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SECULARIZATION AS A DECLINE IN RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY
OVER GENDER

By
Catherine Meyers

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

Department of Sociology
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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Catherine Meyers in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and departmental style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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ABSTRACT

SECULARIZATION AS A DECLINE IN RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY OVER GENDER

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Department of Sociology

Master of Science

Recent secularization debates have helped to interpret the changing influence of religion over time and over social life. I argue that Chaves' (1994) conception of secularization, that secularization occurs as a decline in religious authority, is an effective theoretical tool for describing religious change over time. Using GSS data and the example of gender ideology, I attempt to illustrate this concept and argue that this view of secularization, combined with a multidimensional approach to gender, is necessary to more fully explain the changing relationship among religion and gender over time.

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Introduction

Religion has long been known to have a regulatory function, but its regulatory ability has varied across time and space. Traditional sociologists of religion, such as Durkheim and Weber, promulgated a secularization theory which predicted a change over time, or “transformation of religion in the modern world” (Yamane 1997, p. 110). Across space, religion’s influence varies among dimensions of social life (Bolzendahl and Brooks 2005).

Not all aspects of religion are equally regulatory; some religious denominations exercise more control than others. For example, strict churches require more monetary contributions from their members, have higher levels of participation (often due to proscriptions against other activities), and in general are more stringent in their beliefs than their more liberal counterparts (Iannaccone 1994). Additionally, religion may be more regulatory toward some areas of social life. Religion has been especially regulatory toward family issues (Bolzendahl and Brooks 2005), including appropriate gender roles.

Recent secularization debates can help to interpret the changing influence of religion over time and over social life. In this paper I argue that Chaves’ (1994) conception of secularization, that secularization occurs as a decline in religious authority, is an effective theoretical tool for describing religious change over time. I use the example of gender to illustrate this concept and argue that this view of secularization, combined with a multidimensional approach to gender, is necessary to more fully explain the changing relationship between religion and gender over time.

Neosecularization

Amidst discussions about the future of secularization, Chaves (1994) suggested that secularization be defined as a decline in religious authority. Although the much-debated decline in religious participation was not supported by empirical evidence (see Tschannen 1991), religion's influence in modern society was still changing. This view of secularization departs starkly from classical theories of secularization, which predicted a general decline in religion (see Yamane 1997). Instead of a decline in religion, evident through decreased religious attendance or reliance on science and other secular explanations for questions previously answered by religion, neosecularization theory predicts a decline in religious authority.

Neosecularization also differs from the rational choice or religious economy theories in which there is a diversification of the religious market as new denominations replace more secular denominations. In the religious market, "religion" subsists in a state of equilibrium when changes in religious groups occur to meet an ever-present demand. Chaves notes that such a view may be valid, but is not applicable to secularization (Chaves 1994, p. 759).

Religion's influence is not only present at a denominational, or organizational level; religious authority has the capacity to enact influence at an institutional, organizational, and individual level., and a decrease in religion's influence over these areas may be considered evidence of secularization (Chaves 1994). Religion would have less authority over other institutions at the societal level, less denomination-based authority at the organizational level, and less authority (when compared to that of other

influences) over individual choice at the individual level (Chaves 1994). By endorsing this view of secularization, Chaves is not discounting a religious economies perspective; nor is he predicting an actual decline in religious authority. Chaves is merely asserting that neosecularization, or secularization as a decline in religious authority, is a more useful operationalization than previous definitions of secularization (Chaves 1994).

To describe secularization at the institutional level, Chaves (1994) borrows the term “laicization” from Dobbelaere (1981). Through laicization, or a process by which secular influence replaces laicity, other institutions “gain autonomy from the religious institutions of a society” (Chaves 1994, p. 757). Institutions possess their own rules, scripts, and ideologies, enforcing “the rightness and necessity of their arrangements, practices, and social relations” (Martin 2004, p. 1257). Just as the political system may use democracy, freedom, and equality as moral aims to justify its existence, religion uses supernatural claims (see Yamane 1997) to justify its rules, structure, norms, and beliefs (Chaves 1994). Laicization, or secularization at the institutional level, occurs when religious rules, practices, and beliefs decrease in authority over other institutions. For example, elimination of creationism from school curriculum demonstrates a loss of religious authority over the educational institution.

Secularization at the organizational level, or “internal secularization” (Chaves 1994, p. 757), occurs as religious denominations become more secular; for example, the decision of the United Church of Christ to allow homosexual marriage can be viewed as an instance of a religious organization converging “with the secular world” (Chaves 1994, p. 757). At the individual level, religious beliefs and practices lose their

importance in an individual's life as individual choices are informed less by religion and more by other institutional arrangements. In addition to religion, individuals participate in families, systems of education, and the labor force, each of which influence individual behavior. For example, educational attainment is often more influential than religious participation toward social attitudes (see, for example, Bolzendahl and Brooks 2005).

The elegance of this theory is particularly evident when used to analyze change over time. Instead of focusing on declines in religious behaviors and beliefs, secularization as a decline in religious authority can be used in conjunction with a variety of situations. For example, attitudes of mainline Protestant and Catholic affiliates toward premarital sex have become more liberal over time, while attitudes of conservative Protestants have remained constant (Petersen and Donnerwerth 1997). Here religion has a differential influence (or a decline in authority) at the organizational level over members of certain denominations. Such an analysis illuminates the "varying scope of religious authority across time and space" (Chaves 1994 pp. 764-765).

Secularization at the Institutional Level

Society is "an interinstitutional system" (Friedland and Alford 1991, p. 232), consisting of various institutions which are both contradictory and interdependent. For example, the religious institution may dictate a breadwinner/homemaker division of labor for families, but may also rely on monetary contributions made possible by a dual-earner family model. These institutions contain observable behaviors and nonobservable symbols, or "a set of material practices and symbolic constructions" (Friedland and Alford 1991, p. 248); for example, religious practices include prayer and religious service

attendance, and religious symbolic constructions include beliefs about biblical literalism and the significance of the crucifix. Thus, an institution is a social entity that is durable, transmittable, maintainable, and reproducible (Scott 2001). Institutions are comprised of “taken-for-granted scripts, rules, and classifications” (DiMaggio and Powell 1991, p. 15) that inform meaning or ideology and constrain choices.

Religion and Gender Ideology

Gender ideology, or attitudes about appropriate behaviors for men and women, is a belief system (Kroska 2000) upon which religion’s influence can be examined. Just as society is composed of competing and cooperating institutions, individual ideology incorporates various interests requiring orchestration. An individual’s gender ideology may be informed by childhood socialization (see Brooks and Bolzendahl 2004), workforce participation (Gerson 1987; Glass 1992; Smith 1985; Thornton, Alwin and Camburn 1983), marital status (Finlay, Starnes, and Alvarez 1985; Plutzer 1988), educational attainment (Harris 1980; Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn 1983), and religious participation (Hoffmann and Miller 1997).

Gender ideology has been the focus of several studies, especially through the 1970s and 1980s (see, for example, Cherlin and Walters 1981; Dugger 1988; Ferree 1974; Finlay, Starnes, and Alvarez 1985; Helmreich, Spence, and Gibson 1982; Hess and Ferree 1987; Kiecolt and Acock 1988; Komarovsky and Mayer 1984; Lopata and Thorne 1978; Mason and Bumpass 1975; Mason, Czajka and Arber 1976; Mason and Lu 1988; Simon and Landis 1989; Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn, 1983; Thornton and Freedman 1979). Most of these studies find an egalitarian trend over time, with respondents

becoming more receptive toward expanding roles for men and women with reference to the home and workplace. Brooks and Bolzendahl (2004) summarize three main mechanisms through which change occurs: cohort replacement (gender attitudes change as birth cohorts replace each other), ideological learning (gender attitudes change along with other rights-based attitudes), and structural change (gender attitudes change as familial and labor force participation change). What is often missing from gender ideology discussions, though, is the changing influence of religion.

Though some researchers bemoan the dearth of research examining religion and gender (see, for example, Wallace 1997), there have been several studies which find that religion may have more authority over gender ideology than over other belief systems. Explaining that many religious groups have a “pro-family subculture” (Gay, Ellison and Powers 1996, p. 13), Gay et al. suggest that beliefs about biblical inerrancy and the importance of the traditional family are firmly enforced by conservative Protestant leaders, in turn enforcing attitudes about gender. Additionally, religious leaders may encourage “a traditional husband-wife role structure, which they believe is more beneficial for (adults and) children” (Morgan and Scanzoni 1987, p. 376).

Religious teachings, conservative or otherwise, may be unlikely to postulate that men should be paid more than women or that men should refuse to work under women, neglecting to exercise direct authority over economic ideas. But religious leaders often *do* emphasize the importance of a woman’s role in the home and as a mother (Ellison and Bartkowski 2002; Kosmin and Lachman 1993), and beliefs in biblical literalism may amount to justification for a patriarchal relationship between men and women

(Ammerman 1987; Bendroth 1993; Ellison and Bartkowski 2002; Wilcox 1998; see also Moore and Vanneman 2003). Thus, religion exercises direct authority over gender ideology.

Distinct Dimensions of Gender Ideology

Often gender ideology, or attitudes about gender, are measured as a single dimension. But questions asking whether a preschool child suffers when a mother works or whether men and women should be paid the same amount of money for the same work address at least two distinct areas – gender in the home and gender in the workplace. When researchers combine questions addressing different aspects of gender into one scale (Brooks and Bolzendahl 2004) or use only one item to depict gender attitudes (Hoffmann and Miller 1997), nuances in gender attitude variation are hidden as we fail to identify the different spheres in which gender is at work.

After finding a lack of unidimensionality in gender attitudes, Mason and Bumpass (1975) refer to attitudes about gender in the home a “core ideology” (p. 1218), and to attitudes about gender in the workplace a “secondary ideology” (p. 1218). In 1970 women held more traditional attitudes about gender in the home and more progressive attitudes (favoring equality) about gender in the workplace (Mason and Bumpass 1975). Here I explore the authority of religion on two dimensions of gender; I label attitudes about gender in the home “familial-based gender ideology” and attitudes about gender in the workplace “equal-opportunity-based gender ideology.”

When gender ideology is conceptualized as having two dimensions, religion may have more authority over one dimension than the other. As mentioned, religion may

exercise more authority over gender ideology than over ideas about the workplace. Thus, rules and scripts of the religious institution may have more authority over attitudes about gender in the home, or familial-based gender ideology, than they do over attitudes about gender in the workplace or public sphere, or equal-opportunity-based gender ideology.

I hypothesize that, at the institutional level, (1a) the influence of religious attendance and religious affiliation on gender ideology will change over time in an egalitarian direction; religious attenders and affiliates will become more similar to nonattenders and nonaffiliates. Furthermore, (1b) the changing influence of religious attendance and affiliation on gender ideology will occur differentially across the different dimensions of gender ideology; religious attendance and affiliation will be more influential on familial-based gender ideology than on equal-opportunity-based gender ideology over time.

Secularization at the Organizational Level

Conservative Protestant groups have consistently displayed more traditional attitudes about gender than other groups (Brinkerhoff and MacKie 1984; Gay, Ellison and Powers 1996; Hertel and Hughes 1987; Hoffmann and Miller 1997; Kosmin and Lachman 1993; Martin et al. 1980; Moore and Vanneman 2003; Thornton, Alwin and Camburn 1983; Thornton and Freedman 1979; Wilcox 1986); indeed, most who study attitudinal change over time can see distinctions between groups such as conservative and moderate Protestants. However, though conservative Protestants are more traditional in their views than other religious groups, all groups become more liberal over time

(Hoffmann and Miller 1997). This suggests a diminishing authority of religion at the organizational level.

But religious organizations are not impassive actors in the secularization process. From a religious economies perspective, when faced with perceived threats either from competing religious groups or from other influences (Hoffmann and Miller 1997) such as the economy, religious groups can strengthen their moral or symbolic boundaries (Hoffmann and Miller 1997 p. 54) in an effort to maintain or reiterate their social and religious position (Dekker 1995). If liberal religious groups take steps to reinforce their position as liberal in relation to other religious groups, and if conservative religious groups reinforce their position as conservative relative to other groups, a divergence in attitudes would be seen over time (Hoffmann and Miller 1997). This pattern is evident in existing literature; for example, conservative Protestants have retained their support for traditional beliefs about premarital sex over time, even as the support of other religious groups has declined (Petersen and Donnerwerth 1997). Petersen and Donnerwerth (1998) explain that, although other forces (or influences from other institutions) may affect attitudes in the general population, consistent religious participation and commitment can act to immunize the religiously active against a secularizing influence.

Conservative and Evangelical Religious Groups

What is it about those who claim affiliation with conservative Protestant groups that affects such a divergence in their attitudes from affiliates of other groups? Their unique context, characterized by frequent attendance at church services and a literal interpretation of the Bible, is one viable explanation. Frequent attendance increases

interaction with like-minded peers (Moore and Vanneman 2003), providing opportunities to reinforce conservative ideas that may be at odds with societal norms. Without this frequent attendance, those who affiliate with conservative or evangelical denominations may be more similar in their attitudes to those of other denominational groups (Jelen 1990).

Based on the conclusions of prior research that conservative Protestants attend church more frequently than other groups (Roof and McKinney 1987, Sherkat and Wilson 1995), and that participation affects moral beliefs, Sherkat and Ellison (1997) theorize that the effects of beliefs in biblical literalism are combined with and reinforced by teachings from religious leaders and clergy. These three factors (membership in conservative Protestant groups, frequent church attendance, and beliefs in biblical literalism) can cooperate to affect unique attitudes among conservative Protestants.

Evangelical and conservative Protestant attitudes may be especially unique when considering familial-based gender logics; for example, an overview of conservative Protestant parenting manuals yields distinct attitudes about childrearing and parental roles (Bartkowski and Ellison 1995). However, ideology is not always predictive of behavior (Bartkowski 1999; Gallagher and Smith 1999; Smith 2000; see Ellison and Bartkowski 2002). Conservative and evangelical Protestant leaders may proscribe traditional roles for men and women, but actual behavior is determined by a negotiation among religious and secular ideas (Bartkowski 2001).

I hypothesize that, at the organizational level, (2a) after accounting for different religious groups the influence of religious group affiliation on gender ideology will

change over time in an egalitarian direction. (2b) Affiliates of mainline Protestant groups will, over time, become more egalitarian in their attitudes than affiliates of conservative Protestant groups. (2c) This changing influence of religious group affiliation will occur differentially across the different dimensions of gender ideology; religious group affiliation will be more influential on familial-based gender ideology than on equal-opportunity-based gender ideology over time.

Secularization at the Individual Level

Secularization at the individual level occurs as a decline in religious authority over individual behaviors (Chaves 1994), but this decline is relative to the authority of other institutions. Chaves explains that “individuals...live their lives within a number of overlapping spheres, with some of their actions regulated by the authority of bosses at work, some by the demands of legal systems, some by family obligations, [and] some by the rules of religions” (Chaves 1994 p. 768). As religious authority at the individual level is declining, participation in other institutions may exercise more authority over individual behaviors or gender ideology. For example, religion is exercising authority over a woman who follows conservative Protestant proscriptions to forego employment outside of the home. But religious authority may not be as salient as the influence of participation in other institutions.

Participation in institutions other than religion also contribute to gender ideology. As mentioned, existing literature establishes relationships between gender ideology and educational attainment, workforce participation, and marital status. In an interinstitutional system, identity negotiation is practiced among those faced with

competing interests in an effort to promote reconciliation (Ecklund 2003). For example, in his study of evangelical families, Bartkowski (2001) described one woman's struggle to reconcile educational attainment, occupational goals, and desires to adhere to conservative religious proscriptions concerning the role of women in the home. "Carole herself was an educated, intelligent, modern woman. Carole's commitments in principle to full-time mothering and wifely responsiveness conflicted with her desire to remain employed at a job she found very satisfying" (p. 158). The outcome of such negotiation efforts becomes, at least in part, a function of the degree to which religion exercises authority over the individual.

Religious authority at the individual level may not be as salient as participation in other institutions, and this effect might occur differentially across the different dimensions of gender ideology. For example, rules and scripts of the economic institution may exercise more authority over equal-opportunity-based gender ideology than it does over familial-based gender ideology. Educational attainment might have a similar effect, but familial participation (i.e. being married or having children) may exercise more authority over familial-based gender ideology.

I hypothesize that (3a) educational attainment, full-time employment, being married, and having children will, over time, influence gender ideology more than religious service attendance and religious group affiliation. (3b) These influences will affect familial-based and equal-opportunity-based dimensions of gender ideology differentially over time. Furthermore, I hypothesize that (3c) educational attainment and full-time employment will be more influential toward equal-opportunity-based gender

ideology, and that being married and having children will be more influential toward familial-based gender ideology.

Data and Measures

The General Social Survey (GSS) is a nationally representative survey administered by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago and is partially funded by the National Science Foundation. It was first administered in 1972 and most recently in 2002, with a total of 24 cycles. The GSS is ideal for this study as it was designed to measure attitudes in America over time. I use items from this survey to depict respondents' religious affiliation and attendance, participation in other institutions (e.g. work and education), and attitudes about gender. To accommodate sample size restrictions and for ease in comparing religious groups I limit my analysis to Christian denominations, and I select only eleven GSS cycles between the years of 1977 and 1998 because of item availability.

Many studies examining religious correlations with social attitudes utilize Smith's (1990) classification of Protestant denominations into a Fundamentalist-Liberal scale (Smith 1990 p. 239), easily accessible through the General Social Survey's FUND variable. These classifications were based on a range of information, including denominational beliefs and surveys of church members and leaders (Smith 1990). Other studies structure their denominational categorization after Roof and McKinney's (1987) classification, often at use when referring to "mainline" Protestant denominations. However, a recent effort by Steensland et al. (2000) seeks to improve primarily on the Smith (1990) categorization. For the data used in this paper, the Steensland et al. (2000)

classification primarily departs from Smith's (1990) work by separating nonaffiliated respondents from the "liberal" category and Catholic affiliates from the "moderate" category, including a separate category for black Protestant denominations, and replacing "fundamentalist" with "evangelical." Following recent research (e.g. Bolzendahl and Brooks 2005; Wilcox, Chaves and Franz 2004) I use the Steensland et al. (2000) classification for the evangelical, mainline, and black Protestant groups, the Catholic group, and those reporting no affiliation.¹ I use a dummy variable comparing respondents who affiliate with any religious denomination to those who report no affiliation for analysis at the institutional level, religious group dummy variables at the organizational and individual levels, and a seven-point scale to measure religious service attendance (a higher number indicates more frequent attendance) at all levels. Variables that are frequently only controlled for in similar research have a theoretical importance here as indicators of individual participation in institutions other than religion. Educational attainment is measured by comparing respondents with college experience to those without, and full-time employment is determined by whether the respondent is employed full time. Being married is determined by whether the respondent is married, and having children is determined by whether the respondent has children. I also control for race, southern residence, rural residence, and birth cohort.² Time is measured by the actual year, and is centered (using a z-score transformation) to

¹ I do, however, combine the "Other Methodist" respondents left out of the Steensland et al. (2000) classification with the "Methodist-Don't Know Which" respondents they place in the "mainline Protestant" category.

² Following Brooks and Bolzendahl (2004) I use dummy variables to represent ten-year birth cohorts, using the earliest cohort as the reference category.

decrease collinearity when computing interaction terms. Descriptive statistics of these variables are listed in Table 1.³

Table 1 about here

The GSS contains several items designed to determine respondents' attitudes about gender. Item availability varies by GSS cycle, but eight items were asked consistently in each of the eleven cycles from 1977 to 1998. Items offer either four Likert-type response categories or two response options (agree or disagree), in addition to a "don't know" response option. These items were used together recently (see Brooks and Bolzendahl 2004), but as only one scale. As mentioned, it is clear that these items address different dimensions of gender, and a factor analysis (using Varimax rotation) of the eight questions yields two distinct dimensions. Items in the first factor address gender in relation to the home and family, and items in the second factor address gender in the workplace or public sphere. These seven items⁴ are listed in Table 2 with their eigenvalues.

Table 2 about here

To form the dependent variables, these items were first recoded so that a higher number indicates a more traditional response. Half of the questions had four answer options (i.e. Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree); these questions were collapsed so that each question has an egalitarian and a traditional response (Strongly Agree and Agree versus Disagree and Strongly Disagree). Rather than taking an average of the items in each group, the items were added to obtain a count of

³ Blacks are oversampled in the GSS.

⁴ One of the eight items, referencing whether women should earn money when a husband is capable of providing for her, loaded onto its own factor and is excluded from the analysis.

inegalitarian responses. Missing values were deleted from the analysis. Histograms illustrating the distribution of these counts are displayed in Figure 1. For both variables the largest response category is that of zero traditional responses, but attitudes appear to be more egalitarian when considering equal-opportunity-based gender ideology.

Figure 1 about here

Methods

By creating a count variable it is possible to measure changes in the number of traditional responses rather than changes in a mean score. Utilizing a logistic regression procedure which compares the possible number of traditional responses (trials) with the actual number of traditional responses (events) produces odds ratios indicating the odds of a respondent reporting a traditional response as predicted by the model. I use the SAS “proc logistic” procedure with the “events/trials” option for these models, and report the odds ratios for each model. In that I am interested in change over time, I am primarily concerned with the directionality of the odds ratios.

For the institutional level I include in the model the control variables (race, southern residence, rural residence, and cohort effects), year, the attendance scale, and the affiliation variable. I replace the affiliation variable with religious group variables for evangelical Protestant, black Protestant, mainline Protestant, and Catholic affiliation (“no affiliation” is the reference category) for the organizational level, and include variables indicating participation in other institutions (educational attainment, full-time employment, being married, and having children) in the models for the individual level. Model fit is determined by the Akaike’s Information Criterion (AIC; a smaller value

indicates a better fit) and the Max-rescaled R-Square (a generalized R² that is adjusted for a binary outcome). I test for interaction effects between year and each independent variable, retaining the interaction variables for each level if the interaction effect is significant and if the AIC and Max-Rescaled R² indicate a better model fit. Retained interaction variables represent a changing relationship over time.

Results

It should be noted that in 1977, the first year for which I have data, respondents were already egalitarian in their gender ideologies. Figures 2 and 3 present the percentage of respondents who report no traditional responses and those who report all traditional responses by year, for both the familial-based and equal-opportunity-based dimensions of gender ideology. Except for 1977, only between about 15 and 25 percent of respondents neglect to give an egalitarian response to familial-based gender ideology items, and this percentage is declining over time. Between about 35 and 45 percent of respondents report only egalitarian responses to these items, also becoming more egalitarian over time.

Figures 2 and 3 about here

A similar pattern is found with reference to equal-opportunity-based gender ideology, except that respondents are largely more egalitarian when responding to these items. The percentage of respondents neglecting to give an egalitarian response to these items is generally less than ten percent, and for most of the years for which I have data over 50 percent of respondents give only egalitarian responses. Interestingly, based on these figures alone it appears that there is more change over time among respondents who

give no traditional responses to items referencing equal-opportunity-based gender ideology – about a 40-percent compared to an almost 30-percent increase for familial-based gender ideology.

Table 3 about here

Table 3 lists the models tested and fit statistics for each theoretical level (institutional, organizational, and individual) and for each dependent variable. As mentioned, for each dependent variable I gradually add level-relevant variables (e.g. religious group variables for the organizational level) and by-year interaction terms when independent variables are significant. The preferred model for each level is qualified by significant interaction terms and an improved fit, and is displayed in bold in Table 3.

Institutional Level

My first hypothesis (1a) at the institutional level concerns change over time. When predicting familial-based gender ideology, the preferred model does not include any interaction terms; the effect of religious attendance and affiliation on familial-based gender ideology is not changing over time. However, for equal-opportunity-based gender ideology, the preferred model includes the attendance and affiliation interaction terms, indicating that their effects on attitudes about gender in the workplace are changing over time.

Tables 4 through 6 display odds ratios, standard errors, and significance levels. Odds ratios greater than 1.0 indicate less egalitarian attitudes; odds ratios less than 1.0 indicate more egalitarian attitudes. As reported in Table 4, for familial-based gender ideology the odds ratio for religious attendance is 1.062. The odds ratio for religious

affiliation is 1.290. Thus, although respondents are becoming more egalitarian over time in their familial-based gender ideology, religious attenders and affiliates are consistently less egalitarian than their non-attending, non-affiliating counterparts.

For equal-opportunity-based gender ideology, the odds ratio for religious attendance is 1.064, and the odds ratio for religious affiliation is 1.320. As with familial-based gender ideology, religious attenders and affiliates are less egalitarian than those who do not attend or affiliate. However, the significant interaction terms indicate that this effect is changing; over time, frequent attendance is associated with less egalitarian equal-opportunity-based gender ideology (odds ratio 1.013), and religious affiliation is associated with more egalitarian equal-opportunity-based gender ideology (odds ratio 0.869).

Table 4 about here

These results partially support my first hypothesis (1a); the effect of religious affiliation and religious over gender at the institutional level is changing over time, but only for one dimension of gender ideology as measured here. Furthermore, when there is a changing effect of religious influence, only religious affiliation is associated with more egalitarian gender ideology; religious attendance is associated with less egalitarian equal-opportunity-based gender ideology. Thus, consistent with my second hypothesis (1b), there is a differential influence of religion over gender ideology; the influence of religious affiliation has changed for equal-opportunity-based gender ideology but *not* for familial-based gender ideology.

Organizational Level

My third hypothesis (2a) also concerns change over time, but at the organizational or denominational level. Table 3 indicates that the preferred models for both familial-based gender ideology and equal-opportunity-based gender ideology do include religious group interaction terms, illustrating that the influence of religious group affiliation (as opposed to simply religious affiliation) is changing over time.

Table 5 about here

For familial-based gender ideology, only evangelical Protestant, black Protestant, and Catholic affiliates are statistically different from respondents with no affiliation (with more traditional attitudes), and the effect of evangelical and black Protestant affiliation remains constant over time (see Table 5). The interaction terms for mainline Protestant and Catholic affiliation are slightly outside the 0.05 alpha level (though in the model for the individual level the mainline Protestant interaction term becomes significant within the 0.05 alpha level), but the directionality of the odds ratios implies that these groups are over time becoming more egalitarian.

Figure 4 about here

Figure 4 illustrates mean predicted probabilities for the familial-based gender ideology counts based on the logistic regression model. As indicated by the odds ratios, all groups are becoming more egalitarian over time. Mainline Protestant and Catholic adherents appear to be converging slightly with the nonaffiliated (consistent with their interaction terms), but the effect of evangelical Protestant affiliation appears to remain constant over time as indicated by a slope parallel to that of the nonaffiliates.

In the equal-opportunity-based gender ideology model, each group except mainline Protestant is statistically different from the nonaffiliates, and every interaction term is significant. Though the odds ratios for these groups place them in a more traditional position when compared to respondents with no religious affiliation, the interaction terms show that each group is following the overall egalitarian trend by becoming more egalitarian in their attitudes.

Interestingly, as illustrated by the mean predicted probabilities in Figure 5, there appears to be more convergence among religious groups than for familial-based gender ideology. The 1977 data indicate a clustering of religious groups apart from, or less egalitarian than, the nonaffiliates. By 1998, the religious groups are still more traditional than the nonaffiliates, but less so. For equal-opportunity-based gender ideology, religious group affiliation offers decreasing resistance against the egalitarian trend.

Figure 5 about here

. Thus, my third hypothesis (2a) that there is a change over time in the effect of religious group affiliation on gender ideology is, again, only partially true; this change is present only when considering equal-opportunity-based gender ideology. The stratification of religious groups in relation to gender ideology supports my hypothesis (2b) that mainline Protestant groups are more egalitarian than evangelical Protestant groups in their attitudes. The consistent effects of religious group affiliation for familial-based gender ideology and the changing effects of religious group affiliation for equal-opportunity-based gender ideology confirms the hypothesis (2c) of a differential change in the effect of religious group affiliation among different dimensions of gender.

Individual Level

Table 6 about here

At the individual level for familial-based gender ideology, as displayed in Table 6 the variables representing participation in other institutions are each highly significant. The point of interest for my sixth hypothesis (3a), though, is a comparison of the odds ratios. The odds ratio furthest from zero among the religious groups is that of evangelical Protestant affiliation (1.534), with educational participation (college attendance) being the next furthest from zero (0.717). Evangelical Protestant affiliation appears to have a greater effect than any other variable in the model for familial-based gender ideology, and the nonsignificant interaction term indicates that this effect is remaining constant over time. However, for affiliates of other religious groups, college and workforce participation have a greater effect than affiliation on familial-based gender ideology. Significant odds ratios for the number of children and marital status affirm that familial participation has a constant effect on familial-based gender ideology. Thus, my sixth hypothesis (3a) is partially supported; individual participation in institutions other than religion affects gender ideology to a greater extent than does participation in the religious institution, except for evangelical Protestant affiliates.

Marital status does not appear to be a significant predictor of equal-opportunity-based gender ideology at the individual level, but having children restrains the overall egalitarian trend. Workforce participation is associated with more egalitarian gender ideology, but the nonsignificant interaction term implies that this influence is remaining steady over time. Consistent with the findings for familial-based gender ideology,

college participation is associated with an egalitarian effect toward equal-opportunity-based gender ideology that is becoming less so over time.

Again evangelical Protestant affiliation has the greatest effect toward gender ideology with an odds ratio of 1.640. The next odds ratio furthest from zero is again for college participation (0.541), which is also the greatest influence toward equal-opportunity-based gender ideology for religious groups other than evangelical Protestant. My sixth (3a) hypothesis is again only partially supported, as individual participation in institutions other than religion affects gender ideology to a greater extent than does participation in the religious institution for religious groups other than evangelical Protestant. The differential effect of individual participation in secular institutions on familial-based and equal-opportunity-based gender ideology confirms my seventh hypothesis (3b). The significance of marital status and the larger odds ratio for number of children (1.030 compared to 1.016) in the familial-based gender ideology model confirms my final hypothesis (3c); participation in the familial institution does affect familial-based gender ideology more than it does equal-opportunity-based gender ideology.

Discussion

Is secularization as a decline in religious authority over gender occurring? Is there a “varying scope of religious authority across time and space” (Chaves 1994 pp. 764-765) with respect to gender? These data and previous literature show that gender ideology, regardless of which controls are included, is becoming more egalitarian over time. But is religion able to exercise enough authority to slow this process?

Religious authority is consistently an important factor in determining both familial-based and equal-opportunity-based gender ideology at the institutional, organizational, and individual levels. At the institutional level, religious authority remains constant over time for familial-based gender ideology. For equal-opportunity-based gender ideology, the changing effects of attendance and affiliation over time indicate that, although its influence may be changing, religion still exercises authority at the institutional level. Interestingly, religious attenders are associated with less egalitarian equal-opportunity-based gender ideology over time, but religious affiliates are associated with more egalitarian equal-opportunity-based gender ideology over time. This indicates that it is not so much whether an individual affiliates with a religious group as it is whether the individual attends religious services that moderates the effect of an overall egalitarian trend.

At the organizational level, and especially for evangelical Protestant affiliates, religion acts to moderate the effects of the overall egalitarian trend. However, mainline Protestant groups are generally similar to religious nonaffiliates in their gender ideology, and even evangelical Protestants are adopting more egalitarian gender ideology over time. And, while divergent religious group trends for familial-based gender ideology are persisting over time, with regards to equal-opportunity-based gender ideology religious groups are becoming more similar over time.

At the individual level, for most respondents participation in institutions other than religion exerts more influence over both familial-based gender ideology and equal-opportunity-based gender ideology, with familial participation being slightly more

influential over familial-based gender ideology. However, evangelical Protestants are uniquely immunized against the influences of participation in other institutions, an effect that is likely due to the distinct characteristics of conservative and evangelical Protestants mentioned previously here and in existing literature.

If a trend toward more egalitarian gender ideology is secular, is resisting such a trend religious authority? Is maintaining religious authority over individual behavior even when faced with the influences of participation in secular institutions an indication of the resistance of secularization? These analyses show that religion still has authority over many aspects of gender ideology in that it can act as a mediating influence against secular trends. However, these analyses cannot answer the question of whether a decline in religious authority over gender is actually occurring.

As an example of this dilemma is the previously mentioned decision of the United Church of Christ to allow homosexual marriage. Is this an instance of a religious organization converging “with the secular world” (Chaves 1994, p. 757), or is it an instance of a religious organization adopting a more “accurate” interpretation of the bible? If the religious influence toward gender ideology inspires more egalitarian views, even so much that gender ideology of religious adherents cannot be statistically differentiated from those with no religious affiliation, is this a decline in religious authority?

Using an example of the Reformed church in the Netherlands, Dekker explains, “We have to conclude that adaptation or accommodation of the Church is not, by definition, secularization. It may also result in an actualization or a revitalization of the

faith of people; an updating of the religiosity of people, which enables them to remain religious or to believe in our modern society” (Dekker 1995, p. 85). Dekker recognizes that secularization may occur as “the restriction of the range of influence of religion” (p. 86), or a decline in religious authority, but maintains that accommodation is not secularization.

While Chaves’ definition of secularization as a decline in religious authority may be valid, it is difficult to test. Whether these analyses support this view of secularization necessarily depends on whether one views convergence with secular trends a decline in religious authority. I conclude that religion still has authority over many aspects of gender ideology in that it can act as a mediating influence against secular trends, and that a decline in religious authority is not evident according to these data.

What is evident is that there is a changing relationship between religion and gender over time. Also evident is that gender ideology is affected by an interinstitutional system, with individuals negotiating among a complex myriad of ideological demands. But there is hope for fans of religion – evangelical Protestants, at least, seem to be maintaining distinctiveness despite other institutional pressures.

There are many other questions that this research cannot answer. Existing literature identifies differing religious practices and religious effects among men and women. While sex was controlled for in this paper, an examination of variation within sex categories would yield even more information about the changing relationship between religion and gender. Additionally, existing research has found a significant

amount of variation within conservative or evangelical Protestant groups. Future research should use the approach found in this paper to further analyze those groups.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Independent and Control Variables

Variable	How Measured	Mean/ %	SD
Year	Z score of GSS cycle year	--	--
Cohort	Ten-year intervals of birth year	--	--
Rural residence	1 = rural residence	13.5%	0.342
Sex	1 = female, 0 = male	58.5%	0.493
Race	1 = black, 0 = else	12.8%	0.334
Rural residence	1 = rural residence, 0 = else	13.5%	0.342
Southern residence	1 = Southern residence, 0 = else	35.6%	0.479
Religious service attendance	Seven-point scale; 0 = never, 7 = every week or more	3.821	2.597
Denominational affiliation	1 = Any affiliation, 0 = no affiliation	89.9%	0.301
Evangelical Protestant affiliation	1 = Evangelical Protestant, 0 = else	28.5%	0.452
Black Protestant affiliation	1 = Black Protestant, 0 = else	9.1%	0.288
Mainline Protestant affiliation	1 = Mainline Protestant, 0 = else	23.9%	0.426
Catholic affiliation	1 = Catholic, 0 = else	28.4%	0.451
No affiliation	1 = No affiliation, 0 = else	10.1%	0.301
Education	1 = Some college or more, 0 = else	12.78	3.033
Marital status	1 = Married, 0 = else	54.0%	0.498
Number of children	Number of children	1.93	1.769
Workforce participation	1 = Working full-time, 0 = else	52.4%	0.499

Table 2. Items and Count Variables for Familial-Based and Equal-Opportunity-Based Gender Ideology

Question Wording	Factor Scores	
	Familial	EO
Women should take care of running their homes and leave running the country up to men.		0.788
If your party nominated a woman for President, would you vote for her if she were qualified for the job?		0.709
Most men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women.		0.772
It is more important for a wife to help her husband's career than to have one herself.		0.580
It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.	0.630	
A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.	0.797	
A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.	0.839	
Eigenvalues	1.098	3.179
Percent of Variance	15.687	43.421
Cronbach's Alpha of Items	0.715	0.732

Table 3. Model Descriptions and Fit Statistics

Model Descriptions	Fit Statistics	
	AIC	R ² ^a
<i>Familial-based gender ideology</i>		
<i>Institutional level</i>		
1. Controls^b + attendance + affiliation	42437.129	0.159
2. Model 1 + attendance*year	42438.219	0.159
3. Model 1 + affiliation*year	42438.527	0.159
4. Model 1 + attendance*year + affiliation*year	42438.790	0.159
<i>Organizational level</i>		
5. Controls + attendance + religious groups	42282.065	0.164
6. Model 5 + religious groups*year	42263.091	0.165
<i>Individual level</i>		
7. Model 6 + nonreligious sphere participation	41935.487	0.176
8. Model 7 + educational attainment*year	41911.359	0.177
9. Model 7 + number of children*year	41937.281	0.176
10. Model 7 + marital status*year	41935.876	0.177
11. Model 7 + full-time employment*year	41936.739	0.177
<i>Equal-opportunity-based gender ideology</i>		
<i>Institutional level</i>		
1. Controls + attendance + affiliation	43776.006	0.170
2. Model 1 + attendance*year	43774.535	0.170
3. Model 1 + affiliation*year	43773.892	0.170
4. Model 1 + attendance*year + affiliation*year	43768.754	0.170
<i>Organizational level</i>		
5. Model 2 + religious groups	43457.989	0.180
6. Model 5 + religious groups*year	43452.750	0.180
<i>Individual level</i>		
7. Model 6 + nonreligious sphere participation	42952.177	0.195
8. Model 6 + educational attainment*year	42943.608	0.195
9. Model 6 + number of children*year	42952.299	0.195
10. Model 6 + full-time employment*year	42953.793	0.195

Bolded model indicates preferred model

^a Max-Rescaled R²

^b Controls include year, race, rural residence, southern residence, and birth cohort

Table 4. Logistic Regression Odds Ratios for Gender Ideology, Institutional Level

Independent Variables	Gender Ideology	
	Familial	EO
Year	0.867*** (0.012)	0.806*** (0.047)
Attendance	1.062*** (0.005)	1.064*** (0.005)
Attendance*Year	--	1.013* (0.005)
Affiliation	1.290*** (0.045)	1.320*** (0.005)
Affiliation*Year	--	0.869* (0.005)

All models include control variables.

Interaction terms are not reported if they are not significant in the model.

†p < 0.1 *p < 0.05 **p < 0.005 ***p < 0.001

Table 5. Logistic Regression Odds Ratios for Gender Ideology, Organizational Level

Independent Variables	Gender Ideology	
	Familial	EO
Year	0.982* (0.007)	0.810*** (0.047)
Attendance	1.055*** (0.005)	1.055*** (0.005)
Attendance*Year	--	1.012* (0.005)
Evangelical Protestant affiliation	1.639*** (0.049)	1.806*** (0.056)
Evangelical Protestant*Year	1.053 (0.046)	0.884* (0.005)
Black Protestant affiliation	1.237* (0.078)	1.391*** (0.082)
Black Protestant*Year	0.956 (0.056)	0.880* (0.062)
Mainline Protestant affiliation	1.085 (0.050)	1.006 (0.058)
Mainline Protestant*Year	0.917 [†] (0.047)	0.859** (0.054)
Catholic affiliation	1.271*** (0.049)	1.241*** (0.057)
Catholic*Year	0.913 [†] (0.046)	0.831*** (0.054)

All models include control variables.

Interaction terms are not reported if they are not significant in the model.

[†]p < 0.1 *p < 0.05 **p < 0.005 ***p < 0.001

Table 6. Logistic Regression Odds Ratios for Gender Ideology, Individual Level

Independent Variables	Gender Ideology	
	Familial	EO
Year	0.873** (0.042)	0.808*** (0.047)
Attendance	1.062*** (0.005)	1.069*** (0.005)
Attendance*Year	--	1.011* (0.005)
Evangelical Protestant affiliation	1.534*** (0.050)	1.640*** (0.056)
Evangelical Protestant*Year	1.064 (0.047)	0.886* (0.054)
Black Protestant affiliation	1.150 (0.079)	1.253* (0.082)
Black Protestant*Year	0.968 (0.057)	0.882* (0.062)
Mainline Protestant affiliation	1.087 (0.050)	1.009 (0.058)
Mainline Protestant*Year	0.901* (0.047)	0.844** (0.054)
Catholic affiliation	1.214*** (0.050)	1.162* (0.057)
Catholic*Year	0.915 [†] (0.047)	0.837** (0.055)
Educational attainment	0.717*** (0.030)	0.541*** (0.034)
College*Year	1.163*** (0.030)	1.112** (0.033)
Marital status (married vs. all else)	1.112*** (0.025)	1.021 (0.026)
Full-time employment (full-time vs. all else)	0.737*** (0.027)	0.776*** (0.028)
Number of children	1.030*** (0.008)	1.016* (0.007)

All models include control variables.

Interaction terms are not reported if they are not significant in the model.

[†]p < 0.1 *p < 0.05 **p < 0.005 ***p < 0.001

Figure 1. Histograms of Dependent Variables

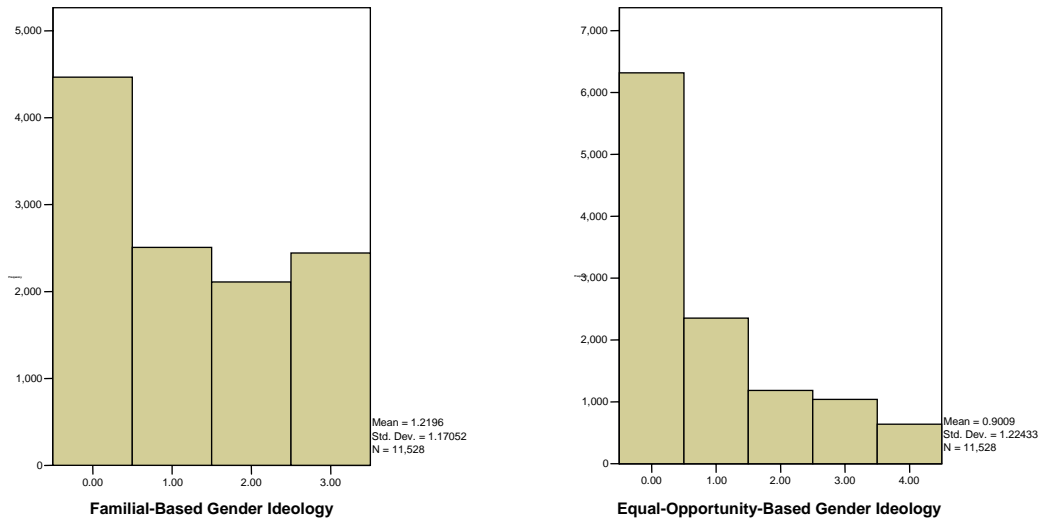


Figure 2. Percent of Respondents in Count Categories for Familial-Based Gender Ideology

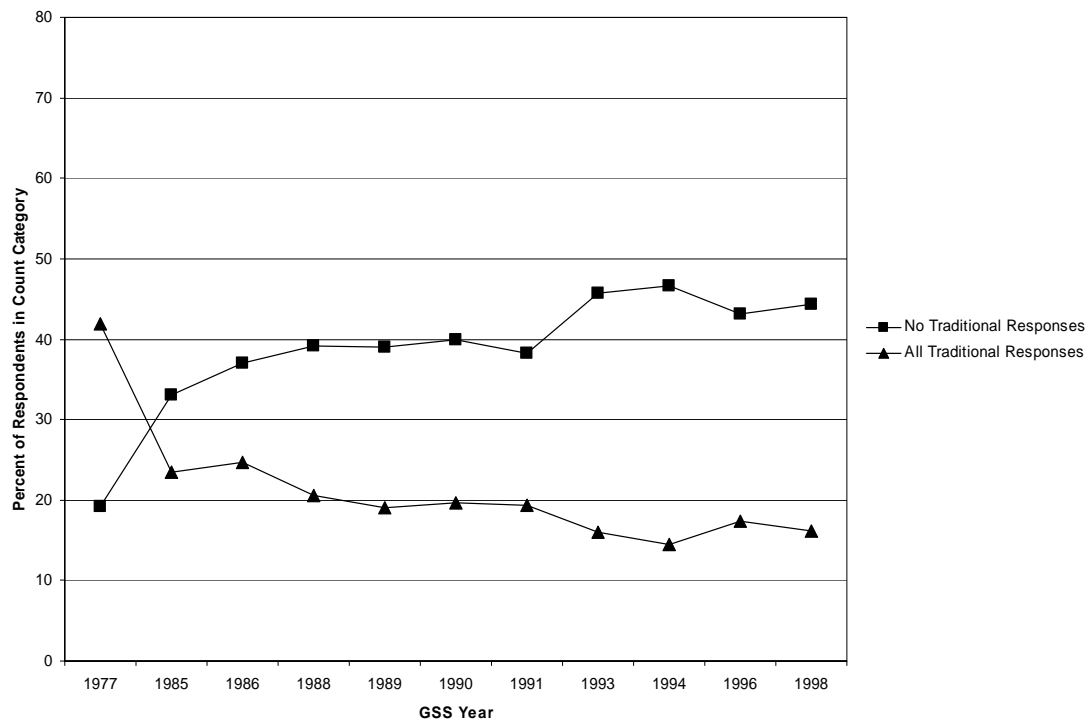


Figure 3. Percent of Respondents in Count Categories for Equal-Opportunity-Based Gender Ideology

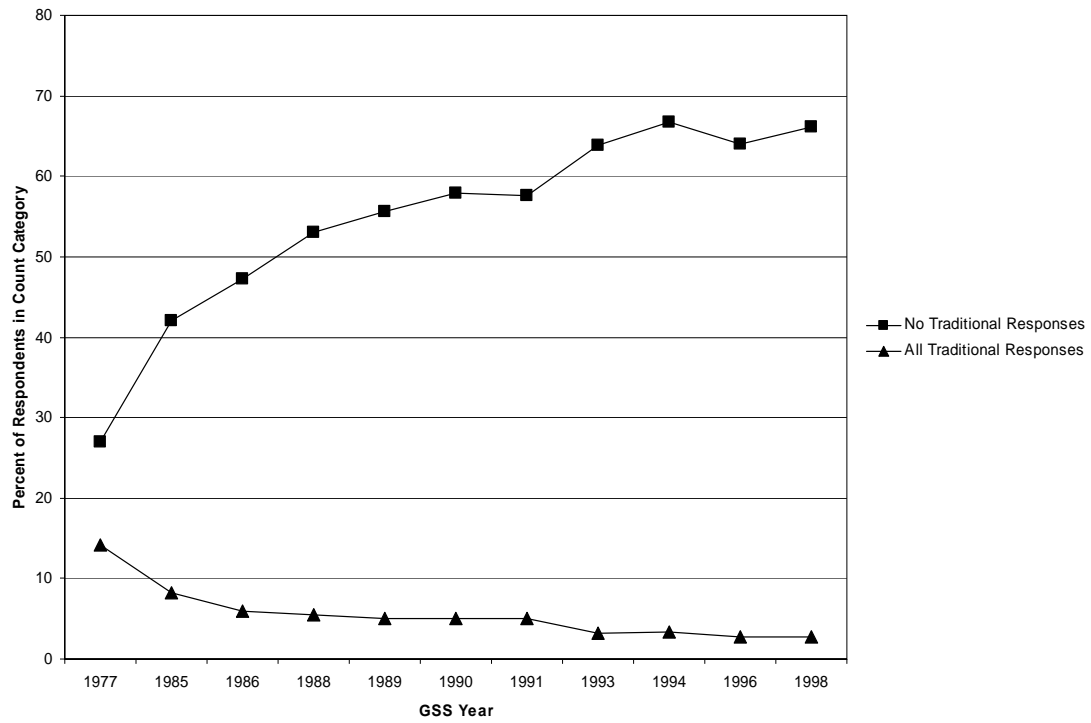
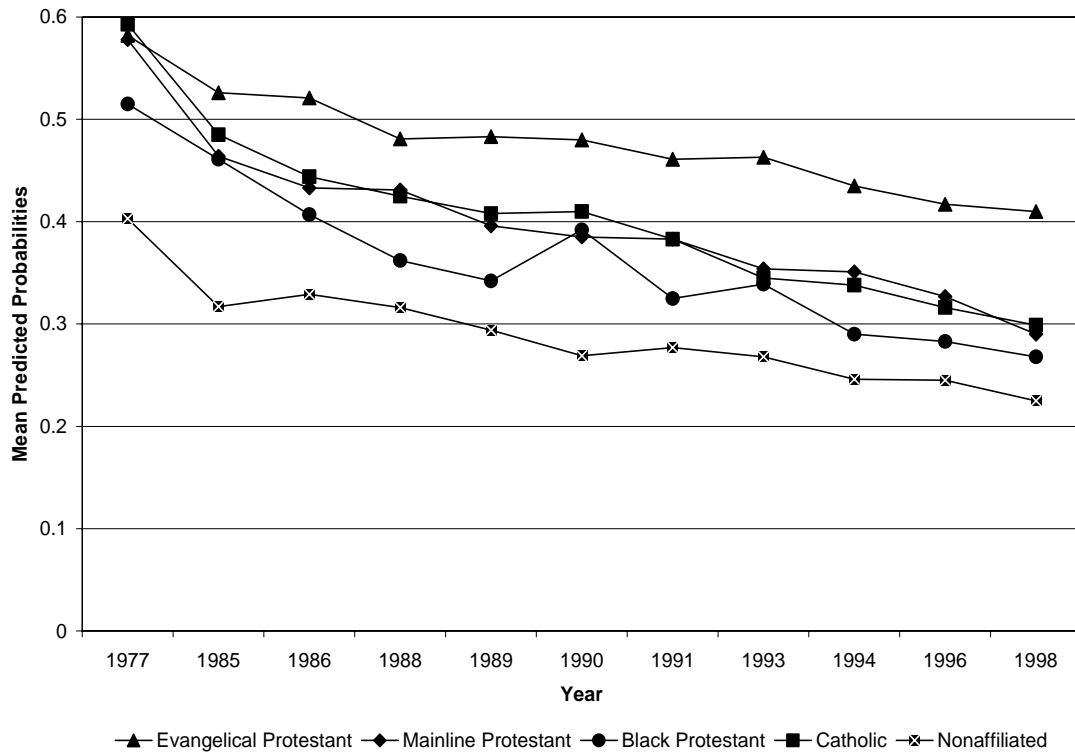
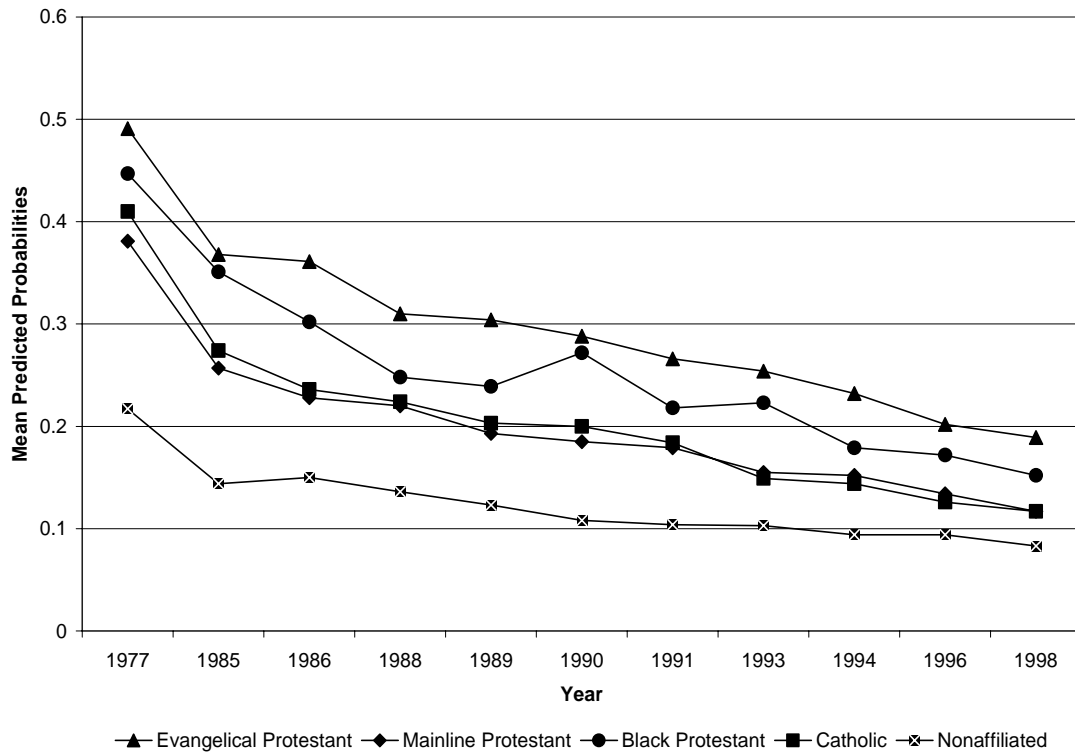


Figure 4. Mean Predicted Probabilities for Familial-Based Gender Ideology Counts



Note: Only Mainline Protestant and Catholic groups are statistically distinct from nonaffiliates

Figure 5. Mean Predicted Probabilities for Equal-Opportunity-Based Gender Ideology Counts



Note: All religious groups are statistically distinct from nonaffiliates