

Religion and Political Beliefs in the American States

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The rise to political prominence of cultural issues over the last several decades has highlighted the important relationship between religion and politics. Yet there is a growing consensus that religious belief and behavior have replaced religious belonging as the driving forces behind religion's effect on politics. However, scant research has addressed how religious belief and behavior might influence the basic state-level political beliefs. In this paper, the relationship between religious orthodoxy, commitment and state-level ideology and partisanship is assessed, in part through the development of a unique measure of religious orthodoxy in the states. Religious orthodoxy and commitment are strongly associated with ideology and partisanship in the states during the post-1960s era, even in the presence of more conventional measures of religious belonging. The findings point to the importance of religious orthodoxy and commitment for understanding the political beliefs of state populations.

Over the last several decades, the field of state politics has benefitted greatly from research aimed at advancing our understanding of how important variables influence politics in the states. One of the most influential and best known works of this type is the research by Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1993) on ideology and partisanship. However, other noteworthy studies in this vein include the exploration of race by Hero and Tolbert (1996) and political geography by Gimpel and Schucknecht (2003). Though not an exhaustive list of such studies, what this research shares in common is an attempt to create superior measures and in some cases superior concepts for understanding politically important phenomena in the states. However, one such element that has yet to be subjected to this treatment is religion. Although numerous researchers have and continue to include religious variables in their analyses of state politics and policy, the field of state politics could benefit from a thorough examination of religion in the states. A wealth of research has demonstrated that religion has become a very important factor influencing both political parties and presidential elections (e.g. Layman 2001). Indeed, religion was a very significant factor dividing Bush from Kerry voters in the 2004 presidential election (Green 2007). The importance of religion to national politics raises the question of whether religion influences state politics and policy in any systematic way. But answering this question is difficult without adequate concepts and measures regarding the potential impact of religion on politics. The next section reviews such concepts, and is followed by a section summarizing what is known about the link between religion and basic state-level political beliefs. The fourth section introduces a new measure of religious orthodoxy in the states and discusses other data to be used in this study. Finally, the association between religion and state-level political attitudes is examined.

Conceptualizing Religion

Historically, studies examining the link between religion and politics have focused on religious belonging. For example, researchers in the 1950s and early 1960s conceived of the religious effect on political behavior as manifesting itself primarily in the tripartite division of the country's three major religious traditions: Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism (Herberg 1960). This perspective, sometimes called the ethnoreligious tradition, fit well with the idea that economic class was the main driving force behind political behavior, as primarily lower-class Catholics voted Democratic and primarily upper-class Protestants voted Republican. Although white Evangelical Protestants in the south were staunchly Democratic, this was a regional rather than a religious phenomenon. This general connection between religious tradition and partisanship was also due to the distrust and even outright hostility that existed between Catholics and Protestants throughout American history and well into the 20th century (Hunter 1991).

But since the late 1960s, the American political landscape has been altered by the rise to prominence of cultural issues such as abortion, gay rights, etc. Indeed, some have argued that the two major political parties are now primarily defined by the distinct positions they take on such issues (Adams 1997). These cultural issues, or morality policies, involve fundamental questions about right and wrong, and therefore provide fertile ground for religion forces to play a role in attitudes toward such issues (Mooney 2001). Yet these issues of culture and morality have also changed the relationship between religion and politics. While the historic relationship involves religious belonging, the new relationship involves religious belief and behavior (Green 2007). Hunter (1991) argues that this new divide pits those with orthodox religious beliefs against

those with progressive religious beliefs.¹ Hunter states that orthodoxy is *...the commitment on the part of the adherents to an external, definable, and transcendent authority* (Hunter 1991, 44 emphasis in original), while for progressives, moral authority tends to be defined by the spirit of the modern age, a spirit of rationalism and subjectivism (Hunter 1991, 44). The orthodox tend to be politically conservative on cultural issues, while progressives tend to be politically liberal on cultural issues. Hunter argues that this new division cuts across the old religious lines, making the previous distinctions between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews less relevant, in that those with orthodox/traditional views can be found in all traditions, as can those with progressive/modern views.

There is ample evidence that religious orthodoxy has become an important determinant of the political behavior of both elites and masses. Guth and Green (1990) find a strong link between political contributors with traditional religious leanings and political conservatism, as well as a connection between less traditional religious views and political liberalism. This, they conclude, represents an, emerging division between the religious and the secular... (174). In a longitudinal study of mass political behavior, Layman (1997, 2001) finds that those with orthodox religious beliefs are becoming more likely to identify with and vote for the Republican party, while non-traditionalists are becoming more affiliated with the Democratic party. This division is also significant for presidential vote choice (Layman and Carmines 1997, Brewer and Stonecash 2007). Moreover, Layman (1999, 2001) finds that this division holds for party activists as well, as Republican national convention delegates are now more religiously orthodox than they were in 1972, while Democratic national convention delegates are more secular and religiously modern. Hence, at both the elite and mass levels there appears to be a political

schism between those with orthodox religious views and those with more modern religious views.

Additional evidence to support the view of a changed religion-politics connection can be found in research related to religious behavior. Scholars have recently begun to explore whether the importance of religion to an individual can have a political impact. This concept, called religious commitment, can be significant both as an agent acting directly on political views, and as a variable that conditions the influence of religious belonging (Guth and Green 1993, Kellstedt et al. 1996). At the mass level, the more religiously committed have become more likely to vote for Republican presidential candidates (Layman 1997, 2001, Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope 2006, Brewer and Stonecash 2007, Green 2007). At the elite level, Republican national convention delegates as a whole include many more religiously committed individuals of all denominations than was the case thirty years ago (Layman 1999, 2001). Layman and Green (2005) find religious commitment significantly conditions the link between religious affiliation and certain aspects of political behavior. Therefore, there is ample evidence that political divisions of all types are increasingly based upon religious commitment and orthodoxy.

Religion, Ideology, and Partisanship in the States

The literature shows that religious orthodoxy and commitment influences not only views about specific moral/cultural issues, but more general political behavior such as party affiliation and presidential vote choice. The important question to be addressed here is whether this new religious divide has had an effect on state politics. While it is probable that religious orthodoxy and commitment affect state-level attitudes and outputs regarding specific morality policies, the interest here is whether the new religious divide has had an effect on more basic political beliefs,

as seems to be the case at the national level. Therefore, this paper focuses on the potential connection between religion, ideology, and partisanship in the states. Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1993), who were the first to develop valid indicators of state-level political ideology and partisanship, show them to be related not only to the partisan composition of state legislatures, but to the general composition of state policy as well.²

There is some evidence to suggest an association between religion, ideology, and partisanship in the states, but the record is incomplete. One of the many key findings of Erikson, Wright, and McIver is that the sources of ideology and partisanship among state populations can be traced to both the demographic composition of each state and each state's underlying political context that is unconnected with specific demographic groups. That is, despite the significance of many demographic variables, the context in which individuals live—state residency—is a very significant explanatory factor of an individual's ideology and partisanship (Erikson, McIver, and Wright 1987, Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993). Similar findings have recently been reported by Norrander and Wilcox (2006), who used the pooled Senate National Election Study to draw their conclusions about the link between state residency and individual political ideology.³

These findings imply that the aggregated attitudes of state populations are more than just the sum of their individual demographic parts. Clearly, underlying state context is important for understanding state-level political ideology and partisanship. And there is some suggestive evidence that this underlying context might be heavily influenced by religious factors. Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1993) question whether the effect of context (what they term state political culture) on ideology is inflated by the omission of important demographic variables, one of which is religious fundamentalism. Using religious census data on church membership and

adherents by state, Erikson, Wright, and McIver compute the percentage of each state's population belonging to a fundamentalist Protestant denomination.⁴ This religious fundamentalism variable is a very strong predictor of the cultural component of state political ideology, even in the presence of controls. Erikson, Wright and McIver posit that, "Most of this net effect of fundamentalism probably should be attributed to an individual-level effect (that was otherwise missed) and perhaps a small amount to the contextual effect of fundamentalism on state culture apart from demographics" (Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993, 67). However, Norrander and Wilcox (2006) find little evidence for an individual-level effect of conservative Christians on ideology or partisanship.⁵ These seemingly contradictory findings can perhaps be attributed to a lack of adequate measures for both state-level religious orthodoxy and commitment. The following section develops a new measure of religious orthodoxy in the states, reviews an existing measure of state-level religious commitment, and explains some standard measures of religious belonging.

Measuring State-Level Religious Belief, Behavior, and Belonging

Religious orthodoxy is often measured by a survey respondent's view on the how literally the Bible should be taken, with those who subscribe to the highest degrees of biblical literalism categorized as the most religiously orthodox. Unfortunately, survey data of this sort are based mostly on national samples, making it infeasible to construct from them accurate state-level measures of religious orthodoxy. However, previous research also indicates that a close link between religious belonging and religious orthodoxy exists, and many scholars use some measure of belonging to help measure orthodoxy (Green and Guth 1991, Layman 1997, 1999, 2001, Layman and Carmines 1997). Specifically, it is often the case that a religious orthodoxy

measure based on biblical literalism is highly related to an orthodoxy scale based on denominational affiliation. This is not surprising given that religious belonging still has a significant influence on religious belief, and therefore continues to play an important role in the formation of political beliefs. Wald, Owen and Hill (1988) find that the viewpoints on social and political issues expressed by particular churches have a strong impact on the individual beliefs of their members even in the presence of other variables that might affect individual beliefs. Moreover, there is a much higher degree of congregational consensus about social and political issues in churches that stress more orthodox theologies (Wald, Owen and Hill 1990). On a larger scale, the social context of religious denominations and entire religious traditions still significantly influence individual beliefs (Kellstedt and Green 1993), and political behavior (Layman and Green 2005). And although the old distinction between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews seems to have diminished, the new divide between religious traditionalists and religious modernists is still greatly shaped by denominational affiliation. Green and Guth (1991) find that congressional voting patterns can be predicted to a significant degree by the overall orthodoxy of the religious denominations present in each congressional district. Other researchers have found that the orthodoxy of specific religious denominations corresponds well with other measures of religious belief (Layman and Camines 1997, Layman 2001).

The documented association between religious denomination and religious orthodoxy is the basis for the measure of religious orthodoxy developed here. Employing church membership and adherence data that has been compiled every ten years since 1970 by the Glenmary Research Center, an index of *Religious Orthodoxy* for each state in 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 is developed, using the method developed by Green and Guth (1991) to measure the religious

orthodoxy of congressional districts.⁶ This was done by first calculating the percentage of each state's residents who were adherents of each of the major Judeo-Christian denominations in 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000.⁷ These percentages were then multiplied by each specific denomination's value on Green and Guth's eight-point scale of denominational orthodoxy and summed for each state. The Green and Guth scale is anchored at one end by seculars (coded as 0"), and on the other end by fundamentalist and charismatic Protestant denominations (coded as 7"). The result of these calculations is an index of religious orthodoxy for each state for all four years that can theoretically vary from zero (a completely secular population), to seven (a completely fundamentalist population). The strength of this measure is that it includes the great majority of religious denominations present in the United States, and takes into account the large variety of religious views present within this country, particularly within Protestantism.⁸ Thus, this index measures almost the entire continuum of religious beliefs in America.

Table One about here

Table one shows each state's score on the religious orthodoxy index for 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000, with higher values indicating more religiously orthodox populations. The final column presents data on the change in each state's religious orthodoxy over the 1970 to 2000 period, with positive values indicating an increased level of orthodoxy, and negative values indicating a decreased level of orthodoxy. This table also shows each state's rank on the religious orthodoxy index, with states ranked from most orthodox to least orthodox. The final column also displays the change in rank over the 30 year period, with a positive number indicating that a state has become more orthodox relative to other states during this time, and a negative number indicating a state has become less orthodox relative to other states. Note that

although the index can theoretically range from 0 to 7, no state comes close to either one of these extremes. The lowest value across all four time periods is 1.22 (Hawaii 1980), and the highest value is 4.82 (Utah 1970).

Overall, the states have become less orthodox over the 1970 to 2000 period, showing a mean decrease in .22 on the orthodoxy index during this era. The standard deviation for change in religious orthodoxy during this time was .20, but this change is skewed in the direction of decreasing orthodoxy. For example, 28 states experienced decreases in religious orthodoxy that were greater than or equal to one standard deviation, and of these 28 states, 11 had decreases in religious orthodoxy greater than or equal to two standard deviations. Only nine states experienced increases in religious orthodoxy during this time, and in none of them was this change equal to even one standard deviation. Despite this apparent evidence of significant changes in religious orthodoxy during this time, particularly in the direction of less orthodoxy, the position of the states on the religious orthodoxy index relative to one another shows a high degree of stability. The final column indicates that during the 1970 to 2000 period, only 12 states changed five or more positions in rank on the religious orthodoxy index, and these changes in rank were evenly split between six states that moved up five or more spots (becoming more orthodox relative to other states), and six states that moved down five or more spots (becoming less orthodox relative to other states). No state moved more than nine spots in rank on the religious orthodoxy index between 1970 and 2000, not a surprising result given that the correlation between state-level religious orthodoxy in 1970 and 2000 is extremely high (.97). Thus, the story of religious orthodoxy in the states during this time is one of overall decreasing orthodoxy, but little change in the positions of the states relative to one another.

The idea that different levels of religious commitment may divide people in politically important ways is consistent with the idea of a new religious division based on religious orthodoxy. Indeed, at the individual level religious orthodoxy and religious commitment are highly related (Layman and Green 2005). Religious commitment is typically assessed by using survey data to measure church attendance, frequency of prayer, and importance of religion and combining the answers to these questions to create a single scale of commitment (Layman 2001, Layman and Green 2005). Brace et al. (2002) have created a state-level measure of what they term *religiosity* from General Social Survey data, which is based on answers to questions about the importance of religion, frequency of prayer, and church attendance.⁹ They pool the results of survey data from the 1974-1998 time period to create an index that essentially measures state-level *Religious Commitment*, and does so without relying on data about either religious belief or belonging. One minor drawback to this measure is that it is available for only 44 out of the 50 states.¹⁰

The focus of this study is religious belief (religious orthodoxy) and religious behavior (religious commitment) and their effect on the political beliefs of state populations. But such an endeavor requires that the possible impact of religious belonging be taken into account. That is, variables measuring the strength of the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish religious traditions must be included in the analysis, to ensure that religious orthodoxy and commitment are not just proxies for the historical political differences between these traditions. However, the extant scholarship indicates that Protestantism should be separated into both a White Evangelical Protestant tradition and a Mainline Protestant tradition (Kellstedt and Green 1993, Steensland et al. 2000).¹¹ These traditions differ in their views on both Jesus and the bible, with the former

focused on the divinity of Jesus and the literalism of the bible, while the latter emphasizes Jesus's role as a social reformer, and generally holds that the words of the bible should not be taken literally (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2007). Moreover, Erikson, Wright, and McIver's religious fundamentalism variable that is highly related to the cultural component of state ideology is essentially a measure of the percentage of White Evangelical Protestants in each state, plus Mormons. Therefore, the religious tradition variables included in the following analyses are *Evangelical Protestant*, which is the percentage of each state's residents who affiliate with the White Evangelical Protestant tradition. *Mainline Protestant* is the percentage of each state's residents who affiliate with the Mainline Protestant tradition. *Catholic* is the percentage of each state's residents who affiliate with the Catholic tradition. *Jewish* is the percentage of each state's residents who affiliate with the Jewish tradition.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables used in the following analyses are state ideology and partisanship, as measured using data retrieved from Gerald Wright's Internet home page.¹² These data contain values for the percentages of self-identified liberals, moderates, and conservatives plus Democrats, independents, and Republicans in the 48 contiguous states for each year between 1976 and 2003, computed from the aforementioned CBS News/*New York Times* surveys. The measure of ideology for each state was calculated by subtracting the percentage of conservatives from the percentage of liberals in each year. The measure of partisanship for each state was calculated by subtracting the percentage of Republicans from the percentage of Democrats in each year. Then, both the ideology and partisanship values were averaged for the entire 1976-2003 period.¹³ As with the ideology and partisanship variables developed by Erikson, Wright,

and McIver (1993), lower values indicate more conservative/Republican state populations, and higher values indicate more liberal/Democratic state populations. The ideology index ranges from -28.88 (Idaho) to .71 (Massachusetts), as almost all states have more conservative identifiers than liberal identifiers. The partisanship index ranges from -20.75 (Utah) to 26.01 (Louisiana).

Culture and Region

Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1987, 1993) find that state residency (or culture) has a very significant impact on ideology and partisanship. Therefore, it is necessary to control for the influence of such culture when examining state-level ideology and partisanship. Fortunately, Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1993) have constructed indices of the cultural components of both ideology and partisanship, separate from the effects of demographic factors on these variables. *Culture* is the effect of state residency on ideology (in the ideology models) and on partisanship (in the partisanship models). The southern states, with their unique set of historical circumstances, are also generally recognized as being quite ideologically conservative. Although the white populations of these states are increasingly Republican, the region had been solidly Democratic for decades. The south is also the most religiously orthodox region in the country. These factors require that a regional control variable be included to insure that any connection between the religious factors of interest and political behavior is not driven purely by inclusion of the southern states. Hence, *South* is dummy variable coded one if a state was a member of the confederacy and zero otherwise.

Demographic Variables

Both Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1987,1993) and Norrander and Wilcox (2006) find that a number of demographic factors also influence ideology and partisanship. Among these are wealth, education, urbanization, race, and unionization. *Wealth* is the personal income per capita of each state, deflated using the revised 2004 version of the Berry-Fording-Hanson state cost of living index (Berry, Fording, and Hanson 2000). *College Education* is the percentage of each state's population aged 25 years of age and older holding at least a four-year college degree. *Urban* is the percentage of each state's population residing within a Statistical Metropolitan Area. *Black* is the percentage of each state's population that is of African-American descent.¹⁴ *Union* is the percentage of each state's residents who are union members.¹⁵ Higher levels of all of these variables are expected to be associated with higher levels of both liberalism and Democratic partisanship.¹⁶ All variables except *religious commitment*, *culture*, and *south* were created by averaging their 1980, 1990, and 2000 values.

Results

Table Two about here

Table two shows the results of the models predicting state-level ideology. Model one is the base model, which does not include the religious orthodoxy and commitment variables. Model two and model three each contain one of the primary religious variables, but not the other. This is because the very high correlation between religious orthodoxy and commitment (.76) would make it impossible to disentangle the separate effects of each were they both included in the same model. It is not surprising that these variables are empirically related as they are conceptually connected with one another, and including them in separate models is the best way

to test whether neither, one, or both of these variables are significant predictors of state-level ideology and partisanship. The inclusion of a base model allows for a comparison between the models containing the religious variables of interest with the more conventional models used to predict state-level ideology and partisanship.

The base model of table two shows three significant determinants of state-level ideology: culture, college education, and unionization. Most of the variables are not statistically significant, including the religious tradition variables, and this is most likely due to the strength of the state culture variable. For example, the bivariate correlation coefficient between state culture and ideology is .66, and a simple bivariate regression of ideology on state culture produces an adjusted R-squared of .42. This is consistent with previous research indicating the importance of state residency for political beliefs. However, models two and three show that both religious orthodoxy and religious commitment are strongly significant determinants of ideology, even in the presence of a state culture variable that remains statistically significant in both models. It is readily apparent from these results that state populations with higher levels of religious orthodoxy and commitment are more ideologically conservative, and vice-versa.

Table Three about here

Table three shows the results of the models predicting state-level partisanship. Here, the base model shows the significant impact of state culture, Catholicism and race. State culture is an even more dominating force in the base partisanship model, as the correlation coefficient between culture and partisanship is .84, while a simple bivariate regression of partisanship on culture yields an adjusted R-squared of .70. Yet models two and three show that religious orthodoxy and commitment have a statistically significant impact on state-level partisanship as

well, despite the continued significance of culture, Catholicism, and race. State populations with higher levels of religious orthodoxy and commitment are more Republican, and vice-versa. With the exception of state culture, religious orthodoxy and religious commitment are the most consistently strong predictors of both state-level ideology and partisanship in these models. Thus, the results indicate that if one wished to estimate the general ideology and/or partisanship of each state's population during this time period, one of the best ways to do so would be to know each state population's level of religious orthodoxy and/or religious commitment.

Conclusion

The findings presented here demonstrate the significant association between religious orthodoxy, religious commitment, and state-level ideology and partisanship. States with more religiously orthodox and committed populations also have more conservative and Republican populations. These relationships hold even in the presence of numerous other variables typically thought to be linked with state-level political ideology and partisanship, particularly state culture. By controlling for religious belonging, in the form of the religious tradition variables, the results indicate that the significance of the religious orthodoxy and commitment variables are not just a function of religious tradition. The importance of religious orthodoxy and commitment for state-level political beliefs also suggests that ideology and partisanship among state populations has become largely a reflection of the views of these populations about moral/cultural issues.

Another noteworthy finding is the lack of significance of the Evangelical Protestant variable, although such a finding is consistent with some of the existing literature (Norrand and Wilcox 2006). This is a significant matter, considering that this particular religious tradition is the one most associated with the Christian Right, a political movement thought to be of great

significance for American politics over the last several decades. Part of the answer for why the percentage of Evangelical Protestants has little impact on state-level ideology and partisanship in the models presented here is the unit of analysis employed. At the state-level, Evangelical Protestants are concentrated in the south, and while the political conservatism of that region is clearly related to its high numbers of adherents to this tradition, there are much lower percentages of Evangelical Protestants in other regions of the country.¹⁷ But the real significance of this result involves the strength of both the religious orthodoxy and commitment variables for predicting state-level political beliefs. For example, the strength of the religious orthodoxy variable indicates that it is crucial to take into account the unique mix of each state's religious population if one is to understand the impact of religious beliefs on state-level politics. It is not just the Evangelical Protestant tradition that matters in this regard, but also the diversity of belief present within the Mainline Protestant tradition, as well as the number of Catholics, African-American Protestants, other religious groups, and even seculars. Future research might explore how religious orthodoxy and commitment influence both state-level legislative and presidential election results. At the very least, researchers interested in the impact of religion, or even ideology and partisanship, on state-level politics and policy should acknowledge the significant role of religious orthodoxy and commitment in helping determine the political beliefs of state populations during the post-1960s era.

APPENDIX

Data on the following denominations was used to create the religious orthodoxy index. The orthodoxy codes are drawn from note #1 of Green and Guth (1991) and appendix A of Layman and Carmines (1997).

DENOMINATION	CODE
Seculars	0
Jewish ^a	1
Episcopal Church Friends (Quakers) Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations United Church of Christ	2
Catholic Church	3
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Reformed Church in America	4
African-American Protestants Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) United Methodist Church	5

DENOMINATION

CODE

American Baptist Association^d
 American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.
 Baptist General Conference^a
 Christian and Missionary Alliance^a
 Christian Reformed Church in North America
 Church of the Brethren
 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons)
 Church of the Nazarene
 Evangelical Covenant Church^c
 Evangelical Free Church of America^a
 Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
 Mennonite Church U.S.A.
 Presbyterian Church in America^c
 Salvation Army
 Seventh-Day Adventist Church
 Southern Baptist Convention
 Wesleyan Church^b
 Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

6

Assemblies of God^a
 Baptist Missionary Association of America
 Christian Churches and Churches of Christ
 Churches of Christ^e
 Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)
 Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee)
 Conservative Baptist Association of America^d
 International Church of the Foursquare Gospel^a
 International Pentecostal Holiness Church
 National Association of Free Will Baptists^b

7

^a Percentage adherents for 1970 is estimated.

^b Percentage adherents for 1980 is estimated.

^c Percentage adherents for 1990 is estimated.

^d Percentage adherents for 1970 and 1990 are estimated.

^e Did not exist in 1970.

1. Others have used the terms *traditionalist* and *modernist* to describe these differing belief systems (Layman 2001).
2. Their ideology measure is based on CBS News/*NY Times* exit polls which ask respondents to categorize themselves as being either *liberal*, *moderate*, or *conservative*. These responses are then aggregated by state, resulting in a scale that captures the general political ideology of each state's population. Their partisanship measure is similar, except that respondents are asked to categorize themselves as either *Democratic*, *Independent*, or *Republican*. For more detailed information on exactly how these indices are constructed, see Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993, pp. 12-46.
3. For an excellent discussion of the ways in which context might influence political beliefs at the state level, see Gimpel and Schuknecht (2003).
4. See Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1993, 65) for a full list of the denominations that they categorize as being *fundamentalist*. Essentially, the denominations included are those from the *White Evangelical Protestant* religious tradition, plus *Mormons*.
5. This conservative Christian category included, ...*evangelicals*, *Pentacostals*, *fundamentalists*, and *Mormons*... (Norrander and Wilcox 2006, 50).
6. Originally compiled by the Glenmary Research Center, the data for 1970, 1980, and 1990 were retrieved from the web site of the Association of Religious Data Archives (www.TheARDA.com). The original sources of these data are Johnson, Picard, and Quinn (1974), Quinn et al. (1982), Bradley et al. (1992), and Jones et al. (2002).
7. Although the religious census data discussed here provides data on both membership and adherents of specific denominations, the calculations performed here use numbers of adherents,

rather than members. This is because the definition of membership varies by denomination. For a fuller description of the methodology employed to determine both membership and adherence, see www.TheARDA.com. Only denominations that had 100,000 or more total adherents in 2000 were used in these calculations, but data on some of these denominations were not available for all years. Where appropriate, the SPSS curve estimation procedure was used to estimate values for missing data. This resulted in adherents data for 2000 on 15 of the 17 denominations with over 1,000,000 adherents, and 24 of the 31 denominations with 100,000 to 999,999 adherents. Although it is impossible to calculate with certainty the total percentage of religious adherents this covers, Jones et al. (2002) report that the 17 denominations with over 1,000,000 adherents in 2000 accounted for approximately 91% of all religious adherents, and the 31 denominations with between 100,000 and 999,999 adherents accounted for another 7% of adherents. Thus, the data in this study can be conservatively estimated to account for at least 90% of all religious adherents in each of the four time periods. See the Appendix for a complete list of all denominations used in these analyses, and how these denominations were coded to create the religious orthodoxy variable. Further information on this coding can also be found in note #1 of Green and Guth (1991) and Appendix A of Layman and Carmines (1997).

8. Since the Glenmary censuses contain only sporadic data on African-American Protestant adherents, the 1970 and 1980 values for this group were calculated from data in tables one and two of Stark (1987), and the method recommended by Stark was used to calculate the numbers of African-American Protestant adherents in 1990 and 2000. This method involves making two assumptions. The first assumption is that the number of African-American religious adherents in a state is approximately equal to the number of religious adherents from other races and ethnic

groups in that state. Thus, if 60% of these other groups are religious adherents, it is assumed that 60% of African-Americans in the state are also religious adherents. The second assumption is that roughly 90% of all African-American religious adherents will affiliate with African-American Protestant denominations. Consider a hypothetical state in which 20% of the population is African-American, and 50% of the non-African-American population are religious adherents of some sort. The African-American Protestant estimate for that state would be 9% (50% of 20% = 10% and 90% of 10% = 9%).

9. The specific questions asked were, Would you call yourself a strong (religious preference) or not a very strong (religious preference)? How often do you attend religious services? About how often do you pray? The individual answers to these questions were then aggregated into a state-level measure of religious commitment that varies from 0 to 1, with higher values representing higher levels of religious commitment. Actual values range from .43 (Washington) to .75 (Utah).

10. The omitted states are Hawaii, Idaho, Maine, Nebraska, Nevada, and New Mexico.

11. The placement of specific denominations into both the White Evangelical Protestant and Mainline Protestant traditions follows the typology found in the appendix of Kellstedt and Green (1993), and is also consistent with the categorizations of Steensland et al. (2000).

12. [Http://mypage.iu.edu/~wright1/](http://mypage.iu.edu/~wright1/). The author is solely responsible for any errors in the use and interpretation of these data.

13. The dependent variables are aggregated in such a manner because Erikson, Wright, and McIver (1993, 2006) argue that ideology and partisanship are fairly stable over this time period, and that the small annual sample sizes of the surveys makes the computation of yearly ideology

and partisanship scores unreliable. Aggregating the ideology and partisanship data over ten year periods results in few substantive differences from the results presented here.

14. One alternative measure is the racial diversification index developed by Hero and Tolbert (1996). However, while there is a clear expected link between African-Americans and both ideology and partisanship, the link between the more general concept of racial diversification and political beliefs is less clear.

15. The 1980 state union membership data were retrieved from www.unionstats.com. Information on the calculation of these data can be found in Hirsch, Macpherson, and Vroman (2001). The 1990 and 2000 state union membership data was provided by Robert Coombs of the Bureau of National Affairs.

16. Erikson, Wright and McIver (1993, 60) note that aggregate levels of both wealth and urbanization are strongly associated with state-level liberalism despite the fact that at the individual level, wealth is associated with conservatism and urban residence is only slightly linked to liberalism. They attribute this anomaly to the presence of large numbers of liberal individuals in wealthy and urbanized states.

17. The mean percentage of White Evangelical Protestants for 1980, 1990, and 2000 in the southern states is 29%, while in the non-southern states it is 10%.

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TABLE ONE

Religious Orthodoxy in the States 1970-2000

State	1970	1980	1990	2000	1970-2000
AL	3.69 (4)	3.77 (3)	3.98 (3)	3.84 (3)	.15 (+1)
AK	1.68 (45)	1.36 (49)	1.41 (45)	1.37 (47)	-.31 (-2)
AZ	2.15 (32)	1.74 (40)	1.80 (40)	1.61 (41)	-.54 (-9)
AR	3.47 (8)	3.61 (4)	3.82 (4)	3.66 (5)	.19 (+3)
CA	1.56 (48)	1.46 (44)	1.56 (42)	1.66 (40)	.10 (+8)
CO	1.92 (41)	1.63 (41)	1.61 (41)	1.52 (42)	-.40 (-1)
CT	2.06 (37)	2.09 (31)	2.04 (33)	1.97 (32)	-.09 (+5)
DE	1.96 (40)	1.95 (37)	1.87 (38)	1.90 (36)	-.06 (+4)
FL	2.38 (27)	1.98 (36)	1.88 (37)	1.92 (35)	-.46 (-8)
GA	3.28 (10)	3.21 (9)	3.23 (9)	3.02 (9)	-.26 (+1)
HI	1.35 (50)	1.22 (50)	1.34 (48)	1.43 (44)	.08 (+6)
ID	2.95 (14)	2.64 (17)	2.68 (17)	2.44 (17)	-.51 (-3)
IL	2.55 (24)	2.49 (22)	2.49 (21)	2.36 (21)	-.19 (+3)
IN	2.24 (30)	2.16 (28)	2.07 (32)	1.96 (33)	-.28 (-3)
IA	2.68 (18)	2.57 (18)	2.51 (20)	2.41 (19)	-.27 (-1)
KS	2.59 (22)	2.54 (21)	2.49 (22)	2.33 (22)	-.26 (0)
KY	3.10 (12)	3.01 (11)	3.08 (10)	2.91 (10)	-.19 (+2)
LA	3.62 (5)	3.38 (7)	3.75 (6)	3.66 (4)	.04 (+1)
ME	1.63 (47)	1.45 (45)	1.28 (50)	1.24 (50)	-.39 (-3)
MD	2.20 (31)	2.11 (29)	2.15 (30)	2.24 (25)	.04 (+6)
MA	2.11 (34)	2.08 (33)	2.03 (34)	2.00 (31)	-.11 (+3)
MI	2.02 (38)	1.90 (38)	2.01 (35)	1.78 (39)	-.24 (-1)
MN	2.65 (21)	2.56 (20)	2.54 (18)	2.43 (18)	-.22 (+3)
MS	4.21 (2)	4.16 (2)	4.50 (2)	4.33 (1)	.12 (+1)
MO	2.76 (17)	2.80 (14)	2.79 (14)	2.63 (15)	-.13 (+2)
MT	1.98 (39)	1.81 (39)	1.80 (39)	1.81 (38)	-.17 (+1)
NE	2.67 (20)	2.74 (15)	2.70 (15)	2.54 (16)	-.13 (+4)
NV	1.70 (44)	1.38 (48)	1.38 (47)	1.41 (45)	-.29 (-1)
NH	1.66 (46)	1.44 (46)	1.28 (49)	1.51 (43)	-.15 (+3)
NJ	2.09 (36)	2.09 (32)	2.16 (29)	2.11 (29)	.02 (+7)
NM	2.79 (16)	2.47 (23)	2.40 (24)	2.25 (24)	-.54 (-8)
NY	2.10 (35)	2.00 (34)	2.33 (26)	2.24 (26)	.14 (+9)
NC	3.30 (9)	3.17 (10)	3.07 (11)	2.78 (12)	-.52 (-3)
ND	2.98 (13)	2.82 (13)	2.86 (13)	2.78 (11)	-.20 (+2)
OH	2.14 (33)	2.17 (27)	2.01 (36)	1.92 (34)	-.22 (-1)
OK	3.60 (6)	3.45 (6)	3.76 (5)	3.51 (6)	-.09 (0)

OR	1.76 (42)	1.63 (42)	1.51 (43)	1.37 (48)	-.39 (-6)
PA	2.43 (25)	2.39 (26)	2.27 (28)	2.22 (27)	-.21 (-2)
RI	2.41 (26)	2.42 (25)	2.43 (23)	2.07 (30)	-.34 (-4)
SC	3.81 (3)	3.56 (5)	3.56 (7)	3.30 (7)	-.51 (-4)
SD	2.81 (15)	2.67 (16)	2.69 (16)	2.66 (14)	-.15 (+1)
TN	3.52 (7)	3.33 (8)	3.40 (8)	3.13 (8)	-.39 (-1)
TX	3.28 (11)	2.93 (12)	3.05 (12)	2.76 (13)	-.52 (-2)
UT	4.82 (1)	4.37 (1)	4.64 (1)	4.31 (2)	-.51 (-1)
VT	1.71 (43)	1.59 (43)	1.39 (46)	1.29 (49)	-.42 (-6)
VA	2.56 (23)	2.44 (24)	2.33 (25)	2.29 (23)	-.27 (0)
WA	1.49 (49)	1.39 (47)	1.44 (44)	1.39 (46)	-.10 (+3)
WV	2.27 (29)	2.11 (30)	2.08 (31)	1.83 (37)	-.44 (-8)
WI	2.68 (19)	2.57 (19)	2.52 (19)	2.40 (20)	-.28 (-1)
WY	2.31 (28)	1.99 (35)	2.28 (27)	2.13 (28)	-.18 (0)
Mean	2.55	2.42	2.44	2.33	-.22
S.D.	.76	.76	.84	.77	.20

TABLE TWO
The Effect of Religious Orthodoxy and Commitment on State-Level Ideology

	Model 1 (N = 48)	Model 2 (N = 48)	Model 3 (N = 43)
Culture	.424*** (.103)	.354*** (.082)	.265* (.123)
South	1.32 (2.67)	.356 (2.09)	2.75 (2.61)
Evangelical Protestant	-7.93 (8.89)	8.61 (7.72)	-9.17 (8.98)
Mainline Protestant	-4.12 (9.66)	2.16 (7.66)	-2.39 (11.7)
Catholic	5.83 (6.74)	5.10 (5.27)	6.22 (6.57)
Jewish	82.9 (70.8)	88.9 (55.4)	62.6 (66.2)
Wealth	-.001 (.001)	-.002** (.001)	-.001 (.001)
College Education	.681** (.266)	.796** (.209)	.696** (.291)
Urban	.063 (.051)	.108** (.041)	.042 (.061)
Black	.016 (.102)	.133 (.083)	.015 (.095)
Union	.330* (.156)	.265* (.122)	.414** (.155)
Religious Orthodoxy	-----	-4.81*** (.982)	-----
Religious Commitment	-----	-----	-32.1** (11.1)
Constant	-16.8 (10.4)	2.52 (9.03)	-1.66 (12.7)
Adjusted R ²	.77	.86	.81

* = $p \leq .05$ ** = $p \leq .01$ *** = $p \leq .001$

TABLE THREE
The Effect of Religious Orthodoxy and Commitment on State-Level Partisanship

	Model 1 (N = 48)	Model 2 (N = 48)	Model 3 (N = 43)
Culture	.908*** (.085)	.889*** (.075)	.878*** (.087)
South	1.39 (2.81)	.660 (2.47)	2.36 (2.87)
Evangelical Protestant	-2.83 (11.7)	12.4 (11.1)	-3.11 (11.8)
Mainline Protestant	7.37 (9.50)	14.3* (8.57)	16.9 (11.1)
Catholic	23.5*** (6.91)	22.0*** (6.07)	20.3** (6.93)
Jewish	109.6 (75.1)	115.9* (65.8)	102.2 (72.8)
Wealth	-.001 (.001)	-.002** (.001)	-.001 (.001)
College Education	.050 (.273)	.178 (.242)	-.050 (.304)
Urban	.009 (.047)	.060 (.044)	.048 (.050)
Black	.230* (.108)	.332*** (.099)	.239* (.104)
Union	.204 (.157)	.128 (.140)	.188 (.161)
Religious Orthodoxy	-----	-3.95*** (1.15)	-----
Religious Commitment	-----	-----	-27.2* (12.1)
Constant	.306 (9.32)	19.0* (9.80)	17.9 (13.0)
Adjusted R ²	.86	.89	.86

* = $p \leq .05$ ** = $p \leq .01$ *** = $p \leq .001$

