The Relationship Between White Americans' Christian Affiliation and Political Leanings.

Robert James

Paper Assignment #2

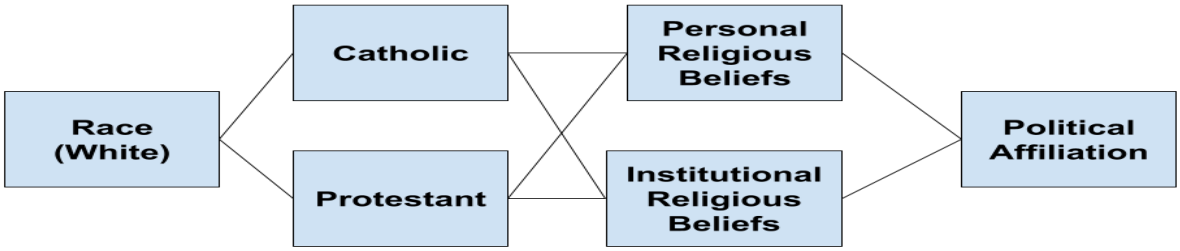
Data 202 - Fall 2023, Section 1

The Relationship Between White Americans' Christian Affiliation and Political Leanings.

How does the denomination of Christianity of white Americans cause white Catholics and Protestants in the US to lean politically? I chose to focus on this subset because they are one of the most significant parts of the US population at 42% of the US population. (PRRI, 2021). Though both protestants and catholics are the same religion, the differences in their practices and beliefs may influence their political affiliations. Religion is likely not the only factor in differences of political party among white Americans, as location, and socioeconomic status comes into play as well (Brown-Iannuzzi et. al. 2017). Additionally, Catholics and Protestants have historical differences in politics due, in part, to their differences in institution. Catholic Church doctrines come from The top level to influence individual's beliefs(Moore, 2005), whereas the protestant churches are less centralized and Churches are moved by the individual instead of the other way around(Evans 2009). This paper will examine how their Christian denomination plays a role in which way they lean politically.

This exploration is based on sample data from the 2006 GSS survey data. The variables were race with the options “Other, Black, White, Not applicable”; party affiliation with the options “Ind,near rep, Not str republican, Independent, Not str democrat, Strong democrat, Ind,near dem, Strong republican, Other party, No answer, Don't know”; and religion with the options “Protestant, Orthodox-Christian, None, Christian, Jewish, Catholic, Other, Inter-nondenominational, Hinduism, Native american, No answer, Buddhism, Moslem/islam, Other eastern, Don't know”. I filtered out multiple categories to select only White from the race category, removed independent from political party and combined the near rep and dem options to their respective party they lean to to have only republican and democrat. Additionally, I

filtered out all religions to only have catholics and protestants as they were the two biggest Christian groups by a large margin



The study hypothesis was that the Christian denomination is related to the political affiliation of white Americans. The null hypothesis is that the denomination has no bearing on political affiliation while the alternative hypothesis is that the Christian denomination has a significant impact on the political affiliation of white Americans. After filtering for only white Americans I focused on only the protestant and catholic groups as well as republicans and democrats. This table summarizes the findings of these groups as well as the percentage of each political party in the groups:

White American Catholics/Protestants Political Affiliation

	df$religion		
df$party	Catholic	Protestant	Total
Republican	89	326	415
	45.2%	66.4%	

```
-----------------------------------------
Democrat          108          165     273
                 54.8%        33.6%
-----------------------------------------
Total             197          491     688
                 28.6%        71.4%
=========================================
```

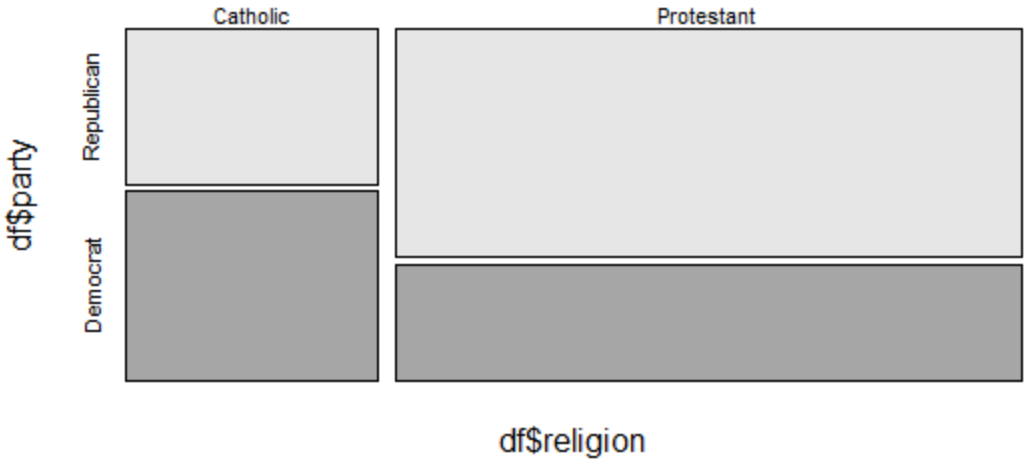
This shows that, among white Americans, 45.2% of Catholics are Republican while 54.8% are Democrats. The difference among protestants is greater in the opposite direction with 66.4% of Protestants being republican while 33.6% of Protestants are Democrats. From this, there is some evidence of association but I continued my analysis with a chi square test.

```
Cell Contents:
|-------------------------|
|                   Count |
|         Expected Values |
| Chi-square contribution |
|-------------------------|


=========================================
             df$religion
df$party     Catholic   Protestant   Total
-----------------------------------------
Republican          89          326     415
                 118.8        296.2
                 7.488        3.004
-----------------------------------------
Democrat           108          165     273
```

```
                  78.2        194.8

                11.383        4.567

-----------------------------------------

> chisq.test(df$party, df$religion)

      Pearson's Chi-squared test with Yates' continuity correction

data:  df$party and df$religion

X-squared = 25.564, df = 1, p-value = 4.279e-07
```

The Chi-squared statistic is 25.564 with 1 degree of freedom and a p-value of.

This analysis supports the original hypothesis that the Christian denomination has a significant influence on the political affiliation among white Americans. White Catholics tend to favor the Democratic Party while protestants favor the Republican party. These findings are important as they provide insight into a large portion of the American population and are a lead to look deeper into how and why these differences exist and what they mean in the real world.


Catholic
Protestant
Republican
Democrat
df$party
df$religion

References

Brown-Iannuzzi, J. L., Lundberg, K. B., & McKee, S. (2017). The politics of socioeconomic status: How socioeconomic status may influence political attitudes and engagement. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *18*, 11-14. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.06.018

Evans, C. J. (2009). White evangelical protestant responses to the civil rights movement. *Harvard Theological Review*, *102*(2), 245-273. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0017816009000765

Moore, A. S. (2005). Practicing What We Preach: White Catholics and the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta. *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, *89*(3), 334-367.

PRRI Staff. (2021, August 7). *The 2020 census of American religion*. PRRI | At the intersection of religion, values, and public life. https://www.prri.org/research/2020-census-of-american-religion/

Code

```
library(tidyverse)
library(dplyr)
library(descr)
library(Hmisc)

data()
??gss_cat
gss_cat
unique(gss_cat$relig)
df <- gss_cat %>%
  filter(year==2006) # filter for only the year 2006
df <- df %>% # select only race, partyid, and religion and rename
  na.omit() %>%
  select(race, partyid, relig) %>%
  rename(party = partyid) %>%
  rename(religion = relig)

unique(df$religion) # view unique variables
unique(df$race) # view unique variables
unique(df$party) # view unique variables
```

```
df <- df %>% ## filter for only White
  filter(race != "Other",
         race != "Black") %>%
  droplevels()
##Drop Non Catholic or Protestant Religions
df <- df %>%
  filter(religion != "None",
         religion != "Jewish",
         religion != "No answer",
         religion != "Other",
         religion != "Moslem/islam",
         religion != "Hinduism",
         religion != "Buddhism",
         religion != "Native american",
         religion != "Christian",
         religion != "Orthodox-Christian",
         religion != "Inter-nondenominational",
         religion != "Other eastern")
df$religion <- droplevels(df$religion)
unique_religions <- unique(df$religion)
unique_religions
##drop non repub or dem leaning values
df <- df %>%
```

```
  filter(party != "No answer",
         party != "Independent",
         party != "Other party",
         party != "Ind,near rep",
         party != "Ind,near dem") %>%
  droplevels()
df <- df %>%
  mutate(party = fct_recode(party,
                            "Republican" = "Strong republican",
                            "Republican" = "Not str republican",
                            "Democrat" = "Not str democrat",
                            "Democrat" = "Strong democrat"))
summary(df)
df
table(df$party, df$religion)
table(df$party, df$race)
table(df$party, df$race, df$religion)
n = count(df)
n
#party and religion analysis
crosstab(df$party, df$religion)

crosstab(df$party, df$religion,
```

```
        prop.r=T) # add row percentages
crosstab(df$party, df$religion,
        prop.c=T)
crosstab(df$party, df$religion,
        expected = T, # get expected values
        prop.chisq=T) # get chi-square contribution


qchisq(.05, 1, lower.tail=F)
chisq.test(df$party, df$religion)
```