

Religion and American Public Attitudes on War and Peace

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In recent years, scholars have discovered that the American public responds to foreign policy issues on the basis of fairly stable broad orientations toward international affairs, influenced by a number of demographic, ideological, and partisan factors. Although there has been much recent speculation about the role that religion plays in shaping such orientations, there are very few empirical analyses of that influence. In this article, I use the 2012 Chicago Council on Global Affairs survey to classify American religious groups on Wittkopf's (1990) classic dimensions of foreign policy attitudes: *militant internationalism* and *cooperative internationalism*. I find rather different religious constituencies for each perspective, with Evangelical Protestants and religious traditionalists from other faiths most supportive of militant internationalism, while ethnoreligious minorities and religious modernists are most likely to back cooperative internationalism.

Keywords American foreign policy, religious groups, militant internationalism, cooperative international

Introduction

One of the most fascinating tasks confronting the analyst of American foreign policy is attempting to illuminate the characteristics of public opinion on international issues, and to assess its influence on the policy-making process. Since World War II, the conventional wisdom, couched in the "Almond-Lippmann consensus" (Holsti 2004, 28-40), held that most Americans were uninterested in, and ill-informed about international events, that their orientation toward particular issues lacked coherence and stability, and therefore that public opinion exerted little if any impact on the president and his foreign policy advisors in their pursuit of national interests.

While there is much evidence to suggest that Americans' interest in, and information about, foreign affairs has not grown significantly, scholars have discovered that public attitudes on specific foreign policy issues are determined

by identifiable and structured beliefs that are relatively stable over time. Some studies of the mass public have uncovered rather coherent attitude structures that allow individuals to be the “cognitive misers” analysts have often portrayed them to be (for a review, see Holsti 2004). And although scholars have identified some of the social, ideological, and demographic influences on these attitudinal structures, much of the variation remains unexplained.

One potential influence, religion, has been largely neglected. Although scholars increasingly incorporate religious factors in studies of voting, party politics, and public opinion (Smidt, Kellstedt and Guth 2009), there has been much less interest in connecting religion to foreign policy opinion. Some even deny that there is anything to study. For example, Kohut and Stokes’s extensive review of Americans’ attitudes concludes that “with the exception of policy toward Israel, religion has little bearing on how they think about international affairs” (2006, 94). Few political scientists have taken seriously J. Bryan Hehir’s argument that “religious convictions and concerns” have permeated U.S. foreign policy since World War II (2001, 36).

The neglect of religion by political scientists has been highlighted by mounting interest from journalists (Mead 2004; 2006; Phillips 2006; Clark 2007), historians (Boyer 2005; Guyatt 2007; Preston 2012; Ruotsila 2008), diplomats (Carter 2005; Albright 2006), religion scholars (Northcott 2004; Marsh 2007), sociologists (Martin 1999; Derber and Magrass 2008), communications analysts (Domke 2004), and even philosophers (Singer 2004). These authors have made strong claims both for religion’s influence on Americans’ foreign policy views and the resulting impact on political leaders. Such assertions are even more common abroad, both among intellectual elites and in the mass public. No one reading European journals of opinion would doubt that many intellectuals there believe that American foreign policy reflects religious influences, or that this notion has widespread appeal among ordinary citizens as well (Kohut and Stokes 2006). Many would agree with a French author Susan George that American religious beliefs “have foreign policy consequences” (2008, 146).

There are two major—and not entirely compatible—themes in this massive body of work. The *hegemonic* theme emphasizes the way religion encourages an American foreign policy characterized by militarism, unilateralism, moralism, and nationalistic assertiveness. This genre usually focuses on Evangelicals, whose religious beliefs are labeled variously as “fundamentalist,” “premillennialist,” “dispensationalist,” “literalist,” or “messianic.” These views are often connected to those infusing earlier themes in American history such as Manifest Destiny or Special Providence (McCartney 2004; Judis 2005). Such attitudes, it is often asserted, were especially influential during the George W. Bush administration (for typical examples, see Kohut and Stokes 2006).

An alternative *altruistic* theme (Wuthnow 2009) has also emerged, one with a very different emphasis, even when drawn from observation of the

same religious groups. Some journalists have focused on Evangelical activity, supported by a variable cast of other religious groups, addressing a range of international crises: fighting for human rights and religious freedom, protecting the global environment, expanding international relief and rescue operations, combatting AIDS in Africa, and working for more ambitious economic development programs. Indeed, Nicolas Kristof, a *New York Times* columnist not known for fundamentalist sympathies, once referred to Evangelicals as “the new internationalists” (Kristof 2002). Some academic observers have concurred, finding redeeming traits in the foreign policy concerns of conservative Christians (Hertzke 2004; Mead 2006; den Dulk 2007; Farr 2008; Wuthnow 2009; McCleary 2009). Others have claimed that these policy tasks are creating new attitudes among religious traditionalists and fostering new alliances across old religious divides. Weyl (2009), for example, finds that religious liberals and conservatives are making common cause on this altruistic agenda, overcoming old divisions.

Unfortunately, the works embroidering both themes are often based on simplistic analyses of American religion. First of all, they tend to focus on religious leaders, with little attention to those in the pews, despite some enormous opinion gaps between organizational elites and the rank and file (Guth et al. 1997). Secondly, the attention is often centered too narrowly on Evangelicals. Few analysts consider the other 75% of the public, creating an analytic dualism that arrays Evangelicals against “secular” opinion (presumably everyone else). But other religious groups also have distinctive attitudes toward foreign policy, as Alfred Hero (1973) demonstrated long ago. Catholic and Mainline Protestant churches, as well as Jewish leaders, have long sought to influence both the public and policymakers (Hanson 1987; Rock 2011). Nor does this dualism recognize that the growing ranks of religiously unaffiliated Americans may have characteristic preferences (Hansen 2011). Thus, the extant literature overstates the distinctiveness of one religious group, ignores the potential influence of others, and treats American religion simplistically.

This article presents a broader picture of the religious factors that shape public attitudes on American policy. First, I describe two fundamental perspectives that dominate the scholarly literature on religion’s political role in America, the *ethnoreligious* and *religious restructuring* theories, and suggest ways that each may help account for foreign policy attitudes. Then I examine the distribution of religious opinion on broad foreign policy orientations, using the classic “Wittkopf-Holsti-Rosenau” typology of *militant internationalism* and *cooperative internationalism*. Although not subsuming every foreign policy issue confronting the United States, these orientations have proved remarkably stable over time, despite changing national agendas (Holsti 2004; Eichenberg 2007). Also, each corresponds to one broad theme in the literature, with militant internationalism representing the hegemonic theme, and cooperative internationalism, the altruistic one. Indeed, historian Andrew Preston has

adopted biblical metaphors for these two dimensions of American foreign policy, with militant internationalism represented as the “sword of the Spirit,” and cooperative ventures as “the shield of faith” (Preston 2012).

Religious Groups in American Politics

There are two major competing interpretations of religious alignments in American politics. *Ethnoreligious theory* emphasizes the religious groups that migrated to America and often multiplied upon reaching her shores. As historians have argued, 19th century electoral politics consisted largely of assembling winning coalitions of contending ethnoreligious groups. Well into the 20th century, the Republican Party (GOP) represented historically dominant Mainline Protestant churches, such as Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists, while Democrats spoke for religious minorities: Catholics, Jews, and southern Evangelicals. By the 1980s, Mainline Protestants had dwindled in number; Evangelicals had moved toward the GOP; the ancient Catholic-Democratic alliance had frayed; Black Protestants had become a critical Democratic bloc (Kellstedt and Guth 2013). Growing religious diversity has added Latino Catholics and Protestants, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and many others to the equation, usually on the Democratic side. Even today many analysts think in ethnoreligious terms, referring to the “Evangelical,” “Catholic,” “Jewish,” or “Muslim” vote. Although the assumptions underlying this framework are often incompletely articulated, historians usually argued that ethnoreligious groups held differing worldviews, cultural preferences, and negative reference groups—all shaping their views on public policy (Swierenga 2009).

A few historical and contemporary examples illustrate the relevance of ethnoreligious traditions for attitudes. The distinctive hostility of Irish Catholics toward the American alliance with Great Britain and the isolationism of German Lutherans and Catholics during World War I are just two examples of ethnoreligious influence. Catholic anticommunism in the 1940s and 1950s was shaped not only by Church pronouncements against that “Godless” system, but also by ethnoreligious solidarity with Eastern European relatives under Soviet domination. The persistent support of American Jews for Israel and the more recent interest of Black Protestants in policy toward Africa are just two examples of contemporary concerns of a host of American “ethnoreligious fragments” (Uslaner 2007). Indeed, the late Samuel P. Huntington feared that U.S. policy might be unduly influenced by such ethnoreligious “diasporas” (Huntington 2004, 285-91). More positive observers might see in the numerical growth of such minorities the prospect for a new kind of internationalism: As America comes to resemble the “United Nations” (UN) religiously, it might look more favorably on the UN and other multilateral institutions.

An alternative to the ethnoreligious approach is the *religious restructuring* or *culture wars* theory, introduced first by sociologist Robert Wuthnow (1988) to explain growing divisions in American faith traditions. This view was brought into common political parlance by James Hunter's *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (1991). Hunter saw new religious battles emerging *within* the old traditions, based on theological differences: "Orthodox" believers accepted "an external, definable, and transcendent authority," and adhered firmly to traditional doctrines, while "progressives" replaced old religious tenets with new ones based on experience or scientific rationality (Hunter 1991, 44). The progressives were often joined by the growing numbers of secular Americans who reject religion entirely but see morality in a similar vein (Hansen 2011).

These religious divisions quickly congealed around issues such as abortion, feminism, and gay rights but soon showed evidence of infusing other attitudes as well. Indeed, the dominant theme of the literature cited earlier often reports the echoes of "culture war" battle cries in foreign policy debates. Some conflicts are extensions of domestic politics, as when Catholic and Evangelical traditionalists fight population control policies of American aid agencies or other international bodies, or insist on "abstinence only" strategies for combatting AIDS in Africa. More significant, perhaps, are the less obvious connections, by which religious traditionalists may identify American foreign objectives with divine goals, or infuse U.S. military action with divine purpose. And although the impact of progressive views has been less discussed, the communitarian social theology of many Mainline Protestants and liberal Catholics should be conducive to a more cooperative foreign policy, focused on social welfare, economic development, and the natural environment (Kurtz and Fulton 2002).

Although Hunter's culture war thesis captivated some scholars and pundits, most analysts concluded that his dualist model was too simplistic, that moral battle lines shifted from issue to issue, and that many citizens were noncombatants (Williams 1997). Some scholars have confirmed, however, some of the political cleavages Hunter envisioned (Layman 2001), but old markers of ethnoreligious tradition (and many other factors) still influence public attitudes. Thus, any analysis of the religious politics of foreign policy attitudes requires both ethnoreligious and restructuring perspectives, as well as an assessment of nonreligious influences. Ethnoreligious traditions include Evangelical and Mainline Protestants, white Catholics, Latino Catholics and Protestants, Black Protestants, Jews, other religions, and "Nones." The new culture war divisions within the larger Christian groups pit *traditionalists*, who are orthodox in belief and active in conventional religious rites, against *modernists*, more heterodox and less conventional in religious expression and engagement.

Militant and Cooperative Internationalisms among Religious Groups

Although it is clear that religion has distinct influences over a few specific issues, such as Mideast policy (Mayer 2004; Guth 2011b) or “American exceptionalism” (Guth 2012), the focus of this article is on how faith undergirds broader policy orientations. As noted above, early studies found that most Americans were poorly informed about and uninterested in foreign policy, but more recently scholars have found that despite such cognitive limitations they do hold overarching, stable, and rational foreign policy predispositions that shape their reaction to specific questions (Eichenberg 2007). Indeed, there is now an expansive literature on how American citizens organize their predispositions on foreign policy issues (Peffley and Hurwitz 1993; Page and Bouton 2006). As Chittick, Billingsley, and Travis noted almost two decades ago, the “most widely used structure for American foreign policy beliefs is the Wittkopf-Holsti-Rosenau model” (1995, 313). Although that assessment is almost two-decades old, it is still valid today (cf. Holsti 2004; Eichenberg 2007).

Wittkopf (1990) proposed that since the 1970s public attitudes on most foreign policy issues have been subsumed by two dimensions: *militant internationalism* (MI) and *cooperative internationalism* (CI). Although the precise components of each dimension vary with the era and the available survey items, MI historically focused on the dangers presented by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the necessity of a strong military, willingness to use force to protect American interests, and a zero-sum interpretation of international conflict. After the demise of the Soviet Union, other enemies provided a substitute focus, such as Islamic terrorists after 2001 (Smidt 2005). CI, on the other hand, stressed the value of international cooperation and multilateral institutions such as the UN, and usually incorporated “North-South” issues such as hunger and economic development (Holsti 2004) and, more recently, climate change (cf. Croft 2009).

As these two dimensions were largely independent, Wittkopf combined MI and CI to produce a four-fold typology for citizens: *hardliners* (high on MI and low on CI), *internationalists* (high on both), *accommodationists* (low on MI, high on CI), and *isolationists* (low on both scales). Several scholars have confirmed that these groups react in predictable ways when confronted with foreign policy choices, although some critics argue for the existence of at least one additional dimension, usually involving international issues with strong domestic implications, such as trade and immigration policies (Chittick, Billingsley and Travis 1995). Nevertheless, almost any empirical exploration of an extensive range of foreign policy items produces at least two major dimensions interpretable as militant internationalism and cooperative internationalism.

In previous analyses of the 2008 National Survey of Religion and Politics (NSRP) (Guth 2010a) and the American National Election Study (ANES) (Guth 2011a), I found strong evidence of distinct religious influences on both dimensions, but especially on militant internationalism. Nevertheless, each study had limitations: The NSRP included a rich battery of religious questions, but limited foreign policy items, especially on cooperative internationalism. The ANES had few religious measures and limited policy items, but a richer array of other variables sometimes thought to influence foreign policy attitudes, such as ethnocentrism and authoritarianism. The present analysis uses the 2012 Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) survey. The survey series conducted regularly by the Council has long been regarded as the “gold standard” for analysis of American public opinion on international issues (Wittkopf 1990; Page and Bouton 2006). Indeed, earlier Chicago Council surveys were the basis of Wittkopf’s work and that of many other scholars (Holsti 2004).

Thus, the 2012 CCGA survey permits development of very robust measures of militant and cooperative internationalisms, the “dependent” variables. Unfortunately, like earlier CCGA surveys, the 2012 iteration has only a few items on religion. Despite this limitation, some earlier studies have noted fascinating influences of religion on specific issues (Page and Bouton 2006), although these have not been explored systematically. If, despite the measurement limitations, the same broad patterns of religious opinion appear as in my earlier studies of the NSRP and ANES, confidence in the findings will be enhanced.

Data and Methods

The first task in the analysis was to create a militant internationalism (MI) score to tap that dimension, one that Eichenberg (2007, 393) has argued is the single most important factor in conditioning a citizen’s international “world view.” For this purpose, I used scores on the unrotated first dimension of a principal components analysis of 18 questions which revealed a preference for reliance on military might to confront perceived dangers of the contemporary international environment, especially in combatting terrorism, Islamic movements, and the rise of potentially hostile foreign powers such as China. This highly reliable score ($\theta=.87$) provides an excellent measure of this dimension.

The CCGA survey also included 17 items which clearly tap cooperative internationalism: preferences for the primacy of diplomacy, reliance on multilateral institutions such as the UN and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), cooperative efforts with allies, and international agreements, with a special concern for “humanitarian” problems such as global climate change, world hunger, and human rights. Here, too, I use scores from the unrotated first dimension of a principal components analysis. This procedure also produces

a highly reliable score ($\theta=.86$). (See the Appendix for the items and factor loadings for both scores.)

Although the CCGA survey excels in tapping foreign policy attitudes, it ignores best practice in measuring religion. Ideally, surveys should ascertain precise religious affiliations, measure at least some central religious beliefs, and determine the degree of religious observance or commitment (Smidt, Kellstedt and Guth 2009). In this case the analyst is put in the classic position of attempting to produce silk purses with unpromising raw materials. The survey has four queries on religion. The first determines broad religious traditions (Q1040): “What is your religious preference? Is it Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, some other religion, or no religion?” The second (Q1040B) asks Christians: “Would that be Catholic, Protestant or Other Christian?” The third (Q1041) requests that those responding “some other religion” to the first question to specify that religion. Finally, Q1042 asks all Christians: “Which one of these words best describes your kind of Christianity—fundamentalist, evangelical, charismatic, Pentecostal, or moderate to liberal?”

Examination of the questions as well as the resulting data reveals several problems. First, it is clear that many members of Protestant denominations answer “Other Christian” when asked the second question, and that many who reply “some other religion” are in fact Protestants or Catholics, as revealed by their answers to the follow-up probe. Finally, the “kind of Christianity” question uses terminology derived from divisions in the Protestant family (“fundamentalist, evangelical, charismatic, Pentecostal”) or imprecise labels drawn more from politics than religion (“moderate to liberal”). Indeed, scholars of religion and political behavior have largely abandoned such “religious identification” as a primary variable. Although this creates a considerable degree of measurement error involved in these questions, there is little alternative but to incorporate them in the analysis.

Using these questions, I first created estimates for membership in several major American ethnoreligious groups. Without denominational affiliation data, I could not assign white Protestants to Evangelical and Mainline traditions but could identify Latino and Black Protestants, European (white) Catholics and the growing contingent of Latino Catholics, as well as Jews. Unfortunately, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and other “minority” traditions are too few to analyze individually but are assigned to the “Other religions” category, also occupied by a variety of “new age” and “off-brand” religious groups. The much discussed contingent of religious “Nones” (see Hansen 2011) are identified by that response to the first question and was augmented by those who answered “some other religion,” but listed agnostic, atheist or “none” on the follow-up query.

The CCGA survey presents more of a challenge for producing a religious restructuring variable. In the absence of belief questions, the “religious identification” approach leaves much to be desired in differentiating traditionalist

and modernist religious views. The labels used are not common to all American religious traditions, and are not always understood by all members of the traditions in which they are commonly employed (Smidt, Kellstedt and Guth 2009). Despite these limitations, I classify respondents taking the “fundamentalist, evangelical, charismatic, Pentecostal” label as “traditionalists,” and those taking either the “moderate to liberal” or no label as “modernists.”

Although this distinction permits creation of “traditionalist” and “modernist” factions within the larger religious traditions, in the absence of detailed denominational affiliations it must also be used to distinguish Evangelical and Mainline Protestants. This distinction is, of course, an important one. Evangelical Protestants and Mainline Protestants are quite distinct religiously. Evangelicals “typically affirm personal salvation through Jesus Christ, call individuals to conversion...and regard the Bible to be the final authority concerning all matters of faith and practice” (Smidt 2013, 64). Mainline Protestants tend to see validity in many religious traditions, stress religious nurture rather than conversion, and hold “lower” views of Scripture. Evangelicals are also more traditionalist on moral issues, such as abortion, gay rights, and gender equality, while Mainliners are more liberal. And in recent decades ideological differences in other areas of public policy have separated the two traditions.

Lacking denominational affiliation data, then, I classify white Protestants who take traditionalist labels as “Evangelical,” and those who do not as “Mainline.” This produces estimates that are obviously too small for the Evangelical tradition and too large for the Mainline and probably reduces the distinctiveness of the two traditions (cf. Smidt, Kellstedt and Guth 2009), but there is no alternative. Although these theological labels are less familiar in other Christian traditions, I divide each of these into “traditionalists” and “modernists” as well. As will be evident, even this crude theological distinction produces some real differences (The very few Latter-day Saints or “Mormons” identified in the survey were assigned to the Evangelical Protestant category on the empirical grounds that their political attitudes and behavior mimic those of Evangelicals).

To recapitulate, the combination of ethnoreligious tradition and theological orientation produces these categories: Evangelicals (“traditionalist” white Protestants), Mainline Protestants (“modernist” white Protestants), as well as White Catholics, Latino Protestants, Latino Catholics, and Black Protestants—all divided into traditionalist and modernist groups—and, finally, Jews, “Other religions,” and “Nones,” those claiming no religion at all (see Table 1 for these groups). If the analysis finds significant religious differences on militant and cooperative internationalism, it is highly likely that better religious measures would produce even more powerful results.

Findings and Discussion

With these data construction exercises completed, I am ready to test the influence of religion on foreign policy orientations. I will locate religious groups on the MI and CI scales, run multivariate analyses on the influence of religious and other factors over each dimension, and then present evidence on the placement of religious groups within Wittkopf's classic typology.

Militant Internationalism

As noted above, much of the speculative literature on religious influence focuses on the MI dimension of opinion, with a primary emphasis on Evangelicals. Also, the limited empirical work done recently has also addressed this "hegemonic" dimension: Barker, Hurwitz and Nelson (2008, 308) investigated "messianic militarism"; Froese and Mencken (2009, 105) considered the effects of "sacralization ideology" on support for "neoconservative foreign policy ideology"; and Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris (2008) found Evangelicals supportive of "hawkish" foreign policy toward the Middle East. In an earlier study, I discovered that Evangelicals and other theological conservatives strongly supported the so-called "Bush Doctrine," with its emphasis on military might, unilateralism and pre-emptive use of force (Guth 2009). Thus, based on previous research I expect distinct religious influences here, especially from Evangelicals.

Of course, membership in other religious groups might also shape attitudes. Mainline Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church have often adopted policies critical of American military power and skeptical about its use. Both traditions opposed use of American troops in the Gulf Wars, especially the second one (Wald 1992; Tipton 2007). And although many of the remaining religious groups have been less outspoken on such issues, I suspect they may also exhibit distinct influence on members' perspectives. In previous work, I found that secular respondents, members of religious minorities, and religious modernists were less supportive of the Bush Doctrine and militant internationalism (Guth 2009; 2010a; 2010b). Also, in a related vein, these same groups are skeptical of American "exceptionalism," the belief that the United States has a unique role to play in international affairs (Guth 2012).

In the first column of Table 1, I report the score of each religious group, using a simple 100-point scale for ease of illustration. Both ethnoreligious tradition and theological orientation obviously produce different levels of support for militant internationalism. Evangelicals (traditionalist white Protestants), traditionalist Latino Protestants and Catholics, and traditionalist white Catholics all score quite high on this scale. Mainliners (modernist white Protestants), modernist white Catholics, both Black Protestant groups, and Jews score in the middle. Latino modernists in both Protestant and Catholic traditions exhibit lower scores, with

Table 1. Religion, Demographics, Basic Attitudes, and Militant Internationalism

| | Militant Internationalism (100=High) | Religious Tradition and Theology | Religious Tradition, Theology and Demographics | Religious Tradition, Theology, Demographics, and Basic Attitudes |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>White Protestant</i> | | | | |
| Evangelical | 63 | .14*** | .14*** | .08** |
| Mainline | 52 | ----- ^a | ----- | ----- |
| <i>White Catholic</i> | | | | |
| Traditionalist | 61 | .06** | .06** | .04 |
| Modernist | 55 | .04 | .04 | .04 |
| <i>Latino Protestant</i> | | | | |
| Traditionalist | 64 | .05* | .06*** | .04* |
| Modernist | 41 | -.05* | -.03 | -.03 |
| <i>Latino Catholic</i> | | | | |
| Traditionalist | 63 | .05* | .07** | .06** |
| Modernist | 47 | -.03 | .01 | .01 |
| <i>Black Protestant</i> | | | | |
| Traditionalist | 50 | .00 | .02 | .02 |
| Modernist | 51 | .02 | .02 | .06** |
| <i>Jewish</i> | 55 | .01 | .01 | .03 |
| <i>Other Religions</i> | 35 | -.13*** | -.10*** | -.08*** |
| <i>No Affiliation</i> | 37 | -.23*** | -.18*** | -.13*** |
| <i>Demographics</i> | | | | |
| Age | | | .17*** | .14*** |
| Female | | | -.01 | .02 |
| Education | | | -.11*** | -.15*** |
| Income | | | .08** | .05* |
| Midwest | | | .02 | .02 |
| South | | | .08*** | .08*** |
| <i>“Basic Attitudes”</i> | | | | |
| “Active Part” | | | | .23*** |
| Conservatism | | | | .11*** |
| Republican ID | | | | .11*** |
| <i>Adj. R squared</i> | | .11 | .15 | .24 |
| <i>N=</i> | (1837) | (1877) | (1877) | (1877) |

Source: Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 2012.

^a Mainline Protestants and unclassifiable respondents comprise the omitted reference category.

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

the “Other religions” and large bloc of “Nones” on the non-militant pole.

The next three columns report the results of three multiple regression analyses, successively incorporating richer explanatory frameworks (cf. Page and Bouton 2006). The first regression uses the religious categories as variables predicting militant internationalism. (The omitted reference category comprises Mainline Protestants and unclassified respondents; both groups score almost

exactly at the sample mean.) This procedure reveals the distinctiveness of Evangelicals on the militant side of the scale, buttressed by the traditionalists in most other religious groups. At the same time, members of “Other religions” and “secular” respondents dominate on the non-militant side. Note that religious group membership alone explains a very respectable 11% of the variance. Incorporating other demographic variables in the regression in the second column bolsters that figure to 15%, with older, Southern and wealthier respondents tending toward militant attitudes, while the highly educated move in the other direction. Note, however, that incorporation of the demographics hardly bodes the coefficients for religious groups. The effects of religious affiliation and belief are not artifacts of demography but persist even when these basic characteristics are accounted for.

The regression in the last column of Table 1 incorporates what Page and Bouton (2006) call “basic attitudes.” Not surprisingly, their measure of “active part internationalism” (the underlying belief that the United States should play an active part in the world) encourages militant internationalism, as do conservative and Republican self-identifications, bringing the total variance explained to 24%. Although some of the religious effects are clearly mediated by these ideological measures, others retain statistically significant direct effects, most notably that for Evangelicals on the “militant” side, and “Other religions” and “Nones” in the opposite direction.

In short, the evidence from the CCGA survey confirms earlier findings that members of the Evangelical community and their traditionalist brethren in other Christian groups do tend to support strong military power while “minority” religions and secular Americans are much less committed to militant internationalism. The influence of some of these religious tendencies is mediated in part by partisan and ideological orientations: Evangelicals and other traditionalists are Republican and conservative while ethnoreligious “minorities” and seculars are Democratic and liberal. However, many of the religious effects are direct, exceeding those explained by the partisan and ideological affinities of each religious group. Clearly, both religious tradition and theological orientation have independent influence on militant internationalism.

Cooperative Internationalism

What about cooperative internationalism? Although Mainline denominations (Kurtz and Fulton 2002) and the Catholic Church (Hanson 1987) have been strong proponents of multilateral cooperation to solve problems of hunger and poverty around the world, neither the critical nor the empirical literature has focused much on these issues. As I noted above, press reports increasingly suggest that religious factors may operate quite differently on *altruistic* foreign policy, involving international human rights, Third-World poverty, economic development, and global climate change. Although such conclusions are often

Table 2. Religion, Demographics, Basic Attitudes, and Cooperative Internationalism

| | Cooperative Internationalism (100=High) | Religious Tradition and Theology | Religious Tradition, Theology and Demographics | Religious Tradition, Theology, Demographics, and Basic Attitudes |
|--------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--|--|
| <i>White Protestant</i> | | | | |
| Evangelical | 37 | -.16*** | -.16*** | -.04 |
| Mainline | 49 | ----- ^a | ----- | ----- |
| <i>White Catholic</i> | | | | |
| Traditionalist | 41 | -.04* | -.04 | .03 |
| Modernist | 49 | .01 | .03 | .02 |
| <i>Latino Protestant</i> | | | | |
| Traditionalist | 36 | -.06 | -.06** | .02 |
| Modernist | 45 | -.01 | -.02 | -.00 |
| <i>Latino Catholic</i> | | | | |
| Traditionalist | 56 | .03 | .04 | .02 |
| Modernist | 61 | .10*** | .12*** | .06** |
| <i>Black Protestant</i> | | | | |
| Traditionalist | 68 | .10*** | .08*** | .02 |
| Modernist | 66 | .14*** | .13*** | .05* |
| <i>Jewish</i> | 60 | .04 | .06** | .02 |
| <i>Other Religions</i> | 60 | .08*** | .09*** | .04 |
| <i>No Affiliation</i> | 54 | .06* | .08** | -.00 |
| <i>Demographics</i> | | | | |
| Age | | | -.01 | -.03 |
| Female | | | .12*** | .08*** |
| Education | | | -.04 | -.08*** |
| Income | | | -.06* | -.06** |
| Midwest | | | .04 | .03 |
| South | | | .08** | .08** |
| <i>“Basic Attitudes”</i> | | | | |
| “Active Part” | | | | .24 |
| Conservatism | | | | -.30*** |
| Republican ID | | | | -.22*** |
| <i>Adj. R squared</i> | | .09 | .11 | .31 |
| <i>N=</i> | (1837) | (1877) | (1877) | (1877) |

Source: Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 2012.

^a Mainline Protestants and unclassifiable respondents comprise the omitted reference category.

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

based on pronouncements by religious elites or studies of religious interest group activity (e.g., Hertzke 2004; Farr 2008), evidence for the influence of religious variables on public attitudes is mixed (Wuthnow and Lewis 2008; Guth 2010a; 2011a). In part, this may reflect the “newness” of such issues or, as Wuthnow (2009) argues, the lack of pervasive and effective engagement strategies by religious leaders at the congregational level. Or perhaps these are “hard issues,”

too complex to assimilate quickly into an overarching ideological or religious perspective (cf. Maggiotto and Wittkopf 1981). Finally, analysis has been hindered by the paucity of surveys including extensive items tapping this dimension along with adequate religious measures.

Given the CCGA survey's richer lode of cooperative policy items, I may find stronger results here. And in fact, that is the case. Table 2 reports analyses identical to those for militant internationalism in Table 1. Although the militant and cooperative internationalism scales are only weakly correlated ($r=.10$), religious group patterns on cooperative internationalism often mirror those on the other dimension. As the first column illustrates, Evangelicals are the least "cooperative," followed by traditionalists among white Catholics and Latino Protestants while Latino Catholics, Black Protestants, Jews, "Other religions," and "Nones" score more highly on cooperative internationalism.

These patterns are summarized by the first regression, where religious group membership explains a respectable 9% of the variance. The addition of demographic variables bolsters that figure only a little, with women and Southerners scoring more highly on cooperation, and those with higher income lower on the scale. Once again, note that inclusion of the demographics in the second regression leaves religious group influences largely unchanged. However, the same is not true when "basic attitudes" are incorporated. "Active part internationalists" are supportive of cooperative internationalism (as they were of militant internationalism), and ideology and partisanship have a big impact: Conservatism and Republican identification work powerfully against cooperative internationalism. (Or, to put it the other way, liberalism and Democratic identification work *for* it.) And the ideological variables absorb almost all of the effects of religious group membership: Only modernist Latino Catholics and Black Protestants exhibit any additional push toward cooperative internationalism beyond that channeled by their ideology and party identification. The political variables also bolster the variance explained to 31%, an impressive performance.

Religious Groups and the Militant/Cooperative Internationalist Typology

All in all, these findings suggest that those who analyze foreign policy opinion would be well advised to incorporate sophisticated religious measures to maximize explanatory power, as religious groups clearly differ in orientation toward militant and cooperative internationalism. As a final step, I combine the two scales to produce the classic Wittkopf typology (see Figure 1), following the customary procedure of dividing respondents at the zero point on each factor score to create the categories of *hardliners* (high on MI and low on CI), *internationalists* (high on both), *accommodationists* (low on MI, high on CI), and *isolationists* (low on both scales).

Figure 1. Militant/Cooperative Internationalist Typology

| | | Cooperative Internationalism | |
|---------------------------|---------|------------------------------|---------------|
| | | Support | Oppose |
| Militant Internationalism | Support | Internationalists | Hardliners |
| | Oppose | Accommodationists | Isolationists |

This assigns roughly a fifth of the sample to each of the hardliner and isolationist camps, almost a third to the internationalist, and one quarter to the accommodationist group (Table 3).

As the first line in Table 3 shows, Evangelicals are overrepresented in the hardliner camp, exceeded only by the small contingent of Latino Protestant traditionalists. Most remaining Evangelicals fall into the internationalist category, with very few accommodationists and only a few more isolationists. Mainline Protestants, on the other hand, are quite evenly distributed, closely mimicking the entire sample, with a few less accommodationists and a few more isolationists. Latino Protestant modernists are more inclined than the general public toward the hardliner camp—and, even more, toward isolationism. (Given the relatively small numbers in this religious group we should be cautious about

Table 3. Distribution of Wittkopf’s Foreign Policy Orientations by Religious Groups

| | Hardliner | Internationalist | Accommodationist | Isolationist | (N=) |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|--------------|--------|
| <i>White Protestant</i> | 30.9 | 32.4 | 16.4 | 20.4 | |
| Evangelical | 42.6 | 30.3 | 10.1 | 17.0 | |
| Mainline | 21.6 | 34.1 | 21.3 | 23.0 | (408) |
| <i>White Catholic</i> | 27.6 | 35.1 | 20.1 | 17.2 | (273) |
| Traditionalist | 37.1 | 37.1 | 8.1 | 17.7 | (55) |
| Modernist | 24.8 | 34.9 | 23.4 | 17.0 | (218) |
| <i>Latino Protestant</i> | 43.3 | 19.4 | 11.9 | 25.4 | (67) |
| Traditionalist | 62.1 | 24.1 | 3.4 | 10.3 | (29) |
| Modernist | 28.9 | 15.8 | 18.4 | 36.8 | (38) |
| <i>Latino Catholic</i> | 10.4 | 37.5 | 36.1 | 16.0 | (143) |
| Traditionalist | 17.2 | 51.7 | 6.9 | 24.1 | (29) |
| Modernist | 8.8 | 34.2 | 43.0 | 14.0 | (114) |
| <i>Black Protestant</i> | 5.0 | 42.5 | 39.4 | 13.1 | (161) |
| Traditionalist | 7.4 | 40.7 | 37.0 | 14.8 | (54) |
| Modernist | 3.7 | 43.0 | 41.1 | 12.1 | (107) |
| <i>Jewish</i> | 12.1 | 54.5 | 21.2 | 12.1 | (33) |
| <i>Other</i> | 2.1 | 31.6 | 42.1 | 24.2 | (95) |
| <i>None</i> | 11.4 | 20.7 | 40.4 | 27.5 | (334) |
| <i>Total</i> | 21.5 | 31.9 | 26.1 | 20.5 | (1838) |

Source: Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 2012.

the distribution.)

Catholics differ both by ethnicity and theological orientation. White Catholic traditionalists are concentrated in the hardliner and internationalist camps while their modernist co-parishioners include many fewer hardliners and more accommodationists. Both white Catholic theological groups have fewer isolationists than most other religious groups and the general public, perhaps befitting members of an “international” religious body. Latino Catholics are unlikely to be hardliners, with internationalists dominating among traditionalists and accommodationists having a plurality among modernists. Finally, Black Protestants differ little by theological orientation, as both factions have an overwhelming preponderance (and about equal numbers) of internationalists and accommodationists.

Not surprisingly, a solid majority of Jews are internationalists, with accommodationists representing the largest remaining contingent. Among members of “Other religions,” accommodationists form a plurality, with internationalists the next most numerous. Note that virtually no members of this diverse category fall into the hardliner camp, but about a quarter are isolationists. Finally, the growing contingent of the religiously unaffiliated (an increasingly significant political force in American politics) also includes few hardliners and somewhat more numerous internationalists, but has a plurality of accommodationists and a fairly sizeable number of isolationists as well.

Any exact comparison with earlier findings is impossible, given the great variation in the subject and number of foreign policy items and varying religious measures in the surveys I have used—the 2008 NSRP, the 2008 ANES, and the 2012 CCGA. But the pattern of religious group location on both dimensions of foreign policy attitudes is quite consistent. For example, analyses of the 2008 NSRP and the 2012 CCGA both classify 42% to 43% of Evangelicals as hardliners, despite the use of very different measures of the foreign policy and religion variables and possible opinion changes from 2008 to 2012. Estimates for other religious groups are also usually within a very few percentage points of each other (cf. Guth 2010a). This suggests that such findings are quite robust and at least somewhat impervious to limitations in the measures employed—and, perhaps—to changes over time.

Intriguingly, findings here are also fairly consistent with the modest evidence available on historical patterns. Not only do the results usually match with the broad descriptions of religious group opinion by Hero (1973), but Wittkopf’s own cursory analysis of the even cruder religious categories available in early CCGA studies showed that in the 1970s and 1980s “Protestants” tended to be hardliners, Catholics and Jews (especially the latter) were internationalists (cf. Greenberg and Wald 2001), and “Nones” were accommodationists (1990, 44). Had Wittkopf been able to differentiate ethnoreligious traditions further and also utilize a theological measure, his findings might have been even more compelling.

Conclusions

While political scientists and international relations specialists have paid increasing attention to the role of religious organizations and movements in world politics, there has been little sustained analysis of how religious factors influence American public attitudes on foreign policy. I have investigated two recent themes in the journalistic and academic coverage of religion and American foreign policy. The hegemonic theme stressed the influence that religious traditionalists, especially Evangelicals, have in supporting militant internationalism. I find that a good bit of the speculation is correct: Evangelicals and other traditionalists are indeed more likely to favor such policies. Based on findings elsewhere, I suspect that religious influences are mediated by other belief factors such as civil religion, social traditionalism, moralism, and dispensationalism (Guth 2011a). In the broadest sense, these hardliners constituted a large part of the coalition supporting the policies of the George W. Bush administration. On the other hand, minority ethnoreligious groups, theological modernists and secular citizens often fell on the other end of MI. These groups are not without potential political clout; in combination, they outnumber traditionalist Evangelicals in the mass public.

I have also considered the altruistic theme by identifying religious influences on cooperative internationalism although these influences are not quite as sharp or as clearly defined. In part, this may be due to the relative newness of some CI issues on the international and national agenda. Religious and political elites have not had the time—or, perhaps, the ability—to educate their constituencies on the connection between religious faith and these issues. Although there are a few commonalities in support for MI and CI perspectives, there is a clear tendency for religious factors providing support for one to have the opposite influence on the other agenda. Also, although traditionalist religious beliefs work against CI, modernist beliefs favor it. In addition, the “new internationalism” of American religion augurs well for cooperative internationalism, as members of burgeoning “minority” ethnoreligious groups are among its strongest supporters.

Thus, both ethnoreligious theory and restructuring theory play a role in explaining religion’s contributions to Americans’ foreign policy orientations. Still, at this point it is not clear whether a new, consensual cooperative agenda might eventually attract support from a wider range of American religious groups, or whether this agenda might ultimately end up being absorbed by militant internationalism. The large Evangelical community will be an important actor here. Currently, divisions over the cooperative internationalism agenda have driven some major fissures through this community. Some Evangelical leaders, such as megachurch pastor Rick Warren, aggressively champion environmentalism, human rights, and international development, but they face adamant resistance from entrenched conservatives, such as *Focus on the Family*

founder James Dobson (for such controversies, see Sheler 2009). The consistency of Evangelical support for militant internationalism and lack of enthusiasm for cooperative internationalism apparent in surveys from both 2008 and 2012 suggest that the new Evangelical elites have at best made limited progress in their campaign. Even young Evangelicals, the supposed adherents of more liberal or “cooperative” policies, do not appear to differ much from their elders on foreign policy (Smith and Johnson 2010).

Indeed, such findings suggest the need to investigate further other aspects of religious influence. The influence of religious leaders is an important subject for inquiry. Although denominational elites and parish clergy often have distinctive attitudes on foreign policy, evidence for their influence over their congregations is mixed. Some studies find that persuasion does take place (Wald 1992), but most see little impact (Wuthnow and Lewis 2008). In a related vein, there is some indication that religious participation and congregational interaction may strengthen adherence to the “normative” perspective within a faith community, but there is little evidence that participation has a distinct independent effect on international attitudes (Guth 2010a). Finally, there is likely to be much more analytical leverage from deeper probes into religious beliefs, but survey organizations find such surveys difficult to execute.

What difference does all this make for American foreign policy? It is beyond the scope of this article to settle the thorny questions of how and to what extent public opinion influences foreign policy decision-making (see Holsti 2004; Page and Bouton 2006). Of course, foreign policy is primarily an executive prerogative and public opinion is most relevant in that context. American presidents have often taken into account and attempted to mobilize the forces of religion on behalf of their foreign policy objectives (Inboden 2008; Preston 2012). Their decisions may also be shaped by the fact that the foreign policy views of political activists and legislators appear to be influenced by religion in much the same way that public views are (Aguilar, Fordham and Lynch 1997; Green and Jackson 2007; Guth 2007; Collins et al. 2011). All this suggests that public attitudes present both constraints and opportunities for presidential leadership, directly and indirectly through influence on other political elites.

Nevertheless, analysts must exercise caution in interpreting the direction of influence. For example, even the most sensitive of the speculative work on Bush administration policies often attributed too much influence to his religious constituency (e.g., Marsden 2008). In fact, the closest observers of Bush’s decision-making scoff at arguments that he was simply responding to demands of his religious constituency on foreign policy. Nor, in fact, did Bush share all the theological emphases common within that constituency, despite journalistic claims to the contrary (cf. Laurent 2004, 11; Gerson 2007). It is clear, however, that public attitudes, shaped in part by religious factors, bolstered the president’s political support, whether for his invasion of Iraq, his support for Israel—or his

commitment to fighting AIDS in Africa.

The Obama administration has searched for the same kind of “supportive” religious coalition for its foreign policy. Both the president and former Secretary of State Clinton are veteran participants in the world of American religious politics, and they initially hoped to go beyond the confines of their religious electoral base (Green 2009) to build a broader religious coalition backing the cooperative internationalist dimension of American policy (Guth 2011c). This coalition has taken a considerably different form than that supporting the Bush administration, but by necessity draws on some elements of the same religious communities. This has been especially true given that the Administration has often exhibited a great deal of continuity with Bush policies—especially in its military engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan—and has sometimes disappointed proponents of a vigorous multilateral foreign policy (Skidmore 2012). Although cooperative internationalism has a long history of elite support in many American religious communities, the specifics of such an approach have often been a much tougher sell at the grass-roots level (Hero 1973). Nevertheless, some observers see globalization providing a wider base for cooperative internationalism among American church people (Wuthnow 2009). If so, the president’s ability to take advantage of that development may help determine his success in mobilizing support for internationalist initiatives in his second term.

The data also suggest, however, that Mr. Obama may well discover (and perhaps already has) that many secular Democrats (“Nones”) have little stomach for extensive American engagement abroad, whether militant or cooperative, preferring to retreat to a more isolationist stance (see Pew Research Center 2009, 12). Indeed, the great internal diversity of the Democratic Party’s religious constituency with its substantial contingents of internationalists, accommodationists and even isolationists, presents substantial obstacles to a coherent foreign policy. Perhaps the reluctance of the Obama administration to undertake more vigorous responses to the crises in Libya, Egypt, and Syria reflects not only presidential caution, bureaucratic influences, and international pressures, but the constraints of a Democratic religious constituency.

Religiously influenced constraints may also affect the current reassessment of foreign policy going on within the Republican Party. Retrospective public disapproval of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, fiscal concerns about defense costs and the loss of the 2012 presidential election have all contributed to a re-evaluation of GOP foreign policy, with new leaders such as Senator Rand Paul urging a neo-isolationist approach. It is true that Republican foreign policy has shifted over time in line with presidential and elite perspectives (Dueck 2010). Nevertheless, since World War II, such changes have occurred within a framework of Republican opinion that emphasized various combinations of hardliner and internationalist perspectives—shaped in considerable part by the GOP’s religious coalition. That coalition’s core has been transformed from

one based in Mainline Protestantism, with its internationalist vision, to one dominated at the grassroots and in Congress by Evangelicals and other religious traditionalists, preferring a hardline approach. There is no reason to think that the latter influences will disappear soon. All in all, scholars would be well-advised to continue their exploration of the religious roots of American foreign policy.

Appendix: Militant and Cooperative Internationalism Measures

The militant internationalism score is derived from the first principal component from a principal components analysis of these 18 questions. This component had an eigenvalue of 5.486 and accounted for 30.5% of the variance. There were also two much smaller components with eigenvalues of 1.703 and 1.278; modest loadings on both were concentrated on a few items. The *theta* reliability score for this measure is .87.

| Question | Militant Internationalism | Loading on Component 1 |
|----------|---|------------------------|
| Q7_3 | U.S. Policy Goal: Fight Terrorism | .72 |
| Q7_4 | U.S. Policy Goal: Maintain U.S. Military Power | .69 |
| Q5_10 | Critical Threat: Terrorism | .66 |
| Q5_15 | Critical Threat: Iranian nuclear arms | .64 |
| Q7_11 | U.S. Policy Goal: Prevent nuclear proliferation | .63 |
| Q5_12 | Critical Threat: Islamist Groups in Pak/Afghan. | .62 |
| Q8_2 | How effective: Military power | .57 |
| Q273 | Taliban power a threat to U.S. | .56 |
| Q26 | Defense Budget | .53 |
| Q20 | Important that U.S. lead world | .53 |
| Q276_1 | Approve airstrikes against terrorist camps | .50 |
| Q5_3 | Critical Threat: China as world power | .50 |
| Q7_8 | U.S. Policy Goal: Fight illegal immigration | .48 |
| Q240_4 | Military strike on Iran's nuclear buildup | .47 |
| Q21 | U.S. greatest nation in the world | .46 |
| Q276_3 | Approve assassinations of terrorist leaders | .42 |
| Q276_2 | Approve ground troops against terrorist camps | .41 |
| Q30_8 | Use U.S. Forces to: Protect Israel | .40 |

The cooperative internationalism score is derived from the first principal component from a principal components analysis of these 17 questions. This component had an eigenvalue of 5.304 and accounted for 31% of the variance. The analysis also produced three small components with eigenvalues of 1.683, 1.566 and 1.134, none of which was substantively interpretable. The *theta* reliability score for this measure is .86.

| Question | Cooperative Internationalism | Loading on Component 1 |
|----------|--|------------------------|
| Q7_2 | U.S. Policy Goal: Strengthen UN | .72 |
| Q7_9 | U.S. Policy Goal: Fight Climate Change | .70 |
| Q8_1 | Strengthening UN has been effective | .69 |
| Q140_3 | Favor new international treaty on climate change | .67 |
| Q146 | How effective has the UN been in solving problems? | .65 |
| Q5_8 | Critical Threat: Climate Change | .64 |
| Q310 | U.S. government action on climate change | .63 |

| Question | Cooperative Internationalism | Loading on Component 1 |
|----------|--|------------------------|
| Q7_12 | U.S. Policy Goal: Fight World Hunger | .53 |
| Q145 | U.S. should cooperate with UN even if disagree | .52 |
| Q7_11 | U.S. Policy Goal: Promoting Human Rights | .52 |
| Q276_6 | Work against terrorism through the UN | .49 |
| Q31 | When U.S. uses force, should be through UN | .45 |
| Q200 | Should work more through NATO | .44 |
| Q8_5 | Building new alliances effective in solving problems | .43 |
| Q140_2 | Favor U.S. approval of International Criminal Court | .43 |
| Q7_6 | U.S. Policy Goal: Spread Democracy | .41 |
| Q140_1 | Favor international treaty prohibiting nuclear tests | .40 |

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