

# You Are What You Watch (And Listen To, And Read):

How Americans' Entertainment Habits Track Their Political Values  
Results from the Zogby/Lear Center Entertainment & Politics Survey

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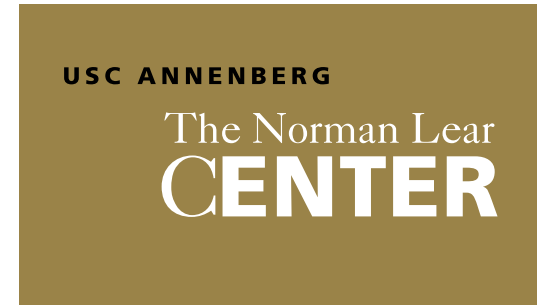
The Norman Lear  
**CENTER**



# ABOUT

## The Norman Lear Center

Based at the Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism at the University of Southern California, the Norman Lear Center is a multidisciplinary research and public policy center exploring implications of the convergence of entertainment, commerce, and society. On campus, the Lear Center builds bridges between eleven schools whose faculty study aspects of entertainment, media and culture. Beyond campus, it bridges the gap between the entertainment industry and academia, and between them and the public. For more information, please visit [www.learcenter.org](http://www.learcenter.org) or email [enter@usc.edu](mailto:enter@usc.edu).



## Zogby International

Zogby International, Inc. offers polling, market research, information, and business solutions and services on strategic information in North America, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and internationally. Its consulting/strategic planning services comprise analysis, business and campaign consulting, commentary, speeches and appearances, strategic solutions, and training/seminars; and information products and services include columns/articles, news releases, reports, and Zogby's real America newsletters. The company's market research services comprise community visioning, competitive and customer satisfaction analysis surveys, consumer tracks, demographic and sector analysis, dial testing/perception analyzing, economic impact studies, employee satisfaction surveys, ethnic demographics, feasibility studies, fundraising, interview methods, opinion leader interviews, panel researches, psycho-graphic profiles, and survey methods.



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**E**veryone knows that America is politically polarized. Over the past 25 years or so, regardless of the party in power, about 37% of the country has self-identified as liberal or progressive or Democratic or “Blue”; about 25% of the population has self-identified as conservative or Republican or “Red”, and the remaining 35% percent – call them moderates, independents, centrists, swing voters, or “Purples” – think of themselves as belonging to the political middle.

Does that polarization play out not only on the spectrum of political values, but also in other ways? Do Americans’ cultural preferences – the entertainment they like, the media they consume – also display a divided nation? Do our tastes in entertainment correlate to our beliefs about government, issues and society? Until recently, little data were available to answer those questions. But in the summer of 2007, a partnership between the USC Annenberg School for Communication’s Norman Lear Center and Zogby International decided to find out. With more than 25 years in opinion research, Zogby International was ideally positioned to measure public political and entertainment preferences, and eager to work with the Lear Center, whose mission is to study the impact of entertainment on society.

Using Zogby’s interactive panel, we fielded our first of a series of surveys in June of 2007. The initial findings, released in November of 2007, offered a number of insights into America’s political and entertainment cultures. Over the past few months, our teams have been collaborating closely to further analyze the data we collected. The results can be found in this report.

This study is planned as the first in a series of surveys answering questions about the interaction between America’s political and entertainment cultures. Our next survey, to be fielded in the next month, will include questions about magazine and newspaper preferences, online gaming and radio listenership.

These surveys will increase our understanding about the relationship between the public and private lives of Americans – between their civic attitudes and their leisure pursuits, and their perceptions about how they ought to behave as citizens, and how they prefer to behave as consumers. We hope to apply what we learn to broader ideas regarding what entertainment choices mean for politics, and what our political inclinations say about our entertainment preferences.

The first section of this report, *Primary Colors: Media and Entertainment Preferences Within Political Groups*, demonstrates that different political groups are living parallel cultural lives, tuning into their own subset of programming, listening to their own brand of music and playing the games that suit them best. The second section, *Paint by Numbers: Demographic Characteristics and Trends Within Political Groups*, describes the intricate relationship between ideological beliefs and gender, race, income, geography, religion and other group characteristics. Finally, section three, *NASCAR Dads and Security Moms? Swing Voters in Swing States*, examines the issue positions, entertainment preferences and demographics of citizens we have called “Purple-Purples” – swing voters in 16 swing states. This section, of particular interest given the expected battleground for the general election, suggests that Purple-Purples hold political positions quite distinct from Reds, Blues and Purples in the rest of the country. We hope you find these results to be as novel and intriguing as we do.

Sincerely,

*Martin Kaplan*  
*Director, Norman Lear Center*

*John Zogby*  
*President, Zogby International*

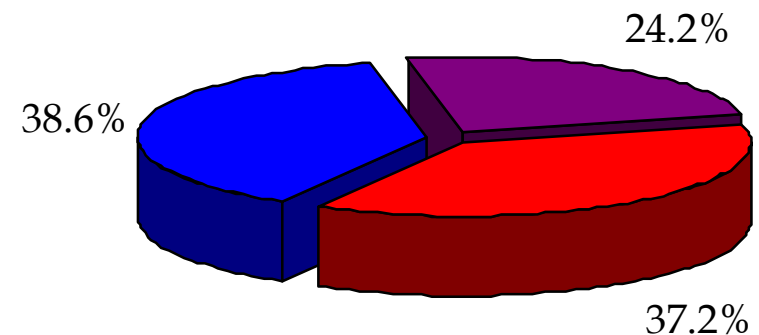
<sup>1</sup> More information about HH&S, as well as the other activities and publications of the Lear Center that are mentioned here, may be found at <http://learcenter.org>

# INTRODUCTION

A landmark Zogby International/Lear Center study, released in November 2007, profiled three major ideological groups and their entertainment preferences using contemporary Red-Blue terminology. The study used an iterative clustering technique to group a total of 3,939 respondents based on their positions on 21 political issues. The statistical analysis produced three significant clusters of respondents: “conservatives,” as we decided to call them, make up 37% of the national sample, while “liberals” comprise 39% and “moderates” 24%. The conservatives were then classified as “Reds,” the liberals were characterized as “Blues,” and moderates became the “Purples” representing the bleeding of the two polar ideological profiles in the center of the American ideological landscape. The same respondents were asked about their entertainment preferences, including their consumption of the most highly-rated TV shows, movies, and TV networks allowing us to create overarching political-entertainment profiles. Despite attempts by politicians of all stripes to minimize the apparent polarization of America, this study suggests that there are entrenched and fundamental demographic and entertainment differences among each ideological preference typology. Not only do Reds appreciate very different cultural and entertainment options than their Blue counterparts, they represent a unique socio-demographic profile. Notably, Purples (who may be called moderates, independents, undecideds or swing voters in the popular press) are not in the middle on all issues; instead, members of this group vacillate between the liberal and conservative ideological and entertainment poles, creating an issue-preference matrix that complicates political efforts to appeal to a crucial group of voters in tight elections. By using sophisticated statistical analysis techniques, the Zogby/Lear Center survey provides a clearer portrait of Purples than we’ve ever seen before. Given the salience of swing voters in swing states

(that is, Purples in Purple states), we have used the Zogby/Lear Center survey to examine the specific demographics and political and media preferences of this group, who will very likely play an outsized role in electing the next president of the United States.

Figure 1: Typology in America: Red, Blue, and Purple



## Notable Findings

### Part I: Entertainment Preferences

- Reds overwhelmingly (76%) believe that TV shows and movies “very often” contain political messages, but they are the least likely to say they learn anything about political issues from them.
- More than twice as many Blues say they’re very often attracted to program-

ming with political themes, compared to the rest of respondents.

- Nearly two in three Reds think it is possible to predict a person's politics when they know the person's entertainment preferences.
- While 22% of Reds said they "never" enjoy entertainment that reflects values other than their own, just 7% of Blues felt the same way.
- Over 80% of Blues admit that they are entertained by material that's in "bad taste." Almost 40% of Reds say they are never entertained by it.

## Part II: Political Ideology and Demographics

- Purples and Blues are more likely to be female and less likely to participate in elections than Reds.
- Reds are older and whiter than both Blues and Purples.
- Blacks constitute the largest non-white proportion of Purples. Their relatively more conservative religious views help to explain the moral and religious conservatism of Purples compared to Blues.
- Blues are significantly more urban than Reds or Purples.
- Purples are deeply skeptical about both the government and corporations. Reds are less accepting of industrial regulation than both Purples and Blues and are more interested in checking the government against excess power.
- Most Americans acknowledge the inevitability of an increasingly global economy and accept the need to embrace this eventuality through free trade. Purples and Blues are slightly more protectionist than Reds.
- Despite being more religious than Blues, Purples share their liberal stance on abortion, asserting that it is a "private decision between a woman and a doctor."
- Purples support the teaching of evolution as well as alternative theories (like Intelligent Design) in the nation's public schools.
- All Americans, regardless of religious beliefs or ideology, agree that the government should not be in the business of regulating morality.
- Both Purples and Blues fear US attempts to promote American values of freedom and democracy abroad, while also asserting their belief that the

War on Terror should be won through a diplomatic focus on fixing anti-American sentiment in the world.

- A significant proportion of Americans disapprove of affirmative action.

## Part III: Swing Voters in Swing States : Who are the Purple-Purples?

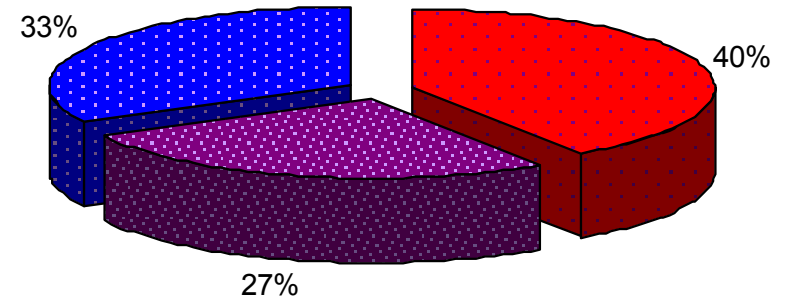
- Swing voters in swing states are more conservative on immigration issues than the nation at-large.
- They are more protectionist than any other group, including liberals and moderates in Red or Blue states.
- Purple-Purples are less inclined towards vouchers than the remainder of the country.
- Swing voters in swing states are less supportive of evolution-only science curricula than much of the rest of the country.
- This group is less supportive of military action in the global War on Terror than everyone else. They are also less likely to support the promotion of freedom and democracy abroad.
- They are more supportive of traditional marriage than the remainder of the country.
- Purple-purples are more supportive of gun rights than Blue state residents or moderates in Blue states.
- Compared to much of the remainder of the country, they are strongly oriented towards environmental stewardship.
- They are more likely to watch mainstream television networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) than everyone else, preferring network television hits like Dancing with the Stars, Desperate Housewives, CSI, and 60 Minutes. They are also more likely to enjoy late-night TV hosted by David Letterman and Jay Leno instead of Jon Stewart.
- Like Purples in other states and all Reds, Purple-Purples are significantly less drawn to entertainment that contains political themes or commentary.
- This group is slightly more likely than Purples in other states, or the nation overall, to have voted for Senator John Kerry in the 2004 election.

- Purple-Purples are less likely than Purples in other states and the nation overall to vote in national elections. Purple-Purples are also less likely than Blues or Reds in Purple States to vote.
- They are marginally more likely to be registered as independent than other Purples or anyone else, and they are less likely to be registered Republican than the remainder of the country or Purples overall.
- Demographically, this group is more middle-aged, less Hispanic, more African American, and less likely to be born again than the rest of the country. Purple-Purples are also more likely to be married, to have kids, and to be female.

Among survey respondents, 37.2% fell into the Red group, 38.6% were within the Blue group, and the remaining 24.2% fell into the Purple group. Ten percent of all respondents were moderates residing in swing states, 40.1% of all respondents resided in the 16 Swing states described below. Respondents from 22 Red states constituted 28% of the panel and respondents from the remaining 12 states (and the District of Columbia) represented 28.2% of survey respondents. Overall, these results suggest a notable pinching at the middle of the ideological spectrum with significantly more people inhabiting the poles than the center. Moderates occupy a nuanced middle-area often splitting the difference between conservative and liberal positions.

Moderates tend to be more economically liberal than conservatives, possibly a result of their relatively lower socio-economic status. These Purples are more inclined towards reality television than either conservatives or liberals and they are generally skeptical about programming with overtly political messages. Moderates are also more skeptical about the government’s role and more inclined towards private solutions to public problems than liberals, approving Social Security privatization by a slim majority. Moderates overwhelmingly support public education rather than private schooling.

Figure 2: Typology in Purple States: Reds, Blues, and Purples



Conservatives, on the other hand, appear generally dissatisfied with modern culture and its manifestations on television, in film, and across other forms of media. Reds are the least likely of any group to enjoy media in general and specific popular programming. Beyond Fox News and Fox, conservatives can largely be defined by the media and information sources that they dislike rather than like. On the other side of the spectrum, liberals are the most immersed and engaged in modern media. Liberals are considerably more likely than either other group to appreciate messages that contradict their own world-view.

This study broadens our understanding of what characterizes American political polarization. Not only are conservatives and liberals distinct politically, their media preferences are opposed. If, as many people assume, media choices significantly influence modern life – including what news we hear, what issues we find important, what products we buy, what ideas we are exposed to – this study, the first in a continuing series of Zogby/Norman Lear surveys, reflects the changing dynamics of the interacting effects of politics and media.

# PART I

## Primary Colors: Media and Entertainment Preferences Within Political Groups

In the case of music, TV, games, sports, film and books, this survey found that entertainment audiences fragment along ideological lines. Different political groups are living parallel cultural lives, tuning into their own subset of programming, listening to their own brand of music and playing the games that suit them best. In a politically divided nation, it can be difficult to have civil conversations across ideological lines. A mitigating factor in an atmosphere of political animosity can be a shared culture – a set of stories and a series of pastimes that can unite a country divided by political battles. What happens when the cultural touchstones have disappeared? Conceivably, ideological divides are further reinforced. This survey found that conservatives do not enjoy entertainment that does not reflect their values, which provides an incentive for the market to offer entertainment fare custom-made for conservative audiences. Moderates also have a distinct entertainment profile and broadcast networks cater to their apolitical tastes, offering a slate of programming that attempts to avoid explicit engagements with politics. Liberals are the most likely to sample entertainment fare from across the ideological spectrum, but, as media channels continue to proliferate, audiences will further fragment, and the possibility of a shared culture increasingly seems beyond our reach.

### Thumbnail Sketches

Here is a brief summary of the entertainment preferences of the three political typologies:

## Red Taste

People with Red taste think a lot of entertainment programming is in bad taste and doesn't reflect their values. They don't like a lot of things on TV, but their two favorite channels are Fox and Fox News. They like sports, especially football and auto racing, and they watch news and business programming. They don't like most contemporary music and they don't watch VH1 or MTV. They don't much like late-night TV. They like to go to sporting events and when they do go to the movies, which is rarely, they seek out action-adventure films. They're not big book readers, but when they do read, they prefer non-fiction. When they read fiction, they often select mysteries and thrillers. They are more likely to listen to country and gospel than other people, but their favorite music is classical. They don't play a lot of video games, but when they do, Madden NFL and Mario are their favorites. They think that fictional TV shows and movies are politically biased, and they believe they can predict a person's politics if they know the person's entertainment preferences.

## Blue Taste

People with Blue taste like a lot of different types of entertainment, even if it doesn't reflect their taste or values. They shy away from a lot of primetime programming, especially game shows and reality TV, but they like comedies, drama, documentaries, news and arts and educational programming. They love 60 Minutes, PBS, HBO, Comedy Central and The Daily Show. They go to the movies, where they often see comedies, and they like to go to live theater and museums and galleries. They read books more often than most people – they prefer fic-



tion to non-fiction, but their favorite genre is politics and current events. They enjoy entertainment with political themes, and they feel like they learn about politics from entertainment. Sports are less interesting to them, but football is their favorite, and they're more likely to follow soccer than other people. They like lots of different kinds of music (except country) and they watch MTV and VH1. They play video games a lot more than other people – Mario and The Sims are favorites.

### Purple Taste

People with Purple taste like all the broadcast networks and a lot of primetime programming, including police procedurals, game shows and reality programming. They watch a lot of Fox News, and they like daytime and children's programming more than other people. Moderates like to read non-fiction, including self-help books and biographies, but they like mysteries and thrillers best. Rock music is their favorite – they don't like classical or folk music as much as other people. Their favorite video games are Mario, Donkey Kong and Madden NFL. They don't seek out entertainment with political themes, and they are far less likely to read books about politics or current events than other people. They are less likely than other people to think that they can predict a person's politics based on their entertainment preferences.

### Entertainment Preferences by the Numbers

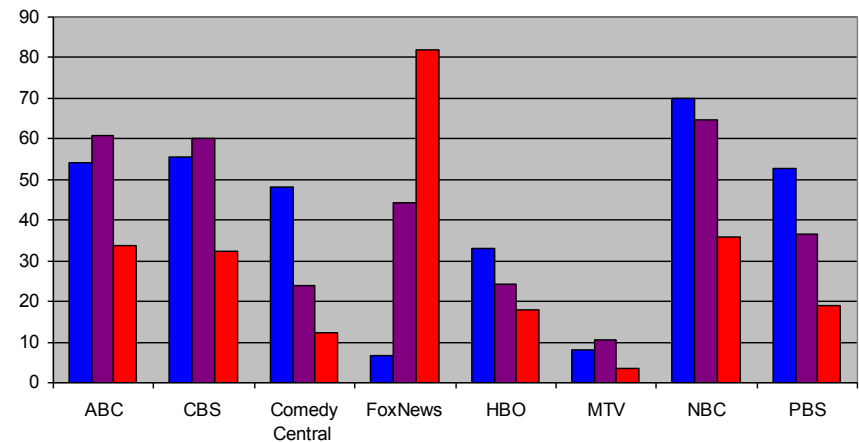
#### TV Networks

Compared to all other respondents, conservatives are more likely to watch only two channels out of the 24 highest-rated networks: Fox and Fox News. Fox News is the most politically divisive TV channel, with 70% of conservatives watching it daily and only 3% of liberals. Moderates are also frequent viewers of Fox News, where over 27% tune in daily. Perhaps more surprising is the conservative preference for the Fox broadcast network, with over twice as many conser-

vatives watching it daily, compared to all other respondents. Fox – the home of anti-authority satires like The Simpsons, Family Guy and MADtv – draws daily more than three times as many conservatives as liberals. The "Fox" brand name may be one that conservatives have come to trust for both news and entertainment offerings.

The least favored networks among conservatives are MTV (82% never watch it) and Univision (84%). Twenty-seven percent of conservatives report that they never watch NBC, compared to 8% of all other respondents, making it their least favorite broadcast network. Liberals, however, prefer it to all other broadcasters, with almost 70% watching it on a daily or weekly basis. Unlike conservatives, moderates watch all the broadcast networks, and, like the liberals, NBC is their favorite, with 37% watching daily. Liberals are the strongest fans of Comedy Central, with 31% watching it daily, compared to 6% of all other respondents.

Figure 3: TV Network Viewership (>Weekly)



### TV and Film Genres

#### Blue Genres

Arts  
Comedy  
Drama  
News  
Educational  
Documentary

#### Purple Genres

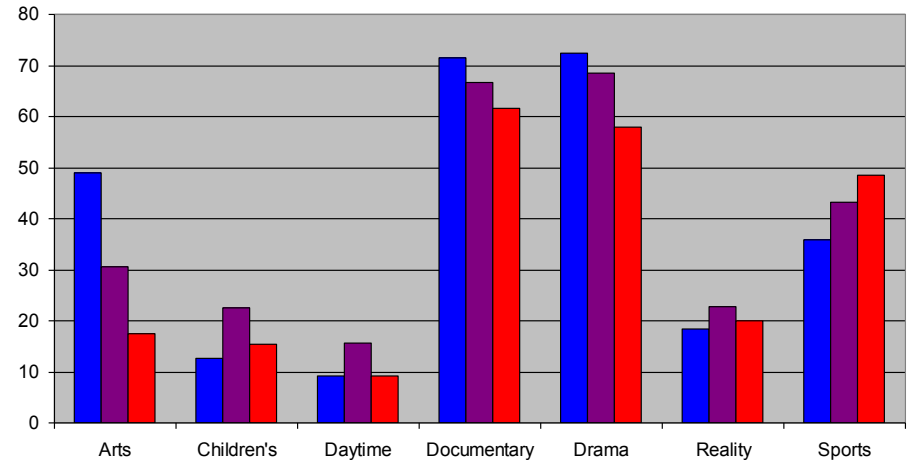
Daytime  
Children  
Drama  
Movies  
Educational

#### Red Genres

Action Adventure  
Sports  
Business

While conservatives, who are 57% male, are more likely than all other respondents to watch action-adventures and business and sports programming; liberals, who are 57% female, are more likely to tune into dramas, comedies, documentaries, and arts and educational programming. Out of 15 TV and film genres, “arts” emerged as the one with the highest positive correlation to liberal viewers and the highest negative correlation to conservative viewers. While 48% of liberals prefer arts programming, only 17% of conservatives do. At the other end of the scale, less than 5% of liberals say they do not like the genre at all, compared to almost 25% of conservatives. Liberals demonstrated a preference for more genres than any group, but they are not fans of game show or reality programming. Compared to other respondents, moderates are more likely to watch children’s and daytime programming.

Figure 4: TV and Film Genres (High Preference)



#### TV Shows

More than twice as many liberals say they are very often attracted to programming with political themes, compared to the rest of respondents. This is reflected in their TV show preferences, with 60 Minutes and Brothers and Sisters topping the list of shows most closely associated with liberal viewers. Although Brothers and Sisters features an outspoken conservative character, 94% of conservatives said they never watch it. Out of 20 top-rated TV programs, the one conservatives are most likely to tune out is 60 Minutes (almost 68% say they never watch it, compared to 27% of all other respondents). Although some news reports have claimed that Desperate Housewives is popular among conservatives, the survey found that conservatives are actually the group least likely to watch it. After controlling for gender, the survey found that conservative women are the least likely to be viewers of Desperate Housewives, compared to liberal and moderate women. Both conservative men and women prefer Sunday Night Football. Late-night programming fares poorly with conservatives, with more than 32% saying they never watch nighttime talk shows. Offered a range of nighttime choices, 22% of conservatives picked Jay Leno, while almost 54% of liberals selected Jon Stewart.

## Leisure Activities

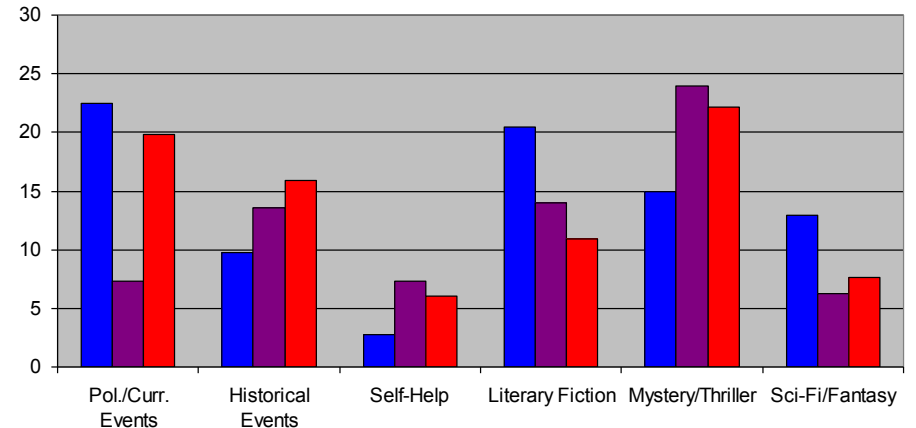
It is more likely to find conservatives at sporting events than at movie theaters, live theater or museums and galleries. For liberals, the reverse is true. Twenty-one percent of conservatives say they never go the movies, compared to less than 9% of liberals. When they do go, the biggest draw is action-adventure movies (35%), while liberals rank comedies (26%) and dramas (25%) highest.

## Books

Conservatives and liberals are more likely than moderates to read books. Liberals are almost twice as likely as conservatives to read literary fiction (11% to 20%) and they are also more likely to read science fiction/fantasy than moderates (8% to 13%). Both moderates and conservatives favor mystery/thrillers while liberals (22%) and conservatives (20%) prefer books about politics and current events.

While liberals like non-fiction and fiction equally, moderates and conservatives prefer non-fiction. Moderates are more likely to read self-help books (liberals are the least likely to read them) and biographies and memoirs are most popular among moderates, but books about historical events are most popular among conservatives.

Figure 5: Preferred Book Genres



## Music

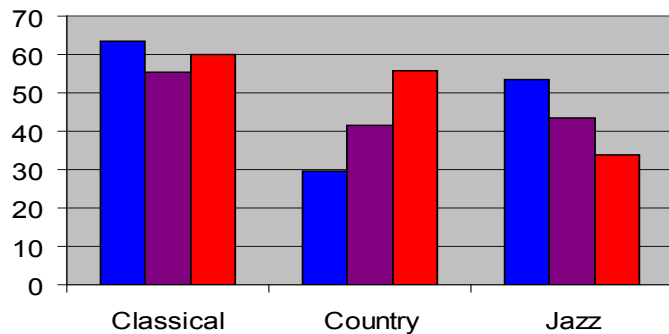
Out of 15 musical genres, conservatives were more likely than the rest of the respondents to listen to only two of them: country and gospel. The least popular genre among conservatives was world music – not punk or hip-hop, as some may have expected. World music is also the genre where we see the greatest difference between conservatives and liberals. Conservatives are the least likely group to listen to jazz (34% vs. 44% vs. 53%) or reggae (8% vs. 20% vs. 26%). Over 90% of conservatives said they “never enjoy” reggae, electronic music or Latin music. Over 95% said they never enjoy world music or punk music.

Liberals, on the other hand, are more likely than other respondents to enjoy almost every music genre, including world, punk, Latin, hip-hop and rap, blues, reggae, electronica, R&B and soul, jazz, folk and traditional music. Rock was the most popular genre among liberals (67%).

Although all political types claimed they enjoy classical music, moderates were

the least enamored with it (56% listen to it compared to almost 62% of the rest of respondents). Moderates also showed their distaste for folk and traditional music (73% said they do not listen to it, compared to 62% of the rest of the respondents), and they joined conservatives in their distaste for world music (90% said they do not listen to it, compared to 71% of liberals.) Moderates' favorite music is rock (58%). Conservatives' favorite music is classical (60%) followed by country (56%) and rock (55%).

Figure 6: Music Preference:



### Movies

The survey asked respondents to indicate which of the most popular movies they had seen in late 2006 and early 2007: conservatives weren't significantly more likely to have seen any of them. The movie that they were least likely to have seen, compared to moderates and liberals, was the religion-themed blockbuster *The Da Vinci Code*. Compared to moderates and conservatives, liberals were more likely to have seen *The Da Vinci Code*, as well as *Borat* and *The Departed*, two of only three R-rated films on the list. The movie that the most moderates had seen was *The Da Vinci Code* (44%).

### Video Games and Sports

For all political types, football was the most popular sport, and rodeo was the least popular. Conservatives do not play video games as much as other groups, but football scores very high for conservatives (62%), and so does the Madden NFL video game franchise (Madden and Mario were the most popular games among conservatives). *Sunday Night Football* is also one of their favorite shows, with over 30% watching it every week. Football is also the favorite sport among liberals, with almost 49% saying they enjoy it. Compared to all other respondents, liberals prefer soccer and tennis, but they dislike auto racing and rodeo.

Moderates' favorite games were Mario (14%), Donkey Kong (12%) and Madden NFL (11%). Although liberals are more likely to play *Grand Theft Auto* than other groups, conservatives favor auto racing. Conservatives are four times more likely than liberals to follow NASCAR (5% vs. 20%).

### Mixing Entertainment and Politics

Conservatives overwhelmingly believe that TV shows and movies contain political messages, but they are the least likely to say they learn anything about political issues from them. Liberals say they seek out entertainment that contains political themes and commentary, while moderates avoid entertainment with political themes. Compared to conservatives and liberals, they are three times less likely to read a book on politics or current events. Moderates are less confident than all other respondents that they would be able to predict a person's politics based on their entertainment preferences. Conservatives are the most confident that they could.

### A Common Culture?

Here are some examples of entertainment with broad appeal across ideological categories:

- **House:** the only TV show in our survey that was popular across the political spectrum.
- **News:** over 70% of each political group said they watch the news everyday.
- **Football:** in almost every demographic category, and across the ideological spectrum, football is the most popular sport. Sunday Night Football has a stronger conservative following, but it is very popular among moderates and liberals, as well.
- **The Da Vinci Code:** in almost every demographic category, except for the ultra-religious, this was the movie seen by the most people.
- **Movies:** although moderates like them best, movies are very popular for every political type.
- **Classical music:** although moderates are less enamored with it, classical music barely nudged ahead of rock as the most popular music genre overall.
- **Mario:** although conservatives slightly prefer Madden NFL, Mario was the most popular game across the political spectrum.

### Subgroup Analysis

By breaking out subgroups based on party affiliation (i.e., conservative Republicans, conservative Independents, moderate Republicans, moderate Independents, moderate Democrats, liberal Independents and liberal Democrats), we found that the political typology groups identified in this survey (conservative, moderate and liberal) are more coherent in terms of entertainment preferences than groups based on party affiliation (Republican, Democrat, Independent). This is especially apparent with Independents:

- Sixty percent of conservative Independents watch the Discovery Channel frequently, compared to 41% of liberal Independents.
- Thirty-eight percent of conservative Independents watch ESPN, compared to 21% of moderate Independents.
- Twenty percent of moderate Independents frequently watch Dancing with

the Stars, compared to 8% of liberal Independents.

- Thirty-two percent of conservative Independents watch NBC frequently, compared to 70% of liberal Independents.
- Moderate Independents are three times more likely to watch Two and a Half Men than conservative Independents.
- Seventeen percent of conservative Independents watch PBS frequently, compared to 52% of liberal Independents.
- Moderate Independents like Law & Order much more than conservative or liberal Independents.
- Twenty-nine percent of conservative Independents watch TBS frequently, compared to 19% of liberal Independents.

### Conclusions

The typology generated from the Zogby/Lear Center survey reveals a polarized political culture, which is reflected most powerfully in people's TV network, genre and program choices. The political middle-ground is occupied by only 24% of respondents. This group, which is 62% female, is less interested in politics than the other two groups, and its members seem less confident about their knowledge of politics. Overall, this group finds the big broadcast networks and primetime programming most appealing. This does not bode well for networks, who have alienated the majority by trying to make their programming appealing to the middle. We can infer from the data that conservatives think most TV programming has a liberal bias. Perhaps this is why they prefer non-fictional programming – sports, business, news, reality and game shows. Action-adventure, which is the favored genre among conservatives, is conventionally perceived as the most politically conservative fictional genre. While conservatives see a disconnect between their own political views and most of the entertainment options available to them, moderates do not see a strong connection between entertainment and politics at all. Liberals see the connection, and they pursue entertainment that explores political themes, even if the material does not reflect their values or taste.

**Liberals, however, do not appear to believe that most TV programming is geared toward them – especially primetime programming on broadcast networks. They are disinclined to watch game shows, reality programming or police procedurals – staples of primetime lineups. This may help to explain why they are more likely to subscribe to HBO and why they go to movies more often than other groups.**

**The results from questions about leisure activities bolsters the argument that, compared to conservatives, liberals are more interested in entertainment that is fictional: they prefer scripted TV shows, they like going to plays, and they enjoy literary fiction and science fiction/fantasy. Since this is the largest group in the sample (and 57% female), this suggests that there is a sizable audience for artistic programming in this country.**

**Liberals are voracious in their entertainment consumption, partly because they are willing to consume entertainment that does not reflect their values or their own personal taste. They may also find entertainment more appealing than other groups because they believe there is an educational potential there, even in fictional material. Liberals also seek out TV programming that may have educational benefits, including fictional programming that can teach them about political issues. Perhaps liberals regard the consumption of entertainment as a productive leisure activity, which contributes to their knowledge about the world. Conservatives, on the other hand, appear to be more comfortable with entertainment that closely adheres to reality and to their own world view. They may believe that time spent consuming entertainment products is time wasted.**

# PART II

## Paint by Numbers: Demographic Characteristics and Trends Within Political Groups

The cultural divide among liberals, conservatives, and moderates is abundantly clear from the discussion in Part I. Each group has evidently distinctive media preferences. While certain forms of entertainment are unifying, such as classical music and news viewership, the methods by which each group view and interpret these forms of media is different – seemingly framed by their political preferences and demographic dispositions. As will be discussed further below, demographics, as much as culture, divides each group. Liberals, generally, favor the government, and conservatives favor personal independence and small government. For moderates, the government serves as a necessary equalizer for the less fortunate, ensuring a degree of protection against corporate greed and unexpected economic misfortune – leveling the playing field, but allowing individual ingenuity and ambition to accomplish personal goals.

Moderates tend to be more religious than their liberal counterparts, but they are also more accepting of alternative viewpoints than conservatives. Moderates are more likely than liberals to support public morality and traditional marriage between a man and a woman. They are also more likely to accommodate religious precepts in schools, supporting two to one the teaching of evolution along with alternative theories. Yet, moderates also support abortion rights for women. Nuance balances these divergent ideological inclinations. While the government can be dangerous when it wields too much power, it is a necessary evil for moderates, who hope to embody the American Dream through hard work and perspicacity.

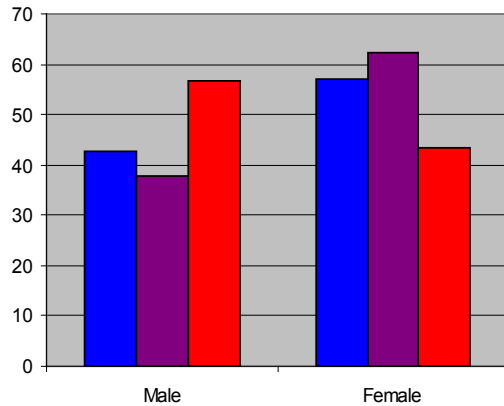
### Ideology by the Numbers

#### Political Participation and the Gender Gap

Moderates (96%) are slightly less likely to vote in national elections than either conservatives (99.3%) or liberals (98.8%). Of those reporting that they were somewhat or not likely to vote, moderates constitute 59.3%. It is important to note when reviewing survey data on projected political participation that there is a high over-response rate. Survey respondents notoriously report behavior that reflects civic virtue, but not necessarily their intended behavior. The fact that moderates seem more unabashedly unlikely to participate suggests either a discomfort or unfamiliarity with the system or an apathy bred of distaste. While political parties try to mobilize the quarter of the population that are Independents, these results potentially suggest that moderates are not attracted by either party or the process itself.

A gender gap is starkly evident in this data. Women constitute a majority of both moderates (62.3%) and liberals (57.2%), while men represent 56.7% of conservatives. With the growing importance of women in the electorate (upwards of 57% of New Hampshire primary voters), these results portend electoral gender gaps well into the future, but also suggest that gender is a useful predictor of ideology. The different distributions of gender within each ideological group also help to explain the difference in opinions towards issues of compassion. Only 56% of conservatives indicated that “it is our duty to help the less fortunate;” 98.2% of liberals and 77.1% of moderates agreed with this statement.

Figure 7: Gender Gap



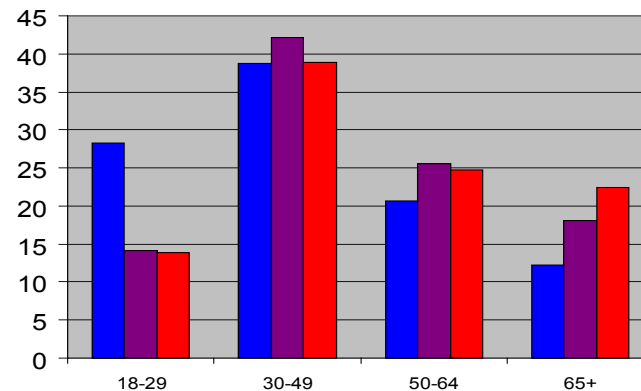
The fact that most moderates are female may also help explain the apparent participation gap described above. More than 62% of moderates are female and women represent 78.7% of those indicating that they are “somewhat” or “not” likely to vote in the next national election. Regardless, female moderates (5.6%) are less likely than either female conservatives (0%) or female liberals (1.7%) to report that they are “somewhat likely” to vote in the upcoming presidential election. Previous research suggests that individuals who are less politically empowered, those who feel less informed about or engaged in the process, are also less likely to participate or feel that their votes make a difference.

Generation Gap

Conservatives are significantly more likely to be elderly (65+) than members of the other groups. Nearly a quarter of conservatives (22.5%) are over the age of 65, while only 18.1% of moderates and 12.3% of liberals are similarly aged. Almost half (47.8%) of survey respondents over the age of 65 fell into the Red group, whereas, 56% of those aged 18-29 were liberal. This generational divide is seemingly offset by the relative moderation of those in the prime child-

bearing and rearing years (30-49 years old). Approximately two-fifths (42%) of moderates were born between 1958 and 1977. Additionally, 67.7% of moderates are middle-aged (30-64 years old) compared to 59.3% of liberals and 63.7% of conservatives. This moderate differential in the age distribution indicates either a conservatism that develops with age or specific generational characteristics produce these ideological inclinations. Late baby-boomers appear to be the bridge between their more conservative parents and their more liberal children. A full 50.8% of those respondents over 70 were conservatives.

Figure 8: Age Distribution



Race

Conservatives (82.9%) are significantly whiter than either moderates (70%) or liberals (69.5%). African Americans constitute a larger proportion of moderates (16.8%) than they do either liberals (13.6%) or conservatives (5.4%). African Americans, generally, constitute a safe Democratic constituency; the fact that nearly 36% of blacks are moderates may belie a complicated interaction between race and religion. Fully 41.5% of blacks attend church at least once a week compared to 35.1% of whites. The high degree of religiosity among blacks balanced by historical racism and poverty appear to interact helping to produce the unusual moral positions of moderates. Blacks (65.9%) are more



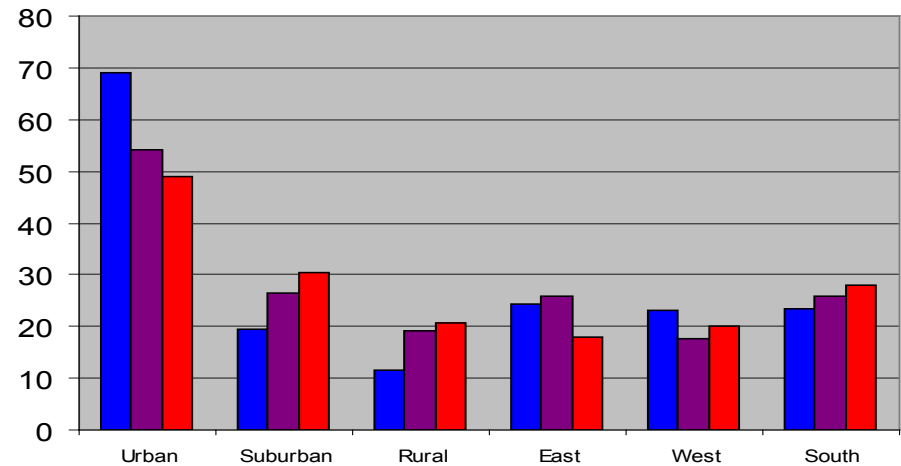
likely than whites (58.8%) to support teaching evolution side by side with other theories. African Americans (63.7%) are also slightly more likely than whites (57.4%) to support traditional marriage. However, blacks (76.9%) are more likely than whites (62%) to support abortion rights, helping to explain why 74.3% of conservatives believe that abortion is murder and 73.3% of moderates believe it is a private decision between a woman and her doctor.

The subtle balance between religion and historical economic disadvantage produces a unique ideological profile among moderates. Blacks appear to cleave more closely with their liberal economic stances when selecting a party, with 68.9% of blacks being Democrats and an additional 17.4% adopting the Independent moniker. Interestingly, 70.9% of moderates do not support affirmative action despite the fact that 74.6% of blacks support it. These results reinforce the notion that racial identity still plays an important role in the development of ideology.

### Residency

Liberals are much more likely to live in urban areas (68.9%) and significantly less likely to live in rural areas (11.6%). Conservatives (20.6%) and moderates (19.3%) are equally likely to live in rural areas, suggesting that socio-economics, gender, race, and generational factors may contribute more to ideology than mere geography. Moreover, Purples (26.6%) are less likely than Reds (30.4%) to live in suburbs and more likely to live in urban areas (54.1%) than conservatives (49%). Members of each ideological group can be found in every region of the country; however, consistent with political and electoral stereotypes, liberals are slightly more likely to live in the East and West (47.4% of liberals compared to 37.9% of conservatives) than in the South and Midwest (52.6% of liberals compared to 62.1% of conservatives). One-quarter of moderates live in the East (25.8%) and an additional quarter (25.9%) live in the South.

Figure 9: Political Geography



The fact that liberals are more likely to live in urban spaces with significant cultural diversity as well as entertainment options helps to explain why liberals are more likely to go to museums periodically (47.9% go a few times a year), compared to 26.3% of moderates and 26.2% of conservatives. Liberals are also considerably more likely (69.5%) to attend live theater at least once a year than their moderate (58.3%) or conservative (55.3%) counterparts. It is unclear whether liberals choose to live in cities or whether cities help make people liberal, but it is evident that liberals have more cosmopolitan beliefs than both moderates and conservatives. More than half (50.7%) of liberals considered themselves to be residents of the world or planet compared to the majority of both moderates (76.5%) and conservatives (98.3%) who thought of themselves as residents of America or their hometown. This more globally oriented perspective, as well as the greater frequency of international travel as suggested by passport possession (57.8% of Blues hold a passport compared to 51.3% and 45% of Reds and Purples, respectively), reinforces the more restrained liberal stances on military force and democracy promotion around the world. Moderates and liberals support diplomacy and disapprove of government efforts to promote democracy and freedom abroad for very different reasons. Moder-

ates, who generally fear government more than liberals, appear to have greater problems with forcing ideas (like morality or evolution) upon those that are not receptive to them. While liberals' foreign policy positions are bred of cosmopolitanism, moderates' positions grow out of their precarious position at the center of an often heated ideological debate.

## Religion

Conservatives are significantly more likely to identify as members of mainstream faiths (Catholicism and Protestantism) than liberals. Moreover, conservatives are significantly more likely (50.4%) to attend religious services frequently (one or more times a week), than either moderates (38.7%) or liberals (20.5%). Generally, conservatives are more devoutly religious than liberals, but more than a quarter (25.7%) of this group rarely attends religious services compared to a third of both the moderates (31.4%) and liberals (35.9%). The frequency of church attendance among conservatives appears to correlate highly with evangelical religious identification: 61.8% attend church monthly, while 62.4% of this group similarly considers themselves to be "born again." Likewise, 52% of moderates regularly attend church, compared with the 44.3% of this group that considers themselves to be "born again." Religious fervor and identification appear to track closely with ideological typology. The more devout an individual, the more likely they are to be conservative.

Despite the fact that conservatives and moderates are religious, they and liberals are opposed to the government regulating morality. More than four-fifths (81.4%) of conservatives assert that religion should play a greater role in public life, but this public faith should not be provoked by government compulsion (64.8%). The perceived depravity of American society discourages conservatives, but the threat of the government impeding in their personal religious lives frightens them more than the absence of religion in the public square. For liberals, their opposition to regulated morality (95.1%) grows out of social libertarianism and a belief in the rights of individuals to have the liberty to con-

duct themselves as they choose. According to liberals, the Constitution should not be shrouded in religious faith, but the diversity of beliefs in America should be respected (21.7% of liberals support teaching both evolution and other theories in schools).

## Home Life

Liberals (18%) are less likely to have children under the age of 17 than either conservatives (32%) or moderates (28.7%), and they are much more likely to be divorced, separated, widowed or domestically partnered than the other groups. Due to their relative youth or because of their more progressive beliefs, liberals are also much more likely to have never been married (33.5%). Only 19.9% of moderates and 7.4% of conservatives are similarly single.

Moderates (6.5%) and liberals (7.4%) are slightly more likely than conservatives to be lower-income with a household income less than \$25,000/year, compared to 3.3% of conservatives in this bracket. Household income appears to be less predictive of ideology than generally assumed. Between 38-39% of all ideological groups fall within the middle quintiles of American household incomes (\$35-75,000/year). Almost half (49.7%) of conservatives report income greater than \$75,000/year, while only 44.2% of moderates and 42.7% of liberals report similar income. Regardless of these facts, income does not seem to be a statistically significant aspect of ideology in this survey. Despite the inconclusiveness of income, conservatives (57.7%) are much more likely to consider themselves to be investors than moderates (38.8%) or liberals (35.2%) suggesting that they have more disposable income to invest in stocks, bonds or property and are potentially more risk-accepting or have more faith in the market system than their more liberal peers.

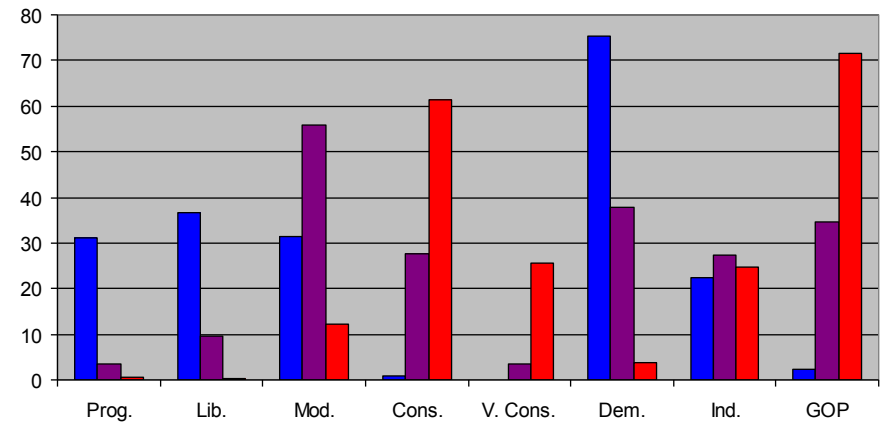
Regardless of ideology, approximately a third of respondents report rarely (1-2 times a year) shopping at Wal-Mart. Overall, conservatives and moderates are more likely to frequent Wal-Mart on a weekly or monthly basis. Nearly 59% of

conservatives shop at Wal-Mart more than once a month, compared to 48.3% of moderates and only 22.8% of liberals. A plurality (45%) of liberal individuals never shops at Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart's poor labor record and liberal publicity campaigns like "Wake Up Wal-Mart" may dissuade liberal (21.9%) and moderate (21.1%) union members from shopping in its mega-stores. Such a significant shopping preference differential among ideological groups likely reflects the influence of geographical and socio-economic factors reinforcing ideological identification.

### Self-Identified Partisanship and Ideology

Moderates are much more likely to identify themselves as "moderates" than either Red or Blue respondents. Moderates are slightly skewed towards the conservative end of the ideological spectrum according to self-reports with 10.1% of moderates classifying themselves to be left of center, as either "liberals" or "progressives," and 31.2% positioning themselves right of center. The remaining 55.8% of moderates perceptively characterized themselves as "moderates." Interestingly, Blues (31.5%) were much more likely than Reds (12.1%) to identify themselves as "moderates." This bias against declaring oneself to be "liberal" may reflect the social stigma frequently associated with liberalism. People who truly have liberal ideological inclinations may decide to classify themselves as "moderate" in order to avoid recrimination.

Figure 10: Partisanship and Ideology



Respondents generally sort themselves into the political parties most consistent with their ideological beliefs. Liberals are much more likely (75.3%) to register as Democrats than either moderates (37.9%) or conservatives (3.7%). Conservatives are equally more likely (71.7%) to register as Republicans than as moderates (34.7%) or liberals (2.3%). Moderates are evenly divided among parties, registering slightly more as Democrats (37.9%) than Republicans (34.7%). Remarkably, nearly equal proportions of liberals (22.4%), moderates (27.4%), and conservatives (24.6%) consider themselves to be Independents. As expected, moderates are marginally more likely to register as Independents and less likely (72.6%), overall, to register with either party than the more ideologically polarized conservatives (75.4% with either party) and Liberals (77.6%). Moderates constitute 23.1% of Democrats, 23.3% of Republicans, and 27.1% of Independents. Presidential voting behavior in 2004 also reflects the polarization among conservatives and liberals and the moderate middle. Members of the Purple group were nearly equally divided in the 2004 election between President Bush (50.3%) and Senator Kerry (48%). Meanwhile, 98.6% of conservatives voted for President Bush and 95.6% of liberals voted for Kerry. The moderates almost perfectly represent the final vote tally for Bush (50.7%) and Kerry (48.3%).

## Conclusions

**Demographic factors help to construct different ideological typologies that can be best described as moderately blurred matrices of similar characteristics on income, race, gender and residency characteristics. Whites are more likely to be conservative, blacks liberal. Urban inhabitants are more liberal, rural area residents are more conservative. Such simple statements, however, fail to account for the incredible degree of nuance evident in the data. It is true that liberals, on average, are younger and more urban, while Reds are more likely to be over 65 years of age (22.5% compared to 18.1% of the Purple group and 12.3% of the Blue group) and inhabitants of the nation's rural regions, but moderates share many characteristics with both liberals and conservatives. Religion, race, and socio-economics interact to produce a rich middle ground in American politics, an area occupied by a sizeable and often ignored minority of the population.**

# PART III

## NASCAR Dads and Security Moms? Swing Voters in Swing States

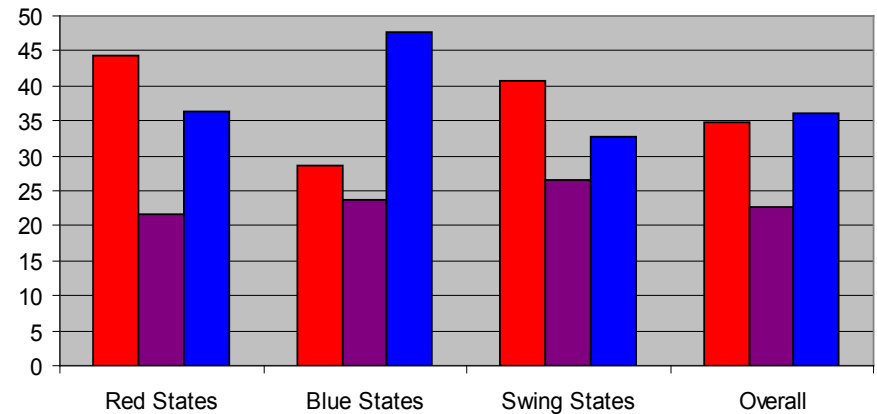
The abundance of information in the Zogby/Lear Center poll, released almost a year to the day before the November 2008 General Election, provides a unique opportunity to explore the most sought after and discussed group: Purple-Purples, moderates living in so-called swing states. These 16 states represent the most hotly contested races in 2004 and promise to be some of the most competitive states for this year’s presidential contenders. On average, President Bush won 50.1% of the vote in these Purple states – earning 103 electoral votes out of an available 171 (60.2%). As Table 1 shows, the electorate of Swing states were much more closely divided than the electorates in either Red or Blue states. The average margin of President Bush over Senator Kerry in Swing states was 1.27 points; in Red States, Bush won with an average of 23 points, and in Blue states Kerry won by an average of 18 points. Clearly, presidential victory hinges on winning over the hearts and minds of swing voters in important swing states like Iowa and New Mexico, the only two states to switch from Gore to Bush in 2004. The ability of candidates to appeal to these voters depends upon their ability to comprehend the complex interaction between political inclinations and entertainment preferences.

TABLE 1:

Swing State	Bush	Kerry	Red States	Bush	Kerry	Blue States	Bush	Kerry
Arizona	54.9	44.4	Alabama	62.5	36.8	California	44.4	54.3
Arkansas	54.3	44.6	Alaska	61.1	35.5	Connecticut	43.9	54.3
Delaware	45.8	53.4	Georgia	58	41.4	DC	9.3	89.2
Colorado	51.7	47.0	Idaho	68.4	30.3	Hawaii	45.3	54.0
Florida	52.1	47.1	Indiana	59.9	39.3	Illinois	44.5	54.8
Iowa	49.9	49.2	Kansas	62	36.6	Maine	44.6	53.6
Michigan	47.8	51.2	Kentucky	59.6	39.7	Maryland	42.9	55.9
Minnesota	47.6	51.1	Louisiana	56.7	42.2	Massachusetts	36.8	61.9
Missouri	53.3	46.1	Mississippi	59.4	39.8	N. Jersey	46.2	52.9
Nevada	50.5	47.9	Montana	59.1	38.6	N. York	40.1	58.4
N. Hampshire	48.9	50.2	Nebraska	65.9	32.7	Rhode Island	38.7	59.4
N. Mexico	49.8	49.1	N. Carolina	56.0	43.6	Vermont	38.8	58.9
Ohio	50.8	48.7	N. Dakota	62.9	35.5	Washington	45.6	52.8
Oregon	47.2	51.4	Oklahoma	65.6	34.4			
Pennsylvania	48.4	50.9	S. Carolina	58	40.9			Kerry (EV)
Wisconsin	49.3	49.7	S. Dakota	59.9	38.4	Avg. Margin	-18.41	180
	Bush (EV)	103	Tennessee	56.8	42.5	w/o DC	-13.29	
	Kerry (EV)	68	Texas	61.1	38.2			
Avg. Margin	1.27		Utah	71.5	26			
			Virginia	53.7	45.5			
			W. Virginia	56.1	43.2			
			Wyoming	68.9	29.1			
				Bush (EV)	186			
			Avg. Margin	23.3				

For the past two presidential election cycles, this country has been overtaken by media hype highlighting “partisan polarization” and the “culture war.” While the populations of Red, Blue, and Purple states look different according to the relative concentrations of people adhering to different typologies, no state is homogeneously Red or Blue. In the five “reddest” states, where President Bush won with between 30 and 45 percent of the vote, 56% of the population qualifies as Red and 24% falls into the Blue group. However, in Red states overall, 43.3% fall into the Red group, 21.14% fall into the Purple group, and the remaining 35.52% fall into the Blue Group. In the five “bluest” states, where Senator Kerry won with between 20 and 80 percent of the vote, 47.8% qualifies as Blue, 24.9% as Red, and 27.2% as Purple. In the Blue states overall, 47.6% of the population is Blue, 28.9% is Red, and 23.7% fills out the middle. The Purple states form the middle, with a lesser division between Red (40.64) and Blue (32.77) and marginally more Purples (26.6). The absence of reliable partisan orientation makes these swing states of vital electoral importance. Particularly, those in the political middle, the Purples, are the most important segment of these Purple states’ electorate. The popular electoral lore highlights the oversized significance of this “middle of the middle” group, but the characterization of this group as soccer moms or NASCAR dads proves to be a gross oversimplification. Undoubtedly, this group is different from the nation at large, but comprehending these differences may help campaigns to better target this group of voters.

Figure 11: Typologies by State Type



The remainder of this report will explore the differences between Purple-Purples and the nation at large as well as differences among moderates in each sub-grouping of states. This analysis will offer some unexpected insights into how campaigns can tailor their messages and effectively mobilize and engage this moderate middle. With the Pennsylvania primary just around the corner, these “Independents” will be at the center of a political firestorm, with candidates on both sides of the aisle attempting to capitalize upon their central, tie-breaking position in the electorate. The question is: what makes Purple-Purples so different? And what does this mean for the American polity at large?

### Purple-Purples v. Everyone Else

#### Politics and Demographics

Politically, Purple-Purples (PPs) represent a unique mix in two ways in particular: they have slightly more liberal inclinations than the remainder of the population and they are less likely to vote. Economic issues relating to free-trade and immigration modulate these more liberal predispositions. The fact that a large

proportion of our PP sub-sample comes from Rust Belt states like Michigan (11% of PPs), Pennsylvania (12.2%), and Ohio (17.8%) means that PPs are generally more working class and blue-collar. More PPs are union members than in any other group (25.6%) compared even to Purples (21.1%) and Blues (21.9%). Moreover, unions dominate PPs more than they do Swing states as a whole (19.6%). The fact that Purple-Purples are more likely to be working-class means that they are less likely to support free trade without limit: 49% of PPs support free trade compared to 66% of Reds and 50.3% of Blues. Interestingly, PPs are also more “liberal” and protectionist (51%) than Purples in either Red (44.2%) or Blue (42.7%) states. PPs (61.4%) are also considerably more liberal than Reds (16.1%) in their support of government regulation of business – nevertheless, PPs do not match Blues (95.3%) on their level of support of regulation. In an increasingly competitive economy, PPs (52%) are more likely to support the government helping its citizens obtain the American Dream compared to other Purples (46.1%), particularly compared to moderates in Blue states (33.6%). PPs are also less supportive (68.9%) of immigrants than other Purples (73.4% overall) – including moderates in Blue (79.6%) and Red (76.2%) states. Purple-Purples (49.1%) are also less supportive of Social Security privatization than the nation at large (55.7%) – including moderates in Blue (54.2%) and Red (59.8%) states. Swing voters are more likely to respond to economic populism that highlights preserving their way of living and securing their retirements into the future. These PPs are less comfortable with the stock market and other forms of investment with only 33.7% identifying as investors, the lowest of any group including Blues (35.3%) – therefore, privatization of Social Security is less palatable than a Social Security system that mimics their own private pension plans. Since the Rust Belt is the region most adversely affected by free-trade and immigration, the aversion that PPs have to free trade and immigration seems well founded. Regardless, on these issues, it appears that the Democrats may have the upper-hand.

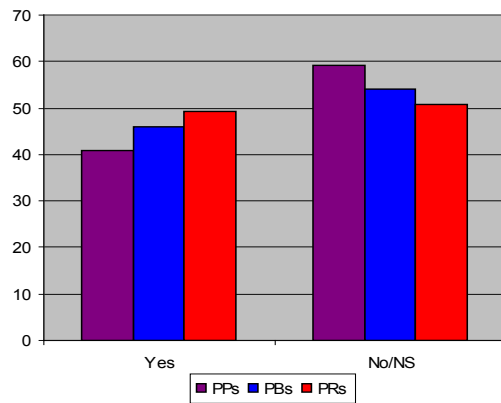
Social issues also distinguish Purple-Purples from the rest of the country. PPs are less conservative on abortion than the population at large with 71.1% sup-

porting abortion as a private decision compared to 64.1% of everyone else. Surprisingly, moderates in Red states are slightly more liberal (76.6%) than PPs or Purples in Blue (76.6%) states (PBs). However, PPs (66.8%) are more conservative on gay marriage than the nation at large – 66.8% compared to 56.2% believe that marriage should only be between a man and a woman. The PP position, however, is still more liberal than their moderate counterparts elsewhere in Red (70.5%) and Blue (72.7%) states. As the discussion of moderates in Part II suggested, this contradictory result may arise from pragmatic considerations as well as racial and religious demographics. PPs are generally more white (75.3%) than other moderates (59.9% of PBs and 68.4% of PRs), but they are as white as the population at large (75%). Moreover, this group is relatively religious with 37% attending religious services at least once a week – suggesting that abortion may be less of a moral issue and more a matter of privacy rights than issues relating to traditional institutions like marriage. Nearly as many PPs (32.7%) as Reds (35.3%) support the government regulating morality. Religion may explain why PPs (67%) are more likely to support teaching evolution side by side with alternative theories on the origins of humankind than the country at large (58.3%), but PPs are more likely to support evolution than other moderates (27.8% of PBs support evolution only, 29.8% of PRs). As suggested above, moderates, overall, may be more supportive of alternative explanations because their worldview is less polarized and more nuanced – these centrist voters like to hear both sides of the story and would rather provide people choices than forestall personal autonomy.

On important domestic issues like education and Social Security, PPs are more supportive of government solutions than many other groups. PPs are less inclined towards vouchers (29.1% support them) than the remainder of the country (43.5%). PPs are more likely than swing state voters overall to support public education (70.9 v. 56.2%) suggesting that public education is an important issue for these voters – PPs are also more supportive of public education than Blue state voters (64.4%). Given this group’s middle-class status and their belief in the importance of the government providing a basic level of social wel-

fare (as suggested by their stances on the American Dream and Social Security), it seems that these voters feel more comfortable with the government helping Americans out than other groups, within limits. More PPs (32.4%) believe that the “government generally solves problems” than other moderates in Blue (25%) and Red (28.4%) states. Nonetheless, PPs have less faith in government than the nation overall (37%).

Figure 12: Moderates and Passports



Overall, PPs are more interested in domestic issues than international affairs. This group is the least likely to have a passport (40.8%), our proxy for international travel, compared to the nation at large (53.7%) or any other subgroup including PBs (46%) and PRs (49.3%). They are also less likely to support the use of military action in the Global War on Terror (23.3%) than everyone else (40%). They are also less supportive of promoting freedom and democracy around the world (32.9% compared to 45.6%). Protectionism matched by a subtle streak of isolationism indicates that bread and butter domestic issues are far more important to this group of voters than other potential campaign issues. Campaigns should capitalize on their economic and domestic agendas rather than attempting to pro-actively promote global democracy when speaking to these audiences. Issues like environmentalism are likely to exact greater support than future military engagements or the enactment of freedom and democracy

abroad. Interestingly, female PPs are more willing to give up liberty for security than other women in America (54.6 v. 37.6%); perhaps, giving credence to the notion that mothers in Purple states are increasingly concerned with security in a new age of terror.

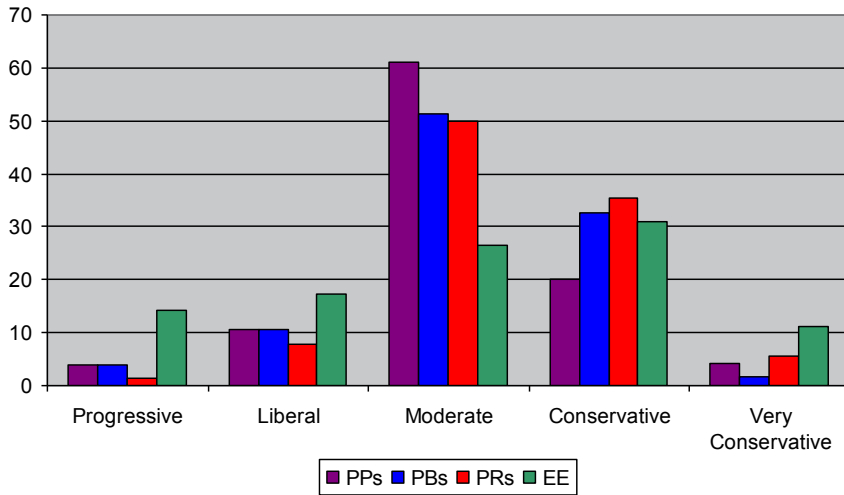
Unexpectedly, PPs are strongly supportive of environmental stewardship (80.6%) more than any other moderate group and markedly more than the rest of the country (58.4%). Perhaps, messages from former politicians like Al Gore or direct contact with the refuse of shuttered industrial plants has strengthened PPs’ support for the government spending resources on protecting the environment. Whatever the cause, campaigns can strengthen their appeal to these individuals and moderates more generally by taking a pro-active stance on conservation and environmental clean-up.

The biggest hurdles that campaigns face when mobilizing Purple-Purples is their lower likelihood of participating in national elections. Without question, PPs are significantly less likely than other groups to indicate a high likelihood in participating in upcoming elections. Only 92.9% of PPs say they are “very likely” to vote; PPs are responsible for the lower participation rate of moderates overall (96%) since 98.8% of PBs and 98.1% of PRs are very likely to vote. Given reporting error, PPs are still much less likely to vote – they are apathetic and politicians must discover ways to get them to the polls, while appealing to their unique issue interests. In 2004, when PPs did vote, Kerry won among this group 51.7% to 47.6% compared to Bush’s edge among PBs (52.2%) and PRs (52.3%). Democrats appear to have a slight edge in mobilizing these individuals. PPs are slightly more likely to identify as independents as any other group (29.8 v. 25.6), but this difference is marginal. PPs are less Republican (30.3%) than other moderates (39.2% of PBs and 40.1% of PRs) and the remainder of the country (36.6%). PPs (39.8%) are slightly more Democratic-leaning than other moderates (36.7% of PBs and 39.2% of PRs). Nonetheless, this group strongly identifies with the “moderate” moniker. More than three-fifths of PPs (61.2%) identify as “moderates” – more than any other group (51.2% of PBs, 49.8% of PRs, and



26.4% of everyone else).

Figure 13: Ideological Identification: Moderates v. Everyone Else



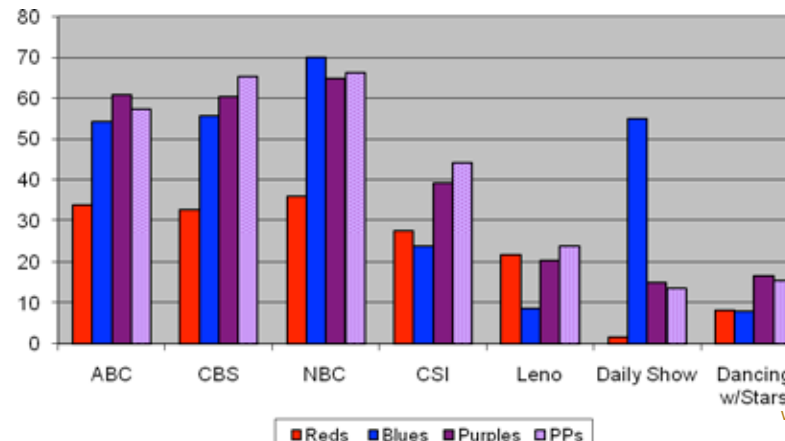
This group is more working class, more inclined towards NASCAR (18.1% compared to 12.8% of everyone else), highly female (66.5% v. 50.2%), and marginally more middle-aged. Almost 70% of PP respondents fall between the ages of 30 and 64 compared to 62.4% of the population at large. PPs and PRs are the most middle-aged of any group studied in this report. PPs are also more likely to have children less than 17 years of age (30.9% v. 25.1%) and more likely to be married (65% v. 60.8%). For these individuals, issues relating to education, marriage and old-age pensions likely resonate for political as well as practical reasons – their kids use the schools, they are traditionally married, and they fear for their retirement security. Demographically and politically, this group looks more amenable to moderate Democratic candidates; Republican candidates, however, can attract these voters with substantive policy platforms that emphasize constructive use of government institutions and power. Interestingly, PPs can also be profiled based upon their media preferences. These preferences indicate that PPs and other moderates are more likely to enjoy mainstream entertainment content, like that provided by network televi-

sion, but also more likely to tune-out overtly political content.

Media and Entertainment

Like most moderates, swing voters in swing states watch a lot of TV. Unlike conservatives, however, Purple-Purples are less likely to watch niche television channels appealing specifically to their interests. Compared to the rest of the country, swing voters in swing states are more likely to watch the big broadcast networks like ABC, CBS, and NBC. Almost two-thirds (64.2%) of PPs watch ABC at least once a week compared to 45.8% of everyone else in the country. Similar proportions of PPs view CBS (65.2%) and NBC (66.2%) with similar regularity. Among cable networks, Purple-Purples enjoy the Cartoon Network (18.9% v. 10.8%); Lifetime (21.3% v. 13.3%); Nickelodeon (21.5% v. 10%); and VH1 (14% v. 7.9%). Since sizeable majorities of Purple-Purples watch network television it should come as no surprise that their favorite shows include network hits like CSI (51.4% v. 36.6%), Dancing with the Stars (22.2% v. 14.5%), and Desperate Housewives (24.1% v. 16%). Compared to other moderates, those in swing states are least likely to regularly enjoy American Idol; 18% of PPs watch this talent-based reality show compared to 26.4% of PRs and 21.9% of PBs. Nevertheless, PPs are just as likely as the nation as a whole to enjoy Idol. As a genre, reality shows hold less appeal for PPs than other TV genres.

Figure 14: Television and Network Preferences



Unlike liberals, PPs like talk shows (30.2 v. 18.9%). Compared to everyone else, PPs are also considerably more likely to enjoy David Letterman (11.1 v. 8.6%) and Jay Leno (23.8% v. 15.3%) rather than the Jon Stewart (13.5 v. 25.5%). PPs (81.1%) expressed a greater preference for movies than the nation overall (73.3%), as well as other moderates (71.3% of PRs and 73.2% of PBs). This affection for movies suggests that the cinema and movies on TV offer an escape or perhaps a more enjoyable form of entertainment for individuals in the middle of the middle. Hollywood's attempt to pander to the middle core may have met some success among this group of citizens.

Purple-Purples are less likely than the remainder of the country to go to museums or galleries, with almost a third (28.9%) indicating that they never go, compared to less than a fifth (17.4%) of everyone else that say they never go. Likewise, PPs are the least likely of any moderate sub-group to frequent museums and galleries (25.6% of PRs and 22.5% of PBs never go to museums). Moreover, Purple-Purples are least likely to enjoy Arts programming on TV with only 27.2% compared to 33.2% of everyone else indicating high enjoyability for this type of television. The common myth of NASCAR Dads may not be too distant from the truth – more “refined” cultural options hold less appeal for this group of hard-working citizens. More than a fifth of this group (20.2%) enjoys auto racing compared to 14.5% of the rest of the country. Moreover, PPs are less likely to enjoy golf (14.6% v. 21.5%).

Political messages encoded in entertainment programming hold less appeal for PPs than for other groups. Their apathy extends to their inability to enjoy political commentary or themes among their television viewing options. Only a third (33.7%) of PPs compared to more than half (52.4%) of everyone else express a preference towards entertainment containing political themes. Swing state moderates are less likely than any other group of moderates to be drawn to this kind of television, suggesting that mobilization through passive methods – like celebrity advocacy or issue highlights during primetime TV – are less likely to be effective with this group of voters.

## Conclusions

Overall, we are, to large degrees, what we watch. Like Reds and Blues, PPs are characterized by unique media and entertainment preferences. Ultimately, PPs have more middling tastes than other groups. Their place in the cultural milieu is more opaque because political and social inclinations appear to motivate them differently than other groups. While liberals often enjoy certain programming because it is liberal, they are not as opposed as Reds to watching shows that differ from their own political values. Conservatives have increasingly selected networks and TV shows that reflect their own values. Meanwhile, PPs and moderates as a whole – who say they enjoy politics significantly less than the nation at large – are stuck in a muddy middle attempting to find entertainment that does not offend their centrism, but still manages to make them laugh or think. PPs are less likely to perceive TV as a political medium, but when they do perceive politicalization they are more likely to change the channel or turn the TV off. For campaigns, PPs are difficult to connect to. Network ad buys are expensive and PPs might be more likely than other groups to tune out political ads or commentary. Moderates' lack of partisan and voter decisiveness seems to go hand-in-hand with their apathy toward politically-themed entertainment. Moderates would prefer to avoid political messages in their entertainment, more than any other group.

As the remainder of this report has suggested modern America has multiple political and cultural cleavages. Culture Wars and Red-Blue binaries may be effective rhetorical devices, but nuanced exploration and analysis of these differences can help produce meaningful political and entertainment messages. The proliferation of TV channels has allowed political groups to become more homogeneous, insofar as it is now possible to watch television without hearing a contradictory message. Small groups of voters, like swing voters living in swing states, often attract the most attention during election cycles. The fact that PPs have unique interests complicates efforts by political campaigns to make national appeals to every political group. PPs, like Reds and Blues, are distinc-

**tive groups defined by different ideological beliefs, different demographics, and different affinities for political identities or candidates. Appealing to this rainbow of people is difficult, much as adopting one message or one television show to appeal to all of these groups at once is difficult. In order to appeal to PPs, political candidates must adopt populist messages and moderately liberal stances on the environment, abortion and religion. This year, like many of our recent election years, will pit swing state strategies against efforts to appeal to the nation at large. By recognizing the differences among different groups of Americans, this report has facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of our political discourse and community.**