

## Religion and Politics

What is the relationship between religion and politics? How is religion related to political attitudes, such as abortion and the war in Iraq?

This learning module explores these and other relationships using the 2004 ABC News poll on Religion and Politics. Research has found important links between religion and a variety of political attitudes and behaviors; this module will allow you to learn more about these important relationships.

If you find yourself lost at any point, look to the instructions on the right.

Open your web browser and go to the homepage for the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA).

News organizations conduct polls on a variety of current events and other important topics in order to supplement the stories that they report. News sources use these polls to help their audience better understand the attitudes that people have on these topics.

The ARDA's large database of surveys includes a number of such polls conducted by ABC News on various subjects related to religion. One of these, the ABC NEWS POLL: RELIGION AND POLITICS, 2004, will be used in this module.

This poll includes questions about political affiliation, political attitudes, and voting behavior.

Find this survey on the ARDA and open it.

You should now see a description of the study. Read through the description and answer the following questions.

1. When was the poll conducted?

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**Open your web browser.**

**Go to [www.thearda.com](http://www.thearda.com)**

**Click on "Data Archive" in the main toolbar.**

**Under the "U.S. Surveys" category, click on "News Polls."**

**Find and click on "ABC News Poll: Religion and Politics, 2004."**

2. What kinds of questions were asked?

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You can look at the questions that were asked in the ABC poll, as well as the responses given for each question, by opening the codebook for the dataset.

Open the codebook and browse through the questions.

3. Find the variable QSEX (Variable #11). This variable describes whether the respondent is male or female. How many of the people interviewed in the poll were female?

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4. What percentage of the people interviewed were female?

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The ARDA can also be used to perform simple analyses of the variables that are included in the datasets. By using the “Analyze results” tool, you can compare the responses to each question for different types of people.

**Click on the “Codebook” tab.**

**Scroll down to question #11, called QSEX.**

**Scroll down to variable #98, called IDEOLOGY.**

**Click on “Analyze Results” below the question.**

5. Perform the “Analyze results” function on variable 98, IDEOLOGY. What is the question that is being asked in this variable?

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6. List the **percentage** of respondents who reported that they were liberal. Do the same for those who reported that they were moderate or conservative:

Liberal: \_\_\_\_\_

Moderate: \_\_\_\_\_

Conservative: \_\_\_\_\_

7. What **percentage** of respondents in each of these religious groups reported that they were liberal?

Protestant: \_\_\_\_\_

Catholic: \_\_\_\_\_

None: \_\_\_\_\_

8. What percentage of respondents attending church at least once a week reported that they were Liberal? Conservative? How does this compare to others attending church less frequently?

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Because this poll includes a question about party affiliation, you can compare the characteristics of people who are more likely to belong to each party.

Find the variable that asks respondents to report their political party. Use the “Analyze” feature to find out more about the characteristics of people who reported belonging to each political party.

9. What religious affiliation (Protestant, Catholic, or None) is most strongly associated with being a Democrat? A Republican? An Independent?

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10. What is the relationship between church attendance and political affiliation?

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11. Based on your answers to the questions above, what relationship seems to exist between political affiliation and religion?

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**Click on the “Search” tab, located next to the “Codebook” tab.**

**Enter an appropriate search term (such as “party,” “Democrat,” or “Republican”) in the text box and press “Search.”**

**Scroll through the list of variables to find the one you are looking for.**

**Click on “Analyze Results” below the question.**

You can also use this dataset to learn about the relationship between religion and other political attitudes, such as attitudes about abortion or the war in Iraq. Answer each of the following questions about how these attitudes are related to religion and other demographic characteristics.

12. Many Americans have very strong attitudes about abortion. What relationship seems to exist between abortion attitudes (variable 89) and religion? Are abortion attitudes related to religious affiliation and church attendance?

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13. The war in Iraq has also evoked strong opinions. Find two variables in the dataset which ask about opinions regarding the war; list the variable names and numbers below. How are attitudes about the war related to religion? What do these variables tell you about the relationship between religion and attitudes about the war in Iraq?

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**Click on the “Codebook” tab and find variable 89.**

**Click on “Analyze Results.”**

