Political Science

Political Culture and Policy Liberalism in American States: A Test of a New Measure

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Introduction

In this research, I will be determining whether or not there is a difference in schemes to measure political culture to determine political liberalism. Political culture has shown a relationship in determining public policy for many years. I will compare Daniel Elazar's scheme on political culture to Colin Woodard's newly established political culture theory. This is an interesting research topic because, since its creation in 1966, Daniel Elazar's scheme has been widely used and regarded to as the most accurate way to predict political liberalism by the political science community. I am predicting that Colin Woodard's more detailed scheme on political culture will be a more accurate and effective way of determining state policy liberalism.

Political Culture and State Policy

The commonality of Elazar's scheme on political culture to determine public policy and political liberalism in the United States has been widely used. Rodney Hero and Caroline Tolbert (1996) tested a theory that "examines a new interpretation of politics in the states of the U.S.- that racial and ethnic diversity, and the levels and types of this diversity, are central to understanding politics and policy in the states." Because Daniel Elazar created his theory on political culture in the 1960's, political scientists quickly began to adopt this theory and deemed it effective enough to not need another one and, therefore, has been used since its creation. "State political culture is a variable with some similarities to state public opinion that is often employed in state policy research. State political culture is usually measured as a variant of Elazar's categorization of "Moralistic", "Individualistic", and "Traditionalistic" political cultures."(Elazar, 1972; Sharkansy, 1979; Kincaid, 1992). Woodard's new typology has yet to be compared to Elazar's. Why is testing Woodard's new typology important?

- Daniel Elazar's scheme has been widely used and regarded as the most accurate way to predict political liberalism by the political science community since its creation in 1966.

- Colin Woodard's theory was developed in 2013, so it is fairly new.

- This is the first study comparing Woodard and Elazar's political culture schemes to predict policy liberalism.

Could Woodard's scheme on political culture put an end to Elazar's fifty-year reign on political culture?

Measure and Methods

The dependent variable in the study is state policy liberalism. I used the state policy scores or policy liberalism scores from Sorens, Muedini, and Ruger (2008) ranged from -5 to 15 with -5 being the most conservative and 15 being the most liberal. In my research, I tested these relationships using per capita income as a control variable because policy liberalism is thought to be largely effected by the financial wellbeing of the people in each particular state; there was no change.

The independent variables used in this research were Woodard's scheme of political culture and Elazar's scheme of political culture. Woodard uses a system of eleven regional cultures, as shown in Figure 1, to determine political culture. In my research however, I used which ever regional culture had a majority of the state. Out of the eleven regional cultures, four of them, New France, New Netherland, The Left Coast and First Nation did not occupy a majority of any state in the United States therefore could not be used. There were a few states that were almost 50/50 and for those states I used their locations and the trends of the other states around their locations to code those particular states. The seven regional cultures used were: Yankeedom, The Midlands, Tidewater, Greater Appalachia, Deep South, El Norte, and The Far West. From the seven regional cultures I used in my research, I then went on to determine, in order, how liberal or conservative each of the regional cultures are according to Woodard's descriptions. I concluded that this was the order from most Conservative (1) to most Liberal (7): 1) Greater Appalachia, 2) Deep South, 3) Far West, 4) El Norte, 5) Tidewater, 6) The Midlands, 7) Yankeedom. See Table 1A for list of which states I coded in each regional culture.

Figure 1: Colin Woodard's Map of the Eleven Regional Cultures

Elazar on the other hand describes three subcultures within the United States, Traditionalistic, Individualistic, and Moralistic, based on the effects of ethnic and religious influences. I then went on to rate those subcultures by how conservative or liberal each was. I concluded that 1) Traditionalistic, 2) Individualistic, and 3) Moralistic. I made a list of descriptive statistics for each of my variables used in the research as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for indicators

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation
Elazar	2.02	0.84
Woodard	3.83	2.21
Policy Liberalism	0.52	5.35
Per Capita Income	3.83	2.21
N = 48		

I used many forms of testing to analyze this data. First, I used two linear regression model to determine the relationship and significance of the two forms of political culture on policy liberalism in states. I developed scatterplots of the data. As you will see in figures 2 and 3,

I used my coding's of the Woodard and Elazar political culture schemes as the x-axis and policy liberalism as the y-axis. Second, because policy liberalism is commonly known to be effected by income in a particular state, I also used multiple regression models with a control variable of per capita income.

Findings

The findings I have gathered in my research were surprising. As you can see in figure 2, Elazar's measures are less predictive then (Hero & Tolbert, 1996) would have thought.
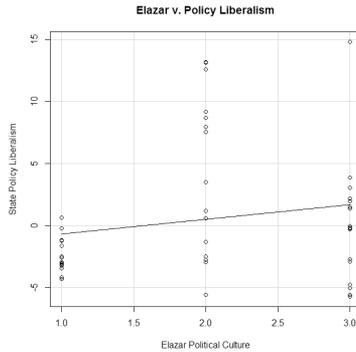

Figure 2: Relationship of policy liberalism in states (2010) with Elazar's political culture (r = 0.19 , p = 0.2032)

The individualistic states which I coded from Elazar's scheme, seem to be the states that are not very predictable as far as predicting policy liberalism goes. For the most part, besides a few outlier states, the moralistic and traditionalistic coded states are where you would expect them to be. The actual model is:

Policy Liberalism = -1.90 + 1.20 Political Culture (Elazar)
r = .19 p = 0.2032

This shows that every 1-unit increase in political culture leads to a 1.20% increase in policy liberalism. Using Elazar's scheme leads to a differential in effects. In his Traditionalistic states, where elite rule is used, political liberalism is very low. States that are Individualistic, where it is preferred to have an inactive government, show variation. The Moralistic states on the other hand, where the government is viewed as an egalitarian institution charged with pursuing social justice, show that about half of the states more conservative and half more liberal than the Traditionalistic states. The relationship is not strong (r = .19) and is not statistically significant.

Now looking at figure 3, we see that Woodard's scheme on political culture is more consistent in predicting policy liberalism in states.
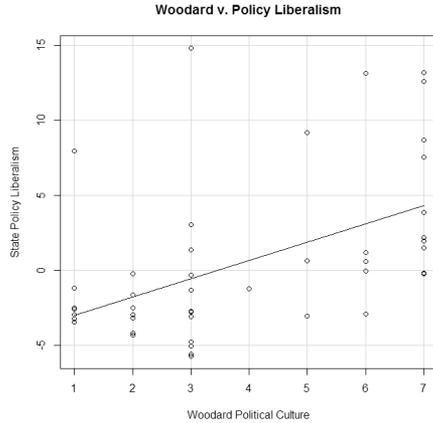
Woodard v. Policy Liberalism

Figure 3: Relationship of policy liberalism in states (2010) with Woodard's political culture
(r = .50 , p = 0.0003337)

Woodard's measure shows a stronger relationship. The actual model is:

Policy Liberalism = -4.23 + 1.22 Political Culture (Woodard)
r = .50 p = 0.0003337

This shows that every 1 unit increase in political culture leads to a 1.22% increase in policy liberalism. Woodard's scheme shows a stronger, statistically significant relationship to policy liberalism (r = .50) than does Elazar's. As the Woodard scale increases, policy liberalism in states increases.

The line of least squares shows a greater increase from the states I coded from Woodard's regional cultures, than does the least squares line from figure 3 in the Elazar scheme. Woodard's scheme does show some outlier states just as Elazar's did. In Woodard's scheme, three of the seven regional cultures showed outlier states. These states are Illinois in the Greater Appalachia region, California in the Far West region, and New Jersey in The Midlands region. For Elazar there was only one outlier and it was California in the Moralistic subculture. California was the only state that was an outlier in both Woodard and Elazar's schemes. The reason for California being so far apart from the rest of the states it was classified with may be because of the diversity in the state of California as a whole. The difference between Woodard and Elazar, however, is where the majority of the coded states are located. As we get to the more liberal regional cultures we can see that policy liberalism in those states also rises. We do not get the same effect when we look at Elazar's scheme.

I also tested Woodard and Elazar's political culture schemes using per capita income as a control variable since policy liberalism is widely believed to be effected by the income of the people in each particular state (Bureau of the Census, 2011):

Table 2: Regression Models for Elazar and Woodard Political Culture Typologies, Alone and Controlled for Income

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Elazar	1.19	0.51		
	$p = 0.20$	$p = 0.64$		
Woodard			1.22	1.38
			$p = 0.0003$	$p = 0.001$
Per Capita Income		-0.27		0.15
		$p = 0.25$		$p = 0.51$
Intercept	-1.90	3.50	-4.23	-7.03
R^2 (adjusted)	0.014	0.021	0.24	0.22
F	1.67	1.52	15.09	7.67
	$p = 0.20$	$p = 0.23$	$p = 0.0003$	$p = 0.0014$
N	48	48	48	48

In Table 2, we see that the results gathered with and without the control variable, per capita income, did not differentiate much at all. The table follows, and reinforces, the finding that Woodard's scheme is more accurate than Elazar's in predicting policy liberalism. In Table 2, when the control variable is added, there is no significant change in the results that we gathered. In fact, when the control variable is added, in Elazar's scheme the relationship weakens whereas the Woodard scheme strengthens its relationship. If there had been a significant change in the results after we added the control variable, the confidence I have in Woodard's scheme over Elazar's would not be as strong as it is.

Discussion and Conclusions

In my research, I found that the scheme that Daniel Elazar created in 1966 is no longer the most effective and accurate way to predict policy liberalism in states using political culture. The newly created scheme of political culture developed by Colin Woodard is the scheme political scientists should begin using for more accuracy on predicting policy liberalism in states. When comparing the results I gathered between Woodard and Elazar's schemes on political culture, we can

see a stronger relationship in every form of analysis, in favor of the Woodard scheme over the Elazar scheme.

Colin Woodard published his political culture scheme in 2013 and there are currently no known comparisons regarding whether or not his scheme is more accurate in determining state policy liberalism Elazar's. Woodard's recent scheme of political culture using regional cultures is more accurate in determining policy liberalism in states than Elazar's. Woodard's scheme shows a stronger relationship between political culture and political liberalism. There were a few outlier states in both Woodard and Elazar's coding schemes, but those did not have an effect on the outcome of the test.

Based on the results we have gathered, it is safe to say that Colin Woodard's scheme on political culture which uses regional cultures, is a more effective way of determining state policy liberalism than Daniel Elazar's scheme, which is based on the effects of ethnic and religious influences. In order to determine whether or not Woodard's scheme of political culture is in fact a reliable way to measure political liberalism, it is necessary for more research to be done. The Elazar scheme has been widely used for years to determine public policy, but after further testing, Woodard's scheme of political culture could be the new way to effectively and accurately determine public policy in the political science community.

Works Cited

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Appendix

Table 1A: Classification of States from Woodard's Political Culture Scheme

Greater Appalachia	Deep South	Far West	El Norte	Tidewater	The Midlands	Yankeedom
Illinois	Alabama	Arizona	New Mexico	Delaware	Iowa	Connecticut
Indiana Arkansas		California		Maryland	Kansas	Maine
Kentucky	Florida	Colorado		North Carolina	New Jersey	Massachusetts
Missouri	Georgia	Idaho		Virginia	Ohio	New Hampshire
Oklahoma	Louisiana	Montana		Pennsylvania	Minnesota	
Tennessee	Mississippi	North Dakota				New York
Texas	South Carolina	Oregon				Rhode Island
West Virginia		South Dakota				Vermont
		Utah				
		Washington				
		Wyoming				
		Nevada				
		Nebraska				