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## ATTITUDES ABOUT SOCIO-MORAL ISSUES AMONG RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR YOUTH

### Abstract

Recent headlines suggest that Americans, and American youth in particular, are growing more liberal in their attitudes about social and moral issues. Do these trends suggest that the oft discussed “culture wars” are nearing an end? We examine this possibility by asking whether younger generations of religious and secular Americans do indeed espouse more liberal attitudes about socio-moral issues than their counterparts in older generations. We focus specifically on differences within and across religious groups in attitudes about four issues: abortion, same-sex marriage, stem cell research, and the environment. We are especially interested in comparing generational differences in attitudes about high profile, “old-line” wedge issues (abortion and same-sex marriage) in the culture wars with newer, lower profile issues (stem cell research and the environment). Using the 2008 National Annenberg Election Survey, we find that religious youth are generally *not* more liberal than older religious individuals.

**Keywords:** religion, youth, millennials, abortion, same-sex marriage, environment, stem cell research.

### Introduction

A central component of Republican electoral strategy since the rise of the religious right in the early 1980s has been a consistently conservative stance on socio-moral “wedge” issues including abortion and sexuality (Domke and Coe 2008; Oldfield 1996; Wilcox and Robinson 2010). This strategy has been effective

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for Republican candidates, both nationally and in regional contests (Campbell and Monson 2008; Domke and Coe 2008; Green et al. 1996; Green, Rozell, and Wilcox 2006; Lewis 2005; Wilcox 1995; Wilcox and Robinson 2010). In fact, a partisan realignment has transpired over the last three decades driving evangelical Protestants and (later) conservative Catholics toward the Republican Party and its candidates. The Republican Party has been so successful in burnishing its image as the unitary political voice of conservative Christianity that the American public has come to perceive the GOP as generally “friendlier toward religion” than the Democrats (Pew Forum 2006). By now it is conventional wisdom that ideological conservatism and Republican partisanship go hand-in-hand with personal commitment to theological conservatism in the context of American Christianity. In light of the rapidly changing demographics of the American electorate, however, is it reasonable to expect this political alignment to last over the long term?

For decades, scholars have sought to understand the causes and implications of the strong link between political conservatism and personal religiosity (e.g., Green, Rozell, and Wilcox 2006; Layman 2001; Leege et al. 2002; Oldfield 1996; Wilcox 1995; Wilcox and Robinson 2010; Wuthnow 1988). A key pivot in this literature is Hunter’s (1991) “culture wars” hypothesis, which posits a cultural rift dividing socio-moral elements of American political discourse into two irreconcilable camps: the “orthodox,” including doctrinally conservative Christians, and the “progressives,” including more nominally religious and secular Americans. Empirical evidence of this divide has been mixed. It is clear that the culture wars have continued unabated among elites, but attitudes never have been so clearly dichotomous at the mass level (Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox 1992; DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson 1996; Evans 2003; Fiorina 2010; Gay, Ellison, and Powers 1996; Green et al. 1996; Layman 1999, 2001; Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Putnam and Campbell 2010).

Recent evidence indicates that younger generations of Americans—including young evangelicals—increasingly are embracing liberal viewpoints on some of the socio-moral issues that form the basis of the culture wars (Andersen and Fetner 2008; Loftus 2001; Pew Research Center 2011; Putnam and Campbell 2010). More broadly, American youth who came of age during the 1990s have been shown to reflect the relative liberalism of their parents (who came of age in the 1960s), eschewing the conservatism of the late twentieth-century United States (Jennings et al. 2009). Despite their apparent liberalism, however, younger Americans are markedly skeptical of government (Pew Research Center 2011). Separately, evangelicals have begun questioning what their loyalty to the Republican Party has netted them (e.g., Kuo 2006), while younger evangelicals increasingly express concern about a range of issues much broader than the standard agenda of the old religious right (Wilcox and Robinson 2010; but see Smidt 2013). Meanwhile, the youngest Americans are more likely than any gen-

eration before them to eschew organized religion; one 2012 survey indicates that almost a third of people under the age of 30 said they were religiously unaffiliated (Jones, Cox, and Navarro-Rivera 2012).

What implications might such shifts have for the future of the Republican Party's electoral strategies? Might the religious right be moving toward irrelevance? Our study is designed to shed light on these questions by asking whether younger generations of religious—and religiously unaffiliated—Americans are more liberal in their attitudes about four issues of socio-moral significance: abortion, same-sex marriage, stem cell research, and environmental protection. In particular, we suspect that the heavy priming of abortion and same-sex marriage as wedge issues over the last several decades might have resulted in greater attitudinal cleavages on these two issues than would be the case for the lower-profile issues of stem cell research and environmental protection.

### **Generational Change, Religion, and Public Opinion about Socio-Moral Issues**

For decades, abortion and same-sex marriage have created larger cleavages in American public opinion than nearly any other issue. Although an overwhelming majority of Americans know relatively little about politics and even less about the details of specific policy issues (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; DelliCarpini and Keeter 1996), they do tend to have fairly well crystallized opinions about abortion and homosexuality (Alvarez and Franklin 1994; Ginsberg 1989; Luker 1984). Socio-moral issues are especially useful tools in any campaign strategy (Abramowitz 1995; Domke and Coe 2008), and prioritization of such issues by the Republican Party went a long way toward inducing the aforementioned partisan realignment among Christian conservatives (e.g., Wilcox 1995). It has been relatively straightforward in recent years to mobilize American voters by incorporating “moral values” rhetoric around wedge issues such as abortion and homosexuality into one's campaign strategy (e.g., Domke and Coe 2008). People on both sides of the abortion debate, for example, know that maintaining the status quo in this policy area is beneficial for electoral and fundraising purposes, precisely because attitudes about abortion generate visceral responses among so many citizens.

It is therefore unsurprising that a great deal of scholarship has focused on public opinion about abortion and sexuality. Trends in public opinion about abortion and gay rights follow different patterns. In short, abortion attitudes have remained relatively constant (Cook 1997; Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox 1993; Pew Research Center 2011) while support for gay rights has increased substantially over time (Altmeyer 2001; Andersen and Fetner 2008; Loftus 2001; Pew Forum 2012). Scholars have shown that demographic factors such as education, age, gender, and urbanicity bear significant relationships to attitudes about abortion

and sexuality (e.g., Brewer 2003; Davis 1992; Herek and Glunt 1993; Loftus 2001). Religious affiliation and religiosity also play important roles in shaping attitudes about both issues (Cochran and Beeghley 1991; Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox 1992; Cotten-Huston and Waite 2000; Evans 2002; Fiorina 2010; Herek and Glunt 1993; Jelen and Wilcox 2003; Olson, Cadge, and Harrison 2006; Putnam and Campbell 2010). We know relatively less about the trends and factors shaping public opinion about stem cell research and environmental protection (but see, e.g., Nisbet 2004 on stem cell research; Konisky et al. 2008 on the environment).

Separately, studies of socialization over the life course show that successive generations of Americans often are distinctive in their political (and religious: Hout and Fischer 2002; Roof 1999; Smith and Denton 2005; Wuthnow 1988, 2007) worldviews (Danigelis, Hardy, and Cutler 2007; Davis 1992, 2004; Inglehart 1990; Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009; Ryder 1965; Smith 1990). The notion of the “generation gap” is rooted in the general truth that new cohorts of Americans (try to) mold the culture to their distinctive needs and tastes. A wide range of contextual factors affects how different cohorts of young Americans perceive the world as they come of age, from economic conditions to war or peace, from the contents of the public agenda to the persuasiveness and political engagement of one’s own parents. The primacy principle, which posits that those things learned first are learned best, has animated scholarly debate about political socialization for decades (Greenstein 1970; Jennings and Niemi 1974; Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009; Merelman 1980; Searing, Wright, and Rabinowitz 1976; Valentino and Sears 1998; Weissberg 1974). Of course, it is not always true that one’s upbringing dictates one’s politics in adulthood, and individual-level effects on political attitudes often intersect in complicated ways with generational effects (Danigelis, Hardy, and Cutler 2007; Stoker and Jennings 2008). Nevertheless, there is some merit to the presumption that what people learn and observe at home while growing up shapes the way they live their lives as adults. If it is true that today’s youth are more liberal (and religiously unaffiliated) in part because their parents came of age during the 1960s (Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009), we should not be surprised to see some movement away from Reagan-era socio-moral conservatism. After all, such conservatism was generated by critics of the 1960s and embraced by the “silent majority”—and their children (Lassiter 2007).

Studies of public opinion that incorporate generational change typically have focused on changes in the American population as a whole rather than among subsets of Americans (but see Sullins 1999). Moreover, few studies have explored the effects of religion and age on public opinion about socio-moral issues, and those that do include such analyses place them in the context of broader research questions (see, e.g., Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox 1992; Olson, Cadge, and Harrison 2006; Ostheimer 1980). This gap in the literature is surprising considering the well-documented relationship between various dimensions of religion

on attitudes about abortion and same-sex marriage. Religion is hardly a static social phenomenon, and the religious marketplace is especially volatile in the United States thanks to the First Amendment guarantee of religious freedom (Finke and Stark 2005). Might it therefore be the case that successive generations conceive of and experience religion in new and different ways (Roof 1999; Smith and Denton 2005; Wuthnow 1988, 2007), thus giving rise to generational differences in the nature of the relationships between religious characteristics on the one hand and issue priorities and positions on the other? We contend that it is essential to understand generational change in public opinion about socio-moral issues by looking at generational differences *within* religious groups. If we see evidence of attitudinal change across generations within particular religious affiliation categories (such as evangelical Protestantism), then we might expect eventual consequences for the entirety of the American political landscape.

### Hypotheses

This study is designed to analyze the role of age in the relationship between “religion” and public attitudes about socio-moral issues. To operationalize “religion,” we draw upon extant literature that emphasizes the empirical distinction between *religious affiliation*, on the one hand, and the nature and intensity of individual *religious commitment* on the other (e.g., Legee and Kellstedt 1993). We include both dimensions of religion in our analysis of public opinion about four socio-moral issues: the “old-line” issues of abortion and same-sex marriage, and the newer issues of stem cell research and the environment.

### Religious Affiliation

Social scientists have advanced the measurement of religious affiliation beyond simple comparisons of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews (Herberg 1955) by drawing substantively meaningful distinctions within the “Protestant” category (Fastnow, Grant, and Rudolph 1999; Green et al. 1996; Layman 2001; Legee and Kellstedt 1993; Legee et al. 2002; Steensland et al. 2000). Scholars appropriately treat mainline Protestants, evangelical Protestants, and African American Protestants separately because of their theological and historical distinctiveness (Kellstedt and Green 1993; Layman 2001; Steensland et al. 2000). Steensland and colleagues note mainline Protestants’ emphasis on “an accommodating stance toward modernity ... and pluralism in their tolerance of varied individual beliefs,” while evangelical Protestants “typically [have] sought more separation from the broader culture, emphasized missionary activity and individual conversion, and taught strict adherence to particular religious doctrines” (2000: 293-294). Meanwhile, African American Protestants combine strict interpretation of scripture with insights derived from African spirituality, particularly the imperatives of

mutual responsibility and community unity (Harris 1999).<sup>3</sup>

These three groups of Protestants differ politically as well. For more than thirty years, evangelicals have been noteworthy for their homogeneous conservatism on high-profile socio-moral issues (Jelen and Wilcox 2003; Olson, Cadge, and Harrison 2006; Wilcox and Robinson 2010). Such issues serve as powerful mobilizing agents for evangelicals, as illustrated by the effect of statewide defense of marriage ballot initiatives on evangelical turnout in the 2004 election (Campbell and Monson 2008; Lewis 2005). Because socio-moral conservatism is heavily primed in the context of evangelical Protestantism, we hypothesize that there will be little attitudinal difference across generations of evangelicals on the socio-moral issues we analyze here.

Mainline Protestants are substantially more liberal than their evangelical counterparts regarding socio-moral issues, and their partisanship has been moving in a more Democratic direction as well (e.g., Manza and Brooks 2002). Mainline Protestants have never been social conservatives; although they constituted a solidly Republican voting bloc until relatively recently, their attraction to the GOP historically has been rooted in economic conservatism (Leege et al. 2002; Manza and Brooks 2002). They are considerably more liberal than evangelicals are on both abortion and same-sex marriage (Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox 1992; Hoffmann and Miller 1997; Olson, Cadge, and Harrison 2006). Most mainline denominations argue that abortion should be a private matter for each individual to decide (Hoffmann and Johnson 2005). Not without controversy, some mainline churches also have been welcoming the gay and lesbian community—to varying degrees and in different ways—for several decades (Cadage 2002). We hypothesize that younger mainline Protestants will be more liberal than their older counterparts regarding socio-moral issues. Mainline Protestantism itself has been diversifying politically since the 1960s (Manza and Brooks 2002; Wuthnow 1988; Wuthnow and Evans 2002), so its youngest generations might be especially likely to be liberal. Moreover, theological teaching in the mainline tradition emphasizes the desirability of diversity, making it difficult for consensus to emerge around much of anything in mainline circles (e.g., Wuthnow and Evans 2002).

African American Protestants tend to be conservative on socio-moral issues, but they place a relatively low priority on such matters (Harris 1999). For generations, political emphasis within the African American Protestant community has been placed primarily on justice issues such as education, jobs, and poverty.

3 We focus on five of the seven religious affiliation categories developed by Steensland et al. (2000) for several reasons. First, we are substantively interested in public opinion within American *Christianity*, as Christians comprise approximately 80 percent of the U.S. population (Pew Forum 2008). Second, because Jewish Americans comprise less than 2 percent of the U.S. population, we exclude them from the analysis. Third, the “other faith” category consists of a rather varied array of religious traditions, including Mormons, Muslims, and others. This combination produces a category about which it is difficult at best to make generalizations. Thus we limit our analysis to the remaining five religious affiliation categories: evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, African American Protestant, Catholic, and unaffiliated.

Until race no longer trumps religion in American politics, African Americans' conservatism on socio-moral issues should not be expected to be a potent force of political mobilization. Thus, our hypothesis is that there will be little attitudinal difference across generations of African American Protestants on socio-moral issues.

The Roman Catholic Church strongly opposes abortion. The pro-life stance is a hallmark of Catholic Social Teaching, which is rooted in a requirement of prioritizing human life in all its forms (Cochran and Cochran 2003; Leege et al. 2002). At least in elite circles, Catholic pro-life attitudinal constraint extends to opposition to stem-cell research as well. However, to the chagrin of many Church leaders, many American Catholics practice the faith in a "cafeteria-style" manner, which has resulted in more moderate socio-moral attitudes than one might expect—particularly regarding same-sex marriage (Olson, Cadge, and Harrison 2006). Therefore, we hypothesize that while there should be little difference between older and younger Catholics in their support of abortion and stem cell research, younger Catholics should be more liberal than older Catholics on same-sex marriage and environmental protection reflecting broader trends in the attitudes of American youth.

Finally, our inclusion of a category of respondents who claim no religious affiliation is noteworthy at a time when the size of this group is growing rapidly in the United States (Jones, Cox, and Navarro-Rivera 2012; Pew Forum 2012; Putnam and Campbell 2010). There is great diversity inherent among individuals who are unaffiliated; this category includes "unattached believers" (those who have no congregational home), people who say they are "spiritual but not religious," seculars, agnostics, (a small number of) atheists, and others (Ammerman 2013; Baker and Smith 2009; Bender 2010; Hout and Fischer 2002; Jones, Cox, and Navarro-Rivera 2012; Lim, MacGregor, and Putnam 2010). Religiously unaffiliated Americans are more ideologically liberal, Democratic in their partisanship, and progressive on socio-moral issues than members of any of the major American religious groups (Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox 1992; Hoffmann and Miller 1997; Lim, MacGregor, and Putnam 2010; Olson, Cadge, and Harrison 2006). Moreover, young people are especially disinclined to indicate a religious affiliation (Jones, Cook, and Navarro-Rivera 2012; Pew Forum 2012; Schwadel 2010). Roof (1999) shows that religious disaffiliation began increasing in the United States when the "Baby Boom Generation" came of age (see also Hout and Fischer 2002; Wuthnow 2007). The 1960s marked a distinct breakpoint after which opting out of traditional religious practice became more culturally acceptable in the United States, so the number of religiously unaffiliated Americans continues to grow (Hout and Fischer 2002). We hypothesize that religiously unaffiliated youth should be especially liberal in their attitudes about all four socio-moral issues.

## Religious Commitment

Since the 1980s, religious commitment has had at least as much bearing as religious affiliation on Americans' political orientations (e.g., Green 2007; Layman 2001). Religious commitment encompasses the extent to which an individual prioritizes and spends time practicing religion (e.g., praying, worshiping) regardless of religious affiliation. Individuals who are deeply invested in religious life are exposed to a distinctive set of experiences. For example, people who attend worship services on a regular basis continually are exposed to information from clergy and fellow parishioners that may be politically relevant, whereas individuals who do not attend services are not exposed to such information (e.g., Djupe and Gilbert 2009). Recent research shows that individuals who are most heavily invested in religious life are markedly more conservative and Republican than their less religiously adherent counterparts (Green 2007; Layman 2001; Olson and Green 2006). In fact, religious affiliation often is less important as a predictor of political attitudes and affiliations than the extent to which one is committed to and engrossed in religious life.

Increased religious commitment should increase opposition to abortion and same-sex marriage because voices of organized religion rarely speak out publicly for abortion rights or in support of gay couples (Guth et al. 1997; but see Cadge 2002 regarding homosexuality). Instead, the more involved a person is in organized religion, the more likely she should be to hear messages opposing abortion and same-sex marriage. Greater religious commitment also is correlated with more conservative attitudes in general, so should result in more conservative attitudes on stem cell research and the environment. Therefore, we expect to observe increased conservatism on socio-moral issues across generations among people who most committed to religious practice.

## Data and Methods

To test our hypotheses, we use the National Annenberg Election Study (NAES) for the 2008 election. Conducted in 2000, 2004 and 2008, the NAES data sets are the "largest academic public opinion studies of the American electorate ever conducted within a campaign cycle" (Romer et al. 2006: 14). Using random-digit dialing technique, 57,967 respondents were interviewed in 2008 (the response rate was approximately 23 percent). We use the NAES's rolling cross-national data, which were collected between December 17, 2007, and November 3, 2008.

We chose to analyze the 2008 NAES data for three reasons. First, using recent election-year data allows us to examine issues that are newer to the public agenda (and to the agendas of American religious groups), including stem cell research and the environment. The second reason we chose the NAES study is its large sample size. Only surveys with a large number of observations yield suf-

ficient numbers of respondents in each category of religious affiliation to permit meaningful statistical analysis. As detailed below, this level of data availability has important implications for our methodological choices. The third reason we chose to use the NAES data is that the survey instrument changed somewhat during the campaign cycle. As a result, the dataset includes a variety of items measuring attitudes about both “old-line” wedge issues and newer issues, providing a richer comparative analysis than other datasets would allow.

### **Dependent Variables**

We employ four dependent variables. Two of these dependent variables measure attitudes on old-line wedge issues, while the other two are measures of attitudes on issues that are newer to political agendas of American religious groups.

First, we analyze opinion on abortion and same-sex marriage to test for attitudinal differences on old-line wedge issues. The abortion item asked respondents to identify the option closest to their view on abortion: it should be available to all, available with restrictions, only permitted in cases of rape and incest, or not permitted at all. Following literature arguing that measuring abortion attitudes dichotomously is most appropriate (Sullins 1999), we transformed this item into a dummy variable (abortion either should be permitted under some circumstances=0, or not permitted at all=1). The same-sex marriage item asked respondents whether they support full marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples, civil unions or domestic partnerships, or no legal recognition at all. In keeping with the literature (Olson, Cadge, and Harrison 2006), we dichotomize this item as well (favoring legal recognition=0; favoring no legal recognition=1).

Second, to test for attitudinal differences regarding newer issues, we analyze opinion about stem cell research and the environment. The stem cell research item asked respondents whether they favor or oppose the federal funding of embryonic stem cell research, with a five-part response set (strongly favor, somewhat favor, neither favor nor oppose, somewhat oppose, and strongly oppose). The environment item asked respondents whether “the environment” or “the economy” should be a higher priority in U.S. policymaking, coded as either favoring the environment or favoring the economy. For ease of interpretation, all variables are coded so that conservative positions=1.

### **Independent Variables**

Our three independent variables of interest include religious affiliation, religious commitment and generation.

The best measure of religious affiliation to date is the seven-category “RELTRAD” measure created by Steensland and colleagues (2000). The NAES

included two questions concerning respondents' religious affiliation that allow us to create a reasonable proxy for the RELTRAD measure. First, the NAES asked respondents to identify their religious preference (if any) as Protestant, Catholic, another type of Christian, Jewish, or some other religion. Survey respondents who self-identified as Protestant, Catholic, or "other" were then asked whether they considered themselves "evangelical or born-again Christian." This measure allows us to distinguish between evangelical and mainline Protestants, thereby enabling a reasonable simulation of the RELTRAD classification scheme. As Kellstedt and Green note, "individuals ... differ in their understanding, participation, and commitment to their own denomination, ... they may also share beliefs, practices, and commitments across denominational boundaries" (1993: 54). Thus, the NAES's "evangelical or born-again Christian" measure might actually do a *better* job than denominational affiliation alone in identifying people who truly are evangelical. For the purposes of this study, religious affiliation variables are coded as a series of dummy variables: evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, African American Protestant, Catholic, and religiously unaffiliated. See the Appendix for details on the specific mechanisms we used to create these categories. The percentages of respondents in each religious category correspond well to those in other surveys (see, e.g., Pew Forum 2008): 32 percent evangelical Protestant, 19 percent mainline Protestant, 23 percent Catholic, 4 percent African American Protestant and 16 percent unaffiliated (Table A1 in the Appendix).

The second independent variable of interest is a measure of religious commitment: a survey item asking respondents how often they attend worship services (more than once a week, once a week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, or never). Although there are many dimensions of religious commitment that encompass frequency of participation in religious activities and orthodoxy of religious beliefs (Kellstedt and Green 1993), scholars agree that worship attendance is a fair proxy for broader religious commitment (e.g., Green 2007). At a minimum, it is a good measure of the frequency of one's participation in religious activity.

Our third key independent variable is generation. We are concerned with whether there are differences in public opinion among younger and older age cohorts, both within and across religious affiliation categories, regarding the socio-moral issues. Accordingly, we include a variable that measures a respondent's generation classified on the basis of birth year: those born between 1901 and 1945; 1946-1964; 1965-1981; and after 1981.<sup>4</sup> Our decision to use generation as a metric rather than a raw measure of age is rooted in the argument that age cohort provides more leverage about how an "aggregate of individuals ... expe-

4 We chose these specific birth years to correspond to the conventional delimitation of generation into five categories: the "Greatest Generation" (born 1901-1924), the "Silent Generation" (born 1925-1945), the "Baby Boom Generation" (born 1946-1964), "Generation X" (born 1965-1981), and "Generation Y" (born after 1981). We combine the "Greatest" and "Silent" generations here since each group now represents a relatively small slice of the U.S. population. In all of our analyses, separate results for these two generations are very similar (data available upon request) so we lose no analytical leverage by combining the two categories.

rienced the same event within the same interval" (Ryder 1965: 845). Moreover, a variety of recent studies (e.g., Andersen and Fetner 2008; Danigelis, Hardy, and Cutler 2007; Davis 2004; Stoker and Jennings 2008) operationalize age cohorts in different ways, depending on their particular research aims. Thus there is no particular "industry standard" to which all scholars must adhere when delimiting age cohorts for an analysis of the sort we present below. Since we are primarily interested in the distinctiveness of youth across the religious groups, we use the youngest category (born after 1981) as our baseline comparison category in all of the analyses. Descriptive statistics (Tables A1 and A2 in the Appendix) reveal that the largest number of respondents were born between 1945 and 1964, while the smallest number were in the youngest generation (born after 1981).

### *Control Variables*

To guard against spuriousness, we include several control variables in our models that have been shown to affect public opinion about the issues under study here: party identification, education, urbanicity, race, income, gender, and marital status. Following Olson, Cadge, and Harrison (2006), we include race in the model via the inclusion of the African American Protestant category. Meanwhile, the size of the NAES sample means that it includes respondents from each of the lower 48 states and the District of Columbia, adding spatial variation to the data. To control for the potential effects of spatial variation, we include a dummy variable for southern states (according to the U.S. Census's coding scheme).<sup>5</sup> See the Appendix for coding details.

### **Analytical Models**

We chose to model each category of religious affiliation separately, thus running five models for each dependent variable. This approach differs from the typical approach used in studies of the relationship between religion and public opinion. It allows for less cumbersome, more elegant models, ensuring greater accuracy compared to a full model including all relevant variables (Achen 2005). Our approach also allows for the direct interpretation of the effect of each category of religious affiliation on attitudes about the four issues. Instead of interpreting each religious category in comparison with an excluded category, our approach of modeling each religious category separately enables direct interpretation of the effects of generation and religiosity for each religious group (rather than turning to a series of interactive effects, which would be difficult to

5 We also estimated a fixed effects model with the individual states as the panel variable (data not reported). An F-test revealed that the fixed effects model is not necessary to control for spatial effects in all but a few cases. Therefore, we include a dummy variable for southern states to account for any spatial variation in the data. This approach also is theoretically justified, as residents of southern states hold more conservative views on abortion and gay rights (in particular) than the rest of the country (Brint and Abrutyn 2010).

interpret). However, our approach precludes us from interpreting the results for each religious group in comparison with those for the other religious categories (holding everything, including religious affiliation, constant). Thus comparisons cannot be made directly across religious groups, only indirectly. The fact that we are able to take this approach is due directly to the large sample size of the NAES data.

We use logistic regression when the dependent variable is dichotomous (abortion, same-sex marriage and the environment) and ordinary least squares regression (OLS) when the dependent variable is a five-point ordinal scale (stem cell research). In the case of stem cell research, we checked our OLS results against an ordered logistic regression model due to the small number of response categories. The ordered logit results (not reported) revealed no substantive differences in sign or significance. Therefore, we use OLS in our analysis of stem cell research for ease of interpretation. All of our models reveal signs of heteroskedasticity, so we use logistic regression and OLS with robust standard errors (unless otherwise noted). Finally, to interpret the substantive effects of the logistic regression models, we employ predicted probabilities. These are calculated by setting all variables at their mean and moving the variable of interest from its minimum to maximum value.

## Results

For each of our dependent variables, we construct five separate models—one for each religious affiliation category—specifically examining the effects of religious affiliation, religiosity, and generation on attitudes about abortion, same-sex marriage, stem cell research and the environment. Preliminary bivariate regressions (results available upon request) revealed generational differences across all of the religious groups for abortion and same-sex marriage, across all groups except for African American Protestants for the environment, and across all groups except for Catholics and African American Protestants for stem cell research.

Table 1 presents the results of our multivariate logistic regression analysis of attitudes about abortion. The controls perform as expected. Education and income are consistent predictors of attitudes about abortion across the five religious groups, with increases in education and income leading to more permissive attitudes. Party identification also performs as expected, with Republicans being significantly more conservative. Meanwhile, among evangelicals and the unaffiliated, being married increases the likelihood of holding a conservative opinion.

**Table 1: Logistic Regression: Effects of Religious Affiliation, Religiosity, and Generation on Attitudes about Abortion**

	Evangelical Protestant		Mainline Protestant		Catholic		African American Protestant		Religiously Unaffiliated	
	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.
Attendance	.372 (.024)**	.245	.489 (.057)**	.110	.609 (.039)**	.386	.315 (.063)**	.134	.365 (.077)**	.075
Born 1965-1982	.047 (.184)	---	-.557 (.343)	---	-.339 (.249)	---	.461 (.388)	---	-.492 (.359)	---
Born 1946-1964	-.271 (.179)	---	-1.049 (.332)**	-.028	-.419 (.235)	---	0.026 (.369)	---	-.796 (.342)*	.016
Born 1901-1945	-.699 (.183)**	.087	-1.289 (.324)**	-.030	-.243 (.234)	---	-.613 (.397)	---	-.765 (.348)*	.012
Rural	.259 (.093)**	.037	.147 (.222)	---	.157 (.144)	---	.148 (.256)	---	.005 (.268)	---
Suburban	.055 (.086)	---	-.217 (.201)	---	.053 (.105)	---	-.382 (.205)	---	-.319 (.234)	---
South	-.199 (.070)**	-.027	.061 (.178)	---	-.034 (.108)	---	.258 (.191)	---	.203 (.218)	---
Education	-.342 (.062)**	-.107	-.880 (.138)**	-.096	-.364 (.085)**	-.087	-.504 (.147)**	-.108	-.688 (.151)**	-.046
Income	-.129 (.020)**	-.160	-.140 (.046)**	-.039	-.141 (.027)**	-.136	-.253 (.051)**	-.202	-.278 (.058)**	-.069
Party ID	.233 (.016)**	.190	.201 (.038)**	.037	.193 (.021)**	.122	.215 (.045)**	.147	.124 (.051)*	.017
Married	.216 (.084)*	.029	.298 (.188)	---	.151 (.105)	---	.273 (.191)	---	.720 (.233)**	.014
Gender	-.061 (.072)	---	.101 (.168)	---	.020 (.093)	---	.286 (.195)	---	-.217 (.205)	---
Constant	-2.252 (.252)**		-1.599 (.485)*		-2.692 (.327)**		-1.516 (.498)**		-.977 (.516)**	
Log Likelihood	-2749.40		-603.24		-1630.36		-417.99		-419.30	
LR	559.4**		222.3**		449.6**		105.0**		121.1**	

Source: National Annenberg Election Study, 2008.

Note: Dependent variable is opinion toward abortion, coded 0=permitted with/without restrictions, 1=not permitted under any circumstances. Pred. Prob. refers to the predicted probabilities of the variables, calculated by setting the variables at their mean and moving the variable of interest from its minimum value to its maximum value. The comparison category for generation is those born after 1981. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

Notably, our hypothesis regarding religious commitment is confirmed. Across all four religious groups, an increase in worship attendance results in more conservative attitudes on the issue of abortion. Substantively speaking, worship attendance has the largest impact on attitudes about abortion. The predicted probabilities reveal that when we move attendance from its minimum (never attending) to its maximum value (attending more than once a week) and hold everything else constant at the mean, opposition to abortion increases by 24 percent for evangelicals, 11 percent for mainline Protestants, 38 percent for Catholics and 13 percent for African American Protestants.

For our hypotheses concerning the impact of generation, we find significant effects for evangelicals, mainline Protestants and the unaffiliated. Compared to the youngest generation of evangelicals (those born after 1981), the oldest generation (those born before 1945) is significantly less likely to oppose abortion. This substantive effect is also fairly large, with a predicated probability of 8 percent. This finding is suggestive of the religious right's success in shaping abortion opinion. The movement's longtime focus on abortion seems to have led to more conservative abortion attitudes among younger generations of evangelicals (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2011). We also find that the two oldest generations of mainline Protestants and unaffiliated (born 1901-1945, 1946-1964) are significantly more likely to oppose abortion than members of the youngest generation. This finding contradicts our hypothesis that younger mainline Protestants and unaffiliated should hold the most liberal views on abortion. However, it is in keeping with recent literature arguing that access to (and in some cases, requirements to view) ultra sounds is moving opinion about abortion in a more conservative direction (Putnam and Campbell 2010). That being said, the substantive effect is small (predicted probabilities: 1 percent for the unaffiliated and 2 percent for mainline Protestants).

Table 2 presents the results for attitudes regarding same-sex marriage. Here again the controls perform as expected. Increases in education and income lead to more liberal views, and moving from Democrat to Republican partisanship results in more conservative attitudes across all five religious categories. Moving from not being married to being married also results in more conservative attitudes among Catholics and the unaffiliated. Mainline Protestant, Catholic, and unaffiliated men are more conservative than women are on same-sex marriage. With the exception of evangelical Protestants and African American Protestants, residing in a southern state leads to more conservative attitudes on the issue of same-sex marriage, justifying our inclusion of a control for spatial variation (Brint and Abrutyn 2010).

**Table 2: Logistic Regression: Effects of Religious Affiliation, Religiosity, and Generation on Attitudes about Same-Sex Marriage**

	Evangelical Protestant		Mainline Protestant		Catholic		African American Protestant		Religiously Unaffiliated	
	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.
Attendance	.413 (.028)**	.460	.288 (.042)**	.282	.324 (.038)**	.336	.451 (.060)**	.505	.427 (.060)**	.376
Born 1965-1982	.354 (.216)	---	.661 (.332)*	.135	.136 (.298)	---	-.051 (.373)	---	.071 (.333)	---
Born 1946-1964	.366 (.208)	---	.500 (.317)	---	.288 (.287)	---	.281 (.357)	---	.580 (.311)	---
Born 1901-1945	.470 (.212)*	.107	.644 (.317)*	.128	.394 (.289)	---	.246 (.374)	---	.730 (.319)*	.098
Rural	.374 (.120)**	.085	.464 (.156)**	.090	.628 (.151)**	.127	.459 (.258)	---	.818 (.206)**	.113
Suburban	-.051 (.094)	---	.017 (.136)	---	.135 (.114)	---	.194 (.185)	---	.431 (.183)*	.047
South	.136 (.080)	---	.374 (.120)**	.073	.419 (.114)**	.070	.250 (.172)	---	.397 (.153)*	.048
Education	-.583 (.076)**	-.144	-.773 (.111)**	-.362	-.468 (.090)**	-.340	-.379 (.168)*	-.176	-.894 (.122)**	-.303
Income	-.079 (.023)**	-.209	-.132 (.034)**	-.147	-.238 (.030)**	-.200	-.133 (.046)	---	-.152 (.038)**	-.152
Party ID	.151 (.017)**	.096	.222 (.025)**	.234	.159 (.023)**	.244	-.018 (.046)	---	.222 (.035)**	.172
Married	.056 (.093)	---	-.086 (.132)	---	.246 (.116)*	.047	-.100 (.191)	---	.468 (.164)**	.051
Gender	.417 (.082)**	---	.857 (.114)**	.166	.643 (.102)**	.158	.352 (.184)	---	.944 (.152)**	.104
Constant	-.422 (.285)		-.991 (.424)**		-.898 (.369)*		-.144 (.533)		-.1705 (.447)**	
Log Likelihood	-1944.88		-1012.05		-1279.02		-422.74		-667.41	
LR	559.4**		222.3**		449.6**		105.0**		121.1**	

Source: National Annenberg Election Study, 2008.

Note: Dependent variable is opinion toward same-sex marriage, coded 0=some type of legal recognition, 1=no legal recognition. Predicted Prob. refers to the predicted probabilities of the variables, calculated by setting the variables at their mean and moving the variable of interest from its minimum value to its maximum value. The comparison category for generation is those born after 1981.\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

As it was in the abortion model, religiosity is a significant and strong predictor of attitudes about same-sex marriage across religious groups. Predicted probabilities reveal that when we move attendance from its minimum (never attending) to its maximum value (attending more than once a week) and hold everything else constant at the mean, attitudes toward same-sex marriage change from 30 to 50 percent in the direction of opposing legal recognition for same-sex relationships. Religiosity is the single biggest predictor of attitudes regarding same-sex marriage in the models (regardless of religious affiliation), pushing respondents in a conservative direction. This effect is especially large among evangelical and African American Protestants.

Turning to the effect of generation on attitudes about same-sex marriage, we again observe significant effects for evangelicals, mainline Protestants and the unaffiliated. Among evangelicals, we find that the oldest generation (born before 1945) holds the most conservative opinions on same-sex marriage. They are the only generation that is significantly more conservative in their attitudes about same-sex marriage in comparison with the youngest generation (those born after 1981). The same pattern obtains among the religiously unaffiliated. Among mainline Protestants, we find that compared to the youngest generation, those born before 1945 and between 1965 and 1982 are significantly more conservative in their attitudes about same-sex marriage.

Overall, we find a mixture of confirming and refuting evidence for our hypotheses concerning the first two dependent variables. Clearly there is overwhelming support for the hypothesis that increased religiosity leads to more conservative attitudes about abortion and same-sex marriage across all four religious groups. However, contrary to our hypothesis about evangelical Protestants, we find a good deal of attitudinal difference across generations. Older generations of evangelicals are more liberal on abortion and more conservative on same-sex marriage in comparison with the youngest generation. For both mainline Protestants and the unaffiliated, we find support for our hypothesis that younger generations are more liberal than older ones regarding same-sex marriage. However, the reverse is true for abortion, which supports the idea that access to innovations such as ultrasound technology might be resulting in more conservative attitudes among younger Americans across the board. We find no attitudinal change across generations of African American Protestants (as hypothesized) or Catholics (as hypothesized for the issue of abortion but not same-sex marriage).

We turn now to an examination of attitudes about two issues that are relatively new to the political agendas of religious groups. First, our results regarding attitudes on stem cell research appear in Table 3. Controls again perform as anticipated, with income and party identification producing large substantive effects in the expected direction across all five categories. As with the old-line issues of

abortion and same-sex marriage, religiosity is a strong, significant predictor of opposition to stem cell research across four of the five religious groups (African American Protestants are the one exception). A one-unit increase in worship attendance results in an increase in the likelihood of opposition to federal funding for stem cell research.

**Table 3: OLS Regression: Effects of Religious Affiliation, Religiosity, and Generation on Attitudes about Stem Cell Research**

	<b>Evangelical Protestant</b> Coeff. (SE)	<b>Mainline Protestant</b> Coeff. (SE)	<b>Catholic</b> Coeff. (SE)	<b>African Am. Protestant</b> Coeff. (SE)	<b>Religiously Unaffiliated</b> Coeff. (SE)
Attendance	.234 (.024)**	.117 (.030)**	.352 (.031)**	.093 (.057)	.162 (.041)**
Born 1965-1982	-.141 (.193)	-.131 (.258)	.029 (.266)	-.129 (.381)	-.377 (.189)*
Born 1946-1964	-.208 (.184)	-.332 (.246)	-.054 (.254)	-.425 (.355)	-.483 (.181)**
Born 1901-1945	-.472 (.187)*	-.464 (.245)	-.062 (.258)	-.620 (.371)	-.582 (.189)**
Rural	.019 (.096)	-.017 (.112)	.042 (.143)	-.368 (.251)	.020 (.130)
Suburban	.036 (.086)	.061 (.092)	-.038 (.093)	-.108 (.185)	.028 (.084)
South	-.134 (.072)	-.062 (.089)	.210 (.103)*	-.008 (.178)	.110 (.101)
Education	-.036 (.067)	-.272 (.087)**	-.256 (.088)**	-.028 (.154)	-.377 (.090)**
Income	-.112 (.021)**	-.066 (.022)**	-.070 (.024)**	-.132 (.044)**	-.072 (.023)**
Party ID	.272 (.016)**	.026 (.018)**	.205 (.019)**	.166 (.047)**	.172 (.022)**
Married	.201 (.087)*	.128 (.092)	.188 (.095)*	.283 (.047)	.097 (.085)
Gender	.066 (.073)	.195 (.083)*	.076 (.084)	.283 (.187)	.159 (.078)*
Constant	1.935 (.265)**	2.348 (.338)**	1.686 (.336)**	2.795 (.521)**	2.782 (.310)**
N	1,866	1,192	1,343	349	1,026
R <sup>2</sup>	.21	.15	.19	.08	.15
F-test	50.21**	18.23**	33.07**	2.49**	15.63**

Source: National Annenberg Election Study, 2008.

Note: Dependent variable is opinion toward the federal government funding stem cell research, coded 1=strongly favor, 2= somewhat favor, 3=neither favor nor oppose, 4=some-what oppose, 5=strongly oppose. The comparison category for generation is those born after 1981.\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ .

Generation has several noteworthy effects on attitudes about stem cell research. First, as we saw regarding abortion, the oldest generation is more likely to espouse liberal views on stem cell research. While more research is needed on this question, our results provide limited evidence that the religious right may be transferring their successful framing of the abortion debate onto the more

specific issue of stem cell research. The second striking finding is that we observe attitudinal differences across generations among the unaffiliated. We find that all three generations (born before 1945, 1946-1964, and 1965-1981) are significantly more likely than the youngest generation to hold conservative views on stem cell research. This result indicates that the youngest generation of religiously unaffiliated Americans is currently the most likely to oppose federal funding for stem cell research, although the actual substantive effect is relatively small. This surprising finding might be due in part to the context of the survey and the particular question asked. The Bush administration had banned the use of federal funds for stem cell research at the time of the survey (2008). Thus the youngest generation had lived most of their adult lives in a context when stem cell research was unfunded, which might have colored their perception of the government's proper role in the matter.

Table 4 presents the results of our analysis of attitudes about the environment. Among the control variables, only education and party identification have significant and strong (and unsurprising) effects. Across all five groups, an increase in education is related to a prioritization of the environment (the liberal position) over the economy (the conservative position), while increasing Republican partisanship leads respondents to favor the economy over the environment. Once again, our hypothesis concerning religiosity is confirmed. Across three of the four religious groups (with Catholics being the exception), an increase in worship attendance is linked to favoring the economy over the environment. This result is a strong indication that worship attendance drives conservatism across a wide range of socio-moral issues. However, the substantive effect is relatively small compared to the effect religiosity has on our other dependent variables, producing predicted probabilities of just 5 to 9 percent across the three religious groups.

**Table 4: Logistic Regression: Effects of Religious Affiliation, Religiosity, and Generation on Attitudes about the Environment**

	Evangelical Protestant		Mainline Protestant		Catholic		African American Protestant		Religiously Unaffiliated	
	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.	Coeff. (SE)	Pred. Prob.
Attendance	.054 (.019)**	.055	.068 (.027)*	.080	.038 (.025)	---	.082 (.039)*	.093	.177 (.035)**	.215
Born 1965-1982	.158 (.152)	---	-.030 (.219)	---	-.072 (.182)	---	.138 (.255)	---	-.133 (.161)	---
Born 1946-1964	.238 (.146)	---	-.096 (.209)	---	.115 (.175)	---	.044 (.245)	---	-.051 (.153)	---
Born 1901-1945	.374 (.150)*	.071	.064 (.210)	---	.263 (.180)	---	.280 (.260)	---	.093 (.162)	---
Rural	.286 (.083)**	.055	.058 (.102)	---	.223 (.104)*	.050	-.170 (.188)	---	-.127 (.113)	---
Suburban	.095 (.069)	---	.042 (.082)	---	.117 (.071)	---	-.166 (.130)	---	.103 (.085)	---
South	.032 (.059)	---	.123 (.078)	---	-.166 (.076)*	-.040	.260 (.124)*	.058	.034 (.091)	---
Education	-.179 (.055)**	-.068	-.486 (.079)**	-.211	-.303 (.064)**	-.132	-.247 (.113)*	-.106	-.657 (.079)**	-.309
Income	-.017 (.017)	---	-.070 (.021)**	-.151	.030 (.090)	---	-.013 (.032)	---	-.065 (.021)**	-.142
Party ID	.174 (.013)**	.206	.306 (.016)**	.412	.246 (.015)**	.329	.105 (.033)**	.134	.312 (.021)**	.436
Married	.091 (.068)	---	.075 (.082)	---	.080 (.073)	---	.000 (.131)	---	.156 (.083)	---
Gender	-.042 (.060)	---	.030 (.072)	---	.039 (.065)	---	-.251 (.124)*	-.057	-.054 (.077)	---
Constant	.19 (.203)		.677 (.292)*		.227 (.240)		.719 (.363)*		.636 (.260)*	
Log Likelihood	-3584.18		-2384.71		-2899.70		-839.25		-2079.57	
LR	263.01**		417.35**		320.82**		30.51**		370.41**	
Pseudo	.04		.09		.06		.02		.10	
N	6,288		3,860		4,613		1,310		3,351	
PRE	4.33%		12.25%		7.52%		2.60%		13.37%	

Source: National Annenberg Election Study, 2008.

Note: Dependent variable is opinion toward the environment, coded as 0=favor the environment 1=favor the economy. Comparison category for generation is those born after 1981. Predicted Prob. refers to the predicted probabilities of the variables. These are calculated by setting the variables at their mean and moving the variable of interest from its minimum value to its maximum value. \* $p<0.05$ ; \*\* $p<0.01$ .

Generational effects are minimal with regard to the environment. The only significant effect we find is for evangelical Protestants. Compared to the youngest generation, the oldest generation of evangelical Protestants is more likely to favor boosting the economy over preserving the environment. Here too, however, the substantive effect is relatively small. While more research is needed in this vein, our finding may represent a shift in attitudes among younger generations of evangelical Protestants in the direction of greater progressivism on issues that lie outside of the traditional socio-moral “toolbox” of the religious right.

Overall, we find surprisingly little attitudinal change across generations with regard to stem cell research and the environment. Although our results confirm the hypothesis that increases in religiosity would result in greater conservatism on these two issues, many of our other hypotheses lack support. We find, contrary to our hypotheses, that younger generations of mainline Protestants, Catholics (on the environment), and the unaffiliated are not more liberal than their older counterparts. Conversely, the youngest generation of the unaffiliated actually espouses more conservative attitudes regarding stem cell research. We also find unexpected changes in evangelical opinions on these two issues. Younger evangelicals are more conservative on stem cell research and more liberal about the environment than their older counterparts. As with our first two dependent variables, we again find no differences across generations of African American Protestants. This result supports our hypothesis (and the broader literature: see Harris 1999) that socio-moral issues are not especially salient issues for many African Americans.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Are there attitudinal differences between younger and older religious and religiously unaffiliated Americans on socio-moral issues? We expected to find evidence of more dramatic generational differences within American religious groups. Instead, the results of our study lead us to mixed, and sometimes surprising, conclusions.

We find that the youngest generation of evangelicals, mainline Protestants, and the unaffiliated are more conservative on abortion than their older counterparts. Conversely, the youngest generation among these three groups is markedly more liberal regarding same-sex marriage. This result shows an increasing divergence in the American public toward these two issues. From the perspective of the religious right’s agenda, some aggregate headway might seem to have been made on the issue of abortion (particularly because younger mainline Protestants and unaffiliated Americans are more conservative) at the expense of losing the battle over same-sex marriage.

Meanwhile, we find very little attitudinal change across religious groups for the two newer socio-moral issues of stem cell research and the environment. One interesting finding, however, is the relative conservatism of younger generations of religiously unaffiliated people with regard to stem cell research. This result is consistent with our analysis of abortion and may highlight the long-term success of the religious right in framing the abortion debate in conservative terms.

One consistent finding across all four dependent variables is the significance of worship attendance as a driver of conservative attitudes in all four religious groups. In almost every model, an increase in worship attendance results in a marked increase in conservatism. This finding supports the contention that religion's effect on political attitudes is quite multidimensional. It is insufficient to consider religious affiliation alone; measures of religiosity must be included as well.

One important implication of our analysis concerns the divergence of opinion among youth in three of the groups we studied (evangelicals, mainline Protestants and the unaffiliated) on abortion and same-sex marriage. On the one hand is the argument that the uptick in conservatism among young people points to successful political framing on the part of the religious right; the movement's efforts to curtail the availability of abortion, especially at the state level, may be shifting public opinion on the issue as well. However, the same cannot be said about the same-sex marriage debate. Here, in the context of the 2008 election, the morally conservative position clearly has lost ground among youth—even among younger evangelicals. At the same time, the absence of evidence of attitudinal change across generations on the newer issues of stem cell research and the environment suggests that although younger evangelicals increasingly are expressing concern about a swath of issues much broader than the standard emphases of the old religious right (Wilcox and Robinson 2010), evangelical leaders seem not to have had much success in transforming attitudes about newer issues.

Overall, our results suggest that socio-moral progressivism so far has failed to captivate sizable numbers of religious American youth, especially those who attend worship services most frequently. We thus may conclude that notwithstanding the conventional wisdom following the 2012 reelection of President Barack Obama, the Republican Party might not be in immediate danger of losing out on one of its key campaign strategies: presenting itself and its candidates as defenders of socio-moral conservatism. Socio-moral conservatism still holds great sway among the most committed American Christians. However, one important caveat must be added. If the number of religiously unaffiliated Americans continues to grow, the smaller number of people who do remain in the pews might well become more uniformly conservative across religious traditions. If

religious affiliation and participation become more achieved than ascribed, religious contexts probably will grow not only leaner but also more sect-like and strict (Finke and Stark 2005; Kelley 1972). Thus it is possible—perhaps even likely—that those who self-select into these contexts will be rather homogeneously conservative. Such a development would not accompany an end to the “culture wars”—it would deepen conflicts over morality in American society.

## ***Appendix***

### **Religious Affiliation, Religiosity and Generation Variables**

Respondents who indicate they are Protestant and “evangelical” or “born again” are coded as evangelical Protestants. Those who say they are Protestant but neither evangelical nor born-again are coded as mainline Protestants. Those who say they are Protestant, evangelical or born-again, and African American are coded as African American Protestants. The survey instrument also includes “atheist” and “no denomination” categories that simulate the unaffiliated category in Steensland and colleagues’ (2000) classification scheme. For the purposes of this study, these religious categories are treated as a series of dummy variables. Religiosity is operationalized using worship attendance, coded as 1-5 (never attend, attend a few times a year, attend once or twice a month, attend once a week, and attend more than once a week). Age was recorded verbatim by the NAES; from this measure we create the four generational categories: those born 1901-1945, born 1946-1964, born 1965-1981, born after 1981.

### **Control Variables**

Gender is coded as zero for female and one for male. Marital status is coded as one for married and zero for not married. Education is operationalized as an ordinal-level variable with three categories: less than a high school diploma, a high school diploma or its equivalent, and more than a high school diploma. Income is operationalized as an ordinal-level variable with ten response categories: less than \$10,000, \$10,000–\$15,000, \$15,000–\$25,000, \$25,000–\$35,000, \$35,000–\$50,000, \$50,000–\$75,000, \$75,000–\$100,000, \$100,000–\$150,000, \$150,000–\$250,000, and more than \$250,000. The urban measure is coded as a series of dummy variables: urban, suburban, and rural. Region is coded as one for a southern state (based on the U.S. Census’s classification scheme) and zero otherwise. Party identification is measured using the traditional 7-point scale (strong Democrat, weak Democrat, lean Democrat, Independent, lean Republican, weak Republican, and strong Republican).

**Table A1: Descriptive Statistics: Religious Affiliation, Generation, and Religiosity**

<b>Total Respondents</b>	23,108
<b>Religious Affiliation (%)</b>	
Evangelical Protestant	32.4
Mainline Protestant	19.0
Catholic	23.4
African Am. Protestant	4.5
Unaffiliated	16.7
<b>Generation (%)</b>	
Born after 1981	6.8
Born 1965-1981	22.0
Born 1946-1964	42.7
Born 1901-1945	28.4
<b>Attendance (%)</b>	
More than once a week	11.8
Once a week	29.6
Once or twice a month	15.4
Few times a year	23.9
Never	19.3

**Table A2: Descriptive Statistics: Generation and Religiosity by Religious Affiliation**

	Evangelical Protestant	Mainline Protestant	Catholic	African Am. Protestant	Religiously Unaffiliated
<b>Total Respondents</b>	8,699	5,596	6,615	2,515	5,056
<b>Generation (%)</b>					
Born after 1981	9.0	10.6	10.5	22.1	14.8
Born 1965-1981	20.5	17.0	20.2	20.0	23.7
Born 1946-1964	40.7	40.2	41.9	35.7	40.1
Born 1901-1945	29.9	32.2	27.7	22.2	21.4
<b>Attendance (%)</b>					
Never	7.4	16.3	11.3	10.0	45.5
Few Times Year	15.4	25.8	21.4	13.6	23.7
Once or twice a month	13.8	17.0	16.1	13.1	7.9
Once a week	34.8	24.7	34.4	24.4	8.3
More than once a week	21.5	5.4	7.4	15.3	2.3

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## СТАВОВИ ПРЕМА ДРУШТВЕНО – МОРАЛНИМ ПИТАЊИМА МЕЂУ РЕЛИГИОЗНОМ И СЕКУЛАРНОМ ОМЛАДИНОМ

### Резиме

Скорији наслови наводе да Американци, а посебно америчка омладина, постају много либералнији у својим ставовима о друштвеним и моралним питањима. Да ли ови трендови најављују да се често помињани “културни рат” ближи крају? Ми испитујемо ову могућност питајући се да ли млађе генерације религиозних и секуларних американаца стварно испољавају више либералне ставове о друштвено – моралним питањима него старије генерације. Ми се фокусирамо на разлике међу верским групама у ставовима према четири питања: абортус, истополни бракови, истраживање матичних ћелија и очување околине. Посебно смо заинтересовани за упоређивање генерацијских разлика у ставовима према “старим” питањима (абортус и истополни бракови) и културни рат са “новим” питањима (истраживање матичних ћелија и околина). Користећи 2008 National Annenberg Election Survey, ми долазимо до закључка да религиозна омладина *није* либералнија од старијих религиозних индивидуа.

**Кључне речи:** религија, омладина, хиљадитари, абортус, истополни бракови, околина, истраживање матичних ћелија

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