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Public Opinion and Regional Differences in Death Penalty Policies

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Public Opinion and Regional Differences in Death Penalty Policies

By

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of the requirements for
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Abstract

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ADVISOR: Professor Bradley D. Hays

Despite the 1976 affirmation by the Supreme Court that the death penalty does not violate the Constitution, some states have moved away from this practice due to a variety of reasons to the point that there appears to be regional differences in policy on this issue. The objective of this study is to determine which factors influence public opinion on capital punishment and how they account for the regional discrepancies in policy. I identify a number of demographic factors that have been found to influence this opinion on a national scale, for reexamination at the regional level. Six states are selected to represent the six regions of the United States.

Using the Survey Documentation and Analysis software, I examine those demographic factors, as well as party ideology, crime rates, and urbanization trends, to determine how they interact and influence public opinion within the different regions. These opinions are then compared to their state's corresponding policy. Additionally, I conduct an analysis of newspaper editorial articles for each of the states. Utilizing SPSS, I look at the variety of arguments for and against the death penalty to determine how this could impact public opinion and policy.

Although this study did not reveal every factor that influences public opinion on capital punishment, it has pointed out some key features that, in combination with the media influence, explain why we observe differing policies among the regions, as well as the potential policy changes that could result if certain aspects of those regions were modified.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

On February seventeenth of 2004, Cameron Todd Willingham was escorted to a Texas death chamber for execution by lethal injection, all the while proclaiming his innocence for the triple murder for which he was accused. Willingham was convicted in 1992 to setting fire to his house the previous year that resulted in the death of his three young children. Fire investigators at the time of his trial claimed that certain forensic evidence contradicted his assertion that he was asleep at the time of the fire, as there was hard evidence that indicated the fire was the result of arson. Willingham was offered a plea deal: life in prison for the exchange of a guilty plea. Rejecting this offer, Willingham never wavered from his claim of innocence for the twelve years he sat on death row.

The Innocence Project is a national organization that advocates on behalf of those whom they believe have been wrongly convicted, specifically through the use of incorrect forensic information. In the days leading up to Willingham's execution, the Innocence Project commissioned nationally recognized arson expert Gerald Hurst to examine the case and issue a report with his opinions on the forensic evidence used in the trial. Hurst found that the evidence used to convict Willingham was in fact erroneous and did not indicate beyond a reasonable doubt that arson was the cause of the fire. Despite the number of state officials who received this report, the claims were not investigated, and Willingham's death sentence was carried out in Huntsville, Texas. Months later, the Chicago Tribune published an investigative piece on the Willingham case. The Tribune consulted with four arson experts who claimed that the methods used by the investigators at the time were outdated and in fact extremely inaccurate. The claim of arson was

untrue; it was in fact “just a fire” (Mills and Possley, 2004). This article drew national attention with its claim that Texas had actually executed an innocent man and left many in other regions of the United States questioning its purpose in today’s day and age while pointing to this risk as a reason why we should move away from this form of punishment.

Reports like these are important to consider when examining the death penalty. As we see, convictions do not necessarily guarantee guilt, especially with the use of forensic evidence and the ever-evolving technologies associated with it. However, the risk of executing an innocent person is just one in a series of items people cite for abolition of the death penalty as a legal form of punishment. Why is a policy like this still in use if there is the risk of executing an innocent person? The observed spread of this story outside of Texas is clear evidence that the media plays a role in perpetuating certain arguments for and against this policy. Through the investigation of individual state policies and public opinion within those states, as well as the influence of the media has on this topic, I hope to inform why we see regional discrepancies in death penalty policies. Throughout the history of the United States, there have been fluctuations in the use of the death penalty, from years with no executions to years where executions numbered almost one hundred. While these fluctuations have existed, the general trend was an overall rise in the number of executions (Allen and Clubb, 2008). More recently, however, there has been a historic decline in the number of people who are put to death for their crimes (Baumgartner, De Boef, and Boydston, 2008).

Beginning in colonial times, the death penalty was the legal punishment for a number of crimes, occasionally used for something as basic as theft (Allen and Clubb, 2008). However, the abolitionist movement took hold in the late 1700s with

encouragement from articles like Cesare Beccaria's 1767 essay, *On Crimes and Punishment*, which influenced many of America's early prominent leaders (Schabas, 1997). This paper was the first to challenge the longstanding deterrent argument, which states that the death penalty acts as a way to discourage crime through fear of the punishment of death. The challenge was articulated by a doctor who believed that rather than deterring crime, the death penalty in fact increased criminal conduct (Randa, 1997). The influence these works and teachings had on key people, including the Philadelphia Attorney General William Bradford, led Pennsylvania to be the first state to repeal the death penalty for all cases except first degree murder in 1794.¹

However, this abolitionist mentality lacked the footing it needed to have more widespread impacts. In the late eighteenth century, both support for and against the death penalty caused states to enact a variety of policies, from increasing the number of crimes punishable by death in some states to decreasing the number in other states. Some states went so far as to abolish the punishment completely. However, this was a rare occurrence, and for the most part during this nineteenth century, states clung to the death penalty. It was not until the first part of the 1900s that the abolitionist movement gained significant momentum. The ten-year period between 1907 and 1917 saw six states completely outlaw the practice and three others limit its use. This quickly changed though as some criminologists argued that the death penalty was a "necessary social measure," resulting in five of these six states reinstate their policies (Bohm, 1999). From this time through the 1940s, the death penalty gained momentum as new ways of executing people, namely the introduction of cyanide gas, allowed for more humane ways of execution (Schabas,

¹ *History of the Death Penalty*. <<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/part-i-history-death-penalty>>

1997). Yet again, though, there was a shift away from the death penalty in the 1950s, and in 1966, public support for this policy was at a record low of 42%.² This aligned with a global trend in the abolition of death penalty practices, with human rights organizations leading the charge in labeling this form of punishment as “unacceptably inhumane and degrading” (Bae, 2007).

In the 1972 Supreme Court case *Furman v. Georgia*, justices were asked to examine the question, “Does the imposition and carrying out of the death penalty in [the *Furman* case] constitute cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments?” (*Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. (1972)). The justices ruled 5 to 4 that the death penalty as it was administered in three separate cases in Georgia, violated the Eighth Amendment and the protection against “cruel and unusual” punishment (*Furman v. Georgia*, 408 U.S. (1972)). The arguments of the judges who voted in favor of the inhumane nature of the death penalty were varied, with two holding the opinion that the death penalty in general was cruel and unusual, and the other three stating that how it was implemented was not uniform in its application as a punishment (Vidmar and Ellsworth, 1974). This monumental case would cause the reexamination of all death penalty policies in the United States, as well as an effective moratorium on its use (Bae, 2007). Led by the key southern states of Georgia, Florida, and Texas, thirty states reworked their policies to address the opinion placed by the judges that the punishment was not universal (Bae, 2007). As a direct result of these states efforts, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the new uniform statutes in *Gregg v. Georgia*, thus effectively

² *Historical Trends: Death Penalty*. <<http://www.gallup.com/poll/1606/death-penalty.aspx>>

reestablishing the death penalty after just four short years of abolitionist victory (Bae, 2007).

The *Gregg* decision resulted in the revival of executions after a decade-long suspension. Since 1976, there have been a total of 1,390 executions carried out in various states.³ At the same time, countries and agencies around the world have called for the abolition of this form of punishment, with Amnesty International claiming, “the death penalty is the ultimate, irreversible denial of human rights.”⁴ Why do we see public support for the death penalty in the United States, despite global condemnation of the practice? Scholars have pointed out that public opinion is one of the strongest drivers of death penalty policy in the United States, holding more influence over this policy agenda than most other issues (Lifton and Mitchell, 2000). People cite very specific reasons when presenting their opinion on the death penalty. At times, the issue is framed around the cost of the death penalty.⁵ Some argue that crime deterrence is their primary reason for supporting the death penalty. Others, such as Amnesty International, reject the death penalty because it in no way acts as a deterrent.⁶ The strong presence of racial bias and unfair administration is debated in relation to the Eighth Amendment (Allen and Clubb, 2008). The simple moral dilemma of “an-eye-for-an-eye” versus “two-wrongs-don’t-make-a-right” is often discussed in this debate (Baumgartner, De Boef and Boydstun,

³ *Number of Executions by State and Region Since 1976.*

<<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/number-executions-state-and-region-1976>>

⁴ *The Ultimate Denial of Human Rights.* <<http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/death-penalty>>

⁵ *Historical Trends: Death Penalty.*

⁶ *Death Penalty Facts.*

<<http://www.amnestyusa.org/pdfs/DeathPenaltyFactsMay2012.pdf>>

2008). No matter which reason is cited, most people hold strong, steadfast decisions regarding the death penalty.

National public support for the death penalty holds at sixty-three percent favorable and thirty-three percent opposed in the latest Gallup poll, which could indicate somewhat of a national consensus in favor of this issue.⁷ But looking at the individual state policies, in thirty-two states, the death penalty is a legal punishment, with eighteen states having abolished the practice.⁸ In a few states, the death penalty is technically legal, but the state governments have issued moratoriums on its use. As we see this discrepancy in state policies, the question arises as to what factors influence these inconsistencies. Through my analysis of a variety of factors, I will see how public opinion falls in these states and if there are perhaps regional perspectives that can explain the differences in opinions and policies we see in the US. Trends in execution rates would suggest that places like Texas should have high levels of support for the death penalty whereas the opposite would hold true in New York, where the death penalty was abolished in 2004. When conducting an analysis using the Survey Documentation and Analysis Archive maintained by UC Berkeley, through the General Social Survey, we analyzed regional support for the death penalty. Through this methodology, we see that in 2012 for New England, support for the death penalty was 59.6%; for the Mid-Atlantic, 60.2%; for the North Central, 69.9%; for the South Atlantic, 60.9%, for the South Central, 69.4%, and 64.8% for the West. These differing levels of support for capital punishment indicates the presence of regional discrepancies in opinion, just as we see differences in policies. This

⁷ *Historical Trends: Death Penalty.*

⁸ *States With and Without the Death Penalty.* <<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/states-and-without-death-penalty>>

is not unexpected as each region is made up of a variety of people that find themselves in differing situations with diverse influences from their own personal experiences as well as from the media that might account for the differing levels of support we observe in each of the regions. In this thesis, I will explore a variety of factors including demographic characteristics, urbanization trends and other social issues, certain arguments for and against the death penalty, and finally media coverage and tone in order to inform what differences we see and how they affect the divergence in policies across the various regions.

1.1 Literature Review

My thesis investigates the influence of public opinion has on the death penalty issue, more specifically what factors have led to the formation of certain opinions and why we see discrepancies in peoples' attitude towards this issue. Many scholars have contributed to the death penalty debate. Much of the literature on this topic pertains to whether the death penalty should or should not be used as a punishment, but few authors address the question of why no national consensus has arisen for this policy. Those that do look at the impact of public opinion peer through a national lens, which is not necessarily the most informative way to look at the data given the discrepancies that exist between state policies. Scholars have explored a variety of arguments for and against this policy, such as the moral question of whether the death penalty is right or wrong, the effectiveness of its impact on crime deterrence, and whether the risk of executing an innocent person should overshadow the need for this type of punishment.

However, what influences people to hold those opinions and how do their opinions impact the policies we see?

As introduced previously, the case of *Furman v. Georgia* was extremely influential in the debate on the death penalty. At the time, capital punishment support levels hovered around fifty percent, which would seem to indicate that the Supreme Court's decision in this case to rule that capital punishment violated the Eighth Amendment was influenced very little by public opinion as there was no majority opinion (Lain, 2007). But as scholars have pointed out, public opinion is one of the strongest drivers of death penalty policy, holding more influence over this policy than most other issues (Lifton and Mitchell, 2000). We see this is the case if we look at the trend in public opinion of the death penalty over time. Public support for this form of punishment had been dropping for a while well before the 1972 *Furman* case (Lain, 2007). The increasing visibility of the abolitionist movement in the 1950s and 1960s was indicative of the changing tides of this social movement, as issues such as racial bias, cruel and unusual means of execution, and the increasing visibility of the risk of execution of innocents provided a firm backing for this movement (McGowen, 2011). The strongest advocates of abolition came from religious groups, who saw the death penalty as morally abhorrent, as well as from anti-segregation groups who emphasized how the death penalty particularly discriminated unfairly against minorities (Bae, 2007). In this sense, the Supreme Court ruling seemed to be contrary to the stable majority of Americans who supported the death penalty, but in general, followed the trend towards abolishing this form of punishment characterizing this time period (Lain, 2007).

As many states rushed to reform their policies in light of the effective moratorium on the use of this punishment that was put in place due to the *Furman* ruling, however, this trend did not continue (Bae, 2007). Southern states in particular led the charge, indicative of the high levels of support this region is characterized by in terms of this policy (Bae, 2007). Additionally, public support for the death penalty rose to 57% just after the *Furman* decision and continued to do so until just before the Supreme Court case *Gregg v. Georgia*, where it was reported at 66%.⁹ The Supreme Court ruled in favor of new statutes proposed by the states, therefore effectively reestablishing the constitutionality of the death penalty after just four short years of abolitionist victory (Bae, 2007). This time period saw a substantial increase in support for the death penalty, and in the 1985, support reached 72% and continued to grow to a high of 80% in 1994.¹⁰ Continuing into recent years, though, we see a general decline in support for the death penalty since that 1994 high, down to 66% in 2000, and resting at the current level of 63%.¹¹

Support prior to the *Furman* decision hovered for almost six years around the 50% approval mark; following this decision, the nation experienced dramatic changes in support levels (Bae, 2007). Why do we see this shift? During the short time span between *Furman* and *Gregg*, support jumped 9%.¹² Scholars attribute this initial rise, as well as the continuation of that rise into the 1980s and 1990s, to the increase in the visibility of crime, and in particular violent crime (Bae, 2007). Through the civilization process, Norbert Elias puts forth the proposal that one aspect of that process is the “rejection and

⁹ *Historical Trends: Death Penalty.*

¹⁰ *Historical Trends: Death Penalty.*

¹¹ *Historical Trends: Death Penalty.*

¹² *Historical Trends: Death Penalty.*

suppression of violence” (Allen and Clubb, 2008). The argument continues that capital punishment is a way for the authority structure to establish a monopoly on the use of force, and through that monopoly, use fear to control through a set of norms, with the threat of death being key to controlling the actions of the people (Allen and Clubb, 2008). Through that control, it was thought that the death penalty would act as a deterrent when enforced as a punishment for the most grievous crimes (Garland, 2011). However, as many scholarly works have pointed out, through a number of studies conducted at various periods in history, the death penalty does not in fact act as an effective deterrent to violent crimes (Bae, 2007). While it may not be an effective means of deterrence, this reason is still credited as influential in the formation of people’s opinion on the death penalty, though the percentage of people who cite this as a reason for their support is less than 10% (Lifton and Mitchell, 2000). Something is perpetuating this theory, keeping it fresh in the minds of the public, as it is cited to this day as a reason for supporting the death penalty.¹³

The primary reason people cite for their pro-death penalty stance is retribution, or the concept of an eye-for-an-eye (Lifton and Mitchell, 2000). This has been the biggest influencing factor for people up until 1981, and has since declined from 50% in 1991 to 35% in 2014 (Lifton and Mitchell, 2000).¹⁴ Where does this mentality come from? The most obvious connection to make is a religious connection. This reference, an eye-for-an-eye comes directly from the Bible, and some scholars argue that fundamentalism in particular provides links between individual salvation and support of the death penalty (Young, 2002). Through this belief, fundamentalists hold the mentality that an individual

¹³ *Historical Trends: Death Penalty.*

¹⁴ *Historical Trends: Death Penalty.*

is responsible for his or her own actions, and therefore, if someone takes a life, their life should be taken in return (Young, 2002). While this is clearly not the case for everyone, Young finds that high levels of support for the death penalty come from this type of religious group in particular. In contrast, evangelical religious followers are highly correlated with a negative view of the death penalty, citing the importance of a concern for others, which is violated by the death penalty (Young, 2002). Therefore, we find the religious factor supports both sides of the debate; when broken down into various religious categories, support shifts depending on the specific type an individual practices. By exploring the individual practices of certain regions, we can see how this form of personal identification can influence public opinion and, in turn, policies for those various regions.

Another argument some scholars cite is the “vigilante tradition” of the United States, particularly of the Southern states, and the influence it has had on the issue of retribution killings in general (Bae, 2007). From the frontier tradition this nation was founded upon, vigilantism and lynching as forms of personal justice during that time fell outside of the purview of the law. Studies conducted by Franklin Zimring suggest that regions with higher levels of vigilantism, of which the South is the biggest contributor, correlate with high levels of execution rates and vice versa (Bae, 2007). In terms of the frame of this vigilante tradition, the death penalty is seen as an extension of the will of the community, rather than the influence of some higher government power, which primarily southern states reject (Bae, 2007).

Much like the frontier past, the death penalty can be seen by some as a way to continue to exercise that right within the purview of the law. By allowing the states to

determine their own policies, rather than imposing a national agenda on the states, this opinion holds strong and further influences the culture of these communities (Bae, 2007). This vigilante tradition has influenced the culture of this region so much so that Texas, along with the southern states of Georgia and Florida, led the charge in the revisal of death penalty policies post-*Furman* (Bae, 2007). The culture of the South, it would seem, is a heavy indicator of the acceptance of this form of punishment, and indeed the southern states of Texas, Oklahoma, and Virginia currently lead the nation in number of executions.¹⁵ If public opinion is indeed influenced by this vigilante tradition, we should see the impact of that on a regional level through differing levels of support between this Southern region and others.

Beyond the reasons of retribution and deterrence, a third reason people cite for their opinion regarding capital punishment is related to the issue of cost.¹⁶ A common misperception held by the American public is that the death penalty costs significantly less to the taxpayer than life imprisonment while in reality, it is significantly more costly than life imprisonment (Baumgartner, De Boef, and Boydston, 2008; Dieter, 2003). Yet, according to the Gallup, 14% of supporters for capital punishment cite this as a reason for their opinion, higher than the similarly discredited deterrent argument, indicating an influence on public opinion that is provided in the form of misinformation perpetuating in the minds of the public.

One such possible explanation for the perpetuation of false information may be the story of media influence. The influence of the media is often cited as the reason certain issues are prevalent in the public debate while others fall by the wayside (Haney,

¹⁵ *States With and Without the Death Penalty.*

¹⁶ *Historical Trends: Death Penalty.*

2005). With the case of capital punishment, the story is no different. Crime in particular has dominated all forms of media for years due to its entertainment value (Haney, 2005). While not tied to crime rates in particular, the media continuously covers certain stories in such a way to gain attention and therefore viewership. A related example would be the constant attention paid to extremely violent crimes, creating the false impression that there is a rise in crime (Haney, 2005). As many people do not directly experience crime, and therefore have little life experience to base their opinions on, the media is particularly influential in this regard (Haney, 2005). By using this frame, the media gives skewed information to the public, leading to misperceptions by its consumers, which is may be a reason why we see deterrence referenced as a reason for supporting the death penalty (Haney, 2005). Through his exploration of media coverage of the death penalty, conducted at a national level, Haney (2005) finds that a distinct bias and slant of information covered by the media exists, and that potential voters and jurors are effected by that publicity, which in turn effects public opinion and indeed jury decisions in capital punishment cases.

Another relevant example of how the media further influences public opinion is through the perpetuation of stories regarding prisoners who are released and go on to murder again, despite the fact that this is an extremely rare occurrence (Lifton and Mitchell, 2000). By covering these types of stories extensively and repeatedly, the idea that this is a likely possibility is continuously hammered into the minds of the public who rely on the media to inform them on these issues. Increasing this visibility also acts as a reinforcer to the deterrence argument and, in more extension, an increase in support of the death penalty.

In addition to propagating information to the public that sparks support for the use of capital punishment, the media also serves as a means of informing the public about situations that would support the anti-capital punishment argument. Similar to the reasons why they provide false information cited previously, the media will also cover stories pertaining to the innocence argument because people are drawn to such stories. The innocence argument was first studied in depth in the Columbia University Report in 2000 (Cagle and Martinez, 2002). While the argument existed prior to this report, it was not as widely publicized and thus was not as prominent in society; therefore, the general public did not care. There are a few notable scholars, Hugo Bedau and Michael Radelet, who attempted to reveal this wrongful conviction scenario in the late 1980s. However, their reports on the subject received little media attention as the death penalty at the time was at its highest levels of support (Haney, 2005). The time following Bedau and Radelet's attempts up to the Columbia University Report saw an upswing in attention paid to this argument as series of wrongful convictions emerged with developments in DNA technologies (Haney, 2005).

The Columbia University Report looked at 5,760 death sentences from the years of 1973-1995 and found there was a 68% national error rate in these cases, revealed during the appeals process (Cagle and Martinez, 2002). This publicly raised many questions about the process of these convictions, in particular how evidence was used in these cases and the risk that a person who has been executed may be innocent (Cagle and Martinez, 2002). The effect of this report was widespread, as it threw open the door for debate on this issue and added support to the growing evidence of problems within the system. Illinois' governor became the first of many to issue a temporary moratorium on

the death penalty in order to reexamine the state system of execution, pressured by the report's highlight of his state as being particularly guilty (Cagle and Martinez, 2002). This along with many other high-profile cases gained media attention and added to abolitionists' arguments in the case against this policy.

A similar argument that has supported anti-death penalty advocates' quest for abolition is the issue of botched executions. Much like the revelation that innocent people were being executed, the way in which they were executed also came into question, played out this time in the courts. As discuss previously, the Supreme Court halted executions in *Furman vs. Georgia* due to issues with the execution methods, particularly in their cruel and unusual manner (Furman v. Georgia, 408 U.S. 238, 239-40 (1972)). In *Baze vs. Rees*, Kentucky's system came into question after a series of high-profile botched executions and the claim that the death penalty itself constituted cruel and usual punishment, leading to a temporary moratorium on the death penalty from September 2007 to April 2008 (Baze v. Rees, 553 U.S. 35 (2008)).

The Supreme Court, in this case, again reaffirmed the constitutionality of the death penalty as those who had brought the claim failed to prove there was a risk of pain from execution (Baze v. Rees, 553 U.S. 35 (2008)). On the incidence of botched executions, a study conducted by Marian Borg and Michael Radelet found that botched executions are not in fact as rare as one might think, but rather that they happen with relative frequency and are a universal problem. During the time period of 1997-2001, 749 inmates were executed with one in every twenty-two executions being botched (Borg and Radelet, 2004). This issue is also being played out in the media, as many recent articles have highlighted this cross-national problem.

The media's coverage of capital punishment frames the way politicians form their political opinions as well (Lifton and Mitchell, 2000). As these violent crimes and risk of repeat offenders are fresh in the minds of the voters, politicians must be careful when it comes to asserting an opinion on the death penalty. They run the risk of being pegged as pro-criminal if they do not express support, which is dicey when much of the criminal justice system is formed through elections. A judge being portrayed as soft on crime runs the risk of not being elected (Bae, 2007). With the media emphasizing stories like heinously violent crimes, politicians will use public exposure to these stories to "get tough on crime" and boost their image with the public through that stance (Haney, 2005). By exploring how the media covers certain issues, whether articles slant towards an abolitionist or pro-death penalty standpoint, and how accurately they report all aspects of the case can reveal how public opinion may have been influenced. By regionalizing the analysis, we are able to look more in depth at distinct places with varying policies to see how the media presents the death penalty to that particular audience and then apply that to public opinion trends to help inform why we see regional inconsistencies.

A number of scholars have looked at the relationship between political ideology and opinions on the death penalty. The majority opinion that comes from literature tells the story of Republican support for this policy. A study conducted by Robert Young finds that conservatism is a key indicator for support of the death penalty, associated with a significant positive influence (Young, 2002). While scholars find that support is generally higher among Republicans than Democrats, they do not find that Democrats are as willing to oppose as one might assume (Bae, 2007). This may be explained by the risk of looking pro-criminal, as discussed above, thus embracing the conservative line in order to

be perceived as strong (Bae, 2007). Conservatives have influenced death penalty policies time and time again, voicing public support for the issue and passing legislation that resulted in dramatic increases in executions, particularly from 1994-1999 (Bae, 2007). Conservatism is attributed to high levels of concern for protecting the public, the greater good argument, and support for the eye-for-an-eye mentality, thus confirming their support of the death penalty (Koenig and Rustad, 2011). For liberals, the public safety concern is there as well, but the rights of those accused of these crimes are important as well. Therefore, arguments against the policy resound more strongly because they fit the basic principles this particular ideology holds (Koenig and Rustad, 2011).

Looking beyond the specific arguments cited as reasons for support of the death penalty and the influence the media has on perpetuating those arguments, when the United States is broken down to look at demography, we see discrepancies in public opinion based on these characteristics. In terms of racial diversity, one group of scholars finds that as the relative size of the minority population declines, the will to execute decreases (Galliher, Koch, Keys, and Guess, 2002). Breaking down further into the specific groups, according to the Pew Research Center, support among whites is at 63%, as opposed to black support, which is at 36%.¹⁷ This indicates a discrepancy among races in opinions about the death penalty. Many scholars have addressed why this is the case. Historically, the capital punishment system has tended to be imbalanced, to the detriment of minorities, with evidence of racial discrimination prominent, despite significant recent

¹⁷ *Shrinking Majority of Americans Support Death Penalty.*
<<http://www.pewforum.org/2014/03/28/shrinking-majority-of-americans-support-death-penalty/>>

diminishment (Allen and Clubb, 2008). This mentality, that blacks are at a disadvantage in the system, is often cited as to why we see such low levels of support among blacks.

The Pew Research Center also explores other demographic factors in assessing their support for the death penalty. They find that women are slightly less likely to favor the death penalty, at 52%, compared to men, at 58%.¹⁸ This could be explained by the trend that men are generally more conservative than women, with men identifying as conservative at 73% as opposed to women at 59%.¹⁹ A further demographic trend that has been examined is education. Some scholars have found that education was not particularly correlated with opinions on the death penalty (Young, 2002). Still others argue that those who are most informed about the death penalty are most likely to oppose it, thereby arguing for the trend that as one receives more education, the likelihood that someone would support the death penalty decreases (Haney, 2005).

In terms of age, some scholars have argued that age has little influence on public opinion (Young, 2002). Yet exploring the data, we find that those 50 or older are more likely to support the death penalty, at 58%, than those under 50, at 53%.²⁰ This could be explained by the trend that young people tend to be more liberal, whereas those over 50 tend to be more conservative.²¹ It would appear that, in general, there is little overall consensus about demographic trends in public opinion support in this field.

As the demographic information reveals, there are some noted discrepancies among men and women, and different age, religious, and racial groups. Our nation is urbanizing, with people moving out of small local units and into larger city environments.

¹⁸ *Shrinking Majority of Americans Support Death Penalty.*

¹⁹ *Shrinking Majority of Americans Support Death Penalty.*

²⁰ *Shrinking Majority of Americans Support Death Penalty.*

²¹ *Shrinking Majority of Americans Support Death Penalty.*

This move is associated with a trend toward liberalism, as the interaction with many different groups facilitates the development of ways in which these groups will work together, and government regulation in some ways is more accepted (Katznelson, 1998). As the nation moves more and more away from the traditional vigilante mentality that has governed death penalty policy debate, in favor of a more liberal agenda, we see this demonstrated with advances in the liberal agenda for things like gay marriage and abortion.²² An urbanizing nation also brings into significance the rate of crime, as crime is associated with cities more so than rural areas, which in turn could ignite the deterrence debate, despite no credible evidence that it actually is effective (Robertson-Rehberg, 2011). It will be helpful to apply these findings to see if a similar trend will affect death penalty policies, in an attempt to reveal some aspect of why we see the discrepancies we do in public opinion on this issue. By exploring the regional situation of these characteristics and corresponding policies, we can expand upon the national analyses conducted by various scholars to see why we cannot seem to come to a national consensus on this issue.

1.2 Methodology

In order to attempt to answer the question as to why the United States has remained attached to capital punishment, I identified six states in which to conduct case studies determining the level of support for the death penalty. As there is no federal law dictating the use of the death penalty at the state level, it is up to the individual states to determine their specific policies for this form of punishment. As such, rather than

²² *Social Trends: Family*. <<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2010/11/18/iv-family/>>

conducting a national analysis, in order to identify discrepancies within the country, each of the six states I chose represents a different region of the country, which the literature indicates should reveal differences due in part to the variation in the unique historical situations of these regions, such as the South's vigilantism (Bae, 2007). I chose New Hampshire to represent New England, New York to represent the Middle Atlantic, Illinois to represent the South Central region, Oregon to represent the West, Texas to represent the South Central region, and Georgia to represent the South Atlantic.

Texas, where the death penalty is legal, was chosen to represent the South Central region because, since the 1976 *Gregg* decision, Texas has executed a total of 518 people as of October 2014, the highest by far in the nation, the next closest being Oklahoma at only 111 people.²³ I chose Oregon to represent the West because, while the death penalty is technically legal there, on November 22, 2011, Governor John Kitzhaber issued a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, so that since the 1976 *Gregg* decision, only two people have been executed. This decision cancelled an execution scheduled in December for the man discussed above, with the governor citing moral issue with the death penalty itself.²⁴ This unique situation makes Oregon an interesting case study, as when the statutes were reworked after the *Furman* decision, Oregon modeled its statutes after statutes put forth by Texas.²⁵ This connection between policies could indicate it is not necessarily the policies themselves that are the basis for contest but rather the

²³ *Number of Executions by State and Region Since 1976.*

²⁴ *Governor Kitzhaber Issues Reprieve - Calls for Action on Capital Punishment. Oregon Newsroom.* <<http://www.oregon.gov/newsroom/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?newsid=589>>

²⁵ *History of Capital Punishment in Oregon.*

<http://www.oregon.gov/doc/GECO/Pages/cap_punishment/history.aspx>

situation of the state itself, indicating public opinion could play a key role in whether states keep the death penalty or not.

Georgia was chosen to represent the Middle Atlantic because as we can see from cases like *Furman v. Georgia* and *Gregg v. Georgia*, crucial changes and movements for and against the death penalty have occurred here. In Georgia, the death penalty has been legal since the Supreme Court reaffirmed the constitutional legality of this practice as a form of punishment in *Gregg v. Georgia*. Since that 1976 decision, this state has executed fifty-seven people, making it the sixth highest in the number of total executions.²⁶ This state will be particularly interesting to examine due to its historical significance in the debate on the death penalty.

Illinois was chosen to represent the North Central region because it demonstrates the next step in the process following the issuance of a moratorium. In this case Governor George Ryan issued a moratorium on the death penalty in his state in 2000, after the decision to exonerate thirteen high-profile cases based on new evidence. With this issuance, Illinois became the first state to suspend the death penalty (Cagle and Martinez, 2002). This case in particular is one of the first in which the innocence argument is cited outright as reason to reexamine policies and practices in this regard. Rod Blagojevich succeeded Ryan and kept the moratorium in place, but the state continued to issue death sentences during this time.²⁷ With the election of Pat Quinn, legislation was introduced and in March 2011, Illinois voted to abolish the death penalty, becoming the 16th state to do so (Illinois Blue Book, 2013-2014). As we see the process of abolition take place

²⁶ *Number of Executions by State and Region Since 1976.*

²⁷ *Illinois State Page.* <<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/illinois-1>>

within this state, this will be an interesting case study in that we can see what role public opinion has played in the abolition process.

In New England, I chose New Hampshire, the only state in the region where the death penalty is still legal. Only twenty-six people have been executed in this state, the latest being in 1939. The length of time since the latest execution could be a key indicator of debate about the policy. Indeed, throughout its history, New Hampshire has grappled with the death penalty and the crimes it deems appropriate for this punishment. In fact, in 2000 a bill for repeal was passed by the legislature, yet the governor at the time, Jeanne Shaheen, vetoed it.²⁸ As time went on, though, the policy has been increasingly restricted, with a variety of crimes being taken off the list of capital offenses. New Hampshire established a Death Penalty Study Commission in 2009, voting in 2010 to keep the death penalty rather than abolish it, but voted not to expand the policy.²⁹ Recently, the 2012 candidates for governor have expressed that they will repeal the death penalty. However, only a year earlier in 2011, New Hampshire voted to expand their death penalty practices. Thus while it seems New Hampshire may be ready to abolish the death penalty, its presence has acted as a regional outlier for years. To see why this is the case, public opinion must be taken into account as politician's reliance on public opinion to form policy decisions, especially in a campaign year, is notable and therefore may have been a direct cause for the fluctuations we see in that policy.

The last state I chose was New York to represent the Mid-Atlantic. I chose this state specifically because, like Illinois, the death penalty was more recently deemed

²⁸ *History of the Death Penalty in New Hampshire*. <<http://nodeathpenaltynh.org/history-of-the-death-penalty-in-new-hampshire/>>

²⁹ *History of the Death Penalty in New Hampshire*.

illegal in this state. However, New York also has a unique history with the death penalty, as it has been abolished and reestablished a number of times prior to the 1976 *Gregg* decision, but since then has seen a reduction in the number of crimes where the death penalty is an option following certain high court decisions. In doing so, an essential moratorium was enacted like we saw in the Oregon and Illinois cases. Repeatedly, the state legislature passed a number of measures attempting to reinstate this practice, but governors vetoed the bills at the time. However, in 1995, Governor George Pataki, who had campaigned on the issue of reinstating the death penalty, followed through with that promise.³⁰ Despite this, in 2004, the New York Court of Appeals deemed the statute unconstitutional, and, following the last death sentence being reduced to life in 2007, New York had essentially abolished the death penalty.³¹

The specific state cases I chose to look at were picked because of their regional situation, to investigate if this is a case where a certain region is influenced in a specific way compared to another region. They were also chosen due to their coverage of the wide range in policies towards the death penalty. In order to account for these differences, I examine a number of state-specific data in order to root out what role public opinion plays in the formation of the different policies we see. To accomplish this, I look first at the demographic situations to see what specific demographic characteristics influence public opinion. Unfortunately, breakdowns in the correlation between demographic characteristics and public opinion on the death penalty do not exist for specific states. However, the University of California, Berkley, maintains a Survey Documentation and

³⁰ *Laws of New York: Death Penalty.*

<http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/legalservices/ch1_1995_death_penalty.htm>

³¹ *New York State Page.* <<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/new-york-1>>

Analysis (SDA) database, an archive that contains several data sets, including the General Social Survey (GSS), which is useful in our case as it provides a region variable that can be used to examine the areas. Recoding the region variable is necessary because the GSS breaks down the United States into nine regions, while my analysis separates it into six. Therefore, I combine the Pacific and Mountain regions to represent the West and Oregon, West and East North Central to represent Illinois and the North Central region, and West and East South Central to represent the South Central Region and Texas. Recoding is not necessary for the states of Georgia, which is represented by the South Atlantic region, New York, which is represented by the Middle Atlantic region, and New Hampshire, which is represented by New England. Limitations to this method could be the failure to capture the picture of the individual states as well through the use of state-level data and by the fact that certain regions are combined in this analysis. However, because this analysis engages with the question of regional differences, the combination of these should not impact my results and in fact more directly address this question. I also include a seventh variable in the entire United States in order to facilitate an analysis comparing the United States to each of the regions. Using that SDA database, I control for a number of variables that are outlined below. The first I look at are a variety of demographic characteristics, specifically race, religion, age, education, income, marriage, and the presence of children.

For the most part, the general aforementioned variables of race, religion, age, and education have all been explored in previous literature. However, these scholars were looking at the demographic situation of the entire United States on a national level. By conducting a regional analysis of these specific variables, and going into further detail

within the variables themselves, I hope to analyze how demographic trends affect public opinion regionally in an attempt to root out the causes of regional discrepancies. For race, I use the categories of white, black, and other to analyze public opinion based on the six regions I have identified above, as available data does not break race down further than those three categories. However, I think this tells us a story of racial differences, as previous literature discusses and indicates the existence of a relationship between race and opinion on the death penalty specifically in regards to whites and blacks. Therefore, we expect to find that whites are more heavily in favor of the death penalty compared to blacks, and more so in the Southern regions of the South Central and South Atlantic than in the other regions.

The next demographic characteristic I examine is religion. The literature only covers the breakdown of fundamentalism versus evangelicalism. The GSS ask the respondents how they identify themselves in those terms, therefore I conduct my own study of this variable, controlling for region, to see if the findings from previous authors, that fundamentalists tend to approve of the death penalty over evangelicals, hold when looking more specifically into the regions of the US. I expand the analysis further to see how religious affiliation in general affects the death penalty in the various regions by controlling for an additional religion option identified by the GSS in the SDA, which breaks down opinion into those who identify as Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox, Muslim, other, and no religion. Specifically, I look at what religion the respondent was raised in, as we have learned from the literature that these opinions do not generally change over the course of a lifetime. Therefore, religion at the onset of one's life should dictate opinion throughout one's life, if religion and public opinion on the death penalty

are indeed correlated. A further option given by the GSS through the SDA is how religious a person considers himself or herself, given a variety of options from very religious to not religious. This is important to look at because if religion does not play a significant role in the majority of people's lives, then its impact on one's opinion of the death penalty would be minimal. Using these three characteristics of religion, I attempt to analyze how religion factors into public opinion on the death penalty. I expect that the more religious a person is, the lower the level of support for the death penalty, as most religions place heavy emphasis on morality. Therefore we should find that regions with higher levels of religious significance should correlate to lower levels of support for the death penalty.

The third demographic characteristic I look at is age. Rather than looking at all ages individually, I group them into five categories of approximately the same number of ages, 18-30, 31-45, 46-60, 61-75, and 75-99, to achieve as even a distribution as possible. I then run an analysis of regional support for the death penalty controlling for these age groups. Overall, as young people tend to be more liberal whereas older people are more conservative, and literature has shown that more liberal people tend to oppose the death penalty while conservatism is generally correlated with favoring the death penalty, I expect that as we progress up the age distribution, support for the death penalty would grow.

The next demographic characteristic I examine is education. The GSS education variable in the SDA archive requests the highest grade finished, and therefore the number is presented in numerical form. In order to analyze education attainment more effectively, I selected certain levels to represent grade school, middle school, and high school as level

6, level 9, and level 12 respectively. To account for higher education, a second variable exists that asks what level of education they reached. The different options include less than high school, high school, junior college, bachelor's degree, and graduate degree. I conduct an analysis of regional support for the death penalty controlling for each of the two education variables. While the literature varies in whether there is a correlation between education and death penalty support, I expect that lower levels of education would be associated with higher levels of support for the death penalty, as some scholars have found that to be the case.

Beyond the available literature, I examine the income variable as well to see if this has an affect on death penalty opinions. To account for this, there are three variables associated with income, the individual respondent and total family income variables, both controlled for constant dollars with the base year of 1986, and the variable for distance below the poverty line. I use all three variables in my analysis, conducting three separate statistical breakdowns examining total family income, respondent income, and distance below the poverty line in regard to regional support for the death penalty in order to control. Because respondents are simply asked to give their income as a number and not from a range of choices, it is necessary to recode the data for family and respondent incomes. To do so, I break the numbers down into \$50,000 increments so that each number corresponds with a range of incomes. This is done for both variables. The highest reported levels are \$162,607 for family income and \$480,144 for respondent's income; therefore the number of outputs is different for the two cases.

As it is generally the case that higher incomes are associated with higher levels of education and higher education in some of the literature appears to be correlated with

opposing the death penalty, intuition would tell us that as income increases, support for the death penalty should decrease. Similarly, we analyze the relationship between distance from the poverty line and opinions on the death penalty. Given as a range from greater than \$10,000 below the poverty line to \$20,000 above, this variable is useful, as it gives another perspective on income with which to analyze the regional situation. These three breakdowns provide a variety of angles to look at to tell us if and how these different variables affect views on capital punishment, as well as inform us if there is a correlation in general between incomes and death penalty opinions.

Another variable that could affect public opinion on the death penalty is the respondent's marriage status. This variable could be significant in that those who are married may be more likely to favor the death penalty than those who are not married because they may have a desire to protect someone else from harm and thus might feel the option of the death penalty is a necessity in safeguarding their spouse. In order to facilitate this analysis, I searched the GSS for a variable that asks explicitly for the respondent's marriage status. However, this question was never asked directly and therefore required an approach at a different angle. One variable included marriage as a category, among a number of others irrelevant to our discussion: condensed household type. This variable groups the wide range of compositions possible into single adult, single parent, married couple with no children, married couple with children, cohabitate couple with no children, cohabitate couple with children, non-family with no children, non-family with children, unsure with no children, unsure with children, other family with no children, and other family with children. I group those labels that indicate a married household, "married couple with no children" and "married couple with children", and those that indicate an

unmarried household, the remaining options, to conduct a regional analysis of death penalty opinions to see if there is a correlation with differences in marriage status.

Through examination of this variable, I also considered that the presence of children might impact views on capital punishment. Parents feel an innate desire to protect their children, and therefore may be more likely to support the death penalty to allow for the maximum protection. On the other hand, the effect of having children may cause an increase in empathy, and therefore we would see a reduction in support for this policy. To examine this, I searched the General Social Survey and found a variable that provided the number of children in a household, which I use to see if there is a correlation among those with children favoring the death penalty over those who do not have children. After exploring the variety of characteristics for each region identified, I use those analyses to determine the demographic makeup of these six regions and the states that I have chosen to look at more carefully.

Beyond the demographic situations in the regions, we know in general from the literature that the nation is urbanizing, which we confirm through an analysis of the general size and type of location of respondents in the GSS. Based off of these results, we are able to make conclusions about certain social issues. The effect of urbanization is something I hope to reveal through my analysis. I begin with the concept that as the nation urbanizes, I expect liberal attitudes and ideals to be gaining support over conservative ones. To determine if this is the case, I use two variables from the GSS, party identification, which measures the strength of a respondent's Democrat or Republican leanings, and political ideology, which the respondent is asked to indicate where they fall on a scale of extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Using those

variables, I analyze the correlation between urbanization and political beliefs in order to determine if the posit that as the nation urbanizes, it liberalizes, stands. I then run logistic regressions with capital punishment to determine how party ideology affects opinions on the death penalty, and see if there is a trend revealed that could be used to inform how urbanization affects capital punishment through this lens. I then test the correlation between opinions on capital punishment and the urbanizing situation of the United States. Within those previously identified analyses, I control for the specific six regions I am testing so that the results can be more generally applied to my hypothesis on regional effects on capital punishment public opinion. The political ideological situations of these regions could be a driving force behind the regional discrepancies, and through my analysis of this and other urbanization trends, I hope to reveal these differences. I expect to find that in urban areas, we see less support for the death penalty than in rural areas, as liberals tend to oppose capital punishment. Therefore, as we see movement into cities, we should also see a shift in this mentality.

Using my analysis on the effect urbanization has on capital punishment issues, I compare this trend to other social issues such as national spending on welfare, abortion, gay marriage, spending on the military, and marijuana legalization. All of these issues are identified as key topics of importance over the last decades, and we have seen the advancement of liberal opinions played out through various state and national laws. Certain issues are seen as state issues, such as gay marriage, whereas national spending on the military is more obviously a national issue. By looking at these two different levels of concerns, we can see if capital punishment follows the trend in social issues that are dealt with more as state concerns or if indeed it is a national issue. I expect to find

similarities between both state and national issues, as the death penalty has been debated in both arenas for years. Most literature looks at this from a national perspective, so similarities with state concerns would support my theory that regional discrepancies exist and are a driving force behind differences in public opinions.

Following urbanization trends, it is logical to look next at various arguments that people use to support the death penalty. Using a variety of responses to a wide range of questions, I attempt to root out the prevalence of these arguments within the specified regions. While the GSS does not directly ask what arguments people have for favoring the death penalty, two reasons identified in the literature and specifically through Gallup are the moral question of whether it is right or wrong and the use of it as a deterrent. While we see in the literature that time and time again, people have argued that the death penalty does not act as an effective deterrent, Gallup indicates this is still cited as a reason for support for this policy. Therefore to account for this argument, I use a variety of crime variables to determine support for this general belief that crime can be reduced through this policy. Following my logistic regression analysis of these variables, I compare the overall situations of the regions in order to see if crime rates are a reason why we see regional divergences.

I first look at the crime rate situation of the six states identified. I use the FBI database for this information, and conduct a comparative analysis of the states to represent their regions, looking specifically at the number of violent crimes committed in those states. Then I look at opinions on how much the government is spending to halt the rising crime rate. I first run a logistic regression simply comparing the different regional opinions for the GSS variable for the rising crime rate, comparing the opinions on

spending to the actual conditions of crime rates in the states to see if there is a correlation. I then conduct an analysis of opinions on the death penalty and its correlation to opinions on spending for reducing the national crime rate, while controlling for the six regions to determine the correlation between crime spending and capital punishment opinions. From the literature and the fact that the deterrence argument is still cited despite being proven wrong, I expect to find areas with high rates of crime to be correlated with positive opinions about the death penalty and national spending on crime.

The next arguments I examine fall under the moral category. Again, while not directly asking for respondent's opinions on the death penalty, there are a variety of variables available through the GSS that deal with morality and questions that relate to my topic. One such variable, opinions on the harshness with which courts deal with criminals, is an overlap with the crime rate variables, and therefore I include some further analysis on crime rates once this variable is accounted for. I run a logistic regression using the variable, testing it against capital punishment opinions while controlling for my six regions. I expect that those who feel that courts are not dealing harshly enough with criminals will tend to favor the death penalty compared to those who believe courts are too harsh.

The GSS additionally asks how much confidence the respondent has in the courts. This also overlaps to some extent with my crime analysis in that those who lack confidence in the courts may feel that the courts lack the ability to deal with crime in general. Additionally, as we have seen in the literature, there is evidence that the courts do not apply the death penalty fairly, particularly in regards to minorities and those with low socioeconomic status. Respondents therefore may have less confidence in the courts'

ability to apply this form of punishment fairly. Therefore, less confidence in the courts may be correlated with opposition to the death penalty.

A third moral variable I explore is whether the respondent agrees that sinners must be punished, reported on a scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. While this does not necessarily directly pertain to crime, sin incorporates crime, and therefore could be useful to review. I run a similar logistic regression to the harshness of courts variable. I expect that those who strongly agree that sinners must be punished are more likely to agree with the death penalty. I run similar logistic regressions with two other moral variables, that right and wrong are not black and white, and that morality is a personal issue and society should not enforce a standard. Logic would argue that those who feel morality is not black and white will be more likely to support the death penalty. Similarly, those who feel that society should not enforce a standard I expect to correlate with support for this policy.

The final variable I examine for support for the death penalty is the issue of spanking. While spanking may seem like a far reach from the death penalty, it does indicate a belief in harsher types of punishment. Therefore, I expect to find that those that strongly agree with spanking also favor the death penalty. To test this, I run an analysis of views on capital punishment compared to views on spanking, while controlling for the regions to determine if my hypothesis holds. I then do an overall comparison of these moral issues testing their prevalence **in a regional analysis**. I expect that regions like the South and Texas would tend to favor harsher punishments due to their vigilante tradition, whereas in places like New England, we see pacifism more prevalent and therefore would expect to see lower levels of support for these morality issues.

My final section encompasses media coverage of the death penalty. I have chosen newspapers as the medium I explore because it is more likely that exposure to these articles was limited to the state within which the newspapers were found. The effects that come with other types of media such as the web and television are much more difficult to determine in terms of state exposure as they are broadcasted nationwide. To determine the general prevalence of newspaper usage by the various regions I look at, the GSS asks the question how often does the respondent read the newspaper, given a range of options from every-day to never. I run a simple logistic regression, testing its correlation to the regions I have identified. This is useful to compare with, as it gives us a somewhat clear picture of how often people read the newspaper within that region. A second question asks how often a person will look for candidate information in a newspaper. This could be significant because, as the literature has shown, politicians care about public opinion when determining where to stand on issues. If people were gathering their information from newspapers, this form of media would be more significant than others. Therefore, I use this analysis to determine if this is where people are getting their political information. I then compare these variables with opinions on capital punishment to see if general media exposure to the newspaper has an effect on public opinion. All of these regressions are then used to support my examination of newspaper articles as a valid source of information provided to the public.

Even if people are not actually reading the newspaper regularly, it is clear that newspapers are still setting the agenda for both political elites and other media sources. In order to see the situation of media coverage on the death penalty, I explore three newspapers from each of my six representative states to determine exposure to positive

and negative stories on the death penalty as well as which pro/con arguments are particularly relevant to the regions. As we see in the literature, the media has played a key role in presenting death penalty information to the public. Through my exploration of these newspapers specific to each state, I determine the prevalence of the slants on the death penalty to see if this affects public opinion. For Texas and the South Central region, I have chosen the Houston Chronicle, Galveston County Daily News, and Austin American-Statesman. The New York Times, Newsday, and the Post Star-Glens Falls will represent New York and the Middle Atlantic. For the West and Oregon, I look at the Oregonian, the Democrat-Herald, and the Argus Observer. In New Hampshire and New England, I look at the Berlin Daily Sun, the Concord Monitor, and the Union Leader. To represent Georgia and the South Atlantic, I examine the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the Gwinnett Daily Post, and the Augusta Chronicle. Finally, for the North Central region, in Illinois, I look at the Chicago Tribune, the Rockford Register-Star, and the State Journal-Register. All of these have been identified as primary sources based in a variety of locations within the states and are considered more prestigious within the media options available. They are therefore useful to determine the general salience of the death penalty in each region, as well as the slant these regions take on the issue. I randomly select twenty editorial stories and code each of them for the general tone towards the death penalty the article takes, as well as which, if any, arguments for and against the death penalty the article mentions. I use this analysis to generalize the conditions of the regions and compare them to inform why we see the regional inconsistencies we do in terms of the arguments they deal with and the stances they take on the death penalty.

1.4 Summary of Chapters

My work is presented in chapter format. Chapter Two introduces my analytical approach in further detail including the specific correlation matrix and logistic regressions as well as additional analyses I undertake. Chapter Three analyzes the demographic variables, containing a comparative analysis of the regions and their demographic makeup to help illustrate the story behind the regional discrepancies. Chapter Four addresses the urbanization trends, including how political ideology and the shift towards urbanization affects social issues in general, which is then compared to the issue of capital punishment to see if this follows the same lines as other social trends. Through conducting a regional analysis with these variables, I hope to see if the urbanization situation in each of these regions affects views on capital punishment. The deterrence and morality arguments are contained in Chapter Five. Through analyzing the variables I discuss, I hope to see why people hold these arguments and how regional support and public opinion in general for these assertions informs their specific policies. Chapter Six encompasses the influence of the media. It contains a state-by-state assessment of media coverage, specifically newspaper attention, on the issue of the death penalty, determining the tone and general prevalence of reporting on this issue and what arguments are prevalent to the discussion of this policy in which region. Chapter Seven contains my discussion as well as general conclusions and comments on the issue, including a general comparison of certain region results that informs how regional support influences individual death penalty opinions and therefore policies. I analyze which of my identified key factors impact public support significantly, determining how

these dynamics play out within the region and compare to other regions to inform why we see divergences in the United States with regards to capital punishment policies.

Chapter 2

Analytical Approach

2.1 Correlation Matrix

Prior to running regressions, I determine whether the independent variables I have outlined above enhance my regression model, moving away from the theoretical idea of what *could* be significant based on my own intuition and past studies towards a determination of which variables are statistically significant to this model. A full list of these variables, the topics to which they are referring, and their descriptions are found in Appendix A. The dependent variable, Respondent R's Opinion on the Death Penalty, and the control variable, Region of the Interview, are excluded from this analysis, as this test is unnecessary for these types of variables. Before running any tests on the statistical significance of the variables, I figure out variables are correlated with each other in order to avoid the problem of multicollinearity.³² In order to determine whether multicollinearity exists, I ran a correlation matrix using the Survey Documentation and Analysis (SDA) program. Unfortunately, this revealed problems with certain variables that I am attempting to use. When those variables are combined in an analysis with other variables I want to utilize, the General Social Survey (GSS) does not have enough valid cases to determine correlation. Out of the original thirty variables, twenty-four of them provided results using the correlation matrix, forcing me to eliminate the following from my list of variables that resulted in zero valid cases: R's Religious Identity, Distance

³² When two or more regressors are highly correlated with one another, this can "limit the usefulness of the regression model for inference and prediction" (Montgomery and Peck, 1991).

Below the Poverty Line, Abortion, Spanking, Frequency of Reading Newspaper, and Political Information from Newspaper.

After eliminating those variables that resulted in zero valid cases to examine, I ran a correlation matrix. The general rule political scientists use for eliminating variables to avoid the problem of multicollinearity follows that if the correlation between the two variables is higher than 0.8, one of the two correlated variables must be eliminated from the regression model. This matrix revealed that only two variables were correlated beyond the 0.8 threshold. These were the education variables of “Highest Year of School Completed,” which asked, “What is the highest grade in elementary school or high school that you finished and got credit for?” and “R’s Highest Degree” which asked, “If finished 9th-12th grade: Did you ever get a high school diploma or a GED certificate?”

Theoretically, it makes sense that these two would be correlated as they ask very similar questions. I chose to eliminate the variable Highest Year of School Completed as this variable only looked at education through high school, whereas R’s Highest Degree variable provides a range of possibilities that includes “less than high school,” “high school,” “junior college,” “bachelor’s degree,” and “graduate degree.” “R’s Highest Degree” gives us a more complete picture of the education spectrum whereas “Highest Year of School Completed” only considers the first two of those categories of education, thereby eliminating the analysis of whether college education effects opinions on the death penalty. For all other variables I use, none were correlated with each other beyond the 0.8 threshold, so it is safe to including them in my logistic regression analyses, which I present next.

2.2 Logistic Regression Analyses

For the logistic regression analyses, I add in the dependent variable, R's Opinion on The Death Penalty, and the control variable, Region of the Interview. Using the SDA logistic/probit regression software, I employ one regression per region in order to determine which variables are significant to my model. In order to enter variables into the SDA software, they must have the level of measurement of ordinal or ratio/interval variables. For any nominal variables, this requires the use of dummy variables, as the categories of the independent variable do not have order or scale to them, so it is impossible to make conclusions on the relationship between the variables. For the variables that I have determined are not correlated with each other beyond the 0.8 threshold, three of my variables required the use of dummy variables, Race of the Respondent, Religion the Respondent was Raised In, and Party Identification. As demonstrated in the tables below, this results in additional variables for each of those categories. For race, I have Black and White as the two variables for this category. For religion the respondent was raised in, I have the categories of Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and no religion. For party identification I isolated the variables of Democrat, Independent, and Republican. I explain why I chose these in more detail within my presentation of the data.

In addition to dummy variables, a few variables included a number of categories that were either irrelevant to my hypothesis or the possible responses were not in an order that could be analyzed and therefore required recoding. The first variable requiring recoding was the Number of Children variable. I recoded this variable, which originally presented the information as an actual number the respondent his or herself gave, to

simply include the two categories of “children” or “no children.” A second variable that required recoding was the variable regarding Courts’ Dealings with Criminals. The order of possible responses was an issue because to test statistical significance, the variables must have a logical order. I recoded this variable to reflect a logical order using the original choices in the new sequence of “not harsh enough,” “about right,” and “too harsh.” The last variable that required recoding was Household Type. This variable was actually already a condensed form of the household makeup of a respondent. However, I wanted to isolate the marriage aspect for this study. Therefore, I selected the categories that indicated a married household and those that indicated a single household and recoded those opinions into the two categories of “married” and “unmarried.” The remaining variables I examine fulfill the non-nominal, ordered sequence of values requirement for variables in order to be analyzed using a logistic regression and therefore are entered as is.

For my first analysis, I ran all variables together as a complete logit regression for each region. The cases had to fill many conditions in order to be considered valid for calculation of the coefficients to determine statistical significance. This results in a number of cases deemed invalid as they do not fulfill the requirements of falling within the region I want to analyze and having responses for each of the independent variables I posit are associated with the death penalty. Therefore, when I ran all independent variables for the first region, New England, the result was an error message that the regression coefficients could not be calculated. To determine which variables were causing this error message, I backtracked and added in each variable individually, running a single logit analysis for each variable, beginning with the race dummy

variables and continuing down my list. Any variable that was added that resulted in the error message I eliminated from my analysis. If the variable did not result in the error message, I retained it for my logistic regression. An additional problem arose when some independent variables would provide results in one region and not in another region due to the variability in the number of valid cases that my independent variables addressed. Because I was attempting to see differences across regions, it was important that all of the independent variables produce results in all regions; therefore, I eliminated these variables as well. In total, twenty of the variables, including the new dummy variables, that I posited would be correlated with opinions on capital punishment provided results to analyze statistical significance, forcing me to eliminate an additional eight of my variables from the regression.

A table of the results from my logistic regression analyses of statistical significance for each of the six regions I am examining can be found in Appendix B. I added an additional row to include the variable of the entire United States in order to see how the regional situations vary from the nation overall. Though the SDA program gives us a number of statistics associated with a logistical regression, for the purposes of this study I am only interested in the nature of the relationship, whether it be positive or negative, and the significance of that relationship. The sign on the value of the coefficient determines the positive or negative nature of the relationship between the variables. I am not concerned with the actual value of the coefficient for this analysis because it is beyond the purpose of this study. If I were to expand this to construct a fully encompassing equation, this resulting equation could be used to expand to the entire population. However, for my purposes, I have simply indicated whether the relationship

is positive or negative, denoted by the sign “+” or “-”, respectively, in the table below.

To interpret the sign of the coefficient, we look at level of measurement and how the possible responses were originally coded as well. This is crucial because the relationship between the variables can change depending on which direction the various categories the independent variable are scaled.

To determine statistical significance for each of the variables, a t-test is conducted, which determines if the variables are in fact related or if the perceived relationship is due to chance or random error. The SDA software gives us an actual value for this statistic, which we could use to calculate statistical significance. However, the program also provides the probability associated with that value, which has already standardized the different t-scores so that they are comparable in terms of statistical significance. Though this may be labeled as a probability, and that is how we will refer to it, the number provided in the tables is actually a proportion because this standardizes the values on a scale of 0 to 1. The general rule for determining statistical significance follows the standard that if the probability is less than 0.05, there is a 95% chance that the variables are significant, indicating that they have a substantive relationship with the dependent variable, R’s Opinion on the Death Penalty. I also examine the 0.1 level, which indicates there is a 90% chance the variables are significant; comparatively, I also examine 0.01, meaning we are 99% confident our variables are related in a significant way. I do not look at significances above the 0.1 threshold because it is more likely that an error will occur in our analysis of the existence of a relationship between the variables. The results from the logistical regressions for the six different regions, as well as the entire United States, of each of the independent variables and their relationship to the dependent

variable, the Respondent's Opinion on the Death Penalty, can be found in Figure 2 in the Appendix B.

From the results found in the table of Appendix B, we see a rough picture of how the variables interact within each of the regions by comparing the probabilities and signs of the coefficients. In the following three chapters, I present the relevant data and calculated statistics to look at a variety of variables analyzed in the logistic regression as they fit to the subjects outlined in my summary of the chapters found in the introduction. However, before I explain the results from my regressions, I must explain how I examine the media influence element of my argument found in Chapter Six.

2.3 Newspaper Analyses

For the media influence section of my study, as discussed in my methodology section, I review three newspapers for each of the six regions to determine what influence the media may have on public opinion and thus policy with regards to the death penalty. It was necessary to select a sample of the articles, as I conducted a general search on the website for each of the newspapers, which returned thousands of articles. Therefore, it was necessary to determine a level that seemed realistic for analysis of the tone and arguments encompassed within that newspaper. This was set at twenty articles per newspaper. When refined to include only editorial articles that discussed the death penalty, the search returned even less, and I was able to use a random number generator to select twenty of these articles. For two states, New York and New Hampshire, searches of my chosen newspapers did not return the required twenty articles per newspaper, so I coded all possible articles. These two states have roughly half of the total number of

articles included for the remaining four states, the implications of which I discuss in Chapter Six.

From the results of the random article generation, I coded each of the selected articles in terms of whether they discussed “sticking with the status quo”, abolishing the death penalty, or reforming it. Additionally, I considered if the articles examined the negative effect a repeal could have, discussed a bill, referenced a specific case, or reported on a botched execution. I then coded for a number of arguments for and against the death penalty, including cost, execution of innocents, vengeance aspect, and whether it was a deterrent or not, all of which were revealed in the literature and thus are important to examine. Also revealed in the literature was the issue of race and morality in terms of death penalty. I therefore coded the newspapers to reflect these arguments. For each of these qualities, a value of one was given if the article included a reference to or reflected the characteristics outlined above, and a value of zero was assigned to those categories that were not reflected.

Because I am not using predetermined survey data, I am unable to use the SDA software to examine the results from my coding. Therefore, I use a different program, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), to input and analyze my results. I conduct an analysis of variance (ANOVA), which tests the average proportion of articles that deal with the various topics and arguments and compare them to the full sample of articles to test the hypothesis that regional differences are significant in predicting what tone the subsample will take. Through using SPSS, the ANOVA conducts an F-test with a related significance level, which we compare to our significance thresholds analyzed above to give the statistical significance. This test also gives us an associated substantive

significance, with eta-squared, which tells us the strength of the relationship. This measure of substantive significance is a Proportional Reduction in Error measure (PRE measure), which we will use to determine how well we can predict the slant of the article based on which category or theme we are examining. Using these two values, I analyze in which regions the different tones and arguments are significant, and of those that are significant, I determine how they influence the regional media's portrayal of the death penalty. As outlined in my summary, this analysis can be found in Chapter Six. I next move on to the results from my different analyses.

Chapter 3

Demographic Variables and the Death Penalty

I began my discussion of the topic of how demographic characteristics are related to capital punishment in my introduction, pointing out that the literature has shown that a number of these characteristics influence individuals' opinions on the death penalty. I identified a variety of demographic variables outlined in my methodology section of the introduction, namely race, religion, age, education, income, marriage, and the presence of children. I look at each of these characteristics and the variables for which we calculated statistical significance to see how they interact and attempt to make conclusions about how they influence the death penalty within the regions.

3.1 Race

The first variable I examine is race. A number of scholars have noted the connection between race and the death penalty, namely that whites tend to favor this policy more than blacks, who tend to be opposed to this method of punishment (Galliher, Koch, Keys, and Guess, 2002). Recall the numbers presented in the first chapter gathered by the Pew Research Center, which claim that support among whites is at 63%, as opposed to black support, which is at 36%. Therefore in my analysis, I expect whites to be correlated with favoring the death penalty while blacks tend to oppose this policy.

3.1.1 Independent Variable: Race

I ran a cross-tabulation of opinions on capital punishment and race to determine levels of support among blacks and whites using the General Social Survey in SDA. In the table below, the percentages associated with each of the regions and their levels of

support for the death penalty among the different races will be found. To use the race variable, which has a nominal level of measurement, it is necessary to use dummy variables and eliminate the category of other in this analysis. Therefore, the variables used in this analysis separate race into whites and blacks.

Table 3: Race by the Feelings about Death Penalty by Region

Region	Race			
	White		Black	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	69.6%	30.4%	38.2%	61.8%
Middle Atlantic	75.1%	24.9%	49.3%	50.7%
North Central	75.4%	24.6%	50.9%	49.1%
South Atlantic	79.3%	20.7%	49.0%	51.0%
South Central	79.3%	20.7%	45.6%	54.4%
West	78.6%	21.4%	54.3%	45.7%
Entire US	77.0%	23.0%	49.0%	51.0%

Source: General Social Survey

From the data, we see that for the entire US, 77% of whites favor the death penalty while just 49% of blacks favor this policy. Both of these values are higher than those reported by the Pew Research Center. The GSS results were last updated in 2012, as opposed to the numbers reported by Pew, which come from 2013 so this could account for the difference. However, because death penalty opinion does not change drastically over a person's lifetime, this year difference does not seem like a logical explanation, so there may be other factors influence these differing results. For our purposes, because I employ the GSS results on race and capital punishment opinion in other ways, I am only referring to the results from the GSS, though it is important to keep in mind the downward trend in support for both of these groups.

Among the six regions I have broken down the United States into, we see that New England has the lowest levels of support for this policy, with whites favoring at

69.6% and blacks at 38.2%, the lowest level of support in all the regions between the two races. In contrast, the highest levels of support among whites is found in the South Atlantic and South Central regions of the United States at 79.3% in favor. The highest level of support among blacks is found in the West region of the US with 54.3% favoring this policy. But as the numbers show, this appears to coincide with the hypothesis of a racial gap in opinions on the death penalty. However, to test the significance of the race variable, we look at the variable in combination with the entire list of variables.

When running a single logit analysis of race and capital punishment, the variable is significant at the 0.01 level for the entire United States for both blacks and whites, as well as in the West, South Central and North Central regions. Among whites only, the variable is significant at the 0.01 level for New England, the South Atlantic, and the Middle Atlantic. Among blacks only, the relationship assessed singularly is significant at the 0.05 level for both the South Atlantic and the Middle Atlantic. The only place where race is not a significant predictor of views on capital punishment is among blacks in New England. However, when we assess variables in a logistic regression singularly, false indications of significance can result because we know (or at least can say with great certainty from exploring past literature and based on intuition) that there are other factors that influence public opinion on the death penalty beyond race. Therefore, we examine the results we got from running the logistic analyses using all of our variables. I have reproduced the portion of the complete Logit below where our race variables can be found.

Table 4: Logistic Regression of Race on Capital Punishment by Region

Region	Race			
	White		Black	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.232	-	0.277
Middle Atlantic	-	0.597	+	0.457
North Central	-	0.355	+	0.289
South Atlantic	+	0.823	+	0.216
South Central	-	0.862	+	0.359
West	-	0.103	-	0.109
Entire US	-	0.042	+	0.054

Source: General Social Survey

For whites, all of the regions have the same sign on the coefficient, negative, with the exception of the South Atlantic. This means that if the relationship between the variables is significant, a white respondent in any region of the United States, with the exception of the South Atlantic, is more likely to favor the death penalty than oppose it. In the South Atlantic, the positive sign on the coefficient could indicate that whites in this region are more likely to oppose the death penalty than non-whites. Among blacks, we see a positive relationship for the country as a whole, indicating that if the respondent is black, they are more likely to oppose the death penalty. We see positive signs on the coefficients in all the regions except New England and the West, where the coefficient takes a negative sign. This could indicate that in the majority of the regions of the United States, blacks tend to oppose the death penalty, except in the regions of New England and the West where they tend to favor the death penalty. To see if we can make these definite conclusions, we look at the probabilities associated with these variables in order to see which are significant.

From the data, we see that for the entire United States, among whites, this variable is significant at the 0.05 level with a probability value (p-value) of 0.042, meaning we can say with 95% certainty that race influences opinions on capital punishment among whites. Among blacks, when rounded to the nearest hundredth place, for the entire United States, the probability is significant at the 0.05 level as well. Therefore for the purposes of this study, we can say that race is impactful on views on capital punishment among both blacks and whites for the entire United States. It must be said that we are slightly less confident in the relationship between blacks and the death penalty due to rounding than we are in the one between whites and views on this form of punishment.

When we break down the results by region, we see that among whites, the only region that is statistically significant is the West at the 0.1 level when the p-value is rounded to the nearest tenth place. This rounded p-value of 0.1 means that we are 90% confident there is a relationship between the whites in the West and views on the death penalty. This is the only region for which we can make any sort of conclusions about the relationship between these variables, as the p-values associated with the other regions are beyond the 0.1 threshold. Among blacks, we see that in the West, when the p-value is rounded to the nearest tenth place, this relationship is determined to be statistically significant at the 0.1 level as well.

3.1.2 Discussion of the Independent Variable

Because the sign of the coefficient for whites in the entire United States is negative, we conclude that, in the event that the person is white, he or she is more likely to favor the death penalty as to oppose it in the whole of the US. The significant

relationship between blacks and views on the death penalty means that when the p-value is combined with the sign on the coefficient, we determine that blacks are more likely to oppose the death penalty than non-blacks. In our regional analysis, when we combine the p-values with our analysis of the signs on the coefficients from above, we see that a negative sign for this region indicates those people who are white are more likely to favor the death penalty in the West, similar to what we found for the whole United States. For the statistically significant relationship of blacks in the West, the sign on the coefficient is negative, meaning that unlike the rest of the United States, where blacks are more likely to oppose the death penalty compared to non-blacks, in this region, blacks are more likely to favor this policy. This is contrary to our hypothesis that blacks are more likely to oppose the death penalty. This could be due to blacks in the West possibly tending to have more of the mentality of vengeance and retribution than do blacks in other regions of the US. Or perhaps blacks in the West have not been subject the racial disparity in the application of the death penalty and therefore feel it is applied fairly. These are just conjectures, however, and assessing them is beyond the scope of this study.

From these results, we can conclude that there is a relationship between the variables in the West, but this is the only region where we can make definite conclusions about the influence of race. In the United States as a whole, race appears to be highly significant to opinions about the death penalty. Because the purpose of this study is to examine regional differences in how death penalty opinion is influenced, we can conclude from this analysis that among the regions, race for both blacks and whites is not a statistically significant influential factor in the various regions of the United States

except in the West, where the characteristic of race is correlated with favoring capital punishment.

3.2 Religion

The second variable I will examine is the religion demographic. Due to the general emphasis on morals of religions and the fact that some of the strongest movements to abolish the death penalty came from religious groups, this factor could be influencing public opinion on this topic at the regional level. Possibly those who are more religious are more likely to oppose the death penalty than their non-religious counterparts. Unfortunately, because of the problem of not enough cases to calculate the logistic regression, I was forced to eliminate one of my variables, the respondent's religious identity, in order for my logistic regression to produce results. However, the two other religion variables, the religion the respondent was raised in, and if the respondent considers his or herself religious, produced results with the logit analysis. I first discuss the religion the respondent was raised in and then move on to the extent a person considers his or herself religious.

3.2.1 Independent Variable: Religion R was Raised in

The table below shows an analysis of the religion a person was raised in and how they correlate with views on capital punishment. This variable in the General Social Survey gives the options of Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox Greek/Russian/Etc., Moslem, other, and no religion. Because Orthodox Greek/Russian/Etc., Moslem, and other, this only makes up 4.7% of the respondents in the survey, and due to the fact that this is a nominal variable, we must eliminate some categories in order to run the logistic

regression. Therefore we examine the categories of Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and no religion to test their correlation with views on the death penalty. Additionally, due to its level of measurement as a nominal level variable, this requires the use of dummy variables, which is why we are able to analyze each of the three religions and the category of no religion individual to determine their significance within the six regions and the entire United States.

Table 5: Religion Raised In by Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Religion Raised In							
	Protestant		Catholic		Jewish		No Religion	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	56.0%	44.0%	70.6%	29.4%	84.8%	15.2%	45.3%	54.7%
Middle Atlantic	64.4%	35.6%	72.3%	27.7%	61.8%	38.2%	68.1%	31.9%
North Central	74.9%	25.1%	69.3%	30.7%	50.5%	49.5%	75.6%	24.4%
South Atlantic	75.6%	24.4%	73.1%	26.9%	82.2%	17.8%	77.9%	22.1%
South Central	76.1%	23.9%	68.0%	32.0%	64.7%	35.3%	77.3%	22.7%
West	77.3%	22.7%	66.6%	33.4%	48.5%	51.5%	74.4%	25.6%
Entire US	74.1%	25.9%	69.8%	30.2%	61.6%	38.4%	73.3%	26.7%

Source: General Social Survey

From the table, we can see that in the entire United States, Protestants are the most likely to favor capital punishment, with 74.1% of those who were raised in this religion feeling this way. The category with the second highest level of support is no religion, with support levels of 73.3% for the death penalty. 69.8% of those raised in Catholicism favor this policy. Of those respondents who identify as Jewish, 61.6% favor the death penalty, the category with the lowest level of support. Of the six regions of the United States and the categories of the independent variable, Jews in New England are the most likely to favor the death penalty, with 84.8% of these respondents indicating their feelings as such. The region and group with the least amount of support for this policy is those raised with no religion in New England, with 45.3% supporting capital

punishment. These observations appear to indicate that religion may be an influential factor in determining what influences levels of support for capital punishment, as we see the highest and the lowest favorability ratings for this policy within one region, New England. Among the three religions singled out in this analysis, it appears that Protestants have the highest level of support for this policy in half of the regions, including North Central, at 74.9%, South Central at 76.1%, and the West at 77.3% of those who were raised in Protestantism favoring the death penalty. Jews have the highest levels of support in New England at 84.8%, and the South Atlantic at 82.2%. These are very different compared to levels of support among Jews in the other regions, as low as 48.5% in the West. In the Middle Atlantic, Catholics have the highest level of support for capital punishment 73.1%. These differences in the regions in terms of the levels of support among the different categories are notable, especially the Jewish category with which we see a 36.3 percentage point difference in levels of support among the regions.

However, to make definite conclusions on the influence of the religion the respondent was raised in, we look at the statistical significance of the variables to see which, if any, categories of the independent variable are significant in terms of their support for the death penalty. Like with the race variable, I ran a logistic regression of just the independent dummy variables the religion the respondent was raised in could take on capital punishment. For the entire United States, every category was significant at the 0.01 level except for the Jewish category, meaning that for Protestants, Catholics, and those raised in no religion, this fact is correlated with opinions on the death penalty. Conducting an analysis of each of the regions, we see that in the Middle Atlantic, Catholicism is significant at the 0.01 level and Protestantism and no religion are

correlated at the 0.1 level. In the North Central region, like the entire United States, Protestantism, Catholicism, and no religion are all significant at the 0.01 level. For the South Atlantic, Protestantism is significant at the 0.1 level. Protestantism is significant in the South Central region of the US. Of all the regions, Judaism is significant at the 0.05 level only in one region, the West. In New England, this independent variable analyzed individually in this logit is not significant. When we run the entire list of variables through the logistic regression program, we see the significance of the categories of the variable changes, replicated in the table below.

Table 6: Logistic Regression of Religion Respondent was Raised In on Capital Punishment by Region

Region	Religion Respondent was Raised In					
	Protestant		Catholic		Jewish	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	+	0.053	+	0.097	+	0.459
Middle Atlantic	-	0.523	-	0.274	-	0.976
North Central	-	0.030	-	0.055	-	0.160
South Atlantic	-	0.032	-	0.142	-	0.300
South Central	+	0.920	+	0.569	+	0.491
West	+	0.459	+	0.248	+	0.518
Entire US	-	0.045	-	0.312	-	0.502

Region	Religion Respondent was Raised In	
	No Religion	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	+	0.127
Middle Atlantic	-	0.423
North Central	-	0.014
South Atlantic	-	0.024
South Central	+	0.832
West	-	0.994
Entire US	-	0.018

Source: General Social Survey

As we can see from the signs on the coefficients, for all the categories of the independent variable, this relationship appears to be negative, in that there is no difference across religions the respondent was raised in in terms of favorability of the death penalty. Indeed for each of the categories, it appears that those who identify as such are more likely to favor the death penalty throughout the United States, which appears to be contrary to my hypothesis that organized religions are more likely to oppose capital punishment than those without a religion.

Comparing the signs on the coefficients for the various regions of the US, we see that for Protestantism, in New England, the South Central, and the West, the relationships between the variables in these regions are opposite of the entire US, in that if a respondent identifies in this category in these regions, he or she is more likely to oppose the death penalty. For Catholicism, we see similar disagreement among the regions as we did for Protestantism, with those raised as Catholics in New England, the South Central, and the West are more likely to favor this policy, while in the other regions Catholics are more likely to oppose it. Again, we see the same situation for Judaism, in that the regions of New England, South Central, and the West disagree with the sign on the coefficient of the entire United States. As such, Jews are more likely to favor the death penalty in these regions whereas for the entire United States, they were found to be more likely than those who do not identify with being raised in this type of religion to oppose this policy. This is an interesting similarity among the regions in that each of these three categories of the variable differ in a similar way among the three. This could indicate that religion is a key predictor of regional differences. For those raised in no religion, we see differences in the signs on the coefficients for New England and the South Central, which in these regions

is positive, indicating that those groups are more likely to favor oppose capital punishment. We look at statistical significance to determine whether there truly is a relationship between the variables.

From the data, we can see that in three of the regions, Protestantism is a significant predictor in opinions on the death penalty in New England. The p-value for this variable is 0.05 (when rounded to the nearest hundredth place), the North Central with a p-value of 0.030, and the South Atlantic, with a p-value of 0.032. This is indicative that, in those three regions, the relationship is significant at the 0.05 level, meaning we can say with 95% certainty that there is a relationship between when a person is raised in Protestantism in the three regions. Looking back at the sign on the coefficient, we see that it is positive in New England, indicating that that Protestants in New England are more likely to oppose the death penalty than non-Protestants in this region. The North Central and South Atlantic regions have negative signs on the coefficients, indicating that Protestants in those regions are more likely to favor the death penalty. In the other regions, the variable did not meet the significance threshold. The contrasting relationships that did appear indicate that region could be a factor in determining differences in death penalty opinions in terms of the religion a respondent was raised in.

Similar to Protestantism, the relationship between those respondents who were raised with no religion and their views on capital punishment is significant at the 0.05 level for North Central, where the p-value is 0.014, and in the South Atlantic, where the significance is 0.024. These two regions, like with Protestantism, are associated with negative signs on the coefficients, indicating that those raised in no religion are more likely to favor the death penalty. For New England, when rounded to the nearest tenths

place, the p-value becomes significant at the 0.1 level, meaning we can make the conclusion that in combination with the sign on the coefficient, those raised with no religion in New England are more likely to oppose the death penalty than those who do not identify with this category. In none of the other regions did this variable meet the 0.1 threshold in order to deem the relationship statistical significant.

For those who were raised in Catholicism, the relationship is significant at the 0.1 level for New England, with a p-value of 0.097, and for the North Central with a p-value of 0.055. When rounded to the nearest hundredths place, in the South Atlantic, the relationship becomes significant at the 0.1 level, also its rounded p-value. In none of the other four regions of the United States is Catholicism significant. Unlike all of the other categories of the independent variable, Judaism was not found to be a significant predictor in any of the regions of the US.

When we look at the significant of the categories the respondents were raised in within the entire US, we find Protestantism and no religion significant, with p-values of 0.045 and 0.018 respectively. This leads to the conclusion that in the United States as a whole, those raised in the categories of Protestantism and no religion, for which the coefficients for both take on a negative sign, are more likely to favor the death penalty.

This supports my hypothesis that religion is an influential factor in certain regions of the United States and is not relevant in other regions, lending support to the analysis of why we see regional differences in opinions and, in turn, policy with regards to the death penalty and for my use of this independent variable. I also speculated that that the relationship between the variables would indicate that those raised in an organized religion are more likely to oppose the death penalty as a result of the moral teachings

emphasized and the fact that many abolitionist groups have been led by religious leaders compared to those raised without a religion. While the second half of my conclusion, that those raised with no religion are more likely to favor the death penalty, is supported to some extent, the only other relationship that was significant was for one of the specific organized religions and led to the same conclusion on favoring this policy. This indicates that the fact that some respondents were raised in an organized religion and some were raised with no religion does not affect views on capital punishment in the opposite way that I posited, but rather affect this variable in the same way.

3.2.2 Independent Variable: *R* Considers Self Religious

Before we can make conclusions on how religion in general affects views on capital punishment within the regions, we have a second religious variable that made it through the correlation matrix and logistic regression to examine, namely the extent the respondent considers him or herself religious. The table below shows an analysis of the regions and each of the categories of how religious the respondent self-identified as showing the percentage that favored and opposed the death penalty.

Table 7: Respondent Considers Self Religious by Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	R Considers Self Religious							
	Very Religious		Moderately Religious		Slightly Religious		Not Religious	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	64.3%	35.7%	66.4%	33.6%	68.5%	31.5%	61.0%	39.0%
Middle Atlantic	57.8%	42.2%	65.4%	34.6%	65.8%	34.2%	53.6%	46.4%
North Central	60.8%	39.2%	69.8%	30.2%	76.5%	23.5%	65.7%	34.3%
South Atlantic	68.9%	31.1%	69.7%	30.3%	73.5%	26.5%	60.3%	39.7%
South Central	65.1%	34.9%	70.8%	29.2%	75.6%	24.4%	69.8%	30.2%
West	71.7%	28.3%	67.8%	32.2%	75.2%	25.8%	65.2%	34.8%
Entire US	65.6%	34.4%	68.9%	31.1%	73.5%	26.5%	62.8%	37.2%

Source: General Social Survey

As we can see from the data in the table above, for the entire United States, those who are slightly religious are more likely to support the death penalty, at 73.5%, than those who are moderately religious, at 68.9%, and very religious at 65.6%, which tends to support our hypothesis that the more religious a person is, the lower their support for the death penalty is. However contrary to our hypothesis and past findings identified in the literature review, the lowest amount of support for the death penalty comes from those who identify as non-religious, with only 62.8% of respondents within the entire United States favoring the death penalty. It will be interesting to see if this result is significant as we move on to that part of the analysis.

For the regions within the US, the Middle Atlantic produces the lowest levels of support for the death penalty in each of the categories when broken down into how religious the respondent considers his or herself, with the lowest level of support in all the regions and all the categories at 53.6% among those who identify as not religious. For the North Central region, the category with the lowest level of support for the death penalty is among those who identify as very religious, with only 60.8%, which would support our original hypothesis. This is similar for the South Central region, with 65.1% of those who identify as very religious favoring capital punishment. The region with the highest level of support is the North Central region among the slightly religious, with 76.5% of those respondents favoring capital punishment. Moving on to an analysis of the statistical significance of variable, we can see in which regions we can make definite conclusions about the significance of this variable.

Unlike the race and religion the respondent was raised in variables we explored above, the variable for how much the respondent considers his or herself religious is an

ordinal variable, meaning that the different categories the variable can take, not religious, slightly religious, and so on, have a natural order to them, but lack specifications on the scale of the categories. Therefore, unlike nominal variables, we can make conclusions about how the religiousness of a person effects views on capital punishment as one rather than looking at each category the variable could take separately, as we did with both race and the religion respondent was raised in. When assessed singularly in the logistic regression, we see how religious a person considers themselves is a significant predictor of views on capital punishment for the North and South Central regions of the US at the 0.05 level. In no other regions or the entire United States, was this variable when regressed alone significant. However as explained above, we cannot make any conclusions from this single variable analysis. Below is the table with the results from the total regression with the signs on the coefficient and the p-value associated with the statistical significance of this variable, controlled for each of the regions in the United States as well as its situation within the entire United States.

Table 8: Logistic Regression of Respondent Considers Self Religious on Capital Punishment by Region

Region	Independent Variable	
	Considers Self Religious	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.042
Middle Atlantic	+	0.635
North Central	-	0.442
South Atlantic	-	0.324
South Central	-	0.941
West	-	0.231
Entire US	-	0.164

Source: General Social Survey

From the signs on the coefficients, we can see that in general for the entire United States, there is a negative correlation between capital punishment opinions and self-identified religiousness, meaning that those who identify with the higher levels of religiousness are more likely to oppose the death penalty than those who are less religious. All of the signs on the coefficients for each of the regions agree with the exception of the Middle Atlantic, where the positive sign on the coefficient indicates that the more religious a person is, the more likely they are to favor the death penalty. While we cannot make any definite conclusions off the signs on the coefficients, we can see that there is a regional difference in terms of the Middle Atlantic versus the other five regions we isolated. In order to test if these perceived relationships are actually present, we must look at the statistical significance associated with the signs on the coefficients.

Looking at the probabilities associated with the variable of how religious the respondent considers him or herself, we see that for one of the regions is the variable significant at the 0.05 level, in New England. Although we do not see religiousness effecting opinions in each of the other five regions, for New England, with a p-value of 0.042 and a negative sign on the coefficient, we can say with 95% confidence that those who self-identify as higher on the religiousness scale are more likely to oppose the death penalty than those who feel less religious within this region.

For the entire United States, we see that this variable is not significant, with a p-value of 0.164 even when we expand to include the 0.1 threshold. We also see that among the regions, the only relationship that exists in terms of how religious a person is and their views on capital punishment is in New England, where there is a significant relationship indicating that higher levels of religiousness correlate with lower levels of

support for capital punishment. In no other region can we make this conclusion, thereby supporting my hypothesis that there are distinct factors within the regions that account for differences in opinions and in turn policy.

3.2.3 Discussion of the Independent Variables

Through combining the analysis of this variable with our other religion variable, the religion a person was raised in, some interesting observations can be made. It appears that in New England, the categories of Protestantism, Catholicism, and no religion, correlating with favoring the death penalty, have an opposite relationship compared to higher levels of religiousness, which in this region are associated with opposing the death penalty. My prediction that organized religions are more likely to oppose the death penalty than the non-religious does not appear to be supported by the data in this region, as the three categories that are significant agree in terms of how they affect policy. Though it does not appear that differences within the independent variable impact opinions on the death penalty in differing ways, they do affect that opinion in general as all are statistically significant.

Comparing this with the two other regions where significant variables existed, in the North Central and South Atlantic regions, we see the categories of the variable impacting opinions on the death penalty opposite from how the categories interact in New England. This supports my argument that there are certain regional differences that affect opinions on capital punishment. Unfortunately, because the variable of how religious a person considers him or herself is only significant in New England, we cannot use this to take the argument much further.

We can say that as this relationship indicates that the more religious a respondent considers his or herself, the more likely he or she is to oppose the death penalty, that perhaps within New England people consider themselves less religious. A person may have been raised in a certain religion but may not necessarily still practice that religion, which could be correlated with them favoring a certain policy, while those that actually consider themselves religious operate outside of the religion they were raised in. The necessity to delete the variable for a respondent's religious identity due to errors in the correlation coefficient has limited our ability to make certain conclusions about how a person's current religious identity could affect views on capital punishment beyond the variables we have explored. Therefore the furthest we can go with this analysis is to say that regional differences in views on the death penalty do exist in terms of the religion the respondent was raised in, but in terms of how religious a person considers him or herself, it is impossible to make definite conclusions about the correlation between the variable and views on capital punishment.

3.3 Age

The next variable I look at is age and how it impacts opinions on the death penalty. I hypothesize that age could be significant in that younger people are more likely to oppose the death penalty because of the establish trends towards liberalism among the younger generations, with that trend prominent in the literature. It must be mentioned that prior literature has found that there is little evidence to confirm the existence of a relationship between these variables, however, it is interesting to see if this recent trend in liberalism among young adults has had a significant impact on public opinion on the

death penalty. Therefore, I expect to see younger age groups positively correlated with opinions on capital punishment, and the older age groups to be correlated negatively with these opinions. Through an examination of the significance, we can see if these trends exist outside of the theoretical realm.

3.3.1 Independent Variable: Age

I ran a total of seven cross-tabulations using the GSS in the SDA of age and opinions on the death penalty to see how the variables interact for each of the six regions of the United States, as well as the country as a whole. The General Social Survey gives the respondent's age as a number, but in order to be able to complete this analysis, I grouped the ages together so that we can make more generational assumptions about the different groups. Below are the results from these analyses.

Table 9: Respondent' Age by Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Age					
	18-30		31-45		46-60	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	64.9%	35.1%	69.0%	31.0%	67.3%	32.7%
Middle Atlantic	64.9%	35.1%	71.5%	28.5%	72.1%	27.9%
North Central	70.7%	29.3%	75.3%	24.7%	73.2%	26.8%
South Atlantic	70.6%	29.4%	74.5%	25.5%	71.3%	28.7%
South Central	72.5%	27.5%	75.8%	24.2%	72.8%	27.2%
West	73.7%	26.3%	75.8%	24.2%	78.1%	21.9%
Entire US	70.5%	29.5%	74.4%	25.6%	73.2%	26.8%

Region	Age			
	61-75		75-99	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	69.2%	30.8%	71.4%	28.6%
Middle Atlantic	77.3%	22.7%	71.4%	28.6%
North Central	72.4%	27.6%	69.5%	30.5%
South Atlantic	74.1%	25.9%	72.5%	27.5%
South Central	72.6%	27.4%	66.8%	33.2%
West	80.0%	20.0%	76.6%	23.4%
Entire US	74.7%	25.3%	71.3%	28.7%

Source: General Social Survey

As we can see from the results above, the group with the lowest level of support is among 18-30 year olds, 70.5% of this group supports the death penalty in the entire United States, which would support our conclusion to some extent. However, the group with the second lowest level of support is among 75-99 year olds whose level of support is 71.3%. The highest levels of support come from 61-75 year olds, with 74.7% favoring the death penalty, and 31-45 year olds for with 74.4% of respondents in this age group favoring this policy. Because of the low variability in support among the age groups, it would appear that generally in the United States, there does not seem to be a definitive pattern of support for this policy.

When we look at group support, the lowest level of support overall can be found in New England and the Middle Atlantic, where 18-30 year olds report favoring the death penalty at 64.9%. We see the highest support for this policy in the West, with 80.0% of 61-75 year olds supporting capital punishment. It appears that in New England, we see the lowest levels of support among all the age groups, with all but the 75-99 age group reporting the lowest levels of support for this policy when compared to all the other regions. Additionally, we find the highest levels of support overall in the West compared to the other regions across all age groups. This would seem to indicate that if age is a significant predictor of opinions on capital punishment, we would see regional differences in terms of how age effects those opinions.

To take this analysis to the next level, we determine the signs on the coefficients and statistical significance for each of the regions, as well as the entire United States. To do so, I ran a logistic analysis that included this variable by itself to see if it, as an individual variable, was a significant predictor in each of the regions. Because our variable is interval/ratio, and therefore the possible responses have a natural order and scale, we assess a direction in which these variables are related without the use of dummy variables. When run singularly, we see the relationship is significant in the entire US at the 0.01 level as well as in the Middle Atlantic and the West, and in New England and the South Central at the 0.1 level. In the other regions, this variable assessed singularly was not significant. But looking at this variable in a logistic regression leaves out many potential predictors of opinions on capital punishment. Therefore, we look at how the entire list of variables interacts in each of the regions. Below are the statistics associated

with age and opinions on capital punishment within each of the regions as well as the entire US.

Table 10: Logistic Regression of Age on Capital Punishment by Region

Region	Independent Variables	
	Age	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.569
Middle Atlantic	-	0.428
North Central	+	0.815
South Atlantic	+	0.341
South Central	+	0.679
West	+	0.542
Entire US	+	0.298

Source: General Social Survey

From the signs on the coefficients for the regions, we can see that for the entire US, there appears to be a positive relationship with age, meaning that the older a person is, the more likely he or she is to oppose the death penalty, which is the opposite of what my hypothesis said. Two of the regions disagree with this assessment, New England and the Middle Atlantic. For those regions, with a negative sign on the coefficient, it appears that as the age of the person increases, those people are more likely to favor the death penalty. However, these are only speculations, as we need to examine statistical significance in order to determine whether the relationships we speculate actually are present.

Looking at the probabilities associated with the different regions and the entire United States, we see that none of the variables p-values are less than the 0.1 threshold. This means that is age a significant predictor of views on capital punishment.

3.3.2 Discussion of the Independent Variable

Because in none of the regions was age a significant predictor of views on capital punishment, we are unable to make any conclusive predictions about how age affects views on this policy. This means we are forced to reject our original hypothesis on this relationship and agree with the literature that tends to suggest that age as a demographic factor has little influence over people's opinions on the death penalty.

3.4 Education

The next demographic variable I will examine is education. I hypothesized that lower levels of education would be associated with higher levels of support for the death penalty, as some scholars have found this to be the case. There is some disagreement in the literature on whether a correlation does exist between education levels and opinions on the death penalty, but as some scholars found there was a connection. This disagreement is important to examine at this level to help explain the regional differences we see in death penalty policy. Unfortunately, from our correlation matrix, we were forced to eliminate two of the three education variables I theorized about examining in the introduction. The first, the respondent's distance below the poverty line, resulted in the error message of zero valid cases when I attempted to put it into the correlation matrix, and therefore it had to be eliminated. The second variable, respondent's highest year of school completed, had to be eliminated because it correlated with the third variable, respondent's highest degree, beyond the 0.8 threshold. Therefore in this analysis, I only examine the respondent's highest degree.

3.4.1 Independent Variable: Degree

I theorize that perhaps there is a correlation between opinions on the death penalty and the highest degree the respondent has received. In order to examine this variable, I first ran cross-tabulations for each of the regions, as well as the entire United States, in order to generally assess differences both between the levels of degree and among the regions in terms of views on capital punishment. Below are the results of this analysis.

Table 11: Respondent's Highest Degree Achieved by Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Degree					
	Less than High School		High School		Junior College	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	72.0%	28.0%	73.0%	27.0%	67.3%	32.7%
Middle Atlantic	69.9%	30.1%	74.1%	25.9%	69.7%	30.3%
North Central	71.6%	28.4%	75.5%	24.5%	74.4%	25.6%
South Atlantic	64.7%	35.3%	76.8%	23.2%	74.0%	26.0%
South Central	63.2%	36.8%	77.4%	22.6%	74.3%	25.7%
West	70.7%	29.3%	81.1%	18.9%	79.6%	20.4%
Entire US	68.0%	32.0%	76.8%	23.2%	74.7%	25.3%

Region	Degree			
	Bachelor		Graduate	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	62.1%	37.9%	48.0%	52.0%
Middle Atlantic	66.7%	33.3%	58.5%	41.5%
North Central	68.4%	31.6%	58.3%	41.7%
South Atlantic	73.0%	27.0%	67.9%	32.1%
South Central	79.2%	20.8%	72.1%	27.9%
West	69.8%	30.2%	66.0%	34.0%
Entire US	70.3%	29.7%	62.5%	37.5%

Source: General Social Survey

From the tables above, we can make some general observations of the impact degree and region have on views on the death penalty. For the entire United States, those who have achieved a high school diploma are most likely to favor the death penalty, at 76.8%. The level we see the least amount of favorability for this policy is among those who

have achieved a Graduate degree, with just 62.5% of this group supporting the death penalty. These statistics, as well as achievement of a junior college degree, at 74.7%, and Bachelor's degree, at 70.3%, indicate the trend in the data appears to be that more educated people are less likely to support the death penalty. However, among the lowest level of education, achievement of less than a high school degree, we see the second lowest level of support, at 68.0%, which seems to be an outlier to the pattern we see among the other categories.

Among the regions specifically, we see that the highest level of support comes from those who have achieved no higher than a high school diploma in the West, with 81.1% of the respondents who fall into this category indicating that they support capital punishment. The lowest level of support comes from those who have achieved a graduate degree and reside in New England, with 48.0% of those that fall into this group supporting this policy. When looking at the overall trend among the regions, we see that in the West, there is a 15.1 percentage point difference in support among high school graduates compared to those who have achieved a Graduate degree, with 66.0% of those who have achieved this level of education supporting this policy. Indeed if we ignore the first category for just a minute, we see that for all the regions, as a person moves from high school degree all the way up through the achievement of a Graduate degree, we see that support decreases across the regions. There is one exception to this, where the highest level of support for capital punishment in the South Central region comes from those who have achieved a bachelor's degree, at 79.2%.

The smallest range in support for the death penalty comes in the South Atlantic, where the highest and lowest levels of support only differ by 12.1 percentage points. The

percentage point difference of the highest range in support comes in New England, with a 25.0 percentage point difference between the highest and lowest levels of support for capital punishment. This could indicate that the relationship is significant in some regions, but not in others. To test this, we look at the statistical significance and signs on the coefficients to determine whether this relationship truly exists outside the theory.

Because we are dealing with a variable with an ordinal level of measurement, meaning the categories have a natural order but lack a scale in the possible values of the variable, we are able to look at this variable as a whole rather than the individual levels of education to determine how higher levels of education impact public opinion. Originally, I ran a logistic regression of the variables for each of the regions and the whole US. I found that when regressed singularly, the education variable degree is a significant predictor at the 0.01 level in five of the six regions, as well as the entire United States. Like we saw with the cross-tabulation, the South Atlantic was an outlier, though the relationship was still significant, but at the 0.05 level. While this is interesting to look at, we cannot make any sort of conclusions without the inclusion of the other variables in my logistic regression. In the table below are the desired statistics from that regression.

Table 12: Logistic Regression of Highest Degree on Capital Punishment by Region

Region	Independent Variables	
	Highest Degree	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	+	0.028
Middle Atlantic	+	0.084
North Central	+	0.180
South Atlantic	+	0.675
South Central	-	0.707
West	+	0.002
Entire US	+	0.001

Source: General Social Survey

As we can see from the sign on the coefficients for the entire United States, there appears to be a positive relationship between the respondent's highest degree and their views on capital punishment. Because of the way the variables are coded, this sign means that the higher degree of education achieved by the respondent appears to correlate with opposition to the death penalty compared to those with lower levels of education for the entire US. For the individual regions, we see agreement on the sign of the coefficient with the exception of the South Central region. In this region, the sign on the coefficient is negative indicating that if the relationship is significant, those with higher educational achievement are in fact more likely to favor capital punishment than their less-educated counterparts. As we also saw this as an outlier in the trends explored in the cross-tabulations, as well as having a lower significance level when the variable was run through the logistic regression singularly, these divergences would tend to support the idea that this region in particular is different compared to the other regions. In order to see if this is truly the case, we examine the probabilities to determine in which regions this variable is significant.

For the entire US, the p-value is 0.001, which is much lower than our 0.05 threshold, and is indicative that we are 99.9% confident that there is a relationship between capital punishment and levels of education for the entirety of the United States. In the West, we also see a high degree of statistical significance with a p-value of 0.002, which meets the threshold for the conclusion that we are 95% confident the relationship between the variables is significant. Also at that confidence level, with a p-value of 0.028 is New England. When we expand our threshold to include the 0.1 level of confidence, we see that in the Middle Atlantic, there is a significant relationship at this level with a p-value of 0.084. In the other three regions of the United States, education levels were not found to be significant predictors of opinions on capital punishment.

3.4.2 Discussion of the Independent Variable

Combining our two analyses of the sign on the coefficient and the associated p-values, we see that for all of the regions that were significant, including the entire United States, there is a positive sign on the coefficient, indicating that those with higher degrees of educational achievement are correlated with opposing the death penalty compared to their less-educated counterparts in the regions of New England, the Middle Atlantic, and the West. This appears to indicate that if education is a significant predictor of opinions on the death penalty, then support for this policy will most likely come from those who have achieved higher education levels, as those are the only significant relationships we observe among the regions. Unfortunately, education is not a significant predictor for the one region that indicated a differing relationship compared with the other regions. But the observations we did make support my hypothesis of the significance of education and that lower levels of education will be correlated with support for the death penalty. Additionally, because we

see this variable significant in some regions and not in others, this adds evidence to answer the question of why we see regional differences in death penalty policy in how the variables and characteristics of that region impact views on capital punishment and in turn policy.

3.5 Income

The next demographic variable I examine is the effect income has on opinions on the death penalty. I hypothesized that because higher incomes are generally associated with higher levels of education, which the literature has show has been correlated with opposing the death penalty, I expect that income would also be correlated with the opposition of this policy. In the GSS, I originally found three income variables to test in terms of their correlation with views on capital punishment. However, we lost the variable for distance below the poverty line in our correlation matrix, with an error message of zero valid cases occurring. And we lost a second variable, the respondent's income, when I ran my full logistic regression due to the fact that it could not calculate the regression coefficients. Therefore, we are left with one variable for income, the respondent's family income in constant dollars.

3.5.1 Independent Variable: Family Income

The first step in the analysis of the variable is to the pattern of the relationship between family income and views on the death penalty. To accomplish this, I conducted a cross-tabulation of the variables looking at the situation in each of the regions and the entire United States. I grouped the incomes into ranges of \$50,000 in order to make the information easier to interpret. In the table below are the results of this cross-tabulation.

Table 13: Respondent's Family Income by Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Family Income in Constant Dollars							
	0-50,000		50,001-100,000		100,001-150,000		150,001-200,000	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	67.2%	32.8%	71.3%	28.7%	64.2%	35.8%	68.7%	31.3%
Middle Atlantic	70.6%	29.4%	71.2%	28.8%	72.6%	27.4%	73.9%	26.1%
North Central	72.9%	27.1%	73.2%	26.8%	70.9%	29.1%	63.4%	36.6%
South Atlantic	71.6%	28.4%	78.9%	21.1%	76.3%	23.7%	74.2%	25.8%
South Central	72.0%	28.0%	83.0%	17.0%	82.0%	18.0%	90.6%	9.4%
West	75.6%	24.4%	81.8%	18.2%	71.4%	28.6%	72.8%	27.2%
Entire US	72.4%	27.6%	76.7%	23.3%	72.9%	27.1%	73.5%	26.5%

Source: General Social Survey

For the United States as a whole, we see the highest percentage of support in one of the middle portion of the possible incomes, with 76.7% those making between \$50,001 and \$100,000 supporting capital punishment. We see the lowest level of support among those making between \$0-\$50,000, with 72.4% supporting this policy. Overall for the United States, it does not appear that there is a correlation between family income and feelings on capital punishment from the percentages in the cross-tabulation.

Looking at the percentages associated with the various regions, we see the highest level of support in the South Central region, with 90.6% of those making between \$150,001 and \$200,000. Contrary to our hypothesis, this number is also much larger than any of the other regions, as the next highest level of not found in the South Central region is 8.8 percentage points below that high value for those making \$50,001-\$100,000 in the West. The lowest level of support for capital punishment is among those making \$150,000-\$200,000 in the North Central region, of whom 63.4% favor this policy. Like the United States, we see the highest levels of support among those whose family income is between \$50,001-\$100,000 in the regions of New England, North Central, South Atlantic, and the West. The regions of the Middle Atlantic and, as we discussed before

South Central, are both exceptions to this and both find their highest levels of support among those whose family income is between \$150,000-\$200,000. These appear to indicate that my hypothesis may not necessarily hold. But in order to test if this is in fact the case, we must examine the statistical significance of the variables in the regions.

As was the case when we looked at age, because our variable is interval/ratio, we assess a direction in which these variables are related without the use of dummy variables as we did with our nominal variables. When income is run as the singular independent variable in a logistic regression of views on capital punishment, we see that this variable is significant at the 0.01 level for the entire United States, as well as the regions of the South Atlantic, South Central and West. Increasing our threshold to 0.05, we see that the Middle Atlantic is significant at this level. For New England and the North Central regions, family income is not a significant predictor of views on capital punishment when regressed on its own. However, to accurately assess statistical significance, it is necessary to test if this relationship holds when other factors are introduced.

Table 14: Logistic Regression of Family Income on Capital Punishment by Region

Region	Independent Variables	
	Family Income	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	+	0.827
Middle Atlantic	-	0.010
North Central	+	0.282
South Atlantic	-	0.853
South Central	-	0.338
West	-	0.024
Entire US	-	0.043

Source: General Social Survey

From the table, we determine the potential direction the relationship between family income and capital punishment could take by looking at the signs on the coefficients. We see for the entire United States, there is a negative sign on the coefficient, meaning that those with higher family incomes are more likely to favor the death penalty than those who have lower levels of family income, which is contrary to our original hypothesis of this variable. We see the same relationship between the variables in the West, South Central, South Atlantic, and Middle Atlantic. The regions of New England and North Central disagree, and the positive signs on their coefficients could indicate that higher family incomes correlate with opposition to the death penalty. If significant, this could point out regional differences in the way income affects capital punishment.

In order to determine which of these possible relationships is accurate, we must look at the associated p-values to test statistical significance. We see that the p-value for the entire US is 0.043 and is significant at the 0.05 level. In the West, we also see the p-value meet this 0.05 significance threshold, at 0.024. We are slightly more confident in the relationship, between family income and views on capital punishment in the Middle Atlantic, as it meets the stricter threshold, with a p-value of 0.010, as it meets the requirements of the 0.01 threshold.

3.4.2 Discussion of the Independent Variable

Combining our two analyses of the statistics given by the logistic regression, we can see that the negative relationship we observed with the United States, as well as the two regions of the West and the Middle Atlantic, holds to be significant. This means that in those two regions, as well as the US as a whole, those with higher family incomes are more likely to favor the death penalty than those with lower family incomes. This is contrary to

my hypothesis, which stated that high income was likely correlated with opposition to the death penalty. The contrary observed in our data is perhaps due to the fact that those with lower socioeconomic statuses are discriminated against more heavily in terms of being sentenced to death and therefore are more likely to oppose this policy, or it could be due to a number of other reasons. The fact that this variable is a predictor in only a few of the regions of the US and not in others lends support to my hypothesis that differences among the regions, specifically in terms of demographic variables, can explain the variation we see in death penalty policies.

3.6 Marriage

The next variable I examine is if marriage affects views on capital punishment among the regions of the US. I hypothesized that those that are married may be more likely to favor the death penalty than those who are not married because they might have a desire to protect someone else from harm and as a result might feel the option of the death penalty is a necessity in safeguarding that person.

3.6.1 Independent Variable: Marriage

Marriage is not asked explicitly as a question in the General Social Survey but rather falls as part of the household type variable. Therefore, I recoded that to include just the categories of married and unmarried in order to test the significance. In order to assess if there is a relationship between marriage and opinions on the death penalty, I first ran a cross-tabulation for each of the regions and the entire United States. The results of this analysis can be found in the table below.

Table 15: Marriage by Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Marriage			
	Unmarried		Married	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	61.1%	38.9%	71.2%	28.8%
Middle Atlantic	62.5%	37.5%	74.7%	25.3%
North Central	69.4%	30.6%	75.2%	24.8%
South Atlantic	67.8%	32.2%	75.5%	24.5%
South Central	66.5%	33.5%	76.8%	23.2%
West	71.1%	28.9%	79.7%	20.3%
Entire US	67.6%	32.4%	76.1%	23.9%

Source: General Social Survey

As we can see in the table, for the entire United States, 76.1% of those who are married favor the death penalty compared to the 67.6% of unmarried people who favor this policy. For each of the regions, we see that those who are married are more likely to favor the death penalty, which appears like it may support my hypothesis. The highest level of support comes among the married people in the West, with 79.7% reporting supporting the death penalty. We see the lowest level of support among unmarried people in New England, at only 61.1% in favor of this policy. Among those regions, we see the largest difference in support levels in the Middle Atlantic, with 74.7% of married people support capital punishment, which is 12.2 percentage points higher than those who are not married. The smallest difference we see is just 5.8 percentage points in the North Central region, with 75.2% of married people supporting this policy compared to the 69.4% of unmarried people.

To see in which of these regions, if any, the relationships we posited above are significant, we run a logistic regression. Unlike the original household type variable, which had a nominal level of measurement, my recoded variable is ordinal. Therefore, we look at this variable as a whole rather than at the individual categories to determine how being

married or not impacts public opinion on capital punishment. When running a single logistic regression of the variable, we find that this appears to be a significant predictor in all the regions as well as the US as a whole at the 0.01 level. However, there may be variables that when added, make marriage no longer a significant predictor in views on capital punishment. In order to see if this is the case, I ran a logistic regression assessing the significance of all the variables, which is reproduced in the table below.

Table 16: Logistic Regression of Marriage on Capital Punishment by Region

Region	Independent Variables	
	Marriage	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.163
Middle Atlantic	+	0.084
North Central	-	0.275
South Atlantic	-	0.598
South Central	-	0.211
West	+	0.715
Entire US	-	0.345

Source: General Social Survey

The signs on the coefficients can help us to make some predictions about the direction of the relationship between marriage and views on capital punishment. As we can see for the entire United States, there is a negative sign on the coefficient, meaning that those that are married are more likely to oppose the death penalty than those who are unmarried, which is contrary to what we saw from the cross-tabulation analysis. Indeed we see this negative relationship for the regions of New England, North Central, South Atlantic, and South Central, all of which are the opposite of the projected relationships we explored above. For the West and the Middle Atlantic, we see a positive sign on the

coefficient, meaning that if the variables are significantly related, then those who are married are more likely to favor the death penalty than those who are unmarried. In order to see which predictions are accurate, we must look at the associated p-values to test statistical significance.

Among all the regions and the entire United States, only in the Middle Atlantic do we see a significant relationship at the 0.1 threshold with a p-value of 0.084. For all of the other regions, the calculated p-value is above our maximum 0.1 level when determining statistical significance.

3.6.2 Discussion of the Independent Variable

Only in the Middle Atlantic do we see marriage as a significant predictor in views on capital punishment. This was also where we saw the largest spread between those who are married and those who are unmarried in levels of support in the cross-tabulation analysis. When combining our assessment of the p-value and the sign on the coefficient, we see that in the Middle Atlantic, those who are married are more likely to support capital punishment than those who are unmarried in that region. This supports my hypothesis of a positive relationship between the variables. In no other region is marriage a significant predictor of opinions on the death penalty. This also supports the hypothesis that different factors are interacting within the regions to influence these opinions, for with this variable, we see that marriage is important in one region, the Middle Atlantic, but not in the others, adding to the evidence as to why we see regional differences in capital punishment policy.

3.7 Children

The final variable I examine is the presence of children in the household of the respondent. Unfortunately, there is little scholarship on this in relation to the death penalty. But based on well-known effects children can have, I hypothesized that if a respondent has children, that would impact opinions on capital punishment, as parents feel a desire to protect their kids, and therefore would be more likely to support the death penalty to allow for the maximum protections. But the relationship could easily be the opposite, and if the effect of having children were an increase in empathy, then we would see a reduction in support for this policy.

3.7.1 Independent Variable: Children

In order to test my theory, I first ran a cross-tabulation of the presence of children in the respondent's household and that respondent's views on capital punishment for each of the regions and the whole United States. The table below presents this analysis.

Table 17: Children by Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Presence of Children			
	No Children		Children	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	62.1%	37.9%	70.4%	29.6%
Middle Atlantic	66.1%	33.9%	72.7%	27.3%
North Central	70.7%	29.3%	73.6%	26.4%
South Atlantic	72.5%	27.5%	72.7%	27.3%
South Central	75.4%	24.6%	72.6%	27.4%
West	72.3%	27.7%	78.1%	21.9%
Entire US	70.9%	29.1%	73.8%	26.2%

Source: General Social Survey

As we can see from the cross-tabulation, it appears that there is only a 2.9 percentage point difference in terms of support for capital punishment among those respondents who have children and those that do not, with those who have children

favoring this policy slightly more at 73.8%. When looking the individual regions, we see that the highest level of support comes in the West from those who have children, with 78.1% of the respondents favoring this policy. The region with the lowest level of support for capital punishment is New England and it is among those who have no children, at 62.1% reporting favoring the death penalty. More generally among the regions we see higher levels of support for the death penalty for those who report having children compared to those who do not have children. It is important to note that these are very slight differences, ranging from the highest percentage point difference at 8.3 in New England, to the lowest at just 0.2 for the South Atlantic. We do see one region, South Central, where the support is higher among those that have no children, at 75.4%, than those who have children, at 72.6%. When we look at the statistical significance, it will be interesting to see if this is reflected, perhaps by the sign on the coefficient. However, even that difference is only 2.8 percentage points, and these small differences could indicate that in fact there is no relationship between the presence of children and capital punishment.

In order to test this relationship, we need to look at the statistical significance of the number of children and views on capital punishment among the six regions and the entire United States. Because of the way I have recoded this variable to reflect only the two categories of children and no children, instead of the initial number the respondent gave, this variable has been transformed from an interval/ratio variable into an ordinal level variable. We did lose the ability to scale our interpretations of the data, but I was only interested in whether children in general impact opinions on capital punishment and was not concerned as to the specific number associated with the respondent, unless it was zero

which indicated no children, therefore information that could inform my analysis will not be lost with the use of an ordinal variable instead.

As with the other variables I examined, I ran a single logit analysis of the presence of children and the death penalty. Assessed singularly, we see that the presence of children is a significant predictor of views on capital punishment for the entire United States as well as New England, the West, and the Middle Atlantic at the 0.01 level. For the regions of North and South Central, this variable is significant at the 0.05 level. In the South Atlantic, the presence of children is not found to be a significant predictor of views on capital punishment when regressed singularly. However, this is only a preliminary analysis, and the result of the logistic regression of all the variables is reproduced in the table below.

Table 18: Logistic Regression of Children on Capital Punishment by Region

Region	Independent Variables	
	Presence of Children	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	+	0.677
Middle Atlantic	-	0.870
North Central	+	0.795
South Atlantic	-	0.559
South Central	+	0.234
West	-	0.815
Entire US	+	0.884

Source: General Social Survey

From the table, when we examine the signs on the coefficients, we see that for the entire United States, the relationship, if significant, would be positive, indicating that if a person has children, they are more likely to oppose the death penalty than those without children. This is different than what we expected to see from observation that we made

from the cross-tabulation, which indicated the opposite relationship could be true. The regions of New England, North Central, and South Central also have positive signs on their coefficients. For New England, this is particularly noteworthy, as it is the region where we see the highest percentage point difference in favorability towards the death penalty, with those who have children tending to favor the policy more. For South Central, the positive sign is concurrent with the possible relationship we concluded from the cross-tabulation. In the Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic, and West, the negative signs on the coefficients also agree with the way the relationship appears in the cross-tabulations, that those with children are more likely to favor capital punishment. It appears that there could be differences among the regions in terms of how the presence of children impacts capital punishment. But we still have to look at the probabilities associated with the regions in order to make any definite conclusions.

Examining the probabilities associated with the different regions and the entire United States, we see that none of the regions p-values are less than the 0.1 threshold that would indicate a significant relationship between the variables. This means that the presence of children is not a factor in predicting views on capital punishment.

3.7.2 Discussion of the Independent Variable

Because in none of the regions was the presence of children significant to views on the death penalty, we are unable to make any conclusive predictions about what impact a respondent having children or not has on views on this policy. This means we are forced to reject our original hypothesis on the existence of this relationship.

3.8 Discussion of Demographic Variables

Within each of the regions, as well as the entire United States, we found that different variables were significant predictors of views on capital punishment in some of the regions and not in others. Some were not significant predictors in any of the regions. For the entire United States, we saw significant positive relationships among whites, Protestants, and those raised in no religion meaning that those people who identify as having one of those characteristics are more likely to favor the death penalty than those without one of those characteristics. Additionally, we saw a positive relationship with income in that those making more money are more likely to favor the death penalty than those of lower socioeconomic status. Those who are black are more likely to oppose the death penalty than non-blacks, and those with higher levels of education are correlated with opposing this policy compared to those with lower levels of education.

Among the various regions, none of the demographic variables were significant in the South Central region of the US. In both the South Atlantic and North Central, we see the religion the respondent was raised in as significant if that religion was Protestantism, Catholicism, or no religion. In those regions, those who identify in one of those groups are more likely to favor the death penalty than those who do not identify as such. This agrees with the United States on the whole, but in New England, we see the opposite relationship among those three groups. In fact, being raised in Protestantism, Catholicism, and/or no religion, are correlated with opposing the death penalty compared to their counterparts. This supports my hypothesis that regional differences could account for why we see differences in policy, in that various demographic characteristics as significant predictors have opposing correlations to the opinions of those who fall into those groups in one region,

New England, compared to the South Atlantic and North Central regions, as well as the US on the whole.

In New England, we see two other variables as significantly correlated to views on capital punishment, how religion a person considers him or herself and the highest degree a person has received. Those who are more religious are more likely to favor the death penalty than those who are not religious, and as we see the specific regions correlated with favorable views on religion, this could indicate that people in this region are less religious as they grow up despite being raised in a certain religion. The correlations we see with those who were also raised in no religion could also lend in part to this conclusion. As for degree, we see those with higher levels of education more likely to oppose the death penalty, which agrees with what we found in the US as a whole.

In the Middle Atlantic and West, we also see this negative correlation with degree, in that more educated people in this region are also more likely to oppose the death penalty. Additionally, the variable income is significant in these regions, where those who make more money are more likely to favor the death penalty than those who make less money. This correlation also exists in the whole of the US. Marriage is a significant predictor in only one of the regions, the Middle Atlantic, where those who are married are more likely to oppose the death penalty than those who are unmarried. While significant in the entire US, race is a significant predictor only in the West, where both blacks and whites are correlated with favoring the death penalty.

As we can see, some demographic variables are significant predictors of opinions on the death penalty while some are not. Among the regions, we see this is the case, which indicates that my hypothesis that different demographic variables could be interacting and

affecting opinions on the death penalty is supported through this analysis. Some features are significant in some regions but not in others, indicating that in those regions, those variables are not important in predicting views on capital punishment, which also lends to the conclusion that there are differences among the regions that affect views on this practice in that region, and in turn could affect death penalty policy within those regions.

Chapter 4

Urbanization Trends and the Death Penalty

The next thing I examine in connection with the death penalty is urbanization trends and how the trend toward liberalism among those living in cities could possibly account for differences between regions in terms of their death penalty policies. I first look at a variable that describes the location a respondent is in as my urbanization variable in correlation with views on capital punishment to determine what effect urbanization in general has had on views on capital punishment. As presented in the literature, there is a distinct correlation between movement into urban locations and a trend towards liberalization as a result. Therefore, I look at political views and party ideology trends to see if there is a correlation between views on the death penalty and those concepts to determine what affect liberalization may have on views on this policy. Finally, I attempt to examine some social issues to see if there are correlations between death penalty opinions and opinions on these issues in an attempt to root out possible connections among the different social issues of today and how urbanization is effecting those issues, particularly comparing them to views on capital punishment.

4.1 Urbanization

As we have seen from our examination of the literature, people are moving out of small local units into cities. We can also check this result through a basic analysis of looking at our town size code variable for each year the survey was conducted, where we see in recent years higher percentages of respondents indicating they are from the larger cities, while we see a decline in the number that indicate they reside in the smaller towns. This supports our use of this variable as indicative of urbanization trends. As urbanization

has been linked to liberalization in the literature, I expect those living in larger cities to favor the death penalty compared to those in areas with much smaller population levels.

4.1.1 Independent Variable: Town Size Code

To determine how the size of a town affects views on capital punishment, I first ran a cross-tabulation of opinions on the death penalty by the town size code. Because the variable was separated into different categories, which ranged from the biggest, large city, to the smallest, open country, the results from each of those cross-tabulations in each of the six regions, as well as the United States as a whole is found in the table below.

Table 19: Town Size Code by Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Town Size Code					
	Large City		Medium City		Suburb of Large City	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	46.4%	53.6%	64.5%	35.5%	69.2%	30.8%
Middle Atlantic	63.2%	36.8%	57.3%	42.7%	72.6%	27.4%
North Central	59.1%	40.9%	66.6%	33.4%	76.5%	23.5%
South Atlantic	65.2%	34.8%	70.1%	29.9%	74.9%	25.1%
South Central	69.6%	30.4%	68.0%	32.0%	79.4%	20.6%
West	70.6%	29.4%	75.6%	24.4%	77.4%	22.6%
Entire US	65.2%	34.8%	68.9%	31.1%	75.8%	24.2%

Region	Town Size Code					
	Suburb of Medium City		Small City		Town	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	68.3%	31.7%	69.5%	30.5%	66.1%	33.9%
Middle Atlantic	71.5%	28.5%	81.8%	18.2%	83.1%	16.9%
North Central	75.1%	24.9%	76.1%	23.9%	79.1%	20.9%
South Atlantic	76.7%	23.3%	70.5%	29.5%	74.8%	25.2%
South Central	76.2%	23.8%	73.2%	26.8%	69.7%	30.3%
West	80.6%	19.4%	80.3%	19.7%	80.3%	19.7%
Entire US	75.3%	24.7%	75.1%	24.9%	76.6%	23.4%

Region	Town Size Code			
	Smaller Areas		Open Country	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	79.4%	20.6%	70.6%	29.4%
Middle Atlantic	83.7%	16.3%	79.8%	20.2%
North Central	77.4%	22.6%	76.4%	23.6%
South Atlantic	76.9%	23.1%	69.7%	30.3%
South Central	72.8%	27.2%	73.8%	26.2%
West	77.5%	22.5%	82.5%	16.5%
Entire US	76.6%	23.4%	74.5%	25.5%

Source: General Social Survey

From the table above, we can make some general conclusions about how the environment an individual lives in could impact public opinion on the death penalty. In the entire United States, we see that the lowest level of support for capital punishment is among those living in a large city, with 65.2% favoring this policy. The highest level of

support for the US comes in two regions, among those living in a town and those living in smaller areas, at 76.6%. Generally, it seems to be that those living in a large or medium city have lower levels of support, below 70%, compared to those living in the suburbs or a large or medium city or a small city, where support lays around 75%. This seems to support my hypothesis in that those in smaller areas have higher levels of support than those from areas with larger populations. However, with those living in open country, we see 74.5% supporting capital punishment, which appears to be an outlier to this trend, although very slight.

Among the individual regions we see the lowest level of support among those in New England who reside in a large city, at just 46.4% favoring this policy. The highest level of support can be found among those in the smaller areas of the Middle Atlantic, at 83.7%. In three of the six regions, we see the highest level of support among those in smaller areas with the Middle Atlantic, New England at 79.4%, and the South Atlantic at 76.9%. Exceptions to this include for the South Central region, the highest level of support is among those in the suburb of a large city at 79.4%; for the North Central region, the highest level is found among those living in a town, at 79.1%; and for the West, we see the highest level of support among those in open country, at 82.5%. While it seems that generally, the smaller areas are associated more so with higher levels of support compared to the larger areas, there are definite examples in the regions where this is not the case, so it will be interesting to see if significant, what relationship the logistic regression outputs.

Because we are dealing with an ordinal level variable, in that the variable is coded so that the sizes go from smallest to largest, we are able to examine this without the use

of dummy variables in a logistic regression. When assessed in a logistic regression on its own, we find that the variable is significant at the 0.01 level for the entire United States, as well as the West, North Central, New England, and Middle Atlantic regions. For the South Central and South Atlantic regions, this variable was not significant. We cannot make any definite conclusions from this analysis, however so in order to determine significance when all the variables are combined, an entire logistic regression must be run including all the variables. In the table below, are the results from the town size code variable for each of the regions and the entire United States.

Table 20: Logistic Regression of Town Size Code on Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Independent Variables	
	Town Size Code	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.967
Middle Atlantic	-	0.060
North Central	-	0.809
South Atlantic	-	0.088
South Central	+	0.229
West	-	0.152
Entire US	-	0.096

Source: General Social Survey

The signs on the coefficients from the table above can tell us the direction in which the relationship, if significant, would be. For the entire US, we see a negative sign on the coefficient, indicating that those who indicated they reside in the smaller town sizes are more likely to favor the death penalty than those who reside in areas with larger populations. We see this relationship reflected in the coefficients for all of the other regions with one exception. For the South Central region, we see a positive sign on the

coefficient, which indicates that among respondents in this region, those from smaller areas are actually more likely to oppose the death penalty than those living in larger areas. However, to see if these relationships hold, we must examine statistical significance to determine in which regions, town size code is a significant predictor in views on capital punishment.

As we can see from the table, for the entire US, this variable is significant at the 0.1 level with a p-value of 0.096, indicating we are 90% confident that this relationship exists. Using that threshold, we also see that in the Middle Atlantic and the South Atlantic regions, this variable is a significant predictor of views on capital punishment. None of the other regions meet that 0.1 threshold, and therefore we have to conclude they are not significant predictors in opinions on capital punishment.

4.1.2 Discussion of the Independent Variable

When we combine our analysis of the sign on the coefficient with our assessment of which regions we found the variable to be significant, we find that in the entire US and the two regions where we see a significant relationship, the Middle and South Atlantic, that the town size code is correlated with views on capital punishment. In each of these areas, we see a negative sign on the coefficient, indicating that in the entire US and the Middle and South Atlantic regions, those that live in areas with smaller populations are more likely to favor the death penalty than those living in areas with large amounts of people. This supports our variable hypothesis that those living in larger areas would be more likely to oppose the death penalty than those living in areas with smaller population levels. Additionally, we see town size code as a significant predictor in some regions and not in

others, which lends support to my overall hypothesis, that there are regional differences that account for discrepancies in death penalty opinions and policy among the regions.

4.2 Party Identification

As we can see, urbanization does impact public opinion in some of the regions. Going off of that, we see from the literature that urbanization has been linked to liberalization in that as the nation urbanizes, we see more favorability for the liberal agenda and movement away from more traditional viewpoints, with social issues like gay marriage and abortion. To see if this also exists with capital punishment, I examine two variables, party identification and political views, to see whether a correlation exists among certain groups in favor or support of this policy. In this section, I look at the first variable, political party identification, and then in the following, I examine political views to see how these variables impact views on capital punishment. For the first variable, party identification, I expect that Democrats would be more likely to oppose the death penalty compared to Republicans. For my second variable, political views, I expect that those who view themselves more as conservatives are more likely to support capital punishment compared to those who consider themselves more liberal.

4.2.1 Independent Variable: Political Party Identification

In order to assess political party identification, it was necessary to use dummy variables, as this is coded as a nominal variable in the General Social Survey. Therefore, I conducted separate cross-tabulations for each of the regions in terms of support for

capital punishment among Democrats, Independents, and Republicans. In the table below are the results from this analysis.

Table 21: Party ID by Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Political Party Identification					
	Democrat		Independent		Republican	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	59.1%	40.9%	70.2%	29.8%	81.8%	18.2%
Middle Atlantic	65.1%	34.9%	70.3%	29.7%	82.5%	17.5%
North Central	65.7%	34.3%	73.9%	26.1%	82.0%	18.0%
South Atlantic	64.2%	35.8%	73.1%	26.9%	83.5%	16.5%
South Central	66.2%	33.8%	70.5%	29.5%	84.1%	15.9%
West	69.8%	30.2%	75.3%	24.7%	87.3%	12.7%
Entire US	65.9%	34.1%	72.8%	27.2%	83.8%	16.2%

Source: General Social Survey

From the analysis above, we can see there is a definite trend in favoring the death penalty in terms of political party affiliation. For the entire United States, we see that among Democrats, 65.9% support the death penalty, while 72.8% of Independents favor this policy. The highest level of support is among Republicans, with 83.8% of those who identify in this category favoring the death penalty in the entire US. When we look at the individual regions we see a similar trend.

The lowest level of support can be found among the Democrats of New England, at a mere 59.1%. The highest level we see is among Republicans in the West, at 87.3%. For all of the regions, the lowest levels of support are found among Democrats, the middle level among Independents, and the highest level among Republicans. This seems to fit with the hypothesis that Democrats are more likely to oppose the death penalty, while Republicans are more likely to favor this form of punishment. However, in order to test this, we must look at the logistic regression to determine significance.

To be able to run this regression through the SDA software, the use of dummy variables was necessary as this is a nominal variable because there is no natural order to the categories of this independent variable. When singularly, the Republican variable is significant at the 0.01 level for all of the regions and the US as a whole. Among Democrats in the West, South Central, South Atlantic, and North Central regions as well as the US as a whole, this variable assessed singularly is significant at the 0.01 level as well. In New England, it is significant at the 0.05 level. For the Middle Atlantic, Democrat party affiliation is not a significant predictor of views on capital punishment when assessed singularly. Among Independents, we see this variable is significant at the 0.01 level in the South Central region and at the 0.1 level for both the Middle Atlantic and the North Central regions. These conclusions, while interesting to look at, cannot give us a complete picture without the inclusion of other variables in the logistic regression. The results from that complete regression are reproduced in the table below.

Table 22: Logistic Regression of Party ID on Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Independent Variables					
	Political Party Affiliation: Democrat		Political Party Affiliation: Independent		Political Party Affiliation: Republican	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.230	+	0.891	-	0.076
Middle Atlantic	-	0.086	-	0.468	-	0.206
North Central	-	0.871	-	0.304	-	0.328
South Atlantic	+	0.489	+	0.597	-	0.778
South Central	+	0.401	+	0.027	-	0.480
West	+	0.811	-	0.193	-	0.051
Entire US	-	0.744	-	0.839	-	0.013

Source: General Social Survey

The coefficients above can tell us what direction we expect the relationship between the variables to be if they are in fact significantly correlated. For all three

political party affiliations, we see a negative sign associated with the entire United States, meaning that if significant, for all Democrats, Independents, and Republicans, those who fall into those three categories are more likely to favor the death penalty. Among the various regions, we see that in the Republican category, the regions agree with the relationship posited for the whole of the US. Among Democrats, however, we see that the regions of the South Atlantic, South Central, and West all have the opposite sign on their coefficients, meaning that among those regions, those who identify as Democrat are more likely to oppose the death penalty than those who are not part of that group. We also see disagreement in the Independent category, with the South Atlantic and South Central regions also having positive signs associated with their coefficients. This points to the possibility that, if significant, these variables could have differing impacts on public opinion based on the region that we are looking at. In order to test this, we must look at the associated probabilities.

For the entire US, we see that the only significant relationship is among Republicans, with a p-value of 0.013 meaning it is significant at the 0.01 level when rounded. Additionally among Republicans, we see this significant at the 0.05 level when rounded for the West, with a p-value of 0.051. And in New England, we also see a significant relationship, at our lowest threshold of 0.1 with a p-value of 0.076. Among the regions for Independents, we see a significant relationship only in one of the regions, the South Central. With a p-value of 0.027, this variable is significant at the 0.05 level. For Democrats, we also find this variable is significant in only one of the regions, the Middle Atlantic, where the p-value of 0.086 indicates this relationship is significant at the 0.1

level. For all of the other regions, we find that none of these are significant predictors in views on capital punishment.

4.2.2 Discussion of the Independent Variable

When we combine the results from the logistic regression, we find that the significant relationships among Republicans in the West and New England as well as the US as a whole in terms of their views on capital punishment are correlated with favoring the death penalty in these regions. We also see this relationship among Democrats in the Middle Atlantic, although we are less confident in the existence of that relationship because of the lowered threshold. For Independents in the Middle Atlantic, we see a significant correlation between this variable and opposing the death penalty. We find support for our conclusion in the fact that Republicans are more likely to favor the death penalty. However, in the one region where Democratic Party affiliation is significant, we see that the opposite relationship of what we hypothesized is in fact present in the region. While this does not support our variable hypothesis, it does lend support to the overall conclusion I am attempting to make, that there are differences among the regions that can account for the differences in opinions and therefore policy on capital punishment.

4.3 Political Views

Building off of our examination of the specific political parties, we can look more generally into whether a person considers him or herself liberal or conservative. As I suggested previously, the liberalization trend in social issues could possibly also be reflected in capital punishment opinions in that liberals would tend to oppose this policy

while conservatives are more likely to favor it. Through an examination of political views, we see if this is the case.

4.3.1 Independent Variable: Political Views

This variable is coded as an ordinal level of measurement and in a way so that we can look at five different levels of liberalism or conservatism in a cross-tabulation to establish the pattern we see in the data. The results of the cross-tabulations for each of the regions and the United States as a whole are replicated below.

Table 23: Political Views by Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Think of Self as Liberal or Conservative					
	Liberal		Slightly Liberal		Moderate	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	46.8%	53.2%	58.8%	41.2%	71.7%	28.3%
Middle Atlantic	54.3%	45.7%	63.0%	37.0%	74.8%	25.2%
North Central	58.0%	42.0%	68.1%	31.9%	74.6%	25.4%
South Atlantic	58.5%	41.5%	66.2%	33.8%	72.5%	27.3%
South Central	62.9%	37.1%	68.1%	31.9%	72.9%	27.1%
West	59.5%	40.5%	68.3%	31.7%	79.6%	20.4%
Entire US	57.7%	42.3%	66.5%	33.5%	74.8%	25.2%

Region	Think of Self as Liberal or Conservative			
	Slightly Conservative		Conservative	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	77.9%	22.1%	81.2%	18.8%
Middle Atlantic	76.6%	23.4%	78.8%	21.2%
North Central	76.7%	23.3%	80.5%	19.5%
South Atlantic	79.0%	21.0%	81.6%	18.4%
South Central	75.6%	24.4%	81.2%	18.8%
West	82.6%	17.4%	85.2%	14.8%
Entire US	78.2%	21.8%	81.6%	18.4%

Source: General Social Survey

From the table above, we can see that an obvious trend exists for the whole of the United States, in that those who identify as liberal favor the death penalty at 57.7%

whereas of those on the opposite end of the spectrum, 81.6% of those who identify as conservatives favor this policy. Moderates fall between those levels, with 74.8% of those in the entire US reporting favoring the death penalty. We see the lowest level of support among liberals in New England, at 46.8%. Conservatives in the West most heavily favor this policy, at 85.2%. Indeed, the highest levels of support for this policy are reported in the West in all of the categories, with the exception of among liberals where those in the South Central have the highest level of support at 62.9%. Among all of the regions, the trend that higher levels of conservatism appear to be correlated with higher level of support for the death penalty is present when moving through the table.

To see if, in fact, this trend exists, we must look at a logistic regression to test the significance of the variables with views on capital punishment. Because this variable has an ordinal level of measurement, we are able to assess it without the use of dummy variables and interpret the results with direction in terms of conservatism as the variable is coded that way. When assessed as a single variable, the relationship between how liberal or conservative a person thinks him or herself is significantly correlated with views on capital punishment at the 0.01 level for all six regions as well as the entire US. To see if this trend continues, we add all the remaining variables into the logistic regression. The results of that analysis are found in the table below.

Table 24: Logistic Regression of Political Views on Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Independent Variables	
	Liberal or Conservative	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.822
Middle Atlantic	-	0.928
North Central	-	0.100
South Atlantic	-	0.011
South Central	-	0.203
West	-	0.029
Entire US	-	0.000

Source: General Social Survey

The signs on the coefficients tell us that if the relationship between the variables is significant, for the entire United States, the more conservative a person considers him or herself, the more likely they are to favor the death penalty than those who identify as more liberal. We see the same sign on the coefficients for all of the regions as well, which would indicate that if political views are a significant predictor in views on capital punishment, then we will see the same relationship that we see for the entire US reflected in each of the regions. To test this, we look at the probabilities associated with each of the regions.

For the entire US, the p-value of 0.000 tells us that this relationship is significant at the 0.01 level, and even beyond that level, though for the purposes of our analysis, we are only assessing the significance between 0.1 and 0.01. We also see a significance of 0.01 when we round the p-value of 0.011 found in the South Atlantic region. Expanding our threshold, we see that in the West, this relationship is significant at the 0.05 level,

with a p-value of 0.029. Finally, in the North Central region, when we expand the threshold even further, the p-value of 0.100 in that region is significant at the 0.1 level.

4.3.2 Discussion of the Independent Variable

The signs on the coefficients and the p-values tell us that for the entire US, we see that those who identify as more conservative are more likely to favor the death penalty. Among the regions, we see that in the South Atlantic, the West, and the North Central regions, there exists a similar relationship, with higher levels of conservatism on the liberal to conservative scale being correlated with favoring capital punishment compared to those who register on the lower hand of that spectrum. This lends support to our argument that liberalism is more likely to indicate opposing the death penalty than conservatism. Capital punishment seems to be somewhat reflective of a similar trend we see in other social issues where the liberal agenda is reflected in support levels.

4.4 Social Issues

The final issue I examine in this chapter is the correlation between views on capital punishment and other social issues. In my first chapter, I identify a number of issues, namely national spending on welfare, abortion, gay marriage, spending on the military, and marijuana legalization, that I theoretically wanted to examine in order to see if there is a similarity in the effect liberalization has had on these topics. However, in my correlation matrix, we lost the variable for abortion because it resulted in zero valid cases. Though the rest of these issues passed that test, when I ran my logistic regression, we unfortunately were forced to exclude all but the issue of marijuana legalization. Though

this seriously weakens our ability to compare views on certain social issues with views on capital punishment, we can still do this analysis with just legalizing marijuana. As marijuana legalization is more heavily favored by liberals over conservatives, a fact that we conclude from a simple cross-tabulation of political views and the variable for the legalization of marijuana using the SDA software, I hypothesize that those who favor legalization are more likely to oppose the death penalty, whereas those who feel it should not be legal are more likely to oppose it.

4.4.1 Independent Variable: Legalizing Marijuana

This variable is coded to just include the options of whether the respondent feels the United States should legalize marijuana or not. I therefore ran a cross-tabulation of the independent variable for each of the regions, as well the United States as whole. The results of that analysis are found in the table below.

Table 25: Legalizing Marijuana by Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Legalizing Marijuana			
	Legal		Not Legal	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	60.0%	40.0%	70.1%	29.9%
Middle Atlantic	65.2%	34.8%	72.4%	27.6%
North Central	69.9%	30.1%	72.9%	27.1%
South Atlantic	68.6%	31.4%	73.0%	27.0%
South Central	70.4%	29.6%	72.1%	27.9%
West	70.7%	29.3%	79.2%	20.8%
Entire US	68.7%	31.3%	73.7%	26.3%

Source: General Social Survey

The table above paints a fairly clear picture about the pattern that exists among those who feel a certain way about legalizing marijuana. For the entire United States, those that favor legalization also favor the death penalty at 68.7%. Those who feel

marijuana should not be legal favor this policy at a level that is five percentage points higher than those who feel it should be legal, at 73.7%. For the US as a whole, we see the lowest level of support is among those in New England who feel marijuana should be legal, at 60.0%. The highest level of support is reported among those who do not favor legalizing marijuana in the West at 79.2%. For all of the regions, there appears to be higher levels of support for capital punishment among those who feel marijuana should be illegal, whereas we see lower levels of support for the death penalty reported among those who feel marijuana should be legal.

To test whether these relationships exist beyond what we have observed with the cross-tabulation, it is necessary to run a logistic regression to test the significance of the relationships in each of the regions, as well as the US as a whole. Because this variable can be classified as ordinal, in that the higher levels of the categories of the variable are associated with less support for the legalization of marijuana, we are able to assess this variable singularly and determine the direction of the relationship. When evaluated as a single variable in the logistic regression, we see that legalizing marijuana is correlated significantly with views on capital punishment for the entire US as well as the West, New England, South Atlantic, and Middle Atlantic regions at the 0.01 threshold. In the North Central region, this variable is significant at the 0.05 level. The only region where legalizing marijuana, when assessed singularly in the logistic regression, is not correlated with views on capital punishment, and that is in the South Central region. However, we must look at the complete logistic regression to determine if this relationship continues to be significant, or if controlling for the other variables causes this relationship to disappear. The results from this analysis are found in the table below.

Table 26: Logistic Regression of Legalizing Marijuana on Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Independent Variables	
	Legalizing Marijuana	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	+	0.202
Middle Atlantic	+	0.263
North Central	+	0.208
South Atlantic	+	0.132
South Central	+	0.278
West	+	0.794
Entire US	+	0.018

Source: General Social Survey

From the table we can see that the positive sign on the coefficient for the entire US indicates that those who feel that marijuana should be illegal are more likely to oppose the death penalty than those who favor legalization. This relationship, if significant, seems to be contrary to my hypothesis that those who are more likely to favor the legalization of marijuana are more likely to oppose capital punishment, as from the coefficients, there appears to be the opposite relationship. Among all of the regions, we see agreement on the positive sign on the coefficient for this variable, which seems to confirm the contrary to my hypothesis. Before we can make any definite conclusions about the relationship, however, we must examine the significant levels associated with those coefficients.

The p-value for the entire United States is 0.018, meaning that the relationship between views on legalizing marijuana and capital punishment is significant at the 0.05 level. Regionally, we see that only one of the variables is significant, that when rounded, in the South Atlantic, we see the variable meet the 0.1 significance threshold to indicate

that there is a significant relationship, though we are much less confident in this relationship than in the one for the entire United States.

4.4.2 Discussion of the Independent Variable

When we combine the p-values with the associated signs on the coefficients, we find that for the entire United States, there exists a significant relationship in that those who are more likely to oppose legalizing marijuana are also more likely to oppose capital punishment. We see this relationship also reflected in the South Atlantic region. This goes against the theory I outlined in my hypothesis and what we observed from the cross-tabulation, which could possibly indicate that one of the variables that we added into the logistic regression could be responsible for the correlation that we originally saw when the variable was examined on its own. The fact that the relationship is the opposite from what we observed could be due to the fact that perhaps those that oppose legalization are stricter morally and therefore are more likely to oppose both of these policies that could be considered immoral. However, this is just speculation. Because this variable is significant in one region, but not in the others, this seems to support our overall hypothesis that different regional factors are responsible for differences in opinions and therefore policy on the death penalty among the regions.

4.5 Discussion of Urbanization Trends

I posited that there would be a relationship between urbanization trends and feelings towards the death penalty in that as our nation is urbanizing, it is also liberalizing, and we will see reflections of that in various social issues, including in views on capital

punishment. From our analysis of the urbanization variable, we found that this was a significant predictor of opinions on the death penalty for the entire United States, as well as in the Middle Atlantic and the South Atlantic. In those regions, we see that those that live in more rural, less populated areas are more likely to favor capital punishment than those who live in more urban places with larger populations, which seems to support our hypothesis about the effect urbanization has on views on capital punishment.

To test the correlation with the liberalization trend that literature associates with urbanization, we found that among Republicans, in the US as a whole as well as New England and the West, this group is correlated with higher levels of support for capital punishment compared to those who do not fall into this category. As Republicans tend to be more conservative, we would expect this higher level of favorability, which we do see revealed in our data. Additionally, as Independents are seen to be more moderate on the liberal-conservative scale, we would expect that they might be more likely to oppose capital punishment possibly if liberalization is occurring among even the different political parties. We see that in the South Central region, Independents are more likely to oppose capital punishment than non-Independents, which seems to support our hypothesis. However, as this is the only region in which we find this political party to be a significant predictor of capital punishment, it is impossible to extend that analysis beyond that region. In the Middle Atlantic, we find that Democrats are more likely to favor capital punishment than their non-Democrat counterparts, which is contrary to our hypothesis. Perhaps in this region, Democrats are more conservative than in other regions and therefore trend in this way. Unfortunately, as this is the only region where this variable is significant, it is impossible to make such a conclusion.

To further solidify liberalization as an impactful variable on views on capital punishment, our analysis shows that political views are a significant predictor of opinions on the death penalty within the United States as a whole, as well as the regions of the West, the North Central, and the South Atlantic. The result from the logistic analysis indicate that those who are more conservative are more likely to favor the death penalty than those who identify as more liberal. This lends support to our prior analyses, that perhaps Democrats in the Middle Atlantic are more conservative and therefore are more likely to favor the death penalty, but in no way is that conclusion definite as our analysis does not allow to extend the correlation that far.

When looking at social issues to determine whether there is a correlation among liberalization trends and those issues, our analysis has been greatly limited due to the necessary elimination of all but one of the social issue variables. For legalizing marijuana, we see that in the United States as well as the South Atlantic regions, opposing the legalization of this substance is correlated with opposing capital punishment, which is the opposite of the relationship I expected to see. As I hypothesized above, perhaps this is due to my own misperceptions about legalizing marijuana, and in fact the relationship might be due to some moral consequence with both of these policies. If we run a logistic regression of views on marijuana and political views, we see that there is a significant positive relationship indicating that the more conservative a person considers him or herself, the more likely they are to feel marijuana should not be legal. We also see this in a singular logistic regression for the entire United States. Although we cannot make any definite conclusions as this analysis did not include the number of other variables that could impact views on legalizing marijuana, this can lead some insight into the possibility

that the influence conservatism has in that region is strong, as we see it is a significant predictor in views on capital punishment. This could possibly be extended to marijuana as well, and therefore is why we see the positive relationship between the variables.

It is clear from the data that there are regional differences in how urbanization has affected views on capital punishment, in that in some regions the variables we examined are significantly correlated with those views, while in others it is not. The liberalization trend seems to impact public opinion on the death penalty in that in those regions where we see urbanization as a significant predictor, in that those residing in larger cities are more likely to oppose the death penalty, we also see liberalism correlated with opposing the death penalty. This study is limited in the connections we can make between the two, but we can see that they are occurring simultaneously both in the US as a whole, as well as in some of the regions, which seem to indicate that urbanization and liberalization in turn could account for some of the differences we see among the six regions of the United States.

Chapter 5

The Death Penalty: An Examination of the Arguments

For this section, I attempt to address two of the prevalent arguments that are cited when discussing capital punishment, one being that it acts as a deterrent and is necessary to prevent crime from occurring and therefore should be legal, and the other, that it is a morally incorrect practice and therefore should be abolished. I first look at the crime argument by examining FBI crime statistics on the number of violent crimes in each of the six states representing my regions. In my first chapter, I lay out a number of variables identified by the General Social Survey that I feel may address these arguments as well. For both the crime and moral arguments, we have the variables of confidence in the courts and feelings towards the courts' dealings with criminals. Of the four additional variables I wanted to theoretically examine, one I was forced to eliminate in the correlation matrix, the spanking variable, which resulted in zero valid cases. In the logistic regression, I was forced to eliminate the three other variables, sinners punished, right and wrong, and morality as a personal matter, as there were not enough valid cases for the correlation coefficients to be calculated. Therefore, this chapter reflects the crime argument more so while touching at points on the moral issue pertaining to views on capital punishment.

5.1 Crime Statistics

In order to determine the situation of crime in the regions of the United States, I looked at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) crime database, where they give a count of the number of violent crimes, broken down by state and by geographical region. While in this discussion, I focus on the regional situation as opposed to the individual

states because this is the ultimate variable I am attempting to explain differences in. I accessed this online database and encountered a variety of options in terms of types of crime. For the purpose of this paper, I chose to examine the level of “murder and non-negligent manslaughter” rather than the entire category of “violent crimes” because from past research as well as the number of arguments for and against the death penalty that I examined in the various newspapers within the states, there is a common call for the death penalty to be applied only to the most violent and heinous of crimes. While this would seem to indicate the call for the total number of violent crimes, according to the FBI, this variable is defined to include “the offenses of murder, rape (legacy definition), robbery, and aggravated assault” (FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 2013). We are only interested in the instance of murder as state policies generally call for the use of the death penalty only when death has occurred, therefore murder and non-negligent manslaughter is more appropriate to examine. Found in the table below are each of the regions, their associated states, and the murder rates for each in 2013, the year for which we have the most recent data.

Table 27: FBI Crime Rates: Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter per 100,000 people

Region or State	Murder and Non-Negligent Manslaughter
	<i>Rate per 100,000 people</i>
New England	2.2
New Hampshire	1.7
Middle Atlantic	4.0
New York	3.3
North Central	4.5
Illinois	5.5
South Atlantic	5.2
Georgia	5.6
South Central	5.3
Texas	4.3
West	4.0
Oregon	2.0
Entire US	4.5

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 2013

For the US as a whole, we see a murder rate of 4.5 people per 100,000, which taken out of context gives us very little information from which to make conclusions. But when we look at the different regions, we see that in New England, there is the lowest rate among the regions, at 2.2 people per 100,000. For all the other regions, the score falls between 4.0 and 5.3 people per 100,000. Notably, we also see the corresponding state, New Hampshire, with the lowest level among the states, at 1.7 people per 100,000. We see the highest regional murder rate in the South Central region, with a value of 5.3 people per 100,000. Just 0.1 percentage points below that we find the South Atlantic region. Georgia, the state representing the South Atlantic region has the highest murder rate among the states, at 5.6 people per 100,000, with Illinois falling just 0.1 percentage points below that rate. Also notable, we see the second lowest rate among the states in Oregon, with a murder rate of 2.0 per 100,000 (FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 2013).

It seems that the regions of the North Central, South Central, and South Atlantic all have fairly high murder rates, either at or above the national average. For New England, the West, and the Middle Atlantic, we see rates below this threshold. Therefore, I would expect that the deterrence argument might be more heavily featured in the areas where the crime rate is highest. Despite this argument being disproven time and time again, people still hold the mentality that the death penalty acts to deter people from committing crimes. Therefore, people in areas with higher instances of murder may be more likely to take credence with this argument compared to those who's crime rates are on the lower side, and, therefore, are not as at the forefront of a person's mind. Through exploring a few variables asked in the GSS, we see if views on the courts are correlated with the higher levels of murder among the regions.

5.2 Confidence in Courts

Now that I have presented the situation of crime within each of the states and regions, I next look at some variables that deal with this crime question and also to some extent address the moral question. The first I look at is the level of confidence a person has in the courts system. I hypothesize in the introduction that those who have a less confidence in the court are more likely to oppose the death penalty perhaps due to the fact that they feel the court cannot apply this policy fairly, as we have seen demonstrated in the literature.

5.2.1 Independent Variable: Confidence in Courts

This variable is coded as an ordinal variable to include various degrees at which the respondent can identify their confidence level in the courts. The results of a cross-tabulation analysis of how the various confidence levels in the courts correspond with views on capital punishment. The results for this analysis in each of the regions, as well as the United States as a whole are reproduced below.

Table 28: Confidence in Courts by Feelings on the Death Penalty by Region

Region	Confidence in Courts					
	Complete Confidence		Great Deal of Confidence		Some Confidence	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	94.5%	5.5%	53.5%	46.5%	66.5%	33.5%
Middle Atlantic	64.6%	35.4%	76.1%	23.9%	63.3%	36.7%
North Central	62.8%	37.2%	65.3%	34.7%	72.1%	27.9%
South Atlantic	67.5%	32.5%	73.0%	27.0%	76.5%	23.5%
South Central	44.0%	56.0%	64.9%	35.1%	76.0%	24.0%
West	74.5%	25.5%	75.7%	24.3%	70.7%	29.3%
Entire US	66.4%	33.6%	69.8%	30.2%	71.5%	28.5%

Region	Confidence in Courts			
	Very Little Confidence		No Confidence at All	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	69.3%	30.7%	83.1%	16.9%
Middle Atlantic	75.8%	24.2%	64.5%	35.5%
North Central	74.5%	25.5%	78.9%	21.1%
South Atlantic	73.2%	26.8%	77.6%	22.4%
South Central	78.4%	21.6%	86.3%	13.7%
West	74.0%	26.0%	68.7%	31.3%
Entire US	74.7%	25.3%	75.9%	24.1%

Source: General Social Survey

As the table above demonstrates, there appears to be a relationship between a person's confidence in the courts and how that individual feels towards capital punishment. For the entire United States, those that have complete confidence in the courts support the death penalty at 66.4%, compared to those who have no confidence at

all, which favor this policy at 75.9%. The levels in between those two appear to indicate that as an individual registers lower on the scale of confidence in the courts, they are more likely to favor the death penalty than those who have higher levels of confidence. This seems to contradict the relationship that I posited in my hypothesis.

In the North and South Central regions as well as the South Atlantic, we see the trend revealed for the entire United States also appearing to be reflected in these regions as well. We see the both the highest and lowest levels of support among those who have complete confidence in the court in New England at 94.5% and South Central, at 44.0%. This seems to indicate that within the regions, there may be differences that account for the differences in the way confidence in the court impact views on capital punishment. New England, outside of the extremely high level we see for those who have complete confidence, otherwise follows the general trend for the entire US. In the Middle Atlantic and the West, there does not seem to be a pattern to the data for these two regions.

Beyond the pattern of what we observe from the cross-tabulation, we look at statistical significance in order to see if these proposed relationships stand. Because this is an ordinal variable, we are able to group all the categories in our assessment and make conclusions based on that one variable. When run as a single variable in the logistic regression, we find confidence in the courts is a significant predictor for the whole United States, as well as the South Central regions at the 0.01 level. In the North Central regions, we see this variable is significant at the 0.05 level. In all of the other regions, when assessed on its own, confidence in the courts is not a significant predictor of views on capital punishment. But in order to make more concrete analyses, we must run the logistic regression with the entire list of variables, the results of which are found below.

Table 29: Logistic Regression of Confidence in Courts on Capital Punishment by Region

Region	Independent Variables	
	Confidence in Courts	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.836
Middle Atlantic	+	0.751
North Central	-	0.269
South Atlantic	-	0.694
South Central	-	0.009
West	+	0.046
Entire US	-	0.479

Source: General Social Survey

The signs on the coefficient tell us that for the entire United States, those who have lower levels of confidence in the courts are more likely to favor capital punishment than those who have higher confidence levels. For the most part, the various regions agree, with the exception of two, the Middle Atlantic and the West. For these regions, there is a positive sign on the coefficient, indicating that those who have less confidence in the courts are more likely to oppose the death penalty. To see if any of these are significant, we look at the p-values associated with each of the regions.

This variable is not significant in predicting views on capital punishment for the entire United States. In fact, in only two of the regions do we see p-values that are below our thresholds. The South Central region, with a p-value of 0.009 indicates that the relationship between views on capital punishment and confidence in the courts is significant at the 0.01 level. In the West, we also see that this relationship is significant, though at a slightly lower threshold. The p-value for this region is 0.046, which meets our

0.05 level of confidence. In none of the other regions is this variable a significant predictor of views on capital punishment.

5.2.2 Discussion of the Independent Variable

Looking at both the p-values and the signs on the coefficients, we see differing relationships between our variables in the two regions. In the South Central region, we see a negative sign on the coefficient, meaning that in this region, those that indicate lower levels of confidence in the courts are more likely to favor the death penalty than those who register higher on the scale. In the West, we see the opposite relationship in that those who have less confidence in the courts are more likely to oppose capital punishment than those who have more confidence in this system. In the West, we see support for my hypothesis, whereas in the South Central region, this significant opposite affect goes against my theory. This could perhaps be the result of a possible the lack of mentality in the South Central region that the courts unfairly apply the death penalty, and therefore if an individual has more support in the courts system, they are more likely to view the death penalty favorably because they lack the belief in the qualms that potentially exist in its application. This indicates strong support for my overall hypothesis that differences within the regions could account for the discrepancies we see in opinions and therefore policy on the death penalty.

5.3 Courts Dealings with Criminals

The next variable I look at is courts' dealings with criminals and its correlation with views on capital punishment. I hypothesized that those who feel the court is not

dealing harshly enough with criminals are more likely to support the death penalty than those that feel the system is too harsh in this regard based on past literature and intuition on the subject.

5.3.1 Independent Variable: Courts Dealings with Criminals

Because this, like the variable we examined above, is also an ordinal level variable, it is coded to include different levels of how harsh a respondent feels the court is in its dealing with criminals. Therefore I conducted a cross-tabulation that looked at each of these categories and determined levels of favorability of the death penalty in each of the regions and the entire United States. The results from this analysis are found in the table below.

Table 30: Courts Dealings with Criminals on Views on Capital Punishment by Region

Region	Courts Dealings with Criminals					
	Not Harsh Enough		About Right		Too Harsh	
	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>	<i>Favor</i>	<i>Oppose</i>
New England	74.8%	25.2%	40.6%	59.4%	25.6%	74.4%
Middle Atlantic	76.9%	23.1%	53.1%	46.9%	38.9%	61.1%
North Central	77.7%	22.3%	58.2%	41.8%	46.1%	53.9%
South Atlantic	77.9%	22.1%	63.5%	36.5%	39.5%	60.5%
South Central	77.6%	22.4%	66.4%	33.6%	44.6%	55.4%
West	82.6%	17.4%	63.9%	36.1%	48.4%	51.6%
Entire US	78.4%	21.6%	60.1%	39.9%	43.4%	56.6%

Source: General Social Survey

For the entire United States, we see that there does indeed seem to be a trend in the level of harshness and views on capital punishment. Those who feel the court is too harsh when dealing with criminals support the death penalty at just 43.4%. Those who feel it is not harsh enough support capital punishment at 78.4%. In the middle, we find those who feel the court is just right in the harshness it deals with criminals, at 60.1%.

We find the lowest level of support among those in New England who feel the court is too harsh, with support at just 25.6%. Comparatively, the highest level of support is a full fifty-seven percentage points higher than the lowest level. Among those who believe the courts are not high enough in the West, support lies at 82.6%. For all of the regions, we see the trend of the highest levels of support being associated with those who feel the court is not harsh enough and the lowest levels among those who feel the court is too harsh. Those who feel it is just about right fall in between those levels in all of the regions. This would seem to support my hypothesis, though statistical significance must still be assessed to determine if these relationship hold.

Because this is an ordinal level variable, like with the others this allows us to assess this variable singularly in the logistic analysis. When run on its own, we see that the respondent's view on the courts' dealings with criminals is a significant predictor of views on capital punishment in all six of the regions and the entire United States at the 0.01 level. To see if this relationship holds, we add in the other variables to our logistic regression. The results of this are presented in the table below.

Table 31: Courts Dealings with Criminals on views on Capital Punishment by Region

Region	Independent Variables	
	Courts Dealings with Criminals	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	+	0.033
Middle Atlantic	+	0.011
North Central	+	0.004
South Atlantic	+	0.000
South Central	+	0.025
West	+	0.000
Entire US	+	0.000

Source: General Social Survey

The signs on the coefficients tell us that for the entire United States, there is a positive relationship in that those who feel the court is too harsh are more likely to oppose capital punishment than those who feel it is not harsh enough, which seems to support our variable hypothesis. For each of the regions, we also see a positive sign, which could indicate this relationship, if significant, is the same across all the regions as well. However, we first must examine the p-values to make any sort of definite conclusions.

For the entire US, the p-value is 0.000, which indicates that this meets the requirements of our lowest threshold, and the relationship is significant at the 0.01 level. We also see that for the West, with a p-value of 0.000, the South Atlantic with the same p-value, and the North Central region with a p-value of 0.004, are also all significant at this level. When rounded, the variable becomes significant at this level for the Middle Atlantic region as well. For New England, with a p-value of 0.033, this meets the threshold for significance at the 0.05 level. Also meeting that threshold is the South Central region, with a p-value of 0.025.

5.3.2 Discussion of the Independent Variable

As we can see from our results above, this variable is significant in all six of the regions as well as the entire United States. Each of these regions is associated with the same sign on the coefficient, so that we can conclude that overall, those who feel the court is too harsh in dealing with criminals are more likely to oppose capital punishment compared to those who indicate the court is not harsh enough in its dealings. This supports my hypothesis that those who are associated with thinking the court is too harsh

are more likely to oppose capital punishment. This does not, however, seem to lend support to my overall hypothesis that this variable could account for regional differences as it is a significant predictor in all the regions in the same way.

5.4 Discussion of the Arguments

As we lost much of the moral argument in the elimination of our variables, I generally focus on the deterrence argument and how crime has affected views people have on the death penalty and the courts ability to handle criminals. In the West, where we saw a comparatively lower crime rate to the rest of the regions, we also see that those who have less confidence in the courts are more likely to oppose capital punishment than those who have more confidence in this system. In the South Central region, which has a crime rate on the higher end of the scale, has the opposite relationship than we observe in the West. Those that indicate lower levels of confidence in the courts in the South Central region are more likely to favor the death penalty than those who register higher on the scale. This could be the result of a high incidence of crime, in particular murder, and the fear that the court may put those people who may cause harm to society back on the streets. This could cause people in the South Central region to be more likely to favor capital punishment. The opposite relationship we observe in the West may be due to the lower rate of crime in this region in combination with views that the death penalty cannot be applied fairly in this court system. They also may lack that fear that the courts will fail in their application of the death penalty because statistics have shown that this region has in general fewer cases to apply the death penalty to, and therefore may be more scrutinous in the death penalty process.

In terms of the harshness at which the courts deal with criminals, we see the same relationship across regions and crime rates, and therefore can posit that this viewpoint has little to do with crime rates and is more of a universal relationship among the people of the United States. This does speak in some ways to the moral question, however, in that those who feel the court is too harsh are more likely to oppose the death penalty, perhaps due to moral consequences with this policy in its application in the courts. It is interesting that the Western region is where we see the highest level of support among those who feel the court is not harsh enough in its dealings with criminals as we also see that those who have less confidence in the courts are more likely to oppose capital punishment. These appear to point to opposite conclusions, but one way we could possibly make sense of this is that those who feel the court is too harsh also have less confidence in the courts, which could account for their similar effect on views on capital punishment in this region.

Overall, it appears that we do find some support for our conclusion that crime rates could impact views on capital punishment. Unfortunately, the GSS lacks a question that would directly ask that. However, from what we have observed with these variables, it appears that those areas with higher crime rates may associate low levels of support for the courts with higher levels of support for the death penalty whereas those with lower crime rates are more likely to associate those low levels of support for the courts with corresponding low levels of support for capital punishment. This provides evidence for our overall conclusion in that we do observe regional differences in terms of crime rates in general, as well as the effect certain views on the courts may have in impacting public opinion and in turn policy in regards to the death penalty. When in the conclusion we combine the analysis from this chapter with the upcoming investigation of the newspaper

articles, this provides us with a more complete picture of how crime influences the different arguments that are cited both for and against the death penalty.

Chapter 6

Media Influence

In this section of my study, I explore the results from my ANOVA analyses of how the different viewpoints and arguments play out in the different regions of the US. Unfortunately, the correlation matrix and logit regression did not allow me to include the two variables that encompassed news interest and usage, so we are not able to conduct an analyses to determine if this is where people are getting their political information. However, because intuition tells us that the newspaper is a source of information for the public, I still explore the newspaper articles to make conclusions about the opinions and stances the articles take. In each of my tables, I present the state average for the number of articles that reference each of the corresponding independent variables, as well as an overall mean for the total articles I examined. Also included is a value “N” which indicates the total number of articles, as well as “eta” and “eta-squared” which are measures of substantive significance. The stars next to those values tell us whether the relationship is statistically significant, with one star indicating it meets the 0.05 threshold and two stars indicating that it meets the 0.01 threshold.

For each of the variables, I look at the eta-squared value and associated stars to determine whether the relationship is statistically significant and how strong that relationship appears to be. Then I look at the means to make some tentative conclusions about among the relationships that are significant, what predictions we could make about those relationships. Because our variable is coded so that a value of 1 is assigned when the article presents the feature described in the independent variable and a value of 0 is assigned when the independent variable is not found in the article, we are able to interpret

the mean as a proportion of the number of articles that have those specified characteristics.

6.1 Independent Variable: Status Quo

The first independent variable I look at is whether the article referenced maintaining the status quo. Therefore, looking at each of the states policies is necessary in order to assess the significance. In New Hampshire, Georgia, and Texas the death penalty is legal. In Oregon, there is a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, though it is technically still legal. In New York and Illinois, the death penalty is illegal. Therefore the articles that were found in each of the states were coded to see if they reflected current policy on the issue where the death penalty was legal or a moratorium was in place, and calling for its reestablishment for where it is illegal. The results from this are presented in the table below.

Table 32: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles:
Status Quo

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Status Quo
New Hampshire	0.16
Texas	0.25
Georgia	0.30
New York	0.03
Oregon	0.17
Illinois	0.27
Total	0.22
N=296	Eta= 0.197*
	Eta-Squared=0.039*

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

An initial glance at the table tells us that the means for the different regions appear to be different, which could indicate a relationship. We see this variable is a

significant predictor in our newspaper sample, at the 0.05 level. The eta-squared value of 0.039 means that it is categorized as a weak predictor and referencing the status quo can account for 3.9 percent of the variation we see among the different regions' newspaper articles. Because we see this as a significant predictor, we can look at the means more closely.

The highest mean, 0.30, can be found in Georgia, which indicates that in this region, we see the most references to maintaining the status quo. The lowest level can be found in New York at 0.03, which could indicate that perhaps more articles have to do with abolition or reform than with reestablishing the death penalty. This would make sense as in New York, the death penalty has been illegal for seven years and could indicate some level of state consensus on this issue. In Illinois and Texas, we also see calls to maintain the status quo in more than 25% of the articles, which is no meager portion. Therefore in these regions, we expect people to be happy with their chosen policy.

Because we see regional differences among the groups in the tone of the media as well as their corresponding policies, it appears that media influence does have some distinct influences on the various regions. This lends support to my hypothesis that media could account for some of the regional discrepancies we see among death penalty opinions and therefore policy.

6.2 Independent Variable: Abolishment

The second argument I look for in the articles is whether the editorial called for the abolishment of the death penalty. Here as well it is important to keep the policies

within the states in mind as we examine the results from the ANOVA analysis, found in the table below.

Table 33: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles:
Abolishment

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Abolishment
New Hampshire	0.66
Texas	0.27
Georgia	0.23
New York	0.65
Oregon	0.30
Illinois	0.72
Total	0.44
N=296	Eta= 0.418**
	Eta-Squared=0.175**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

When we look at the means associated with abolishment, we see that there is variation in the number of articles that reference this mentality in the states. Looking at eta-squared, we can see that the relationship is significant at the 0.01 level. The value of that statistic, 0.175 indicates that there is a weak relationship where knowing if an article references abolishment or not can tell us 17.5 percent of the variation among the states.

Examining the means further, we see for the total articles, 44% of them make reference to abolishment. We see the highest number of references in Illinois, with 72% of the articles calling for abolishment of the death penalty. This makes sense because this state is the most recent to go through the process of abolishing the death penalty, and so a number of my articles made reference to or were created around that time. In Georgia, we see the lowest number of articles call for the abolishment of capital punishment, at just 23%. Texas is similar, with just 27% of the editorial articles calling for the abolishment

of this policy. Of the states where it is legal, we see particularly high calls for abolition in New Hampshire, with 66% of the editorials desiring this policy change.

These differences among the states that represent their regions point to varying conclusions about the influence the media could have on public opinion. In places like Texas and Georgia, we do not see very many calls for abolition, which could indicate that public opinion lies in support of capital punishment and policy is unlikely to change. But in places like New Hampshire, where we see a large percentage of the articles referencing a desire for change, it is more likely that public opinion is shifting and that policy may soon shift as well.

6.3 Independent Variable: Reform

The third and final viewpoint on capital punishment that I code for in the articles is the desire for reform. For the states where the death penalty is legal, Georgia, Texas, and New Hampshire, reform refers to the view that improvements can be made, but not in reference to abolishing the policy, as those were coded in the abolish independent variable we discussed above. In states where the death penalty is illegal, New York and Illinois, reform was coded to reference if reestablishment was to occur, that reforms were needed before the death penalty was reinstated as a form of punishment. Where there is a moratorium, I code the articles that referenced improving the death penalty in order to reestablish it as a policy as indicative of desiring reform. The results from that ANOVA are reproduced in the table below.

Table 34: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Reform

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Reform
New Hampshire	0.13
Texas	0.49
Georgia	0.40
New York	0.42
Oregon	0.46
Illinois	0.08
Total	0.34
N=296	Eta= 0.348**
	Eta-Squared=0.121**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Looking at the means, we can see there does appear to be differences between the states in terms of if they reference reform. When we look at eta-squared, we see that this value 0.121 indicates a weak relationship that is significant at the 0.01 level. This means that if we know an article references reform, 12.1% of the time we can predict which state that particular article is from.

Because we know this relationship is significant, we can make conclusions about the means. For the total articles for all the states, we see that 34% of them make reference to reform. In Texas, we see the biggest calls for reform, with 49% of the articles calling for change to be made to the death penalty policy. This could indicate that though not desiring to abolish the death penalty, Texans acknowledge the need to reform it to improve the current way they practice the death penalty. Among the states where the death penalty is legal, we see that New York's articles reference reform 42% of the time. This is fairly high and could indicate that there is a resurgence of a desire to put people to death for their crimes if the death penalty was to be modified. However, these facts could also be due to our use of editorial articles, which might tend to favor certain arguments

just because they are opinion pieces. We also see states that barely make this reference, such as in Illinois with a mean of just 0.08. This points out that there are definite differences among the states as to how the media portrays the death penalty, which lends support to our overall hypothesis that there are regional differences in the media and that could influence public opinion and therefore policy on the issue.

6.4 Independent Variable: Negative Effect of Repeal

When I initially skimmed the articles to determine what I would actually be looking for, I noticed that some indicated that there could be a negative effect to repealing the death penalty, therefore I include this as an independent variable to examine. The results of the ANOVA for this variable for each of the regions, as well as the total, are found in the table below.

Table 35: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles:
Negative Effect of Repeal

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Negative Effect of Repeal
New Hampshire	0.19
Texas	0.05
Georgia	0.05
New York	0.13
Oregon	0.17
Illinois	0.18
Total	0.12
N=296	Eta= 0.185
	Eta-Squared=0.034

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

As we can see from the table above, there appears to be some difference among the regions in terms of their means. However, when we look at eta-squared, we see that

the relationship between the variables in terms of if the newspaper article references a negative effect to repeal, it is not a significant predictor of the general tone of the article, and therefore we cannot make any conclusions about the means.

6.5 Independent Variable: Discusses a Bill

Additionally, a number of the articles referenced a bill that was being examined or had been sent through the legislature. I also included references to a moratorium in this as I feel they are very similar in terms of the purpose of our study. The results on whether the various articles in each of the regions referenced a bill from the ANOVA are found in the table below.

Table 36: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles:
Discusses a Bill

State:	Average # of Articles that Discuss a Bill
New Hampshire	0.31
Texas	0.10
Georgia	0.18
New York	0.06
Oregon	0.26
Illinois	0.50
Total	0.25
N=296	Eta= 0.344**
	Eta-Squared=0.118**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

There does appear to be differences across the states in terms of the amount of articles that reference a bill, which we can see by looking at the means associated with the states. To test this, we look at the stars associated with eta-squared, and see that the two stars indicate there is a relationship with a significance at the 0.01 level. The actual

value of that 0.118, indicates that this relationship is weak and that 11.8 percent of the variation in the states can be explained by their discussion of a bill.

The mean for the total is 0.25, indicating that in all the states, 25% of their articles make reference to a bill. We see the most discussion in Illinois, with 50% of the articles referencing a bill. This could be due to the fact that Illinois is the most recent state to abolish the death penalty of the ones I have examined so that the debate over this bill is still referenced and fresh in the media. We see the lowest value in New York with just 0.06 of the articles making reference to a bill. This makes sense because in New York, the death penalty has been abolished for the longest period of the states I studied. This does point to the conclusion that the media could be impacting public opinion differently in the regions based on the amount they discuss bills that are relevant to capital punishment, which lends support to my overall hypothesis of regional differences in terms of death penalty opinions.

6.6 Independent Variable: Reference a Specific Case

As we saw, some of the articles made reference to bills that dealt with the death penalty. Additionally, a number of the articles referenced specific death penalty cases. Because of this, I code the articles to reflect whether they discussed a certain case or not to determine if this was an influential factor in some of the states. The results from this ANOVA are found in the table below.

Table 37: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Reference a Specific Case

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Specific Case
New Hampshire	0.53
Texas	0.53
Georgia	0.65
New York	0.23
Oregon	0.54
Illinois	0.23
Total	0.46
N=296	Eta= 0.323**
	Eta-Squared=0.104**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Among the articles that reference a specific case, we see variation in the means for the different states, which seems to imply that this variable could be significant. When we look at eta-squared, we see that there are two stars attached to this value, indicating that indeed the relationship is significant at the 0.01 level. The actual value of eta-squared is 0.104, indicating a weak relationship and suggesting that this variable can explain 10.4% of the variation in the states.

We see the most references to a specific case in Georgia, with 65% of the articles including this variable. As the death penalty is legal there, it makes sense that the debate over this topic would generally turn up when there are cases to discuss. There are two states where we see the least amount of references, with both New York and Illinois referencing cases in 23% of their articles. As the death penalty is illegal there, this would make sense as there are no official death penalty cases. Of all the articles, we see 46% of them referencing cases, which indicates that it is a fairly prominent feature among all the regions. However because we see such variation among the regions, with a 42 percentage

point difference between the state that references this the most, and the least, we can conclude that there does appear to be regional differences in how the media portrays the death penalty.

6.7 Independent Variable: Botched Executions

From simply paying attention to the news, there has been recent attention paid to the prevalence of botched executions that have occurred when those on death row are given the lethal injection. As such, I wanted to see if there were references to executions that were bungled in the editorial newspaper articles I examined for each of the states. The results from that analysis are presented in the table below.

Table 38: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Botched Executions

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Botched Executions
New Hampshire	0.13
Texas	0.05
Georgia	0.07
New York	0.00
Oregon	0.00
Illinois	0.07
Total	0.05
N=296	Eta= 0.173
	Eta-Squared=0.030

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Although the means seem to indicate that there may be differences among the states in the prevalence of media references to botched executions, however when we look at eta-squared, we see that it does not meet the threshold for significance. Therefore, we are forced to conclude that knowing an article will reference a botched execution

cannot tell us which state that article may be from as there is no relationship present between the variables.

6.8 Independent Variable: Pro-Death Penalty: Cost

My next thought in looking at the articles was the different references they made in the arguments for and against the death penalty, namely the cost, innocence, vengeance, and deterrence for which the articles attempted to make both pro- and con-death penalty arguments. In the following eight independent variables, we will examine both the favor and oppose sides to each of these arguments.

I begin with the cost argument in terms of favoring the death penalty. This may seem strange, as the literature all references the cost of the death penalty as being more than the cost of life imprisonment, a fact of which has been proven time and time again. However, like most misinformed viewpoints, there still exists a group of the population who will stick to their opinions despite the facts presented to them, and therefore some of the articles I examined included references to the idea that the cost of the death penalty is less than the alternatives. The results from the ANOVA on the articles coded for this independent variable are found in the table below.

Table 39: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Pro-Death Penalty: Cost

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Pro-Death Penalty Cost Argument
New Hampshire	0.06
Texas	0.00
Georgia	0.00
New York	0.00
Oregon	0.04
Illinois	0.00
Total	0.01
N=296	Eta= 0.192
	Eta-Squared=0.037

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

The means show very little difference among the regions, in fact we only see references to this argument in Oregon and New Hampshire. When we look at eta-squared, we see this value is not significant. We are forced to accept that there is no relationship between the tone of the media and referencing the cost argument in support of the death penalty.

6.9 Independent Variable: Con-Death Penalty: Cost

On the other side of the coin, a number of articles reference the cost as a reason for abolishing the death penalty. The ANOVA for this independent variable is presented in the table below.

Table 40: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Con-Death Penalty: Cost

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Con-Death Penalty Cost Argument
New Hampshire	0.19
Texas	0.15
Georgia	0.27
New York	0.26
Oregon	0.26
Illinois	0.27
Total	0.23
N=296	Eta= 0.110
	Eta-Squared=0.012

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Although the means give a strong indication that this argument is prevalent in the different articles, when we look at eta-squared, we see that this value is not significant. This points to the conclusion that knowing the article references the cost in terms of opposing the death penalty will not tell us much about which region it belongs to, which makes sense as there is only a 0.08 difference among the highest and lowest means.

6.10 Independent Variable: Pro-Death Penalty: Innocence

An additional argument a number of the articles made reference to is the incidence of the execution of the innocent. As we see in the literature, there is no absolute guarantee the guilt of a person, and this has resulted in a number of people to be exonerated of their crime after their execution. While this is general thought of as a anti-death penalty argument, some of the articles referenced changes in technology that have severely reduced the risks in executing people, and therefore, they feel the death penalty should be legal. The means reflect those codes, and are presented in the table below.

Table 41: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Pro-Death Penalty: Innocence

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Pro-Death Penalty Innocence Argument
New Hampshire	0.03
Texas	0.02
Georgia	0.02
New York	0.00
Oregon	0.04
Illinois	0.00
Total	0.02
N=296	Eta= 0.105
	Eta-Squared=0.011

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

As we can see from the means, very few of the articles in four of the six regions make this reference. In the other two, we do not see this argument present in their newspapers. Looking at eta-squared, we see this relationship is not statistically significant, so we lack the means to conclude that there is a relationship between the pro-death penalty innocence argument and therefore must assume that no relationship exists.

6.11 Independent Variable: Con-Death Penalty: Innocence

The opposite side of the coin for this variable is that I discovered frequent references to abolish the death penalty due to the execution of innocent people within the different regions of the US. Presented in the table are the results from the ANOVA tests.

Table 42: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Con-Death Penalty: Innocence

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Con-Death Penalty Innocence Argument
New Hampshire	0.31
Texas	0.29
Georgia	0.17
New York	0.29
Oregon	0.07
Illinois	0.50
Total	0.27
N=296	Eta= 0.320**
	Eta-Squared=0.102**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Unlike with the pro-innocence argument, where we saw very little differences among the means of the different states, with this independent variable, we see variation across the states, which could indicate this relationship is significant. When we look at the value of eta-squared, 0.102, it is significant at the 0.01 level and is indicative of a weak relationship between the variables. Therefore, it is safe for us to make the conclusion that the value of eta-squared indicates that this variable can explain 10.2% of the variation we see among the states.

The mean of the total articles is 0.27, indicating that 27% of the articles make reference to innocence as an argument against the death penalty. We see the highest number of references in Illinois, where a whopping 50% of the articles reference this topic. This could indicate that in the North Central region that Illinois represents exists a particularly heavy emphasis on the execution of the innocent in the debate over capital punishment. We see the lowest number in Oregon, at 0.07, which indicates that this argument might not have as much relevance in the debate over capital punishment. These

differences do indicate regional distinctions in terms of how the media portrays and discusses capital punishment, and in turn what arguments are perpetuated within the regions, lending support to our overall hypothesis.

6.12 Independent Variable: Pro-Death Penalty: Vengeance

Vengeance is the second argument we see referenced in the newspapers in the various regions. Those articles that reflected the view that the death penalty was a just punishment for the crimes a person has committed were coded as appearing in the category. The results from this ANOVA are presented in the table below.

Table 43: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Pro-Death Penalty: Vengeance

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Pro-Death Penalty Vengeance Argument
New Hampshire	0.13
Texas	0.14
Georgia	0.23
New York	0.16
Oregon	0.13
Illinois	0.10
Total	0.15
N=296	Eta= 0.129
	Eta-Squared=0.017

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

It appears from the means that there might be a relationship between this variable and the states within which the means correspond, however, when we look at eta-squared, we see that this relationship is in fact not significant, and therefore we are forced to accept that there is no relationship between this pro-death penalty argument of vengeance and the states within which we see those arguments present in the media.

6.13 Independent Variable: Con-Death Penalty: Vengeance

The flipside of the relationship we examined above is coded slightly differently. In some of the articles, the authors made reference to feeling that vengeance should not come into the law and/or that no crime was worth this extreme punishment for the sake of relief for the victims' families. I therefore coded the articles that made reference to this argument as such, and the results from the ANOVA test on those articles are presented in the table below.

Table 44: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Con-Death Penalty: Vengeance

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Con-Death Penalty Vengeance Argument
New Hampshire	0.28
Texas	0.02
Georgia	0.05
New York	0.03
Oregon	0.04
Illinois	0.15
Total	0.08
N=296	Eta= 0.299**
	Eta-Squared=0.089**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

From the means, we can see that there may be some differences among the states in the amount of articles that reference this concept that the death penalty should not be used for vengeance. In terms of significance, we see the eta-squared value of 0.089, is indicative of a very weak relationship and is significant at the 0.01 level. The actual value of eta-squared indicates that knowing the value of the independent variable can explain 8.9% of the variation among the states.

When we look at the actual means, we see that of the total articles, 8% make reference to this argument. The region where we see the highest number of references to the fact that the death penalty should not be used for vengeance in New Hampshire, at 28%, and the lowest in Texas, with just 2%. As our states are representing our regions, we see there are regional differences among the emphasis the media places on certain arguments, which lends support to our overall hypothesis.

6.14 Independent Variable: Pro-Death Penalty: Deterrence

The final pro/con argument I examine is that the death penalty acts as a deterrent. While correlating reductions in crime levels to the presence of the death penalty has time and time again been proved inaccurate, we still see this argument present in the media and the population. Therefore, I coded the articles that included this reference as such. The results from that analysis can be found in the table below.

Table 45: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Pro-Death Penalty: Deterrence

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Pro-Death Penalty Deterrence Argument
New Hampshire	0.16
Texas	0.02
Georgia	0.05
New York	0.00
Oregon	0.04
Illinois	0.07
Total	0.05
N=296	Eta= 0.193
	Eta-Squared=0.037

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

From the means, we can see that there appears to be differences among the regions in terms of the number of articles that discuss deterrence in relation to supporting the death penalty. Looking at et-squared however, we see this relationship is not significant, so we cannot make conclusions about how deterrence as a pro-death penalty argument is related between the regions.

6.15 Independent Variable: Con-Death Penalty: Deterrence

Those articles that made reference to the false truth behind the deterrence argument were coded to be included in this independent variable, the ANOVA assessment for which can be found in the table below.

Table 46: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Con-Death Penalty: Deterrence

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Con-Death Penalty Deterrence Argument
New Hampshire	0.29
Texas	0.02
Georgia	0.12
New York	0.13
Oregon	0.04
Illinois	0.12
Total	0.10
N=296	Eta= 0.259**
	Eta-Squared=0.067**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Like with the pro-death penalty deterrence argument, we see differences among the means, which could point to a relationship between the variables. Unlike that variable, when we look at eta-squared, we see this relationship is significant at the 0.01 level. The actual value of eta-squared, 0.067, indicates that by knowing if there is reference to the

independent variable in the article, we can know 6.7 percent of the variation in the states. This is categorized as a very weak relationship.

We see that the mean for the total is 0.10, indicating that one-tenth of the all the articles in all six of the states reference the deterrence argument in terms of its falsity. In New Hampshire, we see the most references to this, with a mean of 0.29, indicating that proportion of the articles make this reference. We see the least amount of references in Texas, with just 2% of the articles making this reference. This could perhaps indicate that the media in certain regions is more likely to point out the falsity of this argument, whereas other regions are less likely to point out this fact. This lends support to our hypothesis of regional differences in what the media emphasizes and to what extent that difference is.

6.16 Independent Variable: Reference Race

From the literature, as well as our examination of the demographic variables, we see that race is often referenced in relation to the death penalty. Therefore, I look at the number of articles that made reference to race, all of which were referring to this variable as a reason why we should not have capital punishment. The ANOVA for whether the articles referenced race can be found in the table below.

Table 47: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles:
Reference Race

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Race
New Hampshire	0.16
Texas	0.12
Georgia	0.10
New York	0.19
Oregon	0.02
Illinois	0.33
Total	0.15
N=296	Eta= 0.290**
	Eta-Squared=0.084**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

From the table above, we can see that there appears to be differences among the states in terms of the number of articles that reference race by looking at the means. When we look at the et-squared value, we see that it is significant at the 0.01 level, meaning we can say with 99% confidence that there is a relationship between the number of articles that reference race and the states. The value of eta-square, 0.084, indicates that this relationship is very weak, and that 8.4% of the variations that exist among the regions can be explained by this independent variable.

We see that the mean for the total is 0.15, meaning 15% of the articles make reference to race. We see the most references to race in Illinois, with 33% of the articles from our sample making this reference. We see the fewest references to race in Oregon, with just 2% of the articles discussing race in terms of the death penalty. Because our states represent our regions, we can make the inference that in the West, race is less of a factor referenced by the media, and therefore, may have less of an impact on public opinion than in the North Central region, where we see race play a key role in the debate

on capital punishment. This appears to indicate that in terms of race, certain regions make reference to this more than others, therefore there are regional differences in how the media portrays capital punishment, which could affect opinions on this policy in different ways.

6.17 Independent Variable: Reference Moral Arguments

Similar to the race variable, a number of the articles made reference to having moral issues with the death penalty. I coded this variable to reflect whether the article cited these moral issues as reasons for opposing the death penalty, both in terms of reforming it as well as abolishing it. While this limits the way we can analyze this variable, it does speak to the fact that there are expressed problems in the media with the death penalty in terms of the morality of it. The results from the ANOVA for this variable are presented in the table below.

Table 48: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles:
Reference Moral Arguments

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Moral Arguments
New Hampshire	0.50
Texas	0.47
Georgia	0.42
New York	0.68
Oregon	0.69
Illinois	0.68
Total	0.57
N=296	Eta= 0.231**
	Eta-Squared=0.053**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

As we can see from the means, morality seems to be prevalent in a majority of the articles, with the mean of the total being at 0.57, and only two of the regions reporting

levels lower than 0.50. Looking at eta-squared, we can see this relationship is significant at the 0.01 level, therefore we are able to make conclusions from the means as this is indicative that reference to the morality argument can inform us about in which states this variable is prevalent. The value of eta-squared, 0.053, is indicative of a very weak relationship and that referencing morality can explain 5.3 percent of the variation that exists among the regions.

Because this variable is significant, we are able to look at and compare the means associated with each of the states. As we discussed before, the average of the total is 0.57, meaning 57% of all the articles reference this moral dilemma. We see the highest proportion of the articles referencing this dilemma in Oregon, with a mean of 0.69. This is interesting because in this state, there is a moratorium, therefore, we would expect more debate over a set policy, and we see that morality seems to play a role in that debate. In Georgia and Texas, we see the lowest proportions, at 0.42 and 0.47 respectively. These states that represent our two southern regions, South Atlantic and South Central, so that it seems in the south, morality arguments do not seem to play as influential a role in the debate over the death penalty compared to the other regions. Because we observe these differences, it appears that the media presents varying tones depending on the region at which we are looking, which points to the media influencing public opinion differently in some regions than others.

6.18 Concluding Remarks on Media Influence

Because eleven out of our fourteen variables were found to be significant, this allows us to make conclusions about how what arguments and viewpoints are reflected in each of the states and how they might impact public opinion. In New Hampshire, we see

that among the options of sticking with the death penalty in its current state, reforming this policy, or abolishing it completely, we see the highest number of articles referencing abolishment, at least double the amount that we see either of the other two arguments. Therefore, it is possible that due to the influence of the media, we may soon see a shift in this state's policy on capital punishment.

We see that 31% discuss a bill and 53% reference a specific case, meaning that it appears that events that occur pertaining to the death penalty seem to impact to some extent whether the media discusses this policy in this state. Of the arguments for and against the death penalty, the execution of innocent people, vengeance as something that the law should not condone, and deterrence as a false argument are all fairly equally present within New Hampshire's media (all around 30%). Morality is heavily featured in all the states, and we see that New Hampshire is no different with half of the articles citing moral issue with this policy. Race plays a somewhat important role (16%).

From these results, we can conclude that morality seems to be the most heavily mentioned reason for abolishing the death penalty in New Hampshire, with innocence, deterrence, and vengeance playing into account as well. Race also plays a role, but not as prominent. Because out of our arguments for favoring the death penalty only one was significance, we can make conclusions about that one and compare it to the pro-death penalty arguments, but this severely limits our ability to see how pro-death penalty arguments interact in the media. We can see that the deterrence argument as supporting the death penalty is present, but is not featured as prominently with only 16% of the articles making this reference.

For Texas of the three choices to stick with the status quo, abolish, or reform, we see reform heavily featured in the articles, with 49% of them calling for this change. We do see about a quarter that want to abolish, but combining both status quo and reform (74%), it appears that the media strongly advocates that the death penalty should remain legal. It does call for some changes to be made, which could be indicative that they at least acknowledge that there are problems with the current system, which could indicate that change could occur at some point. Though we do not see many of the articles referencing a bill, probably due to the fact that Texas has not been considering abolishing the death penalty, we do see many references to cases (53%). This indicates that discussion of the death penalty in the media in this state is likely influenced by the events of the time.

Among the arguments, vengeance and deterrence, both for and against the death penalty, are not very prominent within the South Central region (2%). But we do see references to the execution of the innocent (28%), which is perhaps indicative of problems the state is having and where people are calling for reform. The morality argument is heavily featured in these arguments (47%), which is perhaps what is referenced for needing reform. Race is referenced in 12% of the articles, which while not heavily featured, could indicate that Texans do acknowledge the flaws in the system in terms of how is applied to the different races.

In Georgia, like in Texas, we see the call for reform most heavily featured (40%) among the arguments. We also see 30% of the articles referencing sticking with the status quo, which this combined 70% seems to indicate that Georgians are unlikely to call for the abolishment of the death penalty anytime soon. We see very few of the articles

reference a bill, but 65% reference a specific case, which indicates that coverage of the death penalty in this area likely revolves around the events of the time as well.

Of the arguments for and against the death penalty, we see very little reference to any of them, the highest being the innocence argument (17%). Race is also not a distinct feature of the debate in this state (10%). The most prominent issue we see referenced is the morality issue, (42%). This could indicate that the issues morality raises are where Georgians would like to see reform in how the death penalty is applied, though they do not desire to see it done away with completely despite these moral qualms.

In New York, we see a high percentage of the articles referencing abolishing the death penalty (65%), which makes sense, as the death penalty has not been legal there since 2007. With 42% of the articles calling for reform, this seems to indicate an overlap to some extent, so that some articles may have made reference to both calling for reform if the death penalty was to be reestablishment of the death penalty while at the same time maintaining that it should remain abolished. Very few reference a specific bill (6%), and only 23% reference a specific case. Because the death penalty has been abolished for so long, those that did reference a specific case were either referring to past death penalty cases, cases where they would apply the death penalty, or editorials mentioning cases from other states.

Examining the arguments for and against the death penalty, we see that none of them feature deterrence in a positive way, and only 13% reference it as a false argument. Twenty-nine percent of the articles acknowledge the problem of executing the innocent. The most heavily featured flaw in the death penalty that is discussed in this state is the moral problem, with 68% of the articles having this feature. Race is somewhat prominent

(19%), but it is clear that the biggest problem New Yorkers have with the death penalty is the morality, the next being the execution of innocent people.

In Oregon, where there is a moratorium on the death penalty, we see the call for reform in order to reestablish the death penalty is the biggest argument we see featured in these articles, (46%). 30% called for the complete abolishment of this policy, while very few referenced wanting to maintain the moratorium on its use. Compared to the other states, a large number reference a specific bill (26%) or reference a specific case (54%), so like with the other states, it appears that events involving the use of the death penalty do tend to influence if it is discussed in Oregon as well.

In terms of the arguments for and against the death penalty, we see very little reference to the innocence, vengeance, or deterrence, both pro and con, in the articles for this state. Race as well is referenced in only 2% of the articles; therefore these do not seem to be where the debate over the death penalty lies. We do see the highest percentage among the states of the number of articles that reference the morality argument, (69%). This seems to indicate that this is where the most issue is taken with the death penalty.

In Illinois, which is the most recent state to end the death penalty, we see that 72% of the articles reference that abolishment. We do see 27% of the articles calling for the reestablishment of the death penalty, which appears to indicate that at least to some extent, the debate over the use of the death penalty is still fresh in the media and in people's minds. There is very little call for reform if the death penalty was to be reinstated. Half of the articles make reference to a bill, while just a little under a quarter make reference to specific cases. From reading the articles, I know that number of the articles referenced the specific bill that eliminated the death penalty because this is such a

recent event, which could indicate that this is a relevant issue that both the media and the state legislature are actively looking at and debating and is kept in the public eye as a result.

Of the arguments for and against the death penalty, like the other states, we see very little reference to deterrence as an argument for supporting the death penalty. For the arguments against, vengeance and deterrence do not seem to play that big a role in the con-death penalty argument, but innocence does, with 50% of the articles making reference to the execution of the innocent. Moral issues are presented in 68% of the articles, and race in 33%. This indicates that while morality seems to be the most prominent feature of these articles, execution of the innocent and issues over race seem to also be a key argument in the debate over capital punishment.

Each of the states has been chosen to represent a certain region and, therefore, we can extend those conclusions we made about the states above to reflect that corresponding region. In the final chapter, I merge this analysis with the analysis from the logistic regressions to make conclusions about the regions and what factors influence public opinion. I then extend this analysis to determine if public opinion is reflected in the policies of the regions' corresponding states.

Chapter 7

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

All of the themes explored in this study have come from past scholarship relating to the death penalty and the many factors that have been identified to account for public opinion on this issue. While scholars have explored this issue on the national level, from what we have observed through our exploration, regional differences can account for the varying policies we see throughout the United States. By separating the US into six different regions and choosing states to correspond to those regions, we broke down many factors that could influence public opinion to test their situation within each to allow us to compare that opinion to both the policy of that region as well as to the other regions. This facilitated determining what dynamics within those regions are significant. In this section, I present each of the regions and their corresponding significant variables and influential factors to facilitate a comparative analysis, ending with some general conclusions and implications about the differences among the regions.

For most of the regions, I have chosen the states whose policies align with the majority of those states that make up that section of the US. However for New England, I decided to use New Hampshire as a regional outlier to gain a slightly different perspective, as all six of the other New England states have abolished the death penalty. I also chose this state because of the active debate over this policy that I had hoped would be played out in the media. As the death penalty has recently been put before the legislature who determined this form of punishment should still remain a part of New Hampshire's laws, there is much discussion about a bill on the issue as well as death penalty cases in the media, which seems to indicate discussion of this issue is dictated by the events that are occurring at the time and is still active in the minds of the public.

We did see evidence of the discussion of this issue in the newspaper articles we examined, as the majority of the articles supported abolition, though we did see some reference a desire to remain with or reform the death penalty. Morality is the most influential argument for those who favor abolishment, though the execution of innocent people, vengeance as something that the law should not condone, and deterrence as a false argument are all fairly equally present and important in this debate as it plays out in the media as well. Though not significant and therefore indicating there is little differences across the states in terms of its prevalence in the articles, the argument that the death penalty is in fact more expensive than the life imprisonment is also referenced as a reason to abolish this policy.

New Hampshire is where we saw the most frequent reference to the deterrence argument in terms of supporting the death penalty, which suggests that the debate on the other side of the issue is also present. The low instance of crime both in New England and New Hampshire points to the fact that though crime does not seem to be as much of an issue for this region, deterrence is still a perpetuated argument, and the misperceptions of crime are further solidified when taking into account those FBI crime statistics and could account for why we see that small portion desiring to return to capital punishment. Despite the other pro-death penalty arguments not being significant predictors of differences between the regions, we can still look at the means and see that there are references to the cost and vengeance arguments in terms of favoring the death penalty in New Hampshire, even if we cannot compare this situation of the variables to the other regions. The cost and vengeance arguments in favor of capital punishment show up less frequently than the deterrence argument, but their presences indicates that the debate is

still ongoing in this state. However, because we see such a high prevalence of the morality arguments as well as vengeance, deterrence, and innocence all being cited as reasons to be against the death penalty in much higher numbers than any of the arguments in support of this policy, in addition to the most number of articles referencing abolishment, this could indicate that soon enough, New Hampshire will join the rest of the New England states in abolishing the death penalty.

Of the groups that could be making up the pro-death penalty camp in this region, we see those that are very religious, Republicans, individuals with lower levels of education, and those who feel the courts are not harsh enough when dealing with criminals are likely to favor the death penalty. This could indicate those groups are playing an active role in the debate, keeping the support for capital punishment arguments alive. On the other side of things, we find that people who were raised in Protestantism, Catholicism, and no religion, those who presently consider themselves less religious, those with higher levels of education and those who believe the court is too harsh when dealing with criminals all tend to oppose capital punishment. The prevalence of these groups in New Hampshire specifically could possibly explain where the driving force behind the abolitionist movement is found, as well as accounting for the illegal status in the rest of the states that make up this region.

Unlike in New England, in the Middle Atlantic, our chosen state of New York has abolished the death penalty, representing the majority of the policies in this region. Because we see very few references to a bill and only a modest amount of articles that referenced a specific case, it does not appear that this issue is present in the media as the result of the events of the time as we saw in New York. Because the death penalty was

declared unconstitutional almost ten years ago, it would make sense that the debate over whether it should be a policy or not has waned slightly.

Where the argument appears to still be present is if the death penalty were to be reinstated, there needs to be reforms to the policy from the past before citizens would be okay with having this. But very few actually called for the reinstatement of the death penalty. Most that referenced wanting reforms also maintained the desire for the death penalty to stay off the law books. As such, the majority of the articles called for abolishment to remain. Morality, like in New England, is the biggest factor in support for abolition of the death penalty. The risk of executing the innocent also plays a key role in the problems people cited with the death penalty. The inherent race bias in the death penalty and false truth of deterrence play a role but it is not nearly as prominent in the media. The concept that vengeance should not play a role in the law is barely present, which could indicate that this argument comes out when the debate is fresh, like we see in New Hampshire, but less so where policy regarding the death penalty has been well-established. Though not significant, the cost argument in opposition to the death penalty is also prevalent within this region in terms of the number of articles that reference it.

Of the arguments for the death penalty, the one variable that was significant, deterrence, was not mentioned in any of the articles I examined. Crime rates are the second lowest among the regions, and in combination with the fact that we do not see the deterrence argument perpetuated, but rather see it disputed seems to indicate that in this region, they realize its falsehood. While we cannot make comparisons between the regions on the other arguments, we see that vengeance is also cited a reason for the death penalty, so this may be where the argument rests for New Yorkers. It is clear, however,

the media takes an abolitionist tone in their presentation of the death penalty, with morality as their main focus.

In this area, we saw that those with higher levels of education, were married, or from bigger cities as well as people who felt the courts were too harsh in their dealings with criminals were more likely to oppose the death penalty. The groups who corresponded with favoring the death penalty were found to be those with higher incomes, from areas with smaller populations, Democrats, or those who thought the court was not harsh enough with their dealings. This could be where we see the minor level of support for reestablishment of the death penalty in this state. Extending this analysis to the entire region, we can say that these factors have contributed to the overall illegality of the death penalty among the states in the region.

In the North Central region, I chose Illinois to represent the region, as the majority of the states in this region have ended the death penalty as a form of punishment or have put a hold on its use. This debate over capital punishment has been active in this region, as it is one of the most recent to abolish capital punishment. We see this policy actively debated by the media within the region. Though the majority still desire to abolish the death penalty, over a quarter of the articles expressed a desire to return to this practice. Half of the articles discussed a bill, and a small number referenced a specific case. This points to the fact that, like we saw in New Hampshire, the media seems to be responding to the events of the time through its coverage of this policy issue. In terms of the arguments, we see that morality, like in the other regions, factors significantly into the arguments that are perpetuated in support of the death penalty, though it is not alone, as the execution of the innocent is also frequently cited, as half of the articles I examined

cited this as a reason for abolishing the death penalty. Race also played a key role in this debate, with a full third of the articles making mention of this problem with the death penalty. The cost argument also factors into a number of the articles that argued for the abolishment of the death penalty, though not significant enough to make comparisons among the regions.

Deterrence played a small role in why people felt the death penalty should be reinstated, more so than all the states with the exception of New Hampshire, but was still minimal. This region has a somewhat high rate of crime, which could be why we see this argument perpetuated as well as being a reason why people would want to return to using this form of punishment. This could also indicate why, compared to New York whose crime rate is lower than in Illinois, we see this argument perpetuated in one region but not in another. Of the arguments in terms of favoring the death penalty that were not significant, we see a small amount referenced a desire for vengeance, though a higher portion cited this argument as a reason against using the death penalty.

Those who were raised in Protestantism, Catholicism, or no religion all reported favoring the death penalty in this region, which is the opposite from what we found in New England. Additionally, conservatives and those who felt the court was not harsh enough in its dealings with criminals identified as supporting this policy. This is where the significant call for reestablishing the death penalty may come from in Illinois. Those who identified as more liberal and those who felt the court was too harsh were more likely to oppose the death penalty. Their presence within the state could explain why we see that the majority of the state desires to maintain the illegal status of the death penalty. Extending this to regional perspectives, this could also be why we see in the North

Central region, the majority of the states having abolished the death penalty or placing a hold on its use, citing moral consequence, as well as problems with executing the innocent and the racial bias that the literature shows is present within the application of this policy.

As representative of most of the states within the South Atlantic, Georgia was chosen as they have been heavily featured in the national debate over the issue, as well is a state where the death penalty is implemented at one of the highest frequencies among the states. The high percentage of articles referencing a bill makes sense because they deal with a number of death penalty cases. Very few discuss a bill, which indicates that this issue is not as much up for debate as it is in the other regions. From the articles, I know that the ones that discussed a bill were talking about removing secrecy laws surrounding the process for obtaining the chemicals for lethal injections, calling for these laws to be removed. This is probably why the largest majority of the articles call for reform. Sticking with the status quo is also highly prevalent within the state, which in combination with the articles that called for reform but not abolishment, indicate that this state is probably not going to be abolishing the death penalty any time soon. We cannot say, however, that this policy shift is not desired at all within the state, as a small portion of the articles does reference abolition.

As reform is the most prevalent argument, the high prevalence of morality cited by the articles indicates that there seems to be a moral dilemma with how the state applies the death penalty, possibly due to the secrecy laws that prevent the public from gaining access to information about who supplies the lethal injection chemicals. Among the other significant variables, we also see that the execution of the innocent, race, and deterrence

are somewhat present in the media, as well as a small portion citing the cost of the death though this variable is not significant. This could be where those who want to abolish the death penalty place their reasoning for this attitude. Deterrence as an argument for the death penalty is present in the media. Crime rates in this region are fairly high with Georgia reporting the highest level among our chosen states. This seems to indicate that the misperception about how to reduce crime still exists in this region, while in the Middle Atlantic, it seems to have been eliminated. More often cited though is the insignificant variable of a desire for vengeance as reasons for the death penalty in terms of the media coverage on this issue.

Like we saw in the North Central region, people who were raised in Protestantism, Catholicism, or no religion, as well as those who identify as more conservative, people who feel the courts are not harsh enough in their dealings with criminals, and those from smaller areas are more likely to favor capital punishment. Additionally, unlike the regions we have discussed so far, legalizing marijuana is significant in this region in that those who feel marijuana should be legal also feel the death penalty should be legal. These characteristics of the region could indicate that these are the driving force behind the majority who desire the death penalty to remain legal in its present form or in a modified form. We see support for abolition come from those in areas with higher populations and among liberals. The small portion of those who feel the death penalty should be abolished completely could be comprised of this group of people. Expanding this to the regional level, it seems that the morality issue and to some extent the execution of the innocent and issues with race may be driving why the state feels reform needs to be made, in

addition to the problems people have with secrecy laws in place. But overall it seems that Georgia and this region are likely to remain proponents of this policy.

In the South Central region, we see that Texas, where the death penalty is legal, is representative of all the state policies in the region, though a few have moratoriums due to issues with lethal injections. Texas also has the highest execution rates in the nation, so by examining it we can make some conclusions about why this practice is so adamantly held on to by this region and Texas in particular. We see little discussion of a bill, which indicates that change has not really been debated in this region. However we do see many references to specific cases, so our conclusion that the media is influenced by the events of the time stands in this region as well.

Like in the South Atlantic region, we see a large portion of the articles referencing a desire for reforming this policy and about half of that portion calling for sticking with the way the death penalty is currently administered. We see some call for abolition, but this could be because one of the newspapers I examined held the official position that the death penalty should be reformed, but that it could not be reformed to the extent that it would be able to eliminate all of the problems that exist inherently with this policy; therefore they supported abolishment. In those articles as well as the ones that call for reform to the current system, we see that like in the other regions, morality is referenced the most for taking issue with the death penalty. Also playing a significant role is the execution of the innocent, which recalling the story from my introduction of the innocent man executed in Texas, would make sense as to why this problem in particular is referenced by the media. Race as well plays a somewhat slight role in this debate. Our

non-significant variable cost appears in some of the articles in Texas, indicating that this argument may have some influence within the region,

As this region has the highest crime rate, with Texas having a slightly lower but still relatively high rate, we might expect the deterrence argument in support of capital punishment to be present in the region, as we saw in the North Central region. However deterrence both in terms of favoring and opposing the death penalty are mentioned only in a very small portion of the articles, which seems to indicate that, like in the Middle Atlantic, this argument does not hold clout among the populous. Vengeance does have somewhat of a showing among the arguments, though it is insignificant so we can only reflect on its situation within this region.

Among the variables we examined, very few were found to be significant predictors for opinions on capital punishment in the South Central region. We see that Independents are more likely to oppose the death penalty in this region as well as those who lack confidence in the courts and those who believe the court is too harsh when dealing with criminals. From this group could come the portion of the population who want to abolish the death penalty as a form of punishment. Those who have complete confidence in the courts and those that believe the courts are not harsh enough were both found to be correlated with favoring the death penalty, which could indicate that these groups are where the support for this policy lies in the region.

Because so few variables were significant could imply that very few identifiable characteristics matter and opinion is based instead on the culture of the region. In the South Central region, we see that capital punishment is practiced more than in any other region, with the top two ranked states making up almost half of the total executions in the

country since the reinstatement of the death penalty in 1976. This could indicate that in this region in particular, the majority of people favor the same viewpoint, therefore making it impossible to determine distinctions among them as there is only one uniform view. Scholarship makes reference of a vigilante tradition, which is what may be affecting views in this region.

Our final region, the West, provides us with a unique perspective as well. While most of the states in this region have the death penalty on their law books, a majority of the states also have moratoriums on its use for varying reasons. Of the states with that ban, Oregon was chosen to see if we could tease out why this policy has been banned by their former governor and yet is still technically legal.

Out of any opinion, reform is the more frequent in Oregon, which seems to indicate that the former governor was out of touch with public opinion, making policies around his personal beliefs instead. Of note, there is a significant portion of the population that does desire abolishing the death penalty completely as well as a small portion that want to remain in the current conditions. In his official statements regarding why he stopped executions, Gov. Kitzhaber cited his “inability to participate in something [he believes] is morally wrong”³³ and calls for Oregon’s legislature to take up this issue. The current governor has vowed to continue the moratorium until the state engages in some debate on how to reform the policy to eliminate the inherent problems that currently exist.³⁴ Gov. Brown’s mentality seems to be more aligned with what Oregonians would like to see happen with this policy, preferring to retain it as a

³³ *Governor Kitzhaber Issues Reprieve - Calls for Action on Capital Punishment. Oregon Newsroom.* <<http://www.oregon.gov/newsroom/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?newsid=589>>.

³⁴ J. Cooper, "New Oregon Governor Will Continue Death Penalty Moratorium," Associated Press, February 20, 2015.

punishment option, but recognizing that in its current state, the death penalty has flaws that need to be fixed prior to its use.

A number of the articles discuss a bill and reference certain cases. This is not unexpected, as this is a current issue and the moratorium was put in place because someone was to be put to death. This is the case we see most frequently referenced in the articles. In terms of what arguments the articles portrayed, the majority finds moral consequence with the law, which aligns with the former governor's reasons for issuing the moratorium in the first place. Though not significant, the cost argument is referenced in the articles over a quarter of the time, which means that it is likely an influence on public opinion in the region, though we cannot make meaningful inferences about the differences among the states in terms of the prevalence of this variable. The rest of the anti-death penalty variables seem to have very little presence in the media in this state.

Of the pro-death penalty variables, we see very little reference to the deterrence argument, which could indicate that does not influence opinion in this state. We see an equally small number of references to the false perceptions behind the deterrence argument, which could indicate that people may be aware of the facts and therefore have dropped it as a topic of discussion. As Oregon and the West also have some of the lowest crime rates, they may not see the need to use this as a deterrent, even if it was to work as such. Of the variables that are insignificant, we see that Oregon has a few references to the death penalty as a form of vengeance, while the other variable's presence is limited. The implications of this could be that we see a debate in the legislature and ultimately the reinstatement of a reformed death penalty that addresses the moral issues that people have with the policy in its current state.

In the West, unlike what we saw in the South Central region, many of the variables were significant, including a few that were not significant in other regions. We see that both whites and blacks are likely to favor the death penalty as are those who have higher levels of education, those who make more money, Republicans as well as conservatives, those who feel the courts are too harsh in their dealings with criminals, and those who have less confidence in the judicial system. Among the people that fall into the specified categories could be where we might find the calls to reform the death penalty in order to reestablish it. On the other side of the argument, we see that those who have lower levels of education, make less money, consider themselves more liberal, feel the court is not harsh enough, and those who have higher levels of confidence in the courts themselves are likely to oppose capital punishment. Among this group is likely where we find support for abolition that we see portrayed by the media.

Notable among these variables is that blacks are more likely to favor the death penalty in this region, while in on a national level, blacks are more likely to oppose this. It appears that this is a unique regional factor that could explain why we see a lack of reference to the race argument if both races tend to feel the same way about the issue. Additionally, we see that in this region, the position of those who have less confidence in the court is the reverse of what we found in the South Central region. This offers support to our hypothesis that regional differences exist in terms of which factors influence death penalty opinions and how the arguments play out in the media that in combination could inform policy on the issue.

Regionally, the fact that, in the states where the death penalty is legal, there exists a large call for reform, indicative of the acknowledgement that problems exist in the

current system. We can see this is the case from the number of people who are exonerated after being executed and the prevalence of botched executions that have played out in the media on both the local and national scale. The media has a clear role at keeping issues in the forefront of people's minds, and their coverage of this policy is often influenced by the events of the time. As we have seen, the extent to which the media portrays certain arguments varies from region to region and this in turn appears to effect how people frame their arguments for and against the death penalty.

While many of the arguments for the death penalty differ in their prevalence depending on what region is being examined, the arguments against this policy that were not found to be significant could indicate that while there is little difference in what people cite in support of the death penalty, divergences emerge when they are arguing against this policy. Because some of those arguments are influenced by false information, perhaps with more diligence by the media in not perpetuating these opinions, we would see support in regions like the South Atlantic and New England reduced to some degree. In the South Central, where these arguments do not play a key role, this appears to imply that there may be some underlying cultural variables that have facilitated the prevalence of this viewpoint in this region.

Certain characteristics are influential in some regions and do not play a significant role in others, which leads us to conclude that differences policies are due to varying traits of each region (i.e. what is and is not significant in predicting viewpoints on capital punishment). Additionally, unique to the South Central region, we found very few characteristics that we could definitively say would sway opinion in one direction or the other, which could indicate that, like the arguments in the media, these factors do not

actually influence public opinion, and there is an additional underlying issue that was not revealed by this study. As the literature has pointed to the history of vigilantism among the Southern states in particular, the regions of South Central and South Atlantic in our study, this could be the driving force behind these regions' desire to maintain the death penalty as a form of punishment.

Although this study did not reveal every factor that influences public opinion on capital punishment, it has pointed out some key features that, in combination with the media influence, help to explain why we observe differing policies among the regions, as well as the potential policy changes that could result if certain characteristics that influence opinions on the death penalty were modified. It is clear that in some regions, the tradition of capital punishment holds strong, and residents even possess a desire to improve the way the death penalty is applied so that it may remain part of their policies, despite recent challenges ranging from botched executions to the execution of those that were later proven innocent. In other regions, we see a desire to abolish the death penalty completely as a result of the moral issues that are discussed with relation to this policy. In those regions where the death penalty is illegal, there is little desire to shift policy back to the use of capital punishment.

There are, of course, other factors that might influence the regional differences in opinions and policy regarding the death penalty evidenced in the United States, beyond what I have been able to reveal in this study. Further investigation may reveal additional variables that are significant and influential, including other demographic variables that were not addressed or lacked sufficient data for this study. Another area in particular that has the potential to reveal additional information is the cultural component that I have

suggested might be responsible for differences between the regions. Culture likely has an extremely powerful effect on why people hold certain opinions and policies. These variables are just a few of many possibilities that could be included in further investigations into the concept of this study. Differences in characteristics and influences among the regions of the United States can explain to some extent the varied opinions and thus policies we see regarding the death penalty. This subject will continue to be an important one as the popularity and use of the death penalty waxes and wanes throughout the coming years.

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Appendix A: Descriptions of the Variables

Table 1: Descriptions of the Variables

VARIABLE TOPIC	NAME	DESCRIPTION
R's Opinion on the Death Penalty	CAPPUN	Do you favor or oppose the death penalty for persons convicted of murder?
Region of the Interview	REGION	What region of the country the respondent is in
R's Race	RACE	What race do you consider yourself?
R's Religious Identity	RELIGID	When it comes to your religious identity, would you say you are a fundamentalist, evangelical, mainline, or liberal Protestant or do none of these describe you?
Religion R was Raised in	RELIGKID	What religion, if any, were you raised in? Was it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion?
R Considers Self Religious	RELPERSN	To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person? Are you . . .
R's Age	AGE	Respondent's age
Highest Year of School Completed	EDUC	What is the highest grade in elementary school or high school that you finished and got credit for?
R's Highest Degree	DEGREE	If finished 9th-12th grade: Did you ever get a high school diploma or a GED certificate?
R's Family Income	REALINC	Family income on 1972-2006 surveys in constant dollars (base = 1986)
R's Income	REALRINC	Respondent's income on 1972-2006 surveys in constant dollars (base = 1986)
Distance Below the Poverty Line	INCDEF	Income Deficit of Household

Source: "HTML Codebook," *General Social Survey 1972-2012 Cumulative Datafile*, 2014.
<http://sda.berkeley.edu/D3/GSS12/Doc/gss12.htm>.

Table 1: Descriptions of the Variables Continued.

Number of Children	RCHILDS	How many children have you ever had? Please count all that were born alive at any time. Recoded into Children and No Children
Marriage	MARHHTYPE1	Household Type recoded into Married versus Unmarried Household.
Political Party Identification	PARTYID	Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?
Political Views: Liberal or Conservative	POLVIEWS	We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I'm going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal - point 1 - to extremely conservative - point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale?
Town Size Code	XNORCSIZ	The National Opinion Research Center size code for town
Welfare Spending	NATFARE	We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. Welfare.
Abortion	ABLEGAL	Do you think abortions should be legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or never legal under any circumstances?
Homosexuals Right to Marry	MARHOMO	Do you agree or disagree: homosexual couples should have the right to marry one another.
Military Spending	NATARMS	We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. The military, armaments and defense.

Source: "HTML Codebook," *General Social Survey 1972-2012 Cumulative Datafile*, 2014.

<http://sda.berkeley.edu/D3/GSS12/Doc/gss12.htm>.

Table 1: Descriptions of the Variables Continued.

Courts Dealings with Criminals	COURTS	Do you think the courts in this area deal too harshly or not harshly enough with criminals?
Spanking	SPANKING	Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree that it is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good, hard, spanking?
Legalizing Marijuana	GRASS	Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal or not?
Sinners Punished	PUNSIN	Please consider the following statements and tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with each statement. Those who violate God's rules must be punished.
Right and Wrong	BLKWHITE	Please consider the following statements and tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with each statement. b. Right and wrong are not usually a simple matter of black and white; there are many shades of gray.
Morality a Personal Matter	PERMORAL	Please consider the following statements and tell me whether you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with each statement. d. Morality is a personal matter and society should not force everyone to follow one standard.
Frequency of Reading Newspaper	NEWS	How often do you read the newspaper - every day, a few times a week, once a week, less than once a week, or never?
Political Information from Newspaper	POLPAPR	Tell me if you looked for such candidate information from: a. Articles in a daily newspaper
Confidence in Courts	CONCOURT	How much confidence do you have in the Courts and legal system
Crime Rate	NATCRIME	We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount. Halting the rising crime rate.

Source: "HTML Codebook," *General Social Survey 1972-2012 Cumulative Datafile*, 2014.

<http://sda.berkeley.edu/D3/GSS12/Doc/gs12.htm>

Appendix B: Logistic Regression Estimations

Table 2.1: Logistic Regression Analyses

Region	Independent Variables					
	Race: White		Race: Black		Religion Raised in: Protestant	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.232	-	0.277	+	0.053
Middle Atlantic	-	0.597	+	0.457	-	0.523
North Central	-	0.355	+	0.289	-	0.030
South Atlantic	+	0.823	+	0.216	-	0.032
South Central	-	0.862	+	0.359	+	0.920
West	-	0.103	-	0.109	+	0.459
Entire US	-	0.042	+	0.054	-	0.045

Region	Independent Variables					
	Religion Raised in: Catholic		Religion Raised in: Jewish		Religion Raised in: No Religion	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	+	0.097	+	0.459	+	0.127
Middle Atlantic	-	0.274	-	0.976	-	0.423
North Central	-	0.055	-	0.160	-	0.014
South Atlantic	-	0.142	-	0.300	-	0.024
South Central	+	0.569	+	0.491	+	0.832
West	+	0.248	+	0.518	-	0.994
Entire US	-	0.312	-	0.502	-	0.018

Source: General Social Survey

Table 2.1: Logistic Regression Analyses, Continued.

Region	Independent Variables					
	Considers Self Religious		Highest Degree		Family Income	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.042	+	0.028	+	0.827
Middle Atlantic	+	0.635	+	0.084	-	0.010
North Central	-	0.442	+	0.180	+	0.282
South Atlantic	-	0.324	+	0.675	-	0.853
South Central	-	0.941	-	0.707	-	0.338
West	-	0.231	+	0.002	-	0.024
Entire US	-	0.164	+	0.001	-	0.043

Region	Independent Variables					
	Presence of Children		Marriage		Age	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	+	0.677	-	0.163	-	0.569
Middle Atlantic	-	0.870	+	0.084	-	0.428
North Central	+	0.795	-	0.275	+	0.815
South Atlantic	-	0.559	-	0.598	+	0.341
South Central	+	0.234	-	0.211	+	0.679
West	-	0.815	+	0.715	+	0.542
Entire US	+	0.884	-	0.345	+	0.298

Source: General Social Survey

Table 2.1: Logistic Regression Analyses, Continued.

Region	Independent Variables					
	Political Party Affiliation: Democrat		Political Party Affiliation: Independent		Political Party Affiliation: Republican	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.230	+	0.891	-	0.076
Middle Atlantic	-	0.086	-	0.468	-	0.206
North Central	-	0.871	-	0.304	-	0.328
South Atlantic	+	0.489	+	0.597	-	0.778
South Central	+	0.401	+	0.027	-	0.480
West	+	0.811	-	0.193	-	0.051
Entire US	-	0.744	-	0.839	-	0.013

Region	Independent Variables					
	Liberal or Conservative		Legalizing Marijuana		Town Size Code	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.822	+	0.202	-	0.967
Middle Atlantic	-	0.928	+	0.263	-	0.060
North Central	-	0.100	+	0.208	-	0.809
South Atlantic	-	0.011	+	0.132	-	0.088
South Central	-	0.203	+	0.278	+	0.229
West	-	0.029	+	0.794	-	0.152
Entire US	-	0.000	+	0.018	-	0.096

Source: General Social Survey

Table 2.1: Logistic Regression Analyses, Continued.

Region	Independent Variables			
	Confidence in Courts		Courts Dealings with Criminals	
	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>	<i>Sign on Coefficient</i>	<i>Probability</i>
New England	-	0.836	+	0.033
Middle Atlantic	+	0.751	+	0.011
North Central	-	0.269	+	0.004
South Atlantic	-	0.694	+	0.000
South Central	-	0.009	+	0.025
West	+	0.046	+	0.000
Entire US	-	0.479	+	0.000

Source: General Social Survey

Appendix C: ANOVA Results

Table 28: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Status Quo

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Status Quo
New Hampshire	0.16
Texas	0.25
Georgia	0.30
New York	0.03
Oregon	0.17
Illinois	0.27
Total	0.22
N=296	Eta= 0.197*
	Eta-Squared=0.039*

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 29: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Abolishment

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Abolishment
New Hampshire	0.66
Texas	0.27
Georgia	0.23
New York	0.65
Oregon	0.30
Illinois	0.72
Total	0.44
N=296	Eta= 0.418**
	Eta-Squared=0.175**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 30: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Reform

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Reform
New Hampshire	0.13
Texas	0.49
Georgia	0.40
New York	0.42
Oregon	0.46
Illinois	0.08
Total	0.34
N=296	Eta= 0.348**
	Eta-Squared=0.121**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 31: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Negative
Effect of Repeal

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Negative Effect of Repeal
New Hampshire	0.19
Texas	0.05
Georgia	0.05
New York	0.13
Oregon	0.17
Illinois	0.18
Total	0.12
N=296	Eta= 0.185
	Eta-Squared=0.034

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 32: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Discusses a Bill

State:	Average # of Articles that Discuss a Bill
New Hampshire	0.31
Texas	0.10
Georgia	0.18
New York	0.06
Oregon	0.26
Illinois	0.50
Total	0.25
N=296	Eta= 0.344**
	Eta-Squared=0.118**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* p < 0.05

** p < 0.01

Table 33: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Pro-Death Penalty: Cost

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Pro-Death Penalty Cost Argument
New Hampshire	0.06
Texas	0.00
Georgia	0.00
New York	0.00
Oregon	0.04
Illinois	0.00
Total	0.01
N=296	Eta= 0.192
	Eta-Squared=0.037

Source: Newspaper Articles

* p < 0.05

** p < 0.01

Table 34: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Con-Death Penalty: Cost

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Con-Death Penalty Cost Argument
New Hampshire	0.19
Texas	0.15
Georgia	0.27
New York	0.26
Oregon	0.26
Illinois	0.27
Total	0.23
N=296	Eta= 0.110
	Eta-Squared=0.012

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 35: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Pro-Death Penalty: Innocence

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Pro-Death Penalty Innocence Argument
New Hampshire	0.03
Texas	0.02
Georgia	0.02
New York	0.00
Oregon	0.04
Illinois	0.00
Total	0.02
N=296	Eta= 0.105
	Eta-Squared=0.011

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 36: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Con-Death Penalty: Innocence

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Con-Death Penalty Innocence Argument
New Hampshire	0.31
Texas	0.29
Georgia	0.17
New York	0.29
Oregon	0.07
Illinois	0.50
Total	0.27
N=296	Eta= 0.320**
	Eta-Squared=0.102**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 37: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Pro-Death Penalty: Vengeance

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Pro-Death Penalty Vengeance Argument
New Hampshire	0.13
Texas	0.14
Georgia	0.23
New York	0.16
Oregon	0.13
Illinois	0.10
Total	0.15
N=296	Eta= 0.129
	Eta-Squared=0.017

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 38: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Con-Death Penalty: Vengeance

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Con-Death Penalty Vengeance Argument
New Hampshire	0.28
Texas	0.02
Georgia	0.05
New York	0.03
Oregon	0.04
Illinois	0.15
Total	0.08
N=296	Eta= 0.299**
	Eta-Squared=0.089**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 39: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Pro-Death Penalty: Deterrence

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Pro-Death Penalty Deterrence Argument
New Hampshire	0.16
Texas	0.02
Georgia	0.05
New York	0.00
Oregon	0.04
Illinois	0.07
Total	0.05
N=296	Eta= 0.193*
	Eta-Squared=0.037*

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 40: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Con-Death Penalty: Deterrence

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Con-Death Penalty Deterrence Argument
New Hampshire	0.29
Texas	0.02
Georgia	0.12
New York	0.13
Oregon	0.04
Illinois	0.12
Total	0.10
N=296	Eta= 0.259**
	Eta-Squared=0.067**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 41: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Reference Race

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Race
New Hampshire	0.16
Texas	0.12
Georgia	0.10
New York	0.19
Oregon	0.02
Illinois	0.33
Total	0.15
N=296	Eta= 0.290**
	Eta-Squared=0.084**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 42: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Reference Moral Arguments

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Moral Arguments
New Hampshire	0.50
Texas	0.47
Georgia	0.42
New York	0.68
Oregon	0.69
Illinois	0.68
Total	0.57
N=296	Eta= 0.231**
	Eta-Squared=0.053**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 43: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Botched Executions

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference Botched Executions
New Hampshire	0.13
Texas	0.05
Georgia	0.07
New York	0.00
Oregon	0.00
Illinois	0.07
Total	0.05
N=296	Eta= 0.173
	Eta-Squared=0.030

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$

Table 44: ANOVA of Newspaper Articles: Reference a Specific Case

State:	Average # of Articles that Reference a Specific Case
New Hampshire	0.53
Texas	0.53
Georgia	0.65
New York	0.23
Oregon	0.54
Illinois	0.23
Total	0.46
N=296	Eta= 0.323**
	Eta-Squared=0.104**

Source: Newspaper Articles

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$