Political Identity and Religious Choice in the USA:

A Study in Reciprocal Causation

1972 -2004

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Abstract

Recent research in American political behaviour has examined at length the increased closeness of white evangelical Protestants to the Republican Party. These works tend to treat religion as an 'unmoved mover' with respect to political contexts, a stable individual attribute that shapes political concerns without being affected by the political process. By doing so, existing scholarship on religious politicization fails to consider two features that are central to this study: the idiosyncratic nature of religiosity in the US, and the autonomous influence of the political process on other social phenomena. The present study sets out to explore the transformation of religious life through its participation in the political process. Could this participation drive some believers closer to the church and others away from it? One expectation would be for believers that disagree with their church's politics to abandon the church. In a more general sense, what is examined is a reversal of the predominant fear among progressive liberal thinkers: instead of the common preoccupation of how religion can overwhelm liberal democratic politics, the focus here shifts to whether the political involvement of religious constituencies has effects – and of what kind - for religious developments.

The theoretical foundation for the thesis is a view of political identification as a form of social identity. Belonging to an ideological or partisan camp imposes a stereotype of that camp and what its members should do, which can extend to what they should do in the religious domain. The argument is examined empirically by modeling American National Election Study panel data. The analysis explores the previously untested possibility that religious and political factors are linked through reciprocal causation at the individual level. Conditional upon religious and temporal context, the findings highlight the role of ideological and partisan affiliations in generating changes in religious behaviour.

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List of Abbreviations

AMOS	Analysis of Moment Structures
A/NES	American National Election Study
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
df	Degrees of Freedom
FIML	Full-Information Maximum Likelihood
GSS	General Social Survey
GOP	Grand Old Party
IFI	Incremental Fit Index
MLE	Maximum Likelihood Estimation
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
RMSEA	Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SIT	Social Identity Theory
WWII	Second World War
YPSPS	Youth and Parent Socialization Panel Study

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In the aftermath of the 2004 US presidential election, media and pundits followed the demands of the 24-hour news cycle and searched to identify potential protagonists for the 2008 race. On the Republican side, Mitt Romney was considered one of the favourites, a successful businessman and governor. One of the intriguing features of a Romney candidacy was whether his Mormonism would become a liability on the campaign trail. The main component in the GOP base, white evangelical Protestants, were expected to feel uncomfortable with a Mormon candidate.[1]

Some years later, in the run up to the primaries for the 2008 presidential election, criticism appeared in the coverage of Romney's campaign. His Mormon background was by now an issue for most commentators, as Catholicism was a question for John F. Kennedy a half century before. In this instance, criticism did not focus on exotic bits of the Mormon faith or on the compatibility between religious doctrine and the nation's pragmatic interests or even on the candidate's reluctance to discuss his faith. This particular criticism regarded a relatively ignored by-product of political 'God talk': a tendency to water down and misrepresent dogmatic elements of faith so as to make it more appealing – or to put it better, less discouraging - to the key evangelic constituency. This was no usual flip-flopping on some policy issue - it was adjusting religion to fit the needs of partisan politics:

[1] 'Mitt Romney's Evangelical Problem' by Amy Sullivan, *The Washington Monthly*, September 2005.

> ...during an interview earlier this year with George Stephanopoulos, the presidential candidate disputed the suggestion that Christ would someday return to the United States rather than the Middle East. Mormons, he said, believe "that the Messiah will come to Jerusalem. ... It's the same as the other Christian tradition." This was both technically correct and completely misleading: The church's position is that, while Christ will indeed appear at the Mount of Olives, he will also build a new Jerusalem in Jackson County, Missouri, which will serve as the seat of his 1,000-year reign on Earth. Romney had conveniently neglected to mention this part of his church's doctrine.[2]

Romney's case could be treated as an extreme example of trademark elite cynicism. A politician was caught presenting an altered description of his faith due to political considerations – in this case, the aim was to avoid alienating the crucial evangelical vote. Could this 'adjustment' hold any similarity to how the general public experiences religion? This thesis will argue and provide supporting evidence for a similar process taking place at the mass level, although not as intentionally as in Romney's case: the shaping of religious commitment by political concerns.

The argument

The present thesis contributes to the study of the relationship between white evangelical Protestants and the GOP in recent decades. Existing research has produced a vast output of empirical evidence, which testifies that the cross-sectional link between individual religiosity and political behaviour has become stronger. White evangelicals comprise one-quarter of eligible voters and are now considered a necessary pillar in election victories for the Republican Party, while seculars are equally prominent in the Democratic base. Apart

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[2] 'Latter-Day Skeptics' by Josh Patashnik, *The New Republic*, November 20, 2007.

from its electoral implications, what further justifies academic attention to the phenomenon is that it takes place contrary to the expectations of secularization theory. Based on the postulation that advancing modernity drives religiosity statistics downwards, secularization theory posits that religion should become less relevant both politically and personally in the US. We should then witness a weakening link between religious variables and political variables in the American case and not the situation we witness today.

This thesis attempts to provide one explanation of why religion seems to remain relevant for American politics. To do so, it reverses the question asked to date. As the Romney opening to this chapter implied, the discussion shifts to the effects of politicization for religion. Instead of taking religion for granted and examining its consequences for politics, this study asks whether religion becomes stronger or weaker *because of* its involvement with partisan politics.

In doing so, my argument pursues a nuanced direction in the study of the link between social groups and political groups. This approach stresses the framing role of politics in presenting social and political features as 'naturally' connected: for instance, evangelical Protestantism and Republicanism (Sartori 1969; Przeworksi and Sprague 1986; Heath, Jowell and Curtice 1985; Kriesi 1998). This logic of equivalence can have a range of consequences, typically examined at the political arena – for example, the attraction of religious constituencies by political parties. However, the approach adopted here indicates that the products of the infusion of religion into politics are not restricted to the electoral realm, but can transform religion into a secular/political phenomenon. In the case of individual religiosity, one instance of this effect should be evident when Democratic members of a church with prominent Republican leanings minimize their exposure to the church. Avoiding assumptions on the 'objective' and stable nature of religiosity therefore, the influence of religious phenomena on political behaviour - a convention adopted by most

political scientists – is supplemented by a reverse effect, whereby politicization transforms the individual religious experience. This is the 'political religion' hypothesis.[3]

The social-psychological mechanism that supports the hypothesized phenomenon at the individual level rests on social identity theory (Green, Palmquist and Schickler 2002; Greene 2002, 2004; Greene, Jackson and Saunders 2008). Social identity theory uses psychological group membership as a cause of behavioural and attitudinal conformity among group members. My use of the theory applies it in a novel way. Instead of focusing on the conformity of religious group members as expressed in political behaviour, my attention is on how political group members follow group norms regarding religious behaviour. This explains why Democrats would be under pressure to lower their exposure to and/or abandon churches that are too closely connected to the GOP and *vice versa* for Republicans.

My analyses use panel data from the Michigan/American National Election Study (ANES) pool, which both precede and overlap with the religiously charged eras of the mid-1990s and early 2000s. Drawing on the political behaviour literature, particularly on methodological advances regarding the exogeneity of party identification *vis-à-vis* other political concerns, a series of models tests competing expectations.

The existing research framework

The empirical political science literature has made little attempt to evaluate the possibility of this religious transformation in the context of the recent cycle of religious politicization in the US. To be fair, the nexus between religion and politics in violent and non-violent

[3] A note on style is required at this point. The summary term 'political religion' does not mean that religious choice is purely based on political considerations. The reader should notice that the *ceteris paribus* condition is always implied when the term appears.

conflicts tends to generate global scholarly and popular attention. American society in particular serves as a proverbial case, where the peaceful but vocal participation of religious populations in the political process is now widely considered an endemic phenomenon (Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Green, Rozell and Wilcox 2003). The relationship has been identified as a cleavage, a concept describing the translation of objective social divisions into enduring political conflicts with original reference to the formation of West European party systems (Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

The religious cleavage has garnered ample scholarly consideration as the engine in the 'red vs. blue' description of ideological and partisan polarization in the US in recent decades. However, it is surprising that research has tended to probe the role of religion in American politics relative only to the impact of 'stable' religious factors on political behaviour. This bottom-up, sociological interpretation of politics expects that exogenous socio-religious processes (e.g. exposure to church contexts) shape political processes (e.g. partisanship), and accounts for relevant trends accordingly. All in all, there is very limited academic concern about what happens to religious communities and individuals once they are exposed to electoral politics.

Recent studies in this tradition have debated the drift of mainline Protestants away from the Republican Party and the relative stability of Catholic support for the Democrats. Above all, scholarship has located the most consequential phenomenon for electoral politics in the entry of white evangelical Protestants into the Republican base in the 1980s and their transformation into an efficient political machine in the 1990s and 2000s (Moen 1994; Guth, Green, Smidt, Kellstedt and Poloma 1997; Layman 1997, 2001; Manza and Brooks 1999; Bolzendahl and Brooks 2005). It is now commonplace to speak about the Republican Party as the 'God Party' in American politics, and about a 'God Gap' between the two major parties (Keeter 2006). This school of thought tends to interpret the move of

evangelicals towards the GOP as the mobilization of an 'objective' and exogenous religion towards a political outcome.

The opposite expectation (political pressures on individual religiosity) is rarely if ever examined. Michael Hout and Claude Fischer's sociological study (2002) is to my knowledge the only published quantitative effort that attempts to explore this expectation. Their research centres on apostasy, i.e. the phenomenon of Christians dropping out of church. The authors argue that the conservative religious politicization caused the following backlash in the 1990s: ideologically liberal and moderate Christians abandoned conservative denominations. Hout and Fischer interpret part of this movement as a reaction against the Christian Right's political agenda, and the prominent place occupied by conservative Protestantism in GOP ranks (2002, pp. 181, 185). The evangelical movement towards Republicanism is not simply a product of evangelicals following pro-Republican church cues (the conventional assumption), but also of Democrats and liberals abandoning faith due to its politicization towards the conservative cause. If political 'dissidents' leave the faith, the boundaries of the generic evangelical community change because of political grievances by community members. This is the effect of politics on individual religiosity and the religious community.

In a more general sense, the softening of the sacred when put in the service of the secular purposes of politics is not a discovery of the present thesis, but a persistent concern in a variety of fields outside political behaviour research. It has already been a fear of the Christian Realism School since the 1950s and 1960s (for a historical overview, see Thompson 1988). This Protestant movement warned against the use of religion for legitimizing political goals, since it saw the inherent paradox in mixing absolute truths with the bargaining process and relativism of politics. Comparative analysis has identified an analogous development in the rise of European Christian Democracy (Kalyvas 1996).

According to this approach, religious mobilization into politics does not simply awaken an already existing religious identity; instead, it assorts together religious, political, social and economic concerns into a politically reconstructed religious identity. Finally, Bagge Laustsen and Waever's (2000, p. 726) theoretical work on the securitization of religion also expects this potential: 'by using religion for political gains one denies the transcendence of the divine call...religious behaviour stops being driven by, for instance, the acknowledgment of sin...and becomes political behaviour'.

The public role of American religion

The observation that, despite the separation of state and church institutions, religion in the United States is somehow closely related to secular-political institutions is an old one. With the fresh, penetrating perspective of a non-American, Alexis de Tocqueville was perhaps the first to notice the central role of generic religion for democratic citizenship in America. He famously stressed the importance of religious beliefs and voluntary associations outside religious institutions as an antidote to American individualism and hence as a condition for a liberal, egalitarian society (1945; see similar claims in Weber 1958; Herberg 1955; Marty 1976; Cristi 2001). This focus on the national function of American religiosity is a constant theme in most theory and research (Roof and Hadaway 1979; Demerath 1998; Putnam 2001).

The most imaginative elaboration of this observation comes from sociologist Robert Bellah's elusive 'civil religion' concept (1967; see also Richey and Jones 1974; Gehrig 1979). While many specialised definitions are offered, there is agreement on two broad elements defining the concept. First, civil religion is an expression of national culture and values. It is not merely an application of individual piety, or devotion to God, or even affiliation with a particular ethnic group. Second, the rituals of this public theology are not restricted within the church, but expand towards Independence Day celebrations, and the

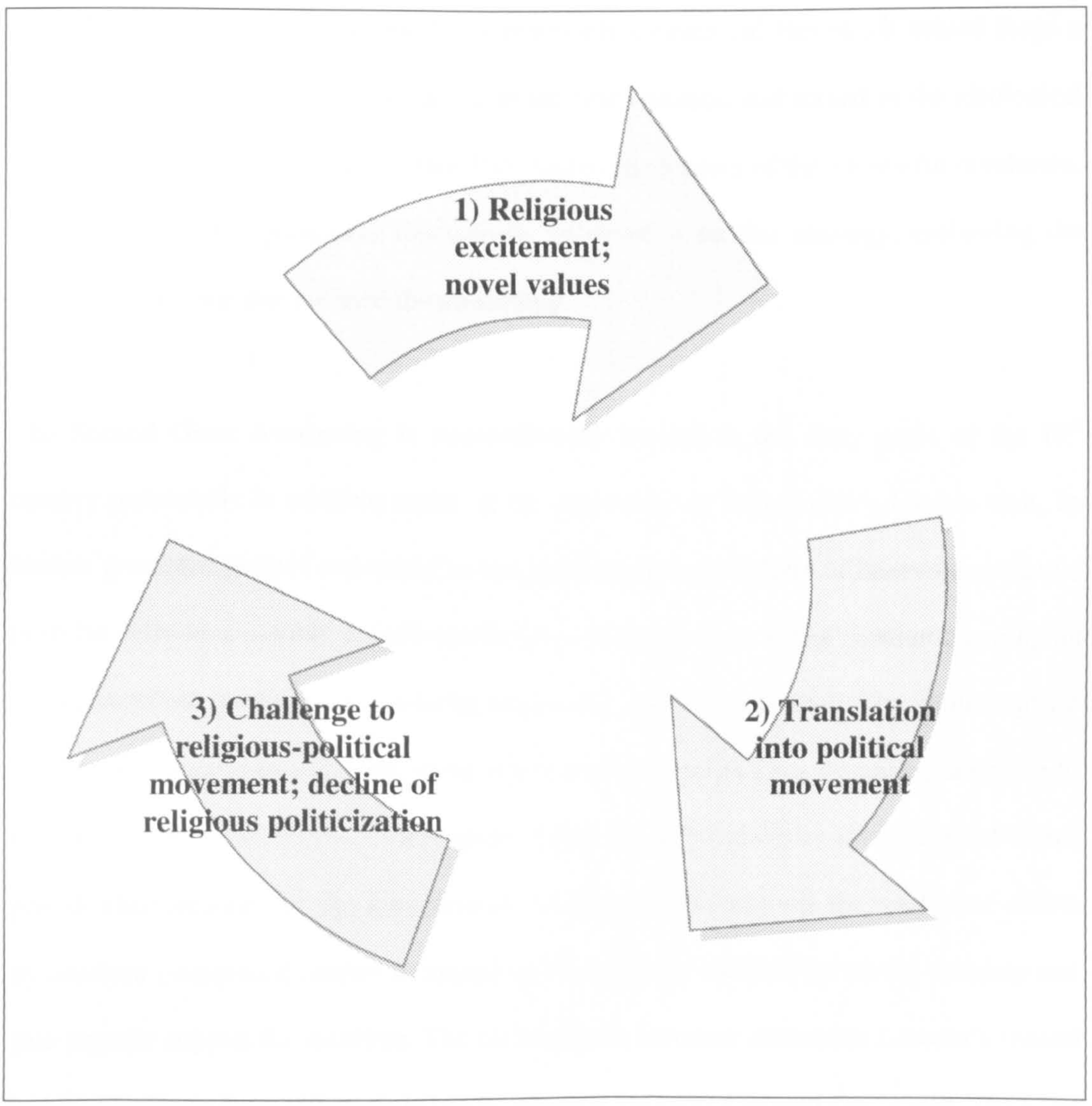
inauguration of a new president (the original work used as its primary source Kennedy's inaugural speech; see Bellah 1967). The office of president is the focal point for the consolidation of civil religion: citizens see the president as a 'high priest', who provides guidance in times of suffering (Pierard and Linder 1988).

This 'natural melding of religion and nationhood' (Demerath 1998, p. 30) provides one explanation for the high ranking of the US in crossnational religiosity statistics, and for the important role of religion in the public sphere. Yet, this public role has not been constant in American history. The political impact of the religious factor belongs to a long historical chain of American Protestant activity that oscillates approximately every 100 years. By examining the current phase in religious politicization within this larger historical framework, we are better able to understand its temporary nature, and avoid treating the role of religion as endemic in American electoral politics. What is of great concern here and also transcends academic interest is of course to find if, when and how religious politicization ends. So, there is more to my empirical investigation of a few decades of American political behaviour than a closer look at the period between 1972 and 2004, in that it focuses on one of the major themes in American society: the rise and more importantly, the subsequent downfall of the religious factor in the political arena.

According to the 'great awakenings' thesis, a popular historiographical heuristic, religious politicization takes place periodically and can have a degree of predictability in its evolution and destination (McLoughlin 1979; Hammond 1979; Fogel 2000). The religious awakenings thesis sees three phases in the involvement of religion with social and political change (see Figure 1.1). First appears a revival of religious feeling - often with an ecstatic character - as an answer to times of social, economic or moral change and crisis. This revival generally emphasizes fresh ethical and moral values. Second, there is the diffusion of those values into a social movement and their expression in the electoral arena. All

religious revivals lead to a major political reform programme. The last phase of the cycle involves a negative reaction towards the ethics expressed in the revival, and then the decline of the political formation that has sprung from this revival. In order to provide an understanding of how they appear, and create a benchmark for assessing the current historical moment, I will briefly review the historical expression of religious awakenings so far.

Figure 1.1: The religious-political cycle



Researchers in the field identify four awakening periods in American history that succeed each other approximately every three generations (see overview in Fogel 2000). There are however no clear dividing lines that establish when one awakening ends and when another begins. The revival phase of the First Great Awakening emerged on American soil in the first half of the 18th century as a reflection of the Puritan Revolution in England in the 17th century. Expressed in developments such as the travelling preacher and an aversion towards church hierarchy, it encouraged a reaction against English control and the Anglican Church in the second half of that century. This was a period when American Protestantism moved away from Calvinism and obtained a distinctively evangelical flavour. It helped forge a sense of common cultural independence in the first colonies, and served as the ideological preparation to the Revolutionary War. Eventually, the leaders of the successful revolution, products of the Enlightenment themselves, promoted a secular ideology, eschewing the theological fervour that initiated the awakening.

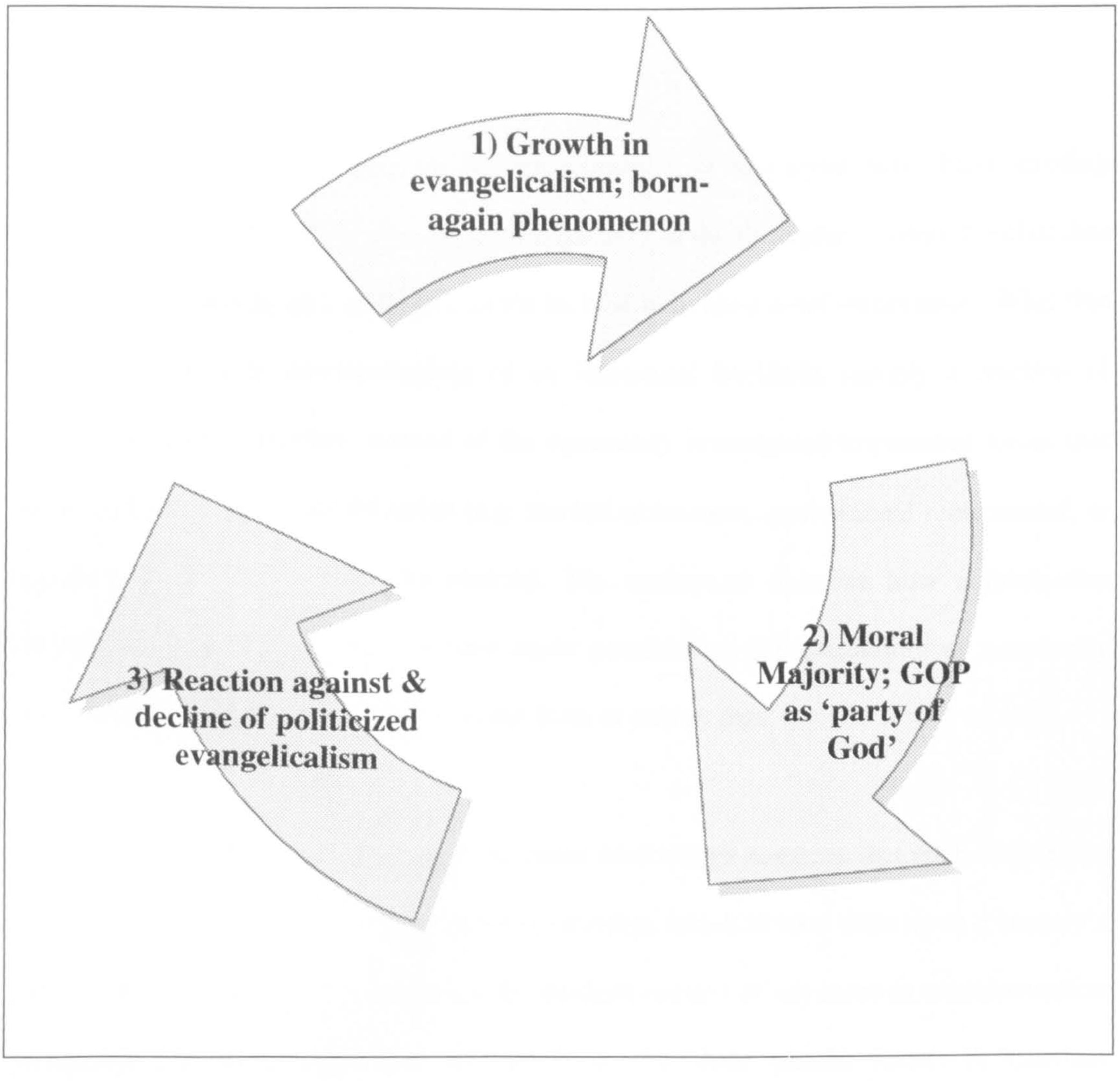
The Second Great Awakening is conventionally located in the early years of the 19th century particularly in northern states, at the same time as Tocqueville's historic visit. Its leaders promoted pietism and social action, millennialism, a culture of benevolence, and a push for reforming society towards perfection. They attacked 'sinful' institutions ranging from alcoholism, gambling, and dancing to slavery, and even masonry. The political phase of the awakening (1840-70) saw many states introduce strict laws regarding licensing to sell alcohol. Women's suffrage and universal primary education were also promoted in this period. Most importantly, the formation of the Republican Party was the product of efforts by northern evangelical leaders to appeal to the religious compassion of the citizenry and gain popular support for abolition. The civil religion literature often cites Lincoln's second inaugural address from this period (1865), which is structured around God's will. The Civil War eventually settled and defused the slavery issue, but the old activist leaders had exited the scene, with the new generation of leaders having different concerns.

The revivalist phase of the Third Great Awakening (1890-1930) witnessed a schism in the Protestant churches over the causes of the urban crisis in American cities, and the theory of evolution. The two sides represented the battle between traditionalism and modernism, with the main questions being those of biblical literalism and the compatibility of evolution with scripture. The Social Gospel movement belongs to the modernist tradition that emerged from this split. It fought for a transformation of religious doctrine that called for government intervention to amend social problems, instead of viewing them as products of personal sin. The ultimate goal was to 'make the world a fit place for the imminent return of Christ' (quoted in Fogel 2000, p. 110). The New Deal and the introduction of welfare and labour reforms in the 1930s and 1940s, and the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, with the participation of the National Council of Churches, are the direct political offspring of this religious revival. These liberal reforms however also led to the widespread conservative backlash of the 1970s, and to the related emergence of religious conservative movements.

Where the Third Great Awakening battled with the problems of a modern industrial society, the currently unfolding Fourth Great Awakening emphasizes more spiritual concerns (see Figure 1.2). The late 1960s saw an increase in service attendance to conservative evangelical churches, the growth in the number of Christians reporting born-again status, and declining membership in mainline denominations. The rise of the Moral Majority in 1979 and of the more efficient Christian Coalition in 1990 gave an organized expression to conservative theological support for pro-life causes, the traditional family structure, school prayer and the fight against pornography. Incentives for the mobilization of these religious populations abound in this era, when the state forcefully attempted to regulate matters of particular salience to religious individuals. Supreme Court decisions in this period include *Engel v. Vitale* in 1962 on school prayer and the notorious *Roe v. Wade*

in 1973 on abortion. The ideological movement found expression through the Republican Party, which still reaped the fruits of this connection in the 2006 mid-term elections, and is expected to benefit from it again in the 2008 race (Green 2008). The third phase of the awakening –the backlash against religious politicization – remains an ongoing question.

Figure 1.2: The current religious-political cycle



All in all, a pattern of religious renewal and stagnation seems to be recurring, which brings tangible political outcomes. Religious enthusiasm produces an idealistic urge to change society (first phase), which in turn finds expression in politics and sometimes in war (second phase). In the last phase, the radical political expression of the religious revival is countered by a combination of processes. These processes range from general historical conditions (for instance, the Enlightenment in the First Great Awakening) to generational replacement (the Second Great Awakening), and opposing social movements (the Third Great Awakening).

There are two updates to the awakenings construct as employed here. First, existing research has downplayed the possibility of a reaction in the third phase within the churches that head the awakening, mainly due to the lack of individual-level information. What this thesis contributes is an examination of an intramural backlash, namely a reaction of individuals *within* churches, instead of the commonly investigated impersonal forces that move against religious politicization (e.g. the Enlightenment, generational replacement, or opposing movements *outside* the church). The attempt to examine how politicization affects members of the church is only made possible by the availability of temporally relevant individual-level information in the form of survey data.

Second, the original conceptualization of great awakenings suggests that each step in the cycle takes approximately one generation to develop, which in total adds up to a century's duration for each awakening. However, the modern context of advances in communication technology arguably makes the succession of the three phases faster. A constant information cycle reaching better educated mass audiences through electronic sources, including news bulletins and tele-evangelism, suggests that the transition from religious upheaval to political manifestation and then to backlash should be speedier in the late 20th and early 21st century than in previous eras of slower information circulation.

To sum up, the core expectation in this thesis is that the politically charged American religious landscape - in this historical moment I refer to the close association in the public mind of evangelical Protestants with social conservatives and the Republican Party - can lead individuals to react by altering their religious circumstances, for example, church membership and attendance. Religious politicization creates the potential to drive believers away from certain churches and – eventually - closer to others or away from organized religion altogether (see reaction against religious politicization in stage three of Figure 1.2). One plausible expression of this process would be Democratic identifiers and liberals abandoning evangelical churches.

The importance of studying the phenomenon

This research aims to update three distinct fields of social science. First, it suggests that the sociology of religion should revise its explanations of individual religiosity and affiliation trends, which so far have concentrated on non-political factors. Common phenomena like denominational switching, religious apostasy, loss of faith, and the growth of certain denominations have been attributed to intergenerational educational differences, geographic mobility, marrying outside the church, gender, differential fertility rates and other 'hard' structural causes (Roof and McKinney 1987; Sherkat 1991; Hout, Greeley and Wilde 2001). Politics has been notably absent as an explanation of the dynamics of religious commitment. This thesis provides evidence that the dynamics of American religion are partly driven by developments in the political environment.

Second, the findings of this research also inform political science. Quantitative studies of religious politicization tend to assume that religion is exogenous to the political environment, i.e. that it can shape it without being affected by it. Religious variables are treated as explanations of political developments, while political developments are not seen

as able to shape these religious forces (Manza and Brooks 1999). It will be argued however that the entrance of religion into the political arena subjects faith to political pressures. A politicized religion can attract believers that agree with its politics, but can also have adverse effects for believers that disagree with its politics. If this happens, we should expect religious groups to become even more politically homogenous. In the short term, this polarization would exacerbate notions of a 'culture war' phenomenon.[4] In the same vein, this research also challenges the exaggerated role that religious elites supposedly play in shaping congregants' political preferences and enforcing attitudinal conformity within the church. After all, homogeneity can be the product of a political sorting process within churches and not simply a product of the pulpit.

Third, using survey data this research provides rigorous support for the much debated 'great awakenings' concept, and especially for the political expression of the Fourth Great Awakening (stage 2 and especially stage 3). Critics of the concept mainly argue for a linear instead of a cyclical character of the religious impact in the political arena (e.g. Smith 1957; Barkun 1985). To date, answers to this debate have typically resorted to describing the aggregate-level picture (see Hammond 1974, 1979). The present contribution fills this weakness in the awakenings construct by describing individual-level processes of backlash at the third phase. Survey evidence presented here shows that the politicization of American evangelicalism since the 1970s has followed predictable steps. The periodic nature of the framework applied also allows speculation concerning future developments. Based on the presence of a cyclical pattern, we can anticipate that the vocal mobilization of conservative Protestants in the GOP base will not persist as an endemic feature of American politics.

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[4] For the longer-term trend, see the awakening thesis.

Analytic strategy and thesis outline

The phenomenon examined in this thesis has implications for the type of methodology employed. I use statistical analyses of survey data for the following reasons. First, the existing body of knowledge that examines the political impact of religion at the individual level is mostly quantitative. The same applies to the sociological scholarship that investigates the dynamics of religiosity in the US. Reliance and contribution to the above fields will be made possible by resorting to quantitative methods. Second, quantification facilitates replication of findings with different samples, with future data, and in cross-national perspective. Third, the use of nationally representative samples upholds the generalizability of research outcomes. Finally, the rigorous framework of quantitative analysis provides higher precision in theory testing by explicitly modeling competing expectations. It is also convenient for statistically isolating the impact of each causal factor in a complex environment of confounding influences.

On the other hand, secondary analysis of quantitative data poses a series of obstacles. The design teams of the surveys used here had different pursuits, often incompatible with the expectation of this thesis (i.e. the expectation of an unstable religion shaped by political concerns). Valuable questions may be missing from certain critical years, while other questions may not have been asked in a consistent form. Also, questions that have been found to be the most valid operational measures of certain theoretical constructs may be absent altogether from the datasets. This is an inevitable risk however when analysis needs to go back in time and resort to previously collected information.

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapters 2 and 3 justify the selection of the US as a case study. Chapter 2 provides a detailed discussion of the role of religion in American society. It offers a critical take on existing literature regarding the supposedly exogenous role of faith in American politics. This establishes the dynamic character of American faith during

advanced modernity, opening thus the potential for its shaping by political concerns. Chapter 3 continues with a historical narrative of how we came to the emergence of the evangelical bloc in the Republican electoral base. This discussion identifies the temporal and social context in which the 'political religion' phenomenon is expected to emerge.

Chapter 4 sets out the theoretical foundation of the argument that motivates the empirical analysis. It builds on the awakenings abstraction mentioned in the introduction by drawing a picture of the micro-mechanics taking place during the politicization of religion, with reference to post-WWII American society. The theoretical basis comes from a top-down version of cleavage theory, one that focuses on politicization as a force in its own right and not simply as a reflection of socio-structural developments. The specific mechanism that produces the politicization effect on religiosity is provided by social identity theory and self-categorization. Parallel theoretical explanations of the same phenomenon are also considered. The discussion is summarized in the form of a general hypothesis, whereby partisan and ideological concerns are expected to shape individual church-going and denominational affiliation. To underline the gap in the field, the chapter closes with a review of how empirical studies have consistently ignored the phenomenon.

Chapter 5 sketches the formal specification of the models and the measures used in the empirical investigation. A description of the datasets and main variables used is followed by the presentation of two models that best capture the processes at the heart of the hypothesized relationships: one examining partisan and ideological pressures on individual church attendance, and another examining such pressures on affiliation with religious traditions. The chapter also contains a discussion of methodological features of the model, chosen from a range of alternatives, and the problem of heterogeneity, which calls for the separate investigation of causal relationships across different social contexts.

Chapter 6 presents results from the first model. This examines how the politicization of a religious environment can lead members with dissenting political affiliations to minimize their exposure to the environment. At the same time, politicization can lead members with compatible political affiliations to increase their exposure to the religious environment. Results indicate that members of the most politicized religious traditions do tend to adjust their religious exposure based on partisan and ideological concerns. The effect is taken as confirmation of the hypothesized phenomenon, and helps us understand the ignored role of the political process in increasing political homogeneity within religious communities.

Chapter 7 presents findings from the second model. This evaluates whether political concerns can eventually lead some members of the politicized church to drop out altogether. Due to limitations with the way the data was collected, this analysis also serves to underline problems in the design of existing surveys. Despite the limited availability of useful data sources to evaluate this more ambitious expression of the political religion phenomenon, findings in this chapter concur with the evidence discussed in Chapter 6. These results update our understanding of the variety of forces that emerge in reaction to religious politicization.

Finally, Chapter 8 summarizes and evaluates the importance of the empirical results. It discusses limitations of the analyses, implications for theory, methodology, and for the American political and religious landscape, and possible directions for future research. It argues that the study provides further support to a top-down understanding of cleavage theory, highlighting the role of the political process in shaping other aspects of social life - in this case, a voluntary religious experience. Methodologically, it proposes a break with previous political research, by turning the spotlight on religious dependent variables. Finally, it also suggests that the political voice of the religious constituency at the centre of

contemporary American politics will soon lower its volume, in a move to protect the religious experience from political influences.

Chapter 2

The US as a critical case in the study of religious politicization

This thesis examines the transformation of religion when it enters the political arena. Before discussing existing literature and theory, the present chapter justifies the selection of the United States as a critical case study for investigation. The identification of religious explanations of political behaviour - and as argued here of political explanations of individual religiosity - should be most likely to emerge in an environment where the religious sphere is vibrant (i.e. religion is relevant in society), and religious populations actively pursue their interests in the political arena. In this chapter, I present the American case and determine that these features are present in the period of interest.

I first talk about religiosity and its place in present day American culture. This discussion involves the competition among churches for believers, which is facilitated by the pluralistic religious landscape in the US. It also entails an examination of the choice-oriented nature of individual religious experience. I then examine the population of interest to my study by mapping the emergence of a new religious bloc in the American political scene in the post-WWII era: evangelical Protestants. Their involvement in politics is viewed as a product of bottom-up forces (rising social standing, which provided resources for civic engagement) and top-down choices (e.g. state legislation).

Finally, I explicate how this involvement was first expressed in connection with conservative concerns during the early 1970s. This is the crucial moment for the

appearance of evangelical Protestants in politics. A step-by-step narrative of how their ideological mobilization in the 1970s found expression in the partisan conflict between Democrats and Republicans appears in the following chapter.

2.1. Secularization theory and the American exception

Discussions of the nature of American religiosity usually begin with secularization theory and its failure to accommodate the American case (see for example Ladd 1986). This analytic framework will be used here to highlight the transformation of religion in modern America. The approach adopted expects that the central causal force in secularization theory, i.e. societal modernization, is not necessarily translated into a decline in the indicators of individual religiosity (for example, church attendance), but into a decline of religious authority over the individual. This transformed religion is the agent that participates in the awakenings cycle and creates phenomena often described as culture wars and fundamentalism, which typically 'objectify' religion and ignore its potential transformation in the political arena.

A comprehensive definition of secularization and its historical manifestations remains an ongoing debate. The straw-man version of the theory simply anticipates that modernization will herald the decay of religious attendance, belief and membership. Developments such as the cognitive mobilization of mass publics and the openness of physical, cultural and information networks create a pluralistic landscape. Churches are likely to experience negative consequences in this new environment, where competing systems of norms and meanings undermine fixed certainties, including the given nature of religion (Berger 1967).

Empirically, this narrow expectation normally rests on inspecting comparative trends in the main indicators of faith: believing, behaving and belonging (for example, see Greeley 2003). Using these indicators of religiosity, the phenomena posited by secularization theory

are not taking place in countries like the US, where advanced modernity – as reflected in scientific advance, increasing affluence and educational attainment, and extended physical mobility - coexists with high levels of religious commitment (Greeley 1989; Hunter 1991; Iannaccone 1991; Dobbelaere 1999).

Many sociologists insist that the apparently high piety of the American public does not preclude the possibility of a latent religious transformation (e.g. Luckmann 1967, pp. 36-37). A mere comparison of crossnational levels of surface devotion does not reveal much on deeper developments (Demerath 1998; Yamane 1997). In an attempt to accommodate the high levels of religious commitment and religious politicization in the US, more nuanced perspectives of secularization theory identify a much more complicated process (Chaves 1994; Yamane 1997; Dobbelaere 1999, 2002).[5] The transformation process is often seen as non-linear, i.e. not leading to the eventual demise of faith in modern society.

This revised point of view expects the progression of modernity to affect religion at three interrelated levels: 1) the societal (Luckmann 1967; Martin 1978); 2) the organizational (Berger 1967; Luckmann 1967); and 3) the individual level (Luckmann 1967; Wilson 1976). Some of the main developments at each level are:

1. *Institutional differentiation*: social spheres such as education, government, and the military become increasingly autonomous from the sacred canopy of the church, and seek legitimacy from sources other than God, functioning according to non-metaphysical criteria: science, rationality, productivity and profit. This differentiation is the first act in the distancing of society from

[5] Norris and Inglehart's (2004) 'secure secularization' thesis accounts for the American outlier, yet their use of theory sticks with the traditional reading. They do however switch levels of analysis and go beyond a treatment of each country as a homogenous context.

religious control, with repercussions for the church and the individual alike. It does not rule out a backlash from religious actors.

2. *Internal transformation of organized religion due to competition with other religions and secular pressures*: modern churches tend to abandon mysticism and a dogmatic interpretation of reality; adjusting to an era of rationality and pluralism, they switch to satisfying congregants' needs, and emerge as providers of non-spiritual products (see internal secularization in Luckmann 1967; Berger 1967).

3. *Declining church authority over the individual*: phenomena appear such as religious exogamy, denominational mobility, and the emergence of religious belief systems constructed outside Church control. Religion eventually becomes a matter of choice.

Sociology of religion takes for granted the first aspect of secularization in the US, namely institutional differentiation, since the absence of an established religion and the separation between state and church form part of the founding act of the Republic. With this societal-level key process in place, researchers have attempted to identify the two remaining expectations of the theory in order to assess whether modern American society fits the profile described in this paradigm.

My strategy in this section will be to examine internal secularization and the decline of religious authority on the individual. These general themes are by no means exhaustive of the processes described by secularization theory. For reasons of parsimony, I focus on these

because they open up the possibility of the transformation of individual commitment due to political exposure.[6]

The two themes addressed here indicate that churches and individuals alike approach faith in a more secular way than high religiosity statistics reveal. By secular I mean that the European paradigm of dealing with religious commitment as an inherited individual attribute - largely immune to ongoing experiences of social and political events - appears to be a heroic assumption in the American case. The following exposition will serve as the prelude to the expectation proposed in Chapter 4: surface religiosity carries an incorporated baggage of political concerns.

Internal secularization

Economic theory describes the American case as a competition among churches for members (supply) and the active choice that religiosity represents for Americans (demand) (Stark and Bainbridge 1985; Finke and Stark 1992; Warner 1993; Iannacone 1998). Religious economics treats churches as suppliers of products, which respond to demand in a competitive, unregulated market. This unregulated market is of course the result of institutional differentiation, where state support for any single religion is absent, and multiple religious worldviews coexist.

Congregants, like consumers in a material market, pursue their interests freely by responding to attractive products in return for a fee (Finke and Stark 1992).[7] These products

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[6] Some of the works cited in the following section originate from famous critics of secularization theory revolving around the work of Rodney Stark. These however seem to 'miss the point' because they interpret as 'religion' various phenomena that are outcomes of secularization; religious bricolage or new religious movements are in effect 'adaptations to a secularized world' (Dobbelaere 1999: pp. 236, 240).

can range from explanations of the meaning of life, strict doctrines, and a promise of salvation to supplements for community ties, social experiences and services. Costs include the time needed to practice one's faith, money for purchasing religious paraphernalia, and sacrifices in personal life, like abstention from alcohol. Theory predicts that individuals conduct a cost-benefit analysis and decide on the religious 'package' that maximizes benefits and minimizes costs (Iannacone 1995). It is important to observe the demystified character of many of the products delivered by organized religion.

This theoretical account, accompanied by strong but contested empirical evidence, claims that the existence of a crowd of churches in America (religious pluralism) creates an evolutionary setting that reinforces religiosity (Iannaccone 1991, 1998; Finke and Stark 1992; Finke 1990; but see Sherkat and Wilson 1995; Sherkat and Ellison 1999). With the absence of state endorsement/subsidization of any religion and the separation of church from state, American churches need to compete aggressively and attract believers in order to survive. In R. Stephen Warner's words, it is 'sink or swim' (1993, p. 1051). This deregulated setting implies that churches have to improve their products in an active pursuit of demand. At the same time, the diversity of available religious options offered in this pluralistic landscape suggests that most religious tastes will eventually be satisfied. In other words, if one church does not suit a believer's needs, another will probably do. In contrast, the existence of a religious monopoly in many European cases – for example Catholicism in Spain - corresponds to a 'lazy', non-competitive market. Here the official or major religion is under no pressure and in no position – since supply is less diverse - to cater for the spiritual, social or psychological needs of consumers, remaining out of tune with believers' needs (Chaves and Cann 1992).

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[7] The terms congregation, denomination and derivatives are used interchangeably. For conceptual differences see Wald and Calhoun-Brown (2007: p. 27).

A case in hand is the rising trend in megachurches in recent decades in the US (Shibley 1998; Miller 1997). Scott Thumma's (1996) extensive study of the phenomenon defines megachurches as mall-like congregations targeting the baby-boomer generation. These institutions are large Protestant churches with typically 2000 to 3000 followers, and a theologically conservative mission - many among them are close to the evangelical family. In their attempt to attract mainly the unchurched population, these institutions tend to follow a more consumer-friendly approach to worship, with entertainment-oriented activities taking place in their facilities, which often include gyms and cafeterias. This phenomenon epitomizes the present discussion: churches attracting - and losing - believers on the basis of offerings that go beyond the theological and spiritual needs of the individual.

In turn, should we expect that church attachment to a political cause (e.g. clergy endorsement of conservative candidates) can serve as an attractive/repulsive non-spiritual product offered to congregants? If believers choose a church based on multiple criteria that include worldly and non-transcendental concerns, these criteria could include political considerations. By explaining why America scores consistently high in religiosity statistics among other developed nations, the market metaphor provides the foundation for an interesting feature of American religiosity: religion as a multifaceted package attracting or discouraging demand.

A matter of choice

Let us consider the context where modern American religion exists: a pluralistic religious market (many religious products on offer), and advanced societal modernity (individual choice is less restrained by social boundaries). It is reasonable to suggest that the public experience of religiosity comes closer to a conscious, changeable association, instead of a taken-for-granted demographic (Newport 1979). American religion emerges as a

phenomenon contradicting the predominantly European experience of religious affiliation as a matter of passive socialization. Individual religious characteristics appear to be increasingly a matter of renewable selection (Chaves 1994).

The eccentricity in the idea of religion as an active choice is reduced when considering two relatively recent phenomena with prominence in the relevant literature, often interpreted as indications of declining church control over its members: religion "à la carte" (Dobbelaere 2002; Bibby 1987; Luckmann 1967) and denominational switching (Stark and Glock 1968; Roof and McKinney 1987; Tocqueville 1945). The first refers to the trend of mixing elements from different religious traditions, and incorporating them into a personalized system of religious belief, i.e. a religious 'cocktail' (Newport 1979; Roof and McKinney 1987; Roof, Carroll, and Roozen 1995). Recent studies of American public opinion, for example, document extreme expressions of this trend, with individuals defining religiosity in relation to Tarot cards, astrology and the lighting of Sabbath candles (Lindsay and Gallup 2000) or even to a 'Cindy Crawford religion' (quoted in Yamane 1997, p. 116).[8] This syncretism refers to an exaggerated practice, one which nevertheless reveals the extent to which individuals can be emancipated from 'top-down' definitions of faith, and include non-religious ingredients in a personalized mix.

Equally challenging to a treatment of religious identities as a taken-for-granted basis of social and political life is the phenomenon of denominational switching or religious mobility. Increasing religious mobility since WWII documents the unstable character of religious 'choice and consumption' in the United States (Wuthnow 1988, p. 88; Sherkat and Wilson 1995, p. 997). Believers appear very prone to switch denominations, drop out from church and reaffiliate. According to consistent empirical results, this type of mobility is

[8] The statement belongs to supermodel Cindy Crawford and reads in full: 'I'm religious but in my own personal way. I always say that I have a Cindy Crawford religion – it's my own'.

practiced by approximately one third of Americans at some point in their life (Warner 1993; Loveland 2003; Pew 2008). Religious mobility supports a conceptualization of religion as a self-selective, dynamic choice. In this vein, religious choices cannot be treated as 'set for life' (Warner 1993, p. 1081), but are instead reinforced or altered as a function of various factors (Stark and Glock 1968; Stark and Bainbridge 1985; Marler and Roozen 1993). Although the sociological literature has lagged in considering the influence of political concerns on religious mobility, it is plausible to expect that in politicized religious settings, the political characteristics of the church would play a key role in switching.

In a nutshell, the two related points reviewed above first explain why one of the most advanced societies remains exceptionally religious among socially advanced nations. Based on these, it is not surprising that Americans continue to report high levels of religious membership, belief and attendance, contrary to the predictions of a popular version of secularization theory. In connection with my argument, I have used these points to imply that under specific circumstances church products can assume political characteristics (supply) that will subsequently attract or drive away believers (demand). The next section examines closely how we came to such circumstances, in the form of the political mobilization of religious populations. Emphasis is placed on evangelical Protestants, the key constituency in the current cycle of religious politicization in the US.[9]

2.2. The social and political importance of evangelical Protestantism since WWII

After examining the nature of the religious experience in American society, I will now move on to discuss the religious experience of American evangelical Protestants, the population of interest to my thesis. Looking back to the 20th century, research on the translation of religion into political outcomes remained typically founded on investigating

[9] The terms 'evangelical' and 'conservative Protestant' are used interchangeably for variety. For a discussion of the various subcultural families within American Evangelicalism see Shibley (1998).

social, economic and political differences among members of the major religious traditions: Catholics, Protestants and Jews (Niebuhr 1929; Herberg 1955; Lenski 1963). This 'tripartite' framework reflected the European historical experience, in which the crude distinction between Protestants and Catholics was still politically relevant, taking the form of Protestant anti-Catholicism (Converse 1966; Fuchs 1967). Focusing on this nominal-level classification of religious traditions, research held that a deep-seated cleavage existed between the not yet 'Americanized' Catholics, and the 'native' Protestants.

Other researchers recognized that differences inside the Protestant family could also be politically relevant, and distinguished between mainline and evangelical Protestant denominations (Greeley 1972; Glock and Stark 1965). The dividing lines had social sources, that is, they were drawn along class, race and ethnic boundaries (Niebuhr 1929). For example, Episcopalians tended to hold on average a higher social status than Baptists. The social differences between the two denominational families are mainly expressed in their reaction towards social advancement. Mainline Protestants are characterised by an 'accommodating stance towards modernity...and pluralism in their tolerance of varied individual beliefs' (Steensland, Park, Regnerus, Robinson, Wilcox and Woodberry 2000: 293-4). On the contrary, evangelical denominations are stricter in the interpretation of doctrine, more 'closed' to modernity, while also requiring greater involvement from the individual believer.

In the second half of the 20th century, a key change in American religious life can be summarized in two connected phenomena: the growing membership of evangelical churches and the declining membership of mainline churches. The traditionally more affluent mainline Protestant churches, such as the Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church, experienced a loss of members almost in every year since 1965 (Sundberg 2000; Kelley 1977). From containing a majority of Protestants in the 1950s compared with other

churches in the family, mainline denominations had fallen to 40% of general Protestant membership by the 1990s (Finke and Stark 1992; Woodberry and Smith 1998).

The easy explanation for this observed change would be to resort to the secularization narrative and attribute it to the effects of societal modernity. Yet, the simultaneous growth of most evangelical churches makes this explanation inadequate. Single-factor causal accounts of this trend are certainly too simplistic. Explanations of the differential rate of growth abound, ranging from a focus on different fertility rates and childbearing patterns in the two traditions (Hout *et al.* 2001) and the closer positioning of conservative churches to the new suburbs (Hadaway 1983), to the internal migration of Southerners – and their more conservative flavour of Protestantism - to other parts of the country (Shibley 1991).

Perhaps the most established explanation of the disparate growth in mainline and evangelical Protestantism focuses on the clarity of the religious product delivered by each denominational family (Berger 1967; Kelley 1977, Finke and Stark 1992; Iannacone 1994; cf. Bruce 1990). On the one hand, mainline churches attempted to combine diluted religious teachings with an open stance towards modernity and cultural pluralism. The advocacy by mainline elites of the liberal causes of the 1960s summarizes this tendency. In a sense, the endorsement of the values of liberalism, tolerance and pluralism created the condition for mainline decline. On the other hand, evangelical churches have been dogmatic, require an active and often public decision to join on behalf of the individual (e.g. a born-again experience), impose strict demands on personal behaviour, and in this way overcome free-riding from less committed members. Therefore, evangelical churches have been better positioned to offer the essence of what many people search for in faith: a clear, authoritative interpretation of the world and its ultimate meaning. Hence, they have been better able to proselytize new members, and retain existing ones.

Why has this phenomenon emerged in this specific period? The trend described above can be understood within the broader setting of socioeconomic changes in American society. Specifically, post-WWII affluence and the rise in educational attainment across the population resulted in denominations becoming more similar in their social/demographic composition. For instance, in the 1950s Episcopalians were almost three times more likely to be college educated compared with the national average. By 1980, they were less than two times more likely than the average. Baptists followed the inverse pattern, by becoming more educated as a group compared to the national average (figures from Wuthnow 1988, pp. 86-87; also see Roof and McKinney 1987: Smith 1998). All in all, denominations were becoming more similar in their social characteristics. This facilitated the movement of members from one denomination to another, especially in the context of the more voluntary nature of religious experience in late 20th century America. Higher social status Episcopalians willing to convert to Baptism now did not have to worry much about joining a less respectable, lower-status congregation. These growing conservative congregations were to play a major role in reshaping American politics.

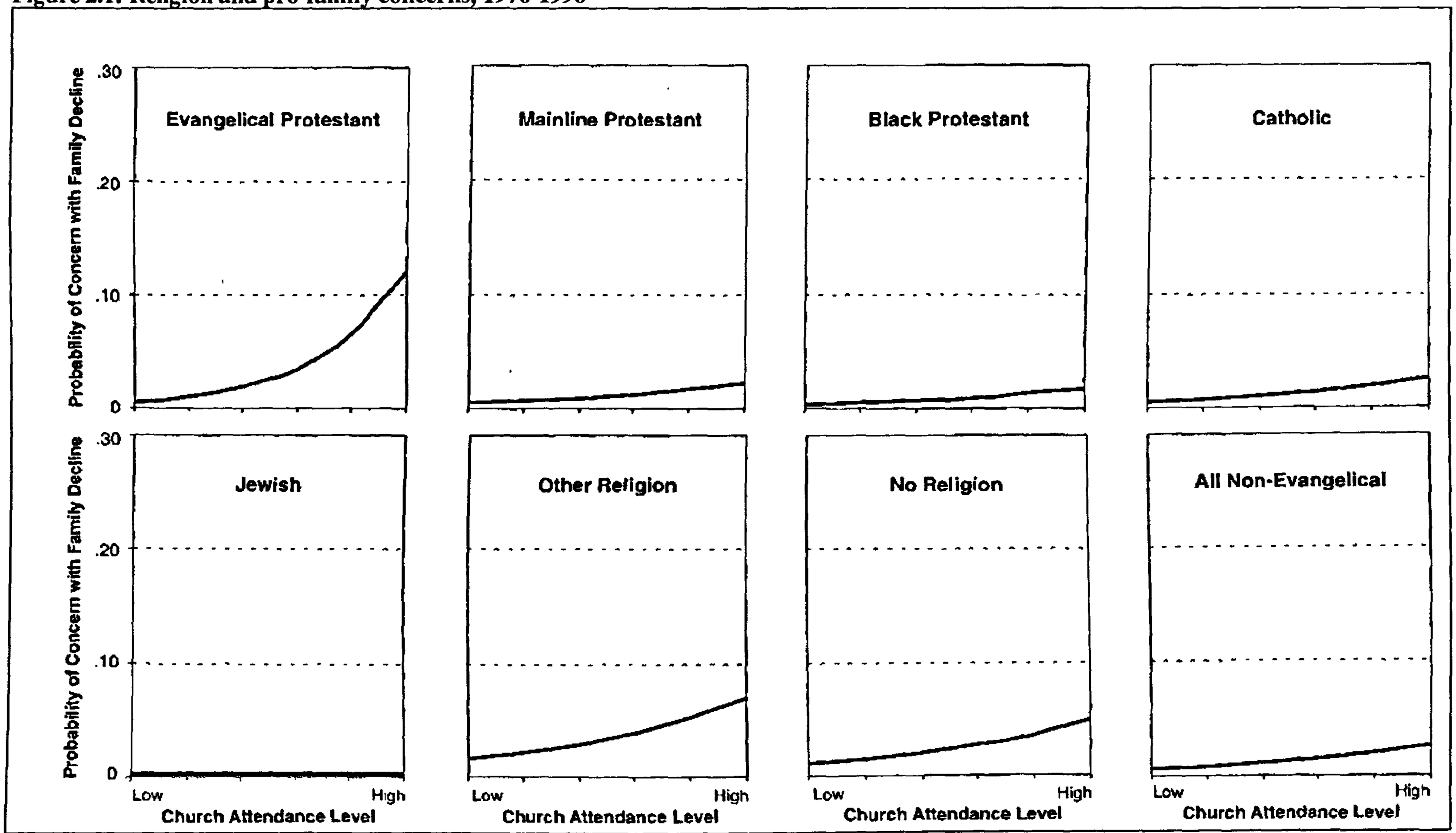
From religious vitality to political mobilization

The rising status and vitality of evangelical Protestantism has had direct repercussions for their involvement in public debates. The old demographic lines separating Catholics from Protestants, Christians from Jews, and members of different denominations from each other were becoming blurred – although without disappearing. These were to be replaced by a different separating line (Roof and McKinney 1987; Greeley 1977; Lipset and Raab 1995). In the late 1980s, Robert Wuthnow's 'restructuring' thesis (1988) was one of the first to recognise the potential that the integration of Catholics, Jews and (importantly for my argument) lower-status evangelical Protestants into the American mainstream played in the displacement of the old divides from 1945 onwards. Wuthnow's contribution lies in describing the new barriers that emerged. The new conflict overrode the old structural

alignments based on demographics and instead occurred along ideological lines. This found expression in the formation of two distinct worldviews that realigned the religious landscape into a 'liberal' and a 'conservative' camp (Wuthnow 1988, pp. 219, 418).

The realignment identified by Wuthnow finds a political voice in an ideological mobilization driven by social issues (cf. the extension of this thesis as a full-scale 'culture war' in Hunter 1991). Although they had eschewed political activism before the 1970s, evangelicals were now better educated and, as a result, more likely to participate in the promotion of public causes against the erosion of public morality. Opportunities for political reaction abounded: public debates on abortion, homosexuality, pornography, equal rights, and church-state relations (for example, school prayer). As an illustration, the panels in Figure 2.1 present results from regressions of pooled ANES data from 1976 to 1996 (Brooks 2002). The analysis explains variation in individual concerns about the decline of the traditional family. The lines show the impact of exposure to different religious contexts (measured as church attendance) on the predicted probability of expressing concerns about the decline of the traditional family. It is evident from the top-left panel that at least since the mid-1970s, evangelical Protestant churches have been increasingly connected with such concerns.

Figure 2.1: Religion and pro-family concerns, 1976-1996



Source: Brooks 2002, p. 202. *Note*: Lines show predicted probabilities of church attendance on family decline concerns, ANES 1976-1996.

Specifically, the early 1970s are generally identified as a watershed moment for the mobilization of religious groups by ideological concerns, especially those related to the protection of traditional values. This was the decade when the state began to legislate heavily on matters that particularly concerned religious populations (e.g. sexuality and personal morality). Legislation on such matters can be seen as both a process that triggered evangelical involvement with public affairs, and then as an outcome of this involvement (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2007). University courses on ethics were introduced for students of law, medicine and business, while the government begun investigating immoral behaviour among members of Congress (Wuthnow 1988, p. 200). This point is supported by a cursory inspection of the frequency of Supreme Court decisions on subjects that particularly attract religious opposition or support (Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3). It is clear that the 1970s mark a cut-off point for the emergence of the traditional family agenda and the political mobilization of conservative religious constituencies.

This was a time when evangelical denominations begun to organize in an attempt to reverse what they interpreted as a grim fate for American society. Ammerman (1991, pp. 48-49) quotes early examples of conservative Southern Baptists, who were worried about societal modernization in a more urban, less segregated, less culturally homogenous American South. They reacted by establishing organizations and newspapers. Wuthnow devotes a whole chapter in his study (1988) to religious special purpose groups that by the mid-1970s outnumbered denominations, growing three times as fast. The common characteristic of these groups was an urge to deal with collective problems, ranging from nuclear arms to prison ministries (Wuthnow 1988: chapter 6).

Table 2.1: Post-WWII Supreme Court Decisions on Abortion

[No decisions prior to 1973]
Roe v. Wade (1973)
Doe v. Bolton (1973)
Bigelow v. Virginia (1975)
Planned Parenthood of Central Missouri v. Danforth (1976)
Beal v. Doe (1977)
Maher v. Roe (1977)
Poelker v. Doe (1977)
Harris v. McRae (1980)
Akron v. Akron Centre for Reproductive Health, Inc. (1983)
Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (1986)
Frisby v. Schultz (1988)
Webster v. Reproductive Health Services (1989)
Hodgson v. Minnesota (1990)
Rust v. Sullivan (1991)
Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey (1992)

Source: Supreme Court Opinions, Cornell University Law School: http://www.law.cornell.edu/

Table 2.2: Post-WWII Supreme Court Decisions on Obscenity

Roth v. United States (1957)
Jacobellis v. Ohio (1964)
Book Named "John Cleland's Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure" v. Attorney General of Massachusetts (1966)
Stanley v. Georgia (1969)
[redacted]
Rowan v. United States Post Office Department (1970)
Cohen v. California (1971)
Miller v. California (1973)
Paris Adult Theatre I v. Slaton (1973)
Jenkins v. Georgia (1974)
Young v. American Mini Theatres, Inc. (1976)
Board of Education v. Pico (1982)
New York v. Ferber (1982)
City of Renton v. Playtime Theatres, Inc. (1986)
Bethel School Dist. No. 403 v. Fraser (1986)
Osborne v. Ohio (1990)
Jacobson v. United States (1992)
Reno v. ACLU (1997)
National Endowment for the Arts v. Finley (1998)
Ashcroft v. Free Speech Coalition (2002)

Source: Supreme Court Opinions, Cornell University Law School: http://www.law.cornell.edu/

Table 2.3: Post-WWII Supreme Court Decisions on Gender

[Only prior decision in 1875]
[redacted]
Wengler v. Druggists Mutual Insurance Co. 446 u.s. 142 (1980)
Rostker v. Goldberg 453 u.s. 57 (1981)
Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan 458 u.s. 718 (1982)
Arizona Governing Committee for Tax Deferred Annuity and Deferred Compensation Plans v. Norris 463 u.s. 1073 (1983)
Hishon v. King and Spalding 467 u.s. 69 (1984)
Roberts v. United States Jaycees 468 u.s. 609 (1984)
Meritor Savings Bank v. Vinson 477 u.s. 57 (1986)
International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, UAW v. Johnson Controls, Inc. 499 u.s. 187 (1991)
Clinton v. Jones 520 u.s. 681 (1997)
Oncale v. Sundowner Offshore Services, Inc. 523 u.s. 75 (1998)
Burlington Industries, Inc. v. Ellerth 524 u.s. 742 (1998)
Faragher v. City of Boca Raton 524 u.s. 775 (1998)
United States v. Morrison 529 u.s. 598 (2000)

Source: Supreme Court Opinions, Cornell University Law School: http://www.law.cornell.edu/

Conclusion

The first task of this chapter was to develop a foundation for understanding the nature of American religiosity. Section 2.1 used advances in the sociological literature to introduce individual religious commitment as an explanandum that can be updated depending on a variety of factors, including political ones. This part established that although most empirical studies treat American religion as the equivalent of a vague 'European' version, the assumption of American religion as a stable demographic isolated from the influence of political life is unfounded. If Americans approach religious experience as a matter of choice, this choice will be subject to a range of considerations: practical, spiritual, and as argued in this thesis, political.

However, political considerations are only likely to affect religious choices when churches become involved in political debate. For example, when Church A is seen as a politically neutral ground, there is no reason for political motivations to affect congregant religious choices. But if Church A plays a prominent role in political debate and imagery, congregants would be more likely to consider political reasons in their religious decisions, since these reasons will be more salient in this context. This is what Section 2.2 established: the phenomenon of religious politicization is mostly affecting evangelical Protestants. A combination of social structural forces (educational attainment) and top-down actions (legislation) has placed them in the middle of the current cycle of religious involvement in politics.

The presentation of the American religious context provides the basis for the further development of the following hypothesis: a transformation of religious life may be taking place for some churches due to their political exposure. The next chapter will provide a more detailed account of how the mobilization of evangelical Protestants was expressed in partisan politics.

Chapter 3

Religious politicization and its electoral context

This chapter explores how religious politicization finds expression across different electoral eras. Having discussed the process through which evangelicals became interested in politics in the previous chapter, here I present the relevance of their mobilization for particular electoral races. The discussion of elections not only provides an historical narrative of how evangelicalism came to be almost synonymous with support for the Republican Party, but is also essential for a number of reasons.

First, the following presentation ensures that my argument avoids exaggerating the role of faith in the public sphere, by showing that religion is only one of many factors contributing to political developments. Nevertheless, it reveals the attempts made by political elites to gain votes from religious constituencies. The chapter also justifies the emphasis put by the previous chapter on the 1970s. This decade was underlined as the defining moment in the politicization of the religious constituency of interest. This chapter will provide the qualitative description that supports this focus.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, the present chapter identifies the period in which evangelicals became associated with the Republican Party. This will be used to illustrate how religious mobilization in politics moved from an ideological foundation in the 1970s to a

partisan foundation in the 1980s and ever since. This will then help fine-tune my expectation of political pressures on religious choice. If the original ideological basis of evangelical political involvement was later reinforced by a partisan basis, then the political religion hypothesis has to consider this transformation. After all, if individuals apply a political reasoning to their religious choices, the present description will distinguish the differential appearance of the ideological from the partisan component in this reasoning. To achieve all the aforementioned goals, I opt for the 'thick' description of electoral eras rather than a quantitative summary of survey and electoral evidence.

From conservative ideology to the Republican Party

Faith communities are important for parties because they provide already formed persuasion structures, financing sources, and valuable volunteer and voter pools in an era of declining social capital (Wald, Owen and Hill 1988; Hertzke 1991; Putnam 2001). Not surprisingly, parties, particularly the GOP, did not ignore the fact that the boundaries separating religious communities were becoming ideological instead of ethno-demographic, a development already evident in the 1970s (see Chapter 2). The restructuring of American religion became politically more relevant in the 1980s through the polarizing movement of the two major parties, both at the elite and the popular level, on the basis of differences on the proverbial 'Social Issue' (see the 'critical moment' in Carmines and Stimson 1989; Green *et al.* 1996; Guth *et al.* 1997; Wilcox 2000; Layman 1997, 2001; Poole and Rosenthal 1984, 1997; Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2007; DiMaggio, Evans and Bryson 1996; Cook, Jelen and Wilson 1992).

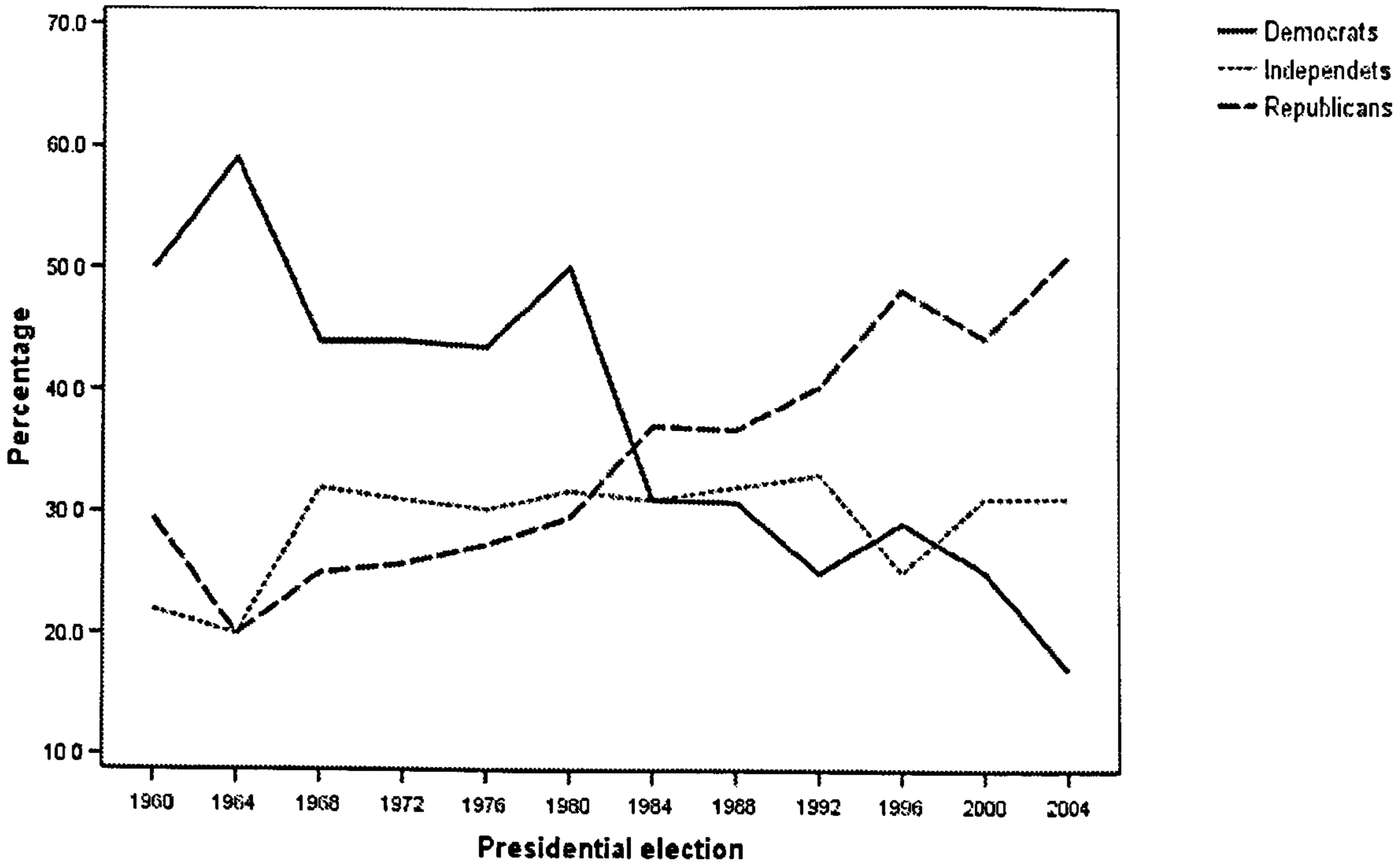
Until the late 1960s / early 1970s the cultural cleavage on racial and cultural issues had crosscut the two parties in Congress. Sparked by the social turbulence of the 1960s and candidates like Republican Barry Goldwater ('Mr. Conservative'), Democrats and Republicans have since

experienced a sorting-out process. The strategic choices of party elites, always interested in new issue alternatives that attract votes, contributed much to this sorting. By adopting opposing stances in the new agenda of pro-family matters, the Republican Party eventually grew into a more socially conservative formation, while the Democratic Party became the liberal coalition (Levitin and Miller 1979; Poole and Rosenthal 1984; Carmines and Stimson 1989; Layman 2001; Abramowitz and Saunders 2006).

How did this happen? The transformative elite effect led to the parties issuing clearer ideological cues to the electorate. These cues told voters that Democrats were for liberalism and Republicans were for conservatism (Levendusky 2005). New voters entering the electoral landscape for the first time also found it easier to differentiate between the two distinct partisan alternatives (for these conversion and cohort-replacement effects see Green *et al.* 2002: chapter 6). In the end, socially liberal Republicans abandoned the GOP – especially during the Reagan years - and conservative Democrats (social issue conservatives, mainly Southern whites) followed a similar movement away from their party and towards the GOP.

In this context, one of the first noticeable expressions of the political mobilization of evangelical Protestants can be seen in the entrance of the Christian Right into the Republican electoral base in the 1980s. The dashed line in Figure 3.1 illustrates the move of evangelical Protestants closer to the increasingly conservative Republican Party, by showing that greater exposure to evangelical religious settings (measured as church attendance) becomes increasingly associated with Republican identification as we move into the 1980s. A detailed presentation of this development follows.

Figure 3.1: Partisanship among frequently attending evangelicals, 1960-2004



Source: 1960-2004 ANES Cumulative File (white respondents only)

Note: Independent category includes 'leaners'. Frequent attendance is defined as 'regular' until 1968, and as 'almost every week' or more thereafter.

A discussion of electoral eras

During the long, disorderly 'decade' from 1960 to 1972, major developments took place in the American political landscape. The electronic media started to have a powerful role in replacing parties as providers of political information to citizens. At the same time, the number of people identifying with neither the Democrats nor the Republicans rose to one third of the electorate.

In the electoral field, parties witnessed a decline in their ability to influence the primary process due to nominating and finance reforms. The bitter experiences of the divisive 1968 Democratic National Convention led to the implementation of a range of reforms in the 1972 Democratic primaries, proposed by the McGovern-Fraser Commission. These were later adopted by the GOP in its own nomination process. The number of primaries increased and the nomination contest became more open to public participation and less subject to state-party control. Democratic delegate selection also became subject to quotas, a measure that aimed to incorporate the alienated groups of the 1960s into the electoral process - especially women, African Americans and younger citizens (Schlesinger 1986; Nie, Verba and Petrocik 1978). Radical ideological pursuits could now find easier expression in the nomination process. This 'openness' of the political system to radical demands contributed to the emergence of an ideological conflict between the two major parties.

A. Nixon vs. McGovern in 1972: The ideological foundation

In 1972, the Democrats experienced one of their worst electoral defeats, with Republican President Richard Nixon obtaining reelection by receiving 61% of the popular vote (96.5% of the electoral college vote) against 37.5% for George McGovern. Heavy defections of Democratic identifiers towards the GOP produced a landslide for Nixon, reflecting the national backlash against the liberalism of the disorderly 1960s, but also the positive times experienced on the economic front under Nixon (Weisberg and Box-Steffensmeier 1999). The 1972 contest concentrated on the ideological positions of the candidates. This is reflected also in the introduction of the liberal/conservative scale by the American National Election Study (ANES) design team in 1972, with empirical findings supporting the significant role played by self-reported ideology on voting choice in this election (Holm and Robinson 1978). The most

salient public concern in the 1972 campaign was the Vietnam situation, which had repercussions for the economy in the form of inflationary pressures (Kessel 1984).

In this setting, McGovern represented the 'liberal left', anti-establishment option (Stimson 1975; Miller, Miller, Raine, and Brown 1976). His positions on social issues and the Vietnam War alienated traditional Democrats, and eventually led to that year's divisive Democratic National Convention (Hagen and Mayer 2000; Miller and Miller 1975). All in all, the Democratic candidate was in retrospect seen as an unpopular nominee, linked in the public mind with radical liberal interests: the civil rights movement (with his campaign focus resting on school busing), women's rights, gay liberation, drug legalization, and mostly with anti-war activism and the demand of troop withdrawal from Vietnam (Boller 1996).

Lopatto's analysis of this election (1985) finds that the war and the race issue triggered the first appearance of a voting bloc that would later become a familiar component of post election commentary: theologically conservative Protestants. In 1972, theologically liberal Protestants moved in the direction of the Democratic Party. Theologically conservative Protestants followed the opposite route, that is, away from McGovern's militant liberal image and in the direction of the GOP. This overview of the 1972 race provides a first indication that ideological concerns already existed among the electorate in general, and evangelical Protestants in particular during the early 1970s. This is a requirement for my argument of political pressures on individual religiosity.

B. Ford vs. Carter in 1976: The year of the evangelical Democrat

The 1972 election was followed by two major events. In the ideological arena, the 1973 Supreme Court decision *Roe vs. Wade* incorporated the pro-choice position on abortion in the

Constitution and officially set the ground for the political mobilization of theologically conservative populations. Furthermore, the full disclosure of the Watergate scandal, causing Nixon's resignation in 1974, led to extensive reforms of election finance rules in the form of the 1974 Federal Election Campaign Act, which called for: direct federal financing of candidates, limits on individual contributions, spending caps for candidates, and disclosure of expenditures by candidates in their campaigns (Alexander 1979; Schlesinger 1986). These changes would further open the electoral process to radical outsider interests. The most important product of Watergate for religious politicization was a shift of attention from private to public morality, and the related emergence of Jimmy Carter, a candidate whose success owed much to his perceived decency.

In the partisan arena, the 1976 presidential election was not a particularly heated contest. 'Politics as usual' pacified the excited electoral spirits, once aroused by the domestic and foreign troubles of the 1960s. Democrat James Carter won 50% of the popular vote (55% of the electoral college vote) to 48% for his incumbent opponent, unelected President Gerald Ford. Turnout was rather low, indicating a campaign that failed to mobilize voters. According to Jules Witcover's *Marathon* (1977, p. 644-645), the classic account of that year's campaign, the outcome of the 1976 election was a weak endorsement of Carter.

Helped by campaign reforms, the Democratic candidate, the first major party candidate for the Presidency from the Deep South since the Civil War, ran his campaign as an anti-establishment politician (Witcover 1977, p. 645). The main issue at stake was a faltering economy in the face of a recession in the mid-1970s, unemployment, and the continuing effects of the 1973 oil crisis. Confidence in federal government was a salient concern, exacerbated by Ford's pardon to Nixon for the Watergate scandal, and by Republican infighting between Ford and Reagan in

the primaries over Vietnam (Kessel 1984, pp. 153-154). A harbinger of candidate-centred politics, the scandals of the Nixon administration laid the ground for the 1976 campaign to place emphasis on the private life of the two candidates, with novel practices introduced, such as each candidate's relatives being interviewed about policy. Issue differences between the two candidates were not the most decisive influence on the outcome; differences in their personalities partly carried the vote (Boller 1996).

But the 1976 contest also had a religious theme, connected to Carter's conversion experience in 1966, and subsequent missionary work and Sunday school teaching (Witcover 1977, p. 270). Not surprisingly, the election year was dubbed by *Time* magazine as the 'Year of the Evangelical'. Carter's candidacy further raised the interest of religious conservatives regarding electoral politics, with white evangelical Protestants being more likely to turnout in 1976. They did so by casting a disproportionally Democratic vote than previously (Manza and Brooks 1997, p. 61; Woodberry and Smith 1998).

Overall, regarding the 1972-1976 cycle, the predicted post-1960s Republican tide was set back due to Nixon's failed second term in power (Kellstedt, Green, Guth and Smidt 1994). But Carter's administration soon corrected this anomaly. His policies were more liberal than expected and were considered a disappointment by a constituency that had been gathering momentum in grassroots campaigning against social liberalization: white conservative Protestants (Hertzke 1991). All in all, the 1976 election raised the political profile of evangelicalism. In addition, what took place between 1976 and 1980 (the failure of an evangelical president elected under the Democratic banner to cater for socially conservative demands) was treated as the final push that brought conservative Protestants closer to the Republican side in the 1980s.

C. Carter vs. Reagan in 1980: From a conservative Democrat to a conservative Republican

The late 1970s and especially the Reagan years witnessed the meeting of religious involvement in conservative ideological causes, already evident since the 1970s, with a new phenomenon: the polarization between the two parties on social issues. Political strategists concentrated their efforts on enhancing the electoral base of the Republican Party, while the Reagan administration promoted a traditionalist image for the GOP. The organization of mobilized religious constituencies into more coherent coalitions (e.g. the Moral Majority in 1979) was directly linked to those efforts (Oldfield 1996).

Hertzke (1991, p. 24) summarizes the systemic change that took place in that period with a fitting comparison. A product of the linking of the Democrats with the 1960s counterculture movement, and the subsequent Republican exploitation of the conservative religious backlash, the American partisan landscape started by the end of the 1980s to resemble a typical scenario in Western Europe: a secular party of the 'left' pitted against a pious party of the 'right'. Various analyses of national sample surveys show that a milestone is reached in the mid to late 1980s: this is the time when a higher percentage of white conservative Protestants identified with the Republican Party than the Democratic Party (see Figure 3.1). At the same time evangelicals replaced mainline Protestants as the core religious constituency in the GOP (Kellstedt *et al.* 1994; Stanley and Niemi 1999).

The 1980s election pitted incumbent president Jimmy Carter against Republican Ronald Reagan. Despite successes in foreign policy (peace in the Middle East and the Panama Canal treaty) President Carter was perceived by the public as heading an incompetent, passive and

politically weak administration (Pomper 1981). Reagan, once governor of California and the victor in the Republican primaries, was a prominent conservative politician. In fact he was the leader of this ideological wing in the party. Reagan's campaign for the White House, although not overtly conservative so as not to alienate traditional Democratic constituencies, such as blue-collar workers, focused on the 'community of shared values', a codeword for traditional family concerns (Pomper 1981). Meanwhile, a third, independent candidate emerged from the GOP primaries, John Anderson, who attempted to get the vote of liberal Republicans.

The dominant theme in the campaign of the three candidates was an urgent call for change in the face of disaster, be it economic or military (Plotkin 1981). One of the main political questions of the period had to do with reliance on Middle Eastern oil, and the economic problems connected with energy policy, for example, inflation, troubles in the domestic automobile industry, and subsequent layoffs. Carter's perceived inability to lead the economy out of trouble was a particular weakness in the Democratic push for re-election. Foreign policy was also prominent due to the hostage crisis in Iran, where militant Islamists took over the embassy demanding the extradition of the former Persian ruler, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Republicans criticized what they saw as a 'dovish' presidency under Carter.

On election day, Reagan won a clear victory with 51.6% of the popular vote (91% of the electoral vote). Carter received 41.7% of the popular vote, while Anderson got 6.6% and no electoral votes. Social issues were seen by many as important in deciding the contest. This was the first election in which the two major candidates took clearly divergent stances on such issues (Schneider 1981). Prominent debates on public morality, abortion, women's rights, school prayer, crime, and sexuality stimulated evangelical groups into the electoral campaign. These groups used various channels of communication with the public in an attempt to reverse

a national move away from traditional moral standards (Plotkin 1981). Unlike their previous support for these standards in 1976, Democrats now emphasized a commitment to liberal causes, such as the Equal Rights Amendment. Republicans on the other hand clearly followed the opposite move, away from progressive secularism, proposing instead the reintroduction of school prayer, publicly (for the first time) opposing the Equal Rights Amendment, and reinstating the importance of the family as the key component of American society. Reagan's personal contribution was immense, as the first major candidate who understood the importance of conservative Protestants in building a winning electoral coalition.

The vocal presence of social issues on the agenda contributed to the consolidation of distinct ideological stances that now separated the two parties. Although part of convention etiquette, Carter's speech at the Democratic National Convention in 1980 was exact when it stressed the ideological divide in the election as: 'a stark choice between two men, two parties, two sharply different pictures of America and the world' (Schneider 1981, p. 249). It is no surprise that CBS exit polls (data from Pomper 1981b and Schneider 1985; see also analysis of NES data in Miller and Wattenberg 1984) document born-again white Protestants splitting their vote in favour of Reagan by 63% compared to 33% for Carter. It would be no overstatement to argue that the 1980 presidential race was the crucial moment when conservative Protestants entered the Republican electoral machine. This point will direct my study of political pressures on individual religious choice to focus on both ideological *and* - from the 1980s onward - partisan pressures.

D. Reagan vs. Mondale in 1984: Yet another liberal Democrat

Reagan's first term in government gave him the opportunity to express the conservative movement that he represented. The ensuing change in the running of government was so drastic

as to justify the term 'Reagan Revolution'. The main tenets of Reagan's conservative vision can be summarized as: a free market under minimal state control; smaller government; more power to the states; government intervention in moral matters; anti-communism; and military preparedness (Ranney 1985). Although not the top priority of the administration, Reagan's verbal support for constitutional amendments to intervene in moral and religious matters intensified the appeal of the GOP among evangelical Protestants. The Reagan administration was in theory favourable towards pieces of legislation that promoted religious values or posed obstacles to the use of abortion. The President also welcomed visits from religious leaders in the White House and appointed conservative Protestants in symbolic public offices (Hunt 1985).

The 1984 election took place in the aftermath of the highly successful Olympic Games and amidst an upbeat economic climate. On election day, Reagan won re-election and 58.8% of popular votes (97.5% of the electoral vote) and defeated Democratic candidate Walter Mondale, who received 40.6% of the popular vote. The Democratic candidate carried only the state of Minnesota, his home state. The race is considered as one of the major landslides in American electoral history, and a personal victory for incumbent Ronald Reagan.

The campaign was uneventful, failing to excite both pundits and electorate alike. The Republican camp emphasized general themes, such as a positive economic atmosphere, and the strong leadership qualities of the incumbent President. The latter had been one of the main issues in the 1980 race. Mondale attempted to refocus the agenda on what his side perceived as the religious fanaticism of the Reagan administration, the separation of church and state, a relaxation in tax policy, and a 'hawkish' attitude in foreign affairs (Rae 1985). This was a clear

effort to isolate Reagan from less conservative voters. Although this effort got him many liberal votes, Mondale lost the conservatives that were attracted by the Carter candidacy.

Tellingly for the importance of the 1980s in placing conservative religion at the centre of partisan competition, the one issue that managed to stir the otherwise passive atmosphere was religion. Henry Plotkin's examination of the issues addressed in this election campaign notes that '[i]f the issues of race bubbled below the surface of American politics, religion erupted like a geyser in the election of 1984' (Plotkin 1985, p. 48). Weeks before election day, during the Republican National Convention, Reagan was addressing religious leaders. He claimed that the sacred and the political sphere 'are necessarily related [and] inseparable' and that any claim of the opposite is simply 'intolerant of religion' (quoted in Hunt 1985, p. 142). The ensuing debate in the campaign was fierce and covered many aspects of the religious role in politics: school prayer, black protestant activism, and the influence of the Religious Right. The Rev. Jerry Falwell, the nationally prominent tele-evangelist who founded the Moral Majority in 1979, summed up the atmosphere by describing Reagan as 'God's instrument in rebuilding America' (quoted in Hunt 1985, p. 142).

Not surprisingly then the CBS exit poll (data from Schneider 1985) reveals that Reagan's strongest showing took place among conservatives, and the born-again white Christian constituency. This second group was the one that moved most decisively to the Republicans in 1984. With the absence of an evangelical candidate in the challenging party's ticket (Carter in 1980), this constituency voted for the Republican candidate by 80%. The change represents a huge swing of +15 in favour of Reagan. In conclusion, Mondale's campaigning in a liberal direction, and Reagan's persistent courting of conservative Protestants in 1984 further intensified the image of the Republican Party as the 'party of God'.

E. Bush vs. Dukakis in 1988: 'For our children'...and the GOP

The Reagan administration has been branded as one of the most 'ideological' in American political history (Burnham 1989, p. 1). Beyond changes in economic structure, Reagan's two terms in office marked a change of course in American partisan politics, with a movement of the GOP towards the pro-family territory of traditional moral values, while Democrats swung in the opposite direction. In 1988, with Reagan's exit from the scene, and after two consecutive Republican terms in presidency, the contest had been expected to be close – and the campaign a bitter one.

The eventful Democratic primaries gave the nomination to Massachusetts Governor, Michael Dukakis, who beat an African-American Baptist minister, Jesse Jackson. Dukakis was the moderate choice compared to the very liberal candidacy of Jackson. Republicans made a much more rapid choice of nominee, driven by their incumbent position. This entailed minimizing ideological debates in the primaries and instead focusing on defending the administration's achievements (Pomper 1989). Since Reagan's record remained sacrosanct among Republican candidates, Vice-President George H. W. Bush was the clear favourite. His position stressed the need for continuity in Reagan's legacy, and his own status as heir. As an illustration of the close connection of Republicanism and conservative Christianity, one of the competitors for the Republican nomination was a tele-evangelist, Pat Robertson. His candidacy aimed to appropriate the traditionalist vote in the Republican electoral base. After a strong showing in the early primary period (especially in the more activist-oriented caucuses), his campaign quickly waned in the open primaries.

On election day, the public voted for continuity over change. It gave a positive evaluation of the Reagan administration. Bush carried 53.4% of the popular vote (79% of electoral vote), by winning a majority in 40 states. Dukakis received 45.6%. In an indication of the changing structure of American electoral politics, and the consolidation of a winning coalition by Reagan, this was the first time that the same party had won three consecutive presidential terms since WWII.

With differences on foreign policy outlook and on the direction of the economy being narrower between the two major parties, candidates attempted to differentiate themselves on the social issue dimension (Pomper 1989). In a predicted close contest, the two candidate strategies eventually had to pick up on that difference. Symbolism featured heavily in the run up to the election (Farah and Klein 1989). Dukakis was clearly reluctant to use ideological labels, and attempted to emphasize his leadership qualities. Bush's presidential campaign theme ('For Our Children and our Future') however focused on a clear message of social conservatism, military readiness, and free-market economics (Pomper 1989). Naturally, he paid particular attention to the concerns of evangelicals (Ammerman 1991, p. 56).

A fitting example of cultural conservatism espoused by the Republican candidate was his ad campaign against Dukakis. One among many themes, which also included patriotism, concentrated on Dukakis's record of giving 'prison-breaks' to convicted murderers in Massachusetts. In the end, Bush managed to frame Dukakis as the quintessential social liberal (Pomper 1989). It is not a surprise that exit-polls (numbers in Pomper 1989b) reveal once more a split of the conservative evangelical Christian vote in favour of Bush with 81%. Generally speaking, the final presidential contest of the 1980s reinforces the pattern that emerged in that decade: an incumbent Republican Party transmitting conservative pro-family cues, and a

sequence of Democratic pretenders perceived as socially liberal. In other words, the 1980s mark the establishment of the bond between conservative Protestantism and Republicanism. The bond was built on the attraction of evangelicals by the conservative causes that the GOP began to champion under Reagan.

F. Bush vs. Clinton in 1992: The 'culture wars' Republican National Convention

Contrary to previous expectations of a partisan dealignment, the 1990s witnessed the culmination of a surge in partisan voting, measured as the impact of partisanship on electoral choice, other things being equal (Bartels 2000). In this decade, Democrats attempted to downplay the salience of social issues, which until then had offered an advantage to the GOP. Democrats emphasized instead welfare issues and the threat posed to those by a Republican administration (Alvarez and Nagler 1998). In the 1992 election, Democrat William J. Clinton received 43% of the popular vote (and 69% of the electoral college vote) and surprisingly blocked the reelection of his opponent, incumbent President George H.W. Bush, who only received 37.5% of the popular vote. Importantly, independent candidate Ross Perot made inroads into the Republican electoral base. He obtained 19% of the vote, mostly among potential Republican voters (Alvarez and Nagler 1995).

The economy was an important influence on the vote in 1992. Clinton's campaign focused intensely on the issue. Bush's team initially emphasized the incumbent's record on the foreign terrain, where the Cold War was over, and the President was seen as the victor of a military intervention in the Persian Gulf. Due to this international crisis, Bush's ratings in 1991 were the highest ever recorded. Clinton's tactic however turned the focus of the campaign to the economy (Boller 1996). In the aftermath of the 1991 recession, voters assessed Bush's economic performance negatively. This development cancelled the positive impact of foreign

issues (Alvarez and Nagler 1995; Abramowitz 1995; Arterton 1993; Pomper 1993). The contest was also noticeable for the presence of a third candidate (Ross Perot) in the electoral landscape, which mitigated a clear cut contest between the two major parties (Alvarez and Nagler 1998).

Despite economic interpretations of the election outcome, the 1992 race is important for another reason. The Republican National Convention of that year perhaps represents the most celebrated moment of the party's effort to associate itself with traditional family values and religion. Nelson's overview of the election (1993) concludes that the 1992 race was not confined to performance questions. Competing positions on cultural issues, such as abortion, were very prominent as well. In particular, the 1992 Republican campaign was a clear partisan move to capture the faith vote, with cues ranging from the religious speeches by Buchanan and Robertson in the convention, to Bush's vocal pro-life position (Abramson, Aldrich and Rohde 1994). Kellstedt and colleagues conclude that evangelical Protestants 'solidified their growing Republican proclivities of recent decades', while mainline Protestants moved further away from the GOP (Kellstedt *et al.* 1994, pp. 307, 317).

An inspection of exit-poll data (numbers in Pomper 1993) reveals that white born-again Christians voted for Bush by 61% against 23% for Clinton and 15% for Perot. This is a lower difference in favour of the GOP from the one documented in the previous race (81% for Bush in 1988). Still, this is an impressive showing by the Republican ticket among conservative Christians when considering two things. First, the Democratic ticket of that year included an unusual pair: two Southern Democrats (Clinton and Gore). Their presence would increase their potential appeal to Southern social conservatives, and therefore justify the weaker Republican performance among conservative Protestants. Second, the election was a three-way race and part of the Republican base broke away towards the third candidate. The 1992 contest then

testifies to the persistence of the ability of Republican candidates to connect with the evangelical constituency even under adverse conditions.

G. Clinton vs. Dole in 1996: Still sticking with the GOP

The Republican tide that swept both houses of Congress in 1994 did not seem to foretell an easy re-election of the Democratic incumbent in 1996. President Clinton however improved on his 1992 performance on the basis of a positive economic record, while also avoiding blame for the policy stalemate that resulted from the Republican congressional landslide. The moderate strategy of triangulation – the President's positioning as an arbitrator between competing parties and adoption of the best policies irrespective of partisan origin - also allowed Clinton to overcome partisan differences in Congress, and to propose policy reform taken directly from the Republican playbook of small government (Morris 1998).

In the 1996 election a popular incumbent run against a weaker challenger under an upbeat economic climate (Weisberg and Box-Steffensmeier 1999). Wayne's analysis of polling data from 1996 reflects Clinton's advantage: voters with a positive evaluation of their economic situation turned to Clinton (2000, p. 279). Bob Dole's (the Republican oppontent) central campaign message – tax relief - also stayed on the economy (Elshtain and Beem 1997). Clinton won re-election by receiving 49% of the popular vote (70.5% of the electoral college vote), against 40.7% for Dole, and 8.5% for third-party candidate Ross Perot. The election however did not generate high interest among voters. Only about half the electorate turned out to vote on election day (Nelson 1997).

The Republican candidate was not openly religious, although his wife was a celebrated evangelical Protestant. All the same, the Republican ticket continued to connect with white

evangelical Protestant voters. This happened despite Clinton's attempt to draw part of the religious vote by using religious references in his speeches and talking about his Baptist upbringing (Campbell 2006). A view at exit-poll data (numbers in Nelson 1997) illustrates the persisting bond that prevailed in this election between conservative Protestants and the Republican Party. The (crudely defined in this exit-poll) constituency of white Protestants preferred the defeated Republican candidate, by 53% against 36% for the Democrat. Had a fine-tuned measure of religious affiliation been available that distinguished evangelical Protestants from other Protestants, the pro-GOP bias would have certainly been more striking.

H. Gore vs. Bush in 2000: The reborn but 'compassionate' Republican

In 2000, a reborn Christian candidate obtained the ticket to the White House. Republican George W. Bush won a very slim victory, losing the popular vote by 47.9% (but controversially winning 50.4% of the electoral vote) compared to 48.4% for Democrat vice-president Albert Gore (49.5% of the electoral vote), and 2.7% for third-party candidate Ralph Nader (no electors). An indication of the wide ideological gap between the two parties is singled out by McGillivray and colleagues (2001). The authors suggest that in the 2000 race, the number of split-ticket districts (different party for the White House and Congress - an indirect measure of partisan polarization) fell to pre-1950s levels.

The issues that dominated the campaign focused on welfare and economic concerns, although not as much as during the Clinton years (Pomper 2001). The Democratic candidate did not emphasize past economic performance under Clinton, and instead offered a vision of the future, a strategy that many researchers blame for his defeat (Aldrich, Griffin and Rickershauser 2006; Pomper 2001; Campbell 2001). Candidate character and public morality remained on the table, especially after the Monica Lewinsky affair that plagued the end of the Clinton presidency. The

electorate evaluated Bush more positively in this respect than Gore. Bush's openness about his religious devotion was welcomed by many as an antidote to the supposedly morally relaxed Clinton White House (Pomper 2001). As Campbell notes however (2006), this personality effect was weakened by Gore's 'moral' choice for Vice President, Senator Joseph Lieberman.

One illustrative incident in the pre-election period was the memorable quote of Bush's naming of Jesus Christ as his favourite political philosopher. Abramson and colleagues (2003) state that during the primaries, Bush campaigned vigorously on abortion and other issues with religious/moral connotations. In a centripetal movement, he downplayed such discourse during the Republican National Convention and the presidential election campaign. Even so, he still insisted on a 'compassionate' version of the main label applied to his party, i.e. pro-family conservatism (Pomper 2001, p. 205). Empirical studies confirm that Bush carried the white conservative Protestant vote against both his main opponent in the primaries (John McCain) and his Democratic opponent on election day (Guth *et al.* 2002; Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2003; Pomper 2001; Beachler 2005; Campbell 2006).

Exit-poll data from the Republican primaries illustrate the impact of Bush's iconic status. Table 3.1 contains exit-poll results from a selection of states. The interesting pattern is in comparing how those identifying with religious conservatism (respondent part of the Religious Right) went against the general trend. For instance, in Michigan religious conservatives were far more likely to vote for Bush compared with other primary voters (a +41 difference). The remaining primary participants voted predominantly for Senator John McCain. The same pattern is repeated in several states, including McCain's home state, Arizona. Here, conservative Protestants split their vote for the two candidates. Exit-polls on election day verify this religious conservative preference for Bush. A clear picture emerges from the reported electoral choice of (the crudely

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defined category of) white respondents that identified with the Religious Right. This constituency voted for the Republican candidate by 80%. [10] In conclusion, the 2000 presidential election extended at least in symbolic terms the Republican courting with evangelical Protestantism. The GOP ticket was now headed by a reborn - even if mainline Protestant – Christian.

[10] Data from: http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2000/results/index.epolls.html

Table 3.1: Conservative religion in the 2000 Republican Primaries

State	Respondent Part of Religious Right?	Bush %	McCain %	Difference
New Hampshire	Yes	36	26	+10
February 1	No	28	54	-26
Delaware	Yes	54	12	+42
February 12	No	48	31	+17
South Carolina	Yes	68	24	+44
February 19	No	46	52	-6
Arizona	Yes	44	48	-4
February 22	No	33	64	-31
Michigan	Yes	66	25	+41
February 22	No	36	60	-24
Virginia	Yes	80	14	+66
February 29	No	45	52	-7
California	Yes	73	17	+56
March 7	No	56	39	+17
New York	Yes	62	28	+34
March 7	No	47	47	0
Florida	Yes	84	7	+77
March 14	No	67	27	+40

Source: Voter News Service exit-poll from http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/kenwald/

I. Bush vs. Kerry 2004: The downright reborn Republican

The 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and the subsequent military effort in Afghanistan and Iraq created a shift in the public agenda. The agenda has ever since been dominated by questions of international and homeland security. The terrorism threat –and related to it, leadership qualities on the domestic and foreign fronts - naturally played a vital role for the 2004 'wartime' election outcome, and suppressed traditional economic concerns (Campbell 2005).

The 2004 contest was seen by the Democrats as a re-match of the much doubted 2000 outcome. The pundits and the public braced themselves for a fierce electoral battle. Intense opposition became very vocal about the President's policy choices on the foreign front. Yet, even with the predominance of foreign policy concerns that emanated from 9/11, the Republican bond with evangelicals would retain its vitality. To this end, the Bush team had invested heavily in traditional family values, abandoning the 'compassionate conservatism' dogma (Noll 2007; Rozell and Whitney 2007; Vinson and Guth 2007). As in 2000, the symbolic character of President Bush's faith status reinforced traditional evangelical support for the GOP. Lower court appointments of social conservatives in the first term and other policy proposals successfully prepared the ground for the mobilization of religious conservatives in 2004. The reelection strategy employed by the presidential team also relied heavily on energizing the conservative religious base with micro-targeting techniques. Finally, referendums took place in 11 states on same-sex marriage on the same day as the presidential election. This could have attracted the religious voter to the polling stations. Indeed, the 2004 election witnessed an unprecedented participation of religious constituencies in the polls (McMahon *et al.* 2005; Beachler 2005).

The general public also responded with an abrupt increase in turnout (60.7%), and in voting along partisan lines (Weisberg 2005). The two major party candidates attracted more votes than any other pair of presidential candidates in American elections. The election outcome was again far from being a landslide, yet this time it did produce a clear winner. Incumbent President George W. Bush won reelection by carrying 50.7% of the popular vote (53% of the electoral vote), against 48.3% for Democrat John Kerry.

National Election Pool exit-poll data from the 2004 contest reveal that a plurality of people considered family values to pose the most important problem experienced by the country, as opposed to the economy and jobs issues, which mattered most in 2000. Respondents opting for the 'values' choice voted for Bush by a wide margin (Weisberg 2005, p. 780).[11] Finally, white evangelical Protestants composed the most prominent social group in the Republican electoral base. This constituency voted for Bush by a 77%-22% split (numbers in Pomper 2005). The only other constituency voting so heavily for Bush were – pointedly – Republican identifiers.

Conclusion

American political science has devoted much attention to the close connection between religion and politics, trying to explain the current historical phase in the polarization of American politics. The most recent national exit-poll data provide a small taste of how persistent this link is: for instance, seven out of ten born-again Christian voters opted for a Republican candidate in the House election of 2006. This religious voting took place despite the hugely unpopular Iraq

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[11] A Pew survey experiment however, found that a closed question –similar to the one used in the exit polls- on issue salience was more likely to favour moral issues, than an open ended version of the same question. (Pew 2004). In both cases however, moral values are much more frequently mentioned among Bush voters than among Kerry voters.

war and a combination of scandals in the GOP, including sexual ones, which can be off-putting to religious constituencies.

The task of the narrative of recent electoral developments was to establish that religious politicization exists, and that it was built on ideological concerns in the 1970s, which became consolidated in partisan politics in the 1980s. Despite the growth of conservative Protestantism, it is evident that the political mobilization of religious populations in the 1970s lacked a clear partisan focus. The partisan polarization that such clear-cut, 'cleavage' connections between religious groups and parties tend to accompany remained dormant. On the other hand, the ideological conflict that emerged in that decade, created an interesting dynamic by pitting conservative constituencies against what they saw as moral decline and the radical erosion of traditional values.

This potential was soon picked up by the major parties. The late 1970s and early 1980s saw the parties, especially the Republicans, who had lost the electoral contests of 1974 and 1976, moving to capitalize on this ideological conflict. Reagan's courting of theologically conservative Protestants was followed by more intense efforts to solidify the presence of evangelicals in the GOP base throughout the 1990s. Furthermore, the presence of a vocally religious candidate in the 2000s helped update this link between conservative religion and Republican politics, and between liberal or no religion and Democratic politics.

The following chapter will use this contextual description to build an argument for the effects of political exposure on religious life. It will provide a theoretical justification of the political element that often emerges in individual religious decisions. Then, it will use the above review

of electoral eras to identify the contexts where this political element is most likely to appear, and the expression it should take – ideological or partisan.

CHAPTER 4

Theory

Existing scholarship normally examines the political mobilization of religious constituencies in terms of the impact of religious forces on politics. This deterministic approach - namely drawing attention merely to social explanations of political processes - prohibits a deeper understanding of the interplay between religious and political forces in the US. This chapter provides a critical take on extant theory and research regarding religion and its place in American electoral politics. The historical case of interest is the political mobilization of white evangelical Protestants, first in relation to the 'Social Issue' of the 1970s, and then their appearance as a major bloc in the Republican electoral base.

Section 4.1 reviews the 'top-down' strain in cleavage theory. This approach provides an understanding of the religious cleavage phenomenon as more than a reflection of social forces onto the political canvass. This perspective shifts attention to the effects of politicization for religion itself. According to this path, the influence of religious phenomena on political behaviour - a conventional assumption adopted by most political scientists - can be accompanied by a reverse effect, whereby religion becomes constrained by political concerns. This nuanced direction in the study of cleavages indicates that the products of the infusion of religion into politics are not restricted to the electoral realm, but can potentially transform religion into a phenomenon partly driven by politics.

A detailed social psychological explanation of this effect is laid out in detail in Section 4.2. This part combines the worldly character of modern American religion with the influence of the political process on non-political phenomena. The causal mechanism lies in group identification. Religious politicization, loosely defined as the affinity of certain religious populations with certain ideological camps and parties, creates the potential to drive believers away from certain churches and – eventually - closer to others or away from organized religion altogether. This process is summarized as an extrinsically 'political religion' fuelled by ideology and partisanship.

The hypothesis appears in full detail in Section 4.3, which establishes two competing expectations arising from religious politicization: i) a religious effect on politics (the 'sociological' approach) and ii) an ideological/partisan effect on religion (the 'political religion' phenomenon). Section 4.4 calls for an empirical evaluation of this hypothesis by documenting that extant research has largely ignored it.

A preliminary caveat is in order. In reviewing a large body of scholarship, covering sociology of religion, political science, and social psychology, I do not intend to provide comprehensive, shopping-list type coverage of the respective debates. I will selectively draw on the literature to construct a theoretically plausible and empirically testable argument.

4.1. From the 'sociology of politics' to 'political sociology'[12]

This discussion connects the religious developments described in Chapter 2 with the political process by means of cleavage theory. It introduces the conceptual framework of the mechanism that generates and cultivates the bond between faith and politics. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of the political process in shaping popular perceptions, attitudes and behaviour. In doing so, this section departs from a static understanding of the religious cleavage, and argues that the social basis of the religious divide in American politics (church life) can be subject to political influences. The discussion prepares the ground for the hypothesis that individual religious choices can be a function of political concerns, other things being equal.

The cleavage literature offers a useful tool for organising causal connections between social and political phenomena, in this case between religion and politics. These connections refer to relatively stable, recurring electoral patterns. The original formulation of the cleavage concept appears in Lipset and Rokkan's influential article in 1967, aiming to explain the formation of West European party systems. Lipset and Rokkan's introduction was followed by a long line of scholarship, which attempted to construct a precise description of the cleavage phenomenon (Bartolini and Mair 1990; Knutsen and Scarbrough 1995; Bartolini 2000). Briefly, the strict definition of cleavage coming from this body of knowledge claims that the translation of objective social divisions into transient political conflicts requires the alignment of three conditions (Bartolini and Mair 1990, pp.213-215; Bartolini 2000, pp.16-17):

- an 'empirical/ sociostructural element': a structural division between social groups, such as membership of a religious denomination;

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[12] The title comes from Sartori's article (1969).

- a 'normative/ identity element': a division based on values, interests and identities attached to this social membership;
- an 'organizational/ behavioural' element: the political expression of the above in the electoral arena. [13]

The role of the two first elements, i.e. the existence of a socio-structural basis for political conflict, and the competing norms, values and identities associated with it, have been extensively researched by the relevant literature. For instance, demographic characteristics (the empirical/socio-structural element in the cleavage definition) are tangible and the easiest to operationalize in empirical research. Due to their glacial movement, they allow for better prediction as more or less stable explanatory factors. It is a natural consequence for researchers to turn to the social structure as 'the' explanation and take it 'to be given' (Sartori 1969, p. 66).

A closer reading of theory however, argues that the existence of social divisions, i.e. of the empirical element is 'a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the emergence of political cleavages' (Zuckerman 1975, p. 237; cf. Przeworksi and Sprague 1986). Focusing on the third element of the definition, Lipset and Rokkan had already mentioned the importance of the political condition required for consolidating the cleavage. But it was Giovanni Sartori who criticized the weight placed on the empirical element of the cleavage definition and elaborated on 'translation handling' (1969, p. 88). Sartori stressed the relevance of political factors, especially parties, in shaping awareness, organizing options for political participation and defining the meaning of 'objective' social divisions (1969; Kriesi 1998; Bartolini and Mair 1990; Bartolini 2000; Knutsen and Scarbrough 1995).

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[13] Numerous versions exist, which place emphasis on different elements of this definition (see a recent overview of the field in Deegan-Krause 2007).

To quote an oft-cited example, Sartori's argument was that class voting cannot be treated as an automatic expression of objective class (social structure), but primarily as a subjective, identity element shaped by the parties (1969, p. 83-84). For the class division to become political and to override other divisions within each class (e.g. ethnicity or religion), it has to be recognised and internalized by citizens as such, and this is 'an effect of the activities of political parties' (Przeworksi and Sprague 1986, p. 9; Kitschelt 1994; Kriesi 1998; Zuckerman 1975; Heath *et al.* 1985). In a sense, what is treated as an objective social feature that pre-exists its politicization is essentially reconstructed as part of a wider political identity: working class 'goes with' Labour, evangelical with Republican, trade-union member with Democrat. Each two features become natural bedfellows. So while the politicization effect is built on social grounds (the first element in the cleavage: a religious revival or the existence of intense social inequalities), the social identity involved in politics is essentially a product of this politicization: it is a class *political* identity or a religious *political* identity. The present case introduces the expectation that when religion becomes the basis of a political conflict, it can also become a signifier of political elements (partisanship and ideology).

The approach described above, often called a political-agency view of cleavage formation and consolidation, has been gaining increasing attention in the empirical literature. The core of this approach refers to the 'learning' effect of politics (Miller and Shanks 1996, p. 133), grounded on a view of the political process as the continuing education and socialization of citizens through political participation. Political groups appear to 'impose images of society on individuals, mould collective identities, and mobilize commitments' (Przeworksi and Sprague 1986, p. 143). Numerous recent studies assert that citizens tend to adjust their issue preferences and even core predispositions, such as moral tolerance, on the basis of political cues (Hetherington 2001; Layman and Carsey 2002; Goren 2005; Carsey and Layman 2006). In

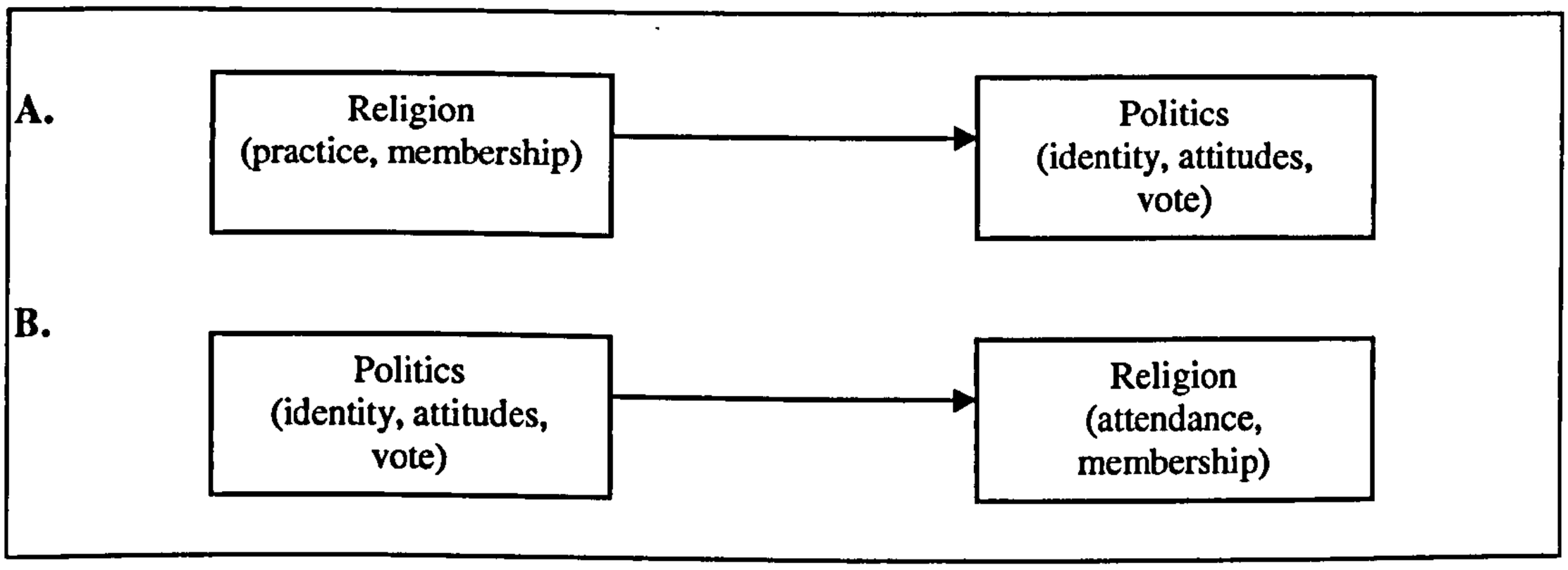
cleavage terminology, the political element of the cleavage does not function as a simple reflection of the normative element, but also shapes this by providing an indication to partisans on which political position/attitude to choose.

This is however only one observed expression of top-down cleavage processes, limited to political behaviour (e.g. Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1960; Green *et al.* 2002; Greene 2004). It describes the power of the political process to mobilize social groups by highlighting common interests and links between social positions and specific parties. What is argued here, however, is an extension of the importance of the political process, this time for non-political behaviour. This effect of political factors can be thought of as a political construction of how people experience membership in social groups, an expectation with little attention in the empirical literature.

This ignored aspect of the political 'voluntaristic approach' on cleavages (Enyedi 2005, p. 698) postulates that the politicization of a social division does not simply make individuals aware of normative links between social positions and political choices. In conditions where social position is a matter of choice, politicization also initiates a process in which the linkage between these positions and political choices may lead to selective exposure to social contexts. Let us assume that Democrats tend to opt for membership of religious group A (for example, a church), while Republicans tend to select religious group B. This phenomenon can further intensify divisions between the social groups that participate in the conflict by making them politically homogenous: church A will become more Democratic, while church B will become more Republican.

To take the traditional assumption, if specific social groups are perceived to be associated with more or less appealing political camps, then group membership will shape political choice (Figure 4.1.A). Yet, this connection has a by-product. If people have control over their exposure to social contexts, then political factors may play a part in their decision to exercise this control (Figure 4.1.B). Political consideration then can determine the degree of individual exposure to social contexts, and membership in *voluntary* social groups including religious ones in the American case. By ignoring this possibility, research continues to over-emphasize the importance of social explanations of political conflict, while downplaying the role of the conflict itself. Bartolini's (2000, p. 19) point concisely anticipates this: 'conflicts and oppositions...may even be generated by politics, activated and *reinforced* by political processes and institutions' (my emphasis). This effect will form the essence of my thesis regarding a revision of the role of religious groups in American politics.

Figure 4.1: The dual nature of religious politicization



As a caveat before moving on to a more specific discussion of the aforementioned phenomenon, this chapter does not suggest that political actors shape social structure independently of objective social conditions. The influential political element in the cleavage definition is itself constrained by structural developments. As conceptualized by the proposed

definition of cleavage, one of the requirements for the emergence of a political conflict is the existence of observable differences in structural positions typically between two groups. Drawing on the classic example in cleavage theory, irrespective of elite efforts tangible reasons would make it hard for working class voters to identify with the upper class and vote for the respective party - harder at least than to identify with the working class and vote for a social democratic party. Adding the top-down element therefore, the non-static view of cleavages postulates a cyclical process: 'factual' conditions (the effect of social divisions) shape the environment in which political discourse articulates, interprets, and fosters structural differences into political outcomes (the effect of political developments).

By extension, it is implausible to expect that exposure to diverse socialization processes, surrounding cues, collective identities and peer pressure will be without consequences for politics or that these can be entirely manipulated by political actors. In their documentation of the religious politicization phenomenon in the US, Roof and McKinney (1987) indicate the prime role of social structure in the mobilization of conservative Christians by emphasising educational and material achievements of American Evangelicals in the post-WWII era (see also Chapter 2 in this thesis). This attainment in turn facilitated the participation of the above populations in the demanding mechanisms of electoral politics. Therefore, one should hesitate to challenge the *sine qua non* character of social structure as a necessary requirement in the political mobilization of religious populations (for a classic example of structural constraints of political behaviour see Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet 1948).

4.2. Does politics matter?

This section will elaborate on the top-down cleavage approach by describing one of its causal expressions. The following discussion presents the social-psychological process that explains

why politics should be responsible for changing the social basis of the cleavage, i.e. the religious environment. In general, the importance of American parties for mass belief systems is reflected in a vast body of research investigating the links that connect them with voters. Prominent among these, partisanship has long been considered as one of the central and most stable elements that shape collective identities in America. The Michigan school and its disciples treat identification with a party as a multifaceted concept: as an evaluation of partisan objects, as a perceptual screen for interpreting objective stimuli, and most importantly for the present thesis, as psychological expression of group membership (e.g. Campbell *et al.* 1960; Green *et al.* 2002). Miller and Shanks for instance mention that: 'one of the roles of the church, or the party, is to provide structure to the ordinary person's understanding of the external world... [and] cues for normative assessments of the outside world' (1996, p. 121).

For this research tradition, partisanship represents a subjective state of mind. It is not formal party membership, as party identifiers do not need to be official activists. Additionally, it does not refer to the voting choice on election day, since Democratic identifiers can vote for the Republican candidate or abstain for reasons other than their psychological attachment to the Democratic Party. On the contrary, partisanship serves, among other things, as an anchoring point for individuals, which directs them in interpreting reality: for instance, what is the 'objective' state of the economy (e.g. Zaller 1992; Bartels 2002).

Steven Greene (1999, 2002, 2004) and Donald Green and associates (2002, pp. 73, 136) have produced strong arguments and evidence against a view of partisanship as a simple perceptual screen, time-saving device, or an attitude towards a political object. Staying faithful to the original theoretical formulation of the concept by the Michigan tradition, they instead propose a more socially embedded version of partisan attachment. My use of party identification draws on

this analytic direction, which treats it as a sense of belonging to a group (for an overview of theoretical and measurement issues see Greene 2002; Green *et al.* 2002). I will introduce the theoretical foundation of this approach with the intuitive example of religious identity, and then shift the discussion to party identification. Hereafter, the terms partisanship and party identification are used to refer to this sense of commitment as psychological group belonging.

Experimental work in social psychology provides the basis for the group-psychological foundation of partisanship. In their major contribution, Tajfel and Turner discovered two psychological effects, termed 'social identity' and 'self-categorization' (Tajfel and Turner 1986; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherell 1987). These two terms refer respectively to a definition of the self according to group characteristics, and to an exaggeration of differences between one's own group and other groups in order to achieve a positive self-concept.

Social identity is defined by Tajfel (1978, p. 63) as: 'knowledge of [one's] membership of a group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to the membership'. In social identity theory (SIT), an individual who psychologically feels closer to a group – no formal membership required - internalizes group membership by perceiving herself though group instead of personal characteristics – 'I am Democrat/Catholic/Hispanic' (cf. stereotype or group standard in Hogg and Terry 2000). The final goal of the application of general attributes is to reduce the complexity of social life and to satisfy 'the need for positive self-esteem' (Turner 1982, p. 33).

On the other hand, the cognitive process of self-categorization elaborates on how SIT works, that is, through the exaggeration of intergroup differences (Turner *et al.* 1987). People assign social objects into *us/them* categories: the *us* category represents the in-group, where people

feel they belong, and the *them* group stands for the out-group, where non-members are located. In this process, individuals attempt to make the in-group more distinctive than the out-group by conducting biased comparisons (stereotypes) with members of the out-group: for example 'we evangelicals are more pro-life than Jews'; and by adopting typical group norms and behaviour in order to maximize psychological inter-group differentiation: 'I protest outside abortion clinics because this is what we evangelicals do, as opposed to pro-choice Presbyterians.'

In sum, SIT expects individuals to a) perceive themselves not so much as unique units but as group members; b) cement their impulse for a positive self-image by making exaggerated comparisons with out-group members (stereotyping); and c) follow in-group standards in attitude and produce 'groupy' behaviour (Hogg and Terry 2000, p. 121). The three points are interrelated, in the sense that self-perceived membership of a group expects conformity with shared in-group standards (and against out-group standards) in order to achieve greatest possible perceived inter-group distinctiveness.

Partisan social identity

So far I have used examples citing the religious community as the group in SIT, while examining the normative outcomes of religious group membership. What happens if we look at the party as the social group in the theory? It has been already mentioned that the original exposition of the party identification concept in *The American Voter* viewed partisanship as many different things: an attitude, a perceptual screen and as group belonging. I am mostly interested in the belonging dimension of partisanship, in the sense of an 'us' vs. 'them' distinction (Campbell *et al.* 1960, pp. 133-135). For instance, the 1960 Michigan study compares the group basis of partisanship with other racial, ethnic and religious identities. The importance of the social character of parties is what Green and his colleagues recently

described when arguing about voters asking themselves 'what kinds of social groups come to mind as I think about Democrats, Republicans, and Independents? Which assemblage of groups (if any) best describes me?' (2002, pp. 8, 10).

Although attachment to American parties is not as strong as to resemble attachment to a socio-structural group, empirical studies on SIT suggest that parties can also function as the 'psychological group' in members' minds (Greene 2002, 2004). Furthermore, most experimentation with SIT is based on the minimal group situation. In this setting, members are assigned to groups by researchers according to arbitrary criteria like common eye colour or even by chance (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Greene (2004, pp. 148-149) argues that if social identity can be provoked in these laboratory conditions and through group creation based on trivial criteria, then partisanship too can generate the expectations of SIT. For example, citizens with stronger partisan social identification, i.e. greater *group* identification with fellow partisans (based on scales that measure feelings of belonging to a group), have been found to internalize in-party and out-party stereotypes, exhibit increased engagement in partisan behaviour (e.g. rally attendance), and exaggerate differences between 'us' and 'them', even after controlling for the traditional party identification variable, as predicted by SIT (Greene 2004).[14]

Consider the following set of normative cues transmitted to in-group (party) members. Typically during the course of a campaign, parties raise the salience of socio-political links by

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[14] Like Steven Greene, Donald Green and associates (2002: p. 78), see party identification as a plausible basis for SIT processes. They eventually insist in using partisanship as a product of social developments, without examining the effect of partisan identities on phenomena beyond voting (see their interpretation of Southern realignment through this prism, 2002: pp. 157-162).

sending out clear references of which social group is part of their electoral base using manifestos, candidate speeches and other broadcasts (Dickson and Scheve 2006; Hetherington 2001). This does not preclude the influence of non-textual symbols as discourses. Symbols can include a politician's personal characteristics or behaviour that exemplify the connection between social categories and political party (cf. Green *et al.* 2002, p. 13).

A distinct body of work is dedicated to this ability of parties to manipulate and provide political content to social labels ('evangelical' or 'working class'). A case in hand is David Green's work on the impact of political language on public consciousness (Green 1987; see also Edelman 1964). Through a process of purposeful use of political symbols, labels become reified and eventually could be considered 'naturally' connected to other labels, for instance attitudes, policies, or even social groups (e.g. Republican/pro-life/conservative/evangelical Protestant). Green's work on campaign speeches reflects this role of political actors in the formation, maintenance or suppression of social cleavages: 'politics is a process of conflict resolution, conflict creation and conflict management, and political language at once reflects and contributes to these processes' (1987, p. 7).

Since the early 1980s, such efforts constitute part of a GOP attempt to define itself as the 'party of God', while identifying the Democrats with godlessness. Examples abound (see a more detailed discussion in Chapter 3). Prominent among many is the 1992 Republican National Convention, especially the 'culture war' speech by Pat Buchanan. This speech represented a symbolic milestone in the recurring effort to associate the party with conservative family values, popular among theologically conservative populations. Its most illustrative excerpt contained the following:

My friends, this election is about much more than who gets what. It is about who we are. It is about what we believe. It is about what we stand for as Americans. There is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself. And in that struggle for the soul of America, Clinton and Clinton are on the other side, and George Bush is on our side. And so, we have to come home, and stand beside him.[15]

Similarly, George W. Bush's election to the White House in 2000 has arguably reemphasized the politics of faith in the Republican Party. The President, a born-again Christian, has consistently stressed the link between his Republican and theologically conservative credentials. In what appears to be a conservative reading of Christian faith he hindered federal funding of pro-choice groups abroad in 2001, while taking steps to promote funding for religious service organizations. Bush has also openly declared his opposition to same-sex marriage by favouring a constitutional amendment that would make same-sex marriage illegal (Muirhead, Rosenblum, Schlozman and Shen 2005; Guth 2004; Guth, Kellstedt, Smidt and Green 2006; Green, Rozell and Wilcox 2006; Campbell 2007; Noll 2007). Evangelical leader Jerry Falwell described Bush's reelection in 2004 and the role played by evangelicals in it as: 'a "slam dunk" as the Church of Jesus Christ made the difference in initiating the return of this nation to moral sanity and the Judeo-Christian ethic' (quoted in Layman and Hussey 2005, p. 1). It is not accidental that ANES data from the early 2000s show that many respondents mistook Bush for an evangelical Protestant, although he belongs to a mainline denomination.

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[15] Republican National Convention Speech, Houston, Texas, 1992. http://www.buchanan.org/pa-92-0817-rnc.html

The outcomes of this recurring identification of two labels as 'naturally' connected and equivalent (Republicanism – evangelical Protestantism or social conservatism - evangelical Protestantism) can be two-fold. If we focus on the religious group as our building bloc, as political science normally does opting for a sociological interpretation of politics, the expectation is that members of specific religious communities will conform to group norms and move closer to the prescribed party (cf. Green *et al.* 2002). Other things being equal, evangelicals will tend to move closer to the GOP.

Yet, members of religious groups also consider themselves part of partisan groups. Partisan identities become particularly prominent and consequential during election periods. What if we switched from the religious group and concentrated on the partisan group, under the assumption that this becomes very salient in the public mind during such periods? In that case, SIT expects that the labels associated with the in-party will guide its members towards adopting similar interpretations of reality and desirable preferences or actions. If in-group (in-party) members are Republicans, and assuming that the link between social group and party is very prominent, members will be exposed to the stereotype (the social imagery of the party). This connects, for instance, Republicanism with evangelical Protestantism, and Democrats with Catholicism, or in more recent years, with secularism. In this case, religiosity becomes an in-group (in-party) norm and according to SIT, group identifiers will be more likely to follow this religious norm. In a self-selective process, Republicans will tend to stress their Republicanism by intensifying their commitment to evangelical Protestant churches. Alternatively, Democrats will be under pressure to distance themselves from this religious environment, which contradicts their partisan in-group norms (cf. the withdrawal outcomes of cognitive dissonance in Festinger 1964).

This stereotyping is of course a simplification of reality – after all, not all Republicans are evangelicals. SIT stresses the point that members perceive in-group and out-groups as homogenous, and not so much that members actually embody these stereotypes. The occurrence of this simplifying strategy is supported by experimental research, where individuals construct simplified versions of external reality, and structure outside information as internally consistent sets of attributes: 'Republican' goes with 'evangelical', while 'Democrat' goes with 'Catholic' (see for example Fiske and Taylor 1984).

Ideological social identity

A similar rationale applies to ideological camps as producers of social identity effects (Holm and Robinson 1978; Levitin and Miller 1979; Conover and Feldman 1981; Lau 1989; Greene *et al.* 2008). The social upheaval that shook America in the 1960s and the backlash it produced in the 1970s brought attention to the existence of two separate and conflicting ideological groups in society: liberals and conservatives. Public debate became saturated with references to the liberal or the conservative camp using various direct or indirect ways to brand them.

Although a vast array of anecdotal evidence exists, Wuthnow's study of the 1970s conservative backlash from the perspective of religious populations provides a particularly rich source of qualitative information. In one example, he quotes an interview with evangelical leader Jerry Falwell in 1981, who claimed that: 'our task is not to Christianize America, it's to bring a moral and *conservative* revolution' (1988, p. 211, my emphasis). In another instance, Wuthnow quotes an interview with a conservative parishioner, who generalizes that 'I would associate [feminism] with across-the-board *liberality*, a weak view of [biblical] inerrancy, a lenient view of abortion and capital punishment' (1988, p. 227, my emphasis). Examples like the above

indicate that everyday language in the churches in the 1970s had already been saturated with ideological stereotyping and an *us* vs. *them* logic.

Certainly, phenomena such as talk-radio also helped spread the idea that two competing ideological coalitions battling and sometimes conspiring for cultural hegemony. Even in academic circles, recent studies reinforce the same idea. American linguist George Lakoff is an illustrative case. His written output includes among other titles the telling 'Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think'. Other, more popularized books also carry forward the same concept, i.e. of a conflict between two grand ideological aggregates. Thomas Frank's recent book 'What's the Matter with Kansas' is subtitled: 'How Conservatives Won the Heart of America'.

On the basis of this conflict, Hout and Fischer (2002) make a crucial observation in one of the few examinations of political pressures on individual religiosity in the context of the recent religious politicization in the US. The authors assert that the conservative flavour dominating evangelical churches since the 1970s has driven non-conservative evangelicals to apostasy, i.e. away from those churches (cf. the distinct but parallel trend in European Protestantism based on a backlash against theological conservatism in Bruce 1990, pp. 109-110). The aggregate-level consequence of this movement is the formation of ideologically homogenous churches.

Green and Guth (1993) appear to examine a similar phenomenon, yet from the opposite perspective. Their analysis of NES pilot data shows that switchers – i.e. individuals abandoning their denomination - resemble the 'target' denomination in terms of political characteristics, such as partisanship and ideology. In the absence of panel data, they can only speculate as for the reasons of this alignment. Yet, instead of following Hout and Fischer's rationale, namely

that political concerns have something to do with the motives behind switching, they opt for the traditional explanation. Specifically, they use the theory of anticipatory socialization, and claim that switchers promptly change their political preferences in order to adjust to the new religious environment. In this vein, political characteristics remain an outcome of the sociological forces that drive people to change denominations, for example lifecycle effects: first believers decide to change church for whatever non-political reason, and then they promptly bring their political characteristics in line with the norms in the new church. Hout and Fischer step away from this conventional thinking.

All in all, the distancing of moderate/liberal believers from evangelical churches can be interpreted as the result of 'groupy' behaviour. Here, liberal evangelicals would be expected to follow political in-group (liberal) standards (on religion) and react to the conservative turn of their churches by avoiding religious services. Conversely, conservative evangelicals would tend to adopt in-group (conservative) religious standards and strengthen their links with evangelical churches by attending more frequently. In politicized periods, the connection of evangelicalism with political conservatism would have attendance become the norm of the political (conservative) in-group, with the reverse holding for the opposite (liberal) in-group. This process should accompany the conventionally assumed influence of church on individual ideological orientations.

Additional explanations

Parallel causal mechanisms could account for partisan and ideological effects on religious commitment. In addition to social identification, some element of social interaction within discussion networks could be in play (Weatherford 1982; MacKuen and Brown 1987). For example, individuals frequenting Republican clubs could find themselves under direct pressure

from peers to join an evangelical church or if already members, to attend evangelical churches more often. At the same time, Democrats frequenting trade-union meetings could be exposed to suggestions by co-workers against joining or attending an evangelical church.

This political sorting-out within religious groups, particularly the abandoning of partisan congregations by identifiers with the opposite political camp, could also be the product of cognitive dissonance (cf. Lazarsfeld *et al.* 1948; Campbell *et al.* 1960). Democrats belonging to evangelical congregations will tend to be under a state of cross-pressure: on the one hand, they are exposed to pro-Republican cues from the pulpit; on the other hand they are Democratic identifiers. The solution to this inconsistency is hypothesized to be disengagement and apathy for the individual. In this case, disengagement could take the form of a retreat from the organized religious realm.

Kristin Luker's qualitative work on abortion attitudes (1984) is a study that sheds light on processes similar to those described in this chapter, yet unrelated to identity-based mechanisms. Her study sets out to illuminate reasons that shape pro-choice or pro-life positions in the abortion debate. Findings from 212 in-depth interviews with abortion activists support the intuitive expectation: that is, individual preferences on the subject are mainly a function of religion and life-cycle experiences. Crucially however for the alternative expectation proposed in the thesis at hand, the vociferous role played by church elites in the public debate over abortion has also ignited a countermovement (for similar conclusions see Warner 1988). According to Luker's analysis, many believers with pro-life concerns had converted to Catholicism, which officially advocates an absolute pro-life position. In a mirroring process, many pro-choice activists followed a movement of de-affiliation from religion altogether.

The aforementioned explanations – social networks and dissonance - provide further theoretical support to the political religion expectation. Yet limited availability of relevant measures favours emphasis on SIT. Questions on discussion networks are not a consistent part of the ANES survey design. Similarly, cognitive dissonance is difficult to establish, since information on individual exposure to cues from the pulpit and the nature of these cues does not form a stable part of ANES surveys. For these practical reasons, analyses in following chapters resort to an explanation rooted in social identity theory, for which more or less valid measures are available.

4.3. A political religion (*ceteris paribus*)?

The combination of the elements presented so far begs the obvious question: in the mobilization of religious communities in the political arena, should we expect the community itself to be transformed? It has been argued here that the influence of religious life on political behaviour - a conventional assumption adopted by most political scientists - is not the only plausible one in the cleavage process. Elaborating on Sartori's critique of reductionist, sociological explanations of voting behaviour, Kriesi (1998, p. 172) notes that members of different structural groups 'come to be mobilized by the political adversaries...and by way of their identification with this opposite camp also *reinforce their social and cultural distinctiveness*' (emphasis added).

In the commonly employed approach, the first part of the sentence emphasizes the 'objective' structural element of the cleavage concept, which is necessary for the mobilization of social groups at an initial stage. In specific terms, parties appear in the arena that make existing communities aware of which political formation is their natural home, and these communities respond (Green *et al.* 2002). When the GOP starts presenting itself in a theologically traditionalist light, being an evangelical makes it more likely for a citizen to be attracted by that

party. In SIT terms, religious membership serves as the categorization criterion dividing society into groups, while partisanship is the normative end product of the process (Figure 4.1.A).

However, when crystallized, the *political* link between social groups and parties or ideological camps creates an additional effect, which can leave an autonomous footprint on society. In a second process then, political identities can constrain religious identities – for example, a member of an evangelical church who is strongly Republican or ideologically conservative, will tend to become even *more strongly* evangelical (see Figure 4.1.B). In reverse, those feeling closer to the Democrats or the liberals will be more likely to limit their exposure to the evangelical environment, as a means to avoid the ambivalence involved in belonging to the 'wrong' church vis-à-vis their partisan/ideological group standard (cf. concept of cross-pressure in Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954). This social psychological effect identifies one instance of top-down effects on the empirical element in cleavage theory, as described above. It is here that political context can reinforce the boundaries of religious communities, by driving citizens closer to their 'natural' religious communities.

My argument calls for a theoretically comprehensive effect. This is what Bartolini and Mair refer to when they note that: 'once cleavages become established and organizationally institutionalized, they develop their own autonomous strength and, in turn, begin to act as an influence on social, cultural and political life' (Bartolini and Mair 1990, p. 218). Specifically in the American religious context, expressions of religious commitment and identity can be connected with a political understanding of faith and church, i.e. of religion as being 'owned' by a specific ideological camp or party (cf. Petrocik 1996).

It seems plausible therefore to suggest that individuals update their religiosity on the basis of political concerns and pressures. Commitment to an evangelical church could eventually function as a symbolic expression of conservatism and Republicanism, whereby one goes to church because one sees this practice as confirmation of the dominant religious stereotypes in one's political in-group (conservatives or Republicans) and as demarcation from the out-group (liberals or Democrats). In a logic akin to a 'self-fulfilling prophecy', the activation and salience of the equivalence between party/ideology and religion leads to a stronger connection between religion and party in a feedback relationship:

PROPOSITION: Reinforcement

Step 1:

Religious exposure → political outcomes (apparent effect)

Exposure to a religious environment will influence political choice.

Step 2:

Political exposure → religious outcomes (masked effect)

Identifiers with political groups will tend to bring their religious preferences in line with their group's social imagery.

Based on the discussion of the sorting phenomenon that took place between the two parties since the 1970s, the phenomenon of religious commitment influenced by political (partisan or ideological) concerns, is hypothesized to emerge within a religious community in which

political identities are increasingly salient. I identify the existence of this condition in the post-1980s political era among evangelicals (see Chapter 3 in this thesis). Specifically, the post-1980s period has been a time of extreme cultural polarization and salient religious and political identities, and even witnessed a reborn Christian heading the Republican ticket.

It remains an empirical question however whether the feedback hypothesis holds among evangelicals before the 1980s. It is implausible to suggest that partisan concerns could affect religious concerns in that period. White evangelical Protestants were not yet explicitly attracted by the GOP. Hence the link between Republicanism and evangelical Protestantism had not yet been consolidated in the public mind. In other words, partisanship was not a very clear divisive line for religious populations, not to the degree that the conservative-liberal demarcations was. After all, 1976, the 'Year of the Evangelical', was defined by the *Democratic* candidacy of Jimmy Carter. So, as discussed in detail in Chapters 2 and 3, during the 1970s evangelicals were only mobilized around ideologically conservative causes. It is more plausible then to expect that while the partisan demarcation was dormant in that period, the ideological drive that emerged among the evangelical population in the 1970s could push some liberal members of the church away – or reinforce the religiosity of conservative members.

4.4. The missing link in empirical research

This section examines how – if at all - this plausible expectation is reflected in methodology. The argument, which expects modern American religious commitment to be partially constrained by politics, has not yet found translation into most sociological and political research. The paradigmatic view in most empirical social science starts with the assumption that the political sphere is a neutral arena, a Marxian superstructure that deterministically reflects society, culture and economy. Especially when examining the fluctuation of religious

trends, political explanations are offered as mere narratives by the scholarly literature. In the sociology of religion field, the predominant tendency is to seek explanations of individual religious choice or of large-scale religious developments in the traditional places: social networks, life-cycle events, affluence and the like. Politics is excluded from such approaches at both the individual or aggregate levels of analysis. Under this perspective, if the politicization of evangelical Protestantism leads to a sudden, intra-generational surge in the number of people dropping out of evangelical denominations, current research may fail to properly account for that surge if focused only on non-political explanations.

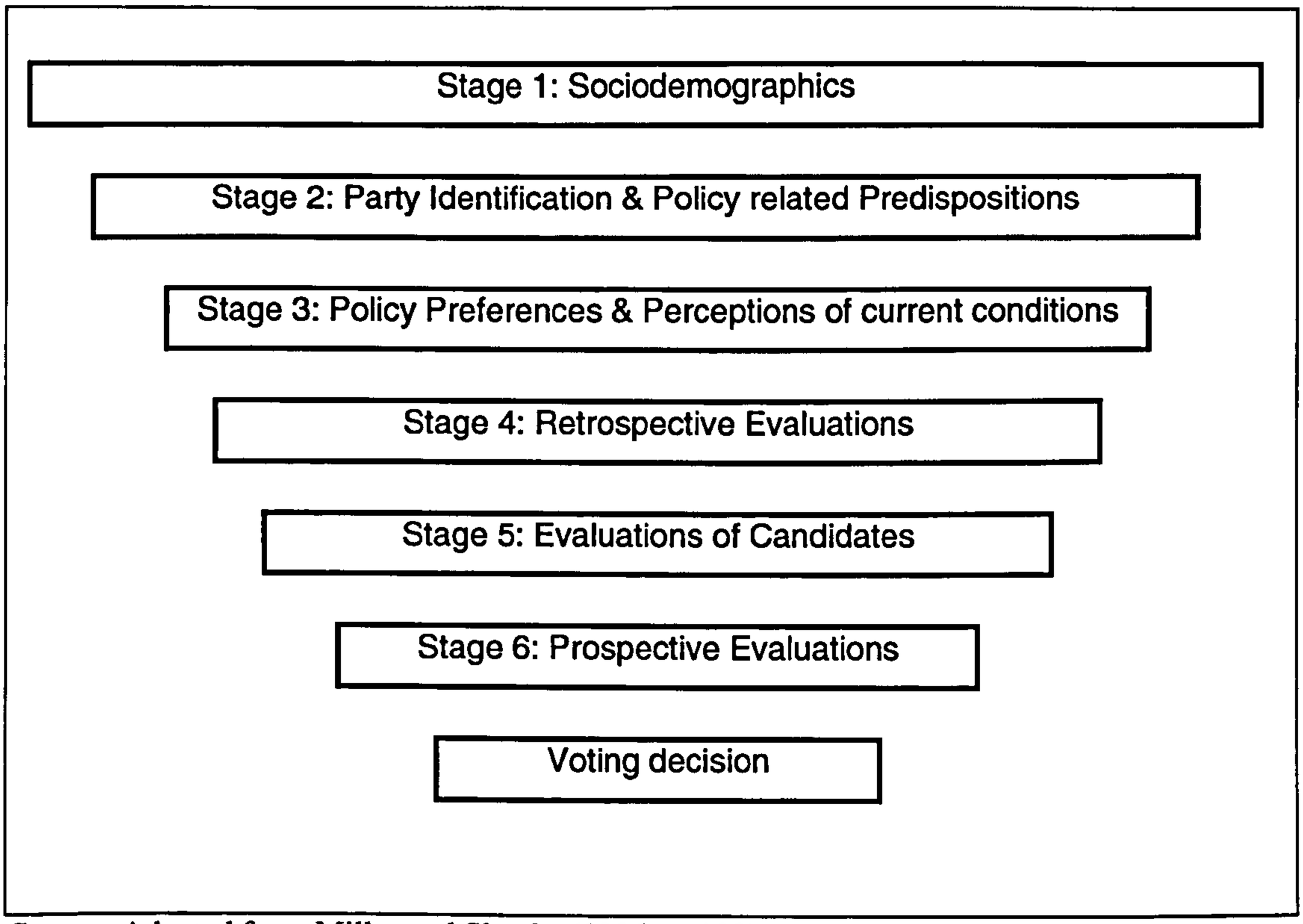
The existing sociological literature does provide some hints of the possibility for political pressures on religiosity. Roof and McKinney's (1987) celebrated work on American Protestants concludes by speculating on the possibility that macro-social explanations of denominational switching could be contested by more 'political' explanations; the claim is that dissonant positions on policy issues could lead certain individuals to abandon one congregation for another that better fits their views. In a more recent sociological overview of explanations of religious commitment however, the potential for effects originating within the political sphere is completely ignored (Sherkat and Ellison 1999).

Empirical evaluation of such claims also comes in short supply in the political science field. Custom still prevails and religious variables are treated as stable, exogenous factors (Campbell *et al.* 1960). In this way, most studies use the sociologically deterministic version of the cleavage concept, and provide an incomplete explanation of how a cleavage develops (see for example Manza and Brooks 1999; Bolzendahl and Brooks 2005; Brooks, Nieuwbeerta, and Manza 2006).

Specifically, the dominant Michigan approach in political behaviour suggests that social characteristics such as class and religion tend to constrain political attitudes and behaviour mostly through the omnipotent partisan identification filter. It has conventionally treated religion –practice, belief and affiliation- as a firm demographic attribute, endogenous to other sociological influences, but strictly exogenous to politics (Campbell *et al.* 1960; Lopatto 1985; Rose and Urwin 1969; Jelen, Smidt and Wilcox 1993; Wald, Kellstedt and Leege 1993; Miller and Shanks 1996; Bolzendahl and Brooks 2005; Wald *et al.* 1988). Religious parameters are normally used as predictors of party identification (e.g. Wilcox 1987), political ideology and attitudes (Carmines and Layman 1997; Barker and Carman 2000), and turnout and vote (Manza and Brooks 1997). When studies do show concern over the factors that actually shape a basic explanatory variable like religion, they still insist in excluding politics as a potential cause (e.g. Olson and Green 2006, including the vast majority of the religious switching literature).

The Michigan approach has been visually presented as a funnel of causality (Campbell *et al.* 1960). A milestone in 20th century voting research, the funnel of causality is a heuristic for the arrangement of numerous influences on political behaviour: causal relationships are based on a social component, one translated through psychological processes into political outcomes. The graphical representation of the major steps in the funnel is outlined in Figure 4.2. Variables in Stage 1 – which include religious ones - are exogenous to the political process and represent enduring personal characteristics. Notice how both elements discussed so far, the unstable nature of American religiosity and the autonomous influence of politics, are absent from this heuristic.

Figure 4.2: The funnel of causality



Source: Adapted from Miller and Shanks (1996, p. 192).

For most political research then, the political mobilization of conservative Christians by the socially conservative Republican agenda can be adequately investigated as follows: exogenous religious characteristics of the individual are linked to specific political choices; for example, evangelicals are more likely to support the GOP. This perspective either analyzes cross-sectional data, and reaches conclusions on the impact of religion on politics at a single point in time or examines fluctuations in the magnitude of this impact across time. The untested assumption or 'objectivist superstition' according to Sartori (1969, p. 92) prevails: membership in social groups urges individuals to behave accordingly in politics.

This disregard is a product of two related conditions, a theoretical and a practical one. First, the behaviourist foundation dominant in the first years of electoral behaviour research dictated that readily observable social traits are temporally prior and more stable than latent political attitudes. The former therefore tended to be treated as causes of the latter. This theoretical misconception leads to the second condition, where research is constrained by data limitations. Analysis of cross-sectional surveys is common practice in empirical political science, but is not acceptable as a robust test for the clarification of feedback relationships (Finkel 1995). In a vicious circle, the supposed stability of personal religious characteristics has guided the designers of national surveys to largely overlook repeated measures of religious features (Green *et al.* 2002, p. 75).

Any cursory inspection of codebooks for ANES panel surveys verifies this. Extensive measures for religiosity do not appear consistently in all waves of such surveys. For instance, in the 1992-1994-1996 panel, five new categories have been added to the Protestant denominations list in the 1994 and 1996 waves, hindering consistency in the classification of religious affiliations. The 2000-2002-2004 NES panel, a dataset of particular interest for the study of religious politicization because of the strategy of Bush's team, contains data on denomination membership only for waves 1 and 2, but even in this case, answers from the 2000 wave are imputed into the 2002 wave.[16] Naturally, post 9/11 research on denominational switching and apostasy due to political concerns is hindered by such designs, since there is no way to evaluate whether individuals changed denomination between the two time points.

[16] For example, see variable number P000904 in 2000 cloned into P023138 and into P023138a in 2002.

Conclusion

The task of this chapter was to use the exceptional nature of American religiosity in order to justify a revisionist evaluation of its role in American politics. The studies appearing in this chapter echo one general question – does religion remain intact when mixed with partisan politics? In the picture that has emerged, the element of choice in American piety, coupled with an intensely partisan environment, can transform religiosity into a function of politics. Section 4.1 reviewed an argument with origins in political sociology, departing thus from the current sociological paradigm in the study of political behaviour. The claim is that the political process is not merely a phenomenon that awaits explanation, but can serve as an explanatory factor *per se* for other aspects of social life.

Section 4.2 amends this absence by developing a social psychological expectation for the impact of political processes on religious life. The hypothesized phenomenon, branded 'political religion', suggests a causal link that contradicts the paradigm followed by most current research. The political mobilization of religious constituencies involves a more complicated mechanism than usually suggested, separated into two processes: an apparent effect on politics and a masked effect on religion. The former coincides with what extant literature brands religious politicization, an attempt to provide religious explanations of political behaviour. Examples include the denominational foundation of party attachment, policy predispositions, foreign policy positions and vote choice. In general, if the political norm of the religious in-group is to support Republicans, then strong in-group identifiers will be more likely to support the GOP.

This incomplete definition of religious politicization however does not fully examine the critical role that identification with political groups exerts in defining and organizing mass

perceptions and choices. If religious life becomes intensely involved in politics, one expectation is that its quality will become affected by this politicization. The addition of this ignored effect provides a more comprehensive account of what follows when the above elements (religion and politics) become constrained into a stereotype. Specifically, religion moves individuals towards certain political directions, drawing a picture of persisting religious vitality in modern society. But this is only half part of the story, since politics can also move believers to certain religious choices. Ignoring this process is to ignore the dynamic character of modern religion, and the negative or positive effects of politics on religious life. Finally, Section 4.4 emphasizes the absence of empirical evaluations of this hypothesis, by presenting how previous studies have examined religious politicization.

This chapter aimed at providing the foundation for the empirical tests that appear in Chapters 6 and 7. Laying the ground for the methodological discussion, a top-down cleavage approach explained why we should expect individual religion to become transformed through political exposure. By extension, religion can be considered as a dependent variable by social scientists. Before assessing whether the above expectations are observed in the data, the next chapter prepares the reader for an empirical answer. It discusses how these theoretical points can be translated into concrete and systematic evaluations. In methodological terms, the present argument calls for the assessment of the mutually reinforcing effect between religious structure and political context, in replacement of the commonly assumed unidirectional impact of religion on politics.

Chapter 5

Methodology

This chapter formally presents the hypothesis that religiosity and ideology/partisanship are linked through mutual reinforcement. The usual methodological specification postulates that exposure to religious communities constrains political choices. The alternative specification proposed here argues that psychological attachment to ideological and partisan camps corresponds to a deeply rooted sense of group identity, which could lead to specific religious choices. Other things being equal, alongside religiously driven political outcomes, the theoretical discussion in the previous chapter also expects a religious outcome driven by political factors.

The starting point in my effort to test this hypothesized bidirectional causal link between religious and political variables is the party identification literature, particularly methodological research that explores reciprocal causation between partisanship and other political variables (Jackson 1975; Markus and Converse 1979; Page and Jones 1979; Layman and Carsey 2002; Goren 2005; Carsey and Layman 2006). This motivation, coupled with the theoretical emphasis of existing SIT research on partisan groups, justifies the preference given by the following discussion to examples using the partisan group. As argued in Chapter 4 however, the same analytic framework is employed here to assess the effect of ideological group identification on religiosity.

I begin with a description of the datasets and the main variables used in the analyses. I then move on to modeling issues, including the nature of the population under investigation. Then, two models that supplement each other are specified. The first model expects that psychological identification with a partisan or ideological group affects, *ceteris paribus*, the degree of exposure to a politicized religious environment (defined as church attendance). This model is the more complex one in terms of inference and specification. The second model comes closer to the essence of the hypothesized phenomenon, and anticipates that ideological and partisan identification can shape denominational choice other things being equal.

5.1. Data and measures

A direct question posed to citizens along the lines of 'why do you go to (that) church' would seem intuitive as a test for the existence of a political religion among the American public. Yet, it carries serious disadvantages. First, such questions are rarely, if ever, asked in national sample surveys (cf. Gallup item discussed in Newport 2007). Second, social desirability effects would lead most respondents to provide a 'proper' reason for their religious choices, such as belief in God or spiritual needs, but not political justifications. The test of the political religion argument has to be indirect, and multivariate statistical analysis serves that purpose. The empirical evaluation will involve disentangling the direction of causality between political and religious variables, in accordance with the expectation posited by the previous chapter. This will be achieved by using quantitative information collected for the same individuals across different time points (waves), i.e. panel surveys. The variables chosen to operationalize politics are party identification and ideological self-placement. As measures of religion I use church attendance and denominational affiliation.

The first part of the analysis (Model 1) evaluates the religious influence on political behaviour and the parallel political influence on religious behaviour using ANES panel data. Three electoral cycles are covered: 1972 to 1976, 1992 to 1996, and 2000 to 2004, with interviews conducted in both pre- and post-election periods for presidential years, and only for the post-election period in off-years.[17] The number of people that participated in the maximum number of repeated interviews (five) across three time-points are: 1183 cases for all waves in the 1972–1974 - 1976 panel; 597 for all waves in the 1992–1994 - 1996 panel; and 748 for the 2000–2002 -2004 panel.[18]

Relevant longitudinal data are missing for other interesting political eras - for example from the 1960s, which witnessed the political mobilization of religious liberals, and especially from the 1980s, a period that marked the breakthrough of the Christian Right into the Republican machine. As an opening caveat therefore, the following results support inferences regarding only the time periods covered by the datasets.

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[17] Data used in the present study were made available by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. The author holds sole responsibility for their analysis and interpretation. Throughout the study, I avoid using the 1956-1960 ANES panel, since the detailed measure that differentiates among Protestant denominations and is required for sub-group analysis had not yet been introduced in 1956. In the examination of the reciprocal link between ideology and attendance (Model 1), the 2000-2004 panel is dropped, because of the absence of repeated measures of ideological self-placement in 2004. In the estimation of political influences on changing religious affiliation (Model 2), the dataset used is the 1972-1976 ANES panel, the only source containing an adequate sample size and consistent repeated measurement of affiliation.

[18] Since the analysis does not employ data from all panel waves, the actual number of cases is higher. This depends on how many waves are used, and whether variables are drawn from both pre- and post-election interviews. The numbers used in each analysis appear with findings in following chapters.

Partisan social identification

For reasons explained in Chapter 4, I adopt the social identity approach to partisanship (Campbell *et al.* 1960; Greene 1999, 2002, 2004; Green *et al.* 2002). Secondary analysis of ANES datasets applies limitations to what kind of variables can be used to accommodate the SIT perspective. To measure partisan identification I employ the standard item designed by the ANES. The wording of the base item and its follow-ups that compose the seven-point summary scale used in the present analysis reads as follows:

Root question:

Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent or what?

Follow-up A (if respondent self-identifies as Republican / Democrat):

Would you call yourself a strong Republican/Democrat or a not very strong Republican/ Democrat?

Follow-up B (if respondent self-identifies as independent, no preference or other):

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or to the Democratic Party?

Summary indicator:

0) Strong Democrat 1) Weak Democrat 2) Democrat leaner

3) Independent

4) Republican leaner 5) Weak Republican 6) Strong Republican

The work of Green and colleagues (2002) and especially Greene (2004) suggests that, in want of more valid questions, the NES measure can be used as an operational definition of social identification. It contains a long-lasting element ('generally speaking'), and also probes for a self-definition ('do you consider yourself'). Question wording provides a cognitive stimulus for

this self-definition and avoids evoking affective elements in the respondent's mind (cf. 'do you feel that you are' and the experimental literature in that direction, e.g. Burden and Klofstad 2005). In this respect, the NES measure comes close to measuring an abstract property like identification with a social group.

The use of the standard Michigan item as a measure of social identification is also supported by the nature of the American party system. While multi-party systems do not offer themselves as fertile settings for *us* vs. *them* partisan categorizations, the two-party system in America provides an implicitly conflictual model for group identification. While 'being' Labour in the UK does not necessarily reflect negative stereotyping of both Liberal Democrats and Conservatives, this is more likely to hold in the case of Democrats vs. Republicans.

The first model presented in this thesis tests for feedback effects between an (unobservable) psychological variable and a (self-reported) behavioural measure. By taking into account the stability of one variable with respect to another, it contains an inherent danger: causal estimates may be influenced by the different stability of the two variables, which is partly an effect of their dissimilar nature. Behavioural elements, even self-reported ones like church attendance, tend to be more reliable and less prone to random error than psychological indicators, like group identification. This could lead to the spurious conclusion that the superficially more stable element (behaviour) 'causes' the less reliable, fuzzier psychological indicator (Bollen 1989, p. 11). Therefore, the different status of the main variables examined can prove problematic.

However, an advantage of the use of the traditional NES party identification item is that it contributes to suppressing this danger. Jon Krosnick's study of the NES question (1991)

suggests that the carefully crafted wording of the partisanship item is the reason behind its relative stability as compared with other psychological measures. Unlike single scales used to measure policy preferences, the party ID measure contains a very detailed, branching scheme (a stem question, an intensity question, and a probing item). This particular item is one of the most reliable among psychological survey questions, and could be used opposite a behavioural question in feedback models. A final strength of the NES measure is that the centrality of party identification in the American paradigm of political behaviour has protected the survey item from wording variations across years. This ensures consistency in longitudinal statistical analysis.

Overall, the root item's long-term perspective, and its focus on self-categorization with a group label have been deemed adequate by researchers for the battery to stand as a measure of group belonging (Green *et al.* 2002; Goren 2005). As a caveat however, it should be noted that respondents who answer follow-ups in the party ID scale have already rejected using a party label in the root item. Thus, the NES branching item (the combination of the root question and two follow-ups) is problematic as a measure of group identification (see detailed discussion in Green *et al.* 2002, pp. 37, 57-58; Greene 2002, p. 174-176). The summary gauges both an attitude towards a political object and a feeling of belonging to a group (psychological identification). The first follow up question differentiates between *strong* and *not very strong* Republicans/Democrats, which do not constitute directly identifiable social groups, in the same way as the labels 'Protestant' or 'Catholic' do. In this sense, interviewees may interpret the first follow-up as a measure of their voting loyalty in the past.

In addition, the second follow-up directly requires respondents to think about their closeness to the parties. It resembles an ideological proximity measure, further departing from the logic of a

social psychological item. Feeling close to a political object is dissimilar from considering oneself as a member of a group. And although limiting analyses only to respondents of the stem question would cancel the disadvantages of the two follow-ups (follow-ups A and B in the NES battery), this would also reduce *N* and hinder the use of complex methods. To avoid this, I prefer to include respondents to the follow-ups in my analyses. Some validation of my choice is provided by previous studies showing that partisan-leaners are very similar to identifiers (e.g. Keith, Magleby, Nelson, Orr, Westlye and Wolfinger 1992). Finally, the assignment of 'independents' by the summary measure also means that there is confusion between membership in distinct groupings (parties) and attitudes towards political independence (Weisberg 1980; Greene et al. 2008).

As an alternative to the ANES question, a specialized indicator measuring social identification and categorization would be more fine-tuned to the requirements of SIT. Although missing from national sample surveys, such a measure has been developed recently. Steven Greene's work (1999, 2002, 2004) adapts a group identity scale developed by social psychologists, and creates the following partisan social identity battery. Comparing this with the NES measure emphasizes their similarities - hence, the strengths of the root item - and also the limited validity of the follow ups:

When someone criticizes this group, it feels like a personal insult.		I have a number of qualities typical of members of this group.
I don't act like the typical person of this group.		This group's successes are my successes.
I'm very interested in what others think of this group.		If a story in the media criticized this group, I would feel embarrassed.
The limitations associated with this group apply to me also.		When someone praises this group, it feels like a personal compliment.
When I talk about this group, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'.		I act like a person of this group to a great extent.

Ideological social identification

As a measure of identification with liberal and conservative camps, I select the ideological self-placement scale introduced in 1972 by the ANES. The wording of the scale appears below. High scores on the seven-point scale represent conservative identification. I use the original root question, available in both the 1970s and 1990s panels. I do not employ the summary three-point measure (liberal/moderate/conservative), which allocates respondents who initially select 'haven't thought much about it' or 'moderate', and is absent in the 1970s panel. This also ensures that when examining reciprocity between ideology and attendance, the two scales have a high number of points. Note also how the use of the self-reported ideology scale allows direct comparison with the similarly structured partisanship scale (both using a seven-point template):

> We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a 7-point scale on which political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal (1) to extremely conservative (7).
>
> Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this? (2 is liberal, 3 is slightly liberal, mid-point is moderate/middle of the road, 5 is slightly conservative, 6 is conservative).

Chapter 4 has mentioned the prominence of the 'liberals vs. conservatives' imagery that has dominated public debate in post-1960s America. My theoretical expectation is based on the religious outcomes of social identity with an ideological group. Thus, the wording of the self-reported ideology item serves my purpose, since it defines from the outset the two opposing

groups. The same argument applies here as in the case of partisanship: identification with a psychological group provides more analytic leverage than reactions to political objects (parties or issues). I am not concerned whether participants organize issue positions in a consistent manner. So, the ANES item used is less about whether people think about issues ideologically, and more about how people see and categorize themselves using an ideological label, such as 'I am Liberal' (Edelman 1964; Holm and Robinson 1978; Levitin and Miller 1979; Conover and Feldman 1981).

Alternatively, studies of public opinion have investigated ideology as the existence of a meaningful structure or attitudinal/belief constraint in measures of issue positions (e.g. Luttbeg 1968; Fleishman 1988). This strategy does not come close to measuring identification with an ideological camp. For instance, it is often the case that individual positions on various attitudes are inconsistent with ideological self-identification: self-reported liberalism coincides with conservative issue positions and *vice versa* (Huckfeldt and Sprague 2000). In a similar sense, measures of issue constraint often find the mass public to be less capable of ideological thinking than usually assumed (Converse 1964; Repass 1971; Zaller 1992). Even so, most respondents still choose to place themselves on the ideological identification scales in opinion surveys. This indicates that ideology is much more than cognitive sophistication and issue constraint, and provides further support to my use of it as a self-identification measure.

The disadvantages of this question as a social identity measure are immediately obvious. Although the survey question mentions the two ideological camps from the beginning, the presentation of a multiple point continuum (and the grey area between them) obscures a clear distinction between the two groups. Similarly, the option '*slightly* liberal' does not correspond to an identifiable political group. The scale also asks respondents for their 'political views'. By

using this item, it is not easy to validate whether respondents understand the question as a belonging query or as an expression of an abstract attitudinal tendency. Still, this is the best measure available in the ANES series.

Measuring religion

Model 1: Church attendance

Religion is commonly treated as a multidimensional concept containing three facets: believing, behaving and belonging (Glock and Stark 1965; Stark and Glock 1968; Emmons and Paloutzian 2003). Two types of religious dependent variables are considered in this study. Due to limited item availability in the panels, the dimension of religion examined in the first analysis (Model 1) is church attendance, a five-point scale with high scores indicating frequent attendance. This indicator, which is not a measure of religious identification, is expected to be subject to partisan and ideological influences. The wording of the attendance item is as follows:

<u>1972-1976 ANES</u> Would you say you go to (church/synagogue) every week (5), almost every week (4), once or twice a month (3), a few times a year (2), or never (1)?
<u>1992-1996 & 2000-2004 ANES</u> Do you go to religious services every week (5), almost every week (4), once or twice a month (3), a few times a year (2), or never (1)? [a]

a. In the 1992-1996 and 2000-2004 panels, a preceding filter excludes respondents who answer 'no' to a dichotomous church attendance question. For this analysis, these have been recoded into the 'never' category of the ordinal variable.

The choice of self-reported church-going as a measure of religiosity in Model 1 was influenced by a number of considerations, practical and theoretical. Church attendance has been the most popular indicator in the sociology of religion (Greeley 1989). A common first step in studies of secularization is to examine whether the number of church-goers is declining in a country. Among political scientists, researchers have also recently discovered that religious attendance shapes ideological predispositions, partisan attachments and vote, often independently of religious tradition (Miller and Shanks 1996; Green 2004; Olson and Green 2006; Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2007).

For this reason, religious attendance is the only religious variable consistently asked in repeated survey designs, and one of few that has been asked with minimal wording changes across decades. For instance, while panel surveys normally measure respondents' religious beliefs and church affiliation only in the first wave of the study, under the obvious assumption that these remain stable, the attendance question is usually repeated across waves. The example of the latest NES panel (2000 to 2004) is illustrative: an item on Biblical literalism (whether the Bible is the word of God) appears only in 2000, making it therefore unsuitable for examining change in individual religious choice across panel waves. The church attendance question on the other hand appears both in 2000 and 2004. The same applies to a battery classifying respondents into religious denominations (it is missing from 2004). Maintaining consistency in testing causal relationships across decades of panel studies is a considerable task *per se*. Keeping discrepancies to a minimum therefore is an urgent need, and using the same variables across time is one way to reach this goal.

My research aims are also best served by a religious indicator that allows space for secular influences. This point will be supported through a discussion of Allport and Ross's (1967) distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity. Extrinsically religious people base their faith on non-religious motives. Intrinsically religious people are those who use faith because of the spiritual dimension in Christianity. The church attendance indicator allows for such extrinsic, multilayered motives. The same distinction cannot be made for beliefs about biblical literalism. Whereas doctrinal belief is much more likely to be related to spiritual concerns, religious practice can reflect motives ranging from the pious to the profane. For theoretical reasons, I also decided not to use an item about prayer (self-reported frequency of prayer outside religious services), which refers to the private dimension of religiosity. As a solitary religious activity, it is not relevant to the social psychological processes investigated here.

The use of the church-attendance variable also facilitates the estimation of contextual effects. Specifically, the phenomenon of political religion is not expected to be uniform across time or across the entire population. Contextual characteristics affecting the salience of the link between social group and political group (ideological or partisan), will be taken into consideration when estimating the models. In other words, analyses are run separately for different religious constituencies, because the prominence of the political-religious link within each setting is expected to vary. Since different religious groups are expected to become politicized in different eras, we should avoid using a religious indicator that depends too much on group characteristics. The attendance question helps overcome this danger, since it permits variation within each religious group (cf. Wilcox 1987). On the other hand, a definition of religiosity within religious groups as doctrinal belief might resemble a constant indicator, since doctrinal belief among members of the same church tends to be similar.

Survey measurement of religious attendance is not without problems. The main weakness of the item lies in misreporting. Being religious is a norm in American society, therefore going to church is socially prescribed. Sociologists have followed various approaches to this problem. Presser and Stinson (1998) find that once the social desirability effect of the face-to-face setting is minimized – for example via time-use diaries - weekly worship attendance is reduced by one third. Hadaway and colleagues (Hadaway, Marler and Chaves 1993) also consider actual attendance to be one-half of the self-reported levels in Gallup samples, and propose the use of 'head counts', i.e. estimates of church-going produced by the church. The authors do however acknowledge that church compiled statistics also tend to be unreliable.

In a more optimistic study for the quality of the self-reported measure, Hout and Greeley (1998) turn to General Social Survey (GSS) data to validate self-reports by asking respondents' spouses to verify the reported behaviour. The researchers conclude that church-going as gauged in surveys is only weakly exaggerated by a ratio of 1.1 rather than 2.0, as found by Hadaway and colleagues. Such a solution is not a possibility in the present case, since NES data do not contain cross-examination questions of respondents' reported behaviour.[19]

Also, estimates of church attendance based on alternative methods such as time-use data or official statistics collected by church institutes can be biased themselves: diaries used in time-use surveys are subject to similar social pressures to exaggerate or downplay certain

[19] One could even go as far as claiming that whether people actually go to church or just report doing so does not matter to the feedback hypothesis. There are two possibilities in the event of a political religion. If reports are sincere, Republican identifiers follow the group norm and increase their attendance. If reports are exaggerated, Republicans follow the group norm by reporting what is desirable, i.e. a high attendance record.

behaviours, while official counts are prone to inflation as church elites will tend to provide a healthy picture of organized religion. Official counts also do not provide individual-level information.

Model 2: Denominational affiliation

When looking for the religious outcomes of political identities, another way to define the religious phenomenon is by using denominational indicators. By doing so, I posit that political pressures drive the choice of religious environment and not simply the degree of exposure to a religious setting (attendance). Therefore a second religious dependent variable is used in Model 2, namely religious affiliation/self-reported membership.[20] ANES codebooks provide a great degree of detail on such membership, especially for Protestant denominations. This thesis follows the conventional solution when it comes to classifying a plethora of Protestants denominations. It organizes broader groups that contain similar denominations on the basis of historical and theological criteria (see a detailed discussion in Steensland *et al.* 2000).

[20] Technically, affiliation and preference are the terms of choice, because membership implies official status defined by paying dues and the like. Compare this with the distinction between partisan identifier and party member.

Information on denomination comes from a combination of questions, the opening ones being:

<u>1972 – 1976 ANES</u>

Is your religious preference Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish or something else? (If response is 'Protestant): What church or denomination is that?

<u>1992-1996 & 2004-2004 ANES</u>

(If respondent attends church) Do you mostly attend a place of worship that is Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or what?

(If respondent does not attend church, but thinks of self as part of church or denomination) Do you consider yourself Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or what?

The battery becomes more complicated after this initial question is asked, in an attempt to differentiate among sister denominations. Eventually, all answers from the long battery appear in a summary measure. This summary measure organizes a long list of specific groups into general groups. Using the options available in the 1992-1996 and 2000-2004 data as an example, the general groups range from General Protestant, Adventist, Anglican, Baptist, Congregational, European Free Church, Holiness, Independent-Fundamentalist, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Reformed, Restorationist, Non-traditional Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Mixed Christian (only 2000-2004), Eastern Orthodox, Non-Christian/Non-Jewish, to a mix of major religions (only 2000-2004), and an option for Other/No religion.

Even these general groups however are not useful for statistical analysis with normal sample sizes. Classification of these religious groups into even larger categories makes statistical

analysis easier. Therefore, I have collapsed these groups into three major traditions: Catholic (contains a single category: Roman Catholic), mainline Protestant, and evangelical Protestant.[21] Tables 5.1 and 5.2 below describe which denominations are included in the two Protestant traditions, evangelical and mainline. Notice that the classification scheme was constructed using the more detailed denominational catalogue of the General Social Survey (Steensland *et al.* 2000).

Also, due to the relatively low size of respondents in ANES panels, some denominations do not appear in the data. Following common practice, African Americans have been excluded from all analyses, due to their idiosyncrasies in terms of historical and demographic characteristics, their organizational autonomy within the Protestant family, and their low numbers in ANES panels (e.g. Lenski 1963; Manza and Brooks 1999; Miller and Shanks 1996; Roof and McKinney 1987). Finally, note that this affiliation variable is also used in Model 1 as a guide for the stratification of the sample into religious groups. It is not however entered directly in the analysis.[22]

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[21] Based on recent trends, Steensland *et al.* classify nondenominational Protestants as evangelicals according to their church attendance (frequent attendance suggests evangelicalism) (2000, p. 316). Since the present analysis is built on the church attendance variable, adopting the above practice would have introduced a biased logic: religiosity would feature both as an independent/dependent variable *within* religious groups and as a stratification criterion *across* groups. Facing the risk of introducing an amount of unwanted variability in the groupings, nondenominational Protestants were assigned to the evangelical group in recent decades, irrespective of their observance. However, they were retained as mainline in the 1970s data, following Steensland and colleagues' suggestions.

[22] Results in Chapter 6 are insensitive to alternative specifications. For instance, if models are estimated within born-again evangelicals (measure not available in 1972-1976), the 'partisan religion' effect is intensified. I do not emphasize this result however, for two main reasons. First, subsample size further decreases. Second, the 'born-again' item is a subjective measure, less reliable than denominational

I preferred not to use other classification schemes that organize denominations according to fundamentalism of religious belief, because these are more 'psychological' than 'social', i.e. not very reliable indicators of the social-psychological group identification inherent in the political religion phenomenon (see Smith 1990; Knoke 1976; Rothenberg and Newport 1984; Wilcox 1986; Wilcox, Jelen and Leege 1993; Jelen 1998; Woodberry and Smith 1998). Also, notice that 'born-again' and theological items separating fundamentalists from others were not been included in surveys conducted before the 1980s, while this thesis analyzes data beginning in 1972. Hence, I concentrate on the Steensland *et al.* distinction of Catholic-mainline-evangelical affiliation.

Table 5.1: Classification of mainline Protestants

American Baptist Churches in the USA(1)	Presbyterian Church in the USA	Christian Disciples	Friends	Reformed Church of Christ
American Lutheran Church	Presbyterian	Congregationalist, First Congregationalist	Grace Reformed	Reformed United Church of Christ
Episcopal Church	Presbyterian, Merged	Disciples of Christ	Hungarian Reformed	Schwenkfelder
Evangelical Lutheran	United Methodist Church	Evangelical Reformed	Latvian Lutheran	United Brethren, United Brethren in Christ
Lutheran Church in America	United Presbyterian Church in the USA	First Christian Disciples of Christ	Moravian	United Church of Canada
Lutheran	American Reformed	First Church	Quaker	United Church of Christ
Methodist (1)	Baptist (Northern)	First Reformed	Reformed	United Church of Christianity

Source: Steensland *et al.* 2000
(1) Included only if race of respondent is not black.

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membership. Estimates are insensitive to an additional test: the successive dropping of each control variable from the analysis.

Table 5.2: Classification of evangelical Protestants

American Baptist Association (1) ·	Brethren Church, Brethren	Christ in God	Evangelical Free Church	Independent Bible, Bible, Bible Fellowship	Pentecostal
Baptist (1)	Brethren, Plymouth	Churches of God (except with Christ & Holiness)	Evangelical Methodist	Independent Fundamental Church of America	Pentecostal Assembly of God
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod	Brother of Christ	Church of Christ	Evangelical United Brethren	Laotian Christian	Pentecostal Church of God
Other Baptist (1)	Calvary Bible	Church of Christ, Evangelical	Faith Christian	Living World	Pentecostal Holiness, Holiness Pentecostal
Other Lutheran	Chapel of Faith	Church of Daniel's Band	Faith Gospel Tabernacle	Macedonia	People's Church
Other Methodist (1)	Charismatic	Church of God of Prophecy	First Christian	Mennonite	Pilgrim Holiness
Other Presbyterian	Chinese Gospel Church	Church of Prophecy	Four Square Gospel	Mennonite Brethren	Primitive Baptist
Southern Baptist Convention (1)	Christ Cathedral of Truth	Church of the First Born	Free Methodist	Missionary Baptist (1)	Salvation Army
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod	Christ Church Unity	Church of the Living God	Free Will Baptist	Missionary Church	Seventh Day Adventist
Advent Christian	Christian and Missionary Alliance	Community Church	Full Gospel	Mission Covenant	Swedish Mission
Amish	Christian Calvary Chapel	Covenant	Grace Brethren	Nazarene	Triumph Ch. of God
Apostolic Christian	Christian Catholic	Dutch Reformed	Holiness Church of God	New Testament Church	Way Ministry
Apostolic Church	Christian; Central Christian	Evangelical Congregational	Holiness (Nazarene)	No Denomination or Nondenominational	Wesleyan
Assembly of God	Christian Reformed	Evangelical Covenant	Holly Roller	Open Bible	Wesleyan Methodist-Pilgrim
Bible Missionary	Christ in Christian Union	Evangelical, Evangelist	Independent	Other Fundamentalist	

Source: Steensland *et al.* 2000
(1): Included only if race of respondent is not black.

Finally, the reader should note that dichotomous affiliation indicators (belong/don't belong) make analysis more complicated. Statistical techniques used for the estimation of feedback phenomena as is the case in Model 1 do not favour the analysis of dichotomous variables (Bollen 1989, p. 433). Also, as previously mentioned, ANES panel designs do not contain consistently repeated measures of affiliation. These designs tend to assume that religious affiliation remains constant across waves. Such measures for example are not available for the 2000-2004 panel, a period in which it would be interesting to examine any trend in dropping-out of evangelical churches for the same individuals due to the explicit Republicanization of these churches. Thus, a rigorous test of the political religion hypothesis that uses denominational indicators will only be possible for the 1970s and 1990s ANES panel studies. Still, even in the 1992-1996 panel, the low number of switchers (respondents that change affiliation) in the altogether small sample is not powerful enough to sustain statistical estimation.

5.2 Model specification

The present work enhances Hout and Fischer's study of ideological pressures on religious membership (2002) by updating it in three ways. First, Hout and Fischer provide an indirect test of their expectation of apostasy due to political concerns by only analysing cross-sectional data. The models presented herein avoid assumptions of temporal precedence by turning to panel data, and provide a more rigorous test of the religious transformation expectation at the individual level. This is achieved by monitoring changes in religiosity for the same participants across time. Second, the 2002 work focuses on how personal ideological orientation determines apostasy. In what follows, I elaborate on this idea and develop an additional explanation rooted in partisan influences. This supplementary proposition rests on a well documented phenomenon in realignment research (also see Chapter 3). This refers to the sorting-out experienced between

the two major parties since the late 1970s, which has led them to ideological homogeneity: a predominantly conservative GOP and a liberal Democratic Party (e.g. Poole and Rosenthal 1984; Levendusky 2005). The overlap between ideology and partisanship, and the partisan polarization that followed this overlap, indicate that partisanship should work alongside ideology in affecting individual religious choices. Finally, my work is not limited to an examination of political pressures on church membership as is Hout and Fischer's work, but encompasses political pressures on church attendance. It is argued that the latter (degree of exposure to a religious environment) is part of a chain that leads to the former (membership change).

In assuming the sole existence of one flow of causality (from religious to political variables), most studies are content to model cross-sectional data, drawn at a single point in time. Considering the typical conjecture in such research, namely that religious variables represent fixed personal characteristics that are temporally prior and exogenous to the political process, analyses without a temporal dimension seem to serve the purpose. Yet, the untested assumption of unidirectional causation can easily be evaluated when temporal precedence is embedded in the data, i.e. when repeated measurement of the same individuals across time is available (Finkel 1995, pp. 22-23).[23] Repeated measurement of the same individuals across time offers a way out of the 'chicken and egg' problem of causal order.

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[23] Establishment of causal precedence between two variables is indeed possible with cross-sectional data, when simultaneous effects are assumed. This however requires the use of very unrealistic modeling options in the form of instrumental variables. Instruments should be very strong predictors of one endogenous variable, but not related to the second endogenous variable. Instrumental variables, as assumed by theory, are very difficult to locate in survey research, unless the design team had planned ahead and included such indicators in the questionnaire.

Systematic accounts of causal effects in social research require three conditions for variable X to cause variable Y: i) the two phenomena must be related; ii) X must be temporally prior to Y; and iii) no spurious relationship must be present (Asher 1983; Davis 1985; Menard 1991). Employing cross-sectional data permits the evaluation of the first condition and only by assumption the second condition of temporal precedence, since all variables are measured with a snapshot at a single point in time. These data lack a time dimension, which in the final analysis, is imposed by assuming that individual scores in variable A are 'set' prior to those in variable B. In other words, without an actual temporal component documented by the dataset (e.g. variables measured at different time points), one cannot test the existence of causal effects from religious to political variables (Asher 1983).

Panel data, i.e. data that measure characteristics of the same people across time, allow the evaluation of the second point. Having measured variable X at time *t-1*, we can be certain that it is temporally prior to variable Y at time *t* for the same individual. The panel structure serves as the basis of the quasi-experimental design: like experiments, it entails repeated measurement pre- and post-intervention (Kenny 1979). This intervention could be any event happening between two measurements. However, the panel design does not provide information about what happens to people who are identical to the panel members, but do not receive the treatment (i.e. there is no comparison with the counter-factual group of people not exposed to the lapse of time; cf. King, Keohane and Verba 1994, p. 77). In this sense, it is almost impossible for non-experimental social research, cross-sectional or longitudinal, to fulfill the third condition, i.e. the omitted variable problem, and control for all possible causes of an outcome.

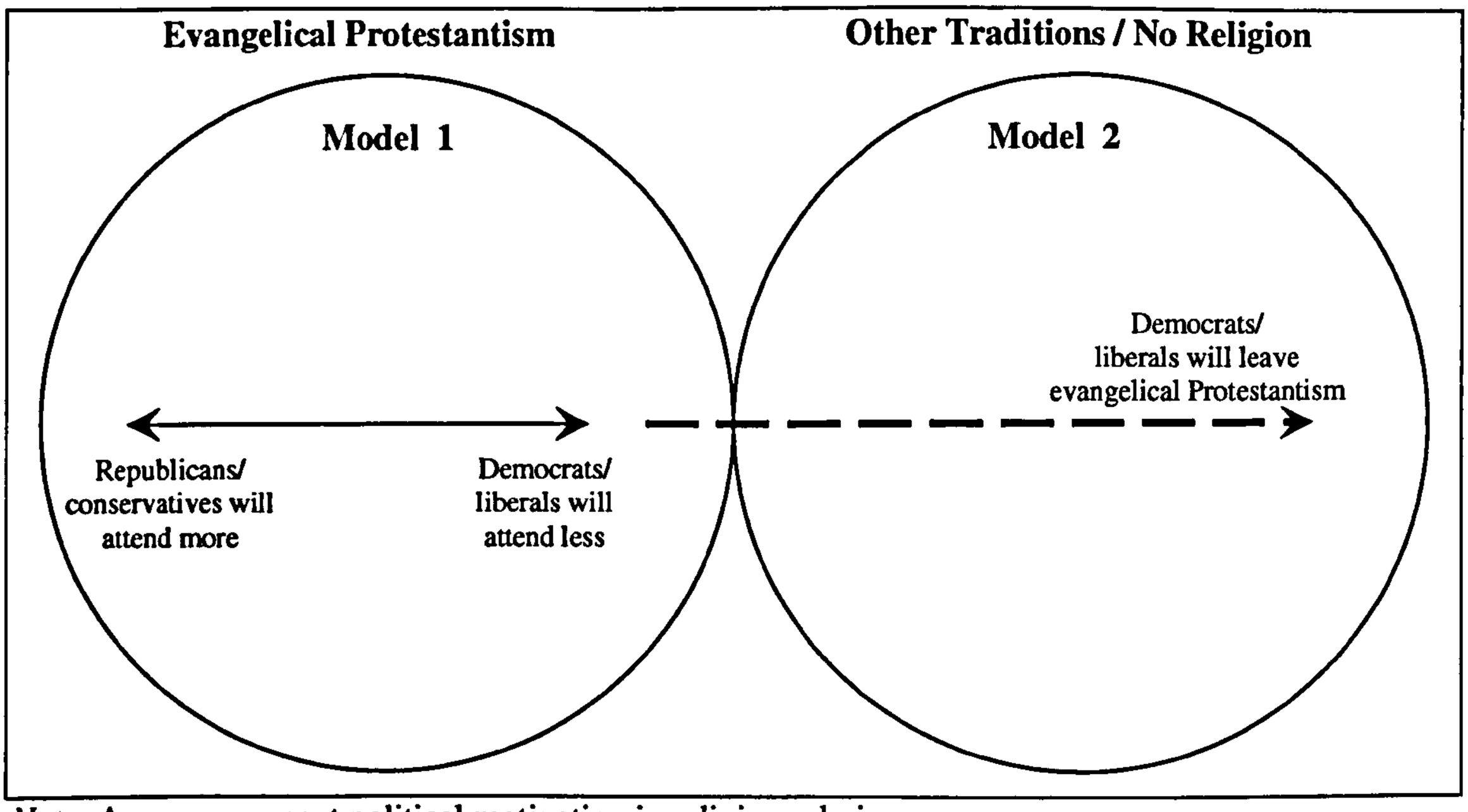
It is very unusual for panel data to be used in models containing endogenous religious variables, at least in political science (see sociologists Sherkat and Wilson 1995). Chapter 4 has already summarized the assumptions underlying most models in electoral studies, based on a conceptualization of religiosity as a stable demographic, isolated from the influences of the political environment. Most studies therefore are innocent about what happens to religious characteristics once they are exposed to politics. However, the causal relationship proposed in Chapter 4 identifies two mutually reinforcing effects: a religious effect on politics (the orthodox assumption in political science), and a political effect on religion. This combination constitutes a feedback effect.

My analysis will follow two directions, supplementary to each other. Model 1, whose results appear in Chapter 6, employs structural equations to examine the feedback effect and is built around the religious attendance variable available across all panels. This analysis tests whether identification with a political group has consequences for the extent of exposure to a politicized religious environment (attendance). The consequences of religious exposure for political identity are also examined in this model. Model 2 uses logistic regression with a focus on repeated measurement of religious affiliation available in the 1970s ANES panel. Results for this model appear in Chapter 7. Model 2 will not examine feedback, but will test whether identification with a political group eventually shapes affiliation with a religious tradition, other things being equal. This affiliation hypothesis will be observed if members of a given partisan inclination are more likely to abandon or join specific denominations. The second model also highlights the limitations in existing datasets that do not allow a more rigorous assessment of the political religion hypothesis.

The sequential relationship between the two models is captured by Figure 5.1 below. The notion that a political social identity 'moves' attendance (Model 1) is a more nuanced case of the second, 'harder' alternative, where political identity is expected to lead to denominational switching or apostasy (Model 2). The assumption in what follows is that individuals will not suddenly join/abandon a church. Instead, they will tend to follow a gradual process. In the example of abandoning one's religious community for political reasons, it is plausible to assume that before leaving the church (Model 2), the individual first reduces exposure to the church (Model 1).

This is one feature that makes Model 1 more likely to find empirical support. In this 'softer' outcome, the number of people lowering their attendance rate will be higher than the number of switchers or drop outs (the 'hard' outcome of Model 2). The disadvantage of Model 2 then is that the size of religious 'movers' (those who change religious affiliation) is suppressed due to the small time span of NES panels. In other words, there is not a long enough time period for the phenomenon to evolve. All in all, the estimation of both models will establish whether the political dynamics in church attendance lead to denominational change.

Figure 5.1: Political influences on church attendance and affiliation



Note: Arrows represent political motivation in religious choice

A caveat is required at this point regarding the use of ANES panel data in the two models. The disadvantage of using ANES data to examine change in religious variables is related to the design logic of the ANES series. Designed by political scientists, its primary purpose is to explain variation in political variables. Therefore, explanations of sociological phenomena, such as choice of religious tradition, should be attempted with care, even when these phenomena appear to be more voluntary than previously assumed. Another disadvantage of survey design is that individual religious choice cannot be prone to a great degree of instability in the course of a single election cycle. In the same vein, the use of relatively small NES panel samples makes my research prone to a Type II error.[24] Yet, assuming, for example, that not many people tend to change affiliation within a four year period, if political forces are found to

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[24] This happens when one fails to reject a false null hypothesis. A small sample size means that differences should be clearly stronger in order to reach statistical significance, compared to a large sample size.

influence the instability of religious affiliation, my hypothesis will have passed a very demanding test.

Model 1: Political shaping of church attendance

The use of the attendance variable permits a precise specification of the feedback effect in the religious cleavage in American politics. The extent of exposure to the religious structure, operationalized as frequency of attendance, should constrain partisanship, and partisanship should constrain religious exposure. Therefore a technique is desired that can accommodate these parallel effects. This condition for simultaneous estimation of multiple equations is met by structural equation modeling (SEM). Unlike regression analysis, whose success is based on explaining variance in a single dependent variable, SEM allows the assessment of fit for a whole system of causal effects, containing multiple dependent variables. In this sense, regression analysis is a subcase of SEM, together with factor analysis. Also, SEM offers an advantage against cross-lagged path analysis, which fails to account for the difference in stability between the two main variables, thus producing biased estimates (Finkel 1995).

The causal feedback between religiosity and party identification is specified as follows:

<u>System 1:</u>

$$\mathbf{PartyID_t = \beta 1 PartyID_{t-1} + \beta 2 Attendance_{t-1} + \varepsilon 1_t}$$

(1):Sociological assumption

$$\mathbf{Attendance_t = \beta 3 Attendance_{t-1} + \beta 4 PartyID_{t-1} + \varepsilon 2_t}$$

(2): Political religion

Coefficient β1 in equation (1) represents the impact of $PartyID_{t-1}$ on $PartyID_t$. This is the stability coefficient, showing how firm partisanship is in the course of two consecutive presidential elections, net of the effect of control variables and the influence of $Religion_{t-1}$. The same logic applies to β3 regarding Attendance as the dependent variable. Coefficient β2 is the cross-lagged effect of $Attendance_{t-1}$ on $PartyID_t$, net of the effect of control variables and $PartyID_{t-1}$. The same applies to β4 and Party as the dependent variable. The presence of the auto-regressive component (X_{t-1} predicts X_t) means that the model explains *change* in the dependent variables. According to the hypothesis in Chapter 4, the two effects underlying the politicization of religion are: first, attendance influences changing partisanship, and second, partisanship influences changing attendance. If the feedback hypothesis is correct, we should observe $\beta2 > 0$ in (1) and $\beta4 > 0$ in (2). Alternatively, if the 'sociological' view that dominates electoral behaviour is true, we should only observe $\beta2 > 0$ in (1), while $\beta4 = 0$ in (2).

For the effect of ideology on attendance, the partisanship variable is replaced by the ideology measure, and the model takes a similar form:

<u>System 2:</u>

$$\mathbf{IdeologyID_t = \beta1 IdeologyID_{t-1} + \beta2 Attendance_{t-1} + \varepsilon1_t}$$

(1): Sociological assumption

$$\mathbf{Attendance_t = \beta3 Attendance_{t-1} + \beta4 IdeologyID_{t-1} + \varepsilon2_t}$$

(2): Political religion

Notice that the effect of partisanship is examined separately from the effect of ideology. While a simultaneous estimation of ideological and partisan effects on attendance would appear more

intuitive, there is a serious obstacle to its implementation. Earlier in this chapter, I have discussed the importance for my analysis of the literature on reciprocal causation between partisanship and other political characteristics (Jackson 1975; Markus and Converse 1979; Page and Jones 1979; Layman and Carsey 2002; Goren 2005; Carsey and Layman 2006). These political characteristics include self-reported ideology, and the ongoing debate centres around the issue of which political variable is prior: is it partisanship that shapes ideology, is it ideology that shapes partisanship or are both causal effects happening in parallel?

There is one thing I could do to incorporate both ideology and partisanship in my models. I could use the advantage offered by the panel design, and attempt to model the causal sequence between partisanship and ideology by adding a third main variable in the cross-lagged model (religiosity + partisanship + ideology) in a three way specification. Here, I would add the equations in System 2 to the equations in System 1, and also add two new equations: Party=*f*(Ideology at *t-1*) and Ideology=*f*(Party at *t-1*) – a total of 6 equations to be estimated simultaneously. Considering the degrees of freedom available within the small samples used in the present thesis, such a complicated model would produce an unstable (if at all) SEM solution. In any case, for reasons of parsimony, I avoid following that route and opt for a compromised, separate estimation of the two political effects. It could still be the case that ideology lies behind the partisan effect on religiosity or that partisanship lies behind the ideological effect on partisanship or – more likely - that both these exist.

Models were estimated with AMOS 6.0 and full-information maximum likelihood (FIML). Goodness-of-fit is assessed with the following criteria (Arbuckle 2005): the χ^2 test/degrees of freedom ratio, in which values less than 5 are desirable (or 3 for stricter evaluations); Bollen's incremental fit index (IFI), which makes adjustments for the complexity of the model taking

into account degrees of freedom, should score close to .90 and above (or .95 and above for more conservative evaluations); Bentler's comparative fit index (CFI), which again accounts for small sample sizes and should be greater than .90 (or .95 for stricter evaluations); finally, the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), where values should be lower than .08 (or .05 for more conservative evaluations). All models tested – feedback and unidirectional, for all groups, during both periods - had an acceptable fit to the variances/covariances encountered in the data.

Without being an imputation method, FIML does not exclude missing cases from analysis for respondents included in the models. Under the assumption of data missing at random (i.e. under ignorable non response, where the probability that Y is recorded depends on X but *not* Y; see Little and Rubin 1987, pp. 13-15), the procedure produces superior estimates to either listwise or pairwise deletion, or mean imputation (Arbuckle 2005). Regarding panel effects, Bartels's study (1999) shows that the ANES design does not suffer from serious biases due to panel attrition or conditioning, with the exception of campaign interest and turnout variables.

The analysis does not simply report coefficients from the above causal specification (Systems 1 and 2) for all subgroups across all panels. An explicit test is proposed, which directly compares alternative models. Specifically, I contrast the fit of the feedback model (both equations in each system) to that of a unidirectional model (sociological assumption only), which postulates that the only effect taking place during religious politicization moves from attendance to ideology/partisanship (see Figure 5.2). This constitutes a more explicit evaluation of competing expectations (Bollen 1989, pp. 291-2).

The comparison is conducted through a chi-square difference test, since the constrained model with unidirectional effects is nested within the unconstrained model that proposes the feedback. The difference between the chi-square values of the two nested models is itself distributed as a chi-square value with degrees of freedom equal to the additional constraints imposed in the second model (Kline 1998, p. 131). Taking into consideration the difference in complexity (degrees of freedom) accounts for the fact that more complex models tend to fit the data better. In sum, the reciprocal hypothesis corresponds to an unrestricted model, where the political effect on religiosity is freely estimated; the traditional, unidirectional expectation corresponds to a restricted model, with the political effect constrained to equal zero. The test will show whether it is best to increase or decrease the complexity of the model (Figure 5.2).

The hypothesis of lagged instead of synchronous effects between the main variables (ideology/partisanship and religiosity) defines the recursive (i.e. unidirectional) character of causality in the model, and makes identification simple. A specification with cotemporaneous effects between the two variables, would suggest that the two variables influence each other at a single point in time.[25] Such models break the condition of independent variables being uncorrelated with the residual (Finkel 1995, p. 32), since the cause is at the same time influenced by its effect. In this case, normal regression estimates would be biased, so analysis must turn to the use of instrumental variables (see footnote 23). Due to weak assumptions in the use of instruments and the gradual nature of most social psychological effects, I consider such non-recursive models a less plausible scenario. In any case, studies that employ cross-lagged models of NES data suggest that the selection of lagged over synchronous effects makes no difference to the estimation of causal relationships (Goren 2005; Carsey and Layman 2006).

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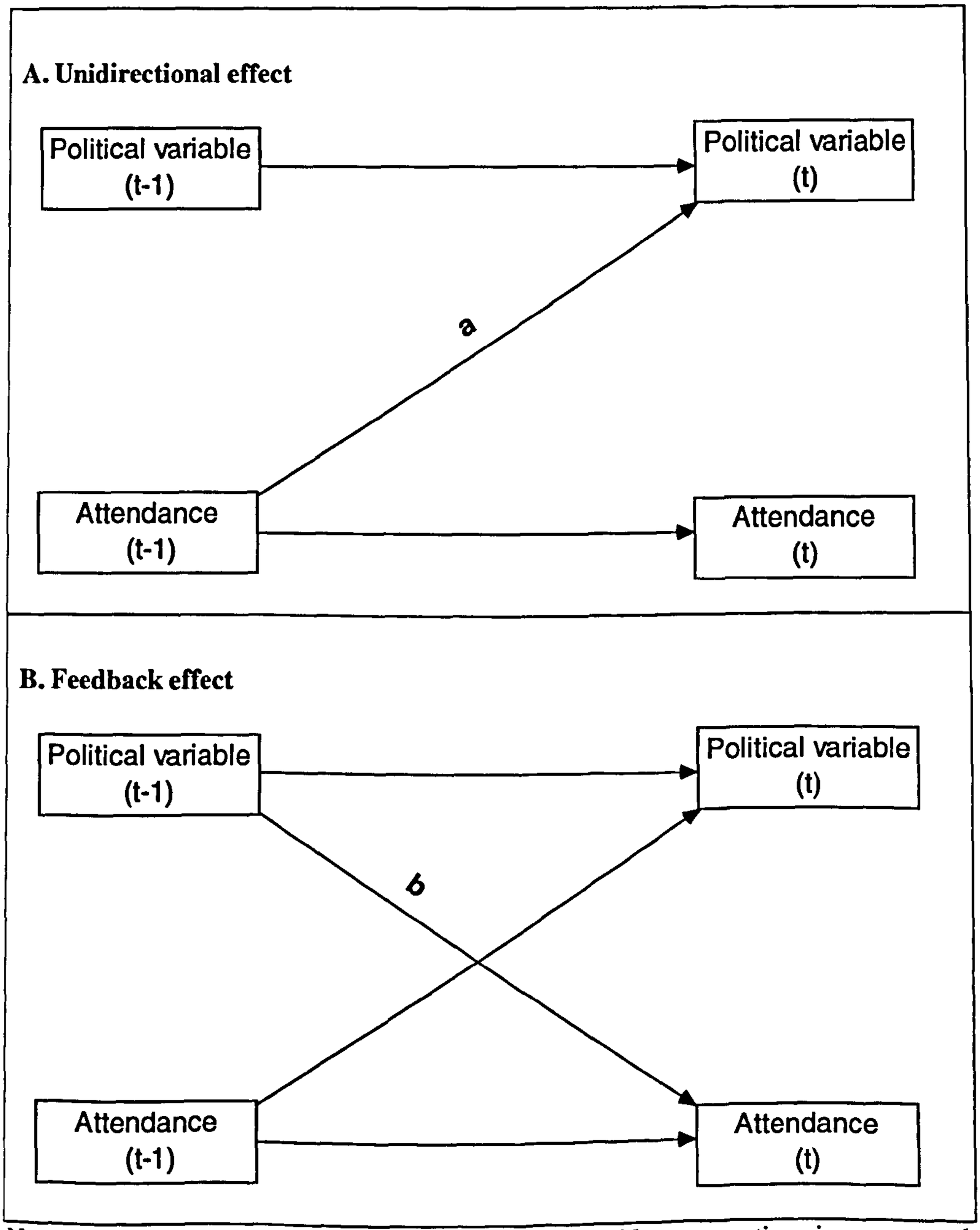
[25] In reality, this simultaneous effect actually represents a very short time lag between cause and outcome, relative to the length between panel measurements (Finkel 1995: p. 12).

Figure 5.2: Unidirectional vs. feedback effects



Note: The sole causal assumption of studies working with cross-sections is represented by coefficient *a* in panel A. The feedback model adds the political effect on attendance represented by coefficient *b*.

I have specified additional elements in the cross-lagged models, in accordance with the methodological literature. First, the error terms in equations (1) and (2) in both systems are correlated. This makes it possible to estimate whether the two dependent variables at time *t* share at least one omitted independent variable (Kline 1998, p. 101). If the disturbances were left unrelated, that would represent the less plausible assumption that the two dependent variables do not share any common (omitted) explanatory factor (Asher 1983, p. 16). This is especially unwarranted, when one considers that partisanship, ideology and religiosity are outcomes of the same contextual and pre-adult socialization processes (Newport 1979).

Controls

A number of demographic controls are included in Model 1. These are specified as influences on both religiosity and ideology/partisanship. Modeling social and political processes is contingent on reaching conclusions net of the effects of third variables (Kenny 1979; Davis 1985). Consider the following example: if examining the influence of X on Y, and a third variable Z causes both X and Y, then this second effect has to be included in the model. Otherwise, omitting Z will lead us to attribute the effect of Z on Y to X alone, which is a spurious relationship. In the present model of change, controls represent additional factors influencing the dynamics in the endogenous variables. The attempt to include all possibly relevant variables and avoid spurious relationships will provide additional certainty to final claims about causal links between the variables of interest (on isolating the effects of religious preferences, see Warner 1993, p. 1058; cf. similar concerns for partisanship in Miller and Shanks 1996). On the other hand, the small sample sizes that causal modeling within different social contexts produces means that controls should be kept to a minimum, so that models remain parsimonious.

The selection of controls is guided by a combination of insights from the sociological literature (see causes of attendance and switching in Sherkat 1998; Sherkat and Ellison 1999; Green and Guth 1993; Peterson 1992) and research on political behaviour (Campbell *et al.* 1960; Fiorina 1981; Miller and Shanks 1996; Green *et al.* 2002). These two fields emphasize the importance of similar factors in the shaping of church attendance and political group identification. I apply the following controls throughout the analysis: age, gender (male), marital status (dummies for married, widowed, divorced, with the rest as the baseline), children in the household dummy, union member in household, family income, region (dummies for south, northcentral, west, with the northeast as the baseline), education (dummies for college degree, some college attended; lower education is baseline). By holding these effects constant, I make sure that, if actually detected, religious change is an outcome of political factors and not of some other unexamined variable.

Controls were simply allowed to correlate with lagged ideological/partisan identification and lagged attendance, without directly predicting those variables. The aim is to account for volatility in these variables (change from time *t-1* to time *t*), and this is achieved by applying controls on the estimation only of future ideology, partisanship and religiosity, while controlling for lagged ideology, partisanship and attendance. Finally, relationships between the control variables were specified but left unanalyzed, i.e. these variables were simply regarded as correlated (Kline 1998, p. 51).

The impact of context

Since SIT is the foundation of the mechanism thought to trigger the political religion phenomenon, this section will translate nuances of the theory into methodological decisions. A central point in SIT is that social identities are dynamic, i.e. their strength and influence

depends on temporal and social context. Huddy's overview of SIT (2003) emphasizes this type of situational influences, which result in different social identities becoming salient in different settings. In essence, context can result in individuals switching from one social identity to another.

Two examples clarify this point (Huddy 2003, pp. 533, 543). First, consider the case of a politician who openly stresses differences between two ethnic groups during her campaign. Here, identification with ethnic groups is likely to become the dominant identity among the public. In another instance, the participation of an in-group member as a candidate in elections also raises the visibility of the in-group and out-group demarcation. The question posed then is: when and for whom should we expect the emergence of a political religion? The following part provides further detail on these two features.

Religious heterogeneity

It is very unlikely that the politicization of religion as defined above, namely as religious effects on politics and political effects on religion, takes place for all citizens irrespective of religious context. In general, the assumption of a homogenous public, comprised of individuals that think about social and political phenomena in the same way, is considered as untenable (Converse 1964; RePass 1971; Achen 1992; Bartle 2005). Regarding religion and politics, I expect that a highly politicized religious community will be more prone to the political religion phenomenon, compared with a community where political mobilization is absent. Politicization of faith means that the link between faith and political choice is prominent in the congregant's mind. This salience is the trigger of the political calculus behind religious change (see Figure 5.1 above). For this reason, the analyses that follow examine the hypothesis of reciprocal causation between religion and politics separately for different religious settings. In Model 1

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(cross-lagged effects involving church attendance) effects were estimated separately for each religious group, in what constitutes the equivalent of an interaction effect. In the case of Model 2 (political effects on religious affiliation), this appears as an interaction term, due to a different specification employed to increase the number of cases in the analysis.

Contextual differences between the three religious groups make this decision essential (Wald *et al.* 1988; Wilcox 1987; Layman and Green 2006). For instance, the relative lack of intense politicization within Roman Catholic churches is one element distinguishing this religious tradition in the US from Protestantism, and making the expectation of substantial effects produced by the politicization of religion less plausible. Moreover, in the Catholic case, religiosity is arguably more habitual and hierarchically defined (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995), hence less open to secular influences. Finally, Catholicism sees a basic distinction between the political and the sacred sphere, one that is absent from some protestant strains, especially activist ones. These strains are characterized by a worldview that attempts the fusion of the sacred and the secular/political spheres. By extension, Protestants will be more prone to considering secular and political elements in their commitment compared with Catholics.

Regarding analytic discrimination between mainline and evangelical Protestant denominations, a key element of my hypothesis is that politicization takes place to different extents and in different periods for the two groups. With the original split between the two traditions located in the moral controversies of the 1920s and 1930s, research generally agrees that political mobilization is experienced differently by evangelical and mainline Protestants (see Chapters 2 and 3 in this thesis; see also Roof and McKinney 1987; Finke and Stark 1992; Manza and Brooks 1999). This justifies a separate estimation of the hypothesized relationships for mainline and evangelical Protestants. As stated explicitly in the hypothesis in Chapter 4, my expectation

is that the religious tradition most likely to harbor the political religion effect, especially in the post-1980s era, is evangelical Protestantism.

Since my analysis aims to investigate context-dependent effects, I have to stratify the population in a relevant way. The stratification variable used to produce the interaction effect in Model 1 is religious preference, i.e. self-reported affiliation with a church. Affiliation bolsters common socialization experiences, demarcates external boundaries, and provides exposure to messages received from the pulpit, shared identities, interests, and stereotypes along with interaction among like-minded members of the same religious community.

This strategy unfortunately encounters practical obstacles already mentioned above, which render it susceptible to criticism. Certain ANES panels measure denominational membership only in their first wave, under the obvious assumption that switching does not take place – or that the phenomenon is irrelevant to politics. The present analysis then assumes that Catholics in the first wave of a panel remain members of their religious community for subsequent waves. In other words, stratification of the sample into religious traditions assumes stability in religious preferences across waves, an expectation that seems to be challenged by denominational switching and apostasy. It would have been more reassuring to define each religious group by selecting respondents that consistently belonged to the same church across panel waves. However, this was only possible for the 1970s data. It was not feasible for the remaining datasets: the 2000-2004 panel has no repeated measure of church affiliation, while response options change across waves in the 1992-1996 data. The small sample size of the 1992-1996 panel also means that restricting analysis to those consistently belonging to the same church across waves would have made multivariate analysis unfeasible. All in all, it is a possibility that some participants defined as Catholics or evangelicals in the first wave of these two panels

(1992-1996 and 2000-2004) may have already dropped out of religion by the following wave or converted to a different religious tradition.

Temporal context: causal lags

The nature of the religious-political nexus can also be affected by the temporal context. The following discussion deals with the appropriate time-lags for specifying the reciprocal relationship between religiosity and ideology/party identification. The use of NES three-wave panel data constrains the analysis, since the first and final waves are administered close to a presidential election, while the middle wave is collected in a mid-term election. In the following, I will justify two features of the models, which I consider interrelated: first, the assumption of discrete time lags and second, the exclusion of measurement conducted in mid-terms.

The problem of specifying the most plausible, if any, 'delay' between cause and effect does not have a straightforward solution (Finkel 1995, p. 13; Bollen 1989, pp. 61-65; Asher 1983, p. 27). It depends partly on theoretical conception of the causal effects and partly on data restrictions. According to the specialized literature, the time distance between measurements is crucial to the detection of causal effects (Finkel 1995). Let us consider a typical example: in a study of the effects of administering aspirin to fight headaches, measuring the drug's effect on a headache one hour after treatment would produce different estimates compared to measuring it one week after treatment. In the same sense, investigating lagged effects of variables in political research depends heavily on the application of plausible time lags.

One obvious strategy is to conceptualize effects as continuous across time (Finkel 1995, p. 16).

It seems plausible to hypothesize that the influence of religiosity on ideology/partisanship and

vice versa takes place continuously distributed across time, and not during some arbitrarily defined time intervals, e.g. every two or four years. Yet, this apparently reasonable specification expects too much on behalf of the individual voter. The idea that voters actively follow political affairs, and update their views in meaningful ways does not hold against empirical reality (the literature is vast, but see examples in Luttbeg and Gant 1985; Zaller 1992).

The alternative is to model discrete time lags, with the expectation that citizens reassess the link between religion and politics mainly in specific time points. Elections appear to be ideal time points. In Edelman's words (1964, p. 3) 'elections are rituals and draw attention to common social ties'. During these periods, candidate speeches, ads and everyday discussions bring the political process to the forefront. Voters become actively engaged, while ideological and partisan identities obtain increased salience (Campbell, Converse, Miller and Stokes 1966; Clarke and Stewart 1998). The temporal salience of the connection between social and political grouping is of significance to the hypothesized relationships. One implication for method is that it seems reasonable to suggest that the political religion phenomenon is triggered by specific situations during specific time points, and does not take place constantly across time.[26]

Temporal context: presidential elections

The focus on presidential elections is supported for practical and substantive reasons. First, sample sizes are too low in the three religious subgroups for the efficient estimation of complex models with three waves of data and latent indicators. Also, the two-year lag between on- and

[26] For the same reasons, I do not use the Youth-Parent Socialization Panel Study, which contains repeated measurement of the same cases during non-election years, specifically in 1965, 1973, 1982, 1997 (see details in Jennings and Niemi 1981)

off-year does not seem long enough to generate substantial movement in the main variables. In addition, mid-term measurement for religious attendance is absent for the 1992-1996 NES panel. Therefore, it is impossible to estimate a three-wave model for this panel.

Substantive concerns also led me to restrict analyses to on-years only. In justifying the exclusion of the mid-term panel wave from the analysis, I argue that citizens re-evaluate the relationship between ideology/party identification and religious commitment mainly in presidential election contexts and not in mid-terms. The differences between presidential and congressional electoral settings are a longstanding concern in American political science (see Campbell 1960). Presidential election campaigns urge citizens to reflect on 'general politics', i.e. more abstract considerations of political and social concerns (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2007, p. 36).

In contrast, congressional elections urge citizens to think about 'specific' politics, local issues and candidacies, while candidates adjust their strategies to the specific electoral context in each constituency, often departing from the orthodox partisan message (Fiorina 1974; Dodd and Oppenheimer 1993; Davidson and Oleszek 2004; Jacobson 1990, 2005).[27] This does not represent an ideal environment for voters to think about symbolic links between social groups and politics. Even when voters think about more general concerns, these normally refer to presidential performance and the economy (Tufte 1975; cf. penalty thesis in Erikson 1988; Key 1964). Certainly, this description of congressional elections does not apply perfectly across time. Yet, in an attempt to make consistent comparisons across decades of American electoral history, I exclude midterm waves from the analysis.

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[27] Davidson and Oleszek (2004:108-110) suggest that this 'personal vote' phenomenon is particularly present in races for the House of Representatives.

The emphasis on presidential elections for examining the link between religiosity and ideology/party identification is also justified by the civil religion literature. The symbolic role of the President as the nation's priest gives flesh and bones to the relationship between religion and politics, since citizens can actually think about this relationship in personalized terms (Edelman 1964, p. 76; Bellah 1967; Donahue 1975; Hammond 1976; cf. Lowi 1985). In contrast, lower level elections are relatively devoid of this religious connotation, which if present is context (state) specific. This suggests that if there is a political effect on religion, it should appear during on-years.

For the above reasons, the same lag (two consecutive presidential elections) was selected for all datasets. Unfortunately, this two-wave specification with observed indicators assumes that indicators are perfect measures of the underlying concepts and prohibits correction for random measurement error. The addition of a measurement model would minimize 'noise' in the variables, but requires either three-wave panel data (for single indicators) or multi-item constructs (Finkel 1995). Still, the results in Chapter 6 will show that even without a three-wave specification and correction for measurement error, the subjective – hence less reliable - ideological and party identification variables exert a clear influence on religious behaviour.

Model 2: Political shaping of religious affiliation

If church attendance appears to change because of political concerns, the next step is to establish whether this change, especially when expressed as decreased attendance, eventually leads one to abandon the church. In this alternative specification, I use the repeated denominational indicators available in the relatively large 1970s panel of the NES series. The existence of repeated measures of religious affiliation will show whether, *ceteris paribus*,

political concerns can trigger changes in one's choice of denomination (switching). A description of model specification follows.[28]

Unlike traditional analyses of switching and apostasy, mainly based on GSS data or NES pilots with retrospective self-reports (Green and Guth 1993), a panel design permits direct observation of switching and apostasy (change of religious affiliation from time *t-1* to time *t* for the same individuals). At the same time, it allows the use of lagged political variables as predictors of religious change by avoiding assumptions of temporal precedence. Consider the difference: when using self-reports of individual religious change included in cross-sections, political variables would still be measured at time *t*. The traditional assumption would remain unchallenged: i.e. that religious environments lead to specific political considerations. On the other hand, the use of a lagged political variable in the right-hand side establishes unquestionable temporal order vis-à-vis individual religious change (changing affiliation).

Alternative datasets have been used to examine religious switching, but they have grave weaknesses. For instance, the Youth and Parent Socialization Panel Study (YPSPS, administered in 1965, 1973, 1982, 1997; see Jennings and Niemi 1981) favours long-term sociological explanations at the expense of the shorter-term political dynamics. On the other hand, the use of short-range NES panels (four-year gap between repeated surveys) allows the consideration of the more temporal forces of partisan politics. The effect of these political forces may be lost when repeated measurement is administered across longer intervals (e.g.

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[28] I have mentioned before that although similar measurement exists in the 1990s panel, subsample size is too low, and denominational categories do not remain consistent between 1992 and 1996. Coupled with the under-representation of religious switching owing to the short time-span of ANES panels, analysis of that dataset is not feasible.

1982 – 1997 as in the YPSPS). For example, we would expect to see an effect of George W. Bush's prominent religiosity (2000) on attachment with the GOP among conservative Protestants in 2004. Yet, this effect may be lost if measurement were administered in 2000 and then again in 2020. Also note that the youth component of YPSPS includes respondents from the same cohort, namely high school seniors of the class of 1965. With age a constant, there is no way to examine life-cycle effects as alternative explanations of the hypothesized relationships. In addition, the YPSPS research design does not cover high school dropouts in 1965, and the retention rate from 1965 to 1997 is only 56% raising serious concerns about the representative nature of the sample.

Finally, unlike most switching studies that define religious mobility as a shift from the denomination in which respondents were reared (Roof and Hadaway 1979), I opt for a model of denominational change during the short term horizon of two consecutive presidential elections. Do people change religious preference from one election period to another? Compare this with the traditional 'Do people change religious preference compared to the one they were brought up in?' ANES panel data are the most suitable for this kind of empirical exploration.

Alternative explanations of individual denominational change

My expectation of political influences (partisan or ideological identification) on changing religious preferences (denominational affiliation) is only one among many more established explanations in the sociological literature. Note however that these traditional explanations usually refer to long-term changes. Status mobility is one factor traditionally held responsible for movement from lower to higher status denominations (Stark and Glock 1968; Roof and Hadaway 1979). Upwardly mobile individuals will be more likely to abandon their religious environment for one that carries higher social status connotations.

Religious exogamy is also proposed as a determinant of individual religious change, whereby individuals that marry spouses of a different religious background are more likely to switch (Newport 1979; Hadaway and Marler 1993). Better educated believers and men are also more likely to change denomination (Roof 1989). Physical mobility across communities is also considered a predictor of changing religious affiliation, since it makes it more difficult for the believer to remain embedded in a stable socio-religious network (Stark and Bainbridge 1980; Sherkat 1991).

Finally, the 'strict church' thesis suggests that traditionalist churches will be more efficient in retaining and attracting members compared to liberal churches (Kelley 1977). Strict churches are more capable of enforcing a common behavioural code and often frame deviation in punitive terms. Affiliation with a liberal church then should make switching more likely to happen relative to affiliation with a more conservative church. Also, fundamentalist views should be used to explain religious mobility, since the strict-church thesis anticipates that evangelical churches attract new members on the basis of a strict doctrine. Analysis should consider this influence on the stability of religious membership, in order to make sure that political effects are not a proxy for theological (fundamentalist) effects.

Explaining denominational mobility

The model attempts to establish whether ideology and partisanship can drive respondents to leave their religious tradition. The dichotomous dependent variable captures exit from one's religious tradition (any religious tradition). It combines apostasy and switching, and in this sense is a measure of religious attrition. Classification of the plethora of American denominations and dogmas into three major religious traditions (Catholic, mainline and

evangelical Protestant) follows the same categorization scheme applied in Model 1, based on self-reporting of church affiliation (Steensland *et al.* 2000). This is a crude classification that bundles together a heterogeneous mix of Protestant denominations under broader family titles (mainline and evangelical). Yet, separate investigation of what happens in each denomination would be impossible with the NES and most other types of samples (low *N*).

The groups in the dependent variable (1,0) are defined as 'leave tradition X' (i.e. reaffiliate with another tradition or become not religious at all), and 'stay in tradition X' between time point *t-1* and time point *t*. I clearly collapse apostasy (dropping out) with switching (changing tradition) in the 'leaving' category (1) and ignore where respondents 'go' after leaving the denomination. My choice helps boost the size of the category and avoids having a nominal dependent variable with one very large stable group (0) and several very small ones (drop-outs, mainline Protestant converts or evangelical Protestant converts).

Another crude feature of the dependent variable has to do with a familiar pattern identified by previous research: switchers tend to 'stay close to home', that is, they tend to join a denomination similar to the one they abandon (Hadaway and Marler 1993; Green and Guth 1993). In other words, evangelicals will tend to switch from one evangelical denomination to another and so on. The dummy variable used here will mask this kind of switching within traditions, but it will still capture the more theoretically interesting shift between traditions or from one tradition to the 'none' category.[29]

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[29] Sample size permitting, analysis could obtain further depth by distinguish among four types of individuals: those who leave organized religion altogether (dropouts); those who leave one denomination for another (switchers); those who remain loyal to their denomination; and finally, seculars who enter organized religion.

Due to the idiosyncrasies of the Roman Catholic population and the extremely high stability in the affiliation of the Catholic subsample (see details in Chapter 7), the analysis will be restricted to the Protestant segment of the 1972-1976 ANES panel. Using the Catholic segment would mean having a dependent variable highly skewed towards the stable group.

Logistic regression will posit the following relationships (they also apply to the model of partisan effects):

$$\mathbf{Leave_t = \beta 1 Evangelical_{t-1} - \beta 2 Ideology_{t-1} - \beta 3 Evangelical_{t-1} * Ideology_{t-1} + Controls + \varepsilon_t}$$

The model assumes that leaving the religious tradition is affected by ideological self-identification and that ideology matters most for evangelicals (compared with the mainline, who are the baseline group in the affiliation dummy). The sign in coefficient β2 is negative, since I expect religious exit due to *liberal* identification to be more common in the 1970s. During a period when evangelical churches increasingly promoted social conservative causes, liberal identification would urge believers to leave those churches (negative sign).

Since my focus is on what happens to evangelical affiliation, the key effect in this specification is the interaction term expressed by coefficient β3. Interaction effects are often used when researchers want to avoid an (additive) simplification of causal effects. Interactions are specified as multiplications between two variables. The assumption in their use is that the magnitude of the effect of an independent variable X on a dependent variable Y depends on a third independent variable Z (Friedrich 1982; Jaccard 2001). Often, the third variable Z is a dummy variable modeling group membership – therefore the interaction shows the existence of

an effect of X on Y depending on Z (0,1). In that case, when positing that $Y = X + Z + X*Z$, one expects that the impact of X on Y depends on membership (1) or not (0) in group Z.

The interaction element here posits that the impact of ideology (or partisanship) is different for evangelicals and the mainline. Its negative sign implies that the political religion phenomenon existing among evangelicals is expressed as the effect of (liberal) ideology on leaving one's religious tradition (lower, liberal ideological scores predict unity in the dependent variable). As posited in Model 1, the mobilization within evangelical churches by conservative 'pro-family' concerns in the 1970s will make evangelicals ideologically driven in their church attendance. Model 2 extends this and expects that for evangelicals, ideology matters not only for shaping attendance (especially minimizing it) but even for shaping decisions on whether to stay or leave the tradition.

As in Model 1, the interplay between partisanship and ideology is a consideration here as well. Results from Model 1 will indicate whether evangelical Protestants experienced a partisan or ideological effect on church attendance in the 1970s. Based on my discussion of temporal context, I expect that ideological identification will be the predominant influence in that era. Since the two models are regarded as two sequential steps of a single chain of events (see Figure 5.1), this will provide a strong clue for focusing my attention on ideology in Model 2.

The more straightforward specification of Model 2 (i.e. it does not estimate a feedback effect) also allows for the incorporation of this interplay. Specifically, model specification makes sure that estimation of the effect of ideology on religious attrition is net of the impact of partisanship and *vice versa*. Following Miller and Shanks's (1996) suggestion, ideology and partisanship will be included simultaneously in a baseline model estimating their relative impact on the

stability of denominational membership. If both variables prove statistically significant predictors, then an interaction term will be created for each variable. Yet, if the coefficient for one variable fails to reach statistical significance, then this variable will be dropped from the analysis as irrelevant.

Controls

Control variables represent the influences that previous research has identified as plausible explanations of change in religious affiliation. Some of these indicators were already available in the ANES data (see coding in Model 1), while others had to be computed taking into account change between time *t-1* and time *t*. Among the already available indicators, I have used education, household income and gender. Age, union membership, married status, years in the community, children in the household, and region were also entered in the estimation, in an attempt to operationalize social embeddedness. The purpose is to capture personal attributes that predispose the individual to keep stable social networks.

Reflecting previously mentioned alternative theoretical explanations of religious change, two original control variables were created that represent changing marital status and social mobility. The former measures whether the respondent experienced changes in marital status between the two panel waves. In terms of religious exogamy, if a respondent who chose 'never married' in 1972 appears to opt for 'married' in 1976, this could be consequential for denominational stability. An evangelical husband might drive a mainline wife to change denomination and *vice versa*. The reverse could happen when moving from a married status to a single status between the two panel waves (for example, when separating or divorcing). In the absence of spousal pressure, a mainline Protestant could lose motivation to retain denominational affiliation. The problem with the above repeated indicators of marital status is

the presence of non response in either the first or second wave (1972-1976). In this case, one cannot establish any change in status.

The new variable that measures social mobility is created from the self-reported social class variable in the 1972 and 1976 waves. The main categories in this variable are 'middle' and 'working' class, with very few respondents identifying as 'lower' or 'upper'. The purpose here was to gauge movement from higher to lower, and lower to higher status in the sample. This could then serve as a plausible explanation of changing affiliation between denominations of different status.[30] The same problem with non response applies to this indicator, on top of the presence of an 'other' option which was excluded.

The use of this subjective variable instead of an objective variable showing income changes between 1972 and 1976 was a conscious decision. A hypothesis of religious switching due to changing social status would first expect that individuals are aware of the status change, which would then create dissonance between personal social status and the social standing of the religious environment. Had I used household income change as an independent variable, I would have to make the heroic assumption that individuals perceive and interpret income fluctuation as a change in status. Also, I would have to solve a non-trivial coding problem, i.e. how much income change constitutes a change in social status.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to move the historical and theoretical discussion in previous chapters closer to a more systematic statement and test of the argument. The limitations in this

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[30] Again, notice that my use of religious traditions due to inadequate sample size cannot show movement between specific denominations, but only between families of denominations.

effort have been laid out, and, when possible, solutions or compromises against these limitations have been sought. The argument posits that the political mobilization of religious constituencies on ideological and partisan grounds affects the quality of religious choice. Quality here stands for the motives behind church attendance and religious switching.

Two specifications have been proposed, each representing a different aspect of the same argument. The two aspects are perceived as two steps in the same trajectory. Model 1 expects the presence of a political motivation in individual church-going. Model 2 anticipates that a similar motivation hides below the decision to leave or stay in one's religious tradition. These effects are likely to emerge under two conditions (see also Chapters 2 through 4 in this thesis). First, they will tend to appear at times when the connection between a church and a political camp becomes prominent. Second, the effects will be observed among populations with first hand experience of that connection.

The following chapter (Chapter 6) will present results from the application of Model 1. Examining a range of datasets, it determines whether ideological and partisan identification is a significant influence for individual church attendance. Chapter 7 will examine the only available dataset that accommodates Model 2, and gauge the impact of political identifications on religious switching.

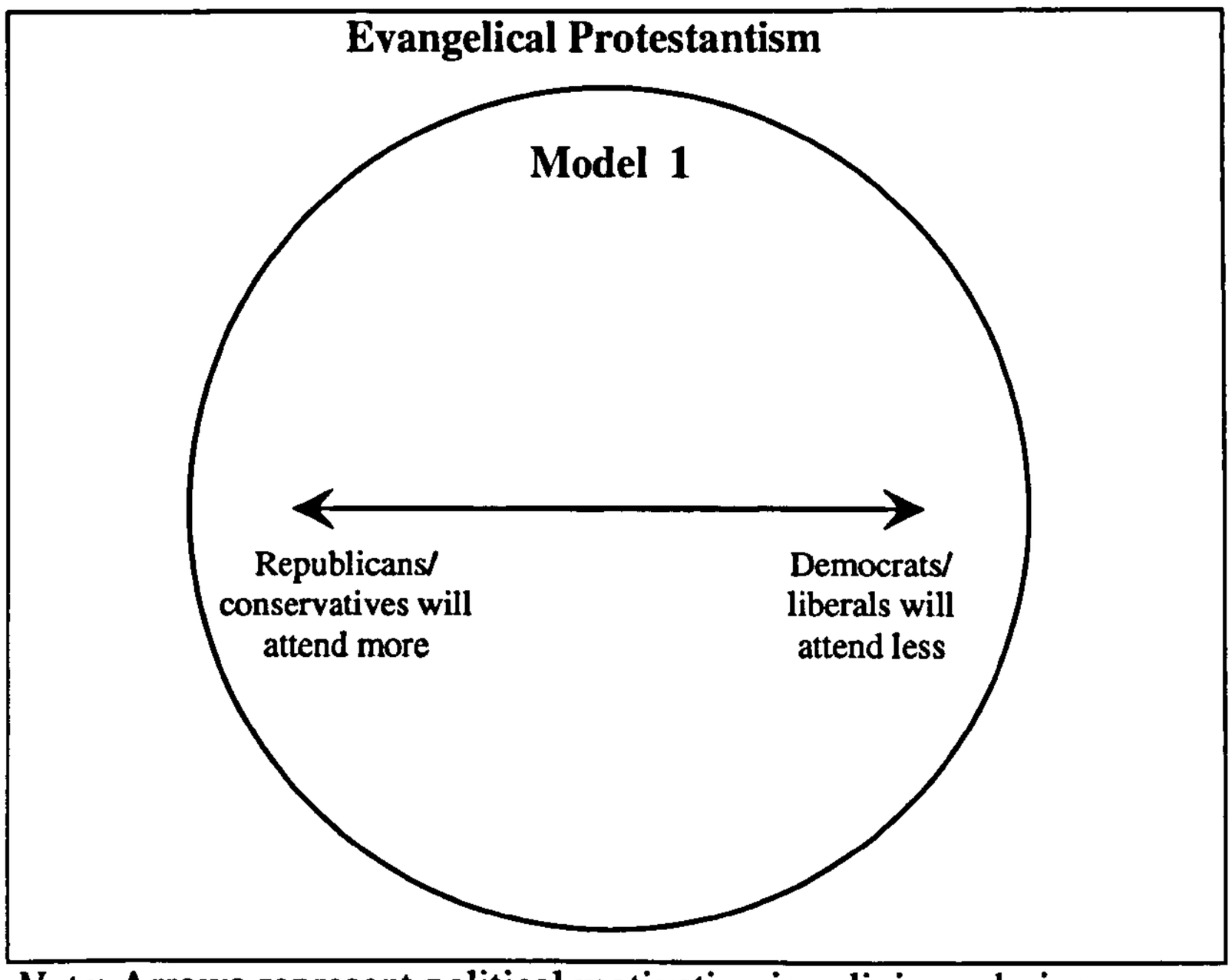
Chapter 6

Political pressures on the dynamics of religious exposure

This chapter tests the existence of a political religion in American politics, as proposed in Chapter 4, and specified in Chapter 5. The analysis examines Model 1 illustrated in the figure below (Figure 6.1). This describes the expectation that evangelicals whose political identity is in contrast with the political image of the evangelical church (conservative/Republican) will tend to adjust their exposure to this religious tradition accordingly (i.e. minimize it). The opposite movement (an increase in attendance) is expected for evangelicals whose political identity is in agreement with the church's political image.

Political religion has two expressions, one ideological and one partisan. The historical discussion in Chapters 2 and 3 suggested that the emergence of ideological constraints on religiosity should be located in the 1970s, when evangelical Protestant denominations came into the political arena as a reaction to the liberalization of American society. This ideological mobilization was then incorporated by the two major parties in their electoral competition, in what is often considered a sorting movement: the ideological conflict between liberals and conservatives became part of the electoral conflict between Democrats and Republicans.

Figure 6.1: Political influences on church attendance



Note: Arrows represent political motivation in religious choice

This realignment will be reflected in the models tested here. The first estimation (Section 6.1) posits that ideological concerns can affect individual church-going for the most politicized populations. It is expected that evangelicals will experience this phenomenon in the 1970s and 1990s (relevant data do not exist for the 2000s). The second estimation (Section 6.2) expects that sometime after the ideological break-out, partisan concerns will also emerge within the same population and shape church attendance. This phenomenon should not arise before the Reagan presidency and the salient incorporation of evangelical constituencies into the GOP base. The emphasis in this case lies on the two post-1980s periods that are covered by ANES panels: 1992-1996 and 2000-2004, both characterized by the vocal support of evangelical Protestants for the Republican Party.

Results

Table 6.1 provides summary information on religious and political change for the same individuals in the panels used. It also describes how the main variables are coded. Even though the four-year span of the datasets does not allow an unambiguous reflection of the sweeping trends that took place in American politics since the 1970s, there is one observation that emerges quite clearly. Evangelicals have become much more Republican in the 2000s compared to the 1970s. Catholics have also trended towards a GOP affiliation. Still, the public image of this religious constituency has not been traditionally linked with the GOP, unlike the image of evangelical Protestants as an electoral pillar of the same party.

6.1. Ideological pressures on individual church attendance

The multivariate analysis tests my modification of Hout and Fischer's thesis (2002) using ANES panel data. This posits changes in religious practice due to ideological concerns. The psychological groups of interest identified by SIT are 'Liberals vs. Conservatives'. Liberals are expected to minimize their exposure to a religious environment that is considered too close to the conservative political camp. Conservatives will do the opposite and maximize their exposure as a confirmation of conservative ideology. In both cases, groups will follow in-group norms and reaffirm their political identity by adjusting their attendance. This phenomenon of ideological pressure on attendance creates a reciprocal situation. Religious effects on political variables (the orthodox, unidirectional assumption in the sociological perspective) are supplemented by political effects on religious variables.

Table 6.1: Descriptive statistics for ANES panels, means (standard deviations)

A: 1972-1976

Variable [scale]	Catholic	Mainline	Evangelical
Party ID 1972 [0-6]	2.18 (1.90)	3.37 (2.02)	2.84 (1.98)
Party ID 1976 [0-6]	2.11 (1.88)	3.29 (1.98)	2.66 (1.96)
Ideology 1972 [1-7]	4.18 (1.16)	4.30 (1.19)	4.62 (1.03)
Ideology 1976 [1-7]	4.25 (1.19)	4.51 (1.23)	4.81 (1.14)
Attendance 1972 [1-5]	3.73 (1.49)	3.00 (1.41)	3.41 (1.49)
Attendance 1976 [1-5]	3.63 (1.48)	2.94 (1.40)	3.50 (1.48)

B: 1992-1996

Variable [scale]	Catholic	Mainline	Evangelical
Party ID 1992 [0-6]	2.54 (1.80)	3.97 (1.73)	3.28 (1.98)
Party ID 1996 [0-6]	2.59 (2.05)	4.11 (1.95)	3.49 (2.02)
Ideology 1992 [1-7]	4.16 (1.35)	4.58 (1.30)	4.59 (1.53)
Ideology 1996 [1-7]	4.18 (1.35)	4.79 (1.21)	4.76 (1.33)
Attendance 1992 [1-5]	3.37 (1.56)	2.71 (1.51)	3.33 (1.59)
Attendance 1996 [1-5]	3.31 (1.55)	2.72 (1.44)	3.16 (1.59)

C: 2000-2004

Variable [scale]	Catholic	Mainline	Evangelical
Party ID 2000 [0-6]	3.13 (2.06)	3.22 (2.11)	3.35 (1.97)
Party ID 2004 [0-6]	3.30 (2.24)	3.35 (2.25)	3.63 (2.16)
Attendance 2000 [1-5]	3.18 (1.56)	2.91 (1.46)	3.16 (1.63)
Attendance 2004 [1-5]	2.89 (1.58)	2.94 (1.51)	3.28 (1.58)

Note: Higher scores indicate Republicanism (6 is strong Republican), conservatism (7 is extremely conservative), and frequent attendance (5 is every week). No repeated measurement available for ideological self-placement in 2000-2004.

Table 6.2: (Ideological) Political Religion, feedback vs. unidirectional effects

Model Comparison			
		$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf
1972-1976 ANES	Catholic	.138	1
	Mainline	2.577	1
	Evangelical	**4.506****	1
1992-1996 ANES	Catholic	.009	1
	Mainline	.305	1
	Evangelical	**9.639****	1

Sources: 1972-1976, 1992-1996 ANES
Note: The 2000-2004 panel study does not contain a repeated measure for ideological self-placement in 2004. Feedback models with a better fit than unidirectional models are highlighted.
* $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$

Which competing assumption – reciprocity or unidirectionality, i.e. an ideological political religion or the sociological model - best approximates the causal patterns observed in the data? Instead of visually comparing the fit of the feedback hypothesis against the fit of the unidirectional hypothesis, Table 6.2 summarizes results from the χ^2 difference test. This test directly compares the feedback hypothesis of ideologically driven attendance against the more unidirectional expectation of religious effects on political variables. The χ^2 difference statistic compares nested models: a feedback model against a constrained unidirectional model, which only suggests religious effects on politics. A significant χ^2 statistic indicates that the specification of the constrained model (unidirectional effects) is significantly less valid. In regression analysis terminology, this suggests that the effect of lagged ideology on attendance is significant. When the statistic is insignificant, the same effect is probably a misspecification.

Feedback models with a better fit than unidirectional models are highlighted in the table. Therefore, highlighted entries show which part of the religious population experiences the political religion phenomenon in each period. In both periods, the religious community that practices religiosity partly as political behaviour is the evangelical group. I consider this a product of the entrance of religious populations into ideological camps, especially the conservative ideological mobilization of evangelicals by social issues since the early 1970s. In this case, members identifying with opposing ideological groups tend to adjust their religious exposure accordingly: for example, liberals are expected to avoid ideologically conservative churches.

Moving on to the actual model estimates, Tables 6.3 and 6.4 summarize information for the populations that do not experience the hypothesized phenomenon. Control estimates for all the tables in this chapter can be found in the Appendix. Ideological pressures on individual religiosity are absent among Catholics and mainline Protestants for both periods covered by the data (1972-1976 and 1992-1996). This is expected, since the two groups were not saliently connected to an ideological camp during those periods. Catholic conservatism on certain social issues, such as abortion, would be counterbalanced by traditionally Democratic commitment, while the mainline group had already experienced an ideological upheaval during the 1960s and the counterculture movement. With the absence of salient politicization, there was no incentive for members of these two populations to react against a politicized religious environment during these periods.

Table 6.3: Unsuccessful models in the 1970s

	Catholic	Mainline
Stabilities		
1972 Ideology → 1976 Ideology	.453 (.437/ .053)***	.566 (.548/ .044)***
1972 Attendance → 1976 Attendance	.654 (.657/ .045)***	.679 (.683/ .035)***
Cross-lagged effects		
1972 Ideology → 1976 Attendance	-.021 (-.016/ .057)	.065 (.055/ .041)
1972 Attendance → 1976 Ideology	-.003 (-.004/ .042)	.039 (.045/ .038)
Summary statistics		
N	282	403
χ^2 / df	84.446 / 47	87.638 / 47
	(1.797, p=.001)	(1.865, p=.000)
IFI, CFI, RMSEA	.960, .956, .053	.975, .973, .046

Source: 1972-1976 NES panel. Notes: Maximum likelihood estimates (MLE). Parentheses contain standardized coefficients/standard errors. Controls included for age, male dummy, education dummies (reference category is high school or less), union member in household dummy, marital status dummies (never married is baseline), region dummies (northeast is baseline), children in household dummy, and income. Estimates for disturbance correlations, unanalyzed relationships, and control effects are omitted for clarity.
* p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01

It should be observed that the conventionally assumed effect of the religious variable on the political variable is also absent among these groups. In other words, these models are non-directional. As a reminder, the dependent variables are dynamic in nature, i.e. they represent change between two time points. Therefore, the absence of an effect from attendance on ideology does not mean that X and Y are not related at all, but rather that X does not explain individual *changes* in Y in the four-year period examined. The rule of parsimony – a statistical Ockham's razor - in structural equation modeling classifies the absence of any effect as 'unidirectional', since it fits the data closer than a reciprocal model (Bollen 1989).

Table 6.4: Unsuccessful models in the 1990s

	Catholic	Mainline
Stabilities		
1992 Ideology → 1996 Ideology	.664 (.659/ .066)***	.646 (.705/ .078)***
1992 Attendance → 1996 Attendance	.778 (.778/ .061)***	.663 (.694/ .069)***
Cross-lagged effects		
1992 Ideology → 1996 Attendance	.006 (.006/ .068)	.050 (.045/ .091)
1992 Attendance → 1996 Ideology	.078 (.090/ .058)	.056 (.071/ .060)
Summary statistics		
N	117	112
χ^2 / df	50.918 / 47	55.943 / 47
	(1.083, p=.322)	(1.190, p=.174)
IFI, CFI, RMSEA	.993, .991, .027	.985, .983, .041

Source: 1992-1996 NES panel. Notes: MLE. Parentheses contain standardized coefficients/standard errors. Controls included for age, male dummy, education dummies (reference category is high school or less), union member in household dummy, marital status dummies (never married is baseline), region dummies (northeast is baseline), children in household dummy, and income. Estimates for disturbance correlations, unanalyzed relationships, and control effects are omitted for clarity.
* p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01

The 1970s, however, was the period when white evangelical Protestants became ideologically mobilized on traditional values. Table 6.5 presents in detail the reciprocal models identified in the model comparison test (Table 6.2) and the coefficients connecting ideology and attendance among evangelicals (a seven- and five-point scale respectively). In the 1970s, it seems that apart from the impact of lagged evangelical attendance on changing ideological orientation, we also observe a significant 'political religion' effect over and above the influence of control variables and lagged attendance. In this case, lagged ideology shapes evangelical attendance, with the more conservative tending to increasingly attend evangelical churches and *vice versa* for the more liberal (b=.162). I will discuss later which effect is the predominant one, that is, the conservative or the liberal movement. On average, extreme conservatives (seven on the

ideology scale) increase their attendance by .97 points compared with extreme liberals (one on the ideology scale), i.e. by almost one point on the attendance scale. We witness a stronger occurrence of the same effect in the 1990s (b=.274), whereby extreme conservatives increase their attendance by 1.64 scale points compared with extreme liberals.

Table 6.5: (Ideological) Political Religion in the 1970s and 1990s

	Evangelical (1972-1976)	Evangelical (1992-1996)
Stabilities (Time 1 → Time 2)		
Ideology → Ideology	.245 (.220/ .068)*** [a]	.571 (.642/ .078)*** [a]
Attendance → Attendance	.608 (.613/ .051)***	.707 (.705/ .069)***
Cross-lags (Time 1 → Time 2)		
Ideology → Attendance	.162 (.113/ .076)**	.274 (.265/ .086)***
Attendance → Ideology	.092 (.119/ .046)**	.205 (.239/ .062)***
Summary statistics		
N	244	106
χ^2 / df	91.201 / 47	58.047 / 47
	(1.941, p=.000)	(1.235 , p=.130)
IFI, CFI, RMSEA	.961, .957, .062	.985, .982, .047

Source: 1972-1976, 1992-1996 NES panels. Notes: MLE. Parentheses contain standardized coefficients/standard errors. Controls included for age, male dummy, education dummies (reference category is high school or less), union member in household dummy, marital status dummies (never married is baseline), region dummies (northeast is baseline), children in household dummy, and income. Estimates for disturbance correlations, unanalyzed relationships, and control effects are omitted for clarity.

a. Ideological stability is artificially low due to the use of the initial seven-point scale, which ignores leaners.

* p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01

6.2. Partisan pressures on individual church attendance

The discussion now turns to the posited occurrence of a partisan political religion, i.e. the shaping of church attendance by party identification. The psychological groups of interest identified by SIT in this case are defined as 'Democrats vs. Republicans'. Members of each group will tend to express their partisan identity through decreasing (Democrats) or increasing (Republicans) exposure to what is stereotyped as a Republican environment, namely evangelical churches. This effect of partisanship on attendance creates a feedback loop, which complements the traditionally assumed impact of religious variables on partisanship.

Table 6.6 summarizes results from the χ^2 difference test, this time using the partisanship variable instead of ideological self-placement. Highlighted entries indicate which population experienced the political religion phenomenon in each period. Once again, attendance seems to be influenced by political (partisan) concerns among evangelical Protestants in the 1990s and 2000s, yet the feedback effect is not present for this constituency in the 1970s. I attribute this to the absence of partisan polarization during that period. That is, the 1970s were still a time when evangelical support for the GOP was not yet salient, and the Christian Right had not emerged as a major force in American elections. Consistently therefore with the context-dependent nature of SIT expectations, evangelicals do not appear to experience partisan pressures on their attendance prior to the 'particization' of their churches.

Table 6.6: (Partisan) Political Religion, feedback vs. unidirectional effects

Model Comparison			
		$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf
	Catholic	.171	1
1972-1976 ANES	Mainline	**7.608****	1
	Evangelical	.118	1
	Catholic	.354	1
1992-1996 ANES	Mainline	.575	1
	Evangelical	**4.395****	1
	Catholic	.412	1
2000-2004 ANES	Mainline	.053	1
	Evangelical	**3.719****	1

Sources: 1972-1976, 1992-1996, 2000-2004 ANES panels
Note: Feedback models with a better fit than unidirectional models are highlighted.
* $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$

Tables 6.7 through 6.9 present coefficients for the non-reciprocal models using partisanship. Partisan influences on individual church attendance are again absent among Catholics and white mainline Protestants for most periods covered by the data (1972-1976, 1992-1996, and 2000-2004). However, monitoring the actual coefficients in detail, Table 6.7 suggests that a partisan religion emerges among mainline Protestants in the 1970s, whereby partisanship appears to constrain church attendance. One explanation of this could lie with the political mobilization of mainline churches during the turbulent 1960s, as defined by the Civil Rights movement and the Vietnam War (e.g. Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2007). However, there are methodological problems in model estimation for this subsample in the 1970s.

Table 6.7: Unsuccessful models in the 1970s

	Catholic	Mainline	Evangelical
Stabilities			
1972 Party ID → 1976 Party ID	.724*** (.734/.038)	.779*** (.790/.029)	.705*** (.718/.043)
1972 Attendance →1976 Attendance	.652*** (.654/.044)	.672*** (.676/.035)	.627*** (.632/.051)
Cross-lagged effects			
1972 Party ID → 1976 Attendance	.014 (.018/.034)	.066*** (.095/.024)	.014 (.018/.039)
1972 Attendance → 1976 Party ID	-.001 (-.001/.049)	-.073*[a] (-.051/042)	.135** (.103/.056)
Summary statistics			
N	282	403	244
χ^2 / df	84.446 / 47	87.638 / 47	91.204 / 47
	(1.797, p=.001)	(1.865, p=.000)	(1.941, p= .000)
IFI, CFI, RMSEA	.966, .963, .053	.979, .978, .046	.965, .963, .062

Source: 1972-1976 NES panel. Notes: MLE. Parentheses contain standardized coefficients/standard errors. Controls included for age, male dummy, education dummies (reference category is high school or less), union member in household dummy, marital status dummies (never married is baseline), region dummies (northeast is baseline), children in household dummy, and income. Estimates for disturbance correlations, unanalyzed relationships, and control effects are omitted for clarity.
a. Suppressor effect. * p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01

Table 6.8: Unsuccessful models in the 1990s

	Catholic	Mainline
Stabilities		
1992 Party ID → 1996 Party ID	.911*** (.798/.062)	.728*** (.642/.078)
1992 Attendance → 1996 Attendance	.784*** (.783/.055)	.658*** (.689/.067)
Cross-lagged effects		
1992 Party ID → 1996 Attendance	-.028 (-.032/.047)	.045 (.054/.059)
1992 Attendance → 1996 Party ID	.026 (.020/.073)	-.014 (-.011/.088)
Summary statistics		
N	135	121
χ^2 / df	(1.251, p=.116)	(1.287, p=.090)
CFI, RMSEA, IFI	.979, .043,.982	.976, .049, .979

Source: 1992-1996 NES panel. Notes: MLE. Parentheses contain standardized coefficients/standard errors. Controls included for age, male dummy, education dummies (reference category is high school or less), union member in household dummy, marital status dummies (never married is baseline), region dummies (northeast is baseline), children in household dummy, and income. Estimates for disturbance correlations, unanalyzed relationships, control effects omitted for clarity.
* p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01

Table 6.9: Unsuccessful models in the 2000s

	Catholic	Mainline
Stabilities		
2000 Party ID → 2004 Party ID	.924*** (.847/.047)	.903*** (.857/.053)
2000 Attendance → 2004 Attendance	.686*** (.670/.058)	.764*** (.746/.057)
Cross-lagged effects		
2000 Party ID → 2004 Attendance	.025 (.032/.038)	.009 (.013/.041)
2000 Attendance → 2004 Party ID	-.003 (-.002/.071)	.144* (.094/.074)
Summary statistics		
N	190	146
χ^2 / df	(1.994, p=.000)	(1.280, p=.094)
CFI, RMSEA, IFI	.940, .073, .946	.981, .044, .983

Source: 2000-2004 NES panel. Notes: MLE. Parentheses contain standardized coefficients/standard errors. Controls included for age, male dummy, education dummies (reference category is high school or less), union member in household dummy, marital status dummies (never married is baseline), region dummies (northeast is baseline), children in household dummy, and income. Estimates for disturbance correlations, unanalyzed relationships, and control effects are omitted for clarity.
* p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01

Specifically, the cross-effects have different signs for mainline Protestants in the 1972-1976 model: lagged partisanship has a positive effect on changing attendance, while lagged attendance has a counter-intuitive, *negative* effect on changing partisanship. This is a suppressor effect, whereby two variables are positively (negatively) correlated, but direct effects are negative (positive). Suppression occurs for two main reasons (Smith, Ager and Williams 1992). First, suppression happens when an additional predictor is entered in the model, i.e. the true relationship between the variables is in the opposite direction than the one indicated by their bivariate correlation. If the difference in sign can be explained theoretically, the effect can be retained. Second, suppression can be the result of multicollinearity, an

inherent problem in cross-lagged models, which use repeated measures of the same - often very stable – variable. Multicollinearity is present in this case and is aggravated by the stratification of the sample into homogenous subsamples. I also find the second explanation more plausible since there is no strong theoretical justification for the negative sign of the coefficient. This justifies my concern in placing too much emphasis on an interpretation of this result.

Focusing on the population of interest, namely evangelical Protestants, one reading of Table 6.7 is that in a period when the explicit link between evangelicalism and the Republican Party had not yet emerged, there was not sufficient motivation for Democratic members of this religious tradition to minimize their exposure to a politically incompatible religious environment. The lack of partisan mobilization is overturned during the 1980s and the Reagan presidency.

Table 6.10 presents the estimates connecting the main variables within the significant reciprocal models identified by the comparison in Table 6.6. Evangelical Protestants go through a round of intense religious politicization in the periods covered by the 1992-1996 and the 2000-2004 panels.[31] The conventionally assumed impact of lagged evangelical attendance on changing partisanship is both substantially and statistically significant in both periods (b=.156 and b=.247 respectively). The substantive interpretation of this result is that in a period of increasing connections between the GOP and evangelical Protestantism, frequent exposure to evangelical churches seems to move congregants closer to the Republican Party. Conversely, less frequent exposure to evangelical churches seems to move congregants closer to the Democrats.

[31] Note that the detection of significant effects especially post-1990s obtains greater value due to small subsample sizes (higher probability for a Type II Error).

However, lagged partisanship also significantly affects attendance in both eras (b=.110 and b=.079 respectively). On average in the 1990s, strong Republicans (six on the partisanship scale) increase their attendance to evangelical churches by .66 points compared to strong Democrats (zero on the scale). In the 2000-2004 case, strong Republicans increase their attendance to evangelical churches by .47 points compared to strong Democrats. As expected therefore, *ceteris paribus*, the more Republican among evangelicals were driven towards participating more frequently in their churches (or the more Democratic were motivated to participate less). These results suggest a Republican pull towards increasing attendance in evangelical churches (or a Democratic push away from the same churches). Importantly, this phenomenon emerges within the constituency that has been at the heart of the polarized partisan environment during this period. [32]

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[32] To further test whether interactions are significant (i.e. whether effects differ across religious communities) I fit two models for each panel. First I allow all parameters to differ across groups. Second, I constrain cross-lagged effects to be equal across groups (i.e. the coefficients for these causal arrows are set to be identical for all religious groups). The relative validity of the two assumptions can be evaluated with a χ^2 difference test, i.e. the difference in χ^2 values between the two hypotheses. This will indicate which model fits the data better (Bollen, 1989: p. 292). Results verify that the intergroup differences observed in Tables 6.2 and 6.6 are significant.

Table 6.10: (Partisan) Political Religion in the 1990s and 2000s

	Evangelical (1992-1996)	Evangelical (2000-2004)
Stabilities (Time 1 → Time 2)		
Party ID → Party ID	.784*** (.786/ .064)	.903*** (.817/ .045)
Attendance → Attendance	.791*** (.789/ .059)	.738*** (.752/ .049)
Cross-lags (Time 1 → Time 2)		
Party ID → Attendance	.110** (.141/ .052)	.079** (.096/ .041)
Attendance → Party ID	.156** (.121/ .072)	.247*** (.187/ .054)
Summary statistics		
N	119	200
χ^2 / df	65.233 / 47	98.046 / 47
	(1.388, p=.040)	(2.086, p=.000)
IFI, CFI, RMSEA	.976, .973, .057	.960, .957, .074

Source: 1992-1996, 2000-2004 ANES panels. Notes: MLE. Parentheses contain standardized coefficients/standard errors. Controls included for age, male dummy, education dummies (reference category is high school or less), union member in household dummy, marital status dummies (never married is baseline), region dummies (northeast is baseline), children in household dummy, and income. Estimates for disturbance correlations, unanalyzed relationships, and control effects are omitted for clarity.
* p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01

Finally, there is one piece of information that could help assess the direction of the political religion phenomenon. While the analysis conducted so far showed that, other things being equal, liberals/Democrats would attend evangelical churches less frequently, and conservatives/Republicans would tend to do so more frequently, it is not clear which of the two movements is the predominant one. Notice that the direction of the phenomenon can change across decades.

Ideally, if there were a large number of evangelicals in the panels, I could determine this with clarity. Specifically, a crosstabulation within the evangelical subsample could show whether liberals/Democrats are becoming less frequent attenders between two panel waves or whether conservatives/Republicans are becoming more frequent attenders or whether both moves are happening at the same time. This could be then compared with later or earlier periods. Using the present datasets, these crosstabulations do not show any meaningful trend. It is difficult then to conduct this kind of analysis among evangelicals without large enough political subgroups.[33]

This missing information remains significant for my thesis. Sole existence of the first phenomenon (the liberal/Democratic move) would mean that politicization of the church may reduce church attendance. On the contrary, the second phenomenon (the conservative/ Republican move) could indicate that politicization can also be good for the church, by making congregants more enthusiastic about their faith. To evaluate the direction of the political religion thesis the next chapter will use available data to test a more appropriate specification. What remains however as the main conclusion is that one aspect of individual religiosity, church attendance, is partly driven by secular, political concerns.

Conclusion

This chapter has tested the first step in the political religion phenomenon: changing church attendance based on political identities. The causal argument and findings presented above suggest that when the link connecting a religious group with an ideological camp or political party becomes 'institutionalized' in the public mind, religious behaviour within that group is transformed into a worldly experience, partly shaped by a political calculus. This effect is

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[33] Multivariate models in this chapter mitigated this problem by using FIML, and by including the full range of the ideological and partisan variables, rather than simply two opposing political subgroups.

particularly evident for the most salient social group in both the conservative backlash to the social upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s, and later in the Republican electoral base: white evangelical Protestants.

The emergence of the ideological effect before the emergence of the partisan effect provides a robust basis for this conclusion (cf. Carmines and Stimson 1989; Layman 2001). As a new issue conflict emerged in the political scene of the 1970s based on traditional social values, evangelicals experiences an ideological political religion. This took the form of individuals adjusting their church attendance on the basis of identification with ideological camps. For instance, if a liberal congregant's church was perceived to be conservative, that congregant was more likely to minimize her exposure to that church. Later on, as party elites responded to and capitalized on this new ideological division, a partisan political religion appears to have followed. In this case, individuals updated their attendance in order to bring it in line with their identification with political parties. In simple terms, if a church was coloured by its vocal support of Party B, then identifiers with Party A would tend to minimize their attendance to that church. I take the above effects to reveal the social significance of considerations related to political self-identity. Such considerations can direct individuals towards specific religious choices.

The analysis is not without problems, not simply because of the separate modeling of ideology and partisanship (see Chapter 5 for an extensive discussion of how partisanship may mediate the effect of ideology). At the basic level of operational definitions, measuring psychological group identification is fraught with obstacles. The items used here are not clear-cut measures of psychological attachment with a political group, although they tap a great part of such a

construct. Items best suited to capture social identities are particularly rare in national sample surveys. Decreased validity is then a risk when conducting secondary analysis of survey data.

The presence of suitable batteries of social identity measures would also solve another problem of this analysis. When only one indicator is available across two waves of panel measurement, structural equation modeling can only resort to the use of surface variables. This means that random measurement error is not corrected, and that instability in the main variables can be the result of 'noise' in the measurement. The use of a social identity battery would help purge indicators from measurement error, by creating latent constructs anchored to a group of related observed indicators.

Low sample sizes also hinder better estimation. In the case of significant cross-lagged effects this is not a problem, since they exist despite a small number of cases (overcoming a Type II error). Yet, when using inadequate sample sizes one cannot be sure whether the absence of significant relationships is an artifact of the low number of cases. In a similar vein, the suppressor effect encountered in one of the above estimations is a by-product of sample size. Small and relatively homogenous groups, such as religious traditions, will tend to harbor stable variables. In models that use auto-regressive components, this can prove challenging for reaching acceptable estimates.

The political adjustment of church attendance that this chapter documented is only one step in the hypothesized movement. For instance, if Democrats minimize their attendance in what is considered a Republican setting (evangelical Protestant churches), we might expect a second step: that the same people will eventually leave these churches altogether. Similarly, if Republicans increase their observance to the same churches and do not drop out, political

homogeneity within these churches may not be a mere effect of theology or demography. The intense linking of a church with a political ideology or party produces an autonomous effect, which could finally alter the composition of the religious constituency. The analysis presented in this chapter only documents the first step. Chapter 7 will use panel data to evaluate the empirical purchase of the second step. Although the available dataset is not entirely appropriate for this kind of analysis, the following chapter will point towards the existence of the second movement as well.

CHAPTER 7

Political pressures on the dynamics of religious affiliation

The previous chapter (Model 1) presented results that on the whole confirmed my first expectation: liberals/Democrats will tend to minimize their exposure to evangelical churches, controlling for other factors (conservatives/Republicans will maximize it). It should be noted that Model 1 did not provide conclusive evidence on the direction of the 'political religion' effect. Various possibilities exist: liberals/Democrats minimize their attendance; conservatives/Republicans maximize it; or both phenomena take place at the same time. This chapter will provide an indication of the direction of the effect.

One example of the 'political religion' effect appears during the 1970s. Results in the previous chapter showed that liberals minimized church-going to evangelical churches (or that conservatives maximized it). I take this to be an effect of the 'conservative equals evangelical' stereotype that emerges in that era. In other words, liberals tended to bring religious behaviour in line with what was expected of their political group. However, the same religious outcome (lower exposure to evangelical environments) does not hold among Democrats in the 1970s (see the previous chapter for the absence of partisan effects on attendance in that period). This is an expected result, since the 'logic of equivalence' between party and religious tradition was to emerge only later, in the post-Carter years. The absence of this logic renders implausible the

expectation of partisan pressures on religious variables, since there was not yet any divergence between being a Democrat and frequenting an evangelical church.

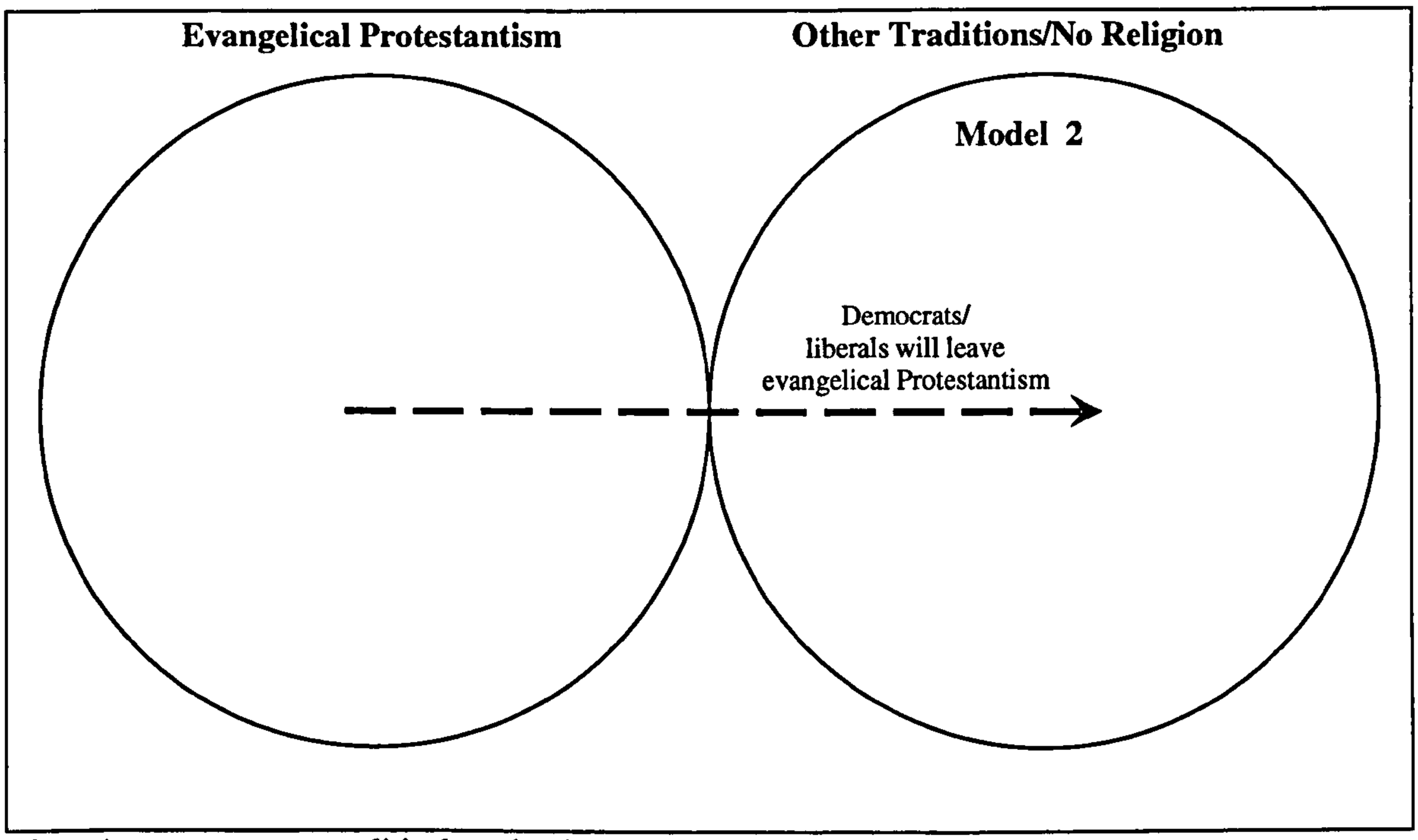
Based on the availability of repeated questions on religious affiliation in the large 1970s panel, this chapter will evaluate the next step in the political religion hypothesis (see Figure 7.1). If believers tend to adjust their attendance on the basis of ideological concerns (e.g. liberals will tend to go less frequently to conservative evangelical churches), analysis will now look into the possibility of those believers leaving the church altogether. Given the 1970s context and the results of the previous chapter, emphasis will be placed on the effects of ideological identification on denominational leaving. Still, the less plausible effects of partisan identification will also be assessed.

The existence of an ideological political religion would have considerable implications for the way we understand religious politicization. Let us take the example of a familiar trend, i.e. that evangelicals tend to become more conservative across time, while mainline Protestants tend to become more liberal. The starting assumption in the literature is that the size and composition of religious communities remain unaffected by their politicization. This assumption stresses the power of religious environments to homogenize political behaviour. Therefore, the religious environment shapes political trends among members.

Findings from this chapter will show that this approach is inadequate, since it overemphasizes religious causes at the expense of political forces. If liberals are more likely to leave the church, *ceteris paribus*, while conservatives are more likely to stay, then politically homogenous religious environments are partly the product of an ideological sorting out, which affects the size and composition of religious communities. Although there are no usable datasets available

to examine the same phenomenon in the 1990s and 2000s, it would not be unlikely for it to exist.

Figure 7.1: Political influences on affiliation



Note: Arrows represent political motivation in religious choice

Results

The dependent variable used here is a dichotomous indicator, created from the religious affiliation indicators repeatedly asked to the same respondents between 1972 and 1976. The zero category contains those who remain stable in their religious tradition (i.e. the broader family of similar denominations) between the two panel waves. The other category (1) contains those individuals that report a different choice of affiliation in 1976 than in 1972. This different choice could be another denomination or even no affiliation at all. So, it could be that some leavers move to a different religious tradition. It could also be that they drop out of religion altogether. What is of interest here is the fact that they leave.

The present analysis is confined to the Protestant segment of the panel dataset. Participants with a Roman Catholic affiliation are not expected to move across religious traditions substantially. This could happen for two main reasons. First, Catholic affiliation resembles a habitual personal feature compared with affiliation with Protestant traditions. The scholarship on the religious marketplace and denominational switching mostly directs attention to the 'native' American religion, which is Protestantism in all its varieties. Second and related to this, mainline and evangelical Protestants belong to relatively similar traditions under the Protestant umbrella, and therefore can switch from one to another. On the other hand, Catholics do not have a sister theological roof to switch to (Hadaway 1980; Verba *et al.* 1995). Consequently, Catholics will be more likely to remain in the same church compared with Protestants.

Table 7.1 summarizes the experience of religious attrition (leaving one's denomination) within the three religious groups: Roman Catholics, mainline Protestants, and evangelical Protestants. Notice the very low frequency of affiliation change among Roman Catholics. This evidence supports my decision to remove Catholics from the analysis. The marginals in Table 7.1 reveal the highest incidence of changing religious tradition among evangelical Protestants, while leaving is also high for mainline Protestants. In particular, one out of five evangelical Protestants moved from this denominational family to Catholicism, mainline Protestantism or apostasy in 1976. On the contrary, fewer than one out of 10 left Catholicism in the same period.

Table 7.1: Leaving the church

	Catholic 1972		Mainline 1972		Evangelical 1972	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Stay 1976	283	93.1	403	84.3	244	80.8
Leave 1976	21	6.9	75	15.7	58	19.2
Total	304	100.0	478	100.0	302	100.0

Source: 1972-1976 ANES panel

Since the dependent variable in this analysis is dichotomous, logistic regression will evaluate whether this attrition is solely the product of established explanatory factors. These factors include social network embeddedness, status mobility, age and other sociological characteristics described in Chapter 5. The unique contribution of this analysis lies in the introduction of an ignored independent variable: political identification. Since this analysis will also involve an interaction term, I avoid using the raw ANES identification scales described in Chapter 5 (ideology and partisanship) and also used in the analysis in Chapter 6 for reasons of collinearity. The two scales used are standardized (z-scores).[34]

The baseline model starts with only three predictors: ideology, partisanship and evangelical affiliation. Its formal expression is:

$$\mathbf{Leave_t = \beta 1 Evangelical_{t-1} - \beta 2 Std\_Ideology_{t-1} - \beta 3 Std\_Pid_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t}$$

[34] Interaction terms are often very highly correlated with one of the original terms, as is the case presently. For instance, bivariate correlation coefficients between the evangelical dummy and an interaction term that multiplies this dummy with the raw ideology scale are consistently above .90 (Pearson's r. Kendall's Tau-B, and Spearman's rho). To avoid biased estimates, a standardized or centred version of the scale variable in the interaction is used. Results presented here remain insensitive to the use of a centred ideology scale.

Since estimation is limited within Protestant denominations, the reference group in the denominational dummy is the mainline Protestant category. The ideological scale is scored as liberal/low and conservative/high, and the partisan scale is scored as Democrat/low and Republican/high. Coefficient signs for each variable reflect theoretical expectations of causal direction. Evangelicals (positive sign in $\beta 1$) are more likely to leave their tradition, since it is their churches that became politicized in the 1970s. Attrition is also likely to result from liberal and Democratic identification (negative signs in $\beta 2$ and $\beta 3$).

Table 7.2 presents results from the baseline specification. With only two independent variables, the overall explanatory power of the model is quite low (pseudo R^2 is .033). The negative sign in the intercept is a product of the low occurrence of change on the dichotomous variable. A product of the weak differences detected in Table 7.1, evangelicals are more likely to switch tradition than the reference category (mainline Protestants) only at a relatively generous $p < .10$ threshold (b=.384).[35] Ideological self-placement is a strongly significant predictor of religious attrition (b= -.371 at $p < .01$). The negative sign confirms expectations: liberalism creates the urge to change religious tradition among the population investigated (Protestants).

[35] Values of *p* refer to the Wald statistic, a test of significance for each independent variable.

Table 7.2: Baseline model

	B	*Wald*	*Exp(B)*
Evangelical	.384 *		
	(.235)	2.684	1.469
Std. Ideology	-.371 ***		
	(.117)	10.030	.690
Std. Partisanship	.132		
	(.117)	1.271	1.142
Constant	-1.817 ***		
	(.149)	149.049	.162
N	592		
Nagelkerke R Sq	.033		

Parentheses contain standard errors.
* p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01

The insignificant effect of partisanship ($p > .10$) confirms expectations. During the 1970s, that is, before the alignment of religious constituencies with partisan camps that took place at a later period, there was no trigger for a partisan political religion. This trigger would exist as a stereotype connecting Republicans with evangelicalism. This expectation is also supported by the SEM estimations in the previous chapter. They reveal that the only time when partisan motives were relevant for evangelical church attendance was after the 1980s. On this basis and for the sake of parsimony, partisanship is dropped from the following tests. Analysis will focus on the effects of ideology on church leaving.

Figures in the Exp(B) column indicate odds ratios, i.e. the change in the odds of the dependent variable happening for a one-unit change in the independent variable. An Exp(B) = 1 means that the variable has no impact. An Exp(B) < 1 shows that for each one-unit increase in the independent variable, the odds of an event in the dependent variable ('1': leave the church)

decrease by EXP(B). For example, in the case of (standardized) ideology, a one unit increase (one standard deviation towards conservative identification) in that variable decreases the odds of leaving the church by a factor of .690.

Still, mainline and evangelical Protestantism were not identical environments in the 1970s. Mainline churches were coming out of the social activism of the 1960s and the fight for what many saw as 'liberal causes', such as civil rights. On the other hand, evangelicals had begun to participate in grass-roots movements in the pursuit of traditionalist, conservative causes such as the pro-life movement. One would anticipate that in the aftermath of intense ideological mobilization and salient connections between mainline churches and liberalism, conservative mainline Protestants would not be very likely to abandon their churches anymore on the basis of ideological disaffection with liberalism – this would have been more likely to happen in the previous era (1960s). Liberal evangelicals would be more likely to exit their churches in the 1970s, since those churches were increasingly connected in the public mind with increasing conservatism.

In order to incorporate the postulation that evangelicals will be the ones most affected by the ideological political religion, a multiplicative term is entered in the equation. The assumption is that ideological pressures on religious attrition should be stronger for evangelicals. The term is composed of the dichotomous evangelical variable (1972), and standardized values of the ideology scale. In other words, the inverse effect of ideology on attrition is conditional upon evangelical affiliation:

$$\mathbf{Leave_t = \beta 1 Evangelical_{t-1} - \beta 2 Std\_Ideology_{t-1} - \beta 3 Evangelical_{t-1} * Std\_Ideology_{t-1} + \varepsilon_t}$$

Table 7.3 presents results from this more complete model. The model again underperforms in terms of explanatory power (pseudo R^2 is .036). The effect of the interaction term is significant (b= -.470 just exceeds the .05 probability level), which is acceptable considering the low amount of variation in the dependent variable. The effect follows the hypothesized direction (negative sign). As the negative sign of the interaction shows, evangelical Protestants (1 in the dummy variable) are more likely to leave their tradition on the basis of *liberal* ideological concerns. Excluding insignificant effects and solving the equation for mainline Protestants (multiply by zero in the interaction term), the effect of ideology in the interaction term is also zero (its direct effect β2 is insignificant). The declining significance of the ideology coefficient after the interaction term is entered (compare Tables 7.2 and 7.3) points towards the same conclusion.[36]

[36] SEM results from the previous chapter also reveal that *partisanship* has consequences for mainline church attendance. This result was problematic due to suppression. I also estimated a model that examines the impact of partisanship (instead of ideology) on religious attrition conditional on mainline affiliation in the 1972-1976 ANES panel. The specification was similar to the model presented in the main text, but the affiliation dummy this time represented the mainline and not the evangelical category. The interaction term was the product of the mainline dummy and the standardized partisanship scale. I tried to assess whether partisanship drives mainline affiliates to leave the tradition. No significant results were found for the variables of interest. This further justifies my caution in interpreting the part of SEM results in Chapter 6 concerning the mainline in the 1970s panel (Table 6.7).

Table 7.3: The conditional effect of liberal ideology

	B	*Wald*	*Exp(B)*
Evangelical	.254 (.236)	1.161	1.290
Std. ideology	-.162 (.136)	1.423	.851
Interaction term (Evangelical*std. ideology)	-.470 * (.246)	3.639	.625
Constant	-1.734 *** (.143)	147.599	.177
N	595		
Nagelkerke R Sq.	.036		

Parentheses contain standard errors.
* p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01

The sociological literature holds that a variety of non-political explanations are responsible for religious switching and apostasy. I will now incorporate those in the above model, and assess how well they perform in the short-term religious dynamics investigated in this chapter. Table 7.4 adds the control variables described in Chapter 5, in an attempt to see whether the effect of the interaction term vanishes as an artifact of the influence of some other variable.

Naturally, the more comprehensive model in Table 7.4 increases explained variance (pseudo R^2 is now .101). Nevertheless, it is evident that the demographic influences typically assumed to affect religious attrition do not perform well in the four-year time span applied by ANES panel studies. In detail, it does not matter whether one lives in a particular region of the country, whether one is male, or whether one has children or not for one's religious choice after four

years. The probability of religious attrition is not even influenced by the number of years the respondent has spent in her current community.

Only three of the non-political variables have an effect that is statistically distinguishable from zero when using conventional levels of significance. Age is negatively but weakly connected to religious attrition (b=-.015 at $p < .10$). Specifically, younger Protestants will be more likely to leave their church than older Protestants. This is not unexpected, since younger individuals tend to experiment more, they are less embedded in social networks and have had less time to develop the emotional attachment or even habitual inertia needed to keep them in the denomination.

Marital status also affects one's decision to leave the religious tradition (b=-.547 at $p < .10$). Specifically, married individuals are less likely to change religious affiliation in the course of the four-year period examined. Again, the explanation lies in those respondents being more heavily exposed to peer pressure compared with non-married respondents. Notice, however, how changes in marital status have no consequence for the dependent variable (Δ Marital Status). Perhaps, with a more extended time span, the effects of such change would have had adequate time to develop, and the variable would have exerted a significant impact on religious attrition. In the limited course of an election cycle it is irrelevant whether the believer obtains a spouse or loses one.

Table 7.4: Full model with controls

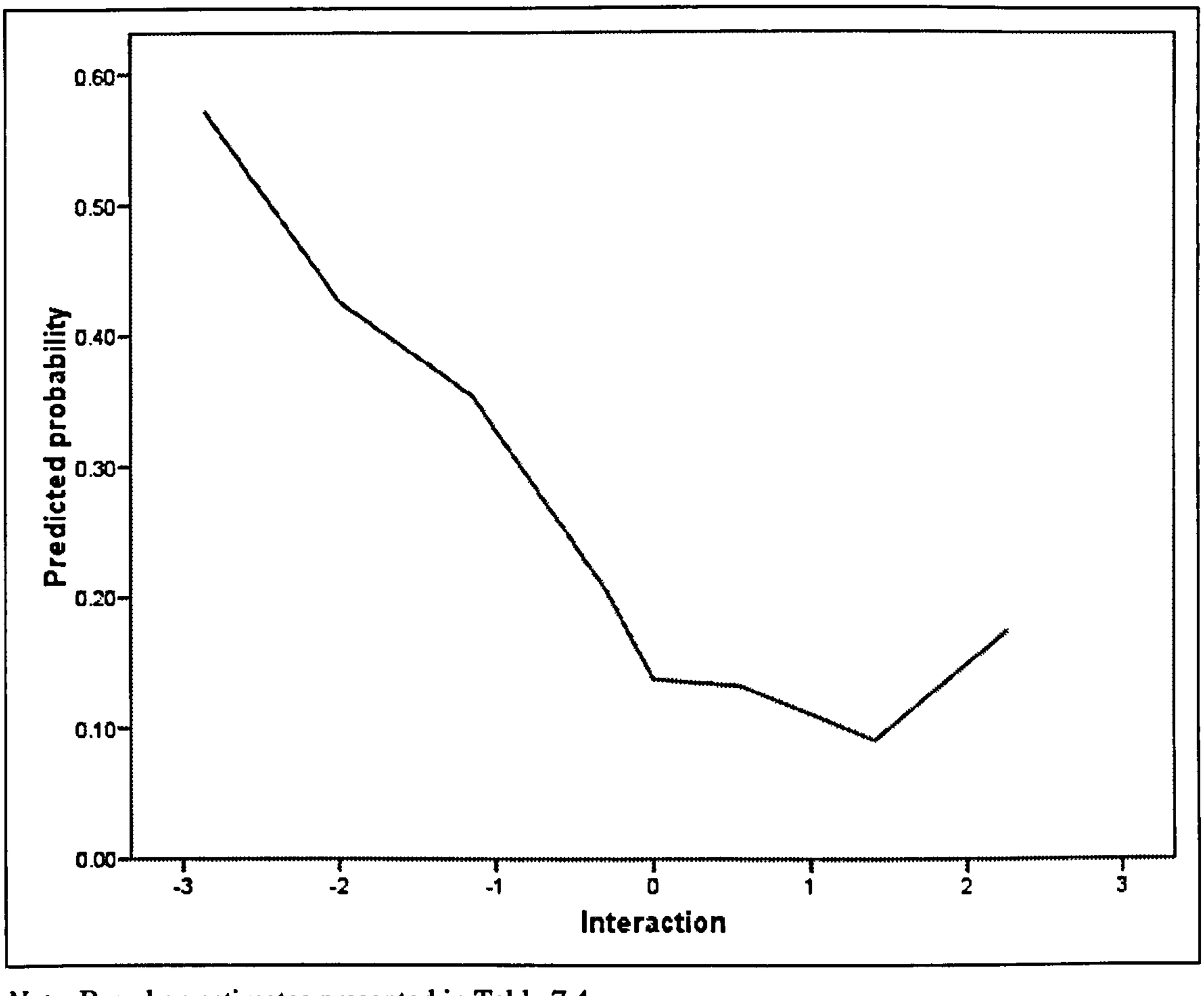
	B	*Wald*	*Exp(B)*
Evangelical	.327	1.384	1.387
	(.278)		
Std. ideology	-.115	.566	.891
	(.153)		
Interaction term	-.516 **	3.920	.597
(Evangelical*std. ideology)	(.261)		
Age	-.015 *	2.931	.985
	(.009)		
Household income	.009	.069	1.009
	(.034)		
West	.256	.330	1.292
	(.446)		
Northcentral	-.038	.009	.962
	(.396)		
South	.137	.109	1.147
	(.417)		
Children	-.062	.051	.940
	(.277)		
Some college	.166	.271	1.181
	(.320)		
College degree	-.049	.020	.953
	(.347)		
Union member	.427	2.041	1.533
	(.299)		
Male	.201	.664	1.223
	(.247)		
Married	-.547 *	3.060	.579
	(.313)		
Δ Marital status	-.092	.054	.913
	(.395)		
Δ class	.538 **	3.813	1.712
	(.275)		
Years in community	-.011	2.127	.990
	(.007)		
Constant	-1.077	2.442	.341
	(.689)		
N	569		
Nagelkerke R Sq.	.101		

Parentheses contain standard errors.
* p < .10 ** p < .05 *** p < .01

Perceived social mobility however does shape respondent choice to leave the tradition (Δ class). The effect is positive, suggesting that those who identify with a different class label between 1972 and 1976 are more likely also to change religious tradition. Some denominations for example are generally considered as higher ranking in terms of social status than others. Consequently, congregants who perceive an upward change in their circumstances would be likely to be attracted to higher status denominations or at least leave their lower ranking denomination.

Finally, other things being equal, this more realistic and comprehensive model shows that the effect of interest remains intact. The interaction term bears the expected sign and is strongly significant (b= -.516, $p < .05$). The impact of the interaction term in Table 7.4 on predicted probabilities of leaving the church is visualized in Figure 7.2. The scores on the X-axis correspond to the product of multiplying the evangelical dummy variable by the standardized ideology scale. The standardized scale shows how many standard deviations a specific observation lies in relation to the mean. So, a score of zero in the interaction variable (affiliation*ideology) matches two conditions. First, it reveals mainline status (since mainline=0 in the affiliation dummy). Second, it can also mean that an evangelical respondent (evangelical=1) has a score of zero (the arithmetic mean) on the standardized ideology scale.

Figure 7.2: The effect of ideology on the probability of denominational change, 1972-1976



Note: Based on estimates presented in Table 7.4

Individuals with positive scores on the interaction term are not very likely to leave the church, with their average probability of leaving standing between 10% and 20%. These individuals are evangelicals with conservative scores in the standardized ideology variable, i.e. conservative evangelicals. The interesting area in Figure 7.2 lies to the left: participants with interaction scores below zero show a greater probability to leave the church in 1976. We know which church they are about to leave, because negative interaction scores and in fact all scores excluding zero correspond to evangelical affiliates in 1972. Negative scores however also mean

that these evangelicals apply a liberal ideological self-label in 1972 (relative to the mean). For instance, notice that for the more liberal (-3 on the X-axis) the probability of leaving the denomination approaches 60% (Y-axis). Therefore, the more liberal members of evangelical churches become dramatically more likely to leave the church, while the more conservative are not very likely to do so.

A final caveat is in order regarding omitted variables. Most of the scholarship on the growth of evangelical churches and the decline of the more lenient mainline churches focuses on the strict-church hypothesis. This suggests that evangelical churches provide stricter rules and a monolithic worldview, which comes closer to the religious ideal for the individual, that is, a strong sense of purpose and absolute truth. This places evangelicalism at an advantageous position compared to the less strict mainline denominations. The variable that would allow me to capture this phenomenon should document fundamentalist views. Questions for example on biblical literalism could be used as predictors of switching: according to the strict-church thesis, during the 1970s we should witness a growing tendency of mainline Protestants with fundamentalist views to abandon their churches in favour of evangelical churches.

Variables on theological tastes have not been measured in the dataset and so cannot be used as an explanation of church leaving. It is not uncommon however for such variables to be omitted by logistic analyses of denominational switching (see a recent example in Loveland 2003). How do we know then that the ideological drive behind religious attrition from evangelical churches is not masking a deeper theological repulsion? In this case, ideological effects might be spurious. There is one reason that makes this problem less ominous. The omission of theological/fundamentalist causes of denominational change would have been more alarming if their expected direction was similar to the political causes emphasized here. In particular,

scholarship documents a fundamentalist theological pull *towards* strict evangelical churches in the 1970s. Yet, my analysis suggests the existence of an ideological push *away from* evangelical churches. In other words, the ideological effect would be spurious (mediating the effect of fundamentalism on religious attrition) only if theory and existing evidence documented the effect of fundamentalist orientations as a move *away* from evangelical Protestantism. As is evident from all the above tests, the interesting story of church leaving is taking place among liberals in evangelical churches – and not among conservatives in mainline churches as previous theory expected. In fact, the move detected here counters the one supported by the strict-church thesis. Nevertheless, the results presented should be interpreted with this limitation in mind.

Conclusion

Findings in this chapter suggest that individual decisions to leave one's church are subject to political considerations. They provide one additional explanation of religious change on top of the usually examined socio-structural causes. This political motivation is experienced mainly by evangelicals, and it takes the form of liberal evangelicals abandoning their denomination. As in Model 1, the present analysis provides a strong indication of the existence of a political religion, while also giving a clue as to its direction.

Whereas Model 1 has predicted changes in church attendance due to political concerns, Model 2 predicts changes in denominational affiliation. It shows that ideological concerns can lead to the suppression of denominational affiliation. In this sense, the findings in this chapter pose serious aggregate-level implications. If the political process can affect denominational affiliation in a consistent way (disaffiliation), denominational size is a reflection of political causes and not simply evidence of demographic and theological trends. In a similar sense, the

attitudinal composition of each denomination today partly mirrors political influences and not merely the homogenizing impact of religious environments.

Limitations in the design of available datasets make this analysis subject to a degree of criticism. While a test of church leaving is one side of the political religion argument, the other part of the argument expects that politicization also promotes church growth (e.g. new members). In other words, it is likely for conservative atheists or conservative mainline Protestants to join evangelical Protestantism due to its conservative social image (conservatives 'are' evangelicals). Part of this expectation however is already incorporated in my analysis. Specifically, the empirical picture that emerged in this chapter shows that mainline Protestants are not likely to leave their church due to political considerations. By extension, it is implausible to argue that they will be likely to join evangelicalism due to the same political considerations.

The story is different for the secular segment. This category contains only 53 cases in 1972 (agnostics/atheists, no preference, not applicable) making any test of significance a daunting task. Yet, a visual inspection of the raw data regarding where seculars 'move to' in 1976, if they move at all, indicates that there is no discernible trend towards evangelical denominations.[37] Also notice that this segment is becoming larger across panel waves and not smaller, as a conservative political pull towards evangelicalism would expect. Therefore, for the 1972-1976 period it would seem safe to say that politicization may have had a negative impact on the number of evangelical Protestants, due to a loss of liberal members.

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[37] The numbers are very small, but the only remotely detectable movement among whites between 1972 and 1976 is towards becoming (i.e. reporting affiliation as) Roman Catholic.

All in all, movement away from evangelical churches due to their being stereotyped as conservative pools counters the effects that the strict-church thesis has identified. We do not only witness mainline Protestants and non-affiliates joining evangelicalism because of its fundamentalist attraction. There is a trade-off with liberal evangelicals abandoning this denominational family. But where do these people go after abandoning the church? Due to sample size limitations, the specification of the dependent variable does not distinguish between those moving towards another church and those dropping out of religion altogether. The existence of a larger sample would allow me to answer this question, and determine whether politicization of a church leads to an overall decline in religiosity statistics (outcome: dropping out) or whether a circulation of congregants around churches is a more accurate assumption (outcome: switching to a denomination that is compatible with ideological identity). That would provide an even clearer indication of the long-term impact of politicization on the future of American religion.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

The Rev. Wright controversy was one of the most memorable incidents during the campaign for the 2008 presidential election. Jeremiah Wright was an African American pastor at the Chicago megachurch that Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama attended. While campaigning, Obama had repeatedly mentioned the pastor as an inspiration in his political career. In the spring of 2008 however, heavy criticism appeared regarding the controversial content of Wright's past sermons regarding race. One British newspaper report covering the row quoted the following:

> In Chickie's and Pete's restaurant and sports bar in Philadelphia, John Fernandez, a chiropractor, said Obama must have known what Wright was preaching. "How can you be that tight and not know or share some of those opinions? I was leaning toward him a little bit, but that took it over the edge," Fernandez said, hollering to be heard over the din of the bar and televized basketball game. "You got to go to another church, or you share those opinions." [38]

This thesis was a first attempt to answer what appears to be an increasingly relevant question: can politics transform religious life? The specific research question evaluated whether religious

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[38] 'Obama struggles to limit damage in pastor row as white voters slip away' by Daniel Nasaw and Ewen McAskill. *The Guardian*, 22 March 2008.

involvement in politics affects religious experience, and whether this effect is positive or negative. The US was selected as a case study because of general historical characteristics and recent political developments (Chapters 1 through 3). These characteristics focused on the increasingly voluntary nature of religious commitment within a pluralistic setting, and the important public role of religion in American history.

The theoretical framework employed to answer the question was a top-down cleavage approach with emphasis on the autonomous impact of the political process on social life. The individual-level explanation proposed was based on a group identification mechanism. This expects that identifiers with political groups follow group stereotypes in domains outside the strictly political (Chapter 4). The lack of a well developed empirical field examining the research question led to an extended discussion of problems with existing data and methods, and ways to overcome them (Chapter 5).

Two main outcomes emerged from the investigation. First, when a religious group is seen as very close to a political group, the degree of exposure to that religious group can be a function of political concerns. The observed instance of this phenomenon was found among evangelicals, who partly based their attendance on a political basis. For example, those self-identifying as Democrats tended to reduce their attendance, while Republican identifiers increased it. A parallel process took place for liberals and conservatives with regard to religious exposure. Second, under the same condition of perceived closeness between a religious and a political group, affiliation with the religious group was also subject to political influences. In this case, liberals appeared to be more likely to altogether abandon those denominations stereotyped as conservative: i.e. the evangelical Protestant ones.

These two political outcomes are regarded as a sequence: decreasing exposure to a religious environment is followed by withdrawal from that environment. This sequence can be recast as a nuanced reading of secularization theory. Religion becomes involved with worldly phenomena (political conflicts), which have the potential to lead people away from religion altogether. I will discuss in more detail the two empirical conclusions.

Chapter 6 supports the existence of political pressures on the dynamics of religious exposure, which was explained through a political identification mechanism. In periods when evangelical churches were identified as ideologically conservative or Republican settings, those identifying with the opposite political side (liberals or Democrats) were put under pressure by their group's norms and social imagery to minimize exposure to those churches. In this manner, they behaved as members of the political group were expected to do and maximized their distance from what members of the out-group are expected to do. On the other hand, those on the same political side as the church (conservatives and Republicans) followed the inverse trajectory. They tended to behave in accordance with their group's stereotype. The conservative stereotype was associated with evangelicalism starting in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as was the Republican stereotype since the 1980s. Conservatives and Republicans then increased their exposure to evangelical churches in a move to produce behaviour according to in-group standards and maximize their distance from the out-group (liberals and Democrats).

The above-mentioned fluctuation of religious exposure based on political concerns is the first step in a general movement. Findings in Chapter 7 show that this movement is complete when decreasing exposure leads to dropping out from the church (Model 2). In this second step, congregants avoid the burden of belonging to a church whose politics is contrary to their own political identity. In the specific case examined, a liberal self-identification predisposed

individuals to abandon evangelical churches in the 1970s, a period when evangelicalism was first linked with conservative political causes and organized groups. It is this second step that should attract more attention than the first step, since instead of affecting frequency of attendance within a church (Model 1) it has consequences for the growth and decline of affiliation rates.

We may conclude that once religious constituencies become saliently involved in politics, individual religious choices are subject to a political push and pull. As suggested at the outset, the twin phenomena described above and summarized by the term 'political religion' do not simply constitute a new way of looking at the connection between religion and politics. Their significance rests in their ability to lead to politically homogenous religious contexts in the long term.

In particular, existing research detects increasingly strong statistical relationships between evangelical affiliation and higher attendance on the one hand, and ideology or partisanship on the other. By ignoring the explanation put forward by this thesis, research usually rests on the traditional assumption that sees stable demographics as the cause and political behavior as the effect. Stronger statistical relationships are then interpreted as evidence of the growing impact of religion on politics. In other words, the homogeneity of the religious setting, for example the emergence of a conservative and Republican wave inside evangelical denominations, is accounted for by the supposed ability of faith to shape politics.

The political religion explanation, however, sees part of this strengthening statistical link between religious and political variables as a product of politics. If we witness a more politically homogenous setting within churches, this is because apart from the shaping power of

faith, politics can shape religious life. If liberals attend less frequently and then abandon evangelicalism, research in these churches will show that attendance rates are higher for conservatives and also, that liberals are not encountered in great numbers. Instead of seeing this purely as an outcome of the religious sphere (doctrine, networks, collective identities or clergy cues that drive people towards conservatism), Chapters 6 and 7 suggest that it has much to do with the political sphere (political identity driving people away from church).

Implications

What do these results mean in substantive terms? The first implication of the presence of a political religion touches upon the changing nature of religion in a modern social context. Various indicators of religiosity have been used by existing scholarship as measures of religious vitality. High levels of church attendance, for example, are interpreted as robust evidence that secularization is not taking place in the US. Yet, the political religion phenomenon adds an underlying factor that drives church attendance. This factor reveals the presence of latent secularization pressures. If attendance and other religious statistics can be partly shaped by political motivation, then a latent transformation of religion is taking place.

Going back to secularization theory, we witness a worldly drive behind modern religious experience. For example, an evangelical church is perceived to be dealing with non-transcendent causes instead of the traditional ones (spirituality and the quest for absolute certainty). This earthly religion then triggers a qualitative change in the religiosity of congregants. The church's political image will drive some individuals away, while it will make others more enthusiastic in their commitment. What is even more important for organized religion is that it is the former movement that is more likely to take place, at least according to the data examined here. This transformation cannot be determined by monitoring the surface of

things, i.e. attendance rates or levels of church membership, but by examining the motivation lying underneath such rates and levels. In this case, the motivation that sustains religious choice matches the politicized character of the church.

The phenomenon described in this study also concerns similar trends that appear to be on the rise in Europe. Religious commitment is losing its hereditary character, with many people even in the traditionally religious Catholic countries deciding to leave the church. New religious movements have also made their presence felt on the continent, opening the religious market and creating a culture of choice. With faith increasingly becoming a matter of active decision in many European countries, it may soon be time to reconsider the use of religious variables as stable, exogenous demographics in multivariate models of political behaviour. This is especially so given the involvement of religious constituencies in the public sphere, over a number of debates: immigration, multiculturalism, European integration and personal morality. The US serves as a most-likely case for the observation of the qualitative transformation of religion through its politicization.

Second, if politics influences religious behaviour and affiliation, other things being equal, politics can be treated as a factor that shapes social developments, and not just as a reflection of social forces. The political system is not as bound by structural divisions in society as traditionally assumed. Messages, frames and symbols used to connect political groups with social groups have the ability to affect the size and composition of those social groups. With respect to the religious cleavage in American electoral politics today, its maintenance can be seen partly as a function of the political process. Reactions based on political identities affect exposure to social settings and can eventually lead social groups (for example, evangelical

churches) into homogeneity via growth or decline. In the end, political factors can sharpen the political distinctiveness of different religious groups.

This autonomous effect of politics is of course a more general phenomenon and affects a range of 'exogenous' variables. Since many individuals today see a great deal of social life as a question of choice, we should be careful when modeling political choices as outcomes of social characteristics. For instance, it is becoming increasingly common for Americans to move to communities where most people agree with their political and social views (Bishop and Cushing 2008). It is a natural product of this move that communities are becoming politically homogenous, and by extension, that more counties produce 'landslides' on election day. If this voluntary sorting-out is ignored, then research is at risk of overestimating non-political reasons behind the polarization of American politics, such as the regional or religious context.

A final implication refers to what this thesis has to say about future developments. Updating the awakenings thesis, the analysis has shown that the church's entry into the public sphere alters religious life. Despite obstacles posed by the nature of existing data, results from Chapters 6 and 7 agree that the political religion emerging from evangelical politicization will probably lead to the electoral de-mobilization of evangelical Protestants. This shadows the political de-mobilization of mainline Protestants following their radical political career in the 1960s.

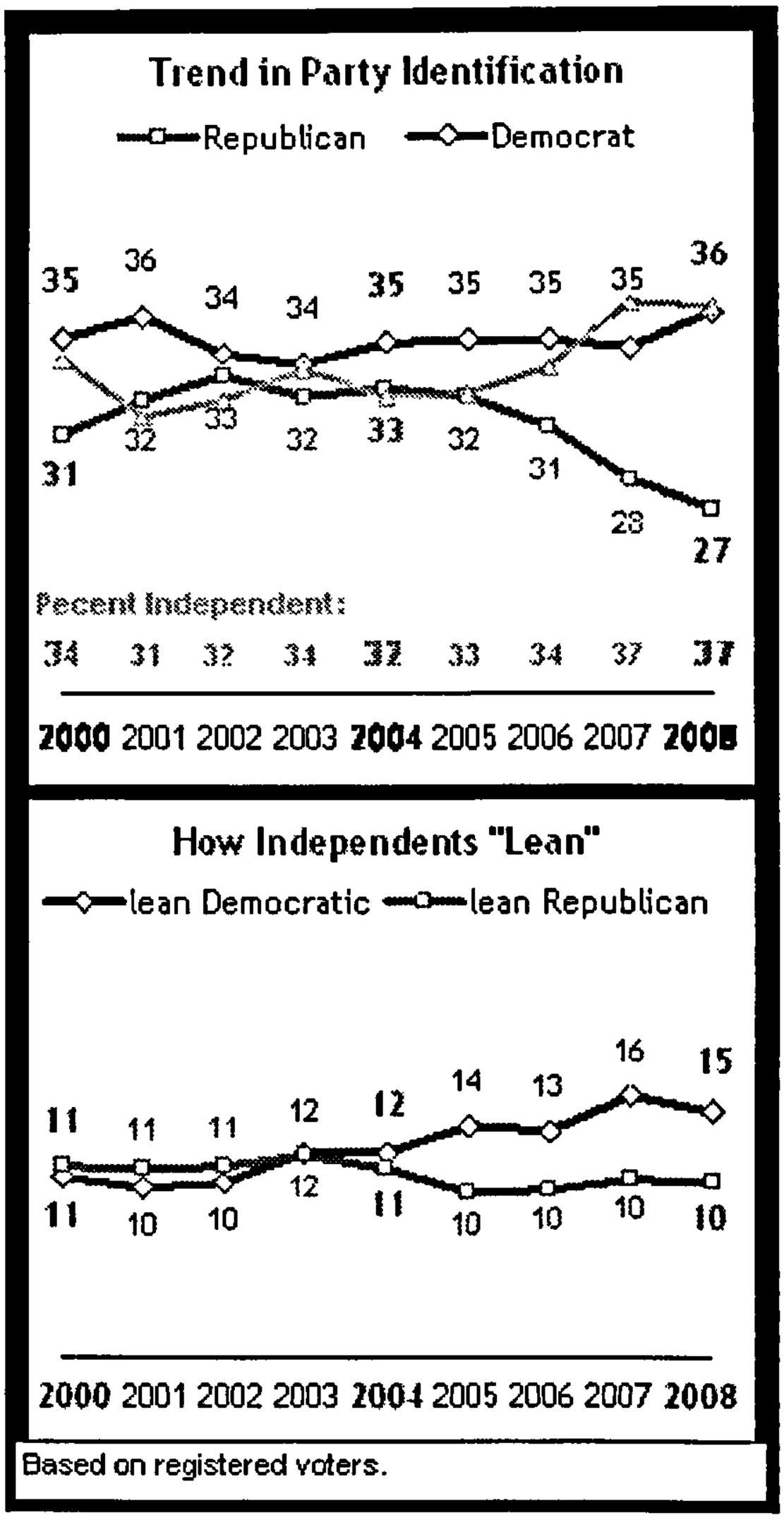
In detail, my analysis of the 1970s has suggested that, other things being equal, ideological concerns can shape religious affiliation with negative consequences for evangelical membership (Chapter 7). Lack of relevant data has not allowed me to test the existence of partisan effects on affiliation during the period of interest (post-1980s). Even so, this analysis offers a firm basis for speculation. It tells us that it may soon be harmful for evangelical

churches that identifiers with the Democratic Party have a clear lead today over Republican identifiers compared with the presidential elections of 2000 and 2004 (see Figure 8.1).[39] If Democratic identification can push congregants away from evangelical churches, then an increase in the number of Democratic identifiers may point to an ominous evangelical future. The same negative picture is drawn from the findings in Chapter 6, which show that attendance is also affected by ideological and partisan concerns. To avoid potentially unpleasant repercussions (dropping attendance and affiliation, driven by Democratic identification), evangelical churches might have to cool-off politically and begin distancing themselves from the Republican cause. Anecdotal evidence of this movement has begun to appear in the form of prominent evangelical voices questioning close ties with the GOP.[40]

[39] 'Fewer Voters Identify as Republicans. Democrats Now Have the Advantage in "Swing" States', Pew Research Centre, March 20. 2008: http://pewresearch.org/pubs/773/fewer-voters-identify-as-republicans

[40] See for example 'The Evangelical Crackup' by David. D. Kirkpatrick, *The New York Times*, October 28, 2007). Similar concerns have been expressed in a recent open declaration of evangelical Protestant leaders against the politicization of faith see: http://www.anevangelicalmanifesto.com/

Figure 8.1: Recent trends in partisanship



Source: Pew Research Centre

Main limitations

The novel character of the argument presented in this thesis comes at a cost. The assumption was that the individual religious experience is open to political pressures. The cost comes with the attempt to test the argument using data compiled under the opposite assumption, i.e. that religiosity cannot be open to such pressures. As mentioned in Chapters 4 and 5, testing the political religion thesis requires panel data. This type of survey design can help determine the direction of causality between two variables. It provides a robust foundation when claiming that causality can also follow the opposite direction than previously assumed. If one wants to test the present thesis across time, the only useful source is the ANES series. This however, being a political science programme, involves an emphasis on the repeated measurement of political variables. Repeated questions on various social characteristics – such as religious affiliation - are not consistently found in these panel surveys. This hinders the consistent testing of the hypothesis.

Regarding the social identification theory used to justify the hypothesis, operationalization was also problematic. Scales gauging individual 'identification with a psychological group' are only a recent addition in the literature. The ANES series has lagged in incorporating those in its design, and naturally, such items are absent from the panels used in this thesis. Therefore, the validity of the measurement of political social identification – the causal basis in this thesis – is open to question. In the same vein, due to the lack of multiple questions tapping social identity, the main variable used in the cross-lagged models cannot be purged from random error. Using only surface indicators (e.g. the partisan identification item), SEM cannot avoid the use of noisy measures. Another problem with item availability is the lack of instruments that could evaluate parallel processes. Chapter 4 has argued that causal mechanisms other than group identification could be reinforcing the political push towards or pull away from specific

churches. These mechanisms include social network and cognitive dissonance effects. Yet, the ANES panel design is not the ideal source of information for testing such explanations.

Statistical power is also restricted by the type of data used. The typically small sample sizes encountered as a result of the panel design make certain tests impossible. The stratification of the sample into religious subgroups aggravates this problem. For instance, a low subsample size for evangelicals makes it impractical to determine the direction of the political religion in Chapter 6. While SEM showed that Democrats tend to attend less and Republicans tend to attend more, it would be valuable to see which move is the dominant one, and also see whether there is variation in direction across decades.

Small samples demand a similar simplification in the consideration of heterogeneity in the models. The existence of a salient link between political and religious groups is the precondition for the emergence of the expected phenomenon. This condition was incorporated by repeating the tests across time under the assumption that more politicized periods would be a fertile setting (Chapter 6). Although great effort was put into separating analyses for different religious groups, this is a crude, aggregate-level reading of the hypothesis. A more accurate reading of the political religion thesis poses an additional moderation effect. If context matters, we should be able to distinguish between those members of the church who are attentive to politics and those who are not. In other words, religious politicization during a given period is not necessarily perceived and internalized by the individual. Similarly, the lack of a large panel means that my analysis assumes that politicization occurs uniformly across denominations of the same family, possibly a heroic assumption. Considering the small number of cases, an effort to control for denominational heterogeneity would mean an unbearable degree of complexity in estimations.

In addition, a lack of panel data from the 1960s and the 1980s deprives researchers from testing the hypothesis in two interesting periods. The politicization of mainline Protestantism peaked in the turbulent 1960s, while the mid-1960s saw the peak of membership rates in mainline churches followed by an unbroken decline ever since. On the other hand, evangelical Protestantism was consolidated as a pillar of the GOP during the Reagan years. The dearth of more frequent panel datasets means that we cannot study the political religion phenomenon in a continuous manner. Therefore, we are somewhat restricted to making inferences only on the basis of four-year panel data for 1972-1976, 1992-1996, and 2000-2004.

Future research

Chapter 5 has discussed in detail the problems with existing datasets, and the limitations for testing the political religion thesis. Some of the limitations could possibly be overcome with additional research. For instance, future ANES panel surveys can include a higher number of participants. One could then determine whether the existence of the political religion is a function of individual political awareness. An extension of this investigation could examine whether those who experience the phenomenon become systematically different in their political behaviour. If a Democrat leaves an evangelical church because of the 'evangelical Republicanism' stereotype, does this make her less or more likely to participate in politics? In effect, is the experience of a political religion a stimulant or a depressant for political engagement?

A larger sample size could also help in estimating the direction of the phenomenon. In that case, the analysis in Chapter 6 (cross-lagged models) could end up with the much-discussed crosstabulation that shows changes in the attendance of Democrats and Republicans in

evangelical denominations. Similarly, Chapter 7 could avoid using a dependent variable that confounds apostasy and switching. Future analysis will be necessary to evaluate at some point where those who leave the church for political reasons turn to: to another, more politically compatible church or to non-affiliation? This question has grave implications for the vitality of religious statistics in the US.

Survey design could also add questions reflecting causal mechanisms other than the one based on SIT that create the political religion phenomenon. Questionnaires could provide contextual information by asking congregants if the church sermon contains messages on political groups, if they discuss politics with fellow congregants and what the nature of those messages is. This information would provide an indication of whether a religious setting is politicized or not, but it would also provide the foundation for estimating the existence of parallel explanations. The trigger in the political religion may not only be identified in stereotypes ('all evangelicals are Protestants'), but also in the effect of social interaction and exposure to political discussion.

ANES surveys could also ask repeated questions on religious affiliation in a consistent fashion, that is, in all panel waves. This will allow sociologists of religion and political scientists alike to monitor the mutually reinforcing relationship between religious and political behaviour in the US. A larger survey programme in the footsteps of the Youth and Parent Socialization Panel Study could even monitor the evolution of religious politicization among the same individuals across a longer time interval, for example three consecutive election cycles (twelve year span). Such an expansion would allow a more rigorous evaluation of period effects, and also determine changes in the direction of the political religion phenomenon. In the end, empirical documentation of the phenomenon across a longer period could be connected with electoral

realignments by relating political religion with major aggregate changes in partisanship and voting.

Finally, the secondary analysis of ANES data underlines the need for more exact survey instruments. Explanations rooted in psychological group identification require measures that extend beyond those typically fielded by the ANES or any other national survey programme. As argued in Chapter 5, existing surveys tend to adopt a confusing operational definition of political attachment, not explicitly oriented towards psychological belonging. Similarly, they largely ignore psychological identification with religious groups and simply prefer to tap denominational preference/affiliation. One step towards the development of a more valid measure would be the implementation of question batteries on both religious and political group identification in the same survey. Unlike ANES measures on ideology, partisanship, and religious preference, this type of battery could use multiple items to tap latent identity constructs. This would permit a more rigorous testing of the political religion hypothesis.

In spite of limitations and additional research required, the findings of this thesis have successfully revealed that religion can often serve as a symbolic reflection of political forces. For the case at hand, evangelical Protestantism functions as an expression of Republicanism and conservatism. This is important for the study of religion, which as secularization theory expects, reflects increasingly non-religious concerns. It is also important for the study of politics, by showing that political identity is a 'sacred canopy' with general implications for social life, not simply for elections. And it is important for the future of both evangelicalism and Republicanism, since their growth and decline are interconnected for the time being at least.

Appendix

Table A1: Ideological model, Catholic 1972-1976 (refer to Table 6.3)

Y (1976)	*Xs (1972)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error.*	*p*
Attendance	Age	.007	.068	.005	.184
	Some college	.020	.005	.184	.912
	College degree	.242	.061	.193	.210
	Union	.030	.010	.138	.826
	Male	-.241	-.081	.128	.060
	South	.011	.003	.191	.953
	West	-.330	-.080	.190	.083
	Northcentral	.011	.003	.148	.943
	Married	.032	.009	.197	.872
	Divorced	-.221	-.023	.431	.608
	Household income	.014	.037	.020	.474
	Children	.064	.022	.136	.635
	Widowed	.308	.057	.303	.309
Ideology	Male	-.219	-.091	.119	.066
	Married	.118	.043	.183	.519
	South	.052	.016	.177	.769
	West	.046	.014	.177	.794
	Northcentral	.534	.211	.138	.001
	Union	-.225	-.091	.128	.079
	Divorced	.280	.037	.401	.485
	Age	.014	.184	.005	.002
	Some college	-.272	-.084	.171	.112
	College degree	.170	.053	.179	.342
	Children	-.215	-.090	.126	.088
	Household income	.034	.111	.018	.063
	Widowed	-.141	-.033	.282	.617

Residual correlation: .064 (p= .281)

Table A2: Ideological model, Mainline 1972-1976 (refer to Table 6.3)

Y (1976)	*Xs (1972)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error.*	*p*
	Age	.012	.135	.003	.001
	Some college	-.076	-.022	.123	.537
	College degree	.267	.079	.126	.034
	Union	-.042	-.012	.120	.726
	Male	-.221	-.078	.097	.022
	South	-.050	-.015	.143	.727
Attendance	West	-.114	-.032	.147	.436
	Northcentral	.140	.049	.127	.268
	Married	.128	.040	.160	.425
	Divorced	-.525	-.064	.305	.085
	Household income	-.025	-.072	.014	.064
	Children	.146	.051	.106	.169
	Widowed	-.449	-.099	.227	.048
	Male	.199	.080	.105	.057
	Married	-.322	-.114	.174	.064
	South	-.114	-.038	.155	.461
	West	-.137	-.044	.159	.387
	Northcentral	.159	.063	.137	.246
	Union	-.193	-.063	.130	.137
Ideology	Divorced	-.749	-.103	.330	.023
	Age	.006	.082	.004	.102
	Some college	.182	.060	.133	.172
	College degree	-.075	-.025	.136	.580
	Children	-.130	-.052	.115	.261
	Household income	.036	.118	.015	.014
	Widowed	-.327	-.082	.246	.183

Residual correlation: -.018 (p= .720)

Table A3: Ideological model, Evangelical 1972-1976 (refer to Table 6.5)

Y (1976)	*Xs (1972)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error.*	*p*
	Age	-.007	-.081	.005	.199
	Some college	-.505	-.116	.225	.025
	College degree	.091	.019	.261	.728
	Union	-.061	-.017	.187	.743
	Male	-.106	-.036	.155	.493
	South	-.011	-.004	.288	.969
Attendance	West	.264	.046	.387	.495
	Northcentral	.144	.043	.309	.640
	Married	.087	.026	.283	.759
	Divorced	-.359	-.034	.564	.525
	Household income	.005	.013	.022	.841
	Children	-.075	-.025	.167	.653
	Widowed	.245	.061	.331	.460
	Male	-.178	-.077	.139	.201
	Married	.026	.010	.253	.919
	South	.593	.253	.258	.021
	West	.275	.061	.347	.427
	Northcentral	.313	.120	.277	.258
	Union	.215	.078	.168	.200
Ideology	Divorced	.175	.022	.505	.729
	Age	-.004	-.053	.005	.462
	Some college	-.077	-.023	.202	.703
	College degree	-.161	-.042	.233	.491
	Children	-.261	-.110	.150	.081
	Household income	.046	.164	.020	.022
	Widowed	.879	.282	.297	.003

Residual correlation: .166 (p= .011)

Table A4: Ideological model, Catholic 1992-1996 (refer to Table 6.4)

Y (1996)	*Xs (1992)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error.*	*p*
	Age	.001	.009	.008	.910
	Some college	.459	.130	.221	.038
	College degree	.548	.165	.211	.009
	Union	-.325	-.079	.223	.145
	Male	.010	.003	.177	.955
	South	-.136	-.035	.235	.564
Attendance	West	.434	.088	.288	.132
	Northcentral	.118	.035	.209	.572
	Married	.230	.071	.284	.417
	Divorced	-.282	-.036	.488	.563
	Household income	-.002	-.006	.021	.931
	Children	.026	.008	.231	.910
	Widowed	.182	.023	.528	.730
	Male	.172	.062	.170	.312
	Married	-.333	-.117	.273	.223
	South	-.084	-.025	.226	.711
	West	.034	.008	.277	.902
	Northcentral	.063	.021	.201	.754
	Union	-.878	-.245	.214	.001
Ideology	Divorced	.195	.029	.470	.678
	Age	.008	.096	.008	.278
	Some college	-.443	-.144	.213	.038
	College degree	-.442	-.153	.203	.029
	Children	.190	.066	.223	.394
	Household income	.087	.305	.020	.001
	Widowed	.660	.096	.509	.195

Residual correlation: .064 (p= .491)

Table A5: Ideological model, Mainline 1992-1996 (refer to Table 6.4)

Y (1996)	*Xs (1992)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error.*	*p*
Attendance	Age	.008	.094	.009	.384
	Some college	.111	.035	.261	.671
	College degree	.333	.112	.278	.232
	Union	-.122	-.035	.249	.625
	Male	-.239	-.083	.195	.221
	South	-.331	-.112	.305	.278
	West	-.263	-.076	.328	.423
	Northcentral	-.375	-.110	.329	.254
	Married	.666	.214	.388	.087
	Divorced	.522	.086	.513	.309
	Household income	-.004	-.014	.022	.870
	Children	-.131	-.045	.273	.632
	Widowed	-.149	-.028	.592	.802
Ideology	Male	-.064	-.027	.168	.704
	Married	-.094	-.037	.334	.777
	South	.008	.003	.261	.975
	West	.033	.012	.282	.906
	Northcentral	.061	.021	.283	.829
	Union	-.526	-.184	.214	.014
	Divorced	-.282	-.056	.440	.522
	Age	.001	.019	.008	.867
	Some college	-.129	-.050	.224	.564
	College degree	-.027	-.011	.239	.911
	Children	-.002	-.001	.235	.993
	Household income	-.048	-.230	.019	.010
	Widowed	-.180	-.041	.508	.724

Residual correlation: .151 (p= .115)

Table A6: Ideological model, Evangelical 1992-1996 (refer to Table 6.5)

Y (1996)	*Xs (1992)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error.*	*p*
Attendance	Age	-.020	-.190	.008	.008
	Some college	-.268	-.074	.209	.199
	College degree	.451	.124	.219	.039
	Union	.224	.047	.257	.382
	Male	-.143	-.045	.178	.422
	South	.140	.044	.310	.653
	West	.106	.029	.324	.743
	Northcentral	-.030	-.008	.325	.927
	Married	-.425	-.131	.297	.152
	Divorced	.298	.052	.372	.422
	Household income	.019	.071	.019	.305
	Children	-.268	-.085	.206	.192
	Widowed	.192	.028	.468	.682
Ideology	Male	.436	.161	.160	.006
	Married	-.194	-.070	.267	.467
	South	-.621	-.226	.279	.026
	West	-.206	-.064	.291	.480
	Northcentral	-.591	-.193	.292	.043
	Union	-.575	-.141	.231	.013
	Divorced	-.074	-.015	.334	.824
	Age	-.001	-.014	.007	.847
	Some college	-.489	-.157	.187	.009
	College degree	-.632	-.203	.197	.001
	Children	.059	.022	.185	.749
	Household income	.020	.088	.017	.227
	Widowed	1.171	.201	.421	.005

Residual correlation: .050 (p= .605)

Table A7: Partisan model, Catholic 1972-1976 (refer to Table 6.7)

Y (1976)	*Xs (1972)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error.*	*p*
	Age	.006	.064	.005	.203
	Some college	.021	.005	.184	.909
	College degree	.243	.061	.193	.208
	Union	.039	.013	.138	.780
	Male	-.242	-.081	.128	.059
	South	.014	.003	.191	.941
Attendance	West	-.323	-.078	.190	.090
	Northcentral	.003	.001	.149	.983
	Married	.021	.006	.197	.915
	Divorced	-.221	-.023	.431	.609
	Household income	.012	.032	.020	.541
	Children	.061	.021	.135	.653
	Widowed	.292	.054	.303	.335
	Male	.042	.011	.141	.769
	Married	.012	.003	.217	.955
	South	.036	.007	.211	.864
	West	-.081	-.015	.210	.701
	Northcentral	.238	.059	.165	.149
	Union	.070	.018	.153	.646
Party ID	Divorced	-.406	-.034	.475	.394
	Age	.004	.030	.005	.490
	Some college	.220	.043	.203	.278
	College degree	.513	.101	.213	.016
	Children	-.031	-.008	.149	.833
	Household income	.049	.101	.022	.026
	Widowed	.581	.085	.335	.083

Residual correlation: -.090 (p= .202)

Table A8: Partisan model, Mainline 1972-1976 (refer to Table 6.7)

Y (1976)	*Xs (1972)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error.*	*p*
	Age	.011	.132	.003	.001
	Some college	-.087	-.025	.122	.474
	College degree	.226	.067	.126	.073
	Union	-.016	-.005	.119	.892
	Male	-.218	-.077	.096	.023
	South	.041	.012	.144	.775
Attendance	West	-.059	-.017	.147	.689
	Northcentral	.176	.061	.127	.165
	Married	.164	.051	.159	.302
	Divorced	-.470	-.057	.304	.122
	Household income	-.025	-.072	.013	.060
	Children	.142	.050	.105	.178
	Widowed	-.368	-.081	.226	.103
	Male	-.019	-.005	.115	.870
	Married	-.087	-.019	.190	.648
	South	-.408	-.084	.172	.018
	West	-.222	-.044	.176	.206
	Northcentral	-.073	-.018	.152	.630
	Union	-.215	-.043	.143	.132
Party ID	Divorced	.165	.014	.363	.650
	Age	.010	.083	.004	.014
	Some college	.367	.075	.146	.012
	College degree	.442	.091	.151	.003
	Children	-.035	-.009	.126	.783
	Household income	.027	.056	.016	.086
	Widowed	-.192	-.030	.271	.479

Residual correlation: -.117 (p=.020)

Table A9: Partisan model, Evangelical 1972-1976 (refer to Table 6.7)

Y (1976)	*Xs (1972)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error.*	*p*
	Age	-.006	-.070	.006	.269
	Some college	-.503	-.115	.229	.028
	College degree	.056	.011	.264	.833
	Union	-.073	-.020	.190	.702
	Male	-.097	-.033	.157	.535
	South	-.038	-.012	.296	.899
Attendance	West	.175	.030	.390	.653
	Northcentral	.042	.012	.309	.893
	Married	-.027	-.008	.283	.923
	Divorced	-.425	-.041	.571	.456
	Household income	.012	.034	.022	.582
	Children	-.051	-.017	.168	.762
	Widowed	.209	.052	.335	.533
	Male	.304	.078	.172	.076
	Married	-1.033	-.236	.311	.001
	South	-.390	-.097	.325	.229
	West	.106	.014	.428	.804
	Northcentral	-.048	-.011	.339	.888
	Union	-.159	-.034	.208	.446
Party ID	Divorced	-.823	-.059	.626	.188
	Age	.009	.077	.006	.143
	Some college	.012	.002	.251	.962
	College degree	-.168	-.026	.289	.562
	Children	-.240	-.060	.185	.193
	Household income	.051	.107	.025	.038
	Widowed	-.154	-.029	.367	.676

Residual correlation: -.169 (p=.068)

Table A10: Partisan model, Catholic 1992-1996 (refer to Table 6.8)

Y (1996)	*Xs (1992)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error.*	*p*
	Age	.001	.013	.007	.858
	Some college	.478	.136	.207	.021
	College degree	.556	.168	.196	.005
	Union	-.342	-.083	.208	.101
	Male	.030	.010	.162	.851
	South	-.156	-.040	.220	.477
Attendance	West	.406	.082	.268	.129
	Northcentral	.130	.039	.194	.504
	Married	.224	.069	.264	.396
	Divorced	-.277	-.035	.453	.542
	Household income	.000	.000	.019	.993
	Children	.035	.011	.214	.871
	Widowed	.178	.023	.487	.715
	Male	.394	.095	.213	.065
	Married	-.543	-.127	.347	.117
	South	.304	.060	.289	.293
	West	-.051	-.008	.352	.885
	Northcentral	-.197	-.045	.256	.442
	Union	.328	.061	.274	.232
Party ID	Divorced	-.963	-.094	.596	.106
	Age	.016	.120	.010	.109
	Some college	.032	.007	.272	.905
	College degree	.084	.019	.258	.744
	Children	.437	.102	.282	.121
	Household income	.009	.022	.026	.715
	Widowed	-.043	-.004	.641	.946

Residual correlation: -.006 (p= .948)

Table A11: Partisan model, Mainline 1992-1996 (refer to Table 6.8)

Y (1996)	*Xs (1992)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error*	*p*
Attendance	Age	.007	.088	.009	.394
	Some college	.109	.035	.250	.661
	College degree	.295	.099	.274	.281
	Union	-.141	-.041	.238	.553
	Male	-.230	-.080	.188	.220
	South	-.329	-.111	.293	.261
	West	-.303	-.088	.313	.333
	Northcentral	-.390	-.114	.316	.217
	Married	.693	.223	.361	.055
	Divorced	.562	.093	.475	.237
	Household income	-.002	-.010	.020	.904
	Children	-.120	-.041	.262	.648
	Widowed	-.139	-.026	.559	.803
Party ID	Male	.211	.054	.246	.390
	Married	.731	.172	.474	.123
	South	.360	.089	.384	.348
	West	-.641	-.137	.410	.118
	Northcentral	.018	.004	.414	.966
	Union	-1.509	-.322	.312	.001
	Divorced	.652	.079	.623	.295
	Age	-.028	-.243	.011	.014
	Some college	-.331	-.077	.327	.311
	College degree	-.462	-.114	.359	.198
	Children	-.777	-.196	.344	.024
	Household income	.022	.065	.027	.400
	Widowed	.774	.107	.733	.291

Residual correlation: .157 (p= .197)

Table A12: Partisan model, Evangelical 1992-1996 (refer to Table 6.10)

Y (1996)	*Xs (1992)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error*	*p*
	Age	-.012	-.113	.007	.093
	Some college	-.263	-.072	.204	.198
	College degree	.445	.123	.212	.036
	Union	.276	.058	.254	.277
	Male	-.052	-.017	.169	.756
	South	.041	.013	.305	.894
Attendance	West	-.044	-.012	.315	.890
	Northcentral	-.165	-.046	.330	.617
	Married	-.078	-.024	.270	.772
	Divorced	.340	.059	.362	.347
	Household income	.001	.002	.019	.973
	Children	-.216	-.068	.199	.277
	Widowed	.238	.035	.454	.600
	Male	.073	.018	.207	.722
	Married	-.448	-.108	.332	.177
	South	-.536	-.130	.374	.152
	West	-.422	-.089	.387	.275
	Northcentral	-.358	-.078	.405	.377
	Union	-.384	-.063	.312	.218
Party ID	Divorced	-.772	-.104	.444	.082
	Age	-.003	-.024	.009	.704
	Some college	-.313	-.067	.250	.211
	College degree	.142	.031	.261	.585
	Children	-.162	-.040	.244	.507
	Household income	.017	.049	.024	.474
	Widowed	-.196	-.022	.557	.725

Residual correlation: .066 (p= .434)

Table A13: Partisan model, Catholic 2000-2004 (refer to Table 6.9)

Y (2004)	*Xs (2000)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error*	*p*
Attendance	Age	.018	.190	.006	.001
	Some college	.090	.016	.265	.734
	College degree	.362	.098	.196	.065
	Union	.126	.034	.177	.476
	Male	-.132	-.042	.159	.406
	South	-.001	.000	.226	.996
	West	.400	.085	.240	.095
	Northcentral	.185	.056	.179	.303
	Married	-.424	-.119	.237	.074
	Divorced	-.813	-.106	.403	.044
	Household income	.027	.047	.031	.387
	Children	.264	.065	.224	.239
	Widowed	-.808	-.110	.428	.059
Party ID	Male	-.361	-.081	.193	.062
	Married	-.451	-.090	.288	.118
	South	-.243	-.041	.275	.378
	West	-.343	-.052	.292	.239
	Northcentral	.652	.142	.218	.003
	Union	-.115	-.022	.216	.593
	Divorced	-.111	-.010	.490	.821
	Age	-.005	-.034	.007	.499
	Some college	-.835	-.107	.323	.010
	College degree	.054	.010	.239	.820
	Children	-.004	-.001	.273	.988
	Household income	.056	.069	.038	.143
	Widowed	-.906	-.088	.520	.082

Residual correlation: -.038 (p= .602)

Table A14: Partisan model, Mainline 2000-2004 (refer to Table 6.9)

Y (2004)	*Xs (2000)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error*	*p*
Attendance	Age	.002	.026	.006	.702
	Some college	.143	.023	.317	.653
	College degree	.014	.005	.171	.933
	Union	-.062	-.017	.191	.747
	Male	-.070	-.022	.164	.671
	South	.331	.100	.213	.120
	West	.062	.015	.244	.800
	Northcentral	.275	.087	.211	.193
	Married	.856	.251	.242	.001
	Divorced	.452	.060	.429	.292
	Household income	-.016	-.034	.027	.546
	Children	.031	.009	.229	.892
	Widowed	.659	.105	.419	.116
Party ID	Male	-.094	-.020	.212	.658
	Married	.207	.041	.314	.510
	South	.355	.072	.276	.199
	West	.073	.012	.316	.817
	Northcentral	.359	.076	.274	.189
	Union	.072	.013	.248	.772
	Divorced	.736	.066	.556	.186
	Age	.003	.026	.008	.660
	Some college	.618	.068	.411	.133
	College degree	-.357	-.077	.222	.107
	Children	-.327	-.063	.297	.271
	Household income	-.013	-.018	.034	.711
	Widowed	.349	.037	.543	.521

Residual correlation: -.030 (p = .715)

Table A15: Partisan model, Evangelical 2000-2004 (refer to Table 6.10)

Y (2004)	*Xs (2000)*	*b*	*Beta*	*St. error*	*p*
Attendance	Age	-.006	-.058	.005	.287
	Some college	.234	.045	.247	.343
	College degree	.171	.043	.199	.389
	Union	.295	.065	.216	.172
	Male	.002	.001	.162	.991
	South	-.342	-.104	.367	.352
	West	-.587	-.120	.405	.148
	Northcentral	-.504	-.134	.382	.187
	Married	-.163	-.045	.237	.492
	Divorced	.018	.003	.323	.956
	Household income	-.027	-.051	.030	.360
	Children	.073	.019	.207	.725
	Widowed	.038	.005	.426	.929
Party ID	Male	-.141	-.033	.180	.434
	Married	.009	.002	.263	.974
	South	-1.796	-.406	.408	.001
	West	-2.129	-.322	.450	.001
	Northcentral	-1.930	-.380	.425	.001
	Union	.817	.133	.240	.001
	Divorced	.217	.028	.359	.547
	Age	-.004	-.028	.006	.533
	Some college	-.226	-.032	.275	.411
	College degree	.117	.022	.221	.597
	Children	.120	.024	.229	.600
	Household income	-.003	-.005	.033	.918
	Widowed	-.508	-.049	.474	.283

Residual correlation: .091 (p= .203)

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