Blue Bible, Red Bible: Sin or Right?

Examining the Impact of Theology on Morality Based Opinions

Among Faith Centered African Americans

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Abstract

To examine religious influence on political behavior and public opinion, scholars often operationalize religiosity. Despite deviations, broadly existing definitions of religiosity connect conceptually to measures of religious, organizational, and institutional engagement and commitment. This paper puts forth a multidimensional measure of theology as an alternative measure, utilizing data from the 2012 Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion survey (N=1714). The Theology measure was developed through confirmatory factor analysis and structural-equation modeling methods. All analyses were conducted in STATA, employing maximum-likelihood estimation methods. The measure was tested on faith-centered African Americans to determine the extent that their political orientation influences issues of morality, and what it says for support or opposition of marriage equality.

*Keywords: African Americans, religiosity, theology, morality, public opinion*

Blue Bible, Red Bible: Sin or Right? Examining the impact of theology on morality based opinions among faith centered African Americans.

Many scholars operationalize religiosity to examine religious influence on political behavior and public opinion. However, these definitions of religiosity connect conceptually to measures of religious, organizational, and institutional engagement and commitment. Although nuanced measures of religiosity exist, these items are often not included in large social science datasets such as the National Election Studies and General Social Survey. The applied literature’s treatment of religiosity is likened to membership in any secular club or organization. Accordingly, more nuanced yet generalizable scales of religiosity are necessary. I argue that religiosity is emphatically different in that occurrences of strong doctrinal commitments, direct teachings, and in depth reading and interpretation of texts are not often captured in many widely used measures which reference theological considerations alone.

The applied literature tends to assume that there is a link between religious belief and practice. Though there is some measure of continuity between practice and belief, I aim to challenge the conventional wisdom that there is a one to one correspondence. Existing measures of religiosity do not capture a person’s way of reading and interpreting the Bible or their understanding of God, and this leads to an inadequate understandings of how religion influences political behavior. I argue instead that a more nuanced consideration of belief rooted in a systematic study of God concepts and claims of religious truths, or theology, would garner more accurate and robust predictions about the influence of religion on public opinion, particularly in regard to the interplay between faith and morality related views. My approach would serve as an alternative to the commonly employed broad understanding of religious belief, activity, and commitment, heretofore known as religiosity.

Hill and Hood (1999) argue that the construction of new measurements are only necessary if (1) existing measures are not psychometrically adequate to the task; (2) conceptual or theoretical issues demand reformation of standing measures; or (3) there are no batteries available for particular constructs, which then necessitates the creation of new measures (3). I argue that there is no individual theology measure, and therefore the creation of a new measurement that more adequately captures the dynamic relationship between faith and political attitudes is justified. The word theology itself refers to the *logos* (reasoning) about *theos* (God and divine things) (Tillich, 1957, 15).[[1]](#footnote-1) Although this paper focuses on Protestant Christian religious sentiment, the Theology scale is generalizable beyond the particulars of a certain faith or religious tradition. I understand theology as defined by Paul Tillich, as “the methodical explanation of the contents of the Christian faith” (28). Although one may argue theology is an intrinsic subcategory of religiosity and differentiations among these concepts are artificial, I aim to separate the two constructs conceptually and statistically. Conceptually, religiosity and theology or, respectively, organizational commitments and practice and belief, understanding as opposed to the systematic study of God (including the specific concepts and nature of religious truths), although related are two theoretically different concepts.

In the following paper I will (1) operationalize theology in a Christian context, measuring understandings of scripture and God; (2) examine robustness of the literature’s religiosity scale and offer an alternative and more effective measure; and (3) reconceptualize theology and religiosity through judicial and constitutional interpretation, understanding theology and religiosity as strict, moderate, and loose. Finally, because of their unique political ideology, I will utilize faith-centered African Americans to test the Theology variable against their conservative political orientation regarding issues of morality and religious devoutness, with a focus on their views on same gender loving marriage (same sex marriage).

**Review of the Literature**

**Religiosity**

Measures of religiosity, applied within the literature, historically have only included single-factor and single-item measures, which typically examine religious participation (e.g. self-reported church attendance) or religious affiliation (e.g. denominational affiliations). Recognizing limitations of such an instrument, recent multidimensional measures of religiosity have come to include self-reported items comprised of frequency of prayer, attendance at religious services (outside of funerals), reading sacred texts, financial contributions, religious salience, and, at times, biblical literalism (Lenski, 1961; Clayton 1971; Voas, 2009).

Some scholars attempt to operationalize denomination as a measure to ascertain distinct cultural and religious beliefs and practices. However, this understanding artificially homogenizes denominations and fails to disentangle discontinuities among individual worship sites including doctrinal teachings, clergy sovereignty, and reading and interpretation of sacred text (Woodberry, Park, and Kellstedt et al, 2012). Other scales of religiosity aim to measure religious beliefs and practices and scales degrees of religious commitment and involvement (Pfeifer & Waelty, 1995). Sethi and Seligman (1993) established the Religious Measure to correlate three aspects of religiosity (religious influence in daily life, religious involvement, and religious hope) with attribution, style, and optimism.

Although the limited literature examines the role of theology, it is limited to items included as parts of larger scales of religious beliefs and practices, religious commitment and involvement, religious and moral values, or religious extremism. Furthermore, these understandings of religiosity often operate within a problematic liberal-conservative framework. Stellway (1973) measures commitments to theological, anthropological, and epistemological frames but only within politically conservative Christianity.

Liberal-conservative theological frameworks automatically assume that theology translates into liberal-conservative political ideology or persuasions (Coursey Ed. Hill & Hood, 1999). The Social-Religious-Political scale measures social, religious, and political attitudes of adult respondents on a liberal to conservative scale that examines the extent in which respondents are open to individuals from other religious denominations or political persuasions (Katz, 1988). Other liberal-conservative scales are couched within particular doctrinal or orthodoxy commitments, which limits the scales generalizability. The Religious Attitude Scale (RAS) assesses liberalism, conservatism, and orthodoxy, but liberalism characterizes Unitarian perspectives, conservatism the Protestant position, and orthodoxy is understood through the Roman Catholic context (Armstrong, Larsen, and Mourer, 1962). Measures that superimpose ideology on particular denominations become problematic because they assume that the views held by the membership of a denomination are cohesive, dependent, and analogous. While there has been research on the linkage between biblical literalism and conservatism (e.g. marriage and parenting ideology), much of the literature focuses on non African American populations and very little situates the role of theology (Bartkowski, 1996). Additionally, the limited body of literature that integrates theology does so within a framework of measuring fundamentalism. The Christian Fundamentalist Belief Scale (CFBS), a scale theoretically limited by denomination, measures the construct of fundamentalism within the Protestant tradition, focusing primarily on authority and inerrancy of the Bible (Gibson & Francis, 1996).

Additionally, religiosity measurement development tools have centered on applicability to social, moral, and political opinions and values (Glock & Stark, 1966; Ausubel & Schpoont, 1957). Scales of religious and moral values aim to demonstrate the influence of religious faith on belief systems. Schmidt’s Character Assessment Scale (1987) evaluates personal character traits but it is within the framework of an evangelical Christian commitment. Friesen and Wagner (2012) examine the “three B’s” (believing, behaving, and belonging) and find that contemporary measures of religious traditionalism precisely reflect individuals’ issue preferences, attitudes, and partisan ideologies. Nonetheless, understanding broad issues at the intersection of faith and politics are best understood through denominational guidance on questions of the role of religion in society.

An increasing body of literature aims to examine religiosity at the intersection of race. Jacobson, Heaton, and Dennis (1990) find that latent dimensions of religiosity (personal religious behavior, belief orthodoxy, ritual involvement, and consequentiality) are not interrelated in the same way for Whites as they are for Blacks—specific items do not relate to the latent dimensions in the same way for the two groups. Though there is a great deal of similarity between religiosities, the differences found in latent dimensions among the group calls for further examination and more nuanced approaches to scale development. As a result, researchers have created specific multidimensional measures of religious involvement for African Americans. Chatters, Levin, and Taylor (1992) created a model of religiosity among African Americans aged 55 years and older, which incorporated religious involvement including organizational, non-organizational, and subjective religiosity. They determine that antecedents exhibit stronger effects on subjective religiosity than organizational and non-organizational dimension of religiosity.

**Conservative Ideology and Democratic Party Identification**

The PEW Research Center notes that African Americans are more intensely religious and observant than other Americans. Despite their level of religious commitment, African Americans support the Democratic Party in large margins. This indicates that they may be personal conservatives and ballot box liberals. In comparison to the general US population religious commitment is linked directly with party affiliation. For example, PEW reports that among the general US population, forty percent of those who attend worship services minimally once per week favor the Democratic Party, and among those who attend services less frequently, fifty-one percent favor the Democratic Party. Such differences between party leaning, religious commitment, and background are not seen within the African American community as ninety-five percent of African Americans in 2008 supported the Democratic Presidential candidate and over ninety percent in 2012 (PEW, 2012).

Although Black Americans are more likely to support the Democratic Party, t, t,,heir political ideology is far more complicated. African Americans are more liberal on the role of the government, redistributive policies, and universalizing rights, but they are more conservative on certain social and moral issues such as abortion, homosexuality, and school prayer (Walton and Smith, 2010). Again, conservatism in these issues does not necessarily translate into support for Conservative Republican candidates, as Black Americans tend to vote on the basis of material issues instead of moral issues; Blacks rank economic and social issues as more salient than issues on the conservative agenda (Dawson, 1994, 112; Dawson, 2001, 112; Tate, 2010, 96). Additionally, Blacks rank economic and racial issues much higher than social issues.

**The Black Church as a Political Institution**

Historically within the African American community, the church and its religion has been a fundamental agent of socialization (Walton and Smith, 2010). The church has served as a foundation for Black political culture and activism (Omi and Winant, 1994). It has provided a base for oppositional and protest politics against the institutions of slavery, segregation, discrimination, racism and oppression (Walton and Smith, 2010; Dawson, 2001). Religious institutions are also critical mobilizers of African Americans in the political processes and provide political and personal efficacy (Harris, 1999). The African American church maintains itself as the “most organized, visible, and nurturing institution for the overall life of black North Americans” (Hopkins, 1993, 1). Additionally, the emergence of liberationist theology enabled Blacks to understand their political, social, and economic liberation through faith in the divine through their own theological perspectives on God, Jesus Christ, and human purpose (Hopkins, 1993, 22).

A growing body of literature examining religiosity in relation to political ideology suggests that institutions and congregations mutually reinforce their shared values. Wald, Owen, and Hill’s (1988) study of Protestant congregations demonstrates an individual’s political conservatism is determined by the theological conservatism of her or his congregation. Accordingly, this points to the ability for the congregation and clergy to be able to influence each other. Religion and faith informs Black politics and vice versa. Religious institutions provide political cues and affect the political actions and beliefs of their members (Gilbert, 1993). While the notion of the separation of church and politics (or secular and sacred) might be distinct within other racial communities it is a far less pertinent concern in African American communities (Sawyer Ed. Crawford and Olson, 2001, 67; Hopkins, 1993, 3).

**The Church as a Moralizing Organization**

Religious organizations also serve as moralizing institutions. Goldscheider and Mosher (1991) determined that traditional family values are more likely to be important for individuals involved in faith-based organizations. Moreover, religious leaders and political elites can raise political issues as questions of morality and mobilize religiously inclined individuals in favor of political candidates who support their moral framework, or in opposition to certain issues such as abortion or homosexuality through ballot referendums, initiatives, or rallies (Harris, 2001; Walton and Smith 2010). Gilbert and Djupe (2009) also suggest controversial issues including abortion and gun control are addressed by clergy and 60 percent church members correctly perceived by lay members. Additionally, African Americans directly connect their conservative political orientation regarding issues of morality to scripture and their faith as noted by the PEW Research Center (2009). African Americans as a group are more likely than the general population to interpret the Bible literally and also believe in the authority of the scripture. While some scholars have attempted to move beyond measures of biblical literalism I argue that measures such as literalism and theology are necessary to understand morality-based opinions within the Black body politic. These measures are increasingly salient with the rise of online ministries and televangelism.

**Theory**

African Americans are one of the most religiously committed groups in the United States (PEW, 2009). Although African Americans are highly committed to voting Democratic they tend to be socially conservative and opposed to morally liberal positions on same sex marriage and abortion for instance (Sherkat et al. 2010). Though conservative views on morality have persisted, recent scholarship has pointed toward a decoupling of African Americans from formal churches (Harris-Lacewell, 2007). Martin et al. (2011) has argued the Black mega-churches, with the goal of increasing church attendance and reaching audiences beyond the physical locations of the congregation, have purposely invested in online outreach through digital resources including: websites, texting, and blogging. This indicates that at least one component of religiosity, namely organizational and institutional commitment, may no longer be appropriate to understand the cause of long-standing conservative ideologies. In light of this shift away from traditional formal religious institutions it should be asked: how does theology impact morality based opinions among faith centered African Americans?

Faith-centered African Americans are employed to test the Theology battery due to their conservative political orientation regarding issues of morality and religious devoutness. African Americans with strict theological understandings are expected to hold more conservative opinions on morality issues. Denominational or religiosity measures should be less predictive compared to the other components rooted in this paper’s conception of theology for this specific group of subjects (Pew, 2009; Harris-Lacewell, 2007; Walton and Smith, 2010). To operationalize theology, I apply the definition put forth by Paul Tillich. He argues that, within the Christian tradition, theology must serve the needs of the church and that theological systems must fulfill two basic needs: To provide (1) “the statement of truth of the Christian message and” (2) “the interpretation of this truth for every new generation” (3). Theology may thus be characterized as the systematic study and explanation of the contents of the Christian faith including God (his attributes, and works), biblical hermeneutics, eschatology, moral theology, and the afterlife.

My operationalization of theology departs from specific theological types (e.g. descriptive theology, normative theology, and theology of culture) but seeks to measure the concept of theological reasoning about God more broadly. Instead of asking the respondents questions such as, “What is the nature of God and how is God related to humanity?” I ask about the nature of God’s existence. Whether the respondent has no doubts, some doubts, sometimes believes, believes in a higher power or cosmic force, or does not know and has no way to find out about God’s existence. At the core, this operationalization of theology seeks to understand how respondents seek to reason about God, and how they view the central tenants of the Christian faith. Each individual item represented within the scale represents a theological norm and collectively the Theology battery measures an individual’s understanding of the God in relation to Biblical text.

Since measures of theology, inter-denominationally and doctrinally, could become problematic (e.g. Trinitarians versus non Trinitarians), I attempt to strip the measure to core theological constructs. Borrowing from judicial and constitutional interpretations, theology is likewise categorically constructed as strict, moderate, and loose. The more limited and restrained an individual’s theological understanding (i.e. I have no doubts that God exists) versus unbounded and relaxed (i.e. I believe in a higher power or cosmic force) the more theologically strict the individual. Previous scholarship has attempted to utilize “theologically liberal” and “theologically conservative” measures. I reject this method and endeavor to dissociate those terminologies from political, social, and moral ideologies. “Theologically liberal” and “theologically conservative” may be conflated with liberal and conservative political ideologies and party identification. As an alternative I develop a strict versus loose conceptualization to remove premature political suppositions. The measure of strictness enables scholars to divorce ideas of theological construction with political ideology; the insertion of strictness enables individuals to be theologically strict (finite and unflinching to their theology or understanding of God) but does not reduce them to a particular political ideology, necessarily. By challenging and changing the contours of religiosity to account for beliefs, interpretations, and attitudes through theology, scholars can understand incongruences between political ideology and political party so that an individual may maintain a conservative ideology without being a Conservative.

The categories of theologically strict, moderate, and loose are predicated on interpretations of the Judeo-Christian Bible (the Old and New Testaments). Put differently, this means that, throughout the cannon there are key Biblical scriptures that individuals potentially use to demonstrate the immorality or sinful nature of certain issues, without any reference to a hermeneutical approach, historicization, contextualization, or a critical reading of the text. An individual who understands the Bible and God in the strictest terms should err toward a conservative stance on morality issues. It should be noted that some scholars might argue that scriptural literalism is a hermeneutical approach to the Bible or that true scriptural literalism is difficult to operationalize. In this case, however, I understand hermeneutics to be any critical method of understanding the text beyond a literal (word-for-word) reading, understanding, and interpretation (Bartkowski, 1996). Theological strictness directly maps on to biblical and scriptural literalism.

**Theology in Practice**

In African American Christian religious traditions, there has been little separation between church and state (Sawyer Ed. Crawford and Olson, 2001; Hopkins, 1993). Pastors, reverends, bishops and other religious clergy have applied Biblical teachings and theological approaches to politics, and disseminated political opinions from the pulpit. Theopolitical statements within worship sites have the capacity to mobilize African American populations. California’s 2008 Proposition 8 ballot initiative remains a testament to the power of churches; particularly African American churches’ ability to involve and mobilize faith centered African Americans against same sex marriage. Seventy percent of African American voters casted a ballot in favor of Proposition 8, a trend that greatly contributed to its four-point victory margin (CNN National Election Pool, 2008). Many voters cited religious opinions as a key factor in determining their vote. A growing body of literature has linked religiosity to public opinion and vote choice (McKenzie and Rouse, 2013).

African American religious communities have been known to embrace liberation theologies grounded in biblical images of the Exodus to overcome institutionalized racism and discrimination. Although, progressive hermeneutical, or interpretational, approaches of reading biblical text through the eyes of the oppressed and downtrodden exist, such traditions may not embrace “liberated” views of women or gay communities. Early critics of liberationist theology had argued that Black liberation theology failed to take seriously sexism and later, sexuality (Chapman, 1996; Griffin, 2006). Moreover, the presence of progressive liberationist theological views does not negate the fact that African Americans remain largely morally conservative. In 2012, President Obama’s interview with Robin Roberts sent shockwaves through the African American religious community when he articulated what was understood as a shift in his views of same sex marital rights—and stated his unequivocal support. While many harshly criticized, condemned, and sought distance from the President they formerly endorsed, others embraced and elaborated on his sentiments. As pastor of nearly 12,000 members at Friendship-West Baptist Church, a Dallas mega-church, Dr. Frederick Haynes III stood on his pulpit and preached: “…Notice it [the Declaration of Independence] does not say that all straight men are created equal. It does not say that all men unless you are gay or lesbian are created equal. He [Barack Obama] swore upon oath to uphold, protect, and defend the Constitution, not the Bible…he is not the pastor of the United States; he’s the president of the United States” (Dallas Voice, 2012).

Dr. Haynes skillfully decouples matters of the church from the state. Though Dr. Haynes’ message can seemingly suggest a condemnation of gay and lesbian individuals by his statement “uphold the Constitution…not the Bible,” he goes on to argue otherwise. Through a glimpse into the New Testament Dr. Haynes continues, “Why are you so angry? Jesus never said a word about it [homosexuality]” (Dallas Voice, 2012). Through this critical line, he utilizes a biblical hermeneutical, interpretational, approach—that liberally advocates for a sociopolitical opinion-position in support of same-sex marriage. This case adeptly illustrates the benefit of a theology measurement. Dr. Haynes’ liberal reading of scriptural text and his progressive political opinion demonstrate the inadequacy of a religiosity measure, which would not explain his complicated argument on God and use of biblical hermeneutics, nor the influence or lack thereof that such an argument has on his congregation. Although Dr. Haynes’ sermon (and moreover his ministry) embraces a liberation theology, (outlining and understanding Christ as the liberator of the oppressed) his theology, per my definition in its totality is loose. Even though there is a clear belief in the total existence of God articulated, he does not take the Bible to be literally word for word, but interprets its meaning.[[2]](#footnote-2) The implication that Jesus does not explicitly discuss homosexuality is interpretively unbounded and relaxed.

Although Dr. Haynes is a pastor, and therefore offers an elite opinion, the membership of his church will receive or reject his message based on their own biblical interpretation and theological understanding. Members that receive the messages of the clergy also have the power to study and interpret text on their own to gain a new, or reaffirm their old, understanding of moral issues. Elite theological positions do not unilaterally dictate morality-based opinion formation and, within a larger context, vote choice.

**Hypotheses**

I hypothesize that theology is a substantively significant factor in faith-centered African Americans’ views of morality on issues such as same sex marriage. The more theologically strict an individual is, the more likely s/he will view the given issue as always wrong.

H1: Theological strictness will increase the likelihood of conservative stances on gay marriage among African Americans

H0: Theological strictness will have no effect on the likelihood of conservative stances on gay marriage among African Americans

**Data & Methodology**

The Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion conducted a nationally representative multi-year study of religious values, practices, and behaviors. The data utilized for the purposes of this study is culled from the 2012 dataset; the data were collected in 2010 (N=1714). A multidimensional measure of theology was developed and confirmatory factor analysis and structural-equation modeling methods are used to confirm the reliability of the scale. I estimate an ordered probit model to determine the predictability of theology on morality-based opinions among faith-centered African Americans. The latent measure of religiosity is used as a comparison to determine the effectiveness of the theology measure in its stead

The latent measure of religiosity was created utilizing six self-reported indicators including self-perception of religious salience, church attendance, prayer, giving, and biblical literalism. Each indicator was coded using a Likert scale from 1 to 4. Missing data was dropped from the estimation. The core latent variable, theology, measures the contents of the Christian faith, specifically, God (his attributes, and works), biblical hermeneutics, eschatology, moral theology, and the afterlife. Theology is composed of an index variable measuring personal beliefs about the Bible, self-conception of theological understanding, belief in God, morality and decision making/scriptural authority, existence of heaven, and belief in the Devil. Theology is understood in terms of loose, moderate, and strict—individuals who score lower on the theology scale are understood as having a more loose theological conception and vice versa.

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| **Table 1: Observed Indicators by Latent Construct** | | |
| ***Latent Construct*** | ***Observed Variable*** | ***Item Description*** |
| *Religiosity* | ***Religiousness*** | How religious do you consider yourself to be? |
|  | ***Church Attendance*** | How often do you attend religious services at a place of worship? |
|  | ***Prayer*** | About how often do you spend time alone praying outside of religious services? |
|  | ***Reading of Sacred Text*** | Outside of attending religious services, about how often do you spend time alone reading the Bible, Koran, Torah, or other sacred books? |
|  | ***Giving*** | During the last year, approximately how much money (if any) did you and other family members in your household contribute to your current place of worship? |
| *Religiosity & Theology* | ***Bible*** | Which one statement comes closest to your personal beliefs about the Bible? |
| *Theology* | ***Belief Heaven*** | In your opinion, does Heaven exist? |
|  | ***Theoconservative*** | How well does the term “theologically conservative” describe your religious identity? |
|  | ***View of God*** | Which one statement comes closest to your personal beliefs about God? |
|  | ***Authority Moral*** | If you were unsure of what was right or wrong in a particular situation, how would you decide what to do? Do you follow the advice of an authority figure? |
|  | ***God Moral*** | If you were unsure of what was right or wrong in a particular situation, how would you decide what to do? Do what you think God or scripture tells you is right? |
|  | ***Belief in the devil*** | In your opinion, does the devil exist? |

I measured the internal consistency of the scales by estimating Cronbach’s coefficient alpha. The religiosity scale consisted of six items (α=.83, standardized) and the theology scale consisted of seven items (α=.84, standardized). I later combined both the theology and religiosity scales to demonstrate through statistical evidence that a separation of both scales (α=.89, standardized) is necessary. I then utilized confirmatory factor analysis to demonstrate that theology and religiosity are two entirely different factors of religiousness and argue for each measure to be understood independently.

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| **Table 2: Measurement/Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model Estimating Religiosity and Morality Combined Scale with No Structure (Standardized)** | | |
| **Observed Variable** | **Coefficient** | **Standard**  **Error** |
| *Religiousness* | .63 | .03 |
| *Church Attendance* | .58 | .03 |
| *Prayer* | .59 | .03 |
| *Reading of Sacred Text* | .64 | .03 |
| *Giving* | .41 | .04 |
| *Bible* | .60 | .03 |
| *Belief Heaven* | .64 | .03 |
| *Theoconservative* | .45 | .03 |
| *View of God* | .55 | .03 |
| *Authority Moral* | -.51 | .03 |
| *God Moral* | .64 | .03 |
| *Belief in the devil* | .61 | .03 |

This model represents a combined Theo-Religiosity scale; N=650; LR test of model vs. saturated: Chi2 (54) = 1142.12; Probability>Chi2= 0.0000

**Figure 3: Path Diagram with Standardized Values and Error Terms**

Belief in the devil

God Moral

Authority Moral

View of God

Theo-conservative

Belief in Heaven

Bible

.70

-.45

.63

.54

.75

.43

.60

.68

.71

.68

.51

.70

.58

.10

Bible

Financial Giving

Reading of Sacred Text

Frequency of Prayer

Church Attendance

Religiousness

This model represents the structured Theology and Religiosity Scales; N=650; LR test of model vs. saturated: Chi2 (52) = 973.56; Probability>Chi2= 0.0000

**Results**

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) combines factor analysis and multiple regression methods. I engage SEM for confirmatory factor analysis purposes. The causal model is presented in Figure 3, where the measured variables are within rectangles and the names of latent variables in ellipses. Ellipses and rectangles are connected with lines containing arrowheads in one (unidirectional causation) or two directions (causational direction is not specific). The independent variables (the latent variables) have one-way arrows pointing away from them and the dependent variables (the observed variables) have one-way arrows pointing toward them. Dependent variables also have residuals as indicated by the errors (encapsulated in circles). SEM models are divided into the measurement aspect of the model, relating the measured variables to the latent variables, and the structural aspect of the model, relating one variable to another.

I initially considered the measurement models presented in Table 2 and Figure 3 to determine, statistically, if a separation of the two latent constructs is supported. I utilize the chi-squared statistic to conduct an examination. Figure 3 provides the structured estimates of the measurement model, the effects of the seven observed variables on the theology construct, and the six observed variables on the religiosity construct. Table 2 provides the estimates of the measurement model but combines the religiosity and theology constructs. I examine multiple goodness-of-fit measures to determine how well the models fit the data. In large samples, the likelihood ratio value is distributed as a chi-square statistic and provides a goodness-of-fit test for the entire model; large chi-square values indicate that the model does not fit the data. I first examine the chi-square test of absolute model fit of both models presented in Table 2 and Figure 2 (1142.12 with 54 DF, p<.0000 and 973.56 with 52 DF, p<.0000 respectively).

The smaller the likelihood ratio, or chi square value, the better the fit of the model. Ideally, the result would not be significant, as a significant result suggests that there may be missing paths in the model’s specification. However, it should be noted that it is not my goal to maximize the goodness-of-fit but rather only add paths that are theoretically meaningful. Since the models do not fit the data on an absolute basis, as determined by the chi-squared test, I employ measures of appropriate fit. I instead use the standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR), which is calculated based on first and second moments, and the coefficient of determination (CD) tests to determine the goodness-of-fit. A SRMR of 0 corresponds to a perfect fit while a value of 0.08 corresponds to a good fit. A CD of 1 corresponds to a perfect fit and is similar to the R2 of the entire model (Hancock and Mueller, 2006). The unstructured Theo-Religiosity Scale produces a SRMR of 0.091 and a CD of 0.861, which indicates that the fit is not very good. Therefore, I measure the size of the residuals of the structure Religiosity and Theology models and find the SRMR to be 0.088 and the CD to be 0.943 indicating a better fit from the unstructured Theo-Religiosity Model. Based on the analysis of the chi-square tests, upon adding structure to the Theo-Religiosity Model and separating the two constructs, I am able to improve the chi-square values and suppress the value from 1142.12 in Table 2 to 973.56 in Figure 3. In addition to the results of the size of the residuals texts, I am able to demonstrate the necessity of separating the latent constructs of theology and religiosity.

To determine which scale is more reliable in relation to morality based opinions of African Americans I test the Theology scale I have developed and the preexisting Religiosity scale. The dependent variable is measured by the respondent’s view of gay marriage: the prompt asks if respondents feel homosexuals should be allowed to legally marry in a Likert scale (1= strongly disagree and 4=strongly agree). The Theology and Religiosity scales are developed based on the factor loadings presented in Table 2 and Figure 3. The control variables include: denomination (with what religious family, if any, do you most closely identify); gender (male=0; female=1); party identification (Strong Democrat=1; Strong Republican=7); Age (measured in birth year); education (8th grade or less=1; Post graduate work/degree=7); and Race (White=0; Black=1).

M: Ordered Probit (View of Gay Marriage)= α + β1(Theology)+ β2 (Denomination)+ β3(Religiosity) + β4 (Gender) + β5 (Party Identification) β6 (Age in Birth Year) β7 (Education) β8 (Race).

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| **Table 4: Ordered Probit Regression Predicting Opposition to Gay Marriage** | | | |
| **Variable** | **Coefficient (std. error)** | **P>|z|** | **95% Confidence Interval** |
| ***Theology\*\**** | .25(.034) | .000 | .1829 .3145 |
| Denomination | -.00(.004) | .902 | -.0086 .0076 |
| ***Gender\*\**** | -.24(.096) | .013 | -.2448 .0680 |
| ***Party Identification\*\**** | .20 (.028) | .000 | .1425 .2529 |
| ***Age (in Birth Year) \*\**** | -.01(.003) | .011 | -.0140 -.0018 |
| ***Education\*\**** | -.09 (.030) | .004 | -.1474 -.0283 |
| ***Religiosity\*\**** | .06(.025) | .016 | .0113 .1082 |
| ***Race (White-Black)\*\**** | .34 (.162) | .034 | .0256 .6597 |
| **Cut 1** | -12.94(6.05) |  | -24.7925 -1.0809 |
| **Cut 2** | -12.43(6.05) |  | -24.2793 -.5729 |
| **Cut** | -11.55(6.05) |  | -23.4010 .2997 |
| **N = 648, Pseudo R2 = .16**  **Standard errors in parentheses, \*\* *p* < .05** | | | |

The results of the ordered probit regression predicting opposition to gay marriage (N=648) confirm my aforementioned expectations. Theology, as measured by the seven-item scale, is significant in explaining individuals’ attitudes towards gay marriage. Theology has a positive effect on opposition to gay marriage. The R2 demonstrates that the model is fitting 16% of the given data. Theology, gender, party identification, age, education, religiosity and race are all significant at p<.05 at the 95% confidence interval. Gender, age (in birth year) and education all had a negative effect on the dependent variable; substantively individuals who were male, older, and were less educated were more likely to oppose gay marriage. Finally, the effect of Theology is significantly greater than the Religiosity measure at predicting attitudes towards gay marriage, which allows for the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0).

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| **Table 5: Ordered Probit Regression Predicting African American Male Opposition to Gay Marriage** | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Coefficient (std. error)** | **Min** | **Max** | **First Difference** |
| ***Theology\*\**** | .25(.033) | 5% | 77% | 72% |
| Denomination | -.00(.004) | \_ | \_ | \_ |
| ***Gender\*\**** | -.24(.096) | 59% | 50% | -9% |
| ***Party Identification\*\**** | .20 (.028) | 33% | 77% | 44% |
| ***Age (in Birth Year) \*\**** | -.01(.003) | 71% | 48% | -23% |
| ***Education\*\**** | -.09 (.030) | 71% | 52% | -19% |
| ***Religiosity\*\**** | .06(.025) | 44% | 65% | 21% |
| ***Race (White-Black)\*\**** | .34 (.162) | 46% | 59% | 13% |

\*First Differences represent the approximate net change in probability of strong opposition to gay marriage if the given independent variable with at least p<.05 were at its maximum values holding all other variables at their means (except race and gender).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 6: Ordered Probit Regression Predicting Caucasian**  **Male Opposition to Gay Marriage** | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Coefficient (std. error)** | **Min** | **Max** | **First Difference** |
| ***Theology\*\**** | .25(.033) | 2% | 65% | 63% |
| Denomination | -.00(.004) | \_ | \_ | \_ |
| ***Gender\*\**** | -.24(.096) | 45% | 37% | -8% |
| ***Party Identification\*\**** | .20 (.028) | 22% | 65% | 43% |
| ***Age (in Birth Year) \*\**** | -.01(.003) | 59% | 34% | -25% |
| ***Education\*\**** | -.09 (.030) | 59% | 38% | -21% |
| ***Religiosity\*\**** | .06(.025) | 30% | 52% | 22% |
| ***Race (White-Black)\*\**** | .34 (.162) | 45% | 59% | 14% |

\* First Differences represent the approximate net change in probability of strong opposition to gay marriage if the given independent variable with at least p<.05 were at its maximum values holding all other variables at their means (except race and gender).

To more substantively explain these effects I simulate the magnitude of theology’s effect, fixing the other variables at their means (except race and gender for practical purposes), and allow theology to vary at its minimum and maximum. In Table 5, I simulate an African American male who is at the sample mean on all other values and vary each variable to its minimum and maximum, ceteris paribus. I simulate an African American male, in particular, because of the effect gender and race have on the dependent variable. Specifically, males and African Americans are more likely to oppose gay marriage. When Theology is fixed at its minimum, the predicted probability that a given respondent opposed gay marriage is only .5. This means that at the loosest theological constraint (theology at its minimum level), only 5 percent of African American men would oppose gay marriage. At Theology’s maximum (the most strict theological constraint), 77 percent of African American men would oppose gay marriage. The effect of Theology is substantively significant for understanding how individual’s perceptions of gay marriage are effected by their theological perspectives. As I observe in the First Differences, the loosest theological constraint (theology at the minimum) versus the strictest theological constraint (theology at its maximum) increases the likelihood of the average African American male respondent opposing gay marriage by 72 percent.

I put this simulation into perspective by comparing the results of Theology to Religiosity. I simulate an African American male who is at the sample mean on all other values and vary Religiosity to its minimum and maximum. At the minimum value (an individual who is the least religious) has a likelihood of opposing gay marriage at 44 percent whereas at the maximum Religiosity (an individual who is the most religious) only has a likelihood of opposing gay marriage at 65 percent. Religiosity has a much smaller effect as demonstrated by the First Difference .21, compared to Theology. These results further support Theology as being a more robust predictor of opposition to gay marriage.

One other simulation is used to compare African Americans to Caucasian Americans. This simulation allows for a better understanding of the impact of Theology on morality based opinions of faith-centered African Americans and supports the stated purpose of this paper, in determining a better predictor of their opinions as compared to Caucasians. Table 6 demonstrates the ordered probit regression predicating Caucasian male opposition to gay marriage. Again, the primary variables are Theology and Morality. When Theology is fixed at its minimum, the loosest theological constraint, the predicted probability that the given respondent opposed gay marriage was only .2, meaning that only 2 percent of Caucasian American men would oppose gay marriage. Increased to its maximum (the most strict theological constraint), 65 percent of Caucasian American men would oppose gay marriage. This means that the there is a 63 percent increase in the likelihood that a Caucasian American male would oppose gay marriage if they were theologically strict. Theology, again, has the largest substantively significant effect when examining attitude toward gay marriage. However, it is worth note that the effect is smaller among Caucasian males than African Americans. The Religiosity simulation, again, has a smaller effect and the First Differences demonstrates that from the minimum to the maximum level, it only increases Caucasian male opposition of gay marriage by 22 percent.

Comparatively, Party Identification did not have the largest effect on the dependent variable; however, it is also both substantively and statistically significant. In both simulations represented in Tables 5 and 6 the effect of the Party Identification variable demonstrates a similar effect (the First Difference in Table 5 is 44 percent and in Table 6 is 43 percent). At the minimum value, African American male respondents are likely to oppose gay marriage by 33 percent and at the maximum (respondents identify as a Strong Republican) they are likely to oppose gay marriage by 77 percent. Similar results are observed for Caucasian men. At the minimum value (Strong Democrats), 22 percent are likely to oppose gay marriage as compared to 65 percent at the maximum value (Strong Republicans). These results are hardly groundbreaking, as previous literature has indicated a link between Party Identification and attitude towards gay marriage. Nonetheless, it is notable that the theology variable has a larger impact than Party Identification, which typically represents the most salient variable in studies of political opinions.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 7: Ordered Probit Regression Predicting Black**  **Female Opposition to Gay Marriage** | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Coefficient (std. error)** | **Min** | **Max** | **First Difference** |
| ***Theology\*\**** | .25(.033) | 3% | 69% | 66% |
| Denomination | -.00(.004) | \_ | \_ | \_ |
| ***Gender\*\**** | -.24(.096) | 59% | 50% | -9% |
| ***Party Identification\*\**** | .20 (.028) | 25% | 69% | 44% |
| ***Age (in Birth Year) \*\**** | -.01(.003) | 63% | 39% | -24% |
| ***Education\*\**** | -.09 (.030) | 63% | 43% | -20% |
| ***Religiosity\*\**** | .06(.025) | 34% | 57% | 23% |
| ***Race (White-Black)\*\**** | .34 (.162) | 36% | 50% | 14% |

\* First Differences represent the approximate net change in probability of strong opposition to gay marriage if the given independent variable with at least p<.05 were at its maximum values holding all other variables at their means (except race and gender).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 8: Ordered Probit Regression Predicting White**  **Female Opposition to Gay Marriage** | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Coefficient (std. error)** | **Min** | **Max** | **First Difference** |
| ***Theology\*\**** | .25(.033) | 1% | 56% | 55% |
| Denomination | -.00(.004) | \_ | \_ | \_ |
| ***Gender\*\**** | -.24(.096) | 45% | 36% | -9% |
| ***Party Identification\*\**** | .20 (.028) | 15% | 57% | 42% |
| ***Age (in Birth Year) \*\**** | -.01(.003) | 50% | 26% | -24% |
| ***Education\*\**** | -.09 (.030) | 49% | 30% | -19% |
| ***Religiosity\*\**** | .06(.025) | 23% | 43% | 20% |
| ***Race (White-Black)\*\**** | .34 (.162) | 36% | 36% | 0% |

\* First Differences represent the approximate net change in probability of strong opposition to gay marriage if the given independent variable with at least p<.05 were at its maximum values holding all other variables at their means (except race and gender).

Lastly, I simulate the impact of gender on opposition to gay marriage. In the simulations presented in Tables 7 and 8 the effect of Theology is the most substantively and statistically significant of the figures. At the minimum value, only 3 percent of African American women are likely to oppose gay marriage as compared to 69 percent at the maximum value. Among White women, at the minimum value, 1 percent oppose gay marriage compared to the maximum value in which 56 percent of women are in opposition. Party identification, again, serves as the second highest predictor of gay marriage. The most surprising result in the gender simulations is the impact of race in Table 8; there is no difference among White and Black women. Accordingly, within the simulation there is no difference between White and Black women’s opposition to gay marriage as both are likely to oppose gay marriage at the same level.

Finally, due to the nature of my African American sample size after the statistical manipulations presented (N=123) I lose 24.9% of the African American sample. Accordingly, I impute the missing data, when it made theoretical sense to do so, within STATA using multiple imputation techniques where data are imputed with values using a specified regression model. An example of this involved dealing with missing data for those who refused to provide their income or age. The magnitude of the coefficients becomes slightly reduced and the standard errors decrease in size. The impact of race becomes largest followed by gender identification, party identification and then theology.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 9: Ordered Probit Regression Predicting Opposition to Gay Marriage with Imputed Values** | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Coefficient (std. error)** | **P>|z|** | |
| ***Theology\*\**** | .18(.185) | **.000** | |
| Denomination | .00(.003) | **.920** | |
| ***Gender\*\**** | -.20(.063) | **.001** | |
| ***Party Identification\*\**** | .19 (.019) | **.000** | |
| ***Age (in Birth Year) \*\**** | -.01(.002) | **.000** | |
| ***Education\*\**** | -.09 (.020) | **.000** | |
| ***Religiosity\*\**** | .05(.014) | **.001** | |
| *Race (White-Black)* | .22 (.014) | .063 | |
| **Cut 1** | -14.19(3.92) |  | |
| **Cut 2** | -13.60(3.92) |  | |
| **Cut 3** -12.80(3.92) | | |
| **N = 1475**  **Standard errors in parentheses, \*\* *p* < .05** | | | | |

To verify these results I attempt to suppress the presented results by imputing the data with the mean. Because mean substitution reduces variability and weakens covariance and correlation estimates in the data (assuming the data are missing at random), mean imputation will not bias my parameter estimates. The results from the mean imputation still demonstrate the significance of theology as predicting opposition to gay marriage but race becomes the most predictive variable.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 10: Ordered Probit Regression Predicting Opposition to Gay Marriage, Imputed with the Mean** | | | |
| **Variable** | **Coefficient (std. error)** | **P>|z|** | **95% Confidence Interval** |
| ***Theology\*\**** | .20(.021) | .000 | .1621 .2428 |
| Denomination | .00(.003) | .850 | -.0050 .0060 |
| ***Gender\*\**** | -.20(.064) | .002 | -.3253 -.0736 |
| ***Party Identification\*\**** | .19 (.019) | .000 | .1569 .2210 |
| ***Age (in Birth Year) \*\**** | -.01(.002) | .000 | -.0121 -.0040 |
| ***Education\*\**** | -.10 (.020) | .000 | -.1394 -.0596 |
| ***Religiosity\*\**** | .07(.018) | .000 | .0395 .1092 |
| ***Race (White-Black)\*\**** | .27 (.116) | .000 | .0472 .5011 |
| **Cut 1** | -13.82(4.05) |  | -21.7487 -5.8931 |
| **Cut 2** | -13.25 (4.04) |  | -21.1745 -5.3247 |
| **Cut** | -12.44(4.04) |  | -20.3632 4.5171 |
| **N = 1,361, Pseudo R2 = .15**  **Standard errors in parentheses, \*\* *p* < .05** | | | |

**Discussion**

According to coefficient and simulation results, the Theology variable was the most robust predictor of opposition to gay marriage. Theology among African American and Caucasian males was a stronger predictor than party identification; this could be reflective of Theology tapping into morality attitudes that Party Identification may not. Furthermore, among a more religious population, the effects of Theology and Party Identification might demonstrate a separation from political and religious opinion. Previous literature has argued that the church-politics separation is a far less pertinent concern among African Americans, and the results presented indicate otherwise (Sawyer Ed. Crawford and Olson, 2001, 67; Hopkins, 1993, 3). Including the Theology variable enables us to separate conservatism (the political ideology seen as preserving traditional values) and those who that identify as Conservative.

In relation to political ideology, the Party Identification variable in the presented simulations directly impacts opposition towards gay marriage. These variables can thus be used in tandem to separate political ideology/identification effects from morality/value-based opinions. Although Blacks understand racial and economic issues to be more salient than social and moral issues, currently political ideology is muddled and the injection of the theology variable enables researchers to directly differentiate its impacts (Walton and Smith, 2010; Dawson, 1994, 112; Dawson, 2001, 112; Tate, 2010, 96). Lastly, these results do not further demonstrate the importance of theology in the lived experiences of Americans but serve as an explanation for how theological considerations are operationalized (Hopkins, 1993). Further research can delve into the impacts of particularized theologies (i.e. liberation theologies) more specifically in regard to social and political causes.

The Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion was used because it conducts one of the most systematic and comprehensive studies of religious values, practices, and behaviors. Unfortunately, I was still limited by the data available. Of the respondents only 158 were African American. Accordingly, in future studies I would hope to have access to more African American respondents (prior to imputation) in order to more fully sample the population. Additionally, when I originally theorized the components of theology, in addition to understanding the systematic study and explanation of the contents of the Christian faith including God (his attributes, and works), biblical hermeneutics, eschatology, moral theology, and the afterlife, I wanted to include measures of Christology, baptism, salvation, the trinity, and the second coming. Due to the constraints of the 2012 dataset, it did not include such items unlike previous datasets and I had to abandon these components in favor of having more current data. For future study, I would recommend considerations of these other direct components of theology to improve the measure. Alternative studies are necessary for groups that fall outside of African American and Caucasian populations. While the results from this study may be generalizable for these two groups, I hesitate to generalize these results for other members of the population.

**Conclusion**

Philip E. Converse’s seminal text argues the mass public does not form opinions as the elite do, have stable attitudes over time, or understand the ideological connections between issues (1964). This paper turns to argue that ideology, as operationalized by theology, does constrain how faith-centered individuals consider political choices. The political attitudes of faith-centered individuals are bound by a particularized theology. Although mass public opinion has foundations in widely shared core values and may find it difficult to identify the values, which are most relevant in the formation of their opinions, among the religiously devout, these results indicate theological preferences not religiosity or Party Identification are the most relevant to understanding their opinions on moral issues (Alvarez and Brehm, 2002).

Historically, within the African American community, the church and its religion has been a fundamental agent of socialization (Walton and Smith, 2010). The church and its once Invisible Institution have served as a foundation for Black political culture and activism (Omi and Winant 1994). It has provided a base for oppositional and protest politics against the institutions of slavery, segregation, discrimination, racism and oppression (Walton and Smith, 2010; Dawson, 2001; Hopkins, 1993). Religious institutions are also critical mobilizers of African Americans in political processes and provide political and personal efficacy. Therefore, it is critical to study the Church and its teachings to further understand African American political opinion (Harris, 2001; Hopkins, 1993). I have demonstrated that a multidimensional measure of Theology is a more robust predictor of morality related views such as gay marriage than religiosity and Party Identification. Accordingly, Theology may be another way in which religious institutions provide political cues and impact the political actions of its members. I am hesitant to say that Theology will work in the exact same way for abortion as it does for opinions on gay marriage, because there is a complex and complicated history about the formation of these opinions; however, further investigation necessary (Alvarez and Brehm, 2002). H---owever, theological strictness could perhaps help to explain views on the death penalty, war, and infidelity.

An individual’s religious opinions, attitudes, and understandings directly impact their political views, opinions, and attitudes. Olson and Warber (2008) demonstrated the impact of religious commitment and orthodoxy of religious belief on presidential approval. Malka et al. (2012) has confirmed that religiosity was associated with conservative positions among the highly politically engaged, but was weaker among those less engaged with politics. The issue of gay marriage directly highlights a complicated policy consideration within faith-oriented African Americans. On one hand, African Americans have endured a history in the United States fraught with discrimination, oppression, and inequality, and may accordingly hope to not project these experiences on others. On the other hand, they have sincere religious opinions and may engage in a strict reading of Leviticus 18:22. As an individual’s theological understanding frames their moral opinion, radical loose theological teachings provide an opportunity to shift the political and policy orientations of African Americans.

In summation, this research carves out a space to more directly understand the influence and impact of theological considerations and political choices, pushing the research agenda and complicating the examination of religion (and religiosity) beyond organizational capacities. Theological understandings of the Bible can more fully explain how religion influences political belief and public opinion. Whether one identifies as the proverbial “Blue” or “Red”, or judges actions as sin or a right can be directly explained by understanding how one reasons about God and the text of the Bible.

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**Appendix**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 2B: Measurement/Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model Estimating Religiosity and Theology Combined Scale with No Structure (Unstandardized)** | | |
| **Observed Variable** | **Coefficient** | **Standard**  **Error** |
| *Religiousness* | 1 | - |
| *Church Attendance* | 1.55 | .12 |
| *Prayer* | 1.46 | .12 |
| *Reading of Sacred Text* | 2.01 | .15 |
| *Giving* | 1.26 | .14 |
| *Bible* | 1.31 | .10 |
| *Belief Heaven* | .78 | .06 |
| *Theoconservative* | 1.40 | .14 |
| *View of God* | .95 | .08 |
| *Authority Moral* | -.56 | .05 |
| *God Moral* | .77 | .06 |
| *Belief in the devil* | 1.12 | .09 |

This model represents a combined Theo-religiosity scale; N=650; LR test of model vs. saturated: Chi2 (54) = 1142.12; Probability>Chi2= 0.0000

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| **Table 3B: Measurement/Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model Estimating Religiosity and Morality Combined Scale with Structure (Unstandardized)** | | | | | |
| **Latent Variable** | | **Observed Variable** | | **Coefficient** | **Standard**  **Error** |
| ***Religiosity*** | | *Religiousness* | | 1 | - |
|  | *Church Attendance* | | 1.73 | | .12 |
|  | | *Prayer* | | 1.33 | .11 |
|  | | *Reading of Sacred Text* | | 2.03 | .15 |
|  | | *Giving* | | 1.44 | .13 |
| ***Religiosity***  ***Theology*** | | *Bible* | | .21  1 | .13  - |
|  | | *Belief Heaven* | | .77 | .10 |
|  | | *Theoconservative* | | 1.13 | .16 |
|  | | *View of God* | | .91 | .12 |
|  | | *Authority Moral* | | -.41 | .06 |
|  | | *God Moral* | | .60 | .08 |
|  | | *Belief in the devil* | | 1.08 | .14 |

This model represents a combined Theo-religiosity scale; N=650 LR test of model vs. saturated: Chi2 (52) = 973.56; Probability>Chi2= 0.0000

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| **Table 11: Ordered Probit Regression Predicting African American Male Opposition to Gay Marriage with Imputed Values** | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Coefficient (std. error)** | **Min** | **Max** | **First Difference** |
| ***Theology\*\**** | .18(.185) | 7% | 89% | 82% |
| Denomination | .00(.003) | \_ | \_ | \_ |
| ***Gender\*\**** | -.20(.063) | 56% | 30% | -26% |
| ***Party Identification\*\**** | .19 (.019) | 19% | 86% | 67% |
| ***Age (in Birth Year) \*\**** | -.01(.002) | 72% | 42% | 30% |
| ***Education\*\**** | -.09 (.020) | 72% | 39% | -33% |
| ***Religiosity\*\**** | .05(.014) | 33% | 75% | 42% |
| Race (White-Black) | .22 (.014) | \_ | \_ | \_ |

\* First Differences represent the approximate net change in probability of strong opposition to gay marriage if the given independent variable with at least p<.05 were at its maximum values holding all other variables at their means (except race and gender).

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| **Table 12: Ordered Probit Regression Predicting White Male Opposition to Gay Marriage with Imputed Values** | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Coefficient (std. error)** | **Min** | **Max** | **First Difference** |
| ***Theology\*\**** | .18(.185) | 3% | 77% | 74% |
| Denomination | .00(.003) | \_ | \_ | \_ |
| ***Gender\*\**** | -.20(.063) | 37% | 16% | -21% |
| ***Party Identification\*\**** | .19 (.019) | 8% | 73% | 65% |
| ***Age (in Birth Year) \*\**** | -.01(.002) | 53% | 2% | -51% |
| ***Education\*\**** | -.09 (.020) | 24% | 54% | 30% |
| ***Religiosity\*\**** | .05(.014) | 22% | 18% | -4% |
| Race (White-Black) | .22 (.014) | \_ | \_ | \_ |

\* First Differences represent the approximate net change in probability of strong opposition to gay marriage if the given independent variable with at least p<.05 were at its maximum values holding all other variables at their means (except race and gender).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 13: Ordered Probit Regression Predicting African American Female Opposition to Gay Marriage with Imputed Values** | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Coefficient (std. error)** | **Min** | **Max** | **First Difference** |
| ***Theology\*\**** | .18(.185) | 1% | 72% | 71% |
| Denomination | .00(.003) | \_ | \_ | \_ |
| ***Gender\*\**** | -.20(.063) | 56% | 31% | -25% |
| ***Party Identification\*\**** | .19 (.019) | 6% | 67% | 61% |
| ***Age (in Birth Year) \*\**** | -.01(.002) | 46% | 19% | -27% |
| ***Education\*\**** | -.09 (.020) | 47% | 17% | -30% |
| ***Religiosity\*\**** | .05(.014) | 14% | 51% | 37% |
| Race (White-Black) | .22 (.014) | \_ | \_ | \_ |

\* First Differences represent the approximate net change in probability of strong opposition to gay marriage if the given independent variable with at least p<.05 were at its maximum values holding all other variables at their means (except race and gender).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 14: Ordered Probit Regression Predicting White Female Opposition to Gay Marriage with Imputed Values** | | | | |
| **Variable** | **Coefficient (std. error)** | **Min** | **Max** | **First Difference** |
| ***Theology\*\**** | .18(.185) | 0% | 54% | 54% |
| Denomination | .00(.003) | \_ | \_ | \_ |
| ***Gender\*\**** | -.20(.063) | 37% | 16% | -21% |
| ***Party Identification\*\**** | .19 (.019) | 2% | 48% | 46% |
| ***Age (in Birth Year) \*\**** | -.01(.002) | 28% | 9% | -19% |
| ***Education\*\**** | -.09 (.020) | 29% | 8% | -21% |
| ***Religiosity\*\**** | .05(.014) | 6% | 32% | 26% |
| Race (White-Black) | .22 (.014) | \_ | \_ | \_ |

\* First Differences represent the approximate net change in probability of strong opposition to gay marriage if the given independent variable with at least p<.05 were at its maximum values holding all other variables at their means (except race and gender).

1. Within the field of theology different types of theology exist: descriptive theology, normative theology, and theologies of culture. In western modern theological debates there are two schools of thought concerning the definition and task of theology within Protestant traditions. The theology of Paul Tillich is concerned with apologetic theology—how one explains the gospel message in relation to questions of human culture or man. Apologetic theology is understood by reasoning from human beings’ existential situation to God. More specifically it is grounded in the historical Jesus, who walked this earth in flesh and blood with human emotions and sympathy. Conversely, there exists kerygmatic theology, which begins with God’s questions and God’s answers to man as developed by Karl Bath. The task of kerygmatic theology is the presentation of the “proclaimed word” emphasizing the truth of the message letting God be God and to proclaim God’s word to every generation from God’s side. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It is worth noting that Dr. Haynes’ treatment of liberation theology includes a view that any teaching or practice of Christian Black Liberation theology must support the full equality of lesbians and gays. This view may not be typical within pastoral treatments of Black Liberationist Theology more broadly. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)