

## ***Wars and Rumours of Wars: The Contexts of Cultural Conflict in American Political Behaviour***

GEOFFREY C. LAYMAN AND JOHN C. GREEN\*

A heated scholarly debate rages over the ‘culture wars thesis’ in American politics. Drawing on the literature on mass opinion constraint and its sources, we propose a resolution to this debate: the culture wars influence mass political behaviour in special religious, policy and political contexts where logical, psychological, social and electoral sources of opinion constraint are in effect. Using data pooled from the 1992, 1996 and 2000 American National Election Studies, we find strong support for our argument. We conclude that the cultural wars are waged by limited religious troops on narrow policy fronts under special political leadership, and a broader cultural conflagration is largely a rumour.

And when you hear of wars and rumours of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is not yet.

*Gospel of Mark 13:7* (Revised Standard Version)

First-century Christians used these words to describe the cultural conflicts of their day. Recently, these terms have been applied to American politics, neatly encapsulating a heated scholarly debate. Some scholars argue that the nation is in the throes of increasingly bitter ‘culture wars’ between rival religious groups, with important consequences for mass political behaviour. Others argue the opposite: the country is vexed by ‘rumours of wars’, reflecting more limited cultural tensions among religious groups, with only modest relevance to mass politics.

Drawing on the literature on mass opinion constraint, we propose a resolution to this debate: the usefulness of the culture wars thesis varies by policy, religious and political context. The culture wars strongly influence mass political behaviour when religious perspectives are logically related to policy issues, communal experiences encourage these connections and electoral actors emphasize and differentiate themselves on such matters. Outside of these contexts, the culture wars have little political impact. Using data pooled from the presidential-year National Election Studies from 1992 through 2000, we examine the culture wars thesis for different policy areas, religious communities and electoral circumstances. The results strongly support our resolution to the culture wars debate. The culture wars are waged by limited religious troops on narrow policy fronts under special political leadership, and a broader cultural conflagration is just a rumour.

\* Department of Government and Politics, University of Maryland; and Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, The University of Akron, respectively. The authors wish to thank Tom Carsey, John Geer, Bud Kellstedt, Bruce Oppenheimer and the participants in the American Politics Workshop at the University of Maryland for helpful comments and suggestions. Any mistakes that remain are, of course, the sole responsibility of the authors. The data used in this study were obtained from the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research. The Consortium bears no responsibility for their use.

## THE CULTURE WARS IN CONTEXT

The term ‘culture wars’ came to public attention with Pat Buchanan’s call to arms in a ‘war for the soul of America’ at the 1992 Republican National Convention and has since entered popular discourse. For example, US Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia accused his colleagues of ‘taking sides in the culture war’ in *Lawrence v. Texas*, which struck down state sodomy laws.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the cultural wars were thought to lie behind the division between ‘red states’ (those in which a majority of voters supported Bush) and ‘blue states’ (those supporting Gore or Kerry) in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections, the expanded ‘religion gap’ in these elections and the apparent importance of ‘moral values’ voters to George W. Bush’s re-election in 2004.<sup>2</sup> In fact, as Morris P. Fiorina and his colleagues argue, the idea that American society is now embroiled in a highly-polarized culture war has become the accepted wisdom among journalists and political commentators.<sup>3</sup>

However, it was James Davison Hunter’s 1991 book of the same title that established the concept of culture wars in scholarly discourse.<sup>4</sup> According to Hunter, the culture wars arise from two incommensurate philosophical ‘impulses’, rooted in ‘different systems of moral understanding’, which he labels ‘orthodoxy’ and ‘progressivism’.<sup>5</sup> The former is characterized by a commitment to ‘external, definable, and transcendent’ sources of moral authority, while the latter adheres to a relativistic view of moral authority which changes with historical circumstances and the boundaries of human knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

The principal troops in the culture wars are religious groups defined by the orthodox–progressive division over religious beliefs and behaviours. The key cleavages are no longer between the historic faith traditions (for example, Protestants versus Catholics), but rather within and across them (for example, orthodox Protestants and Catholics versus their progressive counterparts), so that membership in such traditions is now ‘virtually irrelevant’ to politics.<sup>7</sup> The principal fronts in the culture wars are ‘moral’ issues (such as abortion, gay rights, ‘family values’), where the implications of orthodox–progressive religious differences are most clear.<sup>8</sup> However, Hunter argues that the ‘rhetorical leadership’<sup>9</sup> of orthodox and progressive elites (including religious,

<sup>1</sup> Lincoln Caplan, ‘Dissent is fine, but spare the bite’, *Washington Post Weekly Edition*, 14–20 July 2003, pp. 22–3.

<sup>2</sup> Byron E. Shafer, *The State of American Politics* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, ‘The 2004 Political Landscape Evenly Divided and Increasingly Polarized’, Press Release, 5 November 2003; John C. Green and Mark Silk, ‘The New Religion Gap’, *Religion in the News*, 6:3 (2003), Special Supplement, 1–3, 15; Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, ‘Voters Liked Campaign 2004, But Too Much ‘Mud-Slinging’; Moral Values: How Important?’, Press Release, 11 November 2004; Kevin Eckstrom, ‘In 2004, Christians stood at front lines’, *Washington Post*, 1 January 2005, p. B7.

<sup>3</sup> Morris P. Fiorina, with Samuel J. Abrams and Jeremy C. Pope, *Culture War? The Myth of a Polarized America* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991); see also James Davison Hunter, *Before the Shooting Begins: Searching for Democracy in America’s Culture War* (New York: Macmillan, 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Hunter, *Culture Wars*, pp. 43–4. We use Hunter’s terms for ease of presentation, but they are potentially misleading because of their political connotations. Religious traditionalists (rather than the orthodox) and modernists (rather than progressives) are probably more useful terms.

<sup>6</sup> Hunter, *Culture Wars*, p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> Hunter, *Culture Wars*, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup> What constitutes a ‘moral’ issue, is, of course, debatable. That is evidenced by the dispute among American political commentators over what the plurality of voters who cited ‘moral values’ as their most salient concern in 2004 election-day exit polls had in mind. However, in recent political discourse, the language of morality has most commonly been used in reference to sexual, gender and reproductive issues.

<sup>9</sup> Hunter, *Culture Wars*, p. 281.

intellectual and political leaders) is likely to extend the influence of the orthodox–progressive cleavage to a wide range of issues, from social welfare to civil rights to the environment, creating an ‘isomorphism between religious conservatism and political preservationism ... and between religious liberalism ... and political reformism’.<sup>10</sup>

Scholars generally agree that the culture wars thesis applies to elites, with broad political consequences.<sup>11</sup> Where disagreement arises is on the extent to which such elite disputes influence mass political behaviour. Some researchers identify the orthodox–progressive cleavage as central to the recent ‘restructuring’ of American religion, and find strong links between that cleavage, some core values and policy attitudes, and political behaviour.<sup>12</sup>

But others find little evidence of growing mass polarization along orthodox–progressive religious lines or on policy issues. A growing number of scholars have raised empirical doubts about the culture wars thesis.<sup>13</sup> They argue that the level of societal polarization is not as large as or growing to the extent that the thesis suggests, while the orthodox and progressive cultural camps are considerably less monotonic than Hunter and others contend.<sup>14</sup> Hunter’s critics are particularly sceptical of his suggestion that the cultural divide may extend its influence to policy arenas other than moral issues and create an ‘isomorphism’ between religious orthodoxy and general political ideology. They find little evidence that policy attitudes in the mass electorate are growing more unidimensional and few connections between the orthodox–progressive cleavage and attitudes towards non-moral issues.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the debate is between those who see evidence of culture wars in mass politics and those who see such conflicts as more rumoured than real.

<sup>10</sup> Hunter, *Culture Wars*, p. 128.

<sup>11</sup> Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, *Culture War?* Rhys H. Williams, ed., *Cultural Wars in American Politics: Critical Reviews of a Popular Myth* (New York: De Gruyter, 1997), pp. 291–2; James L. Guth, John C. Green, Corwin E. Smidt and Lyman A. Kellstedt, *The Bully Pulpit: The Politics of Protestant Clergy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997); John C. Green, James L. Guth, Corwin E. Smidt and Lyman A. Kellstedt, *Religion and the Culture Wars* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996); Clyde Wilcox, *Onward Christian Soldiers: The Religious Right in American Politics* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 2000); Geoffrey C. Layman, *The Great Divide: Religious and Cultural Conflict in American Party Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988); Robert Wuthnow, *The Struggle for America’s Soul: Evangelicals, Liberals, and Secularism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989); Gertrude Himmelfarb, *One Nation, Two Cultures* (New York: Knopf, 1999); John Kenneth White, *The Values Divide* (New York: Chatham House, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> The two most recent efforts to directly test the culture wars thesis find rather limited support for it: Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, *Culture War?* Wayne Baker, *America’s Crisis of Values: Reality and Perception* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, *Culture War?* Nancy J. Davis and Robert V. Robinson, ‘Are the Rumors of War Exaggerated? Religious Orthodoxy and Moral Progressivism in America’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 102 (1996), 756–87; Nancy J. Davis and Robert V. Robinson, ‘Religious Orthodoxy in American Society: The Myth of a Monolithic Camp’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 35 (1996), 229–45; Nancy J. Davis and Robert V. Robinson, ‘A War for America’s Soul: The American Religious Landscape’ in Williams, ed., *Cultural Wars in American Politics*, pp. 39–62; N. J. Demerath III and Yonghe Yang, ‘What American Culture War? A View from the Trenches as Opposed to the Command Posts and the Press Corps’, in Williams, ed., *Cultural Wars in American Politics*, pp. 17–38; Paul DiMaggio, John Evans and Bethany Bryson, ‘Have Americans’ Social Attitudes Become More Polarized?’ *American Journal of Sociology*, 102 (1996), 690–755; Christian Smith, Michael Emerson, Sally Gallagher, Paul Kennedy and David Sikkink, ‘The Myth of Culture Wars: The Case of American Protestantism’, in Williams, ed., *Cultural Wars in American Politics*, pp. 175–95; Alan Wolfe, *One Nation, After All: What Middle-Class Americans Really Think About: God, Country, Family, Racism, Welfare, Immigration, Homosexuality, Work, the Right, the Left, and Each Other* (New York: Viking, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> Demerath and Yang, ‘What American Culture War?’ Davis and Robinson, ‘Religious Orthodoxy in American Society’; Daniel V. A. Olson, ‘Dimensions of Cultural Tension among the American Public’, in Williams, ed., *Cultural Wars in American Politics*, pp. 237–58.

The literature on mass opinion constraint and its sources can help to resolve this dispute. The culture wars thesis implies that the orthodox–progressive division produces high levels of both ‘horizontal’ constraint (tying various types of issue attitudes together into something approaching a single ideological dimension) and ‘vertical’ constraint (tying the core values to particular policy attitudes and then to political behaviour). Such predictions of high levels of mass constraint run counter to a central conclusion of the literature on public opinion and electoral behaviour. Scholars searching for horizontal constraint have found that mass policy attitudes generally lack a coherent structure,<sup>16</sup> while related research finds limited evidence of vertical connections between core values, policy attitudes and political behaviour.<sup>17</sup>

However, the same literature identifies several ‘sources of constraint’ that may tie mass political orientations together horizontally and/or vertically. In his seminal article, Converse identified three key sources of constraint: logical, psychological and social.<sup>18</sup> Other scholars denote a fourth source of constraint that is distinctively political (which we call ‘electoral’ constraint).<sup>19</sup> In keeping with the generally low levels of mass opinion constraint, these sources should operate only in special policy, social and political contexts that foster connections between religious perspectives, attitudes towards particular policy issues and political behaviour. Our focus here is on the possibility of vertical constraint between these elements.

### *Logical Constraint and Policy Contexts*

Logic can be a potent source of opinion constraint when there is an inherent rationale for the relationship between political objects, so that simply ‘thinking about’ a set of ‘idea-elements’ may weld them together.<sup>20</sup> However, as Converse argues, logic can tie only a narrow range of elements together, and it is rarely a source of constraint in the mass public because most citizens think little about politics and have limited knowledge of most political objects.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the logic of religious perspectives is unlikely to produce what the culture wars thesis implies: high levels of constraint across a wide swath of the electorate or among a wide range of political orientations.

However, logic may produce vertical constraint between religious perspectives and attitudes towards a narrow range of policy concerns (and, through those attitudes, to

<sup>16</sup> Philip E. Converse, ‘The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics’, in David E. Apter, ed., *Ideology and Discontent* (New York: Free Press, 1964), pp. 206–61; Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes, *The American Voter* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964); Philip E. Converse and Gregory B. Markus, ‘Plus ça Change ... : The New CPS Election Study Panel’, *American Political Science Review*, 73 (1979), 32–49.

<sup>17</sup> Campbell *et al.*, *The American Voter*; Richard A. Brody and Benjamin I. Page, ‘Comment: The Assessment of Policy Voting’, *American Political Science Review*, 66 (1972), 450–8; John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Warren E. Miller and J. Merrill Shanks, *The New American Voter* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).

<sup>18</sup> Converse, ‘The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics’.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Edward G. Carmines and James A. Stimson, *Issue Evolution: Race and the Transformation of American Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989); Norman H. Nie, Sidney Verba and John Petrocik, *The Changing American Voter* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

<sup>20</sup> Converse, ‘The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics’, p. 209.

<sup>21</sup> Converse, ‘The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics’, pp. 209–10; see also Michael X. Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter, *What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996).

political behaviour) that tap directly into the moral visions proffered by orthodox and progressive elites. For example, on ‘moral’ issues such as abortion, gay rights and family values, ‘moral logic ... preclude[s] or endorse[s] the specific proposals from the outset’.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the orthodox may perceive a clear, logical relationship between their traditionalist religious orientations, traditional moral values, opposition to abortion, homosexuality and feminism, and voting for conservative candidates. Likewise, religious progressives may perceive a clear, logical connection between their religion, moral relativism, support for abortion, gay and women’s rights, and voting for liberal candidates.

Given the competing ‘moral’ visions of rival elites, such logic is less likely to be clearly perceived with regard to the linkage between these religious perspectives and ‘non-moral’ core values, such as egalitarianism and individualism, and in other policy areas, such as social welfare, civil rights and national defence. For example, it may be logical for the orthodox to have egalitarian values and support welfare programmes (‘as you have done to the least of these, so you have done unto me’), but it may be just as logical for them to support economic individualism and oppose welfare programmes (‘the poor will be with you always’). Similarly, it might be perfectly logical for religious progressives to support social welfare programmes, but it is just as logical for them to adopt ‘non-progressive’ positions on welfare – for what in the logic of moral relativism would lead to caring for the poor?

All of this suggests that the impact of the orthodox–progressive divide is likely to be strongest for traditional ‘moral’ policy attitudes. The connection between religious orthodoxy and non-moral attitudes should be weaker and less consistent, appearing only where other sources of constraint compensate for the absence of a ‘moral’ logic.

### *Psychological/Social Constraint and Religious Contexts*

According to Converse, psychological and social factors are more likely than pure logic to serve as sources of the sort of widespread opinion constraint predicted by the culture wars thesis.<sup>23</sup> These sources of constraint do not depend on high levels of political information or knowledge, but on personal experiences. Psychological constraints tie attitudes together when life experiences package attitudes with superordinate core values or group identifications; social constraints do the same when group leaders package attitudes for mass consumption and communal interaction promotes and reinforces such packaging.<sup>24</sup>

The role of personal experiences in generating psychological and social constraints means that the nature and extent of vertical constraint varies by social context.<sup>25</sup> In terms of linking religious perspectives to politics, the most important social context is membership in a religious community or tradition. The strength and nature of psychological constraint should vary across religious communities because they

<sup>22</sup> Hunter, *Culture Wars*, p. 127.

<sup>23</sup> Converse, ‘The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics’, p. 209.

<sup>24</sup> Converse, ‘The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics’, pp. 210–12.

<sup>25</sup> Bernard R. Berelson, Paul R. Lazarsfeld and William N. McPhee, *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954); Robert Huckfeldt and John Sprague, *Citizens, Politics, and Social Communication: Information and Influence in an Election Campaign* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

promulgate particular core values and explain the relevance of such values for politics. Religious groups are certainly a key source of the competing moral visions at the heart of the orthodox–progressive divide, but they also disperse other core values that may influence political behaviour. Indeed, it is the mix of core values that produces the distinctive ethos of the major religious traditions, such as the theological individualism of evangelical Protestants, civic-mindedness of the Protestant mainline and communalism of Catholics.<sup>26</sup>

The strength and nature of social constraint also varies across religious communities. Religious and political orientations can be packaged together by official church teachings, the cues provided by clergy, lay leaders and regular contact with fellow congregants – all of which vary considerably across religious communities. For example, psychological and social sources of constraint may reinforce the ‘logical’ connection between religious orthodoxy, moral values and moral policy attitudes to a greater degree in some traditions than in others. Such a linkage may be stronger among evangelical Protestants, where the laity is relatively uniform in its moral traditionalism and clergy often address private and public morality from the pulpit, than among mainline Protestants and Catholics, where the moral values of congregants are more heterogeneous and clergy focus more on social justice and communal good works.<sup>27</sup>

Political connections that are less clearly logical – and which thus rely more heavily on other sources of constraint – should vary even more across faith traditions. For example, the economic individualism displayed by evangelical Protestant clergy may help to connect orthodoxy with social welfare conservatism for their congregants. In contrast, the commitment of Catholic and mainline clergy to economic and social justice may link orthodoxy to more liberal social welfare attitudes for their laity.<sup>28</sup>

In short, we disagree with the proponents of the culture wars thesis who see membership in a particular faith tradition as increasingly irrelevant to politics. Because faith traditions are important sources of core values, they should continue to influence political behaviour independently of religious orthodoxy. And, because religious communities are a key social context for linking religious values to politics, the connection between orthodox–progressive perspectives and political behaviour should vary across faith traditions.

<sup>26</sup> The meaning of terms such as ‘individualism’ and ‘communalism’ may vary across contexts. For instance, white evangelical Protestants are highly individualistic in their theology, demanding a personal conversion for admission to the faith, emphasizing individual prayer and Scripture reading, and placing great importance on the personal moral behaviour of believers. In the context of economic and social welfare policy, that theological individualism tends to translate into economic individualism and support for conservative issue positions (see, for example, David C. Barker and Christopher Jan Carman, ‘The Spirit of Capitalism? Religious Doctrine, Values, and Economic Attitude Constructs’, *Political Behavior*, 22 (2000), 1–27; Guth *et al.*, *The Bully Pulpit*). However, in the context of moral policy, theological individualism can have a strong communitarian character, generating demands for the legal enforcement of moral codes. In another context, evangelical theology among black Protestants gave rise to the Civil Rights movement, which was a highly communitarian enterprise, but also one focused on the individual rights of African-Americans. Here, we use these terms to refer to the character of religious beliefs and values. Their application to policy positions is shaped by religious, policy and political contexts.

<sup>27</sup> Guth *et al.*, *The Bully Pulpit*; Kenneth D. Wald, Dennis E. Owen and Samuel S. Hill Jr, ‘Churches as Political Communities’, *American Political Science Review*, 82 (1988), 531–48; Kenneth D. Wald, Dennis E. Owen and Samuel S. Hill Jr, ‘Political Cohesion in Churches’, *Journal of Politics*, 52 (1990), 197–215.

<sup>28</sup> Barker and Carman, ‘The Spirit of Capitalism?’ Guth *et al.*, *The Bully Pulpit*; Timothy A. Byrnes, *Catholic Bishops in American Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

*Electoral Constraint and Political Contexts*

Research since Converse's article has identified a fourth, 'electoral', source of constraint. When parties and candidates emphasize and take clearly distinct stands on particular policy issues, the horizontal and vertical connections between attitudes towards the issues, related socio-demographic orientations and political behaviour tend to increase.<sup>29</sup> The corresponding pattern holds at the individual level as citizens who care about policy issues and recognize party and candidate differences on them display greater constraint with regard to those issues than do other citizens.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, the electoral contexts that should encourage connections between the orthodox–progressive religious divide and political behaviour are those in which the political parties and their candidates emphasize the 'moral' issues that are most clearly related to that divide and take distinct stands on them. At the individual level, the strongest connection between religious orthodoxy and political behaviour should be for those citizens who find moral issues to be salient and recognize party differences on them.<sup>31</sup>

In sum, we expect the political impact of the orthodox–progressive religious divide to vary by context, being more relevant for moral questions than for other policy areas; in some religious traditions than in others; and for citizens who find moral concerns to be salient and are aware of partisan differences than for other citizens. Within these contexts, the culture wars should strongly influence mass political behaviour; outside of them, such an effect should be largely a rumour.

## MEASURING THE ORTHODOX–PROGRESSIVE DIVIDE

To test our resolution to the culture wars debate, we use data pooled from the 1992, 1996 and 2000 National Election Studies (NES),<sup>32</sup> the three presidential election year surveys

<sup>29</sup> Carmines and Stimson, *Issue Evolution*; V. O. Key, *The Responsible Electorate* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966); Nie, Verba and Petrocik, *The Changing American Voter*; Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody and Philip E. Tetlock, *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Thomas M. Carsey, *Campaign Dynamics: The Race for Governor* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Layman, *The Great Divide*.

<sup>30</sup> David E. RePass, 'Issue Salience and Party Choice', *American Political Science Review*, 65 (1971), 389–400; Brody and Page, 'Comment'; Jon A. Krosnick, 'Government Policy and Citizen Passion: A Study of Issue Publics in Contemporary American Politics', *Political Behavior*, 12 (1990), 59–92; Geoffrey C. Layman and Thomas M. Carsey, 'Party Polarization and "Conflict Extension" in the American Electorate', *American Journal of Political Science*, 46 (2002), 786–802.

<sup>31</sup> In fact, even though they are arguing against the idea of a mass cultural conflict with increasing political relevance, Fiorina and his colleagues contend that the impact of existing religious cleavages on electoral behaviour and outcomes might be made greater by parties and candidates who are culturally polarized: Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, *Culture War?*

<sup>32</sup> The 2000 NES interviewed roughly half (1,006) of its respondents in person and roughly half (801) over the phone. Since the 1972 study, the NES has measured respondents' attitudes and their perceptions of party and candidate positions on most political issues by asking them to place themselves, the two parties and candidates on seven-point scales. The face-to-face interviews in 2000 used the traditional seven-point scale format, but the phone interviews mainly used a branching format resulting in only five categories. To maintain continuity with the 1992 and 1996 surveys, our analysis includes only the face-to-face respondents in 2000.

We combine these three NES surveys for our analysis so that our results will not be greatly affected by the idiosyncrasies of a particular election campaign and will reflect the general connection between religion and contemporary political behaviour. This does have the potential to mask ongoing changes in that connection, but if the political impact of the orthodox–progressive religious divide grew over this period, then pooling the three surveys would deflate, rather than inflate, its current importance. Moreover, we conducted our analyses separately for each of the three years and did not find systematic changes in the political influence of religion.

conducted since NES greatly improved and enhanced its measures of religion.<sup>33</sup> The orthodox–progressive divide within religious traditions is defined by both religious beliefs and religious behaviours.<sup>34</sup> As Hunter notes ‘the words, orthodoxy and progressive, can describe specific doctrinal creeds or particular religious practices’.<sup>35</sup> However, because belief and behaviour are conceptually distinct, we operationalize the orthodox–progressive division with separate measures of the doctrinal orthodoxy of religious beliefs and of commitment to traditional religious practices. Our measure of doctrinal orthodoxy is the respondent’s view of biblical authority.<sup>36</sup> To measure religious commitment we combine religious salience (guidance) and frequency of Bible reading, worship attendance and prayer.<sup>37</sup> In a principal components factor analysis of these items, all four loaded strongly on a single factor.<sup>38</sup> Our measure of religious commitment is the factor score from this analysis.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>33</sup> David C. Leege and Lyman A. Kellstedt, eds, *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1993).

<sup>34</sup> Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion*; Hunter, *Culture Wars*; Lyman A. Kellstedt, John C. Green, James L. Guth and Corwin E. Smidt, ‘Is There a Culture War? Religion and the 1996 Election’ (presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C., 1997).

<sup>35</sup> Hunter, *Culture Wars*, p. 44.

<sup>36</sup> The question on view of the Bible is the only one in the NES that is specifically about religious beliefs. Its response options are the Bible ‘is a book written by men and is not the Word of God’, ‘is the Word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally, word for word’, and ‘is the actual Word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word’. We have recoded the responses to range from – 1 (least orthodox) to 1 (most orthodox).

Although literal and inerrant views of Scripture are more central to theological orthodoxy in Protestantism, especially among evangelicals, than in other traditions, authoritative views of the Bible are a component of religious orthodoxy within most major religious traditions: Lyman A. Kellstedt and Corwin E. Smidt, ‘Doctrinal Beliefs and Political Behavior: Views of the Bible’, in Leege and Kellstedt, eds, *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*, pp. 177–98; Kellstedt *et al.*, ‘Is There a Culture War?’ For example, we used the Third National Survey of Religion and Politics, conducted at the University of Akron in 2000, to create an index of Catholic traditionalism consisting of responses to questions about praying the Rosary, confessing to a priest, and believing that the Pope is infallible. The correlation between that measure and a view of the Bible item very similar to that in the NES was relatively strong (0.30) and highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

Another NES item that is often used as an indicator of doctrinal orthodoxy is identification as a born-again Christian: see Layman, *The Great Divide*. We did not use born-again identification as a measure of belief orthodoxy here because it is much more central to evangelical identifications and beliefs than it is to those in other traditions. However, including the born-again indicator produces results nearly identical to those presented here.

<sup>37</sup> Worship attendance and prayer are normative in all major religious traditions, and religious salience should tap into commitment in all religious contexts. Protestants may attach more importance to Bible reading than do Catholics and members of other traditions. However, past research has shown that Bible reading does distinguish between more and less orthodox Catholics: see James D. Davidson, Andrea S. Williams, Richard A. Lamanna, Jan Stenftenagel, Kathleen Mass Weigert, William J. Whalen and Patricia Wittenberg, S.C., *The Search for Common Ground: What Unites and Divides Catholic Americans* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1997). And, in the Third National Survey of Religion and Politics, the correlation between Bible reading and Catholic traditionalism is relatively strong (0.38) and quite significant ( $p < 0.001$ ).

<sup>38</sup> This analysis produced only one factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1. That factor had an eigenvalue of 2.69 and explained 67 per cent of the total variance in the five indicators. The factor loadings of the four indicators ranged from 0.79 to 0.85.

<sup>39</sup> Religious commitment ranges from – 1 to + 1, and has a reliability coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.84. We use this measure for the analyses in Tables 1 and 3. In Table 2, commitment is measured through a confirmatory factor analysis of observed indicators, treated as having measurement error.

Not surprisingly, our measures of doctrinal orthodoxy and religious commitment are highly correlated with each other  $r = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). However, because beliefs and behaviours are conceptually distinct aspects of religion (see Leege and Kellstedt, *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*; Green *et al.*, *Religion and the Culture Wars*), we leave them as separate variables here. We did conduct all of our analyses with a single

## THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXTS OF THE CULTURE WARS

Our measure of the religious contexts of the culture wars is membership in religious traditions.<sup>40</sup> We use the NES's religious affiliation battery and follow the recent literature<sup>41</sup> to identify the five largest American religious traditions (white evangelical Protestants, white mainline Protestants, Catholics, black Protestants and Jews) and the secular population.<sup>42</sup>

To capture variation in the effects of doctrinal orthodoxy and religious commitment across traditions, our models of political behaviour include dummy variables for five of the religious traditions (with evangelical Protestants serving as the comparison category), our measures of orthodoxy and commitment, interactions between doctrinal orthodoxy and each of the tradition dummies, and interactions between religious commitment and each of the tradition dummies. These interactions indicate the difference between the impact of doctrine and commitment for evangelical Protestants and for each of the other traditions. The dependent variables in these models are five measures of political affiliations and behaviour: liberal–conservative identification, party identification, comparative evaluations of the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates in each year, the two-party presidential vote and a political alignment index that combines the first four variables.<sup>43</sup>

To gain an initial sense of the political impact of the orthodox–progressive divide across different religious contexts, these models include only standard demographic controls.<sup>44</sup>

(Footnote continued)

measure of religious orthodoxy, combining beliefs and behaviours, and the political impact of that variable was nearly always stronger than that of the separate commitment and doctrine variables. Thus, conducting our analysis with separate measures of doctrinal orthodoxy and religious commitment may create a more rigorous test of the political impact of the orthodox–progressive divide.

<sup>40</sup> Because all of our analyses examine the political impact of the orthodox–progressive divide within particular religious traditions (i.e., take into account religious context), the most straightforward analyses are those focusing on religious contexts. Thus, although we introduced policy contexts first in developing our argument, we begin the analysis with religious contexts.

<sup>41</sup> Lyman A. Kellstedt and John C. Green, 'Knowing God's Many People: Denominational Preference and Political Behavior', in Legee and Kellstedt, eds, *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*, pp. 53–71; Lyman A. Kellstedt, John C. Green, James L. Guth and Corwin E. Smidt, 'Grasping the Essentials: The Social Embodiment of Religion and Political Behavior', in Green *et al.*, eds, *Religion and the Culture Wars*, pp. 174–92; Layman, *The Great Divide*.

<sup>42</sup> We discuss the assignment of religious affiliations to religious traditions in Appendix A.

<sup>43</sup> The vote is coded 0 for Democratic and 1 for Republican. We coded the other four variables to range from 0 (most liberal/Democratic) to 1 (most conservative/Republican). We use logit to estimate the vote model and regression for the other models. The political alignment index is the factor score from a principal components factor analysis of the four indicators of political behaviour. The analysis produced only one factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1. That factor had an eigenvalue of 2.38 and explained 74 per cent of the total variance in the four indicators. The factor loadings were 0.89 for party identification, 0.73 for ideological identification, 0.90 for comparative candidate evaluations, and 0.90 for the presidential vote. We use this measure for the analyses in Tables 1 and 3. In Table 2, political alignment is measured through a confirmatory factor analysis of observed indicators.

<sup>44</sup> The control variables are income, education, region of residence (South vs. non-South), gender, age and union membership. We do not control for race because our models include a dummy variable for black Protestants and only non-blacks are included in our evangelical and mainline Protestant categories.

In order to account for the possibility that the intercepts in our models vary across the three survey years in our pooled data set, we include dummy variables for 1996 and 2000 respondents, with 1992 respondents serving as the comparison group. Even with dummy variables for year, there remains the possibility of non-constant error variance across years and that errors are correlated across observations within years. Although regression and logit coefficient estimates remain consistent in the face of such problems, their standard errors may be inaccurate: see Nathaniel Beck and Johnathan N. Katz, 'What to Do (and Not to Do) with Time-Series-Cross-Section Data in

When we consider policy context, we turn to far more fully-specified structural equation models to consider whether the effects of religious orientations on political behaviour are direct or indirect, and the types of political attitudes and values through which indirect effects are exerted.

In order to assess the religious contexts of the culture wars, there are three important things to take from the coefficient estimates of these models: whether religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy have effects on political behaviour within various religious traditions, whether such effects vary significantly from one tradition to another and whether religious tradition has a political impact that is independent of those of commitment and doctrine. So, rather than the full set of regression and logit coefficients, we present, in Table 1, the estimates from our models that highlight these three things.<sup>45</sup>

In the first half of the table, we examine the orthodox–progressive divide within the four largest Christian traditions by showing the estimated slope coefficients on doctrinal orthodoxy and religious commitment, and the standard errors around those slopes, for each tradition.<sup>46</sup> The estimates are odds ratio coefficients for the presidential vote and unstandardized regression coefficients for the other dependent variables. Because commitment and orthodoxy range from  $-1$  to  $+1$ , these coefficients indicate the estimated change in ideology, partisanship, candidate evaluations or political alignment, or in the odds of voting Republican instead of Democratic, for a change in commitment or orthodoxy of half of its full range. In the second half of the table, we assess the political impact of religious tradition, separate from the effects of belief and behavioural orthodoxy, by showing the predicted values of ideology, partisanship, candidate evaluations, political alignment and the predicted probability of voting Republican when commitment, doctrine and all of the control variables are held constant at their sample means.<sup>47</sup>

(Footnote continued)

Comparative Politics', *American Political Science Review*, 89 (1995), 634–47; Nathaniel Beck and Richard Tucker, 'Conflict in Space and Time: Time-Series-Cross-Section Analysis with a Binary Dependent Variable' (presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 1996). To account for this possibility, we compute robust standard errors using Huber's and White's formula for heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors and relaxing the assumption of independent errors within years (by clustering the data on survey year in STATA): Peter J. Huber, 'The Behavior of Maximum Likelihood Estimates Under Non-Standard Conditions', *Proceedings of the Fifth Berkeley Symposium on Mathematical Statistics and Probability*, 1 (1967), 221–33; Halbert White, 'A Heteroskedasticity-Consistent Covariance Matrix and a Direct Test for Heteroskedasticity', *Econometrica*, 48 (1980), 817–38.

<sup>45</sup> Appendix B presents the full set of regression and logit coefficients.

<sup>46</sup> The estimated slope coefficients for each tradition are taken directly from the regression and logit estimates. The slopes for evangelicals, the comparison group, are the coefficients on religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy themselves, and the slopes for each other tradition are the sum of the coefficient on commitment/orthodoxy and the coefficient on the interaction between commitment/orthodoxy and the dummy variable for the particular tradition. The standard errors for evangelicals are simply the standard errors around the coefficients on commitment and orthodoxy. For all of the other traditions, standard errors can be computed based on the variance of the coefficient on commitment/orthodoxy, the variance of the coefficient on the interaction term for that tradition, and the covariance of the two coefficients: see James Jaccard, *Interaction Effects in Logistic Regression* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2001); James Jaccard, Robert Turrissi and Choi K. Wan, *Interaction Effects in Multiple Regression* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1990). Of course, the slopes and standard errors for any tradition besides evangelicals can also be obtained by re-estimating the model with that tradition as the comparison group.

<sup>47</sup> To determine whether the differences between traditions are statistically significant when commitment, orthodoxy and all of the control variables are at their mean values, we recoded commitment, orthodoxy and the control variables so that their mean values were all equal to 0. Tests on the dummy variable coefficients then provided the information on statistical significance reported in Table 1.

TABLE 1 *The Impact of Religious Tradition, Religious Commitment and Doctrinal Orthodoxy on Political Behaviour, Controlling for Demographic Orientations*

Religious tradition and type of prediction	Dependent variables				
	Ideological identification	Party identification	Candidate evaluations	Presidential vote	Political alignment
<i>Effect (Slope) of Doctrinal Orthodoxy/Religious Commitment†</i>					
Evangelical Protestant					
Doctrinal orthodoxy	0.02*** (0.003)	0.02 (0.02)	0.03*** (0.01)	1.52*** (0.42/0.11)	0.05*** (0.01)
Religious commitment	0.13*** (0.01)	0.15*** (0.02)	0.10*** (0.01)	3.37*** (1.21/0.11)	0.15*** (0.01)
Mainline Protestant					
Doctrinal orthodoxy	0.05*** (0.01)	0.03** (0.01)	0.03*** (0.003)	1.61*** (0.48/0.03)	0.05*** (0.01)
Religious commitment	0.05*** (0.02)	0.06 (0.04)	0.04** (0.02)	1.59 (0.47/0.29)	0.07* (0.04)
Catholic					
Doctrinal orthodoxy	0.03* (0.01)	-0.001 (0.03)	0.01 (0.01)	1.36** (0.31/0.13)	0.04** (0.02)
Religious commitment	0.06*** (0.01)	0.06*** (0.02)	0.05*** (0.01)	1.98*** (0.68/0.15)	0.08*** (0.03)
Black Protestant					
Doctrinal orthodoxy	0.04** (0.02)	0.06** (0.03)	0.04*** (0.01)	2.49 (0.91/1.60)	0.05*** (0.01)
Religious commitment	0.001 (0.01)	-0.10*** (0.02)	-0.07** (0.03)	0.14 (-1.94/1.22)	-0.06* (0.02)
<i>Predictions for Traditions with Doctrine/Commitment at Sample Means‡</i>					
Evangelical Protestant (a)	0.56 <sup>bdef</sup>	0.48 <sup>cdef</sup>	0.50 <sup>cdef</sup>	0.51 <sup>cde</sup>	0.51 <sup>cde</sup>
Mainline Protestant (b)	0.54 <sup>adef</sup>	0.51 <sup>cdef</sup>	0.50 <sup>cdef</sup>	0.45 <sup>de</sup>	0.51 <sup>cde</sup>
Catholic (c)	0.53 <sup>aef</sup>	0.40 <sup>abde</sup>	0.46 <sup>abde</sup>	0.40 <sup>ade</sup>	0.45 <sup>abde</sup>
Black Protestant (d)	0.48 <sup>ab</sup>	0.27 <sup>abcf</sup>	0.39 <sup>abcf</sup>	0.04 <sup>abcf</sup>	0.33 <sup>abcf</sup>
Jewish (e)	0.45 <sup>abcf</sup>	0.23 <sup>abcf</sup>	0.37 <sup>abcf</sup>	0.09 <sup>abc</sup>	0.33 <sup>abcf</sup>
Secular (f)	0.51 <sup>abce</sup>	0.44 <sup>abde</sup>	0.46 <sup>abd</sup>	0.39 <sup>d</sup>	0.47 <sup>de</sup>

Source: 1992–2000 National Election Studies (pooled presidential-election surveys).

Note: Ideology, party identification, candidate evaluations and political alignment all range from 0 for most liberal/Democratic to 1 for most conservative/Republican. The presidential vote is coded 0 for Democratic and 1 for Republican.

†The slope coefficients on doctrinal orthodoxy and religious commitment for each religious tradition. They are unstandardized regression coefficients for ideology, party identification and candidate evaluations, and odds ratio coefficients for the logit model of the vote. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. For the vote, the ratio of the regular logit coefficient to its robust standard error is in parentheses. The statistical significance of the effect of orthodoxy is indicated as follows: \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.10$ .

‡The predicted value/probability of voting Republican for a particular religious tradition when religious orthodoxy and all control variables are at their mean values for the entire sample. Superscript letters indicate that the prediction for the tradition is significantly different from that for another tradition at  $p < 0.05$ , with letters representing traditions as follows: (a) evangelical Protestants, (b) mainline Protestants, (c) Catholics, (d) black Protestants, (e) Jews, (f) seculars.

The effects of religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy show considerable support for the culture wars thesis. The more-orthodox and more-committed members of the three predominantly white religious traditions (evangelical and mainline Protestants and Catholics) are noticeably more conservative, more attached to the Republican party, and more supportive of Republican presidential candidates than are their more-progressive and less-committed counterparts. Despite the strong correlation between doctrine and commitment, both have statistically-significant effects on ideological identification, presidential vote choice and overall political alignment in all three traditions. Both orthodoxy and commitment have significant effects on comparative candidate evaluations for evangelical and mainline Protestants, and at least one of the variables has a significant influence on every dependent variable in each of these traditions.

The effects of religious commitment among evangelical Protestants illustrate the substantive implications of these coefficients. An increase in commitment of 1 (half of its full range) among evangelicals is associated with increases (on scales ranging from 0 to 1) of 0.13 in ideological conservatism, 0.15 in Republican party identification, 0.10 in positive evaluations of Republican presidential candidates relative to their Democratic opponents and 0.15 in overall conservative and Republican political preferences. Such an increase in commitment is associated with evangelicals growing nearly 3.4 times more likely to vote for the Republican presidential candidate instead of the Democratic candidate.

While there clearly is an orthodox–progressive political divide in contemporary American political behaviour, the results also support our expectation that the size and character of the divide varies across religious contexts. That variation is primarily in the political impact of religious commitment. That is not altogether surprising since commitment, more than doctrinal orthodoxy, is an indicator of the degree to which individuals are integrated into a particular religious community and exposed to the church teachings, cues from religious leaders and patterns of social interaction that differ across religious contexts.

As we expected, the relationship between religious commitment on the one hand and political conservatism and support for the Republican party and its candidates on the other hand is clearly strongest in evangelical Protestantism: the tradition with the closest connection to conservative and Republican political causes, the most consistently conservative clergy and (among the predominantly white traditions) the most culturally and politically homogeneous congregants. The effect of commitment is significantly more pro-Republican/conservative for evangelicals than it is for mainline Protestants, Catholics and black Protestants on all five dependent variables.<sup>48</sup> The effects of commitment for mainline Protestants and Catholics are all positive and nearly all statistically significant, but are never significantly different from each other.<sup>49</sup>

Meanwhile, the political impact of religious commitment for black Protestants differs not only in size, but also in direction from that for the other three traditions.

<sup>48</sup> In other words, the interactions between religious commitment and the mainline Protestant, Catholic and black Protestant dummy variables (with evangelical Protestants serving as the comparison group) are negative and statistically significant in all five models. The interactions for Catholics and black Protestants are all significant at  $p < 0.05$ . The interactions for mainline Protestants are significant at  $p < 0.05$  in the ideology, candidate evaluation and vote models, and at  $p < 0.10$  in the party identification and political alignment models.

<sup>49</sup> In other words, when we make mainline Protestants the comparison group, the interaction between religious commitment and the Catholic dummy variable is not statistically significant for any dependent variable.

More-committed black Protestants are significantly more likely than their less-devout counterparts to identify with the Democratic party, to evaluate Democratic candidates more favourably than Republican candidates, and to be more liberal and Democratic in overall political alignment. Highlighting the contextual effect of religious belonging, the impact of religious commitment for black Protestants on every dependent variable is significantly less positive than it is for members of each of the other three traditions.<sup>50</sup>

In contrast to the effect of religious commitment, the influence of doctrinal orthodoxy on political behaviour is largely uniform across religious traditions. Indeed, on all five dependent variables, it is nearly always positive and statistically significant in all four religious traditions.<sup>51</sup> Even among black Protestants, more-authoritative views of Scripture are associated with greater conservatism and support for the Republican party when we control for religious commitment. This pattern may reflect the moral traditionalism – and, in some instances, moral-issue conservatism – that exists alongside economic and racial liberalism and Democratic partisanship within black Protestantism.<sup>52</sup>

In addition to its role in conditioning the political impact of the orthodox–progressive divide, religious tradition continues to exert an influence on political behaviour independent of the effects of commitment and doctrine.<sup>53</sup> It is true that when we eliminate differences in religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy between traditions, there is little political difference between evangelical and mainline Protestants. The only statistically significant difference – that in ideological identification – is quite small. A larger substantive difference is found in vote choice, with evangelicals being more likely than mainliners to vote Republican, but it does not quite meet standard levels of statistical significance ( $p = 0.09$ ). However, black Protestants and Jews are significantly less conservative or less Republican than all of the three predominantly white Christian traditions on nearly all of the political variables. Moreover, there is evidence that the Catholic–Protestant divide retains some political importance. Catholics are significantly less Republican or conservative than evangelical Protestants on all five dependent variables. They are also less Republican than mainline Protestants in party identification, comparative candidate evaluations and overall political alignment. Finally, there is some

<sup>50</sup> For each dependent variable, we estimated separate models with evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants and Catholics as the comparison groups. In every instance, the interaction between religious commitment and the black Protestant dummy variable was negative and statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

<sup>51</sup> There are only three instances in which the difference between the effect of doctrinal orthodoxy for two traditions is statistically significant: the effect on candidate evaluations is more positive for black Protestants than for mainline Protestants, the effect on candidate evaluations is more positive for black Protestants than for Catholics, and the effect on ideology is more positive for mainline Protestants than for evangelicals. Only the first instance is significant at  $p < 0.05$ . The other two are significant at  $p < 0.10$ .

<sup>52</sup> Eric C. Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African-American Experience* (Durham, Ca.: Duke University Press, 1990); Layman, *The Great Divide*; Clyde Wilcox, 'Race, Religion, Region, and Abortion Attitudes', *Sociological Analysis*, 53 (1992), 97–105.

<sup>53</sup> In the bottom portion of Table 1, the predicted values or probabilities for each tradition (when doctrinal orthodoxy, religious commitment and all of the control variables are held constant at their mean values) are followed by a series of superscript letters which indicate statistically-significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) differences with other traditions. For example, an 'a' following a predicted value or probability indicates that the prediction for a particular tradition is significantly different from that for evangelical Protestants, while a 'b' indicates that the prediction is significantly different from that for mainline Protestants. That the value for black Protestants is followed by an 'a' and a 'b' for each dependent variable indicates that, when orthodoxy, commitment and the control variables are held at their means, black Protestants are significantly different from both evangelical and mainline Protestants on each variable.

evidence of the gap between seculars and religious people suggested by several scholars.<sup>54</sup> Seculars are less likely than evangelicals, mainliners and Catholics to identify themselves as political conservatives and are less Republican than both white Protestant traditions in both party affiliations and comparative candidate evaluations.

In sum, there are clear signs of an orthodox–progressive religious divide in American politics, but religious tradition remains a potent force, exerting an effect independent of religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy and conditioning the impact of those two variables. Simply put, religious belonging is critical for linking the orthodox–progressive cleavage to politics.

#### THE POLICY CONTEXTS OF THE CULTURE WARS

To examine the policy contexts of the culture wars, we turn to a structural equation model that examines the extent to which the political impact of religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy is exerted through orientations towards key dimensions of public policy. Models of vertical constraint typically envision socio-demographic factors such as religion affecting political behaviour by first affecting core political values (or ‘policy predispositions’). These values then shape attitudes on specific policy issues, which in turn influence political behaviour.<sup>55</sup> This sort of pattern is also implicit in Hunter’s argument that religious orthodoxy and progressivism lead to ‘competing moral visions’, which in turn produce different views on policy issues and, ultimately, different patterns of political behaviour.<sup>56</sup> Thus, we structure our model so that commitment and orthodoxy first affect core values, those values affect attitudes towards policy issues, which in turn affect political behaviour. However, the model also accounts for the possibilities that commitment and doctrine affect policy attitudes and political behaviour directly and that core values have direct effects on political behaviour.

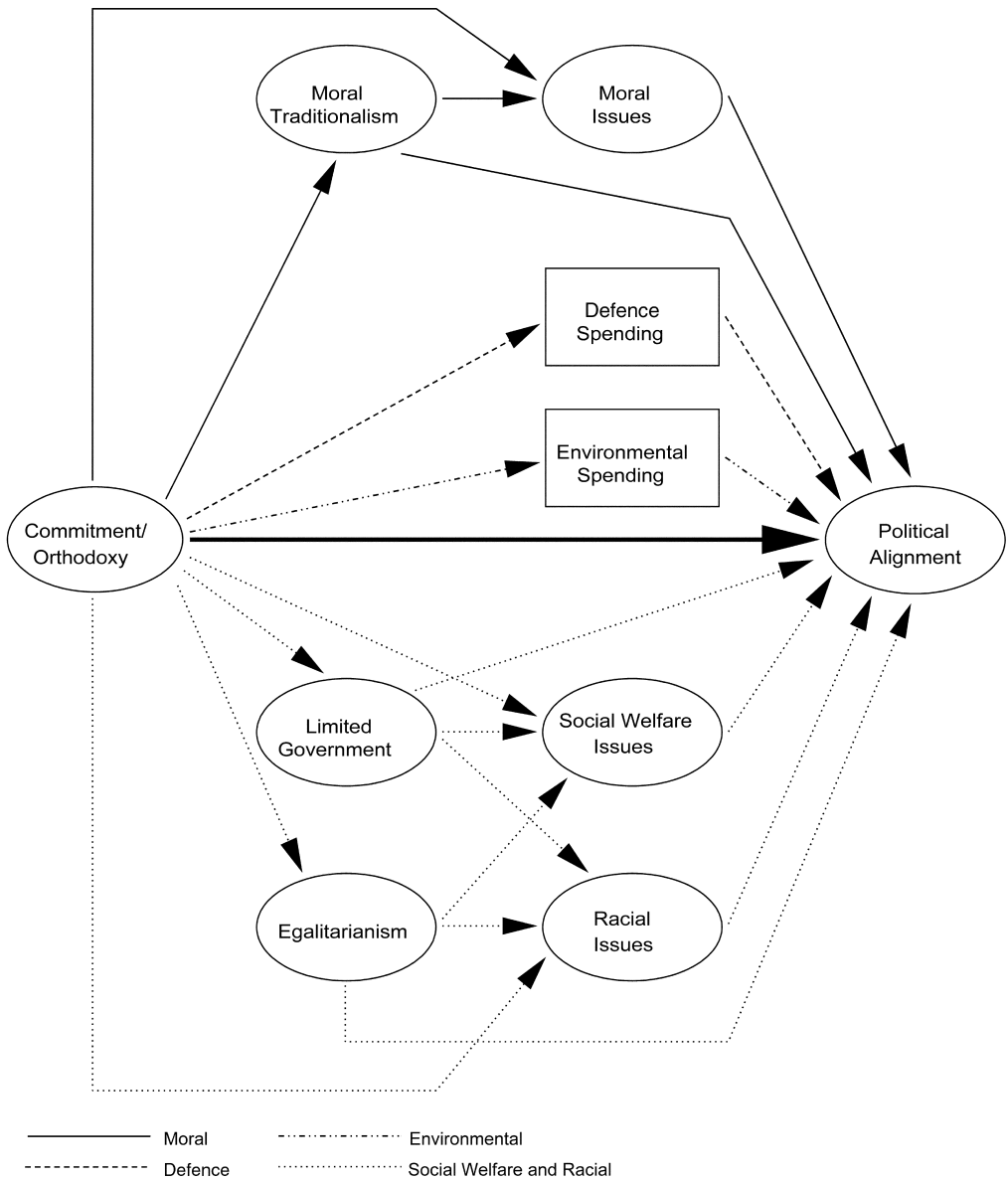
As Figure 1 illustrates, the model includes a direct connection between religious orientations and political affiliations and behaviour – combined into our ‘political alignment’ index – as well as four distinct indirect links between commitment/orthodoxy and political behaviour.<sup>57</sup> One indirect path is through moral values and attitudes, with religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy first affecting the core value of moral traditionalism – the degree to which individuals are committed to traditional moral values and are intolerant of those with different moral outlooks – and then affecting attitudes towards moral issues such as abortion and gay rights both directly and indirectly. A second indirect path is through the values and attitudes associated with the social welfare and racial policy dimensions. Commitment and doctrine first affect two sets of core values – egalitarianism (coded here as anti-egalitarianism) and support for a limited scope of

<sup>54</sup> Wuthnow, *The Struggle for America’s Soul*; Layman, *The Great Divide*.

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, Miller and Shanks, *The New American Voter*.

<sup>56</sup> Hunter, *Culture Wars*.

<sup>57</sup> We use the political alignment index here for two reasons. First, party identification, comparative candidate evaluations and the presidential vote all reflect individuals’ feelings of identification with or support for the two major political parties; and liberal and conservative ideologies are closely identified with the Democratic and Republican parties. Thus the four indicators all tap into one’s degree of alignment with the major combatants in American national politics. Secondly, we estimated our structural model for each of the four indicators separately and the results were very similar to those presented here.



*Fig. 1. Structural model of the political impact of religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy*  
 Note: Each variable represented by an oval is latent and has its own measurement model with observed indicators. The rectangular variables are observed. The paths used to compute the amount of the total effect of orthodoxy on political alignment that is exerted through various types of attitudes are as shown in the legend.

government – that are commonly associated with social welfare and racial attitudes.<sup>58</sup> They then affect attitudes towards issues of social welfare and economic redistribution and towards racial issues such as government assistance to blacks and affirmative action both directly and indirectly.<sup>59</sup> The other two indirect paths are through attitudes towards government spending on national defence and spending on environmental protection.<sup>60</sup>

With the exception of the single-indicator measures of doctrinal orthodoxy, defence and environmental attitudes, all of the variables shown in Figure 1 are latent variables, measured by confirmatory factor loadings on several observed indicators, each of which is treated as having measurement error.<sup>61</sup> To account for our expectation that the political impact of commitment and orthodoxy varies across religious traditions, we estimate the measurement and structural (path) components of the model separately for the three largest

<sup>58</sup> See, for example, Herbert McClosky and John R. Zaller, *The American Ethos: Public Attitudes Toward Capitalism and Democracy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984); Stanley Feldman, 'Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion: The Role of Core Beliefs and Values', *American Journal of Political Science*, 32 (1988), 416–40; Stanley Feldman and Marco R. Steenbergen, 'The Humanitarian Foundation of Public Support for Social Welfare', *American Journal of Political Science*, 45 (2001), 658–77.

Although orientations towards social welfare and racial issues typically fall into two distinct attitudinal dimensions (see Layman and Carsey, 'Party Polarization and "Conflict Extension" in the American Electorate'), we do not separate the indirect effects of orthodoxy through the two sets of attitudes because we assume that they are both influenced by egalitarianism and support for limited government.

<sup>59</sup> Our model also includes attitude towards the death penalty as an indicator of racial attitudes. Race plays a major role in the debate over the death penalty, and in our exploratory factor analysis of domestic policy attitudes, death penalty attitude loaded much more strongly with racial issues than with other types of issues.

<sup>60</sup> These spending questions are the only indicators of environmental and defence and foreign policy attitudes that are included in each of the 1992, 1996 and 2000 NES surveys. Also, there are no indicators of core values associated with environmental or defence and foreign policy attitudes that are included in all three surveys.

<sup>61</sup> To provide a scale for the latent variables, we constrain the factor loading for one observed indicator of each latent variable to be equal to 1. All of the observed indicators are coded to range from 0 for the least orthodox, most liberal or most Democratic orientation to 1 for the most orthodox, most conservative or most Republican orientations. Thus, the latent variables take on the same range of values.

We include the standard demographic controls and dummy variables for 1996 and 2000 in the equation for every endogenous political variable. Because the literature on voting behaviour widely identifies evaluations of the incumbent president, evaluations of prevailing economic conditions, and assessments of presidential candidates' personal traits as shaping vote choice, candidate evaluations, and perhaps even party identification (see Campbell *et al.*, *The American Voter*; Morris P. Fiorina, *Retrospective Voting in American National Elections* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), the political alignment equation also includes these three variables. Economic evaluations are measured by assessments of trends in the national economy over the past year. We did not include assessments of personal finances in the model because the question was asked to only half of the sample (and half of the face-to-face respondents) in 2000 and because the literature suggests that evaluations of the national economy are more closely related than personal financial conditions to electoral choice. We coded both economic evaluations and presidential approval ratings so that higher scores in all three survey years should be associated with stronger support for the Republican party and its candidates. In 1992, with a Republican president in office, approval ratings range from disapprove strongly to approve strongly, and economic evaluations range from the national economy got much worse over the past year to the economy got much better. In 1996 and 2000, with a Democratic incumbent in place, the variables are coded in just the opposite direction.

Assessments of candidates' personal traits are measured by questions asking how well certain characteristics describe both parties' presidential candidates. Questions about five of these characteristics – moral, really cares about people like you, knowledgeable, provides strong leadership, and honest (asked as 'dishonest' in 2000) – were included in all three survey years. We took the difference in each respondent's assessment of how well each of these five traits described the Republican and Democratic candidates. A principal components factor analysis of these five difference scores yielded only one factor with an eigenvalue greater than 1 (which explained 67 per cent of the total variance) and all five difference scores loaded strongly (0.75 or higher) on that single factor. Our measure of assessments of candidate traits is the factor score from that analysis.

religious traditions: evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants and Catholics.<sup>62</sup> Based on the standardized path coefficients in the models, Table 2 shows the direct effects of religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy on policy predispositions; their direct, indirect (through policy predispositions), and total effects on policy attitudes; and their direct, indirect and total effects on political alignment.<sup>63</sup> It also shows the amount of the indirect effects of commitment and orthodoxy on political alignment that is exerted through moral, social welfare and racial, defence and environmental attitudes.<sup>64</sup>

The results provide strong support for the importance of policy contexts in the culture wars and further highlight the importance of religious contexts. As expected, the impact of both religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy is greatest in the moral policy realm. The effects of doctrinal orthodoxy and especially commitment on moral traditionalism are strong and statistically significant in all three traditions.<sup>65</sup> Both variables have strong and significant direct effects on moral-issue attitudes. Combined with their substantial indirect effects through moral traditionalism, commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy produce sizeable total effects on moral-policy attitudes in all three groups.

However, even in the policy context in which the orthodox–progressive divide is manifested most fully, its impact varies considerably across religious contexts, and, as before, the variation is primarily in the influence of religious commitment. The direct effect of commitment on moral traditionalism and commitment’s direct and indirect effects on moral-issue attitudes are clearly greater for evangelical Protestants than for mainline Protestants or Catholics.

As expected, the links between religious behaviour and belief and non-moral policy predispositions and issue attitudes are weaker and less consistent across religious traditions. In keeping with the theological and economic individualism of evangelical Protestants, religious commitment leads to strong and statistically significant increases in both anti-egalitarianism and support for a limited scope of government among them. Thus, although commitment does not have a significant direct effect on social welfare attitudes, it does have a clearly positive indirect effect on social welfare conservatism among evangelicals. The relationship between commitment and support for limited government is also statistically significant for mainline Protestants and Catholics, and commitment has a significant impact on the rejection of egalitarian values among mainliners. However, the more communitarian proclivities of the Protestant mainline and Catholics are reflected in the effect of religious commitment on support for limited government being much smaller for them than for evangelicals, and in its effect on egalitarianism not being statistically significant for Catholics. The end result is that the total effect of commitment

<sup>62</sup> This approach does not allow us to examine the effect of religious tradition, independent of religious orthodoxy, on political attitudes and behaviour. However, we have established that independent effect in Table 1.

<sup>63</sup> Appendix Table A2 presents all of the measurement and structural (path) coefficients in the models. The coefficients on the control variables are available from the authors upon request.

<sup>64</sup> We do not exclude missing values from our analyses. We estimate our model using Amos 4.0, which computes full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimates even in the presence of missing data: see T.W. Andersen, ‘Maximum Likelihood Estimates for a Multivariate Normal Distribution When Some Observations are Missing’, *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 52 (1957), 200–3. Wothke and Arbuckle describe this FIML procedure and show that the estimates produced by it are more consistent and efficient than those produced by pairwise or listwise deletion of missing observations (Werner Wothke and James L. Arbuckle, ‘Full-Information Missing Data Analysis with Amos’ (Chicago: SPSS White Paper, 1996), see <http://www.spss.com>).

<sup>65</sup> All non-zero direct effects in Table 2 are statistically significant at  $p < 0.10$ . Direct effects that are not statistically significant are given a value of 0 in the table, and are treated as 0 in computing indirect and total effects.

TABLE 2 *The Political Impact of Religious Commitment and Doctrinal Orthodoxy Within Religious Traditions: Estimates from Structural Equation Models*

	Evangelical	Mainline	Catholic
<i>Moral attitudes</i>			
<i>Religious commitment</i>			
Direct effect on moral traditionalism <sup>a</sup>	0.54	0.28	0.43
Direct effect on moral issue attitudes	0.29	0.11	0.11
Indirect effect on moral issue attitudes <sup>b</sup>	0.30	0.16	0.24
Total effect on moral issue attitudes	0.59	0.27	0.35
<i>Doctrinal orthodoxy</i>			
Direct effect on moral traditionalism	0.10	0.14	0.08
Direct effect on moral issue attitudes	0.15	0.19	0.11
Indirect effect on moral issue attitudes	0.06	0.08	0.04
Total effect on moral issue attitudes	0.21	0.27	0.15
<i>Welfare/Race-related attitudes</i>			
<i>Religious commitment</i>			
Direct effect on anti-egalitarianism	0.19	0.08	0
Direct effect on support for limited government	0.28	0.11	0.14
Direct effect on social welfare issue attitudes	0	0	0
Indirect effect on social welfare issue attitudes	0.22	0.10	0.08
Total effect on social welfare issue attitudes	0.22	0.10	0.08
Direct effect on racial issue attitudes	-0.16	-0.14	-0.13
Indirect effect on racial issue attitudes	0.20	0.09	0.05
Total effect on racial issue attitudes	0.04	-0.05	-0.08
<i>Doctrinal orthodoxy</i>			
Direct effect on anti-egalitarianism	0.04	0.12	0
Direct effect on support for limited government	0	0	0
Direct effect on social welfare issue attitudes	0	0	0
Indirect effect on social welfare issue attitudes	0	0.06	0
Total effect on social welfare issue attitudes	0	0.06	0
Direct effect on racial issue attitudes	0	0	0
Indirect effect on racial issue attitudes	0	0.09	0
Total effect on racial issue attitudes	0	0.09	0
<i>Defence/Environmental attitudes</i>			
<i>Religious commitment</i>			
Direct effect on defence spending (more)	0	0.09	0.11
Direct effect on environmental spending (less)	0.24	0.10	0.08
<i>Doctrinal orthodoxy</i>			
Direct effect on defence spending (more)	0.09	0.11	0.08
Direct effect on environmental spending (less)	0	0	0
<i>Political alignment</i>			
<i>Religious commitment</i>			
Direct effect	-0.08	0	0
Indirect effect through moral attitudes <sup>c</sup>	0.20	0.04	0.04
Indirect effect through welfare and race-related attitudes	0.07	0.03	0.03
Indirect effect through defence spending	0	0.01	0.01
Indirect effect through environmental spending	0	0	0.004
Total effect	0.19	0.08	0.084

TABLE 2 (Continued)

	Evangelical	Mainline	Catholic
<i>Doctrinal orthodoxy</i>			
Direct effect	0	0	0
Indirect effect through moral attitudes	0.07	0.03	0.02
Indirect effect through welfare and race-related attitudes	0	0.01	0
Indirect effect through defence spending	0	0.01	0.01
Indirect effect through environmental spending	0	0	0
Total effect	0.07	0.05	0.03
(N)	(1,291)	(1,025)	(1,235)
$\chi^2$ (df = 1,083)	6,989.18	6,420.76	7,143.12
$\chi^2$ /df	6.45	5.93	6.60
$\Delta_1/\Delta_2^d$	0.93/0.94	0.91/0.93	0.91/0.92
$\rho_1/\rho_2^e$	0.92/0.93	0.90/0.91	0.90/0.91

Source: 1992–2000 National Election Studies (pooled).

Note: Entries are standardized regression coefficients for direct effects. Indirect and total effects are based on standardized coefficients. Estimates are computed by full-information maximum likelihood, correcting for measurement error in all observed indicators, with Amos 4.0. Controls for demographic characteristics and year of study affect all endogenous variables. Controls for presidential approval, assessments of candidate traits and assessments of the national economy affect political alignment only.

<sup>a</sup> Direct effects of 0 indicate that the effect is not statistically significant. All non-zero direct effects are significant ( $p < 0.10$ ).

<sup>b</sup> Only statistically significant paths are used to compute indirect and total effects. The indirect effects of commitment/orthodoxy on issue attitudes are the sum of the direct effect of commitment/orthodoxy on each policy predisposition affecting the issue attitude multiplied by the direct effect of each predisposition on the attitude.

<sup>c</sup> The indirect effects of religious commitment/doctrinal orthodoxy through moral attitudes and welfare and race-related attitudes are the sum of the direct effect of commitment/orthodoxy on each policy predisposition associated with those attitudes multiplied by the direct effect of those predispositions on political alignment and the total effect of commitment/orthodoxy on the issue attitudes multiplied by the direct effect of the issue attitudes on political alignment.

<sup>d</sup> Bentler and Bonett's normed fit index/Bollen's incremental fit index (Peter M. Bentler and Douglas G. Bonett, 'Significance Tests and Goodness of Fit in the Analysis of Covariance Structures', *Psychological Bulletin*, 88 (1980), 588–606; Kenneth A. Bollen, 'A New Incremental Fit Index for General Structural Equation Models', *Sociological Methods and Research*, 17 (1989), 303–16).

<sup>e</sup> Bollen's relative fit index/Bentler and Bonett's non-normed fit index (Kenneth A. Bollen, 'Sample Size and Bentler and Bonett's Nonnormed Fit Index', *Psychometrika*, 51 (1986), 375–7; Bentler and Bonett, 'Significance Tests and Goodness of Fit in the Analysis of Covariance Structures'.)

on social welfare conservatism is clearly smaller for mainliners and Catholics than for evangelicals.

The indirect effect of religious commitment on racial-issue conservatism is positive for all three traditions, but its total effect is close to 0 for evangelicals and negative for mainline Protestants and Catholics. The reason is that commitment has a statistically significant and negative direct effect on racial-issue conservatism in all three traditions. A possible explanation is that, holding aside their support for limited government and lack of egalitarianism, committed white Christians regard African-Americans as fellow believers, deserving of the compassion God offers to all humankind.

The influence of doctrinal orthodoxy on anti-egalitarianism, support for limiting the role of government, and social-welfare and racial-policy attitudes is generally weaker and less consistent across traditions than is that of religious commitment. In fact, orthodoxy has no effect at all on social welfare and racial attitudes among evangelicals and Catholics. It does have a positive, indirect effect on both social welfare and racial conservatism among mainliners.

Doctrinal orthodoxy leads to support for more spending on national defence in all three traditions, as does religious commitment among mainline Protestants and Catholics. Given evangelicalism's traditional support for a strong national defence and aggressive stance towards foreign enemies,<sup>66</sup> it is somewhat surprising that commitment does not have a significant impact on defence spending preferences in that tradition. The expected pattern returns for environmental spending, where, in keeping with the pre-millennial eschatology of evangelicalism,<sup>67</sup> the relationship between religious commitment and support for decreases in spending on environmental protection is much larger for evangelicals than for mainliners or Catholics. Belief orthodoxy has no effect on environmental spending preferences in any of the three traditions.

Turning to the effects of religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy on political alignment, it is not surprising that the impact of commitment for mainline Protestants and Catholics and of orthodoxy for all three religious traditions is entirely indirect, exerted through core political values and policy-issue attitudes. What is somewhat surprising is that the direct effect of religious commitment for evangelical Protestants is negative and statistically significant. This simply may mean that we have 'over-controlled' for the orientations that link commitment to conservative and Republican political inclinations. However, it also may reflect the traditional Democratic loyalties of committed evangelicals. A large part of the reason why these individuals have shifted their party loyalties from Democratic to Republican over the last forty years is the growing importance of moral issues in American party politics.<sup>68</sup> Once we control for their conservative moral views (as well as their views on other policy issues), it may be only natural that committed evangelicals revert to their Democratic leanings.

The sources and sizes of the indirect effect of religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy on political alignment are in keeping with our arguments about policy and religious contexts. Although commitment has a noticeable indirect effect through social welfare and racial attitudes, the largest portion of its indirect effect on overall alignment in each tradition is exerted through moral values and attitudes, and that is particularly the case among evangelical Protestants. The predominance of moral values and attitudes in linking the orthodox-progressive divide to political behaviour is even more evident in the case of doctrinal orthodoxy. All of the effect of doctrine for evangelical Protestants and the largest proportion of the effect for mainline Protestants and Catholics are exerted through moral attitudes. Meanwhile, the total political effects of both religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy are clearly larger in the evangelical tradition than for mainline Protestants and Catholics.

<sup>66</sup> Green *et al.*, *Religion and the Culture Wars*.

<sup>67</sup> Andrew Kohut, John C. Green, Scott Keeter and Robert C. Toth, *The Diminishing Divide: Religion's Changing Role in American Politics* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2000).

<sup>68</sup> Layman, *The Great Divide*.

## THE POLITICAL CONTEXTS OF THE CULTURE WARS

While religious elites and activists play a crucial role in linking religious orthodoxy to politics, their political counterparts are hardly silent partners in these relationships. The electoral activities of political parties and their candidates help structure the political choices before citizens, fostering or retarding the impact of the orthodox–progressive divide. That impact should be greatest when parties and candidates emphasize the moral issues that are intimately related to the divide and take distinct stands on them. At the individual level, the influence of religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy should be greatest when citizens find moral issues to be salient and recognize partisan differences on them. When these conditions do not hold, the political impact of these variables should be much less evident.

To measure the salience of moral issues and awareness of party differences on them, we turn to two sets of questions in the 1996 NES about the key moral issue of abortion.<sup>69</sup> The first simply asks respondents about the importance of the abortion issue to them. Respondents who say that abortion is ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ important are coded as having ‘salient’ opinion, while those who say that abortion is ‘somewhat’, ‘not very’ or ‘not at all’ important are coded as having opinions that are ‘not salient’. The second set of questions asks respondents to place each of the major political parties on the NES abortion scale. We classify those respondents who place both parties on the scale and view the Republican party as more pro-life (or anti-abortion) than the Democratic party as being aware of party differences on abortion. Respondents who fail to place both parties on the scale, place the parties at the same position, or view the Democrats as more pro-life than the Republicans are coded as not being aware of party differences.

We are then able to estimate our single-equation interactive model of the impact of religious tradition, religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy on political alignment, with standard demographic controls, for four groups of respondents: those for whom abortion is not salient and who are not aware of party differences on abortion; those for whom abortion is not salient but who are aware of party differences; those for whom abortion is salient but who are not aware of party differences; and those for whom abortion is salient and who are aware of party differences.<sup>70</sup> Table 3 shows the estimated slope

<sup>69</sup> We use only the 1996 NES for this analysis because it was the only one of the three presidential-year NES surveys from 1992 to 2000 to ask respondents both how important the abortion issue was to them and to place the two parties (and not just their candidates) on the abortion scale. Abortion was the only moral issue on which questions about salience and party positions were asked in any of the three surveys.

<sup>70</sup> We use the same measures of religious commitment, doctrinal orthodoxy and political alignment as in the analysis in Table 1, but here for only 1996 NES respondents. We return here to simple models including only demographic controls and not controls for issue attitudes and core values. We do so for two reasons. First, we already have shown that the impact of religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy on political behaviour is largely indirect, exerted through issue attitudes and policy predispositions. The purpose of this analysis is not to again uncover the nature of commitment and doctrine’s indirect effects, but to assess the political contexts in which their impact on political behaviour is felt. Secondly, the sample sizes for some of the groups for which we estimate our model are quite small. That makes the estimation of models that include a wide range of policy attitudes and political values very difficult.

The number of Jewish respondents in some of these subgroups is too small for us to estimate meaningful coefficients on the Jewish variable and its interaction with orthodoxy. So, we exclude Jews from these analyses.

TABLE 3 *The Impact of Religious Commitment and Doctrinal Orthodoxy on Political Behaviour by the Salience of and Awareness of Party Differences on Abortion*

Effect (slope) of doctrinal orthodoxy/religious commitment	Salience of abortion and awareness of party differences on abortion			
	Not salient/ Not aware	Not salient/ Aware	Salient/ Not aware	Salient/ Aware
<i>Evangelical Protestant</i>				
Doctrinal orthodoxy	0.09 (0.08)	- 0.05 (0.09)	0.01 (0.07)	0.10** (0.05)
Religious commitment	- 0.14 (0.10)	- 0.08 (0.13)	0.16** (0.08)	0.26*** (0.05)
<i>Mainline Protestant</i>				
Doctrinal orthodoxy	- 0.002 (0.10)	- 0.03 (0.10)	0.03 (0.06)	0.09* (0.05)
Religious commitment	- 0.02 (0.12)	- 0.05 (0.11)	- 0.15** (0.07)	0.09 (0.06)
<i>Catholic</i>				
Doctrinal orthodoxy	0.07 (0.07)	0.04 (0.10)	0.03 (0.06)	0.08** (0.04)
Religious commitment	- 0.21** (0.08)	- 0.02 (0.11)	0.02 (0.08)	0.11** (0.05)
(N)	(115)	(156)	(170)	(409)
Adjusted $R^2$	0.21	0.06	0.27	0.33

Source: 1996 National Election Study.

Note: The entries are the unstandardized slope coefficients on religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy (both ranging from - 1 to + 1) for each religious tradition from regression models of the political alignment index, ranging from 0 (most liberal/Democratic) to 1 (most conservative/Republican). Standard errors are in parentheses. The regression models include controls for demographic orientations.

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \* $p < 0.10$ .

coefficients on religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy for Catholics and evangelical and mainline Protestants within these groups.<sup>71</sup>

The results are strongly supportive of our argument about political context. When respondents either do not find abortion to be salient, or are unaware of party differences on abortion, or both, the effect of doctrinal orthodoxy on political alignment is never statistically significant, and the effect of religious commitment is significant only in three instances. Among Catholics who do not find abortion to be salient and are unaware of party differences, committed parishioners are more liberal and Democratic than are less devout parishioners. A similar pattern holds for mainline Protestants who find abortion to be

<sup>71</sup> We do not show the predicted values of political alignment for various traditions when religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy are at their sample means (as in Table 1) because the differences between traditions are not affected much by the salience of and awareness of party differences on abortion. We performed the same analyses with party identification, ideology, candidate evaluations and the vote as separate dependent variables. The results were all very similar to those for the political alignment index.

salient but are not aware of the Republicans being the more pro-life party. Among evangelicals who find abortion to be salient but are not aware of party differences, the effect of commitment is pro-Republican and conservative but is clearly weaker and less significant than it is for evangelicals who meet both the salience and awareness conditions.

When abortion is both salient to citizens and they are aware of party differences, the impact of religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy approaches the expectations of the culture wars thesis. Both variables are significantly related to conservatism and support for the Republicans among evangelical Protestants and Catholics. Among mainline Protestants, the effect of doctrinal orthodoxy is marginally significant ( $p < 0.10$ ) and the impact of religious commitment approaches statistical significance ( $p < 0.16$ ). The positive effects of commitment and orthodoxy for each tradition are much larger than in any of the other political contexts. Importantly, even in the political context that is most conducive to an orthodox–progressive divide, the importance of religious context is evident: the effect of religious commitment is more than twice as large among evangelicals as it is among mainliners and Catholics.

Thus, the orthodox–progressive cleavage is linked to political behaviour only when citizens find moral issues to be salient and when they are aware of party differences on moral issues. This finding has clear implications for political campaigns and electoral behaviour. When parties and their candidates emphasize moral issues and take distinct stands on them, the orthodox–progressive divide can become politically important. But when moral issues are placed on the back burner of a campaign or partisan moral differences are blurred, the orthodox–progressive divide should be much less relevant to political behaviour.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

We have argued that the resolution to the culture wars debate can be found in the literature on mass opinion constraint. The orthodox–progressive religious divide is most relevant to political behaviour in the special policy, religious and political contexts in which logical, psychological, social and electoral sources of constraint are likely to be in effect. The empirical evidence strongly supports this argument. Thus, the cultural wars are waged by limited religious troops on narrow policy fronts under special political leadership, and the broad cultural conflagration feared by Hunter is largely a rumour.

But if ‘the end is not yet’, could the culture wars engulf the nation in the near future? For the culture wars to spread, the special contexts in which they matter would have to expand dramatically, including a decline in the distinctiveness of religious traditions, the expenditure of enormous political energy by religious and political elites to link the cultural divide to non-moral issues and the further polarization of political elites on a broader agenda. Such a combination of developments does not appear likely in the near term.

However, the fact that the culture wars are limited in scope does not necessarily mean that their impact on aggregate political outcomes is minor. The orthodox–progressive divide matters very much for the political behaviour of at least small groups of citizens, and such groups can have a profound impact in close elections as well as on party and public policy.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, the aggregate impact of the culture wars may be especially strong when

<sup>72</sup> Kohut *et al.*, *The Diminishing Divide*.

the special contexts converge, such as when candidates stress and differentiate themselves on moral issues, and clergy, lay leaders and religion-based interest groups seek to mobilize parishioners behind them.<sup>73</sup> In addition, the aggregate impact of the culture wars may have grown as the relevant contexts have become more prevalent. Their religious contexts may have expanded as evangelical Protestants and seculars have grown in size relative to other major religious groups;<sup>74</sup> their policy contexts may have expanded as new moral issues such as same-sex marriage have been added to the agenda; and their political contexts may have become more commonplace as electoral elites have become more focused on and more polarized on moral issues.<sup>75</sup>

In fact, such a convergence may well have occurred in the 2004 presidential election. The Bush campaign focused considerable attention on mobilizing evangelicals and other religious conservatives. Factors such as President Bush's call for a constitutional amendment to define marriage as being only between a man and a woman, state referendums seeking to do the same and the highly public criticism of Senator Kerry's pro-choice stance on abortion by some Catholic bishops focused considerable attention on moral issues. The president's handling of foreign policy, particularly the war in Iraq, seemed to generate enthusiasm within orthodox religious circles and disdain among seculars and religious progressives, further connecting the cultural divide to issues outside the core 'moral' agenda. And the electoral impact of this conjoining of factors may have been profound: voters motivated by 'moral values' may well have played a deciding role in Bush's victory.

Finally, our resolution to the culture wars debate has implications for other important social cleavages such as gender, race and class. They are most likely to be relevant for mass political behaviour in the special policy, social and political contexts in which the various sources of constraint take shape. For example, gender's political impact is likely to be strongest in the policy areas that have a logical relationship to the unique perspectives of women and men, within communities that encourage distinct core values by gender and connect them to politics, and when candidates and parties emphasize and take distinct stands on issues that tap into unique female and male experiences.

#### APPENDIX A: MEASUREMENT OF RELIGIOUS TRADITION

The assignment of respondents to traditions followed a three-step procedure.

- (1) Respondents with specific religious denominations were assigned to religious traditions as follows:

*Seculars:* No religious preference, agnostics and atheists

*Evangelical Protestants:* Seventh-Day Adventist, American Baptist Association, Baptist Bible Fellowship, Baptist General Conference, Baptist Missionary Association of America, Conservative Baptist Association of America, General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, National Association of Free Will Baptists, Primitive Baptists, Reformed Baptist, Southern Baptist Convention,

<sup>73</sup> See, for example, Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, eds, *God at the Grass Roots: The Christian Right in the 1994 Elections* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1995); Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, eds, *God at the Grass Roots 1996* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997); John C. Green, Mark J. Rozell and Clyde Wilcox, eds, *Prayers in the Precincts: The Christian Right in the 1998 Elections* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2000).

<sup>74</sup> Kohut *et al.*, *The Diminishing Divide*.

<sup>75</sup> Layman, *The Great Divide*; Fiorina, Abrams and Pope, *Culture War?*

Mennonite Church, Evangelical Covenant Church, Evangelical Free Church, Congregational Christian, Brethren in Christ, Mennonite Brethren, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Church of God (Anderson, Ind.), Church of the Nazarene, Free Methodist Church, Salvation Army, Wesleyan Church, Church of God of Findlay, Ohio, Plymouth Brethren, Independent Fundamentalist Churches of America, Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Congregational Methodist, Assemblies of God, Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.), Church of God (Huntsville, Al.), International Church of the Four Square Gospel, Pentecostal Church of God, Pentecostal Holiness Church, Church of God of the Apostolic Faith, Church of God of Prophecy, Apostolic Pentecostal, Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church in America, Evangelical Presbyterian, Christian Reformed Church.

*Mainline Protestants:* Episcopalian, United Church of Christ, American Baptist Churches, USA, Quakers (Friends), Church of the Brethren, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church in the USA, Reformed Church in America, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

*Black Protestant:* National Baptist Convention in the USA, National Baptist Convention of America, National Primitive Baptist Convention of the USA, Progressive National Baptist Convention, African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Church of God in Christ, and all other African-Americans with Protestant affiliations

*Catholic*

*Jewish:* Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jews

- (2) Respondents with ambiguous Protestant affiliations (e.g. ‘Protestant’ or ‘Presbyterian’ with no further specifics) in 1992 and 1996 were assigned to traditions based on their response to the question ‘Which of these words best describes your kind of Christianity?’ The question was not asked in 2000.
  - (a) Non-black individuals who identified themselves as fundamentalist, evangelical, or charismatic/spirit-filled were coded as evangelical Protestants.
  - (b) Non-black individuals who identified themselves as liberal were coded as mainline Protestants.
  - (c) Black individuals who provided any religious identification were coded as black Protestants.
- (3) Respondents with ambiguous Protestant affiliations in 2000 and respondents with ambiguous Protestant affiliations in 1992 and 1996 who did not provide a religious identification were assigned to traditions based on their religious beliefs and behaviours as follows:
  - (a) Individuals who rarely attended church, who did not consider themselves to be born-again Christians, who received no or only some guidance from religion, and who did not hold a literal view of Scripture were coded as seculars.
  - (b) Black individuals not coded as seculars were coded as black Protestants.
  - (c) Non-black individuals who held a literal view of Scripture or considered themselves to be born-again Christians were coded as evangelical Protestants.
  - (d) Non-blacks not coded as seculars or evangelical Protestants were coded as mainline Protestants.

#### APPENDIX B: COEFFICIENT ESTIMATES FOR TABLE 1

Table A1 presents the regression and logit coefficients for our models of the impact of religious tradition, religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy on political affiliations and behaviour with controls for demographic characteristics and dummy variables for 1996 and 2000 respondents, and robust standard errors. In all of our models, the excluded (comparison) category of religious tradition is evangelical Protestants. So, the coefficients on the dummy variables for each of the other religious traditions represent the difference on the dependent variable between that particular tradition and evangelical Protestants when religious commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy (view of the Bible) are both equal to 0 (their midpoints since both are coded to range from  $-1$  to  $+1$ ). The coefficients on doctrinal orthodoxy and religious commitment represent their effects on the dependent variables for evangelical Protestants. The coefficients

TABLE A1 *The Impact of Religious Tradition, Religious Commitment and Doctrinal Orthodoxy on Policy Predispositions, Policy Attitudes and Political Behaviour, Controlling for Demographic Orientations*

Independent variables	Dependent variable				
	Ideological identification	Party identification	Candidate evaluations	Presidential vote	Political alignment
Mainline Protestant <sup>a</sup>	-0.03*** (0.01)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.24* (0.14)	-0.01 (0.01)
Catholic	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.08*** (0.02)	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.44*** (0.15)	-0.06*** (0.01)
Black Protestant	-0.09** (0.04)	-0.24*** (0.03)	-0.13*** (0.01)	-3.40*** (1.06)	-0.20*** (0.04)
Jewish	-0.13*** (0.02)	-0.26*** (0.03)	-0.13*** (0.04)	-2.46*** (0.75)	-0.19*** (0.01)
Secular	-0.07*** (0.01)	-0.06*** (0.01)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.50 (0.51)	-0.05 (0.05)
Doctrinal Orthodoxy	0.02*** (0.003)	0.02 (0.02)	0.03*** (0.01)	0.42*** (0.11)	0.05*** (0.01)
Religious Commitment	0.13*** (0.01)	0.15*** (0.02)	0.10*** (0.01)	1.21*** (0.11)	0.15*** (0.01)
Mainline × Orthodoxy	0.02* (0.01)	0.01 (0.03)	-0.001 (0.01)	0.06 (0.13)	-0.004 (0.01)
Catholic × Orthodoxy	0.01 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.11 (0.17)	-0.01 (0.02)
Black Prot × Orthodoxy	0.02 (0.02)	0.04 (0.05)	0.01 (0.01)	0.49 (1.71)	-0.001 (0.02)
Jewish × Orthodoxy	0.07*** (0.01)	0.01 (0.07)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.22 (0.85)	0.01 (0.01)
Secular × Orthodoxy	0.03*** (0.01)	0.03 (0.03)	0.01 (0.01)	0.20 (0.38)	0.03 (0.04)
Mainline × Commitment	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.08* (0.05)	-0.06** (0.03)	-0.75** (0.38)	-0.08* (0.05)
Catholic × Commitment	-0.06*** (0.02)	-0.08*** (0.03)	-0.05*** (0.01)	-0.53** (0.21)	-0.07** (0.03)
Black Prot × Commitment	-0.13*** (0.01)	-0.25*** (0.01)	-0.17*** (0.03)	-3.15** (1.33)	-0.21*** (0.03)
Jewish × Commitment	-0.09** (0.04)	-0.05 (0.08)	0.02 (0.06)	1.70 (1.65)	-0.05 (0.05)
Secular × Commitment	-0.11*** (0.01)	-0.14*** (0.03)	-0.09*** (0.01)	-0.78 (0.59)	-0.11*** (0.05)
Constant	0.51*** (0.01)	0.41*** (0.04)	0.44*** (0.02)	-1.33*** (0.36)	0.41*** (0.02)
(N)	(4,123)	(4,082)	(3,906)	(2,412)	(2,387)
R <sup>2</sup> or Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.14	0.16	0.15	0.19	0.25
χ <sup>2</sup> (df)	-	-	-	617.42 (25)	-
% Correctly predicted	-	-	-	70.8	-

Source: 1992–2000 National Election Studies (pooled presidential-election surveys).

Note: Entries are logit coefficients for the presidential vote and unstandardized regression coefficients for all other dependent variables. Robust standard errors are in parentheses. The vote is coded 1 for Republican and 0 for Democratic. All other dependent variables range from 0 (most liberal/Democratic) to 1 (most conservative/Republican). The controls included in each model are education, income, southern residence, gender, age, union membership and dummy variables for 1996 and 2000 respondents.

<sup>a</sup>‘Evangelical Protestant’ is the excluded category of religious tradition.

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \* $p < 0.10$ .

on the interactions between the religious tradition dummy variables and commitment/orthodoxy represent the difference between the effect of commitment/orthodoxy on the dependent variable for that particular tradition and the effect of commitment/orthodoxy on the dependent variable for evangelical Protestants.

APPENDIX C: ESTIMATES OF MEASUREMENT AND STRUCTURAL PARAMETERS

Table A2 presents the estimates of all the measurement and structural parameters in the models of the political impact of religions commitment and doctrinal orthodoxy.

TABLE A2 *Estimates of Measurement and Structural Parameters from the Models of the Political Impact of Religious Commitment and Doctrinal Orthodoxy*

	Evangelical Protestants			Mainline Protestants			Catholics		
	Coef.	Std. error	Std. coef.	Coef.	Std. error	Std. coef.	Coef.	Std. error	Std. coef.
<i>Measurement coefficients</i>									
<i>Religious commitment</i>									
Bible reading	0.85	0.04	0.75	0.90	0.05	0.71	0.51	0.04	0.52
Worship attendance	1.00	–	0.73	1.00	–	0.61	1.00	–	0.67
Religious guidance	0.80	0.04	0.68	1.44	0.08	0.77	1.14	0.06	0.72
Frequency of prayer	0.76	0.03	0.71	1.19	0.07	0.76	0.94	0.05	0.70
<i>Moral traditionalism</i>									
More tolerant of people with different moral standards	1.00	–	0.66	1.00	–	0.45	1.00	–	0.47
Fewer problems if emphasis on traditional family ties	0.43	0.03	0.46	1.13	0.10	0.66	0.86	0.08	0.53
Adjust moral behaviour to changing world	1.04	0.06	0.64	0.96	0.12	0.38	1.18	0.12	0.47
Newer lifestyles contribute to breakdown of society	0.60	0.04	0.50	1.65	0.14	0.75	1.10	0.11	0.52
<i>Egalitarianism</i>									
Society make sure everyone has equal opportunity	1.00	–	0.42	1.00	–	0.47	1.00	–	0.35
Gone too far in pushing equality in this country	1.39	0.14	0.47	1.87	0.16	0.63	2.60	0.27	0.63
Big problem is we don't give everyone equal chance	2.03	0.18	0.65	1.50	0.14	0.52	1.73	0.21	0.42
Better off if worried less about how equal people are	1.40	0.14	0.46	1.93	0.16	0.65	2.59	0.27	0.63
Not big problem if some have more chance than others	1.29	0.13	0.45	1.51	0.14	0.55	2.11	0.23	0.54
Fewer problems if people were treated equally	1.74	0.16	0.60	1.30	0.13	0.49	1.65	0.19	0.46
<i>Limited government</i>									
Less government the better vs. more things government should be doing	1.00	–	0.79	1.00	–	0.80	1.00	–	0.73
Need strong govt. to handle complex economic problems vs. free market can handle	0.81	0.04	0.66	0.85	0.05	0.70	0.80	0.05	0.62
Govt. bigger because doing things people should do themselves vs. bigger because problems bigger	0.87	0.04	0.69	0.82	0.05	0.65	0.90	0.06	0.64

TABLE A2 (Continued)

	Evangelical Protestants			Mainline Protestants			Catholics		
	Coef.	Std. error	Std. coef.	Coef.	Std. error	coef.	Coef.	Std. error	Std. coef.
<i>Moral issue attitudes</i>									
Abortion	1.00	—	0.60	1.00	—	0.51	1.00	—	0.51
Women's rights	0.68	0.05	0.47	0.77	0.08	0.47	0.60	0.06	0.44
Homosexual discrimination laws	1.14	0.08	0.57	1.27	0.12	0.50	0.90	0.09	0.44
Homosexuals in military	1.11	0.08	0.55	1.55	0.13	0.62	1.07	0.09	0.52
<i>Social welfare issue attitudes</i>									
Government services/spending	1.00	—	0.65	1.00	—	0.67	1.00	—	0.57
Government health insurance plan	0.92	0.07	0.51	0.91	0.07	0.49	0.99	0.09	0.44
Govt. provide jobs/standard of living	0.97	0.06	0.57	0.91	0.07	0.55	1.07	0.09	0.51
Spending on food stamps	0.98	0.07	0.52	1.07	0.08	0.54	1.27	0.10	0.54
Spending on welfare	1.11	0.07	0.57	1.13	0.08	0.54	1.39	0.10	0.56
Spending on social security	0.76	0.06	0.46	0.76	0.07	0.42	0.83	0.08	0.39
Spending to help the poor	1.14	0.07	0.61	1.24	0.08	0.60	1.29	0.09	0.56
<i>Racial issue attitudes</i>									
Govt. responsibility to help blacks	1.00	—	0.62	1.00	—	0.66	1.00	—	0.61
Govt. ensure racial fairness in jobs	1.28	0.11	0.53	1.48	0.11	0.61	1.29	0.10	0.55
Preferential hiring of minorities	0.80	0.08	0.45	0.78	0.07	0.45	0.93	0.08	0.48
Death penalty	0.67	0.08	0.33	0.59	0.07	0.32	0.75	0.09	0.34
<i>Political alignment</i>									
Candidate evaluations	1.00	—	0.87	1.00	—	0.88	1.00	—	0.87
Party identification	1.31	0.05	0.67	1.33	0.06	0.68	1.30	0.05	0.67
Ideological identification	0.58	0.04	0.46	0.53	0.04	0.43	0.52	0.04	0.40
Presidential vote	1.21	0.02	0.53	1.10	0.03	0.45	1.05	0.03	0.41
<i>Structural coefficients</i>									
<i>Effects on moral traditionalism</i>									
Religious commitment	0.46	0.04	0.54	0.19	0.04	0.28	0.27	0.03	0.43
Doctrinal orthodoxy	0.08	0.04	0.10	0.06	0.02	0.14	0.04	0.02	0.08
<i>Effects on moral issue attitudes</i>									
Moral traditionalism	0.53	0.07	0.55	0.66	0.09	0.56	0.74	0.11	0.55
Religious commitment	0.24	0.05	0.29	0.09	0.04	0.11	0.09	0.04	0.11
Doctrinal orthodoxy	0.12	0.02	0.15	0.10	0.02	0.19	0.08	0.02	0.11
<i>Effects on anti-egalitarianism</i>									
Religious commitment	0.08	0.02	0.19	0.05	0.03	0.08	0.01*	0.02	0.03
Doctrinal orthodoxy	0.02*	0.02	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.12	0.02*	0.02	0.05
<i>Effects on support for limited government</i>									
Religious commitment	0.43	0.06	0.28	0.23	0.09	0.11	0.23	0.07	0.14
Doctrinal orthodoxy	-0.02*	0.06	-0.01	-0.08*	0.06	-0.06	-0.06*	0.04	-0.05
<i>Effects on social welfare issue attitudes</i>									
Anti-egalitarianism	0.70	0.08	0.43	0.71	0.08	0.49	0.77	0.10	0.46
Limited government	0.22	0.02	0.51	0.21	0.02	0.52	0.21	0.02	0.54
Religious commitment	0.04*	0.03	0.05	-0.04*	0.03	-0.04	0.01*	0.02	0.02
Doctrinal orthodoxy	-0.02*	0.02	-0.03	0.01*	0.02	0.02	-0.02*	0.02	-0.02
<i>Effects on racial issue attitudes</i>									
Anti-egalitarianism	1.00	0.11	0.64	1.11	0.11	0.73	1.41	0.17	0.68
Limited government	0.12	0.02	0.28	0.12	0.02	0.29	0.17	0.02	0.35

TABLE A2 (Continued)

	Evangelical Protestants			Mainline Protestants			Catholics		
	Coef.	Std. error	Std. coef.	Coef.	Std. error	coef.	Coef.	Std. error	Std. coef.
Religious commitment	-0.10	0.03	-0.16	-0.12*	0.04	-0.14	-0.10	0.03	-0.13
Doctrinal orthodoxy	-0.02*	0.02	-0.04	0.01*	0.02	0.01	0.02*	0.02	0.06
<i>Effects on defence spending (more)</i>									
Religious commitment	0.02*	0.03	0.02	0.12	0.05	0.09	0.12	0.04	0.11
Doctrinal orthodoxy	0.08	0.04	0.09	0.08	0.02	0.11	0.06	0.02	0.08
<i>Effects on environmental spending (less)</i>									
Religious commitment	0.30	0.04	0.24	0.16	0.06	0.10	0.11	0.05	0.08
Doctrinal orthodoxy	-0.04*	0.04	-0.03	0.02*	0.04	0.02	-0.02*	0.02	-0.02
<i>Effects on political alignment</i>									
Religious commitment	-0.05	0.03	-0.08	0.01*	0.03	0.01	-0.01*	0.02	-0.002
Doctrinal orthodoxy	0.02*	0.02	0.02	-0.02*	0.02	-0.02	0.02*	0.02	0.001
Moral traditionalism	-0.02*	0.05	-0.03	0.06*	0.06	0.04	-0.02*	0.07	-0.02
Moral issues	0.24	0.07	0.33	0.12	0.06	0.12	0.10	0.05	0.12
Anti-egalitarianism	0.03*	0.09	0.02	0.14*	0.11	0.10	0.32	0.15	0.17
Limited government	0.07	0.02	0.17	0.06	0.02	0.14	0.09	0.03	0.21
Social welfare issues	0.10	0.05	0.11	0.15	0.06	0.15	0.08*	0.06	0.07
Racial issues	-0.01*	0.05	-0.005	-0.09*	0.07	-0.10	-0.08*	0.07	-0.09
Defence spending	0.02*	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.07	0.05	0.02	0.08
Environmental spending	0.01*	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.05

Source: 1992–2000 National Election Studies (pooled).

Note: Estimates computed by full-information maximum likelihood, correcting for measurement error in all observed indicators, with Amos 4.0. Controls for demographic characteristics and year of study affect all endogenous variables. Controls for presidential approval, assessments of candidate traits and assessments of the national economy affect political alignment only. The columns for each religious group are unstandardized regression coefficient, standard error and standardized coefficient, respectively. All observed indicators range from 0 for the least religious/most liberal/most Democratic position to 1 for the most religious/most conservative/most Republican position. Goodness-of-fit statistics are in Table 2.

\*Not significant at  $p < 0.10$ .

