



Journal of Religion & Society

The Kripke Center

Volume 12 (2010)

The Effects of Being a Born-Again Christian on Latino Socio-Political Attitudes

Adrian D. Pantoja, Pitzer College

Abstract

This work examines the political consequences of Latino religious identities. Survey data are used to analyze the effects of being a born-again Christian on Latino support for the Republican Party and policies traditionally identified with the Republican Party. Logit results reveal that born-again Christians display more conservative attitudes than Catholics. However, religious commitment, in the form of church attendance rather than religious identity, is a more robust predictor of Latino conservatism. The evidence presented here suggests a potential growth in Latino political and social conservatism should religiosity and conversion to evangelical Christianity increase.

Introduction

[1] The growth and influence of evangelical or born-again Christians in American politics has led to an increase in scholarship examining the political consequences of religious identities and beliefs (Wilcox and Larson; Fowler et al.; Wald).¹ Scholars have considered the impact of religious practices and orientations in structuring a wide range of political attitudes among voters and in determining electoral choices and outcomes (Olson and Warber; Olson and Green; Fowler et al.; Green; Jelen 1997, 1993, 1991; Layman; Jelen and Wilcox 1995; Green and Guth). More specifically, the beliefs held by born-again Christians (the fastest growing religious segment in American) are regarded as a significant force driving many

¹ Throughout this paper the terms born-again Christian and evangelical Christian will be used interchangeably (Jelen, Smidt, and Wilcox).

contemporary political cleavages (Wilcox and Larson; Deckman; Green, Rozell and Wilcox; Guth et al.; Green et al.; Fowler and Hertzke). The effects of religious fundamentalist beliefs are most pronounced when it comes to policy issues with religious and moral underpinnings such as abortion, gay marriage, school prayer, and the display of religious symbols in public (Wilcox 1989, 1986; Jelen 1990, 1991). Moreover, born-again Christians are among the strongest supporters of the Republican Party and politically conservative candidates (Campbell; Layman; Fowler and Hertzke; Miller and Wattenberg).

[2] Within Latino communities, born-again Christianity or conversion toward evangelical or fundamentalist Protestantism appears to be growing rapidly (Walsh; Hernandez; Greeley). Presently, the National Hispanic Association of Evangelicals claims 15 million Hispanic born-again/evangelical members (<http://www.nhclc.org/history>). Such growth and its consequences have largely been studied in the context of Latin America (Chesnut; Stoll; Martin), but little research has been undertaken within Latino communities in the United States (Espinosa; Kelly and Kelly; Walsh). This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the effects of being a born-again Christian on Latino support for the Republican Party and policies traditionally identified with the Republican Party. The data used in this paper are drawn from the 2002 and 2004 national surveys of Latinos by the Pew Hispanic Center and Kaiser Family Foundation. The phenomenon of being a born-again Latino Christian has important implications within and outside Latino communities as Latinos continue to make significant political inroads. The evidence presented here suggests a potential growth in Latino political and social conservatism if religious commitment and affiliation with Christian evangelical and fundamentalist groups increase.

[3] Latinos are the fastest growing segment of the national population and the electorate and, unlike African-Americans, are the focus of intense campaign efforts by *both* political parties (see Frymer). Compared to African-Americans who overwhelmingly vote Democratic, the partisan distribution of Latino votes is far less bent toward the Democratic Party, leading some pundits to conclude that the Latino vote is “up for grabs” (Kiely). As a consequence, the Republican Party has courted Latino voters by emphasizing policy issues that have religious underpinnings. The success of this strategy is dependent on the salience of so-called “moral issues” relative to other policy issues (Nicholson and Segura; Alvarez and Bedolla). Additionally, the salience of moral issues is likely to vary across elections and individual Latinos, being more important among evangelicals and religiously oriented persons. If evangelicalism and religiosity increase among Latinos, then the greatest beneficiaries of this shift will be the Republican Party. This paper demonstrates the potential for this political outcome.

Literature Review

[4] Given that religious associations are the largest voluntary organizational affiliation in the United States, it comes as no surprise that religion plays a central role in American politics (Wald). Churches often serve as a vehicle for political mobilization through the transmission of civic skills (Jones-Correa and Leal; Verba, Schlozman and Brady; Harris), and can shape political judgments through the transmission of political information (Smidt 2004; Jelen 1997, 1993). Yet, even in the absence of explicit mobilization by clergy, religious beliefs and/or identification with a particular religious community can serve as a schema for

evaluating candidates and policies (Wilcox, Jelen and Leege; Jelen 1991). The focus of this study is with this latter scholarship, exploring the nexus between religious beliefs/identities and public opinion. For the sake of brevity, the literature review is limited to this research.

[5] The earliest works on the intersection between religion and political beliefs considered the effects of religious affiliation or denomination on partisanship and vote choice. These studies largely focused on the Catholic-Protestant-Jewish cleavages in presidential elections (Campbell et al.). Although these cleavages are no longer as politically significant, there is broad agreement that the 1960 election marked a high point in Catholic support for the Democratic Party as a consequence of John F. Kennedy's candidacy (Converse). Today, Catholics are largely swing voters, Jewish voters have remained loyal to the Democratic Party, mainline Protestants lean toward the Democrats, and white evangelical Protestants are more aligned with the Republican Party (Olson and Warber; Kellstedt and Green; Kellstedt and Noll; Green and Guth; Miller and Wattenberg). Despite the support of evangelical Christians for the Republican Party, it is important to note that in the 1976 presidential election, evangelicals (namely Baptists and Pentecostals) voted in large numbers for the Democratic Party and its candidate Jimmy Carter, a born-again Southern Baptist (Kellstedt and Noll). This election marked the last time that the Democratic Party won the evangelical vote.

[6] Scholars agree that religious denomination is an insufficient predictor of political behaviors, and that it is important to consider the diverse religious practices and beliefs of members of the same denomination (Layman; Wuthnow). Religious denomination alone cannot determine the intensity of religious practices or beliefs, and some have argued that the old religious cleavages of Catholic versus Protestant have given way to a new cleavage between orthodox and liberal religious orientations (Jelen 1997; Layman; Welch and Leege). Contemporary studies not only included a wide-range of religious expressions and practices in their analyses but have gone beyond explorations of candidate and partisan choice to include attitudes toward a wide-range of social issues and policies (Kohut et al.; Jelen and Wilcox 2003, 1995; Elifson and Hadaway).

[7] Olson and Warber provide a framework for operationalizing the diverse religious identities and expressions of individuals along three dimensions: (1) religious affiliation, "belonging"; (2) religious commitment, "behaving"; and (3) religious beliefs, or "believing." Religious affiliation or belonging captures the denominational affiliation of respondents. Religious commitment or behavior is typically measured by the frequency of church attendance, prayer, reading the Bible, or tuning into religious programs on television or radio. Religious beliefs or believing is a proxy for religious orthodoxy, typically captured with questions regarding the authority of the Bible.

[8] Another religious identity used in public opinion studies captures whether the respondent is a "born-again" Christian. Born-again Christians are typically found among evangelical and/or charismatic Christian churches. In some instances being born-again results from a specific religious experience such as a baptism. In other cases a person is born-again after a longer process (Jelen, Smidt and Wilcox). The measures noted above correlate highly with support for the Republican Party (Kohut et al.), opposition to abortion (Jelen and Wilcox 2003; Cook et al.), opposition to gay rights (Hill, Moulton and Burdette; Wood and

Bartkowski; Brewer), constraints on women's reproductive rights (Jones and McNamara; Miller and Wattenberg), and support for religious expressions and symbols in public places (Kohut et al.; Jelen and Wilcox 1995). The variable born-again Christian can straddle each of the three categories of "belief," "belonging," and "behavior." In this paper, born-again Christian is treated as a denominational affiliation or "belonging" since the measure is used to differentiate these respondents from those who identify as Catholic.

[9] The research previously reviewed has advanced our understanding of the role religion plays in shaping American public opinion, yet these works are largely confined to explorations of Anglo-Americans and, to a lesser degree African-Americans (Harris). Research analyzing the religious identities of Latinos and their effects on political behaviors and attitudes is significantly smaller (Pantoja, Barreto and Anderson; Kelly and Kelly; Ellison, Echevarria, and Smith; Espinosa). The omission is significant given that Latinos are among the most religious people in the United States (Espinosa, Elizondo, and Miranda), and are poised to be significant political players in local, state, and national politics. The role religion plays in structuring Latino political attitudes carries important political implications, as it may highlight the direction and outcomes of certain social policies and provide a blue print for how the major political parties should relate to this electorate.

[10] The few studies on Latino politics and religiosity tend to focus on the mobilizing or demobilizing role of the Catholic Church on voter participation. Verba, Scholzman, and Brady noted that one reason Latinos participated at lower rates is the lack of opportunities to develop civic skills in the traditionally hierarchical Catholic Church. Jones-Correa and Leal draw upon data from the Latino National Political Survey to argue that Latino Catholics are actually more likely to participate than Protestants. Research by Lee, Pachon, and Barreto found that church-based civic skills rather than denominational affiliation is the key factor mobilizing Latinos for political participation. While this line of research is interesting, the focus on political participation does not help answer questions about the role of religiosity in Latino public opinion. However, these studies do make the case that exposure to religion is an important explanatory variable in understanding Latino political behavior. In this paper, this link is extended to the realm of public opinion.

Data, Methods and Results

[11] As previously noted, doctrinally conservative Anglo Christians, typically labeled evangelicals, fundamentalists, or born-again Christians (Kellstedt and Green), hold more conservative attitudes than other denominations on a wide-range of socio-political issues and have a stronger preference for the Republican Party. Is this true for Latinos? Latinos generally hold conservative positions on a number of issues, including abortion, gay rights, and religion in the public schools (Barreto and Pantoja; de la Garza et al.), and it may be that the attitudes of Latino born-again Christians are not very different from those of Latino Catholics, the largest denominational affiliation among Hispanics. Additionally, the attitudinal patterns found among non-Hispanic whites may not necessarily carry over into the Latino population. The experience of African-Americans is instructive on this point. African-Americans are among the strongest supporters of the Democratic Party despite being deeply religious and having affiliations with evangelical and charismatic Christian

churches. In short, being a born-again or evangelical Christian may not have a significant impact in structuring Latino socio-political attitudes.

[12] In order to determine the political effects of being a born-again Christian, I rely on survey data from the 2002 and 2004 national surveys of Latinos by the Pew Hispanic Center and Kaiser Family Foundation. The 2002 survey contains a nationally representative sample of 2929 Latinos while the 2004 survey has a nationally representative sample of 2288 Latinos. I first compare the attitudes of Latino born-again Christians with those held by Latino Catholics. From the 2002 and 2004 national surveys of Latinos, I selected fourteen questions tapping attitudes toward moral values, the conflict in Iraq, the role of religion in politics, and support for the Republican Party. The questions were coded dichotomously with “1” capturing the conservative response.

Table 1. Comparing Public Opinion Between Latino Born-Again Christian and Latino Catholics

	Born-Again religious experience	Catholic religious experience	Difference
2002 National Survey of Latinos			
1. Divorce is acceptable or unacceptable (unacceptable response)	50.3% (209)	40.1% (815)	10.2
2. Sex between two adults of the same sex (unacceptable response)	85.6% (355)	70.5% (1433)	15.1
3. Having a child without being married (unacceptable response)	54.7% (227)	37.9% (770)	16.8
4. Husbands should have the final say in family matters (agree strongly & agree somewhat responses)	43.1% (179)	35.6% (724)	7.5
5. Abortion (unacceptable response)	82.0% (341)	78.5% (1596)	3.5
6. Republican Party Affiliation	32.2% (134)	21.4% (436)	10.8
2004 National Survey of Latinos			
7. Bush is handling the situation in Iraq (strongly to somewhat approve)	43.8% (161)	34.0% (506)	9.8
8. Bush has a clear plan for brining the situation in Iraq to a successful conclusion (Yes, has a clear plan)	39.4% (145)	28.9% (431)	10.5
9. US made the right decision or wrong decision in using military force in Iraq (right decision response)	48.6% (179)	41.9% (624)	6.7
10. Bush Administration deliberately misled the public on Iraq threat (No, did not deliberately misled response)	41.8% (154)	40.1% (597)	1.7
11. Abortion (Illegal in most cases & Illegal in all cases response)	64.9% (239)	47.6% (709)	17.3
12. A constitutional amendment defining marriage as a union between one man and one women (Favor response)	54.1% (199)	42.5% (633)	11.6

13. Religion is a private matter that should be kept out of politics (somewhat & strongly disagree responses)	32.1% (118)	16.2% (241)	15.9
14. Republican Party Affiliation	37.5% (138)	27.6% (411)	9.9

[13] What is immediately evident from the results in Table 1 is that born-again Latino Christians have more conservative attitudes than Latino Catholics. Only on question ten, asking whether the “Bush Administration deliberately misled the American public about how big a threat Iraq was to the United States,” were responses indistinguishable. A unique pattern emerges among the questions pertaining to abortion. In the 2002 survey, respondents were asked whether abortion was “acceptable” or “unacceptable.” A majority of born-again Christians (82%) and Catholics (78.5%) said abortion was unacceptable. The response gap is a mere 3.5 points. However, in the 2004 survey the question was framed differently with respondents being asked whether “abortion should be legal in all cases, legal in most cases, illegal in most cases or illegal in all cases?” Support for a total to near total ban on abortion drops relative to the 2002 question, and a considerable gap (17.3 points) emerges between born-again Christians and Catholics. These findings point to the importance of question wording in eliciting response variation. Taken as a whole, the results in Table 1 show the presence and perhaps emergence of a political cleavage within the Latino population that is driven by their religious identities. Presently, born-again Christians make up a small percentage of the Latino religious landscape, keeping political cleavages small among Latinos. Should the Latino evangelical community continue to grow, these cleavages will attain greater political significance.

Multivariate Results

[14] The attitudinal gap between born-again Christians and Catholics observed in Table 1 cannot tell us whether Latino socio-political conservative attitudes are in fact shaped by their religious identities. Any number of individual socio-demographic factors may also have significant influences in fostering conservatism among Latinos. In order to understand the factors shaping Latino conservative attitudes, multivariate analyses is used to isolate the relevant predictors and assess their causal importance relative to their born-again religious experience. While no study can claim to provide a comprehensive treatment of all the religious and non-religious factors associated with Latino socio-political attitudes, an attempt is made to include predictors commonly used in other public opinion studies (see Appendix for a listing and coding of the independent variables).

[15] The fourteen questions in Table 1 will serve as the dependent variables. Since the responses are coded dichotomously, logistic regression analysis is used. Most of the demographic control variables included in the models are traditional predictors of socio-political attitudes and do not need much explanation. These include controls for age, education, income, gender (female), marital status, nativity, citizenship status, English language ability, and dummies isolating Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban respondents from the other Latino groups.

[16] In addition to these factors, three religion-based variables of interest to this paper merit some discussion. The variable *born-again Christian* is a measure of Latino

Christians/Protestants who also self-identify as “born-again or evangelical Christians.” A limitation of this measure is that respondents who did not previously identify as Protestant or Christian were not asked whether they consider themselves to be born-again or evangelical Christians. This excludes a growing number of Latino Catholics who claim a “born-again” experience (Barreto and Pantoja; Espinosa, Elizondo, and Miranda). Nonetheless, the measure used here captures denominational identity (evangelical Christian *vs.* Catholic) rather than religious experience, e.g., traditionalism, orthodoxy, or commitment, which may vary *within* religious denominations. *Catholic* is a category measuring Latinos who self-identify with this denomination, and *Religiosity* is a scale of how often a respondent attends religious services and ranges from never, seldom, a few times a year, once or twice a month, once a week, and more than once a week. Religious attendance is a measure of religious commitment that, as previously noted, cuts across denominational lines.²

Table 2. Latino Religious Identities, 2002 and 2004 National Survey of Latinos

	2002 Survey	2004 Survey
Catholic	69.4% (2034)	65.1% (1489)
Born-Again Christian	14.2% (415)	16.1% (368)
Church Attendance	2.99 (mean level)	2.86 (mean level)
0 never; 1 seldom; 2 a few times a year; 3 once or twice a month; 4 once a week; 5 more than once a week		

[17] Table 2 shows the distribution of the selected religious identities in the 2002 and 2004 sample. In 2002, 69% of Latinos self-identified as Catholic, while 65.1% did so in 2004. Self-identification with born-again Christianity was 14.2% in 2002 and 16.1% in 2004. The mean level of church attendance for both surveys is “once or twice a month.” It is important to highlight that Table 2 merely identifies the distribution of these religious identities for each year. The slight changes observed may not be driven by actual changes in religious identities, e.g. conversion, but by any number of different factors related to changes in the sample or survey design. I next turn to the multivariate results.

[18] Two sets of results are presented in Table 3 for each of the 14 questions/models. The first reports the logistic coefficients with standard errors in parenthesis; while the second set of results report the unit change in the dependent variable given a fixed change in the independent variable from its minimum to maximum value, holding all others constant at their mean (Long). Rather than presenting 14 models with all of the predictors, Table 3 reports the coefficients for the three religious predictors (Born-again Christian, Catholic, and Religiosity) since they are the variables of interest. The coefficients presented are the results

² The unexpressed category consists of Christians who are not born-again and individuals professing other religious identities beyond born-again Christian and Catholic.

found with the inclusion of the 11 control variables, noted in the Appendix. For the sake of space, the full models were not included, but the full results are available upon request.

Table 3. *Latino Religious Identities and Socio-Political Attitudes*³

	Born-Again Coefficients	Min- Max	Catholic Coefficients	Min- Max	Religiosity Coefficients	Min- Max
2002 Survey						
1. Divorce	.411*** (.149)	.093	-.175† (.120)	-.039	.272*** (.013)	.280
2. Gay Marriage	.767*** (.173)	.137	-.325*** (.117)	-.065	.313*** (.031)	.325
3. Child out of Wedlock	.306** (.144)	.072	-.540*** (.114)	-.126	.213*** (.030)	.234
4. Husband's Final Say	.239* (.145)	.054	-.195* (.115)	.044	.190*** (.030)	.204
5. Abortion	.752*** (.168)	.121	.121 (.117)	.023	.313*** (.031)	.325
6. Republican Party	.840*** (.166)	.168	.313** (.136)	.053	.063* (.033)	.054
2004 Survey						
7. Bush Handling Iraq	.583*** (.167)	.137	.194† (.132)	.043	.152*** (.034)	.165
8. Successful End in Iraq	.683*** (.174)	.151	.128 (.139)	.026	.113*** (.035)	.114
9. Right Decision in Iraq	.266* (.160)	.066	.128 (.123)	.031	.127*** (.033)	.153
10. Bush Not Misled Public	.238† (.164)	.057	.147 (.128)	.035	.115*** (.033)	.135
11. Abortion	.692*** (.165)	.170	.084 (.127)	.021	.311*** (.034)	.367
12. Gay Marriage	.469*** (.157)	.117	.078 (.121)	.019	.074** (.032)	.091
13. Religion in Politics	.727*** (.194)	.120	.055 (.166)	.008	.244*** (.043)	.152
14. Republican Party	.523*** (.175)	.111	.040 (.139)	.079	.152*** (.037)	.146

† p <= .075, * p <= .05, ** p <= .01, *** p <= .001

³ Results controlling for: Age, Education, Income, Female, Marital Status, Native Born, Citizenship, Knowledge of the English Language, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban.

[19] In all of the models, the variables *born-again Christian* and *religiosity* are positive and significant. Not only are these variables significant, but in many instances they are among the most significant of the independent variables. Overall, Latino evangelicals are more conservative than Latino Catholics and being a born-again Christian has a significant impact in structuring Latino attitudes toward a host of issues identified closely with the Republican Party. However, the religiosity variable (a measure of church attendance) exerted a more powerful impact than the denominational variables (born-again Christian and Catholic), suggesting that religious salience or conviction, regardless of denomination, plays a more prominent role in shaping Latino public opinion (note the min-max results). For example, on abortion (Q5), being a born-again Christian increases support by .12 while moving from the minimum to maximum value in religiosity increases support by .32 in the 2002 survey. Religiosity has over twice the impact than the variable “born-again” on attitudes toward abortion. To better illustrate the effects of religiosity on the probability of opposition to abortion, I calculated conditional probabilities based on the logistic results. According to the results, respondents who were not religious had a 52 percent chance of being opposed to abortion, while those who were most religious had a probability of opposing abortion by 86 percent. Examining the conditional probabilities of religiosity across the other questions also reveals a dramatic increase in political conservatism from those who are not religious (0 = never attend religious services) to those who are deeply religious (5 = attend religious services more than once a week).

[20] Are born-again Christians more politically conservative than Catholics simply because they are more religious in terms of frequency of worship attendance? Although born-again Christians attend church more frequently than Catholics, the variables “religiosity” and “born-again Christian” are different phenomena that are not highly correlated.⁴ This suggests that the attitudinal gap and partisan gap among Latinos is more likely to be a function of the frequency of worship attendance, rather than denominational affiliation. The results mirror those found in studies of non-Hispanic whites. Olson and Green summarize this literature by noting that “. . . it becomes most politically relevant to compare individuals who are highly committed to religious life – whatever their actual affiliation may be – to those who report a lower degree of affiliation” (455). This is not to say denominational affiliation is irrelevant, but it does suggest that it may not be as significant in shaping Latino socio-political values as research from the Latin American experience suggests (Martin; Stoll). In order to fully capture the effects of religious intensity, as measured by worship attendance, *among* respondents who are either born-again Christians or Catholics, I re-ran each of the models selecting *only* born-again Christians or Catholics. Across the 14 models, the effects of religiosity among born-again Christians was positive and statistically significant at $p \leq .001$. In other words, worship attendance among born-again Christians significantly increases socio-political conservatism. When replicating the models only among Catholics, the same effects are observed with the exception of Q.12 “Gay Marriage.” Thus, religiosity increased Catholic socio-political conservatism in 13 out of the 14 models.

⁴ The born-again Christian mean level of church attendance is 3.75 (2002 survey) and 3.67 (2004 survey). Catholic mean level of church attendance is 2.99 (2002 survey) and 2.87 (2004 survey). In the 2002 survey born again Christian is correlated with religiosity at .215** and in the 2004 survey it is correlated at .241** (significant at 0.01 two tailed).

[21] Finally, the results in Table 3 show that being Catholic had a mixed effect across the models, but was generally statistically insignificant. In other words, Catholicism was unrelated to conservative socio-political attitudes and on evaluations toward (Q2) gay marriage; (Q3) having a child out of wedlock; (Q4) and husbands having the final say in family matters, the effects were negative. In 2002, Catholicism was positively related to identification with the Republican Party, but in 2004 the variable Catholic was statistically insignificantly. The differential effects are interesting because they point to the importance of context. In 2004, the Democratic presidential candidate, John Kerry, was Catholic and it may have been the case that the presence of a Catholic candidate helped lessen Latino Catholic support for the Republican Party. On the other hand, the findings could also mean that George W. Bush was initially successful at winning the hearts and minds of Latino Catholics, but over time identification with the Republican Party declined as his approval fell. These are inferences and additional research should be undertaken to explore whether Latino Catholics are swing voters or lean toward the Republican or Democratic Party. Of course, as indicated by the findings in this paper, variation in Latino Catholic socio-political conservatism will be strongly influenced by levels of religiosity across individual Catholics.

Conclusion

[22] Since earning the title, “America’s largest minority group,” interest in and speculation about the involvement and impact of Latinos in American politics has grown. Latinos are undoubtedly poised to become significant political players, leading some to contend that a political realignment toward the Democratic Party is in the making (Meyerson).⁵ After all, much of the base of Roosevelt’s New Deal coalition came from Catholics and immigrants from the third wave (1880s-1920s), most of whom were Italian. Perhaps fourth wave immigrants (1980s-present), largely composed of Catholic Latin Americans, will do the same for the Democratic Party.

[23] Latino support for the Democratic Party is widely acknowledged and a number of researchers have documented the factors underlying this support (Nicholson and Segura; Alvarez and Bedolla; Segura, Falcon, and Pachon; Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner). Research on Latino partisan and candidate preferences largely look to the impact of short-term forces by emphasizing the primacy of policy issues rather than symbolic appeals or imagery in shaping political judgments (Abrajano; Nicholson and Segura). The much touted symbolic appeals by George W. Bush and the Republican Party have not paid dividends because many of the policy issues close to the hearts and minds of Latinos have yet to be embraced by the Republican Party (Nicholson, Pantoja, and Segura). However, there is little consensus in the literature over which issues matter most to Latinos, though a recent study suggests that Republican policy positions on abortion, gay marriage, traditional family values, and the war on terrorism are increasingly seen as important to Latinos (Alvarez, Garcia Bedolla, and Nagler). Many of these policy issues have strong religious underpinnings that appeal to evangelical voters. It comes as no surprise that Kelly and Kelly found affiliation with

⁵ Obviously, not all Latinos identify with the Democratic Party and Cubans in particular are strong supporters of the Republican Party.

evangelical and protestant denominations were strong predictors of Latino identification with the Republican Party.

[24] The findings indicate that a second realignment toward the Democratic Party is doubtful if Latino religiosity and conversion to evangelical and charismatic Christian churches increases. In addition, many Latinos within the Catholic Church are embracing religious expressions and identities long associated with evangelical and charismatic churches, such as “speaking in tongues,” “faith healing,” and being “born-again” in the spirit (Espinosa, Elizondo, and Miranda). The number of Latinos in the U.S. converting to and embracing these conservative religious identities is presently illusive, and there appears to be more data and documentation of this phenomenon within Latin America. Piecemeal evidence suggests a large movement among U.S. Latinos toward evangelical churches and organizations (Walsh; Hernandez; Greeley). For example, Soper and Fetzer note that in the 2000 election exit polls 31 percent of Latinos, 23 percent of African-Americans, and 17 percent of Asians considered themselves part of the “Conservative Christian political movement” (227). If U.S. Latinos are in fact embracing conservative religious traditions and expressions, then the data presented here suggests the existence and likely growth of a political cleavage among Latinos brought about by their religious identities. No doubt, the greatest beneficiaries of such trends would be the Republican Party.

Appendix

Independent Variables

Born-again Christian: “Would you consider yourself a born-again or evangelical Christian?” (1 yes; 0 no)

Catholic: “What is your religious preference? Are you Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?” (1 Catholic; 0 other responses)

Religiosity: “Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?” (0 never; 1 seldom; 2 a few times a year; 3 once or twice a month; 4 once a week; 5 more than once a week)

Age: “What is your age?” (a continuous measure from 18 years to 65+ years)

Education: “What is the last grade or class that you completed in school?” (0 none; 1 less than high school; 2 high school graduate; 3; GED; 4 technical/vocational school; 5 some college; 6 college graduate; 7 post-graduate training/professional schooling)

Income: “Is your total annual household income from all sources, and before taxes . . .” (1 less than \$30,000; 0 \$30,000 and above)

Female: “Gender” (1 female; 0 male)

Married: “Are you currently married, living with a partner, widowed, divorced, separated, or have you never been married?” (1 married; 0 all other responses)

U.S. Born: “Were you born in the United States, the island of Puerto Rico or another country?” (1 U.S. born; 0 Puerto Rico or another country)

U.S. Citizen “Now we would like to ask you about U.S. citizenship. Are you . . . (1 a U.S. citizen; 0 other responses)

English Language, a 6-point scale based on two questions: “Would you say you can carry on a conversation in English, both understanding and speaking” (3 very well; 2 pretty well; 1 just a little or 0 not at all?) and “Would you say you can read a newspaper or book in English” (3 very well; 2 pretty well; 1 just a little or 0 not at all?)

“Now I want to ask you about you and your family’s heritage. Are you Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Salvadoran or are your ancestors from another country?”

Mexican. (1 Mexican; 0 other responses)

Puerto Rican. (1 Puerto Rican; 0 other responses)

Cuban. (1 Cuban; 0 other responses)

Bibliography

Abrajano, Marisa

- 2005 “Who Evaluates a Presidential Candidate by Using Non-Policy Campaign Messages?” *Political Research Quarterly* 58: 55-67.

Alvarez, Michael R., and Lisa Garcia Bedolla

- 2003 “The Foundations of Latino Voter Partisanship: Evidence from the 2000 Election.” *The Journal of Politics* 65: 31-49.

Alvarez, Michael R., Lisa Garcia Bedolla, and Jonathan Nagler

- 2006 “Anglo and Hispanic Vote Choice in the 2004 Election.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Political Science Association, Albuquerque.

Barreto, Matt, and Adrian D Pantoja

- 2006 “Politics and Religion in the Schoolhouse: Latino Religiosity and Attitudes toward Education Policies.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Political Science Association, Albuquerque.

Brewer, Paul R.

- 2003 “The Shifting Foundations of Public Opinion about Gay Rights.” *The Journal of Politics* 65: 1208-20.

Cain, Bruce, E., D. Roderick Kiewiet, and Carole J. Uhlaner

- 1991 “The Acquisition of Partisanship by Latinos and Asian Americans.” *American Journal of Political Science* 32: 390-422.

Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes

- 1960 *The American Voter*. New York: Wiley.

- Campbell, David E.
2006 "Religious 'Threat' in Contemporary Presidential Elections." *The Journal of Politics*. 68: 104-15.
- Chesnut, Andrew R.
1997 *Born Again in Brazil: The Pentecostal Boom and the Pathogens of Poverty*. Piscataway: Rutgers University Press.
- Converse, Philip E.
1966 "Religion and Politics: The 1960 Election." Pp. 96-124 in *Elections and the Political Order*. Edited by Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. New York: Wiley.
- Cook, Elizabeth A., Ted G. Jelen, and Clyde Wilcox
1992 *Between Two Absolutes: Public Opinion and the Politics of Abortion*. Boulder: Westview.
- Deckman, Melissa M.
2004 *School Board Battles: The Christian Right in Local Politics*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- de la Garza, Rodolfo O., Louis DeSipio, F. Chris Garcia, John Garcia, and Angelo Falcon
1992 *Latino Voices: Mexican, Puerto Rican and Cuban Perspectives on Latino Politics*. Boulder: Westview.
- Elifson, Kirk W., and C. Kirk Hadaway
1985 "Prayer in Public Schools: When Church and State Collide." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 49: 317-29.
- Ellison, Christopher G., Samuel Echevarria, and Brad Smith
2005 "Religion and Abortion Attitudes Among U.S. Hispanics: Findings From the 1990 Latino National Political Survey." *Social Science Quarterly* 86: 192-208.
- Espinosa, Gastón
2005 "Latino Clergy and Churches in Faith-Based Political and Social Action in the United States." Pp. 279-306 in *Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States*. Edited by Gastón Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Espinosa, Gaston, Virgilio Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda
2003 "Hispanic Churches in American Public Life: Summary of Findings." Institute for Latino Studies Interim Reports. Volume 2003.2 (March).
- Fowler, Robert Booth, and Allen D. Herzke
1995 *Religion and Politics in America, Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices*. Boulder: Westview.

- Fowler, Robert Booth, Allen D. Herzke, Laura R. Olson, and Kevin R. den Dulk
2004 *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture and Strategic Choices*. Third edition. Boulder: Westview.
- Freston, Paul
2008 *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Frymer, Paul
1999 *Uneasy Alliances, Race and Party Competition in America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Greeley, Andrew
1998 "Defections Among Hispanics: Updated." *America* 12: 61-62.
- Green, John C.
2004 "Assemblies of God." Pp. 179-94 in *Pulpit and Politics, Clergy in American Politics at the Advent of the Millennium*. Edited by Corwin E. Smidt. Waco: Baylor University Press.
- Green, John C., and James L. Guth
1988 "The Christian Right in the Republican Party: The Case of Pat Robertson's Contributors." *Journal of Politics* 50: 150-65.
- Green, John C., Mark J. Rozell, and Clyde Wilcox
2003 *The Christian Right in American Politics, Marching to the Millennium*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Green, John C., James L. Guth, Corwin E. Schmidt, and Lyman A. Kellstedt
1996 *Religion and the Culture Wars*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Guth, James L., John C. Green, Corwin E. Smidt, Lyman A. Kellstedt, and Margaret M. Poloma
1997 *The Bully Pulpit: The Politics of Protestant Clergy*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Harris, Fredrick C.
1994 "Something Within: Religion as a Mobilizer of African American Political Activism." *The Journal of Politics* 56: 42-68.
- Hernandez, Edwin I.
1999 "Moving from the Cathedral to Storefront Churches: Understanding Religious Growth and Decline Among Latino Protestants." Pp. 216-235 in *Protestantes/Protestants Hispanic Christianity Within Mainline Traditions*. Edited by David Maldonado, Jr. Nashville: Abingdon.

- Hill, Terrence D., Benjamin E. Moulton, and Amy M. Burdette
- 2004 "Conservative Protestantism and Attitudes Toward Homosexuality: Does Political Orientation Mediate This Relationship?" *Sociological Focus* 37: 59-70.
- Jelen, Ted G.
- 1990 *The Political Mobilization of Religious Belief*. New York: Greenwood.
- 1991 "Politicized Group Identification: The Case of Fundamentalism." *The Western Political Quarterly* 44: 209-19.
- 1993 *The Political World of the Clergy*. Westport: Praeger.
- 1997 "Religion and Public Opinion in the 1990s: An Empirical Overview." Pp. 55-68 in *Understanding Public Opinion*. Edited by Barbara Norrander and Clyde Wilcox. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly.
- Jelen, Ted G., Corwin E. Smidt, and Clyde Wilcox
- 1993 "The Political Effects of the Born-Again Phenomenon." Pp. 199-215 in *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*. Edited by David C. Leege and Lyman A. Kellstedt. New York: M. E. Sharpe.
- Jelen, Ted G., and Clyde Wilcox
- 1995 *Public Attitudes Toward Church and State*. New York: M. E. Sharpe.
- 2003 "Causes and Consequences of Public Attitudes toward Abortion: A Review and Research Agenda." *Political Research Quarterly* 56, 4: 489-500.
- Jones, Barbara, and Kathleen McNamara
- 1991 "Attitudes towards Women and Their Work Roles: Effects of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religious Orientations." *Sex Roles* 24, 2: 21-29.
- Jones-Correa, Michael, and David L. Leal
- 2001 "Political Participation: Does Religion Matter?" *Political Research Quarterly* 54: 751-70.
- Kellstedt, Lyman A., and Mark A. Noll
- 1990 "Religion, Voting for President, and Party Identification, 1948-1984." Pp. 355-79 in *Religion and American Politics, From the Colonial Period to the 1980s*. Edited by Mark A. Noll. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kellstedt, Lyman A., and John C. Green
- 1993 "Knowing God's Many People: Denominational Preferences and Political Behavior." Pp. 53-71 in *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*. Edited by David C. Leege and Layman A. Kellstedt. New York: M. E. Sharpe.

Kelly, Nathan J., and Jana Morgan Kelly

- 2005 "Religion and Latino Partisanship in the United States." *Political Research Quarterly* 58: 87-95

Kiely, Kathy

- 2008 "Hispanic vote 'up for grabs,' could swing election outcome." *USA Today* (June 27). Available online at http://www.usatoday.com/news/politics/election2008/2008-06-26-Hispanic_N.htm.

Kohut, Andrew, John C. Green, Scott Keeter, and Robert C. Toth

- 2000 *The Diminishing Divide, Religion's Changing Role in American Politics*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.

Layman, Geoffrey C.

- 1997 "Religion and Political Behavior in the United States: The Impact of Beliefs, Affiliation, and Commitment From 1980 to 1994." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 61: 288-316.

Lee, Jongho, Harry Pachon, and Matt Barreto

- 2002 "Guiding the Flock: The Impact of Religiosity on Latino Participation." Paper presented at the American Political Science Association annual conference, Boston.

Long, J. Scott

- 1997 "Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables." *Advanced Quantitative Techniques in the Social Sciences* 7. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Martin, David

- 1990 *Tongues of Fire, The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America*. Cambridge: Blackwell.

Meyerson, Harold

- 2002 "The Rising Latino Tide." *The American Prospect* (November 18): 22-25.

Miller, Arthur H., and Martin P. Wattenberg

- 1984 "Politics From the Pulpit: Religiosity and the 1980 Elections." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 48: 301-17.

Nicholson, Stephen P., Adrian Pantoja, and Gary M. Segura

- 2006 "Political Knowledge and Issue Voting Among the Latino Electorate." *Political Research Quarterly* 59: 259-71.

Nicholson, Stephen P., and Gary M. Segura

- 2005 "Issue Agendas and the Politics of Latino Partisan Identification." Pp. 51-71 in *Diversity in Democracy, Minority Representation in the United States*. Edited by

- Gary M. Segura and Shaun Bowler. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Olson, Laura R., and John C. Green
2006 "The Religion Gap." *PS: Political Science and Politics* (July): 455-59.
- Olson, Laura R., and Adam L. Warber
2008 "Belonging, Behaving, and Believing: Assessing the Role of Religion on Presidential Approval." *Political Research Quarterly* 61: 192-204.
- Pantoja, Adrian, Mathew Barreto, and Richard Anderson
2008 "Politics y la Iglesia: Attitudes Toward the Role of Religion in Politics among Latino Catholics." Pp. 113-26 in *Catholics and Politics, The Dynamic Tension Between Faith and Power*. Edited by Kristin E. Hayer, Mark J. Rozell, and Michael A. Genovese. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Segura Gary M., Denis Falcon, and Harry Pachon
1997 "Dynamics of Latino Partisanship in California: Immigration, Issue Salience, and Their Implications." *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy* 10: 62-80.
- Smidt, Corwin E.
2004 *Pulpit and Politics: Clergy in American Politics at the Advent of the Millennium*. Waco: Baylor University Press.
- Soper, Christopher J., and Joel S. Fetzer
2003 "The Christian Right in California: Dimming Fortunes in the Golden State." Pp 209-30 in *The Christian Right in American Politics, Marching to the Millennium*. Edited by John C. Green, Mark J. Rozell, and Clyde Wilcox. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.
- Stoll, David
1990 *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady
1995 *Voice and Equality, Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Wald, Kenneth
2003 *Religion and Politics in the United States*. Fourth edition. Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Walsh, Arlene M. Sanchez
2003 *Latino Pentecostal Identity, Evangelical Faith, Self and Society*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Welch, Michael R., and David C. Leege

- 1991 "Dual Reference Groups and Political Orientations: An Examination of Evangelically Oriented Catholics." *American Journal of Political Science* 35: 28-56.

Wilcox, Clyde

- 1986 "Fundamentalists and Politics: An Analysis of the Effects of Differing Operational Definitions." *Journal of Politics* 48: 1041-51.

- 1989 "Evangelicals and the Moral Majority." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28: 400-14.

Wilcox, Clyde, Ted G. Jelen, and David C. Leege

- 1993 "Religious Group Identifications: Toward a Cognitive Theory of Religious Mobilization." Pp 72-99 in *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*. Edited by David C. Leege and Lyman A. Kellstedt. New York: M. E. Sharpe.

Wilcox, Clyde, and Carin Larson

- 2006 *Onward Christian Soldiers? The Religious Right in American Politics*. Boulder: Westview.

Wood, Peter B., and John P. Bartkowski

- 2004 "Attribution Style and Public Policy Attitudes Toward Gay Rights." *Social Science Quarterly* 85: 58-74.

Wuthnow, Robert

- 1988 *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.