

# Religious Brand Loyalty and Political Loyalties

PAUL A. DJUPE†

*Numerous works have detailed the breakdown of brand loyalty within society over the last forty years and its results. Whether examining political loyalties, religious loyalties, or loyalties to brands such as Lucky Strike cigarettes, each study has noted a lowering of traditional barriers to switching brands and the creation of a nation of individualist choosers (Friedman 1990). Here I attempt to suggest some connections between religious and political loyalties. Using the 1993 General Social Survey, I operationalize religious loyalty in four ways and suggest three mechanisms through which religious loyalty is connected to political loyalty: psychological ties, social ties, and social circumstances. I find significant effects of different conceptions of religious loyalty encouraging party loyalties, steadfast voting, and loyalty to one party's presidential candidates across two elections.*

It is each consumer who is becoming a brand. I am a brand — and each of you are brands. Brands defined by the needs and priorities which are unique to us. There are, in fact, some 260 million brands in the United States.

*(direct-marketer Lester Wunderman, quoted in Turow 1997: 178)*

I am a sect myself.

*(Thomas Jefferson, quoted in Bellah et al. 1985: 233)*

I believe in God. I'm not a religious fanatic... My faith has carried me a long way. It's Sheilaism. Just my own little voice.

*(Bellah et al. 1985: 221)*

**W**hat are the political consequences of a declining loyalty to a religious brand? The decline of religious denominational loyalties over the last forty years has been well documented, whether measured as a rise in ecumenism, intermarriage (McCutcheon 1988), denominational switching (Stark and Glock 1968; Newport 1979; Roof and McKinney 1987; Wuthnow 1988; Hoge, Johnson, and Luidens 1994), apostasy (Bromley 1988), or decreases in negative feelings between denominations (Wuthnow 1988: 91-96). Over the same general period, Americans were losing their loyalties to political parties (Converse 1976; Verba, Nie, and Petrocik 1976; Wattenberg 1996; Beck 1997), the institution of marriage (Friedman 1990), particular brands of cigarettes (Sobel 1978), and even baseball teams (Sobel 1978; Salisbury 1985). Several authors have attempted to link religious loyalties to another sphere of society, especially the family (Babchuk et al. 1967; Crockett et al. 1969) and occupation (Lauer 1975), though few have made the connection between religious and political loyalties (though see Nelson 1987; Green and Guth 1993). The purpose of this paper is not to investigate the underlying causes for the disintegration of traditional loyalties (see Wuthnow 1988; Friedman 1990; Sobel 1978 for that), but rather to ask: What, if any, is the relationship between religious and political loyalties? Numerous pundits and researchers alike have inquired into the nature of our political discontents; perhaps some of the blame is to be given to the changing nature of how people relate to their churches.

† Paul A. Djupe, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Department of Political Science, Denison University, Granville, OH 43023, Phone (740) 587-6310 (Fax 6601), Email [djupe@denison.edu](mailto:djupe@denison.edu)

### The Connection between Religious and Political Loyalties

Before going further, we need a definition — What is loyalty in this scheme? Josiah Royce, a nineteenth century philosopher who produced a philosophy of loyalty, suggested that loyalty is an “attitude [which] makes a man give himself to the active service of a cause,” (1967: 235) and has been “popularly understood [as] a certain attitude of mind which faithful friends, soldiers, or retainers, or which martyrs dying for their faith have exemplified” (1967: 234). Hirschman, on the other hand, suggests that loyalty is instrumentally determined (1970: 38). Similar to Royce, I suggest that loyalty is a continued psychological identification and social attachment arising from involvement with a social or political institution, whether a class, movement, car brand, sports team, beer, political party, religion, etc. Thus, one can be a Ford man, but cannot be truly loyal without driving one, and is surely no longer loyal once the Chrysler is bought. Based on this definition of how loyalty is generated, there are three general connections between religious and political loyalties: psychological ties, social ties, and social circumstances.

#### *Psychological Ties*

This argument would pose that there is a state of loyalty that would apply to institutional attachments throughout a person’s life. Therefore, a loyalist would be loyal in marriage, to her church, political party, car brand, etc. (Royce: “Be loyal to loyalty” (1967: 248)). In this understanding, which is different from Hirschman’s (1970) view of loyalty (see also Berger 1979), loyalty is also not instrumental; it is commitment without raising the question of usefulness. Royce argues that the loyalist sees the object of loyalty as “something beyond his own private self, and as larger than his private self, as vaster and worthier than any of his private interests” (1967: 236). For the loyalist, choosing another institution with a more favorable benefit package is not an option: “To abandon one’s party would be as unthinkable as to abandon one’s country or convert to another church” (Sundquist 1973: 281). A Cubs fan convert to a Sox fan? A Presbyterian to a Pentecostal? A Democrat to a Republican? These choices do not seem like choices at all to the loyal, while those without a sense of loyalty could easily cheer on the summer’s winning team, attend another denomination’s church (or not attend at all), or vote for another party’s candidate (or not vote).

In a state of loyalty, those loyal to a particular brand of church are also likely to be loyal to other brands, such as those of cars, baseball teams, toothpastes, and political parties. Once the state of loyalty has been abandoned and instrumentalism accepted, the choices individuals make are likely to involve concerns endemic to that institution — political concerns for parties and elections, and spiritual or other concerns for churches and religion. Essentially, from the psychological ties perspective, religious loyalties should foster political loyalties out of a sense of attachment, whereas those not so tied to their religion will waver in their attachments. Such a pattern of results would seem to confirm the distinction between the alternative states of loyalty and choice (Friedman 1990).

#### *Social Ties*

An alternative theory of religious loyalty is that individuals, by their affiliation, become embedded in dense social networks that help to create a momentum of affiliation that is difficult to reverse. The church environment then becomes a source for reinforcing political information from the pulpit and from fellow congregants that will act to shape and stabilize political loyalties.

Individuals often become enmeshed in a social context that supports (or coerces) the maintenance of affiliation — friends, family, and neighbors will expect to see you in church and you may want to see them there. One survey found that sixty-four percent of church members

named a fellow church member as a political discussant. Though many of those are relatives or spouses, roughly a third were neighbors, co-workers, or other group members, and roughly ten percent of all discussion partners were met in church (Djupe 1997). Others, namely Stark and Glock (1968: 166), have found that conservative Protestants find the most friends in church, which they claim is due to higher levels of religious commitment. Dean Kelley (1972) wrote that social strength, or the maintenance of the community, is attained by creating strong ties within the congregation primarily due to emphasizing difference with the larger community (see also Moore 1986). However they are generated, it seems clear that social ties within the church serve to prolong affiliation with the church.

There is a long line of research establishing the effects of the church environment on political attitudes and behaviors (Wald, Owen and Hill 1988; Jelen 1992; Gilbert 1993; Legee and Kellstedt 1993; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1996; Green, Guth, Smidt, and Kellstedt 1996; Djupe 1997). In the same way that social networks can promote religious affiliation and attendance, churches foster the adoption and reinforcement of political attributes through regular meetings, clearly communicated expectations for behavior, and through the adoption of a common culture and belief system. Members who are socially embedded within the church and who are strongly committed to the faith are more likely to take on and hold dear the predominant political loyalties of the congregation.

### *Social Circumstances*

Those who have lost a sense of loyalty might still appear loyal in their behavior — the null hypothesis. Without loyalty, clearly other concerns are shaping the choice to continue the affiliation with the institution. One no longer attends the church out of loyalty to a denominational label, but chooses a church based on the quality of the music, the extensive support groups, the catchy road sign, or any other of a host of factors. Wuthnow (1988) has suggested that the decline of traditional loyalties to religious institutions resulted from the increase in higher education, geographic mobility, and ecumenism — all serve to foster choice. Roof and McKinney (1987) found that denominations are somewhat distinctive in their demographics, especially in their average education and income levels. One could plausibly conclude denominations are geared, to some extent, to meet the particular needs of their constituencies. Therefore, those who move away economically from that constituency may find their needs are not being met and therefore find a reason to leave the church.

Political scientists have suggested that the decline of loyalties to parties was a result of television and the jarring public events and scandals of the 1960's and 1970's (Converse 1976; Sundquist 1983; Wattenberg 1996; Beck 1997) — events that shook loose partisan moorings. Instead of choosing a candidate by party label, other factors, such as issues and the candidate's appearance, come into play (Popkin 1994). Further, economic and geographic mobility can serve to encourage choice in the political realm as well — the party of youth and family may no longer match the needs of the adult who has pursued higher education and moved to the suburbs. Specifically, those whose class, education, and region differ from that growing up have an incentive to be disloyal on a number of institutional fronts, including the religious and political.

### **Measuring Loyalty**

While brand loyalty is an abstract notion that involves a host of involvement and identification elements difficult to tease out, there are a few available measures in the 1993 General Social Survey (Davis and Smith 1993). Four measures capture the various conceptions of religious loyalty, including temporal and social/psychological variations.

I construct the first brand loyalty measure (Brand Loyalty 1) by assessing agreement between past (at age sixteen: DENOM16 or RELIG16) and present religious affiliations (DENOM or RELIG) (see Appendix for more specific coding information). It may not be enough to merely

associate oneself with the childhood church; at least a minimal measure of involvement is required as a loyalty test for a second loyalty variable ("It is useless to call my feelings loyal unless my muscles somehow express this loyalty" Royce 1967: 239). Therefore, a minimal religious attendance of several times a year is established as a baseline, attendance below which suggests disaffiliation (Brand Loyalty 2).

This measurement strategy, however, may conflate the psychological and social elements of loyalty. While loyalty may be the result of the psychological orientations discussed above, loyalty alternately may be a state enforced by constant social ties (Wald 1998). In this scheme, the social context of the church may encourage a consistent pattern of behavior in accordance with prevalent and communicated behavioral norms and expectations (Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988; Jelen 1992; Gilbert 1993). The third measure, therefore, is the GSS church attendance measure, which can be conceived of as a social ties measure. The fourth is the strength of current religious affiliation (RELITEN) measure, which captures psychological attachment in the cross-section. The four measures should differentiate whether religious loyalty is psychologically or socially constructed and whether the connection between political and religious loyalty works longitudinally or in the cross-section.

The distributions of the four measures of religious loyalty among various social and religious groups are presented in Table 1, which shows considerable and expected differences among religious traditions. Catholics appear to have high brand loyalty, while, not surprisingly, mainline Protestants have quite low levels of loyalty (Roof and McKinney 1987; Wuthnow 1988). There is a modest difference between the sexes, with females evincing higher loyalties, and a large difference between racial groups — blacks maintain loyalties to their denominations much more than do whites.

Table 2 shows the intercorrelations between the four religious loyalty variables and a few religious traditions. As one might expect most are significantly correlated. Current religious affiliation strength is highly correlated with church attendance and moderately with the two recall loyalty variables. It seems clear that church attendance is a catch-all variable, collecting the strength of current attachments, the longevity of psychological identification, as well as variation based on traditions. Interestingly, Catholics are more loyal in all respects, there is no relationship between being a mainline Protestant and religious loyalty, and only a very mild relationship for evangelicals and religious loyalty.

### **Theoretical Expectations**

#### *Dependent Variables*

We are fortunate that a series of political questions in the GSS allow a rather thorough test of the relationship between religious loyalty and three political variants of loyalty. The first dependent variable allows a test of the spillover of religious loyalties to political partisanship. This cross-sectional measure of political loyalty is collapsed to zero if the respondent identified as an independent (no loyalty) and one if the respondent identified with either the Democratic or Republican party (loyalty).

The second dependent variable can be thought of as an alternate formulation of loyalty — loyalty captured through steadfast voting for one party's candidates over two presidential election cycles (1988 to 1992). The variable is measured one if the respondent voted for Bush in both 1988 and 1992 or Dukakis in 1988 and Clinton in 1992 and zero if they voted for either Bush or Dukakis in 1988 and switched parties or expressed no preference in 1992. Such a formulation has been used in the study of voter loyalties before the advent of reliable survey data (Anderson 1979). The third dependent variable again demonstrates loyalty through behavior, though this time to the democratic process by consistently turning out to vote in two presidential elections. The measure incorporates the voter's recollection of voting in the 1988 and 1992 Presidential contests, and is coded one if she voted in both elections and zero if she voted in neither or only one election.

**TABLE 1**  
**The Distribution of Four Measures of Religious Brand Loyalty**  
**in the 1993 GSS by Sex, Race, and Religious Tradition**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Brand Loyalty 1<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Brand Loyalty 2<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Church Attendance<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>Religious Strength<sup>d</sup></b>
Overall	50.9	27.8	38.9	37.9
Males	50.2	22.9	31.6	31.8
Females	51.5	31.5	44.4	42.4
White	49.4	25.4	36.9	36.1
Black	64.8	44.7	49.4	47.4
Raised Mainline Protestant	57.8	25.5	36.0	33.9
Raised Evangelical Protestant	68.6	42.9	45.5	41.1
Raised White Catholic	74.9	41.8	43.3	36.8
Raised Non-white Catholic	73.0	49.2	50.0	46.0

Source: 1993 General Social Survey, n=1606.

- <sup>a</sup> Brand loyalty version 1 assesses agreement between the denomination/religion raised in and the current denomination/religion — the so-called ‘pure’ version of brand loyalty (see Appendix for more coding information).
- <sup>b</sup> Brand loyalty version 2 establishes a baseline church attendance of 2 to 3 times a month (ATTEND=5) and then assesses agreement between the denomination/religion raised in and the current denomination/religion — the so-called ‘mixed’ version of brand loyalty.
- <sup>c</sup> Church attendance is the percent of each category who claim church attendance 2 to 3 times a month or more often (ATTEND).
- <sup>d</sup> Religious strength is the percentage of each category who claim to be a “strong” member of their religious preference (RELITEN).

**TABLE 2**  
**Correlations Between Religious Loyalty**  
**Variables and Selected Denominational Families<sup>a</sup>**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Religious Strength</b>	<b>Brand Loyalty 1</b>	<b>Brand Loyalty 2</b>	<b>Church Attendance</b>
Brand Loyalty 1	0.220	**		
Brand Loyalty 2	0.205	**	0.872	**
Church attendance	0.456	**	0.620	**
	0.606	**		
Evangelical	0.048	0.063	**	
	0.085		**	
	0.086	**		
Mainline	0.002	-0.045	-0.042	-0.044
Catholic	0.092	**	0.192	**
	0.210	**	0.128	**

Source: 1993 General Social Survey.

<sup>a</sup> Entries are Pearson’s r coefficients. See Appendix for coding information.

Political loyalties have declined over the last forty years, whether measured by political party identification, splitting tickets, or declining turnout. In the 1996 National Election Study, nearly forty percent of the electorate identified themselves as independents, up from twenty-one percent in 1947 (Flanigan and Zingale 1998), thirty-six percent split their ticket between the House and

president in 1992 up from twelve percent in 1952 (Wattenberg 1996), and turnout has dropped nearly 15 percent since the mid-1960's. The reasons advanced to explain this trend have included a rise in education, the introduction of television on a mass scale, the extension of primaries, political scandals, and unpopular wars. In the cross-section, several items in the 1993 GSS would contribute to the maintenance of partisan loyalties which I will detail now.

### *Independent Variables*

In addition to the religious loyalty variables, several factors should also encourage the decline of religious and political loyalties. As Wuthnow (1988) suggested, class and geographic mobility both have served to increase religious disloyalty. The GSS includes several indicators of changing social circumstances from age 16 that might provide an incentive for both religious and political disloyalty (the null hypothesis). I incorporate dichotomous measures of whether the respondent has retained the same class as her parents (compares FINRELA and INCOME16) and lives in the same region as in her youth (compares REGION and REGION16). Both coefficients should be positive as they are coded one if the same region or class and zero if not. Further, I include the distance of the child's and parent's highest educational level, with the thought that the larger difference between the two the more incentive the child has to be disloyal to her childhood institutions (see Appendix for more).

The same basic arguments advanced above to explain the connection between religious and political loyalty can explain the connection between marital fidelity and political loyalty. One who is loyal to the institution of marriage (1=married or widowed; 0=divorced) is more likely to retain political loyalty due to the stability of social circumstances, social ties, and the psychological sense of loyalty. I expect that this relationship will be not nearly as strong as the tie between religious and political loyalties.

Certain other factors have been suggested to have caused the decline of loyalties in society, namely a rise in education and consumption of the mass media (Putnam 1995). The effect of education, however, is difficult to disentangle. Some literature shows the educated to possess stronger party loyalties and more attitudinal restraint than the less educated (Converse 1964; Flanigan and Zingale 1998), meaning less of a likelihood to switch, while Wuthnow (1988) suggests that education has a significant role to play in the erosion of religious loyalties. It is entirely possible that education works in both ways and the underlying diversity is masked by the gross measure of grade attainment; predictions are agnostic.

The rise of television viewing has been associated with all sorts of evils in society, including withering physical health, declining associationalism (Putnam 1995), and weakening political parties (Wattenberg 1996; Beck 1997). Here we must be careful, because different types of media are likely to affect politics in different ways (Graber 1997; Norris 1996). Watching the evening news (1=never use to 5=use daily) is a sign of engagement in the affairs of society and suggests some political interest and involvement with the political system. Media use may also serve to foster that interest and engagement. Increased consumption of television news at least may be said to be associated with the maintenance of political loyalties.

Those who are loyal are also likely to have political reasons for doing so. That is, people who claim themselves to be strongly ideological (folded seven point ideology measure — POLVIEWS) are likely to have an agenda they want to see enacted into public policy. Ideologues, therefore, are more likely to retain a party affiliation, vote, and remain loyal to a party's candidates.

I also include a set of demographic controls. I do not expect any gender effects since that effect is likely captured by other included factors, such as religious loyalty. Whites, however, should possess less political loyalties, mainly due to the partisan stability of non-white groups induced by societal discrimination, segregation, inclusive religious affiliations, and language barriers; however, whites should vote more often than non-whites due to an imbalance in resources (Flanigan and Zingale 1998). Older citizens are often thought to be immunized to shifting political

conditions, are therefore more likely to retain their party loyalties over time (McPhee and Ferguson 1962; Beck 1993), and are more likely to turn out to vote (Flanigan and Zingale 1998).

## RESULTS

The results of the logistic regression estimation of partisanship, loyalty to major party candidates, and loyal turnout are presented in Table 3. The same set of dependent variables is used in each model to simplify the analysis and the comparison of the effects of religious loyalties (Brand loyalty 2 is excluded). The General Social Survey includes a nominal set of political factors and does not include several that have been used to explain these three dependent variables. The models predict, therefore, a smaller portion of the variance commonly explained by more inclusive models, especially for turnout though the other two are not often studied in their current formats (see Table 3 footnotes for model statistics). The models do offer a reasonable opportunity to explore the questions raised in this work, though we should be cautious in inferring too much from the results. To help explain the substantive meaning of the logit coefficients, I have produced in Table 4 the probability shifts in political loyalties generated by low (mean minus the std. dev.) and high (mean plus the std. dev.) values of the religious loyalty variables.

Religious brand loyalty is a positive and significant predictor of partisanship. This is especially intriguing due to the insignificance of both church attendance and current religious affiliation strength. Though partisanship is measured in the cross-section, it is thought of as a stable, long term attitude and clearly is related to the long term affiliation with a religious brand. Further, it is relatively rare for individuals to switch parties during their lifetimes, so in most instances, partisanship does capture a longitudinal affiliation (Jennings and Markus 1984). Therefore, the act of identification with a religious brand serves to help sustain the connection with a particular party. We can be confident in this result when we note that other more directly related factors are included, such as political ideology and the frequency of news consumption (a surrogate for political interest). The probability shifts in Table 4 indicate that the religiously brand loyal are 7.8 percent more likely to be partisans than the disloyal. Though this effect pales in comparison to the effect of folded ideology (17.9 percent increase), it nevertheless is substantively meaningful. Taken together with other, perhaps more proximate, factors, religious loyalty could tip the balance to party affiliation.

We can confidently reject the null hypothesis that common social circumstances serve to maintain partisanship, since neither region, class, nor educational differences have a significant effect. As expected, ideologues, non-whites, and older Americans are more likely to be partisans.

From the model of major candidate loyalty, it seems clear that the choice of a candidate relies on current affiliations and information provided by close associates rather than on stable psychological attachments. Those who attend church more often and who indicate that they strongly affiliate with their current religion are more likely to remain loyal to one major party's candidates across two presidential elections. High church attendance contributes a 9.1 percent increase in candidate loyalty, while high religious affiliation strength contributes 6.7 percent (Table 4). It appears that social cues proximate to the behavior are required to connect religious loyalties to behavioral forms of political loyalty, while having a sense of loyalty due to a long term affiliation is inconsequential.

Ideologues and older Americans are less likely to defect in 1992 from their 1988 party's candidate. The educated are more likely to remain loyal, the opposite of the effect predicted by Wuthnow concerning religious institutions. Again, the null social circumstances hypothesis can be rejected; only educational differences with a respondent's parents is significant, though here higher differences encourage candidate loyalty (the opposite of the predicted relationship).

In the model of turnout, older, white citizens more often exercise their right to vote, while those who have moved to a different region since age sixteen vote less often, most likely due to the hassles of registration in the new location and a lack of community connection. Maintaining the same class as at age 16 promotes non-voting, as do educational differences with one's parents.

**TABLE 3**  
**Logistic Regression Estimates of Partisanship, Candidate Loyalty**  
**In 1988 and 1992, and Turnout in 1988 and 1992**

Variable	Partisanship <sup>A</sup>	Candidate Loyalty <sup>B</sup>	1988-92 Turnout <sup>C</sup>
<i>Brand Loyalty Variables</i>			
Brand Loyalty 1 (pure)	0.337 (0.137)	**	-0.165 (0.144)
	-0.087 (0.149)		
Church Attendance	0.029 (0.029)		0.072 (0.030)
**	0.097 (0.031)	***	
Religious Strength	0.096 (0.078)		0.143 (0.083)
*	0.055 (0.084)		
<i>Other Included Factors</i>			
	Married	0.087 (0.187)	
-0.076 (0.193)		0.049 (0.203)	
Same Region as at Age 16	-0.031 (0.148)		-0.242 (0.154)
	0.481 (0.159)	***	
Same Class as at Age 16	-0.108 (0.128)		0.120 (0.135)
	-0.237 (0.137)	*	
Educational diff. w/ parents	0.031 (0.027)		0.053 (0.028)
*	-0.049 (0.029)	*	
Education	0.039 (0.025)		0.073 (0.026)
***	0.310 (0.029)	***	
Folded ideology	0.422 (0.075)	***	0.337 (0.076)
***	0.321 (0.078)	***	
Freq. watching TV news	-0.012 (0.068)		-0.028 (0.074)
	0.193 (0.073)	***	
Female	0.095 (0.129)		0.009 (0.135)
	-0.153 (0.139)		
White	-0.680 (0.199)	***	-0.316 (0.201)
	0.602 (0.192)	***	
Age	0.009 (0.004)	**	0.008 (0.005)
*	0.051 (0.005)	***	
Constant	-1.146 (0.569)		-1.865 (0.619)
	-8.573 (0.718)		

Source: 1993 General Social Survey.

<sup>A</sup> Model statistics:  $N=1191$ ;  $\chi^2=80.0$  \*\*\* (13 d.f.); percent correct=57.7; McFadden's Rho-squared=0.052. The measure is coded 1 if the respondent claimed an affiliation with a political party (Democrat or Republican) and 0 if the respondent claimed independence from a party. Therefore, a positive coefficient signals more political loyalty. Roughly 65 percent of this sample affiliated with a political party.

<sup>B</sup> Model statistics:  $N=1021$ ;  $\chi^2=19.6$  \*\*\* (13 d.f.); percent correct=54.7; McFadden's Rho-squared=0.057. The measure is coded 1 if the respondent indicated a preference for one party's presidential candidates in 1988 as well as in 1992 (non-voters are included). Therefore, a positive coefficient signals more political loyalty. Roughly 57 percent of this sample remained loyal to one party from 1988 to 1992 (either indicating a preference for Bush in 1988 and Bush in 1992 or Dukakis in 1988 and Clinton in 1992).

<sup>C</sup> Model statistics:  $N=1204$ ;  $\chi^2=334.8$  \*\*\* (13 d.f.); percent correct=63.3; McFadden's Rho-squared=0.203. Roughly 57 percent of this sample claimed to have voted in both the 1988 and 1992 presidential elections. The variable is coded 1 if the respondent voted in both presidential elections and 0 otherwise. Therefore, a positive coefficient signals more political loyalty.



**TABLE 4**  
**Increased Probabilities of Partisanship, Candidate Loyalty In 1988 and 1992, and**  
**Turnout in 1988 and 1992 due to Effects of Variables of Interest<sup>A</sup>**

Variable	Partisanship	Candidate Loyalty	1988-92 Turnout
Brand Loyalty I	7.8	-4.1	-2.1
Church Attendance	3.5	9.1	12.2
Religious Strength	3.9	6.7	2.7
Folded Ideology <sup>B</sup>	17.9	15.2	14.4

<sup>A</sup> Probabilities are calculated by reversing the logit calculation, holding all variables at their means save the variable of interest. To get the cell entries I then subtract the probability at the mean minus the standard deviation from the probability at the mean plus the standard deviation:  $p(\text{mean}+\text{s.d.}) - p(\text{mean}-\text{s.d.})$

<sup>B</sup> The effect of folded ideology is included for comparison.

Watching the TV news as well as the inevitable campaign advertising will convey a significant amount of information to the consumer and encourage voting; the informed operate at a considerable advantage when navigating the electoral process and making choices within it. Further, ideologues vote more often than moderates since they have a stake in the process, care about the outcome, and are interested in the process (Flanigan and Zingale 1998). Education, always one of the most important factors in predicting turnout, strongly encourages turnout in the model (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980).

Neither religious brand loyalty nor religious strength has a significant effect on turnout, though church attendance does. Consequently, there are strong indications that a general, psychological sense of either cross-sectional or over-time religious loyalty does not affect significantly behavioral forms of loyalty. Again, the evidence suggests that it takes a consistent pattern of socialization captured by frequent church attendance, for instance, to convey the cues to demonstrate loyalty through voting. From Table 4, we see that high church attendance increases the probability of voting by 12.2 percent, which is quite comparable to the effect of being an ideologue (14.4 percent increase). Without that social stimulus, the connection between religious and political loyalties appears to exist largely within the mind of the believer and does not manifest itself in the respondent's behavior. Religious brand loyalty does matter indirectly, however, as it promotes loyalties to political parties and loyal partisans are often shown to participate at higher rates in the political process (Flanigan and Zingale 1998).

From this discussion, we are left with several conclusions. While there are many other ways in which religion can affect electoral politics, religious loyalties do spill-over to promote political loyalties, affect involvement in the electoral process indirectly through partisanship, and affect involvement directly through current demonstrations of religious loyalty — attendance and religious affiliation strength. These results can be seen as confirmation of the connection between religion and politics, but more so the notion that the manner in which individuals relate to institutions is pervasive, not segmented to one type of institution at a time. That is, loyalty functions in part as a general ordering principle, structuring individuals' connections to various institutions. As Royce advocated, one should be "loyal to loyalty" (1967: 248), and to some extent the religious loyalists appear to do just that.

In addition, religious loyalty should be thought of as consisting of both psychological *and* social components; one cannot be loyal without carrying out the belief in practice, and mere association does not promote long term political loyalty. Recalling the moderate to strong intercorrelations between these variables in Table 2, it is evident that these factors rarely occur in isolation. Those brand loyal are also likely to be frequent attenders and strong affiliates; taken together, the rather small individual effects of religious on political loyalties can make considerable difference.

## CONCLUSION

In 1960, Will Herberg wrote about the structure of American religion as tripartite, describing Americas as either Protestant, Catholic, or Jew — a state of loyalty. At the same time, Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960) wrote that the primary factor structuring American voting behavior was loyalty to a political party, loyalty which was rooted more in tradition than in choice. Later that decade, and certainly by the early 1970's, political observers had noted the rise in issue-based voting and candidate-centered politics, that is choosing candidates based on agreement with their policies and other factors but not the party label (by choice and not tradition). In the late 1960's and 1970's, observers of religion noted people shopping for churches (Luckmann 1967; Schaller 1990), people abandoning their childhood faiths (Bromley 1987), and later the rise of the megachurch (Lafavre Yorks 1990; Schaller 1990; Towns 1990; Niebuhr 1995).

American religion has nearly always rebounded from membership losses or benefited from market opportunities (widespread disloyalty), whether due to the social dislocation caused by wars, depressions, interstates, or frontiers (Hudson 1953; Hargrove 1980; Finke and Stark 1992). Megachurches, the growth of which have a clear connection to declining religious brand loyalties, if taken together would constitute roughly the fourteenth largest denomination in the United States (Djupe 1995). Further, the fragmentation of the religious market, which the decline of brand loyalty has created, does not seem likely to have severe implications for the future of the nation, at least considered in isolation.

Likewise, the political success of the United States has depended on institutional innovation caused by the desire to win. Political parties, without which some would claim democracy is unthinkable (Schattschneider 1942: 1), were an innovation employed by entrepreneurs (legislators) to guarantee themselves a safe return to office (Aldrich 1995). Political parties, by organizing the government and electorate, have been crucial to much of the governmental stability and responsibility America has enjoyed. It seems that an important aspect underlying the ability of political parties to serve in this capacity is the continued loyalty of affiliates. The American system, bolstered by enduring party loyalties, moved in long, slowly changing patterns, described as party systems. Changes in party systems occurred in short bursts, or realigning elections (Key 1955; Burnham 1970; Sundquist 1983), and then settled into a stable pattern of politics for a generation. As traditional party loyalties declined, the pattern has become unstable, and the realignment "scheduled" for the mid-1960's never materialized.

Rather, there is a new pattern of instability which describes American electoral politics, characterized by candidate-centered politics, heavily mediated campaigning, the never ending campaign, the increased power of money in campaigning, the increasing importance of interest groups and movements on electoral fortunes, and the necessity of polling to understand the needs and desires of a constituency. Perhaps, in some small but significant ways, declining religious loyalties are at least a correlate and maybe a cause of that new pattern of politics. As Moore (1994: 89) puts it:

The downside of some contemporary evidence that loyalty to particular religious denominations is lessening maybe that religious and political loyalties are sliding downward together, their fortunes, as always, linked. Those who have wanted a politics without religion may get their wish, but at the cost of a politics without parties or voters.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

An earlier version of this paper was prepared for the 1998 annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, November 6-8, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. I want to thank Ken Wald and an anonymous reviewer for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper and Ryan Paulsen and Bob Salisubry, for this paper grew in part from our conversations about loyalties in society and their political connections.

## APPENDIX

**Dependent Variables**

*Partisanship*: Collapsed from PARTYID to zero when the respondent is an independent or a leaner, and one when she identifies with a party.

*Major Party Candidate Loyalty*: Starts with the presidential vote (PRES88 and PRES92) or vote preference (IF88WHO and IF92WHIO) of the respondent in 1988 and 1992. If the respondent remained loyal in deed or principle in 1992 to the 1988 party's candidate then she is considered loyal. In practice, if the respondent expressed a preference for Bush in 1988 and 1992 or for Dukakis in 1988 and Clinton in 1992 then she is considered loyal (=1), otherwise the measure equals zero.

*Loyal Voting*: Examines the recalled voting habits of the respondent over the 1988 and 1992 presidential elections. If the respondent voted in both (VOTE88 and VOTE92) then she is considered loyal to the political process; the measure equals zero otherwise.

**Selected Independent Variables**

*Brand Loyalty 1*: equals one if the respondent is loyal and zero otherwise. Specific coding is noted below.

*For Catholics*: Brand loyalty is assessed as the agreement between a Catholic affiliation noted in RELIG and RELIG16 responses.

*For Protestants*: Brand loyalty is assessed as the agreement between DENOM and DENOM16. Thus, while significant shifts may have occurred, for instance, between ELCA and Wisconsin Synod Lutherans, this measure cannot capture it due to the unique denominational codes employed. However, it does capture the moves from some religion to none, or from one denominational code to another, i.e. Lutheran to Baptist.

*For Jews*: Brand loyalty is assessed as the agreement between a Jewish affiliation noted in RELIG and RELIG16 responses. This measure misses moves within Judaism, which are unavoidable since there is no measure of childhood Jewish affiliation.

*For 'Other' religions*: Brand loyalty is assessed as the agreement between the 'other' affiliation noted in OTHER and OTH16 responses.

*Brand Loyalty 2*: Same as Brand Loyalty 1 but uses a baseline of ATTEND=5 (2 to 3 times a month).

*Current religious affiliation strength*: I use RELITEN recoded so that 4=strong, 3=not very, 2=somewhat, and 1=no religion.

*Church attendance*: is the GSS church attendance measure ATTEND.

*Educational differences with parents*: Is assessed by subtracting the highest grade level a parent has achieved (whether mother (MAEDUC) or father (PAEDUC) depending on which is highest) from the highest grade level attained by the respondent (EDUC) and then taking the absolute value.

*Same Region as at Age 16*: Compares REGION and REGION16. The measure equals one if the respondent lives in the same region as at age 16 and zero if she does not.

*Same Class as at Age 16*: Compares FINRELA and INCOME16, both of which ask the respondent to compare her family income to American families in general (far below to far above). The measure equals one if FINRELA and INCOME16 are equal and zero if they are not.

*Folded Ideology*: Folds POLVIEWS at its middle, so 4=extreme liberal/conservative, 3=lib./con., 2=lean lib./con., 1=moderate.

**REFERENCES**

- Aldrich, John H. 1995. *Why Parties? The Origin and Transformation of Political Parties in America*. University of Chicago Press.
- Andersen, Kristi. 1979. *The Creation of a Democratic Majority 1928-1936*. University of Chicago Press.
- Babchuk, Nicholas, Harry J. Crockett, John A. Ballweg. 1967. Change in religious affiliation and family stability. *Social Forces* 45:551-55.
- Beck, Paul Allen. 1993. A socialization theory of party realignment. In *Controversies in Voting Behavior*. Richard Niemi and Herbert Weisberg, editors. Washington DC: CQ Press.
- Beck, Paul Allen. 1997. *Party Politics in America*. 8th ed. New York: Longman.
- Bellah, Robert N., Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton. 1985. *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Berger, Peter L. 1979. *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affiliation*. Garden City, NY: Anchor.
- Bromley, David G., ed. 1988. *Falling from the Faith: Causes and Consequences of Religious Apostasy*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Burnham, Walter Dean. 1970. *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics*. New York: Norton.
- Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller, and Donald E. Stokes. 1960. *The American Voter*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Converse, Philip. 1964. The nature of belief systems in mass publics. In *Ideology and Discontent*, ed. David Apter. New York: Free Press.
- Converse, Philip. 1976. *The Dynamics of Party Support*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Crockett, Harry J., Nicholas Babchuk, and John A. Ballweg. 1969. Change in religious affiliation and family stability: A second study. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 31:464-68.
- Davis, James A., and Tom W. Smith. 1993. *General Social Survey, 1993*. Chicago, IL: National Opinion Research Center.
- Djupe, Paul A. 1995. Brand loyalty and the megachurch. Paper delivered at the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, St. Louis.

- Djupe, Paul A. 1997 *The Plural Church: Church Involvement and Political Behavior*. Ph.D. dissertation, Washington University, St. Louis.
- Finke, Roger, and Rodney Stark. 1992. *The Churching of America, 1776-1990. Winners and Losers in our Religious Economy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press
- Flanagan, William H., and Nancy H. Zingale. 1998. *Political Behavior of the American Electorate*. Ninth edition. Washington DC: CQ Press.
- Friedman, Lawrence. 1990. *The Republic of Choice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Gilbert, Christopher P. 1993. *The Impact of Churches on Political Behavior*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Graber, Doris A. 1997. *Mass Media and American Politics*, 5th edition. Washington DC: CQ Press
- Green, John C., and James L. Guth. 1993. From lambs to sheep: Denominational change and political behavior. In *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*. David C. Leege and Lyman A. Kellstedt, editors.
- Green, John C., James L. Guth, Corwin E. Simdt, and Lyman A. Kellstedt. 1996. *Religion and the Culture Wars: Dispatches from the Front*. Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield
- Hargrove, Barbara. 1980. *Religion for a Dislocated Generation*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press
- Herberg, Will. 1960. *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co.
- Hirschman, Albert O. 1970. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Hoge, Dean, Benton Johnson, and Donald A. Luidens. 1994. *Vanishing Boundaries*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press
- Huckfeldt, Robert and John Sprague. 1995. *Citizens, Politics, and Social Communications: Information and Influence in an Election Campaign*. New York: Cambridge Press
- Hudson, Winthrop S. 1953. *The Great Tradition of the American Churches*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Jelen, Ted G. 1992. Political Christianity: A contextual analysis. *American Journal of Political Science* 36:692-714
- Jennings, M. Kent, and Gregory B. Markus. 1984. Partisan changes over the long haul. *American Political Science Review* 78: 1000-18
- Kelley, Dean M. 1972. *Why Conservative Churches are Growing*. Evanston: Harper and Row.
- Key Jr., V.O. 1955. A theory of critical elections. *Journal of Politics* 17: 3-18
- Lafavre Yorks, Cindy. 1990. McChurch. *USA Today*, April 13-15. USW 4: 1
- Lauer, Robert H. 1975. Occupational and religious mobility in a small city. *Sociological Quarterly* 16:380-92
- Leege, David C. and Lyman A. Kellstedt, eds. 1993. *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Luckmann, Thomas. 1967. *The Invisible Religion*. New York: Macmillan.
- McCutcheon, Allan L. 1988. Denominations and religious intermarriage: Trends among white Americans in the twentieth century. *Review of Religious Research* 29:213-27.
- McPhee, William, and Jack Ferguson. 1962. Political immunization. In *Public Opinion and Congressional Elections*, William McPhee and Nathan Glaser, editors. New York: Free Press.
- Moore, R. Laurence. 1986. *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Moore, R. Laurence. 1994. *Selling God: American Religion and in the Marketplace of Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nelson, Lynn D. 1988. Disaffiliation, desacralization, and political values. In *Falling from the Faith: Causes and Consequences of Religious Apostasy*. David G. Bromley, editor
- Newport, Frank. 1979. The religious switcher in the United States. *American Sociological Review* 44: 528-52
- Niebuhr, Gustav. 1995. Where Shopping Mall Culture Gets a Big Dose of Religion. *New York Times*, April 16
- Norris, Pippa. 1996. Does television erode social capital? A reply to Putnam. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29: 474-9.
- Popkin, Samuel L. 1994. *The Reasoning Voter*. Second edition. University of Chicago Press.
- Putnam, Robert. 1995. Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy* 6:65-78.
- Roof, Wade Clark, and William McKinney. 1987. *American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Royce, Josiah. 1967. 1908. *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems*. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press.
- Salisbury, Robert. 1985. Blame dismal world conditions on .baseball. *Miami Herald* (May 18): 27A.
- Schaller, Lyle E. 1990. Megachurch! *Christianity Today* March 5, 20-24
- Schattschneider, E.E. 1942. *Party Government*. New York: Rinehart.
- Sobel, Robert. 1978. *They Satisfy*. New York: Anchor Press.
- Stark, Rodney, and Charles Y. Glock. 1968. *American Piety: The Nature of Religious Commitment*. Berkeley: University of California Press
- Sundquist, James. 1983. *Dynamics of the Party System: Alignment and Realignment of Political Parties in the United States*. Washington DC: Brookings
- Towns, Elmer L. 1990. *An Inside Look at 10 of Today's Most Innovative Churches*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.
- Turow, Joseph. 1997. *Breaking Up of America*. University of Chicago Press
- Verba, Sidney, Norman H. Nie, and John R. Petrocik. 1976. *The Changing American Voter*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Wald, Kenneth D. 1998. Personal communication (November 9)
- Wald, Kenneth D., Dennis Owen, and Samuel Hill. 1988. Churches as political communities. *American Political Science Review* 82: 531-548.
- Wattenberg, Martin P. 1996. *The Decline of American Political Parties 1952-1994*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Wolfinger, Raymond E. and Steven J. Rosenstone. 1980. *Who Votes?* New Haven: Yale University Press
- Wuthnow, Robert. 1988. *The Restructuring of American Religion*. Princeton: University Press.