

Religion and Attitudes about Multilateralism in the United States

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Prepared for presentation at the 2013 annual meeting of the
Western Political Science Association
Los Angeles, CA

Abstract

Previous research has established that religion, particularly when operationalized as religious affiliation, affects Americans' attitudes about foreign policy matters. We know next to nothing, however, about whether and how "religion" is related to attitudes about multilateralism and multilateral foreign policy tools. We hypothesize that (a) evangelical Protestant identity and (b) high levels of religiosity, as measured by frequent attendance at worship services, will be related to skepticism about two manifestations of multilateral foreign policy: the United Nations and free trade agreements. Using data gathered by the Pew Research Center in 2009, we find that evangelical Protestant and Jewish affiliation have a significant negative effect on attitudes about the UN, while evangelical identity and frequent worship attendance significantly depress support for free trade agreements. We include extended discussion of the simultaneous significance of age in all of our models.

Scholars continue to wrestle with questions of whether and how religion should be included in studies of public opinion about foreign policy issues. Religious variables recently have been used to generate new insights in other areas of study including social networks and political tolerance (e.g., Djupe and Gilbert 2009; Eisenstein 2005), and the disciplinary “religion and politics” subfield is thriving (Wald and Wilcox 2006). On the other hand, as Wald and Wilcox conclude in their analysis of political scientists’ overall treatment of religion: “Apart from economics and geography, it is hard to find a social science [discipline] that has given less attention to religion than political science” (2006: 523)—despite the fact that a vast majority of Americans think of themselves as religious people and participate frequently in religious activities (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2010). Americans also frequently use religious and moral lenses in their evaluation of candidates and elected officials (e.g., Campbell 2007). By extension, it is important to ask whether religious variables also play a role in shaping American attitudes about public policy issues. Most studies of religion and public policy attitudes have focused on domestic policy, especially socio-moral issues (e.g., Campbell 2007; Green 2007; Jelen 1991; Layman 2001; Leege and Kellstedt 1993). Substantially less research has been conducted on how religion might affect foreign policy attitudes. This marks a significant gap in the literature, particularly because U.S. foreign policy has been framed in broadly terms in recent years (Guth 2009b).

If religiously committed Americans view the whole of politics in a systematically different (and conservative) manner than do more nominally religious and secular Americans—and they do (e.g., Green 2007; Layman 2001; Smidt et al. 2010)—it stands to reason that religious variables also should bear a systematic relationship to foreign policy attitudes. Yet there have been relatively few efforts to analyze how religion shapes foreign policy attitudes—and almost all of the work in this area has been done in the wake of September 11, 2001, and the

subsequent “war on terror” (Barker, Hurwitz, and Nelson 2008; Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris 2008; den Dulk 2007; Froese and Mencken 2009; Guth 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Guth et al. 1996; Guth et al. 2005; Jelen 1994; Mayer 2004; Rock 2011; Smidt 2005; Taydas, Kentmen, and Olson 2012). Little is known about how religious variables relate to foreign policy attitudes outside of support for Israel (e.g., Mayer 2004) and the recent war in Iraq (e.g., Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris 2008).

Our study is motivated by the question of whether there is any relationship between Americans’ personal religious characteristics and their attitudes about a particular kind of foreign policy tool: multilateralism. This inquiry is substantively important both in light of the general consensus that public opinion on foreign policy influences actual policy (e.g., Holsti 1992; Page and Shapiro 1992) and also in the context of the increasingly complicated nature of international politics in the post-Cold War era. Do religious differences give rise to different attitudes about multilateral foreign policy among American citizens? More specifically, we ask whether and how (a) religious affiliation and (b) religious commitment might be related to attitudes about the United Nations or free trade agreements and organizations. We expect support for multilateral organizations (such as the UN), treaties (such as the North American Free Trade Agreement), and trade organizations (such as the World Trade Organization) to reflect individual sympathy for isolationism or internationalism (e.g., Page and Shapiro 1992; Wittkopf 1990)—orientations that are themselves correlated with individuals’ religious characteristics (see also Barker, Hurwitz, and Nelson 2008; Guth 2009b). We begin with two specific contentions and one important caveat about how “religion” might affect attitudes about multilateralism.

First, we ask how *religious affiliation* affects attitudes about multilateralism. Following previous studies (Barker, Hurwitz, and Nelson 2008; Guth 2009b; Page 2006), we assume that

members of one specific religious group, *evangelical Protestants*,¹ will stand out compared to adherents of other American religious traditions in rejecting multilateral tools of foreign policy. Elements of evangelical theology are consistent with support for assertive American unilateralism. In general terms, evangelical theology is uncompromisingly black and white; the Bible is to be taken at its word, and there are clear standards of right and wrong. Evangelicals therefore may be more likely than members of other American religious traditions to think the U.S. is an uncomplicated force for good in the world, with a few trusted allies and more than a few outright enemies.² Moreover, unlike most mainline Protestants (whose greater theological liberalism distinguishes them from evangelicals), Catholics, and Jews, evangelical Protestants are religious particularists: they hold to the particular teachings of their own religious tradition as the one and only authentic truth (Glock and Stark 1966; Marty 1970; Smith 1988). Religious particularists tend to be insular, wishing to avoid interaction with (indeed, contamination by) people whose religious views diverge from their own. On the other end of the theological spectrum is ecumenism, or the tolerance (and sometimes, celebration) of religious diversity. Members of ecumenical religious traditions are open to interfaith cooperation and collaboration because such cross-pollination does not create theological problems for them (Guth et al. 1997; Marty 1970). Since their religious traditions are more ecumenical than evangelical Protestantism, we expect mainline Protestants, Catholics, and members of other non-evangelical religious traditions to be more tolerant of multilateralism—which inherently involves cooperation.

¹ Evangelical Protestantism entails an active sharing of the word of God with others (evangelism), the “born-again” experience (in which the believer accepts Christ as personal savior), pietism, and strict scriptural interpretation (high view of scripture). See, e.g., Smith (1998).

² Most evangelical Protestants strongly support Israel on scriptural grounds, believing that Christ will return to earth only if the Jewish people are present in their ancient homeland (Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris 2008; Mayer 2004; Rock 2011). Some evangelicals also criticize Islam and advocate hardline policies toward Muslim countries (Cimino 2005).

Another distinctive element of evangelical Protestant theology—premillennial dispensationalism—distinguishes many (but not all) evangelical Protestantism with regard to foreign policy questions. By no means should evangelical affiliation be expected to correlate perfectly with foreign policy attitudes (den Dulk 2007), but many evangelicals are premillennial dispensationalists: they believe certain events must take place before the reappearance of Christ and the onset of Armageddon (Smith 1998). A substantial majority of evangelicals (roughly two in three) prioritize protecting Israel because their premillennial interpretation of scripture teaches that the presence of the Jewish people in Israel presages the End Times, or Christ’s imminent return to earth (Mayer 2004; Rock 2011). Thus they support a strong unilateral U.S. foreign policy that protects the security and unity of Israel and denounces countries and other international actors that might endanger Israel’s security. As Barker, Hurwitz, and Nelson (2009) term it, theirs is a “messianic militarism.” This orientation is bolstered in some evangelical corners by the conspiracy-oriented “new world order” or “one world government” theory, which holds that the End Times will be preceded by the emergence of a global authoritarian government. Prominent adherents of this view include religious broadcaster and former presidential candidate Rev. Pat Robertson, who published a book titled *The New World Order* (1991) outlining his take on the subject. The popular (and premillennial dispensationalist) *Left Behind* series of novels by Rev. Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins depicts life during the End Times—and features a character, Nicolae Jetty Carpathia, who is both UN Secretary-General and the Antichrist. We suspect that the effect of premillennial dispensationalism on foreign policy attitudes is not limited to the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but instead reflects a broader relationship between religion and public opinion about U.S. foreign policy. In short, we should expect evangelicals to be substantively different—and more unified—in their foreign

policy attitudes than adherents of other faith traditions because of the distinctiveness of evangelical theology as well as the keen ability of evangelical clergy to communicate political cues (Guth et al. 1997).

Second, we argue that *religiosity*—the extent to which one prioritizes religious practice regardless of specific affiliation—will bear upon Americans’ attitudes about multilateralism. Religion and politics scholars have established that the extent of one’s commitment to and engagement with religious life is an important determinant of a range of political attitudes and opinions among Americans (Leege and Kellstedt 1993). Broadly speaking, the more deeply enmeshed one is in a religious context—regardless of religious affiliation—the more politically conservative one tends to be (Green 2007; Layman 2001; Smidt et al. 2010). Over the last two decades, people of faith *across religious traditions* who prioritize religion highly in their lives (as measured by frequent participation in religious activities), as well as those who are most doctrinally orthodox, have been significantly more conservative and loyal to the Republican Party (e.g., Putnam and Campbell 2010; Smidt et al. 2010). We expect to find that people who attend religious services frequently (the best available proxy measure of religious commitment) might be somewhat more likely to endorse the conservative position of skepticism toward international organizations and multinational trade agreements. The fact that ideology and partisanship have been shown to drive foreign policy attitudes more powerfully in recent years than has been true in the past (e.g., Holsti 2004) buoys our contention on this front, as greater religiosity results in enhanced conservatism.

Our caveat about how “religion” will affect attitudes about multilateralism concerns the potentially intervening role of *age*. Recent studies indicate that younger generations of Americans—including young, churchgoing evangelicals—are increasingly liberal (Andersen and

Fetner 2008; Pew Research Center 2011; Putnam and Campbell 2010). American youth who came of age during the 1990s seem to be reflecting the relative liberalism of their parents (who came of age in the 1960s) and eschewing the conservatism of the late twentieth-century United States (Jennings, Stoker, and Bowers 2009). Separately, many evangelicals, especially younger ones, wonder what loyalty to the Republican Party has accomplished (e.g., Kuo 2006). Younger evangelicals in particular have been articulating a broader, more progressive agenda than that of the old religious right (Wilcox and Robinson 2010). Thus we suspect that age might play a significant role, both on its own and in concert with religious affiliation and religiosity, in shaping attitudes about multilateralism.

Religion and American Foreign Policy Attitudes

Scholars have established that a variety of factors shape American foreign policy attitudes, including national interests, partisanship, ideology, gender, education, and race (Holsti 2004; Page 2006). Religion's relationship to foreign policy attitudes is less well understood, even though few deny the influence of religious groups in American politics today either in general terms (e.g., Green 2007; Smidt et al. 2010) or with regard to specific international matters (e.g., Hertzke 2004; Rock 2011). Indeed, religious voices have exercised significant influence (either directly or indirectly) in American foreign policy for at least a century (Hertzke 1988; Inboden 2008; Rock 2011; and controversially, Mearsheimer and Walt 2008).

Nevertheless, until recently little scholarly attention was paid to religion's impact on public opinion about international issues (but see Hero 1973). The paucity of research was primarily the result of conventional wisdom presuming that the public was ill informed about and uninterested in foreign affairs (Holsti 1992). This view, termed the "Almond-Lippmann

consensus,” assumed public opinion about foreign policy was inconsistent, volatile, and incoherent—so not especially influential on actual policy decisions (Almond 1950; Lippmann 1955). Thus scholars had little reason to expect Americans’ religious characteristics—or any other demographic or social dimensions—to be related to their foreign policy attitudes (Smidt 2005).

After the Vietnam War, however, scholars began rethinking public opinion about U.S. foreign policy, eventually challenging the Almond-Lippmann consensus (Holsti 1992, 2004). Scholars now claim that the mass public is better informed about international politics issues than previously thought (e.g., Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989), and that citizens do, in fact, have relatively well-defined attitude structures that make public opinion about foreign policy fairly stable over time (Brewer and Steenbergen 2002; Holsti 2004; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; Maggiotto and Wittkopf 1981; Wittkopf 1981; Zaller 1992). Some even argue that public opinion has a measurable impact on foreign policy itself (Holsti 1992; Page and Barabas 2000; Page and Shapiro 1983, 1992; Peffley and Hurwitz 1992; Wittkopf 1990; but see Drezner 2008). According to this newer literature, the foreign policy attitudes of the American public lack neither predictability nor structure. Even in instances when citizens lack in-depth knowledge about the specifics of foreign policy issues, they rely on cognitive shortcuts to simplify the processing of complex issues—including matters of foreign policy (Guth 2009b; Hurwitz, Peffley, and Seligson 1993; Page 2006). And as Brewer and Steenbergen assert, “When making choices in the often ambiguous and confusing domain of foreign affairs, citizens ... turn to their fundamental beliefs about human nature (2002: 40).

Multilateralism is a complicated matter for most people to understand (e.g., Brewer and Steenbergen 2002; Page and Barabas 2000). Americans generally say they favor the United

Nations and multilateralism in general (Holsti 2004; Kull and Destler 1999; Page and Barabas 2000; Page and Shapiro 1992), but as Todorov and Mandisodza (2004) show, they have little idea what others think about the topic. Attitudes about a matter as complicated as multilateral foreign policy are significantly anchored in broad views about human nature; the more cynical one is about human nature, the more distrusting one tends to be about international actors (Brewer and Steenbergen 2002). Research also shows that antipathy toward free trade agreements is related to ethnocentrism and nationalism (Granzin, Brazell, and Painter 1997). People who are most invested in religiously particularist views of the world (i.e., the only path to eternal salvation is through my own religious tradition, and those who reject my religious tradition will burn in hell) might well be especially prone to cynicism, ethnocentrism, and nationalism. Psychologists of religion have shown that religious fundamentalism is positively related to right-wing authoritarianism (Wulff 1997), lack of empathy (Bradley 2009), prejudice (Rowatt et al. 2006; Wulff 1997), and discrimination (Hunsberger and Jackson 2005). Political scientists (quite reasonably) argue that a more objective term is “authority-mindedness” (Wald, Owen, and Hill 1989; Mockabee 2007), and not all religious particularists are sufficiently conservative to qualify as fundamentalists. Nevertheless, religious particularists might be especially likely to reject the optimism inherent in multilateral cooperation. For such individuals, multilateralism might be acceptable only in highly specific and personalized instances, such as efforts to safeguard international religious freedom (e.g., Danchin 2002; Hertzke 2004).

Several broader theoretical arguments support the contention that religion plays a role in shaping foreign policy attitudes. First, religious orientations have undergirded Americans’ foreign policy orientations in the past. For example, during the Cold War era, concerns about the “godless atheism” of Marxism fueled hawkish, anticommunist positions emphasizing military

readiness and the use of force against “unrighteous” nations (Gunn 2009; Jelen 1994; Rock 2011; Smidt 2005; Wittkopf 1990). This perspective was developed in part by the leading American Protestant theologian of the twentieth century, Reinhold Niebuhr. Rejecting Christian pacifism, Niebuhr (1953) developed a systematic normative approach to foreign policy known as Christian Realism based on the premise that human sinfulness cannot be overcome on earth, which renders pacifism ill advised.

Second, religion has been ever more relevant to discussions of American foreign policy since September 11, 2001. Muslim extremists have replaced communists as the objects of Americans’ deepest derision; thus the U.S.’s chief “enemy” is defined in religious rather than ideological terms (den Dulk 2007; Smidt 2005). In fact, since the introduction of the Bush Doctrine in 2002, American foreign policy sometimes has been framed in outwardly religious terms; Bush himself invoked religious sentiments in appealing for Americans’ support for his foreign policy objectives (Froese and Mencken 2009; Judis 2005; Rock 2011). Research indicates strong support among evangelicals for Bush’s foreign policy priorities and strategies (Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris 2008; den Dulk 2007; Froese and Mencken 2009; Guth 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Guth et al. 2005) and opposition to those of President Barack Obama (Taydas, Kentmen, and Olson 2012).

Third, religious organizations and leaders play important roles in shaping Americans’ political attitudes. Clergy’s political positions and statements have a great deal of influence on the way people interpret a range of issues, including foreign policy matters, because religious organizations and their leaders often are seen as highly credible sources of information by their congregations (Guth 2009b; Jelen 1994). And the more individuals are exposed to the messages religious leaders have to offer, the more likely their attitudes are to fall in line with the prevailing

policy preferences of the religious tradition with which they affiliate (Djupe and Gilbert 2009). In recent years, American religious leaders have been vocal about foreign policy issues. For example, some high-profile evangelical leaders (such as the late Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Franklin Graham) have been outspoken critics of Islam and supporters of aggressive, unilateral U.S. foreign policy, while Catholic leaders weigh the merits of potential military intervention using “just war” principles. A handful of prominent religious leaders—most visibly, Pat Robertson—have endorsed the “new world order” conspiracy theory as well. It is plausible to assume that as levels of cue giving by clergy and other religious leaders increase, polarization in public opinion about foreign policy might naturally result (Mayer 2004; see also Zaller 1992) along religious affiliation lines. Thus if leaders of different American religious traditions provide divergent cues about foreign policy issues, we might expect to observe a relationship between mass-level religious affiliation and foreign policy attitudes. In some instances, members of a particular religious tradition might not even need to attend worship services frequently to have a good idea where clergy and other religious leaders stand on high-profile issues of the day.

Fourth, religion also might have an indirect impact on foreign policy attitudes through its relationship to partisanship and ideology (Guth 2009b; Guth et al. 1996; Holsti 2004; Page 2006). Even though Americans tend to be relatively united when the United States faces threats from or attack by a foreign entity (e.g., Baker and O’Neal 2001), foreign policy attitudes usually are related to partisan politics and ideological self-classification (Brewer et al. 2004; Holsti 2004). It therefore makes sense to introduce religion into the analysis as well because of its own powerful correlation with party identification and ideology (Green 2007; Layman 2001; Smidt 2005; Smidt et al. 2010).

For the reasons outlined above, we hypothesize that religious affiliation and religious commitment (which we measure here as frequent worship attendance) shape American attitudes about multilateral foreign policy tools. Because of the dual impact of their theological distinctiveness (religious particularism, premillennial dispensationalism) and strong Republican partisanship, we expect evangelical Protestants to be markedly more critical of the United Nations and multilateral treaties. As Guth (2009b) terms it, they should be advocates of “unilateralist internationalism” (see also Barker, Hurwitz, and Nelson 2008). By comparison, we hypothesize that members of religious traditions *other than* evangelical Protestantism are significantly more likely to support multilateralism for three reasons. First, non-evangelical Judeo-Christian theology is both ecumenical and not heavily invested in premillennialism (Guth 2009b). Second, nominally religious and secular Americans tend to view politics and policy from a perspective that is broadly oppositional toward evangelical Protestants’ public positions (Layman 2001). Third, the large non-evangelical Christian traditions in the United States (namely mainline Protestantism and Catholicism) officially take less hawkish approaches to foreign policy matters (Rock 2011). They might therefore be more supportive of the peacemaking priorities of organizations such as the UN.

Data and Method

In this paper, we analyze data from the Pew Research Center’s “America’s Place in the World” survey (2009). These data were gathered for Pew between October 28 and November 8, 2009. The survey reached 2,000 adults aged 18 years or older. Landline and cellular random-digit dialing methods of sample selection were used. We use the weighted sample recommended by the Pew Research Center to ensure national population parameters for gender, age, education,

race/ethnicity, region (using U.S. Census definitions), and population density. We analyze data from this survey because the instrument included an array of items that were especially well suited to our research needs. The Pew surveys are among the few recent data sources to include an appropriate battery of questions about religious affiliation and participation. Even more important for our purposes is this particular survey's inclusion of two questions measuring attitudes about multilateralism in foreign policy.

Dependent Variables

First, the survey asks respondents how much priority they think the United States should place on strengthening the United Nations. This item is part of a larger battery of questions about "possible long-range foreign policy goals ... the United States might have." Respondents were asked to state whether they each goal should have "top priority" [which we coded as "1"], "some priority" ["2"], or "no priority" ["3"]. As Table 1 shows, the mean score on this measure was 2.10. Second, the survey asks respondents: "In general, do you think that free trade agreements like NAFTA and the policies of the World Trade Organization have been a good thing or a bad thing for the United States?" We coded respondents who think free trade agreements are a good thing as "1" and those who did not as "0." The mean for this item was .52 (Table 1). "Don't know" responses and refusals are coded as missing for both dependent variables.

[Table 1 about here]

Independent Variables and Controls

Religious affiliation. Our primary independent variable is a measure of religious affiliation. We use a series of dummy variables to classify respondents into categories on the

basis of their self-reported affiliation with a religious tradition or denomination (adapting the classification scheme of Steensland et al. 2000).³ These include evangelical Protestant; mainline Protestant; Roman Catholic; other Christian, including Eastern Orthodox Christians, Mormons, and others; Jewish; other non-Christian, including Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and others; and religiously unaffiliated individuals. Religiously unaffiliated respondents comprise the reference category in our analyses.

Table 1 shows that evangelicals comprise around a quarter of the survey sample (24 percent), which squares roughly with the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life's (2008) highly regarded estimate of the evangelical population in the U.S.: 26.3 percent. Likewise, the dataset we use is 20 percent mainline Protestant, 22 percent Catholic, and 2 percent Jewish. The comparable figures from the Pew Forum (2008) are 18.1 percent mainline, 23.9 percent Catholic, and 1.7 percent Jewish. Thus the data we use appear to have face validity with regard to religious affiliation.

Religiosity (worship attendance). In addition to religious affiliation, we include a measure of worship attendance in our analyses. As stated above, the extent of one's commitment to and engagement with religious life often is an important determinant of political attitudes and opinions regardless of religious affiliation (e.g., Legee and Kellstedt 1993), such that greater religious participation correlates highly with political conservatism (Green 2007; Layman 2001; Smidt et al. 2010). Attending religious services is the best rough proxy of broader religiosity (Green 2007). Thus, we include a dummy variable that divides respondents into two categories on the basis of how often they attend religious services: respondents who attended once a week or more are coded "1"; all others are coded "0." In our sample, 42 percent of respondents report

³ We do not include a separate category for African American Protestants because we control separately for race in our models.

attending worship services once a week or more often (Table 1); the comparable figure from the Pew Forum (2008) is 39 percent, which again suggests face validity.

Age. We highlight age in this analysis, treating it as more than just a demographic control. We wish to test whether younger evangelicals and younger frequent worship attendees might be somewhat less antagonistic toward multilateral foreign policy than we expect their elders to be. Age is measured in years (from 18 to 97 or more); the average age of the sample was just under 53 (Table 1).

Controls. We also include several key control variables in our analysis. These include Republican party identification (1=Republican; 0=Democrat or Independent); gender (male=1); education (measured on a scale of 1, representing grade 8 or less, to 7, representing postgraduate/professional training); race (African American=1); and total family income in 2008 (ranging from 1=less than \$10,000 to 7=\$150,000 or more). See Table 1 for descriptive statistics for these control variables.

Analytic Strategy

Our analyses consist of two separate series of six logistic regressions (one series for each dependent variable) for which we also calculate predicted probabilities. Because our first dependent variable (about the U.S.'s prioritization of the UN) is ordinal, we use ordered logistic regression analysis with robust standard errors to model it.⁴ Our second dependent variable (about whether NAFTA and the WTO have been "good for the U.S.") is dichotomous, so we use bivariate logistic regression analysis to model it. For each of the two dependent variables, we begin in Model 1 by including the religious affiliation dummy series and our control variables.

⁴ We tested the parallel lines assumption of the ordered logit models using Brant tests. The results revealed that our models were not violating the parallel lines assumption (Brant 1990).

Model 2 replaces religious affiliation with worship attendance. Model 3 replaces worship attendance with age. Model 4 includes the religious affiliation dummies and age; Model 5 includes worship attendance and age. Finally, Model 6 includes all variables (religious affiliation, worship attendance, age, and all controls).

Results and Discussion

Strengthening the UN

Table 2 presents the results of our ordered logistic regression analyses of the survey item about whether the United States should prioritize strengthening the United Nations. Recall that this question's response set is threefold, with respondents asked to state whether strengthening the UN should be given top priority, some priority, or no priority. For ease of interpretation, we code "top priority"=3.

[Table 2 about here]

Four clear themes emerge in Table 2. First, evangelical Protestants express significant disapproval of the goal of strengthening the UN in all three of the models that include religious affiliation (Models 1, 4, and 6). This finding bolsters previous research documenting evangelical isolationism and straightforwardly confirms our hypothesis. Second, Jewish respondents also express little enthusiasm for strengthening the UN. This relationship most likely reflects disapproval among Jewish Americans of the UN Security Council's mixed record of support for Israel (Kim and Russett 1996; Mearsheimer and Walt 2008).⁵ Third, worship attendance is insignificant in all three models in which it is included (Models 2, 5, and 6), indicating that religious *affiliation*, but not religiosity, is relevant to attitudes about multilateralism in the

⁵ The Pew data, however, were collected well ahead of the UN's decision in 2012 to elevate Palestine to "non-member state" status.

context of the UN. Simply identifying oneself as evangelical or Jewish is enough to depress approval of the UN; frequent religious participation seems not to be necessary. Fourth, age is highly significant: as we hypothesized, older respondents are less supportive of strengthening the UN.

Notice that all of the control variables in all six models are significant. Thus we may conclude that our findings regarding religious affiliation and age stand up in the face of rather stringent controls. The only counter-hypothetical result we observe among the constants is that increased education depresses support for strengthening the UN. All other results appear in the direction one would expect. Republicans, men, and higher-income respondents do not want the U.S. to help strengthen UN. On the other hand, African Americans do think strengthening the UN should be a high priority, which is more than an artifact of partisanship. Other studies report African Americans to be foreign policy doves (Baumgartner, Francia, and Morris 2008; Brewer and Steenbergen 2002; Page 2006). African Americans might also be favorably disposed to the UN because multilateral organizations often help impoverished black people in other regions (DeConde 1992).

Model 6 in Table 2 shows that being evangelical, Jewish, or older makes one less likely to support strengthening the UN. Variables that are highly significant in one model are highly significant in all models. What, however, about the relative impact of these variables on attitudes about strengthening the UN? Table 3 displays the predicted probabilities for all significant independent variables and controls in each of the Table 2 models. The predicted probabilities for the final, full model (Model 6) indicate that evangelical and Jewish affiliation rank among the most potent predictors of negative attitudes toward the UN. Being evangelical makes one 17.7 percent less likely than other respondents—and being Jewish, 19.4 percent—to say strengthening

the UN should be a priority. By the same token, evangelicals are 15.5 percent more likely than other respondents to say strengthening the UN should be given no priority, while Jews are 24.8 percent more likely to say the same. Only African American identity (in the case of making strengthening the UN a top priority) contributes as substantially to attitudes about the UN.

[Table 3 about here]

Free Trade Agreements

Table 4 presents the results of our bivariate logistic regression analyses of the Pew question about free trade agreements. The survey instrument asked respondents whether “free trade agreements like NAFTA and the policies of the WTO” are “a good thing” or “a bad thing” for the United States, thereby creating a dichotomous variable where 1=“a good thing.”

On the whole, the Table 4 models do a less impressive job of modeling attitudes about free trade agreements. Perhaps this is due to the rather specific nature of the survey question, which combines the two somewhat incongruous examples of NAFTA and the WTO. One might plausibly have conflicting views of free trade, NAFTA, and the WTO. Or it may be that many Americans simply lack a sophisticated understanding of free trade policy and the treaties and organizations designed to promote and sustain it. There are many fewer significant variables on display in Table 4, but this does not mean our religion measures play no role—far from it.

[Table 4 about here]

Several themes emerge from the results presented in Table 4. First, evangelical Protestant identity—but this time, not Jewish identity—is a significant predictor of negative attitudes about free trade agreements in all three models that include religious affiliation (Models 1, 4, and 6). We might therefore conclude that evangelical identify is more broadly related to antipathy

toward multilateralism than Jewish identity, which matters only in the specific context of the UN's inconsistent history of support for Israel.

Second, unlike in the Table 2 models of support for strengthening the UN, worship attendance attains statistical significance. In Model 2 of Table 4, worship attendance is one of only two significant variables (the other is gender); when we introduce age in Model 5, it retains a marginal level of significance. In both cases, frequent worship attendance drives negative attitudes about free trade. This finding suggests an increased importance of the political learning and socialization that occur in congregations. Being exposed frequently to the politically salient messages that are transmitted in a place of worship (regardless of its particular religious affiliation) results in greater skepticism about free trade being "a good thing for the U.S." This result may well reflect the positive correlation between patriotism and religiosity in the American context (Bellah 1967; Mockabee 2007). In our final model (Model 6), however, worship attendance is no longer significant. The combination of evangelical identity and (especially) age overwhelms it.

Age clearly emerges as the most consistently significant predictor across our Table 5 models. Specifically, increased age leads to a greater likelihood of opposition to free trade agreements. One plausible explanation for this finding may be that greater life experience leads to more protectionist attitudes, perhaps out of concerns for national security or jobs for Americans. Another possibility might be a sort of symbolic nativism, reflecting prejudice or resentment toward non-U.S. societies and people (Schildkraut 2011), among older Americans. In any case, age clearly matters in our models of attitudes about free trade agreements. In Model 6, it is the only variable to attain the highest level of significance.

Finally, Table 6 presents the predicted probabilities for all significant independent variables and controls in each of the Table 2 models. The predicted probabilities for the final, full model (Model 6) indicate that a one-half standard deviation increase in age makes one 12.7 percent less likely to think free trade agreements are good for the U.S. Likewise, evangelical identity decreases support for free trade agreements by 11.3 percent, while being African American increases support by almost the same factor (11.5 percent). Table 6 provides further evidence that age is a variable of particular significance in our models of attitudes toward free trade agreements. In each case, the predicted probability is highest for age.

Discussion and Conclusions

Slowly, scholars have been rediscovering the “faith factor” in American politics (Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Wald and Wilcox 2006), but most of their work has been geared toward understanding religion’s effects on partisanship, ideology, electoral behavior, and attitudes about domestic policy issues. Relatively few studies have undertaken any systematic analysis of religion’s relationship to the foreign policy attitudes of the American public—despite the increasingly clear relevance of religious themes, symbols, and doctrines in the shaping and marketing of U.S. foreign policy since 9/11. To enhance our understanding of the relationship between religion and American foreign policy attitudes, we have investigated the extent to which religious variables affect public opinion about two questions about multilateralism.

The results of our study make plain that evangelical Protestants are skeptical of multilateral foreign policy tools and organizations, tending strongly toward an isolationist perspective. We strongly suspect that the emergence of the Bush Doctrine after 9/11 played a role in creating new religion-based cleavages in foreign policy attitudes, with evangelicals

clearly standing apart from adherents of other religious traditions. Bush's own evangelical Protestantism was a prominent feature of his public persona. In discussing foreign policy issues, he frequently alluded to religious themes that resonated especially well with evangelicals (Froese and Mencken 2009; Rock 2011). Evangelical theologies draw a bright line between good and evil, and there is a high degree of certitude in evangelical circles about the absolute correctness and truth of their religious teachings. Evangelicalism's moral clarity, together with the adherence of many evangelical believers to premillennial dispensationalism, seems to act as an obstacle to support for multilateral cooperation. Jewish identity matters in our study as well—but only in the specific context of the question about the UN, whose approach to Israel is unpopular among some Jewish Americans. We found almost no uniformity of opinion at all among mainline Protestants and Catholics, as is the case in other studies (e.g., Taydas, Kentmen, and Olson 2012); members of these two religious groups simply reflect the diversity of the American population at large. Meanwhile, worship attendance is not at all significant in our models of attitudes about the UN, but frequent attendance at religious services is a significant predictor of negative evaluations of the impact of free trade agreements on the United States. Thus, exposure to religious cues and social networks would seem to affect foreign policy attitudes on a situational basis, and particularly in instances when the question at stake is complicated.

We also include an important caveat religion's relationship to attitudes about multilateralism. We find that age is significant in every one of our models, and that it is an especially powerful predictor of views on free trade agreements. The older one is, the more protectionist one's attitudes are regarding multilateralism. This relationship may well reflect increased nativism on the part of older Americans in the face of a rapidly changing society. Moreover, it might suggest that younger people of faith view public policy issues, including

matters that extend beyond domestic policy, in a rather different light than has been the case in previous generations.

The results of this study also indicate that the impact of religious affiliation on public opinion (at least in the context of foreign policy) is distinct from the impact of party affiliation. We acknowledge that religion's influence on foreign policy attitudes might be mediated by partisan orientations. However, the frequency with which religion variables are significant in our models despite stringent controls (particularly party identification) is compelling evidence that religious identity on its own has a substantively meaningful impact on U.S. foreign policy attitudes. We recommend that future studies of American public opinion about foreign policy explore the indirect impact of religious faith in addition to its direct influence. For example, in what ways do partisanship and ideology mediate religious affiliation's influence on foreign policy attitudes?

Our study cannot answer questions about religion's relationship to attitudes about *when* multilateral foreign policy tools might be more or less appropriate. Future studies ought to ask whether people of faith in the United States might be differently disposed toward the use of multilateral tools in different policy areas including economic policy, defense policy, and humanitarian policy. Additional research also might examine whether the relationship between "religion" and foreign policy attitudes is different than it may have been in the past—or altogether new. Evangelicals have not always been as unified as they have been in recent years (Wilcox and Robinson 2010), whereas mainline Protestants and Catholics were more unified in previous generations (Smidt et al. 2010). And levels of religiosity had almost no measurable effect on political orientations until the last several decades (Layman 2001; Smidt et al. 2010). One thing is for certain: foreign policy is much more complex in the post-Cold War era, and a

myriad of personal demographic and contextual factors would appear to shape Americans' attitudes about the appropriate tools of foreign policy in the twenty-first century.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

| | <i>N</i> | Range | Mean | S.D. |
|---|----------|-------|-------|-------|
| <i>Dependent variables</i> | | | | |
| The U.S. should prioritize strengthening the UN | 976 | 1-3 | 2.10 | .74 |
| NAFTA and the WTO have been good for the U.S. | 1491 | 0-1 | .52 | .50 |
| <i>Independent variables</i> | | | | |
| Evangelical Protestant | 2000 | 0-1 | .24 | .43 |
| Mainline Protestant | 2000 | 0-1 | .20 | .40 |
| Catholic | 2000 | 0-1 | .22 | .41 |
| Other Christian | 2000 | 0-1 | .09 | .28 |
| Jewish | 2000 | 0-1 | .02 | .14 |
| Other non-Christian | 2000 | 0-1 | .02 | .15 |
| Worship attendance | 1920 | 0-1 | .42 | .49 |
| Age | 1950 | 18-97 | 52.78 | 17.83 |
| <i>Controls</i> | | | | |
| Race | 2000 | 0-1 | .09 | .29 |
| Republican party identification | 2000 | 0-1 | .28 | .45 |
| Gender (male) | 2000 | 0-1 | .48 | .50 |
| Education | 1955 | 1-7 | 4.69 | 1.67 |
| Income | 1642 | 1-9 | 5.06 | 2.43 |

Table 2: Attitudes about Strengthening the United Nations

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Religious affiliation | | | | | | |
| <i>Evangelical Protestant</i> | -.976*** (.278) | | | -.873*** (.290) | | -.963*** (.306) |
| <i>Mainline Protestant</i> | -.456* (.258) | | | -.408 (.259) | | -.410 (.267) |
| <i>Catholic</i> | -.184 (.257) | | | -.141 (.260) | | -.167 (.265) |
| <i>Other Christian</i> | -.299 (.314) | | | -.302 (.315) | | -.364 (.320) |
| <i>Jewish</i> | -1.355*** (.523) | | | -1.227** (.527) | | -1.287** (.530) |
| <i>Other non-Christian</i> | .054 (.533) | | | .030 (.528) | | -.016 (.529) |
| Worship attendance | | -.155 (.174) | | | -.090 (.177) | .145 (.180) |
| Age | | | -.015*** (.005) | -.010** (.005) | -.015*** (.005) | -.011** (.005) |
| African American | 1.030*** (.304) | .932*** (.294) | .972** (.294) | 1.076*** (.307) | .987*** (.298) | 1.054*** (.310) |
| Republican | -.687*** (.189) | -.738*** (.189) | -.744*** (.185) | -.689*** (.190) | -.753*** (.189) | -.725*** (.192) |
| Male | -.435*** (.163) | -.394** (.161) | -.411** (.162) | -.437*** (.164) | -.396** (.162) | -.425*** (.164) |
| Education | -.142** (.058) | -.152*** (.058) | -.137** (.055) | -.134** (.057) | -.144** (.058) | -.138** (.060) |
| Income | -.188*** (.042) | -.177*** (.042) | -.184*** (.041) | -.193*** (.042) | -.182*** (.043) | -.192*** (.045) |
| Cut 1 Constant | -4.069*** (.363) | -3.647*** (.300) | -4.275*** (.390) | -4.504*** (.429) | -4.322*** (.392) | -4.520*** (.432) |
| Cut 2 Constant | -1.581*** (.337) | -1.253*** (.279) | -1.821*** (.369) | -1.998*** (.410) | -1.868*** (.372) | -2.015*** (.412) |
| <i>N observations</i> | 812 | 804 | 810 | 810 | 802 | 802 |

Note: Ordinal logistic regression with robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<.001; ** p<.05; * p<.10 (two-tailed test).

Table 3: Predicted Probabilities, Strengthening the UN (continued on next page)

| | Model 1 | | | Model 2 | | | Model 3 | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| | No priority | Some priority | Top priority | No priority | Some priority | Top priority | No priority | Some priority | Top priority |
| Religious affiliation | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Evangelical Protestant</i> | .152 | .034 | -.186 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Mainline Protestant</i> | .066 | .026 | -.092 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Catholic</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Other Christian</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Jewish</i> | .258 | -.048 | -.210 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Other non-Christian</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Worship attendance | - | - | - | - | - | -.034 | - | - | - |
| Age | - | - | - | - | - | - | .035 | .017 | -.052 |
| African American | -.102 | -.142 | .244 | -.096 | -.126 | .221 | -.106 | -.124 | .230 |
| Republican | .010 | .038 | -.138 | .109 | .041 | -.150 | .117 | .029 | -.146 |
| Male | .057 | .036 | -.093 | .053 | .033 | -.086 | .056 | .027 | -.083 |
| Education | .031 | .019 | -.050 | .033 | .021 | -.054 | .033 | .016 | -.049 |
| Income | .059 | .036 | -.095 | .056 | .035 | -.091 | .026 | .012 | -.038 |

Table 3: Predicted Probabilities, Strengthening the UN (continued)

| | Model 4 | | | Model 5 | | | Model 6 | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| | No priority | Some priority | Top priority | No priority | Some priority | Top priority | No priority | Some priority | Top priority |
| Religious affiliation | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Evangelical Protestant</i> | .139 | .024 | -.163 | - | - | - | .155 | .022 | -.177 |
| <i>Mainline Protestant</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Catholic</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Other Christian</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Jewish</i> | .234 | -.046 | -.188 | - | - | - | .248 | -.054 | -.194 |
| <i>Other non-Christian</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Worship attendance | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Age | .025 | .013 | -.038 | .035 | .017 | -.052 | .026 | .013 | -.039 |
| African American | -.110 | -.142 | .251 | -.106 | -.124 | .230 | -.108 | -.138 | .246 |
| Republican | .104 | .030 | -.134 | .117 | .029 | -.146 | .110 | .030 | -.140 |
| Male | .060 | .031 | -.091 | .056 | .027 | -.083 | .058 | .030 | -.088 |
| Education | .030 | .016 | -.046 | .033 | .016 | -.049 | .031 | .016 | -.047 |
| Income | .063 | .032 | -.094 | .061 | .029 | -.089 | .062 | .032 | -.094 |

Note: Predicted probabilities are calculated only for statistically significant independent variables ($p < .10$) in Table 2. When the independent variable is dichotomous, we calculate the predicted probabilities by varying it from 0 to 1. When the independent variable is continuous, then we recode it to one-half standard deviation above to one-half standard deviation below the mean (Long and Freese 2001).

Table 4: Attitudes about the North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Religious affiliation | | | | | | |
| <i>Evangelical Protestant</i> | -.758*** (.221) | | | -.517** (.231) | | -.454* (.247) |
| <i>Mainline Protestant</i> | -.334 (.225) | | | -.190 (.230) | | -.167 (.234) |
| <i>Catholic</i> | .122 (.219) | | | .263 (.226) | | .326 (.231) |
| <i>Other Christian</i> | -.286 (.284) | | | -.255 (.296) | | -.174 (.309) |
| <i>Jewish</i> | .341 (.551) | | | .930 (.579) | | .943 (.576) |
| <i>Other non-Christian</i> | -.117 (.492) | | | -.192 (.505) | | -.123 (.524) |
| Worship attendance | | -.419*** (.144) | | | -.294* (.151) | -.167 (.165) |
| Age | | | -.032*** (.004) | -.031*** (.004) | -.030*** (.004) | -.030*** (.004) |
| African American | .402* (.241) | .282 (.237) | .255 (.246) | .445* (.254) | .312 (.253) | .472* (.258) |
| Republican | .010 (.158) | -.036 (.156) | -.059 (.161) | .033 (.165) | -.019 (.163) | .053 (.167) |
| Male | -.247* (.140) | -.266* (.139) | -.272* (.142) | -.272* (.144) | -.295** (.143) | -.292** (.145) |
| Education | -.014 (.047) | .008 (.047) | .008 (.048) | .006 (.049) | .021 (.049) | .019 (.049) |
| Income | -.015 (.035) | -.022 (.033) | -.010 (.035) | -.015 (.036) | -.019 (.035) | -.024 (.036) |
| Constant | .765*** (.284) | .660*** (.238) | 1.896*** (.318) | 1.974*** (.354) | 1.914*** (.319) | 1.927*** (.356) |
| N observations | 1265 | 1253 | 1259 | 1259 | 1248 | 1248 |

Note: Binary logistic regression with robust standard errors in parentheses. *** p<.001; ** p<.05; * p<.10 (two-tailed test).

Table 5: Predicted Probabilities, NAFTA and the WTO

| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 | Model 5 | Model 6 |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Religious affiliation | | | | | | |
| <i>Evangelical Protestant</i> | -.187 | - | - | -.129 | - | -.113 |
| <i>Mainline Protestant</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Catholic</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Other Christian</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Jewish</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| <i>Other non-Christian</i> | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Worship attendance | - | -.050 | - | - | -.036 | - |
| Age | - | - | -.134 | -.132 | -.127 | -.127 |
| African American | .095 | - | - | .108 | - | .115 |
| Republican | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Male | -.060 | -.065 | -.068 | -.068 | -.073 | -.073 |
| Education | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Income | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Note: Predicted probabilities are calculated only for statistically significant independent variables ($p < .10$) in Table 4. When the independent variable is dichotomous, we calculate the predicted probabilities by varying it from 0 to 1. When the independent variable is continuous, we recode it to one-half standard deviation above to one-half standard deviation below the mean (Long and Freese 2001).