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Diffusion of Environmental Concerns in Congregations across U.S. States

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ABSTRACT

Most American congregations belong to denominations. These national networks often promote relevant political issues that constituent congregations may choose to address. Therefore, religious organizations might play a significant role in promoting the process of policy diffusion in the U.S. states. At the same time, congregations are tradition-maintaining institutions that focus first on their own immediate concerns, promoting the maintenance of distinctive regional political contexts and reinforcing the variation of federalism. In this article, we assess the role that religious organizations play in American federal democracy, promoting diffusion or the status quo, with respect to one crucial issue on which religious groups have been particularly vocal: the environment and global warming. We employ two datasets (a large-N national survey and two in-depth survey case studies of clergy in Ohio and South Carolina) and find evidence that religious organizations are vast communication networks that *can* promote policy diffusion, but typically do not.

DO AMERICAN RELIGIOUS organizations have the capacity to shape public policy across U.S. states? While it would seem that religious organizations, like large national denominations, would be optimal vehicles for transmitting unified policy appeals across regions, organized religion's ability to affect sweeping policy change might be constrained by the U.S.'s vast geographic spread and wide diversity of interests, many of which are parochial. Denominations might be conceptualized as national networks, within which clergy act as potential policy entrepreneurs who can push for policy innovations on the ground. At the same time, it is essential to remember that policy innovation is not likely a first instinct among religious communities; denominations and the congregations that comprise them are tradition-maintaining institutions. Moreover, congregations do not always heed the policy-relevant calls handed down by their national governing bodies. Congregations are known for focusing first on

their own immediate concerns and those of their surrounding communities (Crawford and Olson 2001; Djupe and Olson 2007; Olson 2000), promoting the maintenance of distinctive regional political contexts and reinforcing federal variation. Can a denomination-wide call for increased efforts to protect the environment be uniformly effective in local congregations across the United States? Do religious organizations promote the process of policy diffusion in the states?

The extent to which organized religion is capable of exerting policy influence *across* varying state political contexts is a question that carries significant normative implications. The framers of the U.S. Constitution kept church and state separate to allow religion to remain vibrant and provide an independent check on government (Witte 2000). Partly because of the constitutional guarantee of religious freedom, American religious groups today vary tremendously in their political agendas and activism, and many opt for no political engagement whatsoever (Fowler et al. 2004). Nonetheless, if a religious organization's own political orientation overlaps substantially with the policy preferences of one or more government jurisdictions, the religious organization might be constrained in its ability to exert an independent and effective check on government.

We argue for a conceptualization of American religious denominations as national communication networks populated by potential policy entrepreneurs who have the infrastructure in place to participate in policy diffusion. However, full-scale participation in diffusion is a relatively rare event, with the subset of member clergy and congregations who desire active policy engagement constrained by local political cultures. We begin our exploration with two competing models of U.S. state politics, which we follow with a discussion of how religious organizations map onto those models. We then proceed with an analysis of two datasets that provide some leverage on questions about the roles played by religious organizations in advancing pro-environmental policy in the states.

TWO MODELS OF U.S. STATE POLITICS

Two competing strands of the U.S. state policymaking literature are germane to this endeavor; their tension is analogous to that between the competing models of religious influence, which we explore below. First, some scholars have argued that different localities reflect and reinforce distinctive political cultures (e.g., Elazar 1984; Fischer 1989; Sharkansky 1969). In this view, political culture, "the persistent, generational patterns of political attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavior that characterize a group of people who live

in geographical proximity” (Lieske 1993, 889), lies at the foundation of the political system. Political culture shapes its participants, the organization of the government, the public policy government produces, and the citizens’ evaluation of it (Lieske 2010). Underlying the notion that states feature distinctive political cultures is Parsons’ (1937) idea that society is held together by value-instilling institutions, such as churches, that inhibit change (see also Wildavsky 1987).

After Elazar’s (1984) initial three-part formulation, research continued by elaborating the interests that underpin political cultures so that the cultural perspective might more accurately be described as seeking an explanation of public policy rooted in the diversity of interests.¹ For instance, Hero and Tolbert (1996) examined racial diversity in the states, finding that political culture assignments as well as social policy variations are effectively explained by a state’s racial homogeneity. Others, especially Lieske (1993, 2010), have argued that much more complex collections of interests constitute distinctive cultures. Religion has been found to be one of the preeminent components of these constellations of interests (e.g., Lieske 1993). Religion is also notably more stable in regions than demographic characteristics are (Hill 1985).

While research continues in this vein (Elazar 1994; Hero 1998, 2007; Lieske 2010), some scholars have long objected that more proximate factors, such as opinion and group activity, do a better job of explaining policy outcomes than the broad notion of political culture (e.g., Weber and Shaffer 1972), or that public opinion does not clearly reflect cultural distinctions (Lowery and Sigelman 1982). While these critiques have merit, they fail to focus on the key orientation of political culture toward political participation (Elazar 1984, 109).

A competing approach to cultural approaches to the study of state policy making is the policy diffusion model, which at least partly decouples government from citizen preferences (and hence, culture) and, thus, assumes that public officials have relatively free rein to adopt available policy models (e.g., Berry and Berry 1990; Gray 1973, 1994; Walker 1969). In this view, a variety of mechanisms might encourage the adoption of a particular policy innovation beyond specific interests within a state, but in every case, some form of information transfer underlies the process. Social learning would seem to be facilitated by access. However, the proximity of a state, also called neighborliness, is not always the most important factor promoting another state’s adoption of policy innovations (Mooney 2001; Shipan and Volden 2008; Volden 2006) because some policies originate at the national level (Gray 1973), or might bubble up from local jurisdictions (Shipan and Volden 2006), or might be facilitated by organizations of state government officials (Balla

2001; Freeman 1985; Walker 1969). Furthermore, culture and diffusion could be complementary forces, because policy adoption might be facilitated by the exchange of people and media between and among states (Mooney 2001, 106), although the crucial exchange might involve the policy entrepreneur herself (Teodoro 2009).

Multiple studies have suggested that policy entrepreneurs are crucial to diffuse innovation (Balla 2001; Mintrom 1997; Shipan and Volden 2006; Teodoro 2009; Walker 1969). Policy entrepreneurs expend resources by looking for opportunities to push for new policy products in the hopes of reaping rewards. Thus, scholarship in this area often has focused on policy entrepreneurs' motivation to innovate, which might involve the scope of a problem in a locale (Berry and Berry 1990), position maintenance (Berry and Berry 1990; Mintrom and Vergari 1998; Shipan and Volden 2006), or the possibility for career advancement (Teodoro 2009). An important, related determinant of motivation in this context is that policy entrepreneurs approach problems from perspectives socialized by their professions (Brehm and Gates 1997), although Mohr (1969) suggests that motivation must be weighed against the obstacles to innovation and the resources available to overcome them.

TWO MODELS OF RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

Crucial to understanding the public presence of religion is its essential, organizational nature. Diversification of religion into a multiplicity of traditions and denominations has been a hallmark of American religion throughout its history (Herberg 1955; Marty 1970; Wuthnow 1988). Most American Protestant and Jewish congregations belong to national denominations, i.e., umbrella groups of constituent congregations. Even congregations not part of conventional denominations usually have membership ties either to formal religious organizations (such as the Roman Catholic Church or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) or informal networks (such as the Willow Creek Association) composed of like-minded congregations. Functionally, such organizations and networks closely resemble denominations. The most important factor for conducting political analyses regarding denominations (and similar national/international organizations and networks) remains in dispute in the literature and bears on how religion should be understood to function in the process of shaping public policy.

In one view, denominations—such as the Southern Baptist Convention, the Episcopal Church, or Reform Judaism—have unique histories and distinctive approaches to theology and worship that help to bind members together. Some scholarship on religion and politics in the U.S. thus cat-

egorizes religious groups according to their broad worldviews. Commitment to a particular religious tradition—e.g., evangelical Protestantism or Judaism—is rooted in a long-standing set of values and attachments tied to a particular set of political and policy preferences (e.g., Guth et al. 1997; Kellstedt et al. 1996). According to this view, organized religion preserves the status quo by forging long-term attachments between religious affiliation and political orientations (Layman 2001). Of course, not every member of a religious tradition espouses the same political viewpoints, nor would the proponents of this approach to the study of religion and politics assert as much. The depth and character of an individual's ties to the religion they profess moderates the degree to which the individual embraces the core opinions and values of the religious tradition (e.g., Green 2007). Thus, this body of work would predict considerable unity of response within religious traditions, as in the case of the now generation-long affinity of evangelical Protestants for the Republican Party and its candidates (Layman 2001).

Nonetheless, denominational membership is not only about worldviews; membership also offers congregations access to many resources for worship and religious education, as well as a supply of trained clergy, schools, hospitals, and retirement communities, among other material benefits. Moreover, denominations (and similar religious organizations and networks) often promote relevant political issues that constituent congregations might choose to address. Most denominations support formal lobbying offices in Washington, D.C., and some state capitals to ensure representation for their political agendas (Hertzke 1988; Hofrenning 1995; Yamane 2005). Most denominations hold regular national conferences at which they debate and craft their official stances on socio-political issues (among many other matters), including such high-profile issues as homosexuality, racism, and environmental protection. The congregations that comprise denominations must then decide whether and how to respond to denominational calls to grapple with such issues (Cadge, Olson, and Wildeman 2008; Neiheisel and Djupe 2008).

Therefore, a second vein of research on religion's influence on politics asserts that the often-tremendous diversity within and between congregations, let alone within and between broader religious traditions, undermines the plausibility of the supposition that religious organizations can have unified and stable political effects on the people who participate in them (Djupe and Gilbert 2009). Instead, religious organizations—like Protestant denominations—should be conceived of as broad communication networks. As with any broad communication network, denominations' capacity to influence public opinion is characterized by communication problems, especially in the degree to which clergy across a denomination emphasize the same issue priorities

and positions (Djupe and Gilbert 2003). Clergy are limited by the disagreement they often face in the pews, although they often can find the resources to overcome dissent from within and from other cue-givers (Calfano 2009; Djupe and Gilbert 2003). Instead, from an individual's perspective, religion has a unified effect on political attitudes when homogenous social networks within congregations support and reinforce particular political orientations. Such political unity is challenged when diverse information appears from multiple sources, such as contrarian clergy or distant denominational officials. Unless a broad consensus of some kind exists across an entire religious tradition (which is relatively rare, Wuthnow 1988), members of the same religious family might be quite far flung, both theologically and politically, and thus, might have difficulty communicating and enforcing uniform policies, positions, and teachings (Djupe and Neiheisel 2008; Gilbert 1993; Jelen 1992; Neiheisel, Djupe, and Sokhey 2009; Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988).

Furthermore, diversity within many American religious traditions is not only tolerated, but is often promoted, especially in the name of congregational growth (Ammerman 2005; Becker 1999). Individual clergy on the ground are called to minister to congregations with particular (and often parochial) interests. They ignore that mandate at their and the denomination's peril (Djupe and Gilbert 2008; Finke and Stark 1992; Hadden 1969; Quinley 1974). While ministering to local concerns might simply involve a particular agenda construction, it also might entail identification with the particular values of the *community* first and the *religious organization* second. Often, it is essential to adapt community values into traditional religious teachings (Cavendish 2001; Neiheisel and Djupe 2008). All told, this view of religious organizations illuminates the reasons for, and the empirical relevance of, *variety* within religious traditions, as in the case of the recent battles in various mainline Protestant denominations over homosexuality and scriptural interpretation. The emphasis on variety among religious organizations also highlights the communicative forces necessary to showcase religion's role in policy diffusion: denominations are vast communication networks composed of potential policy entrepreneurs (clergy) with more or less receptive audiences (congregants).

In fact, a particular instance of diversity within a religious tradition inspired this research. American religious groups have taken active roles in the debate about environmental protection for decades (Fowler 1995), but only recently have they made news for their views on the environment. In part, this attention was sparked by the surprising emergence of a green movement within a religious tradition—evangelical Protestantism—long known for inattention, and even hostility, to environmental concerns (e.g., Guth et al. 1995).

In fall 2004, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), an umbrella organization of 60 evangelical denominations representing 30 million people, published a broad statement of concern that included an historic shift in orientation toward the environment. Their “Call to Civic Responsibility” advocated allocating more resources to combat environmental degradation, to promote environmental sustainability, and to address “the issue of global warming” (Goodstein 2005; Janofsky 2005; National Association of Evangelicals 2004). While the NAE cannot claim to speak for all of the organizationally diverse evangelical tradition, it is large and powerful enough to attract media attention and, thus, have a hand in agenda setting. But the effectiveness in the policymaking process of appeals, like that of the NAE, is substantially complicated by the realities of federalism. The NAE’s environmental push might have been received more favorably in some regions than in others depending on state political context (in this case, general openness to environmental protection).

We do not propose to test the effectiveness of the NAE’s pronouncement here. (For that, see Djupe and Calfano 2009; Djupe and Gwiasda 2010.) Instead, this time of flux in evangelical Protestants’ formal positions on environmental policy prompted us to undertake a more general examination of the extent to which organized religion is capable of shaping public opinion around, and directly engaging in, policy debates at the state level.

HYPOTHESES

Using one important area of public policy, the environment, as our focal point, we assess whether congregations present a uniform message (reflecting top-down statements from the national leadership of their denomination or equivalent organization/network) to their membership on the ground across U.S. states, and we examine which factors might contribute to that unity of communication. This approach allows us to reach some conclusions about how ideas flow through religious organizations and whether religious organizations subsequently participate in the process of policy diffusion in the states.

In short, we analyze the relationships between U.S. state context and (1) the frequency with which environment-specific communication occurs in congregations, which gauges congregations’ ability to function as communication networks, and (2) the extent to which congregation members and their clergy support the general notion of political participation by religious actors, which is apropos of congregations’ ability to promote policy diffusion at the state level. Our expectations are relatively straightforward: We expect

that the extent of communication about environmental issues in congregations, and congregation-level support for religious involvement in politics, are context-dependent. Not only does such communication and support depend on the religious organization's worldviews, but it also depends on the distribution of preferences of people in local communities that, in part, comprise the state's political culture. Context-dependent church² communication and support for political action by religious organizations indicates the degree to which the congregation is constrained by the local context and thus might be inhibited from engaging in policy diffusion.

To test these hypotheses, we employ a set of variables different from those commonly used in scholarship on religion and politics, as emphasis must be placed on the nature of communication between a national organization (a denomination or its equivalent) and its constituent members (congregations) across the U.S. by ground-level organizational representatives—clergy. Although we would rather examine individual denominations, data availability demands that we aggregate denominations into broader groupings with important shared characteristics, such as theology and worship style, commonly referred to as religious traditions: mainline Protestants, evangelical Protestants, and so on (see Steensland et al. 2000).

In particular, we believe that the relative presence or absence of particular religious interests in a state will affect the likelihood of receiving communication about the environment in church. Greater concentrations of adherents to a given religious tradition should boost policy communication in congregations, since this density should help to promote connections among clergy and bolster unity of practice within that religious tradition. This sort of density should function in addition to individual affiliation with a congregation, especially a mainline Protestant congregation (because much of mainline Protestantism is marked by a relatively progressive political outlook), which should augment the likelihood of receiving communication about environmental concerns.

However, individual predispositions also should interact with the environmental supply of information. For instance, Gelman et al. (2008) show that while wealthy voters vote more Republican than do poorer voters overall, they do so at even higher rates in more Republican states. Likewise, we expect that citizens who are more educated are less likely to hear a sermon calling for environmental protection than are voters who are less educated, and the difference will be more pronounced in highly evangelical states. The average difference reflects two things: a tendency for more educated, and hence more Republican, citizens to attend more conservative churches (other factors equal), but also that those with more resources have the acu-

men and motivation to hold organizations accountable to their interests (e.g., Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). This difference between more and less educated citizens should be particularly pronounced in evangelical states, where highly educated citizens are much more likely to attend conservative churches and where environmental activism is less likely in the first place.

DATA AND METHODS

We use two datasets to test our contentions about the contingent ability of religious organizations to engage in policy diffusion on environmental issues. First, we use the 2000 Religion and Politics Survey to explore variation in religious engagement in environmental politics by state. The Religion and Politics Survey was conducted through Princeton University between January 6 and March 31, 2000, under the auspices of the Public Role of Mainline Protestantism research project funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. A total of 5,603 adults in the 48 continental United States were selected through a random-digit dialing procedure and interviewed by telephone (Wuthnow and Evans 2002). The data are publicly available at the website of the Association of Religion Data Archives (www.thearda.com/).

Several features of the Religion and Politics Survey are advantageous for our project. First, the sample is very large (5,603) and includes respondents from every state in the continental United States, averaging 117 per state (median=84), with a low of 4 in South Dakota and a high of 603 in California (Wyoming excluded with its 2 respondents). This breadth and depth of coverage helps to permit an analysis of state-level variation. The Religion and Politics Survey is also nearly ideal because it includes measures of respondents' exposure to information about the environmental politics in their congregations and the extent to which they wish to see their congregation and their religious tradition or denomination involved in politics at both the state and federal levels. Thus, through this survey, individual congregants become informants about the goings-on in their congregation, but they also serve as valuable outcomes themselves insofar as policy entrepreneurial activity by the clergy and congregation should result in broader support for the religious organization's involvement in politics.

This dataset contains two levels of analysis: the individual and the state. Since we wish to test hypotheses at multiple levels, OLS is inappropriate for our task, since the clustering of individuals within states violates the assumption that the errors are uncorrelated. Using OLS in this situation would serve to depress standard errors, thereby augmenting the risk of committing a Type I error (false positives). Therefore, we use a hierarchical linear model

(HLM) that estimates the effects at each level separately and uses an algorithm to link them (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002; Steenbergen and Jones 2002). Importantly, HLM is able to draw strength from large-N units (in this case, states) to assist in the estimation of low-N units, meaning we can use all of the information available in the dataset without having to draw arbitrary cut-off points for the inclusion of states.

We supplement our analysis of the Religion and Politics Survey data with analysis of data from mail surveys of clergy in Ohio and South Carolina dealing specifically with their own engagement with the issue of global warming. In the fall of 2006, the Ohio State University Political Science and Communication departments conducted a three-wave, telephone-based panel study of voting-age Ohio citizens. One important question included in the final wave (after the 2006 Midterm Election) asked respondents for the name of the religious congregation they were currently attending. Thus, upon completion of interviewing and the compilation of the dataset in February 2007, we used these responses to snowball survey respondents' clergy.³

Our snowball survey was conducted by mail, and three waves of surveying an initial sample of 370 congregations yielded 94 responses for a response rate of 25 percent, which is at the high end of typical, contemporary mail survey response rates (Hager et al. 2003). The distribution of respondents' religious traditions mirrors the proportions found in Ohio according to the 2000 religious census (Jones et al. 2002).⁴ Mainline Protestants are slightly overrepresented (35 percent of congregations in our sample, versus 29 percent of adherents in the census), as are evangelical Protestants (27 percent in the sample, versus 22 percent in the census). Catholics are underrepresented (35 percent, versus 44 percent), although their congregations are much larger, on average, than those of Protestant denominations: Catholics account for 44 percent of the adherents in Ohio, but only 9 percent of the congregations statewide. In short, despite a relatively small sample size, we have a fairly accurate picture of the state of Ohio, which, incidentally, also roughly resembles the nation.

Simultaneously, we surveyed all clergy in the Greenville, South Carolina metropolitan area, using the *Yellow Pages* as our sampling frame. The *Yellow Pages* is a reasonable representation of the religious community, especially because no other affordable alternative exists in the absence of a sample survey with the same question as was employed in Ohio. The *Yellow Pages* frame likely underrepresents small congregations, although Chaves et al. (1999) show that most people who attend religious services do so in larger congregations (466–9). Eighty Greenville-area clergy responded for a response rate of 14 percent. The sample loosely represents the Greenville metropolitan religious

community. Our sample is 63 percent evangelical (compared to 74 percent of the churching population of the Greenville metro area), 32 percent mainline Protestant (versus 19 percent in Greenville), and about 5 percent from other traditions. There are no Catholic priests in our sample, but they comprise only 2 percent of Greenville clergy in any event. Thus, as expected, there are a few more mainline Protestants and somewhat fewer evangelicals in the sample than there are in the population, mandating a control for religious tradition in our analysis of these data.

Clergy in both the Ohio and South Carolina samples were given a battery of questions about their attitudes and actions with regard to global warming, giving us a good sense of how clergy in the same religious traditions might respond differently across two states to the opportunities provided by renewed concern among national religious elites about this issue. Although Ohio and South Carolina, on their own, are not representative of the rest of the nation, they certainly are different demographically, culturally, and politically, and the surveys conducted in each state offer much more depth in key questions than do surveys of the general population.

INFORMATION PROVISION IN CONGREGATIONS

There are a number of ways in which religious groups can influence the policy process through citizen action. Outside of their roles as organizations, lobbying at the local (Cooper, Nownes, and Roberts 2005), state (Yamane 2005), and federal levels (Hertzke 1988; Hofrenning 1995), religious groups provide political information—and their distinctive interpretations of it—with the intention of shaping citizen agendas, attitudes, and actions. Of course, organized religion might also play a political role through distinctive interpretations of religious texts, not just newspapers (Fowler 1995; Guth et al. 1995; Moody 2002; Sherkat and Ellison 2007; White 1967). To explore how religious groups work to shape environmental policy, we begin by examining their role in the provision of political information on the environment. Sermons are perhaps the most direct and efficacious way in which religious actors supply politically relevant information, although additional important information pathways also exist in congregations, such as small groups and informal discussion (Djupe and Gilbert 2009; Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988).

Fortunately, the 2000 Religion and Politics Survey asked respondents a broad, inclusive set of questions about information exposure in religious contexts: During the past year, have you heard a sermon, lecture, or group discussion in your congregation that dealt with any the following six issues? Among the six issues was “protecting the environment.”⁵ Of the six issues

ing somewhat on the denomination), while evangelicals hold greatest sway in the South. That the pattern of environmental information provision shown in Figure 1 does not cleanly match this regional distribution of religious traditions is a puzzle worth investigating further. On the other hand, states in which environmental concern typically runs high—California, Oregon, and Washington—here rank quite low. Of course, the key to understanding the distribution shown in Figure 1 lies in knowledge of patterns of religious adherence; the proportion of the churched is much higher in the South and upper Midwest than in the Pacific Northwest by an order of magnitude of 2 or 3 (Green 2007). It is not possible to receive political information in worship services if people do not attend. But since we are concerned about policy diffusion at the *state* level, controls for religious attendance to explain *individual* variation are, from this perspective anyway, beside the point.

For a more systematic portrait of information provision in congregations concerning the environment, we present the results of a hierarchical logistic regression estimating whether or not the respondent reported that his/her congregation was engaged with the issue of environmental protection (see Table 1).⁸ For significant variables, we report changes in the predicted probabilities of hearing environmental information based on a standard deviation shift from the mean in the final column.⁹ In Table 1, we include several state-level variables capturing religious adherence rates, as well as a variety of individual-level variables, which capture the degree to which attitudes, attentiveness, and religious attachments result in hearing a sermon.

One crucial control at the individual level is worship attendance, of course. Without exposure, the respondent could not report the goings-on in a congregation. To underscore this point, moving up or down one standard deviation from mean attendance boosts the probability of hearing an environmental presentation by 25 percent. Similarly, more attentive respondents, as measured by their political interest and political activity, report more environmental activism in their congregations. This finding may reflect their selection of more politically active churches, but it also represents their attention to cues provided by clergy on an ongoing basis (Welch et al. 1993; Djupe and Gilbert 2009).

More politically and religiously liberal respondents report more environmental activism in their congregations, which might represent a projection effect or openness to hearing a politically consonant message, or might simply reflect the makeup of the congregation. It is not possible to sort out which of these reasons is most salient here without data on the congregation and clergy speech. One study that included this information suggests that all three interpretations have traction (Djupe and Gilbert 2009). Evi-

Table 1. The Determinants of Reporting Hearing a Sermon on the Environment

| | Coeff. | (RSE) | Predicted Probability Shift +/- 1 S.D. |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-----------|--|
| <i>State-Level Variables</i> | | | |
| State adherence rate | 0.001 | (0.000)** | 0.04 |
| Evangelical state adherence rate | 0.662 | (0.581) | 0.03 |
| Mainline state adherence rate | 3.897 | (0.854)** | 0.09 |
| Evangelical × mainline adherence | 26.202 | (13.937)# | — |
| Evangelical adherence × education | -0.576 | (0.156) | — |
| <i>Individual-Level Variables</i> | | | |
| Worship attendance | 0.454 | (0.029)** | 0.25 |
| Religious ideology | 0.043 | (0.027)## | 0.02 |
| Mainline Protestant | 0.616 | (0.091)** | 0.09 |
| Catholic | 0.292 | (0.084)** | 0.05 |
| Education | -0.063 | (0.024)* | -0.04 |
| Political interest | 0.096 | (0.040)* | 0.03 |
| Political activity | 0.173 | (0.031)** | 0.07 |
| Political ideology | 0.061 | (0.024)* | 0.03 |
| Male | -0.093 | (0.061)## | -0.02 |
| South | 0.083 | (0.110) | |
| Age | -0.003 | (0.002)## | -0.02 |
| Constant | -1.484 | (0.069)** | |

**p<0.01; *0.05; #p<0.10; ##p<0.10; two-tailed tests
 Level 1 N=5603, Level 2 N=48.

Source: 2000 Religion and Politics Survey.

Note: Predicted probability shifts are computed using values +/- 1 s.d. from the mean except for dummy variables which use the min/max. Predicted probabilities are reported for each term of the interaction terms holding the other term at its mean value. Both are small and positive.

dence suggests the importance of religious traditions, with Catholics and mainline Protestants both more likely (than the excluded evangelicals and other smaller groups) to hear information about the environment in their congregations. The effects are fairly strong, increasing the odds of hearing a sermon by about 9 percent and 5 percent, respectively. Also at the individual level, males and older people are less likely to hear environmental appeals in their worship services, but the effects are notably weak.

The state concentration of religious adherents also affects the likelihood of hearing environmental sermons, driving up the probability of the congregation addressing environmental issues by 4 percent, on average. Larger effects can be found in the interaction between mainline and evangelical adherence rates. When decomposed, a standard deviation shift from the mean evangelical adherence rate boosts the likelihood of hearing a sermon by 3 percent, while a similar shift in the mainline concentration boosts it by 9 percent (holding the other term constant). Since we set the adherence rates used in this comparison at the mean across the 50 states, the boost provided by high

concentrations of adherents is not the result of competition driving increased adherence rates (see Finke and Stark 1992). Moreover, an examination of the full interaction results suggests that high concentrations of both traditions produce an additive effect. Instead of an explanation rooted in competition, we suspect that a high concentration of a particular religious tradition in a state allows for a support network for clergy that enhances their ability to pursue the work of the denomination. Clergy in isolated congregations would feel greater pressure to conform to the norms of the place. We will explore these ideas further in our case study of Ohio and South Carolina below.

The other significant interaction term in the model, between evangelical adherence rates and individual education levels, showcases how demand pressures conformity from congregations. Holding education levels constant, the state evangelical adherence rate has a modest positive effect on hearing an environmental sermon (0.03); education has a negative effect (-0.04, holding the evangelical adherence rate constant). Allowing these two measures to move together tells us that evangelical adherence rates do not shift the probability of hearing an environmental sermon for those with below-average education. However, those with higher educational attainments are *less* likely to hear such a sermon when they live in areas with high concentrations of evangelicals. To us, this suggests that the more highly educated citizens in heavily evangelical states are more likely to reflect their culture in being conservative and demanding some fealty to conservative perspectives from their clergy in the same way that the more resourceful citizens demand accurate representation from elected officials (e.g., Putnam 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).

That the state distribution of interests (in this case, religious traditions) has a relatively powerful effect is somewhat curious because it is a unit of analysis far removed from individual communities. However, states are quite powerful in shaping the political lives of their citizens and groups within their jurisdictions by prioritizing the issues at stake (i.e., the state's "interests"), defining opportunities for activism, and maintaining a set of norms that encourages or discourages action—essential components of the state's political culture. However, religious organizations themselves often feature state-level and sub-state-level organizational structures (e.g., the Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas, the Greater Milwaukee Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and interdenominational organizations of clergy exist in most communities in the United States (Djupe and Gilbert 2003; Djupe and Niles 2010). Gatherings of such state and local organizational structures might help to diffuse a denomination's message through clergy communication and mutual support. Whatever the interpretation, and both appear to

have merit, the estimation of the level-2 variance component indicates that we have specified a relatively complete explanation given that the state-level variance (around the sample mean) is not significantly different from zero once our set of predictors is included ($\text{var}=0.018$, $\chi^2=54.57$, $p=0.111$).

These results illustrate the power states have to shape the political roles of organizations that inhabit them. Religious organizations (such as denominations) are important actors, to be sure, diffusing a message across the nation, but the community context in which religious organizations operate also appears to exert a strong effect, supporting both the cultural and diffusion approaches to understanding state politics and policymaking. Individual religious identification is not sufficient to capture the political influence of what might be termed “church.” Instead, the distribution of religious interests in a state shapes who attends, which congregations they attend, as well as what they hear when they worship, and thus the political impact of religious groups.

PREFERENCE FOR RELIGIOUS GROUP ACTIVITY

Essential to the participation of religious groups in public policy debates is member support for advocacy efforts at various governmental levels. Under what conditions do citizens desire political advocacy by the various groups to which they belong? How do citizens choose the political jurisdiction on which to focus the bulk of an organization’s efforts? The Religion and Politics Survey asked three questions (although just to Protestants and to those classified as “Other Christians”¹⁰) addressing these matters: Would you like to see your denomination doing more to influence public policy in Washington, or not? What about your state? And, third, the survey asked Protestant and “other Christian” respondents specifically whether they supported their denomination becoming more politically involved in environmental issues.¹¹ The question did not specify the governmental level of the desired activism. Together, the preference for more state-level action and for environmental action should help us triangulate the contingent forces that motivate support for religious activism.

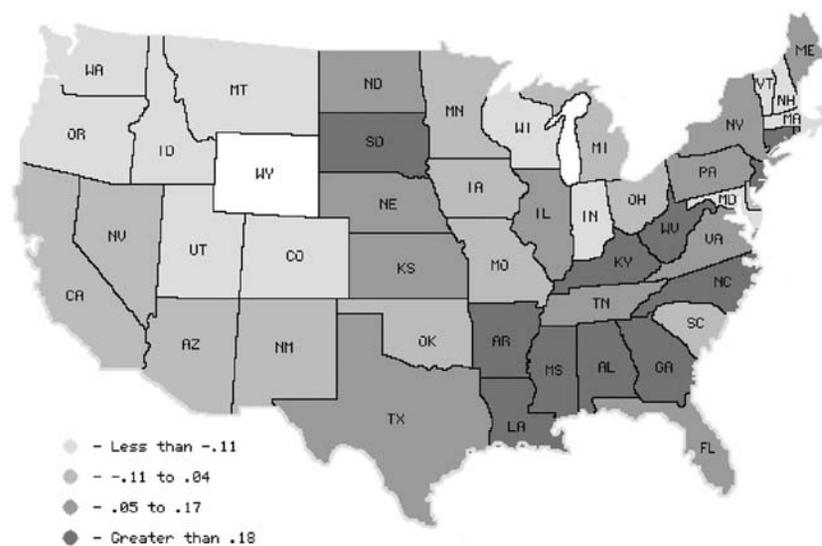
The responses for the jurisdictional variables show a great division, revealing a slight preference for more federal action (49 percent yes, 43 percent no), but a solid majority for *less* state-level advocacy work (40 percent yes, 51 percent no). Few respondents want more state action and no more federal activity, but a fair number prefer more federal to state activity. The standout findings are that Protestant adherents essentially do not support more political advocacy efforts in their state, but also that there is considerable variation

among Protestants. Those who prefer more state-level activity generally want more activity on the environment, although the correlation is not as strong as one might expect ($r=0.22$, $p=0.00$, $n=2782$).

The distribution of support for more state action is shown in Figure 2. The pattern resembles the one shown in Figure 1, where those most in favor of more state action reside in the South, Appalachia, and the Great Plains—all regions where religious advocacy work probably would not generate much substantial change given their relative religious homogeneity (Green 2007). Residents of the Pacific Northwest, industrial Midwest, and Northeast are the least supportive of more state action by their denomination. In those regions, however, coalitions of religious groups perhaps could play an important role in shaping public policy, or they would at least make up for the relative absence of religious voices in state politics.

In Table 2, we estimate a hierarchical logit model for two dependent variables—the preference for more state-level activity and for more environmental activity by denominations (versus a combined category of “less” or “the same”)—comparing the effects of nearly identical models side by side. The results show that the substantive goal of the activism in question matters, since the stories differ in the two models. In part, and not surprisingly, the state-level

Figure 2. Preference for More U.S. State Action by the Respondents' Protestant Denominations, by State



Source: 2000 Religion and Politics Survey.

Note: Preference for more political action by the denomination at the state level was only asked of Protestants and 'Other Christians' and is coded -1=less, 0=don't know, 1=more.

Table 2. The Determinants of the Preference for More Denominational Political Activity at the U.S. State Level and on the Environment

| Independent Variables | Political Activity at the State Level | | | Political Activity on the Environment | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|
| | Coeff. | (RSE) | Predicted Probability Shift | Coeff. | Predicted Probability (RSE) | Shift |
| <i>State Level Effects</i> | | | | | | |
| Mainline state adherence | -1.136 | (1.275) | -0.04 | -3.765 | (2.416)## | -0.05 |
| Evangelical state adherence | -0.517 | (0.660) | -0.03 | -1.011 | (1.078) | |
| Mainline × Evangelical adherence | -46.370 | (17.635)* | — | -32.315 | (34.239) | |
| Total religious adherence | 0.001 | (0.000) | | 0.000 | (0.001) | |
| State environmental sermon mean | 1.672 | (1.039)## | 0.07 | 2.433 | (1.475)## | 0.04 |
| Gore won the state | -0.180 | (0.104)# | -0.04 | -0.080 | (0.198) | |
| <i>Individual and Other Level Effects</i> | | | | | | |
| Worship attendance | 0.216 | (0.032)** | 0.17 | 0.058 | (0.038)## | 0.02 |
| Religious ideology | -0.044 | (0.044) | | 0.068 | (0.044)## | 0.02 |
| Mainline Protestant | -0.458 | (0.087)** | -0.11 | 0.095 | (0.107) | |
| Heard an environmental sermon | 0.513 | (0.074)** | 0.12 | 0.992 | (0.137)** | 0.14 |
| Education | -0.249 | (0.026)** | -0.19 | -0.079 | (0.028)** | -0.02 |
| Political activity | 0.041 | (0.032) | | 0.006 | (0.037) | |
| Political interest | -0.068 | (0.038)# | -0.03 | -0.098 | (0.043)* | -0.04 |
| Democrat | 0.393 | (0.081)** | 0.09 | 0.496 | (0.116)** | 0.06 |
| Political ideology, folded | 0.060 | (0.038)# | 0.04 | 0.102 | (0.038)** | 0.02 |
| Age | -0.011 | (0.002)** | -0.10 | -0.010 | (0.002)** | -0.04 |
| South | 0.290 | (0.130)* | 0.07 | 0.122 | (0.176) | |
| Male | -0.361 | (0.105)** | -0.09 | -0.309 | (0.101)** | -0.03 |
| Question introduction tex | — | | | -0.128 | (0.105) | |
| (Constant) State mean of dependent | -0.077 | (0.097) | | 0.913 | (0.200)** | |

**p<0.01; *0.05; #p<0.10; (two-tailed tests); ##p<0.10

Level 1 N=2,535, Level 2 N=48

Source: 2000 Religion and Politics Survey.

variables are important predictors of state-level activism by the denomination, but they have less effect on the more general environmental activism. In fact, the residual variance around the state-level activism mean is no longer significant once our level-2 model is specified ($\text{var}=0.02$, $\chi^2=47.23$, $p=0.23$); it is still significantly different from zero for the environmental activism model ($p=0.00$).

Several state-level effects that capture the distribution of religious and political interests in the state find statistical purchase in the “preference for more state-level activity” model. Mainline and evangelical adherence rates interact, together serving to drive down the preference for more state activity by modest margins: 4 percent and 3 percent, respectively. When allowed to vary together, the demand for less state activity intensifies when adherence rates for both traditions are high. That is, Protestants in low adherence states express a preference for a higher public profile from their denomination, encouraging policy diffusion, but prefer the status quo where they are numerically dominant. Interestingly, this dynamic does not occur when asking about the environment specifically, but the responses are not bound to a particular state, either. Instead, higher mainline adherence drives down support for more action by the denomination specifically regarding the environment, while higher levels of engagement with the environment in congregations drives such support up. In effect, these two forces cancel each other out.

The state-level proportion of Protestants hearing a sermon on the environment increases the desire for more state-level activity by the denomination, but does nothing to offset the disadvantage of high adherence rates, which push up hearing an environmental sermon in the first place (Table 1). To help offset the depressive effect of high evangelical adherence, “red states” (those favoring Bush in 2000) were more likely to favor state-level action (red states are not more adherent, but they are more evangelical: 20 percent versus 7 percent, $t=5.08$, $p=0.000$, $n=48$). At the same time, however, being a Democrat boosts a respondent’s support for more state-level and environmental activism, overwhelming the mild negative effect of living in a Democratic state.

The individual-level effects suggest a dichotomy, with an important exception that squares with past research. People with the most political resources—the politically interested, older, male, and most educated—are less likely to favor more state or environmental action by their denomination. To some degree, these effects overlap with being a mainline Protestant, which also serves to decrease the likelihood of favoring more state (but not environmental) action. Thus, younger, female, less educated, and evangelical respondents are more likely to favor more action by their denomination at the state level.

This division may be operationalized as the public versus the private (e.g., Elshstain 1981) insofar as the actively engaged segment of society has relatively little need for an organizational representative and (perhaps as a result) resists the influential power of religious elites (Djupe and Gilbert 2009; Zaller 1992). Those who are not as engaged with politics are more in need, and thus desirous, of an intermediary to subsidize the heavy costs of engagement (Downs 1957). Fortunately, religious elites, like clergy, take their democratic roles quite seriously and often step up to perform a representative role when it is most needed (Djupe and Gilbert 2003; Morris 1984; Olson 2000), perhaps promoting policy diffusion.

The exceptions are those people who attend worship services more often and who do so in congregations in which a substantial amount of political information is communicated, measured here as hearing a sermon on the environment. These two variables signal more support of religious engagement and are some of the most powerful effects in the model. The congregational communication effect squares with Djupe and Grant's (2001) exploration of religious effects on political action. They find that the connection between religious activity and political activity is not automatic and must be established; civic skills practiced in congregations have no effect on participation, but the conscious acknowledgement that religious involvement has political consequences does have an effect (see also Djupe and Gilbert 2009; Calhoun-Brown 1996). It is tempting to view the effect of an environmental sermon as strong evidence of the diffusive powers of religious groups, and previous research has demonstrated that different religious traditions do emphasize distinctive issue sets (Guth et al. 1997). The problem is that, to an extent, sermon-giving is itself a product of community norms (see Table 1) and individual clergy preferences (Djupe and Gilbert 2003), thus tempering the ability of denominations to bridge state-level variations.

The results of this analysis offer a mixed view of the potential of religious groups to hold government accountable, especially at the state level. Congregation members want their denominations to be more active where they are not numerically dominant, which supports a diffusion-based conception of political advocacy by religious groups. However, these are precisely the states where the political engagement of churches, on the environment at least, is the lowest (recall Table 1). In addition, the religious tradition (main-line Protestantism) most active in politics and most supportive of political advocacy from the denominational offices is also less supportive of state-level politicking. Thus, the contradictory forces at work continue to roil religious organizations as they wrestle with prophetic dictates that point toward policy diffusion and pluralist memberships that wish to reinforce the status quo.

CASE STUDIES OF OHIO AND SOUTH CAROLINA

Our final analysis concerns surveys of clergy in Ohio and Greenville, South Carolina, which were conducted to gather more in-depth information about how clergy think and act on environmental issues, especially global warming. The benefit of these supplementary data is that they overcome the weaknesses of general questions asking about hearing sermons on “protecting the environment.” That is, with these data, we gain some perspective and analytical leverage on just what is different about a clergy’s environmental engagement across traditions and states. These supplementary data also have the advantage of being newer than the 2000 Religion and Politics Survey, which predates the dawn of evangelical Protestantism’s concern about the environment in the twenty-first century.

Table 3 presents the results of a series of questions measuring clergy’s attitudes about global warming and environmental protection. In this table, we assess three relationships: (1) the differences between the two states, (2) the differences between mainline Protestants and evangelicals within each state, and (3) the differences within each religious tradition between the states. In nearly every case, mainline Protestants differ from evangelicals and in the expected direction: mainline clergy are more liberal, more engaged, and more in tune with their denomination’s activities. The only exception arises around familiarity with the National Association of Evangelicals’ highly publicized 2004 statement on the environment, and signs (although not significant ones) indicate that more *mainline* clergy than evangelicals are aware of it. These results support organized (and particularly hierarchically organized) religion’s role in policy diffusion on the issue of the environment.

Surprisingly few differences exist between the two states, especially given their composition: South Carolina is much more evangelical than Ohio (Green 2007), and our South Carolina sample contains no Catholics. About half of the clergy in both states agree that more resources should be committed to combating global warming; although Ohio evangelicals are slightly less likely to take this view (the difference is not quite significant). The two states’ clergy also agree at statistically equal rates that global warming is an issue that churches should address. They differ on only a few items, although they are potentially significant ones: whether global warming is a hoax (a view more common in South Carolina), whether the environmental movement is too secular (also more common in South Carolina), the appropriateness of addressing global warming (more common in Ohio), and familiarity with the NAE’s statement (more common in South Carolina).

Table 3. Comparison of Ohio and South Carolina Clergy Attitudes on Global Warming

| | Ohio | | | South Carolina | | |
|--|-------|----------|-------------|----------------|----------|-------------|
| | Total | Mainline | Evangelical | Total | Mainline | Evangelical |
| Global warming is a vitally important political issue. | 63.8 | 86.7 | 41.2** | 53.2 | 68.0 | 43.8* |
| Global warming is not a real problem, it is a hoax. | 14.1# | 6.7 | 41.2** | 25.6 | 4.0 | 38.3** |
| I support the government devoting more resources to combat global warming. | 50.0 | 73.3 | 29.4** | 50.6 | 72.0 | 39.1** |
| Whether or not global warming is important, it is not an appropriate problem for congregations to address. | 20.4 | 3.3† | 35.3** | 26.3 | 8.3 | 37.0** |
| The environmental movement is not welcoming of religious perspectives—it is too secular. | 30.8# | 16.7 | 37.5†** | 41.6 | 16.0 | 58.7** |
| Addressing the problem of global warming is an important component of “creation care.” | 69.9# | 83.3 | 41.2** | 61.0 | 80.0 | 52.2** |
| I am familiar with the National Association of Evangelicals’ statement addressing global warming. | 27.3 | 41.4 | 23.5 | 40.5 | 36.4 | 43.5 |
| My denomination has taken a position on global warming and environmental stewardship. | 51.7 | 83.3# | 13.3* | 43.4 | 66.7 | 30.4** |
| I am <i>familiar</i> with my denomination’s stand on environmental stewardship and global warming. | 55.6 | 76.7 | 31.3 | 50.7 | 78.3 | 34.8** |
| I <i>agree</i> with my denomination’s stand on environmental stewardship and global warming. | 52.8 | 63.3 | 26.7# | 47.3 | 79.2 | 29.5** |
| N | 90 | 30 | 15–17 | 77 | 22–25 | 44–48 |

**p<0.01; *0.05; #p<0.10; (two-tailed tests); ##p<0.10
 Source: 2006 Ohio and Greenville, SC Clergy Surveys.

Further evidence more clearly reveals the nature of these state-level differences. Mainline clergy in South Carolina (versus Ohio) are more likely to think that global warming is *not* an appropriate problem for churches to address, while Ohio evangelicals (versus South Carolina evangelicals) are much less likely to think the environmental movement is too secular. Ohio mainline clergy are more knowledgeable about their denomination’s statements on global warming than are their counterparts in South Carolina, while Ohio evangelicals are less knowledgeable than are South Carolina evangelicals.

We suspect that the clergy’s status in the community might help explain these patterns. On general orientations toward the environment (the first two

items mentioned), clergy tend to side with those in their state, which weakens organizational unity. Bolstering the contention that organizational unity is weakened here is our finding that clergy's knowledge of their denomination's activities is weaker when their religious group is in the minority in the state. Evangelical clergy in Ohio do not have networks as densely populated with evangelicals as in South Carolina. If those networks subsidize information costs associated with keeping up with denominational affairs, then Ohio evangelicals should be less informed. And they are. These results affirm a mixed view of the cultural and diffusion models of state politics. The fact that there are few differences here between clergy in two very different states suggests a diffusion model is most appropriate, although the clear differences within religious traditions across states indicates otherwise.

In Table 4, we conduct the same style of analysis, but consider the *activity* regarding global warming and environmental protection that Ohio and South Carolina clergy pursued in 2006. Fewer differences overall appear in Table 3 than in Table 4, suggesting that it is easy to hold opinions, but acting on them is a different matter. Ohio clergy were much more engaged around global warming than their South Carolinian counterparts, but this finding obscures the sizable differences we observe between mainline and evangelical clergy in Ohio. Instead of conformity in behavior, evangelicals are less likely to speak out on the environment in Ohio. In South Carolina, mainline clergy demonstrate some conformity in behavior despite differences in personal attitudes; no significant differences emerge in the activity levels between mainline and evangelical clergy in South Carolina, despite mainline clergy holding more pro-environmental attitudes there. Mainline clergy in South Carolina are less active than Ohio mainline clergy almost across the board, except on an item that might be more palatable to South Carolinians: speaking on environmental "stewardship" rather than on the relatively more controversial topic of "global warming."

Again, we attribute these patterns largely to the social contexts of each state, recalling Table 1, in which the effect of education on hearing a sermon is shown to depend on a state's evangelical adherence. It is far easier to enforce behavioral norms than attitudinal positions, except that a state with more mainline Protestants tends to be more individualist than traditional, supporting tolerance over conformity (Elazar 1984).

CONCLUSION

Elsewhere we offer a manifesto for the study of religion and politics that motivated the present project: "Very little research has treated multiple lev-

Table 4. Comparison of Ohio and South Carolina Clergy Activity on Global Warming

| | Ohio | | | South Carolina | | |
|---|--------|----------|-------------|----------------|----------|-------------|
| | Total | Mainline | Evangelical | Total | Mainline | Evangelical |
| Watch a TV show or movie devoted to global warming? | 47.3** | 60.0## | 29.4# | 37.7 | 41.7 | 36.2 |
| Encourage others to watch a show/movie about global warming? | 30.8** | 40.0 | 11.8# | 19.7 | 29.2 | 13.0 |
| Host a show/movie screening in your cong. about global warming? | 3.3** | 10.0# | 0.0# | 1.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Fall 2006 speech on global warming (very often or often) | 20.9** | 36.7** | 0.0** | 13.2 | 4.2 | 15.2 |
| Fall 2006 speech on environment stewardship (very often or often) | 28.2** | 40.0 | 0.0** | 33.8 | 37.5 | 29.8 |
| N | 90 | 30 | 17 | 76 | 25 | 46-47 |

**p<0.01; *0.05; #p<0.10; (two-tailed tests); ##p<0.10
 Source: 2006 Ohio and Greenville, SC Clergy Surveys.

els of analysis simultaneously, and too little attention has been paid to the *communities* in which questions of representation are generated” (Djupe and Olson 2007, 254). Religion and politics research often explores one actor at a time (typically individuals, but also clergy), without much regard for the systems within which such actors are embedded—congregations and communities—including all of the other actors, such as clergy and other citizens, that function therein. To put the matter more concretely, consider the significance tests in Tables 3 and 4 as examples. Previous research has examined the differences between religious traditions within a governmental unit (generally the United States), but typically has not explored within-tradition differences as they vary by community, nor how governmental units aggregate religious interests, both of which we explore in Tables 3 and 4 and in this paper more generally. When we do explore these additional questions, we find that the *place* where religion takes root matters for its public expression. The fact that a religious group establishes itself in a new community does not mean that it will provide a new perspective. Instead, we see some conformity as a result of community (i.e., state) status.

We believe that ignoring religious and political systems, such as the states, is a serious mistake, in part because explanations of opinion and behavior end up lacking crucial information, but also because key normative questions become apparent only when including systems like states (e.g., Gray and Lowery 1996). In this work, the key normative question concerns the democratic role of religious groups: Do religious groups provide a prophetic vision that can hold government accountable? To what extent are religious interests independent of the communities to which they minister? The incor-

poration of the state (although other jurisdictions can work quite well too) is crucial to this endeavor since states are clearly politically salient and provide multiple points of comparison for how religious groups engage in political advocacy.

The results of investigations of the above questions are mixed. States are far from homogenous entities and have few tools available for enforcing norms within their borders. That being said, the preference for religious action and religious expression itself does conform to an extent to what is normative within a state, limiting the diversity of voices heard in public debate. On the basis of this evidence we certainly would not conclude that religious groups do not fulfill their democratic role because religious voices do address environmental issues in places where we least expect it (see Figure 1). However, their influence is often circumscribed. That leaves us with the less-than-satisfying conclusion that political culture limits the ability of American religious groups to diffuse environmental protection policies. National networks (in this case, religious denominations) do diffuse information that supports a popular desire for activism throughout the country. But myriad forces work against denominations providing a unified perspective to people in all areas, supporting a cultural model.

Nevertheless, the cultural model, as it applies to religious organizations, is in need of updating. As those who study religion and politics often suggest, it is most important to capture religious beliefs to understand political behavior. However, the results here indicate that religious traditions are not unique, but like so many other social institutions, they are dependent on the communities in which they are located. Traditions can present a unified theological and organizational voice, but the extent to which that voice is heard—and its essential messages lived in practice—depends on the presence of devoted fellow travelers in a particular geography. Thus, we argue that in order to understand the public presence of religious organizations, we must think of them as communication networks open to information from a wide variety of national and local sources that can promote policy diffusion, but typically inhibit the spread of new ideas.

APPENDIX: VARIABLE CODING

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Age | in years |
| Catholic | 1=Roman Catholic, 0=other. |
| Worship attendance | “Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?” 6=more than once a week, 5=once a week, 4=almost every week, 3=once or twice a month, 2=a few times a year, 1=never. |
| Democrat | 1=Democrat, 0=other. |
| Education | “What is the highest level of education you have completed?” 1=less than high school graduate, 2=high school graduate, 3=some college, 4=trade/technical/vocational training, 5=college graduate, 6=post-graduate work/degree. |
| Female | 1=female, 0=male. |
| Heard an environmental sermon | [Asked only of those respondents who attended religious services at least a few times a year and are members of a place of worship.] “During the past year, have you heard a sermon, lecture, or group discussion in your congregation that dealt with . . . protecting the environment?” 1=yes, 0=no or don't know. |
| Mainline Protestant | 1=Mainline Protestant, 0=other. |
| Male | 1=male, 0=female. |
| Political activity | An index ranging from 0 to 5, gaining one point for (a) working for a campaign or voter registration drive, (b) attending a class or lecture about a social or political issue, (c) attending a political rally, (d) giving money to a political candidate or party, and (e) contacting an elected official. |
| Political ideology | “Using the same scale [as religious ideology below], where 1 is ‘very conservative’ and 6 is ‘very liberal,’ where would you place yourself in terms of your political views?” |
| Political ideology, folded | Political ideology is recoded such that very conservative and very liberal occupy the high end (=3), while the two moderate scores (3 and 4) are recoded as 1. |
| Political interest | “Would you say you follow what’s going on in government and public affairs . . . 5=most of the time, 4=some of the time, 3=only now and then, 2=hardly ever, or 1=never?” |
| Religious ideology | “On a scale from 1 to 6, where 1 is ‘very conservative’ and 6 is ‘very liberal,’ where would you place yourself in terms of your religious views?” |
| South | 1=South, 0=some other region. |

ENDNOTES

An initial version of this article was prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, in Boston, Massachusetts, August 28–31, 2008. We thank Bob Wuthnow for graciously sharing his 2000 Religion and Politics Survey data with us. We also wish to thank Ken Wald, Anand Sokhey, and Jake Neihsel for their helpful comments; Herb Weisberg, Anand Sokhey, and The Ohio State University Department of Political Science for sharing their survey data with us; and Keith Boone and the Denison University Research Foundation for supporting our data collection efforts.

1. Although we use the term “political culture,” our operationalization of the concept is limited to how the distribution of local interests affects religious organizational presence and is not an operationalization of culture per se. Thus, our approach is similar to Hero (1998, 2007) and others’ work, wherein religion is but one part of the geographical (and relatively stable) dispersion of interests.

2. The word “church” in this and subsequent references below may be read broadly to mean “place of worship” or “church, synagogue, mosque, etc.”

3. Other scholars have used the same procedure. See, e.g., the National Congregations Study (Chaves et al. 1999).

4. We acknowledge that this comparison is somewhat inexact as we are comparing proportions of *adherents* in Ohio (from the church census) to the proportion of *congregations* in our sample, so to the extent that congregation sizes differ, we are comparing apples to oranges. Nevertheless, in at least one sense, the comparison suggests that we do have a representative sample.

5. It is possible that the sermons heard might be *against* the environment even if the sermons *concern* the environment given that the question asks, “During the past year, have you heard a sermon, lecture, or group discussion in your congregation that dealt with any the following?— . . . protecting the environment?” Several things mitigate the possibility that any sizable proportion of the sermons in question might concern opposition to environmental protection, however. First, the survey item about “protecting the environment” is embedded in a battery of questions all framed in a progressive way (the following are verbatim from the survey): governments’ policies toward the poor, being more supportive of homosexuals, the widening gap between rich people and poor people, improving relations between blacks and whites, and the social responsibilities of corporations. Second, research on clergy cue-giving (which has used this style of survey question) consistently has found ideologically sensible results concerning who is more likely to address such issues as “environmental protection” (e.g., Djupe and Gilbert 2003; Guth et al. 1997). For instance, liberals address gay rights, while conservatives address homosexuality; liberals are much more likely to address “protecting the environment” than conservatives are.

6. As a shorthand, we will refer to respondents hearing a “sermon” on the environment, instead of providing the actual list of presentations in the question: “sermon, lecture, or group discussion.”

7. The list of issues included in the survey instrument is by no means a representative list of all issues presented in American congregations.

8. We used the Bryk and Raudenbusch HLM statistical package to estimate the models.

9. For dummy variables, we use a shift from 0 to 1 to calculate the predicted probabilities.

10. This is a self-identification, but evangelical Protestants will often identify themselves without the "Protestant" appellation.

11. This question was part of an experiment that varied the introductory text of the question battery. Half of the sample was introduced with a generic prompt, "Would you like religious groups to take a more active role on each of the following, or a less active role?" while the other half was given a specific prompt listing mainline Protestants, "Think now about mainline Protestant denominations, such as Presbyterians, Methodists, and Lutherans. Would you like these religious groups to take a more active role on each of the following, or a less active role?" The difference in response to desired political action on the environment generated by the question wording is significant but very small in magnitude (difference in means of 0.02 on a 0 to 1 scale). To use the full available data, we include a control for the introductory text in Table 2.

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