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ABORTION AND CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: CHANGING ATTITUDES AND DEMOGRAPHICAL INFLUENCES

by

ASHLEY POPHAM

Under the Direction of Dr. James Ainsworth

ABSTRACT

This project analyzes the changing views on abortion and capital punishment and how opinions have changed over the past 35 years. This is an analysis of how different backgrounds and demographic factors affect people's standpoints toward these two practices.

INDEX WORDS: Abortion, Capital punishment

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ASHLEY POPHAM

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Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2008

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Ashley Popham

2008

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

My study will examine attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment and how these opinions have changed over time. Generally, liberals approve of abortion and disapprove of the death penalty. Conservatives typically object to the legalization of abortion and promote the practice of capital punishment. I will analyze how different backgrounds and demographic factors affect respondents' standpoints toward these two practices, both of which have been highly debated as either acceptable or non-acceptable life-ending practices. This study is important because, unlike other literature, it will incorporate both topics at once. The simultaneous study of abortion and capital punishment provides a new framework for how these attitudes are related. In addition, this study differs from other studies because I will track both these issues over time. I will utilize existing data from the General Social Survey to analyze trends related to these themes. The GSS is ideal for my study because data regarding abortion and capital punishment attitudes have been collected over a long period of time (nearly every year since 1972). This creates a useful way for me to measure the existence of fluctuations in these attitudes.

Abortion and capital punishment attitudes are of interest for several reasons. Both are among the most discordant debates in the United States in the early part of the new millennium. While the two acts themselves are quite different, the "moral" issues inherent in each can be seen as related. I have chosen these particular issues (as opposed to another similar attitudinal object such as suicide) because with both of these acts, an individual is conceivably imposing their belief on a life (or potential life) other than their own. The lack of literature on the abortion/death penalty combination makes this study unique. Past studies have focused on

abortion and capital punishment opinions separately whereas this project will analyze the ideas simultaneously.

This study will explore an array of opinions on abortion and capital punishment, and will focus on what characteristics shape people's opinions and how these attitudes have changed over time. Specifically, I have chosen to test how the following concepts relate to attitudes toward capital punishment and abortion: race, gender, age, religion, education, political views, and region of the United States; these have all been collected as a part of the General Social Survey.

The main question I will answer through my research is *What factors influence people's attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment and how have those opinions fluctuated over time*? Therefore, I will study two variables, attitudes toward capital punishment and attitudes toward abortion. Within this larger dependent variable, Figure 1 shows four types of people categorized: those that fall within the *Anti-Life* category, the *Liberal* category, the *Conservative* category, or the *Pro-Life* category. Those within the *Anti-Life* category would not generally be opposed to either abortion or capital punishment. They would be considered to hold a "consistent" opinion toward life in both instances. Individuals whose attitudes fall within the *Pro-Life* category would value life in both situations (abortion and capital punishment). Again, this would be the other category in which the group members held consistent opinions regarding life in general. In the other two categories, "*Liberal*" and "*Conservative*," group members hold inconsistent views toward life. They value life in one instance and disregard life in the other instance. Due to the nature of these four non-rankable dependent variables, multinomial logistic regression is used as my analytical strategy. My main dependent variable is the combination of these four categories.

Abortion	Capital Punishment: Favor	Capital Punishment: Oppose
Favor	*Anti-Life* *N=7,501*	*Liberal* *N=2,416*
Oppose	*Conservative* *N=10,716*	*Pro-Life* *N=3,881*

Figure 1: Two-by-Two

In order to study the similarities and differences between the topics of abortion and the death penalty, it is important to have a solid understanding of how these debates have fluctuated over time, and how and why potential regulations for and against these acts began. I will give a historical overview of both debates, but will begin by describing a recent case that illustrates the complexities and inconsistencies within these issues.

The Politics of Life

In 2003, Paul Jennings Hill, an excommunicated U.S. Presbyterian minister and anti-abortion activist was put to death in Florida. He was sentenced to execution by lethal injection for shooting and killing an abortion doctor and his clinic escort. Hill claimed that he felt no remorse for his actions, and that he expected "a great reward in Heaven". At the age of 17, Hill had converted to fundamentalist Christianity. As pastor of a Pensacola church, he became deeply involved in the anti-abortion movement. On the morning of July 29, 1994 he fired a 12-gague shotgun at Dr. John B. Britton and his bodyguard, James H. Barret outside the Ladies Clinic in

Pensacola, Florida killing both. Earlier that morning he had practiced with the shotgun at a local shooting range. After the shooting, he noticed that Britton was still alive and he fired five more rounds until all movement stopped. He laid the shotgun down and walked out toward the street with his hands by his side, awaiting arrest (Church and State October 2003). Florida law ruled that he should be sentenced to death and he was the first person in the United States to be executed for killing a physician who provided abortions. This case gives a compelling example of the extreme variation of attitudes toward life and death issues such as abortion and capital punishment.

Over time, the United States has experienced significant uproar when passionate parties from both sides of these debates feel others should share in their beliefs and opinions and should live their lives accordingly, supporting the cause. It is certainly interesting how much fluctuation has occurred in the political arena in the past. Analyzing these trends is an important step in understanding major aspects of the two debates.

In 1995, Pope John Paul II described "culture of life" as, "respect for human life from the first moment of conception until its natural end (Coburn 2004)." Tom Coburn, a former Republican candidate for the U.S. senator for Oklahoma once said that "what we need is some good old-fashioned common sense in Washington" and has implied that he favors the death penalty for doctors that perform abortions (Coburn 2004). President George W. Bush claims he strongly supports the "culture of life" idea in which "it should be our goal as a nation to build a culture of life, where all Americans are valued, welcomed and protected." During the presidential election of 2000, the "culture of life" entered mainstream U.S. politics when George W. Bush expressed his goal of promoting a "culture of life". During the election, he suggested, "surely this nation can come together to promote the value of life." The phrase "culture of life"

references the anti-abortion movement in the United States, which has received significant encouragement, especially in the 2004 presidential election (Annas 2005). This term is a recent slogan among social conservatives, including President Bush himself, who is a strong death penalty supporter. In his State of the Union speech in 2005, Bush announced that, "because a society is measured by how it treats the weak and vulnerable, we must strive to build a culture of life" (Schneider 2005).

The example is commonly raised that politicians who say they endorse the culture of life are simultaneously supportive of capital punishment and war. These politically consistent but perhaps logically contradicting attitudes have been analyzed by academics. In the situation of abortion when the woman's life is at risk, philosopher and author Leonard Peikoff argues that "sentencing a woman to sacrifice her life to an embryo is not upholding the 'right to life'…you cannot be in favor of life and yet demand the sacrifice of an actual, living individual to a clump of tissue" (Peikoff 2003).

Although there will realistically always be opposing views as to what behavior is right and what behavior is wrong, law-abiding citizens are expected to accept the rules set forth by majority rulings, which is what makes us so passionate about both of these debates. They can potentially affect ours lives whether we like it or not. If there are any two topics that can cause utter disagreement among people in the public sphere, abortion and capital punishment are two issues that the public clearly feels strongly about. Therefore, these topics are also often hot topics in political campaigns. It is important that the public be exposed to all aspects of either side of these debates because through political processes, we put the power of life or death in the hands of the government. The issues of abortion and the death penalty are particularly susceptible to

criticism on either side because they affect our most personal feelings and our private lives. Perhaps this is why people are so sensitive about these topics.

When we speak of the "politics of life," we are describing a long continuum of attitudes where the public sphere continually debates over major political issues such as abortion and capital punishment. It seems when we give authorities the ability to decide what is considered murder and what is considered having a "right to life", these lines between right and wrong become very debatable among the general public. The most debatable and, to many, the most important of these political arguments becomes the debates having to do with how we define life and death. Abortion and capital punishment go hand and hand in the political arena for this very reason. They both relate to the way specific individuals view who or what deserves life and what is most important in these situations. Some people consider abortion immoral and some do not, just as some people consider the death penalty immoral and some do not. These issues offer a compelling comparison. Like most other political debates, it is doubtful our society will ever come to a universal agreement.

The political categories are often defined as follows. Political liberals tend to be pro-choice or pro-abortion and anti-capital punishment while political conservatives tend to be pro-life in regards to abortion and pro-death in regards to capital punishment. One would expect pro-lifers to value life in all cases, and those that do not value life to do so in all cases but the general public seems to be more inconsistent than would be expected. I explore an array of different opinions on abortion and capital punishment, and focus on what characteristics shape people's opinions and how these attitudes have changed over time.

The following sections will give an overview of the history behind abortion and capital punishment practices in the United States and Europe. Various arguments for and against both abortion and capital punishment will be summarized. In order to outline and compare the characteristics of people for and against abortion and capital punishment, I will discuss the differences in individual and group attitudes toward the two issues and show how these attitudes have changed over time. I will begin by describing the past accounts of abortion and the concerns that people have held which date far back in history.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The History of Attitudes toward Abortion

Over the last few centuries there have been major changes in attitudes toward abortion. During the mid-thirteenth century, abortion after fetal formation was punished by law as a homicide. The fetal formation was the point at which the fetus assumed human shape, about 40 days after conception. By the mid-seventeenth century, abortion was considered by some as a serious misdemeanor. It began to be prohibited as a "great misprision". Most literature in the early 1800s condemned abortion, but all writers seemed to agree that a large part of the public did not regard abortion as a terrible practice (Sauer 1974).

In the early nineteenth-century, the common law appears to have prohibited abortion after "quickening", meaning the time between the 12th and 20th week of pregnancy. Quickening was defined by the point at which the mother feels the first fetal movement. At this time, as far as reports can show, people probably neither valued early life highly, nor held abortion before quickening to be a violation of morality. There is a limited amount of literature in the early 1800s and it seems abortion was probably not a subject that entered the minds of most Americans. Larger families were the norm at this time and it is doubtful that the average American wife made much use of abortion. At this time, abortions were mostly used to end non-marital pregnancies. The Christian view of abortion as wrong seems to have been a persuasive informal norm, and it seems most American women had little motivation for abortion or any other kind of fertility control (Sauer 1974).

Leading up to the mid 19th century, more women started seeking abortions. People noticed the trend and began to attempt legal measures to try and suppress the growing number of abortions. As manufacturing and business became more widespread, many women began to

think of children as expensive or burdensome. With the emergence of the women's rights movement, women began to want fewer children and there became a greater need for abortion. At this time, many medical professionals became very vocal about their opposition to terminating pregnancies. Religious leaders were also highly vocal in their opposition and abortion was thought of as an unacceptable means of fertility limitation even by the founders of the birth control movement. In fact, one of the main selling points of early birth control proponents was that it would minimize the use of abortion. In early 1846, birth control advocates thought the contraceptive would eventually lead to the disappearance of abortion altogether (Sauer 1974).

In the late nineteenth century both England and the United States experienced a restriction of this prohibition. The wording of these statutory provisions made clear that this law was to protect un-born life (Keown and Phil 2006). In the United States, more dramatically than in England, it seems this new legislation was influenced by the emerging medical profession whose discovery that human life began at fertilization exposed the moral irrelevance of quickening. Soon legislatures began to abolish the quickening distinction and tightened the law in order to protect the unborn.

In 1858, the American Medical Association campaigned to criminalize abortion and successfully made it illegal at all stages of pregnancy (Beisel and Kay 2004). The 1860s and 1870s were the peak period for concern with abortion during the nineteenth century but still in the last decades of the century, widespread reports continued. By 1890, almost every state had passed laws making it illegal and most gave doctors the authority to decide when abortion was medically necessary. Many of these laws did not change until the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision (Beisel and Kay 2004).

In the 1940s and 1950s abortion on demand was very much rejected but broadening the terms of legal abortion became a respectable idea. In the 1960s, Americans increasingly began to justify abortion on moral grounds, and the fetus was seen by growing numbers only as a 'potential' human being. The idea of legalized abortion began to gain acceptance rapidly (Sauer 1974). The idea of aborting a fetus was seemed to become less taboo and more morally acceptable. There was a gradual evolution of more permissive abortion norms that rose from the development of low-fertility values. Modern medicine had made hospital abortion a safer procedure than childbirth, which eliminated one of the main previous reasons for the suppression of abortion (Sauer 1974). In addition, changes in sexual attitudes played a role in attitudes toward abortion. Since early times, a more open discussion of all sexual matters has led to a more open discussion of abortion. This more open-examination of abortion eventually led to changes in the ethics and laws (Sauer 1974).

No single event has had more impact on abortion views than the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade (410 U.S. 113). In January of 1973 the Court ruled that access to abortion during the first three months of pregnancy was guaranteed by constitutional provisions concerning privacy. At the time of the ruling, the Court divided pregnancy into three trimesters and ruled that abortion may not be prohibited within the first six to seven months of pregnancy (Adamek 1994). In the United States, abortion has been highly controversial since this 1973 legalization (Sahar and Karasawa 2005).

Abortion has been common across all societies but has not been a center of attention in political controversy and debate in all societies (Krannich 1980). For example, in Japan, abortion faced "essentially no moral opposition" as recently as ten years ago. Many societies of ancient times did not view abortion as a bad behavior. Some refer to Japan as "abortion heaven."

During April 2007, in an attempt to reduce cases of abandoned babies and abortions, a Japan hospital announced that it would set up a hatch into which unwanted infants could be anonymously dropped, at which point an alarm would sound alerting nurses that an unwanted newborn had arrived. A nurse at the hospital reports that they place a great value on life and want to "widen the choices available to women (CNN.com April 5, 2007)." "With no law against abortions and no clear religious taboos in predominantly Buddhist Japan, the procedure is readily available and widespread (CNN.com April 5, 2007)." According to the Health Ministry, in 2005, more than 289,000 cases of abortion were reported, or 10.3 cases for ever 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 (CNN.com April 5, 2007).

Arguments for and against Abortion

It is not surprising that this history of abortion has seen many arguments for and against the highly debated act. Those in favor of legalized abortion hold strong beliefs but anti-abortion supporters have firm opinions as well. One argument for legalizing abortion is as follows. The implementation of laws making abortion illegal has not stopped women from having illegal abortions. It is likely that women in our society will follow through with having abortions regardless of what laws are attempted to enforce against them. As Richard Krannich pointed out in his article more than twenty years ago, "The most that can be said on the basis of available data is that abortion in the United States certainly did not decline with the implementation of laws and policies restricting legal access to induced pregnancy termination" (Krannich 1980:365). Data on the incidence of abortion for the first half of the twentieth century are scarce but by 1970 it was estimated that 65% of all the abortions that year were illegal abortions. Exact data on the number of illegal abortions remains unavailable (Krannich 1980). However, the

likelihood that women will still have abortions whether legal or not is one of the main arguments made by pro-choice activists.

According to author David Grimes, women have always had abortions and will continue to do so, regardless of laws, religious outlawing or social norms (Grimes et. al 2006). Of course the ethical debate over abortion will remain, but pro-abortionists argue that having access to legal abortion can improve health of the mother. Grimes explains that pregnancy-related deaths are the ultimate tragic outcome of the cumulative denial of women's human rights. "Women are not dying because of untreatable diseases. They are dying because societies have yet to make the decision that their lives are worth saving" (Grimes et. al 2006: 1917). Every year, approximately 19 to 20 million abortions are done worldwide by individuals who lack required skills or in environments that do not meet medical standards, or both. Ninety seven percent of unsafe abortions happen in developing countries. In turn, an estimated 68,000 women die as a result. Many of these women die from hemorrhaging, infection or poisoning. Many pro-choice activists argue that legislation of abortion on request is a necessary step that would improve women's health (Grimes et. al 2006). Some even refer to the unsafe abortions as a "silent pandemic" with an urgent need to become legalized. In fact, some feel it is a pressing public health issue and a human rights imperative. Some abortion supporters compare unsafe abortions to other global health issues, and say that it is similar, just less visible. Grimes explains that the availability of modern contraception can reduce the need for abortion, but it will never eliminate it (Grimes et. al 2006). They point out that the direct costs of treating abortion complications are hard on already impoverished healthcare systems. They refer to the access to safe, legal abortion as the fundamental right of women (Grimes et. al 2006). "Unsafe abortion is a persistent, preventable pandemic" (Grimes et. al 2006). Legal abortion, they explain, is one of safest procedures in

contemporary medical practice. Proponents of abortion feel that unsafe abortion endangers health and should receive the same approach to solution that other threats to public health receive (Grimes et. al 2006).

Scholar and pro-life activist Raymond Adamek has discussed pro-abortion arguments in detail. He describes the reasons some favor abortion and then goes on to argue his anti-abortion stance. Among the reasons that are often cited as pro-abortion arguments, he describes, are as follows: A woman has a right to control her own body (Adamek 1994). Women should be free to choose abortion since it is safer than childbirth (Adamek 1994). Women should be free to have legal abortions so that they are not "forced" to go to "back-street" abortionists (Adamek 1994). Abortion should be allowed in cases of rape or incest to spare the woman mental anguish. Abortion is necessary to protect the physical, mental, or social health of the mother (Adamek 1994). Abortion should be allowed for the sake of the unwanted child. Strict anti-abortion laws limit freedom, whereas lenient laws do not (Adamek 1994). Restrictive anti-abortion laws are not effective deterrents, and thereby create disrespect for the law. Restrictive anti-abortion laws are discriminatory. Abortion is necessary to fight the population explosion (Adamek 1994).

Adamek suggests that personal freedom can only be enhanced by helping people to appreciate the situations they find themselves in. He explains that encouraging them to deal with the facts is the answer, rather than abortion. This is one of the more recently cited arguments, that which is supported by ideas of responsibility. However, there are also more primitive notions of why abortion should be illegal. In the 1800s, James Mohr was one of the first writers to give a detailed historical account of abortion. He wrote that it was believed that outlawing abortion would preserve the native population. At this time in America, white Protestants were threatened by the growing number of immigrants.

Many pro-lifers base their argument on the philosophy that embryos, babies, children and adults are all stages of human life that are equally alive and have equal worth. Pro-life advocates often claim that the fetus merits more protection than the life of the mother, and often describe the fetus as the innocent life that has done nothing to deserve death and so must be allowed to live. However, scholar Thomas Clark argues that in cases where a woman's life is at risk, more concern must be placed on the woman and her "fully developed capacities" and "network of established relationships" than the fetus, an "entity possessing neither." He describes these two stages of life as being very different and doesn't find it difficult to decide which one should live should one be faced with the choice (Clark 2007).

Often cited pro-life arguments include 1) the belief that life begins at conception, 2) social traditionalism, 3) political conservatism, and 4) all life is worth preserving. Many people 5) believe that abortion goes against God's rules, and it 6) devalues human life (Hess and Rueb 2005). Pro-life individuals view life as beginning at conception, whereas most pro-choice activists define life as beginning at birth (Hess and Rueb 2005).

There are two basic schools of thought on how the public expresses their beliefs about abortion. These are the Pro-life and the Pro-choice ideologies. Darwin Sawyer describes two basic ideas on these beliefs. The pro-life (often anti-abortion and/or anti-choice) view summarizes public attitudes toward life and death that come from beliefs about the morality of ending a human life. The basic thought of those who hold the pro-choice view feel a pregnant woman should have the ability to make the decision themselves, rather than the government making that decision for her.

Group Perceptions toward Abortion

People are certainly all over the spectrum with their opinions regarding abortion. With that said, it is important to have an understanding of how opinions can be affiliated with not only individual characteristics, but with group perceptions as well. Factors such as race, gender, age, religiosity and educational attainment have been found to be correlated with certain abortion opinions. Over time, not only have fluctuations occurred amongst individual notions, but these group notions. I will explore the characteristics of people who are in favor of abortion and against abortion and how opinions have changed over time.

Race and Attitudes toward Abortion

Race has often been cited as a predictor of attitudes towards abortion. Using data from the General Social Surveys, Strikler and Danigelis find that in early times, whites were more approving of abortion than blacks but by the end of the 1980s this had reversed (Strickler and Danigelis 2002). They also found that white women are less likely than black women to have an abortion. Their 2002 analysis revealed that by the mid 1990s, black adults had become more accepting of legal abortion than whites after other factors are controlled. Scott and Schuman (1988) found that blacks are generally less likely than whites to regard abortion as important. As an explanation, they suggest that for the black community, issues that involve racial inequalities make abortion seem like an unimportant concern (Scott and Schuman 1988).

Gender and Attitudes toward Abortion

Analyzing a study from 1992 through 1996, Ladd and Bowman (1997) found that when compared to men, women have more polarized views towards abortion, meaning they tend to think that abortion should be always legal or always illegal. Men, on the other hand, had attitudes that fell much more moderate (Ladd and Bowman 1997). However, other studies have

found sex to be altogether unrelated to people's views on abortion (Strickler and Danigelis 2002). An attitudinal study conducted by Jacqueline Scott and Howard Schuman of Michigan University found that women feel more strongly about abortion than men. Even though men were as likely or more likely to be pro-choice than women, women were more likely to regard the issue as important when in comes to voting or taking social action (Scott and Schuman 1988).

A 2000 study found that adolescent males have become less approving of abortion. It seems their feelings about the resolution of possible pregnancies are related to their individual background as well as their family background characteristics (Boggess and Bradner 2000). Young men in 1995 were much less likely than their 1988 counterparts to approve of abortion (Boggess and Bradner 2000).

In her research conducted on attitudes toward abortion among college students, Barbara Finlay (1981) found that males' attitudes toward abortion were simpler in structure than those of females. It seemed females may be more inclined than men to consider humanitarian issues in their development of abortion opinions. She tested this for attitudes toward capital punishment and results were similar. Females were more likely to consider the question of when human life actually begins and whether one has the right to end it (Finlay 1981).

Age and Attitudes toward Abortion

Bivariate analyses indicate that older people may be less likely than younger people to approve of abortion rights (Ladd and Bowman 1997). This brings up another question entirely, whether this is a period effect or simply the result of an individual growing older. This study will test the difference between the two circumstances. In the first circumstance, the act of getting older would influence attitudes toward abortion. In the second circumstance, being a certain age

during a certain period of time in history would weigh more heavily than an individual's age alone.

Religion and Attitudes toward Abortion

Religion also seems to be closely intertwined with attitudes toward abortion. In the United States, expressions of religious faith are more widespread than in other advanced industrial nation. Faith plays an important role in shaping public policy. Therefore, religion is concerned in understanding the causes of criminal behavior as well as how society reacts to the behaviors it defines as illegal (Unnever, Cullen and Applegate 2005). According to author David Garland, a professor of Christian Scriptures, "Throughout the history of the penal practice, religion has been a major force in shaping the ways in which offenders are dealt with."

Religion undoubtedly has a complex affect on abortion attitudes. Politically conservative individuals tend to perceive pregnant woman as having more control over the unwanted pregnancy than do political liberals (Sahar and Karasawa 2005). The Catholic Church has had a considerable role in the pro-life view. Being Catholic has a negative effect on abortion approval, and, as a whole, the Catholic Church has played a key role in opposing abortion rights. Conservative Christians also tend to oppose abortion (Stickler and Danigelis 2002). The majority of the leaders of the pro-life movement have been drawn from conservative Christian denominations. Individuals who are unaffiliated with religion or Jewish tend to have higher levels of support for abortion rights compared to Christians (Ladd and Bowman 1997). Buddhist leaders generally think abortion is wrong, but they are less likely to try to influence politics than religious leaders in the United States (Sahar and Karasawa 2005). Interestingly, studies have shown that the denominational split between Catholics and Protestants has actually narrowed (Ladd and Bowman 1997). Christians who feel that religion is very important to them report

more opposition to abortion than people who report that religion is not as important (Stickler and Danigelis 2002).

Educational Attainment and Attitudes toward Abortion

Authors Ladd and Bowman find that educational attainment is one of the most reliable predictions of attitudes toward abortion. Higher levels of education for both sexes predict higher levels of support for legal abortion (Ladd and Bowman 1997). They suggest that perhaps this is because highly educated women are more likely to hold responsibilities other than motherhood and might feel that unwanted pregnancies could threaten their position. In addition, with an increase in education, we also see a decline in religiosity. Some suggest that a declined religiosity often accounts for a greater individualistic nature.

Strickler and Danigelis also find that educational attainment is one of the most reliable predictors of individuals' views on abortion. They explain that highly educated women support legal abortion because they are more likely to engage in meaningful activities other than motherhood (Strickler and Danigelis 2002). Highly educated women have a broader view of acceptable women's roles, and Strickler and Danigelis suggest that they are more likely to see unwanted pregnancies as threatening to the woman's well-being.

It is evident from this literature that countless attempts have been made to link abortion attitudes with characteristics such as race, gender, age, religiosity, and educational attainment. While all of these factors have been thought to collectively contribute to an individual's attitude toward abortion, another topic in the political sphere whose arguments may also surface from similar aspects of our lives is the debate about capital punishment. There are many ways our particular stance on the death penalty can be equated from our combination of the same background characteristics. Since the first recorded case of capital punishment, there have been

fluctuations in attitudes similarly to the fluctuations in attitudes toward abortion. Quite similarly to abortion, people have been expressing their opinions on capital punishment since long ago.

The History of Attitudes toward Capital Punishment

The use of the death penalty as a punishment in Europe and the United States dates as far back as the tenth century when hanging was the most common method in Britain until the following century when William the Conqueror would not let people be hanged or executed for any crime except in times of war. This short-lived anti-capital punishment trend would not last because during the sixteenth century under the rein of Henry VIII, an estimated 72,000 people (deathpenaltyinfo.org/) were executed by methods such as boiling, burning at the state, hanging and beheading. Throughout the next two centuries, the number of executions in Britain continued to rise but many juries would not convict defendants unless the offense was serious because of the severe executions styles mentioned. This soon led to reforms of Britain's death penalty. However, Britain had more influence on America's use of the death penalty than any other country. European settlers coming to the new world brought the practice to America and their laws regarding capital punishment varied colony to colony.

During the eighteenth century, common methods for execution included crucifixion, drowning, beating to death and burning alive. During these times, an abolitionist movement emerged. A famous essay published in 1764 by European theorist Cesare Beccaria, a pioneer for the abolition of capital punishment, suggested that there was no justification for the state's taking of a life (deathpenaltyinfo.org/) . He argued that the death penalty is irrevocable and without remedy in the case of a judicial error. Beccaria was convinced that a system with more moderate laws would have a better influence on the character of the people, making them kinder and gentler, therefore less prone to commit crimes (Maestro 1973). He expressed the view that *any*

killing, including executing a criminal, was an evil act, and he attempted to produce a general attitude of greater respect for human life (Maestro 1973). This essay had a strong impact throughout the rest of the world and soon American intellectuals were influenced and reforms were attempted. Thomas Jefferson introduced a bill to revise Virginia's death penalty laws, which suggested that capital punishment be used only for the crimes of murder and treason. The bill was defeated by one vote. Another influence was Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and founder of the Pennsylvania Prison Society. He challenged the belief that the death penalty serves as a deterrent (deathpenaltyinfo.org/). He was an early believer in the "brutalization effect" and thought that the death penalty actually increased criminal conduct (deathpenaltyinfo.org/). His interest and passion for this issue sparked his publication of a 1792 essay entitled *Considerations of the Injustice and Impolicy of Punishing Murder by Death*.

During the abolitionist movement, the state of Pennsylvania became the first state to move executions out of the public eye and into correctional facilities. Many states were beginning to abolish the use of the death penalty, but most states held on to it. During the Civil War, opposition to the death penalty diminished as the anti-slavery movement became a focus. The electric chair was introduced at the end of this century when New York built the first electric chair in 1888 (deathpenaltyinfo.org/). At this time, death by electrocution was perceived as "an advance of civilization" and "seemed to signify the human ability-or at least that of white educated males- to understand supernatural forces, to conquer them, and use them for positive, culturally beneficial effects" (Martschukat 2002). During the Enlightenment, the electric chair was seen as giving humans the ability to "subdue and control natural powers" and this became an important piece of the concept of civilization (Martschukat 2002).

Eventually, the progressive period surfaced in the early part of the twentieth century and certain states began to outlaw the death penalty (deathpenaltyinfo.org/). This reform did not last long. From 1907 to 1917, six states completely outlawed the death penalty and three limited it to the rarely committed crimes of treason and first degree murder of a law enforcement officer. Soon, citizens began to panic about the threat of a revolution and five of the six abolitionist states reinstated their death penalty by 1920 (Bedau, 1997 and Bohm, 1999).

From the 1920s to 1940s criminologists began to write that the death penalty was a necessary social measure, and the use of the death penalty began to rise again (deathpenaltyinfo.org/). During the 1930s there were more executions than in any other decade in American history, perhaps due to the fact that Americans were experiencing the Great Depression and Prohibition. But again, in the 1950s, the use of the death penalty dropped. It wasn't until the 1960s that it was strongly suggested that the death penalty was a "cruel and unusual" punishment. Before then, the Fifth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments were interpreted as allowing the death penalty. However, in the 1960s, the Supreme Court began to re-examine the death penalty and the way it was administered.

The United States' use of the death penalty has seen a gradual rise during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There was a peak of almost 200 executions per year in the mid-1930s, a subsequent decline in use and finally we see a trend toward more executions in recent years (deathpenaltyinfo.org/).

It was in 1972 that a momentous decision was made by the US Supreme Court. The trial of Furman v. Georgia made all but a few death penalty statues in the United States unconstitutional. When this happened, over 600 inmates that were on death row in the United

States were re-sentenced to life in prison. Four years later, the Supreme Court reversed this ruling with the case of Greg vs. Georgia (Radelet and Borg 2000).

Over the past 50 years, public opinion on the death penalty has fluctuated. Support decreased through the 1950s and until 1966, when 47% of the American public was in support of capital punishment. Between 1982 and 2000, about 75% of the population favored capital punishment. In a study conducted by Radelet and Borg in 2000, the vast majority of the American public supported the death penalty, at least under some circumstances, but they add that support for the death penalty is highly conditional. They suggest that the best data on public support for the death penalty comes from the Gallup Polls. They point out that in 1994 support had reached 80 percent (Radelet and Borg 2000). An article in the Economist in 2000 mentions that Americans have always favored capital punishment by an overwhelming majority. The article claimed that according to the 2000 Gallup Poll, support for the death penalty had dropped to 66%, a 19-year low (Economist 2000). According to a poll by Gallup released by *USA Today*, As of October 2007, 69 percent of respondents were in favor of the death penalty for a person convicted of murder, up four points since May 2006 (Gallup/USA Today 2007).

Though the death penalty seemed to be on its way out at the end of the eighteenth century, over two hundred years have passed and the death penalty has remained in our legal system. Not surprisingly, and quite similarly to the abortion debate, there are countless arguments for and against the use of the death penalty.

Arguments for and against Capital Punishment

In the 1970's, the main argument that death penalty supporters made was general deterrence (Radelet and Borg 2000). In other words, offenders need to be punished in order to discourage others from committing the same crimes. Some argue that we punish past offenders

in order to send a message to potential offenders. Here, people are certain if they violate laws, they will be punished (Radalet and Borg 2000). Individuals that support the death penalty also commonly argue that there must be consequences for the types of heinous crimes than those in prison commit. But many in the anti-death penalty group argue that capital punishment is not successful as a deterrent. Many researchers, such as well-known criminologists of their times, Edward Sutherland (1925) and Thorsten Sellin (1959) have researched whether or not the death penalty has a greater deterrent effect on homicide rates than long-term imprisonment (Bailey & Peterson 1997, Bohm 1999, Hood 1996, Paternoster 1991, Petersom & Bailey1998, Zimring & Hawkins 1986). Some studies have been able to find deterrent effects (e.g., Ehrlih 1975), but these studies have been criticized (e.g., Klein et al 1978). Overall, most deterrence studies have failed to support the hypothesis that the death penalty has a greater deterrent effect on homicide rates than long-term imprisonment (Radalet and Borg 2000). In fact, Bailey and Peterson (1997), two of America's most experienced deterrence researchers, conclude that capital punishment in the United States is not more effective than imprisonment for deterring murder (Bailey and Peterson 1997). Criminologists and law enforcement officials are in general agreement that capital punishment does not seem to be cutting homicide rates any more than long term imprisonment (Radalet and Borg 2000).

In a 1995 survey, almost 400 randomly selected police chiefs and county sheriffs from all over the United States were asked if they thought the death penalty significantly lowered the number of murders and results showed that one third believed it had that effect (Radelet and Akers 1996). In fact, other opinion polls are showing that most of the American public is agreeing with the police and sheriff study. In 1991, the Gallup Poll reported that 51% of Americans believed the death penalty had deterrent effects, which was a drop from the 1985. In

1997, this number fell to 45%. These polls show that there have been fluctuations in the way the death penalty is justified. What was once a highly cited justification for the death penalty, the idea of actual deterrence is today losing its appeal (Radalet and Borg 2000).

Other reasons that have been suggested for why individuals are in favor of capital punishment is their concern that crime is on the rise as well as the tendency for those who have been personally victimized to consider themselves pro-capital punishment. Joseph Rankin, an author that examines changing attitudes toward capital punishment, argues that it is in fact the concern about crime that results in greater demand for harsh penalties, not personality characteristics or personal victimizations. Rankin uses five years (1972-1976) of NORC General Social Survey data as well as data on official violent crime rates to point out that although many studies have found different personality associations of death penalty attitudes, these are not necessarily precursors for short-term attitudinal changes (Rankin 1979). He argues that only historical or period effects could explain the rise in support for capital punishment at the time of his study. He also disputes the claim that the rise could be the result of an increase in number of people personally victimized. By measuring anxiety scores of victimized and non-victimized respondents, Rankin agrees that there is no relation between victimization and concern about crime. However, he uses the example that even dramatic crimes such as robbery did not have any long-term effects of victims' attitudes and behavior" (Rankin 1979).

Some people who are against capital punishment feel modern prisons are better than prisons of the past, and therefore, the incidence of life without parole should be reexamined. However, others support the incapacitation argument which suggests that we need to execute killers in order to prevent them from killing again. This argument is based on the fact that executed criminals will never kill again, whereas those criminals sentenced to long-term prison

still have that opportunity. Many feel that the incapacitation argument might have made sense in historical times when there were no prisons that could accommodate prisoners long-term. Now, some people feel that the heightened availability of long-term confinement could be equally effective as capital punishment for preventing murders from repeating their crimes. Now there is increased sentencing of "life without parole" as an alternative to the death penalty (Radelet and Borg 2000). However, most people in America do not realize this availability and highly underestimate the amount of time people convicted of capital murders will spend in prison (Fox et al 1991). Many proponents of the death penalty that are aware of life without parole sentencing alternative still feel that judges will always find ways to release life-sentenced inmates. This is an interesting paradox because the group who wishes to give the government the ultimate power to take lives of its citizens does so because of distrust of the same government (Radelet and Borg 2000).

The 1999 Gallup Poll found that 56% of the respondents supported the death penalty given the alternative of life without parole. This percentage seems much less than the "overwhelming support" that many people think the death penalty receives. Authors Radalet and Borg feel that death penalty support will decrease dramatically as more Americans learn that those convicted of capital crimes (who are not executed) will never be released from prison (Radelet and Borg 2000). In fact, several studies have shown that support for the death penalty is conditional to the degree at which the public is informed about the realities of how the death penalty is administered and what alternatives are available (Vollum, Longmire, and Buffington-Vollum 2004). The Marshall Hypothesis is one example of the belief that support for the death penalty is based on a group of people that are simply uninformed of the realities or uneducated about the facts (Vollum, Longmire and Buffington-Vollum 2004).

Another argument of those in favor of capital punishment is a monetary explanation. "Two decades ago, some citizens and political leaders supported the death penalty as a way of avoiding the financial burdens of housing inmates for life or long prison terms" (Radelet & Borg 2000:50). According to legal scholar Ernest van den Haag, "It is not cheaper to keep a criminal confined for all or most of his life than to execute him. He will appeal just as much as a death-sentenced prisoner" (van den Haag & Conrad 1983). The 1985 Gallup report showed that 11% of people who supported the death penalty felt that monetary costs were a big reason for their position (Gallup Report 1985). In the last 25 years, it has become evident through research that the modern death penalty system costs several times more than life without parole (Radelet 2000). There has been extensive research conducted in different states using different data sets through newspapers, courts and legislatures, as well as academics (see reviews in Bohm 1998, Dieter 1997, Spangenberg & Walsh 1989). "Estimates by the *Miami Herald* are typical: $3.2 million for every electrocution versus $600,000 for life imprisonment" (von Drehle 1988: 1). People against the death penalty may argue that these costs could potentially be put towards reducing high rates of criminal violence or aiding the families of homicide victims. Radelet and Borg agree that when the state puts vast resources into homicide cases that involve the death penalty, non-homicidal cases are left with less resources for assisting the families of all homicide victims (Radelet & Borg 2000). However, proponents of capital punishment would argue that the retributive benefits of capital punishment are worth the costs (Radelet 2000).

On the other hand, there are anti-death penalty advocates who feel retribution fosters a "cycle of violence". Therefore, they would argue that executing is not the answer. Proponents of the death penalty utilize the Brutalization Hypothesis which proposes that for people who have a predisposition to violence, executions and the attention that they receive act as an advertisement

which gives evidence to the benefits of violent behavior. In other words, the use of the death penalty as a punishment reduces people's respect for life and thus increases the incidence of violent acts (King 1978).

A former New Hampshire state representative, Renny Cushing, whose father was murdered asks, "How does killing someone demonstrate that killing is wrong?" He feels the death penalty "prompts us to revisit murder, re-victimize families, and create another family that grieves." He is one example of many cases in which families of murder victims do not support capital punishment. In fact, there is a group that originated over twenty years ago, Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation which has over 4,000 members. Some of these members feel their loved ones deserve a more honorable memorial than what they refer to as a pre-meditated, "state-sanctioned" killing. They are among those who do not want the killers to be killed because they do not feel that an execution will help them heal or contribute to reducing homicide in the United States. Many in this group see the death penalty as a "quick fix" that doesn't change a society that breeds violence (Lampman 2001).

Author Michael Cohen, a retired professor at Murray State University, whose father was shot to death when he was young, shares his argument and position against death penalty in a 2006 article. "I oppose the death penalty not because it is morally wrong but because it is ineffective and dangerous. Furthermore, it doesn't deter criminal behavior, it's more expensive than life imprisonment, it's unsure, and it's sold politically and implemented widely in ways that pander to racial bigotry" he says (Cohen 2006:20). In an article published by the Humanist, he explains how "Taking the heat of revenge out of the sentencing process means that sentences will be fairer across lines of gender, race, and class because bias is more likely to sneak into the process the more passionately it is conducted. Therefore, we need to restore to our courts the

social objectivity the Greeks attained, after so many generations of murder and revenge" (Cohen 2006:23).

Radelet and Borg state in their 2000 article that death penalty arguments are now less focused on issues such as deterrence, cost and religious principles and more focused on retribution. They believe that recent proponents of the death penalty are more aware of things like racial and class bias, and are more aware of the inevitability of executing the innocent. They argue that social science research is the reason the death penalty debate is changing and there is a trend now toward the abolition of capital punishment (Radelet and Borg 2000).

According to Radelet and Borg, people nowadays are admitting that as long as we use the death penalty, innocent defendants will occasionally be executed. Innocence is suddenly a concern (Radelet and Borg 2000). In 1992, Barry Scheck and Peter Neufeld at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University founded The Innocence Project to assist prisoners who could be proved innocent through DNA testing. They claim their use of DNA technology has provided proof that "wrongful convictions are not isolated or rare events but instead arise from systemic defects. Some of the causes they cite for wrongful death by capital punishment include: eyewitness identification, unreliable/limited science, false confessions, forensic science misconduct, government misconduct, and bad lawyering (www.innocenceproject.org January 14 2008).

As society notices more and more convicted felons later being released and considered innocent, the question has become not *will* innocent people get put to death, but how *many* and *is it worth the benefits*? "Today the argument is not over the existence or even the inevitability of such errors, but whether the alleged benefits of the death penalty outweigh these uncontested liabilities" (Radelet 50: 2000). Several studies conducted over the last two decades have

documented the problem of erroneous convictions in homicide cases (Givelber 1997, Gross 1996, Huff et al 1996, Leo & Ofshe 1998, Radelet et al 1992). A recent nationwide poll found that 58 percent of Americans are disturbed by the fact that the death penalty might result in the execution of someone who is actually innocent (Ross 1996). Perhaps these cases that involve innocent men sentenced to death are not as rare as the general public imagines. Regardless, it is inevitable that innocent people will continue to be executed. Recently, there have been a large number of people who were sentenced to death and later released from death row after proving their innocence (Ross 1996). In 2008, the Death Penalty Information Center reported that since 1973, 123 people in 25 states have been released from death row with evidence of their innocence. With errors such as this, some individuals are now finding themselves advocating on the other side of the debate from where they once stood; even political figures. Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun considered himself a supporter of the death penalty until 1994 when he wrote that now he feels "morally and intellectually obligated to concede that the death penalty experiment has failed (Callins v. Collins, 510 U.S. 1141, 1145 (Fein 1994)).

Group Perceptions toward Capital Punishment

Many studies have determined that support for the death penalty varies based on personal and demographic characteristics. Factors such as race, gender and religiosity have been correlated to an individual's attitude toward capital punishment. As with other political debates, arguments made between different groups of people have fluctuated depending on time in history.

Race and Attitudes toward Capital Punishment

Many academics have begun to examine how public support for the death penalty is related to racial conflict. Unnever and Cullen find in their 2007 study that capital punishment

and race in the United States are quite intertwined. Many have questioned whether African Americans are more likely than whites to be sentenced to death. When comparable crimes are researched, most research shows that the death penalty is three or four times more likely to be imposed in cases in which the victim is white rather than black (Baldus & Woodworth 1998, Baldus et al, 1990, Bowers et al 1984, Gross & Mauro 1989, Radelet & Pierce 1991).

The 2002 General Social Survey (Davis, Smith and Marsden 2002) reports that 73 percent of whites and 44 percent of African Americans support the death penalty for convicted murders at that time. Research has had minimal explanation for why this gap exists. However, the perception that more blacks are put to death than whites is likely the reason for the racial difference in attitudes. The significant difference between the number of whites put to death compared to blacks holds even when controls are introduced for correlates of death penalty attitudes, such as political views, religion, class, gender as well as other variables (Unnever and Cullen 2007).

Unnever and Cullen suggest that one source of this divide is white racism. They argue that there is no theory of why white racism fosters support for capital punishment, but suggest that there are factors that may have something to do with the linkage. These factors include racial threat, racial stereotypes and racial resentment (Unnever and Cullen 2007). The idea of racial threat is whites using the criminal justice system to subordinate minority groups. Through this practice, whites can conceivably construct an ideology that justifies this injustice. In other words, prejudiced whites might see the death penalty as a way to permit the criminal justice system to suppress unwanted behavior of minorities. Second, prejudiced whites are likely to hold stereotypes that lead them to assume that the most violent criminals are African American. Therefore, these racist whites may believe legal penalties are applied mostly to African

Americans (Unnever and Cullen 2007). Third, white racists may think that African Americans are criminally dangerous, even with special advantages that are not available to whites. They may develop racial resentment, or an angry feeling that black crime is the fault of African Americans themselves rather than a problem of society (Unnever and Cullen 2).

Michael Tonry argues that there is not as much political attention paid to the racial disparities in the execution of death sentences "despite longstanding evidence that a combination of the offender's (black) and victim's (white) races is a primary determinant of capital sentencing" (Tonry 2007:362). He explains that the black fraction of American prison populations has increased from forty percent in the 1970s when the determinate sentencing movement took place to around fifty percent by the late 1980s and has fluctuated until the time of his research in 2005 (Tonry 2007). Young (1992) suggested that African American fundamentalists are less supportive of the death penalty because they attribute the case of crime to situational characteristics. This, he argues, diminishes their desire to fully punish criminals (Unnever, Cullen and Applegate 2005).

Gender and Attitudes toward Capital Punishment

Research on how gender relates to death penalty attitudes is harder to come by than some other demographics. However, it is known that women have historically not been subject to the death penalty at the same rates as men. In fact, from the first woman to have been recorded as hanged in 1632 to the present, women have constituted 3% of executions in the United States. (Deathpenalty.org/). A study in 1992 found women executed in the course of human history were most likely to be black, executed for murder, older, to have been slaves, to have been in a professional occupation, servants, or housewives. Men were more likely to be executed than

women in more recent periods, to be younger, and executed for a broader array of crimes (Harries 1992).

Religion and Attitudes toward Capital Punishment

Religious faith is widespread in the United States and has a notorious role in shaping policy debates, capital punishment being one of those (Unnever, Cullen and Applegate 2005). The leaders of Catholic, most Protestant and Jewish denominations are strongly opposed to the death penalty (Radelet & Borg 2000). "No longer are Old Testament religious arguments in favor of the death penalty widely used or heard. Since the late 1990s the Catholic Church and its leader, Pope John Paul II, are increasingly speaking out against the death penalty". (Radelet & Borg 2000: 54). With Pope John Paul II's contemporary appeal to end the death penalty, many religious organizations around the nation have issued statements opposing the death penalty. Religious leader Reverend Bernice King, daughter of Martin Luther King Jr., shared her thoughts publicly that "Having lost my father and grandmother to gun violence, I will understand the deep hurt and anger felt by the loved ones of those who have been murdered. Yet I can't accept the judgment that their killers deserve to be executed. This merely perpetuates the tragic, unending cycle of violence that destroys our hope for a decent society."

In the 1970s, the National Association of Evangelicals and the Moral Majority were among the Christian groups who supported the death penalty. The NAE represented over 10 million conservative Christians and 47 denominations. More recently, the Fundamentalist and Pentecostal churches have shown support for the death penalty, referencing biblical citings such as the Old Testament (Bedau 1997). In addition, the Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints feel the decision should be solely in the hands of the process of civil law. They do not strictly promote or oppose the death penalty.

Although it was traditionally a supporter of the death penalty, the Roman Catholic Church now generally opposes the death penalty. Most Protestant denominations such as Baptists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and the United Church of Christ are also in opposition. Since the 1960s when religious activists worked to abolish the death penalty, many continue to do so today (deathpenaltyinfo.org/).

It is conceivable that age and education also have a relationship with attitudes toward the death penalty, just as they are associated with attitudes toward abortion. However, research on this is scarce.

Collective Views toward Abortion and Capital Punishment

Needless to say, it is quite evident by the extensive history of abortion and capital punishment arguments that our country will probably continue to debate these topics for years to come. Public opinion has continued to play a vital role in both abortion and capital punishment policies in the United States (Langer & Brace 2005).

As Darwin Sawyer points out, although it is typically assumed that someone either favors or opposes the right to end human life, regardless of the circumstances surrounding the action, this is not generally the case. In other words, people are often thought of as being consistent in their views toward life-taking issues and as not letting other considerations cloud their life orientations (Sawyer 1982). This idea closely ties into capital punishment and abortion because both can be considered life-taking actions. It is well worth noting that many people who claim to value life above all are highly in favor of capital punishment; by some abortion and capital punishment are equally considered as life-taking actions.

Attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment can both be visualized as lying on a continuum. At one end of the abortion debate, there are the people who condemn abortion under any circumstance and actually equate it with murder, known to most as pro-lifers. On the opposite end is the pro-choice group who oppose any legal restrictions on abortion. Most of the general public actually lies somewhere in between, and have been characterized as "ambivalent" because people's beliefs are not consistently pro-choice or pro-life. Where people fall probably reflects their interests, beliefs, and values (Strickler and Danigelis 2002) as well as their structural and social location.

Another way to understand the relation in attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment is by breaking the attitudes down into four simple categories as was demonstrated in Figure 1. For the use of this study, the first category consists of those who approve of abortion and are not against the use of capital punishment. This will be called the "*Anti-Life*" category. People who approve of abortion but oppose capital punishment make up the second group, known as the "*Liberal*" group. Members of the third group, the "*Conservatives*" are those who are against abortion while in favor of the death penalty. Finally, "*Pro-Lifers*" consist of people that are against both abortion and capital punishment.

It is clear that there are inconsistencies within this framework. While the "*Pro-Life*" individuals value life in all cases, the "*Conservative*" group members feel that life worth saving in the case of abortion, but not in capital punishment. They believe in the sanctity of human life in one case, but not in the other. The "*Liberal*" group values life in the case of capital punishment but approve of abortion. Again, this is a group that believes in the sanctity of human life in one case, but not in the other. Finally, those in the "*Anti-Life*" value life in neither case.

The *Conservatives* can be considered the extreme "for-life" group, as the *Anti-Life* group can be considered the extreme "for-death" group. As Darwin Sawyer found, individuals display a definite strain toward consistency in their attitudes toward life-taking and life-supporting actions. The fact that someone opposes the death penalty does not imply opposition to legal abortion as well, although, he says, it does suggest greater tendencies in that direction (Sawyer 1982).

Figure 1 could conceivably illustrate the difference between political congruence and issue congruence. An individual who is pro-life in the case of abortion and at the same time, an advocate of the death penalty would be considered "politically congruent". On the other hand, an individual who is pro-life in the case of abortion and at the same time does not support the death penalty could be considered "issue congruent" in regards to the topic of life-taking actions. The idea that people can hold opposing views toward life and death issues raises the question of whether these attitudes are a reflection of just individual characteristics, or whether external forces sway opinions as well.

Based on the literature I have mentioned, I expect to see the following results:

1. African Americans will be more supportive of abortion yet less supportive of capital punishment than whites. They will be more likely to fall into the *Liberal* category and less likely to fall into the *Conservative* category on Figure 1.
2. Men will be more supportive of abortion and more likely to approve of capital punishment than women. They will be more likely to fall into the *Anti-Life* category on Figure 1 than women.
3. Individuals with less religiosity will be more supportive of abortion and less supportive of capital punishment than those with higher religiosity. They will be more likely to fall into the *Liberal* category on Figure 1 than individuals with higher religiosity.
4. Individuals with a higher educational attainment will be more likely to approve of abortion and less likely to approve of capital punishment than individuals with less educational attainment. They are more likely to fall into the *Liberal* category on Figure 1 than those with less educational attainment.
5. Older people will be less likely than younger people to approve of abortion rights.

Theory of Spatial Clustering and Cognitive Bundling

While there seem to be many contributing factors that influence attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment, researchers have speculated that these factors are not only individually formed within our own minds, but rather we are strongly influenced by the world around us. Lavine and Latane suggest the internal structure of people's attitudes may reflect the external structure of information in the social environment. They describe the way in which people internally organize their attitudes and attempt to maximize the internal consistency of these attitudes (Lavine and Latane 1996). They say public opinion is the result of processes occurring within the minds of individuals as a result of social interaction and communication. However, they find that at the same time this internal organizing is happening, the dynamics of public opinion are also determined by processes resulting from interpersonal influence. So, events in the external world lead to modifications of relations between attitudes in the minds of individuals through repeated patters. They are "updated over time to provide an adequate internal representation of what is perceived to exist in the internal environment" (Lavine and Latane 1996: 54). So, as a result of spatial clustering, if capital punishment advocates also tend to be opponents of legalized abortion, individuals may come to believe that support for one implies opposition to the other. Thus, as the structure of public opinion changes at the societal level, this may cause attitudes to become "bundled" together in the minds of individuals (Lavine and Latane 1996). Individuals can then become likely to recognize the themes through which a given bundle of attitudes is related.

The "culture of life" argument mentioned previously is not comprised of consistent views toward life and death decisions such as abortion and capital punishment. The conservative position seems to support the anti-life capital punishment position and simultaneously disagree

with the pro-choice abortion position. The idea of cognitive bundling could occur here when individuals who feel strongly about one of these matters position themselves under the conservative category. However, knowing that the majority of conservatives feel the opposite about the other matter, the individual surrenders their desire to stay consistent in order to remain in the conservative category, as the implication is that their strong support for one implies opposition to the other. They experience competing bundles and struggle to make concrete logic out of their argument.

Lavine and Latane feel that this social impact leads to what they call "spatial clustering and correlated attitudes." They feel that cognitive and social processes are highly interactive rather than operating independently from one another and these two processes have a very interactive system out of which public opinion may emerge and become organized. Two theories are proposed in attempt to explain how public opinions are developed and structurally organized. Their first theory involves what they refer to as a "cognitive impact specifying a parallel constraining satisfaction process" in which people resolve inconsistencies within their own attitudinal structure. Their second theory has to do with the parallel processes through which those attitudes and beliefs become organized in individual minds and in society. Those models, they explain, work together to make up public opinion. The models claim that communication and social influence promote what they call "spatial clustering" and "cognitive bundling" of attitudes which, according to Lavine and Latane, lead to an incomplete consistency of elements within individual perceptions. Individuals attempting to make sense of these inconsistencies influence the course of social interaction which leads to further clustering and bundling. From this, social outcomes in forming public opinion emerge.

Lavine and Latane discuss the way the inter-attitudinal consistency and interconnected attitude systems develop and change over time. They argue that the cognitive and social processes are mutually reinforcing. An increased consistency within individuals promotes increased organization in the social structure, and public opinion develops and dynamically changes over time. They believe "each attitude within a cognitive structure is jointly determined by the strength, immediacy, and number of linked attitudes as individuals seek harmony, balance, or consistency among them" (Lavine and Latane 1996: 49). They feel thinking is a "dynamic adjustment process" or a self-organizing system in which individual cognitions change in order to maximize their consistency with their neighbors in cognitive space. So, internal attitudes that people hold function much like the external dynamics of society (Lavine and Latane 1996).

Since abortion and capital punishment are both life-taking actions, it would make sense to assume that a strong supporter of one would similarly be a strong supporter of the other, and vice versa. The theory of cognitive bundling tells us that there are internal and external forces at work with these attitudes. History has presented new developments into both of these topics and individuals have continuously updated their opinions based on current development In this way, the theory is highly related to this topic.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Data

The data used in this study is from the General Social Survey (GSS) which was collected by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) in Chicago. NORC has conduced high quality social science research such as the GSS since its founding in 1941. The center resides on the University of Chicago's campus and has become a leader in social science research. The GSS study began in 1972, when it was supported in grants from the Russell Sage Foundation and the National Science Foundation.

The GSS is the largest sociology project funded by the National Science Foundation and it is used by sociologists second only to the Census. The basic purpose of the study is to gather data on American society. Researchers use the study to explain trends and constants in attitudes, behaviors, and attributes.

The survey has been asked almost every year through 2006. Over this 34 year span, there were only 8 years in which it was not conducted. It contains both demographic and attitudinal variables that were replicated each year. The exact wording of these questions is retained year to year in order to facilitate time trend studies and order to replicate past findings.

For the items in the initial survey, 150 social scientists reviewed drafts of the questionnaire, making revisions and suggestions, and submitted their preferences. On an annual basis, the topics and actual questions selected are monitored by a board of overseers, or distinguished social scientists. Since 1985, the GSS has also taken part in the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), a group of social scientists from countries all over the world. Every year, sections of the GSS are devoted to ISSP questions that are asked in nations all over

the world in order to compare trends. Further research on my topic could utilize the ISSP data to track trends in time comparing other countries to the United States over the past two decades.

The General Social Survey is NORC's longest running project. Data has been collected in many different ways, including surveys conducted in-person, by mail, telephone, internet, self-administered audio, and by mixed modes. Other ways include case studies, cognitive interviews, contingent valuation methods, focus groups, key informant and stakeholder interviews, records collection and record sampling, qualitative data collection, site visits and other observational approaches and by the use of vignettes. The GSS includes individual information regarding social behavior, employment, and retirement, as well as administrative records such as academic transcripts, financial documents, and medical records, and also opinion-related questions.

Using data such as the GSS was a necessity in order to research my topic of attitudes toward capital punishment and abortion because it gives access to questions of exact relevance and allows me to trace attitudinal trends over the past thirty years. I utilize Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to calculate all statistical output for the study.

Taking what was gained from the literature mentioned prior, the goal of my study is to reveal how the factors that affect attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment fluctuate over time. Based on the finings of this literature, variables which are of interest in this study include race, gender, age, religion, educational attainment, political views and region. The preceding questions were all asked on the General Social Survey during the years of 1977, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004. This allows an analysis of the attitudes over time, which is the goal of the study.

Of the 18 years that all my questions were asked, the General Social Survey questions from 1977 through 2004 had an average response rate of 75.94%. Breaking this down further,

the response rate between 1977 and 1980 was 75.3%, between 1982 and 1990 it was 77.26% and during 1991 through 2004 the response rate was 75.03%. This general response rate represents the percentage of people that actually completed the survey. People who were not eligible, people who refused and people who were unavailable were considered non-responses.

Of the 18 years of data used in my study, the following number of cases was included for each variable. There were 25,432 cases asked the abortion question, 37,183 asked the capital punishment question, 45,301 asked the religious affiliation question, 45,803 asked the gender question, 44,172 asked the race question, 45,645 asked the age question, 45,769 asked the educational attainment question, 51,020 asked what region they live in, and 42,096 were asked about their political views. For my study, it was important that my sample was asked both the abortion question and the capital punishment question. Therefore, I have restricted my analysis to only those respondents who were asked both questions. This subset of 24,514 cases is still nationally representative since respondents were randomly chosen. Although I have lost some cases, this does not compromise my study as being representative.

The total number in my final sample is 22,503. This is the valid sample number after accounting for the 1,984 missing data that were lost with some of my independent variables. Out of 24,514 cases that I am left with (since I have restricted the study to those that answered both the abortion and capital punishment question) 1,984 respondents did not answer all of the independent variable questions. Therefore, I have lost 8.09% which is not problematic. It is reasonably small given that I still have 22,530 cases left as my valid sample. This number remains nationally representative, as it was a completely random sample. The abortion variable had the most missing data of my questions, with only 25,432 cases throughout the 18 years.

While the same questions were not asked to every one every year, the sample that I do have can still be nationally representative of the population.

My study has face validity due to the fact that my questions were asked year over year on the GSS, which makes the results reliable. It is likely that respondents would give similar answers each time, but I am relying on the fact that the GSS chose to use the same questions over many years.

Dependent Variables

An outline of variable descriptions can be found in Table 1. Although there are various questions regarding attitudes toward abortion on the GSS, most questions ask the respondent if they approve of abortion under certain circumstances, such as in the case of rape or if the woman is not married. For the purpose of this study, the question I use measures attitudes of those who think abortion should be available for any reason. Since "any reason" can cover the entire scope of motives for abortion (from incest, to out-of-wedlock pregnancies, to mothers who think they are simply too young to have a child, to rape), this was the ideal question for the use of my study. It encompasses every motive. Therefore, respondents must answer how they feel toward abortion "under any and all circumstances". Using this question, it is simple to decipher which respondents feel the strongest in either direction. To measure abortion, I use the following GSS question: Please tell me whether you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if the woman wants it for any reason. GSS response options include "yes" or "no." For the purpose of my study, I used this existing GSS question, but recoded the variable to create a new variable that indicates whether the respondent is pro-life in regards to abortion. If they previously indicated that they agreed it should be possible for a woman to obtain an abortion if she wants it for any reason, this was recoded as "0," meaning they are not pro-life in the case of

abortion. If they previously indicated that they do not believe a woman should be able to have an abortion for any reason, this was coded as "1", meaning they are pro-life in the case of abortion.

Much like the abortion questions, questions that pertain to capital punishment take many forms on the GSS. To measure attitudes toward abortion, I have selected the question to which respondents would be most likely to have a strong opinion toward abortion in either direction. To measure capital punishment, I use the following question: Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder? Again, this question allows me to capture those that are in favor of the death penalty under the most urgent circumstance (murder). Response options on the GSS include "favor" or "oppose." Using this existing GSS question, I recoded this variable to create a new variable that indicates whether the respondent is pro-capital punishment. If they previously indicated that they are in favor of the death penalty for people convicted of murder, this was recoded as "1," meaning they are pro-capital punishment. If they previously indicated that they are not in favor of the death penalty for people convicted of murder, this was recoded as "0," meaning they are not pro-capital punishment.

Independent Variables

I use the following questions from the GSS to determine my independent variables. To measure race, I use the following question: What race do you consider yourself? Response options include: "white," "black," and "other (specify)." In order to measure gender, I use the "respondent's sex" question. Response options on the GSS are "male" or "female". For the purpose of my study, I recoded this variable in order to indicate a "1" for female respondents and a "0" for male respondents. Male represents the omitted gender category.

Many religion-related questions are asked every year by the GSS. Some of these include asking the respondent what religion they were raised, or what specific denomination they are.

However, for my study it is most relevant to know how religion of any type affects people's attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment. In order to account for a wide variety of religions, I base my research on how often the respondent attends religious services. This is the best measure of religion as a broad topic because it does not specify the particular religion. Instead, I am able to measure the amount of time respondents actively portray their religiosity. To measure religion, I use the following GSS question: How often do you attend religious services? Response options include: "never," "less than once a year," "about once or twice a year," "several times a year," and "2-3 times a week." The response options were recoded so that if the respondent attended religious services about once a month, this was recoded into "12," since there are 12 months in a year. Those attending less were coded as "7" for several times a year, "1.5" for once or twice a year, "0.5" for less than once a year, and "0" for never. If the respondent attended more than once a month, the recodes are as follows. Religious attendance of 2-3 times a month was recoded as "30", nearly every week was recoded as "41", every week was recoded as "52," since there are 52 months in a year. Finally, if the respondent reported on the GSS that they attend religious services several times a week, this was recoded as "100."

My age variable is measured using the "year of birth" question. In my analysis, the results for year were calculated using a linear time function. Respondents ranged from 18 to 89 years old. To measure educational attainment, I use the following question: Respondent's Education. Response options include: "no formal schooling," all the way up to "8 years of college".

Also included in this study, as a control variable, is an examination of how place of residence affects respondents' attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment. I use a "region of interview" question in order to get an idea of how one's particular geographical placement affects their attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment. Answer options in the GSS for

this question include the following sections of the United States: New England, Middle Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, South Atlantic, East South Central, West South Central, Mountain or Pacific. For my study, the goal was to compare those living in the South to people that do not live in the South. I recoded these responses so that South Atlantic, East South Central and West South Central were counted as "South," and all other regions are considered "Non-South". Non-South represents the omitted region category.

Equally important for this study was the inclusion of political views. How does a respondent's political affiliation skew their attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment? For the study, the following GSS question was measured: We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal—point 1—to extremely conservative—point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale? The GSS response options include: Extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate/middle of the road, slightly conservative, conservative, and extremely conservative. I recoded these response options in order to find which respondents were most liberal. I recoded "Extremely liberal" to equal a "6" on my scale, and "Extremely conservative" to equal a zero on my scale. The categories in between were also adjusted, so that higher numbers represented more liberal attitudes and lower numbers represented more conservative.

Analysis

Multinomial logistic regression (MNLR) is used in this study. MNLR is a general linear model that uses a logistic transformation to create a linear association between the outcome and my independent variables. MNLR is ideal for my study because it allows me to compare my four groups (*Anti-Life*, *Pro-Life*, *Liberal* and *Conservative*) which are qualitatively different. With MNLR, it is possible to combine many variables to produce predictions of the independent variable. This method permits me to separate out the effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable so I can examine the unique contribution of each variable. I have to use MNLR as my research method because of the nature of my dependent variable, which is the combination of attitudes toward abortion and attitudes toward capital punishment. Since I have four categories that are non-rankable and are individually distinct, MNLR was appropriate for this analysis. My variables are discrete (categorical) meaning they cannot be grouped into intervals. I did not use Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression because with OLS, the outcome is typically assumed to have the properties of the interval scale, which my variables do not.

The reference categories for my multi nomial logistic regression tables are as follows: Tables 2-A, 2-B and 2-C make comparisons relative to the Liberal category, Tables 3-A and 3-B make comparisons to the Conservative category, and Table 4-A makes its comparisons relative to the Anti-Life category. These six tables cover all of the possible combinations mentioned earlier.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

In order to show general patterns I have analyzed the uncontrolled influence of each of my variables. The following bivariate study allowed for the comparison of my four groups across all the independent variables in order to provide an overview of the uncontrolled relationships. To review, my results can be categorized into the following groups (demonstrated in Figure 1): *Liberal* (for respondents who are in favor of abortion and against capital punishment, *Anti-Life* (for respondents who are in favor of both abortion and capital punishment), *Pro-Life* (for respondents who are opposed to both abortion and capital punishment) and *Conservatives* (who are in favor of capital punishment but opposed to abortion).

A general pattern emerged for most variables with the majority of respondents falling within the *Conservative* category, followed by *Anti-Life*, *Pro-Life* and the *Liberal*, the group which contained the smallest pool of people in most instances. This is reflective of Figure 1 having the highest number of respondents in the sample (over 10,000) within the *Conservative* category. Figure 2 displays the way in which the four categories in Figure 1 relate to race. Racial categories are shown separated into three groups: white, blacks and other racial minorities. Whites and other minorities were most likely to fall within the *Conservative* and *Anti-Life* categories. However, a different pattern is seen with blacks, who are disproportionately represented in the *Pro-Life* and *Liberal* categories. Blacks were the only group in which *Conservative* was not the modal category. Both of the categories in which blacks were represented disproportionately (*Pro-Life and Liberal*) had their anti-capital punishment attitudes in common. These results were in line with Unnever, Cullen and Applegate's suggestion that African Americans are less supportive of the death penalty than whites because they ascribe

criminal behavior to situational characteristics which makes blacks less likely to have the desire to punish criminals (Unnever, Cullen and Applegate 2007). Abortion attitudes seem to be an important issue to blacks and to other racial minorities. About 64% of blacks, 62% of other racial minorities and 58.7% of whites fell within one of the anti-abortion categories. Past research has suggested that for the black community, abortion is not as important of a concern as other issues involving racial inequalities. However, this research suggests otherwise and reflects a quite prominent inclination for blacks to be against abortion rights.

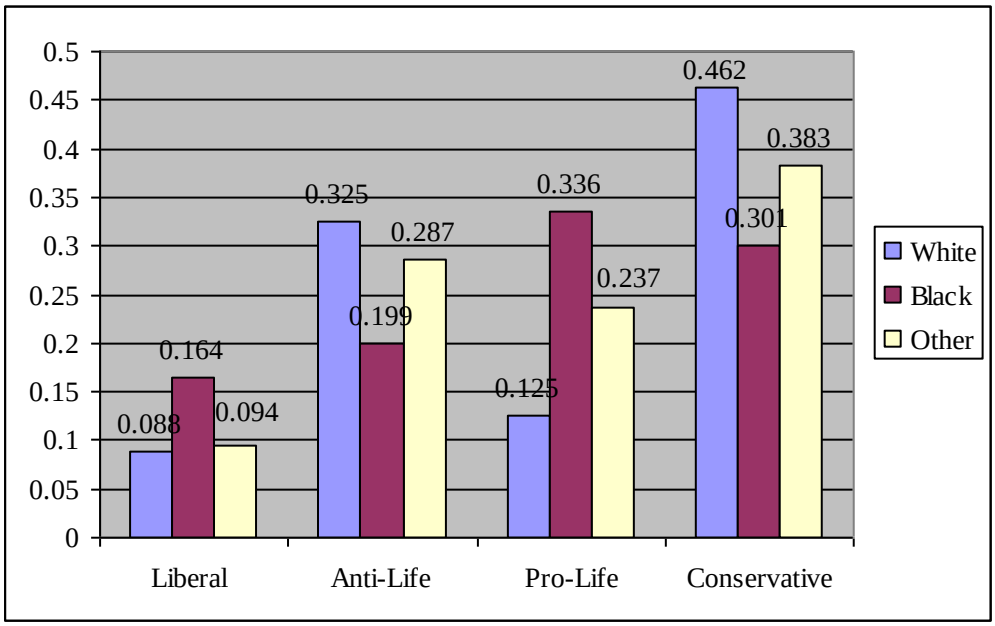

Figure 2: Race

Figure 3 demonstrates the relationship between one's gender and their placement within the four categories. Gender follows the same pattern as most of the other variables with *Conservative* as the largest category, followed by *Anti-Life*, *Pro-Life* and *Liberals*, respectively. Among people who are in favor of abortion, women are more likely to be against capital punishment than men. 11% of women fell into the *Liberal* category while only 8.4% of men reported this similar combination of attitudes. Of those respondents that are in favor of capital punishment, males are more likely to be in favor of abortion than women. Thirty-three percent of

males fell into the *Anti-Life* category while only about 29% of women reported these attitudes. Men are disproportionately represented as being within the *Conservative* and *Anti-Life* categories. Women, in comparison to men, are disproportionately represented as being within the *Liberal* and *Pro-Life* categories, revealing their tendency to hold stronger anti-capital punishment views compared to the men's concern which seems to be most correlated with pro-capital punishment views. Women are more likely than men to either be opposed to both (*Pro-Life*) or opposed to capital punishment but in favor of abortion (*Liberal*). This most likely reflective of women in most cases being less violent and less revengeful while some still in favor of abortion due to their desire to have control over their reproductive rights. The *Pro-Life* and *Liberal* groups are more likely to have women than men, but they are still the smallest number for women.

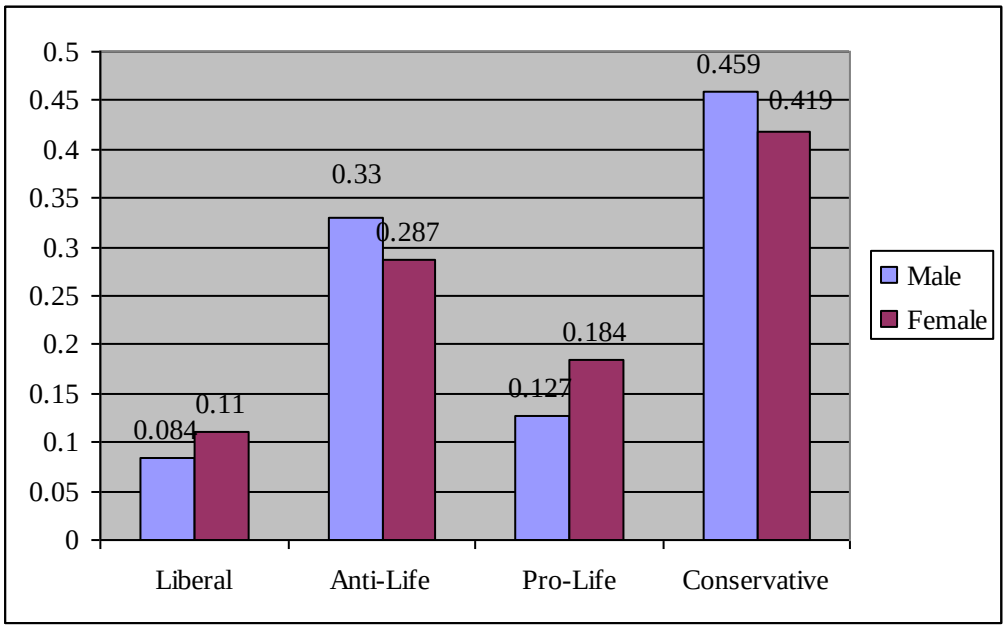

Figure 3: Gender

Figure 4, Religiosity, reveals a prominent difference in attitudes between the four categories. Those in the *Pro-Life* category attend religious services at a higher rate than *Conservatives*, followed by *Liberals* and finally *Anti-Lifers*. This is not surprising, as in general

religion implies moral responsibilities. Figure 4 demonstrates the average number of days per year that people in each of the four categories attend religious services. On average, *Pro-Lifers* attend church more than twice as often as *Anti-Lifers* (36.1 days compared to 14.65 days). The main trend here is an increase in religiosity being correlated with an increase in the likelihood of holding anti-abortion attitudes. Religious attitudes don't seem to be as highly related to capital punishment attitudes as they do abortion attitudes. As reported in existing literature, religion seems to be "closely intertwined with attitudes on abortion" (Unnever, Cullen and Applegate 2005: 304). The two categories with the highest religious services attendance both hold anti-abortion views, yet they have separate views toward capital punishment. *Conservatives* are in favor of capital punishment while the *Pro-Lifers* are against it. Yearly attendance of respondents within the *Conservative* category are also among the highest, at about 30 days per year, while the *Liberal* category is almost half that at about 18 days per year.

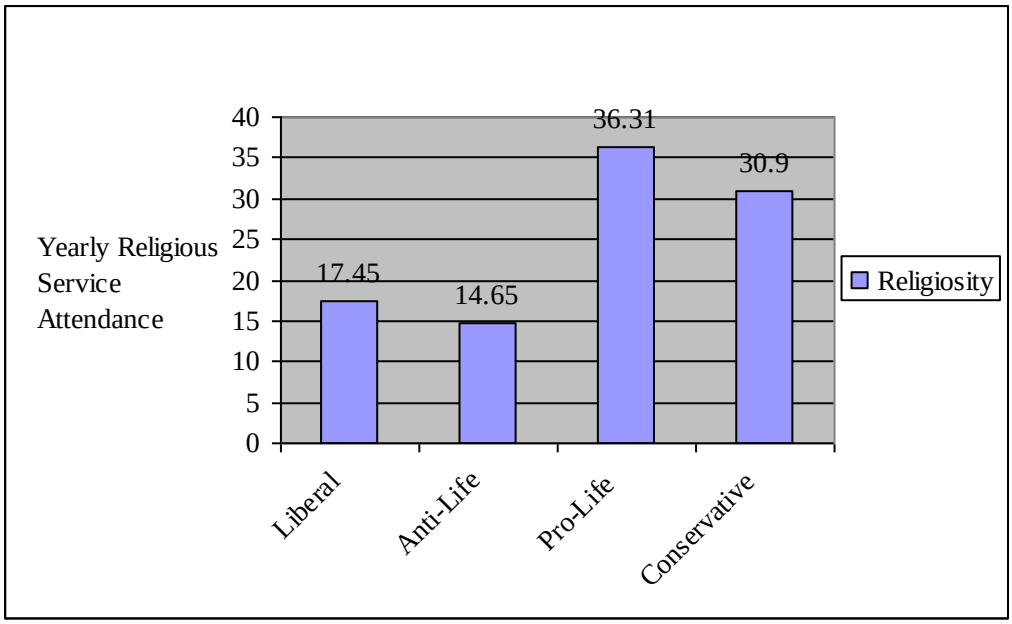

Figure 4: Religiosity

Figure 5 represents the relationship between educational attainment and into which of the four categories respondents fall. A value of twelve would define a respondent that has completed high school and a value of sixteen would represent a respondent that has graduated college. The *Liberal* category is the most educated group (with about 13.9 years of education), followed by *Anti-Life* (with about 13.3 years), *Conservative* (with about 12.3 years) and *Pro-Life* (with about 11.9 years of education). On average, those in the *Liberal* category completed almost two years of college and those in the *Anti-Life* category completed more than one year of college. The *Pro-Life* and *Conservative* categories both average less than or just above a high school education. Similar to what is found in previous literature, educational attainment seems to be a reliable predictor of attitudes toward abortion (Ladd and Bowman 1997). An increase in education seems to push people to be more pro-choice in regards to abortion.

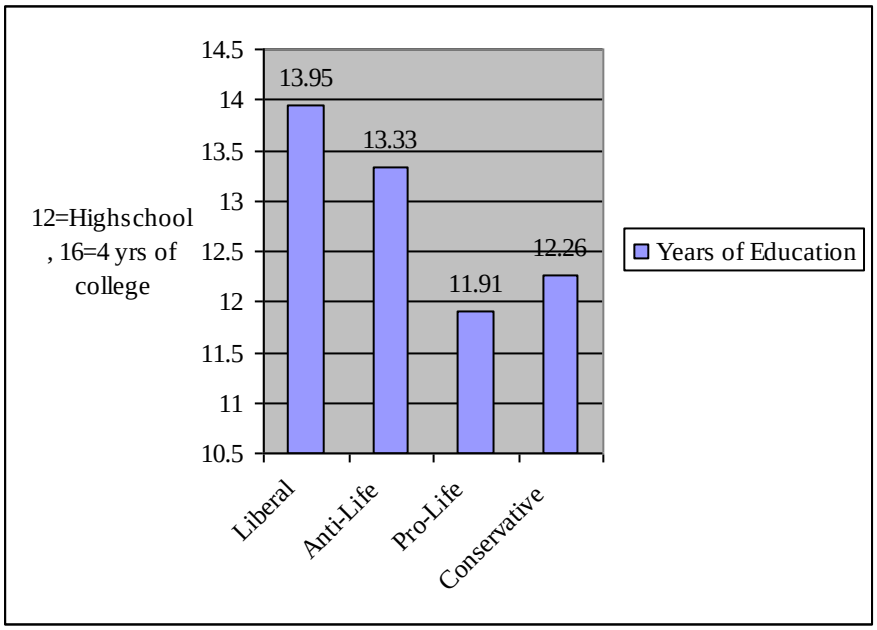

Figure 5: Years of Education

Political views are graphed in Figure 6 and the results shown are not unexpected. A score of "6" would indicate someone who considers themselves extremely liberal on the General Social Survey, while a score of "1" would represent a respondent who considers themselves extremely conservative. As shown in Figure 6, people in the *Conservative* category had previously categorized themselves as more conservative on the General Social Survey. Similarly, people within the *Liberal* category in Figure 6 had previously categorized themselves as more liberal when asked a similar question through the GSS. On average, the score for the *Liberal* category was almost a 4 which is closer to being extremely liberal than the average score of 2.59 for the *Conservative* category. The *Anti-Life* category (at a score of 3.03) fell in-between being extremely liberal and extremely conservative on the General Social Survey.

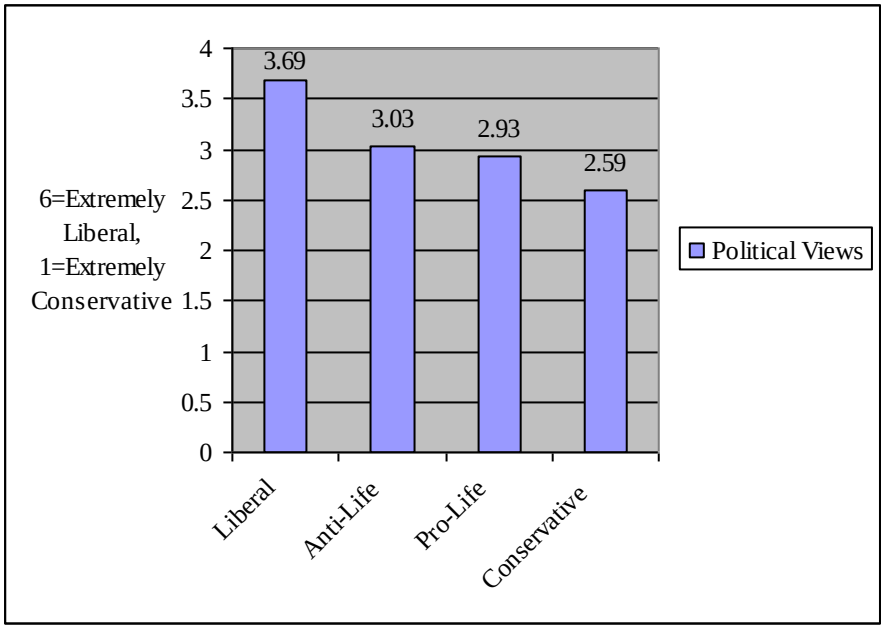

Figure 6: Political Views

The regional (South vs. Non-South) effect of attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment is demonstrated in Figure 7. The original pattern is seen, with most respondents falling into the *Conservative* category, followed by *Anti-Life*, *Pro-Life* and then *Liberal*. As

expected, there a higher percentage of Southerners are *Conservative* compared to Non-Southerners (47% of *Conservatives* are from the South and about 42% are from non-Southern areas). Southerners also disproportionately represent the *Pro-Life* category while non-Southerners disproportionately represent the *Anti-Life* and *Liberal* categories. Southerners are more likely to be *Conservative* or *Pro-Life* and less likely to be *Anti-Life* or *Liberal*.

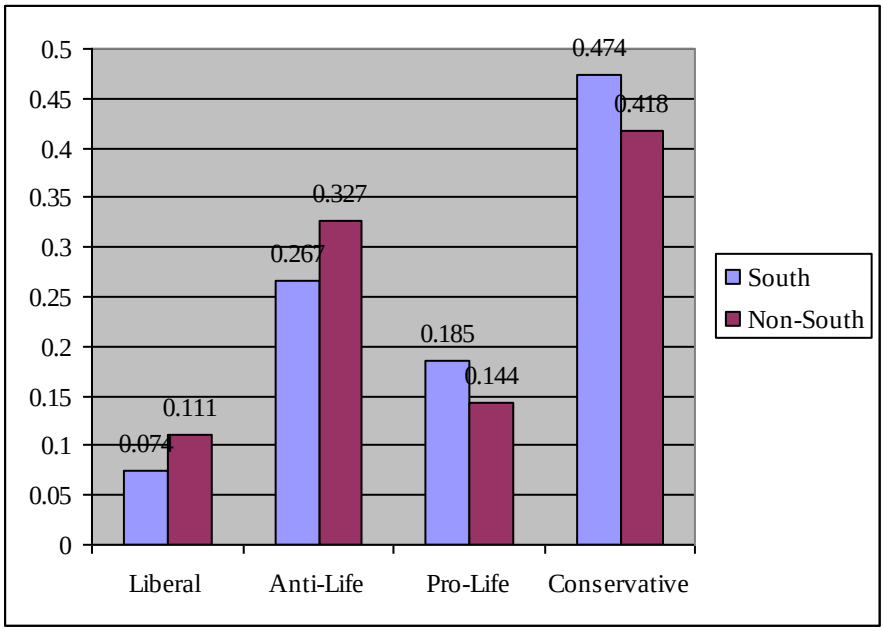

Figure 7: Region

As previously mentioned, to research the influence of time on attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment, it became necessary to create three categories. The first being 'during what year was the respondent surveyed'? The second being 'how old was the respondent when they took the survey'? The third being 'what time span (or birth cohort) does the respondent fall into'? Age alone is not a strong indicator because it is conceivable that someone of a certain age in a certain era is systematically different from someone of that same age in a different era. This is due to what was going on during that time, historically.

Each of the following three figures display the general pattern of a *Conservative* majority, followed by *Anti-Life*, *Pro-Life* and *Liberal* as the minority across time. Figure 8 demonstrates that, depending on when they were surveyed, the *Liberal* category is at the highest percentage it has ever been in the most recent years. There was a slight increase of people in the *Liberal* category that were surveyed in 1998 but the number of people that consider themselves *Liberal* has actually stayed fairly consistent for those surveyed since the1970s with a gradual peak to over 10% into the new millennium. The *Pro-Life* category remained fairly stable in the 70s and into the mid-80s in the high teens and then dropped into the low teens in the mid 80s, peaked back to 20% but dropped to the low teens by 1990s and recently has been in the high teens at almost 20%. The *Anti-Life* category remained fairly stable until the late 80s and peaked in the mid 90s. It then decreased back down to about 30% in recent years. The *Conservative* category fluctuated from the late 70s through the late 80s then slowly declined until recently years when it has been at about 40%.

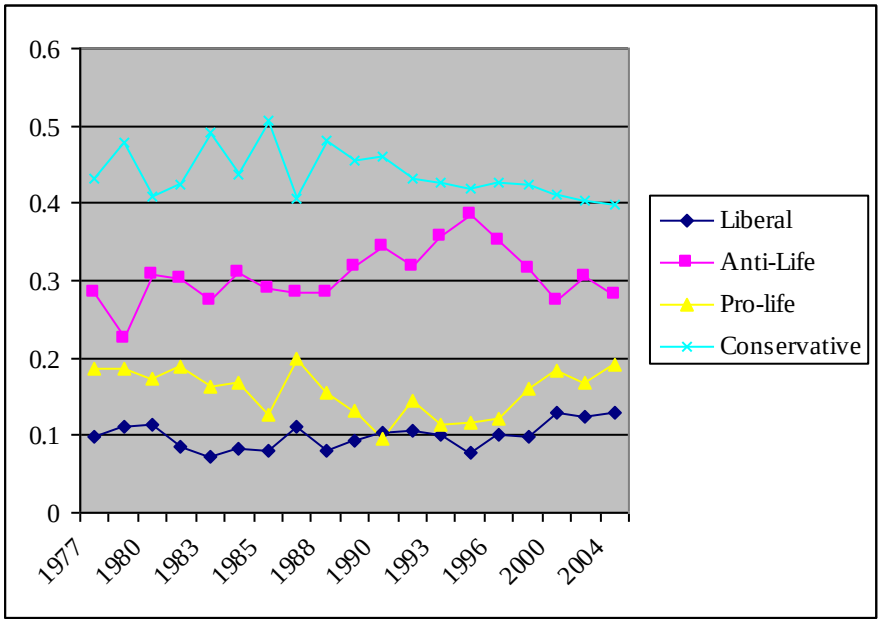

Figure 8: Year Surveyed

Regarding age, Figure 9 indicates that as people get older, their liberalness declines. Similar to past research (Ladd and Bowman 1997), this bivariate analysis indicates that older people are less likely than younger people to approve abortion rights. With age, there is an increase the *Conservative* and *Pro-Life* categories. This is an aging effect and not a cohort effect. As people become older, they become more likely to be in the *Conservative* or *Pro-Life* category. The *Conservative* category rises with age (almost ten percent between the ages of 18 and 89) whereas the *Liberal* category declined by about 5%.

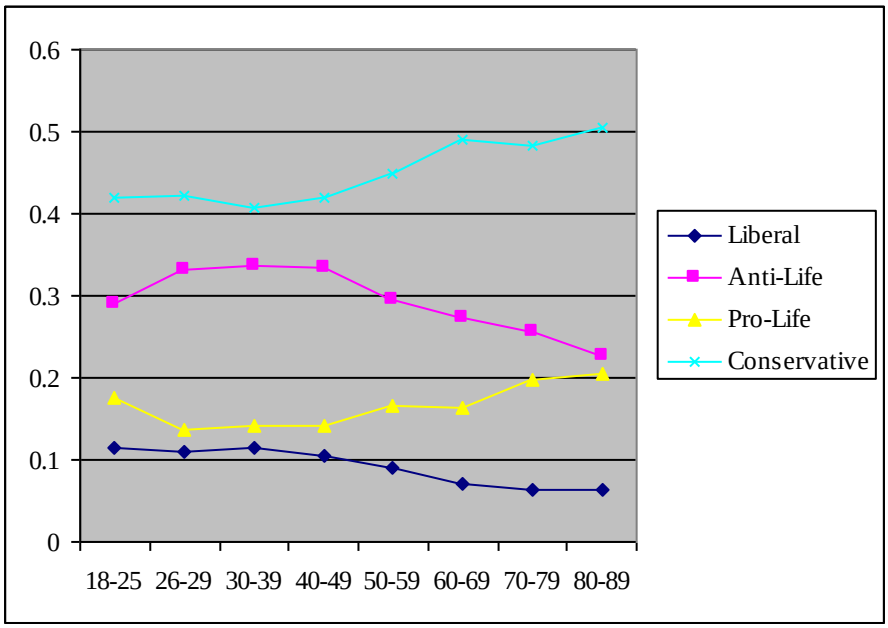

Figure 9: Age (when survey was taken)

Figure 10 demonstrates the effect of the birth cohort or era in which respondents were born and its influence on their attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment. Within the *Conservative* group, we see that within the group of those people born prior to 1940 (who came of age in the 1960s), conservatism decreased. It is highly likely that this is due the drastic youth movement of countercultural values that emerged at that time. During this time period people began to revolt against past repressive power structures and encouraged peace and freedom.

According to Figure 10 there was a rise in the number of people who fall within the *Anti-Life* (for both abortion and capital punishment) group for those that came of age in the 1960s. It seems that those born before the 1940s had more polarized views than those born after the 1940s (the gaps were wider but for those born in more recent years, the four categories become more even.) The *Anti-Life* group and the *Pro-Life* group were both at about 20% for those respondents born before the 1910. For people who were born later in time, the *Anti-Life* (for both abortion and capital punishment) group grew as the *Pro-Life* (against abortion) group decreased. When someone was born seems to have quite an impact on where they fall in the *Liberal or Pro-Life* categories. Being born in the first few decades of the 1900s, liberalism grows while the *Pro-Life* group gets smaller by 10%. The *Pro-Life* and *Conservative* groups grew smaller for those people who were born before the 1940s while the *Anti-Life* and *Liberal* groups grew larger after the 1940s.

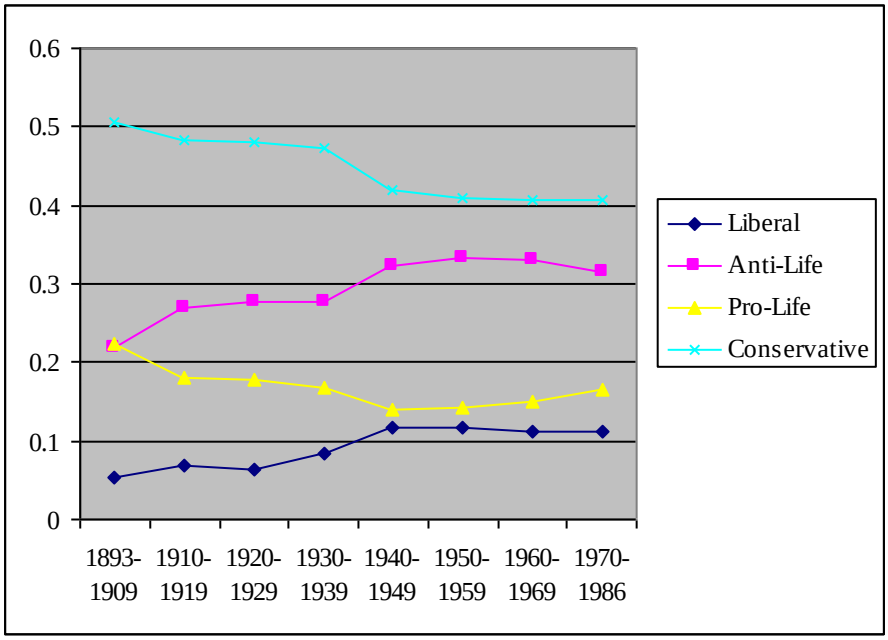

Figure 10: Birth Cohort

Multinomial Logistic Regression Analysis

Multinomial logistic regression allows for the separation of effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable, making it possible to examine the unique contribution of each variable. In other words, each concept can be tested using each of the six combinations (*Conservative* relative to *Liberal*, *Anti-Life* relative to *Liberal*, *Pro-Life* relative to *Liberal*, *Anti-Life* relative to *Conservative*, *Pro-Life* relative to *Conservative* and *Pro-Life* relative to *Anti-Life*).

When analyzing the effect of race on attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment, the top row of the six tables show how likely blacks are to fall within each of the six comparisons (with white as the omitted racial category). According to results presented in Table 2-A, blacks are less likely to be *Conservative* relative to whites (-1.286, $p<.001$). Table 2-B explores the *Anti-Life* group relative to the *Liberal* group. Both of these groups are pro-choice in regards to abortion, but blacks are less likely to be in favor of capital punishment than whites (-1.109, $p<.001$). This makes sense because the difference between these two groups is the capital punishment category. They quite possibly hold these anti-capital punishment views because of the racial unfairness which is reflective in the literature. As previously mentioned, in a 2007 study, Unnever and Cullen describe the idea of racial threat. They argue that white use the criminal justice system to subordinate minority groups (Unnever and Cullen 2007). It is quite likely that the reason blacks are generally against capital punishment (as shown in Table 2-B) could be a reflection of their accepting the idea of racial threat and their tendency to hold attitudes that do not support these injustices.

Of those that are against capital punishment, being black relative to white had no effect on their abortion stance (0.084, NS) in Table 2-C. This was the only table of the six combinations in which there was no black/white racial effect.

According to Table 3-A, being black has a positive effect on being *Anti-Life* relative to *Conservative* which means that among those that favor of capital punishment, blacks are more likely to be in favor of (rather than against) abortion rights (0.176, p<.01). Table 3-B shows that, of those people that are against abortion, relative to whites, blacks are more likely to be against capital punishment (1.396, p<.001), once again swaying them away from the *Conservative* category. There were no instances in which blacks were more likely to be in the *Conservative* category compared to whites, relative to any of the six categories.

Finally, Table 4 shows that blacks are more likely to be *Pro-Life* versus *Anti-Life*, relative to whites (1.193, p<.001). This demonstrates that blacks are more likely to be against both abortion and capital punishment than in favor of both.

Relative to whites, other minorities are more likely than whites to be *Pro-Life* relative to *Liberal* (0.791, p<.001 shown in Table 2-C). Other minorities are more likely to be *Pro-Life* than *Conservative* (.0867, p<.001 in Table 3-B). In addition, in comparison to whites, other racial minorities tend to fall into the “against both” combination rather than the “in favor of both” combination (0.841, p<.001 shown in Table 4).

The black group and the other minority group hold a common pattern when observing *Pro-Life* relative *Anti-Life* views. Both blacks and other racial minorities are more likely to be against both than for both as compared to whites. The overarching theme in Tables 2A to 4 for race seems to be that relative to whites, blacks tend to fall into the categories that are against capital punishment and in favor of abortion rights.

The second variable on the six tables shows how gender influences attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment, with males representing the omitted gender category. The first three tables (2-A through 2-C) make comparisons relative to the *Liberal* category. In each of these first three comparisons, there is a negative gender effect, meaning women are more likely to be *Liberal* when compared to any of the other three categories (-0.552, p<.001 in *Conservative* relative *to Liberal* Table 2-A), (-0.404, p<.001 in *Anti-Life* relative to *Liberal* Table 2-B), (-.0193, p<.001 in *Pro-Life* relative *Liberal* in Table 2-C).

Of people that are in favor of abortion, women are more likely to fall into the "against capital punishment" group (-0.404, p<.001 in Table 2-B). Of those people that are against capital punishment, women are more likely than men to favor abortion rights (-0.193, p<.001 in Table 2-C). As previous research suggested, when compared to men, women tend to hold stronger views town abortion (Scott and Schuman 1988). This study finds that women are more likely to be in favor (pro-choice).

The next two tables (3-A and 3-B) explore how, compared to men, women fall within the *Anti-Life* and *Pro-Life* categories relative to the *Conservative* category. Being female has a positive effect on being both *Anti-Life* (0.147, p<.001 in Table 3-A) and *Pro-Life* (0.358, p<.001 in Table 3-B) relative to being *Conservative*. When examining attitudes toward being either against both abortion and capital punishment (*Pro-Life*) relative to being in favor of both (*Anti-Life*), women are more likely to be against both (0.211, p<.001 in Table 4), compared to men.

To recap these two tables, compared to males, and controlling for all other variables, being female has a positive effect (0.147) on being *Anti-Life* relative to *Conservative*. This demonstrates that among people that are in favor of capital punishment, women are more likely to be in favor of abortion rights than against them. It is likely that this is due to the fact that

women often wish to be in control of their own bodies. Compared to males, being female has a positive effect (0.358) on being *Pro-Lif*e relative to *Conservative*. This demonstrates that of those people that are against abortion rights, women are more likely to against capital punishment than in favor of it. It is highly likely that this is due to women generally holding more forgiving views than men.

According to Table 4, **c**ompared to males, being female has a positive effect (of 0.211, $p<.001$) on being *Pro-Life* relative to *Anti-Life*. In other words, women are more likely to be against both than in favor of both.

To summarize the gender variable in these tables, compared to men, women are more likely to be *Liberal* than *Conservative*. When *Liberal* was an option, women always fell into this category. When *Conservative* was an option, women never fell into this category. It is conceivable that women tend to be *Liberal* for several reasons. Primarily, women by nature are the carrier in which the baby must grow within. Clearly it is possible that women would hold strong beliefs about whether or not they should have the power to terminate their pregnancy. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, Barbara Finlay found that females may be more inclined than men to consider humanitarian issues in their development of abortion opinions. Her results were similar for attitudes toward capital punishment (Finlay 1981). My results follow this same pattern; men are more likely to fall into a category that favors capital punishment than women while women seem to be more swayed by abortion rights. In almost all instances, women are more likely to fall into the combination that contains attitudes toward abortion rights as opposed to capital punishment rights. However, women are more likely than men to be against both rather than proponents of both. Within the *Pro-Life/Anti-Life* comparison, women were most likely to be *Pro-Life*.

The next variables on the tables demonstrate the effect that respondents' age and the year that they took the survey had on their abortion and capital punishment views. These two measures are related to each other. Being a certain age can certainly have an impact on an individual's opinion. For example, someone of college age may have very different priorities than an older individual. Additionally, the year surveyed can have a profound influence due to what is going on in the world at that time. Someone who took the survey in 1975 when they were twenty could conceivably have been exposed to heightened ideas of liberalism and may be very different from an eighteen year old who took the survey in the 1990s when there was perhaps less disorder within the social sphere. Cohort has been excluded from this particular analysis by design, as I would be unable to include all three measures (time, age and cohort) in the same model. These results show that as people get older, there is no effect regarding their likelihood of being in any category relative to another with the exception of the positive effect associated with aging and being *Anti-Life* relative to *Conservative*. This means that, of those that are in favor of the death penalty, with age, people tend to become more likely to be against abortion (0.004, $p<.001$ according to Table 3-A). So, people's views toward capital punishment don't seem to change as they get older, whereas they do become less likely to favor abortion rights. Perhaps this is correlated with the fact that generally as people age, they themselves become less likely to ever have to be faced with the decision of whether or not to consider abortion. In turn, with age, they may be more likely to become against abortion rights. These findings are also consistent with the literature I have summarized regarding abortion and age. Previous bivariate analyses found that older people may be less likely than younger people to approve abortion rights (Ladd and Bowman 1997). Interestingly, and somewhat parallel to my

results, there was no literature found regarding the influence of age on attitudes toward capital punishment.

While there is only one significant relationship between age and the six comparisons, there is similarly no significant relationship between year surveyed and the six comparisons. Literature I have previously mentioned found that older people may be less likely than younger people to approve of abortion rights (Ladd and Bowman 1997). I had also stated that literature is scarce on age and its relationship with attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment. The results of this study also indicate that there doesn't seem to be a large influence on age or year surveyed. The bivariate section of this study indicated that that there have been fluctuations within some of the four categories but not others, depending on what year respondents were surveyed in. The bivariate analysis also showed some fluctuations when looking at how the act of getting older affects abortion and capital punishment views.

Religion is another variable of substantive interest. As previously mentioned, higher religious service attendance is generally thought of as being related to conservative views. According to Table 2-A, as religiosity increases, the likelihood that they will be *Conservative* relative to *Liberal* has a negative effect (-0.018, $p<.001$). Table 2-B points out that, as religiosity increases, the likelihood that they will be *Anti-Life* relative to *Liberal* also has a negative effect (-0.006, $p<.001$). In Table 2-C, religiosity has a positive effect on being *Pro-Life* relative to *Liberal* (0.023, $p<.001$). Tables 3-A and 3-B compare the *Anti-Life* and *Pro-Life* groups to the *Conservative* group. As religiosity increases, respondents are more likely to be *Conservative* than *Anti-Life* and more likely to be *Pro-Life* relative to *Conservative* (-0.024, $p<.001$ in Table 3-A and 0.004, $p<.001$ in Table 3-B). Finally, Table 4 shows that when the comparison is made between *Pro-Life* and *Anti-Life* there is an increased religiosity associated with being *Pro-Life*

rather than *Anti-Life* (0.028, p<.001). These findings indicate that, controlling for all other variables, as religiosity increases, the likelihood that respondents will fall within the *Pro-Life* category is heightened. This is the category that is against both abortion and capital punishment. In the case of abortion, past literature had suggested that Christians who feel that religion is very important to them report more opposition to abortion than people who do not report that religion is important (Strickler and Danigelis 2002). It makes sense that those who feel that religion is very important may attend religious services more often. If they are exposed to these anti-abortion views frequently, this could explain my results. This also seems in line with recent literature that suggests that the leaders of Catholic, most Protestant and Jewish denomination are strongly opposed to the death penalty (Radelet & Borg 2000). The influence that these leaders have on respondents that attend regular services often could very well lead to their anti-capital punishment views.

This analysis also suggests that amount of education does have an effect on these attitudes. These results indicate that respondents with more years of education are more likely to be *Liberal* relative *Conservative* (-.230, p<.001 in Table 2-A), more likely to be *Liberal* relative to *Anti-Life* (-.090, p<.001 in Table 2-B), and also more likely to be *Liberal* relative to *Pro-Life* (-.238, p<.001 in Table 2-C). When comparing *Anti-Life* to *Conservative* (the pro-capital punishment categories), those with higher education tended to be *Anti-Life*, meaning more were accepting of both abortion and capital punishment (.139, p<.001 in Table 4-A). According to Table 3-B, higher years of education do not have a significant effect on being *Pro-Life* relative to *Conservative*, but as Table 4 demonstrates, the more education respondents have, they are more likely to be *Anti-Life* rather than *Pro-Life* (-.148, p<.001). These results are similar to the bivariate analysis which indicated that the *Liberal* category was the most educated group. Just as

the bivariate analysis showed, an increase in education seems to push people to be more pro-choice in regards to abortion. In Table 2-A and 2-B an increase in education gave respondents the tendency to be in favor of abortion in both instances. Just as Ladd and Bowman (1997) and Strickler and Danigelis (2002) state in previous literature, educational attainment seems to be one of the most reliable predictions of attitudes toward abortion. They suggested that highly educated women may have a broader view of acceptable women's roles (Strickler and Danigelis 2002: 189). Ladd and Bowman had a similar finding that high levels of education for both sexes predict higher levels of support for legal abortion (Ladd and Bowman 1997).

Political views were included in this analysis because party affiliation has historically been highly correlated with liberal views in contrast to conservative views as they pertain to both abortion and capital punishment. Similar to the bivariate political views analysis, the results of the Multinomial logistic regression are not surprising. Respondents who consider themselves more liberal are more likely to fall into the *Liberal* group relative to the *Conservative* group (-.538, $p<.001$ in Table 2-A). Respondents who consider themselves more liberal are also more likely to fall into the *Liberal* group relative to the *Anti-Life* group (-.347, $p<.001$ in Table 2-B) and relative to the *Pro-Life* group (-.360 in Table 2-C). Among those that consider themselves more liberal than conservative on the GSS, respondents were not at all likely to fall into the *Conservative* category compared to any other group. There are no significant results associated with higher liberal views and being *Pro-Life* (opposed to both abortion and capital punishment) relative to *Anti-Life* (in favor of both abortion and capital punishment) (-.012, NS).

Finally, the multivariate results indicate a few things in regard to region. Here, Southerners are analyzed, with Non-Southerners representing the omitted regional category. Controlling for all other variables, people living in the South are more likely to be *Conservative*

relative to *Liberal* (0.433, p<.001 in Table 2-A). Table 2-B also indicates a stronger tendency to be in favor of capital punishment, with Southerners more likely to be *Anti-Life* relative to *Liberal* (.280, p<.001). Table 2-C shows a stronger tendency for Southerners to be in a category other than *Conservative*. Here, they there is a positive effect that they will be *Pro-Life* relative to *Liberal* (0.369, p<.001). So, of those against capital punishment, Southerners are more likely to be against abortion than in favor of it. Among those that are in favor of capital punishment, Southerners are more likely to be *Conservative* than *Anti-Life* (-.153, p<.001 in Table 3-A). Based on these results, being Southern seems to indicate favoritism towards capital punishment.

Table 1: Variable Descriptions

Variable Name	Description	Metric	Mean	S.D.
Abortion attitudes	Should it be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if the woman wants it for any reason?	0=No 1=Yes	0.599	0.4901
Capital punishment attitudes	Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?	0=Oppose 1=Favor	0.7344	0.44168
Race	What race do you consider yourself?	1=White; 2=Black; 2=Other		
Gender	Respondent's gender	0=Male; 1=Female	0.5606	0.49632
Religiosity	How often do you attend religious services?	0=Several times a week; 1=Never	25.6047	29.6047
Age	Age of respondent	18-89	45.2647	17.4846
Education	Years of Education		12.6076	3.16681
Political Views	Where would you place yourself on this scale?	0=Extremely conservative; 1=Extremely liberal	2.8925	1.34962
Region	Region of interview	0=Non-South 1=South	0.3458	0.47562
Year Surveyed	What decade the respondent was surveyed in	1=1973-1979 2=1980-1989 3=1990-1999 4=2000-2004	2.4671	1.01268
Birth Cohort		1=1894-1909 2=1910-1919 3=1920-1929 4=1930-1939 5=1940-1949 6=1950-1959 7=1960-1969 8=1970-1986	4.8793	1.93229

Table 2-A:
Multinomial Logistic Regression Results: Conservative (Relative to Liberal)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Odds Ratio
Race[a]			
Black	-1.286***	.068	.276
Other	-0.76	.141	.927
Gender[b]			
Female	-0.552***	.051	.576
Age	-.001	.002	.999
Years Surveyed	.001	.003	1.001
Religiosity	-.018***	.001	1.018
Educational Attainment	-.230***	.009	.795
Political Views	-.538***	.019	.584
Region[c]			
South	.433***	.056	1.541
Intercept	6.152	.173	

χ^2=5491.609, df=27, ***p< .001, **p< .01, *p< .05

[a] White represents omitted racial category
[b] Male represents omitted gender category
[c] Non-South represents omitted region category

Table 2-B:
Multinomial Logistic Regression Results: Anti-Life (Relative to Liberal)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Odds Ratio
Race[a]			
Black	-1.109***	.069	.330
Other	-.051	.140	.951
Gender[b]			
Female	-.404***	.051	.667
Age	.003	.002	1.003
Years Surveyed	.001	.003	1.001
Religiosity	-.006***	.001	.994
Educational Attainment	-.090***	.009	.913
Political Views	-.347***	.019	.707
Region[c]			
South	.280***	.057	1.323
Intercept	3.807***	.171	

χ^2=5491.609, df=27, ***p< .001, **p< .01, *p< .05

[a] White represents omitted racial category
[b] Male represents omitted gender category
[c] Non-South represents omitted region category

Table 2-C:
Multinomial Logistic Regression Results: Pro-Life (Relative to Liberal)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Odds Ratio
Race[a]			
Black	.084	.070	01.087
Other	.791***	.149	2.205
Gender[b]			
Female	-.193***	.059	.824
Age	.001	.002	1.001
Years Surveyed	-.001	.004	.999
Religiosity	.023***	.001	1.023
Educational Attainment	-.238***	.010	.788
Political Views	-.360***	.022	.698
Region[c]			
South	.369***	.063	1.446
Intercept	4.049***	.196	

χ^2=5491.609, df=27, ***p< .001, **p< .01, *p< .05

[a] White represents omitted racial category
[b] Male represents omitted gender category
[c] Non-South represents omitted region category

Table 3-A:
Multinomial Logistic Regression Results: Anti-Life (Relative to Conservative)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Odds Ratio
Race[a]			
Black	.176**	.058	1.193
Other	.025	.096	1.026
Gender[b]			
Female	.147***	.033	1.159
Age	.004***	.001	1.004
Years Surveyed	.000	.002	1.000
Religiosity	-.024***	.035	.858
Educational Attainment	.139***	.006	1.150
Political Views	.190***	.013	1.210
Region[c]			
South	-.153***	.035	.858
Intercept	-2.345***	.111	

χ^2=5491.609, df=27, ***p< .001, **p< .01, *p< .05

[a] White represents omitted racial category
[b] Male represents omitted gender category
[c] Non-South represents omitted region category

Table 3-B:
Multinomial Logistic Regression Results: Pro-Life (Relative to Conservative)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Odds Ratio
Race[a]			
Black	1.369***	0.54	3.933
Other	.867***	.099	2.379
Gender[b]			
Female	.358***	.042	1.431
Age	.002	.001	1.002
Years Surveyed	-.002	.003	.998
Religiosity	.004***	.001	1.004
Educational Attainment	-.008	.007	.992
Political Views	.178***	.016	1.195
Region[c]			
South	-.064	.043	.938
Intercept	.2.104***	.137	

χ^2=5491.609,df=27, ***p< .001, **p< .01, *p< .05

[a] White represents omitted racial category
[b] Male represents omitted gender category
[c] Non-South represents omitted region category

Table 4:
Multinomial Logistic Regression Results: Pro-Life (Relative to Anti-Life)

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standard Error	Odds Ratio
Race[a]			
Black	1.193***	0.61	3.297
Other	.841***	.109	2.320
Gender[b]			
Female	.211***	.045	1.235
Age	-.001	.001	.999
Years Surveyed	-.002	.003	.998
Religiosity	.028***	..001	1.029
Educational Attainment	-.148***	.008	.863
Political Views	-.012	.017	.988
Region[c]			
South	.089	.047	1.094
Intercept	.241	.149	

χ^2=5491.609, df=27, ***p< .001, **p< .01, *p< .05

[a] White represents omitted racial category
[b] Male represents omitted gender category
[c] Non-South represents omitted region category

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This study finds that, in general, demographic factors do shape opinions toward abortion and capital punishment, some more so than others. I have analyzed how different backgrounds affect people's standpoints towards abortion and capital punishment. My research presents the fluctuations over time that have occurred within these two issues. I have outlined the types of people that fall into the four categories and explained why that is most likely the case. The conclusions drawn from my work are as follows.

I hypothesized that African Americans would be more supportive of abortion yet less supportive of capital punishment than whites. I assumed they would be more likely to fall into the *Liberal* category and less likely to fall into the *Conservative* category in the Two-by-Two Figure 1. My bivariate results concluded that blacks were disproportionately represented in the *Pro-Life* and *Liberal* categories, meaning they do tend to be against capital punishment when compared to whites and other racial minorities. Blacks are much more likely to be *Liberal* than any other racial group, but they are less likely to be *Liberal* than any of the other three categories, as shown in Figure 2. My multinomial logistic regression results showed that, controlling for the other variables, compared to whites, blacks were more likely to be *Liberal* than *Conservative*.

I hypothesized that men would be more supportive of abortion and more likely to approve of capital punishment than women. I assumed men would be more likely to fall into the *Anti-Life* category on Figure 1 than women. My bivariate results concluded that of those respondents that are in favor of capital punishment, males were more likely to be in favor of abortion than women. Among people who are in favor of abortion, women are more likely to be against capital punishment than men. Men were disproportionately represented as being with the *Conservative* and *Anti-Life* categories. Women tended to be *Liberal* or *Pro-Life*. Multinomial logistic

regression allowed me to control for other influences and found that women are most often in the *Liberal* category. In addition, among people who are in favor of capital punishment, women are more likely to also be in favor of abortion rather than against it.

I hypothesized that individuals that attended religious services the least would be more supportive of abortion and less supportive of capital punishment. I assumed they would be most likely to fall into the *Liberal* category on Figure 1 than individuals with more frequent attendance. The results of my bivariate analysis indicated that it was actually the *Anti-Lifers* that attended religious services less frequently than the other three categories. However, *Liberals* only attended religious services at about 18 days per year. Multinomial results showed that as religiosity increases, there is a higher chance respondents were *Pro-Life* than *Liberal.*

I hypothesized that individuals with more years of education would be more likely to approve of abortion and less likely to approve of capital punishment than individuals with less educational attainment. I assumed that they would most likely fall into the *Liberal* category on Figure 1 than those with less education. The bivariate section of my study found my prediction to be accurate, that the *Liberal* category is the most educated group, with an average of at least some college. Multinomial logistic regression results were similar. Which controlling for the other variables in the study, an increase in education seems to be correlated with pro-choice abortion views.

Based on the literature, I hypothesized that older people would be less likely than younger people to approve of abortion rights. My results show that this is correct. As people get older, their liberalness does decline.

This research has contributed to the field in various ways. While past research has focused on abortion and capital punishment attitudes separately, my study examines both issues

simultaneously, and tracks these debates longitudinally. One intention of my research is to prompt readers to acknowledge the possible inconsistencies within their own political associations. I hope to ignite discussion amongst readers regarding the opinions of influential figures that I have presented (from both well known and less familiar public profiles).

In addition, I have summarized the history of abortion and capital punishment in order to provide a time comparison for fluctuating public attitudes and show that these changes in public policy have affected our reactions toward the issues. The study has given important insight to both sides of both debates by outlining arguments for and against each issue in order to give a thorough understanding of the grounds on which opposing parties support their claim. I have presented past documented theories of how our private opinions can be influenced by social forces as well as my own theories for why different demographics are influenced in different ways, based on a collection of past publications.

This project can serve as an informational starting point for others seeking to learn more about the way in which abortion and capital punishment can be studied simultaneously. Within the political arena there are liberals and conservatives. Liberals feel that individuals should have control over the unborn children and the power to decide whether a situation is appropriate to continue a pregnancy into a birth. However, liberals also want to limit the power we have as living creatures, in that we should not have power to eliminate a life post birth via capital punishment. The important thing to take away from this is the understanding that there are enormous amounts of societal factors that may influence both the act of abortion and the act of capital punishment, a few of which I have detailed in this study. Racisms, sexisms, religious and educational conflicts are all shaping these larger political conflicts. These societal factors influence people's actions. Whether it be racial conflicts causing African Americans to oppose

the death penalty and whites to favor the death penalty, or the feminist fight of women as the baby carriers to struggle for power over their bodies. Religious beliefs play a large role as well, with the large diversity of faiths in our country battling for universal capital punishment and abortion rulings that reflects what their personal faith would follow. Finally, the accessibility and quality of education that individuals are able to gain about these topics is correlated with the variables I have previously mentioned.

There are inconsistencies of control within this framework. Liberals claim to support the prevention of future societal strain by seeking control over life or death in the case of abortion while simultaneously arguing that those in power should not have the right to end a life based on the detrimental actions of others later in life. Conservatives feel that we should not have the power to control until after individuals are given a chance to live their lives, regardless of the injustices and conflicting interests of those in power. Many conservatives wish to give every unborn child a chance whether the chances they will live a quality life are high or low. However, they do want the power to eliminate the lives of those who disobey what they consider acceptable behavior.

As I have compared to Lavine and Latante's Theory of Spatial Clustering and Bundling, individual attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment are constantly influenced by external factors. An individual that feels very strongly about a particular topic that they can relate to found something in that category that was appealing. Whether or not this individual agrees with everything else in that category or political group, it is likely that they will at least attempt to convince themselves that the stance to the other issue is appropriate as well. While people do want to be consistent, many are not. This idea of "spatial clustering" demonstrates this internal

categorization that takes place when individuals believe that death is acceptable in one instance and not in the other.

The “culture of life” idea mentioned earlier, which is supported by conservatives has similar inconsistencies. Those that currently promote this idea of the supporting a “culture of life” where each living things should be respected are simultaneously advocating for the power to put individuals to death. Many would argue that these ideas are contradicting or hypocritical. I have described in detail the bizarre paradox of the way life is valued in one instance and not in the other.

This study provides new insight in both the areas of abortion and capital punishment and should further provoke constructive debate amongst readers. This could be significant at the societal level because, as we have witnessed throughout history, these debates are not static and opinions will change based on the attention the issues are given. If people are given the necessary tools to further their knowledge and understand the details, this could lead to changes within the political sphere.

My work serves as a starting point for future research which could investigate whether the trends I have outlined are similar outside the United States. As previously mentioned, the General Social Survey has administered many of its questions in other countries. A similar study could track attitudinal trends of other nations in order to provide an even better understanding of the changing attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment.

Additional research may consider other demographical influences above and beyond the attributes that have been outlined in this study. For example, economic factors such as income may play a part in attitudes toward abortion and capital punishment. In addition, psychological factors, cultural backgrounds or membership of certain ethnic groups could be examined.

This research also has the potential to be expanded into a more in-depth study. The religious affiliation that this analysis examined could become more detailed in order to produce results broken down by denomination. The educational analysis could take a more in-depth approach in order to compare attitudes of respondents who are products of a public education as opposed to private schooling.

Abortion and capital punishment attitudes could also be compared to other debatable topics such as euthanasia and stem cell research in order to see if results are similar. These highly debated acts all meet the requirements of being considered morally questionable. Another good area for future research would include a qualitative study. This would allowed for a very detailed description of the attitudes of respondents.

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