

I. African-American Protestants

A. *Dialectical* model of the dual political roles of African-American churches:

1. *Liberal* role: challenge injustice
2. *Conservative* role: encourage patriotism and regime loyalty
3. Theologically, African Americans are more likely than white Protestants to be evangelical
 - a. Inerrancy of Scripture
 - b. Divinity of Christ
 - c. Physical resurrection from the dead
 - d. Necessity of a born-again experience in order to receive salvation

B. Strengths

1. Population size: 37.5 M, 12.5%
2. Geographic concentration in large-electoral-vote states (NY, FL, TX, GA, CA, IL, NC, MD, LA, VA)

C. Weaknesses

1. Politically, African Americans exhibit mixed values
 - a. Conservative “wedge” issues:
 - (1) Faith-based social services should be expanded
 - (2) Gay marriage should be banned
 - (3) Government-sponsored prayer in public schools are needed
 - b. But also liberal “core issues”:
 - (1) Discrimination against homosexuals is also wrong
 - (2) Legal access to abortion is a woman’s right (notable change in black attitudes since 1970s)
 - (3) Gender equality should be guaranteed by government
 - (4) Racial discrimination has not disappeared and should be countered by government action
 - (5) Government should guarantee economic security
2. Dissatisfaction with responsiveness of Democratic Party
3. Divisions within black intellectuals
 - a. Liberal: Cornel West, *Harvard*; Henry Louis Gates, *Harvard*; William Julius Wilson, *Chicago*; **John Hope Franklin, Duke**; Angela Davis, *San Francisco State*; Toni Morrison, *Princeton*; **Maya Angelou, Wake Forest**
 - b. Conservative: Shelby Steele, *UC-Santa Barbara*; Thomas Sowell, *Chicago*; Stanley Crouch, *New Republic*
4. Declining influence of black churches
 - a. Black-nationalist movement among black Muslims
 - b. Declining church membership & attendance – especially among younger & poor black males
 - c. Emphasis of black churches on faith-based ministries instead of political activism
 - d. Loss of black congregants to white Protestant and Catholic denominations

II. Latino Catholics and Protestants

A. Previous scholarly perspective downplayed importance of religion to Latino political attitudes & behavior primarily because of the historical role of European Catholic clergy in supporting conquest and colonization of Latino peoples

B. Strengths:

1. Latinos are now the largest U.S. minority group (approximately 42.7 M or 14.2% of the U.S. total population - 2005 data), surpassing African Americans
2. Now the fastest growing minority group in the U.S.
3. Increasingly concentrated in large-electoral-vote states (CA, TX, FL, NY, IL, AZ, NJ, CO, NM, GA)
4. Religion serves to unite Latinos from many (22) different countries – represents the interests of both undocumented and legal immigrants

C. Weaknesses:

1. Increasing religious diversity among Latinos, especially among evangelical and Pentecostal denominations
2. U.S. Catholic Church has not always been responsive to Latino members’ desire for outreach services
3. Latinos consistently have lower voter turnout rates
4. Latino partisanship is divided: Latino Protestants are more Republican; Latino Catholics are more Democratic
5. Latino ideology is divided: more conservative on morality & gender roles; more liberal in other issue domains

III. Muslim Americans

A. World-wide divisions – <http://hnn.us/articles/934.html#>

1. Sunni: believe that Muhammad's successor was properly determined by election and *not* heredity. Until 1959 they refused to recognize the Shiites as true Muslims. Compose roughly 90% of the Muslim world.
 - a. Live in Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates), north Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia), and southeast & central Asia (Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Uzbekistan)
 - b. Wahhabi: a small group founded in the eighteenth century, but it was the primary force in the creation of the state of Saudi Arabia in 1932, the country of the cities of Mecca and Medina. The Wahhabi have influenced Muslims throughout the world who pilgrimage to Mecca. They are the Puritans of the Muslims, with the most strict, severely enforced moral standard of conduct, and a call for a pure Islam regulated by a literal interpretation of the Koran.
2. Shiite: believe that Muhammad's successor should have been determined by heredity. Live mainly in Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon, Bahrain.
3. Sufi: a mystic tradition of Islam encompassing a diverse range of beliefs and practices.
4. Druze: an offshoot of Islam and influenced by other religions and philosophies; reside primarily in Lebanon, although there are smaller communities in Israel, Syria, and Jordan.

B. Strengths

1. U.S. support for Israel causes them to be swing voters not committed to either major party
2. Increasingly concentrated in large-electoral-vote states (CA, NY, IL, NJ, IN, MI, VA, TX, OH, MD)

C. Weaknesses

1. Small size – approximately 2.8 M or less than 1% of U.S. total population
2. Perceived threats to civil liberties due to the war on terrorism
3. Ethnic divisions:
 - a. Arab-American Muslims (smallest group – not all Arab), divided between Sunni & Shiite
 - b. Asian-American Muslims (about twice as large as Middle-Eastern Muslims in the U.S.), mainly Sunni from India, Pakistan, & Bangladesh
 - c. African-American Muslims (largest group)
 - (1) Black separatist movement: 1930s, Nation of Islam – Elijah Muhammed & Malcolm X – today, Louis Farrakhan
 - (2) More orthodox off-shoot: American Society of Muslims – Imam Mohammed
4. Theological divisions
 - a. Muslims – willing to adapt and integrate into western culture & politics
 - b. Islamists – reject western values
 - c. Jihadists – call for a holy war against all infidels

IV. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

A. Strengths:

1. Ideological cohesion – a “strict church” that weeds out the less-than-fully committed
2. Fastest growing U.S. denomination

B. Weaknesses:

1. Relatively small size (approximately 5.5 M or 1.8% of the U.S. population)
2. Mixed values
 - a. Vote overwhelmingly Republican on basis of cultural conservatism
 - b. More liberal on civil rights and civil liberties, hence closer to Democratic Party on important non-cultural issues
3. Geographic concentration (*UT, ID, WY, NV*) is *not* in battleground states – a problem for former MA governor Mitt Romney [R] in the 2012 election
4. Doctrinal conflicts with other Christian faith traditions
 - a. Modern revelation to spiritual leaders
 - b. “True faith” superiority to other faith traditions

V. Other faith traditions

A. Religious diversity is increasing in the U.S.: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Wicca, Taoism, etc.

B. Strengths

1. Values influence more than strict adherents
2. The diffusion of power in the U.S. political system allows even small-sized groups to have influence, especially in the courts