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**Religious Devotion and Partisan Intensity:
Measures of Religious Faith as
Proxy Measures of Political Affect**

By

Janice K Ward

Accepted in Partial Completion
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Kathleen L. Kitto, Dean of the Graduate School

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MASTER'S THESIS

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Janice K Ward
May 25, 2012

**Religious Devotion and Partisan Intensity:
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A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Janice K. Ward
June 2012

ABSTRACT

For decades now, the nature of independent leaners has been a source of debate and dispute. Are those people who self-identify as independent leaners skeptical, critical thinkers, or are they actually closet partisans who are simply denying their partisanship. Questions of religiosity are used as proxies to measure an individual's inclination towards affect in general. The question asked is whether independent leaners show lower levels of religiosity than both strong and weak partisans.

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Introduction

For decades now, the nature of independent leaners has been a source of debate and dispute. Are those people who self-identify as independent leaners skeptical, critical thinkers, or are they actually closet partisans who are simply denying their partisanship? Questions of religiosity are used as proxies to measure an individual's inclination towards affect in general. The question asked is whether independent leaners show lower levels of religiosity than both strong and weak partisans.

In the American National Election Surveys (ANES), partisanship and independence are measured on a seven-point scale in response to a series of questions. The first question asked of the respondents is whether they think of themselves as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or what? The responses to this first question provide us with a three-point scale categorizing more than two-thirds of the sample into the categories of Republican, Democrat, and independent. Republicans and Democrats are then asked about the strength of their partisanship by asking if they consider themselves to be strong or weak Republicans or Democrats. At this point we then have a five-point scale of political party affiliation. Those respondents who initially self-identify as independents are asked an additional question to tease out political preferences by asking whether they think of themselves as being closer to the Republican or Democratic parties. This adds two new categories to round out the seven-point scale which is typically organized as: strong Democrat, weak Democrat, (independent) leans Democrat, (pure) independent, (independent) leans Republican, weak Republican, and strong Republican. It is those individuals that initially classify themselves as independents,

but under further prompting admit to a preference for one of the parties that are the subject of this inquiry.

Who are the so-called “partisan independents” (Keith et al, 1992)? The question itself presents a problem in that the two terms contradict each other; either one is partisan or one is independent. Flanigan and Zingale define partisanship as “the sense of attachment or belonging that an individual feels for a political party” (1998, 51). If a partisan hears one of their party leaders advocating for a specific policy, they will have “a basis in party loyalty for supporting that policy, quite apart from other considerations” (54). Political candidates sanctioned by the party may also find an inherent favorable inclination from their party’s partisans. A political independent, by definition, is an individual who would not have this same form of political party attachment.

A textbook from the end of the 19th century within the polarized environment of the spoils system, categorized independents this way:

As on the playground, some do not always care to go with the crowd, or even prefer to be by themselves. Such as these, who think for themselves, and dare to stand alone, make the Independents in politics.

They are likely to prefer the good of their country to the success of their party. They will not act with their party, or will leave it, if it is wrong. If the other party changes, as parties sometimes change, and advocates measures that they believe in; if they change their own minds as sensible men sometimes must; or if the other party puts forward better candidates; or if a new party arises, the independent voters are willing to act wherever they can best secure the public welfare. (Dole, 1891, 127)

This definition of an independent accepts that the independent will affiliate with one or the other party, but that that affiliation ends when the party’s concept of the public good is in conflict with the independent’s concept of the public good. The key to this particular

definition is that it defines an independent not as lacking in party affiliation, but that the nature of that affiliation differs substantially from that of a partisan.

Evolution of the Debate

This textbook view of an independent remained dominant until the publishing of *The American Voter* by Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960). These authors analyzed data from the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan with the view that, as a bloc, independents “have somewhat poorer knowledge of the issues, their image of the candidates is fainter, their interest in the campaign is less, their concern over the outcome is relatively slight, and their choice between competing candidates, although it is indeed made later in the campaign, seems much less to spring from discoverable evaluations of the elements of national politics” (Campbell, et al, 1960, 143). These findings were in the context of record consensus between the political parties (Downs, 1957; McCarty, et al, 2006) in which party policies differed only at the margins, liberals, moderates, and conservatives could be found in either party, and faith in government was high (Skocpol, 1996, 109). Under these conditions, with both parties acting in a manner that is providing positive results for society, with an absence of extreme positions, it would follow that the textbook independent would have no qualms about declaring a preference for a specific party. It is also in this context that only the politically unaware would be unable to identify a preference for a particular party.

During the 1960s, there was an increase in the percentage of the population that identified themselves as being independent (Bowler et al, 2009; Campbell, et al, 1980; Keith, et al,

1992). During the 1960s, there were many potential causes of a possible realignment including the nomination of Barry Goldwater by Republicans, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which gave way to a realignment of the South from a Democratic stronghold to a Republican stronghold, and the Viet Nam War which found students, fearing the draft, responding favorably to Nixon's message to end the war. Some have argued that in the realignment process, the position of independent leaner was taken as a temporary placeholder by some as they shifted party allegiance from one party to another (Flanigan and Zingale, 1998). For example, from 1952 to 1968 the percentage of white voters declaring themselves to be independent increased from 12% to 37% with the spike at 37% coinciding with former Democrat and segregationist George Wallace running as an independent candidate in 1968 (Keith et al, 1992, 34).

Studies conducted with data from this period began to distinguish between "pure" independents and independent leaners. Data compiled that separated out these two groups individually consistently came back with the same results: "Partisan Independents always have been relatively interested, informed, and active, and Pure Independents have been notably uninterested, ignorant and inactive" (Keith et al, 1992, 41). Demographic data regarding these two groups found "Pure Independents are at the bottom and partisan Independents at or near the top on measures of political involvement" (Keith et al, 1992, 41) and political sophistication. In terms of political party involvement and activity including participating in primaries, financial contributions, meeting attendance, being delegates at conventions, and concern with who wins the election, the independent leaners are similar to weak partisans. In terms of political sophistication and knowledge, the independent leaners

are more like strong partisans. Above all, the independent leaners, in the aggregate, bear very little resemblance to pure independents. Independent leaners are above average in education and income while pure independents are below average in these regards. This assertion is echoed in data presented by Phillip Converse in 1964, Walter Dean Burnham in 1970, Robert Cantor in 1975, Theodore J Macaluso in 1977, Warren E. Miller and Teresa E Levitin in 1976, and John C. Pierce and Paul R Hagner in 1988 (Keith et al, 1992).

There is no debate remaining in the literature regarding the apolitical nature of pure independents, and that as a group they diverge in almost all respects from independent leaners, with the exception of initially identifying themselves as independents. It is for this reason that I focus on an issue that continues to be debated, whether there is any real difference between partisans and independent leaners. In response to the claim that independents “share some characteristics that differentiate them in important ways from Republicans and Democrats” *The Myth of the Independent Voter* declares “This assumption is wrong. Independents, defined inclusively have little in common. They are more diverse than either Republicans or Democrats. Most of them are not uncommitted, and they are not a bloc. They are largely closet Democrats and Republicans” (Keith et al, 1992, 4).

In *The Myth of the Independent Voter*, Keith et al (1992) do an admirable job of tracing the debate of the independence or partisanship of independent leaners; providing survey data and information gleaned from other studies to determine if there truly is a difference between leaners and partisans that can be teased from the data. Numerous hypotheses are tested and discarded, including political behavior, attitudes, and demographics. As has already been discussed, a good deal of their data on political behavior shows independent leaners as

behaving very similarly to weak partisans in terms of party activity and political knowledge. In addition, the behavior of the leaners is very similar to that of weak partisans in terms of voter turnout, party loyalty at the ballot box, and the frequency of split-ticket voting. One dataset where leaners and weak partisans differed consistently and by large amounts is in self-reporting of whether the respondent has “always voted for the same party’s presidential candidate” (Keith et al, 1992, 104). The authors pointed to panel studies performed by Richard A. Brody that showed respondents who switched parties as claiming that they had always voted for the same party. Those who showed consistency in their party loyalty during the panel study often indicated that they had not always voted for that party. Brody’s panel study casts doubt on the validity of this question, and Keith et al, (1992) suggest that it may well be that those who identify themselves as party loyalists may value party loyalty while those who identify themselves as independents value political independence and that responses to this question may more clearly reflect affect for the term than necessarily past behavior.

Keith et al (1992) also look at the relationship of age to partisanship. This relationship developed relatively recently. “Not until 1964 were people under the age of 29 significantly more likely than the entire population to be Pure Independent. In 1968 a monotonic relationship between youth and pure independence emerged” (Keith et al, 1992, 116), a similar pattern is seen for independent Democrats starting in 1956. The strongest growth in independents from 1965 to 1967 came in the age groups from 21-29 and 30-49, the highest income brackets, college educated, minorities, and white-collar occupations (Burnham, 1970). This increase in independents coincides with substantial increases of educational

attainment for the 25-29 age groups from 1950 to the late 1970s as funding for education increased and college deferments from the draft swelled the enrollment rates of colleges and universities. In 1950, this age group had less than 10% with Bachelor's degrees and just over 50% with a high school education. By 1980, this age group had over 20% with Bachelor's degrees and nearly 90% had a high school diploma (US Census Bureau, 2003). This was commented on by Gerald Pomper (1975) "The growth of Independents has come particularly in those persons with sufficient education to permit freedom from party cues" (Keith et al, 1992, 129).

Keith et al (1992) do find strong correlations between age and partisanship, and attribute much of the growth in the 1970s of self-identified independents as being associated with the baby boomer generation reaching voting age and the introduction of the 26th Amendment.

Attitudes toward political parties, interest groups, and political issues were also tested. With the use of feeling thermometers, in which respondents are asked to rate how they feel about a particular party, group or policy a score is provided on a scale of 0 to 100. Designed to measure "warmth of affect" (Keith et al, 1992), a score above 50 would denote a positive affect for the question object, where a score below 50 would denote a negative affect. A score of 50 then might denote ambivalence. Averages of these scores were taken by self-identification on the 7-point scale and compared. When feeling thermometers looked at "marijuana users, women's liberationists, black militants, radical students, civil rights leaders, and urban rioters" (Keith et al, 1992, 154), all categories of partisan identification showed negative responses to these groups when combined into one group. While the Republican side of the equation follows the predictable monotonic order, the Democratic side

does not. Independent Democratic leaners show greater tolerance for these groups while strong Democrats appear similar to independent Republicans and weak Democrats appear similar to weak Republicans. A similar test was run with attitudes toward “the police, the military, and big business” (155). All partisan classifications were positive to these three groups when lumped together. The monotonic relationship displayed here, however, differed slightly from the previous group. In this set of data from the 1972 Michigan survey, independent leaners were the least favorable to these groups, weak partisans slightly more favorable with strong partisans being most favorable. Four of these seven classifications of partisanship provided scores of 67 or 68, so this does not provide for a significant finding, but it does suggest a question that bears closer scrutiny. Do those who claim stronger partisan affiliation have greater respect for authority than those with weaker affiliations? The responses were also broken down by age group, with younger age groups having a less negative view of anti-authority groups and older age groups having a more positive view of authority figures.

In terms of political behavior, political knowledge, political attitudes, and attitudes toward parties and issues Keith et al (1992) and later, John Petrocik (2009) found no substantive difference between independent leaners and weak partisans other than the inclination to identify themselves differently when responding to whether they are a Democrat, a Republican, or an independent. In Petrocik’s (2009) analysis, he concludes that independents are closet partisans whose self-representation is a mischaracterization “about how they approach elections and make judgments about candidates.” (572)

Returning to the textbook definition of an independent provided earlier in this paper, there is no real indication that the independent will differ from the partisan in any of the observable behaviors tested for by Keith et al (1992) or Petrocik (2009) with the possible exception of party defection and split-ticket voting. Still, more recent data collected in the context of third party candidates have shown greater variance in these political behaviors between partisans and independent leaners (Bowler, et al, 2009) than shown by Keith et al (1992) and Petrocik (2009). However, it is the thought processes through which the observable behavior is derived that separates the independents from the partisans.

Partisanship and Religiosity

By returning briefly to the time period from the textbook description of independents, the late 19th century, Walter Dean Burnham (1982) identified correlations between religious preferences and partisan direction in survey data from Hendricks County, Indiana. Pietistic (Protestant) observers predominantly identified with the Republican Party (23.8% D, 72.3% R). Liturgical (Catholic and Jewish) observers predominantly identified with the Democratic Party (79.7% D, 14.4% R). Those who professed no religious denomination were evenly split in party preference (48.4% D, 47.1% R). Burnham believed that a dearth of entertainment and social interaction left a void filled with both religious and political rally attendance. Those with whom you attended church were also those who attended the political rally of your choice. Both were social events. This relationship has largely been taken for granted over the years and has been commented on in much of the literature (Campbell et al., 1980; Flanigan and Zingale, 1998).

Kenneth Wald and Allison Calhoun-Brown (2010) provide similar studies regarding denominational choice and partisan direction. Their classifications of partisanship are split into only three categories; Democrats, Republicans, and independents, with independent leaners being grouped with their preferred parties. Wald and Calhoun-Brown, using more recent data than previous studies showing Catholics as strong Democrats, identify Catholics as now being situated in the political middle of the electorate.

In a study very similar in intent to what I am considering here, Stephen Mockabee (2007) utilized a broader “authority-mindedness” measure to determine partisan strength and direction which found that strong Republicans had higher levels of respect for authority and strong Democrats had lower levels of respect for authority. For his measure of “authority-mindedness” he incorporated the variables for biblical interpretation, religious affiliation, and religious commitment.

Campbell et al. (1980) discuss social cross-pressures that would create “conflict within the individual’s psychological field to membership in social groupings of dissimilar political preferences.” This contradictory effect was further examined by Maruice Mangum (2008) in his discussion of how black Protestants, an ideologically Conservative group in religious matters, tend to remain faithful to the Democratic Party while white Catholics appear to be deserting the party.

Mangum (2008) concluded that the variables of religious guidance and church attendance worked in opposing directions with black Protestants. The religious guidance variable correlated positively with Democratic Party identification while church attendance correlated negatively with Democratic Party identification. Mangum was looking at how these

variables affected partisan direction in a black population, I am more concerned with how these variables might affect bidirectional partisan strength in the broader society.

If we return to the original concept of what it means to be a partisan and what it means to be independent, we realize that it may not always be the political attitudes and voting behaviors of the individual that determine their level of partisanship, but the evaluative processes behind how those attitudes and behaviors are derived. Discussions of the evaluative process necessarily involve both cognitive and affective perceptions. Those declaring greater party loyalty may well respond more readily to their affective perceptions within the evaluative process.

The question of whether the evaluative processes of political independents differ from that of partisans is not necessarily discernible from observable behavior because it is an internal process. The challenge that this provides the researcher is whether there is data available that may more clearly provide insight to these thought processes.

The Psychological Bases of Partisan Strength

In 2000, Steven Greene published “The Psychological Sources of Partisan-Leaning Independence”. Greene utilized a survey that was admittedly suboptimal in its methodology of sample selection, and did not mirror the U.S. population. Surveys were sent out to 1,250 registered voters in a single metropolitan Midwestern county with the incentive of a \$150 drawing for one of the respondents. The sample was developed from the 302 surveys that were returned. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents were white and the sample was more conservative than is usually found in nationally representative surveys (43% Republican,

29% Democrat, 48% conservative, 26% liberal). In this survey, he used an affective/cognitive measurement strategy previously employed by social psychologists.

The affective/cognitive measurement strategy adopted by Greene (2000) used the “Democratic party” and the “Republican party” as attitude objects (519). Three sets of terms were used to measure affect, cognition, and evaluation for each party. Each of the measurement sets contained both positive and negative terms. Respondents were asked to rate the political parties on a seven-point scale according to whether they felt the word was representative of the party in question, with 1 indicating “not at all” and 7 indicating “definitely”. With the affective set, respondents were asked how the parties made them feel. The eight words used in the affective measure were “delighted, happy, joy, relaxed, hateful, disgusted, annoyed, and angry”. (519) The cognitive word set included “useful, valuable, beneficial, wise, unsafe, unhealthy, worthless, and harmful.” (520) The evaluative word set used “good, positive, like, desirable, bad, dislike, undesirable, and negative” as measurements. The average of the negative responses within each measurement set was subtracted from the average of the positive responses to derive measures of affect, cognition, and evaluation ranging from a positive attitude (6) toward the party in question to a negative attitude (-6). These data were then analyzed in relation to the respondents’ preferred parties to derive the strength of affect and cognition in the evaluative process.

Steven Greene (2000) identified strong partisans as being distinguished by having more positive attitudes (in affect, cognition, and evaluation measures) “across the board” (522) toward their preferred party. Affective and cognitive measures for weak partisans and leaners showed little to no statistical difference from each other, however, there was variation

between these two groups in the weight of affect vs. cognition in overall evaluation.

“Leaners represent a group where cognition is a dominant component of partisanship, with affect playing no role, in contrast to true partisans (both weak and strong) where cognition is the primary component of partisan evaluation, but significantly supplemented by partisan affect” (Greene 2000, 522).

In addition to his discussion of cognitive and affective differences between independent leaners and partisans, Greene also discussed the role of political socialization and the inclination of children to adopt the political parties of their parents long before policy positions, candidates, and issues hold any meaning (Greene, 2000). Independent leaners are more likely than partisans to have at least one independent parent.

Greene (2000) was able to correctly classify 86% of his respondents between partisans and leaners. Leaners showed an absence of affect in the evaluative process, more independent social identity, different patterns of parental socialization, and greater dissatisfaction with the parties than partisans. It is the emphasis on cognition in the evaluative process that is the focus of this paper.

In *Affective Intelligence and Political Judgment*, Marcus et al (2000) described people as operating with preexisting assumptions and opinions. All new sensory information is seen as moving through the amygdala, deriving an emotional response, prior to moving to the cortex region for further processing. The authors identify two different methods through which individuals make political decisions, one is through “casual, even thoughtless, reliance on habitual dispositions,” the other is through “reasoned consideration.” (95) When the individual faces common, recurring conditions, habitual dispositions will prevail. When a

novel or unusual condition presents itself, then the individual will move to reasoned consideration and search for more information on the topic. (Marcus et al, 2000)

Their research determined that partisans who were anxious about their own candidates were more likely to indulge in information searches. In the context of this theory, I would argue that while partisans and independents may well perform information searches, that the neutrality of these searches may well vary between the two groups. Studies have shown that ideologically motivated individuals tend to self-select information sources and limit their searches to those sources that will confirm and fortify their existing worldview. (Taber and Lodge, 2010) Data that contradict this worldview are denied or deflected by the partisan, where they are given greater consideration by the less ideological. (Nyhan and Reifler, 2010) The news media at large is distrusted while the self-selected source becomes a trusted source of information. (Gronke and Cook, 2007) For example, partisans and independent leaners alike may be motivated by anxiety produced by the mortgage meltdown and the financial crisis to conduct an information search. The independent leaner will look for unbiased, nonpartisan information to get a better understanding of the situation. The partisan, on the other hand, will search for an explanation that conforms to their worldview, typically looking for information placing the blame for the mess on the shoulders of the opposing party. Even though the information search is a cognitive process, when the form of the search is affective in nature, the activity cannot be classified as purely cognitive.

Two groups of scholars looked to potential genetic differences in studies involving twin pairs to determine whether partisanship is primarily a socialized phenomena or whether there might be a genetic element involved. A potential genetic link to partisan strength may

indicate that independents and partisans process information differently as a matter of physiological differences. If this is largely influenced by genotypic variation, we might consider the possibility that information processing differences would extend to both political and religious considerations.

As part of a symposium in *Political Research Quarterly*, in 2009, Hatemi et al and Settle et al published findings from twin studies¹ examining possible genetic variation related to political partisanship. The Hatemi group was geneticists aided by political scientists while the Settle group was political scientists aided by geneticists. This is mentioned here as the methodologies employed vary slightly. The results published in both studies found that genetic factors could account for nearly 50% of partisan strength but not partisan direction (Hatemi, et al, 2009, 596; Settle et al, 2009, 605).

Greene (2000) identified a measure that demonstrated a difference between levels of affect in the evaluative process and partisan strength. The research performed by Hatemi et al, (2009) and Settle et al, (2009) suggest that partisan strength, or the inclination to identify (or not identify) strongly with a political party may also be a heritable trait. Both of the twin studies groups discussed religiosity as being analogous to partisan strength with partisan direction being analogous to denominational choice (Hatemi et al. 2009; Settle et al. 2009); the first being a heritable trait, while the second is not. The results of both studies can be

¹ Twin studies have often been utilized to consider the question of nature versus nurture. By studying monozygotic twins and dizygotic twins who would presumably share similar childhood experiences and levels of socialization/indoctrination, geneticists are able to assess the level of influence of environment and genetics for particular behaviors. The monozygotic twins are developed from a single fertilized egg (zygote) which splits into two different embryos, making the twins genetically identical. Dizygotic twins, on the other hand are developed from two separate eggs fertilized from different sperm, resulting in an average of 50% of genetic similarities, similar to those shared of other siblings. This assumption, which is the rationale for twin studies, has been reconsidered by recent studies of embryogenesis that disputes these claims of embryo development. (Boklage, 2009; Hague, et al, 2009; Skipper, 2008)

described in this manner; “the intensity of one’s attachment to a group may be shaped by genetic predispositions, but the selection of the group to which one attaches is largely shaped by parental and environmental exposures” (Settle et al, 2009, 603).

While Keith et al (1992) and Petrocik found that there were no inherent differences in observable political behavior between weak partisans and independent leaners, the studies by Greene (2000), Hatemi et al (2009) and Settle et al (2009) show that it is possible to recognize more discreet psychological differences between the two groups. Whether this is more closely linked to genetic factors or environmental factors is a question better left to the social psychologists, but a difference can be discerned nonetheless.

In 2004, Gallup analysts noted lower levels of religiosity by self-identified independents in comparison to self-identified Democrats and Republicans (Lyons, 2004).

Unfortunately, their data was based on a three-point scale of Republican, Democrat, and Independent so there is little that we can look at in terms of partisan intensity. While the differences are minor between partisans and independents on the question of stating a religious preference, a greater gap can be found in the data when the question is asked whether the respondent has a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in organized religion; 63% of Republicans expressed this faith as did 52% of Democrats. Only 39% of independents expressed confidence in organized religion. Gallup suggests the following explanation: “It’s possible that both the reluctance to adhere to specific religious ideas and behaviors and the reluctance to align oneself with an established political party both tend to spring from an unwillingness to commit oneself to a set of prescribed beliefs.” This could suggest that those with low levels of affect in the religious realm may also show low levels of

affect in the political realm. It is not the strength of a belief in a higher power that is of interest, but a faith in a more specific religious institution that would show high levels of affect.

When looking for a preexisting measurement in the ANES that may show distinct differences between partisans and independent leaners in levels of affect, the research above points to measures of religiosity as a possible clue to differences in partisan strength, or more precisely, differences between independent leaners, weak partisans, and strong partisans. Mockabee (2007) used religious measures in his overall measure of authority-mindedness, Mangum (2008) used religious measures to examine the effects of religiosity on the black population, Hatemi et al (2009) and Settle et al (2009) use religiosity as being analogous to partisan strength, and Gallup (Lyons, 2004) goes so far as to suggest a link between religiosity and the inclination to accept a prescribed set of political beliefs. It would seem then, that measures of religiosity, or religious affect may well serve as a proxy measure of partisanship, or political affect.

Although the measures utilized are typically considered to be measures of religiosity (Flanigan and Zingale, 1998; Mangum, 2008; Mockabee, 2007; Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2010), in this case they will be utilized to represent the level of affect in the evaluative process. While Mockabee (2007) critiqued this form of using religious measures as a proxy for political worldviews, he did so in the context of his measurement of authority which was the key to his directional argument. His concern was the assumption of some that secularists tend to have a more liberal outlook on social issues (Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2010, 33). I do not make that assumption, nor am I interested in partisan direction, only partisan strength.

I believe that greater levels of religious affect shall be correlated with greater levels of political affect.

A faith in a God or Gods, or some level of spirituality does not necessarily suggest a strong degree of affect. It is when an individual is willing to accept the claims of another or the group as to the nature and will of God that affect would be strong. This paper will seek to show that those who demonstrate high levels of religiosity will have an inclination toward high levels of affect toward political parties. Those with lower levels of religiosity, on the other hand, will be more inclined toward political independence. Weak partisans would be expected between the two extremes.

In a study published by John Petrocik (2009), independent leaners bear a close relationship to weak partisans on multiple issues. The table below is a reproduction of Table 5 from his article. This classifies the aggregated responses working on a scale from 0 – the most liberal response possible, to 1 – the most conservative response possible. One item stands out in the table about which Petrocik did not comment. Specifically, that the most

Table 1. The Policy Preferences of Partisans

Issue	Dems			Ind Pure	Reps		
	Strong	Weak	Lean		Lean	Weak	Strong
Religion	.62	.59	.49	.60	.57	.59	.69
Race	.46	.54	.56	.62	.67	.70	.73
Abortion	.41	.51	.45	.55	.59	.62	.72
Gays	.31	.37	.26	.41	.43	.48	.58
Social welfare	.27	.33	.30	.35	.43	.44	.52
Force	.54	.56	.54	.62	.68	.67	.78
Size of gov't	.21	.27	.37	.39	.51	.46	.60
Ideology	.35	.46	.40	.53	.62	.64	.76

Note: Reproduced from Petrocik (2009) The range of responses is from 0 (extremely liberal) to 1 (extremely conservative).

religious individuals would classify themselves as strong partisans, that weak partisans were less favorable to religion, and independent leaners were the least religious. This correlation was bidirectional.

It is my belief that he ignored an important anomaly in his data that on further inspection may reveal a significant and relevant difference in thought processes between self-identified partisans and independents.

Expectations

This research will not be looking into the “pure independents”. The literature across decades concludes that these are typically apathetic, apolitical voters with little interest in politics. (Campbell et al., 1960; Keith et al., 1992) There is no compelling reason to dispute this argument. These individuals would be the most likely to be persuaded by campaign communications as they have little political information beyond the campaign on which to make a choice. They truly are “up for grabs” and will likely support whichever candidate happens to make a good case at the time when the voter is paying attention.

Pure independents have lower levels of education and higher levels of religiosity than the independent leaners. They are a small percentage of the population that, although they skew the data, they do not do so to a degree that correlations lose significance. With the pure independents removed from the data, correlations between religiosity and partisan strength are strengthened. They have been left in the calculations to avoid suggestions that they were removed as being inconvenient to the findings.

This paper will look at those respondents who initially self-identify as independents, but on further prompting relate a preference for one of the two parties. With the winner-take-all, single-district, American electoral system, a two party system is common. In this environment, voters consider the policy positions of two rival candidates and make their selections accordingly. By definition, the difference between the partisans and the leaners, is that the partisans may base their decision more on affect for the party and, ultimately, the party's candidate. Independent leaners, on the other hand, will be less likely to consider the party of the candidate before coming to a decision. A strong Democrat and an independent who leans toward the Democratic Party may exhibit the same behavior in the casting of a ballot, but the process through which they reach that decision may differ.

The problem this presents is that observable behavior is not the key to the question, but the thought processes that bring about that behavior. Whether the respondent is regarded as partisan or independent depends on questions of self-identification. Whether through socialization processes or genetic predisposition, if an individual gives greater weight to affect in the evaluative process, is inclined to vote the party line, and more readily uses party identification as a strong basis for the decision-making process, I expect these differing evaluative processes to extend to other areas of their lives.

Measures of religiosity will be used for measures of affect. The ANES measures of religiosity are imperfect as a measure of affect which will be discussed later, but at this time they may be the most appropriate indicator available.

I will examine ANES data from the 2000 (1807 respondents) and 2004 (1212 respondents) Time Series Studies. These years are recent and should still have some

relevance. Presidential years are used as the general population tends to be more engaged. The year 2008 is not included as it is the first election year with a minority candidate that may skew the data. Two years are used to determine if the findings are consistent or a one-off variation.

Table 2. Religious Preferences of Partisans

7-point scale	Average	7-point scale	Average
Strong Dem	.62	Lean Dem	.49
Weak Dem	.59	Lean Rep	.57
Lean Dem	.49	Weak Dem	.59
Pure Ind	.60	Weak Rep	.59
Lean Rep	.57	Pure Ind	.60
Weak Rep	.59	Strong Dem	.62
Strong Rep	.69	Strong Rep	.69

Note: Reproduced from Petrocik (2009) The range of responses is from 0 (extremely liberal) to 1 (extremely conservative).

In table 2 I have reintroduced Petrocik’s religious scores that were previously introduced in table 1. The left column shows the scores by order of the 7-point scale in which the scores are not monotonic. The right column provides the scores in an ascending, monotonic order.

My expectation is that this pattern of lower levels of religiosity in independent leaners, to slightly higher levels in weak partisans, to even higher levels in strong partisans will be echoed in the ANES data in questions that can be used as a measure of religiosity. If the independent leaners of the seven-point scale really have lower levels of affect in their political decision-making, we should also see lower levels of religiosity within this group.

Methods

I use four measures of religiosity. One variable involves a single question regarding the nature of the Bible. Two other variables measure denominational affiliation/attendance and

religious importance/guidance, with questions whose answers are combined in a manner similar to how the seven-point partisan scale was developed, with certain responses to the first question leading to the asking of a follow up question. These specific questions regarding biblical interpretation, church affiliation, and the importance of religious guidance have been used in the past as measures of religiosity. (Flanigan and Zingale, 1998; Mangum, 2008; Mockabee, 2007; Wald and Calhoun-Brown, 2010) The fourth will be a combined score of religious affect that is derived from the other three questions. Responses to these questions will be compared to a “folded over” version of the ANES survey’s seven-point scale like the one used by Settle et al. (2009)(Gronke, 1997), with 0 coded for pure independents, 1 for independent leaners, 2 for weak partisans, and 3 for strong partisans. I will test for the strength of correlation and the significance of the relationship between religious affect and partisan intensity.

I start with the question on the view of the Bible. In the ANES survey, respondents are asked “Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?” The possible responses are: 1) “The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word” 2) “The Bible is the word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally, word for word”, and 3) “The Bible is a book written by men and is not the word of God.” The options of other, don’t know, and refuse to answer have been dropped.

***Null hypothesis:** There will be no correlation between a respondent’s professed level of partisanship and their belief in the authority of the Bible.*

Research hypothesis: *Strong partisans of both parties will have the greatest inclination to accept a literal translation of the Bible while independent leaners of both parties will be the most likely to see the Bible as the word of man.*

For the second test of adherence to religious doctrine I use two questions. The first is a “yes” or “no” question of whether the respondent attends religious services other than weddings and funerals. The second question is a follow up to the “no” answer and asks whether the respondent considers themselves to be a part of a particular church or denomination. This too is also a simple “yes” or “no” question. Respondents will then be broken down into three categories: 1) those who do not attend church and do not consider themselves to be a part of a church or religion, 2) those who do not attend church but do consider themselves to be a part of a church or religion, 3) and those who do attend church.

Null hypothesis: *There will be no correlation between a respondent’s professed level of partisanship and their identification with a particular church or religion.*

Research hypothesis: *Strong partisans of both parties will have higher levels of identification with a particular church or religion while independent leaners from both parties will show lower levels of identification with a particular church or religion.*

The third measure of adherence to religious doctrine will also come from two questions. The first is a “yes” or “no” question asking whether religion is important in the respondent’s life. The second question is a follow up if the respondent answers “yes” to the first question. This question asks how much does religion provide guidance in your daily life. The possible responses are 1) Some, 2) quite a bit, and 3) a great deal. This provides a four-point scale

with the response of “no” on the first question indicating that religion is not important to the respondent.

***Null hypothesis:** There will be no correlation between a respondent’s professed level of partisanship and their reliance on religion for guidance in their daily lives.*

***Research hypothesis:** Strong partisans of both parties will have greater reliance on religion for guidance in their daily lives while independent leaners from both parties will show lower levels of reliance on religion for guidance in their daily lives.*

These measures have both advantages and disadvantages as a measure of affect. For example, how willing an individual may be to take a literal, word-for-word translation of the Bible could well effectively expose those with high levels of affect. On the other hand, there are very few individuals (13.7% in 2000, 15.4% in 2004) who see the Bible as the word of man. With a plurality of respondents seeing the Bible as the word of God that should not be taken literally (48.2% in 2000, 46% in 2004), we would anticipate that many of the independent leaners would come from this larger group. However, we should expect that of those who see the Bible as the word of man a plurality will identify themselves as independent leaners, while those who believe in a literal interpretation of the Bible will provide a plurality of strong partisans.

There is only one question that asks if the individual identifies with a particular church or denomination and that question is asked only as a follow up question to those who do not attend church. The church attendance question was used to get to those individuals who do not identify with a particular church or religion. In this case, the act of attending church puts the individual at the highest level of religiosity in the measure with 70% of the sample

attending church in 2000 and 67% in 2004. Ideally, there would be a question for those who attend church to determine whether they adhere to the doctrines of the religion of the church that they attend, or whether they just attend that church for a reason other than that church's specific teachings. If someone is attending a Methodist church when a Lutheran or Baptist church would suit them just as well, then their level of affect would be lower than someone who is more insistent on the specific denomination.

The variable for religious importance could be less an indication of affect and more an indication of spirituality, tolerance, or even compassion, however, it does offer a gradation that the other measures lack. So even though it does not necessarily get into the question of whether the respondent affiliates with a group or religious institution, it does have the advantages of identifying those who do not see religion as important and offers a delineation on four dimensions rather than three.

The fourth measure of adherence to religious doctrine will combine the three scores

Table 3. Coding for Variable of Overall Religious Score

Question and ANES codes	Response	Response value	Score	% '00	% '04
1. Bible interpretations '00 – S5 '04 – W4	1. Word of Man, not God	.33 x 0	0	14.4%	15.7%
	2. Word of God, not literal	.33 x .50	.17	50.7%	47.3%
	3. Word of God, literal	.33 x 1	.33	35.0%	36.9%
2. Church affiliation '00 – X1 & X1a '04 – X1 & X3	1. Does not attend church/does not affiliate	.33 x 0	0	13.8%	14.6%
	2. Does not attend church/affiliates	.33 x .50	.17	16.5%	18.5%
	3. Attends church	.33 x 1	.33	69.7%	66.9%
3. Religious guidance '00 – S1 & S2 '04 – W2	1. Religion not important	.33 x 0	0	23.5%	22.6%
	2. Some guidance	.33 x .33	.11	16.2%	18.0%
	3. Quite a bit	.33 x .66	.22	22.1%	23.5%
	4. A great deal	.33 x 1	.33	38.2%	35.8%

above. In this combined score, all three questions will account for one-third of the overall score of affect. While the original variables are nominal, their combination should provide a reliable scale.

A score of zero would indicate a low level of religious affect. As scores increase, affect increases with a score of .99 indicating a high level of religious affect. Scores of 0 through .99 are used for ease of computation.

***Null hypothesis:** There will be no discernible difference between a respondent's professed level of partisanship and their score of religious affect.*

***Research hypothesis:** Strong partisans will demonstrate higher scores of religious affect while independent leaners will demonstrate lower scores of religious affect.*

One final question regards age. Studies have shown younger respondents as more likely to identify themselves as independents, with older respondents having an increasing inclination to identify as partisan (Flanigan and Zingale, 1998; Keith et al, 1992). In the studies by Settle et al. (2009) and Hatemi et al. (2009), they had indicated that approximately 45% of the observed variance in partisan strength could be accounted for by genetic factors. This leaves about 55% of the variance unaccounted for in their studies. It is conceivable that an individual who carefully and consistently considers the candidates and issues, and votes accordingly, may find by the time they have reached their forties or fifties that they have actually supported the same party's candidates for decades, if not all of their policies. At some point, the individual who had previously self-identified as independent may start to report themselves as either a Democrat or a Republican. Looking at the religious scores as above for age groups may get us closer to understanding this relationship. I believe the data

will show that the elderly are more religious than younger people, and that this could account for much of the correlation between age and partisanship.

***Null hypothesis:** There will be no significant difference in age groups when comparing professed levels of partisanship and measures of religious affect.*

***Research hypothesis:** Older age groups will demonstrate both higher professed levels of partisanship, as well as, higher levels of religious affect.*

Findings

It is useful to get a baseline from which to operate. Variation in data should be looked at in relationship to a norm. I have provided data for different demographic groups to establish what we might expect to see how commonly discussed demographic groups look when put

Table 4. 2000 and 2004 Frequencies (in %) of Demographic Groups

2000 demographic group	pure	lean	weak	strong	cases
all	11.6	28.1	27.5	32.8	1776
education 14 +	8.4	28.5	28.5	34.6	919
education less than 14	15.1	27.7	26.5	30.8	857
whites	11.8	28.8	28.4	31.1	1370
minorities	11.3	24.4	25.2	39.1	353
Protestant attends	8.7	24	29.4	37.9	538
Catholic attends	9.3	28.2	26.6	35.9	354
2004 demographic group	pure	lean	weak	strong	
all	9.9	29.1	27.9	33.1	1195
education 14 +	12.7	29.6	26.9	30.8	717
education less than 14	5.6	28.5	29.3	36.6	478
whites	8.7	29.1	27.9	34.3	865
minorities	12.7	29.1	28.8	29.4	316
Protestant attends	7.3	24.2	29.1	39.4	327
Catholic attends	13.3	22.7	28.9	35.1	211

in the “folded over” partisan scale. The demographic categories provided are: all respondents, 14 years education and above, less than 14 years education (14 years was selected as it was the median in the 2000 data), whites, minorities (this group includes blacks, Asians, native Americans, and Hispanics), and Protestants and Catholics who attend religious services. Table 4 below shows the distribution of partisan strength in a number of demographic groups that are often discussed in relationship to party identification and voter choice. In the data a pattern is established showing low numbers of pure independents, higher numbers of strong partisans, with weak partisans and independent leaners occupying the middle ground. The frequency distributions of partisan intensity are fairly consistent between the demographic groups.

The question of biblical interpretation is the first to be examined. In table 5 there is some consistency between 2000 and 2004 in distributions of partisan intensity among the biblical interpretation responses. With the removal of nonresponsive answers, this left 1693

Table 5. Partisan Intensity by Biblical Interpretation

Bible interpretation	pure	lean	weak	strong	% of total	# of cases
2000 - 1693 valid responses						
Literal word of God	10.6	24.2	26.4	38.9	35	592
Not literal word of God	12.1	27.7	30.3	29.8	50.7	858
Word of man	11.1	37	22.2	29.6	14.4	243
2004 - 1162 valid responses						
Literal word of God	8.9	25.6	26.6	38.9	36.9	429
Not literal word of God	11.6	28.7	30	29.6	47.3	550
Word of man	5.5	38.8	25.1	30.6	15.7	183
Pearson Chi-Square	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)			
2000	25.676	6	.000			
2004	21.866	6	.001			

Pearson Chi Square: 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 27.85 in 2000 and 17.64 in 2004.

responses in 2000 and 1162 responses in 2004. The distributions between the two surveys were quite similar. In both years we see a plurality of those who take a literal interpretation of the Bible self-identifying as strong partisans, a plurality of those who take a non-literal interpretation of the Bible self-identifying as weak partisans, and a plurality of those who see the Bible as the word of man self-identifying as independent learners.

Correlation is negative as partisanship moves from 1) pure independent to 4) strong partisan while biblical interpretation moves from 1) literal to 3) word of man, as it was in the original ANES data. The results show a pattern that is statistically significant and relatively consistent over the time period studied. I reject the null hypothesis.

For determining whether a respondent identifies with a particular church or religion, recoding is necessary. Those who responded that they do attend church other than weddings and funerals are coded as 0 for the new variable. For those who do not attend church, those who identify with a particular religion are coded as 1 and those who do not identify with a particular religion are coded as 5. This coding is consistent with how the original data is coded by the ANES. The results in table 6 shows the frequencies of partisan strength within the sample broken down by the respondent's identification with a particular church or religion. The pattern established with the Bible interpretation question is mirrored here; the more religious the respondent, the greater their inclination to self-identify as a partisan. Correlation is negative as partisanship moves from 1) pure to 4) strong while church affiliation moves from 0) attends church to 5) respondent has no church affiliation. Again, the coding is consistent with the coding of the original ANES data. The results demonstrate a pattern that is statistically significant, consistent with the pattern established by the Bible

Table 6. Partisan Intensity by Affiliation with a Religion

Denomination	pure	lean	weak	strong	% of total	# of cases
2000 - 1765 valid responses						
Attends church	10.2	25.3	28.4	36.1	69.7	1231
identifies with church	10.7	29.6	30.2	29.6	16.5	291
Does not identify with a church	18.9	40.3	20.2	20.6	13.8	243
2004 - 1190 valid responses						
Attends church	9.5	25.6	28.4	36.4	66.9	796
identifies with church	11.8	31.8	27.3	29.1	18.5	220
Does not identify with a church	8.6	40.8	27	23.6	14.6	174
Pearson Chi-Square	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)			
2000	51.879	6	.000			
2004	21.934	6	.001			

Pearson Chi Square: 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 27.95 in 2000 and 17.11 in 2004

interpretation, and relatively consistent over the time period studied. I reject the null hypothesis.

For the question of religious importance/guidance, some recoding was also necessary. The 2004 ANES had already combined the two questions of religious importance and guidance. Recoding was necessary for the 2000 results. Responses that indicated that religion was not important were coded as 0. Responses indicating that religion provided some, quite a bit, or a great deal of guidance were coded as 1, 3, and 5 accordingly. This was consistent with how the data was coded for 2004. The results are provided in table 7 on the next page.

The trends evident in the previous questions were mirrored here, with less religious individuals being more inclined to self-identify as partisan leaners and more religious

individuals being more inclined to self-identify as strong partisans. The results show a trend in the correlation of partisan intensity and how much the respondent relies on religion

Table 7. Partisan Intensity by Importance of Religion

Importance of religion	pure	lean	weak	strong	% of total	# of cases
2000 - 1778 valid responses						
Not important	13.8	34.9	27.3	24	23.7	415
Some guidance	11.8	28.2	31.4	28.6	16.2	287
Quite a bit of guidance	9.7	25.6	29.4	35.3	22	391
A great deal of guidance	11.2	25.1	25	38.6	38.1	676
2004 - 1185 valid responses						
Not important	7.5	38.4	27.2	26.9	22.6	268
Some guidance	14.1	28.6	30.5	26.8	18	213
Quite a bit of guidance	8.2	26.5	29.7	35.5	23.5	279
A great deal of guidance	9.9	25.4	26.1	38.6	35.8	425

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
2000	36.527	9	.000
2004	28.311	9	.001

Pearson Chi Square: 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 33.10 in 2000 and 20.67 in 2004.

for guidance in their day to day lives. Again, there is little variation between 2000 and 2004. The correlation is statistically significant and stable over the time period studied. I reject the null hypothesis.

Table 8 shows that the combined religious score demonstrates a similar trend linking higher religious scores to stronger partisan intensity as was seen in the Petrocik data. The 2004 sample would appear to be a little less religious than the 2000 sample with the exception of pure independents who appear to be slightly more religious in the 2004 sample.

The bivariate regression shows a strong correlation between the respondents' religious

scores and their self-identified level of partisan strength. Not only is the correlation significant, but the analysis of variance shows the variation between means is also significant.

Table 8. Mean Religious Scores by Partisan Strength with Bivariate Regression and Analysis of Variance.

partisan strength		Mean	N	Std. Dev.
2000				
	pure	0.6167	194	0.28746
	lean	0.6021	470	0.30539
	weak	0.6643	470	0.2576
	strong	0.7158	557	0.26195
	total	0.6585	1691	0.28015
2004				
	pure	0.6569	110	0.26886
	lean	0.5838	335	0.31216
	weak	0.6434	324	0.2879
	strong	0.6980	384	0.27639
	total	0.6455	1153	0.29286

	B	Std. error	Sig.	Adjusted R Square
2000				
Constant	1.451	.062	.000	0.023
Religious score	0.563	.087	.000	
2004				
Constant	1.601	.070	.000	0.012
Religious score	0.388	.099	.000	

Bivariate regression with 4-point scale of partisan strength as dependent variable

ANOVA					
	Sum of squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
2000					
Regression	5.399	1	5.399	5.489	.020
Residual	258.691	263	.984		
Total	264.091	264			
2004					
Regression	4.041	1	4.041	4.528	.034
Residual	210.678	226	.892		
Total	205.719	227			

The final question of this study was how age influences partisan strength. The samples were broken down into four different age groups. Respondents age 17 to 29 were coded 0, ages 30 to 44 were coded 1, 45 to 64 were coded 2, and all others were coded 3. The research hypothesis considered that older age groups would demonstrate higher levels of religious affect. The means shown in table 9 bear this out. Whether an earlier age cohort has been more religious through their lifetime or whether the aging process makes individuals more religious over their life cycle is a question for another time.

Table 9. Mean Religious Scores by Age Groups

Age groups	Mean	N	Std. Dev.
2000			
17-29	0.6068	268	0.28165
30-44	0.6441	567	0.28965
45-64	0.6697	572	0.28344
65+	0.7024	312	0.25276
total	0.6574	1719	0.28127
2004			
17-29	0.6569	110	0.26886
30-44	0.5838	335	0.31216
45-64	0.6434	324	0.28790
65+	0.6980	384	0.27639
total	0.6455	1153	0.29286

To further test the significance of the religious score, I have used a multivariate regression with partisan strength as the independent variable, to test the respondent's religious scores, age, education, and household income. When these other variables are added, religious scores and age retain significance in 2000 and 2004 while the results for education and income vary as shown in table 10.

Based on these results, the inclination for older generations to self-identify as partisans may include a factor of increased religious devotion than something inherent solely within age itself.

Table 10. Multivariate Regression with 4-Point Scale of Partisan Strength as Dependent Variable

	B	Std. error	Sig.	Adjusted R Square
2000				
Constant	-.579	.145	.000	0.047
Religious score	.514	.087	.000	
Age	.010	.001	.000	
Education	.031	.007	.000	
Income	.001	.001	.515	
2004				
Constant	.951	.133	.000	0.038
Religious score	.375	.100	.000	
Age	.006	.002	.000	
Education	.082	.018	.133	
Income	.000	.001	.007	

The results above are sufficient to reject the null hypothesis, while supporting the research hypothesis. Increased partisanship in older age groups is mirrored by higher religious scores.

To ensure that this significance is bidirectional and not simply a phenomenon of a single party attracting a large share of religious adherents, dummy variables are introduced for Democratic and Republican party identifiers. Strong, weak, and leaning Democrats are coded as 1 with all others (including pure independents) coded as 0 for the Democratic

dummy variable. Coding for the Republican dummy variable is done the same way with the three varieties of Republicans being coded as 1 and all others coded as 0.

As shown in table 11, when these dummy variables are introduced, religious scores and age retain their significance while education and income lose their significance. At the same time, the correlations between religious scores and age with partisan strength do appear to be bidirectional.

Table 11. Multivariate Regression with 4-Point Scale of Partisan Strength as Dependent Variable and Partisan Direction as Dummy Variables

	B	Std. error	Sig.	Adjusted R Square
2000				
Constant	-.674	.118	.000	0.442
Religious score	.419	.067	.000	
Age	.006	.001	.000	
Education	.012	.006	.047	
Income	.001	.001	.109	
Democrats	2.050	.061	.000	
Republicans	1.928	.063	.000	
2004				
Constant	-.693	.133	.000	0.396
Religious score	.346	.080	.000	
Age	.006	.001	.000	
Education	.011	.006	.051	
Income	.001	.001	.520	
Democrats	1.998	.081	.000	
Republicans	2.096	.082	.000	

Discussion

While the validity of using religious measures as a proxy for greater affective reasoning can be argued, the link between religiosity and partisanship appears to be strong. The three

measures; biblical interpretation, identification with a church, and religious guidance, each individually identify a trend of the least religious individuals identifying as independent leaners, the most religious identifying as strong partisans, with the weak partisans tending to take a middle of the road stance on religious beliefs.

As with any study that aggregates data through averages and frequencies of group responses, we are describing only an inclination and not a hard and fast rule. There are individuals who score a .99 on the religious score who still identify as independent leaners and there are those who score a .00 on the religious score and identify themselves as strong partisans. To refer to these individuals as solitary outliers would not be accurate. To refer to them as minorities amongst those with similar religious scores would be accurate. Similarly, it is certainly likely that those who score high on the combined religious measure and identify as strong partisans see little or no relationship between the two.

While my reasoning for seeking correlations between religiosity and partisan strength is based on the possibility that greater affect in the evaluative process plays into both religiosity and party affiliation, there is nothing in these data that proves such a link. The argument could be made that those who attend church and affiliate strongly with a party just like belonging to groups. While this would still indicate a difference between independent leaners and weak partisans it would identify the independents as being consistent with the first part of Dole's textbook definition of independents as loners, but not necessarily the second part of the definition of being individuals who think for themselves, even though it is difficult to indulge in group think when you do not belong to a group. The Bible question

could be seen as measuring respect for authority and the guidance question could be interpreted by some as being a measure of compassion.

Although there does appear to be a strong link between religiosity and partisan strength which is bidirectional, further research would be required to more clearly identify the theoretical connection between the two. Perhaps a question regarding whether President Obama is a Christian with the possible responses of “yes”, “no”, and “the question is irrelevant”, might shed a little light on the subject. One way would be providing erroneous information early in the interview process that appeals to an ideological worldview, testing for the acceptance of that erroneous information in the middle of the interview and correcting the information if it has been accepted, then testing at the end of the interview to see if the erroneous information or the corrected information was retained.

As with any data, it should be evaluated within the context of the times. Independent Democrats of the 1960s and 1970s are likely very different from independent Democrats today. Those of the 1960s and 1970s likely include more of those who are in the process of realignment including Southern Democrats, Catholic Pro-lifers, and blue-collar Reagan Democrats. While these more recent figures may be capturing some in the process of realignment, there is no reason to anticipate a large wave like the realignment of the South. I believe, but have yet to test, that the relationship between religiosity and partisan strength would hold up in the data from at least the mid-1980s to 2004. As with other data it would remain to be seen how an African-American president might change those results.

Conclusion

The debate over the nature of who are independent leaners was the impetus for this paper. Those who argue the point that leaners are closet partisans provide a great deal of data on political behavior as evidence of that fact, yet behavior is not the key to the difference between partisans and independents. It is the degree to which party loyalty influences the evaluative process.

Keith et al (1992) carefully document the relationship between age and partisan strength but attribute this solely to lifecycle effects without recognizing the greater religiosity (not necessarily conservatism) of the older generations. Whether those older generations started out more religious, the increased awareness of one's own mortality, or some other reason is responsible for this variation is also something for further study that cannot be adequately covered here. Keith et al (1992) indicated that they saw nothing in the data that warranted the continuation of the 7-point scale, stating, "a five-point scale combining leaners and weak partisans seems perfectly satisfactory" (196). I would argue against such a solution.

Although the data examined by these previous scholars yielded no differences, differences do exist. The specific mechanisms that link religiosity with partisanship cannot be clearly and empirically derived from the existing data, but a correlation does exist.

There is no doubt that many survey respondents mischaracterize themselves when responding to the questions from which the 7-point scale is derived. Those who are responding to the questions are not trained in the meaning of the responses, nor do they know how those responses might be analyzed. There is no reason to believe that there are any

more partisans mischaracterizing themselves as independents than there may be strong partisans who might actually be more appropriately characterized as independent leaners.

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