



0. Untitled introduction

A. “Culture war” thesis: Pat Buchanan (1992 Republican National Convention)

1. Greatly exaggerated by media – geographically clear religious division
 - a. Red states (“Jesusland”) populated by faith-filled Republicans
 - (1) High plains/Rocky-Mountain states
 - (2) Southern states
 - b. Blue states (“United States of Canada”) populated by godless Democrats
 - (1) Northeastern states
 - (2) “Left” coast – Pacific states
 - (3) Northern Midwestern – Great Lakes states
2. More similarities than differences in religious attitudes & behaviors
 - a. Similar percentages very involved in church activities; majorities in both say that religion is very important in their lives
 - b. Similar percentages think churches should stay out of politics
3. Far more “Purple states”

I. Economic issues – strongest group differences – based heavily on economic & social status

- A. Measures (policy disputes dating back to the 1930s New Deal era):
1. Government guarantee jobs & standard of living Figure 7.1, p. 185
 2. Government fund more health & education services Figure 7.2, p. 186
- B. Racial & ethnic minorities (including Jews) followed by seculars were most supportive; Catholics in middle; mainline Protestants, LDS, and Evangelical Protestants on right
- C. Contemporary partisan alignments are still structured by New-Deal era economic-policy differences

II. Moral-cultural issues – influence of religion is strong but complex

- A. Perspectives Table 7.1, p. 188
1. Traditional/orthodox: moral permissiveness undermines the well-being of society and violates God’s laws
 2. Progressive/liberal: morals must adapt to changing societal circumstances
- B. Evidence: some salient divisions between and within religious groups but nothing of sufficient scope and magnitude to constitute a cultural war
- C. Women’s rights
1. Triggers = *Roe v. Wade* decision & ERA controversy
 2. Abstract measure of gender equality Figure 7.3, p. 190
 3. Concrete measure of gender equality Table 7.2, p. 191
 4. Pluralism in American politics – shifting issue coalitions

	Economic issues	Moral-cultural issues
Jews & seculars	liberal consensus	liberal on abortion conservative on affirmative action
Black Protestants	liberal consensus	divided on abortion liberal on gay job discrimination liberal on affirmative action conservative on gay marriage & adoption
Hispanic Protestants	liberal consensus	liberal on gay job discrimination conservative on abortion conservative on gay marriage & adoption
White mainline Protestants	conservative consensus	liberal on abortion liberal on gay marriage & adoption liberal on gay job discrimination conservative on affirmative action

5. Impact of religious commitment Table 7.3, p. 193 except for Jews, the differences in abortion attitudes between the religiously involved and the uninvolved often exceed the gap between the religious groups
- D. Gay & lesbian rights
1. Victories
 - a. Decriminalization of sodomy

- b. Spread of domestic-partner benefits
- c. Gays in military
- 2. Remaining conflicts Figure 7.4, p 194 & Table 9.4, p. 195
 - a. Marriage & adoption
 - b. Military service
 - c. Anti-discrimination laws
- 3. General group divisions
 - a. Most supportive of gay rights: Jews & seculars
 - b. In the middle: mainline Protestants & Catholics
 - c. Most opposed: Hispanic & Black Protestants, LDS, Evangelical Protestants

III. Social justice – influence of religion is much more ambiguous

- A. Remedies for social inequality Figure 7.5, p. 197
 - 1. Racial & ethnic minorities (except for Hispanic Protestants) and seculars and LDS are most likely to disagree that the U.S. “has gone too far” pushing for equal rights
 - 2. White Evangelical & Hispanic Protestants are most likely to say the push has gone too far
 - 3. White mainline Protestants and Catholics somewhat less so
- B. Environmental protection
 - 1. Issue dimensions
 - a. Material concerns (economic costs & property rights)
 - b. Post-material concerns (quality of life)
 - 2. Common hypothesis not supported by evidence – Evangelical Protestants & LDS only slightly more likely to support the statement that “government environmental regulations place too great a burden on business”
 - 3. Explanation: Scripture can be interpreted both ways –
 - a. Biblical mandate to “be fruitful and multiply, replenish the Earth, subdue it and have dominion” by supporting
 - b. Biblical mandate to be stewards of God’s creation – “What would Jesus drive?”

IV. Foreign policy – religious influence particularly elusive

- A. Foreign policy opinions are typically less stable and informed than attitudes on domestic issues
- B. During the Cold War, stronger religious differences were apparent
 - 1. Evangelical Protestants and Roman Catholics were most hawkish
 - 2. Jews, seculars, Black Protestants, and White mainline Protestants were less so differences of any kind are less common
 - 3. Since the end of the Cold War, shifting coalitions have formed around specific issues
 - a. Evangelical Protestants & Jews are most supportive of Israel
 - b. But, on the Iraq War Figure 7.6, p. 200
 - (1) Jews (with seculars, Black Protestants, and Muslims) are among the least supportive
 - (2) LDS, White Evangelical Protestants, and Hispanic Protestants are most supportive [all are more likely to emphasize “end-times” theology]
 - (3) Catholics & White mainline Protestants are in the middle
 - c. But, there are small group differences in rejecting isolationism and supporting military spending

V. What culture war?

- A. Elites are more polarized than the masses – especially on the most contentious issues
 - 1. Fewer conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans
 - 2. The ideologues in both parties are attempting to use hot-button issues to mobilize support
- B. Religion is not as polarizing a factor (for the masses) as many proclaim
 - 1. Among the American public, when presented with a centrist alternative, we usually support the moderate policy choice rather than the more radical option proposed by the far left or far right – even on hot-button issues like abortion, school prayer, gay rights, immigration, etc.
 - 2. Religious group differences on economic issues reflect status more than religious-value differences
 - 3. Religious values (traditional/orthodox v. modern/progressive)
 - a. Polarized on only a limited set of issues – religion in public schools & sexual morality
 - b. Not polarized on race and economic issues
 - c. The values dichotomy is growing in ambiguity
 - (1) Many traditionalists are becoming more tolerant of behavior they dislike
 - (2) Many progressives are becoming concerned about a loss of moral compass in American society
 - 4. In the masses, there is less a war than a division of labor or emphasis
 - a. Traditionalists emphasize morality issues
 - b. Progressives emphasize social-justice issues
 - c. But neither completely rejects the importance of the other set of issues
 - 5. And, there are traditionalist and progressive factions operating in all religious traditions
- C. The media over-simplify and exaggerate the culture-war divisions between religious groups and red & blue states