

Presidential Appointments and Religious Stratification in the United States, 1789–2003

JAMES D. DAVIDSON
RACHEL KRAUS
SCOTT MORRISSEY

In America's colonial period, the "Protestant Establishment" (Anglicans, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians) had more access to political power than "Other Colonial Elites" (Quakers and Unitarians), "Other Protestants" (e.g., Baptists and Methodists), and "Others" (e.g., Catholics, Jews, and people with no religious affiliation). To what extent has this pattern of religious stratification persisted and/or changed over the course of U.S. history? New data on the religious affiliations of U.S. presidents, cabinet members, and justices on the Supreme Court indicate that the Protestant Establishment and Other Colonial Elites are not as dominant as they once were but continue to be overrepresented in the White House, in the cabinet, and on the Supreme Court. Other Protestants and Others have made noteworthy gains but continue to be underrepresented in most spheres of national political life. Presidents from all religious strata are more likely to appoint people who belong to the Protestant Establishment than any other religious stratum. Other Protestants and Others are most likely to appoint religious outsiders. Thus, political appointments are a means by which religious stratification both persists and changes.

INTRODUCTION

During America's colonial years, a discernible pattern of religious stratification emerged in the political arena (Davidson, Pyle, and Reyes 1995; Pyle 1996; Pyle and Davidson 2003; Pyle and Koch 2001). At the top were the Anglicans, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians, also known as the "Protestant Establishment" (Baltzell 1964). These groups had disproportionate access to public office relative to their numbers in the total population.¹ Quakers, Unitarians, and Universalists comprised a second tier of "Other Colonial Elites."² A third stratum consisted of "Other Protestants," such as Baptists and Methodists. At the bottom were "Others" (including Catholics, Jews, and people with no religious affiliation) who had virtually no access to public office.

What has happened to this pattern of religious stratification over the course of U.S. history? To what extent does it persist? How much has it changed? To explore these questions, we report new data on the religious affiliations of U.S. presidents, cabinet officers, and Supreme Court justices. We also examine the religious affiliations of presidents and the religious affiliations of the people they have appointed to cabinet posts and seats on the Supreme Court.³ The results have implications for further research on the roots and consequences of religious stratification in American politics.

METHODS

To locate the names and religious affiliations of presidents, cabinet officers, and Supreme Court justices, we consulted biographical directories (*Almanac of the Executive Branch*

James D. Davidson is Professor of Sociology, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Purdue University.

Rachel Kraus is Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Ball State University.

Scott Morrissey is a graduate student in the School of Public Policy, University of Maryland.

Correspondence should be addressed to James D. Davidson, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Stone Hall, Purdue University, 700 W. State Street, West Lafayette, IN 47907-2059. E-mail: davidsonj@purdue.edu

1997/98, 1999; *Federal Staff Directory* 1995, 1999; Sobel 1990) and a variety of websites (www.adherents.com, www.potus.com, www.supremecourtus.gov, www.infoplease.com, and www.politicalgraveyard.com.). Together, these sources yielded the names of 43 presidents, 634 cabinet officers, and 108 Supreme Court justices. We have identified the religious affiliations of all 43 presidents, 353 of the 634 cabinet officers (56 percent),⁴ and of all 108 Supreme Court justices.

Each president, cabinet officer, and Supreme Court justice is placed in the stratum to which his religious group belonged at the end of the colonial period. The Protestant Establishment (hereafter, PE) consists of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists (a.k.a. the United Church of Christ). Other Colonial Elites (hereafter OCEs) include Quakers, Unitarians, and Universalists (a.k.a. Unitarian-Universalists). All other Protestant denominations (such as the Disciples of Christ, Dutch Reformed, United Methodists, and various Baptist groups) are coded as Other Protestants (hereafter OPs). The Other stratum (hereafter Os) includes all other groups, most notably Catholics, Jews, Mormons, and people with no religious affiliation.

We report the percentage of presidents, cabinet officers, and Court justices who have belonged to each stratum and each group within each stratum from 1789 to 2003. In addition to the total percentage for this entire period, we also report the percentages for each of three time periods: 1789–1839, 1840–1929, and 1930–2003. The 1789–1839 period begins with George Washington's first term as president and the ratification of the Bill of Rights, encompasses the demise of state-level religious establishments, and ends just before the beginning of the large-scale immigration of non-Protestants from Europe. The 1840–1929 period starts with the influx of Catholic immigrants, includes the Fourteenth Amendment, extends to the Immigration Act of 1924 that, for all practical purposes, put an end to such immigration, and terminates with the stock market crash in 1929. The 1930–2003 period extends from the economic depression of the 1930s through the upward mobility and cultural assimilation of old immigrants to the new wave of non-European immigrants from Asia and Central and South America.⁵

Next, we report the extent to which each stratum has been over, under, or equally represented in the presidency, cabinet posts, and the Court relative to its size in the adult population (persons 19 years of age and older) in each time period. Estimates of the size of each stratum are derived from church membership data reported in Gaustad (1962). These figures are calculated for three years that approximate the midpoints of the three time periods (1810 for the 1789–1839 period, 1880 for the 1840–1929 period, and 1960 for the 1930–2003 period).⁶

It is impossible to determine when presidents have consciously chosen cabinet officers and/or Supreme Court justices who share their religion, when they have consciously chosen people because they belonged to some other religious stratum, and when religion was simply a correlate of other factors that were more important to presidents (such as education, political affiliation, or ideology). However, we can compare the religious affiliations of presidents and the religious affiliations of the people they have appointed to their cabinets and the Court. Thus, whatever the presidents' motivations and criteria might have been, we can show the extent to which their appointments had the effect of perpetuating long-standing religious differences and/or altering religious groups' access to public offices.⁷

FINDINGS

Table 1 shows that 47 percent of presidents have belonged to the PE, which accounted for 50 percent of the nation's first eight presidents and 52 percent of presidents between 1840 and 1929, before slipping to 33 percent of presidents between 1930 and 2003.⁸ Within this stratum, Episcopalians declined from 37 percent of the presidents between 1789 and 1839 to 22 percent between 1840 and 1929 and 25 percent in the 1930–2003 period. The pattern for Presbyterians

TABLE 1
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF PRESIDENTS BY PERIOD (PERCENT)

	Total	1789–1839	1840–1929	1930–2003
Protestant Establishment	47	50 ^a	52	33
Episcopalian	26	37	22	25
Presbyterian	19	12	26	8
Congregational	2	–	4	–
Other Colonial Elites	14	25	13	8
Unitarian	9	25	9	–
Quaker	5	–	4	8
Other Protestants	30	12	26	50
Baptist	9	–	4	25
Methodist	9	–	13	8
Disciples of Christ	7	–	4	17
Dutch Reformed	5	12	4	–
Others	9	12	9	8
None	7	12	9	–
Catholic	2	–	–	8
Total <i>N</i>	43	8	23	12
Total %	100	99 ^b	100	99 ^b

^aPercentages for subcategories do not equal this figure due to rounding.

^bDoes not total 100 percent due to rounding.

has been curvilinear, going from 12 percent in the first time period to 26 percent in the second and 8 percent in the third. The only Congregationalist president (Calvin Coolidge) was elected in the second time period.

OCEs account for 14 percent of U.S. presidents. This stratum has experienced steady decline, going from one-fourth of early U.S. presidents to 13 percent of presidents in the middle period and only 8 percent between 1930 and 2003. Among OCEs, the trend lines for Unitarians and Quakers have been quite different. Thirty percent of presidents have been OPs. This stratum has experienced the largest gains, climbing from 12 percent of presidents between 1789 and 1839 to 26 percent between 1840 and 1929 and 50 percent since 1930. Baptists and Disciples of Christ have gained the most, and members of the Dutch Reformed Church have lost the most. Os account for only 9 percent of presidents. Their pattern has been relatively stable, with only one None in the first time period (Thomas Jefferson), two Nones in the second (Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson), and one Catholic in the third (John Kennedy).⁹

The Appendix shows how each stratum's access to the White House has compared to its representation in the total adult population over time. The ratio of the percentage of PE presidents to the percentage of Establishment members in the adult population has declined from 7.1:1 to 3.7:1, but even in the 1930–2003, there are nearly four times as many PE presidents as one might expect.¹⁰ Although the OCE data must be interpreted cautiously due to the small number of OCE presidents and the dwindling percentage of OCEs in the total population (only 0.3 percent in 1960), OCEs also have been overrepresented in the White House in all three periods. OPs were slightly below parity (0.92:1) in the first, achieved parity in the second period, and are slightly above it (1.2:1) in the most recent period. Os have been consistently underrepresented, with only one-fourteenth to one-sixteenth as many presidents as one might expect based on their numbers in the total population.¹¹

TABLE 2
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF CABINET OFFICERS (PERCENT)

	Total	1789–1839	1840–1929	1930–Present
Protestant Establishment	45	61	46	42 ^a
Episcopalian	19	13	14	24
Presbyterian	21	32	25	16
Congregational	5	16	7	1
Other Colonial Elites	6 ^a	3	12	2
Unitarian	2	3	4	1
Quaker	3	–	8	1
Other Protestants	27	16	32	25
Methodist	16	–	23	13
Baptist	5	13	6	4
Lutheran	2	–	–	4
Disciples of Christ	1	–	3	–
Dutch Reformed	0.3	3	–	–
Other Protestant	3	–	–	4
Others	23 ^a	19	11 ^a	32
None	1	3	2	–
Catholic	17	16	7	24
Jew	3	–	1	5
Mormon	1	–	–	3
Total <i>N</i>	353	31	132	190
Total %	101 ^b	99	101 ^b	101 ^b

^aPercentages for subcategories do not equal this figure due to rounding.

^bDoes not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Cabinet Officers

The religious profile of cabinet officers resembles, but is not identical to, that of presidents (see Table 2). Forty-five percent of all cabinet officers have belonged to the PE. Only 6 percent of cabinet officers have been OCEs, 27 percent have been OPs, and 23 percent have been Os.

The Establishment declined from 61 percent of cabinet officers in 1789–1839 to 46 percent in 1840–1929 and 42 percent in 1930–2003. The pattern among OCEs has been curvilinear (with their greatest gains coming in the middle period, especially among Quakers), but their current representation on the cabinet is quite small and comparable to what it was in the first time period. OPs have gained overall, mostly in the middle period before slipping in the 20th century. Os have experienced a curvilinear pattern, with their biggest increase coming in the most recent time period, especially among Catholics, and to a lesser extent among Jews and Mormons.

Compared to their numbers in the total population, the Establishment has been overrepresented in cabinet posts throughout U.S. history: by a factor of 8.7 in the 1789–1839 period, 6.8 in the 1840–1929 period, and 4.7 in the 1930–2003 period (see Appendix). OCEs also have been overrepresented or at parity in all three periods. OPs, who were slightly overrepresented in each of the first two periods, are underrepresented (0.62:1) in the most recent period. Os have gained ground in the 1930–2003 period, but remain underrepresented (0.64:1) relative to their numbers in the total population.

TABLE 3
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF SUPREME COURT JUSTICES (PERCENT)

	Total	1789–1839	1840–1929	1930–Present
Protestant Establishment	50 ^a	64	51	36
Episcopalian	31	39	32	21
Presbyterian	18	21	17	15
Congregational	2	4	2	–
Other Colonial Elites	9	7	13	6
Unitarian	8	7	11	6
Quaker	1	–	2	–
Other Protestants	25	26	23	24
Methodist	5	4	2	9
Baptist	3	–	4	3
Lutheran	1	–	–	3
Disciples of Christ	1	–	2	–
Other Protestants	15	22	15	9
Others	17	4	12	33
None	1	–	2	–
Catholic	9	4	6	18
Jew	7	–	4	15
Total <i>N</i>	108	28	47	33
Total %	101 ^b	101 ^b	99 ^b	99 ^b

^aPercentages for subcategories do not equal this figure due to rounding.

^bDoes not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Supreme Court Justices

The religious affiliations of Supreme Court justices also are similar to, but not exactly the same as, those of presidents (Table 3). Half of all justices have been members of the PE. OCEs account for 9 percent of justices, while OPs account for one-fourth, and Os account for 17 percent.

The Establishment has been the modal category in all three periods, but its presence on the Court has declined from 64 percent in 1789–1839 to 36 percent in 1930–2003. The trend line for OCEs has been curvilinear, with their greatest influence coming in the 1840–1929 period. Among OPs, the trend line has remained flat. Os have been the biggest gainers, particularly among Catholics and Jews in the 20th century.

Even with these changes, the PE and OCEs remain overrepresented on the Court, compared to their numbers in the total population (see Appendix). There were 9.1 times as many PE justices as one would expect in the 1789–1839 period, 7.3 times as many in the middle period, and four times as many in the 1930–2003 period. Although only a small percentage of the total population, OCEs continue to be overrepresented. OPs were overrepresented on the Court by a factor of 2.0 in the first period, but have slipped to 0.88 and 0.60 in the last two periods. Os have made steady progress, but continue to be underrepresented on the Court (0.66:1).¹²

Presidential Appointments

Our next step is to examine the relationship between the presidents' religious affiliations and the affiliations of the people they have appointed to their cabinets and the Supreme Court. The results are shown in Tables 4 and 5.

TABLE 4
CABINET APPOINTMENTS BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF PRESIDENT
AND CABINET OFFICERS (PERCENT)

Religious Affiliation of Presidents	Religious Affiliation of Cabinet Officers	Total	1789–1839	1840–1929	1930–2003
Protestant Est.	Protestant Est.	47	58	42	49
	Other Colonial Elite	5	5	10	–
	Other Protestants	29	10	41	24
	Others	18	26	7	28
		(<i>n</i> = 129)	(<i>n</i> = 19)	(<i>n</i> = 59)	(<i>n</i> = 51)
Other Colonial Elite	Protestant Est.	65	71	68	60
	Other Colonial Elite	6	–	9	4
	Other Protestants	13	14	18	8
	Other	17	4	5	28
		(<i>n</i> = 54)	(<i>n</i> = 7)	(<i>n</i> = 22)	(<i>n</i> = 25)
Other Protestants	Protestant Est.	36	33	40	35
	Other Colonial Elite	5	–	13	2
	Other Protestants	30	67	29	30
	Others	28	–	18	33
		(<i>n</i> = 148)	(<i>n</i> = 3)	(<i>n</i> = 45)	(<i>n</i> = 100)
Others	Protestant Est.	36	100	33	29
	Other Colonial Elite	9	–	33	–
	Other Protestants	23	–	17	29
	Others	32	–	17	43
		(<i>n</i> = 22)	(<i>n</i> = 2)	(<i>n</i> = 6)	(<i>n</i> = 14)
Total <i>N</i>		353	31	132	190

Cabinet

Once in the White House, Establishment presidents have appointed other members of the PE to the cabinet (47 percent) more often than they have appointed members of any other religious stratum (OPs 29 percent, Os 18 percent, OCEs only 5 percent). Even though the rate at which presidents in the PE appoint their own kind to cabinet posts has dipped from 58 percent to 49 percent, nearly half of their appointments continue to be members of the PE.

Presidents belonging to the OCEs have selected members of the Establishment 65 percent of the time, while choosing Os 17 percent of the time, OPs 13 percent, and members of their own stratum only 6 percent. OCEs' tendency to appoint members of the PE also has declined as their appointment of Os has increased, but even during the most recent time period, six out of ten of their appointments have been members of the PE.

OPs also have been more likely to appoint members of the Establishment, but not quite as often. Thirty-six percent of OPs' appointments have been members of the Establishment, with 30 percent being OPs, 28 percent being Os, and 5 percent being OCEs. The rate at which OPs appoint members of the Establishment has fluctuated as their appointment of Os has increased (from 0 to 33 percent) and their appointment of their own kind has declined (from 67 percent in 1789–1839 to 29–30 percent in the two more recent time periods).

Other presidents also have appointed members of the Establishment more often than they have chosen members of any other stratum, but—like OPs—they have been somewhat less inclined

TABLE 5
SUPREME COURT APPOINTMENTS BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
OF PRESIDENT AND SUPREME COURT JUSTICES (PERCENT)

Religious Affiliation of Presidents	Religious Affiliation of Justices	Total	1789–1839	1840–1929	1930–2003
Protestant Est.	Protestant Est.	45	56	42	38
	Other Colonial Elite	9	11	11	6
	Other Protestants	32	28	37	31
	Others	13	6	11	25
		(n = 53)	(n = 18)	(n = 19)	(n = 16)
Other Colonial Elite	Protestant Est.	63	75	63	50
	Other Colonial Elite	–	–	–	–
	Other Protestants	31	25	25	50
	Other	6	–	13	–
		(n = 16)	(n = 4)	(n = 8)	(n = 4)
Other Protestants	Protestant Est.	48	67	60	27
	Other Colonial Elite	10	–	13	9
	Other Protestants	14	33	13	9
	Others	28	–	13	55
		(n = 29)	(n = 3)	(n = 15)	(n = 11)
Others	Protestant Est.	60	100	40	50
	Other Colonial Elite	20	–	40	–
	Other Protestants	–	–	–	–
	Others	20	–	20	50
		(n = 10)	(n = 3)	(n = 5)	(n = 2)
Total N		108	28	47	33

to do so than are Establishment presidents. Thirty-six percent of the time Other presidents have appointed members of the Establishment. They have appointed Os 32 percent of the time, OPs 23 percent, and OCEs only 9 percent. Os' propensity to appoint the PE has declined (from 100 percent to 29 percent), while their tendency to appoint OPs and Os has increased.

Supreme Court

Forty-five percent of Supreme Court appointments made by PE presidents have been justices who also belong to the Establishment. Thirty-two percent of the time, Establishment presidents have appointed OPs, 13 percent of their appointees have been Os, and only 9 percent of the time have they been OCEs.

The frequency with which members of the PE appoint members of the Establishment has declined from 56 percent in the 1789–1839 period to 42 percent between 1840 and 1929 and 38 percent in the 1930–2003 period. The decline can be attributed to the fact that Establishment presidents have appointed an increasing number of Os, although Os—who account for about half of the population—still account for only one-fourth of their appointees.

Non-Establishment groups are more likely to appoint members of the PE than they are to appoint their own kind. OCEs have appointed Establishment justices 63 percent of the time, but have never appointed one of their own kind to the Court. OPs have appointed members of the Establishment 48 percent of the time, but have appointed one another only 14 percent of the

time. Os have appointed people in the Establishment 60 percent of the time, and themselves only 20 percent of the time.

Trend lines among non-Establishment groups are based on small numbers and, thus, must be interpreted cautiously. Nonetheless, the appointment patterns closely resemble those of cabinet appointments. OCEs' appointment of Establishment justices has declined, while their appointment of OPs has increased. OPs' appointment of Establishment justices and OPs has declined as their appointment of Os has increased. In the 1789–1839 period, Os' appointments were all members of the Establishment. Since 1930, the only Os to be president (Kennedy, a Catholic) made two appointments to the Court: one Episcopalian (Bryon R. White) and one Jew (Arthur J. Goldberg).

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the colonial pattern of religious stratification persists but also has changed. Change is most apparent in two facts: the Protestant Establishment (PE) and Other Colonial Elites (OCEs) do not occupy as large a percentage of public offices as they once did, and Other Protestants (OPs) and Others (Os) have more access to the White House, the cabinet, and the Supreme Court than they used to have. The ratio of PE officeholders to PEs in the population also has slipped, as has the ratio of OPs in cabinet posts and on the Court, while the ratio for Os has increased, especially in the cabinet and on the Court. Persistence is evident in two other facts: relative to their numbers in the total population, PEs and OCEs continue to be overrepresented in elective and appointed offices. Os are still underrepresented in all three public offices, especially the presidency.

Presidential appointments contribute to both persistence and change. The tendency for presidents from all religious strata (especially the PE) to appoint members of the Establishment to cabinet posts and the Supreme Court has perpetuated religious stratification.¹³ The fact that all presidents (especially OPs and Os) appoint some people who do not belong to the Establishment has altered religious groups' access to public office.¹⁴

These findings raise at least three questions about the roots of religious stratification. First, how much impact does religious affiliation have on a presidential candidate's access to the White House relative to other attributes, such as the wealth and stature of the families into which the candidates were born and the prestige of the college or university they attended? Second, how much of religion's impact on presidents is indirect (through factors such as candidates' access to Ivy League schools and exclusive social clubs), and how much of it is direct (as when voters favor a member of the PE over someone of another religion who has a similar education and comparable political experience)? Third, to what extent do presidents take religious affiliation into account when making appointments to cabinet posts and the Supreme Court? How often is religion an important consideration in its own right, and how often is it simply a correlate of other, more important, considerations?

Our findings also pose at least one question related to the consequences of religious stratification. To what extent does differential access to political office affect religious groups' perceptions of American politics? Are members of the PE and OCEs more likely than OPs and Os to perceive presidential actions, cabinet policies, and Supreme Court decisions as fair? Are OPs and Os more likely to question their legitimacy?

Finally, these questions need to be explored using data from various points in time, such as the three time periods we have used. Then, and only then, will researchers be able to map changes over time in the relative importance of religious affiliation, religion's effect on access to public office, and the consequences of religious stratification.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to D. Paul Johnson, Jerome R. Koch, Ralph E. Pyle, and anonymous reviewers for their comments on earlier drafts of this article. We also thank Phyllis M. Scholp for her help in the early stages of data collection.

NOTES

1. Although Anglicans, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians accounted for only 9 percent of the total colonial population (including slaves) and only 11 percent of the white population (Finke and Stark 1992:26, 52), they were 95 percent of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, 86 percent of the representatives to the Constitutional Convention, and 79 percent of the Speakers of the House in colonial legislatures (see Pyle and Davidson 2003).
2. Although there are different views on this issue, we do not consider Unitarian-Universalists Protestant. Thus, we use the phrase “Other Colonial Elites” and not the phrase “Other Protestant Elites.”
3. Appointment is a two-step process: nomination by the president and confirmation (or rejection) by the Senate. Over 90 percent of presidents’ nominations to the executive branch of government, including the cabinet, and about 80 percent of their nominations to the Supreme Court are confirmed (Abraham 1974:8; Loomis 2001:166; Mackenzie 1981:233).
4. Two hundred and eighty-one cabinet officers have been excluded from our analysis because their religious affiliations were not reported in the directories and other sources we consulted. The largest share of exclusions occurs in the earliest time periods, when records of religious affiliation are least complete. We assume these exclusions are randomly distributed among religious strata. For more on the difficulties in identifying the religious affiliations of cabinet officers, see Mintz (1975).
5. These three time periods closely correspond to the three periods of disestablishment discussed by Hammond (1992). Also, see Pyle and Koch (2001).
6. Membership figures for PEs and OCEs are derived from denominational data reported in Gaustad (1962). OPs are calculated by adding the memberships of five mainline groups (Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Lutherans, Methodists, Reformeds) and eight other groups (Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Assemblies of God, Churches of God, Nazarenes, Christian Scientists, Evangelical United Brethren, and Mennonites) discussed by Gaustad (1962). Because Gaustad’s analysis does not include all Protestant bodies, our figures for OPs underestimate the size of the Other Protestant stratum by some unknown amount. A comparison of Gaustad’s figures and *Yearbook of American Churches* data on Protestant church membership in 1960 assures us that our calculations account for at least 85 percent of OPs (Landis 1962). Figures for Os are reached by subtracting the data for PEs, OCEs, and OPs from the size of the total adult population. The decline in the relative size of the Os stratum is due mainly to the growth of OPs and the declining percentage of people with no religious affiliation (Finke and Stark 1992; Landis 1962). The estimates for the 1930–2003 period precede the Immigration Act of 1965, which led to a large influx of “Others” (especially Hispanic Catholics, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists). Due to census limitations, population data for 1810 pertain to free whites only.
7. Our approach is consistent with Reskin’s (2003) plea for less emphasis on motivation (which is difficult, if not impossible, to measure) and more attention to behaviors that have measurable implications for inequality.
8. Protestant Establishment presidents: George Washington, James Madison, James Monroe, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler, Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce, Chester A. Arthur, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Gerald Ford, and George H. W. Bush (all Episcopalian); Andrew Jackson, James Knox Polk, James Buchanan, Grover Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison, Woodrow Wilson, and Dwight D. Eisenhower (Presbyterian); Calvin Coolidge (Congregationalist). Other Colonial Elites: John Adams, John Quincy Adams, Millard Fillmore, and William Howard Taft (Unitarian); Herbert Hoover and Richard M. Nixon (Quaker). Other Protestants: Warren Harding, Harry S. Truman, Jimmy Carter, and William Jefferson Clinton (Baptist); Rutherford B. Hayes, Ulysses S. Grant, William McKinley, and George W. Bush (Methodist); James A. Garfield, Lyndon Baines Johnson, and Ronald Reagan (Disciples of Christ); Martin Van Buren and Theodore Roosevelt (Dutch Reformed). Others: Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Andrew Johnson (no religious affiliation); John F. Kennedy (Catholic).
9. The nation has never elected a Jewish president. In 2003, Joseph Lieberman was the first Jew (Orthodox) to campaign for president. Barry Goldwater had a Jewish background but was an Episcopalian when he ran for the presidency in 1963.
10. This finding is consistent with other studies that have compared the religious affiliations of political officeholders and the general population (Gaustad 1968; Matthews 1954; Mintz 1975; Mills 1956; Reiselbach 1973; Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1998).
11. This lack of parity is even more striking considering the fact that Catholics, Jews, and other groups in this category, such as Mormons, are above the national average in education, occupational status, and income (Roof and McKinney 1987).
12. In 2003, Catholics (with three justices) and Jews (with two) were overrepresented on the Court.
13. Interestingly, presidents Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan (both Other Protestants) chose members of the Protestant Establishment when they introduced racial and gender change on the Supreme Court. Both Thurgood Marshall, the first black justice on the Supreme Court, and Sandra Day O’Connor, the first woman, were Episcopalian.
14. One way to introduce change is through appointments to posts that have been reserved for members of specific religious groups. For example, there is some evidence of a Catholic seat on the cabinet beginning in 1933, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt chose James A. Farley (a Catholic) to be his Postmaster General. When Farley left office

in 1940, he was replaced by another Catholic, Frank C. Walker, who in turn was replaced by a Catholic in 1945 when Harry Truman selected Robert E. Hannegan. Catholics were one-fourth of President Bush's cabinet in 2003. With only occasional interruptions and overlaps, there also was a Catholic seat on the Supreme Court between 1836 and the 1980s. Occupants of that seat were Roger B. Taney (1836–1864), Edward D. White (1894–1921), Joseph McKenna (1898–1925), Pierce Butler (1923–1939), Frank Murphy (1940–1949), Sherman Minton (1949–1956), and William J. Brennan (1956–1990). With the appointments of Antonin Scalia (1986–), Anthony Kennedy (1988–), and Clarence Thomas (1991–), Catholics were one-third of the Court in 2003. Finally, from 1916 to 1969, there also was a Jewish seat on the Court. Its occupants were Louis D. Brandeis (1916–1939), Benjamin N. Cardozo (1932–1938), Felix Frankfurter (1939–1962), Arthur J. Goldberg (1962–1965), and Abe Fortas (1965–1969). Following Fortas, there was a 24-year gap, until President Clinton appointed two Jewish justices, Steven Breyer (1993–) and Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1994–). With these two appointments, Jews were overrepresented on the Court (22 percent) relative to the numbers in the U.S. population (about 2 percent) in 2003.

REFERENCES

- Abraham, H. J. 1974. *Justices and presidents: A political history of appointments to the Supreme Court*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Almanac of the Executive Branch*. 1997/98, 1999. Lanham, MD: Bernam Press.
- Baltzell, E. D. 1964. *The Protestant establishment*. New York: Random House.
- Davidson, J. D., R. E. Pyle, and D. Reyes. 1995. Persistence and change in the Protestant establishment, 1930–1992. *Social Forces* 74(1):157–75.
- Federal Staff Directory*. [1995] 1999. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Finke, R. and R. Stark. 1992. *The churching of America, 1776–1990*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Gaustad, E. 1962. *Historical atlas of religion in America*. New York: Harper and Row.
- . 1968. America's institutions of faith. In *Religion in America*, edited by W. McLoughlin and R. Bellah, pp. 111–30. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Hammond, P. E. 1992. *Religion and personal autonomy*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.
- Landis, B. 1962. *Yearbook of American churches*. New York: National Council of Churches.
- Loomis, B. 2001. The Senate: An "obstacle course" for executive appointments? In *Innocent until nominated: The breakdown of the presidential appointment process*, edited by G. C. Mackenzie, pp. 160–72. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.
- Mackenzie, G. C. 1981. *The politics of presidential appointments*. New York: Free Press.
- Matthews, D. R. 1954. *The social background of political decision-makers*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Mills, C. W. 1956. *The power elite*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mintz, B. 1975. The president's cabinet, 1897–1972: A contribution to the power structure debate. *Insurgent Sociologist* 5(3):131–48.
- Pyle, R. E. 1996. *Persistence and change in the Protestant establishment*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Pyle, R. E. and J. D. Davidson. 2003. The origins of religious stratification in colonial America. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42(1):57–75.
- Pyle, R. E. and J. R. Koch. 2001. The religious affiliations of American elites, 1930s to 1990s: A note on the pace of disestablishment. *Sociological Focus* 34(2):125–37.
- Reskin, B. 2003. Including mechanisms in our models of ascriptive inequality. *American Sociological Review* 68(1):1–21.
- Rieselbach, L. 1973. *Congressional politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Roof, W. C. and W. McKinney. 1987. *American mainline religion*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Sobel, R. 1990. *A biographical directory of the United States executive branch, 1774–1989*. New York: Greenwood.
- Zweigenhaft, R. L. and G. W. Domhoff. 1998. *Diversity in the power elite: Have women and minorities reached the top?* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

APPENDIX

**POPULATION PERCENTAGES (IN PARENTHESES) AND RATIOS
OF OFFICEHOLDERS TO EACH STRATUM'S PERCENTAGE
OF TOTAL POPULATION**

	1810	1880	1960
Protestant Establishment	(7%)	(7%)	(9%)
Presidents	7.1	7.4	3.7
Cabinet officers	8.7	6.8	4.7
Court justices	9.1	7.3	4.0
Other Colonial Elites	(3%)	(1%)	(0.3%)
Presidents	8.3	13.0	26.7
Cabinet officers	1.0	12.0	6.7
Court justices	2.3	13.0	20.0
Other Protestants	(13%)	(26%)	(40%)
Presidents	0.92	1.0	1.2
Cabinet officers	1.2	1.2	0.62
Court justices	2.0	0.88	0.60
Others	(78%)	(66%)	(50%)
Presidents	0.15	0.14	0.16
Cabinet officers	0.24	0.17	0.64
Court justices	0.05	0.18	0.66
Total adult population	2,290,627	25,263,096	110,704,000

Copyright of Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion is the property of Blackwell Publishing Limited. The copyright in an individual article may be maintained by the author in certain cases. Content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.