

Religion's Influence on Political Behavior in the U.S.

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Question: How do religions impact American political ideology and voting habits?

Abstract: This literature review showed, from a social sciences perspective, that religion plays a large role in influencing political behavior.

Focus of Study: Examining the extent to which religion influences American politics

Christain: Christianity has been intertwined and rooted in America's founding. From John Winthrop, the Puritan leader, to antislavery and Prohibition, these events illustrate the implicit idea "between private morality and the collective good" (Coleman 654). With this said, many self-identified Christians have political views that align with the Republican platform. And for Americans who feel that the government should advocate for Christian values because of Christianity's history of conquering (the Crusades for example), gender traditionalism correlates with this population (Whitehead 173).

Non-Religious: There are many different categories behind being non-religious, the most known one is atheism but that isn't representative of the whole, which includes agnostic and unchurched individuals. When it comes to "willingness to help," the only political group that scores lower than the others interns of willingness to help the needy is the non-religious Republicans. Religious Republicans, religious Democrats and non religious Democrats all scored the same for willingness to help others.

Islam: Muslims who attend mosque regularly tend to be more politically active. This is a result of mosques fostering a greater sense of group consciousness, providing political information, and a space in which to hone civic skills (Van der Does 3). Some Muslims distance themselves from the American political sphere as a result of Anti-Islamic rhetoric perpetuated by American media and society at large (Saleem 2). Alternatively, there are those who involve themselves with social movements such as Black Lives Matter. They are compelled by a fusion of Islamic social justice precepts along with their experience as a minority in America (Austin 11).

Conclusion: While political behavior varies from religion-to-religion, political behavior also varies "intra"religiously. Care must be taken to determine how (or if) religion plays a role in a person's political behavior. Furthermore, it must be understood that there is not one uniform way a certain religion will vote, as there is great variation amongst members of the same faith.