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When Frames Fail:

Religion, Politics and the Collapse of the Conservative Christian Movement

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ABSTRACT

While social scientists increasingly have recognized the importance of religious beliefs and traditions to American social movements, it is still unclear how religion affects intramovement dynamics and patterns of cooperation and contention in particular. Drawing on archival, interview, and secondary data, we analyze the rise and decline of the Conservative Christian movement. We argue that meaning-making processes were central to both cooperation and contention among conservative Christian groups. Specifically, the success of the movement was facilitated by limiting frames, which provided generic understandings of morality that allowed relatively diverse groups to work together for sustained periods of time. We also show that changes in the composition of the movement as well as the political environment – and specifically the presence of elite opponents – required more complex understandings of the relationships between morality, the state and public good. These new requirements stretched and then broke the limiting frames, giving rise to contention among previously allied religious groups.

Social scientists increasingly have recognized the importance of religion to American social movements. Religious traditions and organizations have played critical roles in the civil rights, anti-war, anti-feminist, pro-life, prohibition, and environmental movements (Mason 2002; McAdam 1999; Morris 1984; Sherkat and Ellison 2007; Smith 1996; Szymanski 2003; Williams 2002). While it is clear that religion provides an important “cultural resource” for social movements (Williams 1995, 1999; Williams and Demerath 1991), what is less understood is how religious beliefs and traditions affect intramovement dynamics and outcomes. Social movement scholars tend to highlight the instrumental aspects of intramovement dynamics, such as the contextual factors facilitating coalition work but often overlook the ways that religious beliefs might foster sustained cooperation. Further, research on religious movements typically focuses on the activities of one denomination (e.g., Catholic or Protestant), which minimizes diversity among Christian traditions and ultimately treats cooperation as unproblematic. Although both literatures are useful, the theoretical assumptions and empirical foci mask important meaning-making processes that can either facilitate or inhibit cooperation across denominations and influence social movement outcomes.

Drawing on archival, interview, and secondary data, we analyze the rise and decline of the Conservative Christian movement. We argue that meaning-making processes were central to both cooperation and contention among conservative Christian groups. Specifically, the movement’s success was facilitated by limiting frames, which provided generic understandings of morality that allowed relatively diverse groups to work together for sustained periods of time. We also show that changes in the composition of the movement as well as in the political environment –specifically the presence of elite opponents – required more complex understandings of the relationships between morality, the state and public good. This new

challenge stretched and, then, shattered these limiting frames, creating contention among previously allied organizations.

We first discuss the literature, highlighting the deficits in both social movement theory and the empirical research on religious movements, which obscures the theoretical puzzle of how religious groups can sustain cooperation over decades but then rapidly fall apart. We, then, draw on the framing perspective to outline how meaning-making processes affect both cooperation and contention in denominationally diverse religious movements. Specifically, we examine cooperation and contention in the Conservative Christian movement from 1973 to 2006. We conclude with a discussion of the relevance of this research to the theoretical perspectives on religious movements specifically and social movements more generally.

WORKING TOGETHER: EXPLANATIONS FOR COOPERATION

Students of social movements have long been interested in the factors that explain the course, content and outcomes of activism. One commonly-used approach emphasizes the analysis of intramovement dynamics to understand how competition among actors working toward the same general objective affects a social movement's composition, its political effectiveness and the strategies and tactics employed by groups operating in the field (Benford 1993; McCammon 2003; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Minkoff 1993; Staggenborg 1991). Less systematic attention has been paid to how strategic coordination among generally allied actors with similar objective influences movement dynamics and outcomes. Existing research on coordination among movement actors has focused primarily on coalition work in which like-minded groups formally join forces in an effort to achieve a specific political goal (Bandy and Smith 2005; Rochon and Meyer 1997; Smith 2005). However, few studies explain how social movements sustain cooperation beyond particular political threats.

The focus on episodes of cooperation is, in part, a function of the theoretical assumptions that motivate empirical work in the area. Social movement scholars analyzing coalitions largely couch their research in the resource mobilization theory tradition, which emphasizes the competitive tensions that exist among like-minded social movement organizations (Zald and McCarthy 1987b). Specifically, resource mobilization theory assumes that because organizations are critical to the mobilization and maintenance of social movements, they compete with one another for resources (money and support) in order to ensure the survival of their cause and organization (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Zald and McCarthy 1987a).¹ From this perspective, there are clear disincentives for groups to work together. As a result, they only do so in exceptional circumstances (Hathaway and Meyer 1997; Staggenborg 1986). Coalition work is thus treated as the product of particular historical moments when cooperation, rather than competition, is regarded as a rational activity to stave off political losses.

There are at least three related problems with this approach. First, it uses a “cost-benefit” framework for understanding social movement dynamics and, thus, neglects the cultural components of social movements that under grid participation and affect their course and content (Goodwin and Jasper 2004; Jasper 1997; Jasper and Nelkin 1992; Staggenborg 1998). This is particularly true of religious movements in which theological traditions provide cultural resources for mobilization and sustained participation (Klatch 1999; McAdam 1988; Platt and Williams 2002). Second, because of its emphasis on the instrumental aspects of cooperation, research based on this approach mainly focuses on explaining particular instances of coalition work rather than how movements sustain cooperative efforts over time (Hathaway and Meyer

¹ For a more thorough critique of resource mobilization theory, see Jenkins (1980).

1997; Meyer and Brown 2005).² For example, Staggenborg (1986) argues that social movement organizations work together during times of exceptional political threat because that is when ideologically diverse groups benefit from cooperation. Finally, when scholars do consider meaning-making processes in coalition work, they tend to emphasize either the differences among groups that can undermine collective meaning-making or the instrumental strategies used to craft shared meanings and share credit for ideas and campaigns (Benford 1993; Croteau and Hicks 2003; Rochon and Meyer 1997).

Much of the research on religious movements, and on the Conservative Christian movement in particular, emphasize how common moral values make possible cooperative efforts to advance a political agenda (Blanchard 1995; Diamond 1995; Gottfried and Fleming 1988; Hardisty 1999; Hunter 1991; Moen 1992).³ In this literature, cooperation stems from a shared religious tradition, which provides a framework for understanding how the world works and for challenging the assumptions underlying political decisions (Billings 1990; Warner 1993). For example, Burns (2005) discusses how similar worldviews made it possible for pro-life organizations to cooperate in the political arena. He defines moral worldviews as “frames that are perceived by active participants within a debate to encompass many morally charged issues simultaneously, within a comprehensive and explicit worldview” (Burns 2005: 16). According to Burns, moral worldviews may generate controversy around political issues because they require people to either accept or reject a particular set of beliefs, but they also create an environment

² Some scholars are making an effort to integrate both instrumental and cultural components into their explanations of movement dynamics. For example, Author Cite (forthcoming) highlights how the distribution of actors across a social movement field – or strategic articulation – can influence the effectiveness of social movements as well as their vulnerability to opponents. They suggest that a movement with actors pursuing a variety of social change goals, which is conceptualized along a continuum ranging from groups making deep challenges (radical) to consensus-building groups that seek to mobilize broad support (moderate), has more opportunities to directly and indirectly cooperate with one another to push forward their goals.

³ We are not arguing that scholarship treats religious traditions as though they are monolithic, only that empirical work on social movements downplays the differences or does not make it central to their analyses.

conducive to cooperation by providing an identity, a strong sense of purpose, and a shared framework. For these reasons, moral worldviews inspire action and facilitate coalition work across groups with similar goals. The problem is that this literature gives the impression that cooperation, at least among conservative Christian groups, is widespread but fails to explain the periods of contention that also occur among religious groups.

COOPERATION AND CONTENTION

We argue that framing affects both cooperation and contention among actors in religious movements. Frames are central organizing ideas. They tell an audience what is at issue and outline the boundaries of a debate. Framing is the process through which activists produce and mobilize meaning. In this process, movement actors become “signifying agents” who actively construct meaning for constituents, opponents and bystander audiences (Benford and Snow 2000). They present frames as a way to define a situation as problematic, to identify the responsible party or structure, to articulate a reasonable solution, and to call individuals to action (Benford and Snow 2000; Gamson 1992; Snow and Benford 1992).

Moral worldviews, according to Burns (2005), are broader than frames. They represent a more general understanding of the world that can be applied to specific issues (in this case birth control and abortion) to ignite cooperative efforts among religious activists. We agree that moral worldviews may explain cooperation among members of the same denomination in some instances, but we argue that this concept fails to sufficiently account for diversity within religious traditions. Denominations differ significantly in moral worldviews in how they construct the “public good” (Williams 1995, 1999) and in how they conceptualize the role of the state in constructing a moral society. These views, in turn, are likely to influence a

denomination's position on public policy and its willingness to cooperate with other religious groups. Such differences can be found between Catholics and Protestants and also between various Protestant sects.

Within Protestantism differences in beliefs occur between mainline groups consisting of such denominations as Episcopalians, Lutherans and Presbyterians and Evangelicals and other sects. Evangelicalism refers to a broad collection of beliefs and practices that transcends any particular denomination. In reference to the contemporary conservative Protestant political movement, the term is applied to Neoevangelicals, Pentacostals and Fundamentalists. These groups share a belief in Bible literalism, an emphasis on the importance of the personal conversion experience, and a desire to convert others to their faith, but they hold distinctly different worldviews and disagree profoundly on key issues. Fundamentalists desire to separate themselves from dangerous societal influences and seek to preserve their faith unsullied by contact with a contaminated society. They are characterized by rigid adherence to principles, intolerance of other views and opposition to secularism. Evangelicals, by contrast, hope to influence society and are more willing to associate with those with different views. Pentacostals have been accepted within the evangelical movement but are distinguished by their distinctive doctrines and practices, particularly a belief in faith healing and speaking on tongues (Oldfield 1996; Wilcox 2000).

Many Protestant denominations have a tradition of political activism. In the 19th century, Protestants sponsored a diverse network of charities and clubs that provided health care and social welfare services, largely independent of public funds (Morgan 2006). For example, the Social Gospel movement, which was the religious wing of the Progressive reform movement, represented a reaction against the exaggerated spirituality that had removed Protestant churches

from social action (Coughlin 1965). It was led by Protestant social reformers, who believed that public power should be used to protect the common welfare. Progressive organizations sponsored state laws for minimum wages, old age pensions, insurance against industrial accidents, and limits on the working hours of women and children. In the 1930s the Federal Council of Churches, the voice of liberal Protestantism, enthusiastically supported the New Deal, because it “embodied many of the social ideals of the churches” (Quoted in Fones-Wolf 1994:219). However, divisions among Protestants have an equally long history. In the 1930s the Christian Conservative Crusade, led by right-wing radio evangelist Father Charles Coughlin, mobilized opposition to liberal social programs (Lienesch 1982). In the 1940s two evangelical organizations, the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade and the Church League of America, fought against Truman’s national health insurance plan, which they decried as a communist-inspired plot (Wilcox 2000). Divisions among Protestants intensified in the 1950s and 1960s. While churches became a critical resource in the mobilization of African-Americans for Civil Rights (McAdam 1999; Morris 1984), they also provided a breeding ground for white Christians to mobilize resentment to civil rights gains (Edsall 1989; Hardisty 1999).

While Protestants have often been divided on the place of religion in civil society, the Catholic Church has traditionally supported state intervention for public policy that provides basic social rights. Modern Catholic social ethics began with the 1891 papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which championed a living wage and state-level insurance for illness, disability, unemployment and old age. In subsequent decades, popes and bishops’ councils cultivated stronger stands on social and political issues (Derickson 2005; Smith 1996). For example, immediately following the Great War, the Catholic Church proposed a “Program of Social Reconstruction,” that advocated the state intervene in order to balance public good and

capitalism. Specifically, the U.S. Bishops noted that reform in the spirit of both labor and capital was needed:

The laborer must come to realize that he owes his employer and society an honest day's work in return for a fair wage....The capitalist must likewise get a new viewpoint. He needs to learn the long-forgotten truth that wealth is stewardship, that profitmaking is not the basic justification of business enterprise, and that there are such things as fair profits, fair interest, and fair prices... [and] that the laborer is a human being, not merely an instrument of production...The employer has a right to get a reasonable living out of his business, but he has no right to interest on his investment until his employees have obtained at least living wages. This is the human and Christian, in contrast to the purely commercial and pagan, ethics of industry (Muldoon *et al.* 1919).

During this period, American cardinals openly expressed dissatisfaction with capitalism, and many Catholic magazines repudiated the free enterprise system, couching support for New Deal programs in the language of 'social solidarity' with the poor (Fones-Wolf 1994). In the 1960s the Catholic Church was involved in President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. The community action programs created by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 established an alternative social welfare system in Mississippi to train the hardcore unemployed and the functionally illiterate. With offices, staff, access to nationwide news media and an established bureaucratic hierarchy, the Catholic Church was the only organization with the capacity to circumvent Mississippi's segregated educational system (Author Cite 1994).

The exception in Catholic support for government intervention concerns policies related to birth control, abortion and women's position in the family. Many Catholics opposed the Sheppard-Towner Act of 1921, which provided funds to states for nutrition and hygiene

information programs for pregnant women and new mothers, fearing it represented a federal effort to promote birth control (Morgan 2006). The Catholic Church also opposed a bill to expand day care services for AFDC recipients in 1959, arguing that such a move could undermine the traditional family by encouraging mothers to work.⁴

Given the substantial differences between Catholics and Protestants and among Protestant sects, cooperation among religious organizations would seem difficult to sustain. The question of how disparate groups coalesced in the last quarter of the 20th century poses an interesting theoretical puzzle that can help explain how sustained cooperation is possible and why coalition work dissolves into contention. In this paper, we argue that cooperation among diverse religious groups was made possible by the use of limiting frames (Burn 2005). Limiting frames are generic in their discussions of an issue and focus on specific goals rather than broader worldviews. Burns argues that limiting frames are stripped of their moral implications. We suggest instead that limiting frames provide generic understandings of morality that establish common moral ground and thus allow relatively diverse groups to cooperate. We also agree with Hull (2001) that frames have political limits. When changes in the political environment make it necessary to redefine understandings of the relationships between moral values, the state and public good, limiting frames are stretched. This situation creates contention among previously allied organizations is likely to occur, revealing the fragility of the alliance.

⁴ Letter from Monseigneur Raymond Gallagher to Mrs. Katherine B. Oettinger, Chief, Children's Bureau, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, April 27, 1962. National Archives, Record Group 102, Records of the Children's Bureau, Central File 1958-62, Box 832, File: June 1960-1962, Day Care of Children of Working Mothers; See also Memorandum Re: Day Care from Katherine Oettinger, February 1, 1965, National Archives, Record Group 102, Records of the Children's Bureau, Central File 1958-62, Box 1005, File: July 1963-1968.

This paper draws on Congressional records, interviews, archival documents from women's rights, religious, and pro-life organizations as well as documents collected from Presidential libraries, issue reports from conservative think tanks, press releases, and secondary sources to examine how the Conservative Christian movement mobilized a broad-based coalition that spanned three decades before crumbling apart. We argue that the movement mobilized across relatively diverse Christian traditions by focusing on the abortion issue. This focus enabled them to employ the rhetoric of morality without explicitly laying out the contours of the debate. However, as abortion became intertwined in other issues, such as welfare reform and health care, the coalition was unable to elaborate the morality frame to incorporate fundamental differences among religious groups. Cooperative effort faltered, then, dissipated completely over the prospect of Social Security privatization.

MOBILIZING COOPERATIVE EFFORTS:

THE IMPORTANCE OF LIMITING FRAMES

It is difficult to date the origins of the Conservative Christian movement. Some scholars point to the end of the New Deal Era as signified by the election of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President and the publication of Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind*, which outlined the six critical principles of conservatism (Edwards 2003), while others point to the backlash against the Civil Rights movement and changing party rules which made social conservatives a visible and viable constituency (Edsall 1989). The first suggestion of an explicitly conservative, religious political movement occurred in the 1968 election when white southerners, mostly Baptists alienated over civil rights, defected from the Democratic party. It wasn't until 1976, however, that evangelicals became a visible voting bloc when one of their own, Jimmy Carter, a born-

again southern Baptist, ran for the Democratic party nomination. Evangelicals provided Carter's margin of victory over his opponent, President Gerald Ford, but their support was short-lived as it became apparent that Carter was more liberal than he had appeared during his campaign (Manza and Brooks 1997; Reichley 1981-82). They were especially angered over Carter's decision to deny tax exemptions to white Christian academies that were springing up throughout the South in the wake of school desegregation efforts. Thus, divisions among Protestants involved differing visions of public good and the role of the state in legislating disparate views of morality.

The Christian Conservative movement was given form by the New Right, which arose in the 1970s from a loose knit coalition of large multipurpose groups like the American Conservative Union and the Conservative Caucus, think tanks like the Heritage Foundation, and a vast array of single issue groups. Although the New Right goal was to mobilize conservative opinion around free market economics, anti-communism and national defense, it lacked a grassroots force (Bruce 1990). In the late 1970s New Right leaders began wooing evangelicals, arguing that the United States had an important role in God's plan for worldwide evangelism and that communism was not only a threat to the nation but also to evangelicalism (Oldfield 1996; Lienesch 1982). Through this logic, the New Right created a vision that married market fundamentalism and religious fundamentalism. In this "market theocracy," religious doctrine became the basis to justify laissez-faire economics and the dismantling of the welfare state (Kintz 2005).⁵

While race politics certainly involved some segment of the conservative population in politics, we argue that race was not the primary mobilizing force behind the diverse and broad-

⁵ Indeed, as Hart (1996) suggests, Christian religious traditions are replete with resources for asserting individual choice and acting in alignment with one's conscience.

based coalition that became the Conservative Christian movement. Rather we argue that the legalization of abortion in the United States provided a unique political opportunity for conservative Christian leaders to mobilize cooperative efforts around a narrowly defined issue despite vast differences in terms of how various Christian traditions conceptualized the role of the state in legislating public good. More specifically, because abortion was a “life-and-death” issue that required state intervention, it provided a focal point that could mask disagreements about otherwise conflicting conceptions of government involvement in moral issues.

The legalization of abortion in the United States, codified in the 1973 Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision, sparked wide-spread mobilization among conservative Christians because it involved a shared moral tenant – the sanctity of human life. The focus on the public good rather than specific moral traditions made it possible for religious groups to productively cooperate in the political arena. Prior to 1973, for example, the Catholic Church was cautious about when and how it weighed in on political debates, fearing the public might view any intervention as a violation of the separation of church and state. Thus, while the National Catholic Welfare Council, an organization of bishops, issued statements on racial equality and justice for farm workers in the 1960s and came out against the Vietnam War in 1973, the church did not actively pursue these social issues. Abortion was different, however, because it involved a fundamental moral issue that affected the health of society. As Cardinal Krol explained in testimony before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments in 1974, the right to life was “a basic human right which must undergird any civilized society.”⁶ After the Roe decision, the Catholic Church officially sanctioned civil disobedience and the National Conference of Catholic

⁶ U.S. Senate, Statement of John Cardinal Krol, Archbishop of Philadelphia before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments, Judiciary Committee, March 7, 1974, p. 153.

Bishops adopted a sophisticated blueprint of political action that focused on organizing activists in each parish (Burns 1992; Tribe 1990).

This understanding of legalized abortion was shared by other Christian traditions. The Mormon Church argued that abortion was “one of the most revolting and sinful practices in this day...” and the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church testified that “without the right to life, all other rights are meaningless.”⁷ Other religious groups that issued similar statements against abortion included the Greek Orthodox Church, the American Association of Evangelicals, Orthodox Presbyterians, the American Association of Christian Schools, and Baptists for Life, a grassroots organization formed in 1973.⁸ Because the Roe decision restricted the focus of conservative Christians to making a legal procedure illegal, it provided an ideal issue for mobilizing cooperation across generally diverse organizations.

The most significant group to arise from this cross-denominational mobilization effort was the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC), which combined the resources of the Catholic Church, existing state level pro-life groups, and grassroots talent. The group was formed as an explicit effort by pro-life leaders to create a secular rather than a religious organization, one that would appeal to a broad segment of the public which might otherwise be divided on religious doctrine (Author Cite 2005, 2006; Merton 1982). The goal of NRLC was to pass a Constitutional Amendment to reverse the Roe decision and strip from states the ability to make abortion legal at a later date. The Amendment wording declared that the word “person,” used in the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments, “applies to all human beings irrespective of age,

⁷ U.S.Senate, Statement of David McKay before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments, Judiciary Committee, March 7, 1974, p. 318

⁸ House of Representatives, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, H521-2, Proposed constitutional Amendments on Abortion, Part 1, Feb. 4, 1976.

health, function, or condition of dependency, including their unborn offspring at every stage of their biologic development.” As such, abortion would be illegal, although the Amendment did not “prohibit a law permitting only those medical procedures required to prevent the death of the mother” (Wilke 1997: 36).

The efforts of NRLC and religious activists resulted in some success. The first victory came in 1976 with a ban on Medicaid funding of abortion. Medicaid, the joint federal/state program of health insurance for the poor, paid for nearly one third of all legal abortions performed in the U.S., mostly on AFDC recipients. Religious activists viewed Medicaid-funded abortions as government-subsidized murder and worked simultaneously to end and limit the availability of abortion (Author Cite 2002). The Medicaid funding ban was introduced in 1974 in the House of Representatives by Rep. Dewey Bartlett (R-OK) as an amendment to that year’s appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor and Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). The appropriations bill contained the federal share of funds to the states for AFDC and Medicaid. Following *Roe*, several states had passed measures banning the use of *state* Medicaid funds for abortion, but fifteen states still paid for abortions. The Bartlett amendment specified that no *federal* funds could be use to pay for abortion except when necessary to save the life of the mother. As Bartlett, explained, tax dollars should not be used to pay for a procedure that many people vehemently opposed. Rather there needed to be “better more meaningful care for the poor, more meaningful assistance to the unwed mother, and a public consensus to improve the lot of all unwanted, including unwanted children.”⁹ Although the Bartlett amendment was defeated, in 1976 pro-life forces gained a new champion, Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL) who again tacked a strict Medicaid abortion funding ban - with no exceptions - onto that year’s Department

⁹ *Congressional Record*, Sept. 17, 1974: 31454.

of Labor/HEW appropriations bill. The Hyde amendment passed in the House, 207-167 (Tribe 1990).

Whether or not legislation should include an exception to save the life of the mother quickly became a point of division among activists. While those supporting an exception argued such a clause was necessary to abolishing legal abortion, religious fundamentalists argued that such an exception allowed politics to trump morality (Author Cite 2006). The contours of the debate were unfolding just as the New Right began to lay the foundations for its own political machinery. In 1974 Paul Weyrich founded the Free Congress Political Action Committee, which began seeking issues that would serve as a litmus test “to distinguish... ‘movement’ conservative candidates from liberals, or even ‘Old Right’ conservatives,” who often supported legalized abortion (Weyrich 2003: 139). As such, being pro-life was essential for candidates seeking the endorsement, and funding, of the New Right (Weyrich 2003). Weyrich also provided funding for the foundation of the American Life Lobby (later called the American Life League), which was created after two of the National Right to Life Committee’s founding members, Judie and Paul Brown, left the organization in protest of the group’s support for an abortion exception (Blanchard 1995; Diamond 1995; Maxwell 2002). The fissures in the cooperative efforts of conservative Christian groups had visible affects. Organizations publicly and privately attacked one another and competing solutions to the problem of legalized abortion emerged in the political arena. The New Right with the help of Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC) introduced a new Constitutional Amendment, which stripped the exception from the language, and Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) introduced the Human Life Bill, which would make abortion legislation a state, rather than a federal, matter (Wilke 2000, 2003). While prominent pro-life leaders such as Jack Wilke (president of the National Right to Life Committee) worked vigorously to create

consensus around legislation, such efforts had limited success and ultimately all three efforts failed (Author Cite 2006).

The Republican Party helped diffuse the growing tension around abortion by offering a platform that emphasized family values, including support for school prayer, a constitutional amendment to restore the “right to life for unborn children,” and opposition to homosexuality.¹⁰ In the 1980 election, the Republican presidential candidate, Ronald Reagan, attended a national affairs briefing sponsored by the Religious Roundtable and promised that, in his administration, “traditional moral values” would be “reflected in public policy” (Reichley 1981-82:543). Reagan was rewarded for his efforts with the endorsement of the Moral Majority, an evangelical organization created by the Reverend Jerry Falwell in 1979 to defend Christian schools. Led by pastors in the Baptist Bible Fellowship, the Moral Majority played a visible role in Reagan’s campaign, organizing voter registration drives, issuing moral “report cards” and attacking liberal members of Congress. Reagan soundly defeated his rival, President Jimmy Carter, and the Democrats lost control of the Senate for the first time since the 1940s (Oldfield 1996). Uncontrollable inflation, high unemployment and a hostage crisis in Iran were primarily responsible for Carter’s defeat, but the defection of evangelicals and Catholics from the Democratic Party was also a factor. When Reagan ran for reelection in 1984, he won 80 percent of the evangelical vote as well as 55 percent of the Catholic vote. The family values platform, in other words, became short-hand for a bundle of specific issues on which Conservative Christians agreed state intervention and legislation was necessary. Its achievement was to give cooperative political efforts a specific focus.

¹⁰ *Republican Platform, 1980* (Washington, D.C.: Republican National Committee, 1980), pp. 10-15.

WHEN LIMITING FRAMES SPLINTER:

INTRAMOVEMENT SHIFTS AND THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Throughout the 1980s, the Conservative Christian movement, and the New Right, in particular, grew increasingly unhappy with the Republican Party. While Reagan had drawn on the strength and resources of conservative Christians, he had failed to deliver on many of his promises. This was particularly clear on the abortion issue. Upon taking office, Reagan realized he did not need to risk his presidency by launching a full-fledged attack on Roe because Evangelicals and pro-life activists would never defect to the Democratic Party.¹¹ Moreover, he found that he could placate religious supporters with political appointments, minor policy changes, rhetoric and meetings with key leaders. This had two effects on the Conservative Christian movement. First, it radicalized young activists. Taking note of the resources that had been invested in the Republican Party, young activists became disillusioned with mainstream politics and began employing more militant and violent tactics to end abortion (Risen and Thomas 1998). Second, as Reagan's second term came to a close and George Bush emerged as the Republican candidate for the 1988 election, conservative Christians mounted efforts to place "true believers" in political office.

The political mobilization of Christian conservatives encouraged Pat Robertson, the Pentacostal televangelist preacher, to seek the Republican Party presidential nomination. During his campaign, Robertson trained activists in every precinct in the country, creating a grassroots Christian network to raise funds and recruit volunteers (Bruce 1990; Shibley 1998). Vice President George Bush responded to Robertson's challenge by cultivating conservative

¹¹ Specifically, the Reagan administration instituted a "gag rule," which forbid personnel at federally-funded clinics from discussing abortion with clients, and the "Mexico City Policy" (which prohibited nongovernmental organizations receiving federal funding from providing or promoting abortion services). Reagan also banned the use of fetal tissue in medical research, stymied the importation of emergency contraception into the U.S. and prohibited privately funded abortions in overseas military hospitals (Author Cite 2004).

Christians, meeting individually with evangelical leaders, appointing a religious liaison and discussing his own faith in public settings (Oldfield 1996). The Bush campaign also identified the 215 largest southern churches, located a supporter in each church and distributed a special video directed at evangelicals to be played in churches. Robertson lost badly in the primaries, but his attempt to capture the party had long-lasting consequences. During his campaign, evangelicals gained control of many GOP state and local organizations, embedding religious conservatives deeply into the Republican party machinery. Further, the Republican Party adopted many of the Moral Majority's campaign issues and invited conservative Christian leaders to speak at the Republican National Convention. As Robertson recognized:

Could it be that the reason for my candidacy has been fulfilled in the activation of tens of thousands of evangelical Christians into government?...for the first time in recent history, patriotic, pro-family Christians learned the simple techniques of effective party organizing and successful campaigning. Their presence as an active force in American politics may result ultimately in at least one of America's major political parties taking on a profoundly Christian outlook in its platforms and party structure (Quoted in Oldfield 1996:183).

The political might of the New Right/conservative Christian alliance was solidified with the creation of the Christian Coalition, the heir to the Moral Majority (Shibley 1998).¹² Between 1990 and 1995 the Christian Coalition grew from 25,000 members to 1.6 million members with 1,600 local chapters, a national lobbying staff headquartered in Virginia and 50 independently incorporated state organizations (Oldfield 1996; Rozell and Wilcox 1996). Under Reed's guidance, the Christian Coalition became a sophisticated political machine, dedicated to training Christians for political action, keeping them informed on legislative issues and promoting a

¹² The group was created by Robertson, but turned over to Ralph Reed shortly after its founding (Shibley 1998).

conservative policy agenda (Wilcox 2000). The chapters organized grassroots activities and sponsored political candidates. Starting with lower level offices such as school boards, city councils and county election, the Christian Coalition created a pool of candidates qualified to run for higher offices in future races (Oldfield 1996; Usher 2000). The Christian Coalition also formed strong alliances with other groups in order to strengthen its foothold in the political arena. Specifically, the Christian Coalition joined forces with the anti-feminist Concerned Women for America and Focus on the Family, which also had extensive media networks, organized political conferences, workshops and conventions, graded candidates based on their voting records, sponsored voter registration drives in churches, and provided activists for state caucuses and conventions (Author Cite 2004; Wilcox 2000; Oldfield 1996).

The 1992 presidential election was a watershed in the ascendance of religious conservatives but also signaled the beginning of the end for widespread cooperation across the movement. At the Republican convention more than three hundred Christian delegates helped shape the party platform (Regnerus, Sikkink, and Smith 1999). Christian Right leaders also were given prominent billing on the program with Jerry Falwell declaring a religious war “for the soul of America” and Pat Robertson condemning the Democratic party candidate, Bill Clinton, for his “radical plan to destroy the traditional family” (Quoted in Oldfield 1996:89). Clinton’s victory however, meant that conservative Christians could no longer define issues on their own terms. Instead, they were forced to respond to a Democratic administration that recontextualized the debate over abortion. This dilemma would turn the existing fissures in the Conservative Christian movement into deep cracks as organizations representing different traditions fought over the role of the state in legislating public good as well as the meaning of morality more broadly.

These divisions were visible immediately after Clinton took office and made efforts to

honor his campaign promise for universal health insurance (Author Cite 2004; 2005). A key controversy concerned the inclusion of abortion under “pregnancy-related” services. Clinton’s plan, Health Security, would require all health insurance to cover abortion, effectively nullifying the Hyde Amendment and the laws of 37 states that restricted state funding of abortion. It would also cap rate increases in health insurance premiums, a provision that pro-life forces feared could lead to health care rationing or the withholding of care or even infanticide and euthanasia. As Wanda Franz (1993a: 3), the president of the National Right to Life Committee, warned:

Children would grow up finding out that their siblings were killed and that they themselves could have been killed, too, because the government’s health plan offered their mothers abortion as an “option.” Mothers would find themselves under pressure to abort their children because the bureaucrats administrating (it) will be under pressure to save money by avoiding more costly services for birth.

Health Security posed a conflict for the Catholic Church. In 1981 the American Catholic Bishops had published a pastoral letter citing Pope John XXII’s encyclical *Pacem in Terris* which listed “medical care among those basic human rights which flow from the sanctity and dignity of human life....” Catholics “had a responsibility to contribute to the development of a just and humane national health policy.”¹³ The letter had warned, however, that Catholic institutions should not permit practices that violated Catholic teaching, particularly regarding abortion. Since Health Security included abortion services, the bishops initiated a letter-writing campaign opposing that feature of the bill. In testifying on behalf of the Catholic Bishops of the United States, Helen Alvare explained:

¹³ “Health and Health Care.” A Pastoral letter of the American Catholic Bishops, Nov. 19, 1981, United States Catholic Conference, p. 5, 11.

We believe that the fundamental right to health care is grounded in the right to life, a right of all human beings regardless of age, sex or condition of dependency. True healthcare reform, therefore, could never promote attacks on life itself. Tragically, the administration's plan, by including abortion as a mandated benefit, undermines(s) health reform at its root...abortion advocates...have not hesitated to burden the entire momentum for health care reform with their agenda.¹⁴

The Southern Baptist Convention also vehemently opposed including abortion in health care reform. As the Convention's Director for biomedical and life issues, Ben Mitchell, warned:

(B)ecause of our historically attested and committed opposition to public funding for elective abortion, the Southern Baptist Convention is prepared to marshal as many of our resources as necessary to oppose vigorously any health plan that includes coverage...This is such a critical concern for us that we are prepared to oppose any reform which is otherwise excellent if it includes coverage for elective abortions.¹⁵

Ralph Reed (1994:29), head of the Christian Coalition, linked abortion to broader conservative issues, claiming that "The Clinton plan is really a Trojan horse for a not-so-hidden agenda to expand government bureaucracy, pay for abortions with tax dollars, and promote a radical social agenda." Thus, while conservative Christians widely opposed the inclusion of the abortion issue in health care reform, they did so for different reasons. Catholics considered health care a basic

¹⁴ "Hearings on Women's Health." Testimony of Helen Alvare, Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, Committee on Energy and Commerce, House of Representatives, 103rd Congress, 2nd Session, January 26, 1994, pp. 171.

¹⁵ "Hearings on Women's Health." Testimony of C. Ben Mitchell, Director for Biomedical and Life Issues, Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, Committee on Energy and Commerce, House of Representatives, 103rd Congress, 2nd Session, January 26, 1994, pp. 186.

human right and supported legislation to provide this public good to all individuals. The broader conservative movement of social and fiscal conservatives, however, did not regard health care as a basic public good or as central to their definitions of morality. Rather they viewed reform as fiscally imprudent and an unnecessary expansion of the welfare state. The abortion issue simply provided a unified point of attack.

The divisions between Catholics and Evangelicals deepened during the debates over welfare reform and in response to the increased political power of the New Right. In the 1994 congressional elections, the Christian Coalition organized a highly successful Road to Victory plan, which wrested power away from the Democrats. Following the election, the new Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich (R-GA), announced he would bring to fruition the Republican Party's "Contract with America" (Diamond 1995). Gingrich would abolish the Department of Education (to punish teachers' unions), cut spending on Medicare, Medicaid and education, slash the Earned Income Tax Credit for the working poor, and enact a tough welfare reform bill. Reform of AFDC was the first priority. Out-of-wedlock births had increased from 5.3 percent of all births in 1960 to 32.2 percent by 1996;¹⁶ almost one-third of these births were to teenage mothers, a trend Republicans attributed to AFDC:

The plain truth is that if we are ever going to cope with the deficit, and the social programs that inflate it, we are going to have to begin with a very different view of human nature and human responsibility in relation to such issues as criminality, sexuality, welfare dependency, even medical insurance (Kristol 1994:ix).

Phyllis Schafley, the head of the Eagle Forum, called AFDC a "grossly unjust and immoral system... millions of people were taught that they were entitled to pick the pockets of law-

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 1996. *Indicators of Welfare Dependence and Well-Being: Interim Report to Congress*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

abiding, taxpaying families if they met two conditions: they didn't work and they were not married to someone who does work" (Schlafly 1996:1-2).

The Christian Coalition supported many provisions of the Republican Contract with America but felt it paid insufficient attention to moral issues. They responded with an alternative "Contract with the American Family" that included a religious equality amendment to the Constitution, a family tax credit, spending cuts for the arts, humanities and education (all institutions that subjected Christian children to secular humanist values), restrictions on abortion and expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit for two-parent households. The one priority on which there was clear agreement was AFDC reform. AFDC offended evangelicals' basic moral values - that sex should take place within marriage and be tied to procreation, that the father should hold patriarchal authority in the family and that children should be strictly disciplined (Oldfield 1996). Evangelicals believed that AFDC subsidized family breakup, encouraged promiscuity and allowed men to shirk their familial responsibilities. AFDC reform would empower "private citizens to free themselves from dependency on government programs" (Reed 1994:10).

President Clinton had promised to "put an end to welfare as we know it" during his 1992 presidential campaign. In his initial version of welfare reform, AFDC recipients would receive assistance for two years, then would have to find a job or "start earning their way through community service" (DeParle 2004:103). However, they would also receive medical insurance, child care and job training. When the Republican-controlled House of Representatives passed a harsh welfare reform bill (HR 4) in March 1995, it contained no guarantee of health insurance or child care. Single mothers under age 18 would be ineligible for any benefits and states could prohibit payments to single mothers under 21. A "family cap" would deny additional payments

to welfare recipients who bore a child while receiving benefits.

These stringent provisions generated divisions among Christian groups. The Christian Coalition favored even harsher measures and sought to end all cash, food and housing assistance to any unmarried mother younger than 26 and to require mothers with children above pre-school age to work (DeParle 2004). The Christian Coalition also endorsed bonuses to poor mothers who married, “responsible fatherhood” programs, and mandatory child-support (Reed 1994:10). Concerned Women of America agreed that these provisions would “break the cycle of dependency” and demand “moral accountability” from the poor (Reese 2005).¹⁷ However, some Christians disagreed with the organization and founded the Interfaith Alliance in an effort to combat the Christian Coalition. In an open letter to Congress, Herbert Valentine, the head of the Interfaith Alliance, wrote: “The specifics of the [Contract with the American Family] are not the main issue: there may well be those among us who agree with some of the tenets contained in this document. However, for the Christian Coalition to claim the ideological and spiritual endorsement of 40 million Christians for the present lobbying effort is not only ludicrous but inexcusable” (Unknown 1995).

The Catholic Church also opposed many of these provisions on the grounds that they would eliminate an important safety net for the poor. The U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference issued a statement in 1995 noting:

The Catholic community brings strong convictions and broad experience to welfare reform. We support genuine welfare reform that strengthens families, encourages productive work, and protects vulnerable children—born and unborn. We are not defenders of the welfare status quo; however, we oppose abandonment of the federal

¹⁷ Child support enforcement also won the support of liberal feminist groups like the National Women’s Law Center and the Women’s Legal Defense Fund who believed that fathers should be forced to support their children.

government's essential role in helping families overcome poverty and meet their children's basic needs. For the Catholic community, the measure of welfare reform is whether it will enhance the lives and dignity of poor children and their families. The target of reform ought to be poverty, not poor families. The goal of reform is reducing poverty and dependency, not cutting resources and programs (Moral Principles and Policy Priorities for Welfare Reform, 1995).

Thus, when Wisconsin enacted a state welfare program that became the blueprint for national welfare reform, the Catholic bishops declared that "calls for affirming personal responsibility must not become a signal to abandon the poor... Welfare reform that is purely pragmatic, based only on reducing costs and that is conceived in isolation from the needed values of our whole society will not be fruitful" (Yamane 2005:2). Catholic Charities USA, the social service arm of the Catholic Church and the nation's largest private social service network, had 1,400 agencies, 272,000 staff and volunteers and served 10.6 million people a year. Testifying on behalf of Catholic Charities, the Reverend Fred Kammer declared:

We are opposed to a family cap provision as untested, dangerous and cruel. We oppose rigid lifetime limits for AFDC in the face of chronic and systemic unemployment... The churches and charities, beginning with our own, say this would produce a tidal wave of hungry and homeless kids and moms, a torrent of newly abused children and profoundly wrong social and moral outcomes.¹⁸

When the Personal Responsibility Act passed in the House, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops noted, "We cannot support reform that.... eliminates resources that have provided an

¹⁸ Statement of Rev. Fred Kammer, President Catholic Charities USA. Hearing before the Subcommittee on Human Resources, Committee on Ways and Means, House of Representatives. 104th Cong, 1st Sess, January 13, 1995, Part 1. Washington, D.C. U.S. Government Printing Office, pp. 714-17.

essential safety net for vulnerable children.”¹⁹ The NRLC, too, charged that the family cap and ban on payments to teenagers would encourage abortion (Franz 1995a). Although AFDC did subsidize immoral and irresponsible behavior, the child could not be held accountable: “How can it be morally acceptable to punish the child, even execute him by abortion, for the sins of his parents?” (Franz 1995b:3). To pacify pro-life groups, the Republicans agreed to include a bonus to states that reduced illegitimate births without increasing abortion.

The conflict between some evangelical Christians and the Catholic Church over the universal health care coverage and welfare reform illustrates the fragility of the Conservative Christian movement. More specifically, it highlights the importance of restricted issue frames to sustained cooperative efforts among otherwise diverse religious groups. While religious conservatives were unified on some moral issues, they had fundamental disagreements on definitions of public good and the role of the state in legislating morality. As this analysis shows, the willingness of religious organizations to participate in cooperative political goals changed with the composition of the Conservative Christian movement. As the strength of the New Right grew, groups formed to challenge definitions of morality and public welfare. In short, fundamental differences in religious tradition coupled with a changing political environment and the movement placed stress on cooperative efforts within a previously united social movement.

BATTLING MORALITIES AND FRAME FAILURE

During the 2000 presidential campaign, Republican candidate George W. Bush proposed privatizing Social Security by diverting a portion of payroll tax revenues into private accounts.

Although Bush, consumed by the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attack, made no

¹⁹ U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. 1995. “Welfare Reform.” Washington, D.C.: Office of Social Development and Peace.

mention of privatization in his first term, when he was reelected in 2004, he interpreted his victory as a mandate to move forward. Given that evangelicals had helped defeat Clinton's Health Security and supported Republicans on AFDC reform, Bush presumed that they would also back Social Security privatization. However, Bush was unenthusiastic about a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage, a key evangelical issue, and conservative Christian groups threatened to withhold support for his Social Security plan unless he rejected gay marriage. Once Bush endorsed the amendment, several groups, including the Christian Coalition, made Social Security privatization a high priority (Phillips 2006).

The framing of the Social Security debate was similar to that of welfare reform with New Right/conservative Christian organizations emphasizing a model of public good that stressed individualism and private ownership over shared responsibility. Once again, the focus was on relinquishing government control over unnecessary programs that fostered dependence and diminished individual responsibility. The Christian Coalition, for example, praised the idea of privatizing Social Security: "President Bush wants Social Security reform to include turning President Roosevelt's New Deal-era retirement program into a self-financing private investment accounts system which workers could own and control" (Christian Coalition 2005). A feature article in the *Family Voice* tied reform to the Bible more directly:

The Bible says we must be wise in our dealings- as shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves (Matt 10:16, NIV). God calls us to be good stewards of our resources. Therefore, we should encourage our legislators to privatize Social Security. We must ensure that our nation's retirees will receive what has been promised to them. We must defuse this fiscal time bomb NOW! (Wadkins 1998).

Concerned that Biblical references alone were insufficient to rally support for privatization, some conservative Christians attempted to link Social Security reform to an anti-homosexuality agenda. As a commentator Robert Regier (*Family Voice* February 27, 2002), explained:

(Homosexual marriage) would also put a strain on a Social Security System that is already struggling to stay afloat. As it stands now, we barely have enough workers to support those collecting benefits. Adding more beneficiaries would help drive the last nail in the coffin on any chance that people under 40 will ever see a dime of Social Security when they retire.

As such, groups that challenged privatization as the solution for the nation's Social Security woes found themselves under attack. For example, conservative Christian groups launched an ad campaign against the American Association of Retired People (AARP), which linked the organization's opposition to privatization with support for homosexuality. The ad, which appeared on the website of *The American Spectator* identified "The Real AARP Agenda" and included a picture of two men in tuxedos kissing (Justice and Kirkpatrick 2005).

The AARP was not alone in its opposition to privatization. The Catholic Church also opposed the New Right's understanding of Social Security reform and specifically took issue with how it conceptualized the state's obligation to protect the public good. Specifically, the Catholic Church voiced concern over the implications of privatization for the disadvantaged, disenfranchised and the poor. A statement released by the U.S. Catholic Conference noted that the Church had called for a national safety net in 1919 and had no intention of withdrawing its support. In fact, the Bishops reminded:

In the 1983 document, Statement on Social Security, the Administrative Board reaffirmed the Church's support for the Social Security System and highlighted several of the moral principles from the Catholic social tradition which they hoped would shape the public policy debate over Social Security...The 1983 statement noted that "the concept of the common good is an essential element of our social teaching and one that has important implications for the issue of Social Security.....in the case of social insurance for the aged, the widowed, and the disabled, we are dealing with a right that is essential for the effective human development of a large segment of our citizen population". The statement concludes that a "humane social policy must include a comprehensive social insurance program that is organized through the public sector"...The 1983 statement remain[s] a strong statement of the principles which should guide the upcoming public discussion of how to strengthen and preserve the Social Security System (Unknown 1998).

With the lines between Catholics and Evangelicals clearly drawn, the New Right turned on the Catholic Church, equating its position on Social Security with radical liberalism. For instance, Stephen Moore of the CATO Institute opined:

The only remaining objection to private accounts is ideological: some people are simply predisposed to favor big government and are thus unpersuadable by evidence. Too often these days Catholic Charities falls in that category. Now Catholic Charities is increasingly preoccupied with advancing an anti-free-market, big-government agenda -- they oppose almost any tax cuts, promote government run health care, oppose welfare reform, and now condemn poor people to a Social Security system that offers them a lousy deal. The Catholic Church's ravings against welfare reform four years ago -- the

dire predictions that widows and orphans would be thrown on the streets -- has been thoroughly discredited by the spectacular success of work-based welfare. But that bad call has not in any way moved the church's Washington lobby from its increasingly doctrinaire liberal view of the benevolence of government. The church's official support for a muscular government is puzzling, given that throughout history the state has been the primary oppressor of religion in general and Catholicism in particular. Just ask the Polish. Alas, conservative Catholics must begin to rethink their support for Catholic Charities. Contributions are partially financing a propaganda campaign in Washington to prop up a dysfunctional and paternalistic welfare state that keeps poor people poor and dependent. Catholic Charities may not change its ways until contributors stop writing checks (Moore 1998).

In short, the limiting frames that made cooperation among diverse groups in the Conservative Christian Movement for three decades possible finally failed. As policy proposals moved away from issues involving shared visions of public good, divisions regarding the role of the state in a moral society took center stage and cooperative efforts among the groups crumbled under the strain.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this research, we find that patterns of cooperation and contention among social movements are more nuanced than scholars have previously suggested. Specifically, we find that both the political environment and the framing efforts of actors are critical to sustaining cooperation. The political environment provides the context for religious frames, forcing activists to adapt their visions of public good to the existing circumstances (Williams and Demerath 1991). However, if groups wish to build sustained cooperative campaigns across

religious traditions, they should be wary of how they elaborate their frames. In this case, limiting frames provided generic versions of Christian morality by restricting focus to issues in which a range of religious groups believed state intervention was necessary. Abortion, homosexuality, and school prayer were all salient issues for the Conservative Christian movement and allowed groups to work together. It is important to note, however, that the most successful framing efforts may come from actors that are only tangentially related to a movement. The Republican Party provided focus to the movement as groups began to disagree about the contours of the abortion debate. This effectively enabled diverse groups to work together on other issues even as they disagreed on whether an exception to protect the life of a mother should be permitted.

Frames, however, must respond to a political environment that consists of both elite allies and opponents. The presence of allies willing to promote movement issues can enhance the cooperative spirit and nurture limiting frames. The Republican dominance of the White House from 1980 to 1992 and the efforts by Reagan to push forward the Conservative Christian agenda (even if some of these challenges were superficial by design) sustained limiting frames by reinforcing the broadly defined morality and public good motivating the movement. In short, while allies may adopt the limiting frames of movements for their own purposes, this reinforces such frames as a legitimate political challenge, which can sustain cooperation among groups. Elite opponents, in contrast, not only challenge these limiting frames but force them to address oppositional ideas (Author Cite 2006; Ellingson 1995). An influx of new ideas and political action can fracture, and sometimes break, limiting frames because they requires a more nuanced understanding of the role of the state in fostering public welfare. Thus, as is evidenced in the

Conservative Christian movement and the debate over Social Security reform, efforts to create new frames fail and cooperation dissolves into contention.

This study not only provides important insights regarding how framing processes affect intramovement dynamics, it also shows how the composition of the movement affects patterns of cooperation and conflict. In this case, the growing political strength of the New Right/conservative Christian movement threatened to silence other religious perspectives on politics. In response, religious activists created alternative organizations to challenge this limited vision of public good. Over time changes in the composition of the Conservative Christian movement affected the willingness of religious groups to cooperate with one another. It forced organizations to more explicitly articulate a moral understanding of the role of the state in public welfare that were often at odds. Finally, this research suggests that scholars need to pay more attention to how religion is employed as a cultural tool to achieve both short and long term goals. The tendency to analyze particular campaigns or the efforts of specific denominations masks religious diversity as well as the ways that religion is employed to mobilize individuals for political causes. This, in turn, inhibits our understandings of when, how, and why religion matters to American politics.

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