THREE PAPERS ON THE POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW MILLENNIUM

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THREE PAPERS ON THE POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF EVANGELICAL PROTESTANTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MILLENNIUM

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ABSTRACT

The politics of evangelical Protestants in America impacts its broader political landscape. For one, evangelical membership remains steady at one in four Americans, even as other religious traditions have declined. Second, prior research has consistently found a correlation between evangelicals and conservative politics, particularly regarding their political attitudes on social issues and partisanship. However, there are plausible expectations, such as cohort replacement, broader cultural influences, and the recent racial and ethnic diversification among evangelicals, that these relationships may be changing, but they have yet to be empirically and rigorously tested. Consisting of three stand-alone papers, this dissertation seeks, then, to answer this broader research question. In the first paper, I address a theoretical and methodological gap in the existing literature on the young evangelicals liberalizing thesis; I propose possible explanations for a Millennial political cohort, then robustly test the liberalizing thesis. Contrary to popular conception, Millennial evangelicals do not constitute a distinctive political generation, but they have moved away from the Gen X cohort’s particularly Republican identification and anti-abortion position. In the second paper, I ask if the cultural tide that has lifted many Americans’ support for marriage equality has moved evangelicals’ stance as well. The results suggest that evangelicals across the board have shifted. To explain, I offer the theories of “dual citizenship,” that evangelicals are navigating a course between their spiritual and civic roles on the issue of same-sex marriage, and religious reinforcement, both of which receive empirical support. In the third paper, I
build a multi-level theory of immigration attitudes at the intersection of religion and race/ethnicity, as one-quarter of evangelicals are now non-white, on whom the research is only emerging. My results support the “dual conversion” hypothesis that the acculturation and religious conversion experiences may blend to form distinctive political views among non-white evangelicals from relatively recent immigrant backgrounds. Together, these findings suggest discernible shifts in evangelical politics, with implications for American politics in the coming decades.
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Phillipians 1:6
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“Society persists despite the mortality of its individual members, through processes of demographic metabolism and particularly the annual infusion of birth cohorts. These may pose a threat to stability but they also provide the opportunity for societal transformation.”

Norman Ryder (1965, 843)

INTRODUCTION

The coming generation and its politics have perennially fascinated scholars who study evangelicalism (Quebedeaux 1980, Hunter 1984, 1993, Smith 1998, Penning and Smidt 2002, Smith and Johnson 2010, Cox 2007, Farrell 2011, PRRI 2012, Smidt 2013, Pelz and Smidt 2015, Diamant and Alper 2017). In the last ten years, popular accounts have often portrayed younger evangelicals as defecting from the conservative, Republican politics and politicized faith of their evangelical elders (Kirkpatrick 2007, PBS 2008, Stepp 2011, Lee 2015). With a broadened agenda, Millennial evangelicals appear to be bluer and greener as well as more compassionate, globally-minded, and tolerant, perhaps heralding a new brand of politics. At its core, the young evangelicals liberalizing thesis is about mass change through generational succession—that is, distinctive rising cohorts transforming society by replacing older generations.

Prima facie, this Millennial evangelical narrative seems persuasive. For one, 9/11 deeply altered the world in which this generation came into political consciousness. Demographically, Millennials are delaying major life markers, such as marriage and parenthood; these “emerging adults” are experiencing an extended period of exploration and freedom, perhaps leading to more open attitudes (Arnett 2000). Moreover, the
everyday milieus of these “digital natives” have become increasingly global, and their consumption of new technologies is increasing contact and changing how they relate to and communicate with one another (a). For Millennial evangelicals specifically, the strident politicized faith of their elders and the mainstream response to it have left a profound impression (Kinnaman and Hawkins 2011).

Empirical studies on this topic have not always clearly articulated young evangelicals’ liberalization as a cohort hypothesis or rigorously tested it as such. Instead, they use analytical approaches that confound cohort effects with age and period influences, but yet make cohort conclusions. For example, the classic approach statically compares younger evangelicals to their elders (e.g., Smith and Johnson 2010, Farrell 2011, Smidt and Pelz 2015, Diamant and Alpers 2017), but it faultily assumes that all evangelicals converged at an earlier point and that divergence indicates a young liberalizing trend (but an older conservatizing shift is plausible, too). Moreover, though the concept of “liberalizing” inherently involves time, only one study in the literature provides a time-trend analysis. Single-year “snapshot” age gaps do not demonstrate actual liberalization. Parsing age, period, and cohort influences matters if the impetus is to understand enduring societal transformation, because age and period effects are often impermanent, but generational influences tend to last (Putnam and Campbell 2010). Whether Millennial evangelicals will usher in a new era of politics depends on the operating temporal influence and whether they constitute a distinctive political cohort. The present study, then, seeks to rigorously test the young evangelicals liberalizing thesis by providing clearer age, period, and cohort theoretical expectations and using more
appropriate analytical methods. Overall, I do not find particularly compelling evidence of a distinctive Millennial evangelical cohort.

**LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL EXPECTATIONS**

*Age, period, and cohort theories.* Do Millennial evangelicals constitute a political generation, not because of their youth or because they live in a more progressive time, but because of their unique political socialization in the new millennium leading an enduring, distinctive collective political orientation? In other words, is Millennial evangelicals’ politics persistently different from those of older cohorts, even after accounting for life-stage and time effects? To address this question, the formal age, period, and cohort (APC) framework provides a useful theoretical and analytical approach.

One explanation for Millennial evangelicals’ politics is their age. In the aging or life-cycle model, life stage and circumstances inform what is politically salient. The political socialization literature has devoted much attention to youth and young adults because early political development is theorized to have a lasting impact. Youth, it has been argued, “is the time to strive for independence, to form an identity, to search for fidelity, and to find the relationship between the self and society. These characteristics are likely to make youth critical of their elders, society, and politics, and this has been interpreted by some to indicate that youth have a ‘predisposition’ to generational conflict, rebellion, and revolution” (Braungart and Braungart 1986, 210). Importantly, the life-cycle theory assumes that individuals are malleable; as they age, their political disposition evolves with accumulated life experiences and/or the biopsychological process. In its pure form, “individuals change, but society does not” (Putnam and
Campbell 2010, 72). Empirically, earlier studies based on cross-national surveys from the 1960s to 1980s have found that young people tend to disapprove of politics, particularly on social issues, drift center and left of center politically, and lean liberal relative to older individuals (Braungart and Braungart 1986, 210). However, with age, individuals “mellow” politically, and on certain issues, e.g., premarital sex and racial prejudice, conservatize (Markus 1983, Harding and Jencks 2003, Sears 1981). Other research indicates that aging partially explains increased civic participation and voting (Strate et al. 1989, Plutzer 2002).

Another explanation looks to society-wide phenomena and events, such as dramatic political regime transitions and pervasive cultural influences, that induce change in individuals across all age groups and *en masse*. Period changes can be rapid, observable within a few years, and remarkable (Campbell and Putnam 2010, 74). The dramatic recent rise in support for marriage equality is an example (Baunach 2011, Baunach 2012). Despite period effects’ suggestive empirical appeal, researchers acknowledge that their theoretical causes and durability are often unclear (Glenn 2005, Harding and Jencks 2003).

By contrast, in the pure generational model, “individuals do *not* change, but society *does*,” as cohort replacement alters its composition and characteristics (Putnam and Campbell 2010, 72). Cohort theory incorporates both life-cycle’s emphasis on early development and period’s on geo-historical and social location. That is, the biological, “the impressionable years,” and the historical, “the spirit of the age,” interact differentially to form unique generations (Mannheim 1952, Ryder 1965, Alwin 1990, Alwin et al. 1991, Braungart and Braungart 1986). Once political disposition is
established, usually during late adolescence or young adulthood, it remains stable over
the life course (Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009, Sears and Funk 1999, Sears and
Collectively, distinctive political socialization forms distinctive generations.

In his classic essay on generations, Mannheim (1952) also argues for an active
consciousness, that “[g]eneration as an actuality… involves…more than mere co-
presence in…a historical and social region;” it requires “participation in the common
destiny of this historical and social unit” (303). Thus, historical circumstances (e.g.,
demographic shifts, urbanization, economic crises, technological advancements, and
cultural phenomena) combined with mobilization agents (e.g., organized networks,
intergroup and political conflicts, charismatic leadership) can bring about a political
generation—that is, “when an age group rejects the existing order, joins together, and
attempts to redirect the course of politics as its generational mission” (Braungart and
Braungart 1986, 217).

Young evangelicals: the coming generation(s). As with the broader cohort
literature, the young liberalizing narrative has, for decades, intrigued scholars who study
evangelicalism, but these “the coming generation” studies have been theoretically unclear
and use analytical methods that do not robustly test the cohort hypothesis, thus
confounding age, period, and cohort effects (Hunter 1984, 1993, Penning and Smidt
2002, Smith and Johnson 2010, Farrell 2011, Pelz and Smidt 2015). For example, in his
seminal work on the orthodoxy-versus-modernity conflict, Hunter (1984, 1993) argues
that education liberalizes and educated young evangelicals in the early1980s
accommodated to secularization in their theology, morality, and politics. However, as
Jelen (1990) points out, Hunter’s analysis is lacking. First, Hunter implicitly assumes that younger evangelicals liberalized by diverging from older evangelicals, but does not explicitly test this hypothesis as he mainly compares younger evangelicals to orthodox standards rather than to older generations. Second, Hunter fails to consider period and life-cycle effects. Jelen (1990) tries to address these deficiencies, using the 1973-1987 General Social Surveys (GSS) to examine the evangelical age gap on a range of issues. Estimating the conservative shares on each issue, he finds that, during this 15-year period, evangelicals liberalized only on two issues, gay rights and feminism, and conservatized on abortion. Moreover, he tests the age difference over time and reports a significant, but stable gap, even after controlling for education and church attendance, which suggests mostly life-cycle, not generational effects.

Penning and Smidt (2002), too, reassess Hunter’s arguments by comparing two (1982 and 1996) generations of evangelical collegians and seminarians. They find that, relative to the 1982 cohort, the 1996 cohort (e.g., the Gen Xers) maintained their theological and moral strength, became more Republican and politically conservative, but liberalized on policy attitudes (except capital punishment). They explain this conservatizing-yet-liberalizing conundrum in terms of relative assessment; that is, although young educated evangelicals became more liberal on issues, they felt more conservative relative to the broader society (140). Interestingly, Penning and Smidt also find that, during this period, the age gap between similarly-educated younger and older evangelicals had narrowed; moreover, even in the mid-1990s, younger evangelicals were becoming skeptical of mixing religion and politics too much, e.g., the overt political influence of religious right groups such as the Christian Coalition.
More recently, Cox (2007) reports that, between 2001 and 2007, young white evangelicals became increasingly dissatisfied with George W. Bush and shifted away from the Republican Party. Smith and Johnson (2010), however, dismiss the young liberalizing thesis. They find, in the 2007 Baylor Religion Survey, that younger and older evangelicals are quite similar on ideology, abortion, gay rights, and the Iraq War; the age gap is only significant on partisanship and environmental attitudes. Thus, relative to young non-evangelicals’ general liberalism, young evangelicals’ conservatism seems even more surprising.

In a more theoretical effort, Farrell (2011), too, intuits generational forces, positing three possible explanations for why younger evangelicals may be liberalizing. The first is demographic: As “emerging adults,” Millennials are enjoying an extended period of freedom and exploration, unfettered by adult roles such as marriage and financial responsibilities, which lead to more liberal tendencies. The second hypothesis is educational: Millennials are simply more educated than previous generations, and education liberalizes. Farrell, however, caveats the education explanation, citing earlier research that suggests the link may not hold for evangelicals. The third explanation is religious: For millennials, moral authority has shifted from God to personal experience, even as evangelicalism itself has become more experiential. Using the 2006 Panel Study of American Religion and Ethnicity (renamed Portrait of American Life Study), Farrell finds that, except for abortion attitudes, younger evangelicals are more liberal than older evangelicals on pornography, cohabitation, premarital sex, and same-sex marriage. Relative to delayed marriage and increased education, the shift in moral authority consistently explains the evangelical age gap on these issues.
Using the 2007 Pew Religious Landscape Survey and the 2012 Religion and Politics Survey, the most recent study on this subject argues explicitly for political socialization and generational change (Pelz and Smidt 2015). Its authors attribute Millennial evangelicals’ politics to the decline of the Christian Right and changes in the evangelical political environment. Alternatively, they posit, young evangelicals may be unchanged because of what social identity theory would suggest. Specifically, highly-religious evangelicals, regardless of age, would be more aware of in- and out-group differences and most likely to value their group membership. As such, they would conform to group-defining political characteristics, but not on non-group issues. Pelz and Smidt then compare the strength of the religion-and-politics relationship for younger evangelicals and older evangelicals. Their summary findings present a nuanced picture. First, religiosity is strongly associated with Republican identification and anti-abortion attitudes among both age groups. However, on non-social issues, e.g., the environment, foreign affairs, and government helping the needy, there is less of a religious connection for younger evangelicals. Among Millennial evangelicals, diminished religious influence is also observed for ideology and views on homosexuality. Specifically, highly-religious Millennial evangelicals are more liberal on these two dimensions compared to similarly-religious older evangelicals. Overall, while religious effects across the generations outweigh the generational effects across the different religiosity levels, the religion-and-politics nexus is the weakest for Millennial evangelicals. The authors thus conclude that Millennial evangelicals are marginally different from their elders, but the political implications of marginality could be significant.
Theoretical expectations. In sum, the literature on liberalizing young evangelicals argues mostly for a generational model, but does not explicitly articulate it or robustly test it as such. Not surprisingly, the results confound age, period, and cohort effects. Theoretically, there are plausible conditions for Millennial evangelicals to emerge as a distinctive political generation. Farrell (2011) and Pelz and Smidt (2015) posit four such scenarios. One, demographically, by delaying major life markers, Millennial evangelicals as exploring “emerging adults” are more open to differing perspectives and enjoy increased contact with individuals from disparate backgrounds. Delayed marriage, for example, seems to impact views on social issues the most (Farrell 2011). Two, Millennials are more educated, and education is linked to tolerance, environmental attitudes, and support for government action (Bibo and Licari 1989, Guth et al. 1995, Barker and Bearce 2013, Froese, Bader, and Smith 2008). Three, Millennial evangelicals’ religiosity has declined (e.g., their views of the Bible, attendance and strength of affiliation, source of moral authority), resulting in diminished religious influences on correlated political dimensions (Pelz and Smidt 2015).

Four, a concept more difficult to operationalize, the political and cultural environment in which Millennial evangelicals grew up is markedly different from that of their predecessors. Pelz and Smidt (2015) write:

The generation of evangelicals prior to Millennials came of political age during an era in which leaders within the evangelical wing of Christianity, after decades of political disengagement, embarked on an extraordinary level of political advocacy to defend traditional position on abortion, marriage and religious freedom. These new religious voices enlisted many evangelicals into the so-called culture war of the 1990s. More importantly, this new environment patterned how evangelicals approached politics, as religiosity became a strong predictor of conservative attitudes on social issues, particularly abortion, as well as support for the Republican Party. And, these relationships were the strongest among those evangelicals who came of voting age during this period of time (3).
For Millennials, they came of age during the Christian Right’s waning days and devolving leadership (Wilcox and Robinson 2010). In its stead, the new leading evangelical voices—such as Rick Warren, who delivered the Convocation Prayer at President Obama’s inauguration, and even Russell Moore, the current president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission—sound more non-partisan and espouse a broader agenda that calls for creation care, global poverty alleviation, and compassionate immigration policy (Van Biema 2008, Golden 2012, Sanneh 2016). During the last ten years, progressive evangelicals also gained influence (Wallis 2005), while the Democratic Party under President Barack Obama began courting evangelicals (Gibbs and Duff 2007, Broder 2008, Goodstein 2008). Moreover, many evangelicals reacted to the overt politicization of their faith and their resultant image as intolerant, hypocritical, and judgmental (“Manifesto” 2008, Kinnaman and Lyons 2012).

The reactionary point is significant because the classic definition of a political generation, as articulated by Mannheim and others, involves a conscious reaction against the status quo and turn toward an alternative vision. From this perspective, one would expect Millennial evangelicals to react by shifting leftward, away from the Republican Party and the highly-politicized social issues. However, it is unclear whether the alternative is an active shift toward the Democratic Party (versus a mere turn away from the Republican Party) and increasingly liberal views on social issues (versus a new emphasis on non-social issues).

To these four conditions, I would include a fifth. Twenty-first-century technology and globalization may be altering Millennials’ modes of communication and even social interaction in ways that impact their political orientation. For example, going on
international missions trips or attending churches with a missional emphasis may have exposed and connected many evangelical youths to the broader world (Fanning 2009, Barna 2008). Broadened social contacts (also through attending public schools and using social media, for example), too, may have mainstreamed younger evangelicals and increased their interactions with diverse social groups and contexts, such as LGBTQ peers. Of course, these pervasive forces may be at work to influence all groups. Thus, the generational thesis hinges on the unique confluence of social, political, historical, cultural, economic, religious, and demographic factors and how they differentially shape each period’s impressionable generation.

Altogether, these conditions are expected to shift Millennial evangelicals’ politics, but a key question is from whom or what and to whom or what? That is, “liberalization” could benefit from a clearer analytical conceptualization, e.g., in an absolute or relative sense against a specific standard or group, e.g., contemporary older evangelicals, previous generations of young evangelicals, or contemporary young non-evangelicals.

If the comparison is with older evangelicals, then one needs to demonstrate either the emergence of an age gap (i.e., both groups held the same position at a prior point) or that the existing age gap has widened over time. A “snapshot” gap is insufficient for a cohort argument, because it does not indicate movement. Yet only Jelen (1990) has analyzed the evangelical age gap over multiple years, and he finds a stable age gap between 1973 and 1987, which he interprets as life-cycle influences (although, he acknowledges that the 15-year analytical window may not be long enough to detect true generational changes). Jelen’s results suggest a plausible narrative of political mellowing with aging. Particularly for evangelicals, religiosity may strengthen that connection. For
example, research suggests that young adults experience diminished religious participation (albeit not necessarily religious salience), but as they move through life, marrying and becoming parents, they return to the church (Uecker, Regnerus, and Vaaler 2007, Wuthnow 2010). These considerations combined with research that links increasing religiosity with conservative politics among evangelicals (Layman 2001, Layman and Hussey 2007, Guth et al. 2006) provide a tenable aging explanation for why younger evangelicals appear to be more liberal, but conservatize as they age. In other words, at any given point, younger evangelicals will appear more liberal than older evangelicals, but over time, there is not a collective leftward shift among evangelicals. Moreover, for younger evangelicals to be liberalizing in the young-versus-old framework, they need to demonstrate an obvious leftward move, and not older evangelicals conservatizing.

A more rigorous cohort test also needs more than a young-versus-old comparison. Current young evangelicals should be compared to previous cohorts of younger evangelicals as well. That is, relative to older generations as young adults, Millennial evangelicals should exhibit distinctive characteristics and political socialization in an altered milieu, leading to a disparate lifelong political trajectory. Moreover, the reactionary impetus would suggest that Millennial evangelicals are more likely to diverge and pursue their own course on the politicized dimensions of their faith—the evangelical-GOP nexus and the “culture war” issues of abortion and same-sex marriage. That said, even a turn away from older cohorts, as current elders or previous young adults, does not default to a leftward embrace; thus, “liberalization” should be measured against non-evangelical young adults as well.
Finally, to detect true cohort contours, the real analytical challenge is to estimate age, period, and cohort effects simultaneously, which is notoriously difficult (Glenn 1976, 1995, Mason et al. 1973, Yang and Land 2013). This paper, then, seeks to address the gaps in the young evangelicals liberalizing literature and offer a more rigorous test.

Hypothesis: Controlling for age and period, Millennials evangelicals (those who turned age 18 after 2000) exhibit distinctive political attitudes and orientation, especially on politicized social issues and partisan identification—that is, a Millennial cohort pattern is observed for these political measures.

DATA & METHODS

Data. As repeated cross-sectional data, the 1972-2014 cumulative General Social Surveys (GSS) are quite appropriate for APC analysis. They are nationally representative, fielded by multistage, stratified probability sampling for generalizable findings and allow researcher to construct “synthetic cohorts” with detailed individual-level variables (Glenn 2005, Yang and Land 2013). Importantly, the “reltrad” method, a categorization of the major religious traditions based primarily on denominational affiliation, could be applied to all the survey years, yielding a consistent evangelical identification over four decades (Steensland et al. 2000). I use the corrected “reltrad” operationalization (Stetzer and Burge 2015).¹ Per convention in the literature and because cohort analysis is more useful for “closed” populations, i.e., whose in- and out-movements are primarily through births and deaths, I examine white evangelicals only (Jelen 1990, Wilcox 1990, Glenn 2005).

¹ Stetzer and Burge (2016) find that the original “reltrad” coding failed to sort respondents who claim “Christian” generally and those who report “interdenominational” as their affiliation into the evangelical category. As a result, the number of “reltrad” evangelicals operationalized with the original coding has been underestimated for numerous survey years particularly since 1998.
Dependent variables. In analyzing Millennial evangelicals’ politics, I focus on partisanship, ideology, abortion and same-sex marriage attitudes (i.e., the two politicized “culture wars” issues) as well as views on environmental and welfare spending (two issues on the broadened “new evangelical” agenda) for a total of eight outcomes.

For partisanship and ideology, I recode “strong Republican,” “not strong Republican,” and “independent, near Republican” as “Republican,” and collapse the analogous responses for Democratic identification. Similarly, for ideology, I recode “extremely conservative,” “conservative,” and “slightly conservative” as “conservative,” and do the same for the analogous “liberal” responses. Because there are political “independent” and “other” and ideological “moderate” categories, a shift away from “Republican” and “conservative” does not default to “Democratic” and “liberal” identification, respectively.

For abortion, I add the six legal scenarios (i.e., a strong chance of serious defect, seriously endanger woman’s health, pregnancy a result of rape, married but wants no more children, low-income cannot afford more children, and unmarried). For tolerance, I add the three civil liberties questions relating to homosexuals (i.e., allowing a homosexual to make a speech in your community and teach in a college or university, not removing a public library book favoring homosexuality written by a homosexual). With these two measures, higher values indicate more progressive positions. The two spending

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2 To capture GSS’s precise wording, which matters in public opinion research, in the remainder of the paper I use “homosexuals” as opposed to LGBTQ individuals, even though the former term has become anachronistic in our contemporary discourse.
questions ask about “improving and protecting the environment” and “welfare”; the responses range, 1 to 3, from “too little,” “about right,” and “too much.”

Independent variables. The key unit of analysis is birth cohorts. Theoretically, generations could be demarcated by general historical conditions, significant events particular to a movement (e.g., feminist and abortion), demographic trends, zeitgeist, or a combination of the biological and socio-historical (Sapiro 1980, Wilcox and Carr 2010, Strauss and Howe 1991, Pew 2015a). The issue/movement-driven approach is theoretically appealing, but there has not been in-depth theoretical work on identifying political periods particular to the evangelicals. Thus, I define Millennials using the standard operationalization in the literature, i.e., individuals born after 1982, who turned 18 beginning in 2000.

While generations usually span 15 to 20 years, for more granular analyses, I code cohorts in two ways: one, by the decade in which they turned age 18 (i.e., the ’90s, ’80s, ’70s, ’60s, etc.) and in five-year birth year intervals. In the following sections, I intentionally use the term “cohort” to indicate these shorter intervals and “generations” to mean longer spans, for example, 15 to 20 years. I also use the term “come of age” technically, referring to when respondents turned age 18. In the paper, I focus primarily on the cohorts who came of age in the 1960s and thereafter, because the ’60s cohort is the oldest one in the GSS for which there are data on cohort members in their twenties for a fairer comparison with Millennials (for example, the youngest age in the ’50s cohort is 31, but the oldest age among Millennials is 32, so there would be no age overlap with the old cohorts). In the cumulative GSS, among white evangelicals (by the “reltrad”

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3 The GSS prompt for the spending questions states: We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively.
definition), there are 316 Millennials ('00/'10s cohort⁴), 863 respondents in '90s cohort, 1760 in the '80s cohort, 2614 in the '70s cohort, and 2464 in the '60s cohort, but the cohort sizes are smaller for some of the dependent variables because of GSS’s split ballot design.⁵

Another key independent variable is age; per convention in the cohort literature, I operationalize “young” as under age 30 in most of the analyses. In one set of analysis, where I compare Millennial evangelicals to previous cohorts of young adults (please see below section for description), I use age 32 as the ceiling because the oldest Millennial in the cumulative 1972-2014 GSS is age 32 and I can compare all Millennials as young adults to earlier cohorts of young adults in the same age bracket. In the multivariate Hierarchical Age-Period-Cohort Cross-Classified Random-Effects Models (HAPC-CCREMs, please see below section for description), I include the conventional covariates: gender (dichotomous), age (white evangelical group centered⁶, continuous and squared), education (dichotomous: college degree), marital status (dichotomous: married), parental status (dichotomous), region (dichotomous: South), urbanicity (dichotomous: city), logged real income (white evangelical group centered, continuous), religious attendance (dichotomous: weekly), strength of religious affiliation (dichotomous: strong), political party identification (categorical⁷: Republican, Democrat,

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⁴ Because there are only 22 white Millennial evangelicals who turned age 18 in the 2010s, I include them with the 2000s cohort.
⁵ By dependent variable, there are 315 Millennials evangelicals for the party ID variables, 288 for the ideology variables, 172 for abortion, 185 for gay rights tolerance, 144 for environmental spending, and 145 for welfare spending.
⁶ For continuous variables, the literature recommends centering; there are several ways to center, and I use the group mean for white evangelicals, as I expect mean age and real income to vary by race and religious tradition.
⁷ The first category listed after the parenthesis for the categorical variables is the omitted category.
Independent, other), and political ideology (categorical: conservative, moderate, liberal). Cohorts are grouped in five-year intervals, and period is specified as single survey years.

**Analytical approach.** Analytically for each dependent variable, I first test the evangelical age gap (younger than age 30 versus age 30 and older) between 1972 and 2014, in pooled five-year intervals. The emergence or widening of an age gap driven by younger evangelicals trending left, not older evangelicals trending right, could support a liberalizing narrative. On the other hand, a stable age gap would suggest aging/life-cycle influences. Moreover, this perspective allows us to observe not only the evangelical age gap over time, but how younger and older evangelicals compare to previous generations of younger and older evangelicals. This aerial view can also reveal period influences, if all age groups move in a similar pattern. I use OLS to test the statistical significance of the age gap, regressing an “<age 30” dummy on the dependent variables for each pooled five-year period (partisan and ideology are estimated as proportions and attitudinal measures as mean scores).

Second, I test the cohort gap comparing Millennial evangelicals to previous cohorts of young evangelicals. As noted earlier, because the top age for the Millennials is age 32 in the analytical sample (i.e., individuals born in 1982 and thereafter), for this second of set analysis, I use the age 18 to 32 range to define “young adults.” Again, I use OLS to test the statistical difference between Millennial evangelicals and previous cohorts of white young evangelicals. Effectively, this method controls for age effects, and statistical differences between Millennials and older cohorts of young adults could suggest a distinct Millennial cohort.8

---

8 I also test the cohort gap for older evangelicals across the decades, which serves as a proxy period control.
Third, I test the evangelical gap among white young adults over the decades. I regress an “evangelical” dummy on the eight dependent variables for white young adults under age 30 for each five-year period. If the evangelical gap among young adults narrows because Millennial evangelicals are trending left, not because non-evangelical Millennials are moving to the right, then the shift could potentially point to Millennial evangelicals liberalizing.

Estimating independent cohort influences requires controlling for age, period and cohort simultaneously (Yang and Land 2013). However, doing so encounters the classic APC identification problem: the exact linear dependency between age, cohort, and period (i.e., age + birth year/cohort = period) when these three variables’ units are based on the same length of time, such as one or five years. Moreover, the independent effects of age, period, and cohort on a specific outcome may not be linear or additive (Yang and Land 2013). For decades, APC analysts have attempted to overcome the identification problem with various approaches based on assumptions and constraints that may or may not be theoretically justifiable and result in biased estimates, e.g., dropping one of the time variables, constraining the variables in different time intervals, or transforming them into nonlinear relationships (Yang and Land 2006, Yang 2008, Yang and Land 2008, 2013).

Yang and Land argue that the Hierarchical Age-Period-Cohort Cross-Classified Random-Effects Model (HAPC-CCREM) overcomes these obstacles by exploiting the structure of repeated cross-sectional data. This model also offers substantive and statistical advantages relative to the fixed-effects model (Yang and Land 2006, Yang and Land 2013). Essentially, repeated cross-sectional data are multilevel designs, in which “individual-level observations are nested in, and cross-classified simultaneously by, the
two higher-level social contexts defined by time period and birth cohort” (Yang and Land 2013, 192). In other words, “respondents are members simultaneously in cohorts and periods” (Yang and Land 2006, 86). In contrast to a fixed-effects model, a mixed-effects (or hierarchical) approach: 1) does not assume fixed age, period, and cohort effects, thus resolving the linear, additive problem); 2) reveals statistically how contextual historical and cohort forces could influence individuals; and 3) allows for the inclusion of individual and contextual explanatory covariates.

The basic HAPC model belongs to the class of mixed linear models. The Level 1 model specifies individual-level explanatory and outcome variables, with an intercept, fixed slope coefficients, and a random error term. The Level 2 model uses Level 1 coefficients as outcomes and includes intercepts and random-effects coefficients for period and cohort. I specify the general model as follows:

Level 1 or “within-cell” model: 9
(EQ1) \( \text{Outcome}_{ijk} = \beta_{0jk} + \beta_1 \text{AGE}_{ijk} + \beta_2 \text{AGE}^2_{ijk} + \beta_3 \text{IDEOLOGY}_{ijk} + \beta_4 \text{PARTY ID}_{ijk} + \beta_5 \text{MALE}_{ijk} + \beta_6 \text{MARRIED}_{ijk} + \beta_7 \text{PARENT}_{ijk} + \beta_8 \text{COLLEGE}_{ijk} + \beta_9 \text{SOUTH}_{ijk} + \beta_{10} \text{ATTEND}_{ijk} + \beta_{11} \text{AFFILIATION STRENGTH}_{ijk} + \beta_{12} \text{FAMILY INCOME}_{ijk} + e_{ijk} \)

Level 2 or “between-cell” model:
(EQ2) \( \beta_{0jk} = \gamma_0 + \mu_0j + \nu_0k \)

Combined model:
(EQ3) \( \text{Outcome}_{ijk} = \gamma_0 + \beta_1 \text{AGE}_{ijk} + \beta_2 \text{AGE}^2_{ijk} + \ldots + \mu_0j + \nu_0k + e_{ijk} \)

and \( i=1, 2, \ldots, n_{jk} \) individuals within cohort \( j \) and period \( k \);
\( j=1, \ldots, 22 \) five-year birth cohorts\(^{10}\)
\( k=1, \ldots, [21-28] \) survey periods\(^{11}\)

---

9 In the party identification and ideology models, I do not include party ID or ideology, respectively, as a covariate. Also, I do not include feelings about Bible because the GSS only began to survey this question in 1984.

10 The oldest birth cohort in the HAPC-CCREMs was born between 1886 and 1890 and turned 18 between 1904 and 1908. The youngest birth cohort was born between 1991 and 1996 and turned age 18 between 2009 and 2014.
In this random-intercept model, only the Level 1 intercept varies randomly from cohort to cohort and period to period, and the Level 1 coefficients, or slopes, do not. $\beta_{0jk}$ is the “cell mean,” or the average of all respondents in birth cohort $j$ and surveyed in period $k$. The $\beta$s are the Level 1 fixed effects or coefficient estimates of the individual-level explanatory variables; $\gamma_0$, the model intercept, is the grand mean of all the individuals; and $\mu_{0j}$ is the contribution of cohort $j$ averaged over all periods, or the residual random effect of cohort $j$ on $\beta_{0j}$, in other words, the relative cohort effect. Similarly, $\nu_{0k}$ is the contribution of period $k$ averaged over all cohorts, or the relative period effect (Yang and Land 2013, 197). The HAPC model specified as logistic regressions can be used for dichotomous dependent variables. For the attitudinal dependent variables, the HAPC-CCREMs are OLS. In this paper, I report the age and period estimates, but focus on the cohorts, particularly those born after 1981.

While recent studies have utilized the repeated-cross sectional survey data and the HAPC model to examine political outcomes (e.g., Frenk, Yang, and Land 2013, Schwadel and Garneau 2014), I recognize that the APC methodological debate is far from settled (Glenn 2005, Luo 2013). Indeed, to precisely and neatly estimate the independent effects of age, period, and cohort may indeed be “futile” (Glenn 1976) and certainly is not the intent of this paper (nor is it my objective to advance this methodological debate or present a primarily methodological exercise). The simple aim here is not to adjudicate among statistical APC strategies, but to utilize the APC framework to rigorously test a thesis that has been hitherto mostly assumed or examined with methods inadequate for

---

11 The partisan, ideology, and spending variables have 28 survey periods (i.e., years) in the HAPC-CCREMs, beginning with 1974, because that is the first survey year with data on ideology. Abortion attitudes have 27 periods, and gay rights tolerance, 24 periods.
the claims implicitly or explicitly stated. As such, I am guided by one APC scholar’s advice: abandon the quest to separate the APC effects with precision and absolute certainty for “reasonable judgements about the effects… using theory, side information, common sense, and various kinds of statistical analysis” (Glenn 2005, 23).

FINDINGS

Partisan identification. Figure 1.1A presents the partisan age gap from the 1972 to 2014. Over these four decades, all white evangelicals became more Republican and less Democratic. It may be interesting to observe that, in the 1970s, white evangelicals were more blue than red, and the Republican surge of the 1980s appears to have moved younger evangelicals more than older evangelicals, particularly at its peak in the early 1990s when the then younger evangelicals were the most Republican (about 60 percent) cohort of the entire analytical sample. Since then, younger evangelicals have shifted away from Republican identification (a dip in the late 1990s and again in the early 2010s). Interestingly, for the first time in the GSS, young evangelicals in the new millennium moved toward the Democratic Party. As a result, in 2010-14, the Republican age gap has widened and is marginally significant, due primarily to younger evangelicals becoming less Republican. At the same time, the Democratic age gap has also disappeared, due to younger evangelicals becoming more Democratic since the early 2000s and older evangelicals becoming slightly less so (Table 1.1).
Table 1.1: Evangelical Age Gap over the Decades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.18</td>
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<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
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<td>0.44</td>
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<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.14</td>
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<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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<td>2010-14</td>
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<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.06</td>
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Evangelical Age Gap over the Decades (cont’d)

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<td>1985-89</td>
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<td>0.17</td>
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<td>0.24</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>1.33</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-94</td>
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<td>3.47</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.37</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1995-99</td>
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<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.88</td>
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<td>0.41</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.37</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-04</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-09</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>-0.95</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-14</td>
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<td>0.07</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: General Social Surveys

Note: For simpler presentation, bold indicates statistical significance at the p<0.05; italic indicates marginal statistical significance at the p<0.10 level; standard errors, p-values, and Ns are available upon request.

Fig. 1.1A. Partisan Age Gap, White Evangelicals, 1972-2014
That said, in 2010-14, nearly one in two Millennial evangelicals was still a Republican, but only one in four, a Democrat (Table 1.2). Compared to earlier cohorts of young evangelicals (age 32 and younger here), Millennials are marginally less Republican than the '90s cohort, about the same as the '80s cohort, and significantly more so than the '70s and '60s cohorts (Table 1.2, Figure 1.2A); by contrast, there are no analogous cohort differences among older evangelicals (results not shown), which serves as a period control, meaning that, accounting for both age and period, cohort effects seem to persist.

**Table 1.2: Young Evangelical Cohort Gap**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohorts (Decade turned age 18)</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>Democratic</th>
<th>Conservative</th>
<th>Liberal</th>
<th>Abortion</th>
<th>Tolerance</th>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Welfare</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share</td>
<td>Diff</td>
<td>Share</td>
<td>Diff</td>
<td>Share</td>
<td>Diff</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Diff</td>
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<tr>
<td>'00/10s</td>
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<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: General Social Surveys (weighted)*

*Note: For simpler presentation, bold indicates statistical significance at the p<0.05 and italic indicates marginal statistical significance at the p<0.10 level from the '00/'10 cohort); standard errors, p-values, and Ns are available upon request.*

Fig. 1.2A. Partisan and Ideological Cohort Gap, Young Adult White Evangelicals, by Decade Turned Age 18
In 2010-14, the Republican evangelical gap among white young adults also narrowed, primarily because young evangelicals became less Republican, a pattern not observed among their non-evangelical peers (Figure 1.3A, Table 1.3). The Democratic evangelical gap, on the other hand, has been vacillating since the early 2000s, mainly due to a Democratic dip among young non-evangelicals in the late 2000s. Altogether, the partisanship findings suggest that, since 2010, young evangelicals are shifting toward the Democratic Party.

**Table 1.3: Evangelical Gap among Young White Adults over the Decades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1972-74</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-79</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td><strong>0.07</strong></td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td><strong>0.07</strong></td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-84</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.04</td>
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<td>0.37</td>
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<td><strong>0.13</strong></td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-89</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.29</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-94</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td><strong>0.15</strong></td>
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<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td><strong>0.09</strong></td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-99</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td><strong>0.20</strong></td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td><strong>0.17</strong></td>
<td>0.14</td>
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<td>2000-04</td>
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<td><strong>0.21</strong></td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-09</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td><strong>0.26</strong></td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td><strong>0.20</strong></td>
<td>0.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010-14</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td><strong>0.18</strong></td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.39</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abortion Mean Score</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-79</td>
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<td>1980-84</td>
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<td>1985-89</td>
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<td>1995-99</td>
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<td>2010-14</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>-1.13</td>
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</table>

Source: General Social Surveys (weighted)

Note: For simpler presentation, **bold** indicates statistical significance at the p<0.05 and italic indicates marginal statistical significance at the p<0.10 level; standard errors, p-values, and Ns are available upon request.
Controlling for age, period, and the other covariates, the overall cohort effect seems to be marginally significant for partisan identification among white evangelicals, per covariance parameter estimates in the HAPC-CCREM (Table 1.4). While there are aging, or life-cycle, effects particularly for Democratic identification, the more compelling temporal influence on partisanship appears to be period effects. Figure 1.4A presents the cohort effects on Republican and Democratic identification specifically. Overall, the “grand mean” estimates on the Republican and Democratic shares among the entire analytical sample of white evangelicals are 53 percent and 34 percent, respectively. Observing the specific birth cohorts (grouped by five-birth-year intervals), it appears that the cohorts who “came of age,” i.e., turned age 18, in the late 1970s through the late 1990s were particularly Republican, with the ’84–’88 (second Reagan administration) cohort being the most GOP. More recent cohorts, however, have declined in their Republican identification, with the Millennials hovering around the “grand mean” of the analytical sample in their “Republican-ness” and similar to evangelicals who came of age in the 1960s. From a Democratic identification perspective, the youngest cohort, those
who came of age during the Obama administration (2009-2014), appears to have become more Democratic (albeit not significantly so in a statistical sense). Altogether, the evidence on partisanship does seem to support my hypothesis: Millennial evangelicals are shifting away from the particularly Republican identification of their immediate predecessors and toward the Democratic Party.

| Table 1.4: Hierarchical Age-Period-Cohort Cross-Classified Random-Effects Models—Age, Period, & Cohort Effects—White Evangelicals |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Age             | Republican      | Democrat        | Conservative    | Liberal         | Abortion        | Gay Rights      | Environment     | Welfare         |
|                 | Estimate        | Estimate        | Estimate        | Estimate        | Estimate        | Estimate        | Estimate        | Estimate        |
| 1974            | -0.003          | 0.007           | 0.009           | -0.009          | 0.007           | -0.011          | 0.007           | 0.001           |
|                  | 0.0004          | -0.0002         | -0.0004         | 0.0001          | 0.0001          | -0.0003         | 0.0000          | 0.0001          |
| 1975            | 0.46            | 0.43            | 0.44            | 0.15            | 3.65            | 2.26            | 1.62            | 2.42            |
| 1976            | 0.42            | 0.45            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.87            | 1.70            | 2.30            |                |
| 1977            | 0.42            | 0.44            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.93            | 1.93            | 2.57            |                |
| 1978            | 0.44            | 0.46            | 0.44            | 0.15            | 4.21            | 1.69            | 2.55            |                |
| 1979            | 0.46            | 0.39            | 0.44            | 0.15            | 3.72            | 1.68            | 2.60            |                |
| 1980            | 0.41            | 0.41            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 4.04            | 1.78            | 2.57            |                |
| 1981            | 0.48            | 0.41            | 0.44            | 0.13            | 3.95            | 1.82            | 2.75            |                |
| 1982            | 0.43            | 0.47            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.53            | 1.65            | 2.36            |                |
| 1983            | 0.50            | 0.39            | 0.44            | 0.12            | 3.76            | 2.08            | 1.57            | 2.40            |
| 1984            | 0.57            | 0.37            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.81            | 1.90            | 1.52            | 2.42            |
| 1985            | 0.53            | 0.35            | 0.44            | 0.13            | 3.63            | 2.03            | 1.56            | 2.39            |
| 1986            | 0.53            | 0.38            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.63            | 2.03            | 1.56            | 2.39            |
| 1987            | 0.57            | 0.35            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.59            | 2.08            | 1.50            | 2.26            |
| 1988            | 0.57            | 0.33            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.80            | 2.29            | 1.41            | 2.37            |
| 1989            | 0.55            | 0.36            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.70            | 2.11            | 1.46            | 2.32            |
| 1990            | 0.62            | 0.28            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.69            | 2.17            | 1.44            | 2.33            |
| 1991            | 0.58            | 0.31            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.61            | 2.30            | 1.65            | 2.51            |
| 1992            | 0.58            | 0.30            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.89            | 2.32            | 1.58            | 2.60            |
| 1993            | 0.61            | 0.28            | 0.44            | 0.12            | 3.64            | 2.45            | 1.70            | 2.56            |
| 1994            | 0.55            | 0.28            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.40            | 2.41            | 1.59            | 2.41            |
| 1995            | 0.58            | 0.26            | 0.44            | 0.12            | 3.42            | 2.55            | 1.58            | 2.33            |
| 1996            | 0.59            | 0.27            | 0.44            | 0.15            | 3.24            | 2.39            | 1.53            | 2.41            |
| 2000            | 0.58            | 0.26            | 0.44            | 0.12            | 3.23            | 2.63            | 1.73            | 2.32            |
| 2001            | 0.59            | 0.25            | 0.44            | 0.13            | 3.24            | 2.54            | 1.50            | 2.33            |
| 2002            | 0.57            | 0.29            | 0.44            | 0.12            | 3.38            | 2.58            | 1.60            | 2.35            |
| 2003            | 0.55            | 0.30            | 0.44            | 0.13            | 3.38            | 2.71            | 1.70            | 2.38            |
| 2004            | 0.59            | 0.26            | 0.44            | 0.13            | 3.46            | 2.82            | 1.74            | 2.39            |
| 2005            | 0.60            | 0.24            | 0.44            | 0.12            | 3.30            | 2.99            | 1.68            | 2.53            |
| 1904-08         | 0.54            | 0.33            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.60            | 2.26            | 1.62            | 2.42            |
| 1909-13         | 0.54            | 0.31            | 0.44            | 0.14            | 3.59            | 2.27            | 1.61            | 2.42            |
|-------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Estimate    | 0.53    | 0.56    | 0.55    | 0.52    | 0.47    | 0.48    | 0.49    | 0.50    | 0.49    | 0.54    | 0.51    | 0.54    | 0.58    | 0.57    | 0.59    | 0.58    | 0.57    | 0.54    | 0.52    | 0.52    |
| Ns          | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    | 9838    |

Source: General Social Surveys (weighted)

For simpler presentation, bold indicates that the estimate is statistically significant at the p<0.05 level, and italics indicate that the estimate is marginally significant at the p<0.10 level. Standard errors, p-values, and Ns are available upon request. Level 1 covariates include gender, marital status, parenthood, educational attainment, region, city, party identification, ideology, religious attendance, strength of religious affiliation, and real income.

Fig. 1.4A. Partisan Cohort Effect, White Evangelicals

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**Ideology.** Figure 1.1B presents four decades of ideological age-gap trends. Overall, it appears that all evangelicals became slightly more conservative and slightly less liberal since the 1970s, and that young evangelicals have been generally less conservative and more liberal than older evangelicals, intimating conservatizing aging influences. The magnitude of the age gap, however, has varied over the decades, driven primarily by younger evangelicals’ vacillation. Specifically, in the most recent periods, the gap widened in the early 2000s, because young evangelicals became less conservative, but then surged in conservatism during the late 2000s, only to dip again in the early 2010s. However, this fluctuation in conservativism among young evangelicals is not observed in their liberal identification, as both younger and older evangelicals have thus far held steady in their liberal ideology in the new millennium.

From a cohort perspective, compared to previous cohorts of young evangelicals, Millennials are no different from the ’90s and ’80s cohorts, but more conservative/less liberal than the ’70s and ’60s cohorts (Table 1.2, Figure 1.2A), a pattern not observed among the different cohorts of older evangelicals (results not shown). Figures 1.3B and Table 1.3 do not suggest that the ideological evangelical gaps among white young adults in the new millennium are narrowing. Again, the outlier seems to be a conservative bump (49 percent) among young evangelicals in 2005-09; disregarding that data point, conservatism among young evangelicals in the new millennium may have declined slightly after peaking in the late 1990s, but liberalism is by no means surging among young evangelicals, or young non-evangelicals, for that matter.
Once age and period, along with the covariates, are considered, the temporal influence that remains is aging or life-cycle (albeit there are some small, but non-significant, period variations in liberalism over time, and the overall period effects are marginally significant, Table 1.4). Indeed, the cohort lines from Table 1.4 for conservative and liberal ideology among white evangelicals would be virtually flat (not
graphed), and the covariance parameter estimates suggest an overall lack of cohort effect as well. In sum, the evidence is un compelling for a distinct ideological Millennial cohort.

Abortion. Recent studies find that younger generations, especially Millennials, are more anti-abortion than previous generations, driven, it seems, by Republican women (Wilcox and Carr 2010, Ladd and Wilcox 2011). *A priori*, one would expect this trend to be more pronounced among Millennial evangelicals because evangelicals are among the staunchest abortion opponents (Hoffman and Johnson 2005, Jelen and Wilcox 2003). At first glance, Figure 1.1C presents an unsurprising picture. Overall, all evangelicals have become more pro-life since the 1970s; both younger and older evangelicals dropped about one point on the six-point scale. The age gap has been mostly insignificant, except during the late 1970s and early 1980s, when younger evangelicals appeared slightly more pro-choice (by four-tenth of a point). By now a familiar story, sometime in the 1990s, younger evangelicals became less pro-choice than older evangelicals, and the gap widened in the new millennium. A closer look, however, detects another a 2005-09 conservative “blip” among young evangelicals, as they expressed particularly pro-life views during this period, especially so because in 2010-14 younger evangelicals became more pro-choice (at least in mean score), compared to younger evangelicals in the early 2000s. This pro-life “blip” in 2005-09 is not found among Millennial non-evangelicals, who also trended ever-so-slightly toward pro-choice (Figure 1.3C). Together with young evangelicals’ 2005-09 ideological conservative bump discussed in the previous section, these two conservatizing points no longer seem to be a mere data artifact. From a cohort perspective, Millennials’ average abortion attitudes are statistically similar to

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12 Tabulating the data further, the conservative data seem to come from 2008.
those of the ’90s cohort, but less pro-choice than those of the earlier cohorts (by contrast, among older evangelicals, there are no cohort differences) (Figure 1.2B).

Fig. 1.1C. Abortion and Gay Rights Tolerance Age Gap, White Evangelicals, 1973/4-2014

Fig. 1.2B. Attitudinal Cohort Gap, Young Adult White Evangelicals, by Decade Turned Age 18
Age, period, and cohorts estimates from the HAPC-CCREM in Table 4 suggest mainly period effects on abortion attitudes, a near one-point drop between 1973 and 2014, which is consistent with Figure 1.1C; aging, however, does not appear to be influential at all. For cohort effects, while the covariance parameter estimate on the overall effect is not statistically significant, a closer inspection of the more recent cohort estimates in Table 1.4 and Figure 1.4B reveal that the cohort who came of age in ’94-’98 is particularly, in fact the most, pro-life group of evangelicals (3.5 on the scale), and the ’99-’03 cohort is marginally distinctive (p-value=0.054). After them, the younger cohorts, who turned age 18 in the new millennium, seem to be less pro-life, with the youngest cohort reverting to the grand mean (3.7) of the white evangelical analytical sample. Altogether, like the partisan story, on abortion attitudes, the distinctive cohort does not appear to be Millennials, but an earlier group. However, as hypothesized, Millennials are shifting away from older cohorts on this politicized dimension.
Fig. 1.4B. Abortion Attitudes Cohort Effect, White Evangelicals

Gay rights tolerance. Relative to partisanship, ideology, and abortion attitudes, patterns in gay rights tolerance seem straightforward. Between 1972 and 2014, all evangelicals became more tolerant, with young evangelicals increasing about one point on the three-point scale and older evangelicals gaining more than one point (Figure 1.1C). An age gap has always existed, narrowing through the 1970s and 1980s until non-significance in the early 1990s, widening again in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and then tapering somewhat in the last ten years. Not surprisingly, successive cohorts of young evangelicals have become increasingly tolerant, particularly the ’80s, ’90s and ’00/’10 cohorts (Table 1.2, Figure 1.2B), but successive older evangelicals have become more tolerant, too, suggesting period effects (results not shown). Moreover, the evangelical gap among white young adults, too, have narrowed slightly, starting in the late 1990s and cut by more than one-half since the early 1970s. Both groups moved, but young evangelicals moved a tad more.
Overall, these patterns are not suggestive of cohort effects, but more indicative of aging and period effects. The HAPC-CCREM results, which control for all three temporal factors, further bolster this interpretation; age and age-squared are both statistically significant, with a sizable age coefficient estimate. Period-wise, every survey year since 2000, except 2004 (which is consistent with the ballot initiatives and the elections of that year) is particularly and increasingly tolerant, reaching the full three points by 2014. However, graphing the cohort estimates would yield a flat line at the “grand mean” of the analytical white evangelical sample. Thus, on gay rights tolerance, though Millennial evangelicals may be the most tolerant cohort yet, their tolerance is primarily a result of youth and period effects.

*Environmental spending.* The empirical literature on religion and environmentalism has generally shown a negative correlation (Guth et al. 1995, Sherkat and Ellison 2007, Barker and Bearce 2013); in general, evangelicals seem less environmentally concerned (Clements, McCright, and Xiao 2014). Recent research, however, shows greening attitudes particularly among the younger generation (Smith and Johnson 2010, Clements, McCright and Xiao 2014). Environmentalism encompasses a wide range of issues, so it may be worthwhile to note that the GSS question here regards spending to improve and protect the environment. Table 1 shows that evangelicals’ views on environmental spending have remained stable over the last four decades, with a consistent, statistically-significant age gap, except in 2005-09, and more progressive younger views. Over time, while older evangelicals show some fluctuation, younger evangelicals’ attitudes remain flat, a trend confirmed by the non-significant differences between Millennial evangelicals’ and earlier young evangelicals’ views (Table 1.2,
Figure 1.2B). Cohort differences among older evangelicals are not significant either (results not shown). Table 1.3 reveals a similarly stable pattern among white young adults in general; an evangelical gap has mostly persisted (except from the late 1990s to the early 2000s), widening slightly in the most recent years, with young non-evangelicals expressing more progressive spending attitudes and varying slightly over the four decades. Accounting for age, period, cohort, and the other covariates, there are indications of aging and especially period, but not cohort, effects; only one cohort, those who came of age in the late 1960s, seems particularly (i.e., statistically) pro-environmental spending. As such, the results here do not support a cohort thesis on environmental spending, but if one merely focused on the recent age gap, that myopic view would show a widening gap, but not its source in older evangelicals trending right, thereby leading to a misinterpreted liberalizing Millennial cohort. In all, that Millennials did not shift on environmental spending, a relatively non-politicized evangelical issue, supports my hypothesis.

Welfare spending. On welfare, evangelicals seem generally anti-spending, averaging between 2 and 2.5 on the three-point scale, with younger evangelicals slightly more pro-spending than their evangelical elders in the 1980s and early 1990s (Table 1.1). In recent years, the age gap widened again (marginally significant in 2010-14), due to a pro-spending move among young evangelicals in the late 2000s and an anti-spending shift among older evangelicals in the early 2010s. Testing cohort differences (Table 1.2, Figure 1.2B), Millennials are not particularly distinct from the ’90s, ’80s, or ’70s cohorts, but more pro-spending than the ’60s cohort (which is generally the case as well among different cohorts of older evangelicals, results not shown). In the 2000s, young white
evangelicals lagged behind their non-evangelical peers in supporting welfare spending, but in 2010-14, both groups conservatized, averaging similarly anti-spending views (Table 1.3). Finally, controlling for all three temporal factors in the HAPC-CCREM, the effects appear to be mostly from aging and period (Table 1.4). The only significant cohort, slightly favoring “too little” spending, came of age in the late 1970s. In all, despite the marginal age gap in recent years, the evidence on a Millennial cohort story for welfare spending is not persuasive.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Are young evangelicals liberalizing? This question perennially grabs media headlines and engages scholarly attention. For religion scholars, it involves the vitality of the American religious life, and for political analysts, the implications could also reshape the American political landscape. If cohort idiosyncrasies are enduring and Millennial evangelicals are diverging from the politically conservative and Republican path of their elders, then “demographic metabolism” could alter evangelical and American politics in the coming decades.

Previous studies on this topic intuited this potent impetus for socio-political change and sought to assess younger evangelicals’ political orientation. However, their analytical methods are insufficient for a rigorous cohort analysis. Time-trend comparisons between contemporaneous young and old, current young and previous young, as well as evangelicals and non-evangelicals, who serve as a “liberal standard,” are needed for robust inferences about real cohort changes. I employ all these methods and the HAPC-CCREM, which simultaneously controls for age, period, and cohort, to
test the liberalizing Millennial evangelical cohort thesis on eight political outcomes, hoping that the sum of analysis will provide more insightful and confident conclusions about Millennial evangelicals’ politics.

In sum, then, the evidence suggests that cohort influences are mostly absent or marginal, except on partisanship and abortion attitudes. However, on these measures, the distinctive cohorts are not the Millennials, but their predecessors, the Gen Xers—specifically the ’74-’78 and ’84-’93 cohorts, who are the most Republican, and the ’94-’98 cohort, who are the most pro-life. In other words, emerging Millennial contours are drawn more from the younger cohort shifting away from their immediate elders, e.g., a potentially reactionary move, than their own distinctive outlining. The real cohort story appears to lie with Gen Xers. That said, the “leftward” shifts are relative and small, and not a run toward the Democratic Party or pro-choice movement.

But even marginal changes could be profound. Will there be an enduring shift in evangelical partisanship, i.e., a de- and realignment, and abortion attitudes as Millennials replace older cohorts? The answer also depends on aging and period effects, and Table 4 suggests both are operating. When I graph (not shown) partisanship and abortion attitudes over age, i.e., creating a synthetic life-cycle, for each cohort (including the two most Republican cohorts and the one particularly pro-life cohort), I find variability, but generally conservatizing aging and unique life-cycle patterns for the cohorts. Thus, the durability of Millennial evangelicals’ partisanship and abortion attitudes is uncertain, but a mass evangelical exodus from the Republican Party and pro-life movement seems, for now, unlikely.
Nonetheless, the absence of cohort effects among evangelicals is a little surprising, considering the popular narrative and decades-long research interest. Researchers hypothesize that emerging adulthood, increased education, declining religiosity, and a mellowed evangelical political environment could plausibly form a distinctive political generation. In preliminary analysis (not shown), I examine these potential explanations, testing the differences in married share, college share, and levels of religiosity between Millennial and older cohorts of young adults. On these measures, Millennials are only significantly different on marriage, more likely to delay it, relative to the other cohorts in their twenties and early thirties. Farrell (2011) finds that delayed marriage only predicts premarital sex and same-sex marriage attitudes, not abortion attitudes. On education, Millennials as young adults are no different than previous cohorts of young adults, except the '90s cohort, who had the highest share of college graduates. On religiosity, and I examine views on the Bible, church attendance, and strength of religious affiliation, Millennials are not less likely to view the Bible as literal or go to church less often. In fact, they feel—that is in intensity—more strongly affiliated with their denominations than previous cohorts. Considering these background factors, the link would have to hinge on delayed marriage and/or strengthened affiliation translating into lower levels of Republican identification and more pro-choice attitudes; the delayed marriage explanation is plausible. In the HAPC-CCREMs, marriage significantly predicts partisanship, ideology, abortion attitudes and gay rights tolerance, but not the spending variables. To further test the socio-demographic explanations, I run the HAPC-CCREMs without the covariates, but just with age, period, and cohort for the eight outcomes, and the cohort effects gain particular significance in the Democratic
identification and abortion attitudes models and, to a lesser degree, in the partisanship and gay rights tolerance and welfare spending models as well, but not in the ideology and environmental spending models (results not shown).

What also seems compelling is the action-reaction and broader milieu explanation. On the particularly politicized (for evangelicals) measures of partisanship and abortion, particularly Republican and pro-life Gen X cohorts emerged, away from whom Millennials seem to have turned. However, Millennials themselves do not appear to be particularly distinctive in their partisanship identification or abortion attitudes, at least not yet. The non-finding on gay rights tolerance is a little unexpected, given the conventional wisdom. I explore this further as well, running HAPC-CCREMs for white non-evangelicals as well as all nonwhites, and find greater cohort effects among white non-evangelicals, specifically among cohorts who came of age in the late ’40s through the late ’70s, who appear particularly tolerant (results not shown).

In a way, the non-significant Millennial thesis is not surprising. Theoretically, political generations are forged by a confluence of conditions momentous and salient enough to have altered a group of people during their most politically impressionable years. In the classic writings on this subject, the formation of a distinctive generation involves active consciousness of, perhaps realized with sufficient contextual conflict, and participation in a shared movement toward a “common destiny” (Mannheim 1953, Sapiro 1980, Jelen, Cook and Wilcox 1990). These requisites for the making of a political generational unit may be sufficiently present on the partisanship dimension for impressionable young evangelicals from the late 1970s through the early 1990s, e.g., the Reagan effect, and in the late 1990s/early 2000s of the anti-abortion movement, e.g., the
partial birth abortion ban debate. In the absence of ripe requisites converging, distinctive generations fail to emerge. For example, there has not being a moment of political ideological crisis or rebirth for evangelicals, nor have evangelicals fought strident battles on the environmental or welfare front. The debate over gay rights and same-sex marriage might have provided the necessary ingredients, but the measure here involves civil liberty, not the traditional definition of marriage. In a way, the cohort story that has emerged from the present analysis seems to be about Gen Xers (e.g., recall Pelz and Smidt’s earlier description of their charged political environment on p.11), not Millennials, whose political milieu, by contrast, seems less remarkable.

A few caveats and limitations are in order. While the HAPC-CCREM approach seems promising with confirmatory results, if the history of the APC methodological debate is any indication, new methods emerge, are tested, and then critiqued. Thus, it should not be taken as a “silver bullet” that could precisely and definitively estimate independent age, cohort, and period effects. Theory, actual contextual information, and a variety of statistical and analytical methods should be used. Moreover, while the cross-sectional data offer synthetic cohorts, they are nonetheless artificially constructed. Longitudinal data spanning several generations would be ideal for discerning life-cycle, period, and cohort patterns. And as appealing as these theories are, real life does not always work out so neatly; it is hard to imagine any pure effects without other influences, and the results here find period and life-cycle effects generally more persuasive than the cohort narrative. For the Millennial generation, the oldest of whom are only in their early thirties, the rest of their lives and history have yet to unfold, but if the findings here
bear out, pundits and political analysts should not hold their breath waiting for a regime change in evangelical politics, at least not anytime soon.
Support for same-sex marriage in America increased swiftly and dramatically in the new millennium. Even as recent as the 1990s, public acceptance remained low, e.g., less than 30 percent in 1996 when Congress enacted DOMA, and was found mainly among the highly educated, urban residents, and less conservative and religious individuals (Baunach 2012). Since the 2000s, however, support has greatly broadened and even accelerated after 2010. Pew surveys suggest that between 2001 and 2016 support for marriage equality increased by 57 percent; Gallup polls indicate a 45-percent increase between 2004 and 2016 (Pew 2016, Gallup 2016). Such rapidity suggests primarily intra-cohort shifts (individuals changing their minds), not cohort replacement (younger, more liberal cohorts succeeding older, more conservative generations) (Baunach 2011, 2012).

While most Americans now favor same-sex marriage, some still oppose it. Studies show several conservatizing influences and a significant religious cleavage. Affiliation with theologically-conservative denominations, a literal view of the Bible, and frequent religious participation consistently predict opposition to same-sex marriage (Olson, Cadge, and Harrison 2006, Becker and Schefuele 2009, Gaines and Garand 2010, Whitehead 2010, Sherkat et al. 2011, Becker 2012). Not surprisingly, evangelical Protestants, who are defined by these religious characteristics, have been among the least supportive of same-sex marriage and remain so. In 2016, a year after Obergefell, most
evangelicals still oppose same-sex marriage, in contrast to members of other religious traditions (Jones 2015). The few studies on evangelicals’ attitudes toward same-sex marriage suggest that, like the general population, greater religiosity among evangelicals is negatively correlated with support.

Yet despite their staunch religious beliefs and behaviors, even evangelicals have moved on this issue, and significantly. Some surveys suggest that, in the last ten years, evangelical support have at least doubled (Smith et al. 2016, Pew 2016). Given evangelicals’ overwhelming and mobilized opposition on this issue in 2004 as well as their religious characteristics that are correlated with opposition, that they have moved so much in just ten years is surprising. One would have expected that their religion should have anchored them more. What explains the evangelical drift? The existing literature offers a rather statistic and increasingly dated picture of evangelicals’ attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Utilizing the 2004-2014 General Social Surveys, a period that brackets the landmark Goodridge and Obergefell decisions, I provide a more refined, updated trend analysis on this topic and find that, across the board, evangelicals became more supportive of marriage equality. Moreover, applying the working theories of religious reinforcement and dual citizenship, I explain why evangelicals have shifted despite the expectation that their religiosity should have anchored their attitudes toward same-sex marriage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the earliest public opinion data points (from the GSS) on same-sex marriage suggests that, in 1988, only one in ten Americans agreed or strongly agreed that same-sex couples have the right to marry one another. In the 1990s, there were state and
federal legislative and legal actions on same-sex marriage, but the issue did not truly gain national attention until November 2003 when the Massachusetts Supreme Court decided in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health* that the state had no basis to deny same-sex couples the right to marry (Wilcox et al. 2007). Public opinion had been moving toward support prior to *Goodridge*, but it was incremental (Pew 2016, Gallup 2016). Beginning in the 2000s, while most of the public still opposed same-sex marriage, support continued to drift upward and climbed even more steeply in the 2010s, when most Americans came to favor it. Society changes because individuals change and/or because its demographic composition changes. When all cohorts shift, the resultant social change is often speedy, and this appears to be the case for public opinion on same-sex marriage in the U.S. (Baunach 2011, 2012, Flores 2014, 2015).

Why has public opinion on this issue moved so quickly and dramatically? First, research suggests how the issue is framed matters. In the 1990s, the LGBTQ rights movement altered the frame from choice and individual liberty to equality, a core value that resonated with many Americans (Wilcox and Norrander 2002, Brumbaugh et al. 2008, Baunach 2011). Second, the public’s feelings toward LGBTQ issues and the community have warmed in recent decades, likely a confluence of the AIDS epidemic’s humanizing effect, Hollywood’s growing positive portrayal of LGBTQ individuals, and increased personal contact with LGBTQ individuals as more people have come out (Wilcox and Norrander 2002, Garreston 2015, Brewer 2008, Lewis 2011, Perry 2015). Moreover, people’s beliefs about the immutable nature of sexual orientation are shifting as well, from a lifestyle choice to being fixed at birth. When a behavior is beyond individual control, it becomes more difficult to “blame” or hold a person accountable for

However, despite the rising cultural tide, conservatizing influences still persist (Olson, Cadge, and Harrison 2006, Becker and Schefuele 2009, Gaines and Garand 2010, Whitehead 2010, Becker 2012, Bean and Martinez 2014). Some of the most consistent factors are religious: religiously-conservative Protestant (evangelical) affiliation, biblical literalism (or fundamentalism), and church attendance. For example, Olson, Cadge and Harrison (2006), the first scholarly paper on the link between religion and same-sex marriage in the post-Goodridge era, find that religious affiliation matters: evangelical and mainline Protestants were the least supportive of gay marriage, compared to respondents of other religious traditions and the non-religiously affiliated. To a lesser degree, religious participation and religious social network are associated with greater opposition as well. Other studies have found that evangelical Protestant affiliation and biblical literalism in particular to be strongly and negatively associated with support for same-sex marriage (Gaines and Garand 2010, Sherkat et al. 2011, and Perry 2015). And some of the religious influences may be mediated by other considerations, such as etiological beliefs about homosexuality, partisanship, and social context (Whitehead 2014, Sherkat et al. 2011, Merino 2013).
EVANGELICALS & SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

The story of evangelicals and their attitudes toward same-sex marriage is both simple and complex (Wilcox and Iida 2010, Bean and Martinez 2014, Baker and Brauner-Otto 2015, Thomas and Olson 2010). On the one hand, evangelicals are unquestionably marriage traditionalists, and in the pre-Obergefell era, many mobilized politically against marriage equality (Fetner 2008). For decades, concerned evangelicals have equated family breakdown with moral and spiritual decline in America and pursued political action to restore these institutions. In the “culture wars,” same-sex marriage emerged as a significant battle front that politically mobilized many evangelicals and drew them even closer to the Republican Party (Wilcox and Robinson 2010, Brooks 2002, Campbell and Monson 2008). On the other hand, the broad umbrella of evangelicalism, conceptualized either as a religious tradition or social movement, encompasses diverse voices, including a progressive strand (Wilcox and Iida 2010, Smidt 2014). And within evangelicalism, the strength of individual religiosity and its real-world implications are by no means uniform, even as religious life in America has become more individualistic and subjective (Smidt 2014).

Despite the diversity, a set of core doctrines continue to bind and define evangelicals. Arguing that the definition of evangelicalism is primarily doctrinal, the historian David Bebbington (1989) identifies four evangelical distinctives: conversionism, activism, Biblicism, and crucicentrism. As such, evangelicals are, relatively speaking, distinctive in their religious believing, behaving, and belonging, and this should provide a strong anchor in the rising cultural tide of changing attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Empirically, studies have found that evangelicals who are more
religiously conservative or subscribe to biblical inerrancy are more likely to oppose same-sex marriage (Perry 2015, Perry and Whitehead 2016). Belonging to an evangelical community or having a close social network of mostly religious friends seems to buffer against some of the broader liberalizing influences such as contact with LGBTQ individuals (Baker and Brauner-Otto 2015, Perry 2015, Merino 2013).

Theoretically, among the three primary religious dimensions of believing, belonging, and behaving, the believing facet—specifically, views on the Bible’s authority—should have the strongest weight as it is the most direct source of evangelicals’ attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Within the historical Protestant tradition, _Sola scriptura_—the idea that the Bible as God’s Word is the final authority on morality and all matters of life—is a foundational doctrine. For evangelicals, Biblicism, “a high regard for and obedience to the Bible as the ultimate authority,” continues to be one of its four defining characteristics (NAE 2016, Bebbington 1989). As one well-regarded evangelical volume on systematic theology states, “[t]he authority of Scripture means that all the words in Scripture are God’s words in such a way that to disbelieve or disobey any word of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God” (Grudem 1995, 73). In theory, evangelicals take seriously what God says in the Bible about what to believe and how to live.

Among biblical doctrines and ethics, evangelicals place a strong emphasis on marriage. They view passages that point to marriage as a foreshadowing of the covenant between God and his people and the relationship between Jesus and the Church. Marriage, with its gendered nature and procreative function, is an integral part of God’s creative order (Grudem 1995, Hugenerger 1994, Keller 2013, Piper 2012). Relatedly,
the Bible also contains specific passages and directives on sexual morality in general and homosexuality in particular (e.g., 1 Cor. 6:9, 18; Eph. 5:3, 1 The. 4:13, Hebrews 13:4, to cite a few verses). Consequently, the doctrines of marriage, family, and sexual ethics enjoy prominence among evangelical teachings, resulting in a subculture that prioritizes sexual purity and traditional family life as the spiritual and normative standard. Layered upon these scriptural and cultural understandings is the secularization and “culture wars” thesis that still finds “orthodox” and “progressive” impulses, essentially about moral authority, competing in this private, but increasingly public sphere (Wuthnow 1989, Hunter 1991). Not surprisingly, same-sex marriage, particularly framed as a moral issue, challenges these fundamental evangelical concerns; support for marriage equity would not only cross the subcultural boundaries that evangelicalism has enclosed itself in but also subvert scriptural authority and, by extension, God. Theoretically, then, a “high view” of Scripture (the Bible is the literal, inerrant, and/or infallible Word of God) should translate into views on same-sex marriage that align directly with biblical prescriptions on sexual morality and marriage.

While biblical believing should be the primary driver on issues of morality in general and same-sex marriage specifically, the religious belonging and behaving facets should matter as well, buttressing biblical beliefs and their implications on real-life circumstances. On the belonging front, scholars have approached religion as a “social phenomenon… expressed through affiliation with a local church, a denomination, or a religious tradition” (Smidt, Kellstedt, and Guth 2009, 9). More than social groups, churches and denominations also function as political communities (Wald, Owen and Hill 1988). Through affiliation, individuals share common experiences, such as “distinctive
patterns of communication,” “different kinds of information,” “[exposure] to varying interpretations of political events,” and “different patterns of political recruitment and mobilization” (Kohut et al. 2000, 3). Religious belonging provides the forum that links religion to political and social issues (ibid). In theory, denominations and churches derive their interpretations and teachings from Scripture, which are then filtered and processed in their communities. Indeed, American evangelicalism has developed its own distinctive social networks, subcultural identity, and political disposition (Smith 1998, Smidt 2014).

Religious behaving, too, reinforces the religious mechanisms in real life, through increased exposure to and practice of such influences. This dimension could be expressed outwardly, such as churchgoing and participation in other religious activities, or inwardly such as personal prayer. For example, going to church frequently and/or attending a Bible study group could strengthen adherence to church teachings and the Bible; the connection is strengthened by shared behavior and beliefs of fellow church or small group members. As another example, prayer, too, could enable individuals to internalize such views and bolster their religious beliefs. Both public and private religious behavior could also signify religious salience, or the personal importance of religious faith in one’s daily life.

In sum, I expect evangelicals to be among the most opposed to same-sex marriage, in part because of their “high” view of the Bible, frequent religious practices, and strong attachment to their faith, relative to the members of other religious traditions, including other Protestants. Moreover, within evangelicalism, this religious cleavage operates as well. Among the religious influences, I expect views on the Bible to have the
strongest size effect on same-sex marriage attitudes, because relative to the other religious factors, evangelicals derive their stance on this issue ultimately from the Bible. The belonging and behaving dimensions—e.g., churchgoing and personal religiosity—should hold back evangelicals’ support for same-sex marriage to the extent that these influences shore up the Bible’s position on this issue.

Hypothesis 1: Evangelicals who hold a literalist view of the Bible, attend church more frequently, are strongly affiliated with their denominations, and pray daily are less supportive of same-sex marriage and shift less on this issue relative to co-religionists who measure lower on these religious facets.

Hypothesis 2: Relative to church attendance and personal religious salience, views on the Bible have larger size effects on same-sex marriage attitudes among evangelicals.

That said, I do expect some increased support for same-sex marriage among evangelicals amid “a rising tide that lifts all boats” (Wilcox and Iida 2010). Although evangelicals profess not to be “of the world,” they are nonetheless still “in the world,” exposed to and affected by the prevailing cultural influences as well as their own experiences, such as having friends and family who are LGBTQ. However, the magnitude of the shift toward support among evangelicals should be less and the pace slower compared to how much non-evangelicals have moved on this issue, partially because of the former’s more literalist view of the Bible, more frequent religious attendance, and higher levels of religious salience.

There is another hypothesis as well, less to do with the level of religiosity per se and more about the actual “working out” of personal faith, as evangelicals go about their normal lives, practically living out their beliefs and values as members of civil society. For one, there is a pervading sentiment among evangelicals—a reaction against their politicized faith and the resultant public perception that evangelicals are judgmental and
intolerant—to reconsider their political engagement (Hout and Fischer 2014, Kinnaman and Lyons 2012, “Manifesto” 2006). Qualitative research on the emergence of “new evangelicals” finds that many evangelical leaders are broadening their social and political agenda and some are assuming more tolerant positions, including on same-sex union (Pally 2011). A content analysis of articles from 1960 to 2009 in Christianity Today, the flagship evangelical publication, reveals that evangelical elites have been subtly changing their responses to homosexuality. Especially since the 2000s, evangelical elites have been relying less on the Bible and more on less-orthodox sources of moral authority in their moral reasoning on this issue. In turn, these subtleties are gradually translating into evangelical elites’ greater tolerance toward gay rights and same-sex marriage (Thomas and Olson 2010).

Evidence suggests that mainstream evangelicals appear to be shifting on same-sex marriage as well. Reviewing the ethnographic studies on lay evangelicals’ everyday and congregational discourse on homosexuality, one study finds it more complex than the charged, rigid political rhetoric would suggest (Bean and Martinez 2014, 401). The review describes two competing evangelical scripts: one draws subcultural boundaries, often evoking the moral logic of divine judgement, and the other reaches across boundaries to the broader culture, emphasizing the moral logic of compassion. This tension is routinely experienced as pastors and lay leaders counsel congregants facing diverse real-life family and personal situations. In reality, the average evangelical’s life circumstances are not exceptionally different from those of non-evangelicals (Edgell 2006). Researchers posit that many evangelicals have constructed their own “everyday theology” to reconcile proscriptive scriptural teachings on sexual morality and their
personal encounters and relationships with LGBTQ people (Moon 2004). As this internal tension increases, scholars argue, ambivalence toward homosexuality gains an institutional footing, creating a “structured ambivalence” that allows the core, not just the margins, of the evangelical subculture to move away from opposition (Bean and Martinez 2014).

In this space of practically “working out” their faith, and not just in spiritual or doctrinal terms, evangelicals, even the stalwarts, are finding a course in the Bible and their religious life that enables them to bridge the competing moral scripts of judgment and compassion and of morality and equality. Indeed, holistic biblical hermeneutics accommodates a nuanced, or expansive, reading. Just as the Bible addresses sexual ethics and marriage, it also speaks to the inherent dignity and equality of all people created in the image of God (e.g., Genesis 1:27, Colossians 3:11); commands followers to “love one another” and even one’s enemy (e.g., Mark 12:31, Matthew 5:44); and exhorts them to act justly, love mercy, and aid the oppressed (Micah Isaiah 1:17, Micah 6:8). In fact, the second greatest commandment, after loving God, is to love one’s neighbor as yourself; all the laws of the Bible hang on these two (Matthew 22:39-40).

One practical navigation of a holistic textual reading would be to distinguish between the moral/spiritual and political/civil society dimensions of marriage equality, i.e., sexual morality versus civil rights. It is not so much a separation of church-state mentality as it is a twofold engagement that also allows evangelicals to maintain their “dual citizenship” in the “spiritual kingdom” and in the earthly realm as engaged citizens of a pluralistic liberal democracy. Liberal here, to quote one writer, is “in the broadest sense of meaning constitutional government plus the guaranteeing of the reasonable
liberal and just treatment of the individual person (quoted in Pally 2011, xv). This conceptualization draws from recent scholarly work on the emergence of a “new evangelicalism” and its altered engagement within civil society (e.g., Pally 2011). With this dual approach, “new evangelicals” are finding a way to remain faithful to their reading of the Bible and church teaching by continuing to disapprove the morality of homosexuality, while coexisting as members of civil society by supporting same-sex marriage within a rights-based framework.

Hypothesis 3: Over the last ten years, evangelicals have increased their support for same-sex marriage; however, the magnitude and pace of their increased support are smaller and slower than those of non-evangelicals.

Hypothesis 4: The shift in evangelicals’ increasing support for same-sex marriage may be explained by a “dual citizenship” framework: over the last ten years, evangelicals remain unmoved on the morality of homosexuality, even as they become more supportive of marriage equality.

DATA & METHODS

To analyze evangelicals’ attitudes in recent years, I rely on the nationally-representative General Social Survey (GSS), a NORC project at the University of Chicago. The GSS has been tracking societal change in America since 1972, and in the 1988 and 2004-2014 biennial surveys, it asked this question regarding same-sex marriage: “Do you agree or disagree? Homosexual couples have the right to marry one another?” I focus on the 2004-2014 survey years.

To operationalize “evangelicals,” I use the corrected “reltrad” method, which is a primarily denominational categorization but relies on religious attendance as well to

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13 Throughout the paper, I try to reflect the actual wording of the survey questions, e.g., using “homosexuals” rather than LGBTQI individuals, even though the former seems anachronistic or even politically incorrect in our current vernacular, because wording matters in survey questions and responses.
identify evangelicals (Steensland et al. 2000, Stetzer and Burge 2016). To analyze the link between the believing, belonging, and behaving dimensions of religiosity and same-sex marriage attitudes, I focus on four religious independent variables: feelings about the Bible (“Bible”14), religious attendance (“attend”), strength of religious affiliation (“reliten”), and prayer (“pray”). The latter two, strength of affiliation and prayer, are conceptualized as more subjective, and admittedly less than perfect, measures of personal religious salience.

On the Bible question, the responses include: “The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word”15; “The Bible is the inspired word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally, word for word”; “The Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by men”; and “other.” I combine the latter two responses. For attendance, I recode the variable into four categories, according to those who attend: weekly or more often, 1 to 3 times a month, several times to once a year, and less than yearly or never. Strength of affiliation asks respondents if they would call themselves “strong,” “somewhat strong,” “not very strong” in their named religious preference (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, or other religious traditions) or prefer “no religion.” To operationalize a more subjective measure of religiosity, I recode prayer into a binary variable: pray daily or less frequently.16 In addition, in supplemental analysis, I also consider two other measures of evangelicalism:

14 As a shorthand, I use the GSS variable names throughout the paper.
15 There is a robust literature on the hermeneutics of the Bible’s authority, e.g., its literalism, inerrancy or infallibility (see for example Bartkowski 1996, Jelen 1989, Jelen, Wilcox, Smidt 1990, Kellstedt and Smidt 1993). I recognize the limitations of the GSS Bible question, particularly the stringency and bluntness of “literalism,” a concept distinct from inerrancy and infallibility. That said, past research also shows that the difference between the “literal” and “inerrant” wording may not be significant (Jelen 1989).
16 The responses are: several times a day, once a day, several times a week, once a week, less than once a week, and never; the responses are skewed toward greater frequency in the several times a day and daily categories.
whether the respondent has “ever tried to encourage someone to believe in or accept Jesus Christ as his or her savior” (“savesoul”) and whether the respondent would say he or she has been “born again” or “have had a born again experience – a turning point in [his/her] life” (“reborn”).

In the multivariate models, I include the standard demographic covariates: age (continuous), gender, marital status (married/widowed, divorced/separated, and never married), race/ethnicity (non-Hispanic white, black, and “other” and Hispanic), education (college and advanced degrees, high school diploma and some college, less than a high school degree), region (South, Midwest, Northeast, and West\(^\text{17}\)), and urbanicity (“xnorsiz,” large cities with populations 50,000 and up, smaller cities and suburbs, and smaller areas and open country). Political disposition is measured by partisan identification (Republican, Democrat, Independent, and other party\(^\text{18}\)) and ideology (conservative, moderate, and liberal). To operationalize respondents’ feelings toward homosexuality and homosexual individuals, I use the GSS question on the morality of homosexuality: “sexual relations between two adults of the same sex” is always wrong, almost always, only sometimes, or not wrong at all. For tolerance toward homosexual individuals, I recode GSS’ three tolerance questions related to homosexual individuals (i.e., remove book written by a homosexual from library, allow homosexuals to speak

\(^{17}\) GSS uses US Census’ regional coding (http://www2.census.gov/geo/docs/maps-data/maps/reg_div.txt).

\(^{18}\) The 7 responses are coded into 4 groups. Respondents who indicate “independent, near Republican” are grouped with Republicans, strong and not strong, and likewise for Democrats; the GSS also offers an “other party” category, and because the size of this group is not insignificant, about 1.8% in the post-2004 surveys, I retain these respondents in the samples rather than deleting them, which would further reduce some of the smaller cell sizes.
publicly, allow homosexuals to teach in colleges) so that “1” equals the tolerant position and then add the three responses.¹⁹

To test Hypotheses 1 and 2, I pool the 2006-2014 surveys and use ordered logistic regressions to model factors that predict same-sex marriage attitudes first among the general population and then among an evangelical-only subsample.²⁰ I start with a basic demographic and political model and then add the religious covariates to estimate their anchorage. In the full model, I include attitudes toward homosexual relations and tolerance toward homosexual individuals. For evangelicals, I run only the latter two models for efficiency. To test Hypothesis 3, estimating how much and fast evangelicals have shifted between 2004 and 2014 and how they compare to non-evangelicals, I calculate various religious traditions’ and the non-affiliated’s mean same-sex marriage attitude scores and their 10-year average annual changes (i.e., slope estimates on survey year). For a more nuanced examination, I then estimate the 10-year average annual change for each of the five responses to GSS’ same-sex marriage questions as well. To examine whether religious factors held back or slowed support for marriage equality among evangelicals, I use bivariate OLS, regressing same-sex marriage attitudes on survey year dummies, to estimate how much evangelicals in varying categories of religiosity (e.g., from those who believe the Bible to be literal to those who believe it to be a book of fables) have shifted over the last eight/ten years (either from 2004 or 2006, 20

¹⁹ The three questions are: if an admitted homosexual should teach in a college or university; make a speech in the respondent’s community; at the suggestion of some people in the community, taking out of the public library a book written by an admitted homosexual in favor of homosexuality. Admittedly, these questions seem somewhat anachronistic in our present culture. I would like to have included a measure of respondents’ general sexual ethics, for example using the question on the morality of premarital sex (“premarsx”), which some researchers suggest is an indicative measure of changing norms (Putnam and Campbell 2010). However, because of the GSS’ split ballot design, including this variable would have significantly reduced, almost by half, the analytical sample size.

²⁰ Because of GSS’s split ballot design, the 2004 survey did not ask any respondents the same-sex marriage, ideology, and Bible views questions together.
depending on the years surveyed), i.e., the coefficient estimates on survey year dummies.

Finally, to test Hypothesis 4, I regress approval of homosexuality on the survey year
dummies for each religious variable response categories. I similarly estimate the shift in
gay rights tolerance for robustness check.

**FINDINGS**

*Explaining the evangelical gap.* Do the Bible and religious belonging and
behaving anchor attitudes toward same-sex marriage, both among the general population
and just among evangelicals? Table 2.1 presents the pooled ordered logistic regression
estimates for the general population (Models 1-3) and evangelicals (Models 4 & 5). In
Model 1, among the general population, controlling for the demographic and political
covariates, it appears that all other religious groups and the non-affiliated have
significantly lower odds of being in a more oppositional category toward same-sex
marriage compared to evangelicals. Relatively speaking, the gap is narrower between
evangelicals and black Protestants, who are also theologically conservative, and other-faith respondents. However, it widens between evangelicals and mainline Protestants and Catholics. Expectedly, the gap is the widest between evangelicals and Jewish and non-affiliated respondents.

Model 2 includes the religious covariates—Bible views, religious attendance,
strength of religious affiliation, and daily prayer. First, all four variables significantly

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21 In preliminary analysis (results available upon request), I run simple OLS (attendance, prayer), ologit (Bible views, strength of affiliation), logit (Bible literalists) models, with just the “reltrad” and survey year dummies as independent variables and the religious variables as dependent variables to test if evangelicals had been more “religious” on these four measures than non-evangelicals between 2004 and 2014. This seems to be the case, except in four instances. On the strength of affiliation, black Protestants, individuals of other faith, and evangelicals appear to be similar; on prayer, black Protestants are more likely to be
predict same-sex marriage attitudes; specifically, higher levels of religiosity for each variable are correlated with more conservative views on the issue. Moreover, the Bible coefficient estimates suggest the largest size effect, relative to those of the other religious variables. Thus, these results tend to support Hypotheses 1 and 2. All else being equal, compared to Bible literalists, those who believe the Bible is not divine have 68 percent lower odds of providing a more oppositional response on same-sex marriage. The size effect, though significant, is smaller between the literal and inspired view with 48 percent lower odds. Compared to Bible views, the magnitude between the most and least (or from very to not-at-all) religious responses for attendance (weekly or more versus rarely to never) and strength of affiliation (strong to not very) are nearly halved, about 37 percent and 32 percent, respectively; daily prayer increases the odds of a more oppositional response by 32 percent.

Tellingly, the religious variables also better explain the evangelical gap than the demographic and political variables. The reduction in the size of the coefficient estimates on the “reltrad” variables between Models 1 and 2 is greater compared to the reduction between Model 1 and the baseline model with just the “reltrad” and survey year dummies as covariates (baseline model results not shown). Interestingly, once the religious variations are controlled for, the difference between evangelicals and other-faith respondents disappears. However, the evangelical gap with all the other religious

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22 In further analysis (results not shown), I run each prayer response as a dummy, and the difference seems to be only between those who pray more than once a day and those who pray several times a week.  
23 In additional analysis, I test the mediating effects of the four religious variables, and the Bible variable explains the differences in same-sex marriage attitudes between evangelicals and other-faith respondents.
groups as well as the non-affiliated persists, despite accounting for the variations in religiosity.

Model 3 includes approval of homosexual relations and tolerance toward homosexual individuals. As a first observation, the evangelical gap remains: evangelicals still have greater odds of being more oppositional relative to mainline Protestants, black Protestants, Catholics, and the nonaffiliated, although the affiliational differences are further reduced. (The non-significance on the Jewish coefficient estimate may be due to the small number of Jewish respondents in the analytical sample.24) That is, evangelicals’ higher “religiosity” (i.e., measured by literalist Bible views, religious attendance, religious affiliation, and prayer), greater disapproval of homosexual relations, and lower tolerance toward homosexual individuals do not fully explain their opposition to same-sex marriage relative to some of non-evangelicals, which suggests a belonging, evangelical subcultural effect and perhaps other mechanisms at work.25

In Model 3, controlling for morality of homosexuality and tolerance, the coefficient estimates on the Bible, attendance, and strength of affiliation are attenuated. The coefficient estimate on daily prayer, however, remains similar in size (27 percent greater odds of being more oppositional). Bible’s size effect is reduced the most (more than 60 percent), followed by attendance (more than 25 percent) and strength of affiliation (more than 11 percent). Nonetheless, among the religious variables, the literal Bible view continues to have the most effect; compared to Bible literalists, those who feel

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24 When I run Model 3 as unweighted OLS and ologit, the Jewish coefficient estimate is statistically significant.
25 It may be interesting to note that black Protestants are similar to evangelicals on the measures of homosexuality’s morality and tolerance toward homosexual individuals as well as on the religious measures discussed in footnote 10, but they are still more accepting of same-sex marriage compared to evangelicals.
that the Bible is not divine have 48 percent lower odds of expressing more oppositional views on same-sex marriage. As noted earlier, the Bible effect is partially mediated by the acceptance of homosexuality, and this measure appears quite significant. Even a slight waver on this position yields significantly greater support for same-sex marriage. For example, compared to individuals who view homosexual relations as “always wrong,” those who hold it as “almost always wrong” have 62 percent lower odds of expressing more oppositional attitudes toward same-sex marriage. The weight of this anchor comes from maintaining an absolute, unequivocal stance.

Model 3 also shows a number of other significant predictors of attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Older people, non-Hispanic minorities, men, and rural residents have higher odds of responding more negatively on this issue. On the other hand, never-married individuals (compared to marrieds), Democrats, Independents, and other political party affiliates (compared to Republicans), ideological moderates and liberals (compared to conservatives) as well as those who are more tolerant toward homosexual individuals are more likely to be supportive. Notably, the statistical significance on the Hispanic ethnicity, education, and region coefficient estimates disappears once views on homosexuality and tolerance are controlled, which suggests an ethnicity and educational element in these two attitudes.
### TABLE 2.1: Ordered Logistic Regression Predicting Same-Sex Marriage Attitudes, 2006-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Evangelicals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td>Model 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evangelical (omitted)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline</td>
<td>0.39 0.000</td>
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<td>Black Prot.</td>
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<td>0.55 0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>0.22 0.000</td>
<td>0.39 0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other faith</td>
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<td>0.95 0.724</td>
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<td>Non-affiliated</td>
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<td>0.40 0.000</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>White, non-Hispanic (omitted)</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2.62 0.000</td>
<td>1.88 0.000</td>
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<td>Midwest</td>
<td>0.79 0.001</td>
<td>0.84 0.018</td>
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<td>0.76 0.001</td>
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<td>0.70 0.000</td>
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<td>1.05 0.446</td>
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<td>Rural</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bible literal (omitted)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspired</td>
<td>0.52 0.000</td>
<td>0.84 0.017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alberta, etc/other</td>
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<td>0.52 0.000</td>
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<td><strong>Attend weekly (omitted)</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never/rarely</td>
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<td><strong>Strongly affiliated (omitted)</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not very</td>
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<td>Daily prayer</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>Conservative (omitted)</strong></td>
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<td>0.56 0.000</td>
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<td>Liberal</td>
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<td>0.29 0.000</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost always</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
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<td>Tolerance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3.00 0.000</td>
<td>3.21 0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2.56 0.000</td>
<td>2.83 0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1.78 0.000</td>
<td>1.91 0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1.42 0.000</td>
<td>1.41 0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2014 (omitted)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>6759</td>
<td>6546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wald Chi^2</td>
<td>1656.65, 29</td>
<td>1883.93, 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo Likelihood</td>
<td>-9234.6</td>
<td>-8644.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2006-2014 GSS (weighted)

Bold estimates indicate statistical significance at the p<0.05 level.
Explaining the gap among evangelicals. Models 4 and 5 present the data on the evangelicals-only subsample. Model 4 includes the demographic, political, and religious variables, and Model 5 adds approval of homosexuality and tolerance toward homosexual individuals. Without controlling for the latter two variables, Model 4, like Model 2, suggests that Bible views seem to have the strongest effect, relative to the other religious variables. Compared to evangelical Bible literalists, co-religionists who do not consider the Bible as divine have 64 percent lower odds responding more negatively on same-sex marriage. By comparison, the greatest-least religious difference for church attendance is 46 percent lower odds, 27 percent for affiliation strength, and 35 percent for daily prayer. Interestingly, the coefficient estimates on the religious variables in Model 4 are quite like those in Model 2 for the general population; that is, the religious effects tend to be consistent in the general population and among evangelicals. As with Model 3, then, when acceptance of homosexuality and tolerance toward homosexual individuals are considered in Model 5, the size of the religious coefficient estimates, except prayer, are reduced. In fact, attendance and strength of affiliation no longer seem to matter, and the literal-fable Bible gap is reduced by 60 percent. The size effect on daily prayer remains the same, with 36 percent greater odds in expressing a more oppositional position on same-sex marriage for those who pray at least once daily. Moreover, like Model 3 for the general population, views on homosexuality seem to have the strongest effect among just evangelicals as well, and the difference is between taking an absolute stance that homosexuality is “always wrong” versus “almost always wrong” (O.R. = 0.29).

A few other notable findings from Models 4 and 5. Controlling for acceptance of homosexuality and tolerance, age, education, and region are no longer significant. That
is, younger and more educated evangelicals and those living in Western states tend to be more tolerant and accepting of homosexuality, leading to more supportive marriage equality attitudes. Other factors that remain significant include race (African-American versus white evangelicals), gender, political ideology (liberal and moderate versus conservative), and tolerance toward homosexual individuals. It may be interesting to note that partisanship does not matter on this issue for evangelicals, but it does among the general population.

In sum, Table 2.1’s results support Hypotheses 1 and 2. Both among the public and evangelicals, religiosity “anchors” opposition to, or holds back support for, same-sex marriage. Views on the Bible appears to be the most significant among the religious factors, but it also indirectly influences same-sex marriage attitudes through beliefs about the morality of homosexual relations.

Magnitude and rate of evangelicals’ shift. Figure 1 presents the mean responses from 2004 to 2014 on the same-sex marriage question for the seven “reltrad” categories as well for all respondents. It confirms studies and polls that show evangelicals have been and continue to be the least supportive on same-sex marriage, even relative to other Protestants, including theologically-conservative black Protestants. In 2014, only 30 percent of evangelicals supported same-sex marriage, compared to 57 percent among the general population (including evangelicals) and 64 percent among all non-evangelicals. Despite evangelicals’ general opposition, their support (those who responded “agree” or “strongly agree”) more than doubled between 2004 and 2014, from 12 percent to 30 percent. In 2004, evangelicals averaged a score of 4.2 (on a five-response scale, i.e., closer to “disagree”), and in 2014, 3.5 (i.e., between “disagree” and “neither”), a -0.7-
point move over 10 years, or an average annual rate of -0.06 (Table 2.2). Though they shifted, the magnitude of their 10-year shift remains smaller relative to those of other groups, except “other-faith” respondents (Table 2.2 and Figure 2.1).

Fig. 2.1. Mean Scores on Same-Sex Marriage Attitudes, by Religious Tradition, 2004-2014

To provide a finer picture of the shifts (as the mean score may obscure the intensity and subtleties of the movements), I estimate the 10-year average annual shift for each of the five responses to the same-sex marriage question by regressing survey year as a continuous variable on the response category values for each year. Table 2.2 shows that evangelicals declined the most in the most oppositional response, “strongly disagree”—more than some of the other groups such as Catholics and the non-affiliated. However, unlike other groups, which increased the most in the “strongly agree” category, evangelicals moved the most in the “agree” response. That is, while evangelicals became less strongly oppositional, they did not, unlike non-evangelicals, embrace same-sex marriage; instead, their increase in support appears “lukewarm.” Figure 2.1 and Table 2.2 provide some *prima facie* evidence that evangelicals have been lifted with the rising tide, but they seem more anchored—that is, a slower-paced, smaller-magnitude support increase—relative to non-evangelicals.
### Table 2.2: Ordinary Least Squares 10-Year Slope Estimates (Average Annual Change), 2004-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Evangelical</th>
<th>Mainline</th>
<th>Prot.</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Jewish</th>
<th>Other Faith</th>
<th>Non-Affiliated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agree</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>-0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neither</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>-0.60</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>-0.72</td>
<td>-1.29</td>
<td>-0.72</td>
<td>-0.72</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>-1.68</td>
<td>-1.87</td>
<td>-2.08</td>
<td>-1.98</td>
<td>-1.54</td>
<td>-1.54</td>
<td>-1.30</td>
<td>-0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 8210

Source: GSS, 2004-2014 (weighted)

Bolded estimates indicate statistical significance at p<0.05 level.

---

### Table 2.3: Bivariate OLS, Shifts in Mean Score among Evangelicals, 2004/6-2014, by Religiosity

#### Bible Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Literal</th>
<th>Inspired</th>
<th>Fables, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R^2</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Church Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-0.28</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-0.43</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R^2</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Church Attendance (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yearly</th>
<th>Rarely/Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-0.74</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-0.56</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-0.60</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-0.57</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>-1.21</td>
<td>-0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R^2</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

65
### TABLE 2.3: Bivariate OLS, Shifts in Mean Score among Evangelicals, 2004/6-2014, by Religiosity (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strength of Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Not very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>-0.56</td>
<td>-0.46</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1185</td>
<td>1125</td>
<td>1098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>0.0117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Prayer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Several times daily</th>
<th>Once a daily</th>
<th>Less than daily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### "Stalwarts"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&quot;Stalwart 1: Strongly affiliated, weekly attending Bible literalists&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Stalwart 2: Weekly attending Bible literalists who pray several times daily&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### "Non-Stalwarts"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&quot;Non-Stalwart 1&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Non-Stalwart 2&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>-0.57</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1317</td>
<td>1266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GSS 2004-2014 (weighted). "SSM" stands for same-sex marriage attitudes, "SSR" indicates approval for same-sex relations, and "tol." stands for gay rights tolerance. Bold indicates statistical significance at the p < 0.05 level, and italics indicate marginal significance at p < 0.10 level.
**Did evangelical stalwarts shift?** While the pooled multivariate models show that Bible views, religious attendance, strength of religious affiliation, and prayer correlate with conservative attitudes toward same-sex marriage, they provide a rather statistic picture and do not indicate if, and by how much, evangelicals of varying religiosity have moved in the last ten years. In other words, did feelings about the Bible, churchgoing, strength of affiliation, and prayer anchor same-sex marriage attitudes for evangelicals?

Table 2.3 presents the weighted OLS estimates, because I am testing the observed mean differences, regressing same-sex marriage views on survey year dummies (with the earliest survey year, either 2004 or 2006, omitted) for each response category of each religious measure (the two left columns under each category). For example, the top panel begins (from the left to right) with evangelical Bible literalists, then those who hold an inspired view of the Bible, followed by evangelicals who believe the Bible is non-divine; the next panel reports the four categories of religious attendance. I report the mean for the first year and the year coefficient estimates (i.e., difference from the first year) as well as the associated change in standard deviation.

If religion anchors evangelicals’ attitudes toward same-sex marriage, I would expect Bible literalists, weekly church attenders, the strongly affiliated, and evangelicals who pray at least once a day to not have moved or moved very little relative to non-literalists, less-frequent attenders, the less-strongly affiliated, and those who pray less, respectively (Hypothesis 1). However, results in Table 2.3 would suggest otherwise. For every religious measure considered, evangelicals in the higher religious level response category shifted, particularly since 2012, and the shifts are not insignificant. Between 2006-2014, this shift was one-third of a standard deviation for Bible literalists, about one-
half of a standard deviation for weekly attenders and the strongly affiliated, and nearly four-tenth for those who pray more than once daily. Again, the magnitudes here suggest that the Bible tends to be the “weightier” influence, holding back support a little more than the other religious influences. As a robustness check, I run the models for born-again evangelicals and those who have proselytized as well, and those two groups, too, have shifted (results not shown).

By comparison, for some of the lower-religiosity categories, their shifts are not statistically significant, e.g., evangelicals who rarely or never attend church, those who only feel somewhat affiliated, and the less prayerful. One explanation is that evangelicals who measured high on these religious dimensions were more oppositional to begin with and have more ground to make up on this issue. Indeed, the literalists, weekly attenders, strongly affiliated, and those who prayed at least daily all fell between “disagree” and “strongly disagree” in the mid-2000s—they were the most oppositional among evangelicals initially. Relatedly, the lack of significant movement in the lower-religiosity categories may also suggest a ceiling for support among evangelicals, e.g., no category of evangelical averaged below a score of 3 or the “neither” position, except evangelicals who did not believe the Bible to be divine (they averaged 2.7).

Another plausible explanation may be that the religious anchor needs to be reinforced on multiple dimensions—for example, doctrinal beliefs, pulpit messages, religious communities with shared values and beliefs, and/or personal religious salience—to hold back support for marriage equality among evangelicals. Testing this explanation, I regress same-sex marriage attitudes on the survey year dummies for the highest categories of evangelicals on these measures in different combinations. I begin
with two anchoring religious variables, and in all six possible combinations (i.e., literalists and weekly attenders, literalists and strongly affiliated, strongly affiliated and weekly attenders, etc.). Evangelicals who measured the highest on two religious dimensions shifted. I then add a third anchor, testing the four possible combinations (e.g., strongly affiliated-weekly attending-Bible literalists, strongly affiliated-more than daily praying-weekly attenders, etc.). Of those four groups, two groups did not shift: 1) strongly-affiliated, weekly-attending Bible literalists (i.e., “stalwarts 1,” std. dev.=0.25, p-value=0.098) and 2) weekly-attending, more than daily praying Bible literalists (i.e., “stalwarts 2,” std. dev.=0.22, p-value=.200).  

When I change the strength of each religious variable one by one (i.e., lowering one variable at a time to the next level of religiosity, for example, from weekly to monthly attendance, while keeping the other two at the highest religious levels), it appears that the 2006-2014 movement is greater in magnitude when the literalist view is lowered or not present, relative to changes in the other three variables (results not shown). Again, this suggests that views on the authority of the Bible may be the most influential among the religious factors (Hypothesis 2).

Thus far, the evidence suggests that evangelicals who hold “a trifecta of religious anchors”—specifically weekly attending Bible literalists who are strongly affiliated or pray more than once a day—did not shift in their stance on same-sex marriage between 2006-2014. Did the shift, then, come primarily from the “less anchored” religious evangelicals? It appears so. Table 2.3 also shows that the “non-stalwart” evangelicals

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26 In Table 3, I increase the pray threshold to more than once a day because the majority of evangelicals either pray more than once a day or daily. Also, the daily threshold would still have allowed evangelicals to shift; only several times a day prayer anchored views.  

27 Some of the subgroup sizes become rather small.
were less oppositional to begin with (about 3.8 in mean score) and moved nearly -0.6 of a point (or -0.4 of a standard deviation) in the supportive direction between 2006 and 2014; their 10-year average annual rate, or the slope estimate on survey year, is 0.06/0.07 (using the two “non-stalwart” definitions). The magnitude of the non-stalwart shift is on par with the overall evangelical shift in Table 2.2 and Figure 2.1; in other words, the evangelical shift seems to be driven by the “non-stalwart” evangelicals. By the specific responses to the same-sex marriage question, stalwarts and non-stalwarts both lost the most in the “strongly disagree” category, but while the non-stalwarts gained the most in the “strongly agree” column, stalwarts declined slightly (albeit not statistically significant) in this response; they moved more in the “neither” or “agree” responses, again suggesting a “lukewarm” turn (results not shown). In all, Hypothesis 3 seems supported. To be truly moored (i.e., unmoved), evangelicals needed a trifecta of religious reinforcement with Bible views as the most anchoring factor. Even then, the data suggest that the “stalwarts” might be moving, too, starting in 2014 (e.g., the 2006-14 shift is marginally significant for the strongly affiliated, weekly-attending Bible literalists, p-value=0.098)

_Dual citizenship?_ Finally, to test Hypothesis 4, the idea that evangelicals may be distinguishing between the moral and civil society aspects of same-sex marriage, I regress acceptance of homosexual relations on the survey year dummies to estimate the 2004/6-2014 shifts for all the evangelical subgroups in Table 2.3. The results, in the right two columns under each religious category in Table 2.3, reveal that all evangelicals, regardless of their religiosity, held their views on homosexuality during those years.28 I

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28 To be consistent with same-sex marriage attitudes, Table 3 shows the 2006-2014 shifts for Bible view and prayer on the same-sex relations and tolerance measures. I also run the 2004-2014 shifts on these two
then regress tolerance toward homosexual individuals on the survey year dummies to estimate the shift in this measure for all the Table 2.3 subgroups, and the most religious categories except the Bible literalists (i.e., weekly attenders, strongly affiliated, and those who pray more than once daily) all became more tolerant, especially in 2014. For Bible literalists, their 2004-14 shift is not statistically significant (although their 2006-2014 shift is marginally so), which, again, supports Hypothesis 2, that the Bible provides a “weightier” anchor on these issues. By contrast, and like the results for same-sex marriage attitudes, some of the lower-religious categories did not change their tolerance levels. Expectedly now, the “stalwarts,” however, maintained their position on same-sex relations and gay rights tolerance. Together, these findings seem to support the “dual citizenship” theory (Hypothesis 4): in the last ten years, even “high-religiosity” evangelicals, unless they were truly stalwarts, and strong opponents have become more supportive of same-sex marriage and gay rights, but most evangelicals remained unmoved on the moral question.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Reviewing the evidence from the 2004-2014 GSS on evangelicals’ attitudes toward same-sex marriage, I observe the following. First, compared to non-evangelicals, including other socially and theologically-conservative Christians, evangelicals have remained the least supportive of marriage equality. Indeed, as the other religious groups and the non-affiliated have increased their support, the evangelical gap, even with...
doctrinally-conservative black Protestants, seems to have widened over time. However, despite their rather relatively oppositional stance, evangelicals, too, have increased their support, albeit less enthusiastically compared to non-evangelicals.

Second, religious factors explain a significant portion of the evangelical gap in same-sex marriage attitudes and better than the demographic and political variables. As hypothesized, among the belonging, believing, and behaving dimensions of religiosity, feelings about the Bible’s authority appear to have the largest effect on attitudes. These religious associations, particularly with the Bible, are partially mediated by views on the morality of homosexual relations. Controlling for such views reduces the religious effects, which is observed among the general population as well as evangelicals. Other factors that predict evangelicals’ attitude include: race (African American more conservative than white evangelicals), gender (men more conservative than women), marital status (marrieds more conservative than never-married evangelicals), Bible views (literalists are the most conservative), attendance (weekly attenders more conservative than yearly attendees), prayer (daily prayer more conservative than less frequent praying), political ideology (conservatives most oppositional), approval of homosexual relations, and tolerance toward homosexual individuals. Interestingly, for evangelicals, same-sex marriage does not appear to be partisan, but rather ideological. That is, for them, this issue is less motivated by partisan cleavages and perhaps more by their fundamental worldview. On this point, the secularization literature does suggest an ideological dimension, for example, the introduction of new ideas such as individual choice in changing sexual norms (Treas 2002). In other words, an individual’s
underlying worldview may be directing both his political and moral dispositions, as reflected in attitudes toward marriage equality.

Third, views on the Bible’s authority, particularly regarding its divine source, emerge as a particularly influential religious factor in maintaining a conservative stance on same-sex marriage. However, and surprisingly, a literalist view of the Bible does not completely hold back support for same-sex marriage. Similarly, on their own, other religious anchors such as weekly church attendance, strong affiliation, or high private religious salience (e.g., prayer, born-again experience, evangelizing behavior) do not either. In fact, only evangelicals who measure the highest in three religious dimensions—and most importantly a literalist view of the Bible and then churchgoing—seem unmoved in their attitudes on same-sex marriage for the last ten years even as the rest of society and their less-stalwart evangelical peers have shifted. That said, the most recent data offer some marginal statistical evidence that 2014 could be the beginning of what may be a significant movement even among these staunchest opponents.

So, what explains the shift despite strong religious anchoring, at least initially? For one, a literal, or inerrant or infallible, view of the Bible does not negate more nuanced, holistic hermeneutics, influencing attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Just as there are scriptural proscriptions on sexual sins, the Bible also contains passages on the inherent equality and dignity of all men because they are created in God’s image as well as on loving strangers and even one’s enemies. Even for Biblical literalists and evangelicals who go to church every week and pray every day, how they work out their faith and beliefs in the daily realities of life, particularly in relationships and personal experiences such as having a friend or relative who is LGBTQ, is not always so black and
white; indeed, even strict doctrinal beliefs may be transformed by personal contacts into a form of “everyday theology” (Moon 2003). This may especially be bolstered in the context of the last ten years in the midst of a cultural tide for the LGBTQ movement and what may be a different broader political environment for evangelicals as they react to the politicization of their faith in the previous decades and the political stridency of the Religious Right.

This leads to the fourth observation that evangelicals may have demarcated between the moral versus the civil society aspect of same-sex marriage. As such, the evangelical response is less one of “accommodation,” because they have not shifted on their moral position or their level of religiosity, but more one of “bifurcation” or “duality.” In a way, marriage equality exemplifies how evangelicals may be navigating between their “dual citizenship” in a spiritual and earthly sense, that they are in this world, but not of it (John 17:16). This explanation is consistent with recent research on the rise of a “new evangelicalism” (Pally 2011). Perhaps as a reaction to the politicization of the evangelical faith and the resultant poor public perception of evangelicals as judgmental, intolerant, and hypocritical, an emerging cadre of elite and mainstream evangelicals is charting a new engagement with their pluralistic liberal polity and fellow citizens. Findings from this paper support this interpretation. On the morality of homosexual relations, evangelicals of all religiosity have generally maintained their position, even as the anchored shift toward accepting marriage equality and become more tolerant of gay rights. The broader political implication is meaningful, too, as this issue may signal a changed course in the intersection of religion and politics for evangelicals,
who comprise nearly one-quarter of the American public. As such, their political engagement inevitably impacts the broader political landscape.

Fifth, and finally, it may be worthwhile to note that sometimes an anchor needs to be especially big and heavy to completely moor a boat during a strong tide. The Bible alone does not completely ground opposition toward same-sex marriage. It may be that the evangelical movement itself has shifted away from a scriptural emphasis to other sources of authority such as worship or relational experiences (Smidt 2014, 40), and emerging research is showing growing Bible illiteracy among evangelicals (Barna 2016).

Moreover, Bible literalism in survey data is just a label, a way to operationalize a concept in empirical research; how seriously literalists take the Bible and apply Biblical passages to everyday life is less certain. And even for the literal readers, actual interpretation and translation into political attitudes and behaviors can be nuanced and deeply complex.

The results here suggest that a mere literal reading of the Bible is insufficient for holding onto a particular political view; other religious reinforcements, such as belonging to a similarly-minded religious community and regularly practicing one’s beliefs, may be needed to bolster and sustain religiously-sourced political attitudes. The data here seem to be supportive of this hypothesis, as evangelicals who hold a literal view of the Bible, attend church weekly, and are strongly affiliated with their denominations or pray more than once a day appear to be the least swayed on marriage equality.

A few caveats and limitations are in order as well. First, while the data seem optimistic about a rising trend among evangelicals, it is not overly so. As noted earlier, the evangelical gap has widened since 2004. Moreover, although religious evangelicals have moved, the shift among some of the less stalwart evangelicals (e.g., those who do
not believe the Bible is divine, those who rarely or never attend church, those who are somewhat affiliated, and those who pray less than daily), as Table 2.3 suggests, is not statistically significant. Their subgroup mean scores hover between 3 and 3.5 on the five-point scale, near the “neither” position (only the fables, etc. group goes below, but their subsample is small, only 95 observations). Perhaps, then, there is a maximum to evangelical support for same-sex marriage. The higher-religiosity category evangelicals (e.g., Bible literalists and weekly attenders) may be catching up to the culture, but their rising support, which appears to be starting only in this decade, could eventually flat-line. Nationally, for example, post-Obergefell polls show that the increase in support has slowed (Gallup 2016, Pew 2016).

Second, the GSS data used here are cross-sectional, and as such, the associations presented in this analysis are merely correlational. The causality and reciprocal nature of the relationship between religiosity and attitudes toward same-sex marriage, particularly in this rising cultural tide, is difficult to parse. For example, just as Bible views and church attendance may have influenced support for same-sex marriage, views on this issue, which are not formed in a vacuum, may be influencing evangelicals’ religious believing, belonging, and behaving as well. Those who find themselves disagreeing with their church’s position on same-sex marriage or the sentiments of their church friends may reduce or even stop their church attendance, going as far as leaving evangelicalism altogether. Similarly, the construction of “everyday theology” may lead to a diminished view of the Bible’s authority and content. To get at causality and the reciprocal nature of the relationship, panel data are needed.
Another set of limitations is inherent to survey data analysis. For one, wording matters. The GSS same-sex marriage question is framed as a right; for those who cherish equality as a core American value, the question may have garnered greater support. During preliminary analysis, I also explored data from Portrait of American Life Study (PALS), whose question on same-sex marriage is framed as support for a traditional, gendered definition of marriage (“The only legal marriage should be between one man and one woman”). Framed as such, support among evangelicals was flat between 2006 and 2012 (data not shown). Other standard survey issues involve measurement conceptualization; for example, GSS’s Bible question does not adequately capture evangelicals’ true feelings about the Bible and, as such, its influence on same-sex marriage. Moreover, as noted earlier, the Bible covers vast subjects, and even a literalist reading could lead to seemingly contradictory applications, washing out specific effects in the aggregate. Finally, with a more ideal dataset, I would like to have tested other hypotheses such as contact and attribution theories.

In sum, religious factors, particularly views on the Bible, appear to have anchored in that they held back evangelicals’ attitudes toward same-sex marriage, helping to maintain, if not widen, the evangelical gap in support for marriage equality. However, religious influences do not, and perhaps could not, completely anchor their attitudes. Even evangelicals who read the Bible literally and attend church every week increased their support for same-sex marriage over the last ten years; if anything, the data suggest that this liberalizing trend will continue, at least in the near future. How far will evangelicals go to support marriage equality remains to be observed. The findings here also suggest that, in the new millennium, evangelicals, even the stalwarts, may be forging
a new approach to political engagement. On the issue of marriage equality, evangelicals in the last ten years may be distinguishing between its private (moral, spiritual) and public (liberal democracy, civil rights) dimensions. Doing so may allow them to navigate a new route between their participation as “spiritual citizens” and as “earthly citizens” in a pluralistic civil society. Such steering may be indicative of an altered approach that “new evangelicals” are seeking to employ in their politics, as they hold to their “dual citizenship.” If so, this new development has implications for evangelicals’ broader role in American political life.
INTRODUCTION

Living a nation of immigrants, Americans hold rather ambivalent, complex attitudes toward immigration and immigrants\(^{29}\) (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010, Brown 2015, Newport 2015). Among the least liberal on this issue are evangelical Protestants (Knoll 2009, Daniels 2005, Brint and Abrutyn 2010, McDaniel, Nooruddin and Shortle 2011), which begs the question, why? Studies find that evangelsals’ dominant religious in-group status and nationalistic Christian identity may partially or wholly explain their conservative immigration views, but the specific mechanisms have not been robustly established. In general, the religious sources of immigration attitudes remain understudied (Knoll 2009, Fussell 2014, Berg 2015).

That white evangelicals hold restrictive immigration views is consistent with longstanding research findings that demonstrate their association with conservative politics, particularly on social issues (Layman 2001, Woodberry and Smith 1998, Bolzendahl and Brooks 2005, Sherkat et al. 2011, Wilcox 1990, Jelen and Wilcox 1990, Reimer and Park 2001, Wilcox 2009, Brint and Abrutyn 2010). In fact, some commentators envisage immigration as the next “culture war” (Brooks 2007, Salam 2016). However, less is unknown about the immigration views—in fact, the general political orientation—of nonwhite evangelicals, who now comprise one-quarter of

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\(^{29}\) For simpler writing, I use “attitudes toward immigration and immigrants” and “attitudes toward immigration” or “immigrants” interchangeably throughout the paper, except when I am describing the outcome variable; however, I fully recognize that there are many distinct concepts and measures of attitudes toward immigrants and immigration.
American evangelicals, a diversification driven in part by post-1965 immigration and in part by recent efforts for multiracial congregations (Pew 2015b, Anderson and Stetzer 2016, DeYoung 2004, Garces-Foley 2007). Importantly, there are theoretical and empirical expectations that nonwhite evangelicals would hold more sympathetic views on immigration compared to white evangelicals. Indeed, among political attitudes, on the issue of immigration one would envision a particularly strong racial/ethnic dimension. As such, nonwhite evangelicals’ immigration attitudes may influence not only evangelical politics but the broader American political landscape as well in the coming decades as both evangelicals and the American public continue to diversify and immigration gains increasing political salience.


Specifically, I test a working theory on double conversion, which argues that Latino evangelicals’ Protestant and relatively recent immigration (about two-thirds of Latinos in the U.S. are associated with post-1965 immigration) experiences fuse their religious and

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30 Throughout this paper, I use the terms “Latino” and “Hispanic” interchangeably, recognizing that they may be distinct conceptualizations and that pan-ethnic terms may blur finer ethnic distinctiveness (e.g., see Jones-Correa and Leal 1996).
national identities, resulting in attitudes distinctive from those of their white, and even
African-American, co-religionists as well as their non-evangelical Latino peers, who have
not undergone both transformative processes. Overall, my findings are confirmatory of
the double conversion hypothesis.

**RELIGION & IMMIGRATION ATTITUDES**

Despite a robust literature on the formation of attitudes toward immigration and
immigrants, the religious influences are understudied (Daniel 2005, Knoll 2009, Bloom et
al. 2015, Cenobau and Escandell 2010, Fussell 2014, Berg 2015). The few studies that
consider religion focus on religious identity and find that evangelical Protestants
generally hold the least liberal views on immigration (Daniel 2005, Daniel and von der
Ruhr 2005, Knoll 2009, McDaniel et al. 2010, Brint & Abrutyn 2010). This is so despite
scriptural and some evangelical elites’ support for compassionate treatment of
immigrants, including the undocumented (Christianity Today 2006, Evangelical
Immigration Table, Galli 2006, Bauman and Yang 2003). *Prima facie*, religion as a
form of social identity—that is, “categorizing oneself as an in-group member and
accentuating in- and out-group differences in attitudes, beliefs, values, behaviors, and
other characteristics, especially those that favor the in-group”—seems to be a persuasive
approach to studying and religion and immigration attitudes (Fussell 2014, 487, Stets and
Burke 2000, 225). Developed at an early age and sustained throughout life, religious
identity provides a powerful narrative and conveys a sense of security and stability,
transmitted through shared values and social cues for cooperation and conflict by
rendering group boundaries explicit. In this conceptualization, evangelicals constitute the
in-group that perceives its symbolic resources, such as their religious subculture and values, threatened by immigrants, the out-group (Bloom et al. 2015, 2).

One variant of the religious identity theory argues that, in a multi-denominational society, denominations respond differently to globalization and immigration. Fundamentalist Protestants\(^\text{31}\) perceive these trends as a part of modern-day secularism that is encroaching on their cultural boundaries; as a protectionist gesture, they strengthen in-group loyalty, generating stronger bonding/intra-group capital (Putnam 2001, Daniel and von der Ruhr 2005). Relatedly, the separatist orientation of fundamental Protestants, especially those who reside in the South, may be leading them to anti-globalist preferences (Daniel 2005). One study, however, argues that attitudes toward immigration and immigrants are motivated not by religious affiliation \textit{per se}, but by conservative Protestants’ complex, blended form of religious-national identity (McDaniel et al. 2011). Reflecting a conservative\(^\text{32}\) strain of civic religion, the Christian nationalist worldview holds that America has a special covenant with God and that its unique values and traditions need to be preserved against threats, such as immigration, that may alter what it means to be American. In statistical models, then, once Christian nationalism is controlled for, religious affiliation should no longer be statistically significant.

Often on the issue of immigration, religion also becomes intertwined with race and ethnicity. For example, studying American Catholics, Turkish Muslims, and Israelis, Bloom et al. find that “religious social identity increases opposition to immigrants who are dissimilar to in-group members in religion or ethnicity” (2015, 1). Even though

\(^\text{31}\) I use “fundamentalist Protestants” here to be consistent with the conceptualization and terminology used in the studies cited here.

\(^\text{32}\) By contrast, the liberal strain holds that America’s divine role is to exert a positive influence in the world (McDaniel et al. 2010, 212).
evangelical theology is at core “color-blind,” historically, American evangelicals have been predominately white (Emerson and Smith 2000). Thus, it may be that white evangelicals oppose immigration because they feel threatened by dissimilar newcomers, many of whom are Latinos and Asians with religious backgrounds rooted in Catholicism or non-Judeo-Christian heritages, respectively. Mainline Protestants, who are even more overwhelmingly white and native-born, may feel similarly threatened. By contrast, more diverse groups such as Catholics, who are less than 60 percent white and one-quarter foreign-born, and non-Christians may identify more with and/or feel less threatened by recent immigrants, resulting in relatively more supportive immigration views.

Another variant of religious social identity focuses less on in-group and more on out-group identification; religious/minority marginalization contends that, due to their own experiences with persecution and discrimination, religious minorities, e.g., Jews and Mormons, are more likely to sympathize with other social out-groups such as immigrants, compared to dominant religious groups in America like Protestants (Fetzer 1998, Knoll 2009). In a way, this marginalization interpretation could be applied to evangelicals as well, who continue see themselves embattled against and persecuted in the secular culture (Smith 1998, Cox and Jones 2017), despite becoming mainstreamed in recent decades (Lindsay 2007). Considering, then, the variants of religious social identity theory, I posit the following:

Hypothesis 1: Evangelicals are less supportive of immigration than religious minorities and religionists who share more experiences or characteristics (such as religion, ethnicity, or immigrant background) with recent immigrant groups.

RACE/ETHNICITY, NATIVITY, & IMMIGRATION ATTITUDES

Like religion, race/ethnicity and nativity constitute compelling forms of social
identity and sources of immigration attitudes (Fussell 2014). Though distinct, these attributes often overlap and are conflated in the research; for example, Latinos and Asians are more likely to be foreign-born, and as such, they are usually perceived as non-natives, while whites and African Americans are perceived as natives (Fussell 2014, Valenzuela and Stein 2014). Nonetheless, racial and ethnic minorities and individuals from recent immigrant background, even if they are native-born, have in common their out-group status. Here, the argument is straightforward—racial/ethnic and cultural affinity leads to more sympathetic immigration views.

In the immigration attitudes literature, African Americans, although mostly native-born, are conceptualized as an out-group because of their racial minority status and experiences of discrimination; indeed, research does find that African Americans tend to be warmer on immigration than whites, but the relationship is conditioned positively by contact and negatively by economic threat perceptions (Diamond 1998, Espenshade and Hempstead 1996, see Fussell 2014, 488, for a review). However, controlling for the standard covariates, the white-black attitude gap sometimes disappears (Cummings and Lambert 1997, Chandler and Tsai 2001).

Researchers regard Latinos in America as an out-group as well, doubly so because of their ethnicity and immigrant association. Studies suggest that cultural affinity tends to prevail over economic interests in predicting Latinos’ immigration attitudes (Espenshade and Calhoun 1993, Espenshade and Hempstead 1996, Sanchez 2006, Lee and Panchon 2007, Valenzuela and Stein 2014), but this relationship, too, is conditioned, by national origins (Branton 2007, Rouse, Wilkinson and Garand 2010, Knoll 2012), acculturation and immigrant generation (Branton 2007, Rouse, Wilkinson and Garand
2010, Knoll 2012, Valenzuela and Stein 2014, Pedraza 2015), geo-demographic context
(Valenzuela and Stein 2014, Ha 2010) as well as ethnic attachment, group consciousness,
and sensitivity to discrimination against Latinos (Valenzuela and Stein 2014). Similarly,
the one study on Asian Americans’ immigration attitudes finds that perceived political
commonality with different racial groups influences their views (Samson 2014).

Identity, however, is complex and hardly one-dimensional (Roccas and Brewer
2002). Many individuals hold multiple ones and do not neatly compartmentalize each as
they go about their daily lives. What, then, are the implications of holding two, or
possibly even more, strong forms of identity that have been linked to immigration
attitudes? For example, how does racial/ethnic and cultural affinity intersect with
religious belonging—or do they? Is there one identity that tends to dominate?
Examining nonwhite evangelicals’ views on this issue, then, offers an intriguing glimpse
into this less-traversed intersection on political attitude formation, particularly so because
currently one in four evangelical is nonwhite, one in six is foreign-born, and one in ten is
Latino (Pew 2015b). Since neither the immigration attitudes literature nor the
evangelicals’ politics literature has not specifically addressed these questions, I draw
from studies that focus on the relationship between African Americans’ and Latino
Americans’ religion and political attitudes.

A key concept at the nexus of religion and race/ethnicity is interpretive
communities. Rooted in critical literary theory (Fisher 1980), it argues that “individuals
do not read [a sacred text, including the Bible] and form beliefs about it in isolation.
Instead, readings are shaped by communities of persons who share common beliefs about
the nature and purpose of the text and agree on ground rules that govern their views on
appropriate readings” (McDaniel and Ellison 2008, 182). Essentially, “religious experiences shape individuals’ political beliefs by providing authoritative guidance on proper conduct and behavior, constraining personal attitudes, through influential messages from clergy and via interactions with congregants that are governed by social norms.... What varies, however, is the cultural milieu in which these processes take place. … [Thus,] religious experiences may expose individuals to unique ‘brands’ of Christianity that link faith teachings to larger societal concerns” (McKenzie and Rouse 2013, 219). In other words, race and ethnicity moderate the relationship between religion—specifically, evangelicalism faith—and politics.

For white evangelicals, belonging to the dominant racial group in America results in a non-race-neutral religious-cultural toolkit, stocked with freewill, individualism, and pietistic devotion, and places them in a different socio-economic location relative to other Americans who share their religious faith, but not their race or ethnicity (Emerson and Smith 2000, Brown 2009). Thus, white conservative Protestants’ individualistic theology centers on sin, divine judgement, repentance and salvation through grace, and emphasizes individual piety and moral conduct (Emerson and Smith 2000, 76-80). This emphasis may then lead to political attitudes that are more accepting of inequalities, traditional family values, harsher criminal justice positions such as the death penalty, and lower tolerance on civil liberties for social out-groups (McDaniel and Ellison 2008, 182, Emerson and Smith 2000, Burdette, Ellison, and Hill 2005, Ellison and Sherkat 1993, Young 1992).

By doctrinal definition, theologically-conservative African-American Protestants are evangelicals, too; however, their historical experience and continuing struggle in
American society have forged a distinctive religious and political life (Roof and McKinney 1987, Lincoln and Mamiya 1990, Harris 1994, Steensland et al. 2000, Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2014). The theology of African American Protestants “has often expressed resistance and strength in the face of slavery and oppression; has underscored the prophetic concern with issues of injustice, exploitation, and neglect of the less fortunate; and has underscored the imperative of promoting fairness and equality” (McDaniel and Ellison 2008, 182-3, McKenzie and Rouse 2013). Because many congregants daily experience disadvantage and discrimination, African American churches often draw upon scriptures concerned with social justice for the marginalized and oppressed (McKenzie and Rouse 2013, 219). As such, religious belonging, behaving, and believing measures for theologically-conservative African American Protestants translate into more liberal political attitudes on justice and social welfare issues, but less so on social issues (Young 1992, McDaniel and Ellison 2008, McKenzie and Rouse 2013, Brown 2009).

Most Latinos in America, on the other hand, bear more recent immigrant backgrounds; in fact, nearly two in three (or about 37 million) Latinos in the U.S. come from post-1965 immigration (Pew 2015c). As such, many Latinos lack the intertwined historical and contemporary marginalization uniquely experienced by African Americans. Moreover, Latinos are less cohesive ethnically because of their diverse national origins (McKenzie and Rouse 2013). Religiously, Latinos are predominately Catholic, but their brand of Catholicism, intermixed with ethnic and folk culture, differs from that of mainstream American Catholicism (Calvillo and Bailey 2015). The Catholic Church is also not an indigenous institution for Latinos, and there has never been a “Hispanic
church” that parallels the more unified, politically-mobilized “black church” (Leal 2010).

For a while now, some Latinos have been turning to the evangelical faith (Sanchez Walsh 2003, Putnam and Campbell 2010, Avalos 2004). In 2013, about 16 percent of U.S. Latinos are evangelical Protestants, up four percentage points since 2010, and about 10 percent of evangelicals are Latinos (Pew 2014b, 2015a). Some scholars consider Latino Protestants in America doubly marginalized because of their minority faith status among the Latino community and minority ethnicity status in American society (Lee and Panchon 2007). Because of their recent immigrant background and that Protestantism is even less “indigenous” for them than Catholicism, Latino evangelicals in the U.S. may be forming their own distinctive American religious experience, relative to non-evangelical Latinos and non-Latino evangelicals. Research on this subject suggests that “Latino Protestant religiosity has a strong prospective element [compared to Catholicism], focused not on homeland culture, but on personal transformation as a community heavily characterized by the conversion experience…. Protestantism, then, is about breaking with traditions and fully embracing the identity that matters the most, being a cristiano” (Calvillo and Bailey 2015, 74). This conception resonates with core evangelical tenets, for example, “the belief that lives need to be transformed through a ‘born-again’ experience and a life-long process of following Jesus” that forsakes all earthly identities for a new Christ-centric identity (NAE 2017).

Religious conversions, however, do not operate in a cultural vacuum, and for Latinos, becoming evangelical entails “more than a decision to choose belief in Jesus” (Sanchez-Walsh 2003, 2). There is a social, cultural, and even national component as well, because evangelicalism the religious phenomenon also exists in socio-cultural and
geographic locations. In the American context, “conversion often meant casting aside culture and language to become Americanized. Becoming a Christian became equated with, and in some sense still means, becoming American” (Sanchez Walsh 2003, 2). This insightful point could be clarified—the old culture and language are cast aside, but they are supplanted by the culture and language of the new country, as religious beliefs cannot be lived out without either.

For many immigrants and their families, churches aid this acculturation process, functioning as “gateway institutions” or “socializing agents” that help them integrate into American society and adopt American cultural norms and values (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995, Taylor, Gershon, and Pantoja 2014, Ebaugh 2003, Foley and Hoge 2007, Djupe and Gilbert 2006). For example, church activities may facilitate interaction with natives and more assimilated ethnic co-religionists. Many churches also provide services and assistance to immigrants, e.g., such as English language programs, that could intentionally or unintentionally impart civic norms and behavior to newcomers. Thus, immigrants and their children learn how to be “American” in churches, and evangelical churches tend to favor a particularly U.S.-centric, nationalistic tenor of what it means to be American (Taylor, Gershon, and Pantoja 2014).

The empirical evidence regarding this phenomenon is suggestive. For example, Latino Protestants, either evangelical or mainline, are more likely to identify as American and say that being Christian is a hallmark feature of being American (Taylor et al. 2014), and higher-generation Latinos are more likely to identify with evangelical churches (Espinosa et al. 2003). Latino Protestants are also more likely to speak English at home, even after controlling for language proficiency, intimating a cultural reference; many
Latino Protestants also tend to identify more with their religion than their ethnicity, thereby decoupling religion and ethnicity (Calvillo and Bailey 2015). Research on Asian-American evangelicals, too, finds a similar pattern, a conflation of what it means to be evangelical and American (Alumkal 2003).

For Latinos in the U.S., becoming evangelical is politically meaningful as well (Kosmin and Keysar 1995, Leal, Barreto, Lee and de la Garza 2005). Research suggests that the religion and politics connection for Latinos falls somewhere between those of whites and African Americans (McDaniel and Ellison 2008, McKenzie and Rouse 2013). McDaniel and Ellison (2008), for example, find that on social, welfare, and crime issues, Biblical literalism’s effect on Latinos is similar to whites, but to a lesser degree, whereas African Americans’ attitudes diverge from whites on welfare and crime. Similarly, McKenzie and Rouse (2013) report that various measures of religious belief and belonging move whites’ attitudes on several egalitarian issues; religiously-conservative Latinos resemble whites only somewhat, expressing less interest in social issues such as gender discrimination and reducing intolerance toward homosexuals; and religious factors do not affect African Americans, except on social issues.

Studies also suggest that religion moderates the Latino ethnicity and politics connection. For example, ideologically, relative to Latino Catholics of various religiosity, Latino evangelicals are the least likely to self-identify as liberal and moderate, and the most likely as conservative (Gibson and Hare 2012). Also, relative to their non-evangelical peers, Latino evangelicals seem to express different political attitudes, particularly on social issues, but perhaps less so on the socio-economic justice front. For example, born-again Latinos tend to be more conservative on social issues (Pantoja
On same-sex marriage, Latino evangelicals, regardless of their churchgoing, appears to be the least supportive compared to Latino mainline Protestants and Catholics (Ellison, Acevedo and Ramos-Wada 2013). Latino evangelicals also seem less interested in overcoming gender discrimination than Latinos belonging to other religious traditions, but not so on achieving racial equality, helping the poor, and reducing intolerance (McKenzie and Rouse 2013). And even though Latino evangelicals are more likely to support the death penalty than less-committed Catholics, the two groups hold old similar views on universal insurance or more benefits to the poor (Gibson and Hare 2012). Other findings, however, show that evangelical Latinos are no different from Catholic Latinos on issues ranging from abortion and gender roles to food stamps and environmental spending (Kelly and Morgan 2008).

Furthermore, these correlations may be moderated by religiosity, such as attendance, again perhaps more on social issues and less so on the social and economic justice front. Valenzuela (2014) shows that regular-churchgoing Latino Protestants are significantly more conservative on a range of social issues, such as opposition to abortion and gay marriage, and less-frequently attending Latino Protestants are more like Latino Catholics. But on support for immediate amnesty and economic welfare, Latinos of Protestant, Catholic, or other religious faith express similar views regardless of their religiosity, underscoring the dominance of ethnic affinity on these issues.

In sum, the literature suggests that race and ethnicity moderate “evangelical politics,” but religion moderates the racial/ethnic identity politics, too, often depending on the issue. Specifically for Latino evangelicals, most of whom come from immigrant backgrounds, their political attitudes may be conditioned by a blending of their religious
and acculturation processes. For them, what it means to be evangelical and American—this double conversion—intersects in ways that distinguish their immigration views from those of their non-Latino co-religionists who hold more rooted religious and national identities. Cultural and ethnic affinity is still expected to prevail, but may be attenuated by their evangelical-American identification. Thus, I posit:

_Hypothesis 2: Latino evangelicals’ immigration attitudes are expected to be distinct from those of their non-Latino evangelical religionists as well as those of their non-evangelical Latino peers._

**DATA & MEASURES**

*Dependent variable.* One complexity of studying immigration attitudes is the range of issues involved, from views on policy to feelings about individuals. As such, significant explanatory predictors may vary by depending on the specific dimension of the issue (Pantoja 2006). In this paper, I focus on one aspect: respondents’ views on the current level of immigration, whether it should increase or decrease, by a lot or a little, or remain the same (scale 1-5, with higher values indicating support for reducing immigration). As a policy measure, the simple wording and framing are less emotive, e.g., less explicitly about the perceived economic, cultural, or national security threats posed by immigrants or the “law and order” or family breakup considerations of illegal immigration. To test my hypotheses, I pool the most recent General Social Surveys (GSS), 2008-2014, and analyze the “letin1” question.

*Key independent variables.* A key independent variable is religious affiliation, and I use the “reltrad” classification of religious traditions, a primarily denominational

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33 I use OLS regressions to test average yearly differences in LETIN1 attitudes. In the general population, there is a 2008-2010 and a 2012-2014 cluster, with views becoming increasingly pro-immigration. The pattern seems similar among evangelicals.
approach (Steensland et al. 2000), and the updated coding (Stetzer and Burge 2016).

Because “reltard” is denomination-based, it supports the belonging and affiliation nature of evangelicalism, that it is more than just a spiritual ideation, but a socio-cultural identity as well, as conceptualized in this paper. The seven “reltrad” categories are: evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, black Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, “other” religious traditions, and non-affiliated.

Race and ethnicity is the other focal independent variable. I recode GSS’ “race” and “Hispanic” variables into four groups: non-Hispanic white, non-Hispanic black, Hispanic, and “other” races. Because the GSS only began Spanish interviews in 2006, the representativeness of the pre-2006 Latino subsample may be questionable (Barreto and Pedraza 2009). Thus, I only pool the 2008 through 2014 biennial surveys (i.e., four survey years). Weighted, white evangelicals represent 77.4 percent of all evangelicals in the evangelical-only analytical sample, African-American evangelicals, 9.8 percent, Latino evangelicals, 9.8 percent, and “other race” evangelicals, 3.1 percent.

Other covariates. Guided by the broader immigration attitudes literature, the multivariable models include a number of covariates (Berg 2015, Cenobau and Escandell 2010, Fussell 2014). Immigrant status is binary (foreign-born, U.S.-born). Immigrant generation is indicated by parental nativity (categorical: both parents born in the U.S.,

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34 Nearly three-quarters of the “other race” respondents in the analytical sample are of Asian heritage (i.e., Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Pilipino, and other Asian) – 74.3 percent in the general population and 72.9 percent among evangelicals. Also, in the pooled 2008-2014 analytical sample, there are 20 respondents who did not provide a response for their Hispanic ethnicity (either “don’t know” or no response); however, they do have a valid response for GSS’ standard “race” variable, which I use.

35 GSS’s white and Hispanic shares among evangelicals between 2008 and 2014 are generally consistent with Pew’s data. The African-American and “other race” shares are less consistent with Pew’s data, but somewhat more consistent with data from the Portrait of American Life Study (PALS). Regarding African-American evangelicals (not reltrad’s black Protestants), it is plausible that their members have increased, due to racial reconciliation efforts since the 1990s, e.g., Promise Keepers and multiracial churches. For example, the National Congregation Study shows that the percent of churches classified as “white conservative, evangelical, or fundamentalist” with at least 20 percent African Americans doubled from 5 to 10 percent between 1998 and 2012. These figures are available upon request.
just one, neither). Age is continuous, and gender dichotomous. Marital status is collapsed categorical (married/widowed, divorced/separated, never-married). Educational attainment is collapsed ordinal (college degree and above, high school degree/some college, less than high school). I also include GSS’s 10-word verbal recognition scale (continuous, 1-10), a conventional cognitive measure, because studies have found cognitive ability to be correlated with tolerance and social attitudes (Bobo and Licari 1989, Ohlander, Batalova, and Treas 2005). Employment status is recoded into four responses (full-time, part-time, unemployed, and retired/students/stay-at-home, i.e., not in the labor force). Income is in constant 1986 dollars and logged. Region is recoded from GSS’s and Census’ nine sections into four regions (South, Midwest, Northeast, West). Urbanicity is collapsed from the “xnrorsiz” variable into three categories (city, suburb, and rural). To account for geographic context, I calculate percent foreign-born, African American, Latino, and Asian for the nine original GSS region based on Census 2010 data.

Religious covariates include Bible views (categorical: Bible is the literal word of God, inspired word of God, a book of fables/other), church attendance (ordinal: at least weekly, 2 to 3 times a month, a few times a year, rarely/never), and the strength of respondents’ denominational affiliation (ordinal: very strong, somewhat strong, not very

---

36 South Atlantic, East South Center, and West South Central regions are coded as the “South”; East North Central and West North Central are coded as the “Midwest”; New England and the Middle Atlantic are coded as the “Northeast”; and Mountain and Pacific are coded as the West.”

37 Cities have 50,000+ populations; suburbs are large or medium city suburbs, large or medium unincorporated cities, cities with fewer than 50,000 residents, and towns; rural areas are “smaller areas” and open country.

38 To calculate the foreign-born share in each GSS region, I first calculate a state-to-region foreign-born weight, based on the number of foreign-born individuals in the state as a share of total foreign-born individuals in the GSS region. I then multiply the percent of foreign-born individuals for each state by its foreign-born state-to-region weight. Finally, I sum this weighted state share for all the states in a particular region to get the state-weighted foreign-born share for each of the nine GSS regions. I replicate this calculation for the percentages of African Americans, Latinos, and Asians in each region.
strong). I also control for childhood religious affiliation because many Americans switch religions and the reach of religious socialization could be long, perhaps not unlike the persistence of political socialization (Pew 2015b). Childhood religious affiliation, then, is coded using the same approach as adult “reltrad,” but with the analogous religious variables at age 16 (age 12 for attendance), yielding seven childhood “reltrad” categories. In addition to these standard variables, I include support for prayer and the Bible in public schools as a proxy for Christian nationalism. Arguably, the two are distinct concepts, but the phrasing of the GSS question—“The United States Supreme Court has ruled that no state or local government may require the reading of the Lord’s Prayer or Bible verses in public schools”—may capture some church-and-state sentiments, and thus a blend of religious and nationalistic views.39

The final set of variables fall within the political and attitudinal category. Party identification is recoded into four responses (Republican, Independent, Democrat, other).40 Ideology is collapsed into three responses (conservative, moderate, and liberal). The attitudinal variables include one on moral conservatism, which has been linked to evangelicals’ conservative social views (Brint and Abrutyn 2010, Farrell 2011), using views on premarital sex (specified as continuous, 1-4: always wrong, almost always, sometimes, not wrong at all); one on raced-based preferential employment41 (continuous, 1-4: strongly oppose preference, oppose, support, and strongly support); and four on

---

39 The 2007 Baylor Religion Survey contains both the Christian nationalism and school prayer questions (although the latter is worded differently from the GSS question). The overall correlation between the two is 0.59 and 0.51 among evangelicals.

40 About 2 percent of the analytical sample indicated “other” for party identification, whom I decide to keep in the analytical samples.

41 The exact GSS wording is: “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 discriminates against whites. What about your opinion—are you for or against preferential hiring and promotion of blacks?”
racial attitudes toward marriage, which research shows are correlated with religious affiliation (Perry 2013), as a proxy for feelings toward a specific racial/ethnic group\textsuperscript{42} (continuous, 1-5: strongly favors, favor, neither, oppose, and strongly oppose). Because most of the covariates have some missing values (“don’t know” or no responses), list-wise deletion would significantly reduce the analytical samples for the multivariable models.\textsuperscript{43} To address this, I impute the missing values using Stata’s mi impute suite and chained equations.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{METHODS}

I begin the analysis with simple descriptive statistics, cross-tabulating immigration views by religious tradition among the general population and within individual racial/ethnic groups as well as by race and ethnicity among evangelicals. For the multivariate models, I collapse “letin1” into three responses—reduce (omitted), increase, maintain—and use weighted multinomial logit regressions with robust standard errors. To further test Hypothesis 1 and the underlying mechanisms that explain the evangelical cleavage, I start with a simple mlogit model, with just the religious affiliation and survey year variables to estimate the “gross” evangelical effect (Model 2A). I then include, in succession, nativity (Model 2B), geographic, demographic and economic covariates (Model 2C), religious covariates (Model 2D), and political and attitudinal covariates as potential explanations of the “evangelical cleavage” (Model 2E). As a shorthand in the following sections, I reference the probability of favoring increasing

\textsuperscript{42} “What about having a close relative marrying a [black, white, Hispanic, or Asian] person?”
\textsuperscript{43} The variable “realinc” has the highest percentage of missing, 11.8 percent; eight covariates have 1-5 percent missing, and 11 covariates have less than 1 percent missing.
\textsuperscript{44} I do not impute values for “letin1” or “reltrad.” In preliminary analysis, I run the models with non-imputed data, and the results would yield qualitatively similar conclusions.
current immigration over reducing it as “increase-versus/over-reduce” and the second set of probability estimation as “remain-versus/over-reduce.”

To test Hypothesis 2 more rigorously, I run mlogit models for evangelicals only, examining the race/ethnic effect, and then for Latinos only, focusing on the religious/evangelical effect. Due to small cell sizes, for Latinos, I only run the analysis on evangelical, Catholic, and non-affiliated Latinos. The evangelicals-only models begin with race/ethnicity and survey year variables (Model 3A), followed by respondents’ and their parents’ nativity (Model 3B) and then the full slate of covariates form Model 2E, as I am less interested in the precise underlying mechanisms and more in Latino evangelicals’ views after controls. The Latinos-only models commence with survey years, religious affiliation, and respondents’ and their parents’ nativity (Model 4A). Finally, in Model 4B, I include Bible literalism, church attendance, strength of religious affiliation, and the “born-again” experience, per the literature’s findings on the effects of this self-identification measure among Latinos (Pantoja 2010).45

FINDINGS

Bivariate analysis. Table 3.1 presents the cross-tabulations of “letin1” responses and mean scores, first for the general population by religious tradition (Panel 1A) and by race/ethnicity (Panel 1B), then by race/ethnicity for evangelicals only (Panel 1C), and finally by religious affiliation among whites, African Americans, and Latinos (Panels 1D-

45 For Models 4A and 4B, I do not impute for missing data as the imputation process seems to be burdensome on the data and did not properly converge.
responses for all the groups in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Detailed Views on Immigration, 2008-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PANEL 1A</th>
<th>Increase a lot</th>
<th>Increase a little</th>
<th>Remain</th>
<th>Reduce a little</th>
<th>Reduce a lot</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Reduce</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelicals</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline Protestants</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Protestants</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>30.2</td>
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<td>89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other faiths</td>
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<td>15.2</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>37.2</td>
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<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-affiliated</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>24.8</td>
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<th>Remain</th>
<th>Reduce a little</th>
<th>Reduce a lot</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Reduce</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
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<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>55.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3,796</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>819</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>51.0</td>
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<td>20.5</td>
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<td>Other, non-Hispanic</td>
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<td>15.4</td>
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<th>Remain</th>
<th>Reduce a little</th>
<th>Reduce a lot</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Reduce</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
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<td>25.2</td>
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<td>7.4</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1,054</td>
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<td>Black, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
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<td>Other, Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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<th>Remain</th>
<th>Reduce a little</th>
<th>Reduce a lot</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Reduce</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelicals</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1,053</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mainline Protestants</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<td>Catholics</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>791</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>9.2</td>
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<td>777</td>
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<th>Remain</th>
<th>Reduce a little</th>
<th>Reduce a lot</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Reduce</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
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<tr>
<td>Evangelicals</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>149</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Protestants</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-affiliated</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>119</td>
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<tr>
<th>PANEL 1F</th>
<th>Increase a lot</th>
<th>Increase a little</th>
<th>Remain</th>
<th>Reduce a little</th>
<th>Reduce a lot</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Reduce</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelicals</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-affiliated</td>
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<td>18.7</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: General Social Surveys, pooled 2008-2014 (weighted). For mean scores, **bold** indicates statistical difference from the omitted category (either evangelicals or whites). Some categories are omitted due to small sample sizes (N<50).

---

46 I do not present the “other race” category because of small cell sizes (N<50).
Overall, Americans are rather unsupportive of more immigration (Panel 1A). One-half (48 percent) want to reduce immigration, with reduce a little and a lot nearly equal in intensity. About one-third (38 percent) are fine with the current level, and only one in seven (14 percent) favors increasing immigration. Panel 1A also supports prior findings that evangelicals—and indeed mainline Protestants, too, as the two groups are virtually identical in their views—are the least supportive of immigration. Among these two predominately white Protestant religious traditions, most members (57 percent) indicate that they want to reduce immigration. Black Protestants follow in their opposition to immigration, then Catholics and the non-affiliated, then other-faith respondents, and finally Jewish respondents, among whom still more favor reducing than increasing immigration. Prima facie, then, Panel 1A supports Hypothesis 1.

Evangelicals are less supportive of immigration compared to the non-affiliated, religious

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47 In the weighted pooled 2008-14 analytical sample, 77 percent of evangelicals and 92 percent of mainline Protestants are white; by comparison, 59 percent of Catholics are white.
minorities, and Catholics. Even controlling for race, white evangelicals are still less supportive than white Catholics (Panel 1D).

Consistent with racial/ethnic identity and affinity theories, white Americans are the least supportive of immigration, followed by African Americans, then Hispanics and individuals of “other” races, who are the most supportive—a pattern replicated among the evangelicals-only sample (Panels 1B and 1C). Interestingly, though, even among Latinos and “other race” individuals, only one in five favors increasing immigration. In the general population, Latinos are more supportive than whites or African Americans, but among evangelicals, Latinos are no different in their average support than other nonwhite evangelicals. Initially, then, Hypothesis 2 is unsupported; cultural and ethnic affinity seems to matter more than the religious identity.

Panels 1D-F show immigration views by religious tradition for each racial and ethnic group (categories with small Ns are excluded). The evangelical gap is present only among white Americans. Among African Americans, those who affiliate with historically black Protestant denominations (i.e., “reltrd” black Protestants) are the least supportive of immigration (indeed, one-quarter support “reduce a lot”). Among Latinos, evangelicals, Catholics, and the non-affiliated are statistically similar. However, Latino evangelicals are the most likely to say “reduce a little”; Latino Catholics, “increase a lot”; and the non-affiliated, “increase a little.”

*The evangelical gap.* Table 3.2 presents the imputed, weighted mlogit models predicting the likelihood of favoring increasing over reducing immigration and maintaining over reducing immigration. Model 2A begins simply with the religious

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48 For simpler presentation, Table 2 does not present the estimates on the covariates, although they will be discussed in this section; specific results are available upon request.
tradition plus survey year variables. As observed in the previous section, compared to evangelicals, all other groups (except mainline Protestants) are more likely to support increase and remain over reduce. Moreover, the gap seems particularly wide between evangelicals and non-Christians. The affiliation gaps also appear to be larger in the increase-versus-reduce panel.

Table 3.2: Multinomial Logistic Regression Predicting Immigration Views, General Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INCREASE versus REDUCE (base)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2A: Affiliation</td>
<td>2B: Nativity</td>
<td>2C: Demo-Geo-Econ</td>
<td>2D: Religion &amp; Attitudes</td>
<td>2E: Politics &amp; Attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRR p-val</td>
<td>RRR p-val</td>
<td>RRR p-val</td>
<td>RRR p-val</td>
<td>RRR p-val</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evangelical (omitted)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline Prot.</td>
<td>1.04 0.816</td>
<td>1.23 0.258</td>
<td>1.05 0.802</td>
<td>0.80 0.391</td>
<td>0.74 0.268</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Prot.</td>
<td>1.61 0.025</td>
<td>0.93 0.792</td>
<td>0.88 0.624</td>
<td>0.93 0.829</td>
<td>0.72 0.358</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1.89 0.000</td>
<td>1.35 0.067</td>
<td>1.15 0.425</td>
<td>0.87 0.529</td>
<td>0.80 0.343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>5.30 0.000</td>
<td>5.40 0.000</td>
<td>3.75 0.001</td>
<td>4.04 0.058</td>
<td>4.42 0.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other faith</td>
<td>3.30 0.000</td>
<td>2.39 0.000</td>
<td>1.86 0.010</td>
<td>1.94 0.023</td>
<td>1.55 0.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-affiliated</td>
<td>2.42 0.000</td>
<td>2.26 0.000</td>
<td>1.86 0.000</td>
<td>3.15 0.382</td>
<td>2.63 0.532</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>REMAIN versus REDUCE (base)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2A: Affiliation</td>
<td>2B: Nativity</td>
<td>2C: Demo-Geo-Econ</td>
<td>2D: Religion &amp; Attitudes</td>
<td>2E: Politics &amp; Attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRR p-val</td>
<td>RRR p-val</td>
<td>RRR p-val</td>
<td>RRR p-val</td>
<td>RRR p-val</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical (omitted)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainline Prot.</td>
<td>1.02 0.877</td>
<td>1.13 0.752</td>
<td>0.96 0.752</td>
<td>0.86 0.330</td>
<td>0.81 0.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Prot.</td>
<td>1.32 0.047</td>
<td>1.03 0.864</td>
<td>1.03 0.864</td>
<td>1.16 0.524</td>
<td>1.03 0.899</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1.67 0.000</td>
<td>1.30 0.214</td>
<td>1.15 0.214</td>
<td>1.14 0.394</td>
<td>1.08 0.622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>2.51 0.001</td>
<td>2.59 0.019</td>
<td>2.01 0.019</td>
<td>3.23 0.071</td>
<td>4.14 0.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other faith</td>
<td>1.96 0.000</td>
<td>1.56 0.201</td>
<td>1.27 0.201</td>
<td>1.51 0.085</td>
<td>1.35 0.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-affiliated</td>
<td>1.79 0.000</td>
<td>1.71 0.006</td>
<td>1.38 0.006</td>
<td>0.88 0.856</td>
<td>0.80 0.736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imputations</td>
<td>5 5</td>
<td>5 5</td>
<td>5 5</td>
<td>5 5</td>
<td>5 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>5233 5232</td>
<td>5097 4835</td>
<td>4835 4835</td>
<td>4835 4835</td>
<td>4835 4835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. RVI</td>
<td>0.00 0.00</td>
<td>0.00 0.01</td>
<td>0.02 0.03</td>
<td>0.03 0.03</td>
<td>0.03 0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest FMI</td>
<td>0.00 0.00</td>
<td>0.30 0.51</td>
<td>0.61 0.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model F test</td>
<td>6.98 10.8</td>
<td>6.80 5.21</td>
<td>5.76 5.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within VCE type, Prob&gt;F</td>
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<td>0.00 0.00</td>
<td>0.00 0.00</td>
<td>0.00 0.00</td>
<td>0.00 0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: General Social Surveys, pooled 2008-14 (imputed & weighted).
Note: For simpler presentation, I do not present the estimates on the covariates, which are available upon request.

Including race/ethnicity and immigrant status in the model, the difference between black Protestants and evangelicals disappears, and the differences between evangelicals and Catholics and, to a lesser extent, individuals of “other” faiths are
attenuated (Model 2B); the evangelical-mainline gap increases in magnitude, but is not statistically significant. Not surprisingly, in this model, race and ethnicity matter, but the relationship is partially mediated by nativity (results not shown), which is a significant predictor as well.

In Model 2C, the geo-demographic and economic covariates mediate the evangelical-Catholic gaps, which are no longer significant. Specifically, educational attainment explains the evangelical-Catholic difference in the increase-versus-reduce view, and region (Midwest versus South), the remain-versus-reduce difference (results not shown). In the remain-versus-reduce panel, the evangelical-“other” faith gap disappears as well. Thus, while the geo-demographic and economic factors attenuate some of the intra-Christian differences, a broader Christian cleavage remains, particularly in the increase-over-reduce view.

Including the religious variables, now only the evangelical-Jewish and evangelical-“other” faith differences persist (Model 2D). Although the magnitude of the coefficient estimate (and its robust standard error, not shown) for the unaffiliated in the increase-versus-reduce estimation seems sizable, it is not statistically significant. Finally, including the political and attitudinal variables reduces the evangelical-“other” faith gap to non-statistical significance, but the evangelical-Jewish gap persists, both statistically and in magnitude (Model 2E). This finding strongly supports the conventional minority marginalization theory. Thus far, Table 3.2 supports both expectations in Hypothesis 1.

Overall, Model 2E shows that the evangelical gap in immigration support is mostly explained by differences in nativity, demographic, geographic, economic,
religious, political, and attitudinal factors. Interestingly, current religious affiliation, i.e., belonging or identity, *per se* is less meaningful than initially expected, especially given the literature’s emphasis on social identity. Indeed, on that point, Model 2E suggests that religious attendance/behaving, not affiliation/belonging or beliefs/believing, is the stronger religious predictor of immigration views. Relative to weekly attenders, yearly and rarely/never attenders have lower relative risk of favoring increase or remain over reduce; that is, more frequent (weekly and monthly) religious attendance is associated with more supportive immigration views, which is consistent with prior findings in the literature and the idea that religious behaving, particularly within a religious community, generates bridging/inter-group capital, at least on this measure of immigration views. Furthermore, there is some evidence, albeit limited, that childhood religious socialization matters, too; compared to individuals raised evangelical, those who grew up Catholic are more likely to support increase over reduce.

Several non-religious sources of immigration views stand out as well. Race and ethnicity predict attitudes, but, interestingly, only in the remain-versus-reduce estimation: Latinos and “other race” respondents are more likely to support remain, but not increase, over reduce. Individuals born outside the U.S. and college graduates are more likely to support increase or maintain versus reduce, and higher verbal scores predict greater probability of favoring maintain over reduce. The economic factors receive some, albeit relatively limited, support: compared to the fully-employed, those not in the labor force (i.e., retirees, students, and stay-at-home individuals) have higher relative risk of supporting increase over reduce; on the other hand, the unemployed have lower relative risk of favoring remain over reduce. Geographic and contextual influences seem
minimal, too: only rural, versus city, residency is significant, and only in the remain-
versus-reduce panel. Surprisingly, considering the media coverage on this issue (e.g.,
Jones 2016), partisanship does not predict immigration views at all, but ideology does.
Relative to conservatives, liberals have greater probability of favoring increase over
reduce.

Finally, approval of church-state separation and racial attitudes predict
immigration views. Those who approve of the Supreme Court decision that local and
state governments cannot require prayer and Bible in public schools are more likely to
support increasing or maintaining over reducing the current number of immigrants to the
U.S. However, as a proxy for Christian nationalism, it does not explain the religious
affiliation effect the way McDaniel et al. (2010) would suggest. Affiliation differences
have mostly disappeared even before controlling for the school prayer variable, and the
evangelical-Jewish gap persists after accounting for it. Traditional moralism, or approval
of premarital sex, does not predict immigration views; however, disapproval of race-
based hiring and promotion favoring African Americans is associated with lower relative
risk of supporting increase or maintain over reduce. Moreover, racial marriage attitudes,
particularly toward Latinos and whites predict immigration views as well, but in opposite
directions. Greater opposition to close relatives marrying Hispanics is associated with
greater probability of less favorable immigration views, but greater opposition to close
relatives marrying whites predicts more favorable immigration views. Thus, both
animus toward nonwhites and whites influence immigration views. This last set of
findings is consistent with prior findings on cultural factors being stronger predictors of
immigration attitudes than economics one (Venezuela and Stein 2014, Bloom et al. 2015).

**Race, ethnicity, and evangelicalism.** Do cultural affinity and racial/ethnic identity operate among evangelicals even though research suggests American Protestantism may decouple religion and ethnicity for recent immigrants such as Latinos? And do Latino evangelicals express more distinctive views relative to their non-Latino evangelical co-religionists, as hypothesized by the working theory of double conversion? Using an evangelical-only subsample, Table 3.3, Model 3A begins simply with race and ethnicity plus survey year.\(^{49}\) In discussing Table 3.3, I focus primarily on white, African-American, and Latino evangelicals, as there are too few “other race” evangelicals (N=35) for reliable estimates. In the simple model, nonwhite evangelicals are significantly more likely to support increase or remain over reduce than white evangelicals, but statistically similar to one another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>INCREASE versus REDUCE (base)</th>
<th>REMAIN versus REDUCE (base)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3A: Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>3B: Nativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White, NH (omitted)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, NH</td>
<td>3.34 0.000</td>
<td>2.63 0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>4.73 0.000</td>
<td>1.70 0.229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, NH</td>
<td>6.20 0.000</td>
<td>3.23 0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Immigrant</strong></td>
<td>2.51 0.117</td>
<td>5.72 0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 parents US born (omitted)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.77 0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.53 0.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Imputations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>1356</td>
<td>1356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avg. RVI</strong></td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Largest FMI</strong></td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Model F test</strong></td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within VCE type,</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prob&gt;F</strong></td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** General Social Surveys, pooled 2008-14 (imputed & weighted).

**Note:** For simpler presentation, I do not present the estimates on the other covariates, which are available upon request.

\(^{49}\) Again, for simpler presentation, I only present the estimates on the race, ethnicity and nativity variables in Table 4; estimates on the other covariates are available upon request.
Controlling for respondents’ and parents’ nativity attenuates the race/ethnicity effect, particularly for Latino evangelicals and only somewhat for African American evangelicals (Model 3B). Indeed, there is no longer a statistically significant white-Latino gap among evangelicals (nor there is a black-Latino gap, results not shown). Not surprisingly, nativity, both respondents’ and parents’, predict immigration views. In other words, Latino evangelicals seem initially more supportive of immigration because they are more likely to be immigrants, but once that is accounted for, they are not significantly different from their white evangelical peers, which is not the case for African-American evangelicals.

When Model 3C controls for the full slate of demographic, geographic, economic, religious, political and attitudinal covariates, white, African-American, and Latino evangelicals are no longer statistically different, although the magnitudes of the estimates suggest persisting groups variations. In fact, compared to white evangelicals, Latino evangelicals have a lower relative risk of favoring remain over reduce once the covariates are considered (RRR=0.63), but African-American evangelicals have a higher relative risk (RRR=1.48); although, neither estimate is statistically significant. When I omit Latino evangelicals as the base category, African-American evangelicals have more than twice the relative risk of favoring remain over reduce, and the estimate is marginally significant (RRR=2.36, p-value=0.091).

While Table 3.3 does not present the results for the other covariates, here, I will highlight a few noteworthy findings and non-findings. The immigrant variable is highly statistically significant among evangelicals, particularly in magnitude (RRR=5.72
increase-vs.-reduce, RRR=9.71 remain-vs.-reduce) and relative to the immigrant size
effect in the general population (RRR=2.50 and 2.70, increase and remain, respectively).
Parental nativity, on the other hand, does not matter; that is, for evangelicals, it is their
own immigrant experience, not their families’, that motivates their immigration views.
Similar to the general population model, verbal score predicts only the remain-versus-
reduce views among evangelicals as well. Overall, the demographic and economic
variables are not particularly explanatory, but the geographic variables for evangelicals
seem more meaningful (especially compared to the general population). For example, in
the increase-over-reduce estimation, evangelicals living the northeastern and western
states are more supportive of immigration than Southerners, and evangelicals living in
regions with higher shares of African Americans and Latinos are also more supportive,
too. In the remain-over-reduce estimation, Midwestern evangelicals are more supportive
of remain than Southerners, and evangelicals living in regions with higher shares of
Latinos are also more supportive.

Regarding the religious influences, evangelicals are not particularly moved by
their feelings about the Bible, which seems surprising, considering its centrality in
evangelical theology and scriptural passages referenced by both sides of the immigration
debate in support of their position (Bauman and Yang 2003); recent research, however,
reveals that few evangelicals (about one in ten) report being most influenced by the Bible
on immigration issues (LifeWay Research 2015). Frequent churchgoing and childhood
affiliation, on the other hand, matter, particularly in predicting the increase-over-reduce
view. Specifically, compared to weekly attenders, monthly and yearly attenders have
reduced relative risk of favoring increase over reduce. And evangelicals raised in
mainline Protestants denominations or the Catholic Church, compared to “home-grown” evangelicals, are more likely to support increase. In the remain-versus-reduce estimation, these religious variables seem less impactful; the churchgoing gap is between weekly and yearly attenders, and compared to the strongly affiliated, the somewhat affiliated is less likely to favor remain. Surprisingly again, partisanship and ideology do not matter for evangelicals, contrary to popular conception (Jones 2016). Finally, views on raced-based preferential employment and feelings about marriage to Latinos, African Americans, and particularly whites matter as well.

Thus far, Table 3.3 supports one part of Hypothesis 2, that Latino evangelicals hold distinctive immigration views relative to their white and African American co-religionists who have not experienced a cultural-national conversion or perhaps a religious conversion in the way that Latinos have. But does becoming evangelical somehow moderate ethnic identity politics? Table 3.4 presents the results on this question. Model 4A (which controls for religious tradition, respondents’ and parental nativity, and survey year) suggests that non-affiliated Latinos are more likely to favor increase over reduce compared to evangelical Latinos, but evangelical and Catholic Latinos are statistically similar. However, when I control for feelings about the Bible, church attendance, strength of religious affiliation, and the born-again experience in Model 4B, born-again is marginally significant in the remain-over-reduce estimation (RRR=0.59, p-value=0.066); ceteris paribus, born-again Latinos have reduced relative risk of supporting maintaining versus reducing immigration compared to non-born-again Latinos.
For robustness check, I run Model 4B for whites only and African-Americans only, and for neither group is the born-again variable statistically significant (results not shown). I also run Model 4B for “other race” respondents; the subsample is small (N=187), but the born-again variable is statistically significant in the remain-over-reduce estimation (RRR=0.21, \( p \)-value=0.018). The born-again finding here—that the self-identified spiritual conversion experience is meaningful, and in the expected conservative direction, to Latinos and “other race” minorities—supports the double conversion hypothesis and echoes previous research regarding the born-again impact on Latinos’ political orientation (Pantoja 2010).

Table 3.4: Multinomial Logistic Regressions Predicting Immigration Views, Latinos

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 4A: Born-again</th>
<th>Model 4B: Born-again</th>
<th>Model 4A: Born-again</th>
<th>Model 4B: Born-again</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RRR ( p )-val</td>
<td>RRR ( p )-val</td>
<td>RRR ( p )-val</td>
<td>RRR ( p )-val</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born-again</td>
<td>1.09 0.793</td>
<td>0.59 0.066</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>1.20 0.576</td>
<td>1.39 0.255</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-aff.</td>
<td>2.37 0.042</td>
<td>2.30 0.004</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>2.06 0.031</td>
<td>2.44 0.003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( 2 ) parents US born (omitted)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>0.92 0.876</td>
<td>2.36 0.025</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>2.05 0.048</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
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<tr>
<td>Log pseudolikelihood</td>
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<td>-587.24</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wald chi^2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pseudo R^2</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.18</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: General Social Surveys, pooled 2008-14 (weighted).
Note: For simpler presentation, I do not present the estimates on the other covariates, which are available upon request.
DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

In a recently-published literature review on immigration attitudes, the author notes that future research should advance multi-level theoretical models such as intersectionality (Berg 2015). This paper, then, aims to build one such model at the intersection of race/ethnicity, religion, and immigration views, by examining the attitudes of all, not just white, evangelicals, a space in the literature that could benefit from greater scholarly attention.

American evangelicals are perennially relevant to the study of American politics because they comprise about one-fifth to one-quarter of the general population and show no indication of serious decline in membership, contrary to the experiences of the other major traditions (Pew 2015b). Importantly, decades of research has demonstrated a politically-conservative evangelical cleavage. While historically American evangelicalism has been predominately white, in recent years, its members have become more diverse, due in part to post-1965 immigration as well as more recent racial reconciliation efforts. Today, one in four evangelicals is nonwhite and one in six is an immigrant. Thus, the coming generation of evangelicals will be racially and ethnically more diverse, yet our knowledge of this growing segment is only emerging. Drawing from the broader race/ethnicity, religion, and politics literature that suggests race and ethnicity moderate the relationship between religion and politics, we should not expect that the conservative religious-political link found among white evangelicals will necessarily be present among their nonwhite co-religionists as well. Indeed, the “interpretative communities” framework would lead us to expect the opposite—that different races and ethnicities interpret, emphasize, and then translate their evangelical
faith into political expressions in ways specific to their unique historical and
contemporary contexts.

With better data emerging on Latinos in America, scholars are beginning to
examine how religion influences their politics. Recent findings suggest that Latino
Protestants’ politics fall somewhere between their African American and white peers;
moreover, the associations are conditioned by political outcome and religiosity.
Interestingly, the Latino Protestant experience seems to be intertwined with the
acculturation process—that is, becoming evangelical is blended with becoming
American. This distinctive development for Latinos leads me to posit a double
conversion working theory in the formation of immigration attitudes. Specifically, for
racial and ethnic groups that undergo both an evangelical conversion—with all that
entails, not just spiritually but subculturally as well—and a cultural-national conversion,
i.e., leaving behind the old country and making new home, the two experiences blend to
form political attitudes that may be distinct from racial and ethnic groups more
established or unchanged in their national and religious identities. Racial/ethnic and
cultural affinity are still expected to operate for Latino evangelicals, pulling them toward
more sympathetic views, but their evangelical identity may distance them from their
ethnic or immigrant identity. Paradoxically, even as evangelicalism decouples the old
religious and ethnic connection, a new cultural-nationalistic association forms through
assimilation into this religious subculture. The findings in this paper are generally
supportive of this working theory.

I begin this analysis with a persistent religious finding in the literature—that
evangelical Protestants seem to be the least supportive of, or the most opposed to,
immigration. The prevailing theoretical approach to studying religious sources of immigration attitudes uses a social identity framework. My findings suggest that there is a broader Christian/non-Christian cleavage in immigration views, and the standard demographic, economic, geographic, religious, political and attitudinal factors explain much of the “evangelical gap,” which suggests less of a religious identity, or belonging, effect *per se*. Nonetheless, religious identity as articulated in the minority marginalization theory does bear out in that Jewish respondents remain, relatively speaking, the least opposed to immigration.

Interestingly, what persists as an independent religious source of immigration attitudes is religious attendance, a somewhat neglected factor in the immigration attitudes literature that has hitherto focused more on a religious belonging and identity approach. For both the general population and evangelicals, more frequent attendance is associated with less restrictive views. For a particularly oppositional group such as evangelicals, this finding is encouraging—frequent churchgoing may generate greater bridging/inter-group, rather than bonding/intra-group, capital, contrary to prior theories that have mostly conceptualized the evangelical subculture as closed and inward (Daniels and von der Ruhr 2005, Blanchard 2007); at least, this does not seem to be the case for immigration views. Whatever operating influences attendance is capturing or reinforcing—e.g., pulpit messages, social networks, and/or personal interactions—the outcome seems positive for evangelicals on supporting immigration. Perhaps then, contact theory would be a more compelling theoretical and analytical approach than religious identity. That evangelicals’ immigration views correlate positively with the racial composition of their regions supports this reframing in continued research on immigration attitudes as well. The
attendance finding and the relative non-findings on religious believing and belonging also bolster religious congregations’ importance as political and civic communities (Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988, Verba, Scholzmand, and Brady 1995, Jelen 1992, Huckfelt and Sprague 1995, Jones-Correa and Leal 2001, Djupe and Gilbert 2009). Thus, future research should focus on congregations, rather than religious affiliation, as the key analytical unit in studying religious sources of immigration attitudes. Indeed, as evangelical churches continue to diversify—e.g., the National Congregation Study finds that the share of predominately (i.e., more than 80 percent) white evangelical churches decreased from 79 percent to 66 percent between 2006-07 and 2012—a congregational approach to studying evangelicalism, which is institutionally decentralized, seems to be a promising research avenue.

If religious identity does not appear to be the dominant religious source of immigration attitudes, it is not too surprising to find, then, that cultural affinity and racial/ethnic identity seem to exert a stronger influence. But in the case of Latino evangelicals, whose religious, national, and ethnic identities may have uniquely blended in ways specific to their particular American and evangelical experiences, their story is somewhat more complicated. At first, ethnic and cultural affinity seems to hold, but once immigrant status is accounted for, Latino evangelicals are no longer statistically different from their white co-religionists. In fact, there is some limited, but suggestive evidence that, controlling for political and racial attitudinal factors, Latino evangelicals appear more oppositional than African-American evangelicals and even white evangelicals. One could surmise that, in the process of becoming “American,” some individuals from relatively recent immigrant background may try to distance themselves from their
immigrant experience, either their own or that of their family. Alternatively, economic competition may be in operation; for example, the more acculturated or higher-generation ethnic minorities may feel threatened by new immigrants taking away their economic opportunities.

The double conversion theory also finds resonance in the Latinos-only models; while the evangelical affiliation, which is denomination-based, is not particularly meaningful, the born-again experience predicts the remain-over-reduce view (albeit with only marginal statistical significance). Moreover, there is some evidence that the born-again experience may matter for “other race” minorities as well. That this evangelical self-identification/religious conversion—perhaps a more conscious, personal decision than denominational affiliation—seems meaningful to these two groups, both of which are nearly one-half immigrant, but not to whites or African Americans supports the hypothesis that religious and cultural-national conversions may interact to form distinctive political attitudes. Moreover, even though religion and politics studies generally use relatively standard religious operationalizations, the same religious dimension may not be uniformly experienced and translated into political outcomes for all the racial and ethnic groups, yet another interesting research question to further pursue.

A few caveats and limitation are in order. The results here are correlational; the causality and directionality of the relationship between evangelicalism and immigration views for Latinos has yet to be determined; one could imagine, for example, that Latinos who prefer Protestantism have always been more nationalistic and U.S.-centric—that is,
evangelicalism did not cause less sympathetic immigration views. Panel data would enable researchers to test causality with greater confidence.

Moreover, the quality of every study and finding is contingent on the quality of the data. While the GSS is nationally representative and offers interesting, valid measures, some of the subsamples and subgroups in this paper are rather small and likely not wholly representative of the broader populations, limiting the results’ generalizability. The large standard errors on some of the coefficient estimates are an indication of this as well as the sizable magnitude on some of the statistically insignificant coefficient estimates. It is also rather unfortunate that the subsample of “other race” respondents, particularly among evangelicals, is too small for confident statistical inferences. For example, the double conversion theory could be more robustly tested with another recent immigrant group, such as Asian Americans, for whom Protestantism is not indigenous either. Moreover, some of the variables, e.g., the geographic covariates as well as the religious ones such as feelings about the Bible, could be better measured. And were other plausible explanatory variables viable or available, e.g., personality, values, threat perception, trust, and tolerance, I would like to have tested their associated theories as well in an even more fully-specified multi-level model. Of course, attitudes toward immigration and immigrants are varied and nuanced, and in this analysis, I test just one issue.

Immigration is a perennial but also timely topic given our current political climate. It affects not only public policy at all levels of government, but electoral politics as well. More importantly, it impacts how all of us who live in this country perceive, relate to, and treat one another based on what we believe and value, where we are born
and our families come from, what language we speak, and even what we look like on the outside, and those conceptions and their resultant political views and actions matter greatly for the functioning of America’s diverse, pluralistic society and liberal democracy.


Fish, Stanley. 1980. Is There a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.


