THE EFFECTS OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITY AND RACE ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND VOTER REGISTRATION

by

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ABSTRACT

ASHLEIGH VICTORIA VENEZIA. The Effects of Religious Identity and Race on Political Participation and Voter Registration.
(Under the direction of DR. SCOTT FITZGERALD)

The relationship between religion and political participation and voter registration has not been investigated through the lens of Identity Theory. In this thesis, I utilize measures of religious affiliation and race to examine their influence on political participation and voter registration. Using data from the American National Elections Study, I run a variety of models to test my hypotheses that political participation levels and voter registration differs across religious affiliation and race. I find mixed support for the hypotheses that I tested. Overall, different religious affiliations had different levels of political participation and voter registration. Additionally, different races had different levels of political participation and voter registration. For the full models for political participation and voter registration, adding the control variables seemed to impact some of the effects that were seen in previous nested models. Regarding Identity Theory, this could mean that certain religious affiliations are not as salient of an identity in political situations as other religious affiliations. Additionally, it could mean that certain racial identities are more salient than other racial identities in terms of political participation and voter registration.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Bob and Melissa, who have always believed in me and supported me through everything. To my sister, Rebecca, who has always been there for me. To my partner, Eric, who has helped me in various ways through this process. Lastly, to my pets, Whittnie and firefly, who have provided me with emotional support. They have all played an important part in the process of completing this degree.

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INTRODUCTION

Group membership is a way that people connect with other people and society. Since people are involved in numerous groups, they have a variety of roles that impact how they view themselves and how they behave in different situations. Multiple identities do not act independently, but rather there is overlap in how people view themselves which then causes them to behave in various ways. Religious affiliation and race are prominent aspects of a person's identity, which means that it is important to look at their impact on behaviors, particularly in terms of political participation.

There is a large field of research that has looked at the religion-politics relationship. Some of this previous research has shown that there are differences between different religious denominations regarding their political participation, ideology, and affiliations (Brooks and Manza 2004; Driskell, Embry & Lyon 2008; Hirschl et al. 2012; Iyengar et al. 2019; Wilde and Glassman 2016; Patrikios 2008). These differences have implications for political involvement, as religion remains an important political divide (Brooks and Manza 2004; Wilde and Glassman 2016). Political involvement is usually looked at in terms of political participation, which consists of multiple political activities including voter registration. It is important to look at voter registration as a form of political participation, since it is one political activity that most people participate in. Additionally, it is important to look at voter registration on its own because historically there have been barriers to register to vote that have not been in place for other political activities. Race is another factor that intersects both religion and politics, and it has implications regarding political participation, ideology, and affiliations, especially in the form of barriers to these political aspects (Rosino 2016; Driskell, Embry & Lyon 2008; Wilde and Glassman 2016; Iyengar et al. 2019).

Prior research has not really investigated how having multiple identities impacts the religion-politics relationship. It is hard to measure which identity a person is using in a given situation since this is an unconscious thing that people do. Identity theory suggests that the saliency of an identity provides a good way to measure which role a person is enacting. Religious affiliation and race are two identities that tend to be salient for a large number of people, as they tend to be deeply embedded within a person.

Based on these things, it leads to the questions about how religious and racial identity affects political participation and voter registration. Specifically, I ask: (1) Who participates politically? And what are the direct and indirect effects of religious and racial identity on political participation?; and (2) Who registers to vote? And what are the direct and indirect effects of religious and racial identity on voter registration?

In this thesis, I first provide a background on Identity Theory, as well as a background on religion and political participation, and religion and voter registration. Next, I present the data and methods that I used for my research where I address the measures of the specific variables within that data source that I use, as well as the models that I conduct for my data analysis. Then I provide the results of my data analysis, which I then discuss in terms of my hypotheses. Finally, I conclude about why this research is important, how it contributes to the discussions on this topic, some potential limitations of this research, new questions that this research might raise, and future directions for research on religion and politics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept Map

Since the areas of interest for this thesis include both identity and political participation, it means that the existing literature of these two separate areas had to be brought together in a logical way. To frame the literature review and thus the hypotheses, a concept map was created to look at a possible way these two literatures intersect. Briefly, people have multiple identities including demographic characteristics, religious factors, and political orientation, which interact with each other in a hierarchy of saliency. Having a specific identity within those larger categories (i.e., Black, Democrat, Catholic, liberal, young, etc.) leads to barriers to politics that other identities may not encounter. In turn those barriers to politics influence political participation in general, as well as voter registration on its own. The relationships described in this concept map will be further explored and explained in the remainder of the literature review.

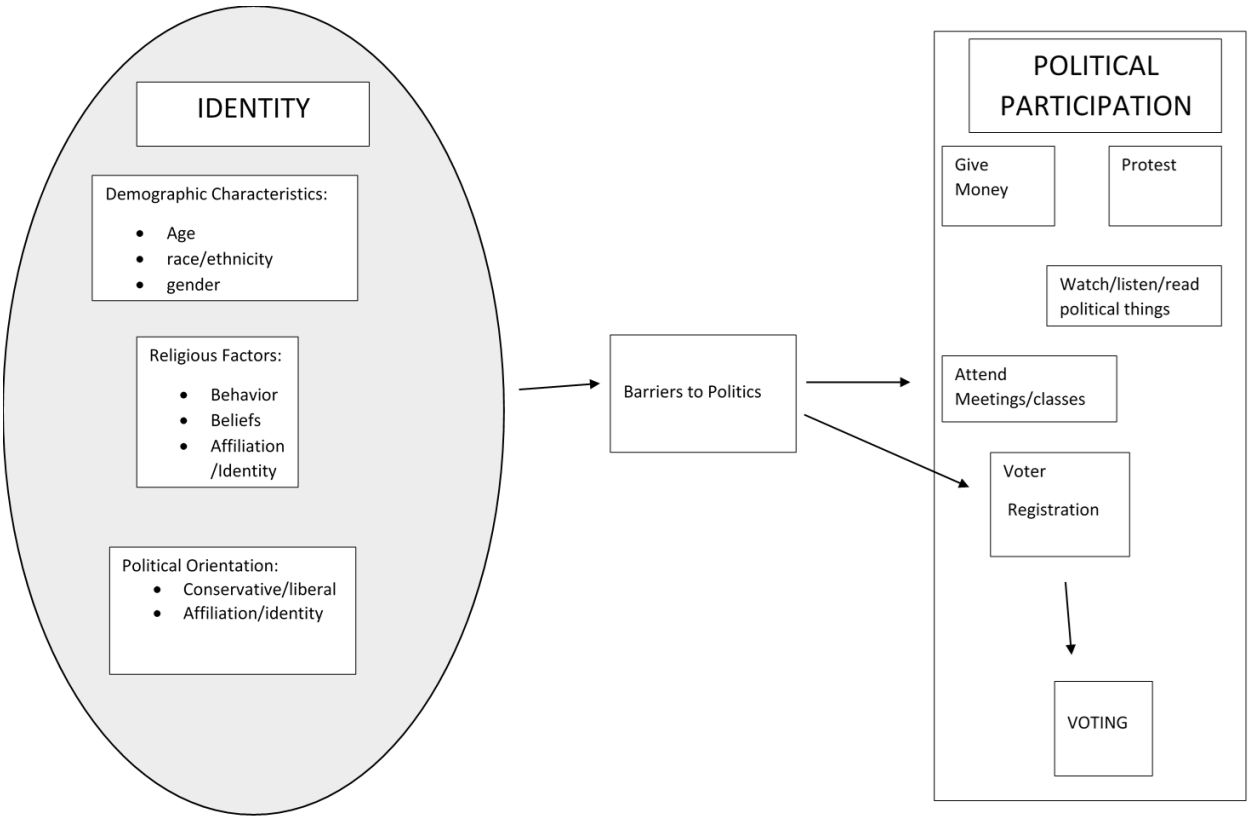

Figure 1: Concept Map

Identity Theory-Multiple Identities

Identity theory comes from the metatheory of structural symbolic interaction, which focuses on identities and how they work (Stryker and Burke 2000). Within identity theory, it is accepted that people have multiple identities based on the positions they occupy and the roles they play in relationships and groups (Stryker and Burke 2000; Burke and Stets 2009). An example of two identities that people have and that interact with each other are religious identities and political identities.

Typically, social and collective identities are seen as separate concepts, but an identity can be both social and collective at the same time. One example of this is religious identity in the form of religious denomination is seen as a type of group membership, and both social and

collective identities are defined in terms of group membership. A social identity is when "the part of one's self-concept that is informed by one's membership in groups defined by some shared attribute" (Kalin and Sambanis 2018, 240). Based on this definition, religious denomination is a social identity because being a member of a specific religious denomination informs the self-concept that someone has of themselves. Olson (2011) believed that social identity is a major component that composes religion. Saying that religious denomination is a social identity then means that being a part of a religious denomination inherently becomes an aspect of how a person identifies and sees themselves (Patrikios 2008).

A collective identity is when the identity of the group becomes a part of an individual's identity. Defining religious denominations this way suggests that having a religious identity means that a person inherently shares a collective identity with the other members of that same religious denomination. The collective identity of a religious denomination is important to look at since it shows how identifying and being a member of a particular religious denomination changes how people think about themselves through the lens of that religion. Also, Williams (1996) states that identity, specifically collective identity, "has important political impact distinct from any given set of religious beliefs or political opinions" (369). This shows that identity is something that needs to be considered in the religion-political relationship because it is separate from the typical definitions of religion and politics, and it does have an impact on political aspects. So, religious denomination can be both a social identity where a person's self-concept is shaped by their religious group membership and a collective identity where their religious group membership forms a connection with other group member that shapes their identity and behavior.

Another social, collective identity that people have is their political identity. Political identity is a social identity because political party affiliation can be a part of someone's self-categorization of themself based on group membership (Kalin and Sambanis 2018). Identifying as a Democrat can cause someone to think of themselves as liberal since as a group Democrats are seen as more liberal; while identifying as a Republican can cause someone to think of themselves as conservative since as a group Republicans are seen as more conservative (Patrikios 2008). However, recently, younger people have become more detached from identifying with political parties, which means that youth are less likely to strongly identify with a political identity (Huddy 2001; Wray-Lake, Arruda, and Hopkins 2019). Rather younger people are more likely to identify as Independents, which suggests that younger people are feeling less included in group membership (Huddy 2001; Newport 2014; Pew Research Center 2018).

Political identity can also be a collective identity because identifying and being a part of a particular political party affiliation changes how people think about themselves through the lens of that affiliation. For example, officially registering with a political party creates an external link between a voter and that political party (Thornburg 2014). Creating this external link as a member of a political party allows the voter to feel like they are part of a group through that membership, and it then allows for that in-group membership to become a part of their identity. This aligns with having a collective identity because as people feel closer to a group they self-categorize as being a member of that group and see themselves as full members of the group (Patrikios 2008).

When looking at the role that identity plays in the religion-political relationship, it is important to make sure to look at people as a whole. This is because how people identify with

other groups can have an impact on their religious identity and political identity. An example of this is that the race that people identify with can be a moderator for political aspects, such as political participation and voter registration. Due to this, "theories of voting participation remain incomplete because of their failure to adequately pinpoint factors that motivate African Americans to vote" (Liu, Austin, and Orey 2016, 577). The fact that these theories have not accounted for the racial aspect of people's identities is an issue because it affects the religion-politics relationship. Along with race, other identity factors, such as sex and gender, should be accounted for in the religion-political relationship.

Since people have multiple identities, the identity that a person acts upon is shaped by the situation as well as other factors, and it is seen as having a hierarchy (Stryker and Burke 2000). There are three constructs, salience, centrality, and commitment, which represents the idea that multiple identities are hierarchical (Stryker and Serpe 1994; Stryker and Burke 2000). The first construct is salience which is defined as the probability that a person will invoke an identity in a given situation because that identity is prominent to that person (Adamsons and Pasley 2013; Stryker and Burke 2000). Identity salience does not require conscious awareness because the more prominent and salient an identity is to a person, the more likely it will be invoked (Adamsons and Pasley 2013). The second construct is centrality, which is the importance of an identity in a given situation (Adamsons and Pasley 2013). Centrality does require conscious awareness because how important an identity is to a person fluctuates. An assumption for both salience and centrality is that they are context-free, which means that the salience or centrality of an identity does not change across situations (Adamsons and Pasley 2013). The third construct is commitment, which is the degree to which relationships effect identity enactment (Adamsons and Pasley 2013; Stryker and Burke 2000). There are two components within commitment:

extensiveness, which is the number of relationships associated with an identity; and intensiveness, which is the importance of the relationships associated with an identity (Adamson and Pasley 2013). Within identity theory, commitment is measured by looking at the cost of losing meaningful relationships associated with a particular identity should that identity be foregone (Adamsons and Pasley 2013; Stryker and Burke 2000). Commitment is seen to moderate the relationship between identity and behavior because if the extensiveness and intensiveness of a commitment is higher than that identity is stronger.

When looking at religious identity with these three concepts, it shows that there is a link between religious identity and behavior. For example, if religious identity is more salient, then religion is more likely to be prominent to a person regardless of whether the person is consciously aware of that identity or the context of the situation. This means that a person with a highly salient religious identity is more likely to behave in ways that align with their religious identity in all aspects of their lives, including in their political participation. Similarly, if religious identity has high centrality, then religion is more likely to be important to a person regardless of whether the person is consciously aware of that identity or the context of the situation. This means that a person with a highly central religious identity is more likely to behave in ways that align with their religious identity in all aspects of their lives, including in their political participation. Lastly, if religious identity has a higher commitment, both extensively and intensively, then a person is more likely to behave in ways that align with their religious identity. This means that a person with a higher commitment to their religious identity is more likely to behave in ways that align with their religious identity, including in their political participation behaviors. When looking at these three concepts collectively, identities

that rate higher in saliency, centrality, and commitment are likely to be towards the top of the hierarchy of identities that someone has, and more likely to be invoked by a person.

Religion and Political Participation

It is important to look at the religious denomination that people identify with because different religious denominations have different political behaviors (Williams 1996). Research on religion divides religious groups into distinct categories including conservative Protestants, mainline Protestants, Catholics, and other religious denominations (Wilde and Glassman 2016). Different religious denominations differ in political participation, voting behavior, level of conservatism and liberalism, and political party affiliation (Brooks and Manza 2004; Driskell, Embry & Lyon 2008; Wilde and Glassman 2016).

The first religious denomination to look at regarding differences in political behaviors is conservative Protestants. When looking at political participation in general, conservative Protestants have lower political participation when compared to non-affiliated/non-religious. Instead, conservative Protestants tend to focus more on spiritual and personal salvation and less on political participation (Driskell, Embry & Lyon 2008). Regarding voting behaviors in particular, conservative Protestants have become steadily more Republican in their voting behaviors from 1960 to 1996 (Layman 2001 in Brooks and Manza 2004). Also, the increasing divide between white conservative Protestants and secular liberals has been seen in voting patterns (Wilde and Glassman 2016). However, Brooks and Manza (2004) were unable to find a specific group shift or pattern in voting behavior for conservative Protestants (Brooks and Manza 2004). When looking at political ideologies, conservative Protestants tend to be more conservative politically in most of their beliefs and values, such as abortion, but economically

they are more liberal (Brooks and Manza 2004; Wild and Glassman 2016; Woodberry and Smith 1998; Felson and Kindell 2007). Overall, there is a greater diversity in the liberal or conservative aspect of their views compared to the general public and other Americans (Woodberry and Smith 1998). Lastly, when looking at political party affiliation, conservative Protestants started to become very prominent as Republicans in the 1980's (Brooks and Manza 2004; Patrikios 2008). Since the 1980's, conservative Protestants have become overwhelmingly Republican, which has led to a deepening of their Republican identity (Iyengar et al. 2019; Brooks and Manza 2004).

When looking at conservative Protestants, there are differences between white conservative Protestants and black Protestants (Steensland et al. 2000; Wilde and Glassman 2016). The categorization of conservative Protestants into (white) conservative Protestants and black (conservative) Protestants falls along racial lines, as well as religious ideology and theology lines, which leads to there being both similarities and differences between (white) conservative Protestants and black Protestants. Similar to white conservative Protestants, black Protestants have lower political participation when compared to non-affiliated/non-religious. Black Protestants are less likely to participate in civic and political organizations of the dominate groups, which results in lower political participation. Also, black Protestants focus less on political participation and focus more on spiritual and personal salvation (Driskell, Embry & Lyon 2008). Regarding voting behavior, black Protestants are more Democratic in their voting, as Black people vote more progressively than White people regardless of religious affiliation, which means that black Protestants should vote more Democratic and progressive than other religious denominations (Wilde and Glassman 2016). When looking at political ideology, black Protestants tend to be theologically conservative as measured by church attendance, frequency of Bible reading, and beliefs (Wild and Glassman 2016). However, black Protestants are more

liberal economically and regarding civil rights, but more conservative regarding homosexuality and abortion, which they have become increasingly liberal on since 1960s (Wilde and Glassman 2016). Finally, black Protestants are overwhelmingly Democratic in general (Iyengar et al. 2019; Wilde and Glassman 2016).

Mainline Protestants vary from other religious denominations in their political behaviors. Mainline Protestants are also similar to conservative Protestants in that they exhibit lower political participation when compared to non-affiliated/non-religious. However, Djupe and Grant (2001) state that mainline Protestants have higher levels of political participation compared to evangelical or conservative Protestants and black Protestants (Brooks and Manza 2004). This difference could be due to other factors like class or the fact that mainline Protestants believe in a more inactive God, which means that they would have to be more active in general and politically (Driskell, Embry, and Lyon 2008). Regarding voting behavior, mainline Protestants had a strong Republican voting alignment in the 1960's, and since the 1960's they have had higher levels of Democratic voting behaviors (Wilde and Glassman 2016; Brooks and Manza 2004). When looking at political party affiliation, since the 1960's there has been a shift where mainline Protestants have become more Democratic which varies from their historically more Republican roots, especially in the last three decades (Brooks and Manza 2004; Patrikios 2008). This shift away from being Republican and towards being Democratic was only found to be a moderate shift (Hirschl et al. 2012; Brooks and Manza 2004).

Catholics also have different political behaviors compared to the other religious denominations. Similar to both conservative Protestants and mainline Protestants, Catholics have lower political participation when compared to non-affiliated/non-religious (Driskell, Embry & Lyon 2008). However, Catholics differ from conservative Protestants in their voting behavior

over time. In the 1960's, Catholics had a strong Democratic alignment, and since the 1960's Catholics have had higher levels of Republican voting behaviors (Wilde and Glassman 2016; Brooks and Manza 2004). Recently, researchers have found that Catholics have had a more neutral alignment regarding their voting behaviors (Wilde and Glassman 2016). Even with these trends, Brooks and Manza (2004) were unable to find a specific group shift in the pattern of voting behavior for Catholics. When looking at political ideology, Catholics have become more conservative politically since the 1960's (Brooks and Manza 2004; Hirschl et al. 2012). Similarly, since the 1960's there has been a shift where Catholics have become more Republican, which varies from their historical Democratic roots (Brooks and Manza 2004; Patrikios 2008).

Based on the previous research on religious denomination differences in political participation outlined above, it is hypothesized that identifying as a conservative Protestant differs from other religious denominations in the level of impact on the level of political participation. Specifically:

H1-a: Compared to conservative Protestants, mainline Protestants have higher levels of political participation

H1-b: Compared to conservative Protestants, Catholics have lower levels of political participation

Racialized Political Participation Barriers

Historically, in the U.S. there have been certain groups of people who have not had the access or the ability to participation in politics. In the U.S., there has been a long-standing connection between racial inequality and political participation in the form of racialized barriers, particularly for Black people. Racialized barriers have taken the form of conflict, coalition

building, interest convergence, and exclusion. The conflict of the Civil War granted political enfranchisement for Black people. A form of political enfranchisement that Black people gained was the legal right to vote, but they still faced barriers to vote in the form of violence, harassment, and biased enforcement of ambiguous rules. The aftermath of the political enfranchisement led to the creation of Jim Crow practices and policies, which then reversed the gains that Black people had made in the political part of society. The racial exclusion of Black people was overt and rigid about who could participate in the political sphere of society, which was done as a way to limit the power of Black people. In the 1960's, the Civil Rights Movement was a racial project for political inclusion of Black people due to collective action, coalition building, and interest convergence (Rosino 2016).

Even with this movement and other forms of work that were done to alleviate racial discrimination in the political sphere, racial inequality remains deeply entrenched as White dominance is maintained in politics through habitual and strategic practices and policies. Due to the how entrenched these barriers are in the political system, Black people and other people of color are underrepresented in political participation, political engagement, and political leadership. Political disenfranchisement and racialized barriers are still seen today in political policies and decision-making that exclude Black people and other people of color from access to political spaces and political involvement (Rosino 2016)

Based on previous research on political participation barriers stemming from racial discrimination, it is hypothesized that that race impacts the relationship between religious affiliation and political participation. Specifically:

H2: Blacks, Hispanics, and other races are less likely to engage in political participation compared to Whties

Religion and Voter Registration

It is important to look at voter registration as an aspect of political participation and as its own separate variable. When looking at voter registration as its own variable separate from political participation there are distinctions between Democrats and Republicans. Democrats have introduced numerous bills in the 1970's and 1980's to make voter registration easier and uniform in the U.S. (Pults 2020). More recently, Democrats have introduced bills that allow for easier access to register to vote, including the bill on election day registration. Election day registration had overwhelming Democratic support since it is a way to attract more supporters to the polls and increase voter participation, particularly for their followers (Neiheisel and Burden 2012). As mainline Protestants tend to be more Democratic, it shows that there might be religious affiliation differences in support for voter registration and possibly even differences in levels of voter registration (Brooks and Manza 2004; Patrikios 2008; Hirschl et al. 2012; Iyengar et al. 2019; Wilde and Glassman 2016).

On the other hand, Republicans have argued in favor of requirements for voter registration, such as voter identification laws and registration roll cleaning, to protect against voter fraud (Miller et al. 2019; Highton 2017). Additionally, requirements for voter registration are considered to reduce participation by minority and lower-income voters, who are typically Democratic. This means that these requirements favor Republicans which is why they encourage and provide support to keep them in place (Miller et al. 2019). Since Republicans have favored restrictive changes and encouraged suppression efforts in order to reduce turnout, it means that they are against laws like election day registration and online voter registration (Highton 2017; Neiheisel and Burden 2012). As Catholics and conservative Protestants tend to be more Republican, it shows that there might be religious affiliation differences in support for voter

registration and possibly even differences in levels of voter registration (Brooks and Manza 2004; Patrikios 2008; Iyengar et al. 2019).

The link between religious affiliation and political party affiliation might impact the support for voter registration and the enactment of voter registration laws which make it harder for Democrats and thus mainline Protestants to vote. Due to these connections, it is possible that this link could impact voter registration. Even though it is possible this link exists, there is still a chance that it does not exist. If there is a connection, then it is hypothesized that identifying as a Conservative Protestant differs from other religious denominations in the level of impact on voter registration. Specifically,

H3-a: Compared to conservative Protestants, mainline Protestants have higher levels of voter registration.

H3-b: Compared to conservative Protestants, Catholics have higher levels of voter registration.

Voter Registration Barriers

Historically, several groups of people have been excluded from registering to vote due to specific voter registration barriers that are not associated with other political variables (Piven and Cloward 1988). Some of the barriers that are associated with voter registration include poll taxes, literacy tests, identification, and residency requirements (Piven and Cloward 1988; Bowers and Whitley 2018; Highton 2017). Along with these barriers, there are also administrative barriers that include access to voter registration sites and time windows to register to vote, which were set in place to limit lower-class and working-class people form registering to vote (Piven and Cloward 1988). Some other administration barriers include personal pieces of information, such

as address, Social Security number, driver's license number, and gender, which have to be filled out on voter registration forms (Pults 2020). These voter registration barriers were originally put into place to stop minorities and marginalized people from voting, and they remain in place today for the same reasons. These barriers now extend to new groups that are marginalized, such as transgender and gender non-conforming individuals (Bowers and Whitley 2018). There are some U.S. states that have more barriers for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, and these are typically the states that have stricter voter registration identification laws (Bowers and Whitley 2018).

Throughout history there have been voter registration reforms that have attempted and succeed at removing some of these barriers. One major reform was the Voting Rights Act (VRA) that was enacted in 1965 to alleviate some of these barriers; however, compliance with the VRA has been limited for a variety of reasons (Saunders 2017). Some of these reasons include that each U.S. state has their own voting laws which interpret the VRA in different ways, and that the VRA mainly benefits minorities and there are groups that want to limit minorities from voting. Other reforms to make registering to vote easier include election day registration and online voter registration (Neiheisel and Burden 2012; Saunders 2017; Yu 2019). Even with reforms and abolishing voter registration barriers, these obstacles to register to vote tend to reassert themselves as an attempt to alter electoral outcomes through shaping who can vote (Piven and Cloward 1988; Highton 2017).

Based on the previous research on voter registration barriers stemming from racial discrimination, it is hypothesized that that race impacts voter registration rates. Specifically:

H4: Blacks, Hispanics, and other races are less likely to register to vote compared to Whites

DATA AND METHODS

I obtained secondary data from the time series dataset of the American National Elections Study (ANES). The ANES produces high quality nationally representative pre- and post-election survey data from U.S. adults (Clink 2009). Data from the ANES starts in 1948 and goes until present day; however, only waves from 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 were selected to be used. These waves were selected for use because the recent political world was of interest for this thesis. The survey asks the same or similar questions over the years, which allows for better comparisons across people, contexts, and time (Clink 2009). Even though the ANES has asked the same questions throughout the years that they have gathered data, the wording of the questions has been slightly altered over time and additional questions have been included based on what is happening in the world, such as questions with technology have only been more recently included. The ANES contains a wide variety of questions including questions that focus on voting, public opinion, general demographics, political participation, religious affiliation, political affiliation, and voter registration (Clink 2009; ANES). It was important to find a data source that included all these variables as they are important to the research questions.

Before using variables from the ANES, certain aspects of cleaning the data had to occur in order to make the data useable. The first thing that had to be done was to apply weights to the variables. The ANES dataset recommends that weights are used on the variables in order to make sure that the variables are comparable, since the questions change slightly over the years. There are multiple weights that are included in the overall dataset that could potentially be used to weight the variables based on certain criteria. For the variables that I chose, the weight that I chose to use was VCF009z, and it was applied to all the variables. The ANES provides a codebook that tells researchers which weights to apply to each variable, and the weight variable

that was chosen was mentioned for each variable that was included. Additionally, the ANES provided additional information for using the cumulative data file, which recommended using this weight when using the combined sample.

The second thing that needed to be done was that the missing values in the data had to be addressed. There are a couple of ways to address missing values using R; however, for this dataset listwise deletion was used to remove rows that contained missing data. This was the appropriate method to use as the dataset contains a large number of data points, so removing cases with missing data still leaves a large number of cases to be analyzed. Before listwise deletion was used, the data set contained 15,525 data points from years 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016. Specifically, there were 1,807 observations from 2000; 1,212 observations from 2004; 2,322 observations from 2008; 5,914 observations from 2012; and 4,270 observations from 2016. Once listwise deletion was used to remove missing data, the data set contained 10,111 data points, which is still a large enough sample size to be used for data analysis. Specifically, there were 1,805 observations from 2000; 767 observations from 2004; 1,548 observations from 2008; 4,018 observations from 2012; and 2,693 observations from 2016.

VARIABLES

Dependent Variable

There are two dependent variables of interest in this study. The first dependent variable is political participation. The political participation variable was constructed from a series of questions asking respondents how many of the following political activities the respondent participated in: 1) donating money to a political party, candidate, or campaign; 2) being contacted by any political party; 3) attending a political meeting or rally during the campaign; 4) voting in the national elections; 5) registering to vote; and 6) voting. Respondents were asked to choose either 'Yes' or 'No' for each of these activities, and each 'Yes' response was given a value of 1. Some variables had more categories than just yes/no, which were adapted to reflect the binary response options of yes/no. For example, the variable measuring whether respondents were contacted by any political party had multiple versions of yes which were all given a value of 1, and the variable measuring registering to vote had three answer choices which were simplified to yes registered to vote or no not registered to vote. Once each response was given a value of 1 (yes) or 0 (no), they were combined and summed across all activities to determine each respondent's political activity score, which could range from 0 to 6 depending on how many political activities respondents were involved with. The method of creating this political participation index is a variation on Driskell et al. 2008 political participation index variable.

The second dependent variable in this study is voter registration. Voter registration was operationalized as a two-level scale of whether respondents were not registered (0) or registered to vote (1).

Independent Variables

There are two main independent variables of interest in this thesis, which are religious affiliation and race. The first independent variable in this study is the religious affiliation that the respondent has. To form the religious affiliation variable, the religious denomination variable of the ANES was used. This religious denomination variable was measured by asking respondents if they were Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, or something else. Then based on the response the respondent gave more specific questions were asked to find out which specific denomination the respondent was a member of. Research on religious affiliation divides religious denominations into distinct categories including (white) conservative Protestants, black Protestants, mainline Protestants, Catholics, Jews, other denominations, and non-affiliates. There is a general consensus among researchers in this field that using these religious categories provides the best way to operationalize the variety of religious denominations in the American religious scene (Steensland et al. 2000; Wilde and Glassman 2016). However, since I am interested in looking at race as a variable that interacts with religion, it means that race shouldn't be a factor in how I operationalize religious affiliation. Thus, I combined (white) conservative Protestants and black Protestants into one category of conservative Protestants. This is able to be done because black Protestants and (white) conservative Protestants were based on the same religious denominations but varied on the categorization based on the race of the respondent. Additionally, since the number of respondents who said they were Jewish, other denominations, or non-affiliated were low, those three categories were collapsed into one other religious denomination category. Thus, religious affiliation was operationalized into four categories including: conservative Protestant, mainline Protestant, Catholic, and other religions.

There were three other religious variables that were included alongside religious affiliation because they were theoretically important. The first religious variable is church attendance. Church attendance measured the frequency of attending church on a six-level scale that included every week-more than once a week, every week-once a week, almost every week, once or twice a month, a few times a year, and never. The second religious variable is religious importance, which measured how important religion was to respondents. This variable is a dummy variable of important (1) and not important (0). The last religious variable is religious guidance, which looked at how much guidance respondents received from their religion in their day-to-day life. This variable was measured on a four-level scale that included some, quite a bit, a great deal, and religion not important.

The second independent variable is the race of the respondents. Race was measured on a four-level scale that included White, non-Hispanics; Black, non-Hispanics; Hispanics; and other, non-Hispanics.

Control Variables

In this study, there are certain variables that need to be controlled for in order to account for the direct impact that the independent variables have on the dependent variables. These control variables include demographic factors since they could impact the proposed relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The first demographic variable that is controlled for is gender of the respondent. Gender was measured on a two-level scale of whether respondents were female (1) or male (0). The other demographic control variable is the age of the respondents. Age is a continuous variable that ranged from age 18 to 93. Additionally, two SES measures were controlled for as prior research found that they impacted both religion and

politics. The first SES measure that is controlled for is education. Education was measured on an ordinal scale with a range that included less than high school education, high school education, some college but no degree, and college/advanced degree. The second SES measure that is controlled for was income. Income was measured by looking at income percentile groups, which range included 0 to 16 percentile, 17 to 33 percentile, 34 to 67 percentile, 68 to 95 percentile, and 96 to 100 percentile. The ANES measures income this way because over time the numeric values associated with these percentiles have drastically changed, which makes this a better way to keep income consistently measured. Additionally, political party identification was controlled for as it could impact the proposed relationship. Political party identification was measured on a three-level scale that included Democrat, Independent, and Republican. Lastly, year was controlled for as it could have an impact on the variables of interest. The ANES conducted surveys every four years, and since only years from 2000 to 2016 are included in the data it means that there are five options for year including 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016.

MODEL

A variety of modeling was done in order to acquire the full scope of the data in terms of the hypotheses. First, descriptive statistics were compiled of the full sample to get an overview of the data. Second, descriptive statistics by political participation were calculated which found the average level of political participation to get a sense of who participates politically. Similarly, descriptive statistics by voter registration were calculated to get an overall sense of who registers to vote. Next, multivariate analyses were run on both political participation and voter registration. Since, political participation and voter registration are different kinds of variables it means that different types of regression analysis were used. The political participation index is a ratio variable with a range from 0-6, which means that using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression is appropriate. However, since voter registration is a dichotomous variable, a binominal logistic regression model is appropriate.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

An examination of the descriptive statistics in Table 1 provides an overview of relevant characteristics for the full sample. Regarding the religious affiliation of the respondents, roughly 30% are conservative Protestants, 33% are mainline Protestants, 29% are Catholics, and 8% are of another religion. About 82% of the sample find religion important, and on average respondents reported that religion guides them quite a bit in their daily lives. Regarding the dependent variables, 91% of the respondents reported being registered to vote, and the average number of political activities respondents engaged in was 2.42.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Full Sample											
	# of Values	Minimum	Maximum	N	Median	Mean	Mean S.E.	Mean C.I. at p=0.95	Variance	Standard Deviation	Coefficient Variance
Political Participation	10111	0	6		2	2.424	0.012	0.024	1.512	1.230	0.507
Voter Registration	10111	0	1	9207	1	0.911	0.003	0.006	0.081	0.285	0.313
Conservative Protestant	10111	0	1	3018	0	0.299	0.005	0.009	0.209	0.458	1.533
Mainline Protestant	10111	0	1	3340	0	0.330	0.005	0.009	0.221	0.470	1.424
Catholic	10111	0	1	2935	0	0.290	0.005	0.009	0.206	0.454	1.564
Other Religion	10111	0	1	818	0	0.081	0.003	0.005	0.074	0.273	3.371
Religion Important	10111	0	1	8271	1	0.818	0.004	0.008	0.149	0.386	0.472
Religion Guide	10111	1	5		3	2.817	0.012	0.024	1.553	1.246	0.442
Church Attendance	10111	0	5		3	2.834	0.017	0.034	2.984	1.728	0.610
White	10111	0	1	6440	1	0.637	0.005	0.009	0.231	0.481	0.755
Black	10111	0	1	1695	0	0.168	0.004	0.007	0.140	0.374	2.228
Hispanic	10111	0	1	1468	0	0.145	0.004	0.007	0.124	0.352	2.427
Other Race	10111	0	1	508	0	0.050	0.002	0.004	0.048	0.219	4.348
Democrat	10111	0	1	5061	1	0.501	0.005	0.010	0.250	0.500	0.999
Republican	10111	0	1	3957	0	0.391	0.005	0.010	0.238	0.488	1.247
Independent	10111	0	1	1093	0	0.108	0.003	0.006	0.096	0.311	2.873
Education	10111	1	4		3	2.960	0.009	0.017	0.727	0.853	0.288
Income	10111	1	5		3	2.843	0.011	0.022	1.290	1.136	0.400
Female	10111	0	1	5577	1	0.552	0.005	0.010	0.247	0.497	0.902
Age	10111	18	93		50	49.73	0.170	0.330	286.870	16.940	0.340
Year	10111	2000	2016		2012	2010.56	0.050	0.097	24.943	4.994	0.003

Descriptive Statistics-Political Participation

In order to investigate the research question of who participates politically, cross tabulations were calculated for political participation and the other variables to see how different groups of people ranked on the political participation index. Table 2 presents the average score of each variable on the political participation index.

Table 2- Descriptive Statistics by Political Participation and Voter Registration

		Poltical Participation	Voter Registration
	N	**Average**	**Average**
Religious Affiliation			
Conservative Protestant	3018	2.3	0.90
Mainline Protestant	3340	2.5	0.93
Catholic	2935	2.4	0.91
Other Religion	818	2.4	0.87
Religion Importance			
Yes, Important	8271	2.4	0.91
No, Not Important	1840	2.4	0.90
Reliigon Guidance			
Some	1574	2.4	0.91
Quite a bit	2383	2.4	0.91
A great deal	4314	2.4	0.92
Not Important	1840	2.4	0.90
Church Attendance			
More than once a week	1293	2.5	0.92
Once a week	1486	2.6	0.94
Almost every week	1487	2.5	0.95
Once or twice a month	1550	2.4	0.91
A few times a year	1932	2.3	0.90
Never	2363	2.3	0.88
Race			
White	6440	2.5	0.92
Black	1695	2.5	0.94
Hispanic	1468	2.1	0.85
Other Race	508	2.3	0.89
Political Party			
Democrat	5061	2.5	0.92
Independent	1093	1.8	0.76
Republican	3957	2.5	0.94
Education			
Less than High School	217	1.9	0.79
High School	3233	2.1	0.84
Some College	3395	2.4	0.92
College/Advanced Degree	3266	2.8	0.97
Income			
0 to 16 Percentile	1720	2.0	0.83
17 to 33 Percentile	1789	2.2	0.88
34 to 67 Percentile	3451	2.4	0.93
68 to 95 Percentile	2660	2.7	0.95
96 to 100 Percentile	491	3.0	0.96
Gender			
Male	4534	2.5	0.91
Female	5577	2.4	0.91
Year			
2000	1085	2.3	0.88
2004	767	2.5	0.90
2008	1548	2.4	0.88
2012	4018	2.5	0.93
2016	2693	2.3	0.92

The religious affiliation variable shows that the average number of political activities respondents in each religious denomination is between two and three. Specifically, on average mainline Protestants participate in 2.5 political activities; Catholics participate in 2.4 political activities; people of other Religions participate in 2.4 political activities; and conservative Protestants participate in 2.3 political activities.

When looking at the other theoretically important religion variables, the average participation in political activities varies. For church attendance and average political participation, there are a couple of connections to look at. First, the average number of political activities that respondents have across frequency of church attendance is between two and three. Second, never going to church and only going to church a few times a year have the same average of political participation. Third, as the frequency of attending church decreases the average of political participation slightly decreases. Fourth, for religious importance the average number of political activities that respondents who say that religion is important engage in is 2.4, which is the same for respondents who say that religion is not important. Finally, looking at if religion guides someone in their life shows the same average number of 2.4 political activities for all levels of religious guidance.

When looking at race and average political participation, there are a couple of connections to look at. First, Black people engage in an average of 2.5 political activities, which is the same compared to White people. Second, Hispanic people engage in an average of 2.1 political activities, which is fewer compared to White people. Third, people of other races engage in an average of 2.3 political activities, which is fewer compared to White people.

For the additional demographic variables, there are connections that should be recognized regarding the average number of political activities respondents engage in. First, looking at

gender and average political participation shows that men and women have similar political engagement. Particularly, men engage in an average of 2.5 political activities and women engage in an average of 2.4 political activities. Second, the average number of political activities that Democrats and Republicans engage in is 2.5, while on average Independents only participate in 1.8 political activities. Third, as the level of education increases, the average number of political activities that respondents engage is also increases. Lastly, as income percentile increases, the average number of political activities that respondents engage in steadily increases from 2 political activities to 3 political activities.

Descriptive Statistics-Voter Registration

To look at the research question of who registers to vote, cross tabulations were done between voter registration and the other variables to see if whether respondents registered to vote varied by different groups of people. Table 2 presents the average voter registration for each variable. The religious affiliation variable shows that across all religious denominations the average rate of respondents reporting that they are registered to vote is above 80%. The average percentage of mainline Protestants, Catholics, and conservative Protestants who are registered to vote is above 90%, while the average percentage people of other religions who are registered to vote is 87%.

When looking at the other theoretically important religion variables, the average percentage of respondents who are registered to vote is around 90%. Regarding church attendance, it shows that across all levels of church attendance the average rate of voter registration is 90%, excluding those who never attend church. The average rate of voter registration for respondents who never attend church is 88%. Regarding religious important,

there are similar average rates of voter registration who say religion is and is not important. Specifically, the average rates of voter registration for respondents who say religion is not important is 91%, while the average rates of voter registration for respondents who say religion is important is 90%. Finally, looking at religious guidance and voter registration shows that across all levels of religious guidance the average rate of voter registration is between 90% and 92%.

When looking at race and voter registration, there are a couple of connections to look at. First, for both White people and Black people the average rate of voter registration is above 90%. Specifically, the average percentage of White people who are registered to vote is 92% and the average percentage of Black people who are registered to vote is 94%. Second, for both Hispanic people and people of other races the average rate of voter registration is above 80%, but below 90%. Specifically, the average percentage of Hispanic people who are registered to vote is 85% and the average percentage of people of other races who are registered to vote is 89%.

For the additional demographic variables, there are some connections that should be looked at regarding the average rates of voter registration. First, looking at gender and voter registration shows that men and women have the same average rates of voter registration at 91%. Second, the average rates of voter registration are above 90% for Democrats and Republicans, but below 80% for Independents. Third, as the level of education increases the average rates of voter registration increases. Lastly, as the income percentile increases the average rates of voter registration also increases.

Multivariate Analysis-Political Participation

Table 3 presents the results in four nested ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models of the variables of interest on the indexed level of political participation.

Table 3- OLS Regression for Political Participation

	Political Participation			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Constant	2.300 ***	2.900 ***	2.900 ***	9.200 **
	(0.022)	(0.120)	(0.120)	(4.500)
Mainline Protestant	0.180 ***	0.210 ***	0.250 ***	0.120 ***
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.032)	(0.029)
Catholic	0.079 ***	0.110 ***	0.250 ***	0.110 ***
	(0.032)	(0.032)	(0.035)	(0.032)
Other Religion	0.110 ***	0.130 ***	0.190 ***	0.059
	(0.048)	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.046)
Religion Important		-0.240 ***	-0.210 ***	-0.180 ***
		(0.068)	(0.067)	(0.062)
Religion Guidance		-0.050 ***	-0.045 **	-0.049 ***
		(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.017)
Church Attendance		-0.096 ***	-0.094 ***	-0.054 ***
		(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Black			0.100 ***	0.290 ***
			(0.035)	(0.036)
Hispanic			-0.440 ***	-0.068
			(0.036)	(0.035)
Other Race			-0.180 ***	-0.051
			(0.056)	(0.052)
Independent				-0.550 ***
				(0.037)
Republican				-0.069 ***
				(0.027)
Education				0.270 ***
				(0.014)
Income				0.150 ***
				(0.011)
Female				-0.006
				(0.022)
Age				0.021 ***
				(0.001)
Year				-0.004
				(0.002)
Observations	10,111	10,111	10,111	10,111
R2	0.004	0.017	0.034	0.200
Adjusted R2	0.003	0.016	0.033	0.190
Residual Standard Error	1.200 (df=10,107)	1.200 (df=10,104)	1.200 (df=10,101)	1.100 (df=10,094)
F-Statistic	12.000*** (df=3; 10,107)	29.000*** (df=6; 10,104)	39.000*** (df=9; 10,101)	152.000*** (df=16; 10,094)

Note: ** p<0.05 ; *** p<0.01

Model 1 of Table 3 presents the results of the bivariate model of religious affiliation on political participation. Mainline Protestants, Catholics, and other religions have statistically significant positive effects, which means they have higher levels of political participation than conservative Protestants. Specifically, participation in political activities is, on average, 0.18 higher for mainline Protestants compared to conservative Protestants; participation in political activities is, on average, 0.079 higher for Catholics compared to conservative Protestants; and participation in political activities is, on average, 0.11 higher for people of other religions compared to conservative Protestants.

Model 2 of Table 3 incorporates the other theoretical religious variables including religious importance, religious guidance, and church attendance on political participation. With adding these additional religion variables, mainline Protestants, Catholics, and other religions continue to have statistically significant positive effects, which means they have higher levels of political participation than conservative Protestants. Both religious salience variables of religious importance and guidance have statistically significant negative effects on political participation. Additionally, church attendance has a statistically significant negative effect on political participation.

Model 3 of Table 3 incorporates race in addition to religious affiliation and the other religion variables. Consistent with Models 1 and 2, mainline Protestants, Catholics, and other religions have statistically significant positive effects, which means their higher levels of political participation than conservative Protestants persists when race is accounted for. Religious importance, religious guidance, and church attendance continue to have statistically significant negative effects when race is incorporated.

When looking at race and political participation, Black respondents differ from Hispanic respondents and respondents of other races when compared to White respondents. Black respondents have higher levels of political participation compared to White respondents. Specifically, participation in political activities is, on average, 0.10 higher for Black people compared to White people. This differs for Hispanic people and people of other races who have lower levels of political participation compared to White people. Specifically, participation in political activities is, on average, 0.045 lower for Hispanic people compared to White people; and participation in political activities is, on average, 0.094 lower for people of other races compared to White people.

Model 4 of Table 3 shows the full model for political participation, as it includes the control variables such as demographic variables, SES measures, and political party affiliation. With adding these additional control variables, mainline Protestants and Catholics continue to have statistically significant positive effects, which means their higher levels of political participation than conservative Protestants persists when the additional control variables are incorporated. Specifically, participation in political activities is, on average, 0.12 higher for mainline Protestants compared to conservative Protestants, net of control variables; and participation in political activities is, on average, 0.11 higher for Catholics compared to conservative Protestants, net of control variables. However, when looking at other religions compared to conservative Protestants, the relationship to political participation remains positive, but it loses its statistical significance. This change in statistical significance could be due to one of the control variables that was included in Model 4, but it is probably not due to race as this relationship was still significant in Model 3 when race was incorporated. Consistent with Models

2 and 3, religious importance, religious guidance, and church attendance all continue to have statistically significant negative effects.

When looking at race and political participation, the relationships in Model 4 are similar to the relationships seen in Model 3. Black respondents continue to have statistically significant higher levels of political participation compared to White people. Specifically, participation in political activities is, on average, 0.29 higher for Black people compared to White people, net of control variables. Hispanic people and people of other races continue to have negative effects, which means they have lower levels of political participation compared to White people. Specifically, participation in political activities is, on average, 0.068 lower for Hispanic people compared to White people, net of control variables; and participation in political activities is, on average, 0.051 lower for people of other races compared to White people, net of control variables. However, both of these findings were no longer statistically significant when the controls were accounted for.

Lastly, when looking at the added control variables and political participation there are some relationships of note. First, older respondents have statistically significant positive effects, which means that as respondents' age increases, they have higher levels of political participation. Second, female respondents have lower levels of political participation compared to males, but this relationship is not statistically significant. Third, respondents with higher education and higher income have statistically significant higher levels of political participation. Finally, Independents and Republicans have statistically significant negative effects, which means that they have lower levels of political participation compared to Democrats.

Multivariate Analysis-Voter Registration

Table 4 presents the results in four nested logit regression models of the variables of interest on voter registration. Odds ratios (presented in Appendix A) were calculated as a more intuitive way of interpreting the multivariate analysis results.

Table 4- Logit Regression for Voter Registration

	Voter Registration			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Constant	2.200 ***	3.300 ***	3.200 ***	-57.000 ***
	(0.061)	(0.350)	(0.350)	(15.000)
Mainline Protestant	0.370 ***	0.410 ***	0.540 ***	0.250 **
	(0.091)	(0.093)	(0.096)	(0.100)
Catholic	0.079	0.140	0.500 ***	0.220 **
	(0.089)	(0.091)	(0.100)	(0.110)
Other Religion	-0.350 ***	-0.300 ***	-0.140	-0.500 ***
	(0.120)	(0.120)	(0.130)	(0.140)
Religion Important		-0.390 **	-0.350	-0.340
		(0.190)	(0.190)	(0.200)
Religion Guidance		-0.093	-0.090	-0.110
		(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.058)
Church Attendance		-0.180 ***	-0.180 ***	-0.120 ***
		(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.026)
Black			0.410 ***	0.880 ***
			(0.120)	(0.130)
Hispanic			-0.790 ***	-0.065
			(0.092)	(0.110)
Other Race			-0.280	-0.140
			(0.150)	(0.160)
Independent				-1.200 ***
				(0.097)
Republican				0.016
				(0.095)
Education				0.830 ***
				(0.054)
Income				0.310 ***
				(0.037)
Female				0.200 ***
				(0.076)
Age				0.032 ***
				(0.002)
Year				0.028 ***
				(0.007)
Observations	10,111	10,111	10,111	10,111
McFadden R2	0.0060	0.0161	0.032	0.176
Adjusted McFadden R2	0.0047	0.0138	0.028	0.170
Log Likelihood	-3,027.00	-2,996.00	-2,948.00	-2510.000
AIC	6,062.00	6,006.00	5,917.00	5055.000

Note: ** p<0.05 ; *** p<0.01

Model 1 of Table 4 presents the results from the logit regression of the bivariate model of religious affiliation on voter registration. Mainline Protestants are statistically significantly more likely to be registered to vote than conservative Protestants. Specifically, the odds a mainline Protestant being registered to vote is 1.4 times greater than a conservative Protestant. The relationship seen for Catholics in Model 1 is not statistically significant. Finally, people of other religions are statistically significantly less likely to be registered to vote compared to conservative Protestants. Specifically, the odds a person of another religion being registered to vote are 0.7 times less than the odds a conservative Protestant.

Model 2 of Table 4 incorporates the other theoretical religious variables including religious importance, religious guidance, and church attendance on political participation. With adding these additional religion variables, the results form Model 1 persist in Model 2. Mainline Protestants still have statistically significant positive effects, which means that mainline Protestants are more likely to be registered to vote than conservative Protestants. The odds of a mainline Protestant being registered to vote is 1.5 times greater than a conservative Protestant. The relationship seen for Catholics in this model are not statistically significant. People of other religions remain statistically significantly less likely to be registered to vote compared to conservative Protestants. Specifically, the odds a person of another religion being registered to vote are 0.74 times less than the odds of a conservative Protestant. The theoretical religious variables of religious importance, religious guidance, and church attendance all have negative effects on voter registration, but only the religious importance and church attendance variables effect are statistically significant. The odds ratios for religion importance and church attendance are both less than one.

Model 3 of Table 4 incorporates race in addition to religious affiliation and the other religion variables on voter registration. Consistent with the prior models, mainline Protestants continue to have statistically significant positive effects. Specifically, the odds of a mainline Protestant being registered to vote is 1.7 times greater than a conservative Protestant. Catholics continue to be more likely than conservative Protestants to be registered to vote; however, when race was accounted for this relationship become statistically significant. Additionally, the odds of a Catholic being registered to vote is 1.7 times greater than a conservative Protestant. When race is incorporated into the model, the relationship seen for people of other religions is no longer statistically significant. Religious importance, religious guidance, and church attendance all continue to have negative effects. However, only church attendance is statistically significant, and the odds ratio for church attendance remains less than one.

Black respondents are statistically significantly more likely to be registered to vote compared to White respondents. Specifically, the odds of a Black person being registered to vote are 1.5 times greater than the odds a White person. Hispanic people and people of other races are less likely to be registered to vote compared to White people. However, only the relationship for Hispanic people is statistically significant. Additionally, the odds of a Hispanic person being registered to vote are 0.45 times less than the odds of a White person.

Model 4 of Table 4 shows the full model for voter registration, which includes the control variables such as demographic variables, SES measures, and political party affiliation. With adding these control variables, mainline Protestants and Catholics continue to have statistically significant positive effects. Specifically, the odds of a mainline Protestant being registered to vote is 1.3 times greater than a conservative Protestant; and the odds of a Catholic being registered to vote is 1.2 times greater than a conservative Protestant. People of other religions

remain statistically significantly less likely to be registered to vote compared to conservative Protestants. Specifically, the odds of a person of another religion being registered to vote are 0.61 times less than the odds of someone who is a conservative Protestant. Consistent with Model 3, religious importance and religious guidance have negative effects that are not statistically significant, while the negative effects of church attendance remain statistically significant.

When looking at race and voter registration, the relationships in Model 4 are similar to the relationships seen in Model 3. Black respondents continue to be significantly more likely to be registered to vote compared to White respondents. Specifically, the odds of a Black person being registered to vote are 2.4 times greater than the odds of a White person, holding all other variables constant. Hispanic people and people of other races continue to be less likely to register to vote compared to White people, but neither of these relationships are statistically significant when the controls were accounted for. Specifically, the odds of a Hispanic person being registered to vote is 0.94 times less than the odds of a White person; and the odds of a person of another race being registered to vote is 0.87 times less than the odds of a White person, holding all other variables constant.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge some of the relationships between the control variables and voter registration. First, older respondents have statistically significant positive effects, which means that as respondents age increases, they are more likely to be registered to vote. Second, female respondents are statistically significantly more likely to be registered to vote compared to males. Third, respondents with higher education and higher income are statistically significantly more likely to be registered to vote. Finally, Independents are statistically significantly less likely to be registered to vote compared to Democrats. However,

Republicans are more likely to be registered to vote compared to Democrats, but this relationship is not statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

The results of this analysis delved into the relationship between religious affiliation and political participation and explored the relationship between religious affiliation and voter registration. Regarding political participation, I hypothesized (H1) that identifying as a conservative Protestant differs from other religious denominations on the level of political participation. The first part of this hypothesis (H1-a) focused on the comparison between mainline Protestants and conservative Protestants, where it was predicted that mainline Protestants would have higher levels of political participation than conservative Protestants. The descriptive statistics find that mainline Protestants engage on average in higher levels of political participation than conservative Protestants. Additionally, Model 4 (presented in Table 3) finds support for this as there was a statistically significant positive effect, which means that mainline Protestants have higher levels of political participation compared to conservative Protestants, net of the control variables.

The second part of this hypothesis (H1-b) looked at if Catholics had lower levels of political participation compared to conservative Protestants. The descriptive statistics find that Catholics engage on average in higher levels of political participation than conservative Protestants. Similarly, no support was found for this hypothesis as across all four Models in Table 3, as there were statistically significant positive effects for Catholics. This finding suggests that Catholics have higher levels of political participation than conservative Protestants, even when accounting for race and other control variables. Future research on this topic could look at including other variables, like religious participation and religious belief, that have been included in prior research to see if this relationship holds.

When looking at political participation, it was hypothesized (H2) that race impacts the relationship between religious affiliation and political participation. There were three parts to this hypothesis that looked at Black people, Hispanic people, and people of other races having lower levels of political participation compared to White people. Regarding Black people, no support was found for this hypothesis as the descriptive statistics find that on average Black people have the same level of political participation as White people. Similarly, in the OLS regression analysis no support was found as there was a statistically significant positive effect of being a Black person on level of political participation, net of the control variables.

For the second part of this hypothesis (H2) regarding Hispanic people, mixed support was found. The descriptive statistics in Table 2 find that Hispanic people participate in lower levels of political participation on average compared to White people. Additionally, Model 3 (presented in Table 3) finds support as there were statistically significant negative effects for Hispanic people. However, in Model 4 (in Table 3) when the control variables were incorporated the negative effect was still there, but it was no longer statistically significant. Lastly, regarding people of other races, the descriptive statistics find that people of other races have on average lower levels of political participation. Similarly, Model 3 (presented in Table 3) finds support for this as there was a statistically significant negative effect for people of other races; however, in Model 4 (in Table 3) when other variables were controlled for the negative effect was no longer statistically significant.

Regarding voter registration, I hypothesized (H3) that identifying as a conservative Protestant differs from other religious denominations in the level of impact on voter registration. The first part of this hypothesis (H3-a) focused on the comparison between mainline Protestants and conservative Protestants, where it was believed that mainline Protestants would have higher

levels of voter registration. When looking at the descriptive statistics, it finds that mainline Protestants are on average more likely to be registered to vote than conservative Protestants. Additionally, Model 4 (presented in Table 4) finds support for this as there was a statistically significant positive effect of being mainline Protestants on voter registration, net of the control variables. Also, the odds ratio (presented in Appendix A) find that mainline Protestants are more likely than conservative Protestants to be registered to vote.

The second part of this hypothesis (H3-b) focused on if Catholics had higher levels of voter registration in comparison to conservative Protestants. When looking at the descriptive statistics, it finds that Catholics are on average more likely to be registered to vote than conservative Protestants. Similarly, support was found for this hypothesis in Model 4 (presented in Table 4) as there were statistically significant positive effects for Catholics, net of the control variables. Additionally, the odds ratio (presented in Appendix A) find that Catholics are more likely than conservative Protestants to be registered to vote net of control variables.

When looking at voter registration, it was hypothesized (H4) that race impacts the rate of voter registration. There were three parts to this hypothesis that looked at Black people, Hispanic people, and people of other races being less likely to be registered to vote compared to White people. Regarding Black people, no support was found for this hypothesis as the descriptive statistics find that on average Black people are more likely to be registered to vote than White people. Additionally, Model 4 (presented in Table 4) finds no support since there was a statistically significant positive effect of being a Black person on voter registration, net of the control variables. Similarly, the odds ratio (presented in Appendix A) finds that Black people are more likely than White people to be registered to vote.

On the other hand, mixed support for this hypothesis was found for Hispanic people as the descriptive statistics in Table 2 finds that Hispanic people are less likely to be registered to vote on average compared to White people. Similarly, Model 3 (presented in Table 4) shows support for this part of the hypothesis as there were statistically significant negative effects for Hispanic people. However, when the other variables were controlled for in Model 4, the negative effect was no longer statistically significant. Additionally, the odds ratio (presented in Appendix A) find that Hispanic people are less likely than White people to be registered to vote. Lastly, regarding people of other races, the descriptive statistics find that people of other races are on average less likely to be registered to vote. Similarly, Model 4 (presented in Table 4) finds support for this part of the hypotheses as there was a negative effect for people of other races; however, this relationship is not statistically significant. Additionally, the odds ratio (presented in Appendix A) find that people of other races are less likely than White people to be registered to vote.

LIMITATIONS

As with all research studies, there are a number of limitations to this thesis. First, since secondary data were used, there was no control over which questions were asked by the ANES in their survey. This means that I had no control over how the questions for any of my variables are worded or what specific questions were asked. The wording of the questions is a limitation for my thesis; however, this is a minor limitation since there is not a lot of ambiguity with the wording of the main variables of interest. Which questions were asked is a more significant limitation because it means that I had to look through all of the variables in the dataset in order to find the ones that are most applicable to the research questions and hypotheses. Additionally, since the ANES selected which questions were asked in the survey, it means that questions that I would have asked respondents to address certain ideas like salience, centrality, and commitment were not included. This is a limitation because it limits how much I can link my results to my concept map.

Second, I did not include certain variables, like region, as control variables that could have had an impact on the relationships of interest. Additionally, I did not include any variables that looked at the historical context of what was occurring in the world that might have had an impact on political participation and/or voter registration. Future research could look at including these variables to see if there is an impact on these relationships. Third, even though year was included as a control variable, differences in political participation and voter registration were not looked at across years. In the future, this could be looked at to see if the results that were found vary across years.

Fourth, in my concept map the aspect of barriers which links identity to political participation is very broad. It was intentionally left as a broad idea because there could be

multiple types of barriers that exist between these two concepts that may have different effects. Some of the barriers may be due to group membership or they could be due to other characteristics or reasons. In the future, the types of barriers should be further investigated to see if there are separate distinct types of barriers or if there is an overarching connection that all of the potential barriers share. Fifth, in my concept map, within political participation there is a link between voter registration and voting; however, this link is not something that I address in this thesis. This is because I focused on looking at political participation in general and then voter registration as its own variable rather than looking into the connection between voter registration and voting. Future research should look at this relationship as there may be differences in religious affiliation for those respondents who are registered to vote and did vote versus respondents who are registered to vote and did not vote. However, this was not in the scope of this research, which is why it was not included.

Sixth, in my concept map the ideas of saliency, centrality, and commitment are not represented. This is because these ideas are more abstract concepts that have not really been conceptualized or operationalized in the terms of this concept map. I think that these three concepts could be added to the concept map in the form of importance and/or daily use for each identity that is represented; however, it is still not entirely clear if operationalizing saliency, centrality, and commitment this way is the best method. Overall, I think more research into how to operationalize and measure these three concepts is necessary before these concepts can be incorporated into the concept map.

Lastly, models that looked at the interactions between religious affiliation and race on political participation and voter registration were not included in this thesis. However, these interaction models could add additional information about the relationship between religious

affiliation and political participation and the relationship between religious affiliation and voter registration. Future research on this topic should look at the interactions between religious affiliation and race, especially since differences in Black people, Hispanic people, and people of other races were seen in terms of both political participation and voter registration.

CONCLUSION

Overall, there was mixed support for the hypotheses that I tested. In terms of the concept map, this could mean that some of these other identities that were controlled for have higher salience, centrality, commitment, or a combination of all three, which caused more of an impact on political participation than religious affiliation. Alternatively, it could mean that some of these control variables have greater barriers to political participation than religious affiliation does.

Relating to the concept map, when race, gender, and SES were incorporated into the political participation Model 4 (presented in Table 3), the results find that people who identify with the dominant group in the U.S. (i.e. White men and people who have higher SES) have higher levels of political participation. Specifically, White people had higher levels of political participation than Hispanic people and people of other races; men had higher levels of political participation than women; and respondents with higher education and income had higher levels of political participation. An explanation for this might be that members of the dominant group face fewer barriers to participate in political activities, regardless of religious affiliation or political party affiliation. However, it is important to note that for race, Black people had higher levels of political participation than White people, which does not align with the idea that the dominant group having higher levels of political participation. This might be due to the fact that as a racial group Black people have been systemically discriminated against for most of U.S. history, so they participate in higher levels of political activities throughout all parts of society; however, there could be other explanations for this.

Similarly, when race, gender, and SES were incorporated into the voter registration Model 4 (presented in Table 4), the results find that people who identify with the dominant group in the U.S. (i.e. White people and people who have higher SES) are more likely to be registered

to vote. Specifically, White people were more likely than Hispanic people and people of other races to register to vote; and respondents with higher education and income were more likely to register to vote. An explanation for this might be that member of the dominant group face fewer barriers to register to vote, regardless of religious affiliation or political party affiliation. However, it is important to note for race that Black people were more likely than White people to be registered to vote, and for gender that women were more likely than men to be registered to vote. This might be due to the fact that both Black people and women have historically been barred from registering to vote, and thus voting, for a long time due to a variety of barriers. This could mean that they are more likely to participate in this specific form of political participation that took a while for these groups to gain access to; however, there could be other explanations for this.

Including religious salience variables in my models was important because it was able to attempt to measure an aspect of identity theory that is harder to include in research. The findings in Model 4 of Table 3 for religion importance, religion guidance, and church attendance show that as political participation increases then all three of these variables decrease. This means that religion is not as important for respondents with higher political participation. Similarly, the findings in Model 4 of Table 4 for religion importance, religion guidance, and church attendance show that if someone is registered to vote then all three of these variables decrease. This means that religion is not as important for respondents who are registered to vote. Since there are similar results for all three additional religious variables in both the political participation and voter registration models, it could mean that there is some internal barrier to political participation that affects respondents who have higher religious salience.

Overall, it is unclear what role religious salience actually has in these models, as salience for the other variables of interest were not included. I think that it would be interesting if replication studies of other research that looked at religious affiliation and political participation were done that also included salience variables. Additionally, I think that if there were variables for political and racial salience then it would be interesting to look at the differences of salience for religion, politics, and race. This is because then identity theory could be applied more to the religion-politics relationship.

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APPENDIX A: ODDS RATIO TABLE

Odds Ratio for Voter Registration				
	Voter Registration			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Intercept	9.200	28.000	25.000	0.000
Mainline Protestant	1.400	1.500	1.700	1.300
Catholic	1.100	1.200	1.700	1.200
Other Religion	0.700	0.740	0.870	0.610
Religion Important		0.680	0.700	0.710
Reliigon Guidance		0.910	0.910	0.900
Church Attendance		0.830	0.830	0.890
Black			1.500	2.400
Hispanic			0.450	0.940
Other Race			0.750	0.870
Independent				0.300
Republican				1.000
Education				2.300
Income				1.400
Female				1.200
Age				1.000
Year				1.000