

**EVANGELICAL AND SOCIAL CONSERVATIVE SUPPORT
FOR GEORGE W. BUSH IN THE 2000 AND 2004
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: EVIDENCE FROM
OKLAHOMA, ARKANSAS AND OHIO**

ANDREW J. DOWDLE
University of Arkansas

GARY WEKKIN
University of Central Arkansas

Little scholarly research has been done to explain the effects of State Question 711 on the 2004 presidential election in Oklahoma. Recent research however has called address this issue in Ohio and Arkansas. However a debate still exists about the precise role of social conservatives in each state. To help address these questions, this paper (1) tries to determine whether this lack of effect is just limited to evangelical voters in one state or region by examining the states of Oklahoma, Ohio, and Arkansas, all of which had a similar issue on the ballot, and (2) attempts to differentiate between white evangelical voters and social conservatives. We find that Bush ran strongly in socially conservative areas in 2000, well before gay marriage became a major issue in any of these states. We also conclude that while there is certainly overlap between social conservatives and evangelicals in Oklahoma and the other two states, they acted as separate electoral groups in 2000 and 2004.

The emergence of political issues often seems random and haphazard.¹ However as Carmines and Stimson (1990) point out, there are processes that many, if not most, important controversies undergo. Two elements that they identify as important elements in issue evolution are the existence of external disruptions and the role of strategic politicians in using policy conflicts to form winning electoral coalitions.

At the beginning of 2004, concerns such as national security and economic growth were anticipated to dominate political discourse. A new contender emerged at the start of the election year, however. In February, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that the state had “failed to identify any constitutionally adequate reason” to deny same-sex marriage. At the same time in California, San Francisco began to issue same-sex marriage licenses. Fitting Carmines and Stimson’s model, it seemed obvious that strategic politicians would use this “disruption” for electoral advantage. President George W. Bush, for example, announced that he would support a Constitutional amendment that would define marriage as a strictly heterosexual institution (O’Brien 2004). By November, activists in no fewer than eleven states, nine of which were eventually won by President Bush in 2004, had petitioned successfully to get voter initiatives banning same-sex marriage on the ballot and secured voter approval of these measures (McMahon 2005, 25).

It became almost an article of faith for some observers that the president’s announcement signaled a re-election strategy of rallying religious conservatives to the polls to vote against gay and lesbian marriage (and *for* the president opposing it). Karl Rove claimed that the gay and lesbian marriage ban initiatives had a small but significant net effect on increasing turnout among social conservatives in 2004 (Halperin and Harris 2006).¹ Many of the measures’ opponents also grudgingly admitted that the strategy was politically fruitful for the GOP. Since previous research has also supported the link between partisanship and individual votes on ballot measures (Branton 2003), it might be reasonable to speculate that popular ballot measures could boost support for one party’s candidate(s). Smith et al. (2005) found some increase at the county-level for President Bush in Ohio in 2004 based on support for Issue One, which banned same-sex marriages. However both they and, in the case of Arkansas, Dowdle and Wekkin (2006; 2007) began to question the over-simplicity of the conventional wisdom.

Despite the large number of state-level studies in this area, no published research has examined its effect on Oklahoma. To further examine the impact of state gay marriage ban ballot measures on the 2004 presidential election, we look at Oklahoma and two states (i.e., Arkansas, and Ohio) to see the effects that the 2004 voter initiatives—Amendment Three, Issue One, and State Question 711 respectively—

that would ban same-sex marriages had on the general election.² We selected Arkansas because it is similar demographically to Oklahoma, especially in the key area of a high concentration of evangelical voters (Gaddie and Copeland 2002; Dowdle and Wekkin 2006). Ohio is used as a third case because it was one of the few states with a ballot measure that was not similar to Oklahoma demographically. Thus it should expand the scope of our findings beyond states with large Evangelical populations.

On the surface, the strategy of linking Bush's fortune in Oklahoma to these initiatives seemed to be a politically sound one. Bush's share of the presidential vote in the state also jumped from 60.3 to 65.6 in Oklahoma during that period. While many people credit the Bush campaign's use of this and other wedge issues for boosting both turnout among social conservatives and Republican vote totals in the 2004 general election, there are other possible alternatives. Using data from 2000 and 2004 election returns from these three states, we test two possible hypotheses: whether (1) the already high levels of social conservative support for Bush and other Republican candidates were boosted by their support for State Question 711 in Oklahoma, Amendment Three in Arkansas, and Issue One in Ohio or (2) Republican votes in 2004 owed primarily to Bush's appeal to social conservatives, as was also the case in 2000, before the same-sex marriage controversy had occurred.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The presidential support for state ballot initiatives that banned same-sex marriage generated almost immediate debate in both scholarly and non-scholarly circles. Gay conservative Bush supporter Andrew Sullivan set Washington on its ear the same day as Bush's February announcement by characterizing the announcement as a betrayal—a "Declaration of War" on gays. Bloggers such as Barbara O'Brien (*Mahablog.com*), John Hawkins (*rightwingnews.com*), Robert Garcia Tagorda (*tagorda.com*), and others quickly responded to the effect that Bush's announcement was entirely predictable, given strategist Karl Rove's argument that Bush had lost the popular vote in 2000 because he had turned out *too few* religious conservatives (O'Brien 2004, ch. 3; see also Ceaser & Bush 2005, 133-34). Within three months, an article in *Perspectives on Politics* by Rutgers political scientist Jyl Josephson

began with the words, “When President Bush endorsed a federal constitutional amendment to prohibit same-sex marriage, he confirmed an electoral strategy of using “gay marriage” as a wedge issue in the 2004 elections” (Josephson 2004, 269).

Validating this conventional wisdom was the even larger volume of political commentary portraying the looming 2004 election as a culture war between “two” Americas—one a bicoastal, better-educated, cosmopolitan, ethnically and religiously tolerant society of urban-dwelling gourmards and theatre-goers and the other a “fly-over” hinterland dominated by Bible- and gun-toting white Anglo-Saxon protestants whose narrow middle-American values would make lemmings and the characters of Sinclair Lewis novels homesick with nostalgia. James Davison Hunter (1991, 1994), Gertrude Himmelfarb (1999), and Terry Teachout (2001) are some of the big-thinkers who opened the doors of the two-hue, red-and-blue schoolhouse of American studies that depicted the 2004 American national elections as being as much about a “war” at home as about the war against terror. These issues have a particular resonance in Oklahoma where presidential elections have had a significant effect on down-ticket races (Gaddie and Shapard 2010).

Embracing this characterization thoroughly, William Crotty’s post-election analysis titled *A Defining Moment: The Presidential Election of 2004* intoned, “Two opposing visions of the United States and its future were presented to the American public; one would prevail and set the country’s course domestically and in relation to the international community for years, if not decades and generations, to come. They had little in common” (Crotty, 2005, 3). Echoing this theme, James Ceaser’s and Andrew Busch’s *Red Over Blue: The 2004 Elections and American Politics* depicts the 2004 election as a decisive, even realigning election in which “As one could see from national red-blue maps—or better yet, county-level purple maps showing gradations of voter concentration—Democrats were highly concentrated in the major urban centers and in a sprinkling of college towns; Republicans were spread more evenly across the rest of the country” (2005, 148). As our results for geographical support levels of State Question 711 will show, Oklahoma witnessed a similar pattern in 2004.

According to the logic of the “culture-war” literature presented above, the same-sex marriage issue should highlight “red-versus-blue” differences, insofar as “whites without college degrees had significantly

more positive feelings toward the Republican party than toward the Democratic party” (Shiraev & Sobel 2006, 173), and only 16 percent of Americans with high school diplomas and 18 percent of those with less than a diploma support the legalization of same-sex marriage, compared to 48 percent of those with post-graduate education (Shiraev & Sobel, 2006, 172, 175). Knowing this to be the case, Bush, “a divider, not a uniter” (Jacobson 2007), and Rove, who “believed that Bush lost the 2000 popular vote because millions of evangelical Christians failed to go to the polls” (Abramson et al. 2006, 46), had the “long-term strategic vision” to take advantage of the “manna from heaven [that] had fallen into their laps in the form of the same-sex marriage debate” (Ceaser & Busch 2005, 134). In so many words, the initiatives banning same-sex marriage that subsequently cropped up on the ballots of eleven states were consciously pushed by the Republican White House as part of its re-election strategy, and worked as planned. The turnout of evangelical Christians is supposed to have risen from 15 million in 2000 to 22 million in 2004 (McMahon 2005, 24), and Bush won 78 percent of their votes, carrying 9 of the 11 states holding such initiatives, including the critical state of Ohio, where “some thought that Republican turnout in the south and west of the state was driven partially by the amendment, and some credited Bush’s improved showing in Appalachian Ohio to it as well” (Ceaser & Busch, 2005, 162). While evangelical voters were an important part of the story in Oklahoma, we argue the role that they play is not as simple as this picture suggests.

On the other hand, the Bush presidential campaign’s manager, Ken Mehlman, and chief strategist, Matthew Dowd, told questioners at Harvard’s quadrennial post-election campaign managers’ conference that the President’s endorsement of a Constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage had been a “reluctant” response to the then-recent events in San Francisco and in Massachusetts, rather than a strategic ploy to galvanize Christian conservative turnout, and that it played little role in the increased turnout of such voters (JFK School, 2006). Neither the Democratic managers nor the campaign correspondents present disagreed with this characterization, and opposing strategist Steve Rosenthal of America Coming Together (ACT) confirmed that self-identified “moral values” voters seldom had brought up gay marriage during exit-interviews or post-election polls and discussions (JFK School 2006, 232). According to John Green, the Bush White House’s

enthusiasm for banning same-sex marriage was so obviously faint during the 2004 campaign that Christian conservatives were actually “deeply troubled” by mid-year (Green & Bigelow 2005, 205), prompting evangelicals such as James Dobson to say immediately after the election, “I’m sure he [President Bush] will fail us. He doesn’t dance to our tune” (ABC *This Week*, 12 November 2004), and David Kuo, late of the White House’s Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, to call for Christian conservatives to “fast” politically for a while (Kuo, 2006).

However empirical confirmation for this hypothesis is harder to find. Smith, DeSantis and Kassel (2005) address this issue in a recent paper when they test whether and how the evangelical Protestant populations in Michigan and Ohio affected the 2004 election outcome. At first glance, it appears that an increase in evangelical Protestants support may have had a positive effect for Bush in 2004.

Smith et al. test three hypotheses on a county-by-county basis: (H1) the higher the number of evangelicals, the higher the support for the ballot measure; (H2) the higher the number of evangelicals, the higher the turnout rates in 2004 over 2000; and (H3) the higher the number of evangelicals, the higher the Bush votes in 2004 over 2000. They discovered that a county’s proportion of evangelical Protestants was not statistically significant in the models. The county-level data did not help to predict any of the three hypotheses; in fact these results appeared to contradict some of the individual-level survey literature on the subject. The authors were unable to find any evidence to convince them that Karl Rove, the social conservatives or the media was correct – that the evangelical population would seal the election for the Bush camp. Smith et al. posit that Bush’s support was likely bolstered by the measures, particularly in Ohio, but the evangelicals should not be given the exclusive credit for his reelection.

These findings raise the issue of whether evangelicals are necessarily political social conservatives. Two important assumptions that are being made about evangelicals is that (1) they also have conservative political values and (2) they are willing to vote for Republican candidates if the Republican are linked to these political issues. And if Gay, Ellison, and Powers’ (1996) assertion that significant diversity of opinion does exist among conservative Protestants, does this mean that not all evangelicals will support Republican candidates who represent traditional moral values?

Most previous studies have supported the first assertion but there is some question about whether religious affiliation, attendance and/or theological beliefs influence political attitudes. Some scholars conclude that religious affiliation provides a strong factor in predicting political attitudes (Green et al, 2005; Bolzendahl and Brooks, 2005). Layman (1997) makes a strong argument that interdenominational divisions within Protestantism provide better explanations of the influence of religion on political behavior than traditional splits between Protestantism and Catholicism or Judaism. Williams et al. (2007) posit a strong correlation between conservative religious values, such as religious fundamentalism and evangelicalism, and conservative political values in areas such as civil liberties. Similarly Tuntiya (2005) finds that a belief in Biblical literalism and demographic factors are more likely to influence political tolerance than denominational affiliation. Burdette et al. (2005) conclude however that all three factors (i.e., conservative religious affiliation, church attendance and belief in Biblical literalism) all have a positive correlation with negative political attitudes towards civil rights for gays and lesbians.

The question then is why? Besides theological concerns, Linneman (2004) believes much of the source of anti-gay political attitudes rests not with homophobia but with a backlash against secular society's attitudes toward Christian conservatives. Campbell (2006) further builds on this external threat hypothesis by finding that the greater the influence of secularists in their community, the more likely that white evangelicals were to vote for the Republican presidential nominee in 1996 and 2000. Did the Republican Party and its candidates then have the ability to channel this backlash to their electoral advantage?

This link between conservative theological and political ideas certainly does allow other conservative elite groups to find common policy ground with evangelicals. As Urban (2006, 1) concludes "there is an important 'fit' or 'elective affinity' between the aggressive foreign policies of the Neoconservatives and the millenarian vision of the *Left Behind* series." A popular president can serve to further the relationship between two groups with somewhat related agendas. In this case, Urban credits Bush as the linchpin that ties Neoconservatives and evangelicals together in an electoral coalition. Zurbriggen (2005) goes as far as positing that the existence of a condition termed "Betrayal Trauma Theory" makes culturally beseiged religious conservative inordinately maleable

to Bush's appeal. However it is important to remember that despite the appearance of shared ground on some issues not all evangelicals are conservative (Woodberry and Smith, 1998) and that it shouldn't be assumed that conservative social values among voters automatically translates into political action (Olson et al., 2006). Much of the conventional wisdom assumed otherwise though in 2004.

IS THE "CULTURE WAR" A NET VOTE GENERATOR AMONG EVANGELICALS IN OKLAHOMA, OHIO AND ARKANSAS?

In this article we intend to investigate the impact of Arkansas, Ohio and Oklahoma's 2004 amendments banning same-sex marriage, which passed with 75, 62, and 76 percent of the vote respectively, upon statewide support for President Bush in the 2000 and 2004 general elections among evangelical voters. We take this approach not out of respect for the word of the president's campaign managers, but rather because of the serious questions raised by Morris P. Fiorina and his associates (2004) about the widely used "culture war" interpretation of the 2004 election. Was the already high level of social conservative support for Bush boosted by the presence of the ballot measures or did Republican voting support in 2004—as in 2000, before the same-sex marriage controversy—stem primarily from Bush's appeal at the top of the ticket?

Despite the question of whether the divisions of the culture war had trickled down to the mass level, one of the more universal assumptions of the 2004 elections was that the presence of a ballot measure prohibiting same-sex marriage had helped Republican candidates in Oklahoma, as alleged elsewhere such as Arkansas and Ohio.

At first glance, this conclusion seems accurate. Previous research (Dowdle and Wekkin, 2006; Dowdle et al. 2007) shows that Republican candidates in 2002 did not run particularly well in the more culturally conservative counties that would support Amendment Three or State Question 711 two years later. To be fair, two of the three 2002 Arkansas GOP nominees for major statewide and federal office had problems that may have resonated negatively with culturally conservative voters. The GOP's lieutenant gubernatorial nominee Win Rockefeller, like his

father before him, was viewed by many as representing moderate as well as traditional wings of the state Republican Party that had been surpassed by the growing influence of Christian conservatives within the party. Rockefeller's strong showing in the faster growing, mostly suburban counties, by contrast, suggests a potential division in the GOP ranks between primarily rural social conservatives and suburban party supporters (Dowdle & Wekkin 2006). Tim Hutchinson, a Baptist minister and the Republican incumbent in the U.S. Senate, had been involved in a scandalous affair and divorce that cut into his support.

However James Inhofe, Oklahoma's own conservative Republican senatorial candidate, also did worse in such areas in 2002. Two GOP candidates who on the face should have performed strongly in the socially conservative areas also did no better than Bush in 2000 and 2004. The incumbent Republican Governor of Arkansas, Mike Huckabee, was also a Baptist minister without such political or personal liabilities, and he did not perform strongly, either, in the culturally conservative counties that would support Amendment Three in 2004. The Oklahoma GOP gubernatorial nominee, Steve Largent, was also a well-known socially conservative Christian. By contrast, Bush did well in 2004 in the culturally conservative counties that had not been so kind to Republicans in 2002 (Dowdle et al., 2007).

A reflexive reaction is to credit the same-sex marriage ban on the 2004 ballot with swaying voters in these areas away from the Democratic side. However, there are two problems with this conclusion. First, there was also a positive correlation between Bush's 2000 results and the vote for the ballot measures in Arkansas in 2004 (Dowdle & Wekkin, 2007). While Bush did especially well in the culturally conservative areas of Arkansas and Oklahoma in 2004, he also did so in 2000, well before the same-sex marriage issue became a major controversy (Dowdle et al., 2007). The question then once again becomes why?

Dowdle et al. (2007) concluded that Bush's appeal as a candidate—not the placement of any particular issue on the ballot—was what convinced culturally conservative voters to vote for him. This additional support was particularly striking when compared to the 2002 statewide results. Second, there was no evidence to believe that candidates who made this issue a central part of their platform benefited from it. The results for the 2004 Senate races certainly call into question whether candidates who emphasized their endorsement of the measure were

particularly helped by that support. Republican challenger Jim Holt was a candidate with little statewide recognition before the race, and too little financial support (\$148,682 spent, versus Sen. Lincoln's \$5.8 million) to achieve the kind of visibility that would alter that fact. When Holt nonetheless pulled 44 percent of the vote, many observers credited Holt's unexpectedly strong showing to his centering of his campaign around Amendment Three (Blomeley & Kellams 4 November 2004): "Protect Marriage" signs had even been attached to "Holt" signs late in the campaign.

Once again, this conclusion looked plausible at first glance. A multivariate model initially showed that Holt did better in areas where support for Amendment Three was strong even when demographic and political factors are included. However, the variable became insignificant when Bush's 2004 support was included. This finding was particularly odd since Holt's campaign centered around his support for Amendment Three, while Bush's campaign did not. The Oklahoma Republican senatorial nominee, Tom Coburn, also did not get any additional boost in these conservative areas. To understand why, we believe that differences in electoral support patterns between social conservatives and evangelicals need to be analyzed in more detail.

MULTI-STATE ANALYSIS

In a perfect world, we would use individual-level panel data that tracked changes in vote decisions among individual voters in these three states between 2000 and 2004. The problem is that no public information among these lines that is available to scholars exists. However there is data that exist at the county-level.³ Therefore our data consist of voting results for the 75 counties in Arkansas, 77 counties of Oklahoma and 88 counties in Ohio, obtained from the Elections Division of the Arkansas Secretary of State, the Oklahoma State Elections Board and the Elections Division of the Ohio Secretary of State. We obtained demographic data for each county from the U.S. Census for 2000 and the Association of Religious Data Archives (ARDA), which is part of the Pennsylvania State University's Sociology Department.

To test these relationships over time, we run four models that look at the presidential elections in Oklahoma, Ohio and Arkansas in 2000 and 2004 as well as the three 2004 ballot measures prohibiting gay

marriage in those states. In each of the four models, we control for past Republican strength in major statewide races. For the 2000 models, we use *Governor 98* (the totals received by Republican nominees in those respective races).⁴ For the 2004 models, we use *Bush 2000* (George W. Bush's percent of the 2000 presidential vote). To account for various demographic influences, we control for four additional measures in the 2000 and the 2004 models: *Growth rate* (which represents the county's population growth rate from 1990 to 2000); *Population Density* (which measures the county's population density per square mile in 2000); *African-American* (the percentage of the 2000 population that is African-American);⁵ and *Evangelical* (a measure of the percentage of the 2000 population that is classified by ARDA as belonging to a non-African American evangelical denomination). These measures represent demographic control variables used in previous studies (Donovan et al. 2005; Dowdle et al. 2007) and control for differences between (1) fast-growing and slower growing areas, (2) urban and rural constituencies, (3) counties with higher and lower-level concentrations of racial minorities who may or may not have been influenced to support the marriage bans, and (4) counties with higher and lower-level concentrations of evangelical voters who were supposed to be the targets of the marriage bans.

To represent the percent of voters supporting Amendment 3 in Arkansas, Issue One in Ohio or State Question 711 in Oklahoma, we created an independent variable called *Ballot Measure*. This variable is a measure of the percent of votes in each county that were in favor of the proposed state ban on gay and lesbian marriage. The dependent variable in the 2000 models is George W. Bush's percent of the 2000 presidential vote in each county and in the 2004 models is his 2004 presidential vote percentage.

Initially we examined the influence of the various individual independent variables on Bush's support in 2000 and 2004. While the necessity of using the 1998 governor's race instead of the 1996 presidential race may cloud the issue, it seems evident in Model One that Bush in 2000 was running well behind previous Republican candidates in areas with large evangelical populations. Model Two, on the other hand, seems to show clearly that he did rather well in those same areas in 2004. At first glance, that finding seems to justify the conclusion that the much of the reason for his 2004 electoral victory in

**MODEL ONE: MULTIPLE REGRESSION CORRELATES
OF REPUBLICAN VOTE SHARE IN 2000 PRESIDENTIAL
CONTESTS IN OKLAHOMA, OHIO, AND ARKANSAS**

<i>Contest</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>B^a</i>	<i>SE B^b</i>	<i>Beta^c</i>
<i>President-2000</i>	Governor 98	.576***	.095	.423
	Growth rate	-.001	.030	-.001
	Pop. Density	.003*	.001	.096
	African-Amer.	-.200***	.033	-.106
	Evangelical	-.165***	.027	-.349
	Ballot Measure	.576***	.095	.423
	Constant	-21.013***	6.348	
	(adj. R ² = .66, sig. F = .000, N=240)			

**MODEL TWO: MULTIPLE REGRESSION CORRELATES
OF REPUBLICAN VOTE SHARE IN 2004 PRESIDENTIAL
CONTESTS IN OKLAHOMA, OHIO, AND ARKANSAS**

<i>Contest</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>B^a</i>	<i>SE B^b</i>	<i>Beta^c</i>
<i>President-2004</i>	Bush 2000	1.009***	.018	.918
	Growth Rate	-.014	.011	-.017
	Pop. Density	.001	.001	.017
	African-Amer.	-.057***	.062	-.106
	Evangelical	.056***	.011	.108
	Ballot Measure	.163***	.040	.109
	Constant	-10.140***	2.459	
	(adj. R ² = .96, sig. F = .000, N=240)			

NOTES: Correlates are obtained by regressing GOP candidates' vote share in the 240 counties against county demographics and county returns for other statewide races. *Bush 2000* = George W. Bush's percent of the 2000 presidential vote; *Growth rate* = population growth rate from 1990 to 2000; *Pop. Density* = population density per square mile in 2000; *African-Amer.* = percentage of the 2000 population that is African-American; *Evangelical* = percentage of the 2000 population that is classified by ARDA as belonging to a non-African American evangelical denomination; *Ballot Measure* = percent of voters supporting Amendment 3 in Arkansas, Issue One in Ohio or State Question 711 in Oklahoma; *Governor 98* = totals received by Republican nominees in those respective races.

^a Slope coefficient ^b Standard error of slope coefficient ^c Standardized regression coefficient
*** significant at .01 level, **significant at .05 level and * significant at .10 level.

these states was that these measures rallied evangelical voters to his camp.⁶

However two caveats jump out to temper that conclusion. First, Model One shows that Bush ran strongly in 2000 in the areas that would support the gay marriage bans four years later. Second, we ran a new series of models with an interaction term that representing support for the respective bans and the percentage of evangelicals in a county. These equations, represented in Models Three and Four, present a much different picture.

When these figures are divided up into three categories — Evangelicals, Social Conservatives (represented by support for the ballot measures) and Socially Conservative Evangelicals (represented by the interaction term), 2004 look surprisingly like 2000. Though these evangelicals may share certain values, these common beliefs may not translate into commonly cast ballots. As Olson et al. (2006) point out, evangelical affiliation is more likely to play a role in shaping attitudes about same-sex marriage than determining electoral behavior itself.

SUPPORT FOR STATE QUESTION 711 IN OKLAHOMA

In Oklahoma, State Question 711 won by a significant margin with slightly more than three-fourths of Oklahoma voters supported the measure. By contrast, 38 percent of Ohio voters opposed Issue One. What is more interesting than the statewide margin is the high level of consensus throughout the state in terms of support for State Question 711. Only five counties (i.e. Cherokee, Cleveland, Oklahoma, Payne, and Tulsa) polled below the 75 percent threshold. These counties included the two largest urban centers and the homes of the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University. As such, they would have been expected to be the largest centers of opposition to the measure. Even “high levels of opposition” is a very relative term though. The lowest level of support for the measure was still 68 percent in Cleveland County and more than 70 percent of voters in the other counties supported State Question 711.

By contrast, the median level of support among the counties was slightly higher than 80 percent. Though counties with high levels of support tended to be in the Western part of the state, no clear pattern existed. Harmon

**MODEL THREE: MULTIPLE REGRESSION
CORRELATES OF REPUBLICAN VOTE SHARE IN 2000
PRESIDENTIAL CONTESTS IN OKLAHOMA, OHIO, AND
ARKANSAS (WITH INTERACTION TERM)**

<i>Contest</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>B^a</i>	<i>SE B^b</i>	<i>Beta^c</i>
<i>President-2000</i>	Governor 98	.718***	.045	.651
	Growth rate	.019	.029	.026
	Pop. Density	.001	.001	.029
	African-Amer.	-.178***	.032	-.214
	Evangelical	-1.433***	.027	-3.025
	Ballot Measure	.229**	.116	.168
	Evang/BM	.016***	.003	2.847
	Constant	5.349	8.132	

(adj. R² = .70, sig. F = .000, N=240)

**MODEL FOUR: MULTIPLE REGRESSION CORRELATES
OF REPUBLICAN VOTE SHARE IN 2004 PRESIDENTIAL
CONTESTS IN OKLAHOMA, OHIO, AND ARKANSAS
(WITH INTERACTION TERM)**

<i>Contest</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>B^a</i>	<i>SE B^b</i>	<i>Beta^c</i>
<i>President-2004</i>	Bush 2000	.909***	.023	.828
	Growth Rate	.007	.011	.008
	Pop. Density	.001	.001	.013
	African-Amer.	-.071***	.013	-.078
	Evangelical	-.341***	.105	-.655
	Ballot Measure	.163***	.040	.109
	Evang/BM	.005***	.001	.767
	Constant	-3.814	3.074	

(adj. R² = .97, sig. F = .000, N=240)

NOTES: Correlates are obtained by regressing GOP candidates' vote share in the 240 counties against county demographics and county returns for other statewide races. *Bush 2000* = George W. Bush's percent of the 2000 presidential vote; *Growth rate* = population growth rate from 1990 to 2000; *Pop. Density* = population density per square mile in 2000; *African-Amer.* = percentage of the 2000 population that is African-American; *Evangelical* = percentage of the 2000 population that is classified by ARDA as belonging to a non-African American evangelical denomination; *Ballot Measure* = percent of voters supporting Amendment 3 in Arkansas, Issue One in Ohio or State Question 711 in Oklahoma; *Evang/BM* = Interaction term that multiplies *Ballot Measure* and *Evangelical*; *Governor 98* = totals received by Republican nominees in those respective races.

^a Slope coefficient ^b Standard error of slope coefficient ^c Standardized regression coefficient
*** significant at .01 level, **significant at .05 level and * significant at .10 level

County, with the highest level of support at 87.62 percent, borders Texas. The next most supportive jurisdiction, Beaver County, is in the Panhandle. Support in the eastern part of the state tended to be lower, but 82 percent of LeFlore County voters voted in favor of the measure.

While the focus of this article is not to explain support for State Question 711 but to explain the effect or lack of effect the measure had on the 2004 presidential vote, answering the original question involves some understanding of the base of support for State Question 711. To address this question, we ran a regression model using the independent variables in Model Two minus the ballot question variable, which we then used as the dependent variable. We then looked at the variance between the predicted vote and the actual vote.⁷

The results of the equation suggest that some possible issues about specific model specification for Oklahoma are not major concerns. As we mentioned earlier, Cherokee County, which is the capital of the Cherokee Nation, had a relatively high level of opposition to State Question 711. At first glance, that result might warrant the inclusion of a variable to represent the Native American population in each county. However the gap between the model's prediction of support and the predicted value for the county is only 0.7% of the vote. The only outlier of more than 5 percent is Payne County, where the model under-predicts opposition by 5.51 percent. While that finding may suggest the need for a variable representing the presence of a university, the "no vote" in Cleveland County is under-predicted by less than 3.5 percent. The lack of drastic outlier, coupled with a mean error of 1.64 percent per county, suggests that the model does a satisfactory job of capturing the dynamics of support for State Question 711 at the county level.

Though the precise effect that State Question 711 had upon support for George W. Bush among evangelical voters is complex, it should not overshadow the strong support that the measure had. The bivariate Pearson correlation between support for the measure in a county and the percent of the population that were classified as evangelical was .49. However, as in the three state model, social conservatism was the driving force in the increase in Bush's support at the county level – not percentage of evangelical voters.

CONCLUSION

There are some obvious shortcomings to this study; more research needs to be done to test our findings. While county-level information was the only available data to address the subject of this study, individual-level data would address more definitively our original question and sidestep the problem of possible inferential issues. Oklahoma and Arkansas are only two states and arguably their unique characteristics such as the highest concentration of evangelicals in the country (Gaddie and Copeland, 2002) prevent us from applying our conclusion beyond it. Ohio is a state from another region and usually considered a good bellwether, but the amount of attention from the two candidates, the two parties, various interest groups, the news media and others make it an atypical state as well in 2004. This difficulty in translating the use of wedge issues to mobilize certain groups of conservative voters was demonstrated again in 2006 in Arkansas when Jim Holt, who ran this time for lieutenant governor on the Republican ticket on a platform of anti-illegal immigrant appeals, was unable to translate that issue into any significant electoral support (Price, 2007). And though some of our other research concerning the 2006 elections in Arkansas and Oklahoma seem to confirm Price's and our (Dowdle et al., 2007) findings, the 2008 electoral cycle should tell us more about how much of the linkage between these voters and the GOP is personality-driven and how much of it rests on social conservatism.

Our findings do suggest that George W. Bush is popular in areas where there are high levels of support for traditional moral values in Oklahoma even when pre-existing levels of Republican are taken into account. However we conclude that much of that support is of a personal nature and therefore limited primarily to support for Bush. Since Bush also had done well in these areas in 2000, it seems unlikely that Amendment Three in 2004 was the cause for any surge in 2004. Our conclusion, which is similar to a previous study showing stability between 2000 and 2004 in the vote patterns of conservative Christians (Langer and Cohen, 2005), seems to be buttressed by previous findings that none of the other Republican candidates in 2004 were unable to draw any additional support from this quarter even if they centered their campaigns on "moral values" issues.

We also question the nature of Bush's 2004 surge in Oklahoma. Though it initially appears that an upsurge of evangelical support helped Bush in 2004, a closer look calls that finding into question somewhat. Though some areas with a large number of socially conservative evangelicals supported him in 2004, many of these same areas provided support for him in 2000 as well. We believe that only by better understanding the nuances (and in some cases, the differences) between social conservatives and evangelicals, will we finally be able to account for what happened in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections.

NOTES

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² Scholarly appraisals of the success of this electoral ploy are divided. Some political scientists find no significant electoral effect (Abramowitz, 2004; Burden, 2004; Hillygus and Shields, 2005) while others (McDonald, 2004; Donovan, Tolbert, Smith, and Parry, 2005) do conclude the tactic was effective.

³ Please see Appendix A for the precise language of the three measures.

⁴ As a result of this data limitation, we attempt in this paper to limit our conclusions to counties (or "geographical areas") instead of individuals. While we realize that there are arguments and methods that would allow us to do just that, we believe it is better to err on the side of caution and limit our the scope of our conclusions to minimize the chance of ecological fallacy. Hanushek et al. (1974) do argue that correct model specification minimizes the possibility of this type of error, and King (1997) offers a methodological solution to the problem. However others (Herron and Shotts 2000) caution against assuming that these remedies are solutions. We prefer to err on the side of caution and would limit our conclusions to counties, not individual voters.

⁵ We avoid using the 1996 presidential vote totals since Bill Clinton is a native of Arkansas.

⁶ We also examined the percentage of Native Americans and Hispanics in initial analyses since they are a significant percentage of the population in some counties. We did not include the variables in our final model since they were insignificant.

⁷ We tested models for each individual state for the four models and found no significant differences between the three states. We did not include the twelve sets of results because of space issues.

⁸ Because of space issues we did not report the entire model.

**APPENDIX A:
TEXT OF GAY MARRIAGE BAN BALLOT MEASURES**

Arkansas Constitutional Amendment 3 (2004), Oklahoma State Question 711 (2004), and Ohio State Issue 1 (2004) each are commonly defined in Wikipedia as “a so-called ‘defense of marriage amendment’ that amended the [Arkansas] [Oklahoma] [Ohio] Constitution to make it unconstitutional for the state to recognize or perform same-sex marriages or civil unions.”

The wording of each as it appeared on the ballot is as follows:

[ARKANSAS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT THREE]

- "1. Marriage. Marriage consists only of the union of one man and one woman.
2. Marital status. Legal status for unmarried persons which is identical or substantially similar to marital status shall not be valid or recognized in Arkansas, except that the legislature may recognize a common law marriage from another state between a man and a woman.
3. Capacity, rights, obligations, privileges, and immunities. The legislature has power to determine the capacity of persons to marry, subject to this amendment, and the legal rights, obligations, privileges, and immunities of marriage.”

[OHIO STATE ISSUE 1]

“Only a union between one man and one woman may be a marriage valid in or recognized by this state and its political subdivisions. This state and its political subdivisions shall not create or recognize a legal status for relationships of unmarried individuals that intends to approximate the design, qualities, significance, or effects of marriage.”

[OKLAHOMA STATE QUESTION 711]

- "(a.) Marriage in this state shall consist only of the union of one man and one woman. Neither this Constitution nor any other

provision of law shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups.

- (b.) A marriage between persons of the same gender performed in another state shall not be recognized as valid and binding in this state as of the date of the marriage.
- (c.) Any person knowingly issuing a marriage license in violation of this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.”

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