What is the relationship between the religious right and the Republican party in the American South? This simple question is investigated with both aggregate and individual level data (from a 1996 Pew Survey, the 1996 and 1998 Voter News Service Exit Polls as well as data from the 1992, 1996, and 1998 American National Election Studies), which is analyzed through bivariate and multivariate statistical techniques. Three separate findings are relevant to the research question. First, religious right (who are statistically defined as evangelical, fundamentalist, and charismatic Christians who are doctrinally orthodox, think religion is an important part of their lives, and believe the church’s main function is conversion) Republicans are very different from other Republicans on social and civil rights policy orientations, though they are nearly identical when the size and scope of government intervention is considered. Second, these differences apparently extend into the campaigns of religious right candidates in the South. Religious right Republican candidates are relatively rare in the region’s statewide elections, but they are most prevalent in states that have high populations of evangelical Christians and low minority populations. These religious right candidates perform moderately well in statewide primary elections, but there is a negative relationship between religious right candidate status and vote totals in general elections. Third, at the individual level, religious right Republicans and other Republican voters behave very differently in statewide general elections. Religious right Republicans make no voting distinctions between religious right and non-religious right Republican candidates, supporting them all at very high rates. Other Republicans, however, vote for religious right Republican
candidates at much lower levels than those at which they vote for other Republican candidates, even when ideology, income, race, gender, and view of the economy are controlled. Ultimately, it seems that religious right Republicans are well integrated into the South’s GOP, while more traditional Republicans are not welcoming of their fellow partisans when they run for statewide offices. This instability could threaten the party’s ability to become the dominant party in the region and the majority party in the nation.

INDEX WORDS: Religious Right, Republican Party, Religion, American Politics, American South

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CHAPTER 1

GUESS WHO CAME TO THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IN THE SOUTH?

THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT AND SOUTHERN POLITICS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During the past quarter century American politics has been revolutionized by two major trends. First, the emergence of the two-party South\(^1\) has dramatically altered the balance of power between the Republican and Democratic parties. Second, the Republican Party has been the beneficiary of a newly energized core of voters—the Christian right. These political convulsions have more in common than their chronological proximity. Many believe that Christian conservatives sing their political songs with the lilt of a southern “twang.” The South has about half of America’s white evangelical Protestants (Pew, 1996), a key component of the Christian right, and two of the movement’s most recognized leaders, Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, are based in Virginia. This, when combined with the generally conservative nature of the region, makes the South a “breeding ground for the Christian right” (Whitley, 1998).

While it is plain the study of the South’s politics and the Christian right intersect, very little is known about the contours of this intersection. I hope to illuminate this sometimes subtly darkened corner of southern politics by asking, and hopefully answering, one question. What is the relationship between Christian conservatives and the Republican Party in the South? In some states, and during some elections, the Christian right has

\(^1\) The South is defined, in the tradition of V.O. Key (1949), as the eleven seceded states of the Confederate States of America (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana,
been a constant source of friction within the GOP. For example, supporters of a Christian right candidate in Virginia nearly ended the state’s Republican convention when they threw ice at opposing speakers. Other states, like South Carolina, benefit from an apparently unified Republican party, where Christian conservatives and mainline Republicans work in concert (Wilcox, 1996). At its heart, then, the relationship between the Christian right and the GOP in the South is about the existence and the extent of factionalism.

The search for factionalism assumes, however, that we have a firm grasp of the parties involved as well as an understanding of the chasm that divides them. Chapter 2 addresses one of the most vexing issues in the study of religion and American politics. Scholars have not yet settled on a suitable definition of the religious right, and though there is convergence around the theoretical composition of the religious right, the variety of operationalizations employed by scholars has clouded the concept. This lack of clarity makes it difficult to use survey data to compare the religious right to other political entities. Because of these methodological issues, our understanding of the relationship between the religious right and the Republican Party is scant and incomplete. Only after arriving at an acceptable operationalization of the religious right in Chapter 2 will I then be able to utilize this measure in Chapter 3.

(Compounding these measurement problems is a historical and definitional overlap in the socio-religious groups thought to comprise the religious right. Three such movements—charismatic Christianity, fundamentalism, and evangelicalism—are relevant to this study and should be minimally defined at this point. Differences between Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia).
evangelicals, fundamentalists, and charismatics are in some ways difficult to recognize. George Marsden (1991) provides a useful summary of these differences, but even his categories are not universally accepted. Evangelicalism is generally regarded as a broad social movement of nineteenth century America, largely born out of the Second Great Awakening. The movement was fairly diverse, and it cut across theological and denominational lines. The unifying forces behind evangelicalism were twin concerns for individual salvation and societal reform. Evangelicalism was, arguably, the dominant public theology at the time, but during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries its dominance was challenged by Darwinism and theological liberalism. According to Marsden, fundamentalism was largely a militant form of evangelicalism. A subset of evangelicals attempted to thrust theological liberalism from denominations and evolution from the schools. Fundamentalists and evangelicals shared, and still share, cardinal Christian beliefs, though they differ in how they address secular and sacred contexts. Fundamentalists are generally more exclusive in how they address the world around them, while evangelicals are more willing to adapt to a variety of religious and intellectual settings. Charismatics have much in common with both evangelicals and fundamentalists, but they differ from each on some theological matters. Charismatics emphasize the third member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, and they highlight “spirit-filled” activities like healing and speaking in tongues. Ultimately, all three movements contain theological conservatives and view society in general as in desperate need of spiritual transformation.)

In Chapter 2, I find, through the use of survey data, that several factors are correlated with self-identification as a member of the religious right. Such people are more likely to
be affiliated with a *socio-religious* movement within Christianity, such as fundamentalism. They are also more likely to be doctrinally orthodox, as seen through their preference for biblical literalism; they are more likely to have had a “born-again” experience; they view their religion as highly salient; and they view the church’s primary mission as proselytism. This rough sketch of the religious rightist can then be used to identify the movement’s likely adherents in other survey contexts, even if self-identification is not an option on the survey instrument.

In Chapter 3, I examine potential issue differences between religious right Republicans and other Republicans, for many cite such differences as a, if not the, source of contention within the party. Significant issue differences between the religious right and other Republicans would depict a political party laboring under the burden of severe cleavages, whereas large parcels of common political ground inhabited by both Christian right and other Republicans would suggest that these religiously conservative Christians are highly integrated into the GOP. Such integration, it seems, would unify the GOP within the electoral context, for political candidates would be free to assume a committed base of voters, thereby allowing them to campaign for moderate Democrats and independents. The evidence suggests that both social and civil rights orientations divide Christian right Republicans from those within their party, even when ideological and demographic controls are in place. The factions are largely similar, however, when basic government orientations are examined, so the party is unified in its basic distrust of governmental intervention. This parcel of common ground may be the only real estate candidates can share with all the electorate within the highly competitive South.
Though differences within the southern GOP are evident in Chapter 3, the impact of those differences cannot truly be measured without some evaluation of the electoral context. An analysis of this context consumes chapters 4 and 5. Elections provide an excellent indicator of the Christian right’s ability to externalize its values by placing its supporters in positions of power, and they also provide a practical view of the support given to Christian right candidates as compared to other Republicans. Chapter 4 is a candidate-centered examination of the South’s electoral context. Ultimately, the goal is to understand any differences between candidates who are part of or sympathetic to the religious right and their Republican colleagues. I am concerned, particularly, with the relative quality of religious right candidates, the typical electoral context that produces them, and, perhaps most importantly, the potential electoral penalty imposed on conservative Christian candidates.

This search yielded some interesting findings that can be summarized at the outset. I found that of the 168 statewide campaigns analyzed, only twenty-five of the candidates were connected with the religious right. Among these candidates, I determined that a relationship between electoral success and candidate qualifications does exist. Unsurprisingly, religious right candidates who are more experienced perform better than less-experienced candidates, especially in general elections. As for the electoral context, the presence of a religious right candidate is negatively related to both the size of the minority population and the Republican Party’s strength at the state level. There is a persistently positive relationship, however, between the presence of religious right candidates and the relative number of conservative Christians in a state. The real breeding ground for religious right candidates, then, appears to be states in which the
GOP is relatively weak, where the minority population is small, and where there are large numbers of conservative Christians. Finally, multivariate analysis reveals a negative relationship between religious right candidate status and general election performance. Chapter 4 does not determine, however, the source of this electoral punishment. Are Republicans punishing religious right candidates, or do independents and Democrats do so? Do Republicans distinguish between religious right and other types of candidates? These questions drive Chapter 5.

Chapter 3 is about potential issue differences among Republicans at the individual level. In Chapter 5, I discuss the impact these differences may have on the electoral process. After all, if issue differences divide the GOP, but religious right Republicans vote along the same lines as other Republicans, then the issue “chasm” is really much ado about nothing. This would portray a GOP in which the religious right is highly integrated. If the opposite is the case, however, and religious rightists and other Republicans are more likely to support their own “kind” of candidate, then the GOP in the South could be portrayed as seriously divided, and perhaps incapable of constructing and maintaining a long-lasting coalition of voters in the region. The evidence suggests that at the individual level, religious right Republicans support all Republican candidates at nearly identical levels, whereas other Republicans tend to support religious right candidates, at least in some situations, less than they support their “kind” of candidates. This finding suggests that at the individual level, the possibility of partisan cleavages within the GOP is realized at the most sensitive point—the ballot box.

Finally, in Chapter 6 I will review the major findings while casting an eye toward the partisan future of the region. Given what I have discovered, it may be difficult for the
Republicans in the South to maintain a unified front. There are serious differences between Republicans in the region, and the possibility that these differences will translate into electoral conflicts has already been realized. In short, people within the party’s most identifiable faction find themselves out-of-step with their colleagues, both in terms of issues and at the ballot box. The ramifications of this simple fact may be wide-ranging in the region’s politics. A divided party forces candidates to court both of the party’s wings, which may isolate key independents and moderate Democrats. This alone may blunt the GOP’s ability to dominate the region’s politics, thereby once again turning the South into a partisan monolith, which if it existed, could become the keystone of Republican strength in the nation.

In the end, I am arguing that the Republican Party in the South has at least one fault line, which exists due to the presence of religious rightists within the party. While the evidence below confirms, I believe, this argument, the argument itself cannot be launched without some understanding of its context. What follows below, then, is a brief explanation of the two environments from which these contexts spring: religion and American politics and southern politics. These contexts are rich and varied, and they are, in some ways, connected. This connection is the heart of this research effort.

**American Politics and the Christian Right**

Placing the Christian right into a historical context is not a straightforward task for interested scholars. Most scholars view the movement as a reactionary entity that has visited the American consciousness three times in the past century. Other scholars view the Christian right with a longer lens. Robert William Fogel (2000) views the recent
outburst of religiously political activity as part of a complex cycle that began very early in America’s history. Regardless of which construction is more accurate, each is worth reviewing so that this analysis can be placed in a broader context.

*The Christian Right’s Three Political Epochs.* The rise of the religious right during the last quarter of the twentieth century can be viewed from many different perspectives. Some scholars view this particular epoch as the third in what is so far a trilogy of movements. These periods of furious activity have many similarities and a few differences. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Christian right rose to play a prominent role in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. Christianity struggled with how to respond to theological liberalism, Darwin, and academic attacks on the Bible’s validity. Fundamentalist leaders, like William Jennings Bryan, emerged to defend “the fundamentals” of the Christian faith on religious, political, and social fronts (Beale, 1986; Marsden, 1980). Politically, however, this Christian right era was bipartisan. There were two geographic components to the fundamentalist revolt—one in the South and the other stretched from the Northeast to the Midwest. The southern wing was, like Bryan, Democratic, while the other component was more diverse politically. The movement also cut across traditional religious and theological divisions. Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and others, were all parts of this coalition, but there was a theological consensus around “the fundamentals” (Wilcox, 1996; Marsden, 1980). The theological differences that did exist were due to varying millennial positions and perceptions of the Holy Spirit.²

² While scholars have traditionally emphasized the theological agreement of this era, there is reason to believe that more study would reveal some disparities like the ones
The Christian right’s second wave, according to this view, was a fountain of anticommunist fervor. Founded in 1955, the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade typified the era. The CACC was generally viewed as a fringe group, and the Christian Coalition and the Moral Majority, the CACC’s descendents, achieved more scholarly notoriety and garnered more media attention. But according to Fowler et al., the CACC foreshadowed “the widespread, angry, conservative religious politics that came into prominence in the 1990’s” (1999: 141). Theologically, this Christian right advent was superficially diverse, for it attracted many anti-Communists, but it had fundamentalist roots at its base (Wilcox, 1996). The theological heart of this cause was simply an opposition to communism, which was perceived as godless and satanic. The movement rallied, then, around the defeat of communism, which had to be achieved regardless of the costs (Hunter, 1987).

Scholars have thoroughly studied the Christian right’s most recent iteration, but they have not done so systematically. The third wave of the Christian right was born in 1976 when Jimmy Carter announced that he was a “born-again” Christian. Conservative Christians largely supported Carter, but most were disappointed with his presidency. In 1979, the Moral Majority was founded and conservative Christians gained not only an institutional presence, but they also became a subject of academic inquiry (Georgianna, 1989; Bruce, 1988; Buell and Sigelman, 1985; Conover and Gray, 1983). Republican operatives, like Richard Viguerie and Paul Weyrich, understood the Christian right’s political potential, and buttressed the fledgling interest group (Fowler et al., 1999). The mentioned above. The diversity of denominations represented in the movement, however, demands some theological flexibility. Presbyterians, Baptists, Pentecostals, and Methodists differ in their eschatological doctrines as well as their interpretation of the Holy Spirit’s role.
movement found its voice in Ronald Reagan (Lejon, 1988), who was the first Republican
to tie the party’s “southern strategy” to a new effort to capture Christian conservatives
(Aistrup, 1996). Some scholars view Pat Robertson’s presidential candidacy, in 1988, as
the Christian right’s zenith. The Robertson campaign faltered, though, when he failed to
unite Christian conservatives. He did well among charismatic Christians, but failed to
secure substantial evangelical and fundamentalist votes (Green, 1993). Out of the ashes
of this failed bid, Robertson fashioned an organization to overcome his campaign’s
shortcomings. Robertson’s state political organizations sired the Christian Coalition, and
it has become one of the most powerful religio-political organizations in the country
(Fowler et al., 1999).

By most accounts, this new wave of conservative Protestant political action has aged
gracefully, for it has been more durable than the previous iterations. The Moral Majority
and Pat Robertson’s presidential bid were theologically particularistic. They emphasized
the details of theological differences rather than theological and political similarities.
New organizations, like the Christian Coalition, Family Research Council, and
Concerned Women for America, have minimized theological particulars while
maximizing political agreement. These organizations have even appealed to conservative
African Americans, Catholics, and Jews (Moen, 1992). The Christian right has also
broadened its policy agenda, which now includes conservative positions on taxes, crime,
and health care, while still maintaining an emphasis on its more traditional issues like
abortion, school prayer, and other “pro-family” matters (Wilcox, 1996).

The Fourth Great Awakening. Robert Fogel (2000) has a slightly different view of the
most recent rise of the Christian right. Fogel argues that America is experiencing its
fourth “great awakening.” Each of these awakenings has been spurred on by technological changes in combination with religious and social malaise. The Fourth Great Awakening, argues Fogel, began around 1960. Evangelical Christian churches experienced a spurt in membership, and these churches began to cut into the membership rolls of more traditional mainline churches. This return to what Fogel calls “sensuous religion” finds its way into single-issue political campaigns as early as the mid-1970s, when the right-to-life movement emerged. These single-issue campaigns were fused into what became a pro-family agenda that was created in response to shifting social mores in the 1950s and 1960s.

The early vehicle for this agenda, the Moral Majority, was too particularistic in its theology, and its influence waned. The Republican Party became the chief vehicle for political change, specifically after the 1984 elections, when many religious conservatives realigned into the Republican Party. The religious right, then, is simply the fourth such manifestation in American history. The movement is a political facade for a religiously initiated response to both technological and social changes. As in all other awakenings, Fogel argues that soon a significant counter-assault will take place, the goal of which will be to limit the awakening’s impact. This response will eventually overlap with the next religious awakening.

Fogel and others provide interesting and informative frameworks that help explain the rise and fall of socio-religious movements. They focus on the theoretical explanations for the religious right. They do not, however, adequately explain the composition of the movement. In order to examine the religious right and its relationship to the Republican Party rigorously, we must precisely understand those who identify with the movement.
Table 1.1: Republican Seats Held or Elections Won in the South, 2001

(Percentage of Seats Held/Elections Won by GOP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>8 (62%)</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
<td>5 (71%)</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>11 (31%)</td>
<td>37 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>5 (39%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
<td>GOP</td>
<td>8 (35%)</td>
<td>30 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>10 (77%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>15 (65%)</td>
<td>GOP</td>
<td>25 (63%)</td>
<td>77 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>6 (46%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>8 (73%)</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>24 (43%)</td>
<td>76 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>7 (54%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5 (71%)</td>
<td>GOP</td>
<td>14 (36%)</td>
<td>32 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss.</td>
<td>8 (62%)</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>18 (35%)</td>
<td>33 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>8 (62%)</td>
<td>1 (100%)</td>
<td>7 (40%)</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>15 (35%)</td>
<td>58 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina</td>
<td>9 (62%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>4 (58%)</td>
<td>DEM</td>
<td>24 (30%)</td>
<td>70 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>8 (69%)</td>
<td>2 (50%)</td>
<td>5 (67%)</td>
<td>GOP</td>
<td>15 (52%)</td>
<td>41 (57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenn.</td>
<td>9 (62%)</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
<td>13 (56%)</td>
<td>GOP</td>
<td>16 (46%)</td>
<td>72 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>12 (69%)</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
<td>6 (43%)</td>
<td>GOP</td>
<td>22 (52%)</td>
<td>52 (48%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>13 (92%)</td>
<td>71 (100%)</td>
<td>6 (55%)</td>
<td>GOP</td>
<td>192 (55%)</td>
<td>578 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>90 (63%)</td>
<td>13 (59%)</td>
<td>71 (57%)</td>
<td>6 (55%)</td>
<td>192 (42%)</td>
<td>578 (44%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data compiled by the author from www.congress.org.
Southern Politics and the Religious Right

The sea change in the twentieth century’s politics took place in the American South. V.O. Key’s (1949) masterwork, Southern Politics in State and Nation, is the unsurpassed portrayal of the South before partisan competition. The pre-civil rights South was dominated by white Democrats, who suppressed the voting rights of African Americans and poor whites. Franklin Roosevelt welded the party’s southern dominance to urban, minority, labor, Roman Catholic, and Jewish voters to construct the New Deal Coalition. Cracks began to splinter the coalition in the South, however, as early as 1948. Strom Thurmond and the Dixiecrats fragmented the region, and Eisenhower became the first Republican in decades to make significant gains in the South. The Republican gains began at the presidential level, but they were not immediately followed by Republican growth in southern congressional delegations, gubernatorial mansions, or state capitols. As of spring, 2001, the GOP strength is uneven from top to bottom.

Table 1.1 shows current Republican power in the region both on a state-by-state and an aggregated basis. Republican presidential candidates have done very well in the region since 1952. What was once a Democratic stranglehold is now a Republican hammerlock. In fact, since Kennedy in 1960, only southern Democrats have done well in the region, but even they have struggled on occasion. Al Gore, the Democratic presidential candidate from Tennessee, failed to win a single southern state in the tumultuous 2000 presidential election; Gore’s native Tennessee deserted him, as did Bill

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3 Bullock and Rozell (1998) provide an excellent summary of the South’s changing political climate since the middle of the Twentieth Century. The figures and analysis that follows are indebted to, and largely comport with, their summation.
Clinton’s Arkansas. In terms of electoral votes, these very personal defections cost Gore the White House.

In Congress, the GOP is now the majority party in the region, but not overwhelmingly so. The party owns 59 percent of the region’s Senate seats and 57 percent of the House seats. This dispersion is also varied across the states. Some delegations are solidly Republican, like Alabama, Tennessee, and Virginia, while others are either more evenly split or are solidly Democratic (Arkansas and Texas).

GOP strength at the national level is evident throughout the South. Republican vigor at the state level is the exception, though, and not the rule. The party holds a slim majority of the governor’s mansions in the region (6 of 11, or 55 percent). The power wanes even more when the seat distribution in state assemblies is considered. Democrats hold a majority of the region’s seats—in both state houses and senates. In five of the state houses the GOP has fewer than 40 percent of the seats, and in six of the eleven state senates the party is under 45 percent. The Republicans do hold the majority of both houses in three states (Florida, South Carolina, and Virginia), and split control in one other (Texas). The Republican Party is well short of controlling the South’s state assemblies. However, in order to grasp fully the Republican Party’s growth in the region, the current levels must be placed in historical perspective. In the 1970s the GOP controlled 13.3 percent of the seats in the South’s state houses, while it controls 42 percent in 2001. Therefore, even though the GOP is not the majority party in the region’s state houses and senates, it has made significant gains during the past several decades.

Republican growth in the region has certainly taken place at the elite, or office holding, level. The party’s development, however, also includes steady increases in
individual level partisan attachments. According to VNS exit polls (Voter News Service, 1999) from the 1998 elections, southerners are relatively evenly divided between the two major parties. About 39 percent (3,581) of voters identified themselves as Democrats, 36 percent (3,306) as Republicans, and 25 percent (2,262) as independents or other partisans. Republican growth is even more impressive among white southerners. In the same VNS exit poll, 43 percent of white respondents identified themselves as Republicans, 29 percent as Democrats, and 27 percent as independents or other partisans.

The evidence suggests the South has clearly passed from a phase of single party dominance to one of two party competition. Controversy surrounds the means by which the region became competitive, however. The conflict centers on whether the South has undergone a political realignment, and if so, what type of realignment has occurred?

Scholars see political realignments in many contexts and they define them in several ways. *The American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1960) defined a realignment as a shift in the partisan affiliations of a major voting group. Key (1965; 1955) expands this definition when he argues for realignments of different kinds and speeds. *Critical* realignments are sudden and lasting changes in the partisan identification of major voting groups, and realigning issues that are salient, crosscutting, and polarizing causes them. Obviously, very few political issues are potent enough to cause such a massive political shift, so there have been very few realignments. *Secular* realignments are slow and dependent upon migration, socialization, and conversion, and this type of realignment might take place over a generation or more.

The evidence suggests the South has undergone both a *critical* and a *secular* realignment. Bartley and Graham (1978) conclude that African Americans were
realigned into the Democratic Party after the 1964 elections. Some white southerners, however, underwent a process closer to a secular realignment. Bullock (1988) argues for a “creeping” realignment, or a combination of the critical and secular versions. Republicans, the theory suggests, began their dominance at the highest levels of government, while success at the lower levels comes over time, as do conversions and replacements in terms of partisan identification. Bullock also notes that the critical realignment that occurred in the South was not enough to make the GOP dominant in the region because of the unique nature of the South in the pre-civil rights era. The Democratic Party was so dominant in the region that a substantial increase in the number of Republicans could not shift power to the GOP, but merely made the region politically competitive. Aistrup (1996) makes a similar argument. He describes the South’s partisan change as a split-level realignment which will persist until the region reaches a “tipping point,” where the Democrats’ affiliation with African Americans combined with the South’s conservative nature will bring about a more complete Republican realignment in the region.

While it is clear that the South has undergone a political transformation, religion’s role in this conversion is unclear. As Green et al. (1998) note, there is a dearth of research that combines religion, politics, and the South. Key’s (1949) definitive work basically ignores religion, as do other southern politics works (Black and Black, 1992, 1997; Petrocik, 1987) generally deemed critical. Green et al. (1998) stand in the gap when they examine the electoral order in the South, particularly the changing partisan coalitions and how many of these changes were spurred by shifts in religious groups. Green et al. argue that religion is a vital component in the South’s shifting partisan
attachments. They think evangelical Christians, particularly those who are highly committed Christians (as measured via church attendance), have realigned into the GOP over time, whereas mainline Christians—especially low commitment ones—have become somewhat less Republican.

Green et al. (1998) should be commended for pursuing a subject too long ignored. This attempt, however, has two serious flaws. First, Green et al.’s distinctions are often forced and unsupported. Green et al. (1998) examine different religious groups (evangelical, mainline, Roman Catholic, African-American, and secular) and the commitment level displayed by individuals within some of these groups (evangelicals and mainliners). They analyze the political behavior of seven total groups (high commitment evangelicals, low commitment evangelicals, high commitment mainliners, low commitment mainliners, African-American protestants, Roman Catholics, and seculars). They then argue that these distinctions are meaningful for political analysis—particularly with high-commitment evangelicals constituting the core of the Republican Party and African-American Protestants as the foundation of the Democratic Party. These characterizations are not, however, supported by Green et al.’s (1998) data. Republican support does not vary much between evangelicals and mainliners regardless of commitment level. The differences that that Green et al. find must be questioned due to the lack of needed statistical controls and tests.

Second, and perhaps most critically, the Green et al. (1998) analysis is marred by a lack of statistical rigor and a paucity of control variables. When comparisons are made between groups, Green et al. offer no statistical tests to substantiate the differences they posit between groups. Also, they control only for basic demographics when they do
compare these groups. Even if we admit that some of the religious distinctions made by Green et al. are warranted, it is highly likely that political ideology, and not religious group affiliation and commitment, accounts for them. Since ideology is not controlled for, however, we cannot know its role in shaping the political attitudes and behavior demonstrated by these seven religious groups.

There are no easy answers to the question that drives this research. What is the relationship between the Republican Party, religion, and southern politics? I hope to answer this basic question by looking at the region’s politics to determine the strength of the tie that binds conservative Christians to the Republican Party. Before we can begin this process, though, we must have a solid understanding of the religious right. Chapter 2 undertakes this task.
Southern politics is ground zero for the recent explosion of political activity among religious conservatives. Oliver North ran for the United States Senate from the state of Virginia and he often did so with a Bible in his hand. Mike Huckabee, a former television preacher and president of the Arkansas Baptist Convention, is now governor of Arkansas. Fob James, former governor of Alabama, walked like a monkey in front of reporters to disprove the theory of evolution, which was only the first step in his effort to restrict the teaching of evolution from his state’s public schools. Most commentators refer to this explosion as the religious right. As noted earlier, the religious right is not a new phenomenon, nor is it one that is widely understood. The reasons behind this misunderstanding are myriad, but I believe they can be summarized quickly. There is no agreed upon method of measuring religious rightists at the individual level. In this chapter I argue that, statistically speaking, a relatively simple definition is feasible and necessary for use in further research. This will allow scholars to use a thumbnail sketch definition of the religious right even when they are using survey instruments that do not explicitly allow religious rightists to identify themselves. More importantly, this definition will allow me—in Chapter 3—to inspect the religious right’s issue positions and compare those to the positions held in the Republican Party.
A Review of Relevant Literature

The most recent political iteration of the Christian right is the first to exist in an era when public opinion is widely studied. In terms of the Christian right, then, this is the first opportunity scholars have had to define the movement through extensive data collection and survey research. Though they have been given the opportunity, scholars have not yet systematically defined the movement, and they have not yet come to grips with what could be seen as a basic disconnection between qualitative and quantitative definitions of the religious right.

Qualitative definitions of the religious right abound, but quantitative scholars have not adequately adhered to these constructions. This disconnection, I argue, threatens the validity of most empirical research surrounding the Christian right. After this disconnection in the present literature is examined, a new definition of the movement is proffered. This definition serves as a launching point for the analysis of the religious right and politics in the South.

Qualitative Studies of the Religious Right

Scholars of the religious right generally agree on the movement’s basic philosophical grounding. Most studies perceive the Christian right as a reactionary movement, with its members fighting against what they see as a hostile culture. The motivations behind this reactionary movement are, however, hotly debated. Crawford (1980) and Lipset and Raab (1978, 1981) use the “status politics” framework, which was largely developed by Richard Hofstadter (1955), to explain the rise of the Christian right. According to the framework, status politics denotes movements “whose appeal is to the not uncommon resentments of individuals or groups who desire to maintain or improve their social
status” (Hofstaedter, 1955:167). In this instance, the movement is in search of the
defense it, and its mores, were accorded. Since society seems to be moving away from
the religious right’s desired morality, it is agitating to regain its place at society’s table.

Crawford (1980) and Lipset and Raab (1978, 1981) characterize the movement as a
reaction against modernization, particularly the elites that embody modernization. The
status politics framework characterizes such “rear-guard” assaults as paranoid and
irrational, and because such assaults are incompatible with democratic values, the rise of
movements like the Christian right, or McCarthyism, threatens political stability (see
Oldfield, 1996: 35-72, for a helpful discussion of these arguments). Though these studies
seem dated, the model has persisted. For instance, Wald et al. (1989) and Diamond

Fowler (1989) and Oldfield (1996) each envision the religious right in much less
threatening terms, and while they agree that the movement is a reaction against societal
forces, they divest it of its assumed paranoia and irrationality. Fowler (1989) sees
religion as society’s “unconventional partner,” with each complementing the other in
critical ways. Religion provides society with “meaning, morality, and community that
are otherwise missing,” while society provides religion with the freedoms religion needs
to survive (Fowler et al., 1999: 151). People come to religion not for politics but to
escape society. Thus, the Christian right’s political surges are spurred by what it
perceives as declining moral and communal standards in society at large (Fowler, 1989).

Oldfield (1996) argues explicitly against the status politics framework. He admits
that some religious rightists are paranoid and conspiratorial, but he thinks the movement
is a rationally driven attack against modernity. The attack is necessary, according to
Oldfield, because unlike most of society, the Christian right does not operate under the assumption that modernization and rationality are necessarily combined. Most see modernization as the progress of reason, and since it attacks some cultural and scientific elements of this progress, the Christian right is assumed to be inherently irrational. Oldfield finds that:

the political activity of the Christian right can best be understood as a set of measures reasonably calculated to support a way of life and a set of values threatened by the trends of contemporary American society. To find that a movement is acting reasonably to promote the values it holds dear should not be an earth-shattering discovery, yet it goes directly against the status politics model’s emphasis on the ‘paranoid style’ of status-based movements (1996: 69).

The Composition of the Religious Right

Scholars have disagreed on the motivations behind the Christian right, but they have displayed more conformity when analyzing the movement’s composition. Smidt (1989a) notes that the Christian right is a religio-political movement that cuts across more traditional socio-religious groups—Catholics, Jews, Protestants, fundamentalists, charismatics, and evangelicals. Guth et al. (1998) agree with Smidt (1989a) generally, as I noted earlier, differences between evangelicals, fundamentalists, and charismatics are difficult to recognize. Marsden (1991) provides a summary of these differences that is worth reiterating. Evangelicalism is a broad social movement in nineteenth century America, largely born out of the Second Great Awakening. The movement was fairly diverse, and it cut across theological and denominational lines. The unifying forces behind evangelicalism were twin concerns for individual salvation and societal reform. Evangelicalism was, arguably, the dominant public theology at the time, but during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries its dominance was challenged by Darwinism
but they insist, “the weight of scholarly opinion is that the Christian right has not advanced very much beyond the walls of its original evangelical strongholds. The entire argument has taken place, however, in the absence of much hard evidence” (Guth et al., 1998: 170). Diamond (1998) and Wilcox (1996) essentially confirm this characterization of the Christian right, for to Wilcox “the movement remains a Christian one concentrated primarily among white evangelical Christians” (1996: 5). Fowler et al. (1999) sound a similar theme. They argue, “conservative Roman Catholics, Jews, and others often share the values and agenda of the Christian right but are uncomfortable with its distinctively Protestant aura” (1999: 138). These studies essentially assume, then, that many groups (fundamentalists, Catholics, Jews, and charismatics) might theoretically comprise the Christian right, but they assert that evangelical Christians dominate this particular body of believers.

The religious right cuts across not only socio-religious groups, but also denominational and, to some degree, doctrinal lines. Oldfield (1996), Wilcox (1996), and Lejon (1988) all note the Christian right's interdenominational qualities. Theoretically, the movement appeals to individuals who feel assaulted by their surrounding culture, and

and theological liberalism. According to Marsden, fundamentalism was largely a militant form of evangelicalism, or a group of evangelicals who were angry enough to thrust theological liberalism from denominations and evolution from the schools. Fundamentalists and evangelicals shared, and still share, cardinal Christian beliefs, though they differ in how they address secular and sacred contexts. Fundamentalists are generally more exclusivistic in how they address the world around them, while evangelicals are more willing to adapt to a variety of religious and intellectual settings. Charismatics have much in common with both evangelicals and fundamentalists, but they differ from each on some theological matters. Charismatics emphasize the third member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, and they highlight “spirit-filled” activities like healing and speaking in tongues. Ultimately, all three movements contain theological conservatives and view society in general as in desperate need of spiritual transformation.
these religious conservatives, who are defined by their theological beliefs, can be found in many Protestant denominations and traditions. Hunter (1994, 1991) and Marsden (1980), in their analyses of religious conservatives, emphasize adherence to some central or cardinal doctrines. In the Christian tradition, these doctrines include the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christ’s sinless perfection and deity, the substitutionary atonement accomplished by his death, and the faultlessness of scripture. These doctrines are widely held among religious conservatives, but there is also a considerable amount of theological diversity on some “non-cardinal” doctrines. Stances on the role of the Holy Spirit, the presence and function of spiritual gifts, eschatology (apocalyptic theology surrounding the end of time), and the mode of baptism vary within conservative Christianity.

Empirical Studies

While scholars of the religious right have produced some notable qualitative studies, most of the research surrounding the movement is empirically oriented. These empirical studies have fashioned a solid foundation in our understanding of the Christian right. Though much of the research is groundbreaking, some of the operational assumptions made throughout the research must be questioned. Many of these assumptions, clearly, are born out of necessity, for data type, quality, and relevance do not always allow for unassailable connections between quantitative realities and qualitative constructions. While often unavoidable, the danger of making untested assumptions is that they tend to accumulate over time, sometimes reaching a point when their accuracy or propriety is unquestioned. If such assumptions are problematic, empirical findings are essentially disconnected from qualitative studies. I argue that the empirical study of the Christian
right must be re-evaluated to avoid such a disconnection. This argument requires, however, that we examine the assumptions made by past empirical studies.

Social scientists place a high priority on understanding the nature and boundaries of groups and movements. It is unsurprising that many empirical analyses of the Christian right seek to make general statements about who is in the Christian right and the characteristics they share. The movement, however, is difficult to define, so empirical scholars use a variety of methods by which to measure the movement and its supporters. These methods can be placed into three categories: analyses that rely on social groups as proxies for the religious right, denominationally based definitions, and symbolic definitions based on affect.

The first method (Guth, 1996; Wilcox, 1996; Smidt, 1989a; Beatty and Walter, 1984) assumes that Christian right status is the same as identification with a socio-religious movement, particularly evangelical and/or fundamentalist Christianity. While these studies assume these group identifications are in some ways interchangeable with the Christian right, they do admit to the difficulty of sustaining such an assumption. Fundamentalism and evangelicalism are socio-religious movements (Smidt, 1989) that are not inherently political. Both movements cut across denominational lines, but the dividing line between evangelicals and fundamentalists is hazy, while the demarcation between these movements and the rest of Christianity is even more difficult to discern. In short, evangelical Christians view scripture as the authoritative word of God, place an emphasis on evangelism/missions, believe that Jesus is the only way to salvation, and have had a conversion/“born again” experience (Kellstedt et al., 1996). Fundamentalists generally hold identical, or similar, beliefs as evangelicals, but they are more likely to
adhere to biblical literalism and are generally more independent of their surrounding
culture (see Marsden, 1980 for a discussion of American Fundamentalism). By
extension, then, Christian rightists are assumed to adhere to conservative socio-religious
movements, are theologically conservative, emphasize religious conversion, and have had
a born-again experience.

The political behavior that arises out of these social movements, particularly
evangelicalism, has been thoroughly studied by social scientists. Kellstedt (1989) argues
that evangelicals have realigned into the Republican Party. He also argues that
evangelicals themselves should be divided based on their attendance levels: high
attendance evangelicals are more conservative than low attendance evangelicals. Green
et al. (1998) follow Kellstedt’s lead by subdividing mainline and evangelical identifiers
as either high or low commitment respondents, and they measured commitment through
church attendance. Again, they find that high commitment evangelicals are in general
more Republican than other religious groups.

Studies that center on the Christian right’s influence employ different operational
strategies than those above. Rozell and Wilcox (1997, 1995) and Green et al. (1993)
attempt to measure the Christian right’s electoral influence at the aggregate level. These
scholars cannot determine the precise number of Christian right members or sympathizers
within electoral districts, so they must estimate by proxy. They assume that Christian
rightists primarily come from particular Protestant denominations, and they then
determine the percentage of the population within the district that belongs to these
denominations. The resulting figure then represents the Christian right’s potential
influence in the area. In certain circumstances the intrepid researcher has no other choice
when estimating the Christian right’s electoral strength. This assumption, however, is problematic. This is a solid measure of the number of conservative Protestants in a given area, but religious conservatives are not necessarily in the Christian right. Denominations are heterogeneous entities, and the Christian right, theoretically, is an interdenominational (and somewhat non-denominational) phenomenon. There is little doubt that many members of these denominations do not consider themselves as part of the Christian right, while there are certainly people in other denominations (perhaps mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics) who do consider themselves as part of the movement.

Finally, scholars also use the level of affect individuals display toward Christian right objects, individuals, and organizations to measure public support for the movement (Wilcox et al., 1999; Guth and Green, 1996; Green, 1996; Jelen and Wilcox, 1992). They assume that if an individual displays a certain level of support for an object, he or she is a member or supporter of the movement that item symbolizes. Wilcox et al. (1999), for example, use respondents’ feeling thermometer scores for the Moral Majority and Christian Coalition. Respondents who rated the organizations at least ten degrees warmer than their average evaluation of other groups are assumed to be supporters of the Christian right. Wilcox et al. use ANES data to examine respondents’ attitudes toward the Moral Majority in 1984 and the Christian Coalition in 1996. By comparing these respondents, they find that the Christian right’s base has grown and that it has become more Republican and evangelical over time. Religious beliefs (born-again status and belief in biblical inerrancy) were the most stable predictor of support for the Christian right in 1984 and 1996.
Guth and Green (1996) use similar reasoning when they assume that elite support of the Moral Majority is equivalent to support for the Christian right. The pair finds that among elites, political issues (gay rights, abortion, and school prayer) were better predictors of Christian right support than religious characteristics. Green (1996) measures Christian right support by comparing Pat Robertson’s campaign supporters to other Republicans. He finds that almost half of Robertson’s convention delegates belonged to non-denominational churches and that self-identified charismatics and Pentecostals dominated the delegate pool. Jelen and Wilcox (1992), on the other hand, argue that support for the Christian right (as measured by support for Pat Robertson and the Moral Majority) is fractured. The Moral Majority sympathizers were disproportionately fundamentalist, while Robertson’s backers were very charismatic. They conclude that theological particularism has cost the Christian right support within the activist community.

While there may be a benefit in utilizing such symbolic proxies to analyze the Christian right, the use of such symbols necessarily leads to a vague portrayal of the Christian right as a movement. For example, one would expect the Moral Majority to appeal to fundamentalists because its founder, Jerry Falwell, is a fundamentalist minister. When the Moral Majority is used to represent or symbolize the Christian right, the movement is heavily fundamentalist. We would also expect the Christian Coalition (and Pat Robertson) to appeal to a wider base of evangelicals and charismatics because Robertson, the Coalition’s founder, holds beliefs that are more evangelical and charismatic than fundamentalist. Unsurprisingly, when the Coalition (or Robertson) is used to represent the Christian right, we find the Christian right’s appeal to be more
evangelical and charismatic. Can we conclude, then, that the Christian right has changed along with support for these organizations (or candidates)? Perhaps, but only if we assume that a particular level of affect is equivalent to group membership or affiliation.

Connecting the Quantitative and Qualitative

Qualitatively, the Christian right is a religio-political movement that cuts across religious traditions and denominational lines. Empirically, scholars assume that evangelical Protestants dominate the movement and that they are found only in particular denominations. Theoretically, religious rightists are theologically conservative, emphasize missions/evangelism, and identify with conservative socio-religious movements. Empirically, evangelicalism (which contains elements of theological conservatism and proselytism) is emphasized, as is religious attendance or commitment.

To join these strands of research, three basic questions must be answered. First, does membership in one group (denominations, socio-religious affiliation, religious traditions) necessitate, or contribute to, membership in another (the religious right)? Second, are certain theological attitudes (biblical inerrancy, born-again status, and an emphasis on evangelism) correlated with Christian right identification? Third, is there a relationship between religious commitment (attendance and salience) and religious right membership?

Data and Methods

The data for this analysis were derived from the 1996 Pew Survey on Religion and Politics titled The Diminishing Divide…American Churches, American Politics. The survey queried a randomly selected nationwide sample of 1,975 respondents about a wide array of both religious and political items. Unlike other surveys that include similar
batteries of religious and political items (i.e. The American National Election Study, The General Social Survey, and the Southern Focus Poll), this particular data source also includes a classification variable that allows respondents to self-identify as members of the religious right. Such a variable is, of course, key to any analysis seeking to determine just who composes the religious right.

**Variable Operationalization**

The question that asks respondents: “Do you consider yourself a member of the religious right political movement, or not?” will serve as the dependent variable. This dichotomous variable is coded 1 for respondents who replied affirmatively and 0 otherwise. The use of a self-identification item is controversial, but it does allow for more concrete statements about correlates to membership, and it provides a baseline from which we might measure support, as distinct from membership, for the Christian Right. The use of self-identification item does come with its own set of problems.

First, it is possible that those who adhere to the movement’s tenets eschew the label “Religious Right” because they think it carries a negative connotation they hope to avoid. This undoubtedly occurs, but much can still be learned from those who embrace the label regardless of connotations. Second, some respondents might embrace the label without entirely grasping the referent. Some respondents will attach the label without entirely understanding it, but this possibility can be monitored by carefully examining the results and by placing them in the proper context. Outrageous, or entirely unexpected results should be viewed suspiciously, and they would lead me to believe that many respondents did not understand the “Religious Right.”
In the end, there are some limitations on what can be learned from a self-
identification item that is built around an abstraction such as the Religious Right, but
these limitations are no more daunting than those surrounding the use of much more
indirect measures of Christian Right membership or support. Scholars who rely on other
measures (like evangelicalism, born-again status, religious commitment, or support for
interest groups they may know little about) to directly or indirectly estimate membership
or support are using one set of abstractions to tap into yet another abstraction. The use of
a self-identification item at least allows us to determine which of these abstractions are
properly, or improperly, associated with Christian Right membership.

Sociodemographic variables in this study include Sex (Female-0, Male-1); Age (18-
94); and Education measured in years of education completed (0-8 years-1, 9-11 years-2,
12 years or GED-3, Business, Technical, or Vocational Degree-4, Some College-5, BA,
BS-6, Post-graduate or Professional-7). Gender has been lightly studied in this area. The
relevant literature suggests that evangelical women, who are generally assumed to be
monolithic in their social beliefs, are much more diverse on social issues like abortion
(Cook et al., 1994) and feminism (Wilcox, 1989a; Klatch, 1987). Given this diversity
among evangelical women, they may not be any more or less likely to identify
themselves as members of the religious right. The general population of women is
probably even less likely to identify as members. If nothing else, gender will serve as a
control variable to help eliminate spurious relationships.

As for age, it has also been under-studied in the context of religion and politics. Age
is not the focus of Green et al.’s (1998) work, but they do discuss age among southern
white evangelicals. In general, they find that older southern white evangelicals are less
Republican than their younger counterparts regardless of their level of religious commitment. Green et al. (1998) do not provide adequate control variables, so the strength and existence of the relationship is somewhat uncertain. The religious right is a relatively recent phenomenon, however, so it is possible that younger Americans are more likely to identify with the movement.

Finally, education and its relationship to religion and politics is also under-studied in terms of its influence on political behavior. Petersen’s (2001) work provides an excellent exception. Petersen explores the comparative impact of education on the moral attitudes of various religious groups. He finds that among highly committed Christian conservatives education’s generally liberalizing influence is mitigated, so their moral views—especially on abortion—remain relatively stable. Education’s expected liberalizing impact remained among other religious groups. If education’s traditionally liberalizing influence persists among most of the population, a negative relationship between religious right affiliation and education should result, but they may not hold true for certain segments of the populace.

Previous work indicates that religious right adherents may be more prolific in the South, which does have a disproportionate share of the nation’s evangelical and fundamentalist Christians (Pew Research Center, 1996). A dummy variable, South, is used to identify any differences between the 11 former states of the Confederacy and the remainder of the U.S. [Non-South-0, South-1].

The religious items included in the multivariate analysis can be divided into four distinct categories: Religious Traditions, Socio-Religious Movements, Theology, and Commitment. A series of questions asked respondents to identify their religious
preferences at various levels (i.e. Christian vs. non-Christian; Catholic vs. Protestant; Protestant denomination). From these questions I created a set of variables that represent membership in the three largest religious traditions in the U.S.: Mainline Protestants, Evangelical Protestants, and Catholics. 

Two variables were created to tap what are called socio-religious movements, or major sub-classifications, within the above religious traditions. Respondents who identified themselves as fundamentalists, Pentecostals, or charismatics were grouped into a variable to denote affiliation within these specific Protestant movements (Protestant Movement). Within the Catholic tradition another movement variable was created to separate self-identified traditional Catholics from progressive Catholics. Traditional Catholic is a dummy variable coded 1 for Catholics who also identify as traditionalists.

Three variables were constructed to identify potentially important theological considerations that may affect one’s propensity to identify as a member of the religious right. As previously noted, these doctrinal questions can transcend both religious traditions and socio-religious movements. The first of these, Born-Again, is designed to classify respondents according to those who claim a born-again conversion experience. Biblical Inerrancy denotes a belief that the Bible is the word of God and its contents should be viewed as literal in nature. A third variable separates parishioners based on

\[2\] The classification scheme used to classify Protestant denominations as either mainline or evangelical is the same as outlined by Kellstedt et al. (1996). The following denominational affiliations were combined to create a measure of Evangelical Protestant membership: Baptist, Pentecostal, and nondenominational or Independent Protestant Church. Likewise, the following denominational groupings were pooled to summarize Mainline Protestants in the sample: Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Congregational or United Church of Christ, Episcopalian, and Reformed.

\[3\] Unfortunately, the survey did not allow respondents to identify as evangelicals.
their view of the most important activity that churches should undertake. Those who emphasize such orientations were coded as 1 in the variable Mission Orientation.

Finally, religious Commitment was measured by two variables which previous research in this area has indicated may be crucial in explaining religious right affiliation. The first, Attendance, asks respondents to indicate their level of church attendance using an ordinal ranking scheme: 1-Never, 2-Seldom, 3-A few times a year, 4-Once or twice a month, 5-once a week, or 6-more than once a week. A second variable labeled Salience is designed to measure the importance of religion in an individual’s life and is coded 1-Not very important, 2-Fairly important, or 3-Very important.

Methodology

Due to the incorporation of a binary dependent variable a nonlinear probability model was utilized for the analyses presented. Logit and probit methodologies are two of the most commonly accepted tools for analyzing the variance in dichotomous dependent variables. The coefficients for the multivariate models presented were estimated using logit. The use of a weight variable designed to adjust sample characteristics in relation to known population parameters further necessitates the use of robust standard errors.

Findings

I begin by noting that membership in the movement is fairly small. In the sample, only 5.7 percent of the respondents self-identified as religious right adherents. This study examines only white respondents. While a small percentage of black

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4The same models estimated using probit generated essentially the same results.
5This study examines only white respondents. While a small percentage of black
finding would appear to indicate that previous attempts to gauge the overall size of the movement may have grossly overestimated potential membership. For example, other research has estimated membership rates to be as high as 20 percent of the electorate (Rozell and Wilcox 1997). Recent exit polls (Voter News Service, 1999) show that 24.6 percent of the white electorate identified itself as the religious right.  

This suggests, though only future research could confirm, that the religious right votes at much higher rates than the general population. Second, we observe that almost all respondents who indicated they were part of the movement, 99 percent are, unsurprisingly, self-identified Christians.

I next examine the composition of the religious right movement in light of three major Christian traditions: evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, and Catholics. Table 2.1 indicates that religious right membership cuts across religious traditions within Christendom. While evangelical Protestants compose a plurality of the religious right at about 38 percent, Catholics and Mainline Protestants comprise approximately one-fifth (20 percent) and one-quarter (28 percent) respectively. The religious right is plainly then, a phenomenon that cuts across standard religious traditions in the U.S.

Table 2.2 presents a comparison of Christian right identifiers alongside other Christians in relation to religious theology and commitment. The results aptly demonstrate that stark differences exist between these two groups. For example, about respondents do identify as members of the Religious right, previous research indicates that African-Americans have a unique religio-political context that deserves separate study. See Harris (1999) for an excellent analysis of religion and politics within the African-American community.

6 In the South, 30.2% of the electorate identified itself as part of the religious right.
Table 2.1: Religious Right Composition by Religious Tradition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Tradition</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Protestant</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline Protestant</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Self-Identified Christians</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.2: Comparison of Theology and Religious Commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent in category for which the following statements apply:</th>
<th>Religious Right Identifier</th>
<th>All Other Self-Identified Christians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Born-again Christian</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible is inerrant Word of God</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most important role of church is conversion of others</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion <em>very important</em></td>
<td>90.3</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend church once/ week</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
72 percent of religious right adherents indicate that they are born-again Christians in comparison to only 29 percent of other Christians—a 43 percent gap. Religious right identifiers are also much more likely to agree that the Bible is the inerrant word of God and that the primary goal of the church should center on evangelistic endeavors.

These same respondents also demonstrated much higher levels of commitment when compared to other self-identified Christians. Seventy-one percent of the religious right indicates that they attend church at least once a week compared to only 35 percent of other self-reported Christians. Likewise, when asked about the salience of religion in their own lives, 90 percent of religious right adherents stated that religion as very important, in contrast to only 50 percent of the comparison group. Clearly stark differences exist between the religious right and others in society. In order to determine which of these factors can assist us in constructing a profile of an average member of the religious right, we develop a series of multivariate models presented in the following section.

Table 2.3 details a series of multivariate logit models designed to test specific variable subsets thought to connected to religious right self identification (Models 1-5). The first model examines a set of demographic correlates in relation to religious right identification. Of these variables, only a respondent’s level of education and his or her regional location had any appreciable independent impact on association. Higher levels of education are associated with a diminishing likelihood of identification while southerners are more likely than their counterparts to claim adherence to the religious right movement.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
<th>Model 6</th>
</tr>
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### Theology:

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### Commitment:

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| Pseudo R²              | .030   | .024   | .050   | .147   | .117   | .207   |
| N                      | 1511   | 1529   | 1529   | 1529   | 1519   | 1501   |

Notes: *p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01. Standard errors presented in parentheses ( ). Standardized Coefficients reported in brackets [ ].
While we know descriptively that religious right identification transcends religious traditions, Model 2 indicates that in line with previous theoretical and empirical constructions members of evangelical Protestant denominations identify with the religious right at higher rates than mainline Protestants or Catholics. Model 3 shows that affiliation with either a Protestant linked socio-religious movement or the more conservative wing of the Roman Catholic Church are both associated with a greater propensity to identify with the religious right.

The theological concerns detailed in Model 4 are all significant determinants of association. Identification as a born-again Christian, belief that the Bible is the inerrant word of God, and taking the position that the primary mission of the Church is evangelism are all common traits for religious right adherents. Theological positions, socio-religious movement affiliation, and membership in one of the primary Christian traditions can all be considered, to some degree, passive indicators of religious commitment. In order to provide a more accurate gauge of religious commitment we include two distinct measures in Model 5: church attendance and religious salience. As in previous research, those professing affiliation with the religious right attend church more often and profess the value of religion in their lives more so than non-adherents.

The effects of the first five models are analyzed simultaneously in Model 6 located in the last column of the table. When controlling for a variety of factors a somewhat different picture emerges regarding religious right membership. In the face of religiously oriented measures, the relative weight of the demographic correlates in the model is greatly diminished. Only region retains any measure of distinction, with southerners still more likely to claim ties to the religious right. This gives this entire analysis, and the fact
it is centered in the South, some justification, for at least in this somewhat narrow sense, the South is still distinct.

Much like the demographic variables included in our model, membership in one of the three major religious traditions identified also becomes an insignificant predictor. Even membership in an evangelical Protestant denomination, an important surrogate in previous research for religious right identification, no longer qualifies as a valid determinant in the face of other controls.

The remaining religious attributes do, however, continue to act as significant determinants of religious right identification. Affiliation with a socio-religious movement, which again certainly cut across traditional Christian groupings, is apparently a better predictor of association with the Christian right than identification as simply mainline or evangelical Protestant or Catholic. Likewise, adherence to specific doctrinal claims, regardless of Christian tradition, continue to be positively related the religious right. Commitment also continues to play a significant role in the explanation of this phenomenon. Somewhat surprisingly of the two factors employed, only Religious Salience remains noteworthy. A profession of the importance of religion in one’s life appears to be more important than church attendance. Further, judging from the reported standardized coefficients, Religious Salience is the single most important determinant of religious right identification in the full model specification.\(^7\)

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\(^7\) I calculated a P.R.E. statistic (% predicted correctly-Null category/100-null category) for Model 6 and found the result to be essentially zero (.0003). In one sense, this is unsurprising because of the severely skewed nature of the dependent variable—only one of every twenty respondents identified themselves with the religious right. The null category is correct 95% of the time, so there is not much variation to be explained by the model. I also calculated expected probabilities for the statistically significant variables
Conclusions

In the context of this study of the Christian right and the Republican Party in the South, what can we conclude from this analysis? First, the religious right is a multifaceted religio-political movement that cuts across traditional religious and denominational lines. The religious right is not an exclusively Protestant movement, for many traditional Catholics identified themselves as among the religious right. Traditional Catholics account for 18 percent of white religious right self-identifiers, but only 9 percent of white traditional Catholics identified themselves as part of the religious right. Even within Protestant religious traditions, a great deal of diversity exists, for religious right adherents can be found in mainline and more evangelical denominations.

Second, the theoretical variables thought to be associated with Christian right membership are in fact important indicators of affiliation. Unsurprisingly, these indicators also transcend religious traditions. Christian rightists tend to identify with conservative socio-religious movements (evangelicalism, fundamentalism, and Charismatic), hold conservative theological positions (biblical literalism, born-again status, and missions orientation), and view religion as a highly salient part of their lives. Theoretically, then, the Christian right is largely comprised of those we would expect to embrace the movement.

Third, research on the Christian right has generally failed to connect these theoretical strands to empirical operationalizations. Too many scholars have conducted empirical

and found much the same results. Only Traditional Catholic was substantively interesting. Traditional Catholics are 8% more likely to identify with the religious right
analyses using poor proxies of the religious right, and this has undoubtedly led to misleading representations of the movement. Very few surveys include items that allow for the self-identification of Christian rightists, so the simplest measure of the religious right is generally unavailable. Individual level research based on surveys that do not allow for the self-identification of religious right affiliates, but do have the requisite number of religious items necessary, should rely on this analysis to extrapolate a rough profile of individuals most likely to be affiliated with the movement. In reality, this rough profile may be at least as accurate in defining the religious right as a self-identification item because many individuals likely share the traits of, and behave politically, as those in the religious right. They may be, for whatever reason, unwilling to identify themselves as such. When measuring the size or the influence of the Christian right, this method may yield more reliable results.

when all other variables were held at their mean levels.
CHAPTER 3

WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE…THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT AND
ISSUE VARIANCE WITHIN THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

As noted previously, scholars have struggled to define the Christian right in an empirical fashion. Scholars have been more successful in their efforts to study conservative Christians and their political attitudes and beliefs. These studies, though voluminous, lack a connective thread, and they generally fail to offer substantial insight into the Christian right. By examining these studies we can begin to hypothesize about the possible relationship between the movement and the Republican Party, especially in the South.

After all, if the Republican symphony is in tune, then the party’s future sounds harmonious. All sections are on the same page, and the music would be sweet to the conservative’s ear. Candidates who end up conducting the symphony during general elections could consult the sheet music and wield the baton to get the desired results—unity that leads to high turnout—as well as enjoy the flexibility to explore issues that are attractive to independents, conservative Democrats, and non-voters.

If the symphony is out of tune, then the party’s future might be an ear-splitting cacophony. The religious right might be the brass section that is shrill and unwilling to listen to direction, whereas the rank-and-file members could resemble the woodwinds who want to get along but not at any cost. The conductor/candidate would then have to
spend much of her time insuring all sections are on the same page, rather than fine-tuning her message for the general election audience.

In short, issues matter. A unified Republican party has more electoral potential in a competitive region of the country, but a hopelessly frayed party is subject to calamity. Low turnout, poor candidates, or general malaise could all doom the GOP to mediocrity, even in the South.

Religion and Political Attitudes

Most scholars agree that the Christian right’s political agenda is socially conservative and intensely pro-family (Wilcox, 1996; Oldfield, 1996). This agreement, however, is based more on anecdotal evidence, the limited study of elites, and an examination of some primary and secondary sources, and less on an empirical examination of survey data. Several unanswered questions still linger. What does the Christian right think about issues most commonly associated with economic conservatives, such as taxes, government spending, and welfare? Alternatively, how do non-Christian right Republicans perceive issues traditionally associated with the Christian right? Perhaps most importantly, when all things are equal, are Christian right Republicans any different than other Republicans?

Answers to these questions should reveal a great deal about the character and quality of the relationship between the GOP and the Christian right. According to conventional wisdom, there is a schism between economic and socially conservative Republicans. If this is so, I plan to survey the nature of this schism. If there is no schism, the Republican Party may be unified, but at what electoral cost? The South provides a reasonable place
to begin the search for these answers, especially since the analysis in the last chapter determined that, all things being equal, southerners are more likely to affiliate with the religious right. If there is a schism in the most homogeneous region in the country, the likelihood of its presence elsewhere increases dramatically. If not, the critical topic becomes the GOP’s character in the South as compared to its nature in the rest of the nation. Perhaps the Christian right comprises more of the GOP in the South than in the rest of the country, which would endanger the party’s ability to become a governing entity. These issues, and the analysis that examines them, should constitute a critical view of the GOP’s future as a political party in the South and in America.

The Christian right’s broad agenda (pro-life, anti-gay rights, etc…) was referenced earlier. Empirical analyses have failed to put flesh on the movement’s bones, however, and this oversight is likely due to the difficulty of defining and operationalizing the Christian right as a movement. As an alternative, scholars have focused on groups related to the Christian right, particularly fundamentalist and evangelical Christians.

There is a strong connection between status as an evangelical or fundamentalist and policy attitudes. Unsurprisingly, these groups take especially strong stands on abortion. A host of religious variables are correlated with opposition to abortion; these include belief in the Bible as the inspired word of God (Kellstedt and Smidt, 1993); religious television viewing (Jelen and Wilcox, 1993); born again status (Jelen et al., 1993); denominational preference (Kellstedt and Green, 1993); and church involvement as defined by participation in organized worship and other church activities (Wald et al., 1993). Kellstedt et al. (1991) also found that evangelical Protestants were much more likely than mainline Protestants to oppose abortion (in all circumstances or except in
cases of rape or where the mother’s health is in danger). Chandler et al. (1994) sounded a similar note when they found that American evangelicals are exceedingly pro-life in their views, but they are not as ardently pro-life as Canadian evangelicals. They conclude that American Evangelicalism is in some ways blunted by America’s individualistic culture.

Religious views also relate to attitudes other than abortion. Wilcox (1989a) shows the relationship between evangelical religious beliefs and women’s attitudes toward feminism, but he also notes that white evangelical women harbor a variety of opinions about feminism, so they are not monolithic. In his study of the Ohio Moral Majority, Wilcox (1986) found that fundamentalists were in fact more conservative than evangelicals on a number of items. So, contrary to popular opinion, religious conservatives are not necessarily unitary in their political attitudes.

There is also some evidence that religious attitudes correspond to secular, or less pro-family, issues. Guth et al. (1995) found that conservative eschatological beliefs are inversely related to support for environmentalism, and in a similar vein, Wald et al. (1994) conclude that religious belief solidly predicts anticommunist sentiments. In fact, fundamentalists were more likely to espouse anticommunist opinions than any other religious tradition.

Some work does examine religious differences at the elite/mass level (Steed et al., 1993), which indirectly informs us about the Christian right’s potential as a faction within the GOP (Penning, 1994). Steed et al. (1983) examined southern Fundamentalist elites and compared them to their colleagues from the rest of the country. They found that these southern elites were wealthier and better educated, and that they were more homogeneous religiously. The southern elites, according to Steed et al., were also much
more active politically than other fundamentalists. In terms of issues, the southern
Fundamentalist elites were more conservative than non-southern fundamentalists on three
issue dimensions—social, economic, and foreign/defense. Penning’s (1994) study nicely
compliments this work. He finds that Pat Robertson’s delegates to the Republican
National Convention in 1988 were significantly different than other delegates. Penning
concluded that Robertson’s delegates were more “amateurish,” “purist,” and less
committed to the GOP than Bush’s delegates.

Theoretical Expectations

It is clear from the literature review that the groups that likely make up the Christian
right—fundamentalists, evangelicals, and charismatics in particular—are socially
conservative. They are not monolithic per se, but they are generally opposed to abortion,
in favor of school prayer, and against additional homosexual rights. Socially, at least,
conservative Christians, and presumably members of the religious right, are very
conservative, so it stands to reason that religious right Republicans are probably more
conservative than their fellow Republicans on social issues.

The previous literature review does suggest this possible hypothesis, but the
hypothesis is also consistent with the theoretical work discussed in Chapter 2. While
examining the various theoretical foundations for the religious right, I noted that many
scholars (Fogel, 2000; Oldfield, 1996; Fowler, 1988) view it as a reactionary movement.
In particular, the religious right as a political movement exists to inform society, and the
movement hopes, to return it, to Judeo-Christian mores. While the religious right is not
the only segment of society that holds these traditional issue stands, it is apparently the
segment that has been politically mobilized by these issues. This, when combined with
the fact that the Republican Party has historically emphasized a reduced governmental
role, particularly in fiscal and distributive policy, enforces the notion that religious
rightists will likely be more socially conservative than their Republican counterparts, for
the religious right seeks an increased government presence within particular policy areas.
As a result, when social issues are considered, religious right Republicans will be more
conservative than other Republicans. The question remains, however, about possible
regional differences. Will the southern GOP display more, or less, unity than the rest of
the nation’s Republicans? Given the traditionally conservative social nature of the
region, it is possible that the GOP in the South will display higher levels of unity on
social issues than in the rest of the country.

While the above hypothesis appears to be relatively straightforward given the
religious right’s political impetus, the other side of this scholarly coin has not been
examined. Given the GOP’s historical reliance on conservative economic policy stands,
is there a possibility that rank-and-file Republicans will be more conservative on
government service/spending than the religious right? Put differently, is there an
economic, as well as social, policy chasm within the GOP? An investigation into this
question should illuminate the present state of the GOP. If religious conservatives are not
in step with the party on economic issues, the potential for division increases
dramatically. If these factions are economically congruent, then a suitable common
ground exists. This gives Republican candidates a wide range of issues to which they can
appeal to unify the party within the electoral context.
In the definitive analysis of the pre-civil rights South, V.O. Key (1949) argues that southern politics begins and ends with the plight of the “Negro.” Though the South has undergone a revolution in race relations, in many ways Key’s argument still holds true. As African-Americans have gained political power, white Democrats have become more scarce throughout the region (Hood et al., 1999a). White Democrats who have managed to stay in power have done so in part by successfully managing biracial coalitions (Glaser, 1996), so white Democratic political power depends on African-Americans in many parts of the South. Civil Rights reform has aided not only African-Americans, but also Republicans. The redistricting revolution has produced African-American districts, and this process of centralization has made many suburban districts more Republican (Bullock, 1995; Swain, 1995). The politics of the South has fundamentally changed since Key’s analysis, but future research may still characterize the region as a struggle between African-Americans and conservative whites who have slowly changed their partisan affiliation. There is some evidence that an especially antagonistic relationship is developing between the religious right and African-Americans (Bullock and Smith, 2000). Such a relationship could influence the electoral climate, for the presence of religious right candidates may in fact mobilize African-Americans, while the absence of such candidates may give the GOP a better opportunity, for a major Democratic voting bloc may not be galvanized.

While the above possibilities will be investigated more thoroughly later in this analysis, the relevant issue here is the possibility of yet another schism within the GOP in the South. There is little research that addresses conservative Christianity and race relations. Emerson and Smith (2000) argue that evangelicals are not racist, but that they
view race relations on an individual basis, e.g., they cannot understand why African Americans think they are racist when they are friendly toward blacks and have many black friends. Emerson and Smith also note, however, that African-Americans view racism in terms of public policy. They cannot understand evangelical rhetoric that seeks to heal racial wounds while at the same time denouncing affirmative action programs and advocating welfare reductions. These policy differences between African-Americans and evangelicals might be exacerbated, however, if conservative Christians are out of stride when compared to other Republicans. If conservative Christians differ from other Republicans on policies that impact African-Americans, then it is possible that candidates may have to treat racial issues very gingerly, again potentially blunting the party’s ability to present a unified front in the South. As white Democrats in the South have been forced to manage biracial coalitions, Republicans may have to navigate a political minefield of their own as they appeal to candidates across a religious divide.

Data and Methods

Data Source

The data for this analysis come from the American National Election Studies from 1998, 1996, and 1992. The ANES studies were pooled for cross-sectional analysis.

1 These three ANES studies were chosen for very specific reasons. Three national surveys were needed to guarantee a sufficient number of cases. The ANES does not over sample in the South, so in order to find enough Religious right southern Republicans, multiple studies had to be pooled. Also, the earliest ANES study that contained anywhere near the requisite number of religious questions was from 1988, but this survey lacked some key religious questions, for it did not allow respondents the opportunity to self-identify as Evangelicals, Fundamentalists, or Charismatics. The 1994 survey did not contain a born-again item, so the only other possibilities were 1990, 1992, 1996, and
These data sets also contain weights to be used in cross sectional analyses, and these weights were incorporated into all phases of the study. The pooled cross-sectional approach is necessary because of the relatively few eligible cases in every ANES study. Glaser (1994) uses a similar method to overcome the same methodological problem in his analysis of race relations in the South.

**Variable Operationalization**

a. Religious Right Status

The primary independent variable throughout this chapter is a dichotomous measure of religious right/Christian right status. This variable builds upon the empirical results seen in the previous chapter. Religious right status depends upon several factors, including affiliation with a conservative socio-religious movement (evangelical, fundamentalist, and or charismatic), conservative theological positions, and religious salience.

1998.

Panel issues, however, had to be considered, for the possibility of double counting had to be avoided if possible. An ANES panel study was conducted in 1990, 1991, and 1992. The initial plan was to attempt to use both the 1990 and the 1992 studies, for they each contained the needed items. To avoid double counting, however, the panel respondents in the 1990 survey were eliminated from the pooled cross-section (1,359) in 1992. Upon investigation, however, I found that nearly half the 1990 respondents (981) were questioned with Form B, which did not contain many of the questions needed to conduct the analysis. Faced with such a dwindling number of cases, I decided to use the 1992 ANES as a cross-sectional survey (it has a weight variable for this purpose, V923008). However, even after this decision, I was forced to remove 254 cases from this survey because either no post-election interview was conducted or a short form eliminated some needed questions.

Finally, panel problems arose in the 1996 ANES as well, for some respondents from 1992 were included in 1996 also. These respondents (545), to again avoid double counting, were eliminated from the 1996 sample, as were those who did not complete both a pre and post-election interview (180). I ended up with the following number of respondents in each survey: 1992 (n=2232), 1996 (n=976), 1998 (n=1281), for N=4489
Membership in a conservative *socio-religious* movement is easily measured in the dataset. The ANES asks respondents “Which one of these words best describes your kind of Christianity, fundamentalist, evangelical, charismatic or spirit filled, moderate to liberal?” Christians alone were asked this question, so by definition, only professing Christians could be in the religious right. All those who claimed to be fundamentalist, evangelical, or charismatic are defined as members of a conservative socio-religious movement.

Theological positions were measured through two common ANES questions. First, the ANES asked self-identified Christians “Would you call yourself a born-again Christian, that is, have you personally had a conversion experience related to Jesus Christ?” Traditionally, conservative Christians view their salvation as a “born-again” experience, where they begin to undergo a radical transformation that lasts a lifetime. These “born-again” Christians are generally theologically conservative and they view their faith as vital and experiential. So while designation as a “born-again” Christian is not a direct measure of theological conservatism, religion and politics scholars often argue that it is an acceptable proxy (Jelen et al., 1993). I coded as “1” those who identified themselves as born-again Christians and all others as “0.”

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2 This question appears in all three surveys (v923846, v960600, and v980566).
3 To minimize confusion, I must note that affiliation with evangelical protestant denominations in Chapter 2, Model 6, was not a significant predictor of religious right status. Affiliation with a socio-religious movement, which would include claiming to be an evangelical Christian (as well as fundamentalist and charismatic), was a statistically significant predictor. Therefore, in this analysis, I am not using any denominational affiliation to complete my thumbnail sketch of the religious right, but I am allowing respondents to identify with a socio-religious movement.
4 This question was also repeated on all three ANES surveys (v923847, v960601,
Second, the ANES regularly asks respondents about their view of the Bible. This question asks respondents “Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?” Four choices were offered: 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,” 3) “The Bible is a book written by men and is not the word of God,” and, 4) “Other.” Again, the goal of the question is not explicitly to measure theology, but the item assumes, as have the scholars who incorporate it into their studies (Kellstedt and Smidt, 1993), that a more literal view of the Bible necessarily leads to theological conservatism. The most conservative of the four choices, obviously, is (1), so I assume in this analysis that this selection denotes theological and Biblical conservatism, while a choice of (2), (3), or (4) does not do so. So, a literal view of the Bible is coded as “1” and all other responses are coded as “0.”

The “born-again” and biblical items are the only ANES queries that address theological conservatism. I fashioned an additive scale of theological conservatism that included both items. There were three points on the scale. Those who scored “2” are both born-again and have a literal view of the Bible, while those who chose one of the two are coded as “1.” All others were coded as “0.” An analysis of the reliability of this scale was performed, and Cronbach’s Alpha, which measures the scalability of the items, was a respectable .5489.

Finally, according to the previous chapter, religious salience is an important indicator of religious right status. The ANES asks a straightforward salience question: “Do you

\v980568).

5 This question also repeats in all three surveys (v923824, v960575, v980496).
consider religion to be an important part of your life, or not?’ Respondents simply chose affirmatively or negatively, and those who chose affirmatively were deemed to view religion as a salient part of their lives.

Given the above variables, religious right status was assigned to individuals in the following manner. If respondents identified with a socio-religious movement, scored at least “1” on the theology scale, and said that religion was a salient part of their lives, they were considered to be part of the religious/Christian right. Respondents did not have to be theologically conservative on both items for the following reason. Though most scholars do not recognize it, it is very possible to be theologically conservative and to eschew both born-again status and biblical literalism. Historically, Roman Catholics have not viewed salvation as a “born-again” event, for they emphasize conversion as an ultimate process, hence the emphasis on all the sacraments as salvific events (baptism, confirmation, communion, marriage, ordination, penance, and extreme unction). While this understanding of salvation is certainly Roman Catholic, it is also orthodox and conservative. In addition, some conservative Christians might balk at the notion that the Bible must be interpreted “literally,” or “word for word.” Historically, many of the most conservative Christians have interpreted the Bible symbolically or allegorically in certain places. St. Augustine, for instance, interpreted some of Genesis in an allegorical fashion, and many contemporary Christians interpret biblical prophecy symbolically, so they could not select the most conservative option on the biblical item. Given these possibilities, I think it is reasonable to lower the threshold of theological conservatism to only one of the two items.

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6 This question also appears on all three surveys (v923820, v960571, v980492).
b. Issue Scales

In order to determine the level of congruence between religious right Republicans and other Republicans, I assembled three separate issue scales that will function as dependent variables throughout the analysis. First, I constructed a social issue scale. I would like to include many items on such a scale, for the Christian right has emphasized many social issues throughout the past two decades. Gay rights, feminism, abortion, school prayer, and euthanasia are all feasible issues, but researchers are often at the mercy of the data with which they work, and this is no exception. Only three items were repeated on all three ANES surveys: abortion, school prayer, and the death penalty. Of these three, only two were usable, for the death penalty item was not scalable given the near unanimity of the respondents, who were overwhelmingly in favor of capital punishment. Consequently, abortion and school prayer were solely relied upon to construct the social issues index.

The ANES’s abortion question has been stable throughout the past decade. “Which one of the opinions on this page best agrees with your view?”

“(1) By law, abortion should never be permitted. (2) The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest, or when the woman’s life is in danger. (3) The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman’s life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established. (4) By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice.”

---

7 The ANES has questioned respondents about abortion in 1992 (v923732), 1996 (v960503), and in 1998 (v980505).
The school prayer item has also been consistent during the past decade. Respondents were asked “Which of the following views comes closest to your opinion on the issue of school prayer?” They could then choose

(1) By law, prayers should not be allowed in public schools, (2) The law should allow public schools to schedule time when children can pray silently if they want to, (3) The law should allow public schools to schedule time when children, as a group, can say a general prayer not tied to a particular religious faith, or (4) By law, public schools should schedule a time when all children would say a chosen Christian prayer. 8

Both of these items were recoded from liberal to conservative and then placed in an additive social issues scale. 9 High scores reflect conservative social positions, while lower scores reflect pro-abortion and anti-school prayer attitudes. A reliability analysis of the scale was conducted. Cronbach’s Alpha in this instance was .3530, which is relatively low. To insure the scale did not bias the results, I conducted the analysis on the separate variables and the results were not appreciably different.

The above scale provides us with an opportunity to measure the possible differences between conservative Christian Republicans and other Republicans, while the following scale allows us to explore the possibility of an ideological rift in the party. The ANES routinely asks a series of questions designed to measure the individual’s view of government and its role in the provision of both services to, and a standard of living for,

8 The ANES questions about school prayer were v925945, v961214, and v980455.
9 While standardization is preferable to an additive scale, it was not necessarily required in this case due to the same number of items in each scale (four) and the fact that standardization did not change the results. So, for ease of interpretation, the additive
its citizens. These questions strike at the heart of the relationship between the
government and the individual. Is it up to the government to provide a helping hand, or
is it up to the individual to help him or her? Some would argue that this is the
fundamental difference between America’s two political parties, so the relationship
between the religious right and the GOP on such a fundamental party concern may be
crucial to the party’s unity.

First, the ANES asks respondents “Some people feel the government in Washington
should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living. Others think
the government should just let each person get ahead on their own. Where would you
place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?” Respondents are
then presented with a seven-point scale, which allows them to choose any value between
“1,” “Government should see to a job and a good standard of living,” and “7,”
“Government should let each person get ahead.”

Second, the ANES asks respondents,

Some people think the government should provide fewer services, even in areas such
as health and education in order to reduce spending. Suppose these people are at one
end of the scale at point 1. Other people feel it is important for the government to
provide many more services even if it means an increase in spending. Suppose these
people are at the other end, at point 7. Moreover, of course, some other people have
opinions somewhere in between at points 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6. Where would you place
yourself on this scale, or haven’t you thought much about this?

scale was used instead.

10 This ANES question was also asked in all three years (v923718, v960483, and
Respondents were again given the opportunity to choose “1,” “Government should provide many fewer services and reduce spending a lot,” “7,” “Government should provide many more services and increase spending a lot,” and everything in between. This variable was recoded so that higher numerical choices reflect an essentially conservative view and low scores reflect a more liberal view of government intervention.

These two variables, which indirectly tap the individual’s view of government and its proper role in society, were combined into an additive index. Higher scores on the scale correspond to conservative beliefs while lower views indicate a more progressive philosophical bent. A reliability analysis was performed to determine the scalability of these variables. Cronbach’s Alpha was .5169, which indicates the close relationship between the two variables.

Finally, civil rights, or racial, policies are considered as one more possible source of consternation within the GOP. The ANES again asks a series of questions that directly tap into the attitudes surrounding racial policy in America. Three separate items were used to create a scale of racial politics. First, respondents are asked about the nature of equal rights in America. Respondents were asked to evaluate the statement, “We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country.” A five-point scale was used to measure these attitudes. Respondents could “1” agree strongly, “2” agree somewhat, “3” neither agree or disagree, “4” disagree somewhat, or “5” disagree strongly. These

\footnote{Again, standardization is a common approach to these kinds of scales, but given that each item contains a seven-point scale, standardization is not necessarily required. Again, the analysis was conducted both with and without standardized dependent variables, and the results were not appreciably different.}
responses were recoded so that conservative responses would correspond to higher scores.¹²

Second, the ANES asks respondents about affirmative action:

Some people say that because of past discrimination, blacks should be given preference in hiring and promotion. Others say that such preference in hiring and promotion of blacks is wrong because it gives blacks advantages they haven't earned. What about your opinion—are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of blacks?

Respondents were allowed to be either for or against preferential hiring. I coded those who were for these hiring practices as “0,” and those against it as “1.”

Finally, ANES asks respondents about the government’s responsibility in guaranteeing the social and economic position of African-Americans.

Some people feel that the government in Washington should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks. Others feel that the government should not make any special effort to help blacks because they should help themselves. Where would you place yourself on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?"

Respondents again had a seven-point scale from which to choose: “1,” “Government should help blacks,” “7,” “Blacks should help themselves,” and all values in between.¹³

These items, due to the varying scales, were standardized and summed to construct a racial politics scale. Again, high values reflect conservative issue stands, while low

¹² The equal rights item was found in all three surveys as v926025, v961230, and v980429.
values reflect traditionally liberal views. And once again, a reliability analysis was conducted to assess the scalability of the three items. Cronbach’s Alpha was .5286, which reflects a scalable set of variables.

c. Control Variables

While part of the analysis is descriptive in nature, much of it is also multivariate. The following variables function as control variables throughout those phases of the analysis. Gender (1-female, 0-male) and Race (1-white, 2-non-white) are dichotomous variables, while Ideology (1-liberal, 2-moderate, 3-conservative) is a three-point scale and Party I.D. (0-strong Democrat, 1-weak Democrat, 2-independent leaning Democrat, 3-independent, 4-independent leaning Republican, 5-weak Republican, and 6-strong Republican) is a seven-point scale. Age is closer to an interval level variable (number of years lived) and socio-economic status (SES) is simply a standardized variable that combines the respondent’s stated level of education and income. High values on the SES scale reflect high levels of education and income. As noted in Chapter 1, throughout this analysis I compare the South to the rest of the nation. In order to do so, I have defined the South, as the eleven seceded states. Finally, because I am pooling cross-sectional datasets, I have inserted into the multivariate analyses dichotomous variables that correspond with the year of the original ANES survey. For example, all respondents from the 1992 survey are coded as “1,” and all others as “0.” The same holds true for 1996 and 1998 respondents. When conducting regression analysis, however, the 1998 variable is excluded to avoid perfect predictability. These variables simply control for

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13 This ANES can be found in 1998 (v980462), 1996 (v960487), and 1992 (v923724).
the possibility that some of these results are due to the temporal circumstances surrounding the individual survey collections.

Methods

I use two methods throughout this portion of the analysis—one-way ANOVA and multivariate regression. The issue scales serve as the dependent variables throughout the analysis, while the independent variable of concern combines Religious Right Status and Party I.D. Religious right Republicans are simply those who identify with the GOP as either independent leaning Republicans, weak Republicans, and strong Republicans. Weak Republicans are included due primarily to a desire to retain as many cases as possible, particularly in the South.

Results

Descriptive Findings

The search for possible rifts within the Republican Party begins with a simple examination of the partisan environment in the South and the Non-South. Table 3.1 shows that out of 4,489 respondents in the ANES surveys, 1,439 (or 32 percent) are from the South. As for the Non-South, 39 percent of the respondents consider themselves Republicans (including independent-leaning Republicans, weak Republicans, and strong Republicans). Of these 1,181 Republicans, 25 percent (or 296) have been classified as religious right Republicans. There are differences between the South and the Non-South. Of the South’s 1,439 respondents, 36 percent (or 515) are Republicans. Of these 515 Republicans, 39 percent are classified as religious right Republicans. So, even though Republicans make up a slightly higher percentage of all respondents in the Non-South, as
Table 3.1: Descriptive Comparisons of the South and Non-South

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits:</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Non-South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>1,439</td>
<td>3,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(32% of all)</td>
<td>(68% of all)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>1,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(36% of all South)</td>
<td>(39% of all Non-South)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Right</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>(39% of GOP South)</td>
<td>(25% of GOP Non-South)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a percentage, religious right Republicans are a much larger presence in the GOP in the South. If divisions between the Christian right and the rest of the GOP, those divisions may be much more damaging to the GOP in the South because of the relative strength of the religious right in the region.

There are differences, then, in the composition of the Republican Party in the South and the Non-South. The real question, however, is do these differences surface in the political attitudes that Republicans hold? The answer to this question begins with a simple assessment of partisan coalitions and the mean positions they hold on three policy dimensions—social policy, civil rights or race policy, and the propriety of government intervention. While the entire analysis has been framed as an examination of the Republican Party, for the sake of comparison, the Democratic Party (white Democrats and non-white Democrats) and Independents are also examined.

a. Social Policy

The possibility of a GOP division along a social policy dimension has been bandied about, but a formal search for such a chasm has not been conducted until now. In Figure 3.1, the party coalition mean scores on the social dimension are reported by region. The means reveal the likelihood of a social dimension rift within the Republican Party. Religious right Republicans are significantly more conservative on social issues than their fellow Republicans. This distinction holds both inside and outside the South. There are, however, some significant differences between the regions. On the whole, southerners seem to be more socially conservative than the rest of the country, particularly within the Democratic Party and among Independents. Non-white Democrats in the South are more conservative socially than all other partisan identifiers.
except conservative Christians. In terms of social policy, religious right Republicans have more in common with non-white Democrats in the South than they do with their fellow party members. If antagonism exists between African-Americans and conservative Christian Republicans, it appears that the roots of such antagonism are to be found somewhere besides the social policy realm.

ANOVA was conducted to verify the differences in means between these party coalitions. Tukey’s tests were also used to identify the presence of homogeneous subsets within the South and the rest of the nation. The results confirm the earlier suspicions. For non-southerners, only two identifiable subsets emerge. There are no significant differences between non-white Democrats, white Democrats, Independents and traditional Republicans. These groups are all significantly different and less conservative than religious right Republicans. There are similarities between the South and the rest of the nation, but also some differences. Mainline Republicans find themselves most closely aligned with white Democrats and Independents. Non-white Democrats are significantly more conservative than these other groups, but they are significantly less conservative than religious right Republicans.¹⁴ The South is distinctive, then, in that religious right Republicans have more in common on the social dimension with non-white Democrats than with their fellow party members. While these differences seem significant, only multivariate analysis can determine the true nature of these rifts.

b. Government Intervention

In general, the South was more conservative than the rest of the nation when abortion and school prayer were considered. The same does not necessarily hold true when
Figure 3.1: Party Coalitions--Social Dimension

All significance levels reported in relation to Tukey’s test are at or below the .05 level.
government intervention is concerned. The most striking feature of Figure 3.2 is the almost identical distribution of attitudes across regional lines. In both the South and the non-South, non-white Democrats are much more appreciative of government intervention than other party factions, and in each they appear to be more liberal than white Democrats. In the non-South, Independents are more conservative on this dimension than all Democrats, while in the South, Independents are slightly less conservative than white Democrats. As for the Republicans, the evidence of a fracture along this policy dimension is non-existent. Religious right Republicans are slightly more conservative than other Republicans in the non-South, while in the South they are not as conservative (or not as opposed to government intervention) on the government intervention dimension than their GOP counterparts.

Tukey’s tests again confirm the homogeneous subsets suspected. In the South, non-white Democrats are significantly more liberal than the other groups, while Independents and white Democrats together are more conservative than non-white Democrats and more liberal than religious right and other Republicans. The two factions of the GOP are not significantly different from one another in terms of government intervention. Only minor differences separate the South and the non-South. In the South, Independents are more conservative than both white and non-Democrats (who were different from one another) and significantly more liberal along this dimension than both religious right and other Republicans, who were statistically indistinguishable.
Figure 3.2: Party Coalitions--Government Intervention
Figure 3.3: Party Coalitions--Civil Rights Policy
c. Civil Rights Policy

The religious right and the Republican Party appear to be divided over social issues, but is that the extent of the GOP’s disunity? The data in Figure 3.3 suggest the religious right is more conservative than other Republicans on civil rights matters as well. This difference is more pronounced in the South, but it is also present elsewhere. Also, in each part of the country, non-white Democrats are much more liberal on civil rights policy, while white Democrats and Independents appear to hold similar views on this policy dimension.

Again, Tukey’s tests confirm the basic homogeneous subsets that would have been expected according to the means themselves. In the South, there are two distinct groups—non-white Democrats and religious right Republicans. Religious right Republicans are significantly more conservative than their fellow Republicans, while non-white Democrats are significantly more liberal than other Democrats. In the rest of the country, the results are almost identical to those in the South. Again, the religious right and non-white Democrats are on the ideological extremes on this issue dimension, while the other groups are statistically separate from them. While significant differences within the GOP seem clear, multivariate analysis must be used to determine the precise nature of such differences. Only after such efforts can we conclude that religious right status is a significant predictor of these issue stands even when ideology, education, socio-economic status, and other factors are controlled.

Multivariate Results

Regression analysis was used to determine the nature and extent of the schisms within the Republican Party. Multivariate analysis is necessary because of the possibility that
### Table 3.2: Regression Analysis of Social Dimension (Republicans Only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>South</th>
<th></th>
<th>Non-South</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partial Slope</td>
<td>t-value</td>
<td>Partial Slope</td>
<td>t-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(beta)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(beta)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>.785</td>
<td>6.05***</td>
<td>1.044</td>
<td>10.958***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right</td>
<td>(.277)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.332)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>.320</td>
<td>3.631***</td>
<td>.262</td>
<td>4.242***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.171)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.131)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-.182</td>
<td>-4.575***</td>
<td>-.130</td>
<td>-4.472***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-.215)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(-.138)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>-.0124</td>
<td>-.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.000)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(-.004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>-.378</td>
<td>-1.64</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>-.036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-.075)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(-.001)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>1.783*</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>2.197**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.084)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(.067)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>-.015</td>
<td>-.084</td>
<td>-.830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-.001)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(-.030)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>-.293</td>
<td>-1.762*</td>
<td>-.050</td>
<td>-.420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-.088)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(-.015)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>4.162</td>
<td>13.85***</td>
<td>3.663</td>
<td>14.476***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td></td>
<td>.156</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>416</td>
<td></td>
<td>947</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01

Table 3.3: Regression Analysis of Civil Rights Dimension (Republicans Only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables:</th>
<th>South</th>
<th>Non-South</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious Right</td>
<td>.262 (.139)</td>
<td>.183 (.088)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>.074 (.059)</td>
<td>.132 (.102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>.039 (.069)</td>
<td>-.026 (-.042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.133 (-.072)</td>
<td>-.041 (-.023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>-.004 (-.001)</td>
<td>.060 (.014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.011 (.196)</td>
<td>.002 (.032)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>.050 (.027)</td>
<td>-.105 (-.058)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>.339 (.150)</td>
<td>.168 (.076)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-.341 (-.150)</td>
<td>-.095 (-.058)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>1059</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01

these differences are really based on more traditional political factors, particularly ideology. The dependent variables throughout these regression analyses are identical to those used earlier in the previous bivariate analyses.

Table 3.2 reports the results of the regression analysis on the social dimension for Republican Party members only. The results confirm those seen in the earlier means tests. The rift within the GOP appears to be more than purely ideological. Religious right status is a significant predictor of social issue stands (at less than the .01 level) even when ideology, socio-economic status, gender, race, and age are controlled. Put differently, Republicans and religious right Republicans, regardless of region, differ on social issues. Religious right Republicans, obviously, are more conservative on social issues that other Republicans according to the partial slopes reported in Table 3.2. In fact, among Republicans, religious right status, and not ideology or any other control variable, is the single most important predictor of these views according to the \( \beta \) weights reported in Table 3.2. Though not as critical as religious right status, ideology is also an important predictor of these social views. As Republicans become more ideologically conservative in general, they become more conservative socially as well. Also, regardless of region, socio-economic status is negatively related to social conservatism. As Republicans become more educated and economically affluent, they become more socially liberal. Age, on the other hand, is positively related to social conservatism. Older Republicans are more conservative socially. While all these results hold regardless of the South/non-South distinction, there are some very minor regional differences. Religious right status appears to be a more important predictor in the non-South than in the South, while socio-economic status appears more crucial in the South.
On the whole, though, it is clear that religious right Republicans are significantly different than their fellow Republicans on social issues.

Table 3.3 shows the results from a similar regression analysis that was conducted on the civil rights policy dimension. The results of this analysis are not substantively different from the analysis of the social dimension. Though the model is not as robust, religious right status is significant and positive in both the South and the non-South. The presence of another possible rift within the Republican Party is detected, for religious right Republicans are significantly more conservative on racial policies than their fellow Republicans. While ideology was a significant predictor of policy stands on the social dimension, its significance here is limited to those outside the South. In fact, in the non-South, ideology is the most important predictor (among the substantive variables) of racial policy stands, whereas in the South, religious right status is supplanted not by ideology, but by age. Older southern Republicans are more conservative on racial policies. Outside the South, there is no significant relationship between age and racial policy preferences.

Conclusions

This analysis provides a much more complete account of the relationship between the religious right and Republican Party in the South and in the rest of the nation. Commentators have for years suspected a rift within the GOP, and it appears to exist, in part, precisely where it was suspected to exist. Religious right Republicans are significantly more conservative than other Republicans on social issues (particularly abortion and school prayer).
Somewhat surprisingly, however, another source of friction has been identified. Religious right Republicans are also more conservative than their comrades on civil rights policies. The theoretical source of this friction has not been properly explicated, but the evidence for its existence is strong, for at this point the matter cannot be simply dismissed as an ideological difference, for other factors are present. Only further analysis will explain the source, scope, and impact of this rift within the GOP.

Though the presence of these points of contention has been identified, an obvious question quickly follows this finding. Does it matter? There is little doubt that political parties have historically consisted of broad, and sometimes combative, concerns, and much of party leadership is the task of smoothing over these disagreements. The diagnosis of factions may not be a terminal diagnosis for the Republican Party. If, however, these disagreements spill into the electoral context, the party’s prognosis must be downgraded. The remainder of this dissertation is dedicated to finding the answer to this seemingly simple question. Can candidates who emphasize their commonalities—particularly their common view of government intervention—coax these disparate voices into harmony, or must candidates run piecemeal campaigns that appeal to different wings of the party at different times?

As noted in Chapter 1, the GOP has made great strides in the South, particularly in terms of getting Republican candidates elected to national offices. In some way, then, the Republican Party has been unified enough to dominate the region at the presidential level, and it is the majority party in the southern delegations to the U.S. House and Senate. The state and local levels, however, have been more of a struggle for the GOP. Perhaps this struggle is rooted in the policies emphasized in lower level elections. Social issues,
which appeal to the religious right, may not be emphasized in local campaigns, so the religious right is not properly mobilized. Maybe morality politics is more suited to the national stage than the smaller venues? Or, perhaps social issues are more prevalent—especially educational controversies like curricula and prayer in schools—at local levels, and while mobilizing religious rightists, and their enemies, these issues may depress other Republicans.

Answers to these questions might rest with the nature of the Christian right, as noted in Chapter 1 and again in Chapter 2. Religious rightists are politically active so that they might achieve policy changes that engineer the salvation of our society from what they perceive as its profligate evils. It stands to reason that the religious right is politically mobilized by appealing to these evils and the legislative solutions that address them. The problem is that these social evils may not be what mobilizes their fellow partisans. In fact, the most significant issue may be that these evils indirectly mobilize those with alternative views to the religious right, or those who think society is in need of salvation not from social evils, but from the religious rightists themselves. Seculars, independents, Democrats, and African-Americans may all be mobilized by rhetoric aimed at conservative Christians.

A re-examination of Figures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 might help penetrate the fog surrounding these matters. Social issues, theoretically, motivate the religious right. The religious right is not terribly different, however, from African-Americans on this dimension (see Figure 3.1). What mobilizes conservative Christians may not necessarily invigorate African-Americans to oppose them. However, when we examine Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3, we see that religious rightists are entirely different from African-
Americans on civil rights policy and notions of government intervention. The cautious Republican candidate can appeal to both wings of her party by arguing for smaller government, fewer social services, and lower taxes, for this is where policy agreement within the GOP appears possible. By making this appeal, though, she might mobilize those most in disagreement with her— independents and African-Americans. Therefore, by attempting to unite her party, she mobilizes her opponents. Moreover, if she tries the alternative, and mollifies the religious right by waxing about social issues, she may in fact depress the turnout or support of her fellow Republicans. Our fictional candidate has become a conductor with a faulty baton. No matter where she points, shrill notes will follow, and in political parlance, shrill notes equal lost votes.

This entire discussion operates on the assumption that partisans bring these particular issues into the voting booth. It is still possible, but perhaps unlikely, that Republicans who vehemently disagree with one another may still support Republican candidates regardless of that candidate’s association, or lack of association, with the religious right. This possibility is examined at the aggregate and individual levels in Chapters 4 and 5.
CHAPTER 4

RELIGIOUS RIGHT CANDIDATES AND THE ELECTORAL CONTEXT OF THE SOUTH

The evidence presented in Chapter 3 suggests the Republican Party is divided along two issue dimensions. The source of this division appears to be a tenuous relationship between the religious right and the rest of the GOP, for these Christian conservatives are significantly different than other Republicans on some social issues as well as civil rights policy. These differences may mean everything or nothing. The GOP may be confronting one of two realities. If religious rightists and other Republicans do not carry these differences into the voting both, then these factions may be merely academic, or at least the quibbles between the camps may be limited to policy debates between decision makers. If these issue factions turn into electoral differences, however, the Republican party may find itself both helplessly divided and unable to construct an electoral majority. A careful examination of the South’s electoral politics should determine which of these scenarios are closer to reality.

This inspection unfolds in two stages. First, I analyze statewide Republican campaigns throughout the South with the campaign as the unit of analysis. I hope to identify the aggregate level determinants of campaign success for Republican candidates in both primary and general elections. Ultimately, this analysis should indicate if candidates closely allied with the religious right pay an electoral price—through fewer votes—for maintaining this alliance. Second, in the next chapter I analyze general
election voting decisions at the individual level to see if Republican voters—of both the religious right and non-religious right variety—distinguish between religious right candidates and other Republicans by splitting their ballots or by abstention. In addition, I hope to see if other segments of the electorate (particularly African-American Democrats, white Democrats, and Independents) are more or less likely to split their tickets when religious right candidates represent the GOP. Together, these analyses should present a picture of either Republican electoral unity, which would suggest that these issue differences do not translate into electoral politics, or disunity, which would suggest that these issue differences turn into electoral rifts. In addition, I will be able to ascertain, to a degree, the Republican Party’s ability to broaden its base of support to include Independents and Democrats. Such conclusions should allow us to understand the present and future of the GOP in the South.

Introduction

In 1998, Gov. Fob James, Jr., (R-Alabama) found himself in a tough primary runoff in spite of his incumbent status. James gained media attention when he criticized both evolutionary theory and its place in the Alabama public school curriculum. In order to show his distaste for the theory, James walked like a monkey in front of the media. His runoff opponent, Winton Blount, quipped that Gov. James danced like a monkey, implying to reporters that James was unfit to be governor. When told of the remark, the Governor said, “If I dance like a monkey, then he must dance like a fat monkey” (Earle, 1998: 1689). James defeated Blount in the Republican runoff but was soundly beaten (58 percent-42 percent) in the general election.
U.S. Representative Tim Hutchinson, an Arkansas Republican, graduated from Bob Jones University, and later became the founder and principal of Benton County Christian School. As his resume suggests, during his short political career Hutchinson was closely identified with the Christian right. In 1996, Hutchinson was tabbed by the state Republican convention to run for an open U.S. Senate seat. Winston Bryant, Hutchinson’s Democratic opponent, had won seven consecutive statewide elections and was the sitting Attorney General at the time. In other words, Bryant’s electoral record made him a formidable opponent in a southern state in which the GOP had failed to make serious gains, particularly at the state level. In a surprise to most observers, Hutchinson defeated Bryant (53 percent–47 percent).

While interesting in and of themselves, these anecdotes present intriguing questions that have been relatively unstudied by political scientists. How successful are candidates who are affiliated with the Christian right? Are such candidates damaged by their religious right affiliation? Previous studies shed some light on possible explanations.

The Christian right and the Electoral Politics of the New South

Given the fundamental nature of elections in American politics, it is unsurprising that much of the literature that addresses the Christian right and the South has revolved around the movement’s impact on elections and partisan control (Bullock and Rozell, 1998; Rozell and Wilcox, 1997; Rozell and Wilcox, 1996; Rozell and Wilcox, 1995; Reichley, 1986). These analyses generally focus on specific elections, or examine only one state within the region rather then make electoral comparisons across time or empirically examine Christian right campaigns across the entire South. This shortcoming
prevents researchers from generalizing beyond a set of special circumstance and from understanding the Christian right’s precise role in the South’s electoral politics. In fact, only one study attempts to make such connections, and it examines U.S. House campaigns from 1978-1988, but not solely in the South (Green et al., 1993). This lack of scholarly inspection has left the above questions unanswered.

As noted, I hope to answer these questions by examining Republican candidates in statewide (U.S. Senate and gubernatorial) primary and general elections in the South from 1992 to 1998. One could argue that statewide elections constitute an unacceptably high level of analysis if the search is for electoral influence or success. For instance, it seems reasonable to assume that a faction’s electoral success is more likely to be found at lower level elections well before results are seen at the state level. State results may not be indicative, then, of the Christian right’s true electoral strength. While examining Republican gains in the South, Bullock (1988) also uses state elections as his unit of analysis. He offers three explanations for his choice, all of which are applicable here. First, Bullock argues that larger electoral districts are more likely to have heterogeneous populations, and when such populations are present, candidates can construct winning coalitions more easily. The Christian right, which is perceived as a cohesive and united political entity, may, like the Republican party before it, be able to exert political influence in large but heterogeneous constituencies. Second, the candidate pool is deeper in larger areas, so there should be more quality Christian right candidates in a state as opposed to a congressional district. The presence of higher quality candidates should translate into more primary and general election victories for the Christian right. Third, strong candidates are enticed by higher offices, so the allure of statewide office should
produce better candidates and better results for the Christian right. There are reasons to believe, then, that Christian right electoral success may be most prominent at the state level.

In Chapters 4 and 5, statewide elections include races for the US Senate and governorships. Political scientists have generally treated gubernatorial and senatorial races differently and very little research on other statewide elections exists. As a result, this literature review will extract relevant variables from the statewide electoral context. The literature can be broken into two broad categories: candidate/campaign characteristics and statewide/environmental characteristics.

Candidate/Campaign Characteristics

Scholars have isolated several candidate-specific factors that influence electoral outcomes. Mayhew (1974) argues that incumbency status, as augmented by Congress’s structure, empowers incumbents, who tower over electoral challengers due to their experience, name recognition, constituency services, and legislative success. In short, incumbents dominate modern American elections. Though Mayhew argues only for the electoral superiority of congressional incumbents, there is evidence that governors enjoy similar advantages (Niemi et al., 1995). Theoretically, it seems that these electoral advantages should also accrue to Christian right candidates, but there is also the possibility that religious rightists govern in such a manner that the incumbency advantage does not aid them as much. Perhaps the policies they advocate are too conservative—especially social policies—or perhaps they are less willing to compromise, so incumbency status may not be quite as beneficial for conservative Christians.
Given the power of incumbency, strategic politicians are more likely to seek higher office when no candidate will wield the incumbent’s weapons. Open seat contests are generally more competitive than contests that feature an incumbent, and open seat candidates are generally well ahead of those who challenge incumbents in terms of qualifications, name recognition, and financing. Open seat candidates, however, still trail incumbents in these categories (Jacobson, 1992). Abramowitz (1988; Abramowitz and Segal, 1992) shows that in open seat elections for U.S. Senate seats, the most important predictor of success is candidate experience (also see Lublin, 1994). (Gaddie and Bullock (2000) show similar findings for open seat elections in the U.S. House.)

Experience is potentially vital for Christian right candidates. Seasoned candidates are less likely to be labeled as “extremists” or “crackpots.” Charges of extremism directed toward political neophytes, however, are more likely to be effective. On the whole, religious right candidates become more experienced, they should have more electoral success.

Should we expect religious right candidates to do better or worse than other Republicans? Theoretically, the question is difficult to answer. As noted earlier, the religious right exists to move social mores in a more traditional direction. Christian conservatives comprise a large segment of the Republican Party, and they have the opportunity to nominate their candidates in primary elections. In areas of Christian conservative concentration, we would not expect religious right candidates to be punished but rewarded through votes. In other areas, however, where Christian conservatives are not as prevalent, we might expect the opposite to happen. To discern this relationship, we must control for the conservative Christian population within the electoral context.
General elections, however, are simpler theoretically. If religious right candidates are seen as truly advocating a return to traditional values, they may suffer at the hands of non-Republicans—especially independent voters—who may feel threatened or attacked by religious right candidates. I hypothesize, then, that religious right candidate status is negatively related to vote percentage in general elections.

Environmental/Statewide Characteristics

A candidate’s success cannot be entirely explained by his or her qualities, or by the specifics of the campaign. Environmental factors, on the other hand, impact all candidates. Specifically, southern states vary in terms of partisan, racial, and religious composition, and in the timing of elections. Each of these variables has electoral ramifications.

Abramowitz (1988; Abramowitz and Segal, 1992) and Hill and Leighley (1993) find that the partisan make-up within a state is an important variable in both senatorial and gubernatorial campaigns. In this case, as Republican Party strength increases, both Christian right and non-Christian right success rates should also increase. Partisan competition is certainly vital, but in the South, race has historically been more crucial. V.O. Key (1949) argues that the radical racism so prevalent in the South was most strident in the areas with the largest concentration of blacks. Therefore, Mississippi was virulently racist while Florida was not. Some commentators (Minor, 1998) see a similar racist strain in the Christian right, but there is no real evidence of that. Earlier evidence showed, however, how religious rightists at the mass level are much more conservative than even fellow Republicans on civil rights policy. This, when combined with the fact that African-Americans make up the Democratic Party’s most reliable southern
component, makes a negative relationship between African-American concentration and religious right campaign success possible at the aggregate level. In fact, there is some evidence of this relationship (Bullock and Smith, 2000). This runs counter, to an extent, to Key’s (1949) assertion that white conservatism was most prevalent in areas with a large African-American presence. If Key’s statements still hold, even post Civil Rights, we might expect Christian right candidates to do well in such settings.

While the size of the African-American community may be a key to Democratic strength, it seems that the size of the Christian right community may be vital for Republican strength, and by extension, the electoral hopes of Christian rightists themselves. While this hypothesis is clear, testing for it is difficult. Several studies (Green, 2000; Green et al., 1993; Guth and Green, 1986; Petersen and Mauss, 1976) operationalize the Christian right’s strength by identifying conservative Protestant denominations, or denominations that produce evangelicals and fundamentalists, who are thought to provide the Christian right with its pool of potential supporters. In fact, Green’s (2000) analysis also assumes the propriety of such a measure, and he notes a positive relationship between the size of the evangelical population and the number of religious right activists at the state level. Bradley et al. (1992) have estimated, through extensive surveys, church membership (including Jewish, Mormon, Protestant, Catholic, etc…) at the national, state, and county level throughout the United States. For example, Bradley et al. can estimate, as definitively as possible, the number of Southern Baptists within a state. All the denominations that are thought to be supportive of the Christian right can then be grouped together to form a measure of Christian right strength at the state level. This technique, which was employed in the above studies, assumes an
uncomfortable level of denominational homogeneity. But given our lack of alternatives, the measure gives us an adequate indicator of the size and relative strength of conservative religious denominations in an area, but it does, by definition, exclude potential religious right members in other denominations.

Finally, an election’s timing can dramatically impact electoral turnout and outcomes. Turnout is typically highest during presidential election years, and at its lowest when local elections alone are being contested (Hill and Leighley, 1993). Tompkins (1988) argues those odd-year elections, or those with no national component, make gubernatorial races distinct and subject to local, not national, forces. In reality, odd year elections may offer the Christian right a unique opportunity. Conventional wisdom suggests that the Christian right is well mobilized, and if factors, such as an odd year election, depress turnout, Christian right candidates may win a majority of a small electorate.

Operationalization of Variables

Data to test the above hypothesis come from a variety of sources. Every Republican gubernatorial or U.S. Senate candidate (for both primary and general elections) in the South between 1992 and 1998 is analyzed.¹ I used one dependent variable throughout the

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¹ Runoff elections were not analyzed, and neither were elections that were part of the jungle primary in Louisiana. General elections in Louisiana were included only if the all party primary yielded a general election contest between a Republican and a Democratic candidate. Two Louisiana general elections qualified under this standard. Landrieu vs. Jenkins for the open U.S. Senate seat in 1996, as well as the gubernatorial election between Foster and Fields in 1995. All other eligible campaigns were disqualified because of the uniqueness of the jungle primary. In addition, only one primary in the state of Virginia was analyzed because of the Virginia Republican Party’s use of the statewide convention to nominate its candidates. An exception occurred in 1996 when John Warner, the incumbent U.S. Senator, exercised his prerogative and demanded a
multivariate analyses that follow. I operationalized electoral outcomes as the candidates’ percentage of either the primary or general election vote. OLS regression was used to measure the impact of the independent variables on the above dependent variables.

The independent variables, as the above literature review suggests, are candidate, state, and campaign specific. The variables included the candidate’s religious right status and his or her electoral experience; the state’s racial and religious composition, as well as the GOP’s strength within the state; and finally, the election’s timing, the electoral field’s size, and the seat’s status (open or not). To begin, candidates are categorized dichotomously as either affiliated with the religious right or not.\(^2\) Candidates were characterized based on extensive secondary source research in *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. If *CQ*’s election coverage indicated that the candidate either received strong support from the religious conservatives/the Christian right, or was a favorite of conservative Christians, they were labeled a religious right candidate.

As indicated earlier, a candidate’s level of experience is an important predictor of electoral success. While this experience certainly includes incumbency status, it is not limited to incumbency, for candidates can be formidable when running from a variety of starting points. Some of these experiences are not easily quantified and candidates may

\(^2\) I considered the possibility of dividing candidates trichotomously by separating those who are part of the religious right, from those who are affiliated with the movement, from those Republicans who have relatively little to do with the movement. This categorization may be helpful in the future, but based on my research, I uncovered only one candidate who could unequivocally be labeled as part of the Christian right (Mike Huckabee from Arkansas), so the utility of this concept can only be explored with more cases and more candidates.
overcome a lack of electoral or political experience. For example, when George W. Bush (R) challenged incumbent Gov. Ann Richards (D) in Texas, his name recognition likely guaranteed a competitive race in spite of his meager personal political experience. This situation was the exception, however, and not the rule. In most cases, poorly qualified candidates run to the level of their experience.

I developed and used a seven-point ordinal scale of candidate experience. The scale is based on the size of the constituency the candidate represents, or has represented, and the relative prestige and suitability of the positions previously or currently held. Given this rationale, incumbents are clearly the most qualified and experienced of all candidates, and they were coded as “6.” Since statewide campaigns are analyzed, statewide elected officials appear to be the most qualified—in electoral terms—candidates besides incumbents, and they were coded as “5.” These candidates have already represented a statewide constituency and have already run in, and won, a statewide election. U.S. House members are coded as “4,” for they generally represent the next largest constituencies and they serve in prestigious and, particularly when they run for U.S. Senate seats, they hold an office that has prepared them for the actual duties they will perform when elected. Next, state representatives, state senators, mayors, and officials appointed to high profile state offices are deemed to be the next most qualified group of candidates, and they were all coded as “3.” While not neophytes, the next group of candidates is usually seen as ill prepared to run for statewide office. Some are local elected officials (like county commissioners or sheriffs), so they may have some electoral experience, while others are party leaders or officials (party chairmen—both state and local) who may be experienced at behind-the-scenes politics, but not experienced as
candidates. They are coded as “2.” Next, previous, but unsuccessful, candidates have obviously gained the experience of running for office, but they have not won any of these campaigns, so they cannot claim governing experience. They are coded as “1.” Neophytes are coded as “0,” and they have neither run for office, nor have they held a political position. While some of these candidates have done well, such as Guy Millner in Georgia, they must have tremendous resources to overcome their inexperience. Most of these candidates should face an uphill struggle. This scale is positively correlated to the candidate’s percentage of the vote. In general elections, the scale has a .45 correlation (where \( p \leq .01 \) with a two-tailed test) to vote totals, while in primary elections the correlation rises to .74 (where \( p \leq .01 \) level with a two-tailed test). The candidates’ level of experience was also gleaned from a review of *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Review*.

There were also several statewide variables factored into the analysis. As previously referred to, the size of a state’s minority population may impact vote totals, especially in general elections. Theoretically, it is unclear how this variable will impact religious right and other Republican candidates. It may be that large minority populations will moderate the state’s Republican Party, which may damage the chances of the conservative religious right candidates. Or it could be, as Key (1949) argued, that high concentrations of minorities bring out the most conservative elements of the white population, so Republicans, and religious right Republicans, may thrive in such environments. This measure is a combination of African-American and Hispanic population density compared to the state’s population, so the actual figures are the percentage of the state’s population that is either black or Hispanic. The figures are based on U.S. Census
projections in every southern state from 1992 to 1998. The population percentages range from 16.9 percent in Tennessee in 1992 to 42.0 percent in Texas in 1998. The average minority population in the South was 28 percent.

A state’s religious composition may also be related to Republican and religious right candidate success. The direction of this relationship is clearer in this instance. Religious right candidates and Republicans should fare better in states with large concentrations of religious conservatives. Measuring the number of religious conservatives within a state is difficult, however. As noted earlier, the only available method appears to be through denominational affiliation as estimated by Bradley et al. (1992). With this measure, the percentage of a state’s population affiliated with the religiously conservative denominations can be easily ascertained. Green et al. (1993) compiled a list of such denominations and I am replicating that list here.\(^3\) The figures were calculated based on

\(^3\) The denominations used included the Seventh Day Adventists, Assemblies of God, Southern Baptist Convention, Church of the Brethren, Church of God (TN), Church of God (IN), Church of God in Christ, Church of the Nazarene, Congregational Christian Church, Christian Reformed Church, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Presbyterian Church of America, Advent Christian Church, Christian Unity Baptist Association, Baptist General Conference of America, Seventh Day Baptist-General Conference, North America Baptist General Conference, Evangelical Free Church of America, Plymouth Brethren, Church of Christ (Holiness), U.S.A., Brethren in Christ, Evangelical Mission Covenant Church of America, Church of God, Religious Society of Friends (Con.), International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, Conservative Mennonite Conference, Conference of the Evangelical Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church, Open Bible Standard Churches, Wesleyan Methodist Church of America, Pentecostal Church of God in America, Pentecostal Holiness Church, Pilgrim Holiness Church, Missionary Church Association, Associate Presbyterian Church of N.A., Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Church of God of Prophecy, Old Order Amish Mennonite Church, Free Methodist Church of N.A., Lumber River Conference (Free Methodist Church), Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church, Moravian Church in America, Holiness Methodist Church, Reformed Episcopal Church, Mennonite Brethren Church of N.A., Bible Protestant Church, Brethren Church, Conservative Amish Mennonite Church, Old Order (Wisler) Mennonite Church, Brethren in Christ, Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the
Bradley et al.’s (1992) 1990 data. The values range from a low of 11 percent in Florida to a high of 32.9 percent in Alabama. The average was 23.1 percent.

It is possible that the racial and religious compositions will exercise an interactive influence on these campaigns. Republicans (of both stripes) should do best in areas that have high concentrations of religious conservatives and low populations of minorities. In essence, these are areas in which the GOP’s most potent faction is found in strength, while the Democrat’s most loyal voters are relatively weak. To capture this particular dynamic, I created a dichotomous variable. The variable is coded as “1” if both the religious conservative population is above average (or 23.1 percent) and the minority population is below average (28 percent). All other cases are coded as “0.”

Finally, the partisan disposition within a state should impact the vote totals won by partisan candidates. In this case, the GOP’s relative strength should be positively related to vote totals enjoyed by GOP candidates, particularly in general elections. I am using the partisan strength measure collected by Hood et al. (1999) in their analysis of Southern politics. Their partisan scale averaged the Republican vote for President (every four years), U.S. Senate (when applicable), and the U.S. House. They then took the average support for the previous four elections (even years) and averaged them with the current year to construct a moving average measure of partisan strength. So, the 1998 partisan strength scale would have taken that year’s GOP support and combined it with the average from the four previous elections. If this scale is used in this analysis, however, I would be using the vote totals from this election cycle (1998, for example) as both a Church of Christ.
dependent variable and as a part of an independent variable, so I would be predicting a specific election’s vote totals with a compilation of vote totals that would include that election. To avoid this problem, I lag the scale by one congressional election, so, for instance, in a 1998 election, the partisan strength variable would be determined by 1996’s vote totals. These values range from a low of 29.7 (Georgia’s moving average GOP vote in the 1992 elections) to 51.7 (Virginia’s support in 1996). The average score was 42.9.

Finally, the nature of the election may play an important role in vote totals. Most vitally, open seat elections provide challengers with their best opportunities to win seats (and votes), but this dynamic is captured, for the most part, in the candidate qualification variable, which includes incumbency status. In fact, open seat status was statistically significant in none of the multivariate analyses. Even at the bivariate level, open seat status was not significantly correlated with either general or primary election totals. As a result, I have dropped this variable from the remaining analyses. Nearly the same can be said for the timing of the election. Odd year elections and off year elections showed no unique or unusual dynamics and variables measuring these occurrences were not statistically significant in bivariate and multivariate analyses.

One campaign level variable remained strong throughout analyses, however, and it simply measures the number of candidates in the election. This variable becomes increasingly important in primary elections, where several candidates can divide the vote in such a way that candidates with a plurality can secure the nomination. People running in the election became candidates when they reached a threshold of 1 percent of the vote, and those below one percent were not factored into the analysis.
Figure 4.1: Religious Right Candidates and Qualifications
Findings

Of the 121 primary candidates analyzed, only 15 (or 12 percent) were closely affiliated with the religious right. Of the 47 general election candidates, only 10 (or 21 percent) were affiliated with the religious right. The small number of religious right candidates makes it virtually impossible to compare them to other Republicans in a meaningful way, but some findings, were clear and worth reporting.

As expected, religious right candidates who have experience tend to do much better than those who do not, particularly in primary elections. Though the number of cases is minuscule, in Figure 4.1 we see that the linear association between experience and vote totals is most clear in primary elections. In fact, with only 15 cases, there is a .40 correlation between the two variables, and the level of significance with a one-tailed test is .065. Two outliers also adversely effect this significance level, and they are easily explainable. Mike Huckabee, who was a candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1992, ran an almost unopposed primary campaign against a physician with no discernable political base. Huckabee, on the other hand, was the former head of the Arkansas Southern Baptist Convention, was a minister on television, and enjoyed a great deal of exposure. His 79 percent, in spite of his low qualification score (of 0), is due to special circumstances. Also, Guy Hunt, who enjoyed a good deal of religious conservative support in the Alabama gubernatorial primary in 1998, was a former governor but not the incumbent. His qualification score of 5 (because he was not the incumbent but did hold the office previously) is mitigated by the fact that only five years before Hunt was forced to resign the governor’s seat because of ethics and legal charges. His poor primary performance is also explainable. With these two outliers removed, the correlation
between the qualification and vote total variables rises to .79 and is significant at the .001 level with a one-tailed test. Other Republicans also display a relationship between qualifications and primary vote totals, and it is stronger. The bivariate correlation is .77 (which is significant beyond the .000 level with a one-tailed test).

The same pattern holds for general elections. For religious right candidates, there is a .46 correlation (which is significant at the .09 level with a one-tailed test) with only ten cases. So again, experienced religious right candidates do better than those who are inexperienced. The same also holds for other Republican candidates. The pattern here is clearer, likely due to the increased number of cases. There is a .47 correlation between the variables, and it is significant at the .002 level with a one-tailed test. Though multivariate analysis is necessary to confirm this finding, it seems that candidate quality is directly related to success for religious right candidates in the South. As noted earlier, this is probably vital because experienced candidates can more easily eschew the “extremist” label, which could be devastating in any campaign.

Other correlations also provide interesting glimpses of the relationships at work. First, there is a negative relationship between the existence of religious right candidates and the size of the minority population within a state, and this holds in both primary and general elections (as seen in Tables 4.1 and 4.2). So, as minority populations get larger, religious right candidates become less frequent. Religious right candidates are more likely to run for statewide nominations in areas of strength for Christian conservatives. This relationship is weaker for general elections, but only slightly, for it is still significant below the .10 level. At the bivariate level there is a negative relationship between religious right candidate status and vote totals, but only in general elections analyses. It
Table 4.1: Pearson’s Correlations—Primary Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Relig Right Candidate</th>
<th>Minority%</th>
<th>Party Strength</th>
<th>Cons Chr%</th>
<th>Vote%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>.09</td>
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<td>-.37***</td>
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<td>Cons Chr%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</table>

N=121

*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01
Table 4.2: Pearson’s Correlations—General Elections

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<th>Cons Chr%</th>
<th>Vote%</th>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote%</td>
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<tr>
<td>N=121</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01
seems that religious right candidates are not harmed within their own party because of their status, but they may be damaged in November. A twist to this finding, however, is that the Republican Party’s strength is negatively related to the presence of Christian conservatives. So, while Christian Conservatives may be able to get some candidates nominated, those who secure the nomination operate in an electoral environment in which their party can help them the least. Only a multivariate analysis of individual voting decisions can bear these findings out, and that will take place in the next chapter.

The bivariate correlations show one other interesting relationship that might be problematic for the Republican Party in the South. There is a persistent negative relationship between Republican Party strength and the number of conservative Christians within a state. This relationship was not hypothesized, and in some ways, it is counter-intuitive, for we would assume that the GOP would be strongest where its base is largest. This relationship seems to have two possible explanations. First, Christian conservatives may not be overwhelmingly Republican, so to expect a positive relationship may be improper. Second, their presence might mobilize opponents to the point that the conservative Christian influence is counteracted. Of the two possibilities, the evidence suggests the latter is more plausible. While the denominations that make up the conservative Christian scale are not entirely homogeneous, they are socially and theologically conservative, and while there may be some Democrats in these churches, it seems unlikely that they consistently vote Democratically. Other evidence (see Bullock and Smith, 2000 for an example) suggests that African-Americans are mobilized by the religious right’s (and by extension conservative Christians who may be in the religious
Table 4.3: OLS Regression Results—General and Primary Elections

Percentage of the Vote is the Dependent Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables:</th>
<th>Partial Slope (beta)</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Partial Slope (beta)</th>
<th>t-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Elections</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>General Elections</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR Candidate</td>
<td>-1.53</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>-6.63</td>
<td>-.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>9.85</td>
<td>11.06***</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority%</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>2.03**</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Strength</td>
<td>-.61</td>
<td>-1.84*</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cons Chr%</td>
<td>-.80</td>
<td>-1.99**</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chr/Minor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter</td>
<td>18.76</td>
<td>2.50**</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Cands</td>
<td>-7.01</td>
<td>-5.40***</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td></td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj R²</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td></td>
<td>.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.10, **p<.05, ***p<.01
right) presence within the electoral context. Regardless of which of these explanations is more accurate, the Republican Party is weaker by virtue of this relationship.

Multivariate analysis was conducted to draw firmer conclusions. The goal here is to determine which of the above variables remain significant when all are factored into the equation. Table 4.3 reports the results for both primary and general elections. The model is much stronger for primary elections, the adjusted $R^2$ is .63, and this may be due to the lack of variation in the dependent variable (vote percent) for general elections. One-half of the cases fell between 45 and 58 percent. Most critically, according to the findings, designation as a religious right candidate is negatively related to vote totals, but only in general elections. In fact, this designation appears to cost candidates nearly 7 percent when all other variables are held constant. As noted earlier, is seems that religious right status is not an electoral handicap in the primary election, but it is in the general. The real issue, though, is one of responsibility. If religious right candidates lose votes, then who is responsible for these losses? Do rank-and-file Republicans break ranks, ever so slightly, and damage religious right candidates, or, are other electoral groups (African-Americans, white Democrats, or Independents) less likely to crossover to the GOP when religious right Republicans are running? Only individual level research, which will take place in the next chapter, can definitively answer this question.

The qualifications scale, unsurprisingly, is the most potent variable in both models, but it is much more crucial in the primary elections model. For every one-point increase in the scale, candidates get nearly 10 percent more votes in primary elections, all things being equal, while it is worth about 2 percent per point in general elections. As for statewide demographics, they are only statistically significant predictors of vote totals in
primary elections. The size of the minority population is positively related to primary vote totals, while GOP and conservative Christian strength are negatively related to vote totals. These results are logical given the primary electoral context. As the minority population grows larger, the likelihood of a Republican victory declines, which probably decreases the quality and number of candidates as well. This results in more opportunities for fewer candidates (and poorer candidates) to secure votes. As party strength and the conservative Christian population increase, the possibility of victory increases. The likelihood of incumbency is higher, strategic politicians see real opportunities for victory, and the quality of candidates rises. There are, then, more candidates of better quality, so fewer votes are won by better candidates, which results in a negative relationship.

Conclusions.

The evidence shows some interesting relationships that bear directly on our primary question: what is the relationship between the Republican Party and religious rightists in the GOP in the South? We know of significant issue differences between the two camps, so the natural question of importance arises. These issues differences may be irrelevant if the party patches up its differences at the voting booth. On the other hand, if the party remains divided with its electoral politics, then the Republican Party may have a serious problem in becoming, and subsequently maintaining, majority status in the South.

The campaign/candidate level data show, first, that there are relatively few candidates who are very closely identified with the religious right. Given the relative prominence of this Republican faction, it has produced a small number of statewide candidates.
According to data noted in Chapter 2 (f.n. 5), about 30 percent of the South’s electorate in 1998 self-identified as part of the religious right. In comparison, only 15 percent of the campaigns (25 of 168) analyzed involved a religious right candidate.

Even if all other data point to a relatively harmonious relationship between the GOP and the religious right, the fact that these conservative Christians have not been able to capture office may itself drive a wedge between these Republicans. We must remember that the religious right exists, theoretically, to save society from a cultural and social drift, and the movement has become politicized so that it might accomplish these goals via public policy. If religious rightists are unable to elect their own to office, the movement may become frustrated with its party, thereby causing more division within the GOP.

Second, religious right candidates do as well in statewide primaries as other Republicans. These candidates’ qualifications play a large role in their success. Qualified candidates—those who are either incumbents or extremely well established challengers—do better than amateur religious rightists. Given this finding, the religious right may do better in the future when more qualified and experienced candidates inhabit the candidate pool. Only then, possibly, can the movement truly externalize its values by holding elected office.

Third, in general elections, this pattern changes. Religious right status is negatively related to vote totals. So, while religious right candidates may not pay for this alliance in the primaries, they pay in November. The real question, though, is who makes them pay? As noted before, Republicans could be more likely to split their tickets when a religious right Republicans are running, or it is non-Republican voters who are less likely to
crossover to the GOP when the party nominates conservative Christian candidates.

Again, only individual level data can answer these questions definitively.
CHAPTER 5

. . . WHO NEEDS ENEMIES

CENTRIFUGAL REPUBLICANS AND RELIGIOUS RIGHT PRAGMATISTS

The religious right and the Republican party have a complex relationship. There are issue differences between religious right Republicans and other Republicans, particularly on social and civil rights issue dimensions. At the aggregate level, it appears these issue differences may be carried into the electoral context, particularly in general elections. There is a negative relationship between vote totals and religious right candidate status, but with these data, it is difficult to infer if this negative relationship is due to strife among Republicans or if other voting groups (white Democrats, minority Democrats, or independents) punish religious right candidates. Individual level data are necessary to determine the extent to which Republicans and religious right Republicans select candidates based on that candidate’s affiliation with this religio-political movement. In order to understand these decisions, and to hypothesize about potential relationships, we must first understand the voting behavior of religious rightists and other southern Republicans. Only then can we begin to understand the potential for either group to cross party lines, which is the only meaningful measure of electoral punishment.

Religious Rightists in the Electoral Context

As noted in Chapter 2, much of the literature surrounding the religious right focuses on the movement’s most prominent sub-groups—evangelical Christians and
fundamentalist. With each socio-religious group, however, the trend appears to be identical, for both have become increasingly Republican. Smidt and Kellstedt (1992) argue that evangelicals realigned into the GOP in the 1980s, particularly during Ronald Reagan’s second term. This “republicanization” of evangelicalism was most pronounced in the South. In a later study, Green et al. (1998) make a similar argument about evangelicals in the South, though they note this republicanization in evangelical voting behavior is most pronounced among those with higher levels of religiosity. Hood and Morris (1985) conducted a study of college students, and they found that “high” fundamentalists, or those who are the most doctrinally orthodox, are significantly more likely to vote Republican at the presidential level, especially when they perceive a moral or religious affinity with the candidate. Rothenberg and Newport (1984) provide an opposing view, for the pair believe evangelicals’ ability to act as a cohesive voting bloc is inhibited due to high levels of political heterogeneity within the movement itself. The only cohesion they find revolves around moral and social issues rather than a comprehensive political agenda.

While evangelicals and fundamentalists have grown more Republican over the past quarter century, the religious right, which is arguably broader and more diverse than either evangelicalism or fundamentalism, has become the Republican party’s most constant ally within the electoral context. Very little research has probed the individual level voting behavior of religious rightists, but much has been said about voters and their reactions to religious right candidates. Johnson et al. (1990) performed a case study of a single U.S. House election in which one candidate was clearly identified with the religious right, arguing that such candidates draw support primarily from fundamentalist
Republicans and older Republicans. They imply, then, a negative relationship between religious right designation and performance. Rozell and Wilcox (1995a) draw a similar conclusion after careful study of the 1994 U.S. Senate contest between Chuck Robb (D) and Oliver North (R) in Virginia. They think North’s electoral opportunity was dampened because of the general perception that he was not only supported by the religious right, but was a movement activist.

Green (2000) offers the most comprehensive analysis and summary of the religious right in the contemporary political context, and his analysis deserves careful consideration. An energized and organized core of activists chiefly aids the religious right. These agitators are middle class, though they have the resources required for political potency. Their effectiveness is blunted by several weaknesses, which may, or may not, be tractable. The “religious” component of the movement is theologically exclusive, so many of the movement’s most capable leaders are damaged by their refusal to traverse theological divisions in search of common political agendas. This quest for theological purity seeps into the movement’s core and can be corrosive. The religious right is itself divided between purists and pragmatists. 

Purists seem to apply their theological particularism to politics, and they cannot stomach the dish most common to politics—compromise. Purists want to vote for candidates who strongly represent the religious right. Though Green (2000) does not say so explicitly, the implication is that purists might exercise alternatives when their electoral demands are not satisfied. These alternatives could range from not voting to voting for a candidate besides the Republican nominee. 

Pragmatists understand the need for political compromise and they seek to forge political coalitions so that electoral victory might be attained. Policy change now
becomes possible. Pragmatists, Green (2000) would probably agree, are more likely to engage in political consolidation so that they might win elections and retain the possibility of policy change, while purists may be more inclined to be confrontational, which brings attention to the movement’s political agenda, but risks electoral defeat. Green (2000) asserts that the religious right has become more pragmatic during the 1990s, but due to President Clinton’s impeachment proceedings, and the fervor with which most religious rightists favored Clinton’s removal, Green discerned an increasing level of confrontational politics within the movement.

Green’s (2000) framework must be meshed with the theoretical constructions we examined in Chapters 2 & 3. Most theoretical examinations that assess the religious right (Fogel, 2000; Oldfield, 1996; Fowler, 1988) argue that the movement is reactionary, and that its primary motivation is to move society toward traditional mores or “family values.” This social movement has become a political enterprise that is closely linked to the Republican Party. Given this relationship, we should be able to use Green’s (2000) framework to generate hypotheses at both the aggregate and individual level.

**Expectations**

Pragmatic religious rightists are satisfied by access, so they should aid the Republican party’s efforts to secure elected offices regardless of the kind—religious right or non-religious right—of candidate. Electoral success, theoretically, would produce at least a modicum of access, which would ensure that a sympathetic ear would hear of the possibility of social change through public policy. So, when confronting the voting calculus pragmatists would, first, vote. At the aggregate level, we would expect a
pragmatic religious right to display relatively constant levels of turnout in spite of the
presence, or absence, of religious right candidates. At the individual level, this mindset
would translate into electoral support, via the vote, for Republican candidates regardless
of whether those Republicans publicly espouse or endorse the religious right’s views. If
the religious right, either as a movement or at the individual level, has advanced to a
pragmatic stage, we would be unable to reject the null hypothesis that there is no
relationship between religious right self-identification and support (in the form of voting
decisions) for the Republican Party. So in this case, the absence of a confirmed
relationship may tell us as much as the probabilistic presence of a relationship.

Purists would likely behave differently. Purists would demand some level of
descriptive and substantive representation whenever possible. Purists want immediate
attention paid to their political agendas and they are willing to practice confrontational
politics even if the tactic jeopardizes political campaigns. The purist’s mindset would
also shape political behavior at the aggregate and individual levels. First, if the religious
right as a movement were generally purist, then we would expect religious right turnout
to decrease when no religious right candidate is running. Second, at the individual level
we would expect to see some variation in religious rightists’ voting decisions when
religious right candidates are present as compared to when they are absent. In general, if
the purist’s orientation were a factor within the voting calculus, then the voter’s religious
right status would be positively related to a vote decision for a religious right candidate.
The converse would also be true, however, so if evidence for this relationship is found,
then we could conclude that religious rightists are less likely to vote for non-religious
right candidates. This possibility seems unlikely given the ideological and issue distance
that separates religious right voters from alternative (or non-Republican) candidates, but it is still a possibility that deserves examination.

While some literature addresses the religious right as an electoral entity within the GOP, the GOP’s response to religious right candidates has not been thoroughly examined. Republicans can have two possible reactions to the religious right and its candidates. A centrifugal Republican party might shun religious right activists and candidates either due to ideological distance or a distaste for morality politics. Republicans might show their displeasure through lower turnout or by voting for other candidates when religious right candidates represent the party. Centrifugal Republicans may be particularly prevalent in the South given the presence of palatable Democratic alternatives. John Breaux, Zell Miller, and Fritz Hollings are examples of Democratic candidates who are conservative enough to lure centrifugal Republicans who do not relish the opportunity to vote for religious right candidates. We would expect, then, to see some variation in turnout and/or support for religious right candidates as compared to support for other Republican candidates if southern Republicans are centrifugal by nature.

Centripetal Republicans, on the other hand, would embrace the religious right and its candidates, and they would do so for the same reasons that pragmatic religious rightists embrace the Republican Party. Centripetal Republicans are concerned more with their party’s electoral success than with the particulars of every policy stand. A more powerful GOP translates into more policies with which they agree, so if the Republicans in the South were primarily centripetal, then we would expect no significant variation in turnout or voting behavior when religious right candidates are representing the party.
Two formal hypotheses should be sufficient to test for the above possibilities.

H$_1$: There is a positive relationship between religious right status and support for religious right candidates.

If religious rightists do distinguish between religious right candidates and other Republicans, then that would indicate that religious rightists tend to behave with a certain level of “purism.” If the null hypothesis, that there is no relationship between religious right status and support for religious right candidates cannot be rejected, that would be evidence for some level of pragmatism within the movement.

H$_2$: There is a positive relationship between non-religious right Republican status and support for Republican candidates.

Evidence for H$_2$ would indicate a centrifugal Republican party within the South, or one that varies in its support for Republican candidates. This variance would be primarily explained by the presence of a religious right candidate. The inability to reject the null hypothesis (there is no relationship between non-religious right Republican status and support for Republican candidates) would be evidence of a centripetal GOP, or one that embraces Republican candidates in spite of their public affiliation with Christian conservatives.

**Data and Methods**

Data to test the above hypotheses came from the Voter News Service’s general election exit polls from 1996 and 1998 (see Voter News Service, 1999 and 1997 for a
The VNS data have some limitations. First, the statewide exit polls have but a sparse battery of attitudinal questions. This forces us to omit some variables thought to be key predictors of voting behavior—such as candidate characteristics and the voter’s issue stands. Second, the VNS often relies on overly simplistic categorizations of the variables on which they do collect data. The VNS uses three point scales of both partisan identification and ideology, which does not allow us to investigate, for example, the possibly subtle differences between weak partisan identifiers and strong partisans.

The data are preferred in this instance for several reasons. First, and most importantly, these VNS surveys offer us a facially valid measure of religious right status at the individual level, for respondents are able to self-identify as members of the religious right. Neither the ANES, the General Social Survey, nor other major data collections offer this option, so any measure of religious right status that is derived from these data sets is, by definition, indirect. Second, the VNS surveys are administered to

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1 Due to the analysis in previous chapters, the VNS surveys from 1994 and 1992 were also considered but were discarded. The 1992 VNS surveys did not allow respondents to self-identify as members of the Religious right (while the 1994, 1996, and 1998 versions did). The 1994 exit polls were not used because the Religious right identification question was not consistently applied. In 1994, nine of the eleven southern states held statewide elections that were suitable for analysis. Of these nine, however, no religious right question was asked in Arkansas, and it was asked of only a fraction of the respondents in both Tennessee and Florida. In Mississippi, no exit poll was conducted, so only five of the nine states had usable data from that cycle. Exacerbating this problem was a maddeningly inconsistent method of variable coding and data placement within the usable VNS data files, so the researcher could not be certain the data purported to be present in certain locations was actually the data referenced in the survey codebook. Given these constraints, the researcher thought it best to forego analysis 1994 election cycle.

2 There is, of course, the possibility that a self-identification measure results in a significant under or overestimation of actual group membership. For instance, some might be repelled by what they perceive as the label’s pejorative nature even though they, all things being equal, should designate themselves as members. The opposite may also
actual voters, so there is little concern that those given the survey may not have voted.

Third, the VNS conducts fairly exhaustive surveys at both the state and national levels, so even when the data are partitioned based on election type, partisan affiliation, or religious right/non-religious right status, there are ample cases with which to conduct statistical analysis.

While the VNS does conduct both national and state exit polls, I pooled the state polls to conduct the following analysis rather than relying solely on the national exit polls. This decision was born out of necessity alone, for the national polls, in spite of their large size nationally, often polled relatively few respondents (between 100-300) in each state in each election. When aggregated, the national totals are impressive, but when the data are partitioned, the number of cases becomes a serious problem. For example, if the state of Arkansas has 300 respondents in a national poll, perhaps only 35 percent of those respondents self-identify as Republicans. Of these 100 or so respondents, perhaps only 35 percent would self-identify as members of the religious right. If about 35 religious right Republicans are found in each of the seven or eight southern states holding statewide elections in a given cycle, we may have about 250 total religious right Republicans in the entire South in a given cycle. Of these seven or eight states, perhaps only two or three involve a religious right Republican candidate, so my analysis of how religious rightists behave in relationship to religious right Republican candidates may hinge on as few as 100 respondents. When compared to the relative size of the state happen, for some might embrace the label while knowing very little about it, thereby inflating estimates of group membership. Regardless of which these instances may or may not have occurred in the VNS surveys, I think we can learn more from a mildly flawed measure of self-identification than we can from indirect measures of group
polls, where a minimum of 900 respondents exist in every state poll, the national VNS poll had to be discarded even though its attitudinal and behavioral items were far superior to those found in the state polls.³

**Variable Operationalization**

As noted above, respondents to the VNS surveys are allowed to self-identify as members of the religious right. Those who claimed to be part of the movement were coded as “1,” and those who did not were coded as “0.” Religious Right candidates were also coded dichotomously. I categorized the candidates here just as I did in Chapter 4. Candidates were characterized based on extensive secondary source research in *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. If CQ’s election coverage indicated that the candidate either received strong support from the religious conservatives/the Christian right, or was a favorite of conservative Christians, he or she was labeled as a religious right candidate. Since VNS’s statewide polls generally ask only about statewide races, only U.S. Senate and gubernatorial candidates (and votes) are analyzed.

The dependent variables throughout this analysis are voting decisions made at the individual level. All Republican vote decisions were coded as “1,” while Democratic votes were coded as “0.” Unless otherwise noted, respondents who voted for third party candidates were not included in the analysis. According to the VNS surveys, 0.6 percent of all Republican voters selected a third party candidate in U.S. Senate campaigns, while

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³ The decision to use state polls also, as implied in the previous paragraph, limited the number and type of statistical and substantive control variables at my disposal throughout the following analysis. I was forced to rely on items asked in all the state polls in both 1996 and 1998. This, more than any other reason, explains the relatively skeletal nature of the following multivariate analyses.
0.3 percent of Republican gubernatorial voters chose third party or other candidates in gubernatorial campaigns.

Throughout the analysis respondents are partitioned based upon their partisan affiliation. The VNS allows respondents to identify themselves as partisans, but not as weak partisans or independent leaning partisans. I categorized partisans as Democrats, Republicans, or Independents. All others were eliminated from the analysis. About 3 percent of all respondents claimed third party status, while nearly 7 percent refused or failed to select a partisan affiliation.

The above variables function as key independent or dependent variables throughout the following analysis. Other variables are used as controls so that rival explanations can be eliminated. In other words, there are several factors other than religious right status that may explain voting preferences. For example, voters’ perceptions of candidates’ qualities can influence voting behavior. VNS surveys, however, do not contain exhaustive batteries of candidate characteristics items. We do not know, in other words, what the respondents think of the U.S. Senate candidate’s trustworthiness, honesty, or intelligence. We can measure the candidates’ levels of experience, however. In the absence of any other indicator of how voters might perceive the candidates, this is the best proxy measure available. Experience levels are coded in precisely the same fashion as they were in Chapter 4.

I developed a seven-point ordinal scale of candidate experience. The scale is based on the size of the constituency the candidate represents, or has represented, and the relative prestige and suitability of the positions previously or currently held. Given this rationale, incumbents are clearly the most qualified and experienced of all candidates,
and they were coded as “6.” Since statewide campaigns are analyzed, statewide elected officials appear to be the most qualified—in electoral terms—candidates besides incumbents, and they were coded as “5.” These candidates have already represented a statewide constituency and have already run in, and won, a statewide election. U.S. House members are coded as “4,” for they generally represent the next largest constituencies and they serve in prestigious and, particularly when they run for U.S. Senate seats, they hold an office that has prepared them for the actual duties they will perform when elected. Next, state representatives, state senators, mayors, and officials appointed to high profile state offices are deemed to be the next most qualified group of candidates, and they were all coded as “3.” While not neophytes, the next group of candidates is usually seen as ill prepared to run for statewide office. Some are local elected officials (like county commissioners or sheriffs), so they may have some electoral experience, while others are party leaders or officials (party chairmen—both state and local) who may be experienced at behind-the-scenes politics, but not experienced as candidates. They are coded as “2.” Next, previous candidates have obviously gained the experience of running for office, but they have not won any of these campaigns, so they cannot claim governing experience. They are coded as “1.” Neophytes are coded as “0,” and they have neither run for office, nor have they held a political position. The candidates’ level of experience was also gleaned from a review of Congressional Quarterly Weekly Review.

To capture some of the campaign’s dynamics, I computed a relative scale of candidate experience by subtracting the Democratic candidate’s qualifications (or experience) from the Republican candidate’s qualifications [Rq-Dq]. This allows us to
measure how voters might perceive the candidate in relation to his or her opponent. Positive scores reflect a Republican advantage in the race, while negative numbers reflect a Democratic advantage on this measure.

Ideology may also explain the differences in voting behavior when religious rightists and other Republicans are compared. Though five-point scales are generally used, the VNS relies on a three-point scale. Liberals were coded as “1,” moderates as “2,” and conservatives as “3.” We might assume a positive relationship between ideology and support for Republican candidates of all types. Most importantly, ideology allows me to rule out some potentially spurious relationships. After all, it may be that conservative Republicans support the more conservative religious right candidates in spite of their relationship with the religious right. Controlling for ideology allows me to determine that religious right self-identification has an independent effect on voting decisions.

Socioeconomic status should also be controlled in the analysis. The VNS surveys unevenly ask about respondents’ education levels, though they always measure income levels. Income is measured at the ordinal level with “1” as under $15,000, “2” as between $15,000 and $30,000, “3” as between $30,000 and $50,000, “4” as between $50,000 and $75,000, “5” as between $75,000 and $100,000, and “6” as $100,000 and up. Respondents were also asked to comment on changes in their personal financial situations. These responses were coded as “1,” their financial situation is worse, “2,” their situation is about the same, and “3,” their situation is better than before. Though unstudied, I expect a negative relationship between income (and financial situation in general) and support for religious right candidates, who may be more concerned with
social issues than with traditional Republican issues like taxes and the size of
government.

The remaining variables are demographic measures. Gender was coded as “2” for
females and “1” for males. Race was also dichotomized with all whites coded as “1” and
all others coded as “0.” Given the similar social issue stands of African-Americans and
religious rightists, as shown in Chapter 3, I expect a negative relationship between race—
as it is coded here—and support for religious right candidates. Finally, age was also
measured in an ordinal fashion. The variable was coded so that “1” is between 18 and 24
years old, “2” was 25 to 29, “3” was between 30 and 39, “4” was between 40 and 44, “5”
was between 45 and 49, “6” was between 50 and 59, “7” between 60 and 64, and finally,
respondents 65 or over chose “8.” As noted in Chapter 1, Green et al. (1998) found that
older evangelicals were less Republican than their younger counterparts. This could spill
into this analysis by manifesting itself as a negative relationship between age and
religious right candidate support. This tendency could be mitigated by the generally
increased conservatism with age.

Methods

Logistic regression was used to estimate the coefficients in the multivariate analyses.
This technique is appropriate due to the presence of a dichotomous dependent variable.
As noted earlier, vote decisions at the individual level comprise the dependent variables
throughout the analysis. Finally, the weight variable supplied by VNS was used to adjust
the statistical samples so that they more accurately reflect demographic parameters.

4 Hispanics make up sizable minority populations in Texas and Florida, and given their
historical Roman Catholicism, it is possible they too might display some amount of
Findings

Bivariate Results

Table 5.1 reports gubernatorial voting patterns for partisan groups throughout the South. The left column refers to the type of Republican candidate present in the race. REPUB candidates are those not affiliated with the religious right, while R R REPUB refers to religious right Republican candidates. In Table 5.1 we have the two-party vote totals for five partisan groups, as well as the percentage shift in religious right candidate support, which is simply the increase or decrease in the Republican vote when religious right Republicans are compared to their counterparts. Positive RR Shifts mean religious right candidates actually outperformed other Republicans, while negative percentages imply some slippage for religious right candidates among that particular voting group.

Table 5.1 is very interesting because of the damage inflicted on religious right candidates by non-religious right Republicans. Support for religious right Republicans dropped 17 percent among Republicans when compared to support for traditional Republican candidates. While religious right gubernatorial candidates suffered some slippage in every partisan group, this drop is by far the largest. The general pattern is that religious right Republican gubernatorial candidates do worse than other Republicans, which confirms the findings already noted in Chapter 4. Table 5.2 examines U.S. Senate general election campaigns in the same fashion, but with very different results. Religious right Republican Senate candidates do slightly better than other Republicans among white Democrats, Independents, and rank-and-file Republicans. They do worse among religious rightists and African-Americans, but only slightly. The safe description of sympathy with religious right candidates.
Table 5.1: Vote Choices of Selected Groups in Southern Gubernatorial General Elections, 1996 & 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minority Democrats</th>
<th>White Democrats</th>
<th>Independents</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Rel. Right Republicans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPUB</td>
<td>658</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(88%)</td>
<td>(12%)</td>
<td>(72%)</td>
<td>(28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R R REPUB</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(93%)</td>
<td>(7%)</td>
<td>(76%)</td>
<td>(24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% RR Shift</td>
<td>-5%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.2: Vote Choices of Selected Groups in Southern U.S. Senate General Elections, 1996 and 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minority Democrats</th>
<th>White Democrats</th>
<th>Independents</th>
<th>Republicans</th>
<th>Rel. Right Republicans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPUB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2421</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>2544</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>1392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(92%)</td>
<td>(8%)</td>
<td>(75%)</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
<td>(45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R R REPUB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>431</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(95%)</td>
<td>(5%)</td>
<td>(71%)</td>
<td>(29%)</td>
<td>(41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% RR Shift</td>
<td>-3%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 5.2 is that there are no significant differences between the two kinds of Republican Senate candidates, at least in this phase of the bivariate analysis. I can draw no firm conclusions from the bivariate data reported in Tables 5.1 and 5.2, though it does suggest that partisan coalitions treat religious right gubernatorial candidates differently than they treat other Republican gubernatorial candidates. Multivariate analysis is needed to confirm this finding and to further explore the possibilities among U.S. Senate candidates.

**Multivariate Results**

Table 5.3 reports a logistic regression analysis with the individual voting decisions of Republicans serving as the dependent variable. In this analysis of U.S. Senate general elections no religious right candidates are present. While the Pseudo-$R^2$ statistic is not impressive (.10), the model Chi-Square (466.024) is statistically significant, so some variance in the dependent variable is explained by these independent variables. Even when no religious right candidate was present, religious right Republicans are more likely to vote for Republican candidates when compared to other Republicans. This statistically significant result occurs even when ideology and other control variables are in place. The impact of the religious right variable is not as large, however, as that of ideology. According to a tabulation of expected probabilities, religious right Republicans are about 7 percent more likely (than other Republicans) to vote GOP in southern U.S. Senate races where no religious right candidate is present when all other variables are held at their mean levels. Conservatives, however, were 9 percent more likely to vote Republican in these same races than are moderates (also when all other variables are held constant at
Table 5.3: Logistic Regression Analysis of Support for Republican Candidates In Southern U.S. Senate Campaigns, 1996 and 1998

**No Religious Right Republican Candidates Present**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B (s.e.)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Exp (B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious Right</td>
<td>.84 (.11)</td>
<td>55.69</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>.96 (.08)</td>
<td>156.30</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Qualifications</td>
<td>.14 (.01)</td>
<td>130.97</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.09 (.04)</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>-.21 (.07)</td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>.80 (.17)</td>
<td>23.68</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.03 (.02)</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-.44 (.10)</td>
<td>21.61</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.03 (.31)</td>
<td>10.75</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>4325</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.4: Logistic Regression Analysis of Individual Voting Decisions In Southern U.S. Senate Campaigns, 1996 and 1998

**Only Religious Right Republican Candidate Present**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>s.e.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Exp (B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious Right</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>(.32)</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>(.23)</td>
<td>39.16</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Qualifications</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>(.23)</td>
<td>11.44</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>(.10)</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>-.76</td>
<td>(.22)</td>
<td>12.34</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>(.40)</td>
<td>28.47</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>8.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>(.28)</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-1.89</td>
<td>(.87)</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>681</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R$^2$</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
their mean levels). At the minimum, however, we see that in this instance there is a significant distinction in the political behavior of religious right and non-religious right Republicans. As for other control variables, income is positively related to support for Republican candidates, while the individual’s financial situation bears a negative sign. Even among Republicans, whites are more likely to support these Republican candidates, as are women. The relationship between age and support for Republican candidates is negative, but it is not statistically significant.

Table 5.4 replicates the above analysis but for U.S. Senate races that feature religious right Republican candidates. The Pseudo-$R^2$ is a bit stronger (.16), but still not impressive. The model Chi-Square (129.295) is significant beyond the .05 level, so once again, we know significantly more about the variance in the dependent variable due to the presence of the independent variable. The results are similar to those in Table 5.1, but they are still telling. Once again, religious right status is significant and it is positively related to voting decisions for religious right candidates. The converse, of course, is also true, so there is a significant negative relationship between traditional Republican status and voting decisions for religious right Republicans. This finding supports $H_1$, which hypothesized a positive relationship between religious right status and support for religious right candidates. The magnitude of the relationship is still, however, not as striking as the impact of ideology on the vote choice. With all other variables held at their mean levels, self-identified religious right Republicans are 5 percent more likely to vote for religious right U.S. Senate candidates than are other Republicans. Under the same conditions, however, conservatives are 11 percent more likely than moderates to vote for these candidates.
Of the control variables, only race, and financial situation are statistically significant. Once again, financial situation is negatively related to support for religious right status, which was expected. This could be due to the booming economy at the time, so the vote may simply be a reward for the Clinton Administration. Race is again positively related to religious right candidate support, so whites are more likely to support religious right Republicans than are non-whites.

Table 5.5 reports a similar analysis, but this time with southern gubernatorial candidates. No religious right candidates are under analysis in Table 5.5. The Pseudo $R^2$ is weak (.07), but the model Chi-Square (90.282) is significant. According to Table 5.5, when non-religious right gubernatorial candidates are present, there is not a statistically significant difference in how religious right and non-religious right Republicans make their voting decisions. Ideology is still significant and positively related to the vote choice, but the variable’s impact is not strong. Conservatives are 3 percent more likely than moderates to support these religious right gubernatorial candidates. The control variables are not statistically significant, except for financial situation, which is again negatively related to support for the Republican candidates.

More dramatic results emerge in Table 5.6, where religious right Republican gubernatorial candidates are considered. The model’s Pseudo-$R^2$ is still relatively modest (.11), but again the model Chi-Square (128.822) is statistically significant. According to this model, Republicans do treat these candidates differently. Religious right status is once again positively related to a vote choice for a religious right candidate, this time at the gubernatorial level. In fact, religious right Republicans are 9 percent more likely to vote for these religious right candidates than other Republicans (when all other variables
Table 5.5: Logistic Regression Analysis of Individual Voting Decisions In Southern Gubernatorial Campaigns, 1996 and 1998

**No Religious Right Republican Candidates Present**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>(s.e.)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Exp (B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious Right</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>(.27)</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>(.18)</td>
<td>30.34</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Qualifications</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>21.17</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>-.66</td>
<td>(.19)</td>
<td>12.72</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>(.36)</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>1.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>(.22)</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-.63</td>
<td>(.77)</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1160</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pseudo R^2: .07
Table 5.6: Logistic Regression Analysis of Individual Voting Decisions In Southern Gubernatorial Campaigns, 1996 and 1998

**Only Religious Right Republican Candidates Present**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B (s.e.)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Exp (B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious Right</td>
<td>.71 (.17)</td>
<td>17.29</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>1.05 (.13)</td>
<td>63.83</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Qualifications</td>
<td>.08 (.03)</td>
<td>10.86</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>-.07 (.06)</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>-.21 (.12)</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>.06 (.43)</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.05 (.04)</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>-.18 (.16)</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-.98 (.64)</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1082</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo $R^2$</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
are held at their mean level). Again, the converse is true, so non-religious right Republicans are 9 percent less likely to make the same decision. Ideology is again, though, a more potent motivator. Conservatives are, under the same conditions, 15 percent more likely than moderates to vote for religious right Republican gubernatorial candidates. None of the control variables are significant below the .05 level, though finance is close at .07. Again, the partial slope is negative.

Finally, Table 5.7 casts the above analyses in a slightly different light. Instead of the pure vote choice itself, this time the dependent variable consists of decisions to split one’s ticket in a multi-candidate setting. Specifically, a setting in which religious right candidates run within the same state that other Republicans are running.\(^5\) A choice to split a ticket (where one votes for the non-religious right Republican but either votes against the religious right Republican or abstains) was coded as “1,” while straight ticket voters were coded as “0.” Given VNS’s tendencies, we can only examine U.S. Senate and gubernatorial elections, so a multi-candidate setting, then, is one in which a gubernatorial and a U.S. Senate campaign are being waged, and, additionally, a race in which one of these Republican candidates are religious rightists. The independent variables are identical, save the omission of candidate qualifications, and again, only Republicans are analyzed. The Pseudo-\(R^2\) (.12) is again unimpressive, though the model Chi-Square (146.811) is, once again, significant beyond the .05 level. In this context, where there is cross pressure on both Republicans and religious right Republicans, we see

\(^5\) I also analyzed multi-candidate races that did not involve religious right candidates for the sake of comparison, but only one such case was found. In the end, fewer than 300 respondents had voted in such a contest, so the opportunities for statistical analysis were severely limited, so the analysis was not reported here.
### Table 5.7: Logistic Regression Analysis of Individual Voting Decisions In Southern Statewide Multi-Candidate Elections, 1996 and 1998

**Religious Right Republican Candidates Present**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B (s.e.)</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Exp (B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>-.42 (.15)</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Ideology</td>
<td>-.61 (.13)</td>
<td>22.71</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.12 (.05)</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>-.10 (.10)</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>-.86 (.36)</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.04 (.03)</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>.04 (.14)</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.60 (.59)</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>926</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R²</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that religious right status is significantly and negatively related to ticket splitting, even when ideology and other variables function as controls. In fact, according to tabulations, religious right Republicans are 9 percent less likely to split their tickets (when all other variables are held at their mean levels) in such settings than other Republicans, who are 9 percent more likely to do so. Conservatives, as compared to moderates, are 12 percent less likely to split their ticket to vote against religious right candidates, so again, ideology is more important than religious right status.

Conclusions

The evidence suggests that to some extent religious right Republicans and other Republicans behave differently within the electoral context. Religious right Republicans support their own candidates at higher levels when they are compared to other Republicans. Religious right Republicans, however, also support other Republicans at similar or higher rates than other Republicans do. So, what are we to conclude about the Republican Party’s factions within the electoral context?

The data suggest that the political behavior of religious rightists, if measured by votes, is essentially pragmatic. Though they might support their own candidates at higher rates when compared to other Republicans, religious rightists also support other Republicans at similar or higher levels as well. This relatively consistent support suggests that religious right Republicans may be entering, or have always been in, a phase of political maturity.\(^6\) In the future, these individuals may begin to understand that

\(^6\) Only longitudinal data could determine the extent to which this is a new phase or political phenomenon.
Republicans in office, even if they are not part of the religious right, guarantees some level of sympathy to the religious right’s ideals and social policies. On the whole, then, $H_1$ can be confirmed, and a positive relationship between religious right status and support for religious right candidates appears to exist.

Other Republicans, however, appear to be, on the whole, centrifugal, for at the individual level they make serious distinctions in their vote choices when religious right candidates are present. Republicans are significantly less likely to vote for religious right candidates when compared to religious rightists, and they are much more likely to split their tickets when religious right candidates were running in a multi-candidate setting.

There was little support in this analysis for $H_2$, which hypothesized a positive relationship between non-religious right Republican status and support for traditional Republican candidates. This lack of evidence, however, may in part be due to the individuals with whom these Republicans were compared. Republicans clearly support Republican candidates, but perhaps not as fervently as religious right Republicans support Republican candidates, so traditional Republicans suffer by comparison.

Given the presence of pragmatic religious rightists and centrifugal Republicans, what is the status of the GOP’s anchor, the New South? Only time will tell if these distinctive voting patterns will persist at the individual level, and, more importantly, time will determine the impact these patterns will have if they do persist. Most likely, Republican candidates will be forced to blur the lines that divide their party’s factions, but these lines will be sharper in some areas (where relatively high levels of evangelicals are present) and duller in others (where more traditional Republicans are present). These new candidates will likely be forced to manage, in Glaser’s (1996) terminology, “bi-religious”
coalitions. Skillful candidates will be able to mollify both wings of the party so that a united front might be presented during general elections. On the other hand, candidates who understand the potential size of the penalties they might incur if they affiliate with the religious right may simply refuse to do so in the future. For in the end, whose votes will they sacrifice if they avoid the religious right? None, for religious right Republicans will continue to support them, according to the evidence, so they might be able to position themselves to appeal to moderate Democrats in the general election contest.

Any shift in campaigns, however runs the risk of alienating what could be the core of the Southern GOP. At some level, religious right Republicans will require certain levels of descriptive representation, and a party that is unwilling to support the movement by supporting its candidates, may find its base uninspired and unmotivated, which could cost the GOP during close election cycles.
CHAPTER 6

BACK TO THE FUTURE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IN THE SOUTH

What is the relationship between the religious right and the Republican Party in the American South? If forced to characterize it according to our occasional musical metaphor, I would say the relationship is akin to a large church choir filled with many talented voices. The director points and cajoles, and the voices genuinely attempt to create something close to harmony, but it is painfully clear that at least two kinds of hymnals are dispersed throughout the choir. Try as they might, the two halves simply see the music in different ways.

The results throughout this analysis generally confirm this mangled metaphor, for there are at least two faces to the Republican Party in the region. People in the religious right are wholly different from other Republicans on many counts. In Chapter 2, the evidence suggests those in the religious right are separated from their surrounding culture. They are overwhelmingly Christian, and they are serious about their Christianity. They attend church more frequently than most Christians, and they are very conservative doctrinally. Most religious rightists claim a born-again experience, and they are more likely to see the church’s primary mission as one of conversion. Religious right identifiers are also connected with socio-religious movements like fundamentalism, and they are more likely to be southern than not. In many ways, then, religious rightists are separated from society in terms of their religious beliefs and behaviors. We should
expect religious rightists to find it difficult to seamlessly transition into political reality, because so much of their reality is “otherworldly” (Green et al., 1998).

Religious rightists have seemingly begun that transition into the Republican Party. They are now confronted with political realities, as are their fellow partisans, who must adjust to an influx of new members and ideas. Their political agenda is unabashedly “pro-family.” According to Ralph Reed (1996), conservative Christians are committed to the sanctity of life, the importance of the marriage-based two-parent family, reversing moral decay, stopping the cultural pollution of sexually explicit films and television programs directed at children, and religious freedom for all Americans...On those points we will not compromise” (1996: 194). Reed’s language is not that of political cooperation. He notes, though, that the movement is not “itching to start a war with Chamber of Commerce-style Republicans. While [conservative Christians and these Chamber of Commerce-style Republicans continue] to disagree over abortion, [the two sides] had generally agreed not to oppose the other constituency’s primary agenda items” (Reed, 1996: 245). The religious right apparently sees the GOP as its best hope to influence the culture, and according to Reed, it is trying hard to fit in.

The data above concur with Reed’s observations in some ways. There are real differences between Republicans, and they begin with differences on social outlooks. Religious rightists are much more conservative on social attitudes than their fellow Republicans. Representatives of the two groups largely agree on basic political attitudes toward government intervention, but they again part ways over civil rights attitudes. Real differences exist between these two kinds of Republicans, and the differences are not purely ideological or demographic.
The importance of these differences, however, can only be truly measured within the electoral context. Chapters 4 and 5 provide strong evidence that at both the aggregate and individual levels these differences persist. At the aggregate level, candidates affiliated with the religious right suffer in general elections because of this association. They are less successful than other Republicans in the South, and when they are successful, it is not in areas where the GOP is particularly strong or well equipped. Religious Right candidates do not suffer, though, in primary elections. They are capable of running well in primaries, particularly in multi-candidate settings where the candidate is qualified and where there are large numbers of conservative Christians in the electorate.

How do non-conservative Christians react to religious right candidates? Chapter 5 suggests that at times Republicans themselves are the religious right candidate’s worst enemies. In southern gubernatorial elections, rank-and-file Republicans were much less likely to vote for religious right Republican candidates than for other Republicans. In fact, non-religious right Republicans were also more likely to split their tickets and vote against religious right candidates when they were present in multi-candidate settings. To be fair, other voting groups were also a bit less likely to support religious right gubernatorial candidates, but not nearly to the extent of rank-and-file Republicans. If the religious right has a difficult time electing candidates it may have to point blame’s finger at its fellow partisans and nowhere else.

The relationship between the Republican party and the religious right is contentious in almost every way. The two groups have significant differences of opinion and they behave differently within the political context. What, then, does the future hold for these
non-kissing political cousins? Several options are possible. First, if the religious right fails to elect its candidates and/or fails to enact major legislative changes, there is a real possibility the movement will fracture or return to dormancy. In the mid-1920s, the fundamentalist-modernist debate was raging throughout much of America. The Scopes Trial of 1925 was a major defeat for fundamentalists, particularly in the arena of public relations. The most eloquent spokesman for the movement, William Jennings Bryan, died just days after the trial, and the religious conservatives suffered major defeats within several denominational battles. The cultural and political tide began to turn against the conservative Christians, and by all accounts, they simply faded from the political scene (Beale, 1986). This possibility exists, but it was the result of societal rejection. The Jazz Age was victorious and the conservative Christians could not recover. A similar seminal event, like the Scopes Trial, could once again render the religious right as an ineffective political force. Ineffectiveness does demand dormancy, however, for if a substantial portion of the religious right switched parties, then the movement’s focus on the GOP would cease, and religious rightists would lose a great deal of political clout.

Second, political defeat or repudiation could also fracture the religious right—even in the South. A different interpretation of the politics of the Jazz Age relies on political defeat, not societal rejection. The Prohibition Era began officially with the Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The amendment was the result of many political forces. The Women’s Christian Temperance Union, the Anti-Saloon League, and even the KKK were all politically responsible for the initiation and maintenance of prohibition. Christian fundamentalists were also active in this crusade. Politically, they were mostly southern and Democratic. The Democratic Party was also home to most of America’s
Roman Catholics at the time, who were “wet.” Evangelical Christians, or those who emphasize proper personal conduct, were usually “dry,” while Catholics and more liturgical Protestants (Lutherans and Episcopalians) thought alcohol was a matter of personal responsibility and a matter of religious conviction as opposed to religious mandate. While many of these liturgical Protestants were from the Midwest and were often Republican, the Catholics and pietistic Protestants were more Democratic (Pegram, 1998).

The dry forces dominated the issue within the Democratic Party until the 1924 Democratic National Convention. The 1924 convention was a marathon because of its intractability. Wet forces and dry delegates haggled for more than a week until a compromise candidate, John W. Davis, was selected on the 103rd ballot. The 1928 convention was an easy victory for the wet—and Catholic—New York Governor Al Smith. Smith’s religion and his preference for alcohol drew the ire of conservative Christians. Smith lost in a landslide to Herbert Hoover, but the Democratic Party turned a corner that the fundamentalists never broached. In 1932, Franklin Roosevelt was an avowed wet candidate who supported repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment (Polakoff, 1981). FDR’s victory was the final repudiation of that era’s religious right. A similar scenario could occur today. The Republican Party, not the Democrats or independents, will have to marginalize the religious right, and it could do so by nominating and electing an avowed pro-choice presidential candidate.

Finally, it is possible the religious right is now a permanent, or at least as permanent as political factions can be, fixture within the Republican Party. This possibility would be confirmed by a continued political ascendancy of the movement. Religious right
candidates would be considered seriously at all levels of government, including the presidency. Party chairs, congressional campaign committees, and other key strategic positions would be occasionally filled by religious rightists, and a mutual support would develop between Reed’s (1996) Chamber of Commerce-style Republicans and conservative Christian Republicans. Pro-family politics would be indistinguishable from Republican politics, just as a sympathy for civil rights is now nearly indistinguishable from Democratic Party politics. This possibility might seem like an improbability, but if it takes place, it will begin in the South, the country’s most conservative and most religious region. Though this could take place in the future, the above analyses indicate the future is not yet here.
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