

**Divided States: Defining and Measuring State Political Culture**

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## **Abstract**

Previous studies of state political culture have relied largely on demographic characteristics in order to classify states and regions. Moreover, many studies have used a single category (usually Elazar's typology) to characterize each state. While culture is often found to strongly influence state policy and citizen attitudes, definitions of political culture are often impressionistic. Moreover, the use of demographic information to define cultural differences requires often untested inferences about the meaning or importance of these demographic characteristics. Finally, despite high population mobility in the United States, political culture is often assumed to change at a glacial pace. In order to overcome these limitations, we attempt to create a survey-based measure of intra-state political culture. We present the results of the first wave of a panel study of Ohio voters on basic attitudes towards political corruption, voter turnout, and the role of parties, and the government in the political system. We find some evidence for the existence of distinct cultural types across five regions of Ohio. The results correlate with citizen ideological, partisan and issue-attitudes. We discuss the implications of our results and the importance of developing dynamic measures of intra-state political culture.

Political culture remains one of the most important but also elusive concepts in the study of political science. In the United States, cultural explanations have been used to explain the lack of a welfare state in the U.S., persistent political disagreement, differences in civic engagement across communities, and as the foundation for the “red-state, blue-state” divide (Hartz 1955; Huntington 1981; Putnam 2000; Brooks 2001). Nevertheless, much like the using the supernatural to explain phenomena that escape the tools of modern science, many empirical political scientists remain uncomfortable with such a nebulous theoretical concept to explain so much, believing culture at best only represents the sum of omitted variables and under rigorous testing does not prove to be related to policy outcomes or political or social stability (Jackman and Miller 1996).

In state politics, scholars have developed numerous cultural typologies to explain cross-sectional differences in state politics and policies (Patterson 1968; Sharkansky 1969; Lieske 1993). Daniel Elazar’s (1968) trichotomy of political cultures (moralist, individualist, and traditionalist), however, remains the single most cited and perhaps compelling scheme of inter and intra-state divisions. Researchers in the field of state politics research continue to show it is a robust predictor of policies and political attitudes, even if they differ about the underlying causes of cultural differences (Grogan 1994; Cook, Jelen and Wilcox 2002; Gray and Hanson 2004). Considerable research has confirmed that the scale at least correlates with other state characteristics above and beyond socio-demographic or attitudinal differences across states. Erikson, Wright and McIver (1987), despite their emphasis on the importance of public opinion in explaining election and policy outcomes, find that state culture powerfully affect both citizen ideology and state policy outcomes. Putnam (2000) notes that his index of social capital

correlates strongly with Elazar's categories; moralist states tended to have high levels of social capital, traditionalist states have the lowest, and individualist states ranked in between.

As political science has become methodologically advanced, scholars have called into the question the validity of Elazar's scheme or have sought to replace it with one more empirically grounded (Wirt 1991). One of the criticisms of Elazar has been that the divisions are largely impressionistic and ignored tensions within the American ethos. Hero and Tolbert (1996), for example, point out Elazar devote little attention to the cultural influences of non-European groups and find that the cultural differences are rooted in racial/ethnic diversity; moralistic states are racially homogenous, traditionalist states are bifurcated between whites and blacks, while individualist cultures are ethnically heterogeneous.

Alternatively, some note that even if his impressions were accurate, they have become outdated (Lieske 1993). Certainly, it is a mistake to interpret Elazar's understanding of as cultures as set in stone (although in various editions of *American Federalism* his mapping of cultures remained largely unchanged). The United States has one of the highest mobility rates in the developed world. As a result, political culture may be more dynamic although change might very well be glacial. In certain states and regions, where in or out migration is high, it is reasonable to expect that change will occur more rapidly in a region's political culture (Gimpel and Schuknetch 2002; 2004).

One question is how change occurs. Evolutionary biologists have noted that humans are remarkable in their ability to adapt to environmental change, but they also are almost incapable of leaving their environment as is (Diamond 1999). So, there are

perhaps two ways of looking at how migration and demographic shifts will influence state political cultures. One is that citizens that move into a region will be affected by the political or social culture of the region. Lieske, argues that “regional sub-cultures...represent the historical extensions of earlier settlement patterns and the continuing advantages of the first effective settler groups (i.e., the founding groups) over later arrivals (i.e., newer groups) who are placed in the culture” (1993:891). The change may not occur immediately, but given time, the person may slowly adjust their expectations about politicians, policies and campaigns to adapt to their new environment.

Alternatively, mass migration should produce differences in the rules of the political game, the issues that divide politicians and parties. Out-migration could also have an impact; people self-select whether to move or to stay, attracted by higher paying jobs, cheap land, and lower taxes. Massive immigration of Northerners to the South and Sunbelt in the post-War period resulted in a much more economically vibrant, diverse and Republican South (Philips 1969; Abramowitz 1994; Gimpel 1999). Hispanic migration has transformed the political culture of many Southern states or at least areas within them (Hero and Tolbert 1996). At the same time, even within the South, patterns of migration had differential effects; New York expatriates to Florida tended to be more liberal and Democratic while Cuban exiles to the same areas were decidedly Republican and often socially conservative. In other words, researchers have found in and out migration processes that have produced contradictory effects on partisanship and perhaps, by extension, political culture. Some dynamics have produced more Republican and conservative electorates and others factors have made certain regions (or even just cities)

more liberal or post-material (Gimpel 2001; Judis and Teixeira 2002; Stonecash, Brewer and Marini 2003).<sup>1</sup>

As a result, developing more dynamic measures of political culture are necessary to capture the fluidity of American life. We seek to test the validity of Elazar's scheme because we acknowledge, confirmed by past research, his categories tapped into deeply ingrained political values across regions. However, we also do not seek to simply confirm or reject his scheme because major demographic shifts have occurred in the last forty years and we expect to find change. Approaching the question scientifically, however, we admit at this point we are not certain how or where the change has occurred. New measures of cultural identity, therefore, are required.

### **The Place of State Subcultures**

In this paper, our primary aim to answer the following question – how strong are intra-state cultural differences? A secondary question is, if intra-state cultural differences exist, whether they can be identified through survey research. Despite the attention to political culture, political scientists have placed less attention on sub-state variations in political culture. Elazar never claimed that the legal borders of states form some magical barrier transforming the attitudes and core values of citizens as soon as one crosses statelines. Rather, patterns or streams of migration tended to flow along regional lines, resulting in concentrations of ethnicities along with economies that tended to be industrial or agricultural, attracting new settlers and shaping the values of the citizens of a region.

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<sup>1</sup> Gimpel (1999, 2001) argues that it is generally the well-educated and wealthy who are most likely to move (internal migration), which leads to more Republican voting in many areas. Other researchers, most notably Judis and Teixeira (2002) argue that the “Knowledge Economy” results in more liberal (or post-material) citizens moving for creative jobs and cultural vitality.

Such patterns generally resulted in many states which have mixed political cultures. In fact, Elazar noted that there were eight distinct categories, not three, as states and regions usually contained a dominant and secondary culture. Most often, the individualist category was preset in some form, while only rarely did moralist and traditionalist cultures coexist.

Such intra-state differences may be rooted in demographics (Hero and Tolbert 1996). Lieske (1993) in developing a new measure of Elazar's scheme, evaluated demographic and religious variables to create a ten point scale of American subcultures traceable to the county level. Lieske's findings largely confirmed Elazar's basic mapping, but provided more rigorous empirical support as well as a richer pictures of sub-cultural divisions.<sup>2</sup>

Identifying these sub-cultures potentially quite important. Difference in intra-state political culture may explain variations in the degree of political competition and the ideological distance between state parties (Gimpel and Shuknetch 2002; 2004; Morrill, Knopp, and Brown 2007). Gimpel and Shuknetch (2004) that political cleavages and polarization between parties often is traceable to how much overlap exists between each party's geographic (and correspondingly, their demographic) base. It is also possible that cultural foundations that are more than the sum of their demographic parts.

### **The Case of Ohio**

Certainly the complexity of the United States population and all of the cultural trends mean that a single state case study has limitations. On the other hand, focusing ion

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<sup>2</sup> More recently, Lieske (2008) has found evidence that has identified eleven distinct state sub-cultures, which, he finds, form a continuum that reduces to unidimensional measure that correlates Elazar's.

s single state allows us to test theories intra-state culture and to develop measures of intra-state regionalism. Moreover, other researchers have found evidence for generalizable results by focusing on a single state (Gimpel and Schuknetch 2002; Nicholson-Crotty and Meier 2002).

While many states have a mix of political cultures, Ohio is largely an individualist state in Elazar's somewhat impressionistic analysis. Some residual of the Yankee political culture of the state's founders remains (concentrated in the Northern parts of the state) but it was largely wiped out by immigration to the state during industrialization. In addition, along the state's border with Kentucky, there are pockets of the traditionalist culture. Lieske (1993) identified several political culture streams in the state.

Northeastern Ohio is largely "ethnic", while much of the central part of the state is characterized as "heartland", the southern part of the state has the "border" culture in common with Tennessee and Kentucky, while pockets of "Germanic" and "rurban" (or Western and close to post-material in the focus on education and high-tech industry) cultures are scattered throughout the state.

In developing our measure of political culture (described in detail below) we begin with Ohio. Recently the "ground zero" of American presidential politics, there is a sliver of each part of America in the Buckeye state. And, the regions really are distinct; with a unique collection of big cities, suburbs, rural areas, one or more media markets, and at least one major newspaper.<sup>3</sup> Since Ohio is an almost perfect microcosm of the nation as a whole, studying Ohio provides insight into the changing political and social

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<sup>3</sup> E.g., see John C. Green (2004) "Ohio: The Heart of it All," *The Forum*: Vol. 2: No. 3, Article 3. Available at: <http://www.bepress.com/forum/vol2/iss3/art3> ; Robert L. Smith and Dave Davis, "Differences Create Invisible Borders," *Cleveland Plain Dealer* (July 4, 2004) – see For an overview of "the five Ohio's," see the Cleveland Plain Dealer's 2004 multi-part series on the topic at: <http://www.cleveland.com/fiveohios/>.



environment in American politics at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Numerous political scientists, journalists, and historians have noted the existence of the “Five Ohios” (Knepper 2003; Lamis and Usher 2007; Coffey et al forthcoming). These regions are, with our definitions in parentheses (see Map 1 in Appendix) Northeast (“Metro”), Northwest (“Commercial”), Southeast (“Appalachia”), Southwest (“Traditional”) and Central (“Conventional”).

It is useful to briefly summarize the key differences across regions. What we call Metro Ohio is centered around the Cleveland-Akron-Youngstown-Canton metropolitan region (or what marketing materials now call “Cleveland+”). Similar to the megalopolis centered on I-95 on the East Coast, this is the most culturally “blue” region of the state and a vital political center, containing almost *twice* as many citizens as any other of the five regions. This is the most ethnically and racially diverse of Ohio’s regions. With a characteristic “rust belt” economy” the region has limited success in transitioning to a service or knowledge economy. Originally settled by Connecticut expatriates (it was called the “Western Reserve”), the moralist roots of the region were largely swamped by migration of poor white laborers from West Virginia and Kentucky during the industrial heyday of the 1920s, the effects of the Great Northern Migration in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and the immigration from Eastern Europe after World War II (which continues unabated today).

Unlike the other regions, Central Ohio has a single, dominant city. Historically, the state capitol was an urban island surrounded by a sea of farm land. In part due to the presence of Ohio State (the largest campus in the nation, with a student population of over 50,000) the city’s economy that has always been one of the most “white collar” in

the state. State government is the largest employer in the region and the city is home several major corporations. In recent years, Columbus and its suburbs have grown rapidly; the capital city now has a population of over 700,000, making it the 15<sup>th</sup> largest in the nation. Delaware County, just to north of Columbus, and one of the fastest growing counties in the nation typified the exurban growth pattern that helped provide Bush a more comfortable margin of victory in 2004 in Ohio compared to 2000 (Bai 2004). In fact, the overall growth rate for the region from 2000 to 2005 was nearly six percent, by far the fastest growth rate for any of the five regions. At the same time, Central Ohio remains largely rural; the region has only about two-fifths as many citizens as the Northeast and nearly a million fewer than Southwestern Ohio. The region is now divided between an increasingly cosmopolitan central city and conservative strongholds in the rural areas and exurbs. The region has a relatively high proportion of Evangelical Protestants, a relatively low level of manufacturing jobs (and by extension, lower levels of union members), and a low poverty rate. On the other hand, Central Ohio has the highest proportion of college-educated citizens and a high percentage of the population is foreign born.

The Southwest region is anchored by urban centers of Cincinnati, Dayton, and Springfield and includes their suburban and rural hinterlands. As a point in fact, Cincinnati's airport is actually in Kentucky, and this speaks volumes about the region. The slight Midwestern accent in the northern parts of the state is replaced with Southern accents and it is much less diverse in ethnic terms than Cleveland. The Wright-Patterson Air Force base, located outside of Dayton, is an economic engine for the area and provides clues to the region's political orientation. The shifting nature of American

social and economic life is partly reflected by the population shell game that is being played out in this region. In the 1990s, Cincinnati led Ohio cities in population decline, no small accomplishment in a state losing both manufacturing jobs and people. There is a strong racial element to this shift that may end Cincinnati's historic reputation as one of the few large cities in America that votes Republican as the city's white population declined significantly during the 1990s. Cincinnati's decline directly benefited the surrounding counties. While the region's population grew at an anemic one percent from 2000 to 2005, the surrounding counties, Warren, Butler, and Clermont are among the fastest growing in the state. Importantly, while the poverty rate is high in Cincinnati, in the fast growing surrounding counties, it is less than half that rate. One in three citizens are Evangelical Protestant and church attendance ranks the highest among the five regions.

The primarily agricultural Northwestern region includes the Toledo metropolitan area, but also small cities like Lima and Findlay and farming areas. In this region, we include the "firelands" region near the lake, given to the New England victims of British raids during the Revolution. The region is full of contrasts; Commercial Ohio has the second highest percentage of citizens in rural areas (31 percent) and the highest percentage of workers holding manufacturing jobs (also 31 percent). It trails only the Northeast region in population decline. Racial diversity is low; only approximately 8 percent of citizens are African-Americans. The region has also been hurt by the decline in the manufacturing base of its economy.

Finally, Appalachia is rural and economically depressed due to the decline of the mining industry. The only mountainous region was among the first sections of the state

settled with people moving out of Pennsylvania and Virginia. Most of this area is part of the U.S. Appalachian Commission. Partly due to these historical factors, the region has developed a unique cultural identity. In many ways, this region is very similar to West Virginia. The least populous region, the region has the highest proportion of citizens living below the poverty line despite the lack of a single major city, and the lowest percentage of citizens with a college degree. Manufacturing and mining are the two main industries. It is also the least diverse region, with whites making up over 96 percent of the citizenry, and relatively few Catholics or Jewish Americans and the highest percentage of Evangelicals in the state.

These patterns of voting tap into the deeply-held opinions and attitudes of the citizens of each region. In 2004, what we call “Metro”, or Northeastern Ohio, gave only 42 percent of its vote share to President Bush. In contrast, in what we call “Traditional” Ohio, or the Southwest, Bush won nearly three-fifths of the vote. Bush performed strongly across the remaining three regions, winning 54 percent of the vote in “Conventional” (or Central Ohio), “Commercial” (Northwest) and Appalachia” (the Southeast). These patterns hold up over time; since 1980 Republican presidential candidates have won 41 percent of the vote in Metro Ohio, 50 percent in Commercial Ohio, 55 percent in Conventional Ohio, 48 percent in Appalachia and 56 percent in the Traditional region. Using surveys conducted by the Bliss Institute in 2006, if we exclude leaners, the most self-identified Republicans are in the Traditional (GOP advantage is +13 percent) and Conventional (+ 4) regions, with the fewest in the Metro (GOP net disadvantage is -15) and Appalachia (-6), while the parties are tied in support in the Commercial Northwest.

## **Using Survey Data to Measure Patterns of Sub-cultural variation**

Can culture be measured at the individual level? Almost all measures of political culture have depended on demographic (usually Census data) to identify political subcultures. Developing individual level measures of political culture have remained elusive, although there are notable exceptions (Inglehart 1990). One reason is that culture is conceptually too difficult to transform into broadly understandable survey questions. Some attempts have been made, but the results have often found only limited evidence for cultural differences along the lines theorized by Elazar. Nardulli (1990) asked respondents survey questions meant to tap into each of the three primary subcultures. The responses, he found, did not line up in any consistent pattern. His survey, of citizens in Illinois, asked respondents to agree or disagree with statements along four dimensions: the role of the government in the political order, the role of citizens in the political order, the role of parties, principles and elites in the political process, and about the place of bureaucracies with the political order. He argues that in reality the Elazar-Shankansky scheme really measures U.S. sectionalism, as when sections were controlled for, the correlations with specific hypotheses in the Shankansky (1969) largely disappear.

There are, however, reasons why individual measures could capture latent cultural attitudes. Nardulli points out that while the public may lack the sophistication or familiarity with politics to understand the underlying concept of political culture, if too much doubt is placed in individual understanding, then culture cannot be said to exist in any meaningful or conscious way. Putnam (2000) has relied on survey questions to classify states and regions by degrees of civic engagement and surveys are the most frequent measure of trust, tolerance, and diffuse support for political institutions,

concepts which are not easily explained in survey research questions. We note that while we begin with the intent of confirming the existence of Elazar's cultural types, the method of using survey responses will allow us to identify different cultural groupings should they exist.

### **The Buckeye Poll**

Our analysis will be based on a four wave panel study of Ohio voters. For the first panel, we have focused on defining the types of culture evident in Ohio. In other words, we have two goals in this paper– identifying survey questions that tap into deeply-held cultural values, and using the responses from these items to classify citizens according to their cultural dispositions based on their survey responses. We are also interested in whether the “Five Ohio’s” correspond to cultural differences in terms of citizen responses.

Table 1 About Here

We do this using a panel study of Ohio voters. The panel will be conducted over four survey waves.<sup>4</sup> We asked survey respondents seven questions (see Table 1 below) about the role of government, parties, politics and voting. In addition, we asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with statements meant to elicit attitudes about the content of politics. These items were designed to correspond to Elazar's schemes. Those with moralistic attitudes should express a belief that government should

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<sup>4</sup> The initial wave is based on a survey of a random sample of adult Ohio citizens (18 years or older) interviewed by telephone between January 10 and March 8, 2008 by the Center for Marketing & Opinion Research, LLC of Canton, Ohio. The survey is part of a broader election year study of Ohio voters undertaken by the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron. The number of survey respondents was 1,507, including a state-wide random sample and over samples of respondents residing outside of Northeastern Ohio. The survey respondents were weighted to reflect the demographic characteristics of the Ohio adult population based on the U.S. Census.

aim to improve society, parties should focus on issues, and that voting is a way to participate in collective decision-making. Those fitting the individualist category should be more likely to want government to focus on efficiency, to be most concerned with economic performance (i.e. the classic retrospective voters), to believe that parties mostly desire to win elections, and that voting is about protecting or voicing one's individual interests. Finally, we attempted to capture traditionalist attitudes as believing that government should maintain order, that politics should be about community values, parties should focus on finding competent leaders, and voting is necessary to fulfill one's civic duty.

The agree-disagree questions do not fit Elazar's categories quite as well, but should tap into the core beliefs of citizens about the "rules of the game" of politics. The first item is perhaps most clearly associated with the moralistic culture; in the other cultures, we expect there to be less enthusiasm for deep moral conflicts in politics. The second item was meant to tap into issue-less character of individualistic politics, as an acceptance of corruption should signal a belief that politics requires a certain degree of bargaining and deal-making that will occasionally cross ethical or legal lines. Such a view, we believe, should be strongly rejected in the moralistic culture, but in the traditionalistic culture, greater levels of apathy might lead to more ambivalent, neutral responses. Finally, the attitudes towards who should participate in politics should differentiate the moralistic from the individualist cultures; we expected the moralistic culture to disapprove of uniformed voting, but in a culture which originated the phrase "vote early and vote often", uniformed voting should be less odious. In the traditionalist culture, it is perhaps less clear; a culture that believes decisions should (or at least are)

made by elites probably will be less bothered by uniformed voting, but we are not certain that this will be the case.

## **Results**

The results indicate that the questions did not differentiate between cultural attitudes as well as expected, but differences are evident. Several items did not work as anticipated. The question on political parties performed poorly, as over seven in ten respondents favored competent leaders. Few believed parties should focus on winning elections or standing for issues. The agree-disagree items—corruption, uninformed voters, and principles in politics—all generated fairly lopsided distributions (see Table 2a and 2b).

Tables 2a and 2b About Here

There are several possible interpretations of the performance of the measures. One is that the responses indicate that some of the questions were not clear to respondents. The option of “competent leaders” did not unfortunately tap into the concept of deference to authority or that parties would affirm the establishment, and very few of the respondents were willing to express any acceptance of corruption. It is of course, possible that the lack of variance indicates that cultures identified by Elazar do fit with beliefs of Ohioians, or that because this is a single state study, there is not sufficient variance in the population to capture the full range of cultural attitudes, a possibility we discuss in the conclusion.

Across questions, however, we attempted to use the variance across the seven questions to categorize respondents by their cultural leanings. A factor analysis of all seven items (with the last three recoded) does produce a three factor solution—but the



results failed to produce clear correlation patterns between the factors to identify pure versions of Elazar's cultures.

Table 3 About Here

Since we were looking to verify whether Elazar's cultures exist in Ohio, it made sense to reduce the response patterns to fit Elazar's categories. To do this, we created a composite measure (dropping the political party item) to sum the individualistic, moralistic, and traditionalistic items in the three-part government, politics, and voting items. This resulted in a scale in which zero means no agreement with any of the sub-cultural responses and three means agreement with all three items in a particular culture (see Table 4). The results indicate that individuals, assuming we have captured Elazar's scheme, accept at least parts of all three cultures, leading to the conclusion that we get very few "pure" or even "semi-pure" individualistic, moralistic, or traditionalistic respondents.

Table 4 About Here

Table 5 About Here

To further the classification scheme, we added the agree-disagree items to the three composite measures. This produced a more cogent three-factor solution: The first factor has a high score for individualistic culture and a low score for traditionalistic culture, and the second factor shows the same pattern for individualistic and moralistic culture. At one level, this makes some sense: these cultures are in some ways opposites, and in any event, we posed the questions in this way by forcing the respondents to make choices. Taken together, these analyses suggest that we are tapping something about political culture, but as in the results above, we may have linked up the characteristics of

the cultures inappropriately. Using all of the variables together, then, failed to produce a factor solution along the lines expected by Elazar.

An alternative approach is to treat the concepts separately. We created nine dummy variables—one for each of the responses in the three main culture items. Using k-means cluster analysis, we searched for three clusters in advance and used all nine variables (see Table 6).

#### Table 6 About Here

The results again provide a limited fit with Elazar's scheme. Cluster 1 is very individualistic; in this cluster are those who preferred efficient government and economic growth politics. On the other hand, while voting for self interest loads highest in this cluster, it really doesn't fit very well anywhere and voting the public interest and voting civic duty are actually higher in Cluster 1. Preference for efficient government ranks highly in Cluster 2, but this cluster also adds social justice and voting civic duty—which makes it sort of a moralistic cluster. Those believing government should reform society is most common here, but doesn't really score high anywhere. Cluster 3 is traditionalistic: maintain order and community values politics—but also voting the public interest.

#### Table 7 About Here

The clusters do seem to differ across regions. For example, the highest proportion of those identifying with the individualistic culture is in Metro Ohio and falls fairly steadily to SW Ohio (although it should be noted that the regions are not necessarily along a continuum). The Traditionalistic culture is less common, but about a quarter of citizens in the Southern regions of the state identify as such, while the fewest are in the industrial regions. The moralistic cluster, however doesn't work quite as well across

regions. The resulting pattern makes some sense: Elazar thought Ohio was Individualistic, but with moralistic and traditionalistic variations by region.

The solution remains unsatisfying however. As an alternative we decided to allow for more than three clusters. Elazar, after all, argued that while most regions usually had a dominant culture, at least two streams were often present in any one region, so it may be the case that the previous models were unsuccessful since they were specified to look for a “pure” version of each culture. In the following specification, we exclude the response for self-interested voting since it never fit with any of the clusters. This led to a four cluster solution, just using eight of the dummy variables.

#### Table 8 About Here

The resulting clusters are not as sharply defined, but are more intuitive. The first cluster is highly individualistic, but also includes respondents who selected public interest as their reason for voting. This is close to Elazar’s “individualist-moralistic” culture. We call this a “public interest individualistic” culture. Cluster 2 combined government pursuit of economic growth policies with maintaining order and voting civic duty. We label it an “individualistic-traditionalistic”, or “civic duty individualistic” culture. Cluster 3 is the most clearly moralistic, albeit lacking those who believed government should pursue social justice. Community values, however, ranks the highest in this cluster, although it does not load very high on any of the clusters. Cluster 4 is a combination of all three cultures: efficient government, social justice politics, and civic duty. We refer to this as the “Progressive” culture (as in the Progressive era, with its cult of efficiency, call to duty, and sense of justice).

### Table 9 About Here

This four cluster solution shows the most differentiation by region. The primarily individualistic culture is evidenced in Northeastern Ohio, which is exactly where Elazar found this culture to be prominent and also the area that Lieske finds to be the most “ethnic” which correlated with Elazar’s individualist culture. The culture is also evident in Appalachia, which Elazar also categorized as individualistic. We also see a large drop in this cluster from the Northeast to the Southwest. In contrast, the Civic Duty and Moralism clusters demonstrate the opposite pattern. The high level of moralists in the Southwest is somewhat consistent with Elazar’s categorization, while Lieske found this region was mostly “border” and “heartland” although some counties contain a “Germanic” cultural influence. The Progressive cluster does not work as well—few respondents in any region were classified as such; however, it may be that this is a benefit of using surveys to measure culture – a latent cultural influence may exist that demographic measures could not explain. Exactly what this cluster is measuring is one area that requires future research. In general, then, we find a regional pattern in which the Northeast and Southwest are at polar ends of Ohio’s cultural map. This is consistent with observations of voting patterns as well as demographic and economic characteristics; the north is more industrial, the central and southeast are more rural, and the Southwest is has a southern cultural influence.

### Figure 1 About Here

Political differences also appear. A plurality of all partisans are in the Public Interest cluster, but a majority of Democrats are classified as such compared to only about four in ten Republicans. Alternatively, only one in ten Democrats were classified in

the traditionalistic Civic Duty cluster compared to over a quarter of Republicans. Perhaps as a mark of the validity of the clustering, independents are more evenly distributed across the clusters and the proportions tended to fall in between Republicans and Democrats. Interestingly, the moralist cluster is well-represented across all partisan categories, as about one fifth of all partisans fall into this category.

Figure 2 About Here

A similar pattern emerges in terms of ideology. Only about one in ten self-identified liberals are in the first cluster compared to almost one in four self-identified conservatives. The most moderates are concentrated in the individualist cluster. Of course, the differences are not huge, and, after all, political culture is not really a substitute of partisanship or ideology. As an intermediate variable between political attitudes and behavior, political culture is about the *operation* of politics rather than its content. This explains why both high proportions of both liberal and conservatives are classified in the Moralistic culture (Cluster 3). This is one reason that region could have an independent impact on politics, once attitudes and demography is controlled: the residents of each region share distinctive views of the political process, including the proper role of government, the proper goals of politics, and appropriate reasons for voting.

Figure 3 About Here

We also find some evidence that the clusters explain other attitudes and behaviors as well, beyond overtly partisan and ideological ones. For example, in terms of issue importance, we find that as expected, in the individualist Public Interest cluster, over eight in ten respondents believed that economic issues are very important for their voting

decision, while slightly fewer in the Civic Duty and Moralistic cultures felt economic issues were very important and only about three of five classified in the Progressive culture agreed economic issues were very important for their voting decision. In contrast, the moralistic and Progressive cultural identifiers were most likely to see social issues as very important while only about three of every ten respondents in the Public Interest cluster felt social issues were very important.

## **Conclusions**

We have attempted to measure political culture at the individual level. Our efforts have met with some success, although we have been unable to clearly pinpoint the regions of Ohio. Our limited success is similar to Nordelli's (1990) findings that Elazar's cultural scheme did not translate into identifiable differences at the individual level. On the other hand, we did find evidence, using cluster analysis, that there are identifiable cultural patterns in the responses to the exploratory questions, however slight.

As a result, this analysis raises several questions. The first is whether the fault is on our end. That is, did we measure political culture well? Clearly, there is room for improvement. Future waves of the survey will allow for us to refine the items in the survey to correct for the lack of variance in responses (most notably parties and corruption). One way we plan to do this is by surveying on standard amateur-professional questions to replace our parties question. In addition, questions about political campaigns (especially given that this is an election year) should tap into citizen attitudes about politics, parties and elections, particularly towards campaign content (such as negative campaigns).

One possibility, of course, is that we need to revisit our regional breakdown. While scholars and observers of Ohio politics have an intuitive sense that there are five Ohio's, the exact breakdown of counties (and the definition of the regions) has never been clearly defined in a precise way that has been accepted as definitive. Perhaps using the clusters as a guide, we might discover that we have put some of the borderline counties in the wrong region—or maybe we need six or seven regions.

Alternatively, perhaps we have simply confirmed Nordell's finding that Elazar's scheme does not accurately describe citizen attitudes at the individual level. The fact that very few people agreed with all three elements of culture is interesting, with the voting question being the most problematic. Perhaps Elazar was wrong—or has become wrong—with regard to views of voting and their association with political culture. Such a conclusion is consistent with one of our basic arguments—political culture should be considered a dynamic rather than static concept. It may be more useful to try other conceptual measures, such as combining survey responses with demographic data (as in Liekse's more variable approach).

Moreover, other definitions of culture may be more pertinent. For example, as was frequently noted in the press, Hillary Clinton and Barak Obama appealed to very different parts of the Ohio population in the recent Ohio Democratic primary, although Clinton easily won the state. It may be that Ingehart's theory best describes modern Ohio politics, with post-material vs. material issue cleavage best capturing the divisions within the population. It may be that while the parties are divided along social-cultural issues (or a religious-secular dimension), internally a secular Democratic party is divided between material and post-material wings.

We plan to further explore these possibilities in the remaining three waves of the panel study. Our general conclusion is that there are distinct cultures within the state of Ohio and that survey research can identify these patterns among individuals. If we are successful, this measure could be widely applicable in other states and in other contexts. Such a survey based measure would help to provide clarity to the “red vs. blue” divide that popular culture is now so familiar with. Indeed, although one recent analysis finds that Americans have engaged in the “Big Sort” this sorting is not necessarily based on ethnic or racial divisions that are often used to identify regional cultures (Bishop and Cushing 2008). Demographic indicators may become less useful over time, as ethnic and regional patterns are subsumed by social and technological changes that are result in cleavages based more on factors such as income or education. A survey-based measure would greatly improve upon Elazar’s highly influential analysis by adding a measurement tool that allows researchers to capture the dynamics of American political and social life.



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**Table 1: Political Culture Survey Questions**

<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Moralist</b>	<b>Individualist</b>	<b>Traditionalist</b>
<b>“Government should focus on”</b>	Reforming society	Providing goods and services efficiently	Maintaining order
<b>“Politics should be primarily be about...”</b>	Social Justice	Economic Growth	Community values
<b>“Political Parties should focus on...”</b>	Promoting issues	Winning elections	Finding competent leaders
<b>“People should vote to...”</b>	Decide what is best for everyone	Get what they want from the government	Because it is their civic duty
<b>Agree/Disagree Questions</b>			
<b>“Moral principles are necessary in politics.”</b>	Strongly Agree		Strongly Disagree
<b>“Some corruption in government is normal.”</b>	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree
<b>“Uninformed people should not bother to vote.”</b>	Strongly Agree		Strongly Agree

Note: Cells are survey response options; placement indicates expected response for each culture.

**Table 2a: Responses to Political Culture Items**

<b>Statement/Response</b>	<b>Percent Agree</b>
<b>“Government should focus on”</b>	
Reforming society	20.0 (300)
Providing goods and services efficiently	50.4 (756)
Maintaining Order	27.3 (410)
<b>“Politics should be primarily be about...”</b>	
Social Justice	19.8 (296)
Economic Growth	57.8 (867)
Community values	18.8 (282)
<b>“Political Parties should focus on...”</b>	
Promoting issues	26.4 (397)
Winning elections	2.5 (28)
Finding competent leaders	70.0 (1050)
<b>“People should vote to...”</b>	
Decide what is best for everyone	52.3 (784)
Get what they want from the government	13.1 (196)
Because it is their civic duty	33.5 (503)

Cell entries are percentages selecting each response per question (n in parentheses). Data are weighted.

**Table 2b: Attitudes on Political System**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>No Opinion</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>“Moral principles are necessary in politics.”</b>	34.9 (523)	44.3 (664)	10.3 (154)	8.5 (127)	1.9 (28)	100.0 (1495)
<b>“Some corruption in government is normal.”</b>	4.4 (66)	18.1 (272)	7.8 (117)	38.8 (581)	30.6 (459)	100.0 (1496)
<b>“Uninformed people should not bother to vote.”</b>	12.1 (182)	28.5 (427)	8.7 (130)	38.8 (582)	11.7 (175)	100.0 (1496)

Percentages (n in parentheses). Data are weighted.

**Table 3: Factor Analysis of Political Culture Items**

<b>Cultural Indicator</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Statements about government	.073	<b>.617</b>	-.189
Statements about politics	-.097	<b>.693</b>	.192
Statements about parties	<b>.730</b>	-.154	-.081
Statements about voting	.217	.218	<b>.604</b>
Moral principles	<b>-.606</b>	-.319	-.050
Acceptance of corruption	.437	-.302	.383
Uninformed Voting	-.209	-.157	<b>.706</b>
Percent Variance Explained	17.9	16.6	14.6
<u>Eigenvalue</u>	<u>1.25</u>	<u>1.16</u>	<u>1.023</u>

**Note:** These entries are rotated factor correlations from a principle components factor analysis with varimax rotation.

**Table 4: Sub-Cultural Classification**

<b>Sub-Culture</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Moralistic</b>	<b>32.8</b> <b>(492)</b>	<b>44.7</b> <b>(670)</b>	<b>20.0</b> <b>(301)</b>	<b>2.4</b> <b>(37)</b>	<b>100.0</b> <b>(1499)</b>
<b>Individualistic</b>	<b>20.9</b> <b>(313)</b>	<b>41.7</b> <b>(625)</b>	<b>32.7</b> <b>(490)</b>	<b>4.7</b> <b>(71)</b>	<b>100.0</b> <b>(1499)</b>
<b>Traditionalist</b>	<b>39.9</b> <b>(598)</b>	<b>42.7</b> <b>(641)</b>	<b>15.1</b> <b>(227)</b>	<b>2.2</b> <b>(34)</b>	<b>100.0</b> <b>(1499)</b>

Note: Scale represents agreement with responses for each culture in the four questions measuring cultural attitudes (see Table 2a and 2b).

**Table 5: Factor Analysis**

<b>Cultural Indicator</b>	<b>Dimension 1</b>	<b>Dimension 2</b>	<b>Dimension 3</b>
Moralistic	.238	<b>-.958</b>	-.043
Individualistic	<b>.694</b>	<b>..684</b>	.042
Traditionalistic	<b>-.956</b>	.253	-.006
Moral Principles	.184	.168	<b>-.616</b>
Acceptance of corruption	.019	.100	<b>.736</b>
Uninformed Voting	.104	.067	<b>.399</b>
Percent Variance Explained	25.7	24.4	17.8
Eigenvalue	1.54	1.46	1.07

**Note:** These entries are rotated factor correlations from a principle components factor analysis with varimax rotation.



**Table 6: Cluster Analysis**

<b>Sub-Culture Indicator</b>	<b>Cluster 1</b>	<b>Cluster 2</b>	<b>Cluster 3</b>
<i>Individualist</i>			
Efficient Government	<b>0.611</b>	<b>0.600</b>	0.203
Economic Growth	<b>1.000</b>	0.000	0.254
Vote Self Interest	0.166	0.153	0.041
<i>Moralist</i>			
Reform Society	0.179	0.234	0.212
Social Justice	0.000	<b>0.750</b>	0.094
Vote Public Interest	0.439	0.327	<b>0.870</b>
<i>Traditionalist</i>			
Maintain Order	0.189	0.132	<b>0.571</b>
Community Values	0.000	0.171	<b>0.582</b>
Vote Civic Duty	0.379	<b>0.511</b>	0.088

Cell entries are means for each cluster for each of the nine dummy variables (where '1' indicates agreements or belief in the response, '0' indicates respondent did not select the response). Three cluster solution specified in advance.

**Table 7: Regional Classification of Respondents by Cluster**

<b>Culture</b>	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Northwest</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Southeast</b>	<b>Southwest</b>	<b>Total Classified</b>
Individualist	64.2	61.4	54.3	54.4	54.8	58.7
Moralist	16.2	17.9	20.8	21.3	18.7	18.7
Traditionalist	19.6	20.7	24.9	24.3	22.6	22.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Cells are percentage of individuals classified in each cluster for each Ohio region. Data are weighted.

**Table 8: Cluster Results and Sub-Cultural Responses**

	<b>Cluster 1 (Public Interest Individualist)</b>	<b>Cluster 2 (Civic Duty Individualist)</b>	<b>Cluster 3 (Moralist)</b>	<b>Cluster 4 (Progressive)</b>
<b>Sub-Cultural Type</b>	<i><b>Individualist- Moralist</b></i>	<i><b>Individualist- Traditionalist</b></i>	<i><b>Moralist</b></i>	<i><b>Mixed</b></i>
Efficient Government	<b>0.853</b>	0.000	0.000	<b>0.745</b>
Economic Growth	<b>0.792</b>	<b>0.668</b>	0.346	0.000
Reform Society	0.000	0.094	<b>0.732</b>	0.203
Social Justice	0.102	0.156	0.246	<b>0.559</b>
Vote Public Interest	<b>0.678</b>	0.000	<b>0.889</b>	0.000
Maintain Order	0.133	<b>0.883</b>	0.244	0.000
Community Values	0.094	0.156	<i>0.346</i>	<i>0.331</i>
Vote Civic Duty	0.221	<b>0.757</b>	0.000	<b>0.790</b>
N	730	264	326	179

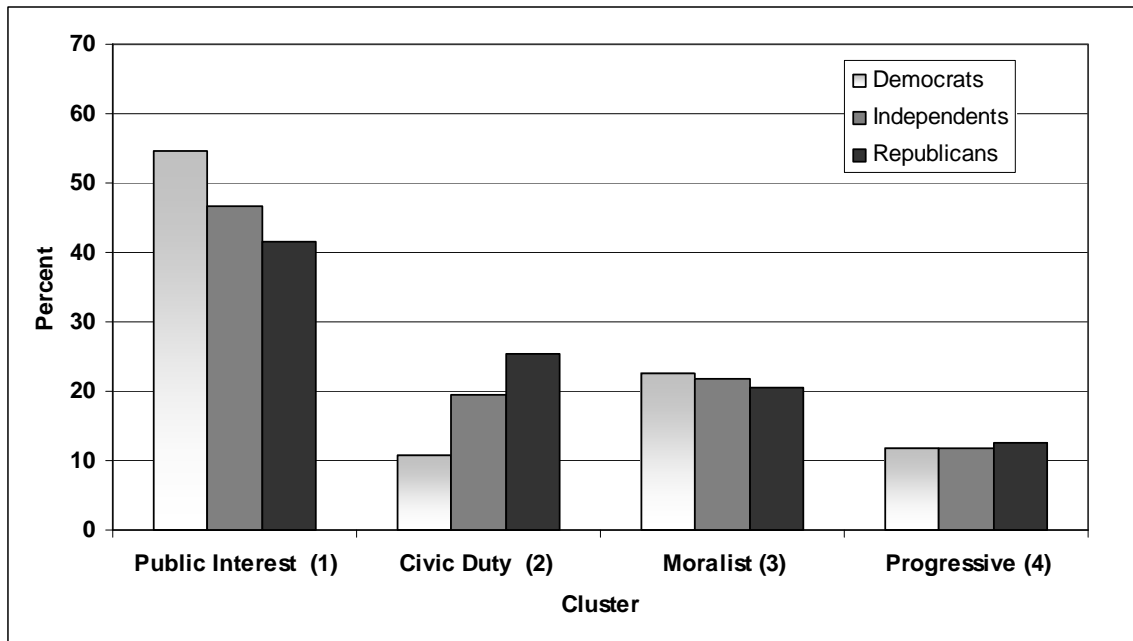
Cell entries are means for each cluster for each of the eight dummy variables (where '1' indicates agreements or belief in the response, '0' indicates respondent did not select the response).

**Table 9: Cultural Clusters by Ohio Regions**

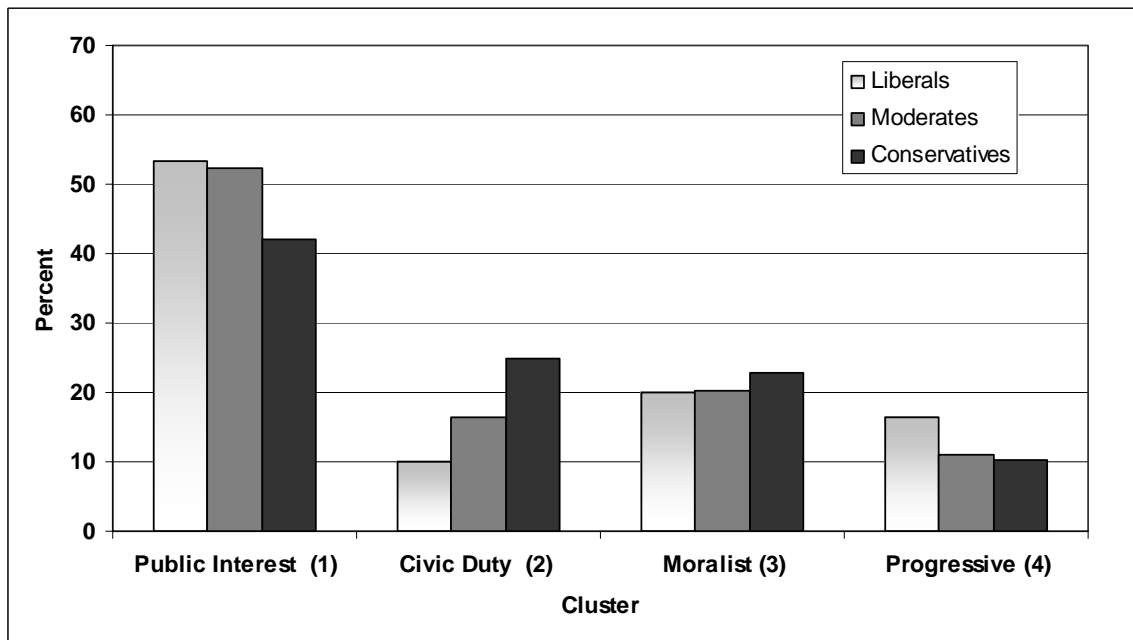
<b>Cluster</b>	<b>Northeast</b>	<b>Northwest</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Southeast</b>	<b>Southwest</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Public Interest (1)</b>	56.9 (291)	49.7 (92)	44.6 (120)	47.0 (79)	40.4 (148)	48.7 (730)
<b>Civic Duty (2)</b>	14.3 (73)	15.7 (29)	16.7 (45)	19.6 (33)	23.0 (84)	17.6 (264)
<b>Moralist (3)</b>	17.0 (87)	21.1 (39)	23.0 (62)	23.8 (40)	26.8 (98)	21.7 (326)
<b>Progressive (4)</b>	11.7 (60)	13.5 (25)	15.6 (42)	9.5 (16)	9.8 (36)	11.9 (179)
<b>Total</b>	100.0 (511)	100.0 (185)	100.0 (269)	100.0 (168)	100.0	100 (1499)

Note: Cells are percentage of individuals classified in each cluster for each Ohio region. Data are weighted.

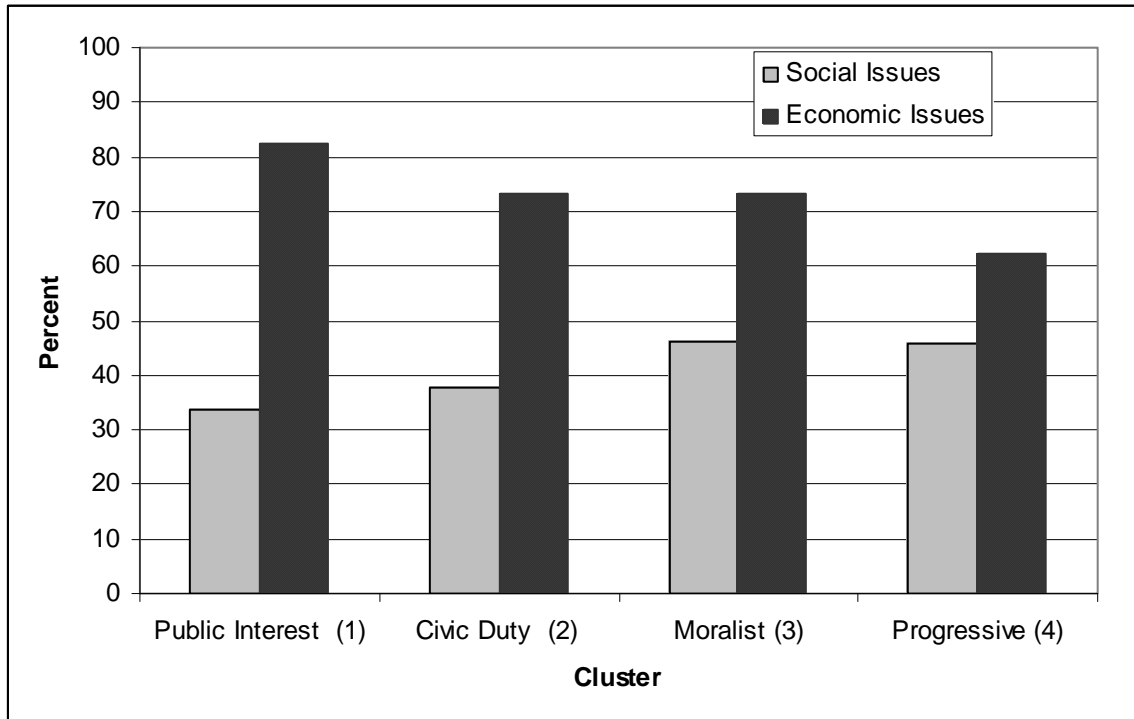
**Figure 1: Cultural Clusters and Ohio Partisanship**



**Figure 2: Cultural Clusters and Ohio Ideology**



**Figure3: Cultural Clusters and Issue Importance**



Note: Bars represent percentage of respondents in the sample stating that the issue is “very important”.