issues dealing with “right or wrong,” “good or bad” evaluations of an action by government (Carmines and Stimson 1986). In terms of moral issues, it is thought that one’s personal religious beliefs help them evaluate the “correct” course of action and develop strong opinions about these issues. Of particular interest to scholars are moral issues dealing with school prayer, abortion, and gay-rights issues, but other issues, such as drug laws, euthanasia, the death penalty, environmental regulation, and even the economy can be consider “moral” issues (Jelen 2009)

Table 1. Distributions for the Chapter 2 Variables

<i>PID</i>	Strong Democrat	Weak Democrat	Lean Democrat	Independent	Lean Republican	Weak Republican	Strong Republican	N
Pre-Boomer Parent, 1965	24.6	24.6	9.55	10.32	5.44	13.71	11.76	1,947
Baby-Boomer Child, 1965	17.87	24.11	15.12	13.57	8.74	12.61	7.97	2,070
Baby-Boomer Child, 1973	8.95	24.72	16.06	19.86	12.33	12.27	5.81	1,687
Baby-Boomer Child, 1982	7.96	24.17	16.43	12.3	15.85	16.21	7.09	1,382
Baby-Boomer Child, 1997	12.66	18.86	16.48	5.52	15.38	19.2	11.89	1,177
Baby-Boomer Parent, 1997	10.02	16.23	17.06	6.44	16.83	21.83	12.17	838
Post-Boomer Child, 1997	9.5	16.75	13.75	18.88	10.25	16.13	14.75	800
	Prayer Should Not be in Schools	No Preferences, Depends, or Uncertain	Prayer Belongs in Schools	N				
<i>School Prayer</i>								
Pre-Boomer Parent, 1965	16.02	4.72	79.26	1,842				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1965	25.52	17.7	56.77	2,096				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1973	28.71	15.59	55.71	1,700				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1982	25.99	18.82	55.19	1,435				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1997	17.19	27.46	55.35	1,187				
Baby-Boomer Parent, 1997	25.21	21.18	53.61	845				
Post-Boomer Child, 1997	39.73	18.24	42.03	828				
	Always Permitted	Permitted Some Circumstances	Never Permitted	N				
<i>Abortion</i>								
Baby-Boomer Child, 1982	46.7	46.07	7.23	1,424				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1997	47.28	44.74	7.98	1,178				
Post-Boomer Child, 1997	54.99	34.99	10.23	811				
	Against Laws Protecting Gays	All Other Responses	N					
<i>Gay Rights</i>								
Baby-Boomer Child, 1997	27.38	72.62	1,165					
Post-Boomer Child, 1997	27.34	72.66	845					
	Against Hiring Gays	All Other Responses	N					
<i>Hire Gays</i>								
Baby-Boomer Child, 1997	24.7	75.3	1,170					
Post-Boomer Child, 1997	21.55	78.45	840					
<i>Gay Feeling Thermometer</i>	Mean	SD	N					
Baby-Boomer Child, 1997	46.74	23.84	1,184					

Post-Boomer Child, 1997	47.7	31.46	803					
			Black					
<i>Religious Tradition</i>	Evangelical	Mainline	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	Other	Unaffiliated/Secular	N
Pre-Boomer Parent, 1965	6.39	52.49	9.16	21.89	4.48	3.62	1.96	1,987
Baby-Boomer Child, 1965	6.48	51.19	8.71	24.19	4.79	2.9	1.74	2,067
Baby-Boomer Child, 1973	14.58	37.01	5.25	20.78	3.6	5.49	13.28	1,694
Baby-Boomer Child, 1982	16.19	38.24	5.3	20.03	4.26	5.3	10.68	1,433
Baby-Boomer Child, 1997	14.26	47.43	2.95	18.06	4.39	4.98	7.93	1,185
Baby-Boomer Parent, 1997	14.15	48.63	2.5	19.02	5.23	5.11	5.35	841
Post-Boomer Child, 1997	13.75	34.98	1.45	19.42	4.1	9.29	17.01	829
	Written By							
<i>Biblical Views</i>	Man	Inspired by God	Word of God	N				
Pre-Boomer Parent, 1965	0.77	45.84	53.39	1,946				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1965	1.08	53.21	45.71	2,028				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1973	13	58.52	28.48	1,654				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1982	11.04	57.91	31.05	1,404				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1997	10.88	56.13	32.99	1,158				
Baby-Boomer Parent, 1997	8.53	56.73	34.74	832				
Post-Boomer Child, 1997	13.82	50.88	35.3	796				
<i>Religious Attendance</i>	Infrequent	Occasional	Regular	N				
Pre-Boomer Parent, 1965	13.61	39.95	46.44	2,080				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1965	18.34	18.05	63.61	2,072				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1973	27.97	46.33	25.7	1,677				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1982	22.53	41.43	36.04	1,429				
Baby-Boomer Child, 1997	19.85	41.22	38.94	1,184				
Baby-Boomer Parent, 1997	14.12	31.44	54.54	843				
Post-Boomer Child, 1997	20.79	40.26	38.94	832				
<i>White</i>	White	Other	N					
Pre-Boomer Parent, 1965	89.16	10.84	1,992					
Baby-Boomer Parent, 1997	96.33	3.67	845					
<i>Family Income (Quartiles)</i>	1st	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3rd	4th	N			
Pre-Boomer Parent, 1965	27.49	29.87	29.53	22.11	2,099			
Baby-Boomer Parent, 1997	30.06	22.25	19.53	28.17	845			
<i>South</i>	South	Non-South	N					
Pre-Boomer Parent, 1965	28.2	71.8	2,099					
Baby-Boomer Parent, 1997	28.76	71.24	845					

As dictated by the questions in the survey instrument, this research focuses on three regularly cited moral issues: school prayer, abortion, and gay rights. First, school prayer is about an individual's view regarding the appropriate role for prayer in public schools. School prayer attitudes ascertain the openness of an individual to allow prayer into areas of secular, public life. A respondent's views regarding school prayer is the only moral issue variable surveyed throughout the entire Youth Parent Study. School prayer is measured from the liberal to conservative response – prayer should not be in schools to no preference, uncertain, or depends to prayer belongs in schools. School prayer variables are constructed separately for (1) the pre-Boomer sample in 1965, serving as a measure of socialization, (2) each wave of the Baby-Boomer sample, serving as dependent variables, and (3) the post-Boomer sample in 1997, serving as a dependent variable. Table 1 shows that for all of the school prayer variables, except the post-Boomer children in 1997, a majority of respondents believe that prayer belongs in schools. This is unsurprising given that most respondents are religious starting in 1965 and religiosity remains high across all generations of the study throughout the study.

Next, questions about abortion typically tap respondent's views about whether abortion should be legal or illegal. Cleavages surrounding abortion in the United States have been some of the most religiously and politically charged, especially after *Roe* (1973). Because abortion was not particularly salient in 1965, the question ascertaining respondents' abortion attitude was first asked of both the Baby-Boomers and pre-Boomers in 1982, and again in 1997 to the Baby-Boomers and post-Boomers. Abortion attitudes are measured using a three-category ordinal measure from the liberal to conservative position

– always permitted, permitted in some circumstances, and never permitted. This variable is constructed for (1) the Baby-Boomers in 1982 and 1997, serving as dependent variables, and (2) for the post-Boomers in 1997, also serving as a dependent variable. As shown in Table 1, distributions for the three abortion variables suggest high support among Baby-Boomers and their post-Boomer children for the always permitted response and in some circumstances response.

Lastly, gay and lesbian rights survey questions usually tap whether gays should be extended the same legal rights as non-gay individuals in our society. Because gay rights were not particularly salient in 1965, the questions ascertaining respondents' attitude about gay and lesbian rights were first asked in 1997 to Baby-Boomers and post-Boomers. While gay rights issues have become increasingly important since 1997, specifically during the 2004 election (Guth et al. 2006; Campbell and Monson 2007), I argue that it is important to examine questions that tap attitudes related to what Legee and Kellstedt (1993) saw as a growing focus on “pelvic politics” in reference to the polarization of sex during the late-20<sup>th</sup> century (249).<sup>34</sup> Several different measures are considered here. First, the Youth Parent Study asks respondents in 1997 about their attitudes regarding a hypothetical federal law that would protect gays against job discrimination. Because of the limited number of individuals who are mixed in their views on gay rights (responded with depend or other),

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<sup>34</sup> In addition, the principal researchers of the Youth Parent Study saw gay rights as an increasingly important issue in American society in the mid-1990s, adding questions that tap respondents' views regarding gay rights to the survey instrument in 1997.



I measure gay rights attitudes dichotomously, “opposition to the law” and “all other responses.” Thus, this measure taps the conservative position versus all other positions regarding the hypothetical job discrimination law. The gay rights variables serve as dependent variables. Table 1 shows that just more than a quarter of the Baby-Boomers and their children, the post-Boomers, have conservative views regarding the hypothetical law protecting gays from job discrimination.

Second, respondents were also asked whether or not a school board should hire an openly gay individual. For the same reason as for the gay rights variables, views regarding hiring gay and lesbian teachers are also measured dichotomously, “the conservative response” and “all other responses.” These measures are believed to tap a more personal aspect of the gay rights attitude and deals directly with gay individuals having access to an individual’s children. These measures serve as dependent variables. In Table 1, like for the gay rights attitudes, only about a quarter of respondents are opposed to hiring gay and lesbian teachers.

Lastly, the feeling thermometer toward gays and lesbians taps a respondent’s affect toward gays and lesbians as a group of individuals in society. The variables are measured from 0 to 100, with 0 being the very unfavorable or cold view toward gays and lesbians and 100 being a very favorable or warm view of gays and lesbians. This variable is employed as an indicator of gay rights issues. While these variables are not based on issue questions, using these measures as dependent variables is believed to help understand how parental religion influences views toward a group of individuals that gay-rights attitudes are ultimately about. Affect toward gay and lesbian individuals is assumed to be related to

an individual's views toward public policies that favor or protect gay individuals. Specifically, for Baby-Boomers, the correlation between gay rights and the feeling thermometer for gays and lesbians is -0.42. And the correlation between hiring gays and the feeling thermometer for gays and lesbians is -0.53, suggesting that Baby-Boomers who have greater affect toward gays and lesbians are less likely to take conservative stances on gay rights issues. Feeling thermometer measures serve only as dependent variables.

### *Parental Religious Socialization*

This analysis uses three indicators to represent parental religious socialization: a parent's religious tradition (belonging), a parent's Biblical views (belief), and a parent's religious attendance (behavior). As mentioned in Chapter 1, each of these measures has been employed by other scholars to summarize the three-b's of religion. While these variables do not represent the extent of each aspect of religion, they are the best available measures provided by the Youth Parent Study.

First, religious tradition is measured using the standard seven-category nominal variable, which separates historically similar religious traditions, including evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, Black Protestants, Catholics, Jews, other ethnoreligious minorities, and unaffiliated/seculars (see Green et al. 1996; Steensland et al. 2000 for the specific denominational coding scheme).<sup>35</sup> Dummy variables are constructed for each

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<sup>35</sup> There are a few important notes about classifying religious tradition. First, Black Protestants include all evangelical and mainline respondents who are also Black. "Reformed and Christian Reformed, and Dutch Reformed" and "United Brethren and

category of religious tradition and the base category for all models is the “unaffiliated/secular” category. Table 1 shows that while mainline Protestants are the most prevalent tradition for each generation and over time, there are a significant number of respondents from other traditions. And there are significant changes in the distributions of the Baby-Boomers religious tradition over time. In particular, Baby-Boomers grow increasingly unaffiliated/secular in their responses in the 1970s, but return to more traditional religious responses by the 1990s. Last, 17 percent of the post-Boomers are unaffiliated/secular identifiers. Overall, though there are small number of identifiers in many minority traditions, as stated in Chapter 1, it is inappropriate to selectively eliminate these individuals without a strong theoretical justification to do so. I argue that such a justification does not exist at present.

Second, Biblical views are measured as a three-category ordinal variable that represents three distinct beliefs about the Bible: “written by man,” “inspired by God,” or “Word of God.” I include Biblical views because this question gauges a respondent’s view on the authority and authenticity of the Bible. It is believed that responses to this question tap different religious worldviews, specifically regarding views of the authority of the

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Evangelical Brethren” categories did not perfectly fit into Steensland et al.’s (2000) scheme. They are classified as mainline in an effort to not diminish the theologically conservative nature of the evangelical category. In addition, evangelical and mainline categories include a very limited number of “other” racial identifiers (e.g., two respondents for the pre-Boomer parents, one respondent for the Baby-Boomer children).

central Christian doctrine. While this measure is about Christianity, non-Christians are also able to evaluate the Bible's authenticity. Hence, responses to the Biblical question among non-Christians are also believed to have meaning. According to these data, Table 1 shows that before 1982, few respondents from the pre-Boomer and Baby-Boomer generations viewed the Bible as written by man. This is largely due to the fact most respondents before 1982 identify as some form of Christian.

Last, religious attendance is measured as a three-category ordinal variable, including categories for infrequent, occasional, and regular attendance at religious services. Measures of religious attendance tap the salience of religious activity. Table 1 shows that most respondents are occasional or frequent attenders at religious services. Of note, the Baby-Boomers in 1973 decreased their religious service attendance, but by the 1982 wave, they had returned to more active attendance.

### *Controls*

There are several factors other than parental religious socialization that may influence a child's partisan and moral attitudes. First, in order to test for the direct transmission of political dispositions from a parent to child as well as control for the potential influence of parental political socialization on children, several measures of parental political socialization are included. When estimating PID, a parent's PID is included. Parental PID is expected to exert an influence on their child's PID, with children who have a Republican parent being more likely to be Republican than those who have a Democratic parent. When estimating school prayer, a parent's views regarding school

prayer are included in the models. A strong positive correlation should also exist between a child's and their parent's views about school prayer.

Finally, due to limited data, when estimating other moral issues, a parent's PID is included. Numerous scholars have posited that PID helps individuals screen issue attitudes (see Bartels 2002; Campbell et al. 1960; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). Because the 1965 values of a pre-Boomer parent's abortion and gay rights attitudes are unavailable, in order to examine changes across generations, a parent's PID is used as control for the political environment in which a child is raised. The partisan environment in which an individual grows up in is expected to serve as a filter for political information, in this case information and moral issue attitudes. Children growing up with a Republican parent are expected to be more likely to take conservative stances on moral issues later in life than children who grow up with a Democratic parent.

Next, several other religious aspects are controlled in the empirical models. In order to control for any influence of religion that may develop outside of the home, such as while attending religious services or from friends, the child's own religious views are included. The measures are the same as those constructed for parents. The Baby-Boomers and post-Boomers' religious views are expected to have similar directional influences as their parent's religion, but they also should become more important as the individual leaves the home (see *Hypothesis 2* above).

Finally, it is important to control for other environmental aspects of socialization other than those dealing directly with religion or politics. Here, some of the primary suspects of social-psychological political science research are employed (see Lewis-Beck

et al. 2008). A parent's race (white or non-white), reported family income (in quartiles), and region (South or non-South) in 1965 are included as controls. The Democrats have long been the party of racial minorities and the Republicans more aligned with white voters. Income has long predicted partisanship, with Republicans attracting the rich, Democrats the poor, and both parties fighting over the middle. The South, especially before the 1970s, was largely a Democratic stronghold but shifted over the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to become a Republican stronghold (see Lewis-Beck et al. 2008).<sup>36</sup>

### *Methods*

Because of the wide variety of dependent variables used here, ordered-logistic regression is employed for estimates where the dependent variable is ordinal, which is the case for most of the models. OLS regression is employed when the feeling thermometer toward gays and lesbians is the dependent variable. Logistic regression is employed for estimates of attitudes towards gay rights and hiring of gays and lesbians. All models include a sampling weight from either the first wave of the Youth Parent Study in 1965 or from the

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<sup>36</sup> Earlier versions of this chapter also included a child's education and income, but including many of these variables does not allow for comparisons across waves of the study. In 1965, a Baby-Boomer's education did not vary because all of the respondents were high school seniors, and measures of family income are not available. That said, a child's own family income was an important determinant of party identification. Including education and income, however, did not substantively change the conclusions about any of the religious measures in the models.

post-Boomer generation dataset in 1997. For a few of estimates throughout this research, I also employ bivariate measures of association, using the appropriate statistics for different types of relationships. Additionally, in order to check the reliability of the regression models, I estimated all of the party identification models using a two-level estimation technique where youth-parent pairs are nested within families. There were very few substantively important differences between the standard modeling and GLLAMM, hierarchical estimation.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, I choose to only report the non-hierarchical models and predictions.

## Results

### *A Note on Direct Transmission*

It is important to keep in mind that any observed correlation between a child's own religion and their political attitudes may be partly a product of the direct transmission of religion, political attitudes, or both from parents to children. In terms of religious tradition, from 1965 to 1997, the percentage similarity between a pre-Boomer parent's religious tradition and their Baby-Boomer child's religious tradition declined from roughly 87

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<sup>37</sup> I employed GLLAMM, hierarchical modeling because it allows for more types of model specifications than REML (Jennings et al. 2009), including ordered logistic regression (Rabe-Hesketh and Skrondal 2012). Information about GLLAMM can also be found at: <http://www.gllamm.org/>. Other socialization scholars have employed hierarchical modeling, and because the family unit may have an impact on an individual's socialization, it is important to consider this unit of analysis in the models (Jennings et al. 2009).

percent to 62 percent, with the similarity between these two generations seeing the largest decline in 1973.<sup>38</sup> However, though the similarity between parents and children in terms of religious tradition declines, according to these data, 62 percent of Baby-Boomer children had the same religious tradition in 1997 as their parent had 32 years earlier in 1965. And the percentage of child-parent similarity in terms of religious tradition between a Baby-Boomer parent and their post-Boomer child in 1997 was only slightly lower, 60.24 percent. Additionally, Biblical views and religious attendance are only slightly less inheritable than religious tradition, ranging from 51 percent to 63 percent child-parent similarity for Biblical views and 43 percent to 55 percent child-parent similarity for religious attendance.<sup>39</sup> Similar patterns exist between Baby-Boomer parents and their post-Boomer children in 1997.

For comparison, in terms of a three-category measure of PID (Democrat, Independent, and Republican), the similarity between a Baby-Boomer child's PID and their pre-Boomer parent's PID in 1965 decreased from 68.82 percent in 1965, to 52.56 percent in 1997, a slightly lower inheritance rate than religious tradition. Similarly, in terms of school prayer attitudes, the percentage of similarity between Baby-Boomer children and

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<sup>38</sup> Lambda values for all of these bivariate nominal correlations range from 0.365 to 0.743, all moderate to strong relationships.

<sup>39</sup> Gamma values for these ordinal bivariate correlations for Biblical views range from 0.461 to 0.648, all moderate to strong relationships, and for religious attendance from 0.217 to 0.623, weak to strong relationships.



their pre-Boomer parents in 1965 decreased only slightly over time, from 59.78 percent in 1965 to 52.85 percent in 1997.

Taken together, while there is a substantively important declines in parent-child similarity in terms of religion, PID, and school prayer over time, these statistics also show a high transmission rate of religion and politics from parents to children. Many children remain in the religion, politics, or both, of their parents, implying that parents are undeniably a powerful social force.

In addition, these patterns suggest the possibility of an indirect influence of parental religion on a child's political attitudes.<sup>40</sup> Because children learn about their religion from their parents, and an individual's own religious belonging, beliefs, and behaviors are connected to their political attitudes and behaviors (see the estimates below), it logically follows that parents have at least an indirect influence on their child's politics. But is there a direct influence of parental religious socialization on their child's political development? The rest of this chapter provides evidence that parental religious socialization is linked to a child's political views early in life, later in life, and across generations.

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<sup>40</sup> A previous version of this analysis also explored Sobel-Goodman mediation tests to determine the indirect influence of a parent's religious beliefs on their child's party identification. These tests revealed a strong indirect relationship of parental religion on a child's politics.

*Party Identification*<sup>41</sup>

The bivariate measures of association presented in Figure 2A show that, of the three measures of parental religion, parental religious tradition has the greatest influence on a child's PID. Graphing standardized PRE statistics, which were generated from one way-ANOVA models, and reporting the significance levels from these bivariate models, Figure 2A shows that a parent's religious tradition significantly predicts their child's PID for every model year and across generations. However, the substantive importance of a parent's religious tradition on their child's PID is small. At most, a parent's religious tradition only explains about 10 percent of the variance in their child's PID.

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<sup>41</sup> Moving forward, when discussing statistically significant relationships the convention selected for this analysis is  $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed). The 95% confidence interval is the standard in frequentist, social science research. However, if the relationship is called "marginal," the  $p < 0.1$  (two-tailed) threshold was considered as a relevant relationship.

Figure 2. Bivariate Correlations between a Parent's Religion and a Child's PID

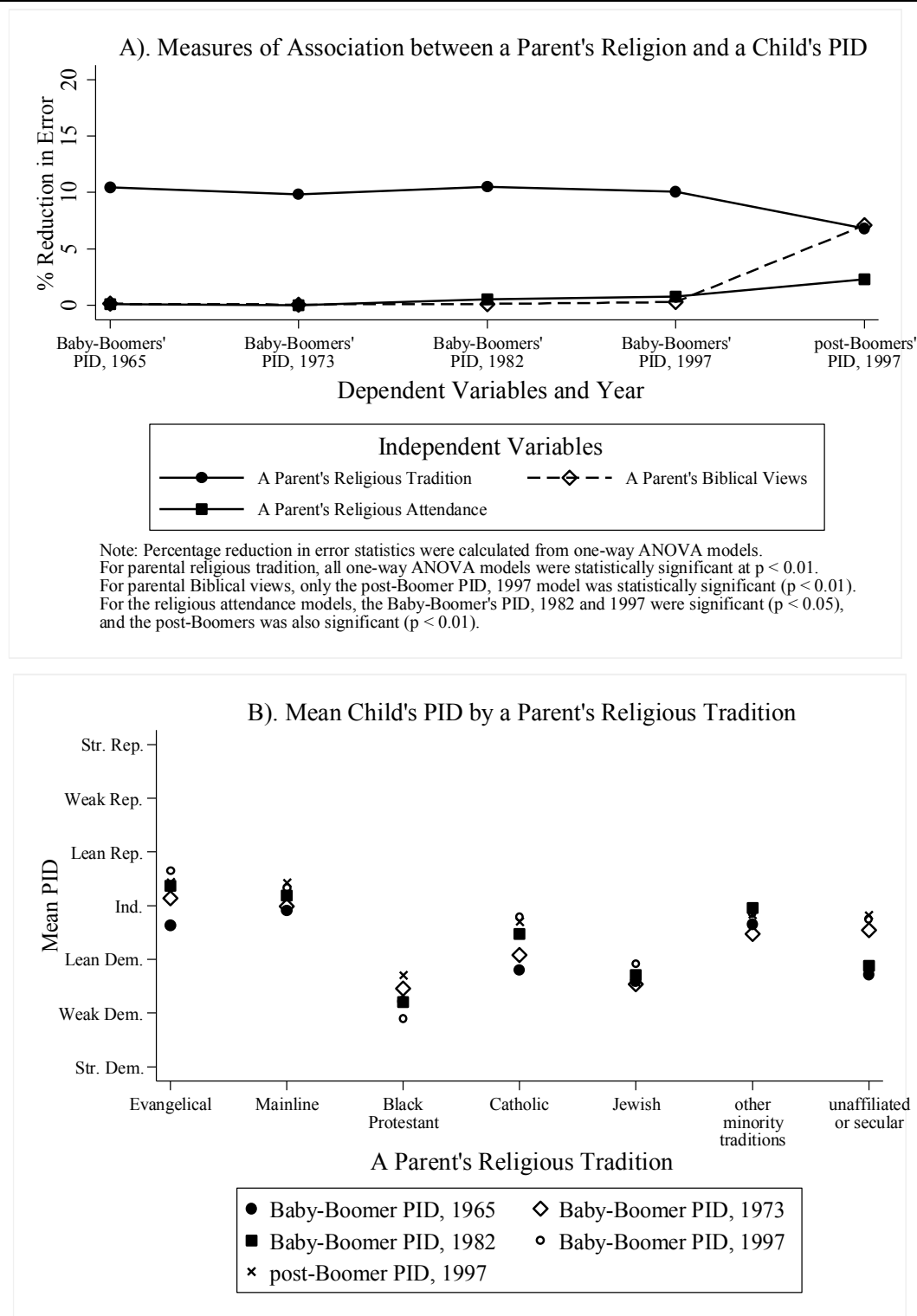


Figure 2B provides some additional insight into the patterns of association between a parent's religious tradition and their child's PID. Figure 2B largely conforms to what we would expect to see based on the literature (see Abramowitz and Saunders 2006; Kellstedt and Guth 2011). Over time and across generations, children who have a mainline Protestant parent are the most consistent Republican identifying group. Those who have a Black Protestant or Jewish parent are Democrats. And children who have an evangelical or Catholic parent have a more varied PID. In 1982 and 1997, these groups were more aligned with the Republican Party than they were in 1965 or 1973. But the shifts shown in Figure 2B are small. Lastly, and surprisingly, according to these data, having an unaffiliated/secular parent also had recently meant a greater Republican identification, which is contradictory to the literature on this topic.<sup>42</sup> Overall, Figure 2 implies that a parent's religious tradition plays a direct, but limited, role in shaping their child's PID. Children growing up in evangelical and Catholics homes have gravitated toward the Republicans, with those who have Black Protestant or Jewish upbringings starting as, and remaining, Democratic (see Abramowitz and Saunders 2006; Guth and Kellstedt 2011).

Turning to religiosity of beliefs and behaviors, bivariate estimates show that a parent's religiosity has a far more limited role on a child's PID than a parent's religious tradition. Specifically, Figure 2 shows that a pre-Boomer parent's Biblical views and religious attendance have a very small influence on a Baby-Boomer child's PID for all of

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<sup>42</sup> The other minority religious category is too religiously heterogeneous to provide a useful discussion.

the years of the study. But one important pattern emerges for the newest generation. In 1997, a post-Baby-Boomer children who have a regular attending Baby-Boomer parent are slightly more likely to be Republican than post-Boomer children who have an infrequent or occasional attending Baby-Boomer parent (not shown in Figure 2, see the additional discussion below). But the influence of parental religious attendance on a child's PID is very small, explaining less than 5 percent of the variance in a child's PID. In addition, a Baby-Boomer parent's Biblical views predict a post-Boomer child's PID in 1997. A post-Boomer child who has a traditionalist, Baby-Boomer parent, one who views the Bible as the "Word of God," was more likely to be Republican in 1997 than a post-Boomer child who has a religiously secular or centrist, Baby-Boomer parent, one who views the Bible as "written by man" and "inspired by God," respectively (not shown in Figure 2, see the additional discussion below). However, as with religious tradition, the influence of parental religious beliefs on a child's PID, even when significant in 1997, is substantively weak. A Baby-Boomer parent's religious beliefs explains less than 10 percent of the variance in their post-Boomer child's PID.

Table 2. Predicting a Child's PID with their Parent's Religion

	Baby-Boomers				Post-Boomers
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	PID '65	PID '73	PID '82	PID '97	PID '97
Parent's PID	0.54***	0.29***	0.24***	0.15***	0.32***
Parent's White	1.16***	1.54***	2.70***	2.20***	0.32**
Parent's Family Income	0.05	-0.02	0.08	-0.03	-0.04
Parent Lives in South	-0.03	-0.55***	-0.62***	-0.27*	-0.20
<i>Parent's Religion</i>					
Parent's Evangelical	0.82*	0.17	1.73***	0.46	-0.33
Parent's Mainline	0.94**	0.02	1.26***	0.09	-0.27
Parent's Black Protestant	1.45*	1.30	3.68***	-0.08	-0.17
Parent's Catholic	1.09**	-0.06	1.06**	0.13	-0.56
Parent's Jewish	0.54	-0.73	0.50	-0.61	-0.62
Parent's Other Traditions	1.45***	0.16	-0.94	0.04	-0.39
Parent's Biblical Views	0.07	-0.06	-0.04	-0.01	0.32**
Parent's Relig. Attendance	0.21**	0.04	0.14	0.09	0.08
<i>Child's Religion</i>					
Child's Evangelical	0.56	0.76***	0.06	0.06	0.39
Child's Mainline	0.36	0.54***	0.29	0.15	-0.19
Child's Black Protestant	0.04	-0.74	-1.38	-0.15	-2.32***
Child's Catholic	-0.58	-0.35	-0.32	-0.34	-0.55*
Child's Jewish	-0.06	0.11	-0.29	-0.09	-0.92
Child's Other Traditions	-0.27	0.47	0.42	-0.16	-0.33
Child's Biblical View	-0.31***	0.21**	0.19*	0.43***	0.39***
Child's Relig. Attendance	0.01	-0.01	0.03	0.24**	0.32***
N	1,796	1,477	1,229	1,046	732
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.13	0.07	0.07	0.056	0.087
PRE	24.48%	13.50%	8.49%	5.02%	9.59%

Notes: All entries are ordered-logistic regression coefficients. Stars indicate the level of statistical significance using two-tailed tests (\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ ). All models are statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ . Variable Coding: PID: (0 = Strong Democrat, 1 = Weak Democrat, 2 = Lean Democrat, 3 = Independent, 4 = Lean Republican, 5 = Weak Republican, 6 = Strong Republican); White: (1 = white, 0 = all other races); Family Income (0 = 1<sup>st</sup> quartile, 1 = 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile, 2 = 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile, 3 = 4<sup>th</sup> quartile); South: (1 = South, 0 = all other regions); Religious Tradition: (dummy variables for evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, Black Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, other religious minority traditions, and unaffiliated/secular, which serves as the comparison category in the model); Biblical Views: (0 = written by man, 1 = inspired by God, 2 = Word of God and true); Religious Attendance: (0 = infrequent (which is a few times of year or never), 1 = occasional (which is once or twice a month), 2 = regular (which is almost weekly or more)).

Turning to the multivariate ordered-logistic regression presented in Table 2, the trends generated by the bivariate estimates are generally supported. First, Table 2 and Figure 3 also support the view that a parent's religious tradition plays a role in predicting their child's PID, but to a more limited extent than presented in Figure 2. The statistically significant coefficients in Model 1 in Table 2 and Figure 3 show that a Baby-Boomer child who has an unaffiliated/secular, pre-Boomer parent is more likely to be Democratic in 1965 than a Baby-Boomer child who has a mainline Protestant, Catholic, or other minority religious, pre-Boomer parent. Because the coefficients for each dummy variable of parental religious tradition in Table 2 are compared to the base category, unaffiliated/secular, independent statistical tests (not shown in Table 2) were conducted to examine the statistical significance between each of the dummy variables of parental religious tradition. Exploring these independent tests reveals that the only other important patterns dealing with parental religious tradition emerge in 1982.<sup>43</sup> In 1982, having an evangelical, pre-Boomer parent is associated with a greater affinity toward Republicanism than growing up

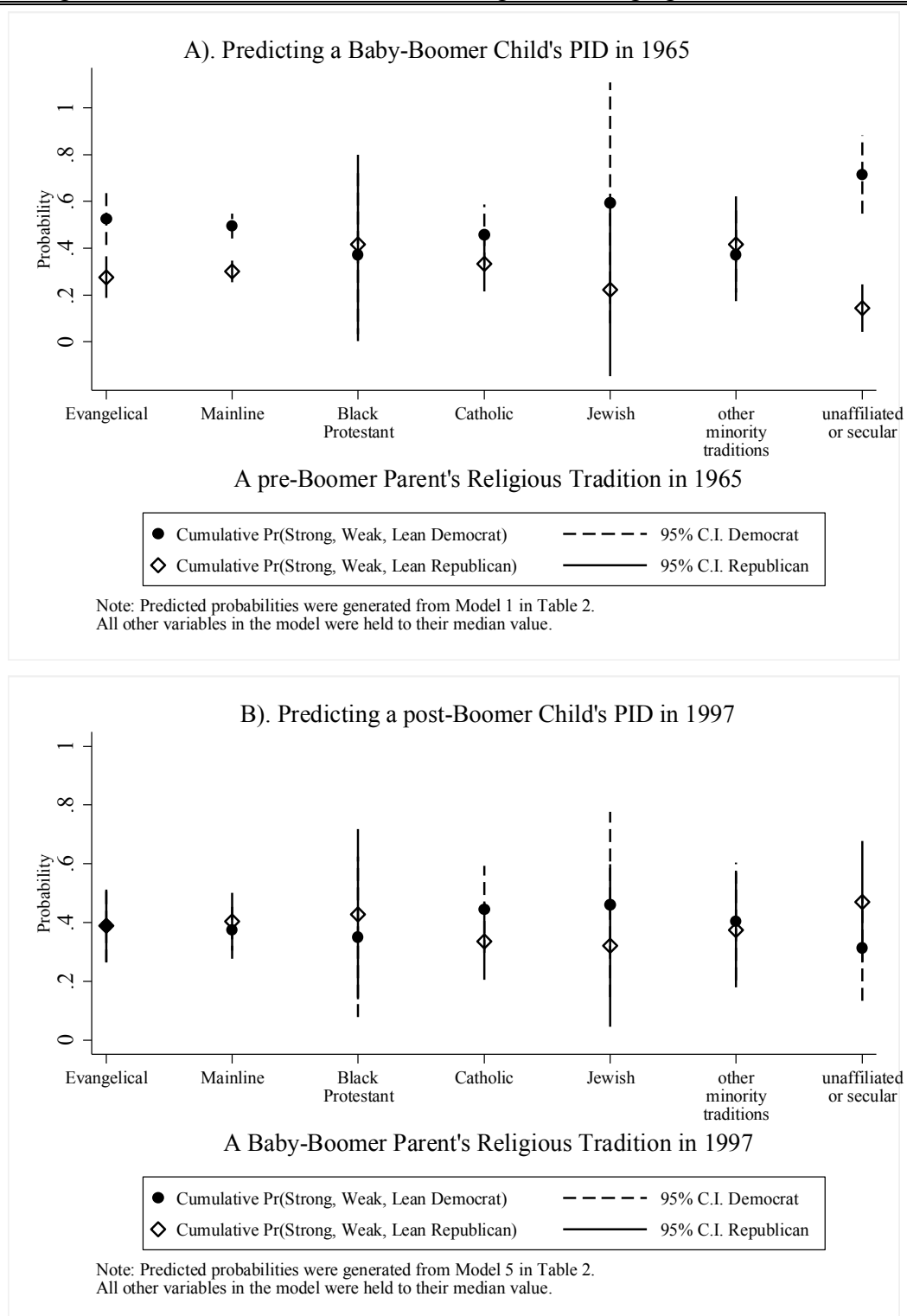
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<sup>43</sup> The 1973 and 1982 models in Table 2, however, show an odd affinity of Baby-Boomer children who have a Black Protestant, pre-Boomer parent to be Republican. But, due to the limited number of Black respondents in the sample, this finding is not reliable. By 1997, Baby-Boomer children who have an evangelical, pre-Boomer parent are more likely to be Republican than those who have a Black Protestant, pre-Boomer parent.

with a Catholic or Jewish pre-Boomer parent. Thus, at the time evangelical Protestants are growing increasingly political (see Fowler et al. 2010; Putnam and Campbell 2010), the early 1980s, parental religious tradition, specifically differentiating evangelical faith from other faiths, has a significant influence on a child's PID. This finding suggests that one's upbringing is likely made salient by the religio-political context at a given time, in this case 1982. Future work should expand our understanding of the interaction between socialization and contextual influences (Valentino and Sears 1998). But overall, the multivariate analysis shows that the most substantive partisan divisions in 1965 were between children growing up with unaffiliated/secular parents and religiously affiliated parents (except Jewish parents) (see Model 1 in Table 2), and similar patterns emerge in 1982 (see Model 3 in Table 2).

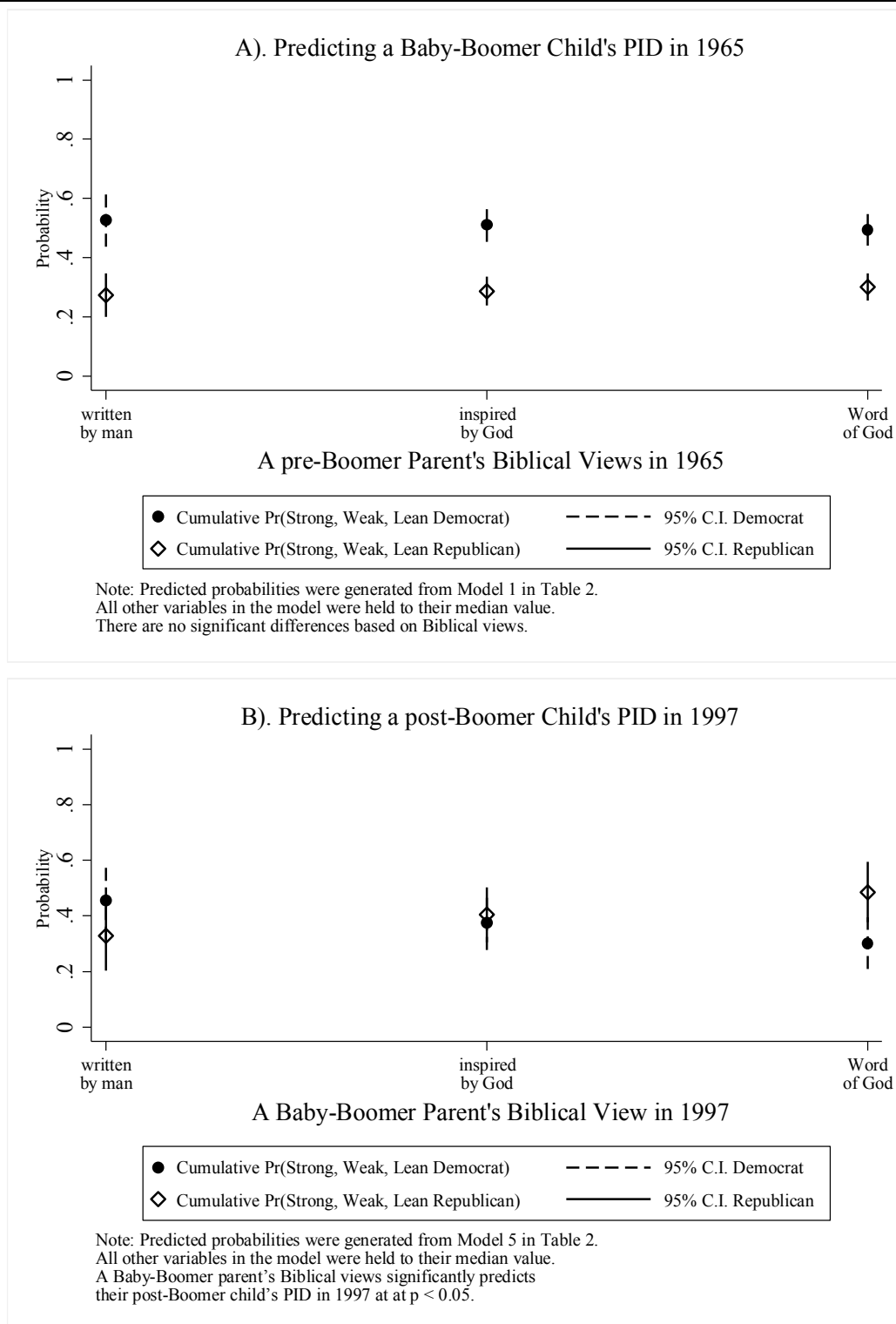


Figure 3. The Influence of a Parent's Religious Belonging on a Child's PID



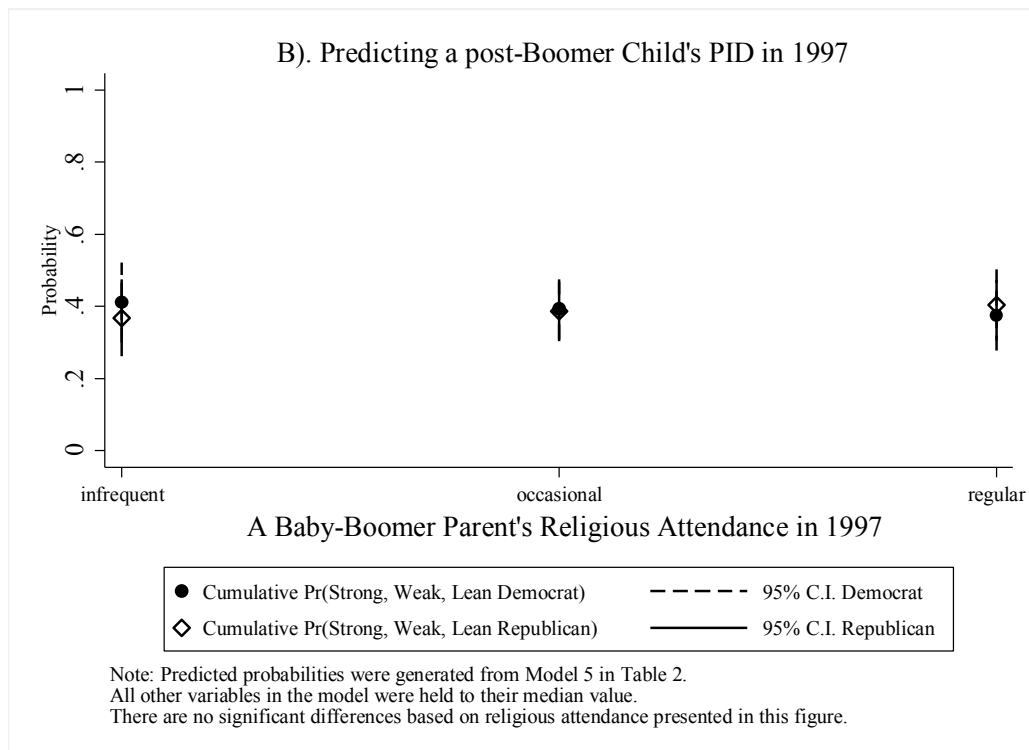
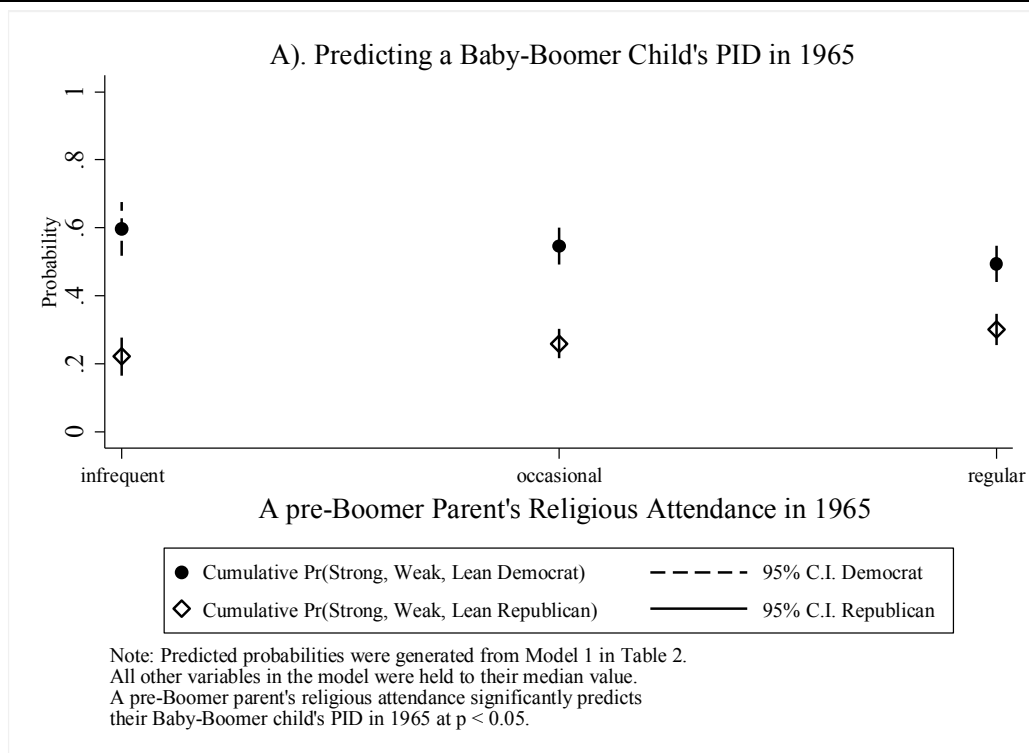
Next, in terms of religious beliefs, the statistically significant coefficient for a parent's Biblical views in Model 5 in Table 2 confirms the bivariate pattern discussed above. In Figure 4, one can see that parental traditionalism (Word of God) and secularism (written by man) predict opposite PIDs for post-Boomer children in 1997, Republican and Democrat, respectively. Thus, as expected, these results imply that a parent's religious beliefs are more important to the partisan development of children for the newest generation after religio-partisan restructuring, in this case the 1980s and 1990s, confirming Hypothesis 3. This finding supports, as well as adds to the body of literature on religio-political generational replacement (Campbell 2002; Jennings and Stoker 2007; Putnam and Campbell 2010). It implies that one of the underlying mechanisms driving generational replacement may be the important role of parental religious socialization based on new competing religious beliefs.

Figure 4. The Influence of a Parent's Religious Beliefs on a Child's PID



While the religious tradition of parents, and to some extent, the Biblical views of parents are significant predictors of their child's PID, in terms of parental religious behavior, there is very little influence. The multivariate estimates in Table 2 suggest that a pre-Boomer parent's religious attendance significantly predicts their Baby-Boomer child's PID in 1965 (see Model 1 in Table 2). However, Figure 5 shows that a Baby-Boomer child's PID only varies slightly across categories of their pre-Boomer parent's religious attendance. The probability of Republican identification among Baby-Boomer children increases very little across the range of pre-Boomer parents' religious attendance. And, for all categories of parental religious attendance, Baby-Boomer children were more likely to be Democrats than Republicans. Other than a minor influence presented in Model 1 in Table 2 and the bivariate models discussed above, parental religious attendance was an insignificant predictor of their child's PID.

Figure 5. The Influence of a Parent's Religious Behavior on a Child's PID



There are several other findings presented in Table 2 worth mentioning. First, examining all models in Table 2, it is clear that a parent's PID is directly related to their child's PID. Democratic parents condition their children to be Democrats and Republican parents condition their children to be Republicans. Second, a parent's race is statistically significant for all of the PID models in Table 2. Children who have a white parent are more likely to be Republican than children who have a non-white parent, suggesting that race has a large influence on the political messages and information children receive when growing up. Third, a parent's income was an insignificant factor for all PID models in Table 2. This challenges other findings that show that one's economic socialization environment plays an important role in shaping partisan attachments (Jennings et al. 2009). Fourth, starting in 1973 and continuing in 1982, there are important regional effects (see Models 2 and 3 in Table 2). Baby-Boomer children who have a parent who lives in the South are less likely to be Republicans than those who have a parent who lives in a different region. For much of this period, up until the late-1980s and early-1990s, the South was heavily Democratic in its partisan orientation, suggesting that the political context, in this case region, can matter in shaping party identification.

Fifth, both Baby-Boomer and post-Boomer children's own religious views were significantly related to their PIDs. For Baby-Boomer children, we see that a child's Biblical views are a significant predictor of their PID for all models in Table 2, except the 1982 model (Model 3 in Table 2). However, there is an odd pattern in 1965. Religiously traditional Baby-Boomers, nearly half of the sample in 1965 (only 1.08 percent believed that the Bible was "written by man"), were more likely to be Democrats in 1965 than their

non-traditionalist counterparts. By 1973, and continuing through the rest of the waves and next generation, Biblical views predict a PID as expected (only marginally significant in 1982); Republicans are more traditionalist than Democrats. Many Bible-Belt southern Democrats in the 1960s were southern evangelicals who held religiously traditional views (Fowler et al. 2010; Putnam and Campbell 2010). These individuals became increasingly Republican after Nixon's "Southern Strategy" and through the process of realigning religious and political coalitions (see Layman 2001; Layman et al. 2006, 2010).

Starting in 1997, for the Baby-Boomers as well as the post-Boomers, their own religious attendance is highly predictive of their partisan alignments. There are strong implications of these findings. Because a child's own religious attendance has become increasingly important only recently (see Models 4 and 5 in Table 2), there is the potential for parental religious attendance to become increasingly important for future generations. The significant coefficients for a child's religious attendance in Models 4 and 5 in Table 2 and other works on religion and politics (e.g., Layman 1997) suggest that the relationship between attendance and partisanship has increased. If so, we might observe a stronger influence of parental religious attendance in shaping a child's politics today than for the decades of the Youth Parent Study. This is likely because children eventually become parents, and it is believed that they pass on their religio-partisan tendencies to their children. However, because of data limitations, these data cannot extend out far enough to test this proposition. Future research may consider this pattern.

Last, Table 2 does not make clear the exact influence of a child's own religious tradition on their PID because all categories of religious tradition are being compared to

the base category, unaffiliated/secular. However, independent tests (not shown in Table 2) reveal that in both 1965 and 1973, evangelical and mainline Protestant Baby-Boomer children were more likely to be Republican than their Catholic counterparts. In 1973, evangelical and mainline Protestant children were also more likely to be Republican than Black Protestant and unaffiliated/secular identifiers. By 1982, only mainline Protestant children were more likely to be Republican than their Catholic counterparts. And Catholic children were less likely to be Republican than members of other religious traditions. Finally, in 1997, only mainline Protestant, Baby-Boomers were more likely to be Republicans than Catholics. Therefore, over the course of the study, an individual's own religious tradition has a smaller influence on differentiating partisan identities, at least for the Baby-Boomer generation. However, for the post-Boomer generation, in 1997, religious tradition emerges as a powerful predictor of PID. Evangelicals are more likely to be Republican than mainline Protestants, Black Protestants, Catholics, Jewish respondents, or individuals who identify as other traditions. Mainline Protestants were more likely to be Republican than Black Protestants. And Black Protestants were more likely to be Democratic than Catholics, other minority traditions, and individuals who were unaffiliated/secular identifiers. Overall, these patterns based on religious tradition largely conform to our current understanding of the relationship between religious tradition and PID (see Layman 2001; Smidt et al. 2009).

In sum, the patterns of association presented in this section show that in spite of a child's own religious belonging, beliefs, and behaviors significantly predicting their PID and controlling for parental PID, parental religion has a direct and independent influence



on a child's PID, providing evidence for Hypothesis 1. However, to be clear, the overall substantive effects of measures of parental religion on a child's PID are weak. But it is clear that different aspects of parental religion have varied in their influence on a child's PID over time, with parental religious beliefs growing more important for the newest generation of the study, providing some support for Hypothesis 3. To a much more limited extent, in terms of religiosity of beliefs and behaviors specifically, a child's own religion has become increasingly predictive of their PID over time, providing support for Hypothesis 2. This section, however, does not show strong evidence for Hypothesis 4. Parental religiosity does not become more important to the Baby-Boomer children's PID later in life. However, parental evangelicalism does emerge as important to a child's PID at the time when evangelical Protestants were becoming increasingly active, the 1980s.

#### *School Prayer Attitudes*

Starting with a discussion of the role of parental religious tradition, Table 3 and Figure 6 show a very odd pattern between Baby-Boomer children's views about school prayer and their pre-Boomer parent's religious tradition.<sup>44</sup> Figure 6A shows no clear

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<sup>44</sup> Bivariate estimates reveal very substantively weak relationships between pre-Boomer parental religion and their Baby-Boomer child's views regarding school prayer (PRE values were approximately 0 percent to 6 percent). The PRE statistics for the correlation between a Baby-Boomer child's school prayer attitudes across all waves and their pre-Boomer parent's religious tradition in 1965 ranged from 3.17 percent to 5.53 percent. The PRE statistics for the correlation between a Baby-Boomer child's school prayer across all

theoretically grounded patterns (see note).<sup>45</sup> But, in Figure 6B, for the newer generation of post-Boomer children, children who have a mainline or evangelical, Baby-Boomer parent

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waves and their pre-Boomer parent's Biblical views in 1965 ranged from 1.82 percent to 3.56 percent. The PRE statistics for the correlation between a Baby-Boomer child's school prayer across all waves and their pre-Boomer parent's religious attendance in 1965 were all less than 2 percent, with several of the relationships being statistically insignificant. However, the PRE statistics predicting a post-Boomer child's views on school prayer by their Baby-Boomer parent's religious tradition was 9.90 percent, Biblical views was 15.37 percent, and religious attendance was 5.61 percent, all substantively important increases from the previous generation.

<sup>45</sup> Independent tests (not shown in Table 3) suggest that Baby-Boomer children who have an unaffiliated/secular pre-Boomer parent are more likely to support school prayer in 1965 than Baby-Boomer children who have a mainline, Catholic, or Jewish pre-Boomer parent. There are no significant differences in a child's school prayer based on parental religious tradition in 1973. In 1982, Baby-Boomer children who have a Black Protestant, pre-Boomer parent were significantly less supportive of school prayer than children who have a Catholic, pre-Boomer parent. Baby-Boomer children who have a Catholic, pre-Boomer parent were more supportive than children who have a Jewish, pre-Boomer parent. In 1997, Baby-Boomer children who have an evangelical, pre-Boomer parent were less supportive of school prayer than Baby-Boomer children who have a Black Protestant or Catholic, pre-Boomer parent. Baby-Boomer children who have a mainline, pre-Boomer parent were less

are less supportive of school prayer than those who have a Black Protestant, Baby-Boomer parent and more supportive than those who have a Jewish, Baby-Boomer parent. Post-Boomers who have a Black Protestant, Baby-Boomer parent were more supportive than those who have a Jewish, Catholic, or pre-Boomer parent from a minority tradition. Post-Boomer children who have a Jewish, Baby-Boomer parent are also more supportive of school prayer than post-Boomer children who have a Baby-Boomer parent who identifies with a minority tradition. Finally, oddly, post-Boomer children who have an unaffiliated or secular Baby-Boomer parent were more supportive toward school prayer than children who have a mainline Protestant, minority tradition, or Jewish parent (see Table 3 for significance levels). This finding might be because mainline Protestant were growing more moderate during this period and Jewish individuals have long been liberals (see Abramowitz and Saunders 2006; Guth and Kellstedt 2011).

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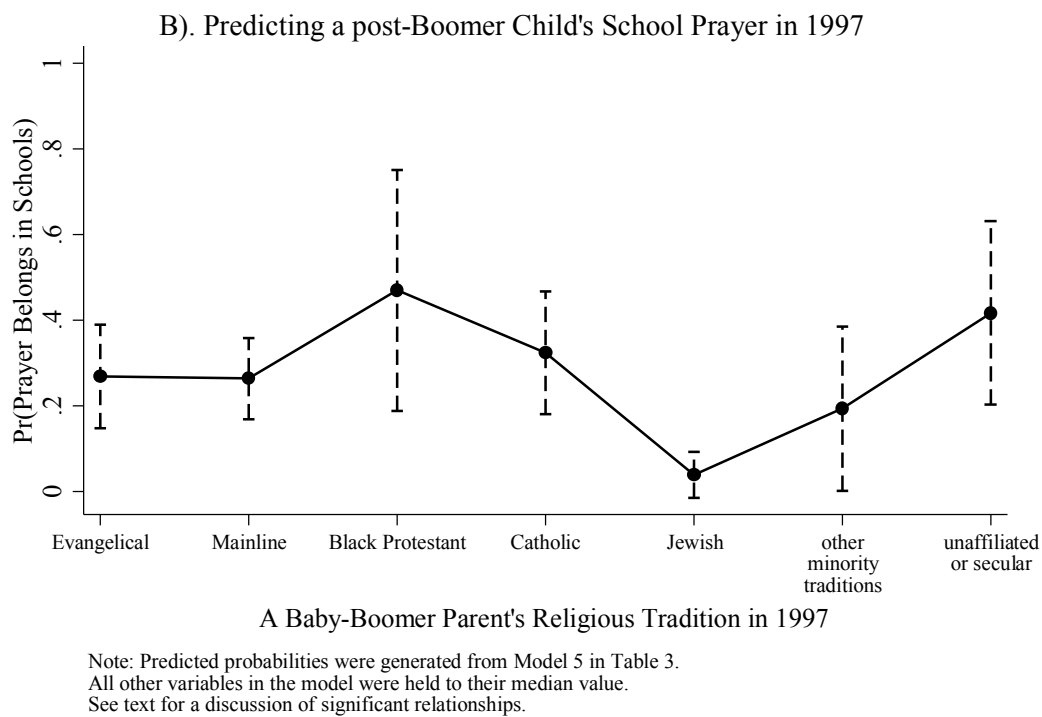
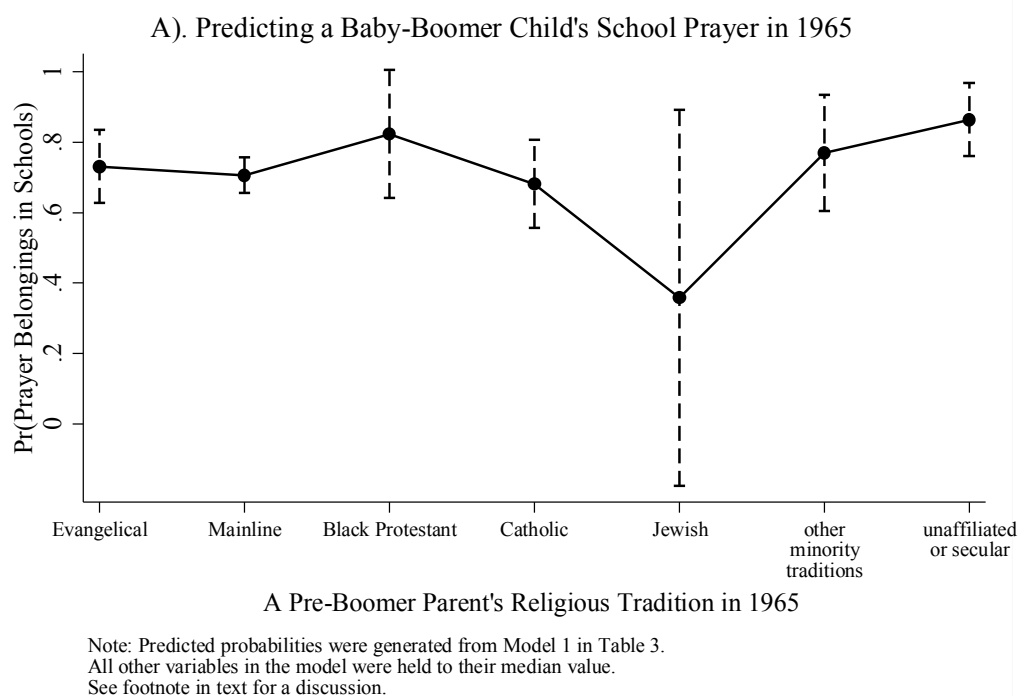
supportive of school prayer than those who have a Black Protestant or Catholic, pre-Boomer parent. Many of these relationships in 1997 were only marginally significant.

Table 3. Predicting a Child's Views Regarding School Prayer with their Parent's Religion

	Baby-Boomers			Post-Boomers	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	1965	1973	1982	1997	1997
Parent's School Prayer	0.52***	0.40***	0.22**	0.24***	0.23**
Parent's White	0.42	0.01	0.17	-0.25	-0.33*
Parent's Family Income	-0.02	-0.11*	-0.19	-0.05	0.11
Parent Lives in South	1.05***	0.08	0.24	-0.00	0.25
<i>Parent's Religion</i>					
Parent's Evangelical	-0.88*	-0.44	-0.12	-0.53	-0.67
Parent's Mainline	-1.00**	-0.23	0.07	-0.26	-0.70*
Parent's Black Protestant	-0.32	0.25	-0.94	0.96	0.28
Parent's Catholic	-1.13**	-0.03	0.47	0.11	-0.41
Parent's Jewish	-2.54**	-0.16	-0.42	-0.46	-2.88***
Parent's Minority Traditions	-0.66	0.36	0.25	-0.01	-1.16*
Parent's Biblical Views	0.16	0.19	0.43***	0.37***	0.47***
Parent's Relig. Attendance	0.11	-0.25**	-0.17	-0.23**	-0.08
<i>Child's Religion</i>					
Child's Evangelical	1.20**	1.48***	0.72**	0.53	1.18***
Child's Mainline	1.11**	0.80***	0.38*	0.14	0.28
Child's Black Protestant	1.04	0.31	1.25*	-0.21	-0.93**
Child's Catholic	0.93*	0.71**	0.26	-0.18	-0.17
Child's Jewish	1.79	-1.06*	-0.12	0.13	-0.03
Child's Minority Tradition	0.17	-0.18	0.13	-0.16	0.05
Child's Biblical View	0.16	0.77***	0.72***	0.64***	1.22***
Child's Relig. Attendance	0.38***	0.39***	0.40***	0.40***	0.65***
N	1,718	1,402	1,185	988	762
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.10	0.13	0.13	0.08	0.22
PRE	13.25%	22.78%	26.84%	5.73%	33.71%

Notes: All entries are order-logistic regression coefficients. Stars indicate the level of statistical significance using two-tailed tests (\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ ). All models are statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ . All models are statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ . Variable Coding: School Prayer: (0 = "prayer should not be in schools," 1 = "no preference or middle ground," 2 = "prayer belongs in schools"); White: (1 = white, 0 = all other races); Family Income (0 = 1<sup>st</sup> quartile, 1 = 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile, 2 = 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile, 3 = 4<sup>th</sup> quartile); South: (1 = South, 0 = all other regions); Religious Tradition: (dummy variables for evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, Black Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, other religious minority traditions, and unaffiliated/secular, which serves as the comparison category in the model); Biblical Views: (0 = written by man, 1 = inspired by God, 2 = Word of God and true); Religious Attendance: (0 = infrequent (which is a few times of year or never), 1 = occasional (which is once or twice a month), 2 = regular (which is almost weekly or more)).

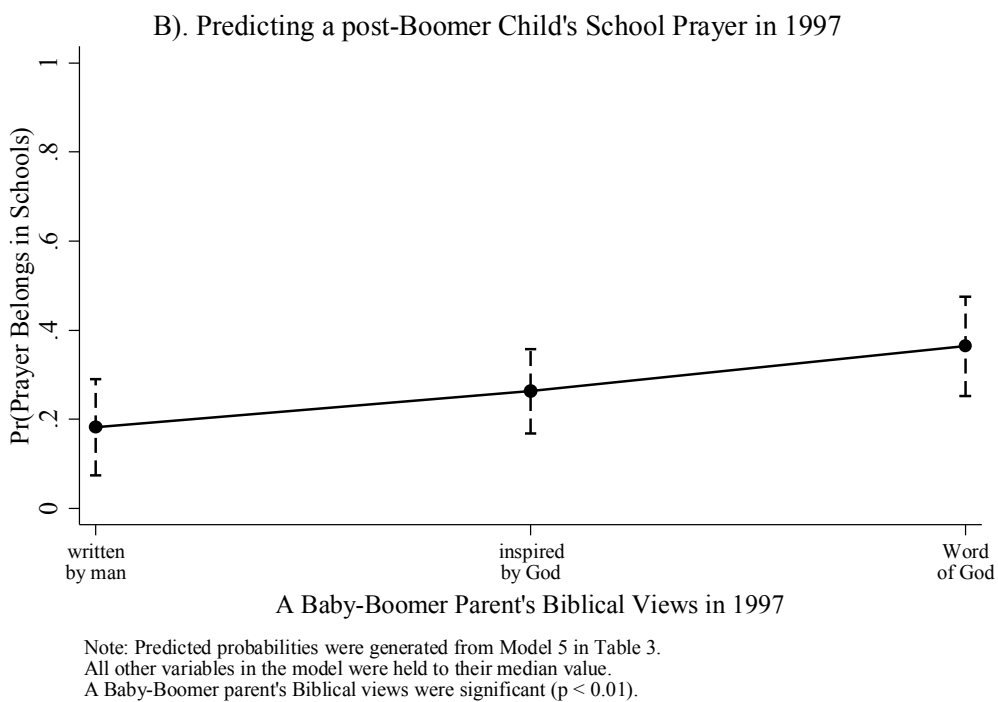
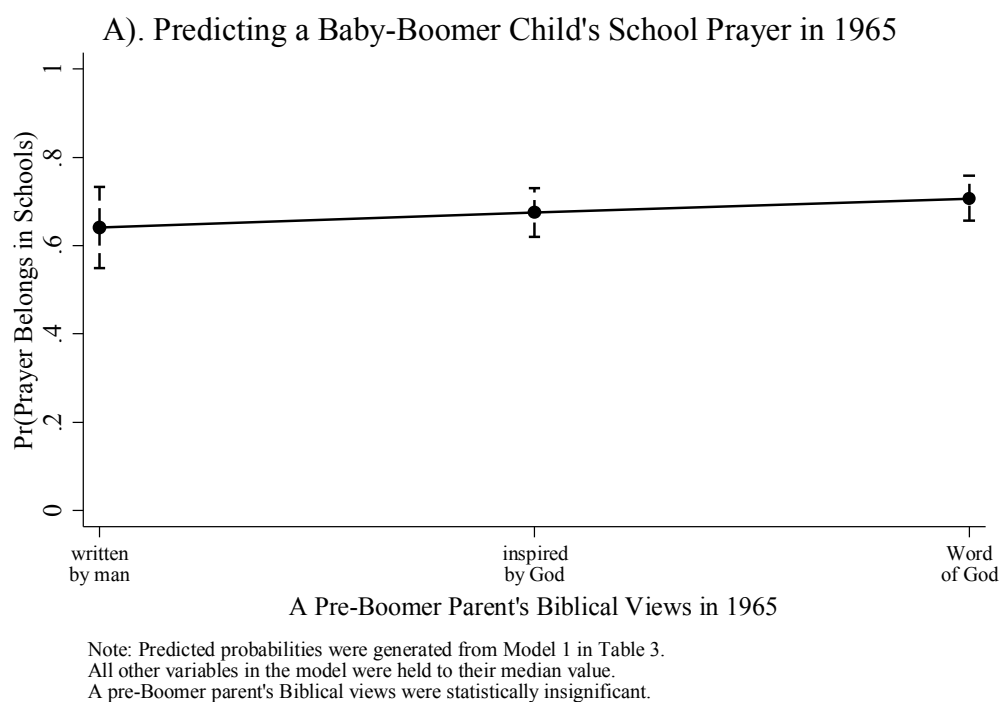
Figure 6. The Influence of a Parent's Religious Belonging on School Prayer



Taken together, it is difficult to make much sense of these trends. One pattern, however, emerges in Figure 6. In the 1960s, support for school prayer was high among all types of religious adherents. But by the 1990s, support for school prayer had dramatically declined, staying high only among individuals who had Black Protestant upbringings. This is not surprising given that Black Protestants have historically been some of the most religiously devout Americans (see Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2011). Taken together, parental religious tradition serves as a very weak explanation for differences in school prayer among Baby-Boomer children, and only plays a minor role for the newest generation of post-Boomer children.

But does parental religiosity of beliefs and behaviors do a better job explaining a child's views about school prayer? Table 3 and Figure 7 reveal that the religious beliefs of parents have only recently become predictive of the Baby-Boomers views regarding school prayer, providing evidence for Hypothesis 4. Both Models 3 and 4 show that Baby-Boomer children who grew up with traditional, Biblical-literalist, pre-Boomer parent in 1965 were more likely to be supportive of school prayer in 1982 and 1997 than Baby-Boomer children who grew up with a more religiously secular or centrist, pre-Boomer parent. This pattern also continues for the newest generation of post-Boomer children in 1997, supporting Hypothesis 3. Post-Boomers who have a Baby-Boomer parent who subscribes to the traditionalist view of the Bible (Word of God) are more likely to believe prayer belongs in schools in 1997 than post-Boomer children who have a more secular ("written by man" or "inspired by God"), Baby-Boomer parent.

Figure 7. The Influence of a Parent's Religious Beliefs on School Prayer



As with PID, Table 3 also shows that parental religious attendance is substantively unimportant, having either no influence or one opposite of the hypothesized direction, as is the case for Models 2 and 4.

Thus, although all indicators of early parental religious socialization were believed to be an influence of school prayer early in life for the Baby-Boomer children, as it turns out, only parental religious beliefs are consequential, and primarily for the newest generation of the study. Contrary to expectations, post-Boomers' views on school prayer are much more correlated with their Baby-Boomer parent's religion than Baby-Boomers' views on school prayer were to their pre-Boomer parent's religion. The view has typically been that school prayer became a divisive and important moral issue much earlier than issues like abortion and gay rights, but these patterns suggest that religious cleavages based on the appropriate role of prayer in schools have emerged only recently. And it was the Baby-Boomer parent's religious beliefs that generated a push against the secularization of education.

One explanation for this pattern might be that for the Baby-Boomer children, their pre-Boomer parent's religious beliefs become influential to their views about the role of prayer in schools at the time when they are likely to have their own families (age 34 in 1982 and 49 in 1997). Therefore, they begin considering the role of God in public education at this time. Given that the parental Biblical views are salient to their Baby-Boomers' views about school prayer, it is not surprising that a similar parent-child pattern emerges for the newest generation. In addition, we see from Table 3 that the Baby-Boomer children's own religious belief, as well as behavior, is important to their views about school prayer.



Therefore, when they become the socializers, this relationship is transmitted to their children, the post-Boomers.

As with the previous section, there are several other findings presented in Table 3 worth mentioning. First, all of the models in Table 3 show that it is clear that a parent's views about school prayer are directly related to their child's views regarding school prayer. When a child is taught about the importance of God in public life, they express attitudes that summarize these teachings. Second, a parent's race was largely a statistically insignificant factor in predicting school prayer attitudes. Only in 1997 did a Baby-Boomer parent's race predict their post-Boomer child's views regarding school prayer (Model 5 in Table 3). Post-Boomer children who have a non-white, Baby-Boomer parent were more likely to support school prayer than post-Boomer children who have a white, Baby-Boomer parent. This is compatible with the finding of having a Black Protestant parent discussed above. Third, in 1965 only (Model 1 in Table 3), Baby-Boomer children who have a parent who lives in the South were more supportive of school prayer than those who have a parent who lives in a different region. This finding is unsurprising given that the South has long been viewed as the Bible belt, where religion is very important to public and private life. However, the diminished influence of region over time is contradictory to expectations.

As mentioned briefly above, both Baby-Boomer and post-Boomer children's own religious views were statistically related to their views about school prayer. For Baby-Boomer children, Table 3 shows that a child's own Biblical views and religious attendance are largely important throughout their life, except in 1965 for Baby-Boomers. As expected,

individuals who have more traditionalist religious orientations are more supportive of school prayer than individuals who are religiously secular or centrist (non-literalists).

As with PID, Table 3 also does not make clear the exact effects of a child's own religious tradition on their views about school prayer. Therefore, independent tests (not shown in Table 3) reveal conventional patterns that support the literature. In 1965, Baby-Boomers who were evangelical and mainline were more supportive of school prayer than unaffiliated/secular identifiers. In 1973, evangelical Baby-Boomers were more supportive of school prayer than mainlines, Catholics, Jewish identifiers, and individuals from other minority traditions. And mainline Protestants as well as Catholics were more supportive than Jewish and other minority traditions. In 1982, religious tradition becomes less predictive; only evangelicals were more supportive than unaffiliated/secular individuals. By 1997, only Baby-Boomer evangelicals were more supportive of school prayer than Catholics. For the newer generation, evangelical post-Boomers in 1997 were more supportive of school prayer than all other religious traditions; except the comparison between evangelicals and Jewish respondents was insignificant. In addition, mainline Protestants were more supportive of school prayer than Black Protestants.

#### *Abortion and Gay Rights Attitudes*

Turning to more contemporary moral issue attitudes, Table 4 presents the results for both Baby-Boomer and post-Boomer children's abortion attitudes and a variety of variables tapping their views about gay and lesbian rights. It is clear that early parental religious socialization has a mixed influence on a child's moral issue attitudes later in life.

Table 4. Predicting a Child's Views Regarding Abortion and Gay Rights with their Parent's Religion

	Baby-Boomers					Post-Boomers			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
	Abortion 1982	Abortion 1997	Gay Rights 1997	Hiring of Gays 1997	Gays FT (OLS) 1997	Abortion 1997	Gay Rights 1997	Hiring Gays 1997	Gays FT (OLS) 1997
Parent's PID	-0.04	-0.03	-0.00	0.06	-0.25	0.13**	0.06	0.13**	-0.81
Parent's White	-0.18	-0.89	-0.99	0.98	-3.25	0.10	-0.15	-0.00	-1.59
Parent's Family Income	-0.21***	-0.34***	-0.21**	-0.03	1.30*	-0.23***	-0.21**	-0.16	1.72*
Parent Lives in South	-0.27*	-0.17	-0.63***	0.30	3.10*	-0.47**	0.47**	0.78***	-4.50*
<i>Parent's Religion</i>									
Parent's Evangelical	1.63**	1.64**	1.67**	2.84**	-10.02**	-1.48***	-0.98	-0.82	3.93
Parent's Mainline	1.37*	0.76	0.89	2.19*	-0.87	-1.48***	-0.91	-0.24	8.12
Parent's Black Protestant	0.14	-0.03	0.54	2.93*	-3.61	-1.67*	-1.29	-17.12***	9.96
Parent's Catholic	1.45	0.95*	0.63	2.09*	3.04	-1.41***	-1.50**	-0.52	9.29
Parent's Jewish	2.73***	1.00	1.22	2.84*	-15.23*	-0.63	-1.02	-14.62***	16.17**
Parent's Other Minority Traditions	2.18***	1.56**	0.44	1.60	-6.89	-0.51	-0.68	-0.11	11.25
Parent's Biblical Views	0.22	0.20	-0.05	0.40**	-3.96***	0.20	0.31	0.68***	-4.92**
Parent's Religious Attendance	0.23**	0.18	-0.11	0.14	1.02	0.31**	-0.11	0.19	-0.62
<i>Child's PID &amp; Religion</i>									
Child's PID	0.06	0.16***	0.21***	0.12***	-2.24***	0.20***	0.28***	0.21***	-3.34***
Child's Evangelical	0.38	-0.71*	0.57*	0.27	-4.68	0.75*	0.55	0.97*	-11.08**
Child's Mainline	0.14	-0.65**	0.18*	-0.39	4.01	0.12	0.09	0.17	0.79
Child's Black Protestant	0.88	-0.23	-0.28	0.11	5.05	1.12	1.01	-0.19	-9.88
Child's Catholic	0.61*	-0.79**	-0.45	-0.33	3.89	0.48	0.17	-0.11	3.66
Child's Jewish	-1.04	-0.76	-0.18	-2.08*	21.35***	0.39	-0.57	-13.33***	-7.77
Child's Other-Minority Tradition	-1.25***	-1.48***	0.15	0.52	7.34**	0.17	0.12	0.40	-1.53
Child's Biblical View	0.94***	0.81***	0.96***	1.05***	-6.73***	1.15***	0.47**	0.95***	-10.22***
Child's Religious Attendance	0.87***	1.08***	-0.09	0.38***	-0.66	0.76***	0.24	0.09	-2.54

N	1,219	1,036	1,028	1,028	1,039	707	732	730	710
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> or R <sup>2</sup>	0.18	0.17	0.15	0.18	0.19	0.23	0.17	0.28	0.32
PRE	33.28%	35.27%	12.68%	15.08%	18.90%	34.74%	13.24%	12.50%	29.73%

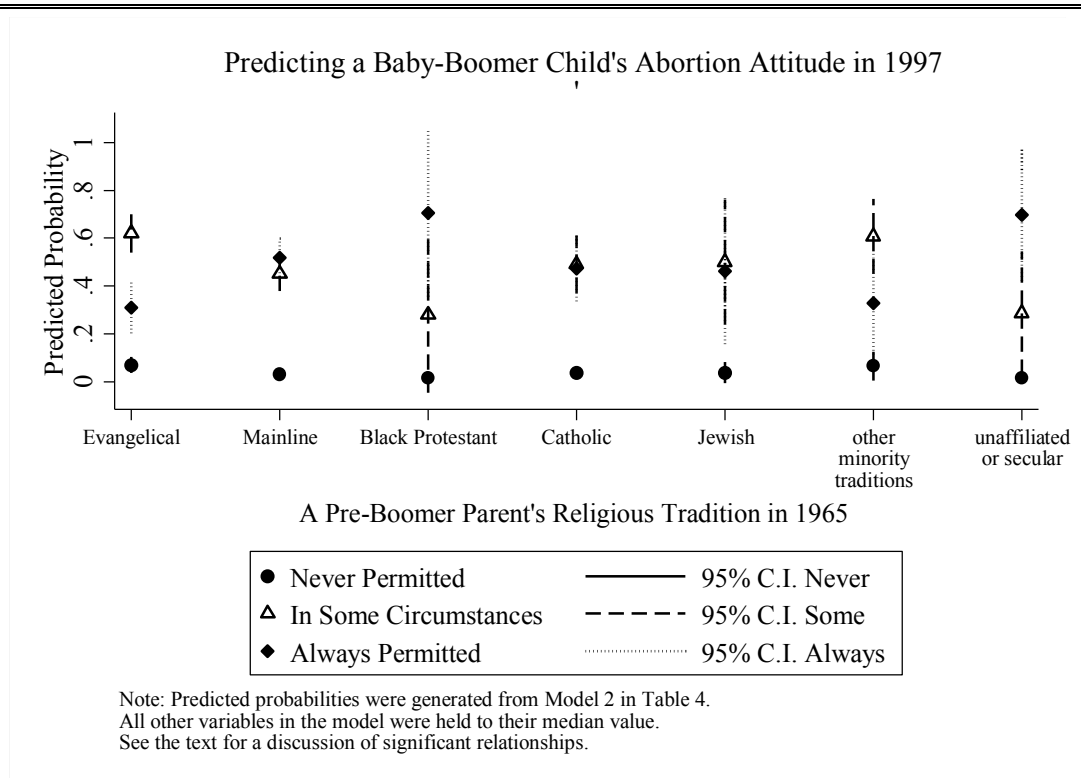
Notes: All entries are order-logistic coefficients for abortion models, logistic regression coefficients for gay rights and hiring of gays models, and OLS coefficients for feeling thermometer for gays and lesbians models. Stars indicate the level of statistical significance using two-tailed tests (\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ ). All models are statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ . Variable Coding: Abortion Attitude (0 = “always permitted,” 1 = “permitted some extreme circumstances,” and 2 = “never permitted”); Gay-Rights Attitude: (1 = “opposition to the law,” 0 = “all other responses”); Hiring of Gays Attitude: (1 = “the conservative response” and 0 = “all other responses”); Feeling Thermometer toward Gay Men and Lesbians: (0 to 100, with 0 being the very unfavorable or cold view toward gay men and lesbians and 100 being a very favorable or warm view of gay men and lesbians); White: (1 = white, 0 = all other races); Family Income (0 = 1<sup>st</sup> quartile, 1 = 2<sup>nd</sup> quartile, 2 = 3<sup>rd</sup> quartile, 3 = 4<sup>th</sup> quartile); South: (1 = South, 0 = all other regions); Religious Tradition: (dummy variables for evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, Black Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, other religious minority traditions, and unaffiliated/secular, which serves as the comparison category in the model); Biblical Views: (0 = written by man, 1 = inspired by God, 2 = Word of God and true); Religious Attendance: (0 = infrequent (which is a few times of year or never), 1 = occasional (which is once or twice a month), 2 = regular (which is almost weekly or more).

Starting with a discussion of abortion attitudes, Table 4 shows that parental religious tradition has a limited influence on a child's abortion attitudes. The coefficients in Table 4 and pairwise independent tests (not shown in Table 4) of the parental religious tradition dummy variables reveal that in 1982, only Baby-Boomer children who had an evangelical pre-Boomer parent were more likely to believe that abortion should never be permitted than children who had a Black Protestant or unaffiliated/secular, pre-Boomer parent. In addition, Baby-Boomer children who had a Black Protestant, pre-Boomer parent were less likely to take pro-life, never permitted, positions than children who have a Jewish or other minority tradition, pre-Boomer parent. Finally, Baby-Boomer children who had a Jewish or other minority tradition, pre-Boomer parent were more likely to be pro-life than Baby-Boomer children who had an unaffiliated/secular, pre-Boomer parent. Overall, there are few strong patterns that emerge in terms of parental religious tradition predicting a child's abortion attitudes in 1982. But, Table 4 and independent tests (not shown in Table 4) reveal that by 1997, Baby-Boomer children who have an evangelical, pre-Boomer parent in 1965 were more likely to be pro-life than those who have a mainline, Catholic, or unaffiliated/secular parent (see Figure 8). This observed pattern in 1997 does not continue for the newest generation. Instead an odd trend emerges. Post-Boomer children who have an unaffiliated/secular parent are more likely to be pro-life than those who have an evangelical, mainline, or Catholic Baby-Boomer parent. There is no strong justification for this pattern other than to say that unaffiliated/secular upbringings do not always translate into liberal attitudes regarding moral issues. And having a parent who identifies with a

minority tradition predicts more conservative abortion views than having a parent who is evangelical or mainline Protestant.

Therefore, very little should be made of the role of parental religious tradition in predicting abortion attitudes. In 1982 in comparison with Black Protestants and unaffiliated/secular parents and in 1997 in comparison with mainline, Catholics, as well as the unaffiliated/secular parents, for the Baby-Boomer children, having an evangelical upbringing was more determinative of having a more conservative stance regarding abortion. But, as the prediction in Figure 8 shows, the differences are largely about allowing abortion in some circumstances like rape and incest rather than the never permitted, pro-life category. This pattern confirms findings from other works on the topic, which suggests there are few abortion absolutists and many adults who take mixed, centrist positions on this issue (Fiorina et al. 2008).

Figure 8. The Influence of Pre-Boomer Parents' Religious Belonging on Baby-Boomers' Abortion Attitudes in 1997

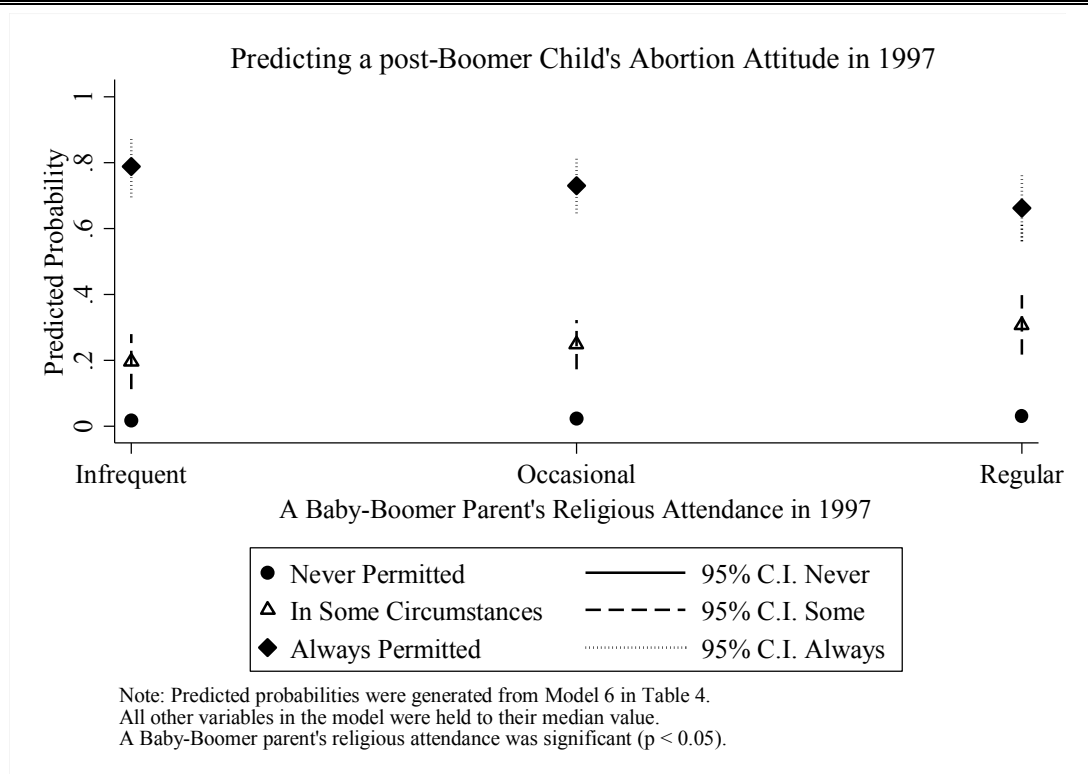


Although parental religious tradition has a limited influence on abortion attitudes, in 1982, a pre-Boomer parent's religious attendance was a statistically significant influence. A Baby-Boomer child who has a parent who regularly attends religious services in 1965 was more likely to be pro-life in 1982 than children who have a parent who attended religious services less frequently. However, the influence of parental religious attendance on a Baby-Boomer child's abortion attitude does not carry over to 1997 (Model 2 in Table 4). But, as shown in Model 6 in Table 2 and Figure 9, a similar pattern emerges for the newest generation, suggesting that parental religious attendance may only influence abortion attitudes when the child is young, potentially through the child's 30s in the case of the Baby-Boomers. However, these relationships are substantively weak. Generally, the view that abortion should always be permitted was the dominate prediction for post-Boomer children in 1997 regardless of the religious service attendance of their parent.

Finally, and surprisingly, parental religious beliefs were insignificant predictors of their child's abortion attitudes.



Figure 9. The Influence of Baby-Boomer Parents' Religious Behavior on Post-Boomers' Abortion Attitude in 1997



Next, there is also some evidence that parental religious socialization influences evaluations of gay and lesbian rights and overall affect toward the gay and lesbian community. Starting with the role of parental religious tradition, Table 4 and independent tests (not shown in Table 4) reveal that for Baby-Boomer children in 1997, growing up with an evangelical, pre-Boomer parent in 1965 predicts more conservative views in regards to gay and lesbian job discrimination rights than growing up with an unaffiliated/secular, mainline, Catholic or parent who identifies with a minority religious tradition (Model 3 in Table 4). This pattern largely conforms to the expectation from the literature on this topic. For the post-Boomer children, however, parental religious tradition is largely an insignificant predictor of the gay rights variable (see Model 7 in Table 4 for the only significant relationship). Additionally, Models 3 and 7 in Table 4 show that parental religiosity (beliefs or behavior) did not predict a child's gay rights attitudes for either generation.

When considering attitudes about hiring gays and lesbians to teach in schools, a much stronger influence of parental religious tradition emerges. Model 4 in Table 4, independent statistical tests (not shown in Table 4), as well as Figure 10 shows that Baby-Boomer children who have an evangelical, pre-Boomer parent in 1965 are less supportive of allowing gays and lesbians to be teachers than those who have a mainline, Catholic, other religious tradition, and unaffiliated/secular, pre-Boomer parent. For post-Boomer children, shown in Model 8 in Table 4 and via independent tests (not shown in Table 4) fewer statistical patterns exist, but evangelical upbringings do lead to more conservative views about gays and lesbians teaching in schools than Black Protestant and Jewish

upbringings. Having a mainline parent predicts more conservative views than having a Black Protestant parent. Catholic family life leads to more conservative views on this topic than Jewish family life. Lastly, having a Jewish parent leads to less conservative views than having a parent who identifies with other religious traditions.

When considering individuals' opinions about whether a school should allow an openly gay individual to teach, parental religious beliefs have the strongest influence of the parental religious variables. Statistically significant coefficients in Models 4 and 8 in Table 4 suggest that both Baby-Boomer and post-Boomer children who have a parent who is religiously traditional in their Biblical views are more likely to agree that the school board should not let an openly gay individual teach (the conservative position) than children who have a parent who is more secular (also see Figure 11).

Figure 10. The Influence of Pre-Boomer Parents' Religious Belonging on Baby-Boomers' Attitudes toward Hiring Gay Teachers in 1997

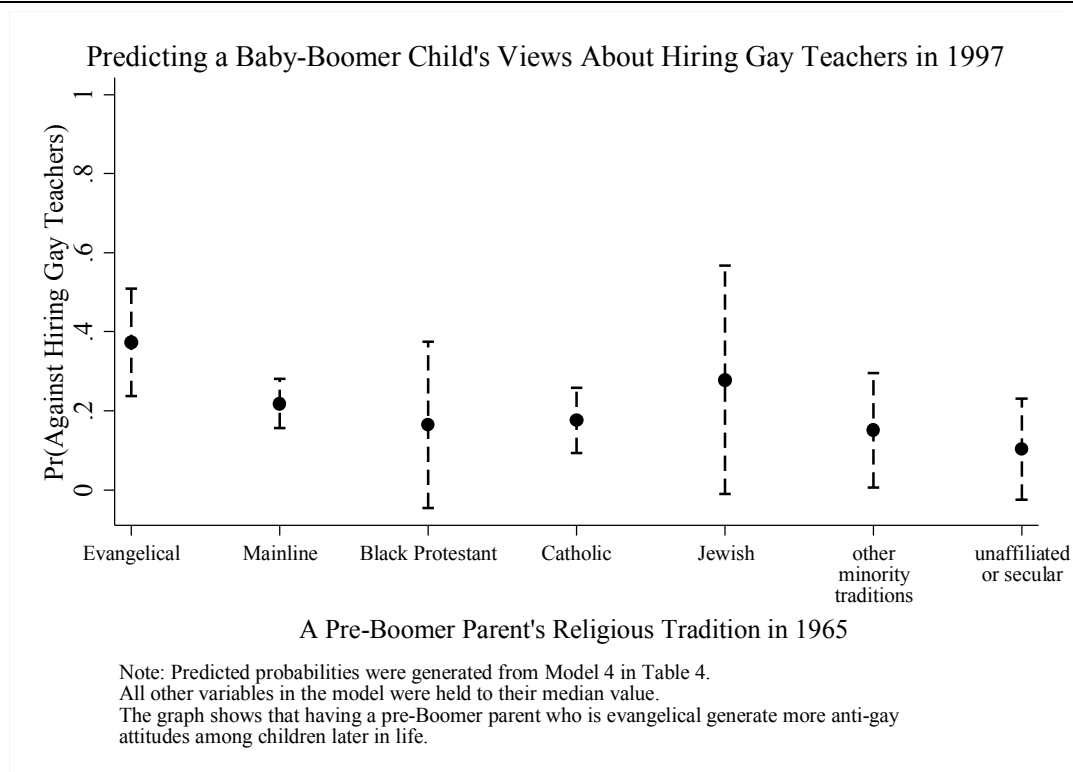
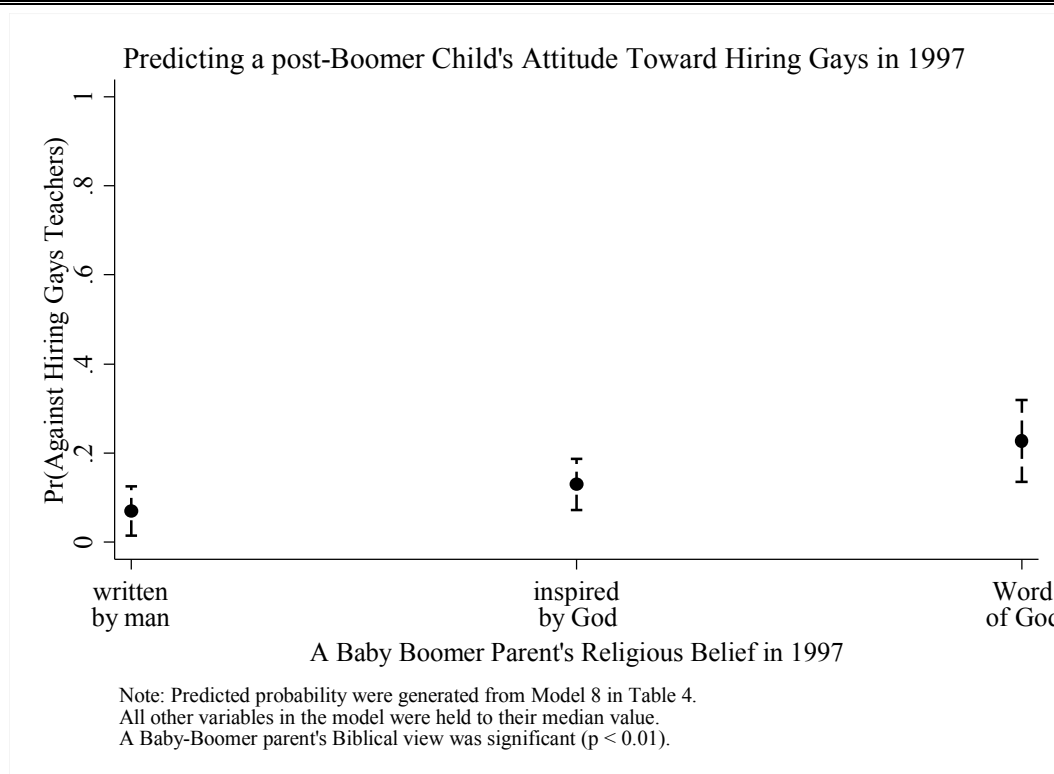


Figure 11. The Influence of Baby-Boomer Parents' Religious Beliefs on Post-Boomers' Attitudes toward Hiring Gay Teachers in 1997



Last, while not a moral issue directly, Model 5 in Table 4 as well as independent tests (not shown in Table 4) suggest that Baby-Boomer children who have an evangelical, pre-Boomer parent had much lower affect toward gays and lesbians than Baby-Boomer children who have an unaffiliated/secular (10 points on average), mainline (9 points on average), and Catholic (13 points on average), pre-Boomer parent in 1965. In addition, Baby-Boomer children who have a Catholic, pre-Boomer parent had higher affect toward gays and lesbians than Baby-Boomer children who have a Jewish (18 points on average) or other minority tradition (9 points on average), pre-Boomer parent in 1965. Thus, over 32 years after early socialization, there is some evidence that religious tradition, specifically the distinction between evangelicals and other Christian and secular upbringings influence affect toward morally salient groups in society. For the newest generation, fewer statistically significant patterns emerge. Model 9 in Table 4 shows that post-Boomer children who have a Jewish, Baby-Boomer parent had higher affect, 16 points on average, toward gays and lesbians than post-Boomer children who have an unaffiliated/secular pre-Boomer parent in 1997.<sup>46</sup> Independent tests (not shown in Table 4) reveal no other significant patterns in terms of parental religious tradition.

Similarly to the patterns for attitudes about hiring gay and lesbian teachers above, in 1997, both Baby-Boomer and post-Boomer children's feeling thermometer toward gay and lesbian individuals was influenced by their parent's views about the Bible. Thus, the

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<sup>46</sup> Jewish individuals have long been connected to liberal moral issue attitudes (see Fowler et al. 2010).

estimates from Table 4 show that moving from growing up with a parent who believes the Bible is “written by man” to having a parent who believes the Bible is the “Word of God” amounts to roughly a 8 degree and 10 degree drop in a Baby-Boomer and post-Boomers’ feeling thermometer placements on average.

Taken together, parental Biblical views play a large role in shaping a child’s views about where gays and lesbians fit into society and general affect towards gays and lesbians, but there is no evidence for this pattern in regards to abortion attitudes. Overall, these findings show that it might be the case that individuals do not wish to suggest that gays and lesbians should not be protected against discrimination (Model 3 in Table 4), but they are willing to openly rank gay individuals unfavorably on the feeling thermometer scale (Models 5 and 9 in Table 4), and suggest that they do not deserve the same rights as others when it comes to teaching America’s youth (Models 4 and 8 in Table 4).

As before, Table 4 also presents several other important findings. Among others, parental PID becomes influential to abortion attitudes only for the newest generation in 1997 (see Model 6 in Table 4). But a child’s own partisanship predicts abortion attitudes for both generations in 1997 and also predicts their gay rights attitudes for all of the models. These finding suggests that partisan upbringings have also come to mean certain patterns of moral attitudes, specifically abortion attitudes (Model 6 in Table 4) and views regarding the hiring of gay and lesbian teachers (Model 8 in Table 4), but only recently. The increased importance of parental partisanship in predicting additional issue attitudes is a topic that deserves further inquiry. Several of the models in Table 4 support the idea that family income has an effect on abortion and gay rights attitudes with children growing up in more

wealthy settings being surprisingly less conservative than children growing up in poorer economic environments. Next, there is a mixed influence of living in the South. Models 7 and 8 in Table 4 suggests that living in the South has meant more conservative views regarding moral issues, but only for the post-Boomers. Whereas, Model 3 and Model 6 in Table 4 suggest that living in the South has meant less conservative moral issue attitudes at times for both generations. Last, as before, an individual's own religious belonging, religious beliefs, and to a more limited extent behavior, predicts these contemporary moral issue attitudes.

Overall, the relationship between a child's moral issue attitudes and their parent's religion provide some, mixed, support for the role of parental religious socialization on the development of a child's moral issue attitudes later in life, providing evidence for Hypothesis 1. But it was primarily religiosity of beliefs and behaviors that predicted moral issues (specifically abortion, views about hiring gays, and the feeling thermometer toward gays and lesbians) for the post-Boomers. Differences between evangelicals and non-evangelical upbringings largely influenced Baby-Boomer's moral issue attitudes. These patterns show some support for Hypothesis 3, which states that the influence of pre-Boomer religion on their Baby-Boomer child should be dominated by measures of religious tradition; whereas, for post-Boomers, their Baby-Boomer parent's religiosity of beliefs and behavior should be more predictive of their politics. Finally, there is very limited support for Hypothesis 4. The significant coefficients for a parent's Biblical views in Models 4 and 5 in Table 4 support the view that Baby-Boomers recalled the religiosity of their childhood in evaluating gay rights issues 32 years after adolescent socialization.



## Conclusion

These analyses provided a very strict test by examining the influence of early parental religious socialization on the development of an individual's political attitudes while including the current religious preferences of children as well as a number of other parental controls. The results imply that there is an influence of early parental religious socialization in terms of belonging, beliefs, and behaviors on a child's political identification and moral issue attitudes. Although none of these relationships are particularly strong. While they are substantively weak, finding a relationship at all given the design of this research is viewed as impressive because an individual's own religion, which is highly correlated with their parent's religion, is included in the models. In addition, controls for the possibility of the direct transmission of a political attribute or the political socialization environment when young were also included in the models, which, as with religion, are highly correlated with the political attitudes of children. As such, the findings imply that Americans carry important religious socialization experiences with them throughout their lives and these experiences influence their political dispositions.

Most importantly, the findings also show that parental religious socialization has evolved over time. A parent's religious beliefs have become increasingly important to predicting their child's political attitudes by the final waves and newest generation of the Youth Parent Study. I expect that if we carried out this type of study today, we would observe an even stronger role of parental religious beliefs, and maybe even behaviors as suggested above, on their child's political attitudes.

But these findings are not without limitations. First and foremost, while this research shows an influence for what I call parental religious socialization, the methodology used here cannot establish for certain whether it is parental religious socialization or some other factors that lead an individual to grow up in a certain type of religious setting that influences their political attitudes. Outside agents such as places of worship, schools, peers or other factors incorporated into an individual's socialization setting might also drive the development of an individual's political attitudes. Future research should consider other methodological techniques to establish additional theoretical frameworks for exploring these developmental questions.

Second, there is a limited set of religious indicators included in this analysis. This study could be improved by fielding a longitudinal youth-parent panel study with a wider set of religious measures and larger set of respondents from different religious groups. It is clear that the data used was not specifically designed for examining the research questions posed here.<sup>47</sup> Future research needs to design a socialization panel study geared specifically toward understanding the influence of religion on politics within the home. Alternatively, we could field surveys that ask respondents about the dynamics between religion and politics at home and when intersecting with their parents. No matter the design, the growing

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<sup>47</sup> However, to be fair, the narrow focus on primarily a Judeo-Christian sample reflects the religious beliefs of a majority of the U.S. population in the 1960s. The religious landscape in the U.S. has changes substantially over the years. The conclusions should be considered with this in mind.

interest in research on religion and American politics over the past few decades could benefit from better data.

Lastly, religion and politics within the home environment are not separate. Thus, future work needs to explore the interaction between these factors. Because of the mass shifts in the electorate, such as southern Democrats to the Republican Party during the late twentieth century, religion and political attitudes have become more sorted. But at the micro-level, was it religion, politics, or both, that lead people to choose their path? This study has only touched the surface of understanding the complexity between religion, politics, and issue attitudes within the home. Future work should build on the theory presented here, developing more fully what this process looks like. For example, one might consider the interaction between religious and political upbringings in predicting partisanship or issue attitudes over time.

Yet, as this research demonstrates, the complexity of the human experience when young and over time makes it challenging to model the development of political attitudes. Isolating the direct influence of parental religious socialization is particularly challenging and not without limitations. However, I believe that the empirical results derived from the methodological design presented here provide a strong starting point. At times, American parents' religion plays a small role in the development of their child's politics.

## CHAPTER 3: DOES CHANGING RELIGIOSITY OF BELIEFS & BEHAVIORS LEAD TO CHANGING POLITICAL ATTITUDES?

### Introduction

This chapter takes another step toward understanding how religion actually influences Americans' political development. This brief analysis concentrates on the influence of changes in religiosity of beliefs and behaviors on changes in political party identification and abortion attitudes over an individual's life-cycle, specifically in the years after early parental socialization.

As discussed in Chapter 1, no known literature has actually explored the connection between changing religiosity of beliefs and behaviors on changing political attitudes using panel or longitudinal data; though scholars regularly cite the cross-sectional, individual-level, relationships between these variables (e.g., Brint and Abrutyn 2010; Green et al. 1996; Kohut et al. 2000; Layman 1997; Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Kellstedt and Smidt 1993; Mockabee 2007). For example, using ANES data, Kellstedt and Smidt (1993), conclude that "beliefs about the Bible are important predictors of such political variables as partisanship, vote choice, and attitudes toward abortion" (194). Others, using a variety of different measures of religiosity of beliefs and behaviors, find similar relationships (see Brint and Abrutyn 2010; Mockabee 2007).

The argument here is predicated on the idea that Americans have sorted themselves into religious camps with opposing worldviews, traditional versus secular (Hunter 1991; Wuthnow 1988, 1989). Proponents of this view suggest that these competing camps are "characterized by alternative beliefs systems, different religious practices and adherence to

rival religious movements,” which have implications for how these individuals view culture, society, and politics (Smidt et al. 2009:7). If true, we should observe that changing religiosity of beliefs and behaviors are likely to influence changes in political variables because there are different social norms and cultural expectations associated with holding different types of religious beliefs and engaging in different types of religious behaviors (Hunter 1991; Layman 2001; Layman and Green 2005; Smidt et al. 2009; Wuthnow 1988, 1989).

There is some evidence of this process. One study, Jennings and Stoker (2007), focuses on the influence of changing religious belonging on party identification. They show that conversion to evangelicalism or becoming unaffiliated with religion has meant an increased association with Republicanism and Democratic identity, respectively. However, they do not include any controls in their models to rule out the influence of other changing life circumstances. In addition, they do not examine the influence of changing religiosity of beliefs and behaviors on changes in political attitudes. Given that the recent shift in religio-political realignments is centered on the increasing influence of divisions based on religiosity (see Layman 1997), I argue it is important to explore the relationship between these factors. While religious belonging remains important today, since the 1980s, for example, there are much wider political differences between Biblical literalists and non-literalists and attenders and non-attenders than different sects for Christianity (e.g., Brooks and Manza 2004; Kohut et al. 2000; Layman 1997).

Taken together, this chapter attempts to fill the gap in the research by using the longitudinal, Youth Parent Study data to generate models that estimate the relationship

between changes in religiosity of beliefs and behaviors and political attitudes over time. This chapter estimates changes in these factors over two “change periods,” which is the time from one wave of the Youth Parent Study, for example 1973, to the next wave of the Youth Parent Study, for example 1982. For this example, it is called the 1973-1982 change period.

#### The Association between Religiosity and Political Attitudes

Scholars once thought that early socialization crystallized one’s political dispositions during their teenage years, leading to stability in an individual’s political attitudes and behaviors over their lifecycle (see Niemi and Hepburn 1995; Niemi and Sobieszek 1977). However, it is now known that socializing processes do not cease after individuals’ early formative years, but rather, experiences throughout individuals’ lives, such as college, employment, military, marriage, and the like, may help resocialize individuals. Everyday individuals are susceptible to new stimuli that may influence their religious beliefs and behaviors, political attitudes, and the relationships between these learned factors. Thus, we learn about our religion and politics as a by-product of daily experiences and interactions with other individuals in our lives (Argyle 2000; Desmond et al. 2010; Popkin 1991). For example, during college, there is evidence that individuals look to friends more than their parents for their religious viewpoint (Argyle 2000). Taken together, there is the possibility that individuals will change their views about religion and politics at some point later in life as they interact with new socializing agents. This chapter is specifically interested in understanding what happens to a person’s political attitudes when they change their religiosity of beliefs and behaviors.

The idea behind the influence of religious changes on changes in political attitudes is rooted in social identity theory. Religious groups make clear to affiliated members the political norms of the group (Green and Guth 1993; Green et al. 2002; Legee 1993). Green and Guth (1993) write that “at root, such affiliations represent attachments to broader cultural traditions undergirding individual political beliefs, affiliations, and behaviors” (100). Members of religious groups have the same politics because they have shared values and commitments of the religious group (Johnson and White 1967; White 1967). For example, Johnson and White (1967:31) write that “members of religious groups have a common identity, interact with one another regularly and expect each other to think and act in certain ways.” More recently, Green et al. (2002) argue that when individuals decide what political party they should affiliate with they think about what types of social groups are allied with the political parties. Generally speaking, empirical evidence confirms a long history of religious group correspondence to political parties in the United States (Berelson et al. 1954; Campbell et. al. 1960; Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Menendez 1977).

Similarly to classic views of religious belonging, changing one’s religiosity of beliefs and behaviors makes an individual susceptible to social pressure to conform to an acceptable set of cultural and political expectations and viewpoints. Religiosity provides guidance for individuals to evaluate their political and social surroundings through defining one’s values and providing individuals a way to think about the world (Layman 1997, 2001). Thus, religious beliefs and behaviors have social consequences for how “people act politically, economically, or socially in keeping with their ultimate beliefs” (Smidt et al.

2009; Swierenga 1990:154).<sup>48</sup> Because religiosity of beliefs and behaviors are such a large part of many American's daily lives, when individuals change their beliefs and behaviors, the transformations are expected to have important consequences for politics.<sup>49</sup>

In line with theories of social identity and cognitive consistency, when individuals make adjustments to their religiosity of beliefs and behaviors, they should feel pressure by society and other people who have a shared religiosity of beliefs and behavior to bring their political attitudes in line with their new religiosity (Festinger 1957; Hoge and de Zulueta 1985; Smidt et al. 2009; Wald et al. 1988, 1990, 2005).<sup>50</sup> In this way, religious beliefs and behaviors are a constraint on, and possibly a generator of political attitudes (Smidt et al. 2009:20). As a result, I test the following hypothesis: individuals who become more religiously traditional over time are more likely to become more Republican and have

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<sup>48</sup> Thus, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the empirical patterns between religious beliefs and behaviors and political attitudes are well documented.

<sup>49</sup> The changes might be a conscious decision, unconscious long-term process, or responses to religious questions over time might simply be “off the top of their head” (Zaller and Feldmen 1992). While examining how religion might change as a result of lifestyle changes or the processes involved in these changes are interesting topics, this section is not focused on the causal processes that lead to religious change, but rather focused on how changes in religious beliefs relate to changes in politics.

<sup>50</sup> This theory could be expanded to better understand the process of geographic sorting (see Bishop 2008).



conservative views regarding abortion than individuals who become more secular over time. By traditional, I mean those individuals who subscribe to more literalist beliefs of the Bible and attend religious services more frequently. And, by secular, I mean those individuals who believe the Bible is not literal and are infrequent or non-attenders at religious services.

As discussed in Chapter 2, scholars posit that religious viewpoints and political viewpoints have become increasingly aligned in recent years (Hunter 1991; Wuthnow 1988, 1989). Additionally, Campbell (2002), Jennings and Stoker (2007), and Putnam and Campbell (2010) argue that during realigning periods it is the youngest generations that exhibit the strongest relationship between the aligning factors. However, the perspective proposed here is that during a religio-political realigning period, the mass public in general, regardless of age, is more inclined to take positions that align with the “appropriate” religio-political trends. The realignments between religiosity and political orientations in the mass electorate are believed to have started during the 1980s (see Layman 2001; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Smidt et al. 2009). Accordingly, if realignments happen for all members of the electorate, we should also see the influence of changing religiosity on changing party identification and abortion attitudes for Baby-Boomer children being more pronounced for the 1982-1997 change period than during the 1973-1982 change period.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> As mentioned above, change periods refer to the changes across waves of the Youth Parent Study (1973-1982 and 1982-1997). See the discussion in the next section for details.

Finally, some Americans simply do not change their religious views and behaviors over their lifecycle. But we might see these individuals changing their political attitudes. Thus, regardless of changing religiosity, religio-political realignment theory also predicts that individuals who are religiously traditional at the start of the change period are expected to become more Republican and pro-life by the end of the change period than religiously secular individuals at the start of the change period. The latter group is expected to become more Democratic and pro-choice over the change period. Like above, this process is more likely to occur for the 1982-1997 period than the 1973-1982 period because the early 1980s are marked as the beginning of these religio-political shifts (see Layman 2001; Putnam and Campbell 2010; Smidt et al. 2009).

#### Data and Variables

As in the previous chapter, data from the Youth Parent Socialization Study are employed to test the expectations developed above. In order to test the hypotheses, two types of variables are needed, those that summarize change over time and those that summarize an individual's preferences at the beginning of the change period. First, variables that summarize changes in religiosity of beliefs and behaviors as well as political attitudes are constructed by subtracting the respondent's value on a specific attribute at time one ( $t_1$ ) from the value of the same attribute at time two ( $t_2$ ) (e.g.,  $PID_{t_2} - PID_{t_1}$ ). Change variables are constructed over the 1973-1982 waves when the average age of the Baby-Boomers was 25 to 34 years old and the 1982-1997 waves when the average age of

the Baby-Boomers was 34 to 49 years old.<sup>52</sup> These periods were chosen because they are assumed to be far enough removed from early in life socialization to diminish direct parental influences; though parental socialization influences are controlled for.

The dependent variables for this section that summarize individual level changes include: changes in PID and change in abortion attitude (due to data availability, for 1982-1997 only). First, change in PID is measured on an ordinal scale from -6 to 6, with higher values indicating that a respondent switched their PID from Democrat to Republican. Lower values indicate a respondent switched their PID from Republican to Democrat. Zero indicates that a respondent did not change their PID. In general, few Baby-Boomers make dramatic shifts in their party identification over time. For both the 1973-1982 and 1982-1997 periods just over 40 percent of the Baby-Boomers' PID remained constant, with just under 60 percent changing their PID. However, these changes typically involve small movements from the lean to weak partisan to strong partisan categories of the same political party. We know this because the standard deviations are less than 1.6 for both of the periods studied here, meaning that approximately 68 percent of respondents shift less than two categories in their partisanship, such as a move from lean Republican to strong Republican, over these time periods. Change in PID is also used as a control variable in the change in abortion attitudes model in Table 5 (see below).

Next, change in abortion attitude is measured on an ordinal scale from -3 to 3, with higher values indicating that a respondent switched their abortion attitude from a more pro-

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<sup>52</sup> Because the data are not in long form, time series estimation techniques are inapplicable.

choice position to a more pro-life position. Lower values indicate that the respondent switched their abortion attitude from a more pro-life position to a more pro-choice position. Zero indicates that the respondent did not change their abortion attitude. Just fewer than 60 percent of the Baby-Boomers do not change their abortion attitudes from 1982-1997, suggesting a slightly higher rate of stability in abortion attitudes than PID.<sup>53</sup> However, a move from one category to the next for the PID and Abortion variables is not actually comparable because the meaning of each shift is not interpreted in the exact same way.

Due to data availability, Biblical views and religious attendance serve as the indicators for religiosity, the central independent variables. First, the change in religious beliefs is measured from -2 to 2 with higher values indicating that the respondent became more traditional (more literalist) in their views about the Bible over the change period. Lower values indicate the respondent became more secular (toward “written by man”) in their Biblical views. Zero indicates no change. Slightly more than 70 percent of the respondents do not change their Biblical views over both of the change periods, suggesting a remarkable amount of religious stability.

Second, the change in religious behavior is measured from -3 to 3 with higher values indicating that the respondent became more religiously active and lower values

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<sup>53</sup> For example, a one unit shift in PID might be from lean Republican to weak Republican; whereas, a one unit shift in abortion attitudes might be from the in some circumstances position to the never permitted position.

means that they decreased attendance at their place of worship.<sup>54</sup> Zero indicates no change. Just fewer than 60 percent of Baby-Boomers retain the same religious attendance levels over each change period.

In addition to these change period variables, also included in the models are the initial change year values of the dependent and independent variables. I do this for two reasons. First, a strong Republican cannot become a stronger Republican. Thus, it is important to include what the respondent's PID was at the start of the change period. Additionally, I include religious measures from the initial wave for the change year to test for realignment period influences. For example, a Baby-Boomer who was very religiously traditional in 1982 cannot become more traditional over the 1982-1997 time period. But they could possibly become more Republican, suggesting a growing alignment between religiosity and PID over this time period. This is also true for seculars not being able to become more secular but potentially being able to become more Democratic.

The models also include several important controls, including parental political and religious preferences from 1965 as well as demographic controls for the individual. It might

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<sup>54</sup> This is a slightly different original measure from the one used in Chapter 2. Here, religious attendance is measured as a four-category ordinal measures from 0 = "never/no religious preference," 1 = "a few times a year," 2 = "once or twice a month," 3 = "almost weekly or more." In Chapter 2 the middle categories were condensed.

be the case that individuals who grew up with Democratic or Republican parents are less likely to change their PID over time. It also might be the case that individuals who grew up with a religiously traditional parent are less likely to change their political orientations over time than individuals who grew up with a secular parent. However, the specific directional patterns for these relationships are unclear, given that no known literature has considered these propositions. However, because religiously traditional family settings place a strong emphasis on children to conform to the appropriate religious and cultural expectations (see Argyle 2000), I expect that when children are socialized by a religiously traditional parents when young their political orientations are more resilient to personal religious changes later in life. Lastly, I also control for an individual's sex and race and include two variables that summarize individual-level demographic changes: change in family income (quartile standardized for each wave) and change in education.

### Results

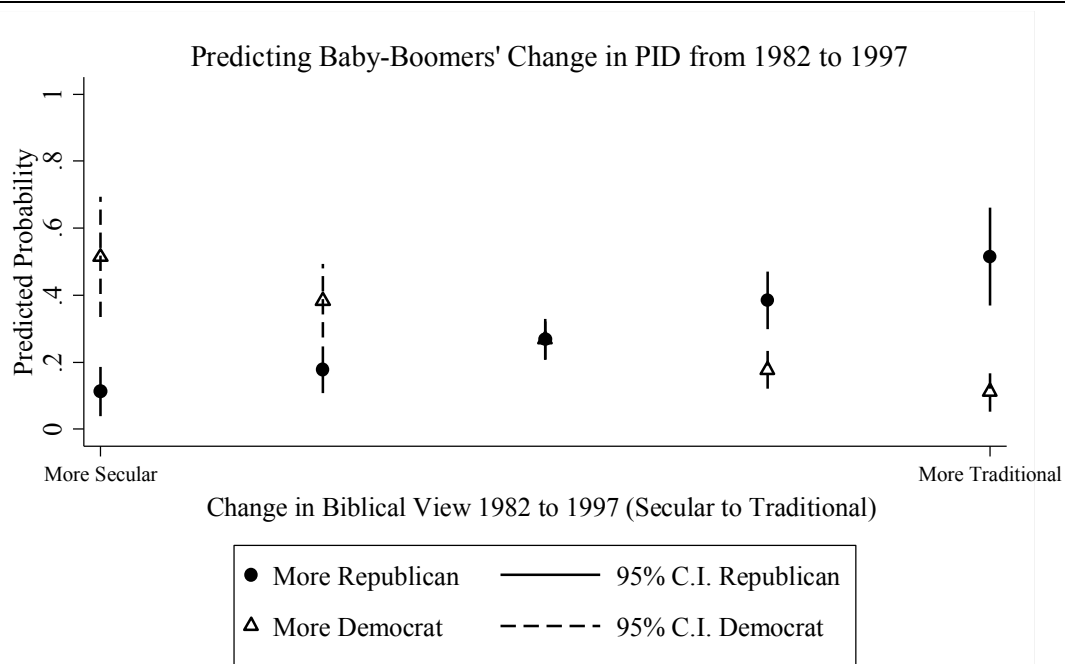
Below, Table 5 shows the ordered-logistic regression coefficients for change in PID and change in abortion attitudes. There are several important individual-level and time-specific effects. First, for change in PID, Model 1 in Table 5 shows that changes in a Baby-Boomer's religiosity for the 1973-1982 period ( $\Delta$  Bible '73-'82 and  $\Delta$  Religious Attendance'73-'82) were statistically insignificant predictors of changes to a Baby-Boomer's party identification.

Second, however, by the 1982-1997 period, Model 2 in Table 5 shows that shifts in religiosity from 1982-1997, specifically changes in one's views about the Bible, and to a much more limited extent changes in one's religious attendance (marginally significant),

correlated with changes in their party identification. As Figure 12 shows, Baby-Boomers who became more traditionalist in their Biblical views were more likely than their increasingly secular counterparts to become Republicans. The latter group grew increasingly Democratic over the same period. This finding shows that parties have become increasingly sorted based on religiosity of beliefs.

Third, in addition to changes in PID, Model 3 in Table 5 also shows that changing levels of religiosity influence changes in an individuals' views about abortion. Baby-Boomers who became increasingly traditional in the Biblical views and active at their place of worship were more likely than their increasingly secular and inactive counterparts to shift to the pro-life position between 1982 and 1997. This relationship is present even after controlling for changes in Baby-Boomer's party identification over the same period.

Figure 12. The Influence of Baby-Boomers' Changing Religious Beliefs on Changing PID, 1982-1997



Note: Predicted probabilities were generated from Model 2 in Table 5.  
 All other variables in the model were held to their median value.  
 Changes in religious beliefs were significant ( $p < 0.01$ ).



Table 5. The Influence of Changing Religiosity of Beliefs and Behaviors on Changing Political Attitudes

<i>Independent Variables</i>	25 to 34 Years Old		34 to 49 Years Old		
	Model 1 $\Delta$ PID '73-'82	<i>Independent Variables</i>	Model 2 $\Delta$ PID, '82-'97	Model 3 $\Delta$ Abortion '82-'97	Model 4 $\Delta$ PID, '82-'97
PID '73	-0.480*** (0.037)	PID '82	-0.376*** (0.040)	0.141*** (0.045)	-0.386*** (0.040)
--	--	$\Delta$ PID '82-'97	--	0.173*** (0.045)	--
--	--	Abortion '82	--	-1.605*** (0.095)	0.343*** (0.100)
--	--	$\Delta$ Abortion '82-'97	--	--	0.292*** (0.087)
Bible '73	0.095 (0.139)	Bible '82	0.625*** (0.157)	0.706*** (0.178)	0.468*** (0.167)
$\Delta$ Bible '73-'82	0.165 (0.132)	$\Delta$ Bible '82-'97	0.531*** (0.150)	0.450*** (0.154)	0.460*** (0.148)
Religious Attendance '73	0.031 (0.071)	Religious Attendance '82	0.179*** (0.072)	0.523*** (0.087)	0.068 (0.081)
$\Delta$ Religious Attendance '73-'82	0.065 (0.065)	$\Delta$ Religious Attendance '82-'97	0.130* (0.080)	0.653*** (0.075)	0.033 (0.086)
Income '73	0.072 (0.067)	Income '82	0.242*** (0.080)	-0.171** (0.077)	0.282*** (0.079)
$\Delta$ Income '73-'82	0.126** (0.052)	$\Delta$ Income '82-'97	0.184*** (0.061)	-0.058 (0.071)	0.191*** (0.062)
Education '73	0.106 (0.097)	Education '82	-0.086 (0.114)	-0.250** (0.121)	-0.044 (0.116)
$\Delta$ Education '73-'82	0.297* (0.166)	$\Delta$ Education '82-'97	-0.726*** (0.265)	0.404 (0.298)	-0.778*** (0.262)
Parent's PID '65	0.134*** (0.032)	Parent's PID '65	0.026 (0.031)	-0.015 (0.036)	0.030 (0.032)
Parent's Bible '65	-0.027 (0.121)	Parent's Bible '65	-0.054 (0.136)	0.223 (0.152)	-0.124 (0.139)
Parent's Relig.	0.090	Parent's Relig.	0.022	-0.015	0.017

Attendance '65		Attendance '65			
	(0.064)		(0.066)	(0.071)	(0.068)
Female	-0.289**	Female	-0.479***	-0.500***	-0.404***
	(0.116)		(0.132)	(0.143)	(0.133)
White	1.117***	White	1.628***	-0.142	1.596***
	(0.208)		(0.223)	(0.363)	(0.244)
N	1,183	N	1,001	983	983
BIC	-3395.48	BIC	-2564.98	-4003.335	-2513.312
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.05	Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.05	0.16	0.05

Notes: Data comes from the Youth Parent Study. All models are order-logistic regression. Stars indicate the level of statistical significance using two-tailed tests (\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.1$ ). All models are statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ . Eliminating the pre-Boomer parent variables and using only Baby-Boomer child data revealed no substantively important changes.

In an effort to hash out the relationship between religiosity, abortion attitudes, and PID, Model 4 in Table 5 re-estimates changes in PID over the 1982-1997 period. It might be the case that parties and moral issues became more aligned during this period, leading to the appearance of an influence of changing religiosity on changing party identification. Thus, while changes in abortion attitude did influence changes in PID, changes in Biblical views remained statistically significant. However, change in religious attendance was no longer significant; though change in religious attendance was only marginally significant to begin with (see Model 2 in Table 5). This finding may suggest that places of worship during this period were growing increasingly political. Attending a political church influenced shifts in abortion attitudes. But the mechanism behind the shift in party identification is primarily policy-based moral issues and religious beliefs, in this case Biblical beliefs, rather than the actual act of sitting in the pew at a place of worship.

Fourth, Table 5 also shows that in addition to the influence of changing religiosity, the coefficients for Biblical views and religious attendance in 1982 are statistically significant. This shows that individuals who were more religiously traditional at the start of the change period in 1982 were more likely to become more Republican and pro-life over the change period than their secular counterparts who were more likely to become Democratic and pro-choice over the change period (Models 2 and 3 in Table 5). However, this pattern is not present for the 1973-1982 period. Thus, Models 2 and 3 provide evidence for the view that religio-political alignments based on religiosity began during the early 1980s, supporting the religious restructuring perspective based on religiosity of beliefs and behaviors proposed by Hunter (1991) and Wuthnow (1988, 1989).

Finally, there are several other notable individual-level findings from Table 5. First, change in income from both 1973-1982, as well as 1982-1997, were significantly related to changes in PID (Models 1 and 2 in Table 5), but not changes in abortion attitudes (Models 3 in Table 5). Baby-Boomers who increased their income were more likely to be Republican than their counterparts who decreased their income to become Democratic.

Second, an odd pattern emerges with change in education. Individuals who increased their education from 1973-1982 became more Republican (Model 1 in Table 5), but individuals who increased their education from 1982-1997 became more Democratic (Model 2 in Table 5). This measure, however, may be tapping the effect of when Baby-Boomers received their higher education. Thus, it likely speaks to a period or generation effect.

Third, the more Republican a Baby-Boomer was in 1973 and 1982 the less likely they were to become more Republican by 1982 and 1997 (Models 1 and 2 in Table 5), respectively. Additionally, if a Baby-Boomer was more pro-life in 1982 they were less likely to become more pro-life by 1997 (Models 2 and 3 in Table 5). The converse is true about Democrats and pro-choice positions as well. These findings are consistent with the idea that individuals cannot become more Republican if they are Republican, Democratic if they are a Democrat, pro-choice if they are pro-choice, or pro-life if they are pro-life.

Fourth, Table 5 shows that there was little influence of the socialization variables on changes in PID or abortion attitudes. However, for the 1973-1982 period, a pre-Boomer parent's PID did have a significant influence on changes in their child's PID, with

individuals who have a more Republican parent in 1965 being less likely to change to the Republicans over the 1973-1982 period.

Lastly, women were much more likely than men to become Democratic and pro-choice. Whites were much more likely than non-Whites to become Republican. But there was no significant influence of race on change in abortion attitudes in Model 3 in Table 5.

### Conclusion

This brief analysis shows that even controlling for changes in party identification, changes in an individual's religiosity of beliefs and behaviors have a significant and substantively important influence on changes in abortion attitudes. And even controlling for changes in abortion attitudes, which are highly correlated with religiosity, changes in religiosity, specifically changes in Biblical views, have a significant and substantively important influence on changes in party identification. But this pattern does not emerge until the period between 1982 and 1997, the time during which scholars believe religiosity supplanted religious belonging in defining political cleavages. Overall, these findings support the view that it was not only the younger generations that responded to religio-political restructuring in America, but in the 1980s and 1990s, individuals in their 30s and 40s were very much a part of shaping the political divisions between traditionalists and seculars we see today, extending some of the findings of Campbell (2002) and Putnam and Campbell (2010). Thus, generational replacement alone does not account for mass changes in religious and political attitudes during this period (also see Hout and Fischer 2002).

This chapter, however, is not without limitations. As discussed in Chapter 1, these data have clear limitations. Specifically, there is a limited selection of religious variables

to use to operationalize religiosity. In addition, one cannot say that religiosity is causing political attitudes. But rather, these factors simply change together over time. But even if it is the other way around, it remains clear that religiosity and political attitudes change together at an individual-level, suggesting these factors are socially and psychologically connected (see Green 2002). Future research should consider alternative methods at clarifying the causal relationship between religious and political change. For example, given that religious changes track political ones, future work should also reconsider Wald et al.'s (1988) study about places of worship. Does going to a different church lead to political change? We need to gather the appropriate longitudinal data to consider this question.

## CHAPTER 4: DOES GOING TO CHURCH REALLY LEAD TO POLITICAL PARTICIPATION?

### Introduction

The previous chapter explored the link between changing religiosity and changing political attitudes, but this is not the only regularly cited relationship suggested by the religion and American political behavior literature. This chapter turns attention to the association between religious attendance and political participation. As mentioned in Chapter 1, regardless of religious tradition, several studies show the positive correlation between religious service attendance and political activity (Calhoun-Brown 1996; Harris 1994; Jamal 2005; Jones-Correa and Leal 2001; Liu et al. 2009; Macaluso and Wanat 1979; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Peterson 1990; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Smidt 1999; Timpone 1998; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Verba et al. 1995).<sup>55</sup> Attendance at a place of worship is said to provide individuals with important resources, generate social capital, make clear important political information, and generate social networks that connect individuals to the wider community (Brown and Brown 2003; Calhoun-Brown 1996; Harris 1994; Jamal 2005; Jones-Correa and Leal 2001; Liu et al. 2009; Peterson 1990, 1992; Putnam 1995, 2000; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba et al. 1995; Wielhouwer

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<sup>55</sup> Empirical tests for the relationship between religious attendance and political participation have been conducted for Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Muslims and all other religious denominations in the U.S. (see Calhoun-Brown 1996; Harris 1994; Jamal 2005; Jones-Correa and Leal 2001; Verba et al. 1995).

2009). In turn, all of these factors lead to a greater inclination for individuals to participate politically (see Wielhouwer 2009 for an in-depth review of the literature).

While the theoretical reasoning for the association between religious attendance and political participation is well established, none of the literature actually examines how changes in an individual's religious service attendance relate to changes in their political participation over time. As shown in Chapter 1 and the previous chapter, several scholars have explored the influence of religious denominational changes on changes in political orientations and behaviors (Green and Guth 1993; Jennings and Stoker 2007), but this literature is not specifically geared toward understanding political participation.<sup>56</sup> Only Gerber et al. (2008) and Teixeira (1992) use a methodological design that allows them to imply a causal link between religious service attendance and political participation. However, these studies use aggregate-level data instead of individual-level data.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Green and Guth (1993) explore how changes to an individual's religious denomination relate to political participation, specifically percent voter turnout. However, they do not discuss the differences in turnout across religious denominational changes nor do they provide a statistical test of the difference across these groups.

<sup>57</sup> Using a natural experiment design, Gerber et al. (2008) examine how repealing the "Blue Laws," which are also called Sunday closing laws, relate to changes in both religious service attendance and political participation. They find that the repeal of the retail-based "Blue Laws" led to a 5 percent decrease in church attendance, which corresponded with a 1 percentage point decrease in voter turnout, implying that religious attendance has a causal



Therefore, at an individual-level, we are left wondering if it is actually attendance at places of worship that is the mechanism driving activities in the political arena. Over an individual's lifecycle, are increases in religious attendance associated with increases in political participation and decreases in religious attendance associated with decreases in political participation?

As a consequence of the gap in the literature, this analysis concentrates on three theoretical possibilities. First, the mechanism linking religious attendance to political participation may be indirect. Religious attendance may be positively related to other variables that are highly correlated with political participation. I explore three possibilities: political interest, partisanship, and civic activity. Second, there may be a direct influence of changes in religious attendance on changes in political participation, even after controlling for indirect possibilities. Lastly, contrary to conventional wisdom, there may simply be no influence of declining religious attendance on political participation because individuals are likely to become regular participators after entering into the political arena (Gerber et al. 2003; Plutzer 2002). For each of these possibilities, using Youth Parent Study data, two forms of political participation are examined: first, a change in political

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influence on voter turnout. But it is unclear if the aggregate-level relationship between changes in religious service attendance and turnout are present when exploring this relationship at an individual-level of analysis. Also using aggregate-level data, Teixeira (1992) attributed declines in voter turnout between the 1960s and the late 1980s to declining rates of religious service attendance during the same period.

participation index, which summarizes changes in several electoral and campaign activities, and second, a change in presidential voting participation variable, which examines the continuation or stopping of voting in presidential elections over time.

### The Indirect Relationship

First, the relationship between religious attendance and political participation may be indirect, meaning that religious attendance might drive other factors that are highly correlated with political participation. The “spillover effect theory” proposed by Peterson (1990, 1992) suggests that participation in one environment generates participation in other areas. For Peterson, the spillover effect is an indirect process in which religious attendance generates qualities and resources advantageous to political participation, such as increased civic engagement (Peterson 1990). Following this line of thought, other scholars, namely the writings by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, find that places of worship help individuals build important civic skills necessary for political participation. For example, Brady et al. (1995:276) writes that “church provides opportunities to acquire the resources relevant to political activity” (also see Verba et al. 1995). Others, like Putnam (1995, 2000), also are strong advocates of an indirect theoretical process, claiming that religious attendance as well as other associational membership and activity are the basis of building social capital, which leads to positive democratic consequences like political participation (also see Brown and Brown 2003; Liu et al. 2009).

Three indirect possibilities are considered here. Religious attendance may influence political interest, strengthen partisan attachments, and/or generate civic activity. Each of these variables has been shown to positively correlate with political participation (Brady et

al. 1995; Peterson 1990; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba et al. 1995; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980).

First, places of worship are political, calling on members to participate in politics and to adopt the political orientations expected by other members of the congregation and the religious leadership (Wald et al. 1988). For example, starting in the 1970s, the new Christian right's growing connection between conservative, Republican politics, and Christian fundamentalism motivates political interest among religiously active individuals (Miller and Wattenberg 1984).<sup>58</sup> Generally, political churches in a wide variety of contexts have served as a force to generate political interest (Calhoun-Brown 1996; Harris 1994; Jamal 2005).

Second, since the late 1970s, religious attendance has been clearly linked to measures of party identification (e.g., Layman 1997, 2001). But, religious attendance does not only drive Republicanism, but rather, it is likely related to partisan tendencies more generally. For example, Black Protestants are one of the most religiously devout groups; yet, they are strong Democrats. Similar patterns as those for Black Protestants hold for some Latino Christians as well. Therefore, for these Christian racial minorities, going to church does not generate Republican tendencies, but it likely strengthens their established partisan attachments (Calhoun-Brown 1996). As a result, when individuals are invested in

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<sup>58</sup> The "Christian right" referred to here is not the organization, but rather, individuals who are Christian and also have very conservative political preferences.

who wins elections, either through strong political party attachments or interest in politics, they are more likely to participate in politics.

Finally, religious attendance might also be related to civic engagement. Places of worship likely connect individuals to the wider community (Peterson 1990, 1992; Putnam 1995, 2000; Zukin et al. 2006). The social networks and connections built at places of worships may influence individuals' ties to their community, leading individuals to participate civically, and in turn, politically.

From this brief discussion, three expectations can be derived. Individuals who increase their religious service attendance over time should be more likely to be interested in politics, strengthen their partisan attachments, and be civically active than individuals who decrease or maintain the same level of religious service attendance over time. Each of these relationships will be tested independently of the others.

### The Direct Relationship

Though indirect theoretical processes are the most common, scholars regularly test the direct relationship between religious service attendance and political participation. Specifically, much early work on this topic indicated a direct relationship between religious attendance and voter turnout (Macaluso and Wanat 1979; Houghland and Christenson 1983; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993). For example, Rosenstone and Hansen (1993:158) go so far as to provide a precise estimate of the effect, stating "people who attend church every week are 15.1 percent more likely to vote in presidential elections and 10.2 percent more likely to vote in midterm years than people who never attend religious services."

However, there are qualifications. Some scholars have shown that religious attendance might not be similar across all forms or types of political activity (Milbrath and Goel 1977). Others also highlight that other measures, such as performing skilled acts within the places of worship, are more clearly linked to acts of political participation than simple unspecific measures of religious attendance (Brady et al. 1995; Peterson 1992). However, Brady et al. (1995) include several religious measures in their models which are highly correlated, leading to potential problems of multicollinearity. Individuals most likely to perform skill acts related to places of worship (e.g., volunteering or organizing religious events) are those who attend most frequently (Brady et al. 1995). It requires religious attendance at a place of worship to be involved with the specific tasks and activities that lead to the increased skills that Brady et al. (1995) find related to political participation.

Accordingly, while scholars have shown the direct link between religious attendance and some forms of political participation, especially voting (Wielhouwer 2009), it still remains unclear if there is something special about attending places of worship more frequently that drives political participation. But even though this section is called the “direct test,” it is certainly testing to see if all of the things that encompass changing one’s rate of attendance at a place of worship are related to changes in political participation. Controlling for several other factors most associated with changes in political participation, helps us understand if any direct relationship exists.

If a direct relationship exists, we should find support for the following expectation: individuals who increase their attendance at religious services over time should be more

likely to increase their political participation over time than individuals who decrease or maintain the same level of religious service attendance over time even after controlling for changes in other indirect possibilities, such as political interest, strength of partisanship, and civic activities.

#### We Are “Habitual Participators” (The Null)

Legally speaking, in the United States, the religious and political spheres are supposed to be separate. But it is not for this reason that we might expect that changes in religious service attendance would not influence changes in political participation. More likely is the possibility that once individuals enter into political participation, they become habitual participators (Plutzer 2002). This terminology comes from Plutzer’s (2002) findings that individuals are “habitual voters,” meaning that once an individual enters the electorate, they tend to remain an active voting member of society. Overall, scholars have shown that individuals are largely socialized to either participate politically or not, and once they start participating, they are very likely to continue to do so (Gerber et al. 2003; Plutzer 2002).<sup>59</sup>

If we become habitual participators, changes in religious service attendance should matter little to political participation. If so, we should not observe an influence of changes in religious service attendance on political participation over time, nor should changes in

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<sup>59</sup> Similarly individuals are socialized to attend religious services or not; however, we also observe some variance in religious attendance over individuals’ lifecycles (Desmond et al. 2010).

any other personal characteristics, such as income, relate to changes in political participation. These null relationships should largely be a function of too little variance in the changes of political participation over time to result in a discernible statistically significant pattern. In particular, it may also be the case for individuals who exhibit a decline in their religious service attendance not to decrease their political participation. Declining religious service attendance may not lead to declining political participation, because regardless of religious changes, these individuals have already made decisions about whether or not to participate in politics.<sup>60</sup> Taken together, finding support for the null hypothesis would have the strongest implications for the theory proposed by Plutzer (2002).

#### Variables

Here I only look at changes in religious attendance and political variables for the Baby-Boomer cohort starting in 1973 because the Baby-Boomers could not vote in the 1964 presidential election. They were high school juniors, mostly 16-17 years old, in 1964. Therefore, constructing variables that summarize changes in political participation from 1965-1973 would be inappropriate. As a result, this research only examines the influence of changes in religious attendance on changes in political participation as well as other political orientations related to political participation from the 1973-1982 and 1982-1997 periods.

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<sup>60</sup> And reasons for declining religious attendance may also be focused on religious issues, not things that would directly disrupt political participation.

There are several dependent variables used in this research, including changes in political interest, changes in partisan strength, changes in civic activity, changes in an index of political participation activities, and changes in voting. The primary independent variable is change in religious attendance. As in Chapter 3, all of the change variables were constructed by subtracting a respondent's values for a variable at  $t_1$  from their values for a variable at  $t_2$  (e.g., the value of religious attendance from 1982 minus a value of religious attendance from 1973).

First, change in political interest is measured on an ordinal scale from -3 to 3, with higher values indicating that a respondent became more politically interested. Zero indicates that a respondent did not change their level of political interest. Change in political interest is used as a dependent variable and control variable in the models that estimate the direct effect of changes in religious attendance on changes in political participation and vote. Very few Baby-Boomers make dramatic shifts in their level of political interest over time. For both the 1973-1982 as well as the 1982-1997 periods, just fewer than 60 percent of Baby-Boomers maintained the same level of political interest. Models that estimate changes in political interest are ordered-logistic regression models because the measures are discrete and ordered.

Next, change in partisan strength is measured on an ordinal scale from -3 to 3 with higher values indicating that a respondent strengthened their partisanship (e.g., from lean partisan to weak partisan, from weak partisan to strong partisan). Lower values indicate that they became less partisan. Zero indicates that a respondent did not change their partisan strength. Change in partisan strength is used as a dependent variable and control variable



in the models that estimate the direct effect of changes in religious attendance on changes in political participation and vote. Like political interest, partisanship is stable over time. Roughly half of the Baby-Boomers do not change their partisan strength over each of the change periods studied here. Models that estimate changes in partisan strength are ordered-logistic regression models because the measures are discrete and ordered.

Third, change in civic activity is an interval-level variable with higher values indicating that a respondent became more civically active. Lower values indicate that they became less civically active. Zero indicates that a respondent did not change their level of civic activity. Change in civic activity is used as a dependent variable and control variable in the models that estimate the direct effect of changes in religious attendance on changes in political participation and vote. The Youth Parent Study asks respondents about a number of organizations in which they were actively engaged, including church organizations, fraternal groups, neighborhood clubs, sports teams, informal clubs, business groups, service groups, racial organizations, veterans groups, political issue advocacy groups, and other civic and cultural organizations. Respondents could indicate that they were either not a member, not very active, fairly active, or very active with the organization. From this list, an additive index of all the possible organizations, including if the respondent indicated they were in an organization not specifically listed, was calculated. That index was then standardized for each wave of the study. Finally, the civic activity indices from each wave of the study were used to generate the change variables. There is a substantial amount of variance in civic activity over each of the change periods. However, most Baby-Boomers make only small changes to their civic activity over time.

Models that estimate changes in civic activity are linear regression (OLS) models because the measures are interval and continuous.

Fourth, change in political participation is an interval measure with higher values indicating that a respondent became more politically participatory. Lower values indicate that they became less politically participatory. Zero indicates that a respondent did not change their level of political participation. Change in political participation is only used as a dependent variable. The measures are constructed in a similar manner as change in civic activity. The Youth Parent Study includes several questions that gauge a respondent's political participation, which were combined in additive political participation indices. These additive variables include several measures of electoral and participatory activities, including nine different political acts: (1) tried to persuade others, (2) went to a political event, (3) worked for a political campaign, (4) wore a button or sticker, (5) gave money, (6) wrote a political letter to a public official or (7) newspaper, (8) took part in a demonstration, and (9) worked to solve community problems. Using standardized versions of these additive participation indices, I generate changes in political participation over time. Distributional analyses show that there is a clear tendency to maintain the same or similar level of political participation over time. Models that estimate changes in political participation are linear regression (OLS) models because the measures are interval and continuous.

Finally, change in vote is measured on an ordinal scale from -1 to 1, with higher values indicating that a respondent started voting. Lower values indicate that they stopped voting. Zero indicates that a respondent did not change their voting behavior. Change in

vote is only used as a dependent variable. These variables are constructed by examining whether or not the respondent voted in the presidential election immediately preceding the wave of the study. For the 1973 wave, this is the 1972 election. For the 1982 wave, this is the 1980 election. For the 1997 wave, this is the 1996 election. For both change periods, nearly 80 percent of the Baby-Boomers did not change their presidential voting participation. It is clear that Plutzer's (2002) perspective about habitual voting (and non-voting) is empirically supported by the distribution of the data. Very few individuals enter or exit the electorate over time. Models that estimate change in vote are ordered logistic regression models because the measures are discrete and ordered.

The primary independent variable, change in religious attendance, is measured on an ordinal scale from -3 to 3 with higher values indicating that a respondent became more religiously active. Lower values indicate that they became less religiously active. Zero indicates that a respondent did not change their religious behavior. The variables are constructed by subtracting the specific values of religious attendance from each year from each of the relevant waves of the study.<sup>61</sup> Just fewer than 60 percent of the Baby-Boomers maintained the same level of religious attendance over each of the change periods studied here.

Each of the models also include several additional important independent variables. First, change in political interest, change in partisan strength, and change in civic activity

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<sup>61</sup> The religious attendance variable in which these measures were generated is the same as in Chapter 3.

are included as controls when estimating changes in political participation and vote. In order to determine the direct influence of changes in religious attendance on changes in political participation or voting, it is important to rule out these indirect possibilities.

Second, other socio-economic variables that typically relate to political participation, such as changes in education, changes in income (z-score standardized), race (a dummy variable for whites) and gender (a dummy variable for females) are also included in the models.

Third, several socialization measures, the parent's level of political activity as well as their educational attainment in 1965 and the youth's number of civic courses as well as their political activity from high school in 1965 are also included in the models as controls. It is believed that these factors may influence a respondent's propensity to change their political participation overtime. Individuals who are socialized to participate early in life are expected to be less likely to change their participation later in life.

Lastly, each of the initial wave values for all independent variables as well as the dependent variable of the model are included as controls. Baby-Boomers who have very high rates of religious attendance, education, income, political interest, or any of the other variables in the model cannot increase their attendance, education, income, interest or the like (the similar situation is true for individuals who have low values ability to decrease their attributes). This does not mean that high (or low) values on these variables at the start of the change period do not correlate with changes in political participation or voting over time. For example, it could be the case that religious attendance might become more correlated with political participation over time, but changes in an individual's attendance

could matter little. This would potentially suggest that places of worship have become more effective institutions of political mobilization over time. Finding this would be in line with the perspective of several scholars who believe religious institutions have grown more aware of politics, and as such, made a greater effort to provide political information and resources to patrons (Wielhouwer 2009). In a sense, this could be an additional hypothesis.

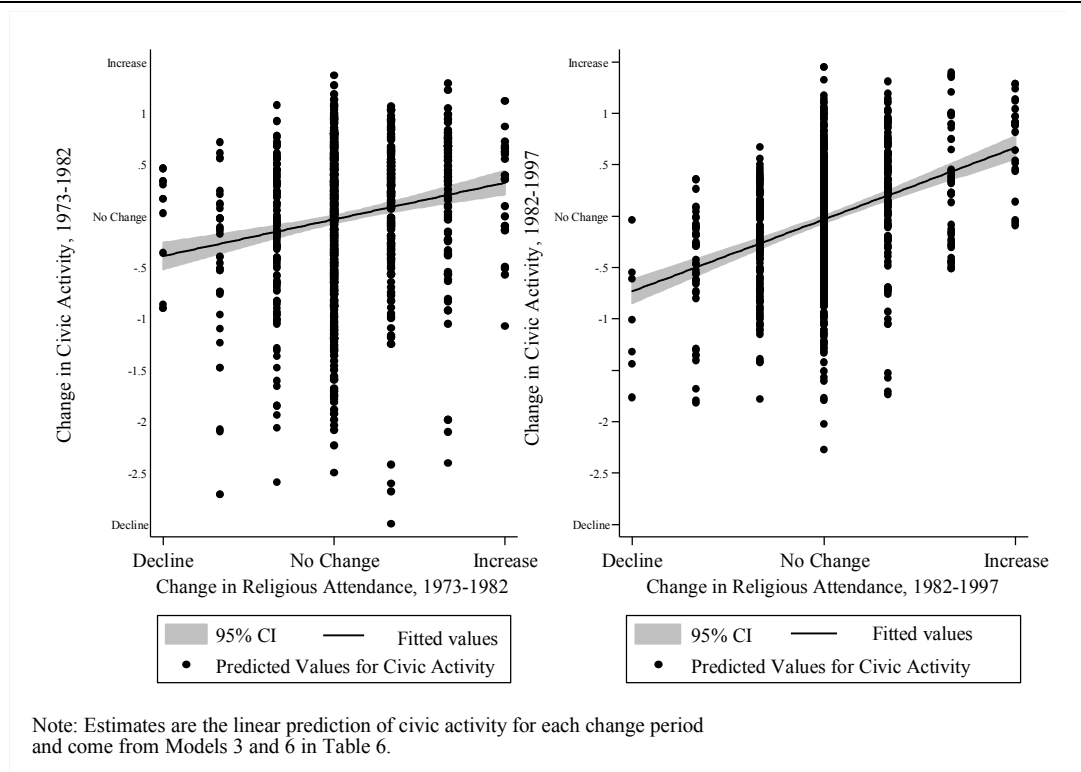
## Results

### *Indirect Effects*

Table 6 shows the relationships between changes in religious attendance and changes in political interest, changes in strength of partisanship, and changes in civic activity from 1973-1982 as well as 1982-1997. The insignificant coefficients in Models 1, 2, 4, and 5 clearly demonstrate that changes in religious attendance do not significantly predict changes in political interest or changes in strength of partisanship, providing no support for two of the indirect hypotheses.

However, there is a clear correspondence between changes in religious attendance and changes in civic activity, providing support for the link between religious attendance and civic activity. Baby-Boomers who increased their religious attendance from 1973-1982 as well as from 1982-1997 were more likely to increase their civic activity over these same time periods than Baby-Boomers who decreased or maintained the same level of religious attendance. This relationship is shown graphically in Figure 13.

Figure 13. The Influence of Baby-Boomers' Changing Religious Attendance on Changing Civic Activity



In addition to the influence of changes in religious attendance on changes in civic activity, Baby-Boomers who had higher levels of religious attendance at the beginning of each of these change periods were also more likely than their infrequently attending counterparts to become more civically inclined over time, potentially suggesting that places of worship became better catalysts of civic activity over the time periods studied here. The other possibility is that during these times in an individual's lifecycle, religious attendance may become more predictive of civic activity regardless of changes in the Baby-Boomer's religious attendance. In sum, not only do we see changes in religious attendance influencing civic activity, but we also see the link between religious attendance and civic activity becoming stronger over time, with active members of religious communities becoming more attached to the civic community over time.

How substantively important is the influence of changes in religious attendance on changes in civic activity? Because the estimation for changes in civic activity is linear, there is a direct interpretation of the coefficients in Table 6. For every one unit increase in change in religious attendance (e.g., such as going from never attending to attending a few times a year) there is a 0.223 and 0.267 (both statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ ) increase in change in civic activity for the 1973-1982 and 1982-1997 periods, respectively. However, because change in civic activity is a z-score standardized variable with a range of -4.14 to 3.52 for the 1973-1982 period and -3.18 to 3.66 for the 1982-1997 period, these direct interpretations have little value.

Table 6. Testing The Indirect Effects

	25 to 34 Years Old			34 to 49 Years Old		
	Ordered-Logit	Ordered-Logit	OLS	Ordered-Logit	Ordered-Logit	OLS
	Model 1 Δ Political Interest '73-'82	Model 2 Δ Partisanship '73- '82	Model 3 Δ Civic Activity '73-'82	Model 4 Δ Political Interest '82-'97	Model 5 Δ Partisanship '82- '97	Model 6 Δ Civic Activity '82-'97
Political Interest '73	-1.878*** (0.118)	--	--	Political Interest '82	-1.810*** (0.120)	--
Partisanship '73	--	-1.353*** (0.065)	--	Partisanship '82	--	-1.328*** (0.074)
Civic Activity '73	--	--	-0.697*** (0.036)	Civic Activity '82	--	-0.588*** (0.037)
Religious Attendance '73	0.068 (0.058)	0.031 (0.056)	0.210*** (0.028)	Religious Attendance '82	0.162** (0.064)	0.165*** (0.028)
Δ Religious Attendance '73-'82	0.091 (0.069)	0.035 (0.062)	0.223*** (0.031)	Δ Religious Attendance '82-'97	0.091 (0.080)	0.267*** (0.032)
Income '73	0.081 (0.067)	-0.029 (0.063)	0.097** (0.038)	Income '82	0.087 (0.077)	0.003 (0.032)
Δ Income '73-'82	0.029 (0.050)	-0.038 (0.052)	0.109*** (0.038)	Δ Income '82-'97	0.057 (0.067)	0.173*** (0.059)
Education '73	0.590*** (0.099)	0.086 (0.108)	0.123** (0.026)	Education '82	0.178 (0.120)	-0.006 (0.107)
Δ Education '73-'82	0.294* (0.157)	-0.068 (0.147)	0.169** (0.077)	Δ Education '82-'97	0.351 (0.267)	-0.057 (0.260)
Parent's Political Activity '65	-0.051 (0.043)	-0.041 (0.046)	0.026 (0.021)	Parent's Political Activity '65	0.043 (0.054)	-0.090* (0.047)
Parent's Education '65	-0.045 (0.067)	0.025 (0.066)	-0.022 (0.032)	Parent's Education '65	0.133* (0.076)	-0.025 (0.073)



Student's Civics Courses '65	0.211** (0.093)	0.032 (0.087)	-0.003 (0.045)	Student Civics Courses '65	-0.125 (0.103)	0.196* (0.106)	-0.014 (0.045)
Student's Political School Activity '65	0.024 (0.036)	-0.026 (0.036)	0.063*** (0.019)	Student's Political School Activity '65	0.043 (0.042)	-0.014 (0.039)	0.073*** (0.019)
Female	-0.644*** (0.126)	0.313*** (0.119)	-0.145** (0.062)	Female	-0.622*** (0.141)	-0.032 (0.138)	-0.090 (0.061)
White	-0.519** (0.222)	-0.674*** (0.215)	-0.183 (0.124)	White	-0.330 (0.248)	-0.451* (0.269)	-0.517*** (0.155)
Constant	--	--	-0.724*** (0.177)	Constant	--	--	-0.328 (0.200)
N	1,334	1,279	949	N	1,117	1,076	912
chi <sup>2</sup> or F	274.64***	454.60***	36.13***	chi <sup>2</sup> or F	245.85***	344.63***	29.47***
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> or R <sup>2</sup>	0.160	0.135	0.410	Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> or R <sup>2</sup>	0.149	0.123	0.348

Notes: Data comes from the Youth Parent Study. Model estimation varies based on the dependent variables, but all models employ a sampling weight. Stars indicate the level of statistical significance using two-tailed tests (\*\*\*)  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ ). All models are statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ . Running the models without parental socialization variables and making the unit of analysis only the Baby-Boomer sample does not substantively alter the results. The only major change was that for the  $\Delta$  Partisan Strength '82-'97 model where religious attendance from 1982 become marginally significant at  $p < 0.1$ .

Hence, Figure 13 shows the estimated linear relationship between change in religious attendance and change in civic activity. Viewing the relationships graphically makes clear that these relationships are substantively weak. Increasing or decreasing the rate in which a Baby-Boomer attends religious services does not have a very large influence on changes in their civic activity. There are only small adjustments to civic activity across the range of change in religious attendance. This might suggest that while religious attendance plays a role in connecting individuals to their community by generating additional interest in civic organizations, there is something else driving change in civic activity. However, the effects for the 1982-1997 period are greater than the effects for the 1973-1982 period, potentially suggesting a growing influence of religious attendance on civic activity over the time periods studied here. And, to be fair, if we think back to the discussion of the distributions, given how few Baby-Boomers change their civic activity and religious attendance, finding any relationship at all is impressive. Taken together, there is only limited evidence for the indirect explanation that suggests religious attendance is indirectly related to political participation through other variables associated with political participation. Nonetheless, the weak relationship implies a causal process between religious attendance and civic activity in the United States.

There are several additional findings from Table 6 worth mentioning. Several of the demographic control variables predict changes in the political variables in Table 6. For example, change in income from 1982-1997 is a significant predictor of change in partisan strength from 1982-1997, but this relationship is not present for the 1973-1982 period. A Baby-Boomer's education from 1973 is also related to their change in political interest and

change in civic activity for the 1973-1982 period. And their education from 1982 is related to their change in civic activity for the 1982-1997 period. This can be taken to mean that Baby-Boomers who have more education are more likely to increase political interest and civic activity as they age. Women were also less likely than men to increase their political interest during both periods studied. And women were more likely than men to increase their civic activity but only for 1973-1982. An inconsistent pattern emerges when considering race. But there is some evidence that racial minorities were more likely than Whites to become politically interested and strengthen their partisanship for the 1973-1982 periods as well as increase their civic activity for the 1982-1997 period.

#### *Direct Effects*

How do changes in religious attendance directly relate to changes in political participation? Tables 7 and 8 provide models that estimate the relationship between changes in religious attendance and changes in political participation and voting, respectively.

Table 7. Testing the Direct Effect – The  $\Delta$  Participation Index

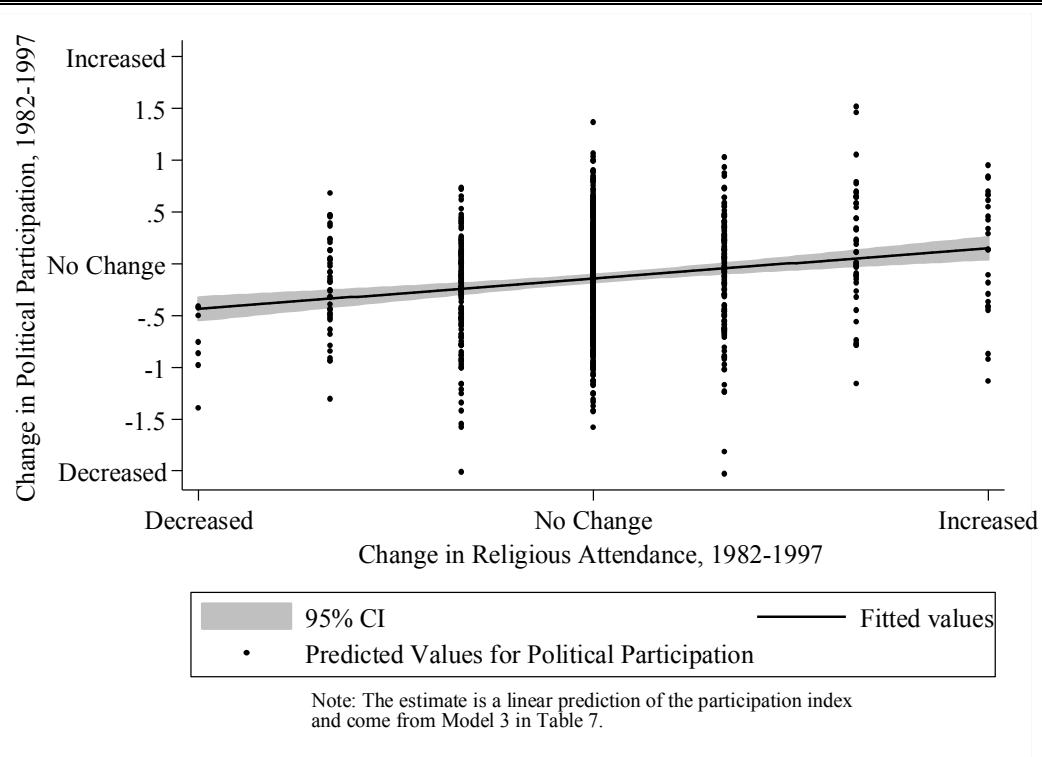
	Model 1	Model 2		Model 3	Model 4
	$\Delta$ Political Participation, '73-'82	$\Delta$ Political Participation, '73-'82		$\Delta$ Political Participation, '82-'97	$\Delta$ Political Participation, '82-'97
Participation Index '73	-0.598*** (0.028)	-0.619*** (0.033)	Participation Index '82	-0.531*** (0.027)	-0.555*** (0.032)
Religious Attendance '73	0.083*** (0.023)	0.018 (0.027)	Religious Attendance '82	0.081*** (0.024)	0.049* (0.027)
$\Delta$ Religious Attendance '73-'82	0.085*** (0.025)	0.049 (0.030)	$\Delta$ Religious Attendance '82-'97	0.117*** (0.027)	0.106*** (0.029)
Income '73	-0.000 (0.027)	0.002 (0.035)	Income '82	0.048* (0.027)	0.048 (0.029)
$\Delta$ Income '73-'82	-0.008 (0.022)	0.020 (0.027)	$\Delta$ Income '82-'97	0.028 (0.023)	0.023 (0.026)
Education '73	0.164*** (0.041)	0.153*** (0.048)	Education '82	0.021 (0.043)	-0.048 (0.048)
$\Delta$ Education '73-'82	0.172** (0.070)	0.189** (0.075)	$\Delta$ Education '82-'97	0.068 (0.091)	0.055 (0.094)
Civic Activity '73	--	0.223*** (0.035)	Civic Activity '82	--	0.161*** (0.038)
$\Delta$ Civic Activity '73-'82	--	0.236*** (0.034)	$\Delta$ Civic Activity '82-'97	--	0.153*** (0.034)
Political Interest '73	0.311*** (0.036)	0.254*** (0.043)	Political Interest '82	0.258*** (0.039)	0.247*** (0.044)
$\Delta$ Political Interest '73-'82	0.188*** (0.033)	0.142*** (0.039)	$\Delta$ Political Interest '82-'97	0.260*** (0.039)	0.256*** (0.042)
Partisan Strength '73	0.099*** (0.030)	0.072** (0.037)	Partisan Strength '82	0.109*** (0.031)	0.049 (0.034)
$\Delta$ Partisan Strength '73-'82	0.121*** (0.029)	0.065* (0.036)	$\Delta$ Partisan Strength '82-'97	0.149*** (0.032)	0.133*** (0.035)

Parent's Political Activity '65	0.024 (0.018)	0.036* (0.020)	Parent's Political Activity '65	0.093*** (0.019)	0.088*** (0.021)
Parent's Education '65	-0.006 (0.026)	-0.019 (0.030)	Parent's Education '65	0.010 (0.028)	0.031 (0.031)
Student's Civic Courses '65	0.038 (0.038)	0.082** (0.042)	Student Civic Courses '65	-0.023 (0.036)	-0.044 (0.040)
Student's Political School Activity '65	0.049*** (0.014)	0.041** (0.017)	Student's Political School Activity '65	0.046*** (0.015)	0.032* (0.017)
Female	-0.014 (0.050)	-0.007 (0.058)	Female	0.025 (0.052)	0.092 (0.057)
White	-0.091 (0.094)	0.043 (0.104)	White	-0.150 (0.115)	-0.105 (0.121)
Constant	-1.481*** (0.161)	-1.305*** (0.188)	Constant	-1.301*** (0.199)	-1.016*** (0.213)
N	1,277	905	N	1,075	878
F	34.61***	23.83***	F	27.40***	23.56***
R <sup>2</sup>	0.318	0.366	R <sup>2</sup>	0.325	0.357

Notes: Data comes from Youth Parent Study. Models are OLS Linear regression with a sampling weight. Stars indicate the level of statistical significance using two-tailed tests (\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ ). All models are statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ . Running the models without parental socialization variables and making the unit of analysis only the Baby-Boomer sample does not substantively alter the results.

From Table 7, we see that when the civic activity variables are excluded from the models (Models 1 and 3) change in religious attendance significantly predicts change in political participation for both change periods studied. However, as with the influence of change in religious attendance on change in civic activity, the effects are weak. Additionally, when one controls for changes in civic activity, the influence of change in religious attendance on change in political participation is further diminished (Models 2 and 4). In Model 2, the impact of change in religious attendance diminishes so greatly that it is no longer statistically significant. Figure 14 shows the graphic relationship between changes in religious attendance from 1982-1997 and changes in political participation from 1982-1997. The best linear prediction is only slightly positive. There are only small adjustments to political participation across the range of change in religious attendance. However, as with the previous section, finding a statistically significant relationship at all given the distribution of changes in both religious attendance and political participation is impressive.

Figure 14. The Influence of Baby-Boomers' Changing Religious Attendance on Changing Political Participation (Index)



While indices of political participation provide us a way to estimate changes in the general propensity of individuals to participate politically, it is also important to explore voting behavior more specifically. Therefore, Table 8 provides estimates for change in voting (presidential elections only) over time. As one can see from Table 8, the models have an overall poor fit primarily because there is little variance in both change in voting variables. However, we do see that change in religious attendance from 1973-1982 does significantly predict change in voting over the same period. It is clear that individuals who increase their religious attendance from age 25 to 34 are more likely to start voting than those who maintain the same religious attendance or decrease their religious attendance. Figure 15 show the predicted probabilities of change in voting across the range of changes in religious attendance for the 1973-1982 period. While the change in probability of starting voting is small across the range of changes in religious attendance, it is impressive to find an influence at all given how few individuals change their voting participation over time.

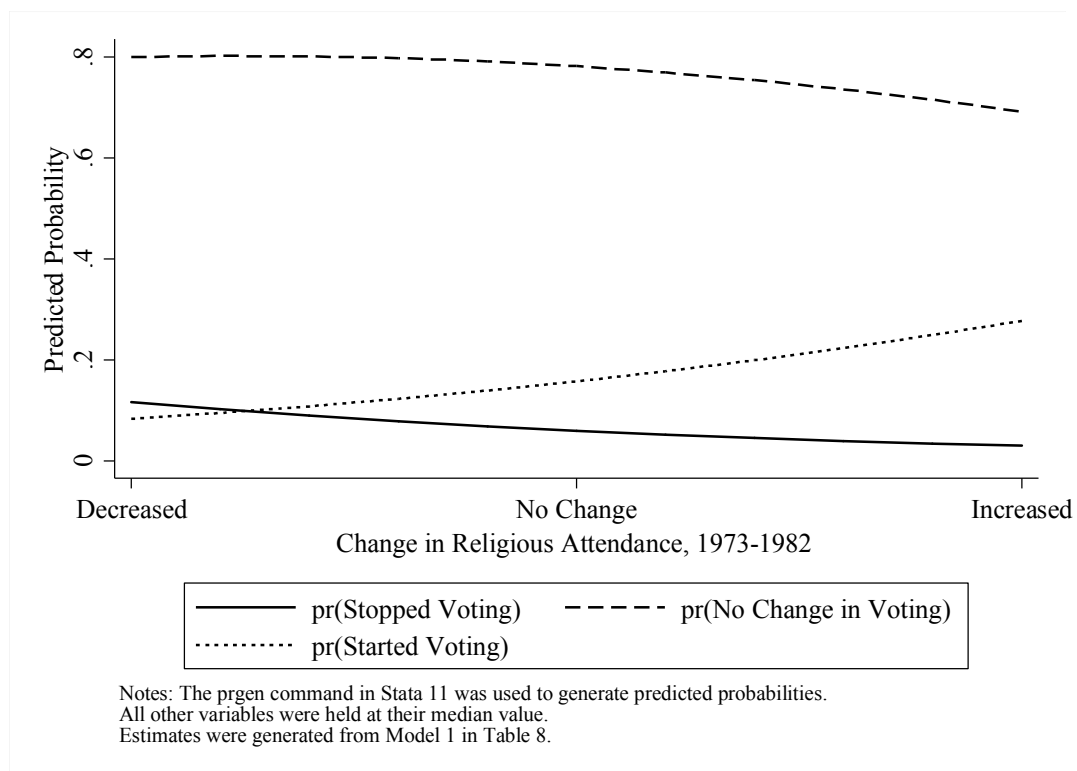


Table 8. Testing the Direct Effects –  $\Delta$  Voting

	Model 1		Model 2
	$\Delta$ Voting, '73-'82		$\Delta$ Voting, '82-'97
Religious Attendance '73	0.135 (0.090)	Religious Attendance '82	-0.166 (0.104)
$\Delta$ Relig, Attendance '73-'82	0.239** (0.104)	$\Delta$ Relig. Attendance '82-'97	0.097 (0.113)
Income '73	-0.086 (0.110)	Income '82	0.157 (0.123)
$\Delta$ Income '73-'82	0.099 (0.082)	$\Delta$ Income '82-'97	-0.013 (0.107)
Education '73	-0.367** (0.160)	Education '82	-0.401** (0.162)
$\Delta$ Education '73-'82	0.074 (0.187)	$\Delta$ Education '82-'97	0.051 (0.381)
Civic Activity '73	0.020 (0.096)	Civic Activity '82	0.059 (0.114)
$\Delta$ Civic Activity '73-'82	0.101 (0.095)	$\Delta$ Civic Activity '82-'97	0.132 (0.106)
Political Interest '73	0.071 (0.151)	Political Interest '82	-0.226 (0.172)
$\Delta$ Political Interest '73-'82	0.118 (0.136)	$\Delta$ Political Interest '82-'97	0.140 (0.178)
Partisan Strength '73	-0.097 (0.121)	Partisan Strength '82	-0.116 (0.121)
$\Delta$ Partisan Strength '73-'82	-0.075 (0.114)	$\Delta$ Partisan Strength '82-'97	0.142 (0.109)
Parent's Political Activity '65	0.003 (0.063)	Parent's Political Activity '65	0.022 (0.076)
Parent's Education '65	-0.057 (0.099)	Parent's Education '65	-0.023 (0.097)
Student's Civic Courses '65	0.115 (0.122)	Student Civic Courses '65	0.136 (0.148)
Student's Political School Activity '65	-0.046 (0.054)	Student's Political School Activity '65	0.048 (0.065)
Female	0.171 (0.181)	Female	0.295 (0.199)
White	-0.496 (0.305)	White	0.252 (0.315)
N	900	N	875
Chi <sup>2</sup>	41.29***	Chi <sup>2</sup>	35.56***
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.03	Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.04

Notes: Data comes from Youth Parent Study. Models are ordered-logistic regression with a sampling weight. Stars indicate the level of statistical significance using two-tailed tests (\*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ ). All models are statistically significant at  $p < 0.01$ . Running the models without parental socialization variables and making the unit of analysis only the Baby-Boomer sample does not substantively alter the results.

Figure 15. The Influence of Baby-Boomers' Changing Religious Attendance on Voting



From Tables 7 and 8, there several additional findings worth mentioning. First, there is mixed evidence of an influence for the initial wave value of religious attendance. When not controlling for change in civic activity in Table 8, the measures for religious attendance from the start of the change periods are positive and significant predictors of change in political participation. However, when controlling for civic activity, only religious attendance from 1982 remains a marginally significant predictor of change in political participation from 1982-1997. This suggests that places of worship may have become better at providing patrons resources for participation in recent years or that religious attendance has become more important to political participation during an individual's mid-thirties to late-forties. There is not an influence of the initial wave value of religious attendance on change in voting.

Second, change in education significantly predicts change in political participation from 1973-1982, but not later in life or for the change in voting models. This finding has particularly important implications for the socio-economic model of political participation (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Education may matter in different ways at different times in an individual's lifecycle. Because most individuals are most likely to gain education early in life, gains from education in terms of political activities are likely to occur earlier in life rather than later in life.

Third, all of the indirect variables, change in political interest, change in strength of partisanship, and change in civic activity, clearly predict change in the political participation index for both change periods studied here. However, because of the poor fit

and lack of variance of change in voting, there is not a clear relationship between these factors and change in voting presented in Table 8.

Fourth, several of the individual's high school related indicators predict change in political participation from 1973-1982, including a respondent's civics courses and political activity in high school from 1965. These factors, however, do not influence change in political participation for the 1982-1997 period. This might suggest that the payoff from civic education and political activity in high school is present in their decisions to participate politically between an individual's mid-twenties to mid-thirties, but not later in life when an individual has become too far removed from these experiences and settled into habitual political patterns.

Finally, parental characteristics matter little to changes in their child's political participation from 1973-1982, but when their child is becoming a parent and starting a family, parental political activity appears once again to predict changes in political participation (1982-1997). Further research should evaluate this finding more closely.

### Conclusion

First and foremost, the results suggest that we should not overstate the influence of religious attendance on political participation in the United States. While it is clear that changes to an individual's rate of religious attendance have a statistically significant relationship to changes in political participation and presidential voting over time, it is also clear that the substantive effects of changes in religious attendance on changes in political participation and voting are very small. Previous literature has likely overstated the influence of religious attendance in generating political participation (e.g., Rosenstone and

Hansen 1993). This is largely because few people change their rate of religious attendance and political participation throughout their life. In particular, decreases in attendance are not correlated with decreases political participation, at least in terms of voting. Thus, the findings have strong implications on the perspective that individuals behave habitually.

That said, the findings also suggest a role for institutions, particularly socially-oriented civic institutions to shape political behavior (Putnam 1995, 2000). The evidence implies that places of worship serve different civic and political roles for individuals based on where they are at in their lifecycle. Religious attendance plays a greater role in stimulating entrance into the electorate when individuals are in their mid-twenties to early-thirties. Whereas, changes in religious attendance have a greater influence on changes in general political participation when an individual is in their mid-thirties to late-forties. However, regardless of age, religious attendance may serve to indirectly stimulate political activity through generating increased civic activity. There is some evidence presented here that places of worship connect individuals to the community and civically oriented organizations.

But these results are not without limitations. First, these data are dated. It has been 17 years since the last wave of the Youth Parent Study. As such, this analysis is unable to account for the growing influence of places of worship in the American political system over the past several decades. Additionally, these data do not include the growing number of religiously “unaffiliated” individuals. They also only include a very a limited number of racial and religious minorities. These groups are particularly important to understanding the influence religious attendance plays in stimulating political activity. In addition,

because this panel only includes four waves, we are not able to estimate a dynamic model that would account for a longer causal process between religious attendance and political participation.

However, with these limitations in mind, I believe the results remain a strong addition to the religion and politics as well as political participation literature, primarily showing support for several establish theories of political participation as well as showing how these relationships may change over an individual's lifecycle. These results should not, however, be taken as a call to promote religious service attendance as a way to generate political participation. They are meant to show that religious service attendance does in fact relate to positive forms of democratic behavior just as many other variables in the models do.

But we are still left with a paradox. It is clear that religious attendance has declined in recent years (Putnam and Campbell 2010; Wuthnow 2007), but we continue to see record turnout in presidential elections (e.g. 2008). It is also clear that many secular individuals who do not attend religious services also participate politically and have well-defined political preferences. Thus, future research needs to better understand how a growing nonreligious population continues to produce high rates of political participation, or at least voting. Since the 1990s, community activity in other nonreligious activities may have become a more important part of the story. Strong relationships between changes to religious attendance and political participation at an aggregate-level (Gerber et al. 2008; Teixeira 1992) clearly do not automatically translate into strong relationships between religious attendance and political participation at an individual-level. Research needs to

reevaluate these claims, looking more closely at individual-level data, non-religious individuals' social activity, and non-traditional forms of social interaction, including non-traditional forms of religious participation (e.g., online churches). If this chapter shows anything, it is that social interaction, measured as civic activity and religious attendance, predict political participation. We need to explore these topics further, keeping in mind how social interaction in an increasingly secular nation has dramatically changed over the past few decades.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Due to an observed gap in the literature, the primary goal of this dissertation was to examine three questions that focused on better understanding the mechanisms underlying the observed association between religion and American political behavior. As such, Chapter 2 analyzed how early parental religious socialization connects children to their party identification and moral issue attitudes. Chapter 3 considered the political consequences of an individual changing their religious beliefs and behavior over time. And Chapter 4 assessed the well-cited association between religious attendance and political participation. Taken together these analyses explored some important relationships between religion and American political behavior over an individual's lifecycle, paying particular attention to the influence of religion as a socializing force in shaping political attitudes and behaviors. In addition, the analyses sought to incorporate the view that religiosity of beliefs and behaviors have increasingly supplanted religious belonging in shaping American political behavior in recent years.

From the empirical analyses, I observed three important general findings. First, when modelling religion as a mechanism that facilitates Americans' political attitudes and behaviors, there are statistically significant patterns of association. Chapter 2 employed a very strict test. It included the current religious preferences of children as well as a number of other sociological and political, parental controls into models that estimated the relationship between a parent's religion and their child's politics. Generally speaking, the statistically significant results presented in Chapter 2 imply that early parental religious socialization plays at least a minor role in shaping a child's political identification and



moral issue attitudes. Chapter 3 also finds a statistically significant influence of changes in an individual's religious beliefs, and to a lesser extent religious behaviors, on changes in party identification and abortion attitudes. Like, Chapter 2, Chapter 3 also includes many controls to rule out alternative explanations for changing political attitudes. But changes in religiosity, at least for the most contemporary period studied here, were observed as significantly connected to changes in political attitudes. Lastly, while controlling for other explanations and factors associated with changes in political participation, Chapter 4 also concluded that changes in religious attendance were significantly related to civic and political participation.

But, significant relationships are not the same as substantively important relationships. Therefore, second, the findings also clearly suggest a very minimal substantive influence of religion on political development and change over time. None of the statistically significant relationships presented throughout this dissertation were particularly strong. Specifically, the findings in Chapter 2 only show a very minor role of measures of parental religious socialization in shaping a child's PID and moral issue attitudes. In addition, Chapter 4 finds a very weak connection between religious attendance and civic activity and religious attendance and political participation. The strongest relationships between religion and politics were displayed in Chapter 3. But, even then, over the range of changes in an individual's Biblical views, the probability of an individual becoming more Republican only increased by just greater than 0.2 (see Figure 12 in Chapter 3).

Last, there is evidence for a changing relationship between religion and political attitudes over time. The findings in Chapter 2 show that a parent's religious beliefs have become increasingly important to predicting their child's political attitudes by the final waves of the Youth Parent Study. In addition, the findings in Chapter 3 show that the connection between changes in religiosity of beliefs and behaviors and changes in political attitudes emerges only for the later period, 1982-1997, but not the early period, 1973-1982. The evidence presented suggests that the religious restructuring perspective, which emphasizes the role of religious beliefs and behaviors rather than distinctions between religious traditions (the ethnoreligious perspective), did become increasingly related to political attitudes during the 1980s and 1990s. But unlike other scholars (Campbell 2002; Putnam and Campbell 2010), the findings in Chapter 3 also imply that this process does not only extend to the youngest segments of the electorate, as Campbell (2002) finds. The findings in Chapter 3 support the view that in the 1980s and 1990s, individuals in their 30s and 40s were very much a part of shaping the political divisions between religious traditionalists and seculars we see today. Thus, generational replacement alone does not account for mass changes in religious and political attitudes during this period.

But the findings presented here are not without limitations. As mentioned throughout the dissertation the data are dated, have some methodological limitations, and were not specifically designed to study questions about the relationship between religion and American political behavior. Second, the methodology used here cannot truly establish whether it is religion causing politics, politics causing religion, or some other factors that lead an individual to adopt both religion and political attitudes that correlate with each

other. Outside factors not considered by this research, such as the role of places of worship, schools, or peers may help drive the development of an individual's political attitudes. Future research should consider other causal questions related to the role of religion in facilitating political change. For example, as mentioned in the conclusion of Chapter 3, future work might reconsider Wald et al.'s (1988) study about the influence of changing one's places of worship on their political development.

In addition, future work might also look more closely at how exactly religion and politics are connected, if at all, psychologically. Much previous work, including the research here, assumes that religious belonging, beliefs, and behaviors are socially connected to political attitudes, choices, and behaviors. But we could do better by looking at individual-level responses to religious and political images, seeing how individuals react to these stimuli.

In closing, isolating the direct influence of religion on politics is particularly challenging and not without limitations. But these types of causality-oriented analyses are important because they help confirm and challenge scholars' understanding of where religion fits into the mix of factors that shape political attitudes and behaviors. I believe that the empirical results derived from the methodological design presented here provide a good starting point. The results imply that, at times, Americans' religion plays a small role in the development of their politics. But, according to the data and design used here, religion has a far weaker effect on politics than many cross-sectional studies find.

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