Church Engagement, Religious Values, and Mass-Elite Policy Agenda Agreement in Local Communities

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We provide evidence on two prominent but heretofore untested expectations about the relevance of religion for the democratic process: (1) that greater engagement in churches or comparable religious institutions and their organizational life enhances representational processes; and (2) that religious values in a community have greater influence on the latter processes, with more liberal religious values expected to enhance the responsiveness of community leaders to general public preferences. Using data on local communities in the United States in the late 1960s, we find strong support for the expected relevance of religious liberalism for representation, but none for the expected effect of church engagement. We provide evidence, too, that our findings about religious values are generalizable to present-day politics.

Do religious values and engagement in religious institutions influence the success of democratic representation in America? Existing research hints at answers to this provocative question but does not address it systematically. Certainly, the roles of religious faith and religious organizations in political life have been discussed at length in recent times. Yet most of that discussion has centered on the so-called “culture war” wherein policy issues with moral implications have helped mobilize, in particular, people of conservative religious faith; the prominence of religious leaders, organizations, and activists in recent elections; and the association of religious values with electoral and policy choices by many members of the mass public (see, among many others, Campbell 2006; Green et al. 1996; Hunter 1991; Layman and Green 2005). Thus existing research documents how religious preferences are related to the political attitudes and behavior of various individuals and groups in contemporary American society.

In the large body of scholarship on civic, religious, and political engagement more generally, however, there exist two quite different—and heretofore untested—expectations about the effects of engagement in religious organizations (generally called church engagement, but encompassing participation in churches, synagogues, and all similar institutions), first, and religious values, second, on democratic representation. These expectations should be of particular importance for our understanding of American politics. It is widely observed that involvement in religious organizations is the overwhelmingly most common form of civic engagement in America. Indeed, America may be unique among Western democratic nations in this respect. Yet no systematic research has investigated the representational consequences of religious engagement and values.

We offer the first empirical assessment of these two alternative expectations about how church engagement and religious values might influence representation. We explain the rationales behind these two alternative expectations about religion and representation, extract testable hypotheses from each of them, and then construct de novo and validate a general theoretical model in which we test these hypotheses. Because adequate data are not available for a contemporary test of these expectations, we provide a test with historical data that offers a benchmark assessment which can inform future research on comparable processes today. Yet we also provide contemporary empirical evidence that suggests our key benchmark findings are

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An earlier version of this article was presented at the 20th World Congress of the International Political Science Association, July 10, 2006, Fukuoka, Japan. We thank Patricia Hurley, Lyman Kellstedt, and the editor and reviewers for this journal for valuable comments on earlier versions of this article. Some of the data analyzed here were provided by Susan Hansen, John Petrocik, and Sidney Verba. Other data are from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.


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ISSN 0092-5853
generalizable to present-day politics. Our findings comport, too, with a longstanding interpretation of the disposition of different religious faiths toward public action to solve community problems.

The first of these two alternative expectations is that church engagement is salutary for democratic representation. There are two bodies of research that support this expectation, one about general voter mobilization effects of participation in churches, and one about selective, class-related mobilization. Both bodies of research, however, are linked to a series of well-documented propositions—that higher levels of mass participation in American politics are associated with lower inequality across social groups in political participation, a more representative set of policy preferences articulated to political leaders, and more responsiveness of political leaders to the public generally (on the latter point, see, among many others, Verba and Nie 1972, 267–344).

A number of studies, first, have documented with nationally representative survey samples and for elections going back to the early 1950s that the more active individuals are in church organizations, the more likely they are to vote (e.g., Cassel 1999; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, 128–60; Strate et al. 1989; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995, 334–55). Various explanations have been advanced for this finding, and the most prominent is the argument of Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995, 384–88) that church engagement enhances civic skills and other personal resources that increase the likelihood of political participation. Cassel (1999), however, presents evidence that questions this and several other notable explanations. Whatever its underlying causes, the consistent finding here is that church attendance enhances voter mobilization generally. To the degree this is the case, inequality in voting participation might be reduced, the set of mass preferences articulated at elections made more generally representative, and the policy responsiveness of the political system increased.

This first body of research suggests the following hypothesis, adapted for relevance to individual local communities and the specific dimension of representation that will be examined here:

**H1:** The higher the engagement in religious institutions among all the residents in a community, the higher the responsiveness of community leaders to the policy concerns of the mass public.

Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995), however, especially recognize that mass political participation of most kinds is biased by social class and race or ethnicity, and thus so is the set of policy preferences articulated by such participation. And they provide a second set of findings that participation in religious organizations and activities provides civic skills and motivations for political participation specifically to those who would otherwise be at a disadvantage in these respects—because the other forces that enhance such skills and mobilization principally benefit Anglo Americans and those in higher social classes (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995, 520). Thus church engagement is expected to enhance the participation of lower-class groups and individuals, in particular, who would otherwise not participate and, consequently, elite responsiveness to general mass preferences. Much subsequent scholarship has sought to unravel the underlying mechanisms that might account for these processes (e.g., Brown and Brown 2003; Djupe and Gilbert 2006).

Some analyses by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1993, 1995, 381–84) indicate that black Americans especially benefit politically from church engagement, and those findings have been of particular interest. However, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995, 384–90) demonstrate how church engagement can enhance the civic skills and participation of lower-class and “blue-collar” Americans generally. Indeed, this is a central conclusion of their research (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995, 518–21). The latter findings and conclusion, then, lead to the second hypothesis relevant to church engagement:

**H2:** The higher the engagement in religious institutions in a community by members of the lower classes, the higher the responsiveness of community leaders to the policy concerns of the mass public.

The second expectation about religion and democratic processes is not fully articulated in a single work. Four bodies of evidence and argument, nonetheless, provide the foundation for it. It has long been understood, first, that different religious faiths have different orientations toward social and political problems and how such problems—of individuals or the community at large—should be addressed. Wuthnow (1999, esp. 338–41; see also, among others, Parenti 1967; Roof and McKinney 1987, 72–105; Stark and Glock 1968, 46–48; Uslaner 2001) provides a useful recent summary of these ideas. As is commonly argued in the literature on this topic, Wuthnow observes that so-called Mainline Protestant denominations have generally been oriented toward broad civic involvement, concerned with community social problems, and supportive of various kinds of community activity to address those problems. In contrast, some evangelical and other relatively more conservative Protestant denominations are likely to eschew concern with social problems and the social and political needs of others for inward-looking
attention to personal salvation. Alternatively, members of many relatively conservative faiths participate energetically in social activist efforts, but only those affiliated with their church. Other discussions of linkages between religious faith and political values (e.g., Roof and McKinney 1987, 94–99; Wald 1997, 197–206) take account of additional denominations, characterizing Jews as among the most liberal and civically inclined religious adherents and American Catholics as having moderate to conservative levels of civic interest and policy preferences which are conditioned on the nature of particular issues.

The democratic process implications of the preceding distinctions have been elaborated, second, in the literature on civic engagement and democracy. Putnam (2000, 77–79) argues that relatively conservative religious faiths that emphasize inward-looking concerns tend only to generate bonding-group social capital—that is, in-group solidarity that is detrimental to general social trust, tolerance, and reciprocity in the community. In contrast, relatively liberal faiths that address community problems in community-wide efforts and fora generate bridging-group social capital that cuts across different groups in the society and that enhances trust, tolerance, and reciprocity across the community. Putnam (2000, 22–24) also asserts that, for the preceding reasons, bonding-group social capital is detrimental to the process of democratic representation while bridging-group capital is beneficial for it, and recent empirical research has provided evidence for the former conclusion (Hill and Matsubayashi 2005). Wuthnow (1999, 341–52) reaches the same conclusions about the kind of social capital generated in different religious faiths and demonstrates that Mainline Protestants have greater civic engagement on average than evangelicals, with Catholics falling between the two former groups.

Third, research on tolerance and social trust contributes to this characterization of how religious values influence the democratic process. McClosky and Brill (1983, 403–5), Nunn, Crockett, and Williams (1978, 131–41), Roof and McKinney (1987, 186–228), Uslaner (2002, 162–65), and to a more qualified degree Welch et al. (2004) provide evidence that adherents to more conservative religious faiths have lower tolerance or social trust. Other research on tolerance suggests one of the possible causes for such findings in addition to the possible influence of religious ideas per se. Various research finds that members of more liberal faiths are more engaged in nonreligious civic organizations (e.g., Uslaner 2001; Wuthnow 1999). Further, Cigler and Joslyn (2002) demonstrate that the extensiveness of a person’s civic engagement is positively related to his or her level of political tolerance. These findings, then, support Putnam’s expectation summarized above about how members of relatively liberal faiths have more social trust and are more engaged in their communities.

Fourth, Beyerlein and Hipp (2005) provide systematic evidence that liberal and conservative religious adherents influence community-level social outcomes in ways exactly compatible with this second argument about their representational effects. Beyerlein and Hipp demonstrate that U.S. counties with higher proportions of their residents who are members of religious faiths that promote bonding-group social capital (as Putnam categorized these faiths, as explained above) have higher crime rates, while counties with higher proportions of their residents in bridging-social-capital faiths have lower crime rates. Beyerlein and Hipp summarize the rationales for their results in ways that comport exactly with this second thesis. Regarding bonding-social-capital religious faiths, for example, they observe that “by generally creating only tightly knit internal network ties among members, bonding groups do not forge ties with others in the wider community, which hinders the flow of communication and collective action efforts and thus make them [the communities] more susceptible to crime” (2005, 1006).

It is possible that Beyerlein and Hipp’s conclusions can be extended to a large number of local government policies. Haider-Markel and O’Brian’s (1999) and Wald, Button, and Rienzo’s (1996) analyses, respectively, of the politics of adoption of community hate crimes and gay rights ordinances do demonstrate that selected social policies are of particular interest to liberal and conservative religious groups and stimulate them to engage in the politics of the larger community. Yet the majority of local government policy issues are unlikely to evoke comparable interest among religious groups, and political processes like those Beyerlein and Hipp suggest are likely to characterize the latter policy issues.

Thus this second argument is that the relevance of religion for democratic representation is based on the content of religious beliefs. Individuals whose faiths emphasize concern with their fellow men in the present world—who are commonly referred to as relatively religiously liberal—are especially expected to encourage governmental as well as nongovernmental efforts to respond to the needs of the full community. Those whose beliefs focus on personal salvation and the needs of their cobelievers—who are commonly referred to as more conservative—are expected to be either less supportive of or indifferent to government action to aid the social and economic circumstances of the larger community. This second perspective, then, implies the following hypothesis:

H3: The less conservative the religious values in a community, the higher the responsiveness of
community leaders to the policy concerns of the mass public.

There is evidence, however, that the relevance of religious values for individual political behavior is conditioned by how actively engaged one is in his or her church (Campbell 2004; Kellstedt et al. 1996, 175–87; Wald 1997, 213–15). Similarly, there is evidence that the effect of religious values on individual political behavior is conditioned by exposure to discussion of political affairs in one’s church (Brown and Brown 2003; Layman 2001, 250–79). It is possible that these two conditioning effects increase the influence of religious values in a community for representation there. Thus we also test the following two subsidiary hypotheses:

**H4:** The effect of religious conservatism on the responsiveness of leaders to the policy concerns of the mass public is conditioned by the degree of church engagement in the mass public.

**H5:** The effect of religious conservatism on the responsiveness of leaders to the policy concerns of the mass public is conditioned by the degree to which members of the mass public are exposed to the discussion of political affairs in their churches.

In sum, two bodies of scholarship suggest that religion influences more than whether individuals and groups adopt relatively liberal or conservative political attitudes and participate in politics. Instead, they both indicate that religion influences the success of the democratic process, although they anticipate quite different influences on that process. Yet the latter expectations have not been systematically investigated.

### A General Model of Representational Processes in American Communities

Often the testing of hypotheses like those above is insufficiently rigorous because ad hoc models are employed for that purpose. But our understanding of many subjects is such that there exist advanced theoretical formulations for them. While no systematic theory of representation in American communities exists, there is agreement in classic and contemporary research on a parsimonious set of causal factors that shapes the quality of representation there. These causal factors are individually well established in prior research. Yet they have never been empirically assessed with respect to whether they collectively constitute a general model of local representation. A model validated in this way would provide a rigorous one for testing our original hypotheses, and findings about those hypotheses within such a model would be especially compelling.

Tests of such a model for representation in local communities will serve another important purpose. Some observers might be concerned because of the age of the data with which we are working and might doubt the generalizability of findings produced with those data. Yet if the relations among the variables in these data conform to well-established expectations about the process of representation, then findings about our original hypotheses are prima facie generalizable as well.

Figure 1 summarizes the individually well-established causal relations for the representational process in local communities in the form of a recursive causal model that has heretofore not been presented or tested in toto. Indeed, some prior research has not accounted for the full causal process implied here and has misconstrued the expected relations among variables. We first explain the hypothesized relations implied in this model. Later in the article we demonstrate that this general model is supported empirically and thus provides a rigorous one for testing our original hypotheses.

**Structural Attributes of Communities and Policy Responsiveness.** Two demographic attributes of local communities are commonly identified as direct causes of the level of responsiveness there. One is the population size of the community. Various scholars have theorized that smaller communities offer better prospects for representation (e.g., Banfield and Wilson 1963, 24–25; Dahl 1967), while others have provided empirical evidence for that conclusion (Eulau and Prewitt 1973, 458–61; Hill and Matsubayashi 2005). The preceding observations justify the link in Figure 1 from population size to mass-elite policy agenda agreement.

Relatedly, Oliver (2001, 33–67) has found that the population size of communities effectively influences representational processes indirectly because of a negative association between the size of the community and the level of voting turnout. This evidence justifies the negative link in Figure 1 between population size and voting participation.

The second structural factor expected to influence representation is the ethnic/racial diversity of the community. Such diversity is commonly argued to aggravate the prospects for responsiveness to the community at large, because it implies more potentially conflicting interests. Early urban politics research thought of such diversity as principally that between black and Anglo residents, with some attention to other nationality groups (e.g., Banfield and Wilson 1963, 38–43). Contemporary scholarship still argues that the black-Anglo divide is important, but it takes account of the salience of other minority groups for
representation (e.g., McClain and Tauber 2001) and of the relevance of the racial/ethnic composition of a community for participation in political affairs (e.g., Oliver 2001, 122–33).

No systematic, multicommunity evidence about the effect of such diversity on representation exists, but case-study evidence supports this expectation. Higher diversity, for example, is negatively associated with the prospects of creating community-wide coalitions to support education reform, although the exact reasons for this relationship have not been established (e.g., Henig et al. 1999). While they do not remark on this fact, Berry, Portney, and Thomson’s (1993, 150–57) four-city study of local representational linkages demonstrates that the degree to which local leaders resolve major policy issues in accord with public preferences varies inversely with the racial/ethnic diversity of the community. The preceding expectations and evidence provide support for the negative link in Figure 1 between racial/ethnic diversity and mass-elite agenda agreement.

Racial/ethnic diversity in communities has also been consistently found to be negatively associated with the level of mass participation in politics (e.g., Leighley 2001, 145–65; Oliver 2001, 120–22). Thus such diversity has a well-established indirect effect on representation through this negative association—that is also included as a link in Figure 1.

Sociocultural Values and Responsiveness. Numerous scholars conclude that cultural values influence the democratic process in urban areas, but there exists no generally accepted conception of relevant values. Two research projects exemplify early efforts to identify such values. Banfield and Wilson (1963, 234–40) conceived the values of “private regarding” and “public regarding” preferences for community action. Elazar (1984, 112–50) identified moralistic, individualistic, and traditionalistic political culture views of the roles of the public sector and of the individual in public life. Neither of these conceptualizations, however, was widely adopted for the study of representation in local communities.
No subsequent urban politics scholar has developed an equally ambitious conception of cultural values that might influence the representational process. Yet Sharp (1999, 10–14) argues that cultural values shape the policy concerns that arise in local communities and that we might develop theoretically justified types of such values based on Putnam’s (1993, 167–76; 2000) research on social capital. Notably, Sharp also observes that “Putnam’s focus on social capital suggests that the theoretically important distinctions in communities’ political cultures are concerned with how participative and integrative they are. . . and, subsequently, how much mutual trust is developed” (Sharp 1999, 13).

Putnam (2000, 22–23) distinguishes two forms of social capital related to Sharp’s observations: that produced in bridging community organizations and networks that include individuals of different social statuses, which is expected to increase social trust, reciprocity, and the responsiveness of government to the community at large; and that produced in bonding civic organizations and networks that bring together people of common status, ethnicity, class, and the like, and which is expected to be detrimental to social trust and reciprocity, and to encourage government responsiveness to the few instead of the many.

While the preceding ideas have not been widely pursued, Hill and Matsubayashi (2005) demonstrate that membership in bonding groups reduces responsiveness to the general public in local communities. This finding comports with Sharp’s argument in that higher membership in groups thought to weaken community social trust and reciprocity is associated with weaker representational linkages. This finding also provides support for the link in Figure 1 between bonding-group civic engagement and mass-elite agreement. (No research has found systematic support for the influence of bridging group membership on representational linkages in communities, and we exclude such a link from Figure 1.)

The Democratic Process and Representation. It is widely agreed that components of the democratic process like higher mass participation in politics and electoral competitiveness should enhance the representation of general public preferences (e.g., Banfield and Wilson 1963, 45; Sharp 2003). Yet it is also widely thought that these processes do not generally lead to good representation. Going back at least to Adrian (1955, 68–74), it has been thought that mass participation has weak effects because it is typically low and class-biased in local elections (see also Sharp 2003). Comparable conclusions about the weakness of local political parties are also common (e.g., Adrian 1955, 74–84; Oliver 2001, 178–84).

Yet several analyses demonstrate that higher mass participation and electoral competitiveness do enhance representation (Berry, Portney, and Thomson 1993, 101–94; Eulau and Prewitt 1973, 424–43; Hansen 1975; Hill and Matsubayashi 2005; Verba and Nie 1972, 267–344). The latter research, of course, takes account of the full range of these causal variables instead of their most typical values. These studies justify the direct links in Figure 1 between the levels of voting participation and of electoral competition and mass-elite agenda agreement.

Local Political Institutions and Representation. It is widely assumed that unreformed political structures that encourage party involvement in local politics—partisan elections and the mayor-council form of government in particular—enhance the representation of mass preferences in politics indirectly by stimulating higher electoral competitiveness and mass participation in elections (e.g., Lineberry and Sharkansky 1978, 124–26; Sharp 2003, 71; Wood 2002, 212–15). Considerable empirical evidence exists, as well, for the association of unreformed structures with higher turnout (e.g., Alford and Lee 1968; Oliver 2001, 178–84; Schaffner, Wright, and Streb 2001).

Research on the representational consequences of political institutions, however, has not always tested for these indirect effects. And analyses that ignore the theoretically expected sequence of effects and test only for direct effects of institutions on representation report mixed findings (e.g., Hansen 1975, 1192–93; Kelleher 2004, 99–119; Lineberry and Fowler 1967). Research on political mobilization that is more extensive on other levels of government (e.g., Hill and Leighley 1993) clarifies the expected causal sequence here. Such research indicates that institutional structures like reformed or unreformed institutions shape elite opportunities and activity and, hence, electoral competition. Electoral competition is then a cause of levels of turnout. These expectations justify the links in Figure 1 from partisan elections and direct election of mayors to electoral competition, the link from electoral competition to voter turnout, and the absence of links from direct election of mayors and from partisan elections to voter turnout or to mass-elite agreement.

**Empirical Methods**

To test the original hypotheses and general model above, we employ data collected by Verba and Nie (1972) for their analysis of representational processes in 64 randomly selected American communities in 1967. This is the only data set that includes measures of all the concepts needed to assess our hypotheses and our general model of
representation. The data set is exceptional, too, for such research. It includes interview data for samples of members of the mass public in each community, interview data for local political and community leaders chosen by positional status, and a wealth of measures of community attributes. We have added a number of original measures to the data set as well.

Our dependent variable is Verba and Nie’s (1972, 412–14) measure of mass-elite agreement on the policy agenda in each community. Both sets of respondents were asked to name the most important community problem, and local leaders were also asked to name the problem they thought was most important to the mass public, as well as the problem they were especially trying to solve at the time. The final agreement measure is created by first calculating the percentages of leaders who (1) agree themselves with the most important problem of each mass respondent, (2) judge that problem to be the major one of concern to the general public, and (3) report working on that problem. These three percentages are averaged for each mass respondent and then across all the mass respondents in a community. Thus the final measure takes account of mass-elite agreement on local policy problems and the degree to which the leaders are actually working on problems of concern to the general public.

Verba and Nie (1972, 328–29) and Hansen (1972, 52–92 and 107–14) report additional analyses of the mass and elite responses about policy problems that indicate substantial agreement about solutions to these problems as well as simply their importance. Verba and Nie (1972, 331–32) also provide evidence that this concurrence measure indicates leader responsiveness to the mass public instead of the reverse influence process. Further, one or another related form of mass-elite agreement has been shown to be a necessary condition for the representation of mass preferences in actual policy—in dyadic representation models that build on the classic work of Miller and Stokes (1963), in dynamic representation studies (e.g., Carmines and Stimson 1989), in models of state-level representation processes (e.g., Erikson, Wright, and McIver 1993, 96–149), and in studies of representation in local communities (e.g., Berry, Portney, and Thomson 1993, 101–65).

To develop a measure of church engagement, we essentially replicate a widely used measurement procedure that takes account of activity in the organizational life of churches and comparable religious institutions (e.g., Brown and Brown 2003; Green and Guth 1996; Peterson 1992). We first calculate the measure for each mass respondent as the sum, with one point each, of whether he or she reported being a member of a church, belonging to any church-affiliated organizations, and doing active work in the latter kind of organizations. These individual-level scores are then averaged for each community.

To measure the liberalism or conservatism of religious values in communities, we first identify on an ordinal scale the liberalism-conservatism of the denominational affiliation of each mass respondent. The survey respondents were allowed to designate their denominational affiliation in response to an open-ended question, and we aggregated those affiliations into an 8-point scale, replicating identical scales for this concept independently created by Green and Guth (1991) and Layman (2001). These individual-level scores are then averaged for each community, and higher scores on this final measure indicate a religiously more conservative community.

There are two bodies of evidence for the construct validity of such scales, the highest form of validation for a scientific measure (Kerlinger and Lee 2000, 670–72). First, as Guth and Green observe, “This kind of scale has been found to be a valid proxy for the acceptance of traditional religious values, such as belief in God and an afterlife, and the intensity with which such values are held” (1996, 122). Green and Guth (1996, 122–23), Layman (2001, 86–87), and Layman and Carmines (1997, 756–57), as examples, demonstrate that this scale correlates highly with various individual-level survey measures of the liberalism-traditionalism of religious beliefs. Thus the scale validly orders denominations in terms of their relative religious conservatism. Second, various studies provide evidence that denominational conservatism is associated with one or another individual- or group-level political attitude or behavior, in both mass public and elite samples, as relevant theory predicts (e.g., Green and Guth 1991; Guth and Green 1996; Hurley and Hill 2003, 315; Layman 2001, 243–89). Thus such scales have been validated for their theoretical implications for both religious and political attitudes and behavior.

As further evidence for the validity of this scale from the same time period for the data we will analyze, we replicated as closely as possible the construct validation analyses in Layman and Carmines (1997, 756–57) with data from the Northern California Church Members

1The community leaders were the highest locally elected government official, the highest elected county official, the highest official of the local Democratic and Republican party organizations, the head of the Chamber of Commerce or a near-equivalent private executive if no Chamber existed, the editor of the local newspaper, and the highest local public school official.

2Our scale categories, from the least to the most orthodox, are the unchurched; Jews; liberal Protestants (e.g., Congregationalists and Episcopalians); Catholics; Lutherans, Presbyterians, and related Protestants; Disciples of Christ and Methodists; Baptists and Black Protestants; and Charismatic and Fundamentalist faiths. For coding some specific denominations we relied on Green and Guth (1991), Guth and Green (1996), Layman (2001, 350), and Melton (1978).
Study of 1963 and the Anti-Semitism in the United States Study of 1964 that were first analyzed by Stark and Glock (1968). Despite limitations in the samples and survey questions in these studies, they produce notable evidence that the conservatism of the religious denomination of respondents in the 1960s as measured on our scale is associated with religious beliefs and practices, as other validation analyses of such scales have demonstrated.

There is additional evidence for the construct validity of the scale in the data employed here. One implication of the second perspective on the relevance of religion for democratic processes that is discussed in our introduction is that membership in a more conservative religious faith should be associated with relatively lower community-wide civic engagement (Wuthnow 1999, 338–41). Thus one could also infer that the more conservative a person’s religious faith, the lower his or her participation in electoral politics. And the individual-level data from Verba and Nie demonstrate, as examples, that respondents in more conservative denominations report lower levels of voting in local elections, voting in national elections, and attempting to influence the votes of others. Comparably, and of particular note given that our analyses are for community-level aggregates, a higher community-level score on religious conservatism is notably correlated with lower scores on Verba and Nie’s mean community-level measures for voting participation ($r = −.47$) and campaign participation ($r = −.36$), and on their summary scale that takes account of all the measured forms of participation ($r = −.40$).

There is, however, some unknown degree of unreliability in the scale. It is widely recognized that some specific religious congregations are more or less conservative than the modal level indicated for their denomination on the scale, that some individuals are more or less conservative than the specific congregation or denomination to which they belong, and even that survey research efforts to record the specific denomination name for every respondent can be incomplete for various reasons. Thus the coding procedure for such scales will cause some individual respondents to receive scale scores somewhat at variance from their true religious conservatism. These problems will introduce random error into the individual-level scores, which will be partially canceled out, however, when we calculate the community-level mean scores. Yet the remaining error in the community-level scores should also be random, which means that our hypothesis tests with this measure will underestimate the magnitude of any relations with other variables (Carmines and Zeller 1979, 48–49).

To assess whether church engagement conditions the effect of religious values on representation, we weight the measure of religious conservatism at the individual level (rescaled so that the weighting enhances negative values for the relatively more liberal and positive values for the relatively more conservative) by the measure of religious engagement, and then average the resulting individual-level scores in each community. To assess whether discussion of political affairs in church conditions the effect of religious conservatism, we employ an identical procedure, using as a weighting variable the mass respondents’ reports of whether there was discussion of political affairs in their religious organizations.

The population size of the communities, reported in thousands, is an original measure, created by linear extrapolation of the change in U.S. Census Bureau population estimates between 1960 and 1970 up to 1967, the year of the Verba and Nie survey.

Our measure of the racial/ethnic diversity of each community is the percentage of the population that is black and “other races” and Hispanic and nonwhite, from U.S. Census data for 1970. Higher values denote more diversity.

The density of engagement in bonding-social-capital local organizations is measured by first summing the total number of memberships reported by the mass respondents in such organizations—in accord with Putnam’s (2000, 22–23) characterizations of the predominant orientation of individual organizations—and then by dividing by the product of the number of possible types of organizations in each type multiplied by the number of respondents. Higher scores on this measure, then, indicate higher densities of individual-level bonding social networks across each community (Granovetter 1973, 1373–76). Hill and Matsubayashi (2005, 220–21) offer various kinds of empirical evidence to support the validity of the categorizations of specific kinds of groups as ones that principally generate bonding-group social capital.

We assess mass participation in local electoral politics by a measure for participation in local elections alone, which is important given the distinctive level and character of such participation as opposed to that in national elections. The Verba and Nie mass-public survey asked respondents whether they voted in local elections: always, sometimes, rarely, or never. For our measure we calculated the percentage of respondents in each community who reported voting in local elections either always or

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3. An alternative measure of racial/ethnic fragmentation across the categories white and non-Hispanic, black and “other races,” and Hispanic and nonwhite based on the formula in Rae and Taylor (1970, 24–33) produces identical hypothesis test results.

4. The bonding groups are fraternal organizations, labor unions, fraternities, sororities, farm organizations, study clubs, and professional societies.
sometimes. Alternative measures of voting participation produce identical hypothesis test results.

Our *electoral competitiveness* measure takes account of competition regardless of the kind of election system and form of government in each community (that is, whether the system is partisan or nonpartisan, has a popularly elected mayor, and so on). For 52 communities with a popularly elected mayor, the measure is based on elite survey data on a 4-point ordinal scale for how frequently the elections for that post are contested, whether by partisan or nonpartisan processes. The remaining 12 communities were located on the same 4-point scale based on party-elite interview data for how frequently the parties endorsed candidates for local elections.

We employ dummy variables for the presence of partisan elections and the direct election of mayors taken from interview data with local elites collected by Verba and Nie.

Finally, to provide evidence on the causal process that relates religious values to representation and on its generalizability, we analyze survey data from Verba and Nie and from the 2004 National Election Study (NES) for mass survey respondents’ gender, ethnicity defined as white and non-Hispanic versus all others, age, length of residence in their communities, family income, education level, and frequency of church attendance.

Two dependent variables in models reported below, for mass-elite policy agenda agreement and for the level of voting turnout in local elections, are estimated from samples of respondents in each community. Estimating the parameters in those models with conventional OLS regression may produce inconsistent and underestimated standard errors—because of possible heteroskedasticity in the error term from the initial sampling estimates. Thus we report OLS regression estimates with Efron heteroskedastic consistent standard errors (Lewis and Linzer 2005, 346; Long and Ervin 2000).5 One dependent variable, for the level of electoral competition, is an ordinal scale from elite interview data, and we analyze the predictors for that variable with an ordered logit model.

### Theory Confirmation

#### Empirical Tests

We first provide evidence for the satisfactoriness of our general, theoretical framework and of our data set, which is critical to the testing of our original hypotheses about church engagement and religious values. Thus Table 1 reports tests of the set of propositions in the general model of representation in local communities that is depicted in Figure 1. The results comport closely with established expectations. The first model indicates, as expected, that electoral competition is driven in part by partisan elections and direct elections of mayors. The second model for voter turnout in elections demonstrates, also as expected, that competition and racial/ethnic diversity directly affect voter turnout. Population size, however, has a negative but not significant relationship to turnout, perhaps because of the robustness of the other two predictors.

The third model in Table 1 includes those predictor variables expected to have direct effects on whatever measure of representation one might assess, in this case for mass-elite policy agenda agreement. All of the predictors in model 3 have robust relationships with mass-elite agreement that conform to expectations. In sum, the results in Table 1 provide strong support for the general theoretical model of representation. All the expected indirect and direct effects are supported except the one for the relation of population size to turnout. (More extensive tests not reported here for reasons of space provide support for the implied null relations in Figure 1 as well.) The third model in the table, then, provides a parsimonious and theoretically comprehensive specification for anticipated causes of representation in local communities and, thus, an especially demanding model for the testing of additional, original hypotheses.6

Consider another implication of these results. Some observers might be concerned because the data analyzed here are not contemporary. But the *relationships among the variables* in these data comport with contemporary theoretical expectations and are therefore generalizable. Thus the findings we uncover for our original hypotheses about church engagement and values are plausibly generalizable as well.

### Tests of the Hypotheses for Church Engagement and Religious Values

Table 2 presents empirical tests for our hypotheses about how church engagement and religious values in communities might affect representation. Model 1 is for the expectation that higher church engagement among

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5Another appropriate estimation method is Feasible Generalized Least Squares (Lewis and Linzer 2005), which produces results essentially identical to those we report.

6While they have weak theoretical rationales, we tested as additional predictors of mass-elite agreement the median family income of communities and a dummy variable for communities in the South. Neither of these attributes, however, is related to mass-elite agreement in a model with the substantive predictors in Table 1.
low-income residents of a community (defined operationally here as those individuals below the median income category in our survey sample) will enhance representation. Model 2 tests the related expectation that it is church engagement among all residents that enhances representation. Model 3 tests the rival expectation that more conservative religious values in a community decrease representation. Models 4 and 5 test whether church engagement or political discussion in religious organizations, respectively, condition the effect of religious values on representation. Each model includes as control variables the predictors directly linked to levels of representation in Table 1.

The results in Table 2 for the tests of our hypotheses are unambiguous. Neither measure of church engagement (in models 1 and 2) is related to the level of mass-elite policy agenda agreement. Alternative tests of the effect of church engagement among low-income respondents using different income cutoffs produce hypothesis test results equivalent to those in model 1. In contrast, the degree of religious conservatism in communities (in model 3) is robustly and negatively related to the level of agenda agreement.

Further, the two conditioning variables, which are tested in models 4 and 5, do not enhance the effects of religious values alone on representation. The measures of religious conservatism weighted by church engagement and by political discussion, respectively, are significant, negative predictors of agenda agreement. But the explained variance and various other model statistics for models 4 and 5 that include these alternative predictors are less robust than those for model 3 that contains the measure of religious conservatism alone. Taking account of these conditioning effects, then, does not enhance our ability to account for agenda agreement beyond what we can do on the basis of community religious values alone. Thus the more parsimonious formulation with religious values alone is preferred.

Finally, various diagnostics demonstrate that the results in Table 2 are not compromised by notable problems from violations of OLS regression assumptions. These hypothesis tests are especially rigorous, too, because they are derived from a comprehensive theoretical specification that accounts for the most potent rival explanatory variables. These results collectively indicate that religious values in a community are more influential in the democratic

### Table 1  Theory Confirmation Model Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variable</th>
<th>Model 1 for Electoral Competition(a)</th>
<th>Model 2 for Turnout in Local Elections(b)</th>
<th>Model 3 for Mass-Elite Concurrence(b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partisan Elections</td>
<td>1.370** (.545)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Election of Mayor</td>
<td>1.480** (.562)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Competition</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2.455** (1.156)</td>
<td>1.125** (.490)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Size (in thousands)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>– (.093)</td>
<td>– (.057)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial/Ethnic Diversity</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–2.845** (1.238)</td>
<td>–.711** (.388)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnout in Local Elections</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.138** (.049)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonding-Group Civic Engagement</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–52.901** (19.696)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>−360*</td>
<td>75.77**</td>
<td>5.287*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log-Likelihood</td>
<td>−74.14</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \chi^2 )</td>
<td>19.65**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R(^2)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Ordered logit estimates, with threshold intercepts omitted for space limitations.
(b) OLS estimates with Efron standard errors.

\( n = 64 \)

\(*^*p < .05; ^*p < .10, \) one-tailed tests.
process than is involvement in the organizational life of the churches that promulgate those values.

**The Causal Process and Its Generalizability to Present-Day Politics**

It is profitable to consider the causes behind the negative association of religious conservatism with mass-elite agenda agreement. A complete analysis of those mechanisms is beyond the scope of this article, because they might include aspects of general mass or elite behavior in communities, or aspects of the behavior of particular mass or elite subgroups there. Yet we provide notable evidence for one cause that might be part of a set of related linkages between the public and community leaders affected by the religious orientation of communities—along with evidence that this particular linkage functions comparably in contemporary politics as it did in the 1960s.

As evidence for the validity of the measure of religious conservatism, we explained earlier that more conservative communities and individuals demonstrated lower levels of political participation. Consider the representational implications of these circumstances. Higher mass participation in community politics has been universally demonstrated to enhance the representation of the mass public. So if greater community religious conservatism reduces mass participation, it also reduces the positive effect of participation on mass-elite policy agenda agreement.

Analyses of Verba and Nie’s community-level measures of voting participation, campaign participation, local elections participation, and overall participation—that control for the expected causes of political participation depicted in Figure 1—all demonstrate that greater religious denomination conservatism is associated with lower levels of participation. (We do not report these analyses because of limitations of space.) Thus religious conservatism has a direct negative effect on mass-elite agenda agreement as Table 2 demonstrates and an indirect negative effect on such agreement by way of a negative relationship with mass participation.

### Table 2 Tests of the Hypotheses about Church Engagement and Religious Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church Engagement by Low-Income Respondents</td>
<td>2.153</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3.249)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Engagement by All Respondents</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–1.471</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4.314)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Religious Conservatism</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–1.743**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.654)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Conservatism Weighted by Mean Church Engagement</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–.996*</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.675)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Conservatism Weighted by Political Discussion in Church</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1.690**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.639)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Size (in thousands)</td>
<td>−.047</td>
<td>−.061*</td>
<td>−.072**</td>
<td>−.067**</td>
<td>−.071**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.039)</td>
<td>(.038)</td>
<td>(.032)</td>
<td>(.036)</td>
<td>(.032)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial/Ethnic Diversity</td>
<td>−.766**</td>
<td>−.697**</td>
<td>−.550*</td>
<td>−.634*</td>
<td>−.556*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.416)</td>
<td>(.400)</td>
<td>(.361)</td>
<td>(.393)</td>
<td>(.362)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonding-Group Engagement</td>
<td>−51.254**</td>
<td>−51.384**</td>
<td>−57.753**</td>
<td>−54.561**</td>
<td>−58.025**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnout in Local Elections</td>
<td>.132**</td>
<td>.147**</td>
<td>.123**</td>
<td>.132**</td>
<td>.125**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.047)</td>
<td>(.055)</td>
<td>(.042)</td>
<td>(.044)</td>
<td>(.042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Competition</td>
<td>1.169**</td>
<td>1.112**</td>
<td>.888**</td>
<td>.944**</td>
<td>.870**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.508)</td>
<td>(.507)</td>
<td>(.470)</td>
<td>(.489)</td>
<td>(.467)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>4.608</td>
<td>5.818*</td>
<td>15.395**</td>
<td>7.385**</td>
<td>9.168**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dependent variable is mass-elite policy agenda concurrence, with OLS estimates with Efron standard errors. n = 64; **p < .05, *p < .10, one-tailed tests.
If the relationship between religious conservatism and lower participation also existed at the individual level, that would be even more compelling evidence for this causal mechanism. If this relationship also existed in contemporary data, that would be evidence the mechanism is not unique to the 1960s. To provide both of these kinds of evidence, Table 3 reports analyses of the determinants of political participation in 1967 in Verba and Nie’s survey data and in the 2004 NES. Verba and Nie developed measures of several modes of participation, and we report analyses for two of those (voting and campaign participation). The NES does not have measures of political participation that replicate those in the Verba and Nie data, but we have constructed two generally comparable measures—an ordinal scale of voting participation with the categories not registered, registered but not voting, voting in one but not both of the presidential and U.S. House of Representatives elections, and a campaign participation factor score scale that is based on four component measures very similar to those Verba and Nie employed—questions about whether respondents try to convince others to vote for a party or candidate; attend a political event for a candidate or party; show a sign, sticker, or button for a candidate or party; or do other work for a candidate or party (with a Cronbach’s alpha for the latter scale of 0.57). Because measures of literal participation are limited in the NES, we also report an analysis for a measure of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variable</th>
<th>1967 Voting Participation Factor Score (a)</th>
<th>1967 Campaign Participation Factor Score (a)</th>
<th>2004 Voting Participation Ordinal Scale(b)</th>
<th>2004 Campaign Participation Factor Score (c)</th>
<th>2004 Interest in the Campaign (b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Dummy (female = 1)</td>
<td>-.159** (.052)</td>
<td>-.129** (.052)</td>
<td>.063 (.166)</td>
<td>-.045 (.069)</td>
<td>-.428** (.149)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Dummy (white, non-Hispanic = 1)</td>
<td>.491** (.107)</td>
<td>-.006 (.052)</td>
<td>.242* (.166)</td>
<td>.107* (.069)</td>
<td>.197 (.149)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.008** (.002)</td>
<td>.003** (.002)</td>
<td>.019** (.006)</td>
<td>.005** (.002)</td>
<td>.022** (.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Residence in Community</td>
<td>.144** (.023)</td>
<td>.053** (.022)</td>
<td>.005 (.005)</td>
<td>.004** (.002)</td>
<td>.002 (.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
<td>.099** (.002)</td>
<td>.010** (.002)</td>
<td>.070** (.015)</td>
<td>.006 (.007)</td>
<td>.031** (.014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
<td>.149** (.021)</td>
<td>.153** (.021)</td>
<td>.322** (.063)</td>
<td>.074** (.024)</td>
<td>.189** (.051)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Engagement</td>
<td>.242** (.038)</td>
<td>.095** (.039)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Church Attendance</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.132** (.059)</td>
<td>.082** (.024)</td>
<td>.085** (.053)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Denomination</td>
<td>-.053** (.213)</td>
<td>-.023* (.203)</td>
<td>-.066* (.044)</td>
<td>-.062** (.019)</td>
<td>-.084** (.045)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatism</td>
<td>(.015)</td>
<td>(.015)</td>
<td>(.019)</td>
<td>(.069)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-1.731**</td>
<td>-.861**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.319*</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj. R²</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>χ²</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>116.59**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>79.4**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) OLS estimates, n varies from 1228 to 1321.
(b) Ordered logit estimates, with threshold intercepts omitted for space considerations, weighted n = 908.
(c) OLS estimates, weighted n = 922.
*p < .10, **p < .05, one-tailed tests.

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>-.006 (.052)</td>
<td>.242* (.166)</td>
<td>.107* (.069)</td>
<td>.197 (.149)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.003** (.002)</td>
<td>.019** (.006)</td>
<td>.005** (.002)</td>
<td>.022** (.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Residence in Community</td>
<td>.144** (.023)</td>
<td>.053** (.022)</td>
<td>.005 (.005)</td>
<td>.004** (.002)</td>
<td>.002 (.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
<td>.099** (.002)</td>
<td>.010** (.002)</td>
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<td>.006 (.007)</td>
<td>.031** (.014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level</td>
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<td>.153** (.021)</td>
<td>.322** (.063)</td>
<td>.074** (.024)</td>
<td>.189** (.051)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Engagement</td>
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<td>.095** (.039)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of Church Attendance</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>.132** (.059)</td>
<td>.082** (.024)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.053** (.213)</td>
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<td>-.066* (.044)</td>
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<td>Conservatism</td>
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<tr>
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<td>–</td>
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<td>–</td>
<td>116.59**</td>
<td>–</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) OLS estimates, n varies from 1228 to 1321.
(b) Ordered logit estimates, with threshold intercepts omitted for space considerations, weighted n = 908.
(c) OLS estimates, weighted n = 922.
*p < .10, **p < .05, one-tailed tests.
the respondents’ interest in the 2004 political campaign, measured at the height of the campaign, that is a good predictor of political participation.

To pose a rigorous test for the possible effect of religious conservatism at the individual level, we employ a socioeconomic status model that includes a demanding set of customarily expected predictor variables of that character. We must use our measure of church engagement as a surrogate for the frequency of attending church in the Verba and Nie survey. The results of these analyses are reported in Table 3.

For every measure of participation, for the measure of interest in the 2004 campaign, and thus in both benchmark and contemporary data there is a notable, negative effect of religious conservatism on political participation and interest—as is found generally, too, by Campbell (2004) in other recent data. The other predictors perform as expected, too, especially if one considers how their influence might vary across the two time periods. In the Verba and Nie data, further, we uncover comparable results for the measures of individual-level particularized contacting and overall participation (which, again, we do not report for lack of space). These results suggest that essentially identical processes are operating in both time periods, that religious conservatism reduces participation in both periods, and that it has negative effects on representational linkages in both periods.

Other, related causal mechanisms are suggested by the preceding results. If individuals of relatively more conservative religious faiths are less likely to engage in community-wide social and political activities, then many forms of and venues for communication between the mass public and community leaders will be impaired. And the direct negative association between community religious values and mass-elite agreement in Table 2 might be explained in part by these other impaired forms of communication, precisely as Granovetter’s (1973) construction of local social networks and Verba and Nie’s (1972, 319–23) expectations about information for and pressure on community leaders from mass participation lead us to expect.

Conclusions

Two somewhat contradictory and previously untested expectations about how religion might influence democratic representation exist in the literature on religion and politics. We provide systematic tests of these two expectations. We find no support for the hypothesis that engagement in religious organizations enhances representation. In contrast, we uncover robust evidence that more conservative religious values in a community are detrimental to the responsiveness of community leaders to the general public. The preceding conclusion will be controversial. To have confidence in it, it should be based on especially rigorous analyses. The present article provides such analyses by using a comprehensive model of representation in local communities to test our original hypotheses and by providing historical and contemporary evidence for a key causal mechanism that might account for our principal findings.

While these findings might be controversial, they comport with a longstanding descriptive interpretation of the relevance of religious values for community political affairs. Parenti (1967), Roof and McKinney (1987, 72–105), Stark and Glock (1968, 46–48), and Wuthnow (1999), among many other scholars, explain how religious faiths engender different conceptions of the public good among their adherents and shape the kinds of political and community activities those adherents will support in light of that conception. Thus we provide systematic evidence for this understanding of religious faiths that has heretofore been based on interpretive assessments of denominational dispositions and case-study evidence.

Some scholars might be concerned about the generalizability of our findings given the age of the principal data analyzed here. We have addressed this concern by first demonstrating that the fundamental representational processes reflected in our data comport with contemporary theoretical expectations. We have also shown that one plausible cause for the relationship of religious conservatism to mass-elite agreement can be documented in contemporary as well as benchmark data. We cannot replicate our literal representational analyses with contemporary data, yet the results presented here for 2004 make a strong case for the generalizability of the findings from our benchmark analysis. More complete contemporary evidence for the processes documented here must, of course, await a modern-day replication of Verba and Nie’s seminal research.

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