

Grassroots Activism and Party Politics:
The Christian Right in State Republican Parties

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

One of the most important phenomena in contemporary American politics has been the development of the political Christian Right. Many scholars have made significant contributions to our understanding of both the origin and development of the national movement and the unique situations in individual states and their Republican parties. However, few have sought a theoretical explanation for the variation we see across states. My dissertation develops and tests, using quantitative and qualitative data, a theory of the varying influence of the Christian Right in state level Republican parties that focuses on the most important ingredients for Christian Right influence. Building on an elite “political observer” survey conducted after the 2000 election, I create a useful measure of the Christian Right’s influence in all fifty states and find that the characteristics of the Christian Right in the state, primarily the quality of movement leadership, have the most impact on the potency of that influence. Then, utilizing a rigorous case study methodology, I combine publicly available state-level data with face-to-face in-depth interviews of party and movement elites from several states to gain a comprehensive and contextual understanding on the relationship between the Christian Right and the Republican party in that state. Complementing scholars’ understanding of the interplay between social movements and political parties, two major conclusions are presented.

First, the structures of the Republican party and state politics have a significant impact on the Christian Right's ability to gain access to the party organization. Second, the character of the Christian Right movement in a state, based upon extensive Evangelical and conservative social networks and grassroots political activity, greatly determines the effectiveness with which the movement can promote its policy goals.

For Michael, for all the raisins

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The fortunes of the Christian Right (CR) in American politics have ebbed and flowed in the 20 years it has been a part of the landscape. No sooner has a political pundit offered its obituary than it returns to the fray in some resurrected or reconstituted form. Periods of relative quiet have been followed by prolonged moments of militancy and vociferousness. Thus, while the rhetoric of current political culture is one of studied inclusiveness and tolerance, seemingly precluding much of the Christian Right's agenda, its basic political ideas, represented by organizations like the Family Research Council and Concerned Women for America, continue to guide the political choices of millions of voting Americans. It is for this reason, if no other, that we should continue to observe the evolving influence the Christian Right exerts on American politics.

Perhaps the most tangible and enduring result of the presence of the Christian Right in the American political arena is the effect its influence has had upon the Republican party at all levels. Like the persistence of the movement itself, the relative power the Christian Right has enjoyed within the Republican party has been debated with fervor by both scholars and journalists. Some suggest that the party has been "captured" by the Christian Right, while others cite the movement's divergence from the mainstream

as its terminal pathology as a party player. Most agree, however, that the movement has become a permanent fixture in the calculations of Republican political strategists. Many believe that the political mobilization of conservative Christians holds the key to Republican victories at all levels of electoral contest. This may have been born out in the 2000 presidential election, when many commentators blamed the historic closeness of the voting returns on the lack of enthusiasm on the part of conservative religious voters.

Like all social movements, however, the power and importance of the Christian Right and its constituent organizations are highly dependent upon the context in which its adherents find themselves. The late 1980's and early 1990's signaled a shift in movement strategy; Christian Right leaders decided that it was time to abandon the largely unsuccessful attempt to influence federal policy and to move to the smaller and more amenable arenas of the states and of grassroots politics. As early as 1988, Pat Robertson was encouraging his rank and file supporters to run for local offices themselves (May, 1988: 14). The effects of such a strategy were brought to fruition on a national level in 1994 with the election of the first Republican Congress in four decades. The strategy was also successful at more local levels with the election of Christian Right supporters to many local school boards and the introduction of referenda consistent with the movement's worldview.

But what of the Christian Right's influence upon the Republican party itself? Much had been made throughout the 1980s of the influence that high-profile Evangelicals had on both the Reagan administration and the national Republican party. The movement's relative silence within the Republican party during the Bush administration came to a screeching halt with the election of Bill Clinton in 1992. Many have sought to

link the “Republican Revolution” of 1994 to the CR activity on the national level. But if the influence so clear to political pundits on the national level had a hand in the 1994 congressional elections, surely the Christian Right must also be influential at the state party level. Congressional seats, at least in their electoral milieu, are distinctly state offices. Thus, the Christian Right’s activity at the state and local level should not be underestimated. Statements by movement leaders themselves point to the importance of these arenas in the overall strategy of Christian political influence. Further, political parties are largely governed by state law and political practice. It could be said that the Republican party is really fifty separate entities with differing structures and contexts in each state. Thus, the Christian Right had to be successful in exerting power in an array of dissimilar state parties.

Yet, very little academic research has focused upon this aspect of the relationship between the Christian Right and the Republican party. What exists is, to a sizeable degree, theoretically and methodologically inadequate. With the consistent focus upon localized politics by Christian Right leaders, and the plausible, but dated measure of Christian Right influence in state Republican parties (Persinos, 1994) suggesting that upwards of 18 state parties exhibit significant influence by the Christian Right, it seems important to assess the current strength of the movement in the state parties and to seek theoretically robust explanations for the variation in Christian Right influence.

The movement’s influence in state Republican parties is the focus of this dissertation. In it, I seek to determine the current level of influence the Christian Right has upon state parties and to explain the variation among states by looking at the movement’s characteristics within each state and the political opportunity structure

within the states and their Republican parties. Thus, I seek to understand the fundamental question: *What accounts for the variation in Christian Right influence among the state Republican parties?* In attempting to solve this puzzle, I hope not only to shed light upon the nature of the Christian Right in contemporary American politics, but also to examine more broadly the characteristics of state party organization and the avenues that social movements utilize to influence that apparatus.

Drawing on the theoretical perspectives of both social movements and political parties literature, I offer a model of variation in influence that is consistent with political scientists' understanding of the operation and organization of political parties. The model allows me to account for a wide variety of phenomena in the relationship among the Christian Right and state Republican parties. This study is an advance upon previous research in its collection of new and more systematic data, its intention to propose and test a theoretical perspective on Christian Right activity, and its focus on the political structures that constrain and enable the Christian Right to exert influence.

To this end, the early chapters of this dissertation set the conceptual stage for the project. The remainder of chapter one offers a history of the Christian Right movement in America and examines the existing scholarly literature concerning the Christian Right and its relationship with the Republican party. Chapter two reviews the relevant political parties and social movements literature, with a specific emphasis on the organization and functions of state-level parties. It further offers a very specific statement of the influence variation model and hypothesizes model outcomes. The middle section of this dissertation moves to a report of the primary data collection and analytical model testing. Chapter three reports the methods and results of the national political observer survey I

conducted from December, 2000 to May, 2001. Chapter four tests the proposed model utilizing the survey data reported in chapter three. Recognizing that survey data may be insufficient to understand the contextual nature of the relationship between the Christian Right and Republican party in any given state, several state-level case studies are offered to complement and expand the statistical data analysis. Chapter five reports the results of the three case studies individually and with considerable depth. Chapter six compares the findings of the cases and offers the thematic results of the political observer study and the case studies. Finally, chapter seven discusses the implications of the research for our understanding of the Christian Right in American politics and offers a course for further research.

History of the Christian Right in the United States

The origins of the Christian Right can be traced from two distinct branches, the political activism of evangelical Christians such as William Jennings Bryan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the conservative New Right movement initiated by Barry Goldwater in 1964. It was generally assumed that Evangelical and Fundamentalist Christians had left the political sphere after the embarrassment of the Scopes Monkey trial in 1925. They had retreated to the relative safety of their own enclaves to concentrate on the purity of their religious experience. Non-evangelical churches continued to be involved politically, but their emphasis on the “social gospel” put them in the mainstream of politics, as opposed to the more radical alternative of the evangelical moralists.

While religiously based, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s was almost entirely a phenomenon of African-American churches in the South. The nearly total separation between white and non-white members of the Evangelical, Fundamentalist, and Pentecostal churches remains to this day.

Barry Goldwater and the New Right movement he inaugurated, however, provided the catalyst for the return of the values of most conservative evangelicals to mainstream politics. Conservative moralism was politically acceptable once again. Although he lost his bid for the presidency in 1964, Goldwater's organization consisted of newly mobilized conservatives who had moved into significant leadership positions in the Republican party by the middle of the 1970's. Ronald Reagan's strong showing in the 1976 Republican primaries was testimony to that development.

James Guth (1983) argues that it was the national trauma of Watergate that was the early catalyst for the emergence of the Christian Right into American politics. Unlike any other event, Watergate blurred the lines between private morality and public action. The consequences of Nixon's personal moral choices had a greater effect on the American public than had any president's before him. This scandal served to heighten the perception of many religiously moral Americans that their beliefs had a place in American political discourse. Compounding the feeling that the end of the 1960s had somehow robbed America of its moral bearings with its focus on personal expression and removal of imposed limits, Nixon's duplicity signaled the need for a renewed sense of morality in the public realm.

Another proximate cause of the rise of the Christian Right was the battle over the passage and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. One of the oldest organizations

associated with the Christian Right, Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum, was formed specifically to defeat ratification of the amendment. Many conservatives, especially those of the evangelical Christian persuasion, saw the ERA as undermining their vision of the traditional, and appropriate, family structure. Its emphasis on abortion on demand and the absolute equality of women in all circumstances ran counter to the socio-moral teachings of most evangelical churches. Eagle Forum was founded in 1972 and is credited with exerting the grassroots influence that denied ratification of ERA a decade later by a three state margin.

Perhaps the final incentive for the political involvement of religious conservatives was the election of Jimmy Carter to the White House in 1976. A publicly professing evangelical Christian, Carter brought the notion of religion affecting politics out of the radical ends of the political spectrum into the mainstream. This further strengthened Evangelicals' feelings that they could and should make a difference in American politics. Interestingly, it was an event during Carter's administration that may have been the true rallying point for the early "pro-family" movement. In an attempt to root out institutional racial discrimination in the South in 1978, the Justice Department sought to remove the tax-exempt status of many non-profit organizations, including Christian schools (Von Drehle and Edsall, 1994: A1). Certainly some of these Christian schools in the South represented an attempt to circumvent the desegregation laws, but schools all over the country fought these developments and produced a new group of grassroots, conservative Christian activists.

Further, many Evangelicals were not happy with Carter's performance as President. He was not sufficiently socially conservative (Reichley, 1992: 375). He

supported ERA and did not vehemently oppose abortion. This combined with the general frustration with his handling of national economics primed both evangelicals, and more generally, Republicans, for a far more conservative candidate than they had fielded in 1976.

The late 1970s were the critical moment for the development of the Christian Right. A proliferation of groups expanded the reach and influence of the Christian Right in the electorate. Never monolithic, the movement spawned a plethora of groups specifically focused upon abortion, the ERA, Christian schools, and pornography. Utilizing the nation-wide network of Christian radio stations, many of these organizations were able to proclaim their messages to large numbers of conservative Evangelicals. One exception to the single-issue concentration was Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, Inc. Calling for a return to Christian morality in all venues of public life, the Moral Majority empowered evangelical and fundamentalist leaders to action and mobilized thousands of church congregations. This entrance into mainstream politics, on the side of the conservative Ronald Reagan, was the movement's first appearance on the radar screen of political journalists and academics.

It is clear that the professionalized elements of the New Right, mobilized in 1964, played a significant role in the early preparation of the Christian Right for the achievement of its political goals (Oldfield, 1996: 101). They provided the mechanism, but the clearly conservative and pro-tradition message of Ronald Reagan provided the catalyst. All these forces came together in 1980 when the Christian Right was a "much-noticed presence at the 1980 Republican convention" (Guth, 1983:36). The Christian Right, mobilized by visible and ambitious leaders such as Jerry Falwell and Tim LaHaye,

played an important role in starting Republican parties from scratch in strong Democratic areas, particularly in the South. The social conservatism of these new Republican organizations was central to the movement of southern whites to the Republican party. Thus began the complex relationship between the Republican party and the Christian Right.

This relationship continued to grow and strengthen during the Reagan administration as various candidates, backed and recruited by Christian Right Republicans, were elected to all levels of government. Evangelical Christians were also appointed to executive branch positions in the White House and the federal agencies. However, very little substantive change occurred in national policy (Wilcox, 2000). It appeared that the Republicans under Reagan were paying lip-service to conservative and religious moral issues (abortion, prayer in schools, abolition of the Department of Education), but not delivering victories of any substance (Blumenthal, 1994).

Many observers thought the CR was on the wane in the late 1980's. With a conservative president in the White House who seemed a supporter of their goals and agenda, lack of representation did not seem a legitimate rally point. But movement leaders realized their substantive goals were not being achieved and sought to express their policy desires in a new way.

Many of their hopes and efforts came to fruition in 1988 with the presidential candidacy of evangelical pastor and TV personality, Pat Robertson. In Robertson, the movement had one of its own running for the highest office in the land. Large portions of the membership of CR organizations believed that electing a conservative Christian of unquestionable moral credentials to the presidency would be the impetus needed to enact

the reforms they desired. Robertson was not, perhaps, the most politically desirable candidate for this goal, however. He ran well at the start of the Republican primaries, winning the Iowa straw poll and coming in second to Vice-President Bush in the Michigan primary. But issues of personal and policy competence and the internal theological and philosophical divisions within the CR and its constituent groups (Robertson's Pentecostal and prophetic theology alienated many fundamentalists and conservative evangelicals) plagued Robertson's campaign, especially in primary states where a motivated minority was not enough to achieve victory. While Robertson's apparent success faded away after the initial non-primary state contests, the enduring legacy of his candidacy was the number of Christian Right activists who had acceded into leadership positions in the Republican party by the end of the general election season (Moen, 1992: 113).

In 1989, out of the remnants of his campaign organizations, Robertson founded the Christian Coalition (CC). The more practical and local successor to the Moral Majority (which folded in the mid-1980s), the Christian Coalition embodied the notion that national politics were not fruitful for the CR. Focusing on state and local elections and issues, the Christian Coalition had affiliated state organizations in nearly every state. This was the result of a conscious effort to include primarily state-level organizations that were already in existence (Diamond, 1998: 76). Utilizing the support base created and nourished by the original organizations, the Coalition became truly that, a coordinator for many state-level affiliates. The nature of the issues that the CC found to be important made their influence within the state Republican parties a major priority. With its

emphasis on the practical side of politics, the organization also came to emphasize conservative economic issues, in addition to the religious conservative moral agenda.

The Christian Right continued to strengthen its presence in grassroots and Republican Party organizations throughout George Bush's term. The movement, in many ways, had dropped off the national political map. In the third term of Republican control of the White House, their agenda was still given lip-service, if not tangible action. The focus of Christian conservative political action, however, had significantly shifted to the local sphere. This shift allowed religious conservatives to deflect the criticism that they were intolerant and overbearing (Moen, 1992: 117). Moving to the smaller arenas of state politics gave the movement a connection to its own constituents that it had somewhat lacked in its earlier incarnation. It is less likely that the average voter will label their next-door neighbor, who is running for city council, an extremist than they are to a person of similar issue positions in national politics.

Christian Right leaders, including Pat Robertson, believed that religious conservatives would have more opportunities to influence politics at local levels. They believed that their numbers would make more difference in getting the "right" people elected than seeking to wield that numeric power in a centralized way in Washington, DC. Many religiously conservative organization members and movement supporters began to seek positions in state and local government, particularly in local school boards and state legislatures. This trend led to the reports of school boards and other local offices being taken over by "stealth" candidates. These were religious conservatives seeking votes not through the traditional avenues of party endorsement or primary campaign canvassing, but through their own internal social networks, including churches

and particularly Christian radio (Diamond, 1998: 79). Thus, main-stream media did not appreciate their true appeal and strength until the election results were tabulated.

By the end of the 1992 Republican primaries, most CR activists had accepted that George Bush, generally not conservative enough for members of the Christian Right, would again win the nomination. While Pat Buchanan had made significant inroads to the conservative base of the Republican party during the primaries, his rumored anti-Semitism and harsh demeanor ruined his chances to seriously challenge Vice President Bush. Thus the CR and its constituent organizations concentrated most of their national efforts on making the Republican platform as conservative as possible. By the convention, they had managed to get 20 members of their own ranks elected to the 107-member platform committee (Corrado, 1996: 77). They drafted a platform that was far more conservative than Bush or many of the other regular Republicans would have liked. These members of the party felt compelled to stand by the platform, however, in the name of party unity for the election. A “Pro-Family Values” TV night during the convention featured many conservative and Christian Right leaders giving speeches extolling the virtue of traditional values, families, God, and country. Many commentators have ascribed Bush’s poor showing in the 1992 election to this perceived shift to the right during the convention (Corrado, 1996: 78).

This election loss and the bad media coverage that followed seemed to cause some CR groups to rethink their place in the public sphere. Ralph Reed, then director of the Christian Coalition, attributed Bush’s loss and the rise of the Perot phenomenon to the Republican’s lack of consistent and convinced conservatism. Pointing out the relative success of conservative and Christian Right candidates at the state and local level, Reed

saw the foundations of a much more successful push for Christian Right power in the coming years (Mydans, 1992).

With a newly elected Democratic and liberal president, the CR had a new enemy around which to mobilize conservative support. Bill Clinton gave much ammunition to religious conservatives in the first two years of his administration. His position on gays in the military, liberal abortion views, and the push for nationalized healthcare all served as significant rallying points for many members of the movement. This “crisis” poised members of the movement to seek power and influence in more significant ways. The hard campaign work by CR activists and astonishing voter turnout of their rank and file supporters in the 1994 congressional elections is widely credited with producing the Republican landslide that gave the party majorities in the House and Senate. Voter mobilization by Christian Right groups in the states, in addition to general and widespread dissatisfaction with the Clinton administration’s policies, led to record levels of voter turnout by religious conservatives of all theological persuasions. This unprecedented mobilization, in conjunction with an unusually high number of open seats in the House, allowed religious conservatives to be the margin of victory (estimates range from 10-15% of the voting population) in a great number of close races (Rozell and Wilcox, 1995: 255-256).

This election, however, signaled a sea change that had been in the works for several years in the movement and its supporters. A focus on practical politics came to fruition. While many of the new members of Congress were actual supporters of the CR, many more simply shared some, but not all of their views. The movement signed on to the conservative Republican “Contract with America,” a set of policy goals that had far

more to do with the economic conservatism of the mainstream Republican party than with the CR's usual agenda of social conservatism. While producing their own "Contract with the American Family" later in the 1995 session, no part of which was passed by the 104th Congress, many Christian Right members and supporters were elected to Congress on the basis of their affiliation with economic conservatism, not social conservatism.

An ancillary effect of the 1994 successes and the rebound that followed has been the increased sophistication of the activists within the states. Many came for the state and local elections of the early 1990s and stayed to become regular Republican party members. As religious conservatives "grew up" in the political arena, they seemed to move into positions of power within state party structures (Diamond, 1998; Guth, 1983; Moen, 1992). This likely shifted their focus from simply election mobilization to more of a governing and policy making role.

These changes in focus highlight the internal contradiction inherent within the CR movement. A moral stance based upon the Bible, which they believe to be the inerrant Word of God, is not usually amenable to the compromise situations intrinsic to modern politics. The focus on achievable goals opened up the practical part of the movement (represented by the CC) to criticism by the more radicalized faction that believe that no compromise is appropriate. These disagreements were regularly aired in the press in the wake of the policy failures of the 104th Congress (Reed, 1994, 1996). This tension has led both to the creation of extremist groups such as Operation Rescue and the Evangelical movement to withdraw from politics to focus on the church.

This specific attention to practical politics significantly affected the relationship between the CR movement and the Republican parties in the states as well. By the

middle of 1994, the movement was reported to be in control of the Republican Party in 18 states and had significant influence in 13 more (Persinos, 1994: 22). At more local levels, members of the Christian Right continued to make gains in local elections. They have also benefited from the general swing toward the Republican Party of the last 20 years. The congressional elections of 1996 and 1998, however, were not the unalloyed success of 1994. In 1996, expected readjustments were made after the Republican landslide of 1994, causing some conservatives in tenuous positions to lose their seats as some districts returned to their normal Democratic partisanship. President Clinton had moderated many of his views on moral issues in the last two years of his first term and thus provided less of a rallying point for CR mobilization. The mid-term election of 1998 continued this trend. Further, many commentators attributed the poor showing of Republicans to the party's emphasis on President Clinton's behavior in the Monica Lewinsky scandal and his subsequent impeachment. This emphasis was largely the game plan of House Speaker Newt Gingrich in consultation with Christian Right forces. While weakening their power in the public's perception, the Christian Right continued to wield influence at the state level (Green, Rozell, and Wilcox, 2000).

The 2000 presidential election was a further development in the relationship between the Christian Right and the national Republican party. The entire election was infused with religious rhetoric on both sides of the partisan divide. The Christian Right movement pressured Republican hopefuls for the 2000 election to announce their opposition to abortion rights in the earliest days of the campaign and at many points after that. Candidate John McCain railed against religious conservatives and their agenda during the primaries. Claiming the CR as the new evil empire, he denounced George W.

Bush's appearance on the Bob Jones University campus in Greenville, SC, a college with a history of anti-Catholic bias and rules against inter-racial dating. His appeal, however, was mostly to Republican moderates and independents, not the standard CR supporter in the Republican party. His candidacy failed, in part, because rank and file Republican loyalists did not see him as a real Republican, espousing their views.

Thus, George W. Bush, a candidate with goals more consonant with the CR moral and economic positions, was nominated by the Republican party. While Bush publicly proclaimed his commitment to religion and a born-again experience, the CR was conspicuously absent from the nominating convention in 2000. In a convention emphasizing diversity and inclusion, the Christian Right was asked to tow the party line and not foment division so that the Republicans would have a better shot at the White House in November. Compliance in this area may have cost movement leaders some prestige as the closeness of the popular vote called into question the election results for several months following election day. Some have blamed the lack of conservative evangelical mobilization for not providing George W. Bush with a larger margin of victory.

The events of the 2000 presidential election may be the result of an anti-political-mobilization movement within evangelicalism. Leaders within the Christian Right have begun to question the goals and tactics of the movement. With the publication of *Blinded By Might* (1999) by former Moral Majority, Inc. insiders Cal Thomas and Ed Dobson, some commentators predicted the wholesale withdrawal of conservative Christians from American politics. The book characterizes the movement and its leaders as much more concerned with their own and their followers' power and prestige than their original

intention of changing society to fit their moral prescriptions. This, they claim, should remind evangelical Christians that their main calling is saving souls, not saving society. Causing a vigorous and public debate within the Christian Right and the larger evangelical community, the book has met with equal amounts of accolade and derision. Its detractors, most significantly James Dobson (no relation to Ed Dobson) of the Focus on the Family organization, have claimed that the CR is, indeed, having an impact and that the call to reform society is legitimate.

The death knell of the movement has been sounded after nearly every election in the last two decades. But, the Christian Right continues to reinvent itself and take advantage of its place at the Republican table. The movement's role in state politics and Republican parties in the 2000 election will be studied in greater depth in later portions of this dissertation. Now we turn to scholarly assessments of the Christian Right phenomenon and its implications for the Republican party.

Previous Research on the Christian Right

With the increased visibility and power of the Christian Right in American politics came scores of studies of various aspects of the movement and its followers. Most of these studies can be categorized as one of two types. The first is a selection of generally broad overviews of the Christian Right movement, its history, beliefs, leaders, issues, and contemporary battles (Bruce, 1988; Capps, 1990; Jorstad, 1987; Martin, 1996; Wilcox, 1992). Basically a set of individual assessments of the movement and its followers, many echo one another in their exploration of the Christian Right. Nearly all of them offer some sort of prediction of the future of the movement and its political

fortunes. Almost as universal is the sense that these studies are somehow trying to explain something that is unintelligible, or even disconcerting and threatening, to democratic society. Walter Capps says of the origin of his study, “It was simply that my curiosity had been aroused by the fact that the rise of a New Religious Right seemed demonstrably out of touch with the real needs and deeper challenges of our time. I wondered how this could be, and how its proponents could respond to the course of human events in such a peculiar fashion” (1990, ix). That he and others like him eventually come to the conclusion that the Christian Right is more (and sometimes less) than it appears to be does not change the fact that a tone of skepticism pervades this component of the literature.

There are, however, an increasing number of exceptions to this rule. Focusing more on the sociological phenomenon of the Christian Right movement and the policy goals of its attendant organizations, more recent studies frequently let participants such as Ralph Reed and Gary Bauer speak for themselves. They further seek to explain evangelicalism and the Christian Right without demonizing the movement’s goals or its adherents (Cromartie, 1993, 1994; Lienesch, 1993; Moen, 1996; Neuhaus and Cromartie, 1987; Smith, 2000).

While not a purely academic treatment of the CR’s history, William Martin’s 1996 study, *With God on Our Side* is certainly one of the best documented and most revealing of the people and organizations of the movement and their motivations. Clyde Wilcox’s 1996 (2nd edition, 2000) book, *Onward Christian Soldiers?* provides an almost textbook treatment of the CR, its supporters, and the organizations that form the core of the movement. These works together provide invaluable factual data on the origins,

events, and historical development of the Christian Right and its constituent organizations in the United States. They evoke an accurate picture of the movement and its ongoing involvement with politics.

Perhaps the richest and most nuanced treatment of the Christian Right as a social and political movement is Sara Diamond's *Not by Politics Alone* (1998). Filled with thick description and cogent analysis of not only movement activities, but also the speeches and publications of the most visible actors, this book makes plain the relationships that hold the movement together outside the political realm. Diamond argues for a picture of the Christian Right as a social movement of Christians who believe themselves to be victimized by the culture in which they live and that their political action is an outgrowth of this victim identity. This focus allows her more clearly than many other scholars of the Christian Right to delineate the motivations of the movement leaders and followers and to more effectively trace the flow of information and personal influence within the movement.

An important examination of the development of the Christian Right as a social and political movement is Matthew Moen's (1992) study of the way in which the Christian Right changed over the period of 1979-1989. His thesis is that the character of the movement changed as it became more politically sophisticated. He asserts that it became more secular and pragmatic. Moen provides support for his thesis by showing the differences between the old-guard leadership and the new activists that acceded to power in the 1980s. He further points to the shift in focus that was occurring in the late 1980s and early 1990s toward the state level and grass-roots politics, even before the hallmark election of 1994.

Following both Diamond's focus on group victim identity and Moen's assessment of change within the movement and its goals is Justin Watson's study of the Christian Coalition (1997). He argues that the Coalition, in its heyday, sought both a place at the pluralistic political table and a return to an earlier vision of morality in American life. Noting the contradictions inherent in two such goals, Watson claims that they are the understandable outgrowth of an evangelical theology and culture that believes in absolute truth and the inevitable persecution of adherents to that truth.

While more clearly assessing the phenomenon of the Christian Right at the social and political level than many of their predecessors, these analyses lack a more specific approach to the differences among the movement's supporters and organizations around the country. The nature of their investigations is consistently national-level. However, all point to the rising importance of the CR in the states and the state Republican parties as the movement matured and developed a wider policy focus.

If these broad studies of the Christian Right are macro-level analyses of the movement, the works in the second category are on the opposite end of the spectrum. These studies, generally book chapters, focus on one particular aspect or area of the movement and its relationship to politics (Bruce, Kivisto, Swatos, 1995; Green, Rozell, and Wilcox, 2000; Guth and Green, 1991; Liebman and Wuthnow, 1983; Rozell and Wilcox, 1995; Smidt and Penning, 1997; Urofsky and May, 1996; all edited volumes). While some volumes concentrate on a particular election year and frequently upon the movement in individual states, others offer studies of the specific parts of the movements such as activists, clergy, or visible leadership. While providing a wealth of contextual

information and insightful individual state analysis, few of these studies are tied by theoretical connections beyond covering a particular portion of the Christian Right.

There is some excellent scholarship represented especially by the mini case studies of the Christian Right in the states (Green, Rozell, and Wilcox, 2000; Rozell and Wilcox, 1995, 1997), but the high degree of analytic fragmentation hinders the creation of a “body” of evidence in the traditional political scientific sense. There are few identifiable controversies outside of the perpetual question of the movement’s health and prospects. The breadth and variety of these studies do attest to the wide spectrum of activities and issues the CR has addressed in the last decade. Many add specific pieces to the puzzle of CR influence. For example, James Guth’s 1983 book chapter about the CR in the Republican party gives a thorough picture of the early years of the movement in the national arena. The fact remains, however, that the proliferation of small case study chapters has not encouraged general theory building.

While the state level case studies add a wealth of specific knowledge about the Christian Right at the state level, none seek to draw a larger picture of the influence through their narratives. Each is a story of a particular period in time in a state with the attendant personalities and controversies. While makes conclusions about the situation and CR influence inherent to their state, there are no larger concepts drawn from these compilations of case studies. An examination of this material as a whole does yield some interesting themes, but none that add up to a comprehensive explanation of Christian Right influence at the state level.

The stories of influence in these 39 case studies of 18 states (Green, Rozell, and Wilcox, 2000; Rozell and Wilcox, 1995, 1997) show a pattern of grassroots activity and

the importance of the state's laws and the traditions of the Republican party in the state. Grassroots activism on the part of the Christian Right and the importance of effective leadership within the movement are stressed in many cases. This activist seems to be focused not only on winning elections, but particularly on gaining power in the lowest levels of the Republican party structure. This activity combined with the numerical strength of Evangelical voters has made religious conservatives a sizable and persistent minority in the Republican party of many states. This presence, while ensuring Christian Right influence, even domination, of Republican party politics in some states, has tended to cause a backlash of opposition from both the larger community and moderate forces in the Republican party itself. In addition, these cases demonstrate the importance of the types of laws and traditions that govern party organizational behavior in each state and the effects of activist movement between the Christian Right and Republican party. These themes are evident in the body of case studies that exist. However, none are specifically compared to one another. This previous research certainly informs the questions and research directions of the current project, but do not truly represent a comprehensive literature that can be engaged as a body.

There is, however, an exception to the lack of engageable controversy. The study of evangelical voting behavior has spawned a vigorous theoretical and descriptive literature (Busch, 2000; Green, Guth, and Hill, 1993; Guth, Kellstedt, Green, and Smidt, 2001; Jelen, 1991; Knuckley, 1999; Leege and Kellstedt, 1993; Menendez, 1996), and seems to be a part of every larger study of the movement. There is significant contention over how to identify voters who should be labeled part of the Christian Right, and how large a part of the American electorate they are. Less controversial, and perhaps more

timely, are questions about the Christian Right voter's loyalty to the Republican party and how they affect election outcomes. The most convincing argument is that the movement makes the difference at the margins, in close elections and low turnout situations (Rozell and Wilcox, 1995: 255-256).

All in all, the political science (and larger social science) literature about the Christian Right and its role in American politics remains fragmented and in need of theoretical constructions. As the movement matures and continually reinvents itself, the studies of its impact upon American politics will benefit from longer-term observation and consistent analytic traditions. The scholarship of the Christian Right, however, still significantly lacks testable theories of its behavior and influence.

The Christian Right in the Republican Party– Previous Research

The analysis of the role of the Christian Right in the Republican party infuses much of the literature in both the parties and Christian Right areas. While all extant studies of the Christian Right acknowledge its particular relationship with the Republican party, identifying it as the most enduring change the movement has brought to American politics, only a few have specifically focused upon this affiliation. Because the two now overlap to a significant degree, more careful scrutiny of the delicate dynamics of the relationship has sometimes been overlooked.

Early work suggested that the movement had significant influence in the national Republican party and threatened to split it apart (Blumenthal, 1984). Further study, centered on the activists in Pat Robertson's presidential campaign, revealed that Christian Right activists were not very different from their conservative Republican colleagues

(Green and Guth, 1988). This foresaw that the movement was in the party for the long term, ready to contribute time and money in order to see its goals accomplished.

In *The Right and the Righteous: The Christian Right Confronts the Republican Party* (1996), Duane Murray Oldfield traces the involvement of the movement in the party from its inception in the late 1970's to the two contracts of the 104th Congress; the now famous "Contract with America" and its less well-known sibling "Contract with the American Family." Perhaps the most comprehensive study of the relationship between the Christian Right and the Republican party, Oldfield concludes that the Christian Right has been much more successful in gaining control of state Republican parties than it has been in controlling the congressional candidate selection process, i.e., primaries. This is intriguing, given the larger focus of recent literature on the 1994 Congressional elections and the role of evangelical voting behavior upon members of Congress. It illustrates that the seemingly strong influence of the Christian Right at the congressional level may, in fact, be only a shadow of the grassroots strength the movement exerts in state Republican parties.

The actual strength of the CR movement at the state and local level has been analyzed in the case studies of the edited volumes discussed above. Like the larger literature, however, there seems to be little theoretical connection among the studies of state-level influence. More importantly, the dearth of systematic and comparable data makes it difficult for scholars to make any kind of general, *relative* assessment of the movement's strength among the states.

Some may argue that the nature of state level parties, governed by state law and tradition, does not lend itself to such generalizations. However, it seems likely that it is

these structural variations that may explain the differential influence we see the religious conservative movement exerting, in addition to differences within the movement itself. This seems particularly convincing in light of the quest for stronger state Republican party structures evident in the initiatives of the Republican National Committee in the last decades. While these have been largely successful, many state parties still retain their unique identities and personalities, based primarily upon state laws and traditions. In any case, significant research needs to address this question of state party similarity and difference, particularly in their interactions with social movements like the Christian Right.

One of the barriers to this type of more rigorous and systematic analysis of the varying influence the movement has been able to exert at the state level has been a genuine lack of current comparative data. To date, the primary source of information concerning the relative strength of the Christian Right in *state* Republican parties has been a 1994 article in *Campaigns and Elections* by John F. Persinos.¹ In it, Persinos reports the results of a 50-state survey of state political elites in which they were asked to rate the influence of the Christian Right on the Republican party in their state. His conclusion is that, at the time of the study, the Christian Right dominated the Republican party in 18 states and exerted substantial influence in 13 more. These figures are repeatedly quoted by scholars of the Christian Right and political pundits alike – though they are hard pressed to make the case that it still represents an accurate picture of the relationship between state Republican parties and religious conservatives.

¹ There is an earlier examination of the Christian Right's impact in the states (Bohannon, Buckley, and Osborne, 1983). However, coming from a distinctly anti-Christian Right perspective, it simply lists the

In addition to its obsolescence, there are some significant shortcomings in Persinos' data. Of greatest concern is the ambiguity and limited scope of the question actually posed in the survey. The respondents are simply asked:

“What percentage of the governing body of the Republican party in your state would you estimate is directly affiliated with the Christian Right or with an organization commonly associated with religious conservative causes such as pro-life, home-schooling, and other similar groups?” (24).

This question is flawed in several ways. First is the notion of the “governing body.” Persinos states that, for the most part, this means the state committee (22). While the state committees certainly wield appreciable power within the party organizations in their states, they are not the only arena for influence. It seems that the Christian Right might be active in other areas such as individual issues, election campaigns, or more local-level leadership. Each of these venues could allow the Christian Right to exert significant influence without that impact registering at the state committee level. Thus, a more differentiated approach to the concept, though still encompassing the realm of the state committee, may be more appropriate.

A second problem is the idea of “directly affiliated.” A person in a position of political authority who shares the views of the Christian Right, if not the label, will probably be an effective advocate for their issues. In some cases, they may even be more effective than direct affiliates because they are not seen as part of a possibly threatening group. It would therefore seem more fruitful to discern, if possible, the general positions of a person, beyond simply their stated affiliation with a particular activist group.

groups and issues and discusses how to combat them. One interesting section lists all of the bills introduced by Christian Right supporters into state legislatures during the 1981-1982 session.

These flaws would seem to produce a situation where the Christian Right might be significantly under-measured. For Persinos' purposes, this may have been an acceptable situation, as it made it harder for influence to emerge at all and made his findings of significant or moderate influence in a majority of states more dramatic. However, Persinos' approach limits our ability to understand the contemporary conditions in the states, particularly as we try to create valid and reliable measures of these phenomena.

Another general problem with the study is the nature of the respondents with whom Persinos spoke. He interviewed "Republican state chairs, party directors, and campaign consultants, as well as a few adversarial Democratic analysts and considerably more objective (though not necessarily more knowledgeable) political reporters and academic researchers" (24). There is no demonstrated systematicity to the choice of respondents. It seems that Persinos may have simply contacted a few observers in each state who had a comprehensive view of the situation. While effective journalistically, it does not allow us to assess the validity or reliability of his inferences and conclusions. Although it seems logical to talk to this diverse group of observers, we have no information on the number or distribution of these respondents. Little information is provided about them. The failure to report this type of categorization causes one to wonder how balanced the responses were, and how possible imbalances might be accounted for.

These criticisms raise questions about the validity of Persinos' measure of Christian Right influence. Yet, Persinos never represented this study as a model of rigorous and systematic research. Instead, he was simply trying to gauge the influence of

the Christian Right for an elections industry publication. His presentation of results may imply a false precision, but they appear to be accurate for the time period. While the only available measure of Christian Right influence across all fifty states, the widespread use of Persinos' data is out of proportion with the study's age and methodological rigor. An improved and updated reading is needed to more fully understand the influence of the Christian Right in state level Republican parties. Further, our knowledge will be greatly enhanced by better and more systematic data.

While Persinos' study is frequently mentioned in the academic literature, usually as illustration for some broader point, little work has been done to more completely explore the reasons behind the variation in Christian Right influence among the states. Because little theoretical work exists at the level of the state parties there are few conceptualizations upon which to draw for such comparisons. A notable exception is work by John C. Green, James L. Guth and Clyde Wilcox (1998). In it they merge Persinos' data with a 1992 survey of the delegates to the Republican national convention to create an "Index of Christian Right Influence" (118). Using this index as their dependent variable, they test three related theories about the how a group becomes influential in politics. These theories are drawn from the social movements literature; specifically how a movement may gain power in larger political structures.

"Collective Grievance" theory argues that groups emerge and exert influence when there are political needs that are perceived to be unmet within their constituency. "Resource Mobilization" theory argues that it is the internal characteristics of the group outside of politics that allow it to exert influence. "Political Process" theory emphasizes the role of political opportunity in the exertion of influence (120). Green, Guth, and

Wilcox use these theories to propose independent variables that allow them to test the relative impact of these concepts on the variation among Christian Right influence in the states.

The authors find that it is the effects of the elements of resource mobilization theory that most powerfully explains the variation in influence across states, though more elements of political opportunity structure are important than the other two categories. In essence, the CR has more power in states with greater numbers of movement activists, where the movement has been active for enough years to link Evangelicals with the conservative activist core of the Republican party. It is clearly a model of activity by political elites creating opening for Christian Right issue influence. But how do they create that influence? What is it about the Christian Right activists in a particular state and the political context in which they find themselves that produces high (or low) influence? How are these characteristics translated into influence?

Thus, we arrive at the central question of this dissertation. What accounts for the variation in influence the Christian Right is able to exert in state-level Republican parties? Current theory and data are insufficient to answer this question. An exploration of the extant literature has revealed little sustained effort to form comprehensive understandings of Christian Right political activity in state level Republican parties. Seeking a more sophisticated understanding of the dynamics present, I now turn to literatures concerning political party function and organization and social movement formation and development. From these, I will propose a useful and testable theory of party and movement interaction.

CHAPTER 2

POLITICAL PARTIES AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

It seems clear from the discussion in chapter one that the current state of research into the relationship between the Christian Right and the Republican party is insufficient to approach the puzzle explored in this dissertation. In order to understand the variation in influence we see displayed at the state level, a new model of the relationship and its determinants will be proposed. The most effective way to approach this new model is to first explore the relevant literatures that will help us to more clearly understand the inner functions and outer behavior of the both the political party and the Christian Right.

Beginning with the extant literature on political parties that talks about the structure, organization, functions, and behavior of parties in a general sense, this literature review then turns to work that specifically addresses these issues in the context of state-level parties. Further, and perhaps most important for model specification, I then focus on the component of the state parties literature that addresses the organizational and functional strength of state parties, comparing each to the other and exploring the ramifications of the accumulated data. This review of the literature concerning political parties allows us to not only understand what a party is and how it behaves but also to identify important points of influence and avenues that groups might take to gain

influence within the organization. It allows me to propose a reasonable model of influence based upon current understandings of party organization and function.

Then we turn to the literature concerning social movements, their formation, behavior, and evolution. A review of current understandings particularly of social movement organizations and goals pursuit will give us a broader theoretical understanding of Christian Right behavior. While some have suggested that the Christian Right is not a social movement because its participants are not of the traditional socio-economic class that births social movements; namely the poor and disenfranchised (Baer and Bositis, 1988), I will show that the Christian Right is indeed a social movement and exhibits all the important and observable characteristics of one. This will allow us to utilize the insights of the social movement literature to describe Christian Right goals and functions and further our ability to model the movement's interactions with state level Republican parties.

Finally, I conclude this chapter by proposing a statistical model of the variation in influence the Christian Right is able to exert in state level Republican parties. Drawing on the literatures here reviewed, a set of organizational and contextual variables are proposed as explanatory factors in influence variation. Based on this model, hypotheses concerning movement and party behavior are enumerated and discussed.

Political Parties

A political party is notoriously hard to define. Its goals can be variously described as the winning of office for power and ambition's sake, the implementation of its policy positions, or existing as the main conduit between the elected and the governed

(Eldersveld, 1982; Rossiter, 1960; Schlesinger, 1991). The most comprehensive definitions take each of these into account. In many ways, however, these goals describe what a party does, not what it is. Particularly in the United States context, however, political parties may be seen to *be* what they *do*. Parties have evolved into primarily functional entities whose purpose and goals are to serve their members and their elected officials, and to have insignificant identities of their own (Monroe, 2001). But parties are multi-faceted creatures, existing both as organizations and as theoretical constructions for the election of candidates (voting) and the production of public policy (governance). Thus, trying to define a party, to pin it down and determine all things it must or may be, has a quality of the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. The more closely defined one aspect becomes, the less precise the others appear.

Perhaps the clearest way to approach the generic definition of the term “party,” is to look at the goals it must balance to remain viable within a system (Müller and Strøm, 1999). Each party has the desire to enact its policies in the context of governance. However, in order to do that, the party must inspire a majority of voters to elect members of the party into office. So vote-maximization becomes not only a means to achieve a policy end, but also an end unto itself as the party seeks to increase and consolidate its majority and power. If we assume that vote-maximization is a constant goal, regardless of shifting policy goals, we may arrive at a functional definition of “party” in the American system.

A party is a group of people who have banded together to obtain and maintain power. They have managed to overcome the collective action problem (Olson, 1965) by aggregating their voices and by disseminating information and influence. They have

reduced the information and action costs of each individual member so that their contributions seem less than their benefits (Wilson, 1973, 1995). Most important, it is this aggregation and cooperation that allow them to function as teams within the American electoral system, combining their strength to gain the power they seek (Downs, 1957).

This functional definition held constant, it is in the realm of policy goals that a party may evolve, develop, and become the avenue for influence and group power. A political party is also an aggregation of the beliefs, opinions, and needs of its constituent parts. It is one of the few institutionalized mechanisms by which citizen's voice can be communicated to the government. A party functions as the framework through which a multiplicity of goals and interests from all levels of society are debated, refined, distilled, and proclaimed (Eldersveld and Walton, 2000: 10). In this way a party functions as a mediator in society between the voters and those they elect. Thus, elected officials use the party as an ideational reference in making policy because they believe it represents a certain set of issue positions and goals that voters have elected them to represent. Therefore, the policies and positions for which a party stands become extremely important to all those involved in the party, voters, elected officials, and party organizers.

This facet of party purpose, namely its role as definer of partisan goals and policies, is what makes the dynamics of influence and discussion within the party so important. In order to truly understand a party and how it operates, we must approach it as a coalition of groups espousing a variety of goals and all seeking the "stamp of approval" that party policy positions offer.

The party as a coalition combines within its characteristics the expression of opinion of a variety of people and social groupings with the ultimate goal of achieving the organizational cohesion necessary to win elections. Further, it elucidates the motivation of members of the party serving in government as they make decisions based upon the competing demands of the party's constituent groups. As the Christian Right is but one, albeit a powerful one, of a number of groups that vie for control in the Republican party, an approach that utilizes the coalition as a rudimentary conception of the Republican party seems appropriate.

A political party's organizational structure will reflect these functional and ideational goals through not only candidate recruitment and voter mobilization, but also through the *types* of candidates recruited and voters mobilized. The policy goals are expressed through the overarching goal of vote-maximization. Thus, a party will be organized in such a way to facilitate these goals (Monroe, 2001: 17). The more we can understand about a party's organization, the better we will be able to see how it will accomplish election and policy objectives. Most importantly, we will be able to observe how various members of the party coalitions can use this organizational structure to advance their own group goals.

An ancillary phenomenon to this more functionally derived definition of political parties is the presence of issue activists within the party organization. Given the coalitional nature of parties, the people within the party itself, whether party functionaries or elected officials, may represent any number of coalitional groups. Together they may seek control over the election and policy goals of the larger organization. Weber and Brace (1999) suggest that many party organizations have become networks of these issue

activists, creating situations where coalition groups' disagreements are vetted within the organizational structure of the party and may significantly affect the strategies a party uses to achieve its goals.

To this point, political parties have been discussed as monolithic entities. It is as if the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States were two all-encompassing groups with uniform internal goals. The nature of American politics makes this picture far from correct. In fact, parties tend to be comprised of many overlapping layers of organization and control. "Each stratum of organization is relatively autonomous in its own sphere, although it does maintain links above and below. There is, thus, the proliferation of power and decision making..." (Eldersveld and Walton, 2000: 16). Thus, in order to gain a true understanding of the operations and behavior of political parties, and to further illuminate the overarching research question of this dissertation, we now turn to a discussion of state level political parties.

State Political Parties

The study of political parties at the state level is the study of 50 individual systems and 100 organizations. Much of the literature is an explication of the specifics of a particular state's laws and conventions concerning elections and the behavior of political parties (Gimpel, 1996; Jewell and Morehouse, 2001; Jewell and Olson, 1982, 1988). Or even more generally, this literature can consist of simply a brief coverage of state party behavior in a larger work on state politics or political parties (Bibby, 1987; Eldersveld and Watson, 2000; Hershey and Beck, 2002; Key, 1956; Weber and Brace, 1999). While very useful to complete the patchwork picture of state parties in America,

very little of this work gives us theoretical understandings that are generalizable across the different state contexts. This specific information will be useful in later portions of the dissertation, but it is the work that allows us a broader picture of the behavior of state parties in general on which we now concentrate.

Understanding that state parties function much like their national counterparts from the earlier discussion of party function and goals, what must we more fully understand to comprehend state-level organizations? First, state parties perform many of the “nuts and bolts” party functions, even for national offices. It is primarily their responsibility to recruit candidates for state-wide offices (and to some degree for congressional seats) and to mobilize voters in ways that will coordinate their votes over various districts and levels of office. Most state parties also play a part in policy goal setting for their state, including platform drafting and coordination with state legislative caucuses. In order to accomplish these goals, state parties have formed overlapping relationships with not only local and county party organizations, but with “candidate organizations, allied groups (such as labor unions or issue groups), campaign consultants, and fund raisers” (Weber and Brace, 1999: 201). Thus state parties provide a wealth of opportunities for motivated individuals or groups to seek involvement and influence within these complex relationships.

Jewell and Morehouse (2001) provide the most comprehensive picture of a state party’s goals and functions. They examine most specifically the composition and role of the state central committees in policy and electoral goal formation. Still a broad overview, this work seeks only to give information, not to present a particular theoretical argument concerning state parties.

The primary theoretical work concerning state parties is Cotter et al.'s 1984 study of state party organizations. The authors focus on the strength of state parties and seek to determine whether organizational form and sophistication has bearing on electoral success. While they find that these characteristics vary independently of one another, this work adds significantly to our understanding state parties and their operations. Most specifically, Cotter et al. add to our understanding of state party organizations. They find the state parties to be enlarging their capacities to help candidates get elected (contrary to the party decline thesis), and that many are significantly involved in policy formation (21).

Cotter et al.'s measurement and comparison of party strength are based primarily on the earlier work of Austin Ranney and Willmoore Kendall's *Democracy and the American Party System* (1956). Ranney and Kendall offer a typology based upon the level of competition within an electoral system. While couched in general political system terms, they intend to apply it to all the possible "systems" within the United States. Thus, they classify state party systems as one of five possible situations: multi-party; two-party; modified one-party; one-party; and totalitarian one-party (157-158). Giving detailed descriptions about what each of these systems look like, they classify each of the 48 states in one of these categories based upon data from 1914 to 1954. This work has been expanded and updated for the contemporary parties by Bibby and Holbrook (2001), and is useful in comparing the competitiveness of state parties.

David Mayhew (1986) moves the next logical step to look at the organizations of the parties themselves. As both parties begin to compete in nearly every locality, it is the strength of their party organization that may win electoral victories and serve to

perpetuate the party in that area. Mayhew's analysis seems to stall when it tries move beyond the traditionally structured patronage parties. His categories begin with strong, "traditional" party organizations, moves to those with "persistent factionalism" (those with multiple sectors of one party fighting for control of the main apparatus), and then simply ranks all the non-traditional organizations by geographical region. He gives no sustained theoretical accounting for the variation in those states that do not exhibit traditional party behavior. A further hindrance to his analysis is the fact that he seeks to classify the party situations of the late 1960s when the state parties were certainly different and perhaps weaker than they now appear. The analysis makes no attempt to account for the party reforms of the early 1970s or other more contemporary changes to the party situation in the states.

This review of the literature concerning political parties, particularly their organization at the state level, gives us the building blocks to form a model of influence within a party. It has given us a picture of the areas where influence might be exerted and motivations for that exertion. Now that a clear understanding of state political parties has been obtained, a review the literature on social movements, of which the Christian Right is one, is required.

Social Movements

In reviewing the literature concerning social movements I seek three specific outcomes: to define the term "social movement," to provide a framework to study these groups and their interactions with society at large, and to examine previous research on interactions between social movements and political parties. By concentrating on these

three goals, I focus what is an extensive scholarly literature and help it to provide the understanding needed to formulate a model of the influence the Christian Right exerts in state political parties.

A social movement can be defined as “socially shared activities and beliefs directed toward the demand for change in some aspect of the social order” (Gusfield, 1970: 2). It should be considered a collective action, prompted by a belief that there is something wrong with the society or its institutions in which the members reside. It is “consciousness of dysfunction relative to a social problem” (Rush and Denisoff, 1971: 255). Social movements are formed when “individuals determine that their lot in life is not simply their own personal failure, but reflects in larger part group discrimination that has resulted in their disadvantaged status” (Baer and Bositis, 1988: 54).

Social movements are rarely well organized. In fact, a defining characteristic seems to be that social movement action is initially of the “ground-swell” variety. A person feels compelled to act as an individual and only after the initial deed realizes that they are part of a larger group with similar grievances and goals. Thus members or adherents do not know all of their counterparts. Most are linked through the leaders of the organizations of which they become a part as they are moved to repeated action (Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 121). “Social Movements are: (1) segmented, with numerous different groups or cells in continual rise and decline; (2) policephalous, having many leaders each commanding a limited following only; and (3) reticular, with multiple links between autonomous cells forming indistinctly-bounded network” (Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 140).

Social movements tend to encompass an aspect of personal transformation (Baer and Bositis, 1988: 106). Frequently, they lead members to higher levels of political and social efficacy through shared goals and action. “Social movement organizations give particular importance to internal relationships, transforming the very costs of collective action into benefits through the intrinsic reward of participation itself” (Della Porta and Diani, 1999: 141). Movements give personal benefits to members outside of the achievement of social or political goals.

McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996) suggest that scholars emphasize three primary factors when discussing the development and accomplishments of social movements. These are the political opportunity structure in which the movement operates, the resources and organizations available to the movement, and the framing processes through which the movement utilizes opportunities and motivates action. Because social movements seek foremost to change the social and political structures around them, these three factors will prove useful in assessing the behavior of a social movement as it seeks influence within political institutions.

The political context in which a social movement finds itself has great bearing upon the behavior of a social movement and its prospects for societal change. Political context is comprised of the constraints and opportunities faced within a particular system. It is a very broad category, encompassing the entirety of political process, law, and custom (Della Porta and Diani, 1999). In the United States, these constraints and opportunities include ballot and election laws, party and governmental institution structure, and personal freedoms and rights.

Mobilizing structures encompass both the organizational and interpersonal resources available to a social movement. This includes monetary resources (McCarthy and Zald, 1987: 19). These resources seem to be self-enforcing. Existing organizations and social networks (such as the African-American church in the Civil Rights era) serve as arenas for individual mobilization and provide their membership with personal and social efficacy that may translate into political action. Most recruitment for social movement action is face-to-face (Baer and Bositis, 1988: 111) and it “flows along lines of pre-existing, significant social relationships of positive affect” (Gerlach and Hine, 1970: 97). Thus, the original organizations are strengthened and new ones are spawned as these personal interrelationships are utilized to communicate a group’s deprivation and goals for redress (McCarthy and Zald, 1987).

“Mediating between opportunity, organization, and action are the shared meanings and definitions that people bring to their situation” (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1996: 5). These framing processes are what allow people to perceive a group grievance or deprivation and to believe that they have the power to remedy it. While a collective grievance perspective is perhaps the oldest in the study of social movements, it has been revitalized by the realization that only those people who feel themselves to be disadvantaged in some way seek to enact change. Those who are content with the status quo can simply ignore the political process as long as the beneficial state of affairs is perpetuated. A social movement, even with attendant resources and organizations and an amenable political climate, has no reason for existence if there is no change to be enacted, no disadvantage to overcome. The second part of this concept is very important, however. Potential members of a social movement must not only see their relative

deprivation, but must believe they can affect the situation. Thus, leaders within social movement organizations are required to spend much of their time raising awareness of issues and potential solutions. This is why personal relationship resources are vitally important to social movement development. The production of shared understandings of the world and participants' place in it are vital to the group identity and solidarity of social movements (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1996: 6).

Now that we have reviewed the relevant literature concerning social movements and provided a framework through which to examine their behavior, it will be useful to understand how the Christian Right fits into this conception of a social movement. First, and most important, the Christian Right has a vision of itself as a threatened group (Reed, 1994; Watson, 1997). Participants believe that the larger culture in the United States does not fit with their religious-moral views and that they are discriminated against because of these beliefs, particularly in the public policy arena, in speech and expression, and in entertainment options. The Christian Right is not a monolithic entity; it finds expression in numerous organizations and groups, fitting the description of a segmented, policephalous, and reticulated movement. Most importantly, though, there are a body of goals and policies that can be identified with the Christian Right even if not all are emphasized equally by these constituent organizations.

Participants in the Christian Right are certainly linked by non-political means, which serve as mobilizing and efficacy-building situations.

“The culture of evangelicalism encourages people to take political action, should they choose to. They are more likely to choose to do so if they know people who are active and if they can take action in ways that are religiously comfortable...[Their] agenda is set by the evangelical subculture, which thrives through an array of institutions that may not, on the surface, seem political...the

evangelical subculture...is like a big ocean in which the Christian Right's activist fish swim and spawn." (Diamond, 1998: 11).

This includes the personal transformations necessary to the cohesion of social movements. Christian Right participants are transformed from simply churchgoers into broadly involved political activists by their ongoing connection with other Christian Right participants and larger, frequently non-political, organizations.

The Christian Right clearly exhibits the most important characteristics of a social movement. So it is with confidence that we make reference to it and build assumptions about it in this context. One final component of relevant research should be examined before a model of influence variation can be specified. There are several works that deal specifically with the relationship between social movements and political parties. It is my hope to add to this small but vital literature.

Baer and Bositis (1988) are among the few scholars who have taken on the relationship between political parties and social movements within a theoretical framework (though Green, Rozell, and Wilcox, 2001 discuss the Christian Right's success in state elections using the framework). They argue that current party theory is insufficient to explain the revitalization of party ideologies in the United States in the past thirty years. It is only with the advent of social movement activity in politics, based upon group identities, that parties have once again become entities with vital internal debate and programmatic policy goals (18). They argue that these changes in the parties, and the resurgence of parties in general, is a response to social movement pressure. Following a coalitional logic to explain movement/party relationships, the authors lend much credence to the puzzle and theoretical claims of this dissertation. If parties have indeed

been revitalized by the addition of social movement activists to their ranks, then the nature, activities, and influence of these social movements are important ingredients to our understanding of modern political parties in the United States. However, their work is focused on explaining party behavior, not on measuring and accounting for variation in social movement influence.

Also a part of this literature is Green, Guth and Wilcox's (2000) examination of Christian Right power in state Republican parties, discussed in chapter one. This dissertation moves beyond this previous research utilizing a somewhat more developed theoretical and analytic framework and up-to-date data. The insights of the relevant parties and social movements literatures here discussed provide the basic building blocks of a theoretical model of the variation in influence the Christian Right is able to exert in state-level Republican parties. Drawing from previous research in political party behavior and organization and social movement development and action, I will specify a testable theory and provide hypotheses as to its proposed outcomes.

Analytic Model

The goals and behaviors of both political parties and social movements have been elucidated in order to help us better understand the ways in which they interact. Specifically, I am interested in the way the Christian Right is able to influence the Republican party at the state level. While there is certainly a story in the variation of influence over the long life the Christian Right in American politics, this dissertation focuses intentionally on a specific period of time, the 2000 election cycle. By using the

cross-sectional approach, I am better able to discern the importance of contextual differences in the Christian Right's success or failure.

Thus, the dependent variable for this study is the amount of influence the Christian Right had in a state's Republican party during the 2000 election. Using a data collection process explained and operationalized in later chapters, I compute a comprehensive influence measure for each state that functions as the dependent variable in the model.

Believing that the three-fold characterization of the components of influence by social movements in political institutions to be a theoretically profitable approach, the independent variables of the statistical model are categorized within a modified version of that framework. In order to correctly analyze the ingredients for Christian Right influence in state Republican parties, the nature of the party needs to be accounted for in addition to the ways in which a social movement interacts with its environment. Those variables that would fit under the political context rubric are thus divided into two categories: party characteristics and state characteristics. By separating these two categories concerning political structures, we can better understand the varying effects of different types of political structures on the CR's ability to exert influence. The final variable category is movement characteristics, encompassing the mobilizing structures and framing processes concepts in the social movements literature. These are united because they are all related to the way in which the movement behaves and the way members interact. So, the influence variation model is organized into these three categories with the measurement variables enumerated below.

I should note here that when I use the term model, I am referring primarily to the statistical definition of model. While certainly there are interesting hypotheses that flow from the proposed set of explanatory variables, the broader relationships among those variables is not well specified in this study. Some attempt to spell out those relationships is made in the case study portion of this project, but those findings are in no way comprehensive and do not constitute a comprehensive theoretical model.

Party Characteristics

The characteristics of a state's Republican party are very important to the ability of the Christian Right to influence it. The strength of the organization and its electoral successes may produce a situation with few or many openings for CR access. This access has been found to be important in electoral outcomes (Green, Wilcox and Rozell, 2001) and is likely important to the inner workings of the state party and its strategy and policy decisions. The following variables measure a party's strength and points of access available to the Christian Right.

First is the state Republican party's organizational structure. Organizations can be formal and hierarchical or diffuse and equal. Political parties by their very nature are less formal organizations, with opportunities to exert influence at many points. However, there is variation even within this diffusion. The degree to which a party is strongly or weakly organized will have a significant impact upon the ability of the CR to influence it. This will be particularly true in the points of access available to Christian Right participants. More diffuse parties will allow more contact and influence, less diffuse will allow less. Organizational structure can also be seen in the rules the party has adopted

for itself. The rules by which party candidates are nominated can constrain the ability of insurgent groups to have an impact on the outcome.

Another way to determine the strength of a political party and illuminate its organizational and electoral characteristics is by observing a state's party competition. Party competition is the degree to which the two parties trade electoral victories in a state. Given a party's purpose and goal to elect partisans to office, this measure is one indication of the difficulty faced in the attempt at partisan victory.

State Characteristics

The larger political context impacts the ways in which the Christian Right seeks influence and what the outcome of their activities will be. While the situation within the party itself directly affects the CR's success, the characteristics of the state in which they both operate likely shape the avenues the Christian Right uses to seek influence and the public opinion and legal environment in which that attempt takes place.

State policy situation will have an effect upon the CR's ability to influence the state party. Because political parties are bound primarily by state laws, the legal interaction of these entities may vary from state to state. States may legislate everything from party committee make-up to the dates of political conventions. Further, each state has different laws concerning ballot access, referenda, and initiatives; all have a significant effect on the ability of any group to influence the politics of a particular state. Thus, it is important to gauge these statutory differences in the political context that may affect the exertion of influence.

Further, the Christian Right faces diverging public sentiment situations in the various states. This is both general and specific sentiment. General opinions about the

policies espoused by religious conservatives (social policy) and specific opinion about the movement itself. The tenor of state public sentiment may significantly affect the CR's ability to influence the state's Republican party as the party seeks to reflect the core beliefs of its state-level constituents.

Movement Characteristics

The movement itself clearly plays a part in its own ability to influence a state's Republican party. We know that the movement appears in different forms in different states and it seems likely that those differences will affect their ability to exert influence. These characteristics are not only the resources the movement brings to bear but also encompass the movement's self concept and internal connections.

The number of Evangelicals in a state forms the resource base for Christian Right activity in a state. Not all Evangelicals are religious conservatives nor are all CR members Evangelicals. But there is significant overlap, thus the proportion of Evangelicals in a state shows the population from which the CR can draw supporters. Our understanding of the strong social networks inherent in the Evangelical subculture shows that the more Evangelicals, the wider and more varied the connections which bring them and the Christian Right, together.

Another resource utilized by the Christian Right is the quality of their leadership. As in most social movements the activities of the leader are varied and can sometimes be best characterized as a coordination role. The determination and foresight of the coordinator/leader often governs the success of Christian Right goals, whether pursued within a mass or specific group context. Their knowledge and activism frequently forms

the connection between political situations and the grassroots supporters of the movement. It may be as much as a lobbying appointment or as little as a phone call to a friend that makes the difference in the leaders' ability to focus religious conservative activity for successful influence.

A gauge of the extent to which the Christian Right is utilizing the resources available in the Evangelical community is the number of Evangelicals that identify themselves as members of CR groups. These groups provide an institutional base for Christian Right activity and the principal face by which the movement is identified. While not primarily the focus of Christian Right action, which is predominantly grassroots in nature, these groups form the backbone of the Christian Right as seen by those outside the movement

Finally, the degree to which the supporters of the Christian Right movement in a state feel threatened by the larger society around them is an important characteristic of the movement. We understand from the literature concerning social movements that this framing process is a necessary condition for the formation and development of a social movement. There is significant evidence that the movement as whole believes its positions are disadvantaged in the political discourse of the United States. Thus, differing levels of threat may predict different levels of motivation on the part of religious conservative activists.

Model Hypotheses

These independent variables all help us to understand the variation we observe in the Christian Right's ability to influence state-level Republican party politics. It is my

assertion that these variables give us a wide-ranging picture of the contextual situation and that their variation will significantly predict the levels of influence the dependent variable assigns to individual states. Now that a model of influence has been laid out, hypotheses concerning the relationships among these independent variables and the dependent variable should be detailed. While it may be rather intuitive how these variables will interact to produce varying levels of Christian Right influence in state Republican parties, the hypotheses will provide a baseline by which to analyze the results of the this study.

Hypothesis #1 – *If the state Republican party is organizationally strong, the Christian Right will not have significant influence within the party.* Organizational strength is here defined by professionalism, staff size, budget, and integration with national and local parties. A state party leadership not aligned with religious conservatives should, with a strong party organization, be able to rebuff attempts at influence or infiltration by Christian Right supporters. Conversely, a power or leadership vacuum in a critical spot may allow a CR supporter an entry she would not have had otherwise. While all parties are diffuse organizations in the classical sense, they do differ in the amount of diffuseness (Mayhew, 1986). A state party with a widely scattered and diverse leadership cadre is more susceptible to concentrated influence. The lack of central organization allows multiple access points for the Christian Right to seek influence.

Hypothesis #2 – *Closed primaries will yield more influence for the Christian Right than will open primaries.* Closed primaries allow the Christian Right to wield the maximum power in the smallest arena. In many states the CR constitutes 25-40% of the

Republican primary constituency, a proportion that can be very significant in low turn-out races. In closed primaries, Democrats and Independents cannot vote in the Republican primary, thus, not providing the dilution of CR vote possible in open primary contests.

Hypothesis #3 – *An open political system provides more avenues for Christian Right influence than a closed system.* This is expressed as openness of electoral access for ballot initiatives and referenda. We know from recent history that the movement has been highly active in these processes in a variety of states. These conditions allow the CR to influence politics in general, which translates into the ability to pressure the Republican party from the outside. Thus, in open systems as here defined, the CR should wield more influence.

Hypothesis #4 – *The more amenable the state's public sentiment toward the Christian Right and its issues, the more influence it will have.* This encompasses both general and specific opinions. Thus, the more conservative a state, the more sympathy the CR should elicit for their policy positions. If the Christian Right is well thought of by members of the larger, non-CR community in a state, the more ability the movement will have to support their issue positions and gain power in the state Republican party.

Hypothesis #5 – *The more resources the Christian Right has at its disposal, the more successful the movement will be in exerting influence.* Resources in this case refer to supporters of the movement and members of movement organizations, the size of the potential pool of supporters (Evangelical and Fundamentalist Christians), how well they have been recruited into the movement, and the quality of Christian Right leadership.

These ingredients allow the Christian Right to mobilize to exert influence in the state Republican party and in the larger arena of state politics.

Hypothesis #6 – *The more threatened the Christian Right feels by issues or policy in a state, the more incentive the movement has to seek influence in the state's Republican party.* Threat mobilizes people to action. Because they feel the Republican party most closely mirrors their own political views, Christian Right supporters are likely to channel this reaction against threat into Republican party activities. Thus, the more threatened they feel, the harder they will try to gain power within the party.

These hypotheses demonstrate how the model will operate in explaining the variation in Christian Right influence among the various state Republican parties. If confirmed, they will lend credence to this theoretical conception of state parties and their interactions with social movements. If disconfirmed, counter-intuitive results will allow a more comprehensive picture of the interactions that will, in turn, eventually produce better theoretical frameworks.

Conclusion

This chapter has offered a comprehensive picture of the scholarly literature relevant to the research puzzle examined by this dissertation. By utilizing significant research concerning political parties, their organization and behavior, and social movements, their goals and functions, I am able to offer a model of party/movement interaction that benefits from previous insights. The next chapters detail the data collected to test the model and discuss the implications of the findings for our understanding of the Christian Right and the Republican party.

CHAPTER 3

MEASURING CHRISTIAN RIGHT INFLUENCE IN THE STATES: THE POLITICAL OBSERVER STUDY

As we have seen, the Christian Right movement has been a product of both its ideological underpinnings and the relative success of its message of political involvement within the conservative Christian community. Supporters and detractors alike have wondered at its ability to mobilize political action of all sorts and exert influence within the highest levels of power in the United States. As we have also seen, religious conservatives became the victims of their own inexperience in politics. They believed that the moral weight of their religious and political views would be enough to change public policy and governmental behavior. Experience with national level politics, however, exhibited the shortcomings of this approach. Thus, the 1990's were a time of change in focus and strategy within the movement. Concentrating more explicitly on influence within state level politics and policies, the Christian Right strengthened its grassroots presence through the efforts of myriad individuals and unaffiliated organizations.

In order to understand this transition and its impact on state politics and state parties, a clearer picture of the range and scope of the phenomenon is needed. The important issue for political science, then, is how successful the Christian Right has

actually been in exerting influence at the state level. Just how much power do they really have? Anecdotal and journalistic evidence suggest that the Christian Right was more than just successful in the last two decades – that it became the dominant player in Republican politics in many states.

As part of the larger project of examining and explaining the variation in influence the Christian Right has in state level Republican parties, we here focus on answering the question, “*How much* influence does the Christian Right exert in each state and its Republican party?” This chapter systematically measures influence through the collection and analysis of primary data. Reporting the results of a political observer study conducted by the author, an index of influence is calculated and investigated. This index functions as the dependent variable for the quantitative and qualitative analyses undertaken in the rest of the dissertation to understand the variation in the influence the Christian Right exerts on state level Republican parties.

Moving beyond earlier attempts to measure Christian Right influence (see chapter one), in this chapter I propose and operationalize a theoretically appropriate and consistent measure of Christian Right influence in state Republican parties. First, I examine the important elements of the measure, i.e., influence, the Christian Right, and state level Republican parties.

Influence seems to be a term that scholars inherently understand, but find difficult to define. It is the Oxford English Dictionary’s definition of influence that seems most appropriate in this context. Influence is “the capacity or faculty of producing effects by insensible or invisible means, without the employment of material force; ...not formally or overtly expressed” (OED Online, 2001). This definition seems to encompass the

nature of political influence, especially the notion of infungible power that creates observable results. Further, influence is primarily invisible. We can observe the actions meant to influence and the outcome of that action, but not the pressure of influence itself.

Because the term influence can be hard to precisely define, I will attempt to operationalize and measure Christian Right influence in a multi-faceted way. My measure will tap several dimensions of observable activity in order to present a thorough picture. It will include both the actions of the influencer and observers' perceptions of the result of action and will contain both quantitative and qualitative assessments of these concepts. The measure will take into account a wide variety of observers' views, hoping to triangulate based upon the opinions of many.

The Christian Right is less a particular entity than a wide group of loosely related individuals, organizations, and fellow travelers. Following the earlier discussion of the origination and evolution of the movement, no single group speaks authoritatively on behalf of the Christian Right. The single group that may have laid claim to this role (The Christian Coalition) has become largely moribund in the last few years, particularly at the state level. So the term "Christian Right" must encompass both people who are members of specific groups aligned with social and religious conservatism, both in general and in support of single issue positions, as well as those non-members whose political opinions and behavior are consonant with the broad set of Christian Right goals. The Christian Right is a social movement with the diffuse personal and organizational linkages attendant to that type of social grouping. Thus, at a minimum, these are people who are socially, politically, and religiously conservative and believe that the United States as a

society and polity is not reflective of their values and feel obligated and motivated upon these bases to take action in the political realm.

Again, following the earlier discussion of political parties in their state level incarnations, political parties are defined as groups of individuals organized to win public office, and representing a particular set of beliefs and policy goals in that capacity. In this study, I specifically seek to measure the amount of influence that religious conservatives have in state level Republican parties. It seems most unambiguous to approach the party in the milieu by which many observers judge its strength and effectiveness, that of the election cycle. This formulation has important empirical strengths. Political scientists tend to look at political parties as institutionalized organizations with a life and purpose of their own. In contrast, practitioners and activists within these parties see their activities and goals almost entirely in terms of elections, not in organizational maintenance or improvement. Organizational questions posed to these types of people are almost universally answered in the context of election cycle. Even those bodies that operate more broadly (legislative caucuses, for example) see themselves as entirely dependent upon the election cycle and therefore are very sensitive to its realities. Thus, this electoral approach seems the most appropriate for the purpose of this research.

The Political Observer Study

In order to systematically measure the influence of the Christian Right in state level Republican parties, I conducted a political observer study from November, 2000 to May, 2001. It was funded by the Ray Bliss Institute at the University of Akron and

conducted on behalf of *Campaigns & Elections*, which serves the campaign industry. *Campaigns & Elections* lent their name to the project to establish our credibility with potential respondents and published an early report of its results (Conger and Green, 2002). In the study, over 1400 people were contacted by email, fax, US mail, and phone and asked to respond to 19 questions about religious conservatives in their states' politics, their states' Republican parties, and the relationship between the two. Those contacted were state Republican and Democratic party leaders, leaders of religiously conservative political groups, members of both the political and religious media, political consultants of various partisan loyalties, and academic observers.

While this was, in a sense, a survey, there was no random selection of sample participants. There is no compiled list of the names and positions of many of the people I sought to contact, as many of the activities in which they are engaged are centered on the campaign and election cycle. This is particularly true of the party officials and political consultants. I built a list of possible respondents using all available data: party lists, national and state party web sites, membership lists from national organizations such as the Religion Newswriters Association and the National Association of Political Consultants, web sites of national and state level religious conservative political organizations, and the APSA membership directory. In states where these national lists were not sufficient, other web listings and independent resources were utilized to obtain respondent contact information. This contact information collection effort did not seek to identify a similar number of respondents in each state; but it did seek to identify at least two individuals of each non-academic contact type (Republican Party, Democratic Party, Media, Political Consultant, and Christian Right Leadership) in each state. While they

may represent only a part of the whole universe of state-level political observers, I believe that I contacted a significant portion of those able to be located. All practical resources were utilized to identify these people. The omissions that exist should not pose a significant barrier to the collection and analysis of the appropriate data.

Each person in the sample was contacted at least twice. Those with email or fax contact information (nearly all the respondents) were contacted three times.² The cover letter described the project and asked for their participation by responding to the questionnaire (see Appendix A). The specific wording of the cover letter for each group was changed slightly to reflect its level of political participation.³

Of 1410 people contacted, 395 responded, giving an overall response rate of approximately 28%. This does not present the true story of the level of response, however. Because the level of analysis is the state, and not national politics, disaggregated response statistics seem more appropriate.

² Many Republican party officials were contacted even more frequently, given that I believed their answers to be vitally important in assessing the involvement of the Christian Right within the party they supervised.

³ Involvement in the project was entirely consensual and no incentives or sanctions were offered. All standard survey protection practices were followed; human subjects review board consent was sought and granted.

<u>State</u>	<u>AO</u>	<u>CR</u>	<u>DP</u>	<u>PC</u>	<u>PM</u>	<u>RM</u>	<u>RP</u>	<u>Total Responded</u>	<u>Total Contacted</u>	<u>Response Rate</u>
AK			2	2				4	14	0.29
AL	1	4	2	3			3	13	28	0.46
AR	1		1	3			2	7	29	0.24
AZ	1	1		2		1	1	6	25	0.24
CA		3	2	23		1	1	30	122	0.25
CO		2	2	5		2		11	34	0.32
CT			2	1				3	24	0.13
DE			1				1	2	10	0.20
FL	1	3	1	9	2	1	1	18	53	0.34
GA	1	2	2	5		2	2	14	36	0.39
HI		1	1	1			1	4	15	0.27
IA	1	2	1				1	5	23	0.22
ID	1		3	1			4	9	14	0.64
IL	1	3		5	2	1		12	34	0.35
IN			1	3		1	2	7	29	0.24
KS	1	1	2				1	5	18	0.28
KY			3	5	1		1	10	31	0.32
LA	1	1	1	4	2	2	1	12	37	0.32
MA		1		4			1	6	38	0.16
MD	1	1	1	1				4	26	0.15
ME	1	2	2	1			2	8	12	0.67
MI		3	1	2	2	2	2	12	44	0.27
MN		1	3	4	1		1	10	35	0.29
MO	1	1	1	2			1	6	26	0.23
MS		1	1	2			1	5	23	0.22
MT			2		1		1	4	12	0.33
NC		2	3	8		1	3	17	39	0.44
ND	1	1	2				2	6	11	0.55
NE		1	1	1	1	1		5	19	0.26
NH	1			1				2	16	0.13
NJ			1	3	1	2		7	32	0.22
NM	1		1	1			1	4	15	0.27
NV	1		1	1	1		1	5	23	0.22
NY	1	2		7	1		1	12	37	0.32

N = 395

Overall Response Rate: .28

AO: Academic Observer; CR: Christian Right; DP: Democratic Party; PC: Political Consultant; PM: Political Media; RM: Religious Media; RP: Republican Party

Table 1: **Response Rate by State and Observer Type**
Continued

Table 1 (continued): **Response Rate by State and Observer Type**

OH		1	1	4		2	2	10	43	0.23
OK		2	1	1				4	20	0.20
OR	1	1	1					3	21	0.14
PA				8	1	3		12	36	0.33
RI			1	1	1	1		4	13	0.31
SC	1	1	1	1			1	5	14	0.36
SD	1	1		2	1	1		6	15	0.40
TN		1	2	3		1	3	10	33	0.30
TX		3	1	5		1		10	55	0.19
UT	1			2		1	3	7	22	0.32
VA		2	4	6	1		1	14	59	0.24
VT		1					1	2	10	0.20
WA		2	3	4			1	10	39	0.27
WI		1	1			1	3	6	25	0.24
WV		1		3			1	5	11	0.46
WY			2					2	11	0.18
Total N	22	54	66	148	22	25	58	395	1410	
Resp. Rate	0.45	0.29	0.31	0.31	0.19	0.16	0.26	0.28		

N = 395

Overall Response Rate: .28

AO: Academic Observer; CR: Christian Right; DP: Democratic Party; PC: Political Consultant; PM: Political Media; RM: Religious Media; RP: Republican Party

In order to understand the distribution of opinions and to ensure as balanced a view as possible, the response statistics are disaggregated by the type of respondent as well. Table one reports the number of people contacted, the actual number of respondents for each state and for the seven different categories of respondent type and the overall response rates for each state and overall respondent type. Because different numbers of observers were contacted in each state, both the absolute number of responses and response rate are important for the overall picture of response to this survey. For example, Maine has the highest response rate (.67) but only has 8 respondents. Overall, I

find that academics had the highest response rate (though lowest absolute number of responses) and the two media categories had the lowest response rate.

In follow-up contacts with non-respondents, then, I sought to achieve a balance of different types of respondents in each state, as well as the opinions of as many respondents as possible. As can be seen in table one, the effort bore more fruit in some states than in others. The number of responses also reflect the differential pool from which respondents were drawn in each state. Some states simply had more people to contact, due to population or concentration of observers (New York, for example). Response rates reflect this natural variation to a great degree. Further, states such as California and Virginia have a much higher population of political consultants than do Indiana or Wyoming. No state, however, had a zero response rate. There is no apparent pattern to the states with similar response rates, beyond a similar population of observers on which to draw. There is no significant correlation (.049) between the number of respondents in a state and that states' influence index score (calculated below). Overall, there seems to be no problem in seeking to create an influence index for every state with the data collected. However, greater or lesser confidence may be placed on each state's calculated influence index scores based upon these response rates. This issue will be discussed later in this chapter.

The questionnaire itself encompassed 19 questions, designed to elicit an understanding of the politics of the Christian Right and the Republican party in each state (see Appendix B). Respondents were asked to base their answers upon the following operational definition of the Christian Right:

“By the Christian Right we mean *members or supporters of any political group of Christians that espouses and promotes a religiously conservative political agenda*. This would include groups popularly thought of as a part of the Christian Right movement, including the Christian Coalition or Focus on the Family. It would also include the groups who fit the above description and concentrate their efforts upon one issue area; for example, home-schooling or pro-life groups. When in doubt, simply use your own perceptions of what you would consider to be the Christian Right in your state to guide your answers to the following questions.”

These instructions gave the participants free rein to respond on the basis of their perceptions and experience, not simply on a particular, strongly-defined category. This freedom seems to have proven important, particularly as research reported later in this dissertation suggests that the religious conservative movement has evolved into a much less formal configuration than it exhibited even five years ago.

Interestingly, there was some trouble with identifying religious conservatives with the label “Christian Right.” Many participants found the term pejorative, something previous research and inquiries had not suggested. Several respondents were quite angry at the term, suggesting it was given to religious conservatives as a demeaning label by the media. Many were at least uncomfortable with the connotations the term has had as referring to political and religious zealots or to a group that is somehow on the fringe of American society. While it seemed that more religious conservatives objected to the term than other respondent groups, they were certainly not alone in their discomfort with “Christian Right.” Given the amorphous nature of social movements, however, another term may have caused more confusion, if less consternation. “Christian Right” seemed to capture the groups of people, organizations, and movement supporters about which I was seeking information. Another term may not have brought the desired constituency to the respondents’ minds.

Another issue should here be briefly noted. Within the survey the concept of the Christian Right was operationalized as those organizations, primarily public policy institutes and interest groups, who espouse and promote a religiously conservative view of policy and political life. Further research, discussed later in this dissertation, suggests this may be a somewhat unsatisfactory operationalization. The movement and its supporters appear to be much larger and less cohesive than a simple view of these organizations would suggest. However, in the interest of systemicity and rigor, using organizations as the operationalization of the Christian Right movement provides a broad enough definition for the intent to measure political influence. Many of the questions in the survey were asked with the understanding that most, if not all activity of religious conservatives takes place within the context of Republican politics, whether through efforts on behalf of particular candidates or in seeking a voice in policy formation (Guth, 1983; Reichley, 1992)⁴.

Operationalizing the Influence Index: The Dependent Variable

Utilizing the information gathered by the observer study described above, I construct a measure of the influence the Christian Right exerts in state level parties. It is based upon the earlier discussion of influence and takes into account the need for measurement of varied dimensions of action and effect. Influence is operationalized as

⁴ This assumption may be somewhat problematic, given the dominance of the pro-life movement within religious conservatism. The pro-life movement has a large Catholic component, not a religious group that is usually included within the blanket term "Christian Right." However, the pro-life issue is one upon which most religious conservatives agree. In fact, 73% of survey respondents listed abortion as one of the most important issues for religious conservatives in their state. Thus, the issue was used to define religious conservatives in my initial instructions to the survey respondents, but no leaders in the pro-life movement were included in the leaders of Christian Right organizations that were contacted for the survey. Further

survey respondents' perceptions of the overall influence of religious conservatives in state politics, both their activity in and effect upon the 2000 election cycle, and the percentage of the state's Republican central committee that support the agenda of religious conservatives. These concepts allow me to gauge the perception of influence, as well as identify the activities of groups seeking to exert influence.

Other operationalizations of this influence can certainly be conceived. Data was collected within the study to discern the level of influence religious conservatives exerted upon state Republican legislative agendas in the two years preceding the survey. This data proved less reliable than that finally used to calculate the influence index. It had fewer overall responses and higher standard deviation than the index items and fit less well with those items when analyzed in combination with them. Further, discussing the party within the context of an election cycle seems to be more appropriate from the participants' reaction to the questions, and yielded far less ambiguous results. Participants seemed to consider the strength of the party to be more closely related to electoral success than to other forms of organizational achievement.⁵

The following four questions from the political observer study were used to create an index of influence exerted by the Christian Right. Theoretical support, methodological corroboration, and empirical evidence for their power as a composite index operationalization is offered in an effort to construct a trustworthy index measure of influence.

research suggests that while the pro-life movement may try to influence Democrats, their main avenue of access and influence is through Republicans and Republican parties.

⁵ This observation is based upon the phone interviews that were conducted and further qualitative research reported in later chapters of this dissertation.

Index Questions #1: *Overall, how influential is the Christian Right in the politics of your state?* This question allows me to gauge the general perception of strength of the movement in the state overall. While it (along with the rest of the index questions) may be somewhat amorphous in its target, i.e., the “Christian Right” is not a well-defined group with a uniform identity, I believe that it captures a very important aspect of the whole religious conservative phenomenon, namely, perception. To a certain degree, as in most political situations, a significant component of the power the Christian Right has in influencing policy and politics is based upon how strong others, particularly the objects of their influence and their opponents, believe them to be. More importantly, this question addresses most directly the phenomenon of Christian Right influence; it plainly asks how much of it exists.

Index Question #2: *How active was the Christian Right in the 2000 campaigns in your state?* This question is less ambiguous. Activities such as distribution of voter guides and registration and monetary contributions can be observed directly, though most participants were certainly answering not from first-hand knowledge, but from a general understanding. This question allows me to gauge the “activity exerted” as a measure of influence applied and we can see how these activities were designed to exercise influence. A candidate may not need the extra 20,000 votes religious conservatives provided in her district, creating a situation where considerable effort on the part of the Christian Right may have produced little influence, or vice versa.

Index Question #3: *Thinking about the Christian Right’s impact on the outcome of the 2000 elections in your state, would you say the movement had: Great Impact; Substantial Impact; Some Impact; Little Impact, or No Impact at all?* This question

seeks the result of the action measured by question two. With it, I am able to gauge the effect that the activity of religious conservatives had upon state level races. The combination of questions two and three allow us to see both the invisible exertion and visible result components of influence.

Index Question #4: *What percentage of your state's Republican Party Committee would you say support the agenda of the Christian Right?* In this question, respondents are asked to assess the makeup of their state's Republican Party Central Committee, the governing body of all state parties. While selection methods do vary from state to state, these committees are generally elected or chosen on the basis of geographic districting, usually corresponding in some way to congressional districts. Thus, they frequently reflect the spectrum of conservative ideology held by Republican activists within a particular state. The committee elects/chooses a state chairperson and generally directs the overarching and policy oriented goals of the state committee. The presence of religious conservatives in such a body would not only reflect their influence within a state, or at least in particular regions of a state, but it would also, in many ways, determine the direction a state's party would seek to go.

This question seems to measure most directly what the possible effect of these committee members' loyalty might be. Following Persinos, a question was asked about how many members of the committee were actually members of a Christian Right affiliated group. However, fewer respondents felt confident answering this question than simply the "support the agenda" question. Further analysis suggests that respondents

viewed this question very differently from the ones used to create the influence index.⁶ Finally, it seems likely that agenda supporters will be as amenable to Christian Right views as actual members of constituent organizations. Thus, this question encompasses more possible influence than the more constrained membership question or Persinos' operationalization of the concept.

The first three questions deal with the respondents' assessment of the Christian Right in their state. This focus may not entirely overlap with the actions of the Republican party in their state. However, it seems that in many cases the assumption of election activity and impact within the state by the Christian Right being exclusively within the Republican party is valid. Qualitative research, reported later in this dissertation, suggests that the vast majority of the Christian Right's attention and activity is focused on Republicans and the Republican party. The slight difference in the questions' foci may cause me to be a bit less confident of the analysis of this data in the later portions of this chapter and beyond. However, the following statistical evidence lends credence to the use of the four questions as a single index measure.

Methodologically, these four questions appear best suited to the task of creating an index of influence. While other questions included in the survey might have information to add, the responses to these questions appear the most robust. In addition to most specifically fitting the election cycle focus, there tend to be lower standard deviations among the answers within each state for these four questions than for the

⁶ This question had a small (.297) but significant correlation to the overall influence index calculated below. It also exhibits small but significant correlations with the individual components of the influence index. However, dimensional analysis shows that this question loads on a different factor than those used in the influence index. These findings indicate that the responses to this question are different enough to be withheld from the overall influence index.

others. In other words, respondents seem to have the most agreement, and the smallest range of answers for these four questions as opposed to the other possible questions.

Empirically, these questions do seem to be tapping the same underlying phenomenon in different ways. This can be shown using three inter-related statistical tests.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Q1		.698*	.760*	.595*
Q2	.698*		.746*	.491*
Q3	.760*	.746*		.519*
Q4	.595*	.491*	.519*	

* Correlation significant at .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2: Bivariate Correlations of Index Questions 1,2,3 and 4 (Pearson)

Table two reports the correlation coefficients for the four questions. They “hang together” as a grouping, but table two shows that they do not covary to the degree to make us suspicious that respondents answered them as identical questions. A simple exploration of the resultant data through factor analysis, shown in table three, reveals that the items are multiple measures of the same dimension.

Item	Factor #1
Q1	.900
Q2	.872
Q3	.895
Q4	.735

Total Variance Explained: 72.74%

One Component Extracted

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Table 3: Matrix for Factor Analysis of Index Questions 1,2,3, and 4

In the principal components analysis, the four items load on a single factor. Yet, they show enough variation to lend credence to the need for all four aspects within a comprehensive measurement of influence. Each of the first three questions returns a loading of more than .8 on the first factor. While the fourth question (index question 4) returns a slightly lower loading (.735), more than half of its variance is accounted for by this dimension, even though it may possibly be measuring a somewhat different aspect of the phenomenon.

Finally, the internal consistency of the index was tested using Cronbach's Alpha.

Item	Item-Total Correlation
Q1	.80
Q2	.75
Q3	.79
Q4	.58

Alpha = .87

Table 4: Cronbach's Alpha for Index Questions 1,2,3, and 4

Each question is tested for its correlation with the whole index. Table four reports the result of this test. The overall Alpha score is .87, surpassing the standard level of overall significance (.8). The test suggests that the four questions are tapping the same underlying variable, at least in regard to their inter-item reliability. As we would expect given the results of the above tests, the first three questions all satisfy the standard level of individual significance (.6-.7). The fourth very closely approaches this standard level. Therefore, we can say that the index exhibits a reasonably high level of internal consistency.

Thus, it is with theoretical, methodological and empirical confidence that I take an index constructed of these four questions as an appropriate measurement of the influence the Christian Right exerts in state level Republican parties.⁷ As we have seen, each of the above variables represents a part of the picture of influence I am seeking to capture. In order to create an accurate measure of Christian Right influence for each state, the information contained in the responses to these four questions must be combined. In this way, the different aspects of influence may be most clearly triangulated.

⁷ Given the slight difference between the concept measured in the first three questions and that of question four, further analysis was conducted based upon question four's usefulness in the influence variation model tested in chapter four. The regression model was conducted with only question four serving as the dependent variable. The results are remarkably similar to those found by the full model. Of the six significant variables in the full model, four remain significant in the constrained model with question four serving as the dependent variable. The referenda and initiative variable and the perception of threat variable cease to be significant. Primary type, Evangelical proportion, CR leader skill, and conservative advantage retain their significance. Given question four's specific focus on the Republican party, it makes sense that the referenda and initiative variable would cease to be significant because it is less specifically linked to the party than to politics as a whole. Given the similarity of these findings, and the theoretical and statistical evidences offered for the strength of the four item index, I believe the index is a better and more appropriate dependent variable choice than is question four on its own.

Index of Christian Right Influence in State Level Republican Parties

Questions one, two, and three were scaled to give respondents five answer options, allowing them to rate the overall influence of the Christian Right, and their effort and impact in the 2000 election cycle from high (4, “Extremely influential”) to low (0, “No influence at all”). Question four asked respondents to determine a percentage of committee members, so responses ranged from 0 to 100. For clarity and comparability, responses for question four were recoded by dividing them by 25 to fit into the 0-4 scaling.

For each respondent, the mean of the answers to the four index questions was calculated to produce a comprehensive influence score. Then, the mean of the individual influence scores in each state was calculated, creating an overall influence score for each state. The equations are as follows:

$$(Q1_i + Q2_i + Q3_i + (Q4_i/25))/4 = C_i$$

$$(C_i + C_i + \dots + C_i + C_i)/N_s = O_s$$

Where: Qn_i = Question Response

C_i = Individual Respondent Composite Influence Score

N_s = Number of Respondents per state

O_s = State Overall Influence Score

Thus, an influence score was calculated for each state using the different aspects of Christian Right influence reported by each observer.⁸

⁸Other methods of calculating the state influence index were thoroughly explored and found to be either extremely similar or generally inferior to this simplest method. While an argument could be made for some sort of correction based upon the differential response rates and overall attitudes of the different types of respondent, further analysis of this strategy proves it to be unnecessary. When the responses of the different types of respondents were submitted to correlational and factor analysis, the differences among group types show themselves to be “self-weighting.” In a varimax rotated principal components analysis

State	Influence Index	Standard Deviation	State	Influence Index	Standard Deviation	State	Influence Index	Standard Deviation
OK	3.17	.72	VA	2.50	.68	MD	1.90	.44
AL	3.07	.62	MS	2.50	.52	PA	1.90	.57
UT	2.99	.54	TN	2.46	.69	ND	1.84	.99
IA	2.95	.41	GA	2.46	.81	IN	1.80	.56
CO	2.95	.50	WV	2.45	.32	LA	1.80	.61
SC	2.85	.49	FL	2.39	.71	VT	1.79	.30
OR	2.84	.96	WY	2.38	.74	CA	1.76	.70
NE	2.77	.32	AR	2.36	.58	WI	1.74	.70
MO	2.68	.70	KS	2.32	.59	NH	1.63	.53
ID	2.68	.76	NC	2.31	.66	IL	1.61	.59
TX	2.67	.80	KY	2.26	.89	HI	1.49	.39
AK	2.61	.87	MN	2.24	.53	DE	1.35	.07
SD	2.58	.47	NM	2.15	.82	NY	1.05	.55
MI	2.53	.58	ME	2.06	.79	NJ	.86	.37
AZ	2.51	.86	OH	2.03	.72	MA	.72	.46
NV	2.51	.81	WA	1.90	.70	CT	.59	.49
MT	2.50	.63				RI	.48	.35

$$(Q1_i + Q2_i + Q3_i + (Q4_i/25))/4 = C_i$$

$$(C_i + C_i + \dots + C_i + C_i)/N_s = O_s$$

Where: Qn_i = Question Response

C_i = Individual Respondent Composite Influence Score

N_s = Number of Respondents per state

O_s = State Overall Influence Score

Table 5: State Christian Right Influence Index Scores and Standard Deviations

(with pairwise deletion), the responses of Academic Observers, Democratic Party leaders, and members of the Political Media loaded strongly on one component, while Christian Right leaders and Republican Party leaders' responses loaded strongly on the second component. Responses of Political Consultants and members of the Religious Media loaded approximately equally on both factors. The distribution of these responses closely mimics a normal distribution with the "left" and "right" portions being nearly equal and the middle portion constituting considerably more responses. Correlational analysis among the respondent type responses also bears out these relationships. Further, the two calculated indices (simple and weighted by respondent type) exhibit a statistically significant correlation of .984. Thus, it is with considerable confidence that the simpler, non-weighted version of the influence index is used in this project. (See Appendix C).

Table five shows the overall influence ratings for each of the fifty states based upon the multiple item index. It also reports the standard deviation of the states' overall index scores calculated on the individual respondent means for each state. It is interesting to note that the range of the overall influence index scores is between .48 and 3.17. While several states received scores close to the lower bound of zero, none were entirely bereft of Christian Right influence. It is also the case that no state received an overall influence score of more than 3.17. This points to the fact that while some states are highly influenced by religious conservatives and some state Republican parties are largely controlled by the Christian Right, in no state are they uniformly perceived by the observers as entirely dominant.

The overall scores for the states are fairly evenly spaced, but are slightly skewed toward the higher values with 32 states exhibiting overall index scores above the midpoint of 2. Further, figure one suggests a significant cluster around 2.5.

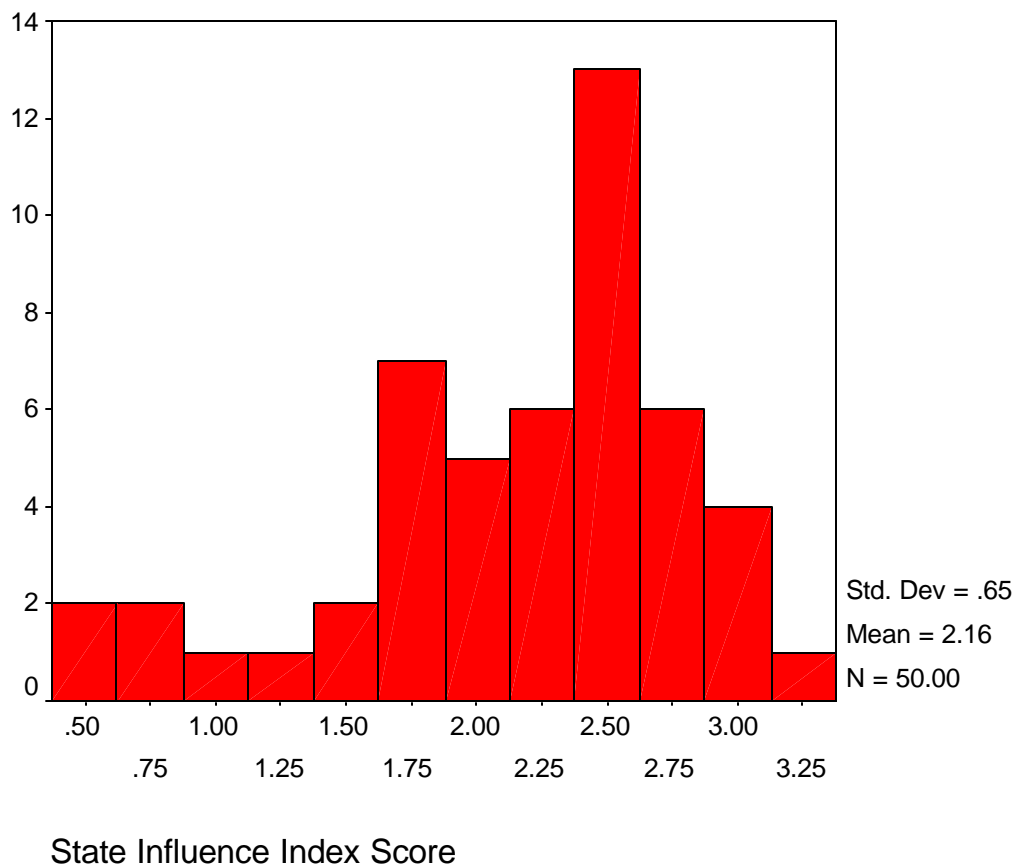


Figure 1: **Distribution of State Influence Index Scores**

This seems to suggest that most observers believe the Christian Right to have a considerable amount of influence in many states. Scores around the midpoint or slightly above (as we see a cluster in this case) may suggest that observers believe that the CR has some influence, but may not be sure exactly how much. Thus, for example, they would record a midpoint answer of “some influence” for the state influence question (#1).

Also interesting is the regional variation observable in the index scores. All of the Northeastern states, except Maine and Vermont, appear in the lowest fifth of the scores.

Southern states, with a few exceptions, namely Alabama and South Carolina, cluster in the middle. This is particularly interesting given that the South is where the Christian Right is thought to be the strongest. This may reflect the interesting phenomenon, discussed more fully later in this dissertation, of activist assimilation. The movement and party begin to look so much like one another that specific influence may be hard to detect.

Comparison with Earlier Measure of Christian Right Influence

Of further interest is how these index scores relate to the only other measure of Christian Right influence in state Republican parties, that of Persinos (1994). Persinos gave the states no influence score, but simply rated the influence as minor, substantial, and dominant (rendered for comparison in the table as high, moderate, and little influence). To compare the influence index calculated for this study, the overall index scores calculated in the current study were coded as high (2.5 and above), moderate (between 1.5 and 2.5) and little (below 1.5) influence. These codings are based on the possible combinations of answers from each respondent for the index questions. A high level of influence requires, for example, that a respondent answer two of the index questions with “2” and two with “3.” Thus, reporting a mean response to the four questions (individual influence index) considerably greater than the midpoint answer of two. The low category was similarly conceived of as a respondent who answered two questions with “2” and two with “1.” This would result in an influence rating correspondingly below the midpoint.

State	1994	2000	Perceived Change
AL	H	H	1.00
AK	H	H	-.50
AZ	H	H	.39
AR	M	M	.72
CA	H	M	-.68
CO	L	H	1.25
CT	L	L	-.67
DE	L	L	-1.00
FL	H	M	.38
GA	H	M	-.51
HI	H	L	-.25
ID	H	H	.84
IL	L	M	.08
IN	L	M	.28
IA	H	H	.44
KS	M	M	.50
KY	M	M	-.32

State	1994	2000	Perceived Change
LA	H	M	-.72
ME	M	M	-.10
MD	L	M	-.17
MA	L	L	.00
MI	M	H	.15
MN	H	M	.19
MS	M	H	.67
MO	L	H	.67
MT	M	H	.50
NE	M	H	1.00
NV	M	H	.83
NH	L	M	-.50
NJ	L	L	-.22
NM	L	M	.16
NY	L	L	-.31
NC	H	M	-.59

State	1994	2000	Perceived Change
ND	L	M	-.11
OH	M	M	.31
OK	H	H	1.00
OR	H	H	.00
PA	M	M	-.24
RI	L	L	.00
SC	H	H	-1.00
SD	L	H	.42
TN	L	M	.16
TX	H	H	.50
UT	M	H	.80
VT	L	M	.50
VA	H	H	-.09
WA	H	M	-.86
WV	L	M	-.15
WI	L	M	.50
WY	L	M	.50

H: High Influence; M: Moderate Influence; L: Little Influence

2000 Results: High = Above 2.5, Moderate = Between 1.5 and 2.5, Little = Below 1.5;
1994 Results: From Persinos (1994)

Perceived Change: from 2000 political observer study

1994 Totals: H: 18
 M: 13
 L: 20

2000 Totals: H: 19
 M: 24
 L: 7

Table 6: State Christian Right Influence Change from 1994 to 2000

Table six reports the 1994 and 2000 ratings for each state.⁹ Further, it reports the change in influence perceived by the respondents to the survey reported earlier in this

⁹ While it seems appropriate to use the question from the political observer study that most closely reflects the wording of Persinos' question, it has been shown that that study item is not appropriate for use in this project. Further, his results were based only primarily on that question, some of his own judgments were apparently used in assigning influence levels to states. Thus, a comparison using the overall index score is

chapter. This change is operationalized by a question asked in the political observer study, “In your opinion, how has that [CR] influence changed since 1994?” Response options ranged from “much stronger,” to “much weaker.” Overall, the perceived change in Christian Right influence from 1994 to 2000 was positive, .05. Table seven reports the breakdown of the amount of change perceived by respondents for their states.

Perceived Change	< -.5	-.5 to 0	0	0 to .5	> .5
Number of Respondents	10	11	3	16	10

Mean Overall Change: .05

Table 7: Crosstab of Perception of Change in Christian Right Influence from 1994 to 2000

A large change (>.5, either positive or negative) was reported for almost half the states. Only three states recorded no change in the influence of the Christian Right. While the overall change is slightly positive, it is interesting to note that in 26 states respondents perceived some increase in Christian Right influence.

The comparison of influence between the 1994 Persinos ratings and the 2000 influence index shows some significant differences. In 1994, the Christian Right was dominant in 18 states, had substantial influence in 13 states and minor influence in 20 states. In 2000, the Christian Right had high influence in 19 states, moderate influence in 24 states, and little influence in only 7 states. The results from the two time periods are significantly correlated (.433 $p < .01$) which suggests that even with the overall increase in perceived influence, each state’s level of influence in 2000 is strongly related to the

warranted with the understanding that the variation in the two data sets may come both from differences

states' situation in 1994. There is some continuity in the relationships among the state Republican parties and the Christian Right movements. Viewing these results along with the perceptions of the political observer study respondents reported above, the overall shift seems to be one of increased influence, primarily in those states that represent the moderate category. Because of the lack of information about the collection process of the information in the Persinos study, it is unclear how comparable are the two measures, but it is interesting that the observers' perceived change in influence moved in a different direction than the level comparison between the 1994 and 2000 observations in only six cases. In all six of those cases, the movement of the state was into the middle category. As noted below, the middle category is wide and disparate with a variety of explanations for states' presence there. These discrepancies may reflect some of that diversity.

Index Measure Confidence

It is important to assess the confidence with which we should view the overall state Christian Right influence scores calculated in this study. Before moving on to test the theoretical model that intends to explain the variation, we should be satisfied that the dependent variable, the overall state index scores, is an accurate reflection of Christian Right influence in each state. To do that, I will assess the consistency of the index scores, and how the level of response in each state may affect those scores. While such evaluations will not allow us to actually correct the data, they will allow us to determine in which states' measures of influence we may have more confidence.

One way to determine this level of confidence is to calculate the standard deviation of the mean composite scores calculated for each respondent type in a state. The standard deviation takes into account both range, by measuring the distance each score is from the mean, and the number of responses, by averaging those distances to produce a measure of the variation in index scores in each state. While this measure is specifically a measurement of consistency, not confidence, consistent data lends more confidence to the results.

As shown in table five, the individual composite scores for each state are fairly consistent. Exactly half the states have standard deviations of less than .6. This suggests that in these states individual's index scores were not greatly different from one another, indicating modest difference in opinions among the respondent types from those states. No state had a standard deviation above .99, and only nine are above .80. Since the maximum possible standard deviation value is 2, even the state with the highest standard deviation has less than half the maximum. These results point to general agreement among the respondents in each state concerning the level of influence the Christian Right exerts in the state Republican party, but do point to some disagreement in assessments of the situation. Because it is unclear from where this disagreement (and thus higher standard deviations) might be coming, from genuine conflict within the state's politics or simple differences in respondent observations, a statistical solution to the problem is not appropriate. Only more in-depth analysis of the state's political situation can illumine these questions. Such analysis is undertaken for several states later in this dissertation.

A brief look at table five suggests that the states in this high consistency category are clustered near the top and bottom of the influence ratings. While it is clear these

states fall at the top or bottom by virtue of the agreement among response types within the state, they may also be found here because in states where the Christian Right exerts considerable or little power in the Republican party it is fairly obvious, or the party itself makes clear reference to the fact that they are pro- or anti-Christian Right.

Beyond this consistency in the states with low levels of influence, there seems to be some link between a particular level of influence with a similar level of consistency. The overall index scores of each state and the standard deviation of the individual index score means that comprise the overall scores show a small but statistically significant correlation of .354. This suggests a genuine, if minor, linear relationship between the overall state index score and the consistency with which that score is measured. Thus, states with higher influence index scores are somewhat more likely to exhibit higher standard deviations as well, showing differences of opinion concerning the influence of the Christian Right or perhaps greater conflict in those states with significant influence in the Republican party. This can also be seen in figure two, a scatterplot of a state's influence index score and its standard deviation.

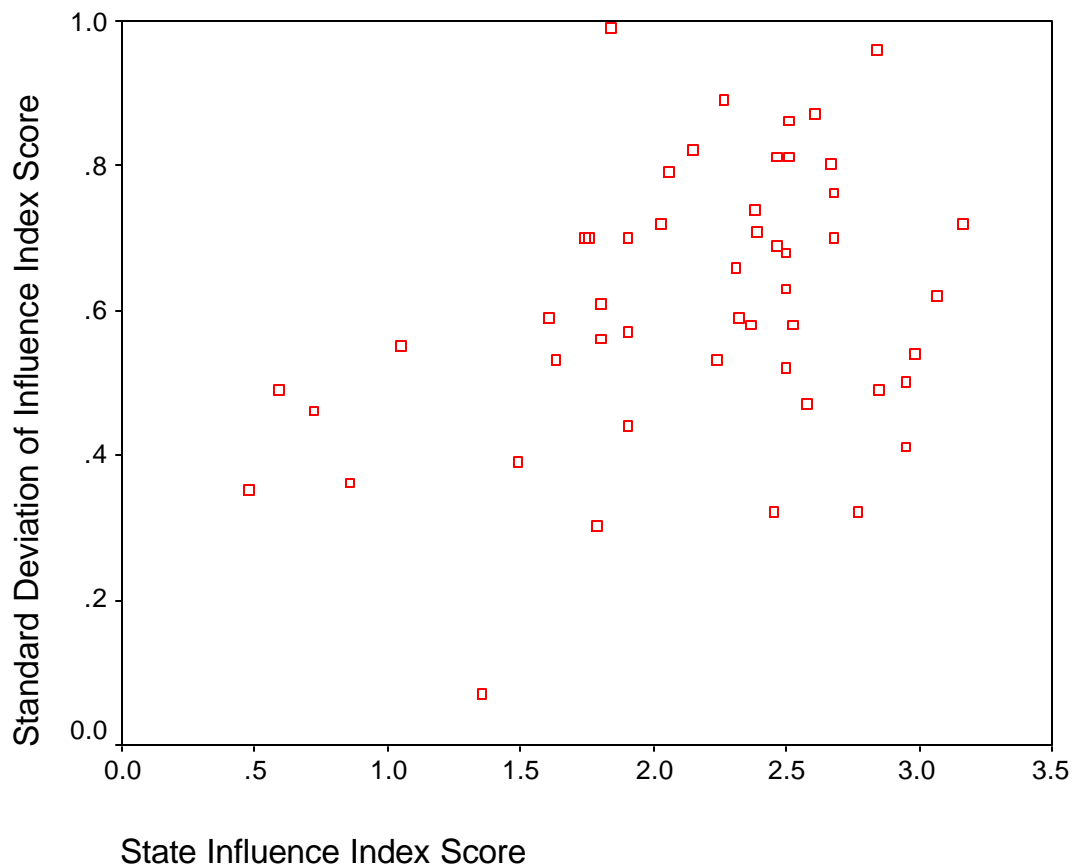


Figure 2: Scatterplot of Relationship Between the State Influence Index and Its Standard Deviation

Of the 25 states with the highest consistency ratings, eleven of them are in the highest or lowest ten states ranked by influence. It seems that the power of the Christian Right is fairly explicit in those states that exhibit high levels of influence. This appears to be the case in some of the highest rated states, i.e., Utah, Iowa, Colorado, South Carolina, and Nebraska. It is also the case that the lack of Christian Right influence is unambiguous in those states that received the lowest overall influence scores. Of the ten lowest rated states, nine had low standard deviations. Further, Hawaii, Delaware, New

Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island all exhibit index scores of below 1.5 and standard deviations below .5. We would expect this to be the case since low scores require agreement among respondents. If there were disagreement, the higher level responses would push the mean score to the middle of the analysis, and raise its standard deviation.

It seems that there is a wide and disparate middle in both the overall composite index of influence and in the consistency of respondents' answers that created that index. However, the face validity of most of these influence ratings is hard to ignore. Northeastern states fall primarily into the low category, while the high category is composed of states with widely noted Christian Right influence. Many of the states in the middle section of both the influence index and the consistency ratings may, in fact, be exhibiting conflicted influence. The Christian Right may be strong in one area of the state or one function of the state party, but less effective or non-existent in others. The concentration of the higher standard deviations, and thus differences in opinion within a state, in the middle section of influence scores seems to bear this out. Factions within the movement or the party may be fighting for control of the entire system or parts of it. Further, it may be that different groups have different perspectives on the influence the Christian Right exerts. Finally, the Christian Right in a state may genuinely exhibit a moderate level of influence in the state's Republican party. All of these situations would likely produce an influence index and consistency ratings like those here presented. But these possibilities are not testable directly from the index questions or their combination. This situation does not call into question the accuracy of the results, but does require a further study to explore the underlying reasons for these variations.

Another possible way to approximate the confidence with which we should approach the index scores calculated by this study is to examine the index scores and their standard deviation in light of the response rate and respondent type distribution in each state. I assert that those states with a higher absolute number of responses and ones with a more equal distribution of respondent types produce more valid and reliable index score calculations. Certainly the standard deviation is a part of the basis for this confidence, but in some cases it may represent genuine conflict of opinion within a state, as opposed to random variation in opinion based on differing levels of information.

Figure three is comprise of two lists of those states in which I place more and less confidence in their index scores. This assessment is based upon the total number of responses from a state, the distribution of respondent types in that state, and the standard deviation of the influence index score for that state.

<u>More Confident</u>	<u>Less Confident</u>
AL	AK
AR	AZ
CA	KY
CO	MT
CT	ND
DE	NH
FL	NM
GA	NV
HI	WY
IA	
ID	
IL	
IN	
KS	
LA	
MA	
MD	
ME	
MI	
MN	
MO	
MS	
NC	
NE	
NJ	
NY	
OH	
OK	
OR	
PA	
RI	
SC	
SD	
TN	
TX	
UT	
VA	
VT	
WA	
WI	
WV	

Figure 3: Confidence Levels for State Christian Right Influence Index

I place greater confidence in scores from those states with more than five total respondents, and with a relatively even distribution of respondent types, particularly

those with responses from at least one Christian Right leader, and a Democratic and Republican party leader. While a standard deviation of less than .6 increases my confidence, one above .6 is not sufficient to reduce my confidence. In combination with the total response rate and response type distribution, I tried to determine in which states such a higher standard deviation might be the result of conflicting perceptions, not simply lack of information. Figure three represents a qualitative judgment on my part, but one that I think has significant face validity. One possible problem is that all of the states in the lower confidence category are less populous with a smaller contingent of observers on which to draw. However, there are certainly smaller states in the higher confidence category (Nebraska, Idaho, Maine, South Dakota, Hawaii, Rhode Island) as well. Further, there is no significant correlation (.240) between the number of responses from a given state and the standard deviation of the state's influence index score.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to measure the influence of the Christian Right in state level Republican parties in a systematic way. Through theoretical, methodological, and empirical analyses of the created overall index scores and their component parts, I have assessed the confidence with which we may view this measure as an accurate reflection of the influence the Christian Right exerts in state Republican parties. Now that a durable and up to date index exists, further effort can be expended to understand the trends underlying this index. The next chapter will take up the question of why such significant variation exists in the influence exerted by the Christian Right in the states. It will seek to link this variation to a theoretical set of social and political conditions. Later, several

states will be examined in more depth, allowing more contextual understandings of such variation and ambiguity to be explored.

CHAPTER 4

BRINGING THE DIVERGENT INTO FOCUS: TESTING THE INFLUENCE VARIATION MODEL

Many explanations have been offered for the influence the Christian Right (CR) exerts in American politics. These have relied primarily on the national experiences of the movement but have utilized a variety of analytical frameworks. Previous studies have traced the phenomenon to a reaction against changing social patterns in the 1960s, the legalization of abortion, or a national ideological shift to the right in the late 1970s. While the current state of the Christian Right in the United States certainly has its roots in these events, the catalyst for the initial organization and current situation of the Christian Right are different in each state. This has, in turn, caused a wide variation in the amount of influence that the Christian Right exerts in state Republican parties. Taking into account both the common experiences suggested by studies of the national movement, and the differing political and social contexts represented by each state, I proposed a model of variation in Christian Right influence in state Republican parties in chapter two. Building on the influence index created in the last chapter, I will now turn to testing the model enumerated at the end of chapter two. Using a variety of state level variables I seek to understand why the variation apparent in the influence index exists.

The influence of the Christian Right may depend on the characteristics of the movement, the Republican party, and political context of the state itself. The Christian Right movement exhibits features in each state that distinguish it from the national movement and the movement in other states. Evangelical presence, i.e., the number of Evangelical Christians in a state, is a basic ingredient for Christian Right influence. But these numbers of people, whether great or small, must feel the need to be politically active in support of their policy goals. I expect the degree to which Evangelicals feel threatened by the culture around them, and by state politics and policy, to be important in the mobilization of these people into political action. Further, the accessibility of Christian Right groups and the quality of leadership of these groups is an important resource for Evangelicals threatened into action.

While the characteristics of the Christian Right movement are important, so too are the characteristics of the Republican party being influenced. Party strength, competitiveness, and organization are all components of the party that may affect the Christian Right's ability to gain access to the governing structures of the party and their ability to exert influence on the party and its policy. Finally, the characteristics of the state context in which these influence attempts take place are important. Because state law largely governs elections and party operations, the climate created by the state's constitution and election laws are important. Further, the opinions and attitudes of the citizens of the state will affect the ability of the Christian Right to advance their policy goals within the Republican party and the state as a whole. A favorable situation can be viewed as a resource to be utilized by the movement.

Focusing on these themes, this chapter will specifically operationalize the earlier defined model and propose appropriate independent variables for its testing. The results of the model will be compared with previous research and the groundwork laid for further case study research.

Influence and its ingredients

Given the nature of the data under scrutiny, i.e., state level data that are primarily additive indices or proportional measurements of survey samples, the most appropriate way to assess the relationship between the overall state influence index and the independent variables is through Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) multivariate regression.¹⁰ The dependent variable is the Christian Right influence score for each state calculated in chapter three (N=50). The independent variables are drawn from the analytical model enumerated in chapter two; they are more specifically operationalized below. In some cases, data is utilized that was gathered by the political observer study. For the other independent variables, the most rigorous and up-to-date data was sought to allow the most comprehensive picture of the Christian Right and state Republican parties in the 2000 election cycle. Following the proposed model, the independent variables (the “ingredients” for influence) are discussed in three categories: the characteristics of Party, State, and Movement.

¹⁰ Other analytical schemes were examined, but OLS multivariate regression proved most appropriate. Given the state-level nature of the data, WLS to correct for survey inconsistencies was not appropriate and other GLM approaches mirror the results provided by OLS. The small number of cases in this analyses made non-linear models inappropriate. However, a non-linear model was investigated with a transformed

Party Characteristics

One of the principal concepts proposed by the influence variation model for understanding the influence the Christian Right has in state level Republican parties is the characteristics of the party being influenced. Observing the characteristics of state Republican parties gives us insight into the environment in which the Christian Right seeks influence. A situation with strong party leadership and few avenues to influence may reduce the Christian Right's efficacy in a state. The strength of a party, its competitiveness within a state's party system, and the type of primary by which it chooses its candidates all have bearing on the party's ability to withstand Christian Right influence.

Party Strength is a measure of the party's potency as an organizational entity. How much effort and money can it bring to bear in the elections and issue debates of which it is a part? A weak party is more likely to be dominated by the Christian Right because the movement can both easily penetrate and control the party and provide stability and electoral support to the party organization. In strong parties, the influence is likely to be less and cause more conflict within the party itself. Party strength is operationalized using the Cotter et. al. data from their book on state party organizations (1984: 28-29). They rank 90 parties in 49 states by organizational strength for the years 1975-1980, using a 0-1 ranking scheme. These rankings are based upon the parties' number of staff, recruitment of and service to candidates, leadership professionalization,

dependent variable, i.e., ordered probit with Clarify, and produced nearly identical results as to the significant independent variables.

voter mobilization programs, polling, budget, newsletter publication, type of headquarters, and issue visibility.¹¹

Party competition is an important ingredient for Christian Right influence in the Republican party. As previous research has shown (Rozell and Wilcox, 1995), the primary difference made by Christian Right supporters in elections are in closely contested races. They tend to constitute approximately 15% of the voting public and are able to leverage that presence particularly in those cases when the margin of victory for Republican candidates is less than 15%. Thus, the Christian Right should be more influential in states with greater party competition, i.e., where there are consistently smaller margins of electoral victory. Party competition is operationalized using a folded Ranney (1976) scale of state party competition. Based upon the state level elective offices, the higher the competition proportion, the closer the party tallies are in an election. Thus, states where one party consistently wins exhibit lower competition scores, and states where control of offices switches between the parties receives a higher competition score. Scores for 1995-1998 were utilized for this project (Bibby and Holbrook, 1999) in order to most closely approximate the competition situation during the 2000 election cycle.

Finally, the type of primary by which the Republican party must select its candidates for state-wide and national office should affect the degree to which the

¹¹ More contemporary data that would measure party strength more closely to the period under study in this project was also diligently sought. One excellent candidate was data collected by John Aldrich through surveys of state party chairpersons in 1999 (the data was graciously provided by Professor Aldrich). This data was available for the Republican party in only 25 states. A correlation between that available data and the scores for the corresponding states in the Cotter, et. al. data was .631, significant at the .01 level. Further, it is somewhat interesting to note that the Cotter, et. al. measure corresponds to a time period prior to the rise of the CR states, gauging party strength before the presence of the Christian Right influenced the

Christian Right can influence the party. In closed primaries where only active Republicans vote, the Christian Right is likely to gain influence. This is because in closed primaries, the percentage of Christian Right supporters is likely to be higher. While Christian Right voters may only represent 15% of the voting population, they may comprise up to 45% of the Republican constituency in a particular state. Thus, when their numbers cannot be diluted as in open or blanket primaries by crossover Democrats, Christian Right voters are likely to have a proportionally higher impact on the types of candidates nominated. This, in turn, translates into party power with the election of officials beholden to them. Ultimately, they gain recognition as a significant voting block within the party that must be mollified in order to achieve partisan electoral victories. Primary type is measured using Jewell and Morehouse's (2001) categorization of state primaries into Closed, Closed with party shifting allowed, Open but declared party, Completely Open, and Open/Blanket types. These have been converted into dummy variables with the Closed variable type serving as the omitted variable.

State Characteristics

A further set of variables that is important in understanding the variation in influence the Christian Right exhibits in state level Republican parties is the general political context in which the relationship exists. State characteristics, such as the degree to which ballot access is regulated and public sentiment about the Christian Right or politics more generally, form the backdrop for attempts at influence within the Republican party. A state with wider ballot access and a population that is generally

organizations and their behavior. Thus, while not as current a measure as would be preferred, it has

conservative allows for an environment where the Christian Right can flourish. In a closed primary system or very liberal environment, the Christian Right is less likely to emerge at all, let alone gain supporters for its issue agenda.

Ballot access represents the openness of the state political system to change initiated from the grassroots. This is an important ingredient for Christian Right influence in the Republican party because the movement has historically been able to convert this type of access into party power. It is not a direct translation of power. The Republican party is almost universally more amenable to Christian Right issue positions than any other party. Success in ballot access situations allows the movement to demonstrate its strength and the breadth of its appeal, thus, leading to a position of leverage within the party. It is here operationalized as the ability of citizens to vote on referenda and propose ballot initiatives. Referenda are proposed by the state legislature and allow citizens to vote on a legislative proposal. Initiatives are placed on the ballot by individual citizens or groups who usually have to obtain a certain number of signatures. Interestingly, these types of ballot access mechanisms were enacted primarily as a response to overbearing or corrupt parties in the early part of the 20th century. Thus, their presence may, in fact, have had an impact on how the parties developed over time. While this measure may be indirectly related to party characteristics, I believe the use of referenda and initiative by the Christian Right historically argues for its importance in this explanatory model. The ballot access data were obtained from the website of the Initiative and Referendum Institute (www.iandrinstute.org/). According to the Institute, 23 states have neither referenda nor initiative capabilities, five states have one or the

significant correspondence to the present time and seems appropriate for the purposes of this analysis.

other, and 22 states have both. These data have been converted into dummy variables with the neither referenda nor initiative category serving as the omitted variable.

Public sentiment is an important state characteristic. It is operationalized in two ways. First, public sentiment about the Christian Right is operationalized as the favorable opinion the general public has toward the Christian Right as a group. This measure of public sentiment allows us to observe the level of support or opposition the Christian Right has in the general public. High levels of support or, at a minimum, widespread indifference should allow the Christian Right to seek to exert influence. Low levels of support or high levels of opposition should make it harder for the Christian Right to influence the state Republican party. The measure is taken from the 2000 National Survey of Religion and Politics conducted by the University of Akron Survey Research Center (Green, 2000; N = 6000). It is recorded as the proportion of the respondents in a state who had a favorable or neutral (as opposed to unfavorable) opinion of the Christian Right.

Second, the general conservatism of a state informs us of the basic political views of its citizens. A more conservative state gives the Christian Right, if not outright supporters, then at least “fellow travelers,” people who are sympathetic to the movement’s views if not entirely espousing them. While the Christian Right advocates mainly social conservatism (although many state movements are beginning to be active in economic matters as well), it will benefit from the broader conservative inclinations of the rest of the state. This variable is operationalized as the proportional advantage held by conservatives in a state based upon self-reporting of personal ideology in exit polls for

the 2000 election.¹² To calculate the conservative advantage (or disadvantage), the proportion of self-reported liberals in the state was subtracted from the proportion of self-reported conservatives. States with a positive conservative advantage report positive proportions and those where conservatives are at a disadvantage report negative proportions. By using conservative advantage, instead of simply conservative proportion, we are able to gauge how much power conservatives wield by their numeric advantage (or disadvantage) in a state. Measurements were taken from Voter News Service exit polls as reported by CNN.com (<http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2000/>).

Christian Right Movement Characteristics

The characteristics of the Christian Right movement are another set of important ingredients in the influence it is able to exert upon the state's Republican party. While the situations in state politics and within the Republican party itself set the stage and are the arena for Christian Right influence, the internal nature of the movement will most strongly determine its ability to exert influence by allowing it to use the resources of people who are its members and supporters.

Members of the Evangelical subculture are connected to each other in many ways, including Christian Schools, para-church and mission organizations, and Christian radio. The number of Evangelicals in a state is a good indication of the size and extent of these connections. These networks form the basis of communication and identity necessary for the Christian Right to succeed as a movement. Much of the information about policy issues and movement activities is spread by word of mouth and mutual acquaintance, not

¹² Other measures of conservatism were explored in the model, but they proved to be highly collinear with

necessarily through official organization communications. Also important is Christian media, particularly radio. Many communities with large Evangelical populations support multiple Christian radio and even television stations. Further, simply the number of Evangelicals allows for a larger base from which supporters and activists can be drawn. Evangelical population is measured using the National Survey of Religion and Politics (Green, 2000) and was specifically operationalized as the state's proportion of "observant" Evangelicals, those that attend church one or more times per week.

The social network of potential Christian Right participants must be mobilized in order for it to be effective. To do that, leadership and coordination in strategy and action is needed. It seems likely that the quality of that leadership will greatly affect the degree to which the Christian Right will be successful in their efforts to exert influence on the state level Republican party. The quality of Christian Right leadership is operationalized using a question from the political observer study discussed in chapter three. "How politically skillful would you say the leadership of the Christian Right is in your state?" Response possibilities ranged from "very skillful," to "not at all skillful." This question tapped how strong the Christian Right leadership is perceived to be by political observers in each state. Since effective leadership may rest on how the leader is perceived, this seems an appropriate measure, especially in light of the fact that no national measure consonant with this data exists. Responses were coded in a 1-4 scale, and state means were calculated using the methodology described in chapter three. Like other variables from the political observer survey, this measure of the quality of Christian Right leadership is appropriate to its theoretical usage and of reasonable statistical quality. The

conservative advantage, which most closely fits the theoretical conception enumerated in chapter two.

variable's standard deviation is .844, with 388 of the 395 participants responding to the question. Responses were recorded in every state, with only one state having only one response. The distribution of responses among type of participant is reasonably normal¹³ and no other evidences of bias or heteroskedasticity were found.

While it is clear that movement mobilization and activity takes place primarily outside of the bounds of organized Christian Right groups, their presence and vitality are frequently an indicator of the presence and strength of the CR within a state. Certainly, the observation of these groups can give us an idea of how effective Christian Right leadership has been in mobilizing people to the point of pro-actively joining a group, instead of simply reacting to distributed information. With the understanding that membership lists are usually inflated, and that the level of inflation may vary by state, a self-identification measure of Christian Right group membership from the National Religion and Politics Survey (Green, 2000) is used. While self-identification is subject to bias due to social desirability factors, it seems likely this measure represents a more accurate picture of membership than organizational lists might. This variable reports the proportion of the respondents from each state that identified themselves as either active or nominal members of a Christian Right organization.

A final important characteristic of the Christian Right movement is its level of motivation for political activity. Political action on the part of social movements is usually in reaction to a felt need. To what degree do members of the Christian Right feel

¹³ Responses from CR leadership were significantly different from the other six response types (mean of 3.11 for CR as opposed to 2.60 for all others, significant at the $p < .05$ level). However, dropping the CR responses from the overall analysis created more problems than it solved. It reduced the standard deviation of the state mean for only 13 states and raised it for 19. Further, for the regression model tested below,

a need that ought to be addressed? In other words, how threatened does the Christian Right feel in their context? A highly threatened group is more likely to seek to exert influence than a group that feels little threat from the society and institutions of which it is a part. Consciousness of threat on the part of the Christian Right was operationalized as a question from the political observer study. “The Christian Right in some states feels that their core values are being threatened by state policy, state politicians, and/or the social culture in their state. To what extent does this characterize the Christian Right in your state?” Response possibilities ranged from “very threatened,” to “not at all threatened.” This question allowed the political observers to assess how vulnerable members of the Christian Right movement feel in the political discourse of each state and their perceived level of “victimhood.” Responses were coded on a 1-4 scale and state means were calculated. Following the discussion of the quality of Christian Right leadership variable, this measure of Christian Right threat perception is appropriate to its theoretical usage and of reasonable statistical quality. The variable’s standard deviation is .857, with 382 of the 395 participants responding to the question.¹⁴ Responses were recorded in every state, with all states recording at least two responses. The distribution of responses among type of participant is normal and no other evidences of bias or heteroskedasticity were found.

These variables, party, state, and movement characteristics, are intended to produce a thorough picture of the ingredients that are important in predicting the amount

using the variable calculated without the CR respondents showed no significant difference in the overall results of the model. Thus, the variable was included using all the responses from all respondent types.

¹⁴ While it may seem appropriate to include only the responses of Christian Right leaders about the movement’s perception of threat, their answers were not significantly different from the group of all

of influence the Christian Right has in state level Republican parties.¹⁵ I expect each grouping to contribute to our understanding of the relationship. While, according to the theoretical model laid out in chapter two, all of the variables should be important, we may count the model successful if it points to the most important categories of variables. These findings will form the groundwork for the case studies that may identify variables that are important under certain conditions, but not others. Thus, using the influence index created in chapter three as the dependent variable, the regression equation used to test the model follows.

Testing the Influence Variation Model

Using the independent variables as operationalized above, I conducted OLS multivariate regression to determine which variables are significant in predicting variation in the dependent variable, the overall state index scores calculated in chapter three.

respondents. While CR leaders answers were overall somewhat higher (mean of 3.02 versus 2.80 for all others), this difference does not achieve statistical significance.

¹⁵ One interaction term also suggested itself, that between the quality of Christian Right leadership and the proportion of Evangelicals in the state. However, testing of such a variable confirmed that the two separate variables that it encompassed accounted for all the variation to be explained by them. Thus, the interaction term was omitted from the analytic model.

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Unstandardized Coefficients</u>	<u>Std. Error</u>
Party Characteristics		
Republican Party Strength	5.818 E-03	(.38)
Party Competition	.783	(.68)
Primary Types (v. Closed)		
Closed Primary w/ party shifting allowed	-6.657 E-02	(.15)
Open w/ declared party	-.232	(.17)
Completely Open	2.014 E-02	(.16)
Open/Blanket Primary	-.391*	(.21)
State Characteristics		
Referenda and Initiative	.240**	(.11)
Public Opinion Favorable toward CR	-1.405 E-02	(.70)
Conservative Advantage	2.347*****	(.64)
Christian Right Characteristics		
Evangelical Presence	2.322**	(1.01)
Skill of CR Leadership	.680*****	(.13)
CR Organizational Membership	-1.904	(1.37)
CR Perception of Threat	.214*	(.11)
Constant	-1.235*	(.73)
R2 (Adjusted)	.801	
N	50	

*p< .10, **p< .05, ***p< .01, *****p<.001; two-tailed

Dependent Variable – Index of Christian Right Influence in State Republican Parties

Table 8: Influence Variation Model – What Accounts for Varying Christian Right Influence in State Republican Parties?

The results of the analysis are presented in table eight. It is evident that the quality of Christian Right leadership and Conservative Advantage are the predicting variables with significance at the highest level, but the other significant variables portray a situation where all categories of variables are important in some way. Further, the

results suggest that it is primarily the nature of the Christian Right movement in the state, working through the political context of state law and custom, that determines the amount of influence the movement will have in the state's Republican party.

Surprisingly, neither of the variables that directly concern the state Republican parties are significant in this analysis. While it seems that the type of primary, or at least the difference between a totally closed and totally open primary, has some impact on the relationship, primary types are sometimes mandated by state law and not necessarily an internal Republican party characteristic. Thus, it appears that the characteristics of the party in some states may have little bearing on the influence the Christian Right is able to exert upon it. This suggests that the Christian Right is able to exert similar amounts of influence in states with widely divergent party organizational structures and strength and in states with both high and low levels of party competition.

The primary type variable shows an impact on the influence index that approaches traditional levels of significance ($p < .10$). The coefficient for the Open/Blanket primary is negative because it is showing its difference from the omitted category of "Closed Primary." Thus, this result shows us that states with Open/Blanket primaries are less likely to exhibit high levels of Christian Right influence than those states with closed primaries. Primary type, in fact, is one of the few variables we should expect to return a negative coefficient. While a somewhat weak finding, it supports earlier assertions that the Christian Right's electoral influence is diluted in situations where Democrats and Independents can vote in Republican primaries.

The characteristics of the state appear to have a larger impact on the amount of influence the Christian Right exerts on state Republican parties. The operationalization

of state laws and public sentiment both seem to express important ingredients for Christian Right influence. Two of the three variables are significant, with Conservative Advantage at the $p < .001$ level. The ability for citizens to be directly involved in government through referenda and initiative powers significantly affects CR influence in state Republican parties. While it returns a relatively small coefficient, this variable is strongly significant, suggesting that where citizens have these rights, the CR is able to utilize them effectively in furthering their policy and political goals in the Republican party.

Analysis of state public sentiment reveals several interesting findings. The proportion of citizens in the state with favorable opinions toward the Christian Right is not significant. However, the conservative advantage within the state (how many more self-reported conservatives than liberals) has an observably significant impact on Christian Right influence, suggesting the importance of an amenable opinion environment to the success of the movement in the party. Interestingly, both variables are significantly correlated with the influence index, though Conservative Advantage has a higher and slightly more significant relationship. They are also significantly correlated with each other ($.581, p < .01$). It seems likely, then, that both may be operating within the attempt at CR influence, but that Conservative Advantage subsumes the influence of the Public Opinion Concerning the Christian Right variable.

The level of general conservatism in a state has a significant effect upon the Christian Right's ability to exert influence in the state Republican party over and above the general public's opinion of the Christian Right. It is clear that the advantage that conservatives have over liberals in the proportion of the state population is relevant to the

success the Christian Right enjoys. A state where the general population is more amenable to their policy positions certainly gives the Christian Right more lee-way in the level of conservatism they exhibit. So, similar to the movement characteristics we will explore below, the situation is more greatly affected by the sheer number of conservatives than by their more particularized views. This finding is still, of course, based upon the opinions of these larger numbers of conservatives, but it is their general conservatism, not their particular views on the Christian Right that is important.

So, the Christian Right seems to need the support of the larger population in a general sense in order to exert influence on the state Republican party. The conservative ideology of regular citizens is broadly consonant with Christian Right goals, so the movement receives less overall opposition, even in situations where they receive little direct support. This finding points to a larger sense in which the Christian Right seems to need to be grounded in their state's ideological context. While there are certainly exceptions, the Christian Right seems to be strong in states that are generally conservative. Where they are not, structural and political context factors seem to be more important. These findings appear to fit into the larger theme of this dissertation, the grassroots power of the Christian Right mediated through the political and party structures extant within a state.

The proportion of observant Evangelicals in a state is a significant predictor of Christian Right influence in the state Republican party ($p < .05$). It appears that the Christian Right needs to have a constituency on which to draw for the movement to exert influence. It seems that the size of this constituency is likely a root cause of the influence the Christian Right can exert. At a very basic level, the Christian Right needs

to have a strong physical presence in the state for it to be effective in promoting its policy goals within the Republican party. It is a vital resource on which the movement draws to achieve its goals. This finding further suggests that the social networks extant within Evangelical communities may be important to the ability of the Christian Right to disseminate its issue positions and strategy.

Clearly, one of the most important predictors for this model of Christian Right influence in state Republican parties is the quality of CR leadership. The leadership variable produces a coefficient with significance at the .001 level. Leadership quality seems to be a substantial factor behind successful exertion of influence. It appears that the presence of a large number of evangelicals and Christian Right issue supporters is not enough. The movement needs strong leadership to guide these participants and to focus their activity on effective strategies and winnable issues. Returning to the social movement literature, it is clear that the Christian Right is exhibiting both the policephalous and reticular tendencies of social movements. In this way, several quality leaders of a large, amorphous group are able to produce influence where coordinated efforts of numerically stronger, if more concretely organized groups might not. Further, the number of self-identified members of Christian Right organizations proved to be insignificant.

Finally, the level of threat from the politics and society of their state that the Christian Right movement perceives seems to have some impact in explaining the variation in influence achieved; it approaches $p < .05$ (.058). It is interesting to note, as well, that the level of threat perceived by the Christian Right is significantly negatively correlated with Conservative Advantage ($-.346, p < .014$). This suggests that the

Christian Right feels a greater threat in those states where conservatives comprise a smaller proportion of the population. Further exploration, reported in the case study section of this dissertation, suggests that nearly all supporters of the Christian Right agenda feel threatened by the society around them. This threat may be so necessary to their mobilization that it has become inherent in any influence.

Overall, the model explains a large portion of the variation in the dependent variable (Adjusted $R^2 = .801$)¹⁶. This suggests that, while not perfect, the model is a reasonably good representation of the factors at work in producing Christian Right influence in state level Republican parties. Some variables from all three categories – party, state, and movement characteristics – proved to be at least somewhat important. Overall, however, the results of the model testing suggest two primary findings: the shape and evolution of the movement itself is important; and the political context, laws, customs, and opinions in which the movement operates form the framework through which their influence is mediated in the state Republican party.¹⁷

Clearly the variable of the Christian Right movement characteristics that exhibits the most consequence is the quality of Christian Right leadership. Without strong and visible leaders, the movement would not have an impact on the Republican party in a state. This fact, combined with the other highly significant variables in this analysis (proportion of Evangelicals in the population and conservative advantage), suggest that

¹⁶ All pertinent regression diagnostics were performed. No significant heteroskedasticity, collinearity, or autocorrelation were found.

¹⁷ In order to sure that the primary effect found by the model were not artifacts of the survey collection process, an alternative model was analyzed dropping the two independent variables measured by the political observer study. The results are remarkably similar to the full model. Conservative Advantage remains significant at the .002 level as does the proportion of Evangelicals at the .01 level. Primary type drops below significance, but it had the smallest effect in the first model. The constant also ceased to be

the Christian Right primarily exerts influence in its grassroots incarnation. Further, the importance of both the type of primary used in a state and the ability for citizens to use referenda and ballot initiatives to make their voices directly heard suggest that grassroots strength is not enough. It seems that there must be openings in the political system, party and state characteristics, avenues for the Christian Right to channel their activism, in order for the movement to influence the state Republican party. Finally, the level of threat perceived by the Christian Right in a state has an impact on how much influence they are able to exert in the state's Republican party, likely through the mechanism of motivation. These findings makes sense intuitively. A grassroots group must show itself strong and valuable, necessary even, for a party's success in order to have their issue positions and policy goals taken seriously. The Christian Right movement, using its numbers in the Republican voter base and the strength of its leadership, has not only exerted its numerical influence, but has taken advantage of the "value added" of ballot referenda to prove their worth as a vehicle of electoral success for state Republican parties.

These results echo other findings about the Christian Right (Green, Guth, and Wilcox, 1998), but no other study has so clearly shown the importance of the interaction between grassroots strength and political context. This being the case, it is important that these state and movement characteristics are examined in detail. This is the approach taken by the case studies presented later in this dissertation.

A further question is whether these results are affected by possible measurement problems in the dependent variable. Following the discussion of confidence for the index

significant. Therefore, we can be fairly confident that the effects of the independent variables upon the

variable from chapter three, the model was re-tested using only the 41 states that met criteria for higher confidence.

<u>Independent Variable</u>	<u>Unstandardized Coefficients</u>	<u>Std. Error</u>
Party Characteristics		
Republican Party Strength	.138	(.49)
Party Competition	.352	(.83)
Primary Types (v. Closed)		
Closed Primary w/ party shifting allowed	-.150	(.21)
Open w/ declared party	-.270	(.22)
Completely Open	5.575 E-03	(.22)
Open/Blanket Primary	-.446*	(.25)
State Characteristics		
Referenda and Initiative	.266*	(.13)
Public Opinion Favorable toward CR	-.378	(.98)
Conservative Advantage	2.398**	(.88)
Christian Right Characteristics		
Evangelical Presence	2.602*	(1.35)
Skill of CR Leadership	.656***	(.17)
CR Organizational Membership	-.978	(1.91)
CR Perception of Threat	.261*	(.15)
Constant	-.929	(1.12)
R ² (Adjusted)	.798	
N	41	

*p< .10, **p< .05, ***p< .01; two-tailed

Dependent Variable – Index of Christian Right Influence in State Republican Parties, using 41 states with higher confidence characteristics

Table 9: Influence Variation Model with Reduced N – Model Testing with States that meet “Higher Confidence” Criteria

Influence Index are not primary due to endogeneity within the political observer study results.

Table nine shows that the coefficients returned by this “higher confidence” analysis are not very different from those calculated in the model with the all the states included, confirming the results of the full model. All of the coefficients are similar to those in the full model and all but the constant retained their significance. Leadership skills within the Christian Right and the advantage enjoyed by conservatives within a state remain important and significant with relatively unchanged coefficients. All other significant variables from the full model retain their importance, but with significance between $p < .05$ and $p < .10$.

Overall, the models remain remarkably similar, suggesting that the explanatory variables are robust, even in a situation with a reduced sample. Thus, it is with reasonable confidence that I accept the findings of this model as an explanation for the variation in influence exhibited by the Christian Right in state level Republican parties.

Grassroots Activity and Political Context – Testing the Hypotheses

Now that the regression model has been analyzed and the significant model variables explored, we turn to a discussion of how these results compare to the hypotheses enumerated in chapter two. This examination will allow us to more fully understand how the model compares to the original expectations of the theoretical model. Discussing each hypothesis in turn, I then assess the model results overall in relation to the theoretical implications of the model.

Hypothesis #1 – *If the state Republican party is organizationally strong, the Christian Right will not have significant influence in the party.* This hypothesis is not confirmed by the model analysis. While there is a positive relationship between the party

strength variable and the influence index, this relationship does not achieve significance in the model. This finding is counter-intuitive because it implies that the structure and organization of state Republican parties have nothing to do with the level of influence that the Christian Right has in the party. A strong party should be able to resist the insurgency of the Christian Right because the organization will have more resources at its disposal. It will have a full cadre of leadership at all its levels, have the ability to raise significant money, and have executable plans for operations and policy that allow few openings for insurgent activities. These characteristics provide it with the support of rank and file activists and coherent structure needed to constrain CR activity within the organization. It is interesting that the type of primary variable approaches significance in the model. While not a reflection on the strength of the party organization, in some states the party can control the type of primary it uses to nominate candidates. Thus, they may not be entirely powerless. However, I believe that the idea that party organizational strength is unimportant to this model is the hardest to reconcile with our theoretical understandings of political parties and their interactions with interest groups. This finding, therefore, may be the result of a dearth of appropriate data. Party strength is notoriously hard to define and measure. However, even the most recent measure of party strength (Aldrich, n.d.) shows no significant correlation with the influence index calculated in chapter three.

Hypothesis #2 – *Closed primaries will yield more influence for the Christian Right than will open primaries.* This hypothesis is confirmed by the results of the model analysis. The coefficient for the dummy variable “Open/Blanket primary” was negative and exhibited difference approaching significance from the “Closed primary” omitted

variable, pointing to the idea that the CR has relatively little influence in open primary states as opposed to their closed primary counterparts. We see that the Christian Right is more able to influence the Republican party in states where primaries are closed because Democrats and Independents are not able to dilute the Christian Right's vote in the Republican primary.

Hypothesis #3 – *An open political system provides more avenues for Christian Right influence than a closed system.* This hypothesis is confirmed by the results of the model analysis. The ability of citizens to impact state government through the use of referenda and ballot initiatives seems to have a great deal of impact on the influence the Christian Right is able to exert on state level Republican parties. The Christian Right uses such avenues to achieve their policy goals (e.g., Oregon and Colorado's anti-gay-rights ballot initiatives), and these efforts translate into power within the party through the mechanism of the demonstration of issue appeal and numerical strength discussed above. By gaining visibility and support for particular ballot issues, the movement is able to show the Republican party not only that its supporters are active, but that the issues about which they are active are important to a wider part of the population. Given the CR's natural ideological home in the Republican party, this show of force through ballot issues reinforces the importance of the movement to achieving Republican aims.¹⁸

Hypothesis #4 – *The more amenable the state's public sentiment toward the Christian Right and its issues, the more influence it will have.* This hypothesis is

¹⁸ Some may suggest that the presence of ballot initiative and referenda mark those states with historically weak parties. This would suggest that the mechanism of CR influence is the weak party, not the initiative or referenda themselves. However, it is unclear whether historical and contemporary strength are related, at least for the time period of such progressive reforms and the present. There is no significant correlation between the measure of party strength used for this project and the presence of ballot or initiative in a state.

somewhat confirmed by the results of the model analysis. While the opinion of the average citizen concerning the Christian Right seems to be of little value over and above the general level of conservatism in their influence attempts, clearly the proportional advantage (or disadvantage) held by conservatives in the state has an impact. The results of the model suggest that the success of the Christian Right in exerting influence on a state's Republican party is tied to the degree to which the general population at least nominally agrees with the movement's issue positions and policy goals. Therefore it seems that the general ideological predispositions of the average citizen, as opposed to their specific opinion of the CR movement, has the most effect. This advantage provides the Christian Right with leverage as they seek to promote their conservative message both within the party and in the larger state political arena.

Hypothesis #5 – *The more resources the Christian Right has at its disposal, the more successful the movement will be in exerting influence.* This hypothesis is strongly confirmed by the results of the model analysis. While the actual membership of CR groups was not a significant variable in the model, two other variables that represent resources on which the CR can draw, proportion of Evangelicals and Christian Right leadership, were significant. It is interesting to note that the relevant resources are not necessarily group-oriented. Proportion of Evangelicals in the population is certainly a more grassroots oriented variable. The importance of leadership may be evidence of this phenomenon as well, as further case study research suggests that many visible Christian Right leaders are either independent of organizations or have impact in the Evangelical community far beyond their group's membership lists due to the close-knit nature of

Evangelical social networks. This grass-roots focus of the CR movement seems to translate into power within the state Republican party through voter turnout and also through CR supporters who become part of the party structure without conspicuous use of Christian Right symbols or affiliations.

Hypothesis #6 – *The more threatened the Christian Right feels by issues or policy in a state, the more incentive the movement has to seek influence in the state's Republican party.* This hypothesis is confirmed by the results of the model analysis. A higher perception of threat seems to translate into a higher level of Christian Right influence in a state's Republican party. Additionally, threat seems to be related to the presence or absence of a larger conservative community within the state. Analysis of the individual threat perception variable further suggests that Christian Right supporters do feel threatened by the society and politics of their state (mean score: 2.79 on a 1-4 scale). This finding is clearly demonstrated in the case study portion of this dissertation.

Five of the six hypotheses proposed from the theoretical discussions of state political parties and interest groups were confirmed by the model analysis. Two variables that describe the structure of the political party and political system were important. Also important, however, were the variables and hypotheses concerning the resources the Christian Right has to draw upon in their attempts to exert influence. Again, the importance of these variables and the confirmation of these hypotheses suggest that the mechanism for influence in the party is the grass-roots and leadership resources the movement brings to bear on the party. This mobilization interacts with the political and party structures in place to produce the form and level of influence we see in each

individual state. Both of these phenomena occur within the larger context of favorable public sentiment within a state. Further evidence suggests that both a strong grassroots mobilization and political access are necessary for high levels of Christian Right influence to occur in a state's Republican party. Without a large grassroots component, Christian Right leaders have few resources to mobilize into action. Without access points, the mobilized grassroots have few ways to demonstrate their power, though electoral and intraparty avenues may be available as well.

Comparing Results to Previous Studies

How do these results compare with the only other exploration of this topic?

Green, Guth, and Wilcox (1998) use older data differently operationalized, but they also seek to use insights from social movement theory as a framework for exploring the influence of the Christian Right in state Republican parties. Concentrating specifically on the significant variables in their analysis, they find an overlapping, but not entirely similar set of independent variables important in explaining the variation in Christian Right influence among the state Republican parties. The authors find that the number of activists and mean level of public conservatism are the most important factors in predicting Christian Right influence. These correspond to several variables in the state and movement categories here utilized. Further, they find other, more structurally oriented variables in the state and party categories to have slightly less impact on the exertion of CR influence.

While there is clearly some overlap between their findings and those of the current study (the importance of conservatism, leadership/activists), there are two rather

striking differences. First, in the present study, several of the explanatory variables come from the area of Christian Right resources. Green, Guth and Wilcox conclude a similar category is important in their study, though the nature of measurement differs greatly between the two. The resources found to be important in their work are primarily elite-based resources (this is also true in the “political opportunity” category of their study). They find the number of activists to be very important while I find that Evangelical population and leadership most important. Interesting, I also find that conservatism is important (though measured differently). Second, the present study finds a greater amount of evidence for the importance of state laws and party structures in the Christian Right’s attempt to influence the Republican party. Overall, the important difference is one of focus, not necessarily specific results. Their work points to the importance of activism and elite behavior, while mine points to the importance of grass-roots political mobilization mediated through the state’s structural and political context.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to operationalize and test the model of influence variation proposed in chapter two. Several interesting results were obtained, primarily the importance of utilizable resources to the Christian Right movement and state political structure. There are a number of things, however, that a statistical analysis of these data cannot tell us about the mechanisms of influence. To understand how this seeming grass-roots power is translated into influence in the party and how some party machinery, such as closed primaries, are used by the Christian Right to the benefit of the movement, more

in-depth and contextual analysis is needed. Further study of each individual state Republican party and how they choose their leadership would shed light onto avenues of access for Christian Right supporters. A more complete understanding of the opposition faced by the CR movement from within a particular party would give a more complete picture of the importance of party organization and personalities in attempts at influence. This chapter has shown us the ingredients for influence. Further study should show us the path these ingredients, and the people who utilize them, take to gain influence in the state Republican parties. The most effective way to approach this is to look at several states more closely, to create case studies of the relationship among the Republican party, CR groups, and CR activists to more fully understand the ways in which influence is sought and exerted in state level Republican parties. The next two chapters attempt this task for three states.

CHAPTER 5

PRAGMATIC, ACTIVIST, AND INTERCONNECTED: THREE CASE STUDIES

The Christian Right has been successful in exerting influence in the Republican party in a wide variety of states. The movement is visible in nearly every state and the results presented in earlier chapters show how its reach has enlarged over the past decade. Chapter four tested a model of influence variation, showing that the characteristics of the Christian Right movement itself and the political context within which it operates are the most important factors in understanding the variation evident in the amount of influence the CR has in state Republican parties. Building on those results, however, we must look deeper into the politics of the individual states. The political observer study data analyzed earlier shows what predicts CR influence, but it does not show *how* the influence is achieved. We know the ingredients for CR influence, but not how they are combined to produce the situation we observe. The purpose of this chapter is to explore more deeply the unique state level procedures that affect the CR's ability to exert influence by closely examining three states. Observing the processes and personalities unique to each state, I utilize case study methodology to determine how attempts at influence are made and why they succeed or fail.

The case studies serve to expand the results of the political observer study and give flesh and context to the significant variables. Each is a story within a story. The

overall account is the grassroots mobilization of Christian Right supporters to political action mediated through political structures, state law, and public sentiment, i.e., the social and political context of the state. The case studies in this chapter give a picture of how this framework operates in three states. Given the very contextual nature of the variation influence model, however, there are more facets to each state's story than are predicted with the larger model. Thus, the idiosyncrasies and nuances of public life in each state are drawn out, many times as illustrations of the larger story, other times as interesting factors in the state's individual political climate that affects the relationship between the Christian Right and Republican party. Overall, however, the broader themes of movement characteristics and political context are clearly evidenced in each of the cases.

More so, perhaps, than in even the earlier historical narrative, the Christian Right is revealed in these case studies to be a classic social movement. With multiple incarnations, leaders, and overlapping sets of loyalty and identity, the specific outlines of the movement are sometimes hard to define. There are identifiable segments of the movement in each state, consistently based upon widespread social networks in the Evangelical subculture. The social networks consist of relationships built on overlapping membership in churches, Christian schools, parachurch groups, and mission organizations, to name a few. The contacts and acquaintances made in these groups make the dissemination of political information much easier and increase the rewards for political action based on the information through social desirability.

Following the definition of a political party in chapter two, the parties in the case studies are largely a confederation of people and groups seeking to elect their partisans to

office through a variety of levels of organization. While the state party organization itself is the main focus of much of this dissertation (the state committee and executive staff), the constituent parts of the state party organization (the county and district committees) and related party groups (conventions, legislative caucuses, and congressional campaign committees) are a vital part of each state's individual political context. Thus, distinctions among the party segments are made where possible.

Case Study Methodology

The states in which I conducted case studies were chosen based upon the level of influence exhibited by the Christian Right in the state's Republican party as shown by the political observer study and the state's outward characteristics. By this I mean general understandings of the state and its politics, i.e., whether the state is liberal or conservative; progressive or machine-run, etc. For the cases, I chose two states with counterintuitive results and one with intuitive results. In the first state, the Christian Right has little power in the state's Republican party, yet it is a very conservative state with a large number of Evangelicals. This represents a counterintuitive case because we would expect, given these characteristics, that this state should exhibit a high level of Christian Right influence in its Republican party. The second state is exactly the opposite. It shows a high level of Christian Right influence in the state's Republican party, but, again counter intuitively, it is a very liberal and progressive state. The state has a tradition of morality in politics, but contains fewer of the Evangelicals that seem a necessary ingredient for Christian Right power. Finally, the third state is one where the Christian Right has a high level of influence in the state's Republican party and this

influence seems to fit in with the broader identity of the state. It is a generally conservative state with a strong presence of Evangelicals and particularly Fundamentalists. Its conservatism spreads to all areas of politics from government involvement in public works to more general social and economic issues.

Following this case study choice framework, I am able to observe a range of combinations of state, party, and movement characteristics. This diversity provides me with a variety of contexts in which to observe the relationship between the Christian Right and Republican party, thereby gaining a better understanding of how influence is attempted and achieved. While certainly following the trajectory of the quantitative analysis and fitting into the larger goals of testing hypotheses about the relationship between party and movement, the case studies are able to stand on their own as explanations of influence in each state. The individual results, and the larger account drawn from them in chapter six, show significant support for the overarching results of the influence variation model while providing insights into the “how” of influence, information not available from the analysis in the previous chapters.

For this reason, the case studies are not as straightforward in their presentation of data or drawing of conclusions. They seek to tell the story of Christian Right influence during a period of time, drawing on history, laws, and personality to place that influence in proper context. Taking example from earlier case studies of Christian Right influence in the states (Green, Rozell, and Wilcox, 2000; Rozell and Wilcox, 1995, 1997), from Fenno’s (1978) study of the “Home Style” of members of Congress, and other studies utilizing case methodology (Hertzke, 1993; Wilcox, 1996), the case studies in this

dissertation draw from a wide variety of sources to present the comprehensive story of Christian Right influence in the Republican parties of three states.

The states chosen for these case studies will remain anonymous throughout this project. The issue of anonymity was a difficult one for this portion of my dissertation. In seeking to protect the identity of those I interviewed (14 people in the Pragmatic State, 17 in the Activist State, and 21 in Interconnected State; see Appendix D) I found that many were willing to talk to me under any circumstances. However, there were a few people whose opinions I deemed very important who were persuaded to talk with me only after I described the extent to which I protect their identities. Many of these were leaders or members of groups who seemed defensive about the role of the Christian Right in the state or about my research on the topic.

This type of total anonymity presents some unique challenges in the presentation of my research. Some of the features of the individual political systems and situations proved to be too identifiable to be used in the presentation of the data, though much of this detail would certainly illustrate my arguments more clearly. Thus, sometimes vaguer representations of events are used, somewhat diminishing the power of the observations I make. However, the requirements of total state anonymity do not detract from the generalizability of the themes and situations I report. In producing case studies with fewer identifiable state characteristics, in many ways, I am better able to show how individual and unique situations illustrate the larger conclusions of this study.

The case studies I construct are comprised of interviews with political leaders and observers in each state and publicly available data concerning the politics, personalities and characteristics of the state, its politics and parties, the Christian Right, and

Evangelical community. The interviews I conducted in each state form the core of the case study information. While the non-interview data allowed me to assess the veracity of some of the interview data, much of the information gathered from these leaders is available in no other form. The perceptions, thoughts, and analyses of the interview participants provide a look into the mechanics of state politics and the motivations and strategies of both the Christian Right and the Republican party it is trying to influence. Because of their positions, the perception of political situations by these people, in many cases, determines the further path taken by political organizations and actors in the state.

The interviews usually lasted between 30 and 45 minutes.¹⁹ Participants were asked an overarching set of seven questions (see Appendix F). Throughout their answers to these questions, I probed for specific pieces of information if not offered by the participant. I further tailored each interview to fit the individual. While I asked every participant the seven questions, I did not use all probes in all cases. For example, several of the Democratic leaders with whom I spoke did not have knowledge of the inner-workings of the Christian Right movement in their state, but had a wide-ranging understanding of the Republican party, its structure and internal conflicts. Thus, I asked these participants more detailed questions about the Republican party than I did about the Christian Right. Appendix F contains the full interview protocol with probes. In many cases participants volunteered valuable information not covered in the protocol. Finally, I asked questions in each state that were specific to the state's political context. These were primarily based on the partisan distribution of the state's government, the laws that govern political parties and elections in the state, and state political issues of current

¹⁹ For the template invitation to participate in the project, please see Appendix E.

controversy.²⁰ The case studies that follow are based upon these interviews and information gathered from other sources. A more comprehensive enumeration of the interview and case study methods is provided in Appendix G.

It is important to underscore the fact that these case studies are not the description of a particular election in the state's history. While they do intend to depict a particular time period that falls around an election cycle, the case studies are focused on the inner workings of the party and the movement. Certainly, the activity within an election cycle and the outcomes of the 2000 election are a significant part of the story of Christian Right influence during the time period. However, a case study of the election itself would be a different research focus than what I seek here. Some of the information on which I draw comes from later in 2001 because the relationships among activists changed as a result of the election, but with some time lag. So the case studies themselves seek to explain CR influence around the 2000 election, with reference to the fortunes of the movement in that election.

Finally, much of the information in these case studies has been obtained from party activists and many of the conclusions drawn from this exercise relates to the behavior of party activists and its outcomes. Thus, it is useful here to keep in mind the categories employed by James Q. Wilson (1966, 1973) in his discussions of activists within parties and their relationships to one another. "Amateurs," are usually newcomers to the party organization. They have come from a variety of backgrounds and are in the party in order to see some change enacted in society. Frequently their issue opinions are much more important than partisan goals and they can become frustrated with the

²⁰ Institutional Research Board approval was sought and granted for this portion of the dissertation project.

compromise necessary in policy making. “Professionals,” on the other hand, have usually been a part of the party organization for a longer period of time. They desire to be pragmatic and to promote the victory of the party, regardless of the compromises necessary to achieve that end. While not necessarily free of policy issue goals, these goals are subsumed into the larger objective of electoral victory. These two groups are frequently in conflict within a party structure. Many of the professionals are in positions of power within the party organization and many amateurs seek to gain those positions in order to achieve their policy goals. In some states, the amateurs have succeeded in staffing entire party organizations: in others they have been rebuffed at every turn. In many cases, however, the relationship between these two groups is constantly in flux, with each groups gaining victories and losses within the organization.

The Christian Right’s relationship with the Republican party exemplifies this conflict between amateurs and professionals in many states. Christian Right supporters are almost by definition amateurs, issue focused and new to the party organization. The resolution of the conflict, or at least terms of a truce, is unique in each state and is based upon a variety of contextual and personality factors. The results of these individual state characteristics and how they affect this conflict may be seen clearly in the case studies that follow.

Case #1 – Influence and conflict in a highly Evangelical setting: The Pragmatic State

In the words of one observer, the Pragmatic State is “a conservative state as opposed to a political state.” It is conservatism both fiscal and social in nature with conservatives enjoying a 20 percentage point advantage over all liberals. In fact, the state has a significant proportion of self-identified members of the “White Religious Right,” and in the 2000 election, gave President Bush a large majority of the vote. These conservative characteristics appear to be the primary factors in understanding the influence of the Christian Right in this state and its Republican party. Such generalized conservatism seems to have dampened the importance of Christian Right issues and caused many within its possible constituency to feel little threat from state policies or culture. The movement has relatively little influence in the state’s Republican party (influence index score below 2), but has caused a moderate amount of conflict in the organization. Interestingly, the Christian Right does seem to have influence with many Republican legislators in the state house, but this has only marginally transferred to power within the state party organization itself. The movement has channeled its grassroots activities toward electoral races and the influence of legislators primarily because of the inaccessibility of the Republican party organization at all levels brought about by the laws and customs that govern the party and its operations.

The Pragmatic State has a relatively large population, with slightly over six million inhabitants. Over 80% of the population is white, making it fairly homogenous racially as well. With rich farm land and a varied topographical character, the primary industries in the Pragmatic State are services and manufacturing, providing a median

income just slightly below the national average. The state lags behind in educational attainment with low levels of achievement in elementary and secondary education; the proportion of the population with a bachelor's degree is below 20%, considerably less than the national average of 24.4%. The state has a well-publicized "brain-drain" with few of the people educated by the state's elite university of science and technology remaining in the state to pursue their careers.

While fundamentally conservative, the Pragmatic State has a long tradition of close partisan competition with politics focused primarily on the individual politician, her social ties to the community she represents, and the personal power accrued by her involvement in politics. This has, in the past, created an interesting phenomenon of nearly constant Republican dominance in Presidential campaigns and family dynasties of both parties in state and local politics. Because of this focus on personal relationships, politics tend to be less polarized here. The general conservatism of the state makes many policy questions those of degree and means, with minor ideological bickering over end results. Tax issues and a rural/urban divide dominate most political questions while education quality is a perennial issue. Race and lack of access to technology (primarily internet and telecommunications) are regionally important.

The Pragmatic State scores very high on religiosity measures of all types including daily prayer and church attendance. The Evangelical community in the state is large and active with 18 churches listed in a national mega-church database. Over 40% of citizens identify themselves as Evangelical Christians, while only 25% identify themselves as main-line Protestant and 13% as Catholic. The Pragmatic State has one of the largest proportions of Evangelicals in the United States. It has at least 48 Christian

radio stations and several local Christian television stations that serve all the cities in the state. These media outlets provide information to Evangelicals of many denominations and help to build community and efficacy through the shared experience of listening to national speakers like Dr. James Dobson and D. James Kennedy. Many Christian radio programs contain some political content. Correspondingly, citizens of the state are overwhelmingly positive toward the Christian Right and its presence in state politics. However, only a small proportion of the population claim to be members of Christian Right organizations, somewhat below the national average of 17.4% (Green, 2000), but higher than the other two states selected for case studies. Thus, while there is an unusually large base of potential constituents from which the Christian Right and its leaders can draw, the movement has not experienced the kind of success in state politics or the Republican party exhibited by states with a similar demographic make-up.

The Republican party in the Pragmatic State has historically been of the traditionally conservative bent with an independent streak. It was never strongly influenced by the progressive impulses of the early part of the 20th century, but it also avoided many of the ideological excesses of the conservatism of the late 1940s and early 1950s. This can be traced directly to the importance of personal advancement at the expense of ideology in the politics of the Pragmatic State. The state's pragmatic label in this study is, in fact, derived from this characteristic. Republican party members and officials are mainly pragmatic in their approach to politics, exemplifying Wilson's professionals. Change occurs slowly and few are willing to stake their political ties or careers on the dictates of ideology. The pervasive conservatism perpetuates this focus on the practicalities of politics. Personal loyalty to party and elected leaders is extremely

important in the Republican party of this state. To this end, the strength of the party as an organization and ideational force in state politics is highly dependent upon its electoral fortunes. The last vestiges of a vast patronage system were only fully dismantled in the past decade. Previously, a significant and highly profitable state agency had been entirely staffed through patronage and thus provided significant income and incentives for partisan loyalty among supporters. The loss of these patronage appointments, along with the failure to capture the governor's mansion in the last years has left the Republican party of the Pragmatic State only moderate in strength.

Like most state Republican parties, it has the ability to raise large sums of money, but observers from both parties believe that the organization is not as technologically savvy as its Democratic counterpart. Democrats seem to be more effective at manipulating the all-important voter lists, and share their information more broadly with a greater range of candidates. The failure to win the governor's seat has also left the party without a unified message around which to base a coordinated campaign. One observer suggested that there are too many Republican elected officials who believe that their personal political message should be the unifying goal of all state campaigns. This lack of intentional direction was most clearly seen in the 2000 election, when the Republican-nominated gubernatorial candidate proposed a large and visible policy change of dubious worth or feasibility. Few candidates for other offices wanted to be associated with this policy promise and coordinated campaigning became almost impossible.

While the governor's race has proven to be the centerpiece of state Republican efforts, the last several Republican candidates have chosen to run their campaigns outside

the auspices of the state party apparatus. In the last two campaigns, observers suggest that the candidates were so strongly tied to the Christian Right movement that they believed they would get little help from the party organization, which they perceived to be in the control of “regular” Republican forces. Some observers believe that a win by either of these candidates would have caused a significant shift in the character of the Republican state party. Because a sitting governor frequently chooses her party’s state committee chair, a governor with closer links to the Christian Right would most likely have appointed a person with similar ties. This situation highlights the conflict that seems to exist within state party organization between Christian Right supporters and regular Republicans based primarily on electoral activities. There has never been the public rift evidenced in many other states, but the differences between the two groups are recognized by many. They do not differ so much on policy positions, but on the degree to which they would change the status quo. The individualism of the Pragmatic State, however, makes these disagreements harder to resolve, particularly when CR supporters frequently go around the state party organization to accomplish their goals.

The method by which state party leaders are chosen also impacts the way this relationship plays out. The laws that govern parties in the Pragmatic State are quite specific and very complicated. They give significant power to the county chairs. Precinct committee people are chosen in the non-presidential primary year. This significantly reduces the potential voter turnout, so committees are chosen by a fraction of eligible Republicans. The precinct leaders chosen by these committees become the county committee. That county committee chooses the county chair, three years, in the year after a presidential election, the only time when no state elections are held. The

county chair fills all vacancies on that county committee, not the original precinct committees. In this way, the county chair may be able to change the makeup of the county committee to a group more favorable to her continued power in the years between the original selection of county committee people and her election. Thus, change is slow at this basic level of political organization. This filters up through the ranks of party leadership because the county chairs comprise the district committees and the district chairs the state committee. A lack of a Republican governor in the state in the last ten years has meant that the state party chair is chosen without input from a Republican governor and the choices reflect this continuity in lower level leadership. This system has the effect of encouraging candidates to work outside the party system because they have very little chance of making an impact on the ascending levels of committees unless they have been a supporter of the current leadership. This may explain why the Christian Right has focused its attention on the election of candidates that support the movement's agenda.

The candidates for governor and the national offices are selected in a state primary, but the rest of the state-wide offices (lieutenant governor, attorney general, etc.), are selected in state party conventions. These nominations tend to more closely reflect the grassroots base of the party because delegates are generally chosen from the ranks of loyal grassroots workers, diluting the power of entrenched county committee chairs. In the Republican party, this frequently means delegates who are strong conservatives and espouse policy positions that are consonant with Christian Right goals. In one recent election, the person nominated for lieutenant governor was a well-known supporter of the Christian Right and it is believed that the movement's support from those grassroots

party workers who were rewarded by being chosen as delegates became the deciding factor in that contest.

The Christian Right has a long and interesting history in the Pragmatic State. It first emerged in the candidacies of several people running for national office in the early 1980s. Many of these people remain in higher office and represent the backbone of Christian Right support and power within the state. Many Christian Right activists have been mobilized by working in their campaigns. The movement has remained focused primarily on the legislative arenas, both national and state. In the mid-1980s, a set of perennially unsuccessful candidates connected with the movement emerged. While associated with the less practical and more ideological segment of the movement in the Pragmatic State, these candidates continue to appear on the ballot for a variety of offices, one contesting the Republican primary for governor in 2000.

As discussed above, the movement has a large base of Evangelical Christians, parachurch organizations, and Christian media outlets on which to draw for support. This social network, in fact, is one of the most striking features of the Christian Right movement in the Pragmatic State. A well developed and integrated set of contact situations allow the members of the Evangelical community to form ties and build public skills outside the realm of politics that translate into significant efficacy and power within politics.

While there are several organized Christian Right groups in the Pragmatic State, affiliates of national organizations like Family Research Council, the American Family Association, and Eagle Forum, and several independent state organizations, most Christian Right effort seems to focus either on grassroots mobilization or on lobbying

legislators. These groups are certainly involved in several issue areas, but they are not the primary mobilizers of Christian Right activists or instigators of grassroots activity. As mentioned above, this may have much to do with the structure of the Republican party at the local levels that does not allow for much access. Although there is one significant leader in the movement who claims to represent the entire CR community in the state and who lobbies daily during legislative sessions, the movement in the Pragmatic State was described in the political observer study as having leadership of only moderate quality. These organizational features combined with the laws that govern leadership selection in the party contribute to the lack of influence exhibited by the Christian Right in the Pragmatic State's Republican party.

The issue that receives the most attention is abortion, as in most other states. However, the other issues on which the Christian Right focuses reflect the overall conservatism of the state. Freedom from regulation for churches, Christian schools and home schools, and other church-based charities and organizations appears to be a primary focus. Issues perennially important in other states such as homosexuality and public education are less visible here. This seems to stem from a wider, cultural agreement in the state about these issues that transcends the Christian Right movement.

Thus, the Christian Right in the Pragmatic State does not feel particularly threatened by the state policy and culture. In the political observer study, the Pragmatic State received a 2.57 threat perception rating (on a 4 point scale). This is a lower threat perception than 36 other states. Clearly, the movement feels fairly comfortable in their surroundings in the Pragmatic State. There seems to be little motivation to be involved in state politics in order to see CR policy goals achieved. In fact, such consensus exists on

moral and religious issues that the state's law protecting the public display of the Ten Commandments was originally sponsored by a Democratic legislator.

Abortion is still a very important issue to religious conservatives in the Pragmatic State. The Pragmatic State has fairly restrictive abortion laws, however, with a ban on partial-birth abortions and abortion counseling by state agencies, and requires "informed" consent and an 18 hour waiting period. Further, the state has only 16 abortion providers. These laws combined with the state's general conservatism makes the issue less divisive than it might be in other states. However, Christian Right forces successfully included a pro-life plank in the Republican party's platform, causing some conflict within the state party organization between CR and regular Republican forces.

The primary instigator of this platform change was a principal CR leader with personal influence in the state party. He is the head of one of the independent CR organizations. He claims to have helped to write most of the recent state laws concerning abortion, churches, Christian and home schools, pornography, and homosexuality. He is widely acknowledged to have been the driving force behind the pro-life plank in the Republican party platform. His prominence seems to come not from the organization, but from his own personal influence and his claims to represent the majority of religious conservatives in the Pragmatic State. That assertion is certainly debatable; many commentators believe that he primarily represents his own personal views in state politics. However, the organization he heads claims to have a significant email network and to be in contact with all the major Evangelical denominations and churches in the state. The claim to a wide constituency is certainly used to his advantage, particularly in lobbying the state legislature. In fact, many observers point to the Christian Right's

influence not in the Republican party itself, but in the Republican legislative caucuses. This influence can be traced in many ways to this Christian Right leader, his extensive lobbying efforts, and apparent ability to mobilize constituent concern over CR issues. One observer remarked, “[He] and the Christian Right have power because they seem to be about the only ones paying any attention. If a group can generate six ‘While you were out’ messages to a legislator before a vote, then they have power.” The mechanism of this influence is unclear, however. It seems likely that the recipients of his action alerts may share them with their friends, creating a greater response than the size of his organization’s membership lists would suggest.

This focus on legislative action is echoed by multiple observers and other leaders within the Christian Right. One suggested that the state apparatus finds the CR to be an annoyance and that he focuses most of his attention on conservative Republican legislators. This disparity between the state Republican party and the legislative caucuses is further supported by the Republican party leadership, who comment that the party is primarily in charge of strategy, not issue positions. This is another example of the pragmatism of the state party organization, bolstered by a static local party leadership.

Another example of the movement’s focus on legislative rather than party influence is the acknowledged power of the Christian Right at the grassroots. At a basic level, this grassroots clout makes effective lobbying by CR activists possible. As exemplified earlier in the discussion of the state Republican party conventions, the Christian Right has many members and supporters that are active in elections at the local level, working on campaigns. Several commentators suggest that the Republican party relies on these activists for their grassroots efforts including Get Out The Vote, phone

banks, yard signs and other volunteer services. One reason that Republican legislators may seem to be so amenable to Christian Right influence on particular issues is that they feel the Christian Right supporters in their district turned out in the primary to vote for them and worked the hardest for their election. Again, this situation appears to be related in many ways to the personalization of politics in the Pragmatic State. Voters are loyal to representatives they know and that serve the constituency well. Legislators are beholden to the motivated minorities in their districts that provide the electoral work and support they need.

Following the earlier discussion of the difficulty faced by outside groups trying to influence the party, some Christian Right activists have sought alternative ways to impact the state party organization and its policies. Recently, a chapter of the ideologically conservative Republican Assemblies was started in the Pragmatic State, led by traditional conservatives and Christian Right activists. The Republican Assemblies are a group independent of the Republican party that seeks to uphold the conservative traditions of the party. This development is also significant in that it shows the movement of CR activists beyond the Evangelical social network so prevalent in the Pragmatic State into an overlapping set of political identities. The Evangelical social network is not losing its potency, however. It is clear from observer comments that many of the state's Evangelicals receive most of their political news and opinions through the "grapevine" of interconnected membership and acquaintance. It is hard to deny the importance of these networks when observing the grassroots mobilization of religious conservatives in the Pragmatic State.

Following the earlier discussion of the important issues in the Pragmatic State, activism and mobilization does not seem to be entirely based on traditionally controversial Christian Right issues in the Pragmatic State. The general conservatism of the state combined with the importance of relationships within the political arena has produced a Christian Right/Republican party relationship that seems more related to kinship and social ties than to the importance of particular issues. It is not that the CR in the Pragmatic State is less committed, for example, to the eradication of abortion, but that legislators elected with the help of CR activists are likely to be part of CR social networks either explicitly or implicitly. Thus, a person trusted by religious conservatives in a particular district is likely to reflect their values naturally, and not need to specifically campaign on particular conservative issues. Most activists and workers will already know the candidate's stands because they interact with her outside the political arena. Legislators associated with the Christian Right comment that they were elected as much for their ties to the local communities as they were for their brand of religious conservatism.

This is not to say that these legislators are not lobbied by the CR once elected. They certainly are. But they are also very likely to be the sponsors of bills that other legislators are pressured to support through lobbying activities. In fact, one observer notes that the Christian Right origin of a proposed bill can be discerned simply by noting which legislator authored it.

The Pragmatic State seems to be exhibiting a situation where the Christian Right movement has a small impact on the state Republican party. One observer commented, "The real interesting story about the state Republican party and the Christian Right is

almost, ‘why hasn’t the Christian Right come to dominate the Republican party?’” It is evident from this discussion that this situation is based on a number of factors including the general conservatism of the state and subsequent lack of polarization in the party system, the low level of threat perceived by the Christian Right constituency and a party organizational governance system that have protected the state Republican party structure from incursions by CR activists. These state laws have produced a pragmatic and professionalized party, interested in its electoral fortunes and protective of the power of its leadership. This situation has caused conflict, however latent, and the movement is exerting some influence in the state Republican party concerning the platform and at the grassroots in electoral contests. It is interesting to note, however, that these are not internal party organization functions, pointing again to the importance of the party leadership laws in affecting the outcome of Christian Right efforts. One observer likened the relationship between the party and the movement to a dance, where the state party chairman, while not espousing Christian Right views, seeks to keep the party and the movement together because the party needs the movement’s grassroots workers and primary election constituency.

Thus, the picture of the Pragmatic State is one where Christian Right influence seems to bypass the state Republican party organization and focus both on elections and the state legislature. Though the Christian Right does not exhibit a high level of influence in the Pragmatic State, it does seem to confirm some of the findings of the influence variation model reported earlier in this dissertation. The relative lack of unified leadership is noteworthy in the Pragmatic State, but it is mediated through the importance of personal and social ties for success in politics. Thus, the single strong CR leader who

is very involved in lobbying state legislators interacts with local level CR electoral support through both the Evangelical and political social networks. Further, the stability of the Republican party organizations at all levels has significantly contributed to the lack of influence by the CR on the state party organization. However, it is clear that the CR has more influence in the county and local arenas, as reflected in their success at state Republican conventions. These findings support the larger results of this project, that the grassroots support of the CR is the primary means by which they exert influence on the Republican party at any level and the “rules of the game,” in this case rules concerning party leadership, impact the way in which that grassroots activity is expressed. The large Evangelical population is clearly important to the success of this strategy. The Pragmatic State is somewhat anomalous in comparison to other states in that this influence seems to be more legislatively and electorally oriented than strictly party oriented, but given the larger context of party rules and resistance within the organization, it is obvious that the movement has found these alternative routes to influence more rewarding. It certainly explains why activity is clearly exhibited in the state, but not registered in the influence index from chapter three.

Case #2 – Conflict and Accommodation: the Activist State

The Activist State has many unique social and political characteristics that have great impact on both the politics of the state and the amount of influence the Christian Right has in its state Republican party. More than many other states, the political culture is one of widespread activism. Informed citizens are involved in politics because of their

desire for the spirit of public good to prevail. The amateur type of political activist described by Wilson is clearly evidenced in the state at all levels and in all parties and policy debates. These grassroots action impulses and a unique political structure have led to a significant number of systemic openings for both the Christian Right as a movement and CR supporters who desire to individually impact the political process at all levels and the governance of the state's Republican party. These openings have caused significant conflict within the party and have produced a large group of Republican leaders who were previously Christian Right activists. These characteristics have led to the moderately high degree of Christian Right influence, between 2.0 and 2.5, exhibited in the Activist State's Republican party.

The Activist State is near the median of states in population with just under 5 million residents, and a majority of them live in the single large metropolitan area. Though increasing in diversity, particularly in the last decade, the Activist State is still quite homogenous with Whites comprising over 85% of the population. A strongly agricultural state in the rural areas, the wider state economy rests primarily on service industries. With a highly educated workforce (over 25% of the population hold bachelor's degrees) the Activist State has a very high median household income at over \$50,000. The Activist State is well known for their quality of life that includes these demographic aspects and a pervasive community spirit.

Intriguingly, the Activist State exhibits a fairly low concentration of self-identified Evangelicals, 23%, but larger populations of mainline Protestants, 31% and Catholics, 27%. This religious composition substantially affects how the Christian Right appears and operates in the state; it draws support from greater numbers of conservative

Mainline Protestants and Catholics than in other states. Overlapping with these religious identities is a widespread commitment to both economic and social pragmatism. It is not quite the conservatism of traditional Republicans, but it is more a sense of approaching life realistically, and expecting all the members of the community to do their share to accomplish the common good. While citizens of the Activist State look to their government to alleviate social problems and improve the quality of life for the whole state, they expect it to accomplish these goals within the framework of economic responsibility and traditional values. The state has a smaller percentage of self-identified conservatives and a greater percentage of liberals than the other states considered in these case studies, but this general sense of pragmatism has caused the citizens of the Activist State to vote more moderately than this polarization of ideology might suggest.

The Activist State's political parties are strong (as rated by Cotter, et. al., 1984) and enjoy the fruits of an active and informed electorate. While both parties bear the stamp of the progressive movement from the early part of the 20th century, the Democrats have most strongly retained this identity. These progressive roots have produced a party system where rank and file members and activists have significant access to the party and are involved in candidate endorsements. This system has greatly affected the efficacy of citizens of the state. However, consistent with its commitment to "common good" politics, the state is not particularly amenable for interest group activity. Any shade of special interest on the part of interest groups or politicians is quickly and resoundingly rejected by the voters of the Activist State.

The leadership for political parties in the Activist State is governed not only by state law but by party tradition and convention. Unlike many states where the precinct

committee is chosen in a primary election, precinct level leaders are chosen in precinct meetings and are sent on to county and district meetings. For Christian Right activists, the incentive exists to turn out as many bodies as possible to these precinct meetings. The law stipulates that the meetings at each succeeding level of party organization be held on successive Saturdays during one month early in every other year. Thus the time commitment required for active participation in the party system is high. These meetings also make endorsements for party candidates. In the Republican party, the state chair is chosen by state committee, an enormous body of over 350 people. Day to day committee business is handled by the party's state executive committee which is usually comprised of about 20 members.

The Republican party has had a rough electoral road in recent years. The Activist State has been primarily controlled by Democrats at the state house and state office level, though Republicans are currently in control of the state House of Representatives. It also frequently elects Republicans to national office. A dropoff in citizen participation in politics, seen in all states at all levels, has hurt the Republican party in the Activist State more than in others because of the state's traditional focus on community action. This left the party in disarray for a time in the 1980s and led to a visible move by the Christian Right to take power in the early 1990s. Rebuffing that challenge, the past few state party leaders have been solid members of the business wing of the Republican party. They have been able to raise significant amounts of money and their perceived moderation has led to an increase in Republican voting. This difference between the business conservatives and social conservatives, both Christian Right and others, represents the largest conflict within the state party organization.

Business conservatives play the role of the “regular” Republicans in the state party organization, emphasizing electoral victory and organizational maintenance. But they are more ideologically focused on business issues than their power-maximizing counterparts in the Pragmatic State who find business issues to be politically useful. Observers point out that business conservatives in the Activist State are very interested in tax reform at all levels. The state has high personal and business incomes taxes and an antiquated property tax system that has contributed to the relocation of several large corporations from the Activist State. While social conservatives, primarily the Christian Right, are concerned about these issues, they are secondary to the social issue agenda. Those business conservatives interviewed see their issues as far more important to the state as a whole and a much more successful vehicle for partisan success, thus the battle lines between the two groups have been drawn over priorities in addition to a social moderation evident in many of the business conservatives.

This conflict seems to be primarily one of focus, but with elements of ideological disagreement. Observers’ perception is that the business conservatives are in the party for the long-term, that they are committed to party building and victory. Conversely, social conservatives, including the Christian Right, appear to be in the Republican party for what the party can bring to their issues. This assessment has caused significant conflict within the party organization itself, with some activists calling in to question the commitment and ideological integrity of other activists. These conflicts are currently far from overwhelming, though they have been paralyzing in the past. It seems ultimately to be a case of the two groups looking for situations in which they can overlap. Overall the

Republican party is stronger and in better shape electorally than it was fifteen years ago, but general developments like declining political participation threaten its success.

One of the results of this decline in participation has been the polarization of both parties in the Activist State. Because rank and file members and activists are allowed such significant access to the parties, motivated minorities have more power when general turnout is lower. This situation has set the stage for the Christian Right to exert observable influence in the Republican party.

The Christian Right appeared early in the Activist State. But, unlike the Pragmatic State, much of the effort was focused around the Republican party. One observer suggests that significant maturing in Christian Right activists, acclimation to politics and the need for compromise and strategy, had occurred even by the 1988 election. In 1988, Pat Robertson's run for President brought an even greater number of CR activists into the Republican party fold. These assimilating activists set the stage for the significant upswing in Christian Right influence in the Activist State in the early 1990s.

There are a number of Christian Right groups that are operating in the Activist State, but none are highly visible or hold the reins of exclusive power. The Christian Right movement in the Activist State seems to be primarily grass-roots in orientation and to encompass two types of people. The first are the "true-believer" activists. These most closely approximate Wilson's amateurs in this context, though they seem to be even more ideologically driven than his description would suggest. Located primarily at the local levels and in the rural areas of the Activist State, these activists hold sway not only in the general politics of their local areas, electing a great number of their supporters to the

legislature (one observer suggests that the Republican legislative caucuses' election efforts rely heavily on CR grass-roots support), but also in local level Republican parties. These activists seem to capitalize on what is already a prominent urban/rural split by emphasizing traditional values and the importance of community to the voters in the non-metropolitan areas. Larger number of conservative main-line Protestants and Catholics are part of the movement in rural areas as well, reflecting a conservative approach to religion, politics, and life in general in those parts of the state. These activists seem to be those portrayed by the descriptive literature concerning the Christian Right. They are pious, involved, uncompromising, and convinced of the absolute rectitude of their own political positions. Those I interviewed were concerned primarily about ideological and ideational issues. They were particularly alarmed about issues related to the American founding and the Christian identity of prominent participants, and the future of first amendment rights for churches and conservative Christians.

The second group consisted of those Christian Right supporters who had achieved significant places of influence within the Republican party structure. These activists had entered the party structure at earlier times and had shed their "true-believer" status for a more pragmatic and realistic view of the political process. They fall somewhere between the amateur and professional in Wilson's scheme. They seem to have professional behaviors, motivated by amateur ideals. Not that these people are less committed to their issue positions, but they are more committed to the political system as a process and seek to achieve reachable goals in ways that support the status quo politics of the Activist State. When interviewed, these activists talk of more matter-of-fact issues including outcome-based education and family-friendly tax policies. They seem to hold somewhat

in distaste their less sophisticated activist brothers and sisters. Some observers suggest that this group of Christian Right supporters have become much more committed to economic conservatism and a libertarian view of personal freedoms. Certainly, they have become more “regular” in their Republican loyalties, seeking party victory above and beyond their own issue victories.

A significant portion of this type of activist holds power in the higher echelons of the Republican party. Of the 21 members of the Republican party Executive Committee, thirteen are readily identifiable as supporters of the Christian Right. These activists look more like their “regular” Republican counterparts than the Christian Right movement from which they arise. However, their core values and ideology are the same and they have served to push the Republicans to a strongly conservative position on most issues.

Thus, these Christian Right supporters (some would call themselves former Christian Right members) hold considerable power within the Republican party in the Activist State. But, because they look different from the standard CR activist, their presence and influence may be underestimated in the state. The generally acknowledged highpoint of the movement within the party was in the early 1990s, but the current situation may represent more significant, long-lasting, and effective influence by religious conservatives in the Republican party.

The ground swell for support for the Christian Right in the Republican party in the early 1990s centered around elections for statewide offices. A drop in Republican activism and the election of a series of socially moderate, and specifically pro-choice and pro-homosexual rights Republican candidates created a situation where the Christian Right was motivated to seek considerable power. An early 1990s governor’s race pitted

the supporters of a Christian Right candidate against “regular” Republicans. While the CR won the party endorsement, their candidate was roundly defeated in a subsequent election. While their attempts to elect one of their own failed, CR supporters were basically in charge of the state party organization in the middle of the 1990s. Observers point to strategic mistakes that did not allow them to capitalize on this position. Moderates and economic conservatives were able to regain organizational control. However, many of the CR activists stayed in the party and gained personal power. These evolved into the second type of activist discussed above. The CR as a movement within the state party was discredited by the loss of their candidate and the widespread, even national coverage of the movement’s attempt to take over the party in the Activist State. According to one well-placed observer, of the thirteen current Republican Executive Committee members who voted for the CR candidate in the 1994 endorsement process, none now speak to him.

This diffusion of activists in the party points to another important phenomenon in the relationship between the Christian Right and Republican party in the Activist State. The social network among both religious conservatives and general conservatives in the state is extensive. There is significant overlap not only between the leadership of CR groups and local and state Republican organizations, but also significant movement of staff and supporters between issue politics and electoral campaigns. While the Evangelical social networks of the Pragmatic State clearly exist in the Activist State, a more significant political network of conservatives, including conservative main-line Protestants and Catholics, and Evangelicals exists that seems to have a substantial impact on the ability of CR issue positions to be put forward and supported.

While the most visible sections of the state Christian Right apparatus within the Republican party seemed to ebb through the late 1990s into the 2000 election, the experience of individual CR supporters within the party seems to be far different. While the overall relationship between the Republican party and the Christian Right certainly bears the scars of conflict, several observers suggest that neither social nor economic conservatives are currently trying to force the other faction out of the party. Following the earlier discussion of differences in focus, many believe the Christian Right to be the primary grassroots base and activists for the Republican party in the state and are thus essential to the future electoral victories of the Republican party. Many of the “true-believer” Christian Right supporters seem to desire control of the party apparatus only as far as it takes to get their issue positions in the spotlight, in many cases leaving organizational maintenance tasks and fund raising to the regular Republicans. Thus, social and religious conservatives and economic conservatives continue to coexist, albeit sometimes uncomfortably, in the Activist State’s Republican party.

Voters have seemed to react strongly against the perceived rightward shift of the Republican party (and the attendant leftward shift in the Democratic party) that followed the Christian Right’s very public presence in the early 1990s. They seem to be seeking a more moderate middle way. Few partisan labels made a difference in the late 1990s; citizens elected a prominent independent to state-wide office. This situation has caused the parties to re-evaluate their strategies and has particularly caused the Republican party to seek to outwardly distance itself from the Christian Right while seeking internal accommodation. Thus, conflict within the party seemed to cause electoral problems and Christian Right activism has been forced to be more low-key, at least at the state level.

This situation seems to highlight an interesting state of affairs within the Republican party in many states, and specifically in the Activist State. There are significant disconnects between party activists, party financiers, and party voters. Each of these groups have different foci and in some cases even strongly disagree with one another over the future of the party. While party voters affect the electoral fortunes of the party, they are not universally triumphant. In fact, voters are more divided among themselves than either of the other two groups. At least in the Activist State, it seems that the money people, those whose donations finance the operations of the party and much of its election activity, are currently ascendant. They further represent a moderate section of the voting public. Not that there are not many CR activists in the ranks of the state Republican party, but they have focused on their identity as economic conservatives to be successful in the current political climate.

So, what explains the moderate level of influence exhibited by the Christian Right in the Republican party in the Activist State? To a great degree, this influence is an evolutionary process with advances, declines, and changes of form. Thus, the type and strength of influence exerted in the early 1990s is very different from that of the 2000 election cycle. This is primarily due to the way in which certain Christian Right activists have been assimilated into the Republican party structure. These activists have become part of the system and create influence for the Christian Right and its issue positions by their presence within the governing structure. While they may hold more moderate views than their non-assimilated colleagues, their very presence and identities as members or even former members of the Christian Right creates influence for CR issue positions in the party organization.

The Christian Right further exerts influence by their willingness to participate in grassroots politics and campaigning. One observer noted that the movement is “more politically active with its feet and pens than with their (sic) checkbooks.” In many parts of the state, particularly in rural areas, the Christian Right forms most of the core supporters and participants in the Republican party. This ability to mobilize bodies, in addition to the easily accessible party governance and endorsement system, allow the Christian Right to exert significant influence at the local levels that filters up through the party system.

These systemic issues are probably the most tangible reason for the amount of influence the CR has in the Activist State’s Republican party. The state’s accessible party system allows considerable admittance for motivated minorities who want to influence the candidate choices and policy positions of the Republican party. Several observers mention the skill with which the Christian Right has utilized this situation, flooding the local levels of the party with CR activists. This accessibility has also allowed activists to move up into the ranks of the state party, where they are assimilated and become part of the permanent fabric of the party. This openness is certainly the basis for conflict as well. Party “regulars” and long-time activists feel the CR has manipulated the system for their ends and have not done the work of party building that will ensure Republican electoral victories over the next decades. They seek to use their access to the party organizations at all levels to make the party into their issue vehicle and tend to neglect other party maintenance matters, particularly fund-raising. As CR activists become “regulars,” however, this trend has shifted, though a large portion of the Christian Right activists at the local levels remain of the ideologically “pure” group.

Overall, the Activist State's Republican party is largely shaped by, but not entirely controlled by the Christian Right and its supporters. The movement exhibits significant influence in elections and party governance, and spends considerable time lobbying Republican legislators in favor of their issue positions. The state's political system and the ethic of citizen involvement, political activism, and government working for the common good have combined to give the Christian Right the opportunity to influence the Republican party in ways that outstrip the actual Evangelical presence in the state.

Case #3 – Diffuse, yet potent: Strong influence in the Interconnected State

The influence of the Christian Right in the Republican party of the Interconnected State is significant, yet hard to specifically delineate. Widespread and general conservatism makes the positions of the CR consistent with a great number of citizens' political opinions. Yet, religious conservatives still feel very threatened by the society around them, and are motivated to act against that threat. The state has many conservative voices, yet perceived threats to the culture of the larger country make those of the Christian Right louder and more noticeable. This divergence of apparent state situation and Christian Right behavior, in addition to the political characteristics of the state make drawing conclusions about the mechanisms of influence more difficult in this state than in the other two. These characteristics, combined with a moderately weak Republican party, have set the stage for the Christian Right's significant influence, above 2.5, in the Interconnected State.

With a population just under 6 million people, the Interconnected State is relatively populous and encompasses two large urban areas. Outside the urban areas, the economy is based upon farming; agriculture and services are the two primary industries of the state. Less than 22% of the population holds bachelor's degrees, more than in the Pragmatic State, but median household income is considerably lower, under \$40,000. These state characteristics, primarily the importance of farming and relatively low household incomes, have a significant impact on the way politics operates in the Interconnected State.

More so than perhaps the other two case study states, the history and geography of the Interconnected State strongly affect contemporary state politics and the relationship between the Christian Right movement and the Republican party in the state. The divided loyalties of the state's population during the Civil War have produced strongly ingrained partisanship that endure to this day. These partisanship tend to remain even in the face of ideological change, which has created a large body of conservative Democrats in the state, both voters and elected officials. Thus, while considerable party competition exists, it is within the context of overarching social and economic conservatism.

The Interconnected State is a conservative and religious state. In fact, that description was given by almost every observer when asked to initially describe the state and its politics. With large Evangelical and Catholic populations, the state records the fewest "seculars," people who profess no faith in any religion or transcendent experience, among the case study states with 12%. In exit polls for the 2000 election, about 1/5 of the voting population identified themselves as members of the "White Religious Right,"

and in further research a large majority of the population claims to hold neutral or positive opinions of the Christian Right, similar to the results in the Pragmatic State. Yet the state does not simply appear to be a duplication of the Pragmatic State with its high general conservatism and lack of Christian Right influence. The Christian Right has a significant amount of perceived influence in the state (above 2.5), and a weaker Republican party (ranking low in Cotter, et. al., 1984). Further, there are more self-identified liberals in the Interconnected State than in the Pragmatic State, 20% of the population, and supporters of the Christian Right appear to have a greater sense of threat in the Interconnected State than they do in the other two case study states. However, the influence and its proponents are diffuse and hard to pin down, making assessments of cause and effect in the state's political system somewhat difficult.

While there is no direct evidence in this case study, it seems that the liberal presence and attendant sense of threat on the part of the Christian Right may come from the demographic make-up of the state which differs significantly from the other case study states. However, the movement does not seem to be outwardly reacting to this demographic situation. There are two large cities in the Interconnected State with corresponding populations of racial and ethnic minorities, thereby increasing the numbers of self-identified liberals in the state. The state capital is not one of these cities and seems to suffer a provincialism inherent to its isolation from the main population centers. Though present in the other two case studies, the sense of an urban/rural divide is much greater in the Interconnected State and seems to pervade all aspects of politics from tax policy and land use to even the abortion issue. In fact, several observers believe this split to be the defining cleavage in the politics of the Interconnected State. It seems to have

greater impact upon voting and policy decisions than ideology and overlaps to a significant degree with partisanship.

Observers contend that the citizens of the Interconnected State believe themselves to have an innate sense of good judgment and of pragmatism that pervades their notions of the appropriate behavior for government and their elected officials. Unlike the Activist State, however, politics in the Interconnected State are very personal. Television campaigns do not succeed in most parts of the state. A candidate must get out and shake hands in order to be elected. This characteristic defines the title for this case study. The citizens and elected officials of the state are connected to one another through ties of kinship and acquaintance. Personal interaction is very important for the success of even state-wide candidates. Though historically a state with widespread machine politics, this political personalism is based less on patronage, more on trust and personality. One observer told the story of a candidate for the state legislature who had “only” lived in the area for 15 years. Most of the constituency did not feel that she had lived there long enough to really understand the people and be able to represent them effectively. Citizens are also conservative in the broadest sense; they are wary of innovation in politics or policy and must be convinced that a new plan will produce its intended results. Consequently, the state has significant budget problems as few new tax proposals are approved by the voters (as required by state law).

Another relevant characteristic of the Interconnected State as a whole is a widespread acceptance of religion and religious expression, even among the non-observant. A wide variety of vocally religious people have been elected to local and state offices and no issue has been made of their beliefs or the expression of those beliefs as

elected officials. Many of the Evangelicals have conducted Bible studies and prayer meetings in their offices and encountered no opposition to the practice. The overall sense is one of comfort with religion as an integral part of life, so much so that nearly every observer cited this as a barrier to the observation of the activity of the Christian Right in the state's Republican party. Religious conservatives simply do not exhibit great differences in opinion from the other citizens of the Interconnected State, but they seem to hold those opinions more strongly and become mobilized in ways average citizens do not. Some commentators suggested that state political climate and public policy would look very similar without the presence of the Christian Right and the political observer study reports less conflict within the Republican party than in most states. Yet observers believe the Christian Right to have significant influence in the state's Republican party. It seems likely that this is because of the way in which the movement has raised the visibility of the issues on which the movement is most active.

The Republican party in the Interconnected State is relatively weak at the state level. There seems to be little integration with lower levels of party organization, and commentators remark that individual candidates tend to be more successful in raising money than is the state party as a whole. This fits well with the Interconnected State's notion of personal politics where individual relationships are more important than partisan affiliations. According to observers, the state Republican party organization is made up primarily of grassroots activists, without the disconnect between party workers and contributors so evident in many other state Republican parties. These leaders seem to occupy the middle ground between Wilson's amateurs and professionals. Like the CR activists that have been assimilated in the Republican party in the Activist State, they

seem to be motivated as amateurs, but seek to achieve their goals through professional means. The lack of professionals in the party seems to have increased the ability of the Christian Right to exert influence in the party organization or at least experience less opposition given the general acceptance of more amateur, ideological views.

The state party organization appears to have a genial relationship with the Republican legislative caucuses; perhaps because the GOP has only recently become an electoral player in the statehouse, gaining control over the state Senate. This has long been a challenge in this Democratically advantaged state where party loyalties were built during the Civil War. Democratic dominance, however, has broken down in the past 30 years, primarily for state-level offices with the legislature following this shift with a considerable lag. As with many state parties, the Republicans focus more on strategy and campaign coordination than on ideology. Given the relative weakness of their organizational structure, however, it is questionable to what degree they achieve these goals. By the leadership's own admission, the party tries to stay out of issues, except where there is a specifically political question at stake.

The party as an organization appears to be fairly conservative, however, perhaps more so than many other state Republican parties. This seems to be the case both within the state central committee and the leadership within the party organization itself. While it is unclear whether the state chair and executive director are Christian Right supporters, it is the case that they are affiliated and got their political start with vocal religious conservative office holders.

The laws governing party operations in the Interconnected State are wide-ranging and complex. Party committees are required at the county, legislative district, state

senatorial district, circuit judicial district, congressional district, and state levels. The state party committee is comprised of 68 members, with representatives from each of the state senatorial districts. The state committee and the chair they select at a meeting in September of an election year make decisions about the function and activities of the state party organization. Given the sheer number of party committees to be maintained in the Interconnected State, the local levels of party organization are weak in most areas. More effort is expended in campaigns than in party maintenance. Thus, it seems that motivated activists may have significant impact on the state party organization by virtue of perseverance through the levels of party committees.

The Christian Right in the Interconnected State is hard to identify as a specific entity. Of all the case studies here presented, the CR movement in the Interconnected State best exemplifies the diffusion of a social movement with a large following and no single leader or representative group. While there are some large and active religious conservative groups in the state, they are not the primary focus of the movement's activity in the state. Almost to a person, observers of the Christian Right in the Interconnected State say that the movement is hard to pin down. One suggests, "It's more like a spirit thing. You kinda know they're there, but it's real hard to point to something and say 'there's proof of their existence...' It tends to be, I think, more kind of a grassroots effort." More than in the other two case studies, the Interconnected State is representative of the ingredients for Christian Right influence discussed earlier in this dissertation. An extensive and loosely organized group of grass-roots activists using the widespread acceptance of their agenda and the organizational weakness of the state Republican party to exert influence.

There are certainly Christian Right groups in the state, with a strong and varied pro-life movement along with the national headquarters of several large Evangelical and Fundamentalist denominations and a national Christian Right organization. But, activity is based almost entirely on grassroots efforts, fewer leaders and specific organizations were mentioned by observers than in the other case study states. Many commentators discussed the importance of social networks in the exertion of influence. These operate both at the elite and grassroots level. For example, the leaders of several Christian Right organizations in the state are also members of the Republican state central committee. The social network inherent to Evangelicals seems extremely important in the Interconnected State. Grassroots mobilization operates primarily through Evangelical mega-churches in the towns and cities. Politically aware parishioners seem to call their friends and ask them to be involved; ideas and issue positions spread like the branches of a tree. Nearly every observer noted this method of political mobilization, none suggested that groups are important to the process. In fact, when asked about such groups many observers, even the leaders of CR affiliated groups, suggested that the groups are not important for mobilization or policy promulgation. Once these parishioners become involved in one issue, it appears they are quickly recruited to other related causes. Interestingly, there is little evidence of pastoral involvement. Most Christian Right activists to whom I spoke believed that their pastors and pastors in general were not active enough in the political realm. Further bolstering the Christian Right political agenda and serving as a connection among Evangelicals, the Interconnected State has by far the largest number of entirely Christian media outlets among the case study states with 67 radio stations and four television stations. Clearly the interconnectedness of the

state is exhibited both in the political culture and the operation of the Christian Right social movement.

These Christian Right networks seem to overlap with and be bolstered by the strong presence of other non-religious ultraconservative groups. The John Birch Society is very strong in the Interconnected State, as are several ideologically conservative groups affiliated with the Republican party. In fact, it seems to some degree that little distinction is made between the religious and other types of conservatives, which may, in the end, confound the conclusions of this case study. Many observers noted that there are few real differences between the issue positions of most conservative citizens and those who specifically identify with the Christian Right. The pro-life position is the majority in the state, even among Democrats, and the state has some of the most restrictive abortion laws in the country. In fact, one Republican suggested that the issue was much more divisive within the Democratic party than it is among Republicans. Many citizens of the Interconnected State are fiscally very conservative and approach most national issues conservatively as well, eliminating the frequently observable disconnect between social and fiscal conservatives. This overlap certainly complicates the analysis of the Christian Right's influence in the Republican party as the two groups seem almost synonymous.

However, it is interesting that the Christian Right in the Interconnected State appears to feel very threatened by the culture in which they live and the politics that reflect it. They have the 11th highest threat perception rating as measured in the political observer study; this is well above the scores of the other two case study states. Many of the religious conservatives I interviewed expressed deep concerns over the state of morality in the country and about their freedom to discuss such issues in the public

square. They seemed primarily motivated by national issues, an observation echoed by other commentators in the state. This accounts for the high visibility of the issues with which the movement is involved and is a defining characteristic of CR activity in the state. Most CR activists discussed abortion, education, second amendment rights, and even the United States' membership in the United Nations. It is clear that Christian Right supporters in the Interconnected State have a heightened awareness of their disadvantaged place in American political discourse. It seems likely that it is this perception of threat, and the political awareness that attends it, that has motivated religious conservatives to be such a strong force in a state whose average citizen, in many ways, holds views of society, economics, and politics indistinguishable from that of the movement.

Within the Republican party itself, the Christian Right appears to have a strong presence. The movement is represented both by Republican elected officials and party organizational leadership. One leading Republican noted,

“You’ve got the religious conservative Evangelical who is politically active and becoming more sophisticated politically over time. You see those folks a lot in positions of leadership; they’re elected officials, party leaders, and that sort of thing.”

Here we see evidence of widespread activist assimilation discussed above in the Activist State case study. Christian Right activists have used the overwhelming nature of local party politics in the state, with the proliferation of party committees, to gain access to the party. They have become the infantry in the Republican's battle for electoral success. This seems to be less a result of coordinated efforts as in the Activist State, rather that individuals motivated by grassroots information dissemination and mobilization seeking

influence within the party structure. These attempts at influence have caused conflict in local Republican party organizations. An observer noted that in his part of the state, religious conservatives were able to gain control of a party committee, and the delegates it sent to higher levels of the party organization, simply by knowing *Robert's Rules of Order* better than their less conservative counterparts.

Religious conservatives are active both in elections and during the legislative session. While it is true that the general conservatism of the state frequently frustrates partisan labels, the movement is primarily active in the Republican party. Although Christian Right activists may seek to convince conservative Democrats of their policy positions, party work is exclusively Republican.

In the state legislature, there are several groups that lobby on a regular basis and myriad individuals who both lobby and simply contact their elected representative. One lobbyist's name was continually mentioned by observers as an advocate for Christian Right issues in the legislature. While this person seems to represent a small group with little grassroots base, he appears to serve as a clearing house of information for legislators about Christian Right issues and opinions and vice versa. It appears that his primary method of communication with supporters of the movement is through email and personal contacts. Once again, the movement seems hard to pin down and describe, yet it clearly wields considerable power. Other groups lobby the legislature as well. Several leaders of Christian Right organizations told me that their groups write legislation for amenable legislators to introduce. This legislation ranges from the symbolic to considerable pieces of regulation. Groups professed to have contact and coordination with one another, but most admitted to having small grassroots followings. Yet, many

legislators receive contacts from their constituents about particular Christian Right issues and bills under consideration. Again, this seems to point to the vital importance of Evangelical social networks to the exertion of influence in the Interconnected State.

The state Republican party organization is certainly cognizant of the presence of Christian Right lobbyists in the state house and their supporters in the legislature. While their contact with the caucuses is significant, they function as a service organization to those caucus members. Thus, the state party is affected by the efforts of Christian Right supporters during election cycles in addition to the CR supporters within the party's ranks. There is significant evidence that the movement is very active during elections at all levels of competition. Many observers noted that candidates receive questionnaires from a variety of Christian Right groups, seeking their stands on issues important to the movement. While accounts of voter guides being distributed at churches are less widespread than they were five years ago, a considerable amount of these activities still take place. There is some evidence of collaboration between Christian Right groups and other non-religious conservative groups cooperating for these efforts. Again, though, these are primarily coordination roles, with the bulk of actual activity, campaign work and constituent phone calls, coming from grassroots social networks.

Though no visible conflict has occurred over the nomination of movement supporters for state office, it is evident that many state-level Republicans fit the Evangelical conservative demographic, even if they are not specifically supportive of Christian Right groups or issues. This state of affairs fits into the larger context of the state's politics. Those nominated for state office have gained the trust and confidence of

a wide number of their constituents. Because their religious and political views are similar to the population at large, those views do not become issues during the election.

This overall conservatism, particularly of the religious and social variety, seems to be reflected in the platform passed by the Republican state convention in 2000. While several observers (and the state's media) note its conservative tone and policy proposals, it appears to be appropriate given the conservative and probably CR character of the leadership in the state party organization and the state committee and delegates. By many accounts this is a result of the overlapping conservative and religious identities of many Republicans in the Interconnected State. There has been such a high degree of agreement and movement assimilation that there appears to be no real difference between the Christian Right activists and the party itself.

There is some evidence, however, that the party does have an ideologically conservative but non-Christian Right, pragmatic wing. While they seem to generally agree with CR issue positions, this group appears to be more realistic in their attempts to achieve Republican victories in the state. This impact may be seen primarily in the return to presidential primaries after several attempts at a caucus system. The caucus system produced victories for several ultra-conservative presidential candidates and correspondingly conservative national convention delegations. The move back to a primary system is seen by many as an attempt to hew to a more moderate ideology and increase electoral viability by moderating the impact of religious conservative activists.

The story of the influence exerted by the Christian Right in the Interconnected State is much less specific and based more upon observers' impressions than upon verifiable facts and events. This opacity reflects the way in which influence is exerted in

the state. It truly seems that the effects are diffuse and hard to pinpoint, yet unarguably present. The importance of social networks seems paramount. This was even demonstrated in my search for observers to interview. At least three quarters of those I interviewed were referred to me by an earlier participant. Many observers said that they could not identify particular Christian Right supporters, but gave me a list of three or four other people to contact. Thus, I talked to more people in the Interconnected State than in the other case studies, and yet got less definite information.

The Interconnected State appears to have a strong Christian Right base, but one that is almost ingrained into the fabric of the state's society and social structure. Many people are religious, conservative, threatened by society, and politically active. What has caused this situation? While my answer to this question is somewhat speculative, it has been confirmed by observers in the state and may be a useful model in states with conservative and religious populations.

Building on the religious, conservative, and practical nature of the citizens, people are involved in politics because they want to fix a problem. It is not for personal gain as in the Pragmatic State or because it is a public good as in the Activist State. Christian Right supporters in the Interconnected State see problems with the moral fiber of society both in terms of social issues such as abortion, homosexuality, and education, and economic issues such as taxes and government regulation of business. In order to fix these perceived problems they seek to affect politics and policy. Mediated through the political and social structures of the state, primarily political personalism, widespread acceptance of the movement's goals, and a weak and accessible state party organization, activism is diffuse and broadly applied. Most convincingly mirroring earlier discussions

of social movements, in the Christian Right there is no single head and the people within the movement are connected by a social network that has nothing to do with politics. The bonds formed through churches and other religious and service organizations are used to further political goals, almost as an afterthought, or an outgrowth of the original association. Like the results of the other two case studies, the Interconnected State exemplifies the findings of the influence variation model, grassroots efforts mediated through the social and political structures of the state and Republican party.

Conclusion

The preceding case studies provide a comprehensive view of the interior workings of the Christian Right movement and its attempts at influence three states' Republican parties. With the understanding that the "how" of influence exertion is as important as the "what," these cases show the effects of three very different contexts on the success or failure of the Christian Right to achieve its goals. Weaving in and out of these unique stories, however, have been the larger arguments enumerated by the results of the influence variation model; namely, the importance of the characteristics of the Christian Right movement mediated through the social and political structures extant within the state. The next chapter takes up the task of comparing the results of the three cases and specifically linking them with the results of the survey analysis and the influence variation model.

CHAPTER 6

MECHANISMS OF CHRISTIAN RIGHT INFLUENCE

The analysis of the political observer study in chapter four shows that the presence of high quality Christian Right leadership in a state predicted higher levels of movement influence in the state's Republican party. The contextual descriptions of particular situations in chapter five show how that finding operates on an individual basis. Leadership looks somewhat different than we might imagine by just paying attention to the results of the survey research. Leadership is clearly important within each of the case studies, but it is a leadership of coordination and information dissemination more than the sort of figure-head type leadership exhibited in many interest groups. This example, examined in greater detail later in this chapter, shows the importance of the case studies to the overall goals of this project. Without them, we would see only the broad strokes of the political observer study that show us what predicts Christian Right influence, not the ways in which those variables interact with one another to produce a particular level of influence in an individual state. The case studies extend and "thicken" the analysis of the influence variation model. They tell the story of the Christian Right movement and the Republican party in each selected state and explain the events, personalities and situations that produce varying levels of influence.

On their own, the case studies themselves are also insufficient. The guidance of the influence variation model gives organization to what are highly complex situations and clarifies important concepts that are not immediately obvious in the qualitative analysis of the cases. Extending the example used to begin this chapter, without the survey analysis, it would be hard to see the differing situations in the three states as all being examples of the importance of leadership. The people involved in the movement and in the politics of each state vary in their opinions, activities, and strategies. Yet, the combination of information available in both types of analysis allow a more complete picture of the situation in the states with the ability to generalize those situations into larger understandings of the Christian Right in the United States.

Following the findings of the influence variation model, the case studies exhibit the importance of both grassroots mobilization by the Christian Right and the social and political context in which they operate. In fact, these case studies could be said to be extended explorations of each state's context and how the characteristics of the Christian Right interact with it. While the quantitative analysis suggests the ultimate importance of the movement, its resources and activities, the cases present a more nuanced story. Actors are very aware of the environment in which they operate and adjust their activities and expectations based upon it. Operating through this social and political context, Christian Right activists on the grassroots level seek to change the system, a significant part of the very context that constrains them.

Grassroots Mobilization

Grassroots activism has a long and storied history in the United States. From the farm and labor movements of the later 19th century to the Civil Rights movement, average Americans have used their freedoms to act individually to change society and the political system. Those individual actions, sometimes coordinated, frequently not, have combined to produce significant results. Called grassroots because they are widespread and hard to observe on their own, these agglomerations of individual opinions and decisions form the basis of most social and political movements and citizen interest groups. As discussed earlier, the Christian Right is heir to a number of social and political movements and has adopted some of the tactics of previous and current foes. While the Christian Right movement has been identified with powerful national leaders in the past, the earlier part of this study demonstrates the changing focus of the movement on more local issues and strategies. Given this “move to the states,” activism has become much more grassroots in character, with motivated individual citizens acting on a variety of social issues and elections. Grassroots activism takes many forms, sometimes appearing as the attempt to convince like-minded people of the importance of a particular issue, sometimes in campaigns to contact representatives, and sometimes in the formation of a group to coordinate a variety of such activities.

Grassroots movements are based on a very important process, the dissemination of information. Without networks of contacts to connect these individual “roots,” the information necessary for action could not be communicated. This is not to say that these types of movements are not in many ways organic; a group of people who come to feel the same way and find each other. But the continuing success of activities will depend

upon the type of contact and information that these activists have. The Christian Right has a well-developed ability to disseminate information through existing networks of both political and religious acquaintances. Many of these people were in contact with each other for a variety of religious reasons before they became politically activated. Within the case studies in this dissertation, this phenomenon is most clearly evidenced in the Interconnected State. There it seems evident that much of the information and strategy of the movement is disseminated through personal contact, more so than in the other two states where organizations play various roles in this process. In the Interconnected State, we see the Christian Right operating in its most specifically grassroots form, with individuals motivated to action that appears to be somewhat coordinated, but the mechanisms of that coordination are not always obvious. For example, according to observers, there are a significant number of Christian Right activists in the ranks of both the state Republican party committee and among its elected officials, yet no centralized effort to recruit such people is apparent. While coordinated activity is observed within local level Republican committees, it is hard to trace the trajectory of those who advance to leadership on the state level.

This process is much clearer in the Activist State. The usual characteristics of a grassroots movement are slightly modified for the Christian Right in this state by the overarching focus on citizen participation that is inherent in the culture. Grassroots activities and movements of all stripes are more organized in the Activist State than in the other two case study states. There are also very clear paths to power within the Republican party in the state, a situation exploited in the early 1990s by Christian Right activists. This is not to say that the information and strategy disseminating networks are

not at work in the Activist State, they certainly are. It is clear, however, that they have moved beyond the “phone call to church acquaintances” model prevalent in the Interconnected State to more formal lines of communication between interested activists. The movement seems to be further along in its particular evolutionary process in the Activist State, as well. The movement has learned from long years of activity, successes and failures, the most effective way to achieve their goals through grassroots mobilization. Evidence is also stronger in the Activist State for the widespread involvement of movement supporters at the local level of the Republican party. This suggests a group of people who are not only attuned to the social and political situation around them, but aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the movement and its ability to mobilize.

The Pragmatic State stands in contrast to both of the other states. Grassroots activity is less widespread, and it is focused not so much on the Republican party itself, but on the election of like-minded representatives. There appears to be less to motivate the Christian Right in the Pragmatic State; the movement seems to perceive less threat than the movement in the other states. There are certainly grassroots activities underway in the movement, however, they are just more specifically focused on individual candidates than on the party as an organization. The issue activism that does exist seems to be largely focused by a few organizations in the state, a model very different from the other two states.

The varying degrees of grassroots activity and success of Christian Right influence in the states notwithstanding, each state movement has at its root a core of Evangelical churches and organizations that provide the majority of its constituency and

the vehicles through which much information and opinion is disseminated. Evangelical churches provide fertile ground for the mobilization of activists. There is widespread agreement on moral values and appropriate behavior, with nearly all opposing abortion, sexuality outside of traditional marriage, and violence and sexuality in media. There is widespread agreement that the society and culture of contemporary America is in many ways degenerate and detrimental to children. Further, many strains of Evangelical theology emphasize the believer's responsibility to spread the word about redemption available from these sins. The Christian Right has harnessed these beliefs into a movement. The traditions of church membership, activity, and almsgiving make the mobilization of Evangelicals even easier, as they already possess the skills of civic volunteerism so important to activism (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). The overlapping activities and groups inherent to the Evangelical subculture make the social connections between adherents strong and continually reinforced. This holds the subculture and, further, the movement together with ties that are non-political. It also builds networks of information dissemination. A person is more likely to attend to the information and opinions expressed to them by people they pray with in church and make decisions with on a missionary board than those expressed by acquaintances with whom they do not share such experiences.

This is not to say that the CR has been able to mobilize all or even most Evangelicals in every state. Many remain apolitical and some express their theological views through less conservative politics. A large portion of the observers to which I spoke in each state identified groups of Evangelicals who believed that Christians should not be involved in politics or who were not comfortable with the vehemence of the CR's

policy goals or the strategies used to pursue them. What was unclear, however, was to what degree these opinions were based upon reactions earlier CR activity and/or failure. The well-publicized (within Evangelical circles) political withdrawal movement certainly has some impact, but the sense was more that many of the current activists or non-CR Evangelicals had witnessed rhetorical and behavioral excesses on the behalf of Christian Right activists and had moderated in response. For example, grassroots mobilization to picket abortion clinics in the Pragmatic State has declined in the years that more violent anti-abortion protests have come to the fore. It is not that Evangelicals are any less opposed to abortion, but their strategy and activities have moderated in order to draw distinctions between themselves and those who seek to kill doctors who perform abortions.

Both the Pragmatic and Interconnected States have large populations of Evangelicals, the Pragmatic one of the largest proportionally in the country. The influence variation model clearly shows Evangelical proportion to be important in the CR's ability to exert influence. The Activist State has fewer Evangelicals, but it has a large population of what might be called "sympathetics," conservative mainline Protestants and Catholics who agree on many of the CR's issue positions but for a variety of cultural or theological issues do not belong in the definition of the Christian Right movement. The Interconnected State also seems to have large numbers of these sympathetic Catholics. These non-CR groups seem to help the movement by creating an environment where its issue positions are supported, even if only tacitly. Some of these sympathetic non-supporters are also mobilized at the grassroots level, providing

overlapping support for some of the CRs policy goals. To varying degrees, they seem to share the Christian Right movement's sense of threat concerning the culture around them.

This sense of threat plainly forms the motivational basis for Christian Right activism. The Evangelical subculture has the structures in place to be successful in that mobilization, but without some underlying motivation, that structure will not be utilized.

Threat for the Christian Right comes from the larger culture in which it exists.

Movement supporters feel not only that their values and way of life are denigrated, but that they are intentionally and specifically under attack by the media and other cultural institutions in society. They frequently make reference to the American founding and the importance of religious belief to the founding generation. They believe that unless the United States returns to that earlier form of morality and public expressions of religious devotion, the entire country will be irreparably damaged and will lose its power and prosperity. Joyce Meyer, president of Joyce Meyer Ministries and the featured keynote speaker at the Christian Coalition's 2002 *Road to Victory* conference commented in reference to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States that God is not required to protect a nation that does not honor Him (2002). Thus, the threat the Christian Right perceives is not only to themselves and their families but to the entire United States and its culture.

Those who feel threatened by this situation, who are already tied into the Evangelical subculture with its ethic of church and societal involvement and who are mobilized by their politically active Christian friends, have become the large groups of grassroots activists within the Christian Right movement. What is clear from both the analysis of the survey data and from the case studies themselves is that the level to which

the CR in a particular state feels threatened is strongly related to the degree to which they are able to influence their state's Republican party. It is, of course, not a direct relationship, it is mediated through the activities the movement undertakes to achieve that influence. But it seems that higher levels of threat perception lead movement activists to work harder and be more involved in the general processes of party politics.

The perception of threat appears to vary in interesting ways across the case study states. The Pragmatic State records by far the lowest threat perception of the three case studies, it is in fact low in relation to the remaining states as well. This seems to translate into the smaller amount of influence the Christian Right is able to exert on the state's Republican party. Observers point out that the state's climate is generally "family-friendly," a euphemism for supportive of Christian Right issue positions. While a certain level of threat perception exists, it seems to be channeled toward activity on behalf of state and national Republican candidates for office. The grassroots mobilization that occurs seems more focused on electoral politics. This is not to say that there are no Christian Right supporters lobbying the legislature once they have been elected; there are. However, it seems that the movement focuses on getting supporters elected who will follow Christian Right principles once elected, instead of trying to encourage non-CR representatives to vote in ways that the Christian Right wants.

The perception of threat is higher in the other two case studies. In the Activist State, the threat perceived is of a moderate level and seems to be based on the state's liberal and progressive environment. Christian Right forces are well organized in the state with a variety of conservative political networks to draw on in addition to the traditional Evangelical cultural ties. The lower proportion of Evangelicals in the

population may account for this move toward a larger social conservative base where non-Evangelical, non-Christian Right sympathetics will add their strength to policy goals.

The Interconnected State by far exhibits the highest threat perception of the three case studies. This is very interesting, given that the state parallels the Pragmatic State in its conservatism. In fact, the overriding description by observers of all types in the state was that it was a very conservative and religious state. While some demographic issues may play into this (larger cities and more minorities), these are not the issues mentioned when observers are asked about the CR movement in the state. It is primarily national issues that seem to exercise the Christian Right in the Interconnected State. While some of the standard state-based issues such as abortion are clearly important, many of the CR leaders to whom I spoke were far more concerned with broader ideational issues such as the Christian character of the American founding and the role of the United States in world affairs. These activists seem to feel more as if they were under attack from all directions than do their counterparts in the other case study states. This sense of pervasive threat has led to a widespread mobilization of Evangelicals and Fundamentalists in the Interconnected State. A network based almost entirely on church-based acquaintance groups, the grassroots mobilization is the most diffuse of the case studies. Christian Right supporters appear at almost every level of party organization and Republican state government, yet, there seems to be no formal organization of any activities. Perhaps the sense of threat is so widespread that individuals are motivated to act even in the absence of a mobilization structure.

The Interconnected State is the best example of a phenomenon that seems to be occurring to a greater or lesser extent in contemporary state Christian Right movements

all over the country. The national CR groups, so important in the early 1990s, have little or no presence at the state level. Even the Christian Coalition, formerly the flagship CR organization comprising a federation of numerous state chapters, lacks contact people in many states (<http://www.cc.org>). The state organizers that do exist seem to be individuals working from their homes instead of a true and active organization of committed members. In the Pragmatic State no Christian Coalition organization exists. In the Activist State it is a small operation with no grassroots following, eclipsed by other socially conservative organizations and by the involvement of the CR in the Republican party itself. In the Interconnected State, the Coalition contact is in a town far from the state capital and other areas of observable CR activity.

Political organizations as a whole seem to be far less important to the process of Christian Right influence than previously thought. While some organizations do exist, they function primarily as clearinghouses for information or as the backdrop for individual political aspirations to be realized. Only in the Activist State are organizations in any way noteworthy in the interplay between the Christian Right and state party organization. Yet these organizations are still small, focused on single issues, and tend to downplay the connections they might have to the movement. The grassroots mobilization efforts once thought to be the domain of these organization seems to have moved primarily to the personal contact model. Politically active Evangelicals making telephone calls to their network of Evangelical acquaintances disseminate ideas and strategy and raise money for individual causes. Interestingly, the Family Research Council seems to be the single national organization to remain strong through this shift in focus. But the Council is somewhat of a unique organization. Its state affiliates provide

services to their communities by way of research and development of social services. The political activity in which they engage is strictly non-partisan, though their pro-family agenda is very clear, and is based primarily in lobbying with information, not mobilizing grassroots campaigns.

The variation in the way grassroots activists are organized, motivated, and mobilized shows that the CR movement has adapted to the environments in which it seeks to wield influence. The differences in focus and activities are largely determined by the political and social contexts in which they operate. This variation lends support to a major finding of the survey analysis, that state context, socially, culturally, and politically, impacts the degree to which the CR movement can influence its state Republican party.

Political and Social Context

The case studies provide a rich picture of each state's milieu, the situations that surround the Christian Right and the Republican party and constrain the ways in which the two entities interact. The concept of "context" can be extremely large, encompassing every infinite detail of a particular situation or event. For this project, however, a reasonable delimitation of the idea is to focus on those attributes of the state's political system and social structure that have an identifiable impact upon the interactions between the CR and Republican party. The clearest way to discuss the role that social and political context plays in Christian Right influence is to examine three basic categories: the Republican party, including state laws and organizational traditions; public sentiment, including personal ideologies, partisanship, and policy opinions; and state political

culture, encompassing the ways in which “politics gets done,” how citizens view government and politics.

The Republican Party

The strategy and success of grassroots activism is greatly impacted by the structure of state laws governing political parties and elections and by the traditional ways in which the Republican party operates and chooses its leadership in a state. Both the analysis of the political observer study and the case studies show that a variety of laws regulate Christian Right access to the Republican party. In the survey analysis, it is clear that the type of primary dictated by state law has an impact on the ability of the CR to influence the state’s Republican party. What is evidenced in the case studies is that the very structure of the party itself, governed by state laws and varying considerably from state to state, significantly affects the ability of the Christian Right to gain access to the party organization. Each of the states has a set of party organizational rules that has had profound effects on the nature of politics in the state as a whole and on the operations of the Christian Right as a movement. The Activist State clearly provides the most access to its party structure by way of the precinct committee selection. A party leader chosen in a meeting of equals is more likely to pay attention to the opinions and goals of those who elected her than one chosen in a faceless primary where she has no name recognition. The Christian Right has taken advantage of this electoral system by turning out large numbers of people to precinct meetings, ensuring their opinion is heard even if a delegate is not chosen from their own ranks. The norm of candidate endorsement, further, gives an even greater incentive to seek power within the party.

In direct contrast are the party organization rules in the Pragmatic State, called the “county chairman for life” laws. These party regulations, passed in 1988, were intended to protect the parties from insurgent groups like the Christian Right. These two very different approaches to party regulation have had a significant effect on the ability of the Christian Right to exert influence. In the Activist State, the movement has been able to make great strides in the party as its supporters have flooded the precinct meetings in many areas, assuring sympathetic delegates are sent on to the higher levels of party organization, eventually choosing the state committee and executive officers. Conversely, the party laws in the Pragmatic State have almost completely blocked the ability of the Christian Right to be an insurgent movement within the party organization.

While less dramatic than in the other two states, the party organizational laws in the Interconnected State do seem to play a part in the relationship between the Christian Right and the Republican party. There are so many levels of party committees to be filled that the Christian Right may have influence by sheer perseverance. The political apathy so apparent in much of the United States favors motivated minorities, especially in states like the Interconnected State with complicated and obscure party organizations.

These variations in party access have had a major impact on not only the amount of influence the Christian Right movement can exert in each state’s Republican parties, but also in the ways the movement is organized and the strategies it pursues. In the Pragmatic State, the focus on electoral mobilization and constituent lobbying of elected officials by the Christian Right can be seen as a direct result of their inability to make progress within the party organization. The election of a CR-sympathetic governor with the attendant privilege of appointing the party’s state chair may allow them to change

this, but again by going around the main portion of the party's organization. It is clear that in the Activist State, however, that the CR movement has spent significant time and energy to wield power at the local levels of the party in order to influence the state party as a whole, its issue positions and the candidates it nominates. The organizations that exist are geared toward individual issues because the broad clout most comprehensive organizations seek is already available to the Christian Right by virtue of the party's electoral laws. This access also provides incentive for the grassroots to become mobilized and sustains the intensity through the precinct meetings. Activists see tangible results in the meetings they attend and in the subsequent decisions made by their delegates to higher levels of organization. In the Pragmatic State, there is no such sustenance mechanism. The county committee people chosen by the precinct leaders they have elected in the primaries have to stay in office for three years in order to change the county leadership; a complicated proposition if they were chosen specifically to challenge a powerful county chair.

The laws governing the ways in which primaries are conducted clearly impact the ability of the Christian Right to influence the party, as shown in the political observer study. The larger point to draw from this discussion of party is that there are certain types of situations that are most beneficial to the Christian Right's goals. These are those closed party functions where members of the movement can dominate the proceedings. These include closed primaries, caucuses, the party endorsement that exists in a number of states, and party conventions. In these situations, only committed Republicans can participate. Thus, a motivated minority who will show up and work for their candidates and issue positions has the advantage.

The rules that govern political party organization and behavior in each state frequently determine the amount of access that insurgent groups like the Christian Right have to the party and its activities. The ability of insurgent groups to gain access to the party affects the strength of the party; on the other hand, the strength of the party affects the degree to which groups can gain access. Thus, the concept of organizational strength is important for a comprehensive understanding of the relationship among state Christian Right movements and Republican parties. Recall, however, that the measure of strength utilized in the influence variation model, based on a variety of state party organization characteristics including staff and professionalism, budget, and relationship with candidates, did not achieve significance. The organizational strength of a political party would seem like a straight-forward, easily determined characteristic. However, the variety of definitions of party strength, the cyclical and voluntary nature of the organization, and the role of history and tradition in a state make this a hard concept to pin down.

Electoral strength seems to have an impact on party strength both in the sense that unsuccessful parties may be targets for takeover, but they may also suffer from a calcified leadership when few avenues of insurgent access exist. Further, because the governor in many states chooses the party chair, the organization itself may be affected by the party's fortunes in an election. The history of the Republican party in the Interconnected State shows how state electoral victories by Republican candidates in the early 1970s revitalized what was basically a moribund organization. It took the success of a single candidate to make the party a more attractive place for activists, not, as one might assume that the strengthening of the party organization made the election of a Republican

candidate more likely. Yet, the party remains relatively weak both statutorily and organizationally to this day.

The Pragmatic State exhibits the same phenomenon but in reverse. The inability of a Republican to be elected to the governorship, in combination with organizational laws designed to protect the party from insurgency, has calcified the leadership to the point that little activity is initiated by the state party organization. The Christian Right understands the situation and works around the party whenever they can. But the Republican party itself is still somewhat strong, particularly statutorily. However, none of these outcomes adds up to a trend. The CR exerts a considerable amount of influence in the Republican parties of both the Activist and Interconnected States, states with very strong and weak parties respectively. It is clear from the quantitative analysis that party strength, at least as here measured, is unimportant in explaining variation among the state parties in Christian Right influence. The case studies seem to support this overall conclusion. However, in each case study state, the operations and activities of the Republican party, and its history and institutional self-concept, had an impact on the way in which the CR seeks to influence and the success the movement enjoys.

It is interesting to note, in discussing the strength of state parties and the related issue of access to the party organization, that while the presence of ballot initiative and referenda was significantly related to Christian Right influence in state Republican parties in the survey model analysis, this was not the situation in one of the case studies. While the Interconnected State has both initiative and referenda powers, neither of the other two states do. The Christian Right has considerable influence in the Republican party of the Interconnected State. Yet it also does in the Activist State, which has no

initiative or referenda power. This may be a false finding, however, given that the Activist State allows organizational access in so many other ways, primarily through its system of face to face meetings for the selection of precinct committeemen. Further analysis of other states is necessary to fully explore the importance of referenda and initiative powers.

The concepts of access and strength have been discussed almost as if they are mutually exclusive prospects. Clearly parties exist along a continuum of these characteristics. As a result of this type of insurgent activity, or by virtue of the inherent political situation, many state parties are made up of several factions of people. Frequently all groups agree on a basic set of principles, but differ on the degree or implementation of the ideology. It is clear from the case studies and other current accounts that the primary factional divisions in state Republican parties are economic or business conservatives, and social conservatives made up primarily of supporters of the Christian Right. These groups are both conservative, as their names suggest, but they differ greatly on the emphasis that should be placed on the different aspects of the conservative ideology. Both the Activist and Pragmatic State have these factions at work within their Republican parties. Both groups vie for power within each state's Republican party, but seem to be frequently forced to work together in order to achieve that most important of party goals, the election of partisan candidates.

Another fault line exists between Wilson's professional and amateur within the party organization. The professional in the party organization is a person whose goals for the party are long-term. They desire to see the party succeed on many fronts, but particularly in the electoral sphere. Professionals generally take the long view of such

victories and spend a significant portion of their effort in organization building activities. The amateur, conversely, is generally new to politics and is more motivated by ideological goals than by organizational maintenance. The amateur certainly desires electoral victory for the party, but looks at it instrumentally, as a means to achieve ideological ends. Overall, amateurs tend to be more focused on issues and to be uncompromising in their approach, even to the extent of feeling that many of the professionals in the party are too willing to compromise or make overtures to other parties. Professionals, conversely, tend to view amateurs as detrimental to the long-term prospects of the party and see them as interested primarily in their own issues to the neglect of the larger party objectives.

It is clear that in the state Republican parties in the case study states that there is significant overlap between the fault lines of factionalization and the divide between professionals and amateurs. In many cases it is the social conservatives in the Republican parties, primarily the CR, who operate as amateurs in the party and the economic or business conservatives who are the professionals. It seems however, that this divide is somewhat historically based. Social conservatism is largely an addition of the last 20-30 years in the Republican party. Many of those who are now considered to be the economic conservatives are the bastions of the earlier forms of Republicanism. So they have been around the party longer and the experience has had an effect on how they operate within the party. The Christian Right has tended to be made up of newly mobilized activists, excited and passionate about their policy goals and less concerned with long term party issues. There is a change occurring however, in many state Republican parties as CR activists mature in their party identity. This evolution is

discussed in more detail below, but suffice it to say that the assimilation of CR activists has changed the dynamics of both the factional splits and professional/amateur identities within state Republican parties.

The characteristics and internal relationships in state Republican parties form a significant portion of the backdrop of attempts by the Christian Right to influence those organizations. In fact, these internal issues may have the greatest impact on the ability of the CR to gain access to the Republican organizations. In many ways, however, the characteristics of the state Republican parties are based upon the larger context of state politics and society. Parties have a sort of a reciprocal relationship with the broader political situation. The parties are shaped by the society in which they exist and in turn constrain the way that society expresses itself politically. Now we turn to the characteristics of the larger society in order to fully understand the social and political context in which the Christian Right attempts influence.

Public Sentiment

One can learn a great deal about a state and its culture by listening to how citizens describe themselves. This self-assessment contains within it the core understanding of how society works. Many of the observers interviewed for the case studies made direct linkages between these state self-identities and not only the politics of the state but also the relationship between the Christian Right movement and Republican party in the state. In each of the states, observers frequently started their reflections by saying, “In order to understand politics in this state, you need to know...” Thus, the idea that there is some

underlying characteristic that impacts all of social and political life is strongly ingrained in most people.

The Interconnected State is known to be a place where the truth of a claim must be demonstrated. Citizens feel they have innate good sense and just need to have ideas made concrete in order to understand and judge them. This characteristic clearly affects the way politics is constituted in the state. Most successful politicians have built up grassroots followings by meeting their constituents personally and shaking their hands. The personal relationship is fundamental in politics, primarily because of the ethic of “real-ness,” the idea that something is not true unless personally experienced. While certainly a simplification of a complex social and political situation, it is clear that citizens and political leaders alike not only acknowledge the reality of their self-identity, but are proud of it.

Interestingly, it is a specifically political trait that observers in the Activist State most often noted. People in the Activist State are very involved with politics because they tend to be community-minded and to approach politics as a spectator sport. While linking these opinions to immigration patterns in the state, most observers found volunteerism, specifically in the political realm, to be a defining factor of most of the activists state’s citizens. The impact of this self-identity on the political system demonstrates the reciprocal nature of state context and party organization. The Activist State has a political system that values and rewards personal involvement in partisan affairs on the part of ordinary citizens. The system was clearly designed by people who supported this type of environment, and it perpetuates personal involvement as new voters are socialized into this activist-oriented system.

Perhaps the first thing most observers in the Pragmatic State noted was the high degree of conservatism in the state in all realms – moral, social, and political. Citizens in the Pragmatic State take pride in their conservatism and their independence from larger trends in society. This general (though not universal) set of political beliefs has created a situation where much of the disagreement in the state on social and political issues involves arguments of means, not of ends. This has encouraged the professionalization of politics as fewer activists are mobilized by issue disagreements.

The Pragmatic State's self-identity illustrates a larger concept that is certainly a constituting factor of a state's social and political context, i.e., ideology. The political beliefs and opinions of the citizens of a state are important to the overall politics of the state because they determine the issues of importance and frequently impact the partisanship of the state. So ideology makes a difference in both campaigns and on-going policy debates. As we have seen in the influence variation model in chapter four, the degree to which conservative political opinions are privileged in a state seems to make a difference in terms of the amount of influence the Christian Right has in the state's Republican party. This suggests that perhaps the lack of opposition allows the Christian Right to convince many of the correctness of the movement's views. This seems to make intuitive sense when we see the CR exerting the least influence in the Northeast, an area of the United States with more self-identifying liberals than conservatives. It is interesting, then, that these results are not fully supported by the case studies, though it should be said that counter-intuitive examples were sought for the case studies. The differences, however, are instructive.

The findings of the influence variation model are upheld by the Interconnected State. Conservatives hold a 14% advantage in the ideological opinions of the citizens and the CR has moderately strong impact on the state's Republican party. However, the influence variation model is not upheld in the Activist or Pragmatic State. Conservatives and Liberals are basically tied in the Activist State, though Democrats have tended to be in control of statewide offices. It seems, however, that it may be the activist culture of the state and the attendant political structure that has allowed the CR to compensate for a smaller conservative base on which to draw.

The most interesting comparison is between the Interconnected and Pragmatic State. The Pragmatic State is highly conservative with more than a third of its population self-identifying conservative. Yet, as we have seen, the Christian Right exerts little influence on the state's Republican party. While clearly an effect of the party organizational system in the state, it is interesting that the Interconnected State has a similar proportion of conservatives, but more liberals, and yet has a very different influence profile. It seems this difference in situations can also be attributed to the heightened sense of threat perceived by CR activists in the Interconnected State, though it remains somewhat unclear to what that sense of threat can be attributed.

Political Culture

Both the self-identity of a state and its ideological make-up are in some ways defined by and interact with the state's political culture. Political culture is a short-hand term for the "rules of the game" of politics in a particular state. While based on the categories proposed by Elazar (1966) the definition of the concept for this project are

more broadly construed and thus more idiosyncratic to each state. Elazar points to the immigration patterns of the late 19th and early 20th century as the primary determinant of a state's political culture, based on the social, religious, and political values that each immigrant group brought to a state's polity. While some of the characteristics of these immigrant groups remain in the case study states, other factors seem to contribute to the overall operation of politics in these states. Perhaps the best way to approach this concept is through the rules of the political game metaphor. How do politics "get done" in each state? Why have particular individuals and groups gained power? What issues are perennially important and how do citizens and leaders approach these issues? The answers to these questions all fall under the idea of the rules of the political game and significantly affect the ability of the Christian Right movement to influence the state's Republican party.

The importance of the rules of the game is perhaps most clearly seen in the Activist State where a culture focused on volunteerism and community activity makes politics a spectator sport. Informed and motivated citizens form the backdrop for inter- and intra-party conflict. Based on its strong identity as a progressive state in the early part of the 20th century, citizen involvement in politics is the norm and the laws that govern parties and political participation reflect and reinforce this. It is progressivism that forms the core of the state's political culture. Progressivism is the value that underlies government and party functions and thus permeates both the structure of government and the ways in which issues are discussed and solutions sought. Christian Right supporters who ascend to positions of power in the Republican party or as elected officials are almost universally aware of this culture and change their behavior to fit in to

it. While few forsake their original motivations or policy goals, rhetoric tends to be couched in terms that are acceptable to the dominant political culture and not merely professions of their beliefs.

In the Pragmatic State, the rules of the game are about personal power and attainment through the vocation of politics. The underlying value is pragmatic compromise in the attempt to allow all participants to achieve their personal goals. Politics tend to be consensual because compromise allows most incumbents to keep their power and influence. Strong ideology or activism upsets this balance and takes resources away from those in power. The laws governing parties reflect this. The county chairs laws were passed by the legislature in order to protect those already in power. Thus, it is clear that this political culture of power and benefit have held sway in the solutions sought even in regulatory issues. The CR movement in the state seems to have adapted to this reality, in many ways bypassing the state party organization and focusing its primary efforts in the electoral arena.

Differing more from the Activist State than the Pragmatic State, the Interconnected State's tradition of political personalism strongly impacts not only campaigns, but also the operations of the legislature and parties. Candidates and elected officials are attentive to the people they represent because many know the citizens personally. Most grew up in the areas they serve and thus have an intimate, first hand knowledge of the needs and opinions of their constituents. This culture has affected not only the operations of the Christian Right movement, but also its organization and development. The importance of the Evangelical social network is directly linked to the focus in the state on personal relationships and kinship ties in politics. Large,

hierarchical organizations simply would not be effective in this state. Perhaps more clearly than in the other two states, this political culture of personalism is related to observers self concept of the state. How are people to trust and believe what they are told by politicians and activists if these leaders have not proved their trustworthiness through long and successful relationships with their constituents?

A state's political and social context is an amalgam of history and culture, a variety of characteristics and situations. The concepts that make up this context, at least as I have presented them, are constantly interacting with one another, modifying and reinforcing the ways in which political and social relations occur in the state. So while the laws that govern party organizations are in many ways the result of the rules of the game of political culture, the party organizations and the individuals within it help define the political culture of a state. This is important because it helps to account for the maintenance and change present in all state contexts. It further highlights the fact that the political landscape faced by the Christian Right is not static. The movement changes and is changed by the situation in which it operates.

The primary importance of the political and social context of a state comes in its ability to constrain the options open to the CR in that milieu. The context sets the parameters for action in the political realm and frequently the limits of discourse and policy options. A well funded, organized, and motivated group would still have difficulty making an impact in a state with a closed party system, a political culture that opposed citizen activism, and a large number of both citizens and leaders who oppose the group. Clearly variation in these types of constraining situations makes a difference as well. A state with even one part of the context open to political insurgency may be an attractive

place for CR activity. So, in many ways, an amenable social and political context is necessary to the success of the Christian Right in influencing a state's Republican party. It seems that the case studies bear this out more explicitly than do the findings of the political observer study. In each of the cases, the CR as a movement has considerable strengths, both numerically and organizationally. While there are clear differences in level of motivation to be active, it still appears that the political and social context, primarily the laws and customs governing party organizational behavior, is a decisive factor in the ability of the Christian Right to influence the state's Republican party.

However, it seems clear that without some effort and mobilization on the part of the Christian Right movement, it could not take advantage of the openings provided by the political and social context. Thus, context is not a sufficient cause for the variation we observe in CR influence across the states. The need for movement activity is evidenced in the case studies, but more clearly demonstrated in the results of the influence variation model. The characteristics of the grassroots movement in the state are important factors in determining the amount of influence the CR has. Again, the movement characteristics appear to be necessary but insufficient causes for Christian Right influence in a state's Republican party. Case study research into more states is necessary to verify this claim more fully, but it seems reasonably clear that there is a two-fold process at work here, the characteristics of the CR movement are mediated through the social and political context of the state to shape the amount of influence the CR can have on the state's Republican party.

Grassroots Mobilization Mediated through Social and Political Context

The idea of mediation expresses the ways in which social and political context constrain the CR movement. The social and political context sets up the parameters of action for the Christian Right, whether the movement has the ability to take advantage of the openings allowed to them is based on their resources and other characteristics inherent to the Christian Right. This process is evident in each of the cases, particularly in the choices the CR movement makes in order to advance its agenda. In many ways, these choices and the influence achieved by them are the overarching stories of each case. The influence situation in a state is typified by the way in which Christian Right supporters seek power.

In the Pragmatic State, the Christian Right movement has chosen to concentrate its effort on individual elections and the legislative branch. Though apparently feeling relatively safe and unthreatened by the society around them, the numbers of Christian Right activists in the state is not insignificant. Nor are the large proportion of self-identifying Evangelicals that make up both the group of CR supporters and many of the fellow-travelers. The movement in the state has reasonably effective leadership and it is clear from many observers that a mobilized grassroots base is in evidence, particularly during elections. The interesting outcome of this situation is that the Christian Right seems to have moderately little influence in the Pragmatic State's Republican party, but considerable influence with elected officials and the Republican caucuses in the state house. In the case study, this phenomenon was successfully linked to structure of the Republican party organization and the lack of electoral success at the gubernatorial level. In this, we see the resources and efforts of the movement mediated through the state

social and political context. This is primarily the party rules and a political culture that has made those rules possible and viable. Thus, the movement, still able to utilize a base of grassroots support and an almost overwhelming number of Evangelicals and conservatives to impact politics, has chosen to concentrate on those avenues open to insurgency, election campaigns and legislative lobbying. This accounts for both the story told by the case study of the Pragmatic State and its results in the political observer study.

Evidence for grassroots mobilization mediated through state social and political context is observable in the Activist State as well. A significantly smaller Evangelical base is highly mobilized along with a significant number of conservative non-Evangelicals. The movement appears to be fairly well funded and led, but its main focus has been on influence in the state Republican party. Given the significant amount of access to political parties starting at the precinct level, there has been an enormous amount of grassroots activity that is focused on precinct meetings and seems not to be centrally coordinated. In this way we see grassroots mobilization mediated through social and political context. With a somewhat smaller constituency on which to draw, the CR found itself to be effective in exerting influence on the state Republican party because of the access allowed by party laws. Under the rubric of an activist political culture which underlies both the party rules and the motivation to take advantage of them, the Christian Right's insurgency was reinforced by success. While clearly an evolving situation, the movement in the Activist State exerts significant influence in the state party as attested by both the political observer study and the case study.

While less concretely than in the other two case studies, the case study of the Interconnected State lends credence to the explanation of Christian Right influence

variation as grassroots mobilization mediated through state's social and political context. The case study of the Interconnected State yields less specific information about the movement and its relationship to the state party than do the other two. It seems clear however, that there are a large number of Evangelicals in the state that have been mobilized into Christian Right activism through the urgent sense of threat they feel. The party organizations in the Interconnected State are diffuse and complex, and moderately weak. Further, the political culture of the state, characterized by personalism, requires political relationships to be personally based. Thus the CR's influence on the state party seems to be significant, as shown by the political observer study, and yet based on personal relationships and the personal political objectives of party organizational participants. Looking at the situation in these terms helps to illuminate what is a somewhat confusing situation. Most important, the Interconnected State seems to exhibit the importance of social and political context as a constraining factor on the behavior of mobilized CR activists, even if the demonstration is not as straightforward as we might desire.

How the Christian Right Creates Influence: Social Networks

While the case studies perform a primary goal of deeply exploring the relationship between grassroots mobilization and state social and political context, they further illuminate how the Christian Right exerts influence. Moving beyond the enumeration of the ingredients for influence, the case studies allow us to see not only the structure of the situation in which the CR operates, but also the process by which influence is exerted.

Utilizing the broad-based and widespread social networks of the Evangelical subculture, the CR movement is able to undertake a range of activities in each state.

As a social movement, the Christian Right has a set of significant connections outside of politics that give members incentive to work together. It is clear from the three case studies that the social networks among Evangelicals are strong, vital, and provide avenues of information dissemination and motivation for religious conservatives. Each state has large Evangelical and Fundamentalist congregations that observers identify as important sources for Christian Right support. Evangelicals are connected not only by membership and attendance at the same church. A whole web of denominational and independent Christian schools and colleges, parachurch organizations, charitable and missionary endeavors, and Christian radio and television stations make the Evangelicals in particular areas readily accessible to one another. Many people share leadership positions within these organizations; overlapping membership and friendship groups ever broaden the scope of acquaintance in Evangelical circles. It is this network that allows issue positions and legislative alerts to be spread quickly, effectively, and with little notice by the larger population.

Evangelicals as a group are motivated joiners; they frequently spend a great deal of time at their churches for various events and regularly give large sums of money both to their churches and related organizations. This characteristic, in combination with evangelical theology that makes the church and Christian community an important focus of an Evangelical's daily life, provide a level of trust and solidarity that the movement utilizes in the dissemination of its policy positions and strategies. Some movement appeals come from pastors, but over the last five years, this type of direct involvement by

churches has diminished. This development can be linked to questions concerning the tax status of churches that make political statements and a movement within the larger Evangelical subculture away from specifically political or partisan activities in the church itself. Finally, Christian radio and television are full of spiritual and social commentators like Dr. James Dobson and Phyllis Schlafly who blend spiritual and emotional advice with calls to political action. This common set of beliefs, socialization, authority, and sources of political news and opinion make the Evangelical community closely connected and easy to mobilize.

The breadth and importance of Evangelical and Fundamentalist social networks to the ways in which the Christian Right exerts influence in states' Republican parties are aptly demonstrated in each of the three case studies. In the Pragmatic State, the social network is observable through the many Evangelical churches, mission organizations, parachurch ministries, and Christian schools. While Christian Right organizations have ebbed and flowed in the state, recently a more specific overlap between religious conservative leaders and non-religious Republican groups has been growing. This process of expanding the Evangelical social network into entirely political arenas has come into its own in the Activist State. With so many Christian Right activists assimilated into the Republican party organizations, a political network of religious conservatives has grown on its own. Working in much the same way as its still important Evangelical counterpart, the political network allows like-minded people to quickly and effectively disseminate information and mobilize for action. In the Interconnected State, the Evangelical social network appears to be the primary means by which religious conservatives are mobilized. More so than in the other two states, observers identified

the power of motivated individuals making telephone calls to their friends in increasing the visibility and influence of the Christian Right movement in the state's Republican party organization.

How the Christian Right Creates Influence: Leadership

In this extended discourse on the case studies, their findings, and the implications for understanding the variation we observe in the influence the Christian Right has in state Republican parties, all but one of the variables found to be significant in the influence variation model has been discussed at length. It seems that for the most part, the model captures a reasonable portion of the variation and points to a correct view of the process of influence. The case studies seem to suggest a different focus in two areas, however: The importance of party strength/structure, discussed at length above and the importance of high quality Christian Right leadership.

The Christian Right leadership variable was highly significant in the quantitative analysis conducted in chapter four. However, it seemed markedly less important, at least as originally conceptualized, to the situations I observed in the case studies. Only in the Pragmatic State is there a well-known and identifiable leader, and in the Interconnected State it is almost impossible to identify anyone who might be considered a movement leader. I believe there are three possible (not mutually exclusive) reasons for this observation. First, it is hard to talk about a group of people without putting a face to it. For example, while Microsoft is a large computer software company with thousands of employees and a wide variety of products, its best known symbol is Bill Gates, the founder of the company. Second and related, it seems possible that in states where the

Christian Right is strong, observers may assume that there is strong leadership. Note that the Interconnected State, where there is no discernable leadership structure in the Christian Right, received a higher leadership quality rating than the Pragmatic State where, by all accounts, the prominent leader is reasonably effective in promoting Christian Right goals. Third, and probably most important, is the need for a grassroots movement to have a coordination point. All social movements need a few full-time “managers” to organize efforts for that majority who do not spend significant portions of their time dealing with movement issues but in living their lives. Thus, these organizers become more visible than the grassroots people they represent and are perceived as the leaders of the movement. And, in fact, they are representatives in name only. Frequently these leaders have small mailing-lists, yet the issue and strategies they espouse are spread through the Evangelical social network.

Interestingly, in the Activist State there was at one time a very prominent leader who represented the majority of religious conservatives in the state, but his failure to win the state’s gubernatorial primary caused his downfall. His rise occurred during the years of national leaders in the movement as well. The Activist State has since moved to more of a grassroots model with the added benefit of a large number of activists who have been assimilated into the ranks of the Republican party. Clearly, leadership needs to be thought of more in terms of coordination and information than visibility or coercion. I think these concepts, drawn from the case studies, fit well with the notion of the importance of leadership found in the influence variation model. Leadership simply needs a broader definition.

It is clear from the above discussions that the findings of the political observers study are reasonably parallel to those of the case studies. The case studies add richness and texture to the bare facts of the quantitative analysis and they also add information to the overall project by observing phenomena that are not easily simplified for survey data. How does the addition of the case study material affect the assessment of the original hypotheses?

Hypothesis Testing with Case Study Data

Hypothesis #1 – *If the state Republican party is organizationally strong, the Christian Right will not have significant influence in the party.* The results of the influence variation model disconfirm this hypothesis. The findings of the case studies are hardly different, but truly suggest a more nuanced view may be appropriate. The case studies show that the situation within the party, how it is organized, and the laws that govern its behavior are very important to the ability of the Christian Right to exert influence in it. While the Republican party in the Pragmatic State is rated as only moderate in its strength, the rules concerning party leadership have made it almost impossible for the CR to gain access. In the Activist State, with the strongest state Republican party in the country, the CR has gained significant access again because of the laws concerning activist access. Perhaps strength should be evaluated in terms of organization maintenance. In any case, the findings of the case studies do not confirm the hypothesis, but shed significant light on why strength was not important in the model.

Hypothesis #2 – *Closed primaries will yield more influence for the Christian Right than will open primaries.* Confirmed by the analysis of the political observer study,

the assessment of this hypothesis is again slightly altered by the findings of the case studies. Again it is only to take a more nuanced view. While there is no doubt that the Christian Right has more power in situations where they can bring the most numerical power to bear, the way the decisions are made appears to be important as well. In the Activist State, the face-to-face meeting of precinct residents allows the CR to effectively control the meeting by increasing supporter turnout, guaranteeing them representation in the state party. In the Interconnected State, forces within the Republican party trying to dilute Christian Right influence in presidential nominating situations were successful in obtaining the return of presidential primaries from a caucus system. The movement has more control in these type of meeting situations because they can persuade and intimidate by their presence. The setting is much more personal than those in which primary voters go into a ballot box by themselves to pick the presidential nominee or Republican precinct chairperson.

Hypothesis #3 – *An open political system provides more avenues for Christian Right influence than a closed system.* This hypothesis is confirmed by both the influence variation model and the case study results. While only one of the case study states has citizen referenda and initiative powers, the importance of an open system can be seen most clearly in the ways in which party and election laws constrain CR behavior.

Hypothesis #4 – *The more amenable a state's public sentiment toward the Christian Right and its issues, the more influence the movement will have.* Confirmed by the political observer study, this hypothesis is again confirmed, but secondarily in the case study findings. Large Evangelical populations and general conservatism are both very important in the Pragmatic and Interconnected State. The Activist State lends more

credence to the hypothesis. With a smaller group of Evangelicals on which the Christian Right can draw, the movement has had to rely on the support of like-minded citizens, both religious and secular, to maintain its power in the party. The presence of a large liberal and progressive population is felt in the Activist State as well with party success frequently leading to electoral failure for the Christian Right.

Hypothesis #5 – *The more resources the Christian Right has at its disposal, the more successful the movement will be at exerting influence.* Again, this hypothesis is confirmed by both sets of analyses. In the case studies, however, the role of resources seems to be most likely subsumed under the rubric of the social networks inherent in the Evangelical subculture. The resources that exist are mobilized through this network and would be hard to combine without it. Of course, the size and strength of the networks themselves are based on the proportion of the state populations who identify themselves as Evangelical.

Hypothesis #6 – *The more threatened the Christian Right feels by issues or policy in a state, the more incentive the movement has to seek influence in the state's Republican party.* This hypothesis was confirmed by the findings of the influence variation model and even more strongly confirmed by the case study results. Threat seems to be the bottom-line motivation for much of the Christian Right activity. While the movement is active and moderately successful in the Pragmatic State, the vast resources available to CR by virtue of the large Evangelical population are not fully utilized. This is primarily because little threat is perceived to the movement's values or goals, thus smaller amounts of effort achieve the desired ends. The Interconnected State strongly confirms the hypothesis in the other direction. The state appears to be very

amenable to most of the Christian Right and their agenda. A highly conservative and religious state, many observers suggest that there is little difference between those who think of themselves as CR supporters and those who are “regular” conservatives. Yet the Christian Right in the Interconnected State feels highly threatened by the society around it. The movement also tends to focus on national issues, which may account for their feelings of threat in such a conservative state.

The hypotheses proposed and tested by this project are almost entirely confirmed by both the analysis of the political observer study and the case studies. Each approach gives a different perspective on the hypotheses and how they relate to variations in Christian Right influence. Looking at the two analyses in conjunction with one another, we see that they have fulfilled the intention of being complementary and additive in their pursuit of understanding the variation in Christian Right influence in state Republican parties. Together they show that the variation can be explained by observing the characteristics of the CR movement and the social and political context of each state. Given the fact that the case studies oriented toward explaining the process of influence, in addition to simply illuminating the ingredients that lead to different levels of influence, the data gathered from these three states allow us to make some further observations about the Christian Right and its relationship with state Republican parties.

Further Case Study Findings

As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, the starting assumption for this project was that the Christian Right operated primarily through organizations specifically tied to the movement and that all policy positions and activity were the result of effort by the

organizations. A very different picture emerged as the information for the case studies was gathered. Very few organizations of the type described above exist in any state, let alone the three on which the case studies focused. What organizations do exist are primarily information disseminating and are frequently run by one or two people with a post office box and an email account. Almost none of the organizations identified in the three states had a physical address. This dearth of organizations may be the cause of perceptions of decline in CR activity in the last few years. But as is clear from the case studies, there is significant activity being expended in support of Christian Right causes. Almost all of it, however, is motivated and facilitated through social networks of Evangelicals and politically active Christians. Most CR supporters get their information from acquaintances or through Christian media outlets. This fact points to the continuing health of the Christian Right movement as the focus has shifted from national to state and local issues and officials.

The shift from national organizations and issues in the 1970s and 1980s to local and state efforts in the early 1990s highlights another interesting finding of the case studies. The CR movement and its relationship with the Republican party is evolving. In none of the case study states is the movement stagnant in terms of people, issues, or activities. Leaders rise and fall, successes achieve policy change, and new advances in technology change the terms of the issues about which the movement is concerned. The growing focus on stem cell research reflects the changing definition of that group of issues related to the pro-life movement. The evolutionary process is perhaps most clearly defined in the Activist State with great turmoil in the early 1990s giving way to a more peaceful relationship in the 2000 election cycle.

Much of this evolutionary change is relative to the changes in the activists themselves. It is clear that in all three states, leaders in the Christian Right movement who accede to party leadership positions become assimilated into the party organizational structure. Their goals and strategies change somewhat as they begin to view the success of the CR agenda in terms of the success of the Republican party. Simply being part of the party organization seems to moderate their tactics. Christian Right activists learn the need for compromise and incremental reform. This activist assimilation changes the party as well. In the Activist and Interconnected States where observers believe there to be a significant number of these assimilated activists, the party organization has taken on a much more conservative image, expressed primarily through their platforms, than they had before the insurgency of Christian Right activists. The activists themselves are changed as they become socialized into the practice of politics.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to take a thematic view of the case studies and link their findings with the results of the political observer study and influence variation model. Using the strong finding of the importance of Christian Right movement characteristics mediated through the social and political context of a state, I have tried to draw the most important findings of the individual case studies into a coherent picture of how influence is attempted. The root cause of Christian Right activism is clearly the movement's sense that they are threatened by the larger culture around them. This threat is communicated and reinforced through Evangelical social networks, and also through messages disseminated by Christian radio and television. The importance of this social

network has led to a situation where the grassroots is the most active portion of the Christian Right movement in many states. This is a significant finding given the nearly complete focus on Christian Right organizations by both scholars and the media.

These grassroots efforts are greatly affected by the social and political context in which they take place, particularly the rules that govern political parties and elections in each state. Christian Right supporters have had great success in using these rules to their advantage and leveraging their efforts into a greater proportion of influence than their numbers would suggest. This grassroots commitment and strategic use of party and election rules have helped a large number of CR activists and supporters to gain not only electoral office but positions of leadership within the party. Religious conservatives who become party leaders seem to be assimilated in the party culture. In some ways they lose their ideological distinctiveness as Christian Right activists, but become much more effective in furthering their agenda. The state parties themselves have been changed by the entry of these activists into their ranks and have over time come to, in some ways, reflect the Christian Right agenda.

The comparison of the case studies' findings with those of the political observer study and influence variation model have helped to bring the two together and have shown how their complementary conclusions create a much clearer and nuanced picture of the variation in Christian Right influence than either approach would have on their own. Overall the findings of the two sets of analyses show the importance of the characteristics of both the Christian Right movement and the Republican party organization in the level of influence achieved by CR activists.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

There is a story that seems to typify the way in which the Christian Right has found its voice in American politics. In 1976, Jerry Falwell got a phone call from Jody Powell, a special assistant to Jimmy Carter. He asked Dr. Falwell to tone down his criticism of the then-presidential candidate's interview with Playboy magazine. Falwell was shocked that the president was paying attention to what he said from his pulpit on Sunday morning. While the sermons were broadcast on a national television show, Falwell had never thought of them as political statements, but as exhortations to fellow evangelical Christians. It was at that moment that the Christian Right was officially born. Falwell realized that conservative Christians could make an impact on government policy and society by simply making their voices heard (Cromartie, 2001). Thence came the advent of Moral Majority, Inc., the first wave of the Christian Right movement in America.

The rise of the Christian Right in the United States and the corresponding attention paid to socially conservative issues by lawmakers, the media, and voters has proven to be one of the most important political developments of the last 25 years. Social conservatism has become the hallmark of the Republican party. Thus, the movement, its constituent parts, and the activities through which it interacts with the American political

system are important areas for scholarly research as we seek to more clearly understand its important role in the elections and decision-making of the United States.

The Christian Right is a relatively large and vocal group within the Republican party. As discussed earlier, CR supporters may comprise up to 45% of the Republican party's constituency in a state. They generally prove to be 10-15% of the total voting population. These numbers do not reflect the total Evangelical and Fundamentalist population in the United States. While exact figures are hard to ascertain, it seems clear that considerably less than all of the people who identify themselves as Evangelical or Fundamentalist Christians support the Christian Right movement or its policy goals and strategies. However, the success of mobilization efforts makes the movement a formidable force both in the Republican party and the larger realm of national politics. The focus within evangelical theology on redemption and involvement in the activities and functions of the church make Evangelicals as a group more willing and able to be mobilized into political activity than other groups with similarly intense ideological positions. The civic skills that Evangelicals of both sexes build in their interactions with others in their churches and Evangelical communities equip them for the tasks of political action. Most important, however, is the personal efficacy they acquire by their involvement in church activities. They believe that their concerted and committed efforts can have an impact on the issues and situations they target. These Evangelicals and Fundamentalists, who have similarly civic church experiences, form the backbone of the Christian Right movement. The CR is able to channel these skills and commitment into the furthering of their social and political goals.

The civic skills of Evangelicals, deployed in support of socially conservative issues and candidates, are a significant source of the success the Christian Right has had in raising the visibility of their strongly held moral and political views. While a perception that conservatives and the larger culture are endangered by contemporary society and politics is clearly vital to the motivation and mobilization of the movement, it is the way in which the movement and its supporters operate and implement their political activity that has convinced so many observers of their significant power in American politics.

Many people, commentators and laypeople alike, believe the Christian Right to be a very strong force in contemporary Republican politics. Given the comparatively small proportion of the population, 10-15%, that can be identified as supporters of the Christian Right, it seems somewhat strange that they are perceived to wield such dictatorial power over the policy and personnel decisions of the Republican party. It seems clear that the movement is identified as having power out of proportion with their actual number of supporters. The movement's ability to mobilize people and resources for their policy issues, however, can make them a formidable force, flooding the ranks of Republican activists. The movement and its activities in the party have become lightning rods for criticism both from within and outside the party. This has continued to be the case even as partisanship has evolved. More religiously traditional people of all faiths voted for George W. Bush for president than his Democratic counterpart in 2000. This is even true of conservative Catholics, ostensibly one of the mainstays of Democratic power (Bolce and De Maio, 2002). As the demographic makeup of the Republican party has shifted

more in the movement's favor, the Christian Right has also evolved into a somewhat different form with different foci and strategies.

The CR's growing concentration on state level politics in the last 15 years has changed the face of the movement and the activities in which it engages. The movement has capitalized on a perceived move to the right on the ideological spectrum by voters and has found the lack of widespread political involvement at the state level to be conducive to activist insurgence. As discussed at length earlier in this dissertation, the Christian Right has become an important constituent group in nearly every state's Republican party and has come to dominate the organization in many states. These characteristics make the Christian Right an important element in state politics and state parties and thus deserve significant attention. Not only is the Christian Right and its supporters and activities an interesting and important topic of study in its own right, but analyses of situations in which the movement interacts with the Republican party at the state level gives insight into the more general processes at work among political parties and social movements.

Perhaps most vital to understanding the specific Christian Right situation has been the analysis of the party organization itself. It has been clearly demonstrated that the rules by which a party operates and the ways in which they choose leaders are vitally important to the amount of influence the Christian Right can exert. We may further infer that these rules are important to those social movements seeking insurgency within political parties. The experience of the Christian Right in state parties, however, has also clarified the functioning of many of those parties. As Republican party organizations have sought to deal with CR insurgency, they have sometimes adapted in order to

accommodate the movement, or in some cases made access more difficult to protect the organization from such insurgency. Again, these party developments may affect the status and fortunes of non-CR social movements in the present or future as they try to exert influence on the state parties. Thus, analyses of the experience of the Christian Right in the state Republican parties serve a larger function by exploring the relationship between social movements and political parties, an avenue somewhat neglected in contemporary parties research.

This relationship between political parties and social movements has some interesting implications for participatory democracy as well. The entities are alike in that they both serve as conduits for making citizens' needs and opinions known to government. They serve as intermediaries between the governed and the governors both during and between elections. Thus, they both perform a vital role in the maintenance of participatory democracy. Citizens become mobilized through the identity they share with other members of a social movement; an identity they frequently have prior to their connection to others in the movement. By mobilizing around a particular set of ideas and goals, they focus their energies in order to put the most pressure on government or the larger society to change specified behavior or ideas. Social movements may choose to pursue their ends through the rubric of political party organizations. Even those that consciously reject such party activity are frequently associated with the ideology of a particular party. Thus, the party may eventually take on some or all of the goals of a social movement, creating a more institutionalized framework for the achievement of those objectives.

There are several examples of this in American history beyond the Christian Right and social conservatives in the Republican party. For example, by the mid-1930s, most of the original platform of the American Socialist party had been enacted by the Democratic administration of Franklin Roosevelt. The Democratic party was certainly more amenable to the aims of socialism than was the Republican party, and those voters who espoused some form of socialism frequently became Democrats in hopes of achieving their ends through democratic means.

The interplay between social movements and political parties is also made clear by the avenues of activist mobilization and assimilation obvious in many such relationships. Many citizens are mobilized into political life and activity and attain personal efficacy through their association with a social movement. Their interaction with a political party as a representative of the social movement gives them access to more avenues of power and influence and frequently convinces them of the usefulness of party endeavors. They may become partial or full members of party organizations, still retaining many of the issue positions and attitudes they formed as social movement activists. This assimilation process is clearly demonstrated in the case study portion of this project. Other consonant examples exist as well. The feminist movement and New Left in the Democratic party are both examples of social movements that through their contact with sympathetic Democratic leaders became assimilated into the Democratic party and now form a strong base both within Democratic voters and the party leadership itself.

The amount of influence the Christian Right exerts in state parties and how that influence comes about are clearly important topics of study for our understanding of

contemporary politics in the United States. Further, the situations observable within that relationship give us greater understanding of the general class of phenomena of which it is a part. The overall relationships between social movements and political parties are vital areas of study to gain a full understanding not only of the party system, but of the ways in which politics works at the grassroots level in America. In order to adequately examine both the Christian Right and state Republican parties, a multi-method approach was used where the insights of both quantitative survey research and qualitative case studies were combined to present the fullest picture of influence possible.

Utilizing the political observer study described in chapter three, I draw a broad outline of the influence of the Christian Right and causes for its success. The opinions provided by commentators from all over the country allow a birds-eye view of the situation and provide the necessarily large amount of data needed not only to compare the differing levels of influence exerted by the Christian Right but also to gauge those factors that are statistically important to the degree of influence achieved. By using this quantitative data, I am able to make generalizations about the variation in influence we observe from state to state. Rather than simply relying on the situation in individual states as much previous work on the CR movement at the state level has done, the political observer study allows me to look at the situation holistically and identify the characteristics important across the board in predicting the amount of influence the Christian Right exerts.

This quantitative data is expanded and fleshed-out by the case studies completed for this project. Still seeking to make theoretical generalizations about the results, I seek not only to comprehensively discuss the movement and Republican party in the context

of a specific state, but also to compare the findings of each case study to each other and the results of the political observer study. In this way, I am able to present both the wide overview and detailed nuance of the relationship among the various state movements and Republican parties. The two types of analyses complement each and are in many ways vital to the overall intentions of this project. The political observer study and influence variation model provide the ingredients for Christian Right influence, and the case studies show how those ingredients, primarily the state political context and the characteristics of the Christian Right movement in the state, interact to create the unique situation and influence level in each state. This multi-method approach allows me to not only understand the “what” of CR influence, but also the why and how.

The political observer study, influence variation model, and case studies have provided some interesting findings that are robust across the different types of analyses. Many of the variables significant in the influence variation model prove to be important in the narratives of the case studies. While in some cases those variables are expressed in unexpected ways, these findings further serve to strengthen the results of the model as it is able to account for even idiosyncratic situations in a state’s politics. Further, of the six hypotheses proposed in the early part of the dissertation, four are entirely confirmed by both the influence variation model and the case studies. These robust findings have led to some significant conclusions about the nature of Christian Right influence in state Republican parties, how it is achieved, and the importance of the situation in which the influence attempt takes place.

Perhaps the most important conclusion of the project is the importance of state Christian Right movement characteristics and the state’s political context in determining

the level of influence the Christian Right has in a state's Republican party. The variation in these attributes seems to be the primary reason for the differences we see in the degree to which the Christian Right can exert influence. In fact, the finding that these two concepts largely establish the amount of influence the movement has in a state's Republican party is the type of generalizable explanation, not available in other studies of the Christian Right at the state level, that this project originally set out to find. The variations in state situation and movement resources are accounted for in this framework and the idiosyncratic results of the case studies find structure in its parameters. Overall this conclusion guides other important results of the project and explains how all the data fit together into a comprehensive picture of Christian Right influence.

Within this framework, several specific findings are drawn from the interplay of the data from the political observer study and the case studies. First, and most basically, is the perception of threat on the part of the Christian Right movement and its supporters. Threat perception seems to be the underlying motivation for political activity in all the case studies, with greater or lesser degrees of threat prompting corresponding levels of activity. The issues and situations about which movement supporters felt threatened was important as well, supporting the significance of the threat perception variable in the influence variation model. Perception of threat seems to need a focal point for action in order to be a motivating and mobilizing force in Christian Right politics. This focal point is shown to be the leaders and coordinators of the movement and their policy strategies. The influence variation model shows the importance of such leadership most clearly with a coefficient significant at the $p < .001$ level. The case studies support this finding, and

also show the diversity of leadership and points of coordination that make the assembling of movement resources possible and effective.

Beyond the characteristics of the movement itself, the political context in which influence is attempted is shown to be extremely important. While measures of party strength and electoral robustness were not significant in the influence variation model, the vital role of party rules and state party traditions was clearly shown in the case studies. It is an important finding that the structure of the Republican parties' organizations constrain the behavior of Christian Right activists and their attempts to influence the party, most clearly shown in the Pragmatic State's case study. It seems safe to extend that finding and assert that party structure and rules are a defining factor in most relationships between parties and social movements or insurgent groups.

The structure of Republican party organization leads to varying levels of access to the party itself. In those states where the party is accessible, primarily observed in the Activist State case study, Christian Right activists seem to have been assimilated into the Republican party as they seek to use the organs of party power to further their policy strategies. This finding is primarily drawn from the case study portions and suggests that the importance of party rules would have been lost if I had only used the data from the political observer study. Movement activists are changed by their contact with the Republican party organization. They are functionally moderated as they learn the skills of compromise and persuasion so necessary to political success.

These conclusions are important because they tell us important things about both the interaction between the Christian Right and Republican party and between social movements and political parties more generally. Further, beyond simply proposing and

testing a generalizable model of influence variation, which the project does successfully, these conclusions elucidate interesting phenomena that are both part of the variation in observed influence and give insight into the inner workings of state party organizations. First, and most important, this project has fulfilled its stated goals by proposing and testing a model of influence variation across the states. The insights of the quantitative influence variation model and the qualitative case study analysis lead me to place influence variation in the framework of Christian Right movement characteristics and state political context. The general categories help organize the information about each state and its situation and provide a systematic way of viewing Christian Right influence in the Republican party at the state level. The secondary finding of the importance of activist assimilation not only provides nuance to the overall framework of analysis (and may explain the moderate levels of CR influence reported in southern states), but is also a significant finding of its own outside the goal of explanation of variation. If activists are assimilated into the party from their original positions as movement activists, their identity and goals change. This seems to have a moderating tendency on the activists. The process has significant implications for participatory democracy in the United States. If these activists, who are mobilized to political action for ideological reasons, are assimilated into the party system, the status quo mechanism of political communication and power, then perhaps they are not as dangerous to the functioning of democracy as many critics have charged. Their entry into movement and later party politics makes them more completely citizens, thereby making them more fully vested in the American political system and less likely to seek its radical altering to the detriment of civil liberties.

The earlier brief examples show the presence of this type of party assimilation in a variety of situations with differing groups and in different time periods. This applicability of findings shows that the conclusions of this particular project may be extendable to other situations where social movements and political parties interact. What little research exists suggests that parties may owe current and future relevancy and success to the activity of social movements within their ranks (Baer and Bositis, 1988). The current project provides more evidence concerning how the two entities interact and may serve as the starting point for more detailed research into the interactions at all levels.

Such expansions of this project into further research should take several directions. First in the refinement of measurement. In many cases the most precise or contemporary data available was used to operationalize concepts in the influence variation model. However, data that represents a closer conceptual fit to the model laid out in chapter two would improve the precision of the results. For example, a more up-to-date measure of state party strength might increase the variable's importance in the influence variation model. And further measurement of certain Christian Right variables, like threat perception, should benefit from replication in order to insure accuracy and reliability. Other useful variables might be added to the model, particularly those having to do with the state political context such as socio-economic status distributions or measurement of ideological cleavages within the Republican party itself. The case study portion of the project would benefit from more case studies of diverse states, thus improving the validity of case study results.

A somewhat problematic concept in the project that should benefit from extensions to the study is the idea of “influence.” Given its intangible nature, the concept is hard to define and operationalize. Other ways to measure influence should be explored in the quest to ensure the reliability and validity of such a measure. Two avenues readily present themselves for future research. First, the influence of the Christian Right on the Republican party may be operationalized as the impact the movement has on the platform of the state Republican party. The party platform is frequently the most important pronouncement of policy goals made by a state party. Analyzing the platforms for CR influence in areas such as abortion policy, education, homosexuality, and church regulation may yield a more concrete measure of Christian Right influence. Because the platforms are usually drafted by party leaders in a convention committee, the effect of Christian Right influence on an entirely internal function would allow perhaps a more specific measure.

A second extension of this research that may yield a more concrete measure of Christian Right influence is the analysis of bills proposed and passed within the state legislature. As evidenced in the case studies, CR activists frequently help legislators write amenable bills. The identification of these bills and the proportion of them passed may show more concretely the influence of the Christian Right in the legislative portion of the party organization. Further, general analysis of policy change over time may also show the influence of the Christian Right in the state policy apparatus as a whole.

Other extensions of this research may provide a clearer picture of the political context faced by the Christian Right as they seek influence in the states. One factor observed in many states has been the development of organized opposition to the

Christian Right both within and outside the Republican party. In some cases, this has further constrained the movement's ability to exert influence. It is interesting, however, that the case studies in this project did not find a primary role for developing opposition. In the Activist State a reaction to the Christian Right outside the party has been evident in the voting returns of the early 1990s. However, it is not clear that the reaction was a result of organized effort. Observers believe that voters simply wanted to vote for candidates that were less conservative than those supported by a CR-dominated Republican party structure. Certainly the presence of business Republicans in the Activist State and the professionalism of the Republican party in the Pragmatic State are also forms of within-party opposition. But none of the counter-mobilization within the Republican party evident in some other states was displayed in these three states. Clearly the concept is important and State case studies by other scholars have pointed to this factor. Therefore, more case study research on further states would likely reveal a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon. Perhaps a measure of intra- and inter-party opposition could be constructed for testing within a quantitative model like the influence variation model of chapter four.

The most important state political context variables, the rules governing the party, its functions and organization, deserve serious consideration on their own. Not only are more appropriate and comprehensive measures of the party strength, organizational type, and leadership selection needed, but further case study research seems also to be needed. It is clear from the totality of this project that the variables used to measure aspects of the Republican party organization in the influence variation model were not sufficient to gauge the true outlines of the important concepts. The wide diversity of state party laws

makes quantification difficult except in the broadest of categories, though perhaps a set of organizational and party rules variables might be constructed that would more appropriately gauge the important aspects of the Republican party for Christian Right insurgency. Thus, a more nuanced look at how a party governs itself, how it selects leaders at all levels of organization, and the electoral success with which it has strengthened its place in state politics is necessary to fully understand the implications of party rules for Christian Right influence and other similar insurgent activities. This avenue may prove to be the most fruitful and interesting of the possible extensions of the research in this project. State parties are frequently not as closely studied as their national counterparts because of complexity and feasibility issues. Clearly, however, there is a wealth of information concerning the state parties available to the political scientists with the resources to gather it.

More broadly, the logical progression of this research into the interactions among state Christian Right movements and state Republican parties is to analyze other instances of social movement/party interaction at the state level for commonalities and differences that may suggest general theories about such relationships. Perhaps most closely related would be a social movement such as Feminists in the Democratic party. But even further extensions could be imagined encompassing the progressive movement, the temperance movement, and even labor unions.

Due to the unique roles played by parties and social movements in American society and politics, much can be learned about grassroots and participatory democracy in the further study of the interactions between the two entities. We can observe in this study the assimilation of movement activists into the ranks of the Republican party. They

both change the party and are changed by their participation in the party. Further research should examine the ways in which such activism promotes a richer idea of citizenship for activists and those they mobilize.

These possible extensions of this project and the suggestions for future research show the significant amount of work that still needs to be done in order to fully understand the phenomenon of the Christian Right's influence on state Republican parties. The study of interactions among political parties and social movements is a fruitful research area with room for theoretical growth and a wealth of information to be collected. It is clearly an important matter for the understanding of political parties and their internal functions. Further, the growth in knowledge in this sub-discipline sheds further light on democracy in practice, how politics works at the grassroots level and affects the daily lives of its participants.

Jerry Falwell's phone call roused a slumbering giant. A considerable proportion of the previously politically inactive members of Evangelical and Fundamentalist churches have been mobilized to action by the Christian Right and its supporters. Now a powerful force in Republican politics and in state and national politics, the movement makes an impact that exceeds its numerical strength through the dedication and hard work of thousands of activists and supporters in nearly every community in America. Garnering this strength, the Christian Right has specifically targeted state Republican parties for their influence and the movement has been at least moderately successful in a majority of states. The characteristics of the movement and its activists in each state and the political structures in which they operate have significant bearing on the amount and

shape of that influence. The movement has likely become a permanent part of the American political landscape and provides a complex, and extremely interesting, avenue for the study of the relationship between political parties and social movements.

APPENDIX A

REQUEST FOR POLITICAL OBSERVER STUDY PARTICIPATION



Department of Political Science

2140 Derby Hall
154 North Oval Mall
Columbus, Ohio 42310-1373

Phone: 614-292-2880
Fax: 614-292-1146

On behalf of *Campaigns and Elections* Magazine, we are conducting a survey of politically active individuals in all fifty states to determine the strength and influence the Christian Right (politically conservative Christians) and its organizations have in your state and in your state's Republican party. The results of this survey will be published in a future issue of the magazine, updating one published in the October 1994 issue of *Campaigns and Elections*. The research will also be used for academic study.

As a person active in politics in your state, you are uniquely qualified to assess the strength of the Christian Right and its role in your state's Republican party. We are asking only a few well-placed observers to complete our questionnaire in each state, so your response is very important to our study. Please be assured that all responses will remain anonymous; all names and identifying information will be stripped from the survey responses before we analyze or publish any of the data.

The survey should take less than five minutes to complete. Just clearly circle or fill in your responses to the questions on the following pages and then fax those sheets, along with the original cover sheet, back to (419) 730-7485. It is very important that you fax the original cover sheet to us; it allows us to verify that we have received only one completed questionnaire from you.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact the project's research assistant, Kimberly Conger, by email: kim@kimberlyconger.com, or by phone: (614) 537-8006.

Thank you for your participation!

Kimberly H. Conger
PhD Student
The Ohio State University

Dr. John C. Green
University of Akron

Dr. Paul Allen Beck
The Ohio State University

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

In this survey you will be asked to respond to questions about the Christian Right and the Republican party in your state. By the Christian Right we mean *members or supporters of any political group of Christians that espouses and promotes a religiously conservative political agenda*. This would include groups popularly thought of as a part of the Christian Right movement, including the Christian Coalition or Focus on the Family. It would also include the groups who fit the above description and concentrate their efforts upon one issue area; for example, home-schooling or pro-life groups. When in doubt, simply use your own perceptions of what you would consider to be the Christian Right in your state to guide your answers to the following questions. PLEASE CIRCLE THE ANSWER THAT BEST REPRESENTS YOUR OPINION.

1. Overall, how influential is the Christian Right in the politics of your state?

Extremely Influential	Very Influential	Somewhat Influential	Slightly Influential	Not at all Influential
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2. In your opinion, how has that influence changed since 1994?

Much Stronger	Slightly Stronger	No Change	Slightly Weaker	Much Weaker
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3. How active was the Christian Right in the 2000 campaigns in your state

Extremely Active	Very Active	Somewhat Active	Slightly Active	Not Active at all
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4. Thinking about the Christian Right's impact on the outcome of the 2000 elections in your state, would you say the movement had:

Great Impact	Substantial Impact	Some Impact	Little Impact	No Impact at all
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5. What percentage of your state's Republican Party Committee would you say support the agenda of the Christian Right?

- 5a. What percentage of your state's Republican Party Committee would you say are members of a Christian Right Organization?

6. In your opinion, how much influence has the Christian Right exerted on the nominations for state-wide Republican candidates in the 1998 or 2000 election?

Great Influence	Substantial Influence	Some Influence	Little Influence	No Influence at all
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7. In the past two years, 1999 and 2000, how much influence has the Christian Right had on the legislative priorities of the Republican party in your state?

Great Influence	Substantial Influence	Some Influence	Little Influence	No Influence at all
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8. To what degree is there conflict within your state's Republican Party regarding the influence of the Christian Right in the party?

Significant Conflict	Some Conflict	Little Conflict	No Conflict at all
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9. Which Christian Right groups are most visible in your state?

10. About how many people in your state are members of Christian Right organizations?

11. Among the Christian Right groups in your state, how much agreement or conflict exists concerning issues and tactics?

Complete Unity	Very Cohesive	Somewhat Cohesive	Slightly Cohesive	Not Cohesive at all
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12. How politically skillful would you say the leadership of the Christian Right is in your state?

Very Skillful	Some what Skillful	Slightly Skillful	Not at all skillful
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13. In your opinion, what is the most important issue for the Christian Right in your state?

14. In general, how important is that issue to the citizens of you state?

Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Slightly Important	Not at all Important
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15. The Christian Right in some states feels that their core values are being threatened by state policy, state politicians, and/or the social culture in their state. To what extent does this characterize the Christian Right in your state? In your opinion, do they feel:

Very Threatened	Somewhat Threatened	Slightly Threatened	Not at all Threatened
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16. To what extent do the election laws in your state advantage or disadvantage the Christian Right?

Greatly Advantage	Somewhat Advantage	Neither Advantage or Disadvantage	Somewhat Disadvantage	Greatly Disadvantage
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17. In your opinion, how will the influence of the Christian Right in your state change over the next four years?

Much Stronger	Somewhat Stronger	Neither Stronger or Weaker	Somewhat Weaker	Much Weaker
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18. The organizational strength of a political party can be measured in a variety of ways. The most important of these are: number and professionalization of staff, budget, and level of activity to support the party and its candidates. Given these characteristics, how strong would you say the state-level Republican party organization is in your state?

Very Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Very Weak
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APPENDIX C

EXPLORATION OF ALTERNATIVE STATE INFLUENCE INDEX CALCULATIONS

Matrix for Factor Analysis of Respondent Type overall index responses

Respondent Type	Factor #1	Factor #2
Academic Observer	.888	.183
Christian Right	.260	.835
Democratic Party	.847	6.678 E-02
Political Consultant	.597	.504
Political Media	.743	.182
Religious Media	.693	.588
Republican Party	5.018 E-02	.951

Total Variance Explained: 74.83%

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Varimax Rotation with Kaiser Normalization; Pairwise Deletion

Bivariate Correlations of Respondent Type Overall Index Responses (Pearson)

	AO	CR	DP	PC	PM	RM	RP
AO		.416	.637**	.465	.720	.744	.230
CR	.416		.298	.442*	.409	.569*	.716**
DP	.637**	.298		.556**	.445	.640	.113
PC	.465	.442*	.556**		.431	.722**	.462*
PM	.720	.409	.445	.431		.446	.248
RM	.744	.569*	.640*	.722*	.446		.599
RP	.230	.716**	.113	.462*	.248	.599	

* Correlation significant at the .05 level

** Correlation significant at .01 level (two-tailed)

Respondent Type Group Distribution

“Left” (AO, DP, PM); N = 110

“Center” (PC, PM); N = 170

“Right” (CR, RP); N = 112

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Pragmatic State: 14 People; 5 Republicans, 2 Democrats, 2 Christian Right Leaders, 2 Academics, 3 Media

1. State Republican Party Official
2. University Professor
3. University Professor
4. Christian Right Leader
5. Political Reporter
6. State Democratic Government Official
7. State Republican Legislator
8. State Republican Party Notable
9. National Republican Legislator
10. Christian Right Leader
11. State Republican Party Official
12. Political Reporter
13. State Democratic Party Official
14. Political Reporter

Activist State: 17 People; 6 Republicans (2 Consultants); 4 Democrats (1 Consultant); 2 Christian Right Leaders, 3 Academics, 2 Media

1. State Republican Party Official/Conservative Interest Group Leader
2. State Democratic Party Official
3. Political Reporter
4. University Professor
5. State Republican Government Official
6. State Democratic Party Official
7. State Republican Legislator
8. University Professor
9. Democratic/Independent Political Consultant
10. Republican Political Consultant
11. Political Reporter
12. State Democratic Party Official
13. Christian Right Leader
14. Republican Political Consultant

15. University Professor
16. Christian Right Leader
17. State Republican Government Official

Interconnected State: 21 People; 9 Republicans, 1 Democrat, 3 Christian Right Leaders, 3 Academics, 5 Media

1. State Republican Legislator
2. Political Reporter
3. National Republican Party Official
4. University Professor
5. State Republican Party Notable
6. Political Reporter
7. Political Reporter
8. Political Reporter
9. University Professor
10. State Republican Party Official
11. Christian Right Leader
12. Republican/Christian Right Activist
13. Republican/Christian Right Activist
14. Republican/Christian Right Activist
15. Christian Right Leader
16. Christian Right Leader
17. State Republican Party Notable
18. University Professor
19. State Republican Party Official
20. Political Reporter
21. State Democratic Party Official

APPENDIX E

TEMPLATE LETTER REQUESTING AN INTERVIEW

Dear _____:

I am a political science PhD student at Ohio State University doing research for my dissertation. I am looking into the relationship between the state-level Republican party and politically active conservative Christians. After conducting a national survey of political observers in all 50 states, I would like to do more in-depth research about _____. I am conducting interviews with leaders in both parties, religious conservative activists, and particularly people like yourself who will be able to give me a birds eye view of _____ politics. I wonder if you might have some time to talk with me. I expect the interview to take 30-45 minutes. While I'd like to audiotape our interview, it would be at your discretion and you would in no way be identified in the final research project.

[Scheduling information]

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email or by phone: _____.

Thanks for your time!

Sincerely,

Kimberly Conger

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. “Tell me about your involvement in state politics.”
 - a. Probe for:
 - i. Participant’s daily job functions.
 - ii. Participant’s involvement in the Christian Right or Republican Party or Media.
2. “Tell me about the Republican party in your state.”
 - a. Probe for:
 - i. Strength – staff, money, SERVICE to candidates and local parties (How does this compare to similar states?)
 - ii. Structure – permeability, points of access
 - iii. State-Level activities - candidate support, issue involvement, policy stands, platform
 - iv. Who makes decisions? How are they communicated? (state committee, county chairs, legislative leadership, governor)
3. “Tell me about the activity of the Christian Right in your state.”
 - a. Probe for:
 - i. First emergence and Historical level of influence
 - ii. Specific or “turning point” events
 - iii. Important issues/groups/leaders
 - iv. Internal cohesion among groups
 - v. Current level of influence in state politics – overall and in Evangelical and Fundamentalist community
 - vi. General Public Opinion of CR
 - vii. Ties to larger evangelical community
 - viii. Perception of threat from policy, state or national
 - ix. Linkage between state and national politics
4. “What has the relationship between the Christian Right and the Republican party been like in your state?”
 - a. Probe for:
 - i. General opinion of the party about the movement and vice versa
 - ii. CR Tactics and success – “What do they do? Are they good at it?”

- iii. How many members of the Republican state committee are sympathetic to the CRs positions?
 - iv. How active is the CR in candidate nominations or state legislative agenda
 - v. Is there conflict within the party about the role of the CR? Have there been accommodations? On either side?
 - vi. Other sources of (non-CR) conflict. What issues dominate?
5. “Is there anything about your state’s politics that you think has been a central factor in defining the CR’s relationship with the party?”
- a. Probe for:
 - i. General state ideological profile (how conservative or liberal?)
 - ii. Particular state issues
 - iii. Ballot and referenda laws
6. “How do you see the relationship changing in the future?”
7. “Am I missing anything?”

APPENDIX G

CASE STUDY AND INTERVIEW METHODS

The case study methodology utilized here follows the format developed by Alexander George (1982), seeking to find causal relationships between Christian Right influence in a state's Republican party and the social and political characteristics of the state, its Republican party, and Christian Right movement. This is accomplished using specific, contextual information from a single state instead of the comparison across all the states utilized earlier in this dissertation.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 50 people across the three states (see Appendix D). They occurred primarily in the participants' offices, with a few in restaurants and one in a participant's home. Three were conducted as telephone interviews due to scheduling conflicts. Participants were principally selected in two ways. First, some had earlier been identified as political leaders or observers through the sample collection efforts described in chapter three's Political Observer Study. Second, many were referred to me by other interview participants. Using pre-existing political and social contacts, I was able to identify a principal activist or politician within each state who was willing to introduce me to a variety of other potential interview participants. These contacts were, by far, the most productive. Potential participants were contacted by phone or email and asked to meet with me during a specific week when I was visiting their state. They were informed of the purpose of the interviews and the nature of the larger project, and their permission was sought to audiotape the interview. Finally, they were informed of the anonymity standards for the project (See Appendix E).

There is likely a bias in the type of people who agreed to be interviewed, but given the range of people I interviewed and the other sources of information I consulted to compile the case studies, I do not believe the situation will cause systematic errors in the analysis. In each state I was able to talk to a leader in both the Republican and Democratic party, though not always leadership within the state party organization itself. Further, I interviewed several of the most prominent Christian Right leaders and members of the media whose focus was state politics in each state. Overall, I believe that those who refused to grant me interviews (and the reasons they gave for their refusals) give me some interesting information about the political and social climate within each state and the sensitivity of the topic of religious conservative involvement in state politics.

While content analysis of the interviews was used, it was of a subjective nature. In listening to the recordings of the interviews and assessing the transcripts, I sought

themes in conversations. Events, issues, people, and evaluations that were consistently discussed by participants became the main concepts on which I focused. In many cases, participants addressed similar situations in diverse ways, adding to my understanding of the topic. Further, I sought to understand differences or inconsistencies in the narratives given by participants. Some appeared to be disparity in the information available to participants; however some represented multiple explanations of a single situation, a finding that helped describe the ideological and social features of the state and illuminated its political situation.

The information gained in the interviews was combined with information from a variety of other sources to produce each case study. I utilized the publications of many of the Republican parties and Christian Right interest groups themselves, including party platforms, newsletters, special interest newspapers and fund-raising letters. Newspaper articles concerning political and social issues within the state and the activity of the Christian Right were used. I also made use of books and articles on the history and politics of each state and state level case studies produced by other scholars. Public opinion survey information was employed to gauge the demographic and opinion trends in the state. Other more specific information, including relationships among activists, donation amounts, and issue positions, as well as various accounts of important events was traced taking advantage of resources available on the internet. These sources, along with subsequent information provided to me by interview participants comprise the non-interview information utilized in the case study reports.

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