ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	**SUPERNATURAL TIES: RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES AND COMMITMENT AND COHESION IN POLITICS**
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Dissertation directed by:	Professor Kathleen Gallagher Cunningham, Department of Government and Politics

I propose a general mechanism of religion in politics which is not limited to the use of violent tactics or a particular religious background: religious belief and practice generate strong mutual commitment among individuals in a group and this commitment can, in turn, create political cohesion. This process gives a strong organizational resource to political actors who can successfully link political goals to religious commitment and illuminates three puzzles: first, why do some organizations persist in demanding autonomy or independence for decades while others cease after only a short time? Little is known about the persistence of contentious actors, violent and nonviolent, who may eventually become rebels in a civil war. Linking research on civil war duration, nonviolent contention, and the club model of religion with novel cross-national time series data from a sample of self-determination organizations in Pakistan, India, Ethiopia, and

Canada, I find some evidence that organizations based on religion or religion-like ideologies in the sample are more likely to persist. I find stronger evidence that organizations persist when they encourage membership practices (such as religious study or dress codes) through which individual members demonstrate public commitment to the group.

Second, why do some politicians offer an overt religious basis for their policies? Overt religious rhetoric can harm a politician's standing with less religious voters in the United States, and positive stereotypes of religious people are diminishing. Still, even politicians who depend on less religious voters sometimes use overt rhetoric instead of subtler religious cues. In two survey experiments, I find that religious rhetoric does not increase the level of a voter's confidence that a politician is committed to a noncontroversial policy in an undergraduate sample nor to a controversial policy in a national sample in the United States, but it does increase the probability that a voter becomes completely convinced of a politician's commitment to a controversial policy, though not among Democrats, nor does visible participation in a congregation affect this signal.

Third, what keeps some civil wars from resuming after violence has stopped? Previous research has shown religious civil wars are likely to recur due to time-invariant factors of issue indivisibility and information uncertainty. Using existing data on secessionist rebels from 1975 to 2009, I find evidence that recruitment from religious networks drives recurrence. Giving religious constituencies equal access to political power and reaching formal ceasefires or agreements with territorial rebels discourages rebels from mobilizing that network for a return to fighting and makes them no more likely to return than nonreligious territorial rebels.

These results identify a general process of religion applicable across different religious backgrounds and political contexts: cohesion from practices, often related to religion, which

allow individuals to signal their commitment to a group. Identifying this process makes the study of religion in politics less context limited giving a starting point for future research.

SUPERNATURAL TIES: RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES AND COMMITMENT AND COHESION IN POLITICS

by

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Dedication

This dissertation has been a long journey with many turns ultimately making a straight path. I am grateful for Professor Kathleen Cunningham, whose research first inspired me to apply to the doctoral program at the University of Maryland and offered guidance from my first campus visit through now. Professor Shibley Telhami has also been very helpful in guiding me in several research projects including some that do not appear here. Dr. Thabet Abu Rass, Thair Abu Rass, Shahin Sarsour, and the United States–Israel Educational Foundation have also been very helpful as I developed my thoughts through other research projects outside those in this dissertation. I am also grateful for the assistance of very many faculty and graduate students at the University of Maryland who made a supportive environment, the faculty and graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where I earned my M.A. and first considered pursuing a dissertation, and the faculty who helped me first apply to graduate school at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where I earned my B.A.

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Introduction:

Political Cohesion from Religious Believing and Belonging

In the late 1950s in rural India, an eight-year old Narendra Modi joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) (Jaffrelot 2021, 34), which was "the only extracurricular activity in town." Its members still meet daily across India, merging spiritualism and patriotism, providing social services like healthcare, education, and disaster relief, and pursuing a Hindu nationalist vision of India. Since 1924, the RSS's "intensive socialization", such as the daily meetings, "has been the glue that keeps the *parivar* [network] together" (Andersen and Dahle 2019, xii-xiv, xxii).

Modi grew up to be a permanent member, and, using technology to publicize his traditional Hindu piety, he became the Chief Minister of the State of Gujarat with the associated Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and later Prime Minister of India (Jaffrelot 2021, 34-48). Party officials argue that the BJP's consistent commitment to its principles, in combination with consistent social service provision, led voters to trust the party (Mehta 2024, Ch. 1). Perhaps as a result of this assertively Hindu vision, Indian Muslims are more likely to trust politicians who are fellow Muslims (Chhibber, Kumar, and Sekhon 2018). For members of both religions, political trust and religion are closely related.

Modi implemented a key part of his Hindu nationalist program in 2019 when he put the formerly autonomous and Muslim-majority State of Jammu and Kashmir under direct central control. This territory has been the site of violence between the central government and various Muslim insurgents since 1989. Though fatalities nearly ceased in the early 2000s, they have risen again since 2012 with increasing connections to foreign Islamists (Lalwani and Gayner 2020), making this religious intrastate conflict increasingly intractable.

These aspects of Modi's career demonstrate multiple ways that religious belief and practice send signals of commitment that change political behavior. The intensive socialization

of some religious organizations, resulting from the combination of belief and practice, sends signals of commitment to other members and supporters and helps maintain the organization over long periods of time. This visible religiosity can also serve as a signal to voters of politicians' commitments to election promises. Finally, intensive socialization can also create strongly committed religious networks which provide consistent pools of recruitment for insurgency. The commitment signal comes from a combination of belief and practice in a community. Social identity or extreme beliefs, though they may be present, are not sufficient alone. Moreover, this signal occurs in situations well beyond Modi. Consider American politicians like Representatives Madeline Dean and Stephanie Bice, both of whom are prominent in their churches and have promised abortion policy based on their religious beliefs, despite being on opposing sides of the debate (Bice n.d.a; Dean 2023; Regional Leadership Council n.d.; Rotary Club of Edmond 2017), or the Afar Liberation Front, organized around traditional Muslim institutions, which challenged the Ethiopian government for decades using both violent and peaceful electoral tactics (Yasin 2008).

The following papers explore the potential for religion to signal political commitment to group members across a set of different contexts. The first paper addresses the question: Of the many organizations which have demanded autonomy or independence for identity groups, why do some last so much longer than others? Membership practices, often based around a religious or other strong ideology, provide an answer because they signal members' commitment to each other as "intensive socialization" gives the RSS its "glue." The second paper addresses the question: Why do politicians in a democratic electoral system often make promises in terms of religion? Like the BJP or Representative Dean above, they may do so to demonstrate their commitment to the political promises they make. Finally, the third paper addresses the question:

Why do some religious civil wars so often recur while others do not? Like the Kashmiri insurgents above, the strong commitment created by religious belief and practice within rebel recruitment networks may make it easier for secessionist rebel organizations to return to war if and when their religious constituents remain dissatisfied. As a whole, the dissertation explores the strong social ties created by religious belief and practice that can in turn create strong political ties, regardless of violent or nonviolent tactics and regardless of extreme or moderate ideologies. These papers advance the literature by showing how belief and practice create strong ties not only for users of particular tactics or for extremists but across varied spheres of politics and religious doctrines.

While Max Weber approached religion as a question of believing, which is an individual and mental activity, Émile Durkheim approached it as a question of belonging, which is a social identity (Wald and Smidt 1993, 32). Political scientists often emphasize the latter much more than the former, especially in quantitative work. In conflict research, studies like Reynal-Querol (2002) and Bormann, Cederman, and Vogt (2017), and Birnir and Satana (2023) have understood religion as mainly as a group identity similar to other identities like ethnicity but with different labels. Others have distinguished religious belonging as different from ethnic belonging because of its transnationality (e.g., Breslawski and Ives 2019; Nilsson and Svensson 2021) but see it as little different from an ethnic group with a particularly large diaspora. Similarly to this strain of conflict research, studies of religious mobilization in electoral politics in the United States (Calfano and Djupe 2009; McDermott 2009; Weber and Thornton 2012),[1] as well as in Turkey and Israel (Bloom, Arikan, and Courtemanche 2015), have often understood religion to act as an identity marker in politics. These bodies of research have made important contributions to

[1] See also: Albertson 2011; 2015; Castle et al. 2017; Clifford and Gaskins 2016; Djupe and Gilbert 2009; Djupe and Neiheisel 2019; McLaughlin and Wise 2014; Simas and Ozer 2017.

understanding how religion can form an important part of political identity, but the understanding of how religion influences politics is limited without incorporating how belief, with its associated communal practices, creates and strengthens a distinct form of belonging.

Believing and belonging are often closely tied in everyday experience. There are some examples of places and times where the political effects of believing and belonging are split: for example, Catholics in Northern Ireland (Mitchell 2006, 59) or various religiously defined ethnic groups in the countries of the former Yugoslavia include many people who strongly identify with a particular religious community but have relatively low levels of religious belief (Sells 2003, 309-311). At least as often, however, belief influences belonging even in cases where it formerly was less important. At one time, both Israeli and Palestinian leaders were mostly secular, with little role for religious belief in their politics despite strong affiliations with communities defined, at least partly, in religious terms. Many of today's Israeli and Palestinian leaders, however, emphasize the religious aspect of their faith community (Ben Porat and Filc 2022; Shelef 2023). United States President Joe Biden not only claims to belong to the Catholic community but is well known for his attendance at Mass (Memoli and Lee 2021). While former President Donald Trump has not been as closely connected to a religious community most of his life, his spiritual adviser Paula White has influenced his political thinking and strengthened his ties to the Evangelical Christian community (Bowler 2018, 8). Incorporating belief as part of belonging better represents real-life influences of religion in politics.

Research which has understood believing and belonging together often suffers from one of two limitations: a narrow focus on violence or a narrow social context. Some work has shown how extreme religious beliefs create incentives within religious communities to undertake terrorism (Bloom 2004; Berman 2009; Berman and Laitin 2008; Iannaccone and Berman 2006).

Other studies have considered how political claims based in religious beliefs lead to civil war (Basedau, Pfeiffer, Vüllers 2016; Svensson and Nilsson 2018; Toft 2007; 2021), how religious belief and practice combine to create these political claims (Hassner 2009), and how religious belief and practice create immaterial resources for violent conflict (Basedau Deitch, Zellman 2022). This has even included work at the microlevel (Basedau and Koos 2015; De Juan, Pierskalla, and Vüllers 2015). While this work connecting religious belief and practice has furthered the understanding of religious violence, the overwhelming majority of religious people who are engaged in politics are neither extreme in their beliefs nor violent, and even those who have been in the past may not necessarily remain so in the future.

Another body of political science research has investigated how religious belief and practice generate incentives to participate in nonviolent politics. Many of these have focused, however, only on Islamist politics (Brooke 2019; Cammett and Luong 2014; Mecham 2017) or Africa (McCauley 2017), so universally applicable understandings of religion have remained limited. Kettell (2024, 69) has argued that these scope limitations on in-depth theories of religion in politics has limited the field. Though the study of religion has increased substantially in political science in recent years, this body of research has little influenced the mainstream of the field because the knowledge produced has been too narrowly focused on violence or Islamic politics and insufficiently connected to religious situations outside of those.

There is a need to find general mechanisms connecting religious belief and practice to political behavior that can encompass both moderate and extreme religious belief, both violent and electoral politics, and that are applicable to religion generally. This dissertation advances a general principle connecting religious belief and practice to political behavior: cohesion from commitment. When religious individuals share beliefs and engage in communal practices, their

resulting belonging is stronger than a social identity alone. This cohesion creates a powerful political resource as long as the conditions which created it persist.

In the first paper, I show that mutual commitment created by religious belief and practice helps maintain self-determination organizations. Self-determination organizations are political actors that make claims for greater group autonomy or independence. Some of these organizations are also religiously identified. I create novel cross-national time series data of organizations within self-determination movements. This data consists of a random sample, which allows me to perform an unbiased test. However, the sample is not necessarily "representative" of the larger universe of cases. For each organization in the data, I determine whether its political goals are based on religion by identifying if their political goals are tied to their beliefs. I also code data on whether the organization has membership practices, such as religious study or dress codes, that encourage members to demonstrate their commitment to the organization in front of each other. I find limited evidence that organizations in the sample whose political goals are tried to belief persist longer but stronger evidence that those which encourage membership practices that signal individual members' commitment to the group persist longer. The data for this paper is based on a random sample of organizations defined only by making self-determination demands and not by use of a particular tactic. As such, this paper shows the ability of belief and practice to create belonging, not only for a particular religion or for extreme tactics, but also for moderate and peaceful organizations. It should be noted that the randomly sampled cases are drawn from Pakistan, India, Ethiopia, and Canada. The disputes in these areas feature both religious and non-religious organizations, and the religious organizations are primarily Hindu and Muslim.

Next, in the second paper, I look for individual, microlevel evidence for political cohesion based on religious commitment signals derived from belief and practice. In two survey experiments, I present respondents with a political promise from a politician, contrasting conditions in which the promise is given in religious or nonreligious terms. I find that there is no evidence of this having an effect on perceptions of policy commitment for an electoral candidate with the noncontroversial policy of traffic congestion but find some evidence for the mechanism with the controversial topic of abortion. While I do not find direct evidence that a politician's visible commitment to religion increases the perceived credibility of political promises, the results suggest that belief can generate a signal of political commitment across the American public at large, which may be useful in electoral politics. Even though the surveys are done in the context of an election in the United States to provide a concrete framing for the conditions to respondents, the theoretical design of the experiment does not rely only on conditions unique to the United States or to elections only, and future research could carry out other surveys along similar lines to show the generality of the commitment mechanism.

Finally, in the third paper, I show that the cohesion resulting from religious commitment can lead to the resumption of civil war over territory or the continuation of peace depending on incentives for the religious community with which a rebel group is associated. Using existing data classifying secessionist rebel organizations between 1975 and 2009 by whether they intentionally affiliate with a religious community, I identify equal access to political power and voluntary ending of the previous conflict as factors that limit recruitment from cohesive religious networks. I show that territorial religious rebels are not more likely to resume fighting when they are unable to recruit from highly committed religious networks. With these findings, I advance a key conditioning factor of religious civil war recurrence that explains both the recurrence of war

and the persistence of peace. Though my evidence is limited to territorial civil wars which began between 1975 and 2009, the global sample within these limits means the evidence applies beyond any particular religious context.

All three of these papers also use data which are as disaggregated as possible. It has not always been feasible for political scientists to study the relationship of religious belief and practice to politics at a reasonable level of analysis. At the smaller end, researchers can evaluate these at the individual level through surveys as I have done in the second paper. On the larger end, quantitative researchers once had to study religion at the country level (e.g., Reynal-Querol 2002), but in recent decades, data availability has improved such that researchers can study at the level of ethnic groups or organizations. This is crucially important as it is at this level that belief and practice interact, in small communities and in the political mobilization of individuals behind a political force, rather than at the national level directly or the individual level independently of the community. The first and the third papers take advantage of this plethora of data and study how belief and practice work to create commitment at the level of specific organizations.

Together, through these three papers, I contribute novel evidence in support of the role of political cohesion derived from religious belief and practice, a mechanism of religion in politics applicable broadly to different religious traditions and to nonviolent as well violent political activity. In doing so, I explain the variation of organizational persistence in self-determination movements, addressing the question of why many organizations continue their activities for secession or autonomy for decades, but others last only a year or two. Those with cohesion from belief and especially those with cohesion from communal practice tend to last longer. Since self-determination demands can lead to intrastate conflict, this finding also contributes to an understanding of where potential rebels may come from.

I also explain how religious promises in politics can be more credible than nonreligious promises, showing that cohesion from belief works in electoral politics, too, and contributing an explanation for why politicians appeal to religion when it would be otherwise unhelpful. Finally, I contribute to the puzzle of the recurrence of religious civil war by providing explanations for both recurrence and nonrecurrence. Recruitment from cohesive religious networks, created from religious belief and practice, helps explain territorial religious civil war recurrence when religious communities lack equal access to power or when religious rebels have already voluntarily committed to end conflict. The papers show that believing strengthens belonging and that this mechanism is politically relevant across different the wide range of religious backgrounds and political tactics, whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Afar Liberation Front, or Representative Madeline Dean, in which we observe religious political actors, creating a generalized finding about religion in politics.

1

Praying Together and Staying Together: Faction Survival in Self-Determination Movements

Abstract: Why do some organizations persist in demanding autonomy or independence for decades while others cease after only a short time? Research on civil war duration has rarely been linked with research on the duration of nonviolent contention, and little is known about the persistence of contentious actors, violent and nonviolent, who may eventually become rebels in a civil war. I argue that the persistence of self-determination factions, in other words, organizations demanding autonomy and independence, is primarily a function of membership continuity, and that organizations which base their political claims on religion or religion-like ideologies are likely to have more committed members and, ultimately, persist in making self-determination demands compared with other organizations. I test this on novel cross-national time series data of organizations within a sample of self-determination movements in Pakistan, India, Ethiopia, and Canada. I classify each organization by whether it has a religious or religion-like ideology as the foundation of its political goals (not merely as an identity) and whether it requires public commitment among the members, such as religious study, dress codes, or other membership practices. I find some limited evidence that religious organizations in the sample and those with religion-like ideology are more likely to persist in making self-determination demands compared with other organizations. With stronger evidence, I find that organizations which encourage membership practices demonstrating public commitment persist. Thus, behavioral incentives sometimes associated with religion facilitate the persistence of self-determination demands by organizations in this sample, revealing a new mechanism linking religion and the duration of contentious action, both violent and nonviolent.

Introduction

Why do some organizations persist in demanding autonomy or independence for decades while others make such demands for only a short time? Many ethnic groups seek self-determination from states, but these movements are not unitary, consisting of many specific organizational actors (Cunningham, Bakke, Seymour 2012). Some of these organizations persist in seeking self-determination for decades, while others arise among an ethnic group which is already represented by existing organizations only to quickly fade from the scene, leaving others to continue the movement. Consider that organizations demanding self-determination for the Afar in Ethiopia have persisted from 1974 to the present day. The Liberation Movement of the Afars has been active in demanding self-determination for the Afar for this entire period. By contrast, another Afar organization demanding self-determination, the Afar National Democratic Movement, was only active between 1994 and 1999. Variation in the number of specific organizations making self-determination demands matters for understanding conflict because each actor is a potential veto player against a bargain with the state (Cunningham 2011, 33, 44) and because the set of organizations making self-determination demands determines the set of demands in a dispute. If extreme demands are present in a movement, a peaceful resolution is less likely (Jenne 2004). Yet, what explains such a variation in the ability of each organization to persist in making demands against the government?

I argue that the rhetorical basis of an organization's political claims as well as the ideas that strengthen ties between an organization's members and leadership grant an organization the cohesion needed to persist over time. In particular, I argue that organizations which derive their demands from religion or a strong, religion-like ideology enjoy an advantage in mobilization. These organizations often expect their members to uphold standards which set behavior and

encourage participation in nonpolitical activities . These standards, which I call membership practices, allow members of each organization to signal their commitment to each other, granting an advantage in recruiting and retaining specific individuals through the production of solidary goods. This mechanism has been demonstrated for violent mobilization in a limited number of cases (Berman 2009) but has not been linked to mobilization in a broader context which includes nonviolent tactics despite self-determination organizations varying substantially on whether they make their demands based on religion. For example, the Liberation Movement of the Afars adhered to an Islamist ideology for most of its existence, while the Afar National Democratic Movement never adhered to any religious or similar ideology.

Using a novel dataset on the demands and membership practices of organizations in self-determination movements, I find some, though limited, evidence that organizations which root their self-determination demands against the state primarily in religion or a religion-like ideology are less likely to cease making self-determination demands than those rooting their claims in alternative ways. The random sample allows me to assume my test is unbiased but does not necessarily yield a representative sample. The types of organizations included in the sample vary in religion, but those that are religious tend to be Hindu or Muslim. In this sample, I find stronger support for the role played by standards of behavior and participation in nonpolitical activities (membership practices), which I argue serve as a commitment mechanism among the members. Though associated with religious demands, these practices are conceptually different (Berman and Laitin 2008, 1950): whether a self-determination demand is derived from religion is a purely ideational characteristic of the demand itself, while membership practices, even just the studying of religious ideas, involve some concrete, nonpolitical, action performed by the members. The results show that religion and similar ideologies affect the persistence of the ability of an

organization to make self-determination demands, regardless of whether that organization is violent or nonviolent. The results also show that specific signals of commitment from membership practices, sometimes associated with religion but conceptually different from belief itself, matter even more strongly for mobilization.

Organizational Persistence

Most research of organizational survival or persistence has centered on violent organizations – either "rebels" or "terrorists."[2] Research on the duration of intrastate conflict has become increasingly precise in identifying the actors involved. While some research had provided insights through the study of state-level characteristics (Buhaug, Gates, and Lujala 2009), Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan (2009) argued for a need to study the particular rebel organizations involved in conflict. This was a key insight as conflict is inherently an interaction between the government and specific rebel organizations such that civil wars contain "a set of actors that have separate preferences over the outcome of the conflict and separate abilities to block an end to the war" (Cunningham 2011, 15). Any rebel organization can be a spoiler; thus, the persistence of war is inherently linked to the persistence of the violent actors in the dispute.

Alongside this study of civil war duration, has arisen another body of research to study other varieties of contention over such disputes, particularly with the development of the NAVCO dataset (Chenoweth and Lewis 2013). Many studies have brought attention to the choice that non-state actors face in opposing states: violence is merely one tactic out of several

[2] While a large body of research has studied the factors of the duration of civil wars, we know little about the persistence of rebel actors themselves other than how long they persist in their violent action against the government. Since violent activity against the state is a choice, made out of other potential strategies, we need to know the persistence of rebel organizations as political, not just military, organizations as well as the persistence of potential rebels who pursued their claims against the government without violence.

tactics available, such as nonviolent resistance (Cunningham 2013). A smaller part of this research has analyzed the specific organizations involved (Asal et al. 2013; Cunningham, Dahl, and Frugé 2017; Dahl et al. 2020). However, unlike in the civil war literature, very little is known about duration in nonviolent campaigns, an exception being Abbs and Gleditsch (2021), who found that the outbreak of riots puts an end to nonviolent campaigns. Yet, why specific organizations persist in making their demands remains unknown. Understanding why organizations persist in making their demands will inform the study of the possible set of contentious actors in intrastate disputes and the choice they may or may not make to engage in violence.

This need to study potential, not just actual, violent actors is indicated by a body of research on the actors which precede intrastate conflict. For example, Breslawski and Ives (2019) studied how organizations making self-determination demands choose to engage in violence. White et al. (2015) argued that intrastate conflict is predicated on the pre-existence of demands against the state. These works suggest that intrastate conflict is preceded by organizations and demands. If this is so, it implies a need to explain why organizations and demands vary so much in their persistence and, therefore, in their ability to create the underlying conditions for further contentious action.

Religious demands not only increase the intensity of violence in conflicts (Svensson and Nilsson 2018; Toft 2021) but also mobilize individuals who are less willing to compromise. Thus, organizations with religious demands are less willing to accept concessions because of the distinct characteristics of their memberships, in turn increasing conflict duration (Keels and Wiegand 2020). Just as religious demands may prolong war by gathering a membership less willing to compromise, the membership of an organization pursuing religious demands may

similarly persist in demand-making, regardless of the presence of conflict. Yet, it is important to test this directly. As long as religious demands are only studied in the context of violence, it is not possible to separate religious demands in general from religious demands that may develop in the runup to conflict itself. The factors that created the violent situation could also have created the religious claims (Maoz and Henderson 2020, 375, 381). This means that the study of religious claims on the persistence of demands, encompassing both violent and nonviolent conditions, is distinct from the study of religious claims only within existing violence; we lack knowledge on religion in organizations that make demands of the government but do not choose to go to war.

Self-determination organizations are an appropriate set of demand-making organizations for this study because they are not limited to intrastate conflict or any other particular tactic, permitting the study of the effect of religion on the persistence of organizations themselves and their political demands, rather than the persistence or intensity of violence. I use the set of self-determination organizations from Cunningham (2014). As in the case of the Afar above, they vary greatly in their religious affiliations and persistence and are selected based on their participation in self-determination disputes, not based on the use of any particular tactic, making them a good sample with which to study the question. Despite this, the organizations often do use violence as well as nonviolent tactics (Cunningham, Dahl, and Frugé 2017), making them a substantively interesting category for the study of both civil war and nonviolent contention.

The question of organizational persistence in self-determination movements thus makes an important contribution to the study of civil war persistence even though it does not itself ask about violent activity. Answering this question adds to the longstanding need to know more about potential rebel organizations, not just civil wars at the conflict or country level

(Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan 2009) and the need to understand civil war as just one tactical choice out of several, violent and nonviolent, by which an organization may pursue a demand against the government (Cunningham 2013). The individuals mobilized by religious demands can cause civil war to persist longer due to their uncompromising stances (Keels and Wiegand 2020), but religious demands after war has begun are not necessarily the same as those existing before the war (Maoz and Henderson 2020, 375, 381). Therefore, the influence of religious cohesion on the persistence of membership and demands in a set of the organizations which could have gone to war but may or may not have chosen to do so is a highly relevant question to the study of intrastate conflict and contentious action. This paper furthers the study of civil war duration, first by measuring an understudied factor which underlies it, the persistence of organizations which may or may not rebel, and second by examining the influence of religion on the organizational cohesion of these organizations over time without limiting religion to beliefs held after the outbreak of violence.

Ideology and Membership Practices in Political Organizations

I make several assumptions about the nature of political activity and mobilization to hypothesize the relationship between religion and organizational duration. First, each organization has a leadership, which claims to represent a set of constituents and demands concessions from the government regarding autonomy or independence. Second, each organization attempts to impose costs on the government to make the government prefer a concession to the status quo. Third, the leadership needs some group of constituents to participate in actions to impose these costs on the government. Other resources, particularly money, may be useful, even necessary, but remain insufficient without people to use them. This is true whether the tactics are violent, nonviolent, or even limited to conventional electoral

activity. Therefore, every organization requires participants to persist in the pursuit of its demands.[3] To recruit and retain participants, an organization needs to maintain greater expected benefits than expected costs for participants in activities against the government (Gates and Nordås 2010, 7; Weinstein 2007, 7-8).

I argue that an organization whose goals are religiously motivated can increase the expected value of participation among those who share the same beliefs because of the potential to generate rewards based on those beliefs (Gates and Nordås 2010, 3; Walter 2017, 9, 20). Religion can provide a shared, systemic understanding of daily emotions, establishing a relationship between the people experiencing the emotion and other people whose are supposedly at fault (Costalli and Ruggeri 2015, 127-8). When this understanding derives from "an exogenous principle (ideology, ideal, doctrine, deity)" which is often "interpreted, administered, maintained, or even personified" by the organization's leadership, recruits receive utility or "functional rewards" from participating in the just cause of the organization (Gates and Nordås 2010, 9, 28), regardless of the eventual outcome of the participation. This increases the value of participation at low cost to the organization (Walter 2017, 20). Since functional rewards can be generated indefinitely, religion can facilitate the recruitment and retention of devotees over time and, ultimately, the persistence of the organization and its demands.

Yet, religion may also impose costs on potential recruits. Only a particular subset of the population may sufficiently accept the religious beliefs of the organization to receive functional rewards from participation; other parts of the population may have somewhat different religious preferences (Walter 2017, 17-8). The latter may be discouraged from supporting the organization

[3] I assume that the decision to participate in an organization's political activities is a rational choice by each constituent. While the responsiveness and repression of the government determines many of the costs and benefits of participation (DeNardo 1985, 190-2), the organization still has influence over other costs and benefits.

(Szekely 2014, 282).[4] Assuming that constituents naturally vary in their propensity to accept the beliefs of the organization, functional rewards mainly facilitate participation among a particularly devout subset of the constituency. So, if this were the only mechanism for religious organizations to increase mobilization, the ultimate influence on an organization's persistent ability to pursue demands against the government would be limited.

Despite these costs, however, religious organizations can also appeal even to non-religious individuals though the organizations marketing themselves and by using religion as a commitment signal. Beyond those constituents inclined to fully accept the beliefs of the organization, there may be other constituents who may not accept those beliefs or do so only weakly. Being constituents of the self-determination movement, they may still care about the shared goals of the movement. So, they could be convinced to participate in the tactics of the organization, provided they believe the organization to be sincere, capable of success, and able to successfully put costs on the government, fulfill its promises, reject unfavorable bargains, and avoid monetary gain or power for its own sake. This may be particularly true in violent conflicts (Walter 2017, 17), but even in a solely nonviolent movement, constituents should still prefer organizations which intend to fulfill the shared goals of the movement to those organizations whose leaders primarily care about power-seeking and graft.

The ability to recruit beyond those willing to directly accept the beliefs of the organization is possible by the organization marketing itself as benefiting a wider constituency. Constituents who do not fully accept the religious beliefs of the organization receive information from the recruitment of those constituents who do. When an organization recruits highly committed constituents and carries out tactics with them, this signals to unaffiliated constituents

[4] This differential effect of religion has been demonstrated quantitatively in American electoral politics (Calfano and Djupe 2009; Jennings 2016).

that the organization has at least a minimal capability to mobilize. When organizations demonstrate that they have highly committed participants, unaffiliated constituents are more likely to perceive that they are capable and sincere (Walter 2017, 11-2, 30). The organization can then position itself as the obvious choice for the broader set of constituents (Szekely 2011, 28-35). So, because an organization can use its core recruits to recruit a broader set of constituents, the religious organization may be preferred, even by nonreligious people, because it is seen as more sincere due to its core members' commitment to the stated goal.

Functional rewards and marketing can be derived not only from religion itself but also from religion-like ideologies. Theology can serve as a common "programmatic orientation," but it is not the only possible theme (Schubiger and Zelina 2017, 948) which can arrange political ideas into a set. An ideology can be a "way of understanding the world", using "doctrines, narratives, symbols, and myths" to outline "relations between members of a group and outsiders, and among members" of the group (Ugarriza and Craig 2012, 450) and can relate them to a political grievance, define goals to rectify these grievances, and define, to some extent, action to reach these goals (Ahmadov and Hughes 2017, 3; Costalli and Ruggeri 2015, 127; Gutiérrez-Sanín and Wood 2014, 215; Ugarriza and Craig 2012, 451). Therefore, there can be ideologies which function similarly to religion, though they are not religious: for example, some socialist organizations, particularly communist ones,[5] which ascribe to their leadership a vanguard role can feature strong internal discipline based on belief in socialist ideology (Kalyvas and Balcells 2010, 421) similar to religious moral authority among religious organizations. Marxist organizations like Peru's Shining Path (*Sendero Luminoso*) (Gutierrez-Sanín and Wood 2014, 218, 221) or the Communist Party of Bangladesh provide striking examples. For another

[5] Note that I am using a definition of socialism that considers communism as an extreme subset within socialism, rather than using them as mutually exclusive categories.

example, “traditional indigenous discourse (stewardship, subsistence, traditional knowledge, and indigenous governance)” serves a guiding principle for the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, not only in its politics, but in many of its activities (Shadian 2006, 284). Thus, I refer to such ideologies as religion-like ideologies and consider them similar to religion for purposes of this research.

Hypothesis 1: Religious organizations (and those with similar ideologies) can persist in making self-determination demands for longer than organizations which lack such beliefs.

Religious organizations can generate functional rewards among dedicated believers and signal commitment and capability to a broader set of constituents; they can increase this signal further the greater the visible commitment is to the organization among the existing members. Thus, religious organizations may enjoy a recruitment and retention advantage because they can normalize costly participation in the organization’s activity among its members. Participation in costly, time-consuming activities, such as religious study and charitable work, signals the members’ willingness to commit to the organization, which deters free riders and assures members that other members will contribute to the organization (Berman 2000, 905-6; Berman 2009, 22; Berman and Laitin 2008, 1943; Iannaccone and Berman 2006, 116). Together, by enduring time-consuming activities, members create confidence in each other that they will not defect from the organization. This is visible to a substantial number of members, and so, generates the expectation that everyone will participate: this expectation creates incentives for all members to remain loyal to the organization (McLauchlin 2010, 333, 338-9). This creates a belief among potential recruits that they will not be alone if they participate in the organization’s tactics.

Because the members of the organization are committed to each other, they have an advantage at "cooperative production" (Iannaccone and Berman 2006, 125). Such organizations can provide club goods, particularly mutual social aid (Berman 2000, 908; Berman 2009, 21; Berman and Laitin 2008, 1942). This advantage at cooperative production increases the advantage of joining to potential recruits, and since they may find the club goods useful, reduces their incentive to desert, leading to higher retention (McLauchlin 2014, 1437).

Religious organizations may enjoy a further retention advantage when their beliefs normalize costly prohibitions of particular social or economic activities outside the organization. Observing each other obeying prohibitions further strengthens the confidence members have in each other's commitment to the organization (Iannaccone and Berman 2006, 116, 125). Additionally, costly prohibitions on outside activities make engaging in activity outside the organization harder. This increases the value of participating in the organization, particularly the value of the social aid and other club goods provided by the organization, because members have difficulty obtaining similar goods and social aid outside the organization (Berman 2000, 908; Berman and Laitin 2008, 1943, 1951; Iannaccone and Berman 2006, 116). Hence, the normalization of costly prohibitions makes it even less likely that members have the opportunity to desert the organization, either to another organization, to the government, or to inactivity, further ensuring the retention of participants in the organization. For example, the Liberation Front of the Afars prohibited the use of alcohol and mixed-gender secondary education, separating them from supporters of the government. Supporters were also encouraged to rely on traditional mechanisms of dispute resolution (Press 1991, August 8). Presumably, supporters were less likely to interact with government supporters due to these prohibitions, making it easier

to use the traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. In the context of the Afar, turning against the organization would be likely to exacerbate costly disputes over livestock grazing.

Norms of costly participation and prohibition strengthen the credibility of organization leaders as well. By following the prohibitions and enduring the required sacrifices of participation, the organization's leaders demonstrate their commitment to the rank-and-file (Iannaccone and Berman 2006, 125). This demonstrates that they are not primarily engaged in politics for graft or for power for its own sake. Moreover, such leaders, being dedicated to their political goals, are less likely to be bought off by the government through deals which serve them personally but harm the constituents they claim to represent (Walter 2017, 23-5). This further increases the expected value of participation in both the short and long run and further facilitates recruitment and retention.

The normalization of costly participation in the organization and costly prohibition of activity outside the organization ties people so closely to the club goods, particularly social aid, provided by the organization and its leadership, that members perceive a social benefit from furthering the cause of the organization for its own sake. This further increases the marketing effect as well, as the members of the organization are visibly committed to each other and, thus, can be seen as more capable and sincere. Therefore, visible norms of costly participation and prohibition, even though they impose costs on participants, should increase the expected benefit of participation in an organization's activities. This means that religious organizations which visibly adhere to these norms should enjoy an advantage in mobilization and retention and, thus, be more able to continue to pursue demands against the government.

As with Hypothesis 1, membership practices may derive from religion-like ideology as well as from religion itself. Costly participation and prohibition often draw on the moral

authority of religion (Berman 2009), and small, strict sects like the Haredi Jews often exhibit particularly strong and visible membership practices. Still, more widespread religions also exhibit them to an extent, and membership practices do not necessarily require a theological basis (Iannaccone and Berman 2006, 117). Therefore, I do not refer to a specific basis for thought upon which membership practices can be based.

Hypothesis 2: Organizations which encourage norms of costly participation or prohibition can persist in making self-determination demands for longer than organizations which lack such norms.

Empirical Evaluation

I test these hypotheses with a novel data set. The ideal set of cases is a set of political movements which are making costly demands upon the government. Nearly all lists of organizations challenging states are defined by the organizations' tactics; for example, organizations engaging in civil war (Sundberg and Melander 2013) or terrorism (START 2018; Heger and Jung 2017). However, the above hypotheses do not depend on the use of a particular tactic: they should apply to violent and nonviolent organizations equally. I built a new dataset on Cunningham's (2014, 14; 235) list of self-determination movements, which are ultimately drawn from a list of the Minorities at Risk project (Marshall and Gurr 2003), and studied them between 1960 and 2016. Demands for autonomy or independence impose high costs upon a government because they limit a state's sovereignty. While my hypotheses apply to organizations making any set of costly demands, self-determination movements provide a set of equivalent cases on which to test the hypotheses without being limited to either violent or nonviolent organizations only. This avoids making the assumption that religion only has an effect in a violent context.

While the full set of organizations numbers 1124 organizations within 138 identity groups, reviewing the sources for membership practices is an extremely slow process, and I coded only a randomly selected subset sufficient to test these hypotheses. The subset includes 51 organizations within 5 randomly selected identity groups in Pakistan, India, Canada, and Ethiopia; this equates to an organization-year sample of 895 observations. This number of organizations was selected because 50 organizations would significantly exceed the central limit theorem criteria of 30 in a time-invariant design. I included the additional, 51st organization to encompass all component organizations in all the included movements. The subset was selected in several stages. First, one-quarter (34 of the 138) of the self-determination movements were randomly selected. Second, this set was randomly ordered by country. If multiple self-determination movements in a country had been selected, these were put in a random order. Third, all organizations in the self-determination groups at the top of the list were chosen in the new, random order, until greater than 50 organizations were included. Since all organizations within any included movement are included, this led to the subset of 51 organizations. Though this subset is sufficient to be useful, it has limitations which I discuss below.

For each organization, I coded whether it was a religious organization (or an organization following a religion-like ideology). Recall that for members to receive a benefit solely for pursuing the organization's cause, its claims must be on behalf of the religion or ideology (Gates and Nordås 2010, 9, 28; Walter 2017, 20). Crucially, an organization whose membership happens to adhere to a particular religion would not enjoy this effect unless its claims were based on that belief. So, this coding expressly does not include organizations that may discuss religion occasionally as a means of carrying out other goals (like the Palestinian Liberation Organization, for example) or nonreligious organizations that are associated with a religious identity group

despite being themselves nonreligious (like the Irish Republican Army, for example). I only coded as religious an organization whose primary political claims are considered, at least in public, by an organization to be a necessary result of pursuing a religion or religion-like ideology in each year in which the organization is active.

For each year in which an organization has been actively pursuing self-determination demands, I coded whether religion or a religion-like ideology primarily motivated those demands within the organization. An organization is coded as religious in a year if at any time in that year its primary justification for its primary political claim based on religion or on a religion-like ideology, the latter being defined as a system of thought that directs at least some behavior outside of the political context. While such systems of thought are usually religious, they do not have to be (Berman and Laitin 2008, 1950), with socialist ideology sometimes providing a similar function (Kalyvas and Balcells 2010, 421). Such principles are not necessarily a closed set. In the current sample, the nonreligious ideologies that meet this requirement are socialism and indigenous knowledge, by which I mean the extension of cultural tradition to a comprehensive system of thought which is used to derive rules for new social situations. For example, as explained above, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference invoked principles of "traditional indigenous discourse (stewardship, subsistence, traditional knowledge, and indigenous governance) and transformed these into an overarching contemporary Arctic political agenda" (Shadian 2006, 284). Since the organization uses this as a system of thought which directs ecology as well as politics, it meets the above definition of a religion-like ideology.

I also coded a binary indicator for whether the organization encourages its members to engage in participation in non-political activities or uphold standards of behavior, either of which constitutes a signal of commitment among the members to each other. Costly participation

involves theoretical religious or ideological activities, such as worship or education, labor to provide services not directly related to tactics, or very time-consuming social events. This indicator is present in a year when one of several such signals is present. First, the organization may have encouraged members to engage in time-consuming activities with each other: for example, members of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha annually commemorate the foundation of the organization with a special ceremony (Bodo Sahitya Sabha 2004) and are encouraged to organize and participate in dance, music, and art festivals which promote the culture of the self-determination group (Saikia 2009, 116-7). For the commitment to be credible, this commitment must be visible to the membership at large (Berman 2009, McLauchlin 2015, 669), so only those activities which the membership at large has the opportunity to witness count. Furthermore, to avoid endogeneity, activities directly related to pursuing political activity (the direct training, planning, or carrying out of tactics, or obtaining material resources for the same) are not counted as costly ideological participation. (Moreover, these are not as costly of signals of commitment to the cause since they also further an individual's chances at rising in power in the organization from taking successful action against the state.).

Second, signals of commitment also include costly prohibitions, a second factor which facilitates the production of club goods and, ultimately, recruitment, for each organization. More broadly, these are mandates on behavior which reduce options to receive club goods outside of the organization by visibly distinguishing the members from the general public (Berman 2000, 908; Berman and Laitin 2008, 1943, 1951; Iannaccone and Berman 2006, 116). Examples include mandates about diet, clothing, social activities (particularly those related to family and children), travel, and media consumption; all these distinguish organization members and make it

more difficult for them to find solidary goods and social services from other parts of society (Berman 2009, 65, 80).

The coding process for each organization and variable was carefully structured to be consistent across observations. I searched the sources used to build the Cunningham's (2014) dataset: Lexis Nexis, Factiva, and Keesing's news databases as well as searching dissertations, academic books, and articles. After searching these, I employed searches in Google for additional sources if needed. I first looked for an organization's demands for independence, autonomy, or other rights for the identity group. I looked to see if an organization's highest demand–i.e., independence if applicable, then autonomy, and only other demands for the identity group's self-governance (such as land rights) if neither independence or autonomy is demanded—is justified as part of religious framework or another framework of ideas. If the organization uses a nonreligious framework, the organization needs to use that framework to explain behavior outside a political context. If an organization makes a demand against the government or uses a religious justification at a point in time, I considered that situation to have continued unless it is clearly linked to a one-time event, or I found later evidence that the organization had ceased to make that demand or use that justification. I coded costly participation and prohibitions similarly, except that I only considered these to have continued over time if there is evidence that the participation or prohibition is clearly intended to persist indefinitely; otherwise, I only coded these in the years for which I found direct evidence for them. An organization does not have to have a religious or religion-like ideology to require costly participation and prohibitions, so these are potentially independent of the religion or religion-like ideology. Thus, this process provides a systemic review of an organization's

demands, systems of thought, and commitment signals for each year during which the organization made a demand on behalf of the identity group.

The sample of 51 organizations and 925 organization-years yields a distribution of five religious categories (table 1.1). More than half (548 or 59%) of the organization-years are neither religious nor have any religion-like ideology. There are 52 (or 6%) socialist organization-years, and 70 (8%) organization-years have an indigenous ideology. Given the sample, the religions involved are Hindu (231 organization-years or 25%) and Muslim (24 organization years or 3%). Thus, though the random sample is limited, it includes organizations both nonreligious and religious from multiple religious families as well as multiple religion-like ideologies.

Table 1.1: Distribution of Organization-Years by Religion or Ideology

	None	Hindu	Islam	Socialist	Indigenous
Organization-Years	548	231	24	52	70
Percent	59.243	24.973	2.595	5.622	7.568

This distribution provides a useful but limited sample. Because I selected these cases randomly from the entire set of self-determination organizations, I can assume that a test using them will not be biased in favor of my hypotheses. However, I cannot necessarily assume that the results will generalize to every situation. The sample includes a high proportion of South Asian Hindu nationalists and socialists, with a lower number of organizations that can be identified as Ethiopian Islamists and socialists, and Canadian First Nations. The sample lacks organizations from Europe, the Middle East, East Asia, Latin America, and West Africa. Most of the organizations were also active after 1990 though some started much earlier. So, I can assume reasonably that this sample will provide results that may generalize better to South Asian

organizations of different religious backgrounds and somewhat to Islamists elsewhere than other contexts. The sample also inherits the limitations of its selection frame, Cunningham's (2014) list of self-determination organizations, which itself inherits the limitations of the Minorities at Risk list of self-determination movements (Marshall and Gurr 2003), which focused on minorities that were considered at risk of conflict. So, I cannot necessarily generalize these to every ethnic group, but it is a reasonable initial test of self-determination organizations that could become rebels.[6]

In addition to the various religious groups represented, there is also a variety of membership practices in the sample (table 1.2). About half (54%) of nonreligious organization-years nevertheless have membership practices, while only 2% of socialist organization-years do. Nearly all Hindu, Muslim, and indigenous ideology organization-years, by contrast, do feature membership practices.

Table 1.2: Distribution of Organization-Years by Religion and Membership Practices

	No Membership Practices		*Membership Practices*	
	Count	% of Religion	Count	% of Religion
None	251	45.803	297	54.197
Hindu	18	7.792	213	92.208
Islamist	1	4.167	23	95.833
Socialist	51	98.077	1	1.923
Indigenous	0	0	70	100

[6] The random sample has one final flaw: the only religious organizations that ended activity before the end of the observation period are Bengali organizations which successfully achieved independence. I cannot properly estimate a model excluding these because I would then have perfect separation between religion and ending activity, but arguably these groups should not be considered to have ended their activity in the same way as others because they were successful in achieving independence. This further limits the utility of the results for religion. Thankfully, the sample does not suffer this limitation when it comes to membership practices, so the results for that variable should be considered much stronger.

The membership practices in the sample include all the six categories described above (table 1.3). Organization-years without religion or religion-like ideologies are less likely to feature membership practices, but there are many nonreligious organization-years which feature them, particularly in education and social standards of behavior. The Hindu organization-years in the sample include many membership practices, but the Muslim ones primarily feature economic and social standards rather than clothing restrictions or requirements to provide social services or study particular forms of thought.

Table 1.3: Distribution of Organization-Years by Type of Membership Practice

	Education	Services	Clothing	Other Participation	Economic	Social
None	157	5	19	60	6	195
Hindu	133	175	112	161	121	179
Islamist	0	0	0	0	23	23
Socialist	0	0	1	0	0	1
Indigenous	70	0	0	0	0	0
Total	360	180	132	221	150	398

In general, there is a lot of persistence in the data. Most organization-years persist into the next year, continuing to make some demand for the self-determination group, even if the specific type of demand (independence, autonomy, or other) changes. In 21 organization-years (2.270%), the organization ceases to make any self-determination demand and fails to persist to the next year. Also, 30 organizations (3.243%) which remained active in 2016 are right-censored.

On this data, I estimated two kinds of models, Cox proportional hazards models[7] for the survival time of the organization and logistic regression models estimating the log-odds of an organization ceasing to make claims in a year, controlling for the age of the organization with cubic splines in the latter. In both sets of models, I use robust standard errors clustered by organization. The 30 right-censored organization-years (in other words, those active in 2016) are dropped from the analysis, yielding 895 observations instead of the full 925. While no observation is taken before 1960,the 4 organization-years in 1960 are coded as their true age, not as new organizations. I use Cox proportional hazards models as the standard method but also include logistic regression because it facilitates the analysis of both the predicted probability of an organization ceasing to make claims and the relative importance of religion and membership practices to model fit. To estimate predicted probability in the logistic regression models, I used the observed values method of Hanmer and Kalkan (2013), setting all controls to the values observed in the data and averaging the probabilities thereby calculated, rather than setting controls to a mean value. To evaluate model fit, following the method of Ward, Greenhill, and Bakke (2010), I compared the area under the curve (AUC) values for each logistic regression. The "curve" refers to the Receiver Operator Characteristic (ROC) curve, a plot of a model's true positive rate (correctly predicted events as a proportion of all events in the data) by false positive rate (falsely predicted events as a proportion of all non-events in the data) at different thresholds of predicted probability. Guessing would yield equal rates, creating an AUC of 0.5, and higher AUCs indicate better predictive power. I provide a table of AUCs and levels of predicted probabilities in Appendix 1.1.

[7] I test for violations of the proportional hazards assumption in Appendix 1.1 and find no violations.

I considered four substantively important control variables. First, because it is reasonable to assume that an organization which has persisted many years is more likely to persist into the next year than a new organization, I controlled in the logistic regression models for the number of whole years that the organization has been actively making claims up to the year of observation using cubic splines to model time dependence. Second and third, in both kinds of models, because states with civil liberties and greater wealth could, potentially, be more favorable environments for organizational persistence as well as the free practice of religion, I estimated models with controls at the country level for liberal democracy (Coppedge et al. 2017a, 51) from the Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM) project (Coppedge et al. 2017b) and the natural log of gross domestic product per capita from the Penn World Table Version 10 (Feenstra, Inklaar, and Timmer 2015). Fourth, in both kinds of models, I also controlled for the number of other organizations in an organization's self-determination movement (that is, other organizations representing the same constituency). I lagged liberal democracy, GDP, and the number of organizations in the self-determination movement by one year.

Results

Hypothesis 1 predicts that an organization which adheres to religion, or a religion-like ideology will be more likely to persist than other organizations. I started by estimating models without controls (except for the age of an organization in the logistic model) (column 1 in tables 1.4 and 1.5 below). Religious organizations and those with religion-like ideology are significantly more likely to end activity in both the Cox proportional hazards model and the logistic regression compared with nonreligious organizations. This demonstrates strong evidence in favor of Hypothesis 1. Similarly, model 1 shows additional evidence in favor of Hypothesis 1 when calculating predicted probabilities from the logistic model. The predicted probability of

ending activity in the following year is .030 less (or 3.0 percentage points) for religious organizations and those with religion-like ideology than for nonreligious organizations (row 1 in table 1.6 below). This is a substantively significant decrease from the baseline probability of ceasing activity (the proportion of organization-years that fail to persist): from the logistic model, I estimated the predicted probability of a non-religious organization ending activity in a year as .041, which declines to .011 for organizations which are either religious or have a religion-like ideology. With an AUC of 0.755, the logistic model has reasonably good predictive power. In figure 1.1, I plot survival curves from the Cox model: religious organizations are likely to persist, but nonreligious ones fall to about 90% likely to persist after 15 years, a statistically significantly lower probability. Therefore, model 1 shows substantial support for Hypothesis 1 that religious organizations and those with religion-like ideology are more likely to persist than other organizations.

Next, I turn to Hypothesis 2. Are organizations which promote membership practices less likely to cease activity in a year? In model 2 (column 2 in tables 1.4 and 1.5 below), I estimated a relationship between membership practices and the chances of persisting in activity (controlling only for the age of the organization in the logistic model). As with Hypothesis 1, I find support for Hypothesis 2: organizations which promote membership practices have significant negative coefficients for ceasing activity both in the one-year logistic regression and the Cox models. From the logistic model, this corresponds to a .050 (or 5.0 percentage point) reduction in the predicted probability of ceasing activity in a year (row 2 in table 1.6 above), from .062 to .011. The logistic model provides reasonably good predictive power with an AUC of 0.763. From the Cox model, the survival curves (figure 1.2 below) show that organizations with membership

Table 1.4 Cox Proportional Hazards Model Coefficients

	Religion Alone	Membership Practices Alone	Religion with Controls	Membership Practices with Controls	Both	Both with Controls
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Religion	-1.967*		-2.064*		-1.085	-1.162
	(0.744)		(0.752)		(0.766)	(0.765)
Membership Practices		-2.994***		-3.041***	-2.689***	-2.789***
		(0.632)		(0.666)	(0.648)	(0.699)
Number of Organizations (lag)			0.084+	0.010		-0.0003
			(0.047)	(0.050)		(0.053)
Democracy (lag)			-2.141	1.036		1.366
			(1.425)	(1.453)		(1.614)
GDP per Capita (nat log, lag)			-0.193	-0.445		-0.487
			(0.287)	(0.289)		(0.295)
Observations	895	895	895	895	895	895
R^2	0.013	0.039	0.022	0.042	0.042	0.046
Max. Possible R^2	0.257	0.257	0.257	0.257	0.257	0.257
Log Likelihood	-127.083	-115.025	-122.854	-113.487	-113.732	-111.979
Wald Test	5.650* (df = 1)	18.050*** (df = 1)	15.480** (df = 4)	17.020** (df = 4)	23.320*** (df = 2)	21.240*** (df = 5)
LR Test	11.491*** (df = 1)	35.607*** (df = 1)	19.950*** (df = 4)	38.683*** (df = 4)	38.192*** (df = 2)	41.698*** (df = 5)
Score (Logrank) Test	9.569** (df = 1)	42.280*** (df = 1)	18.032** (df = 4)	44.195*** (df = 4)	44.008*** (df = 2)	46.127*** (df = 5)

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Table 1.5: Logistic Regression Coefficients

	Dependent Variable: Log-Odds of Ending Activity in the Year					
	Religion Alone	Membership Practices Alone	Religion with Controls	Membership Practices with Controls	Both	Both with Controls
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Religion	-1.828*		-2.021**		-1.355+	-1.538*
	(0.757)		(0.704)		(0.752)	(0.670)
Membership Practices		-2.224***		-2.102***	-1.931**	-1.712**
		(0.640)		(0.629)	(0.666)	(0.661)
Number of Organizations (lag)			0.075	0.018		0.028
			(0.054)	(0.054)		(0.060)
Democracy (lag)			-3.084	-0.955		-1.691
			(1.889)	(1.662)		(1.960)
GDP per Capita (nat log, lag)			0.098	-0.094		-0.025
			(0.307)	(0.338)		(0.359)
Active Years Spline 1	-3.077	-1.918	-4.238	-2.485	-1.930	-2.966
	(3.457)	(3.716)	(3.714)	(4.330)	(3.696)	(4.441)
Active Years Spline 2	5.410	5.610	6.583	7.357	5.829	7.928
	(11.532)	(12.789)	(11.051)	(13.274)	(12.794)	(12.902)
Active Years Spline 3	-25.543	-22.307	-25.019	-26.172	-24.298	-29.163
	(25.902)	(28.680)	(22.946)	(29.779)	(29.642)	(29.414)
Intercept	-2.528***	-2.492***	-1.101	-1.949*	-2.290***	-1.343
	(0.419)	(0.431)	(0.967)	(0.889)	(0.429)	(1.041)
Observations	895	895	895	895	895	895
Log Likelihood	-90.396	-86.528	-87.166	-85.786	-84.356	-83.042
Akaike Inf. Crit.	190.791	183.056	190.333	187.573	180.711	184.084

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

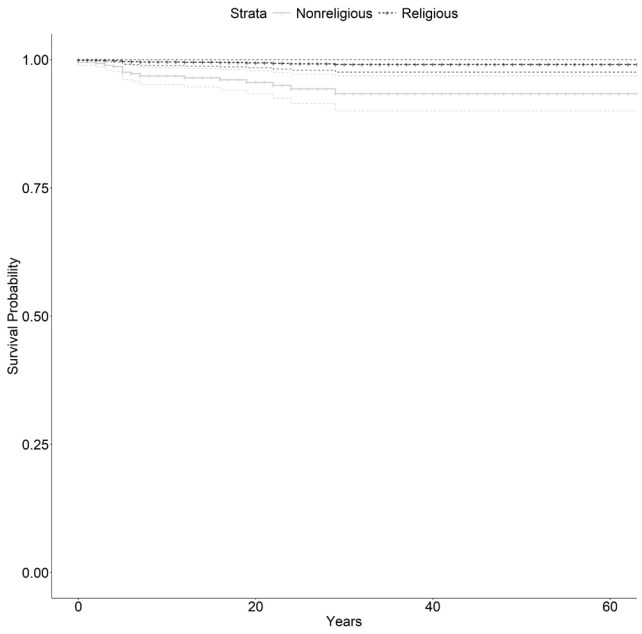

Figure 1.1: Survival Curves by Religion (Model 1 – Religion Only)

Table 1.6: Change in the Predicted Probability of Ending Activity in the Year due to Religion and Membership Practices[8]

Model	Ideology	Signals	Change	95% C.I. Min	95% C.I. Max
M1: Religion Alone	0 to 1	NA	-0.030	-0.055	-0.008
M2: Membership Practices Alone	NA	0 to 1	-0.050	-0.086	-0.024
M3: Religion with Controls	0 to 1	NA	-0.036	-0.064	-0.014
M4: Membership Practices with Controls	NA	0 to 1	-0.049	-0.088	-0.023
M5: Both	0 to 1	Observed	-0.023	-0.049	0.003
M5: Both	Observed	0 to 1	-0.041	-0.075	-0.015
M6: Both with Controls	0 to 1	Observed	-0.028	-0.055	-0.005
M6: Both with Controls	Observed	0 to 1	-0.037	-0.072	-0.011

[8] Observed means the predicted probability was calculated with that variable set to the values observed in the data, following Hanmer and Kalkan (2013). The analysis used R (R Core Team 2024); including the{DAMisc} package (Armstrong 2022) for predicted probabilities; {sandwich} (Zeileis 2006; Zeileis, Köll, and Graham 2020) and {lmtest} (Zeileis and Hothorn 2002) for clustered standard errors;{stargazer}(Hlavac 2022) for tables; and{calibrate} (Graffelman and Van Eeuwijk 2005) for plots.

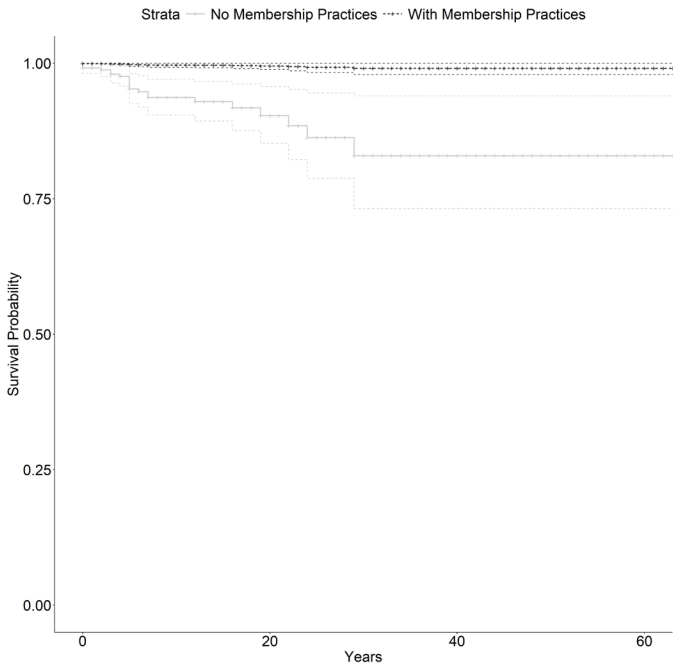

Figure 1.2: Survival Curves by Membership Practices (Model 2 – Practices Only)

practices are always very likely to persist, but those without fall to a statistically significantly lower probability (about 80%) after 15 years. So, I also find strong support for Hypothesis 2.

Having demonstrated that the relationship between both religion and membership practices and the log-odds of ceasing activity in a year support both Hypotheses 1 and 2, I now turn to see whether these results hold when controlling for basic controls of democracy and GDP in case richer countries or those with more civil liberties allow organizations greater ability to publicly proclaim religion and membership practices as well as to persist in political activity. In model 3 (column 3 in tables 1.4 and 1.5 above), I find that there is a significant and negative coefficient for religion in the logistic as well as in the Cox proportional hazard model. Thus, religious organizations have a significantly smaller probability of ceasing activity than nonreligious organizations even when controlling for democracy and GDP. Similarly, according

to the logistic model, I find that the predicted probability of ceasing activity in a year decreases by .036 (3.6 percentage points) (row 3 in table 1.6 above) or from .046 to .009, similarly to the situation without the controls. The AUC of 0.766 in the logistic model is only slightly better than the AUC of 0.755 in logistic model 1 which did not control for the number of organizations, wealth, or liberal democracy. From the Cox model, the survival curves (figure 1.3 below) also show that religious organizations are more likely to persist, though the difference is smaller than in the model without controls and the confidence intervals of the curves overlap. Competing organizations, wealth, and liberal democracy, therefore, only slightly weaken the evidence for Hypothesis 1.

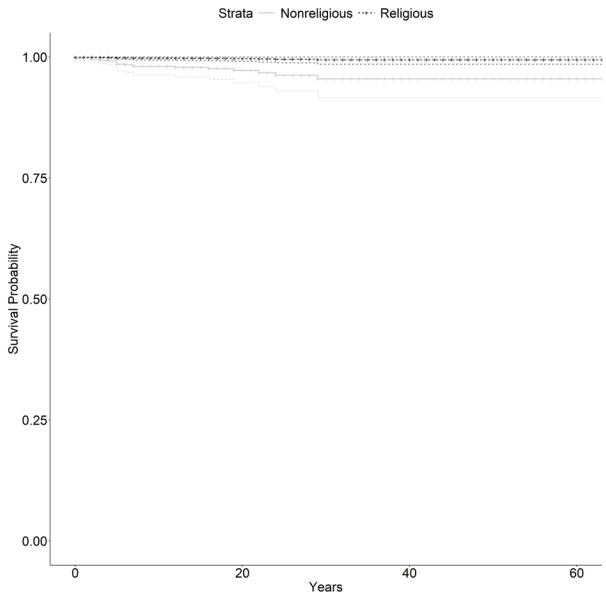

Figure 1.3: Survival Curves by Religion (Model 3 – with Controls)

Turning again to Hypothesis 2, I estimate model 4 (column 4 in tables 1.4 and 1.5 above) to estimate a relationship between membership practices and the log-odds of ceasing activity in a year while controlling for the number of competing organizations, democracy, and GDP. As with

Hypothesis 1, the relationship between persistence and membership practices is not explained by the number of competing organizations, wealth, or democracy in both the logistic and proportional hazards models; the coefficient for ending activity is lower for organizations with membership practices than those without, regardless of the number of competing organizations, level of wealth, or democracy, supporting Hypothesis 2. I also present predicted probabilities from the logistic model 4 (row 4 in table 1.6 above) which show that the predicted probability of ending activity is .049 (or 4.9 percentage points) lower (from .061 to .013) for organizations with membership practices than those without, controlling for wealth and democracy. The AUC of 0.796 of the logistic model is only slightly better than the AUC of 0.763 in logistic model 2 which did not control for the number of organizations, wealth, or liberal democracy. From the Cox model, the survival curves (figure 1.4 below) show, again similarly to Model 2, that

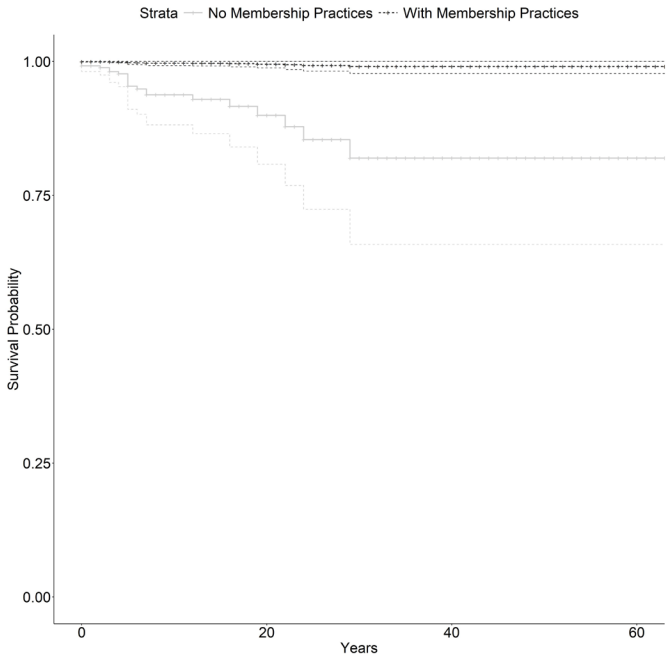

Figure 1.4: Survival Curves by Membership Practices (Model 4 – with Controls)

organizations with membership practices are always likely to persist but those without fall to about only an 80% chance of survival after 15 years though the confidence intervals of the curves overlap. Thus, even considering that the number of competing organizations, state-level wealth and democracy might affect organizations' persistence, I again find reasonable evidence in favor of both Hypothesis 1 and 2.

Having shown that religion or religion-like ideology and membership practices each increase an organization's chance of persistence, both alone and controlling for the number of competing organizations, state-level wealth, and liberal democracy, in support of both Hypothesis 1 and 2, I now turn to whether both religion and membership practices affect persistence in the presence of the other. In model 5 (column 5 in tables 1.4 and 1.5 above), I estimated the chances of an organization ending activity conditional on both whether the organization is religious and whether it has membership practices (controlling only for the age of the organization in the logistic model). I find weaker evidence for an effect of religion in the presence of membership practices: the coefficient for the log-odds of an organization ending activity in the next year in the logistic model is negative but only significant at the 10% level. The coefficient for religion in the Cox model is negative but not significant. Similarly, I calculated that the predicted probability from the logistic regression of religious organizations ending activity in the next year is .023 (2.3 percentage points – see row 5 in table 1.6 above) less than nonreligious organizations (from .038 to .014), controlling for the presence of membership practices, but this difference is not statistically different from 0 at the ordinary 5% significance level. The AUC in logistic model 5 is 0.818, somewhat better than the AUC of 0.755 in logistic model 1 which included religion without membership practices. Thus, I find some evidence in favor of Hypothesis 1 that religious organizations are more likely to persist than nonreligious

organizations even when controlling for whether the organization has membership practices in addition to religious beliefs, but this evidence is not as strong as compared with the evidence for religion when not considering membership practices.

By contrast, for membership practices, I find strong evidence in both the logistic and Cox regressions for model 5even controlling for whether the organization is religious (or has a religion-like ideology). From the logistic regression, I calculated that the predicted probability for an organization ceasing activity is .041 (or 4.1 percentage points – See row 6 in table 1.6 above) less for an organization with membership practices than without, controlling for religion, a decrease from .053 to .012. Since the AUC of logistic model 2 with membership practices only was 0.763, the increase to the AUC of 0.818 in logistic model 5 is smaller than it was for logistic model 1 with religion alone but still somewhat better. Therefore, I find strong evidence for Hypothesis 2 controlling for religion: organizations with membership practices are more likely to persist even regardless of whether they are religious.

Finally, I estimated a final model (model 6 – column 6 in tables 1.4 and 1.5 above) with both religion and membership practices like model 5 and controlling for democracy and GDP (as in models 3 and 4) to examine whether religion and membership practices both have effects when controlling for each other as well controlling for other factors like the potential for wealth and greater civil liberties to allow organizations greater freedom to practice religion and institute membership practices (as well as freedom to persist) and like the potential for competing organizations to inhibit persistence. Here, I find good evidence for both Hypothesis 2 but the evidence for Hypothesis 1 is weaker. The coefficients for membership practices are statistically significant and negative in both the logistic and Cox regressions, so organizations with membership practices are significantly less likely to cease activity, regardless of whether those

organizations are also religious. However, I only find a significant negative coefficient for religious organizations in the logistic regression. In the predicted probabilities from the logistic regression, religious organizations have a .028 (2.8 percentage point) smaller probability of ceasing activity in a year (row 7 in table 1.6 above), controlling for religion as well as wealth, liberal democracy, and the number of competing organizations. The AUC of 0.791 is not substantively less than the AUC of 0.818 in logistic model 5 that did not control for the number of organizations, wealth, and liberal democracy. However, the survival curves from the Cox model suggest no effect of religion in the presence of membership practices: while there is a (statistically significant) decrease in the estimated probability of survival for nonreligious organizations compared with religious ones among organizations without membership practices (figure 1.5), the survival curves for organizations with membership practices differ little by religion (figure 1.6). Thus, I find only weak evidence in favor of Hypothesis 1 that religion has an effect independent of membership practices.

The evidence is for Hypothesis 2 from model 6 is stronger. Controlling for religion and for the other controls, I find a significantly negative coefficient for membership practices in both the logistic and Cox models. From the logistic regression, organizations with membership practices have a .037 (3.7 percentage point) smaller probability of ceasing activity (row 8 in table 1.6 above). From the survival curves from the Cox model, organizations with membership practices have a very high probability of continuing activity regardless of religion. Among nonreligious organizations, those without membership practices fall to about a 75% chance of survival after 15 years (figure 1.7) while religious ones without membership practices fall to about a 90% percent chance of survival after 15 years (figure 1.8). While this is moderately strong support for Hypothesis 2, that membership practices have significant relationships with

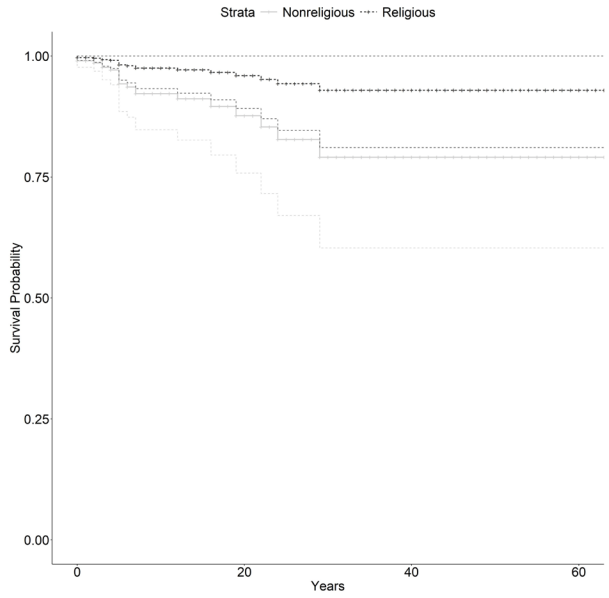

Figure 1.5: Survival Curves by Religion (Organizations without Membership Practices) (Model 6)

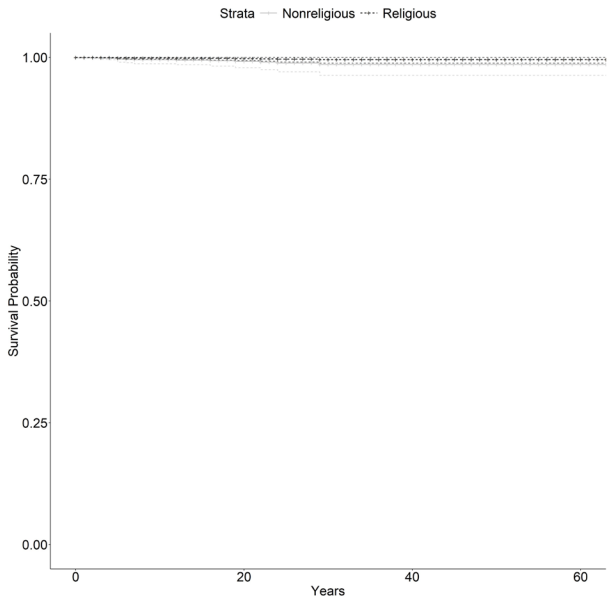

Figure 1.6: Survival Curves by Religion (Organizations with Membership Practices) (Model 6)

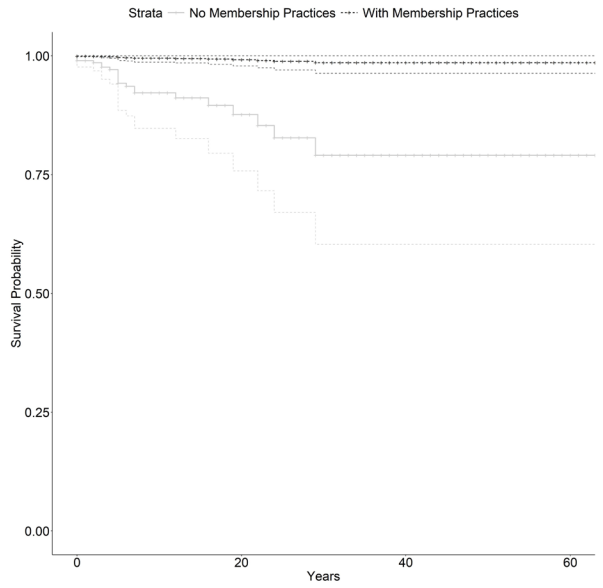

Figure 1.7: Survival Curves by Membership Practices (Nonreligious Organizations) (Model 6)

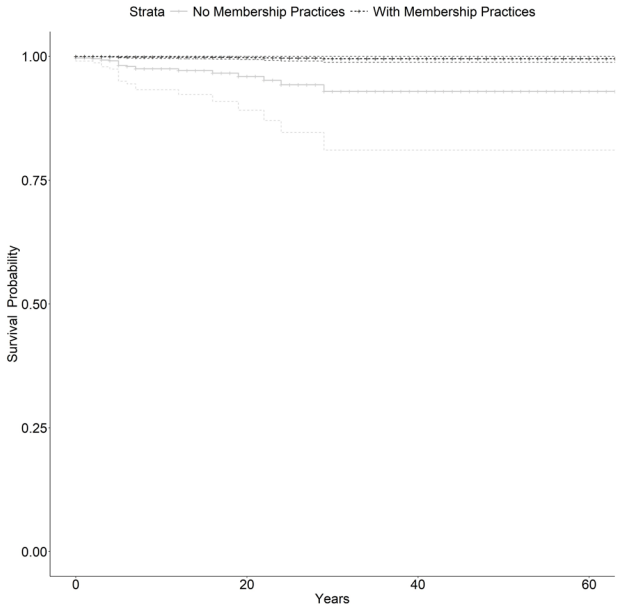

Figure 1.8: Survival Curves by Membership Practices (Religious Organizations) (Model 6)

persistence, independently of religion and other controls, this evidence is also limited by the overlap in the confidence intervals of the survival curves.

Finally, I turn to find further evidence in favor of the hypotheses by showing the predictive power in the logistic regression models of religion and membership practices compared with the control variables of the number of competing organizations, wealth (GDP), civil liberties (liberal democracy). Figure 1.9, stage 1, shows the AUC from the full model (model 6) and models removing each of the variables in it. ("S1", "S2", and "S3" represent the splines for the number of years the organization has been active.) The coefficient for membership practices has the greatest predictive power in the full model, and removing it reduces AUC from 0.791 to 0.779. Religion has the second greatest predictive power, reducing AUC to 0.789. While these variables do not add large improvements to predictive power, they are better than intuitively important variables like the splines for the number of years the organization has been active, the removal of which results in a slight increase of AUC to 0.828 or 0.829. Removing the number of competing organizations, GDP, or liberal democracy also slightly improves AUC to 0.831, 0.831, and 0.821, respectively, compared with the 0.791 AUC of the full model.

Figure 1.9, stage 2, shows the changes in predictive power from removing each variable after already removing membership practices. Among variables other than membership practices, religion has the greatest predicting power, and removing it drops AUC from 0.779 to 0.704. Removing liberal democracy drops AUC to only 0.772, and removing the number of competing organizations drops it to 0.775. Removing the three splines for the active years of an organization either actually increases AUC from 0.779 to 0.782 or very slightly decreases it to 0.776 and 0.777. Removing GDP does not change AUC from 0.779. Stage 3, starting with a

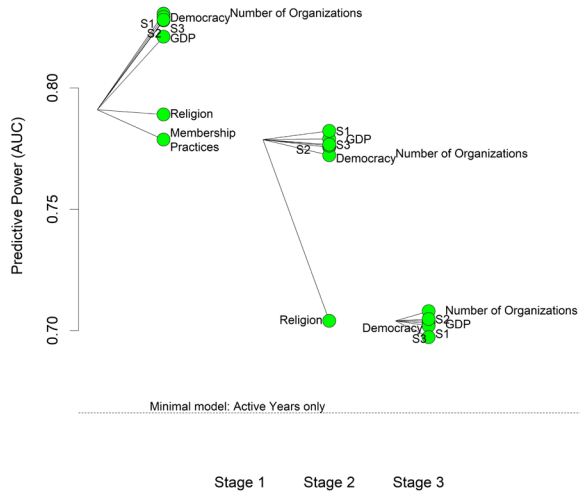

Figure 1.9: In-Sample Predictive Power

model including only splines for the active years, liberal democracy, and GDP, shows that the splines for the active years of an organization are much more predictive than liberal democracy and GDP, with dropping the splines for the active years reducing AUC from 0.704 to 0.697 for the third spline and slight changes to .702 and .705 for the others. This is compared with 0.704 for liberal democracy. Dropping the number of competing organizations in Stage 3 slightly increases AUC from 0.704 to 0.708, while dropping GDP does not change AUC from 0.704.

Figure 1.10 shows the same analysis as figure 1.9 but using 4-fold cross-validation (*k*-fold where *k* equals 4) (Ward, Greenhill, and Bakke 2010). This estimates the models with a random selection of ¾ of the dataset (a "training set") and examines the changes in AUC from prediction on the remaining ¼ (a "test set"); the average is then taken of having done this for each quarter of the dataset being used as the test set. To account for variation in the four-fold division of the data, this whole process is done ten times and averaged to create the result. The results are little different from the in-sample results in figure 1.9: removing membership

practices reduces AUC from 0.769 to 0.720, and removing religion drops AUC to 0.737, while removing the three splines for the years of activity increases it slightly to 0.780 or 0.767 or slightly decreases it to 0.764. In stage 2, dropping religion from a model that already excludes membership practices drops AUC from 0.720 to 0.644. Dropping liberal democracy in Stage 2 drops AUC from 0.720 to 0.715, and dropping the number of competing organizations and GDP, respectively, increase AUC slightly to 0.722 and 0.733. Dropping the three splines changes AUC slightly to .744, .728, and .710. Thus, these analyses of predictive power show that membership practices are a substantively significant factor of the survival of an organization while religion is likewise an important factor but to a lesser extent. Both are much better predictors than the organization's age, the number of competing organizations in the movement, country-level wealth, and liberal democracy.

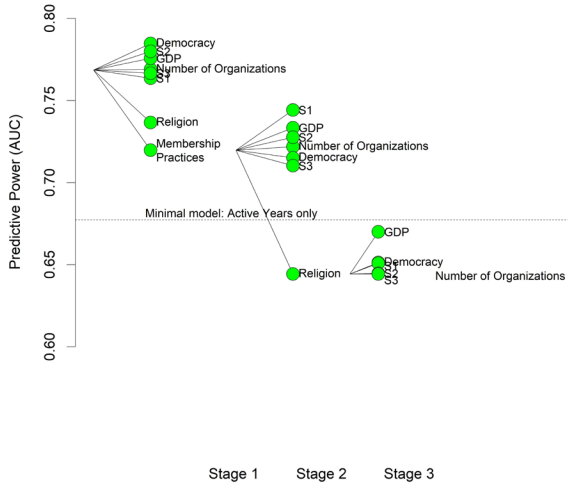

Figure 1.10: Out-of-Sample Predictive Power

Together, the results of these models and the analyses of predictive power provide reasonably strong evidence in favor of both hypotheses: both religion (or religion-like ideology) and membership practices have significant relationships with persistence. Neither the possibility that democracy or wealth at the country level permit an organization to more freely practice both religion and membership practices as well as persist nor the possibility that competing organizations inhibit persistence fully explains these relationships. Moreover, there is some evidence that both religion and membership practices have relationships with persistence controlling for the other characteristic, though that evidence is stronger for membership practices than for religion. The Cox proportional hazards models do not change the results for membership practices, but religion is not statistically significant at conventional levels in some models controlling for membership practices though still a negative coefficient. Therefore, I still conclude that these results show that ideational factors do allow organizations in self-determination movements to persist in their demands over time.

Conclusion

Religion, including religion-like ideology, but especially membership practices (that is, standards of behavior and participation which an organization imposes upon its members), are significant factors in the ability of organizations to continue making self-determination demands against a state over time. Thus, first, these results identify specific factors of mobilization that influence the persistence of the set of potential rebel actors, those that ultimately do not become violent as well as those that do. Second, these results show some, though limited evidence that religion (and religion-like ideologies) have an effect on nonviolent as well as violent mobilization for self-determination movements outside of civil war, extending the known findings that religion may encourage mobilization in war. Third, more strongly supported,

specific signals of commitment by organizational members made through participation in nonpolitical activities and standards of behavior, often but not necessarily related to religion or a religion-like ideology, have an independent effect from belief in religion or ideology itself on maintaining mobilization over time at least for the study sample. This adds to the body of research on the mechanisms by which religion and religion-like ideologies may influence mobilization.

These results have implications for the study of civil war duration and dynamics of contentious action. If factors like religion that influence civil war duration also influence the persistence of claim making organizations, then studies of religion and civil war onset need to distinguish the effect of religion on mobilization for demand-making from the effect of religion on a politically active organization in choosing to engage in pursuing those claims by violence. Second, the results also have implications for the study of the role of religion and ideology on conflict duration. Though the evidence is limited, deriving goals from religion or religion-like ideology may allow an organization to persist in making self-determination demands, at least within the cases represented in the sample. More importantly, membership practices that provide signals of commitment, dictating standards of behavior and participation in nonpolitical activity, produce independent results on organizational persistence in this sample. While these often are related to religion, I find stronger support for an effect of these practices than belief itself. This paper then adds to the study of research on the mechanisms of religion and ideology in violence and contentious politics. Specific behaviors, often associated with religion but not necessarily religious, are an additional factor related to but distinct from religion itself, lending more evidence to the importance of considering specific mechanisms of religion rather than simply studying religion as a fixed identity in the cases in the sample. Future research on religion and

conflict will need to continue to identify such mechanisms rather than treating religion as a simple category associated with contentious organizations, supporting calls made in previous research (Toft 2021, 1608).

This paper explains important variation in an understudied topic adjacent to the study of civil war duration and the study of varieties of contentious action, both violent and nonviolent: the duration of organizations participating in self-determination movements. Because this is a set of potential civil war actors, including those that rebel and those that may not rebel, this is an important category of actors to study in its own right to understand mobilization accounting for the fact that violence is a strategic choice made by specific actors, not something that happens to a country, region, or ethnic group. It is specific organizations that make claims and choose to pursue violence or nonviolence in their pursuit. These organizations, to the extent they are similar to organizations in the random sample, may be more likely to persist as self-determination organizations when their members have mobilized around demands explicitly based on religion or a religion-like ideology. There is stronger evidence that this set of organizations are more likely to persist when their members show commitment to each other through standards of behavior and participation in nonpolitical activities. In addition to testing these hypotheses on a broader sample of organizations, future research needs to continue to explain the mobilization of claim-making organizations, regardless of their tactical choice, and further investigate the effects of both religious and ideological factors and specific behavioral practices on the ability to pursue claims against states.

2

Let Your Yea Be Yea; and Your Nay, Nay: Religious Rhetoric as a Signal of Policy Commitment

Abstract: Why do some politicians offer an overt religious basis for their policies? Overt religious rhetoric can harm a politician's standing with less religious voters and, in the current American environment, signals shared beliefs, policies, and affiliations with religious conservatives. While overt religious rhetoric can appeal to a broader constituency if those voters hold positive stereotypes of religious people or negative stereotypes of atheists, this explanation seems decreasingly relevant as polarization increases in the United States and the nonreligious share of the population grows. Yet, left-leaning politicians, notably President Joe Biden, who depend little on religious conservatives but depend substantially on less religious voters, nevertheless continue to use religious rhetoric when explaining their policies. I look for empirical evidence that religious rhetoric can create a perception among voters of a politician's commitment to promised policies, a possible explanation for its use. Religious rhetoric, when used with a policy promise, might appeal to a less religious constituency which supports that policy because it signals commitment to that policy even if that constituency does not subscribe to the religious ideas. In two survey experiments, I contrast religious and nonreligious frames for a political promise, first with a noncontroversial policy, improving traffic congestion, and second with a highly polarized topic, abortion,. I find that the religious rhetoric does not increase a voter's confidence that a politician is committed to a noncontroversial policy in an undergraduate sample. While initial results for the controversial policy are also insignificant, except among Republicans, an extended analysis shows that religious rhetoric does increase the probability that voters in United States from a balanced sample are completely convinced of a politician's commitment, though this is not true among Democrats, for whom nonreligious justifications are more effective.

Introduction

Why do some politicians in the United States provide an overt religious basis for their policies? In the 2020 election, then-candidate Joe Biden often mentioned his religion as a basis for his policies, citing, for example, the teachings of Pope Francis in laying out his policy platform in Warm Springs, Georgia, on October 27, 2020 (Biden 2020). Similarly, in June 2023, 31 Democratic members of Congress, including former Speaker Nancy Pelosi, published a letter led by Connecticut Representative Rosa DeLauro (2023) citing Catholic religious principles as the reason for their support for legal abortion. Previous literature suggests that politicians can use religious rhetoric to appeal to voters beyond religious conservatives because those politicians can benefit from a widespread stereotype of religious people as more trustworthy than atheists (McDermott 2009; Clifford and Gaskins 2016).

However, as polarization has increased in the United States, opinions about religious people by nonreligious people, particularly among Democrats, have cooled. Democrats are now more likely to have unfavorable than favorable views of both Catholic and Evangelical Christians and only slightly more favorable views of Mainline Protestants. The growing religiously unaffiliated population rates most Christian groups even more unfavorably (Tevington 2023). Why have some politicians, particularly those not affiliated with the religious right, continued to use a religious justification for their policies when their voters are increasingly unlikely to view such religious justifications favorably? I argue that providing a religious justification for a policy creates a perception of a particularly strong commitment to that policy which should be attractive to supporters of that policy, regardless of their own religious views.

Rhetorically linking religion to politics is extremely common in the United States. It garners support among religious voters, particularly among Evangelical Christians, by cueing shared identity (Castle et al. 2017) and implying shared policy goals (Weber and Thornton 2012). Because some voters, particularly less religious ones, disapprove of connecting religion and politics, politicians sometimes use subtle rhetoric easy for certain Christians to understand but likely to be ignored by others (McLaughlin and Wise 2014).[9] Despite that option, politicians often overtly tie their policies to religion as in the examples of President Biden and Representative De Lauro above. One reason for a politician to want to appeal openly to religion is to avoid being perceived as an atheist and suffering from a stereotype that atheists are untrustworthy (Clifford and Gaskins 2016). However, this reason to overtly link religion and policy should be decreasingly important as the nonreligious share of the population grows and the general public's sentiment toward many Christian groups cools.

I explain the persistence of overtly linking religion to policies as a signal of commitment to those policies. Regardless of whether voters consider religious people more trustworthy than atheists, linking a policy to religion can create a perception among voters that a politician believes that policy to be a core part of the politician's worldview. It also suggests to voters that, for the politician, abandoning that position would impose psychological penalties upon the politician as a sincere believer and social penalties regardless of the politician's depth of actual belief.

After showing that current understandings of religious policy justification cannot explain its persistence, I describe the psychological and social incentives for a politician when linking a policy to religion and the perceptions these may create for voters. I test for the presence of such

[9] For example, a candidate might use the word "faith" but not the word "God" (McLaughlin and Wise 2014, 374).

perceptions among voters through two survey experiments. In the first, with a sample of university undergraduates, I find that religious rhetoric does not increase voters' estimation of a politician's commitment to a noncontroversial policy. Since this may be because there is little incentive not to be committed to a noncontroversial policy, in the second, using a national sample in the United States, I test the effect of religious rhetoric on voters' estimation of a politician's commitment to a promised abortion policy. I fail to support my hypothesis in the initial analysis, except among Republicans, but in an additional analysis, I find evidence that a religious justification for a policy can make voters across the national sample more likely to completely believe a candidate is committed. However, I fail to find evidence that a religious justification can increase commitment perceptions for Democratic voters. I conclude by discussing the implications for the understanding of electoral politics from religion serving as a signal of policy commitment.

Politicians' Incentives to Use Religious Rhetoric

The first and obvious explanation for the widespread use of religious rhetoric among American politicians is to gain the support of religious voters. However, overt religious rhetoric can also harm a politician's position among the less religious because of negative associations with religion, or at least with religion in politics, among that audience (Albertson 2015; Domke and Coe 2008, 19; McLaughlin and Wise 2014, 376-9). Given this, politicians often use more muted religious rhetoric which is understood well by those whom the politician wants to target but less well by others. Still, despite the risk of negative associations and the option of using coded rhetoric to avoid those associations, politicians do not always hide their religious rhetoric.

Politicians may want to associate with religion more openly because it serves as a heuristic by which voters may infer information about a candidate (McDermott 2009, 342). This

can be useful for a politician who wants to signal shared political positions with religious traditionalists (Weber and Thornton 2012) since revealing a candidate's religious intensity causes voters to infer conservative positions on cultural issues (Castle et al. 2017). However, this cannot explain why a politician would overtly use religion to justify a directly stated policy position, much less one which is not culturally conservative. Religious rhetoric (Albertson 2015, 21; Calfano and Djupe 2009, 333-7) or revealing a candidate's denomination as a Catholic or Evangelical Christian also signals that the candidate is more likely to be a Republican (Simas and Ozer 2017). Signaling that the candidate is a highly religious Christian, not only signals party identification as a Republican (Campbell, Green, and Layman 2011), but also intensity of partisanship (Castle et al. 2017). While a politician may also want to use overt religious rhetoric if trying to attract conservative or strongly Republican votes, this cannot explain overt religious rhetoric in the context of moderate or even left-leaning positions associated with the Democratic Party. Such an approach would imply a politician trying to both attract and repel conservatives and Republicans at the same time. So, heuristics of issue positions or partisanship do not explain the overt religious justification for policies which are neither culturally conservative nor strongly linked to the Republican Party.

Potentially, the overt religious justification for these policies might instead help politicians benefit from positive stereotypes of religious people. Evangelical Christians are seen not only as more politically conservative but also more trustworthy and competent, particularly compared with those who have no religion (McDermott 2009, 348). By contrast, atheists are seen as untrustworthy, so candidates can increase their perceived trustworthiness by appealing to religion (Clifford and Gaskins 2016, 1066). Still, this depends on a voter having the underlying positive stereotype of religious people (or the underlying negative stereotype of atheists).

Clifford and Gaskins (2016, 1085) found that only individuals who were at least moderately religious actually perceive a candidate as more trustworthy due to a religious cue. While a politician might benefit from overtly cueing religion to be seen as trustworthy even if that politician does not want to be associated with conservative positions or the Republican Party, this only works if the target audience holds the stereotype that religious people are trustworthy, which most likely requires that audience to be at least minimally religious.

This assumption might have held in the recent past in the United States, making it reasonable for a left-leaning politician to use overt religious rhetoric, but it is no longer clear that such politicians' target constituencies hold positive stereotypes of religious people. Rather, the relationship between the political right and Christianity has become so strong that left-leaning people are increasingly becoming nonreligious to avoid being associated with the right, and the trend is growing (Campbell et al. 2018; Margolis 2018). Moreover, the data in many of these studies date from no later than the beginning of the administration of President Donald Trump. This process may have progressed substantially after the 2020 election. Since many Americans on the political left are increasingly rejecting any connection to religion, it seems unlikely that they would retain a positive stereotype of religious people as trustworthy. A left-leaning politician is unlikely to garner voters' trust by using overt religious rhetoric now that this stereotype may no longer exist or may be much weaker.

National surveys on the willingness to vote for candidates of different religious backgrounds further support the idea that this stereotype has weakened among Democrats. Clifford and Gaskins (2016), using polling data from 2007, argued that the stereotype of religious people as more trustworthy than atheists created a bias against voting for atheists. It was this bias that led candidates to portray themselves as religious when they otherwise would

not have the incentive to do so. While current national data shows that atheists indeed remain unpopular choices as presidential candidates, it is Republicans, for whom a candidate's Christianity can also signal shared policy preferences regardless of any stereotype of trustworthiness, who drive this result. A January 2020 Gallup survey (Saad 2020) showed that only 60% of the US public was willing to vote for an atheist. However, this included only 41% of Republicans but 69% of Democrats. Though the percentage of Democrats willing to vote for an atheist still fell under the 77% of Democrats willing to vote for an Evangelical Christian, the difference was not particularly significant given the 4-point margin of error. Notably, more Democrats were willing to vote for an atheist than the 66% of Democrats who were willing to vote for a candidate older than 70 in the same survey even though Joe Biden, the eventual nominee and future president, was already 77 years old at the time. Even more important than the size of the partisan divide toward atheist candidates is the trend: in the same survey in 2012, only 58% of Democrats were willing to vote for an atheist compared with 48% of Republicans (Jones 2012), but by 2015, 64% of Democrats were willing to vote for an atheist compared with 45% of Republicans (McCarthy 2015). Atheism does not seem to be the difficulty it once was for Democratic candidates. It is reasonable to assume that Democratic voters do not attribute the same level of trustworthiness to candidates using overt religious rhetoric today as they did in 2007.

Yet, the examples in the introduction postdate that 2020 survey. Even though it is very unlikely that Democratic politicians need to demonstrate religiousness to gain the trust of voters as they might have in 2007, and despite the risk of alienating less religious voters, they sometimes continue to appeal to religion in explaining their policies. Republican politicians or others who rely more on religious voters than nonreligious ones and those who hold culturally

conservative positions may use overt religion as a heuristic, but mainstream Democratic politicians, presenting non-conservative positions, should not benefit from doing so. I argue that overt religious justification for policies must signal something other than issue positions, partisanship, or positive religious stereotypes. I explain below why it may signal to voters those politicians' commitment to the policies presented alongside the religious rhetoric. Politicians may, therefore, gain voters who favor those policies, regardless of those voters' own religious views or biases.

Accountability and Commitment

Assuming that voters expect politicians to act on the voters' preferences, politicians must promise to pursue particular policies to gain or retain voters' support.[10] Each candidate needs to indicate which policies that candidate intends to carry out to attract voters. Voters can only imperfectly know a politician's true preferences and must vote based on their best estimation of them, so politicians have incentives to give voters a perception that they share their preferences. This communication of preferences can be understood as promises which voters expect winning candidates to fulfill, regardless of whether those candidates express them formally as such (Sulkin 2011, 11), making promises a key part of gaining and retaining office.

This creates a commitment problem. Assuming that politicians hold even weak personal preferences on policies, rather than caring solely about holding office, they have a possible incentive to misrepresent their positions to match those of the median voter in the electorate to win. Winners can renege and act on true preferences afterwards, but voters cannot hold them accountable until the next election. Anticipating this time-inconsistency problem, voters cannot

[10] Voters might instead choose politicians for using their best, independent judgement (Mansbridge 2009, 380), but voters are especially likely to prefer politicians who will faithfully pursue the voters' preferences when society is strongly ideologically polarized (Fox and Shotts 2009) as the United States is currently (e.g., Margolis 2018).

trust politicians' stated positions (Alesina 1988, 796-799; Becher 2015; Iversen and Soskice 2006, 168; Persson and Tabellini 2000, 99). While politicians do actually attempt to act on their promises (Bonilla 2014, 10-11), voters also *believe* there is a large risk they will not (Bonilla 2014, 17)[11]. To gain and retain office, politicians should benefit from showing voters that they can solve this commitment problem.

To do so, politicians can show that their future costs from broken promises exceed their expected benefits from pursuing different policies. Two factors are especially important. First, if politicians' promises are already close to their true preferences, the temptation to pursue different policies is smaller. Second, politicians must face a high likelihood of punishment from future promise breaking (Alesina 1988, 800-2).[12]

Actually punishing promise-breaking requires monitoring and sanctioning politicians. Because these are relatively difficult tasks for voters, voters prefer candidates for whom someone else can do the monitoring and sanctioning (Mansbridge 2009, 378). Politicians benefit when voters see that institutions already exist for these tasks. Coalition partners serve this purpose in many countries but do not exist for individual candidates in majoritarian systems like the United States (Iversen and Soskice 2006, 168-9). Parties might also monitor and sanction their members for defecting from promises in the party platform (Becher 2015), but the weak state of American political party institutions makes this unlikely in practice (e.g., Hilton 2021). Media coverage of any key vote in the extremely closely divided House and Senate reveals the power of individual members to defect. Individual politicians in the United States today need ways beyond party

[11] The time-inconsistency problem is also supported empirically: it explains observed relationships between income inequality, government wealth redistribution, and electoral institutions (Becher 2015, 770) and the lack of policy convergence between opposing parties, though, in theory, all parties should take the position of the median voter (Lee, Moretti, and Butler 2004).

[12] Assuming a repeated cycle of elections into the future, politicians will be punished eventually, but this does not make promises credible in the short run (Alesina 1988, 796). Moreover, voters and politicians do not act as though they see themselves in an infinitely repeated game (Becher 2015, 770).

institutions to show voters that they can be monitored and sanctioned for defecting from their promises, ideally in addition to showing that their preferences are truly what they say they are.

Commitment and Religious Rhetoric

Religious rhetoric provides a way for politicians to signal both that their promises are their true preferences and that they will face monitoring and sanctioning for reneging. When politicians use religious rhetoric, they suggest to voters a tie between their politics and their religious belief and practice. Religious belief and practice together have two distinct aspects: mental (focused on the individual's inner life) and social (involving the group to which an individual belongs) (Wald and Smidt 1993, 32). The mental aspect helps politicians signal their true preferences and implies that they can face psychological costs for reneging. The social aspect strengthens these signals, making them more visible, and, most importantly, indicates the existence of monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms through religious congregations. Together, they suggest that a religious justification for a policy provides information about a candidate's commitment to that policy.

Mentally, religious belief and practice require affirmation from believers which affects their preferences and generates psychological costs and benefits from particular actions. Spiritual practice provides concrete psychological benefits (Berman 2009, 76-7; Wuthnow 1994, 53; 2006, 76), for example, "existential certainty, explanations for stressful life events, internal coping resources, attachments to divine others, [and] examples for role taking" (Sherkat 1997, 69). When true-believing religious candidates tie promises to their religious beliefs, they suggest that breaking them would contradict their religious beliefs, thereby harming their spiritual practice and weakening these psychological benefits. Such politicians are likely to prefer the rewards from pursuing policies concordant with their beliefs to reneging (Gates and Nordås

2010, 6-7; Walter 2017, 20-25). Additionally, since believers experience these psychological benefits through a particular religious community's set of beliefs and practices, politicians who value them cannot quickly or easily replace them with those of another community (Sherkat 1997, 67; Stark 1997, 8). Because of the possibility of losing these benefits, the cost of reneging on promises linked to religious rhetoric is higher than that of violating other promises, but it is a noisy signal because voters cannot know that politicians truly believe in the mental aspect of religion.

Despite this, politicians' policy promises supported by religious rhetoric can be more credible than the mental aspect alone suggests because religious belief and practice also feature a social aspect. Politicians' participation in a religious community is observable (Berman 2009, 98). Congregants interact repeatedly and regularly in many different situations (Wuthnow 1994; 2006, 65), through which they learn and influence each other's preferences (Mecham 2017, 55-6; Sherkat 1997, 71;Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988, 533; Wuthnow 1994, 54-5), creating shared expectations and norms (Wald and Smidt 1993, 36). Because of these relationships, politicians who tie policy to their religion suggest to voters that their preferences have been and are being monitored by others who already know them well.

Voters can also infer that the social aspect of religion as practiced in a congregation provides a sanctioning mechanism against reneging politicians. Even politicians who care nothing for the spiritual, mental rewards can still receive nonspiritual, material or social benefits from their congregations, such as social services, strong and socially influential friendships, and entertainment (Iannaccone 1997, 38; Sherkat 1997,74; Wuthnow 2006, 76; 89). These do not necessarily depend on the politician's private spiritual beliefs (Lewis, MacGregor, and Putnam 2013, 332), but the congregation can still withhold them from individual members who violate

congregational norms (Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988, 534-5). As with the spiritual benefits from the mental aspect of religious belief and practice, the nonspiritual benefits which the social aspect provides cannot be easily replaced with those of another congregation (Berman 2009, 67, 78-81; Iannaccone 1997, 32-5; Sherkat 1997, 69; Sherkat and Wilson 1995, 996), making their potential withholding powerful. Combined with congregations' monitoring ability, politicians who violate the norms of their congregation are likely to lose these material and social benefits, in addition to any spiritual benefits about which they may care.

Politicians can benefit from using religious rhetoric even when they are not trying directly to appeal to religious or conservative voters because of these mechanisms. By linking a policy to religion, politicians can signal their own incentive structures. Reneging politicians face sanctioning from the loss of material or social benefits and, possibly, spiritual, psychological benefits, and have to interact with other congregants, who can monitor those politicians for defection from their promises linked to religious rhetoric. Voters know this monitoring and sanctioning exists simply by knowing that the politician participates in a congregation with repeated interactions and shared norms, regardless of the voters' (or even the politicians') own beliefs. Finally, since it is the congregation that monitors and sanctions, not high-ranking clergy, the promise need not correspond to the views of denominational leaders (Djupe and Gilbert 2009, 36; Djupe and Neiheisel 2019, 125; Iannaccone 1997, 33-4; Sherkat 1997, 71). Because the politicians making religious promises face monitoring and sanctioning beyond those of the voters, voters can expect that political promises linked to religion are more credible.

Hypothesis 1: Voters are more likely to believe that a candidate is committed to a policy when that policy is promised with a religious justification.

I test this hypothesis with two survey experiments. I have designed both to isolate the effect of politicians making a policy promise with religious rhetoric on voters' estimation of their commitment to that promise as compared with making it without religious rhetoric. The experiments vary in the type of policy promised to understand whether religious rhetoric similarly affects estimated commitment to promises over both noncontroversial and controversial topics. Different electoral contexts examine how religious rhetoric may influence credibility at both the local and federal levels in the United States. Finally, each uses different populations, a more secular university sample and a general national sample, to study how religious rhetoric may affect credibility among voters in both more and less secular populations.

First Experiment (Noncontroversial Topic)

I begin testing Hypothesis 1 by studying voter perceptions of commitment to a noncontroversial policy topic in a local electoral context with a sample of undergraduates recruited at the University of Maryland Government and Politics Experimental Laboratory between March 26 and May 12, 2021. Removing noncitizens yielded a sample of 288 participants. While not representative, this sample is a hard test because it is younger, less religious, more urban, more educated, and more left-leaning than conservative populations who might have other reasons to respond positively to religious rhetoric. Additionally, because Republicans respond positively for other reasons and because of the polarized climate, the experimental conditions refer to a hypothetical candidate of a respondent's own party (or the one toward which the respondent leaned) while true independents received a version presenting the candidate as independent.

Respondents read one of two versions of a campaign advertisement: one justifying a policy with overt religious rhetoric and the other without religious terminology. The specific

policy issue is solving traffic congestion, which was chosen as a non-contentious policy to allow the treatment to affect assessment of politician credibility without interference from respondents' views on the policy. Since gender and race may change the effect of religious rhetoric (Calfano and Djupe 2009; 2011), the candidate was given a gender-neutral name that does not suggest being Black or White ("Taylor Morris") without a picture or pronouns. Figure 2.1 shows the Democratic Party conditions. Republican and independent conditions differed only by the party name and its color; see the questionnaire in Appendix 2.1.[13] I ask respondents, "Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements," on a five-point Likert scale. The dependent variable (estimated commitment) is the response to the statement "This candidate (Taylor Morris) is committed to achieving the policy stated in the ad (solving traffic problems)." I estimated several ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models treating the dependent variable as continuous.[14]

[13] Please note a small error in the background of the conditions where the control has "local school" while the treatment has "public school". As this text is small and not prominent, this seems unlikely to have influenced the result.

[14] I present a simplified analysis which differs somewhat from my pre-registered analysis to focus on the results relevant to my second experiment, but the interpretation does not differ from the pre-registered analysis available in Appendix 2.2.

Control	Treatment
	

Figure 2.1: Experimental Conditions (for Democratic respondents)

For Hypothesis 1 (table 2.1), model 1 simply regresses religious rhetoric (the binary treatment variable) on estimated commitment. I fail to find support for Hypothesis 1: the coefficient is positive but not statistically significant at conventional levels. Probing this null result, in model 2, I controlled for the importance of religion to the respondent, party, sex, and importance of the policy to the respondent as well as interacting the treatment with whether a respondent has a Christian religious identity in case the connection between religious rhetoric and commitment is clearer for Christian respondents. This interaction term is not significant, and I still failed to find a significant total effect of religious rhetoric on estimated commitment for either Christians or non-Christians. Finally, since positive stereotypes of religious people (McDermott 2009) and negative ones of atheists (Clifford and Gaskins 2016) may influence voters' preferences for religious candidates, I controlled for views (a 0-100 thermometer) of Evangelical Christians and nonreligious people (model 3). I again find no effect.

Table 2.1: First Experiment: Effect of Religious Rhetoric on Estimated Commitment

	Estimated Candidate Commitment		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Religious Rhetoric	0.102	0.115	0.087
	(0.095)	(0.131)	(0.098)
View of Nonreligious			-0.002
			(0.002)
View of Evangelicals			0.003
			(0.002)
Christian		-0.129	-0.121
		(0.143)	(0.109)
Religious Importance		0.071^{+}	0.083^{*}
		(0.037)	(0.039)
Independent		-0.386^{+}	-0.343^{+}
		(0.198)	(0.204)
Republican		-0.263^{*}	-0.266^{+}
		(0.128)	(0.137)
Female		-0.057	-0.073
		(0.102)	(0.103)
Policy Importance		0.044	0.043
		(0.047)	(0.048)
Religious Rhetoric*Christian		0.009	
		(0.194)	
Intercept	2.587^{**}	2.530^{**}	2.362^{**}
	(0.068)	(0.156)	(0.241)
Observations	288	281	268
R^2	0.004	0.043	0.056
Adjusted R^2	0.001	0.015	0.023
Residual Std. Error	0.810 (df = 286)	0.802 (df = 272)	0.794 (df = 258)
F Statistic	1.147 (df = 1; 286)	1.519 (df = 8; 272)	1.685^{+} (df = 9; 258)
Note:			+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

In sum, the first experiment does not support Hypothesis 1, that religious rhetoric will have a direct effect on perceptions of candidate commitment to a specific policy. The null results suggest that religious rhetoric does not affect credibility under the scope conditions of the first experiment: a noncontroversial topic, local electoral level, and relatively secular sample (33% nonreligious). Voters may not expect politicians to have any need to disguise a preference for a noncontroversial topic, so the estimation of politicians' commitment may not vary according to candidates' statements if voters estimate commitment in this context at all. The local electoral level does not necessarily have the same weakness of party organizations, so respondents may not have had a sense of how indicative individual candidate statements were of commitment compared with the influence of parties' monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms.

Third, respondents in the secular sample may not have recognized the connection between religious rhetoric and the potential monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms from congregational participation. Religious rhetoric should signal commitment regardless of voters' views on religion, but the paucity of information in the imagined scenario may not have been enough to remind respondents, particularly secular ones who do not themselves participate in a congregation, that religious belief and practice have a social aspect, providing continual interaction and benefits, both spiritual and nonspiritual, which a congregation can withhold. Respondents may not have accounted for how religious belief and practice can indicate credibility as they might have if they had been reminded of the social aspect. Accounting for these limitations, I test Hypothesis 1 again through my second experiment.

Second Experiment (Controversial Topic)

I now test Hypothesis 1 with different scope conditions: a controversial topic, the federal electoral level, and a national sample. I also introduce a new hypothesis that reminding voters of

the social aspect of religion influences the effect of religious rhetoric. The policy promise in the second experiment pertains to abortion, a highly controversial issue on which politicians may have incentives to misrepresent their true policy preference, particularly as the Supreme Court's 2022 *Dobbs* decision overturning *Roe v. Wade* has given politicians a much broader range of potential action on the issue. Naturally, respondents also vary on this issue. The concept of commitment usually carries a positive connotation. Respondents may have difficulty associating the positively charged concept of commitment with a policy position opposed to their own and to which they attach a negative association. To address this issue, I ensured that all respondents evaluated commitment to a promise with which they agreed by asking whether respondents considered themselves pro-choice or pro-life and giving a corresponding version of the policy promise, either supporting or opposing restrictions on abortion. In other words, respondents self-selected into a pro-choice or a pro-life sample, each of which I randomly split into treatment groups.

My second change in scope from the first experiment is that I featured candidates for the United States House of Representatives in the second experiment instead of local candidates. Thanks to the recent removal of Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy, and similar prominent examples of representatives opposing their own leadership, respondents are likely to understand that party leaders have little ability to coerce winning candidates to stick to the party's platform. This lack of institutional constraint increases the need for voters to assess the commitment of an individual candidate to promised policies by other means. While respondents may react negatively to a candidate not of their own party, I limited this by not mentioning party labels and discussing only a policy which the respondent favors. The national context and controversial

issue together ensure that estimated commitment could vary, so candidate statements might more strongly affect estimated commitment.

My third change in scope is my use in the second experiment of a national sample, in contrast to the student sample in the first experiment. It is possible that the disproportionately non-religious undergraduate sample in the first experiment included many who were not familiar with the repeated interaction and resulting opportunities for monitoring and sanctioning in a religious congregation. The national survey makes it more likely that respondents realize the possible monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms from religious belief and practice in a congregation. I fielded the survey for the second experiment through Lucid Theorem, a survey firm whose panel, though not randomly selected, is balanced to match the United States population in terms of age, gender, race and ethnicity, and census region: 820 participants took the survey between February 22 and March 11, 2024. This sample is more likely to include more people who are familiar with religious congregations and the potential for monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms.

Based on the mechanisms advanced in this paper, religious rhetoric should create a perception of candidate commitment regardless of whether the voters share the candidate's religious beliefs. If voters, either religious or nonreligious, are informed about a candidate's participation in a congregation, they should be more likely to realize that religious belief and practice permit monitoring and sanctioning through repeated interaction. Accordingly, they should be more likely to consider a candidate using a religious policy justification committed when they are reminded of a candidate's participation in a congregation.

Hypothesis 2: Given a candidate who has promised a policy with a religious justification, voters are more likely to believe a candidate is committed to that policy when voters are aware of the candidate's participation in a religious congregation.

In the second survey experiment, I directly test the effect of reminding voters about a candidate's congregational participation in addition to testing the effect of a religious justification for the policy promise as before. Within both the pro-choice and pro-life samples, I used a three by two design, making six treatment groups in each sample. I varied the justification for the policy promise between a religious justification, an alternative, secular rights-based justification, and no justification, to test the effect of religious rhetoric on estimated commitment, but here, I also varied the mention of the candidate's participation and leadership in a religious congregation. This shows that the candidate has continual interaction with the congregation and enjoys a leadership status in it, which could potentially be lost for opposing the congregation's wishes, increasing the potential for the congregation to sanction the candidate. I thereby measured, not only the influence of using a religious policy justification compared with other justifications or none, but also how a reminder that candidate interacts continually with a congregation affects the strength of the suggested commitment signal which may occur from a religious policy justification.

I assigned respondents to read policy statements, justifications, and biographies which I created for a fictional incumbent candidate for the House of Representatives, Jennifer Harris. I drew upon the websites and biographies of the real-life Representatives Stephanie Bice and Madeleine Dean to make the wording appear realistic (Bice n.d.a; n.d.b; Dean 2023; n.d.; Regional Leadership Council n.d.; Rotary Club of Edmond 2017), while using a fictional character to make the treatments for the pro-choice and pro-life samples as similar as possible

and control for any previous knowledge a respondent might have had about the real representatives. I chose the name from the list of common female first names from 1973, the birth year of the real-life Representative Bice (Social Security Administration n.d.), and last name from the 1990 census (United States Census Bureau 2016) to sound similar to people of that generational cohort. To seem natural, the biography includes statements of the representative's professional and family background. Between these two pieces of information, the description of the representative's participation and leadership in a religious congregation is inserted for the religious version of the biography. Because the issue of the policy promise is abortion, an issue which is often considered particularly relevant for women, the fictional representative is a woman. To ensure that respondents recognize that the policy is a topic on which the congregation is likely to have an opinion, the fictional representative is a Catholic Christian, a religion which is prominent in discussions on abortion.

Within both the pro-choice and the pro-life samples, I randomly assigned respondents to one of six treatment groups in a three by two design. There are three variations in the rhetoric justifying the policy position: one third of each sample (Groups 1 and 4) was shown the policy position with no justification, one third (Groups 2 and 6) with a secular, rights-based justification, and one third with a religious justification (Groups 3 and 6). There are two variations in biography: one half of each sample (Groups 1-2) was shown a biography describing the fictional candidate's professional experience and family. The other half (Groups 4-6) was given it with an additional statement mentioning the fictional candidate's participation and leadership in her religious congregation. I show the three by two arrangement of conditions and the six treatment groups in each sample in table 2.2. I show the full questionnaire in Appendix 2.4.

Table 2.2: Second Experiment: Treatment Groups

For each sample (pro-choice and pro-life):	**Nonreligious Biography (1/2 sample)**	**Religious Biography (1/2 sample)**
No Policy Justification (1/3 sample)	*Control* (Group 1) (1/6 sample): No Policy Justification Nonreligious Biography	Group 4 (1/6 sample): No Policy Justification Religious Biography
Rights Policy Justification (1/3 sample)	Group 2 (1/6 sample): Rights Policy Justification Nonreligious Biography	Group 5 (1/6 sample): Rights Policy Justification Religious Biography
Religious Policy Justification (1/3 sample)	Group 3 (1/6 sample): Religious Policy Justification Nonreligious Biography	Group 6 (1/6 sample): Religious Policy Justification Religious Biography

The six treatment groups of the pro-choice sample were assigned to read the following texts. (Differences from the control version are **bolded** but were shown without bolding.)

Pro-Choice Group 1: No Policy Justification and Nonreligious Biography

Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports women and pro-choice policies. Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Choice Group 2: Rights Policy Justification and Nonreligious Biography

Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports women and pro-choice policies: **"Women have a fundamental right to reproductive healthcare."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Choice Group 3: Religious Policy Justification and Nonreligious Biography

Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports women and pro-choice policies: **"I am Catholic and pro-choice. As a Christian, I believe in compassion, tolerance, and love."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Choice Group 4: No Policy Justification and Religious Biography

Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports women and pro-choice policies. Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. **She is a parishioner of St. Luke Catholic Church and has served as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Board.** She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Choice Group 5: Rights Policy Justification and Religious Biography

Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports women and pro-choice policies: **"Women have a fundamental right to reproductive healthcare."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. **She is a parishioner of St. Luke Catholic Church and has served as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Board.** She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Choice Group 6: Religious Policy Justification and Religious Biography

Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports women and pro-choice policies: **"I am Catholic and pro-choice. As a Christian, I believe in compassion, tolerance, and love."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. **She is a parishioner of St. Luke Catholic Church and has served as a**

member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Board. She and her husband have three children.

The six treatment groups of the pro-life sample were assigned to read the following texts. (Differences from the control version are **bolded** but were shown without bolding, and differences from pro-choice versions are *italicized* but were shown without italics.)

Pro-Life Group 1: No Policy Justification and Nonreligious Biography

Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports *the unborn* and pro-*life* policies. Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Life Group 2: Rights Policy Justification and Nonreligious Biography

Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports *the unborn* and pro-*life* policies. ***Unborn children*** **have a fundamental right to *life*.** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Life Group 3: Religious Policy Justification and Nonreligious Biography

Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports *the unborn* and pro-*life* policies: **"I am Catholic and pro-*life*. As a Christian, I believe in *the sanctity of human life*."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Life Group 4: No Policy Justification and Religious Biography

Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports *the unborn* and pro-*life* policies. Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. **She is a parishioner of St. Luke Catholic Church and has served as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Board.** She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Life Group 5: Rights Policy Justification and Religious Biography

Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports *the unborn* and pro-*life* policies. ***Unborn children*** **have a fundamental right to *life*.** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. **She is a parishioner of St. Luke Catholic Church and has served as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Board.** She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Life Group 6: Religious Policy Justification and Religious Biography

Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports *the unborn* and pro-*life* policies: **"I am Catholic and pro-*life*. As a Christian, I believe in *the sanctity of human life*."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. **She is a parishioner of St. Luke Catholic Church and has served as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Board.** She and her husband have three children.

I would find support for Hypothesis 1 if respondents are more likely to consider the candidate committed when the abortion position is justified with religion compared with when other justifications are used. So, Group 3 should be more likely to consider the candidate committed than Groups 1 or 2, and Group 6 should be more likely to consider the candidate

committed than Groups 4 or 5. For Hypothesis 2, respondents reading a religious justification should be more likely to consider the candidate committed when they are aware of the candidate's participation in a religious congregation. Given this, Group 6 should be more likely to consider the candidate committed than Group 3.

Finally, in addition to asking respondents how committed they think the candidate is to the policy, as before, I also asked respondents how likely they think the candidate is to vote for hypothetical bills which would fulfill, violate, or compromise on the promise. The pro-choice bill would make "abortion legally available nationwide using telehealth and prescriptions in the mail and requiring its coverage by publicly subsidized health insurance plans." The pro-life policy is to ban both of these, and the compromise position is to legally permit but prohibit inclusion in publicly subsidized insurance plans. These bills are among the core goals on the issue mentioned on or linked from the official websites of real-life Representatives Bice and Dean (Bice n.d.b; Dean n.d.; Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America 2021; 2022). By asking for expectations about similar bills, I can consistently measure estimated commitment as the increased expectation that a candidate will vote for the promised policy compared with the alternatives, regardless of an individual respondent's interpretation of the concept of commitment, more accurately measuring the hypotheses.

Despite these changes in scope and measurement, the results of the second experiment do not yield support for the hypotheses. I fail to find statistically significant evidence that religious justification for abortion policy has a relationship with estimated commitment. The coefficients for religious justification are all positive but mostly statistically insignificant. This is true regardless of whether estimated commitment is measured directly (table 2.3, models 1-3) or

Table 2.3: Second Experiment: Effect of Religious Rhetoric on Estimated Commitment

	Dependent variable:					
	Estimated Candidate Commitment			Estimated Candidate Support for Concordant Bill		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Rights Justification	0.161	0.213^{+}	0.189^{+}	0.154	0.191	0.146
	(0.114)	(0.112)	(0.113)	(0.203)	(0.200)	(0.204)
Religious Justification	0.095	0.193	0.101	0.317	0.789*	0.272
	(0.112)	(0.185)	(0.111)	(0.199)	(0.328)	(0.200)
Christian		0.097	0.095		0.322	0.079
		(0.145)	(0.130)		(0.259)	(0.234)
Religious Biography	0.059	0.024	0.009	0.069	0.032	0.073
	(0.092)	(0.091)	(0.091)	(0.163)	(0.161)	(0.163)
Religious Importance		0.051	0.078		-0.132	-0.113
		(0.061)	(0.063)		(0.109)	(0.114)
Independent		-0.455**	-0.457**		-0.396	-0.364
		(0.136)	(0.139)		(0.241)	(0.249)
Republican		-0.114	-0.142		0.297	0.277
		(0.109)	(0.109)		(0.194)	(0.197)
Pro-Life		0.099	0.125		0.327	0.357^{+}
		(0.115)	(0.117)		(0.206)	(0.211)
Female		0.069	0.061		0.357*	0.320^{+}
		(0.092)	(0.092)		(0.163)	(0.165)
Policy Importance		0.276**	0.257**		0.269**	0.230*
		(0.053)	(0.055)		(0.095)	(0.098)
Religious Policy Importance		-0.066	-0.050		-0.275**	-0.277**
		(0.046)	(0.047)		(0.082)	(0.084)
Religious Justification*Christian		-0.096			-0.684^{+}	
		(0.207)			(0.366)	
View of Nonreligious			0.005**			0.006^{+}
			(0.002)			(0.003)
View of Evangelicals			-0.0004			0.002
			(0.002)			(0.003)
Intercept	2.688**	2.070**	1.745**	1.588**	1.124**	0.934*
	(0.094)	(0.190)	(0.209)	(0.167)	(0.339)	(0.374)
Observations	675	668	647	677	670	649
R^2	0.004	0.078	0.091	0.004	0.074	0.071
Adjusted R^2	-0.001	0.061	0.073	-0.0005	0.057	0.052
Residual Std. Error	1.190 (df = 671)	1.157 (df = 655)	1.143 (df = 633)	2.116 (df = 673)	2.056 (df = 657)	2.058 (df = 635)
F Statistic	0.808 (df = 3; 671)	4.587** (df = 12; 655)	4.902** (df = 13; 633)	0.895 (df = 3; 673)	4.346** (df = 12; 657)	3.724** (df = 13; 635)
Note:	+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01					

as the likelihood of voting for a concordant bill (table 2.3, models 4-6). The one exception is that religious justification does significantly increase respondents' estimation of a candidate's likelihood of voting for a concordant bill when religious justification is interacted with a respondent identifying as a Christian (table 2.3, model 5). However, the interaction term in that model is significant at the 10 percent level and negative, indicating that religious justification only significantly increases estimated commitment among non-Christians, while not influencing Christian voters. So, any effect of religious justification on estimated commitment that may exist seems to affect those who are less familiar with the monitoring and sanctioning mechanism of congregations, contrary to the theory above.[15] Looking at Republicans and Democrats separately (Appendix 2.5) does not change the results.[16]

Next, I turn to Hypothesis 2, interacting religious justification with religious biography and measuring estimated commitment directly (table 2.4). Once more, however, I find that there are no significant effects in the sample as a whole, regardless of controls. Looking at Republicans and Democrats separately, however, I find evidence among Republicans that using a religious justification does increase estimated commitment though there is no significant interaction with reading the religious biography. The same analysis using the likelihood of supporting a concordant bill as the dependent variable is presented in Appendix 2.5 and is similar to the results presented. Thus, I find very limited support for Hypothesis 2 from the initial results of the experiment. I cannot conclude that being reminded of the monitoring and sanctioning

[15] This could be because self-identification of religious affiliation does not necessarily indicate membership or attendance in a corresponding congregation. People may even attend congregations of traditions other than those with which they identify (Djupe, Burge, and Garneau 2023). Exploring this result is outside the scope of this paper.
[16] Appendix 2.5 also presents the full pre-registered analysis for the second experiment, of which I present only a subset here as the initial results. Focusing on this subset does not change the interpretation of the analysis.

Table 2.4: Second Experiment: Effect of Religious Rhetoric and Biography on Estimated Commitment

	Dependent variable:					
	Estimated Candidate Commitment					
	(All)	(All)	(Democrats)	(Democrats)	(Republicans)	(Republicans)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Rights Justification	0.161	0.188^{+}	0.157	0.069	0.205	0.264
	(0.114)	(0.114)	(0.166)	(0.165)	(0.173)	(0.170)
Religious Justification	0.173	0.166	-0.223	-0.244	0.403^{+}	0.468*
	(0.146)	(0.145)	(0.211)	(0.211)	(0.226)	(0.221)
Religious Biography	0.115	0.056	0.197	0.149	-0.103	-0.089
	(0.114)	(0.113)	(0.166)	(0.165)	(0.173)	(0.169)
Christian		0.094		0.096		-0.133
		(0.130)		(0.175)		(0.233)
Religious Importance		0.076		0.026		0.122
		(0.064)		(0.097)		(0.092)
Independent		-0.455**				
		(0.139)				
Republican		-0.144				
		(0.109)				
Strong Partisan				-0.011		0.073
				(0.136)		(0.146)
Pro-Life		0.122		0.051		-0.010
		(0.117)		(0.193)		(0.168)
Female		0.061		-0.167		0.237^{+}
		(0.092)		(0.133)		(0.142)
Policy Importance		0.257**		0.409**		0.219**
		(0.055)		(0.088)		(0.080)
Religious Policy Importance		-0.048		-0.144^{+}		0.051
		(0.047)		(0.076)		(0.066)
View of Nonreligious		0.005**				
		(0.002)				
View of Evangelicals		-0.0004				
		(0.002)				
Religious Justification*Religious Biography	-0.159	-0.132	0.201	0.165	-0.113	-0.155
	(0.192)	(0.189)	(0.272)	(0.269)	(0.315)	(0.309)
Intercept	2.659**	1.724**	2.859**	2.150**	2.657**	1.791**
	(0.100)	(0.211)	(0.143)	(0.267)	(0.155)	(0.290)
Observations	675	647	304	300	263	263
R^2	0.005	0.092	0.025	0.110	0.021	0.099
Adjusted R^2	-0.001	0.072	0.012	0.076	0.005	0.059
Residual Std. Error	1.191 (df = 670)	1.144 (df = 632)	1.146 (df = 299)	1.112 (df = 288)	1.162 (df = 258)	1.130 (df = 251)
F Statistic	0.778 (df = 4; 670)	4.583** (df = 14; 632)	1.952 (df = 4; 299)	3.244** (df = 11; 288)	1.360 (df = 4; 258)	2.499** (df = 11; 251)
Note:	+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01					

mechanisms in a congregation conditions voters to receive a signal creating a perception of policy commitment from religious rhetoric other than among Republicans. Moreover, religious rhetoric does not seem to change voters' estimation of a politicians' commitment to a promised policy regardless of being reminded of a candidate's participation in a religious congregation.

Extending the Analysis

While I fail to find support for my hypotheses from the initial results of the experiment, I next present the results of a modification of the second experiment.[17] This modification differs first by testing whether voters perceive potential monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms in nonreligious organizations comparable to the monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms that I have argued exist within religious congregations. Within the pro-life and pro-choice samples, a small group, half the size of the other groups, were given a secular service or civic biography. This was similar to the religious biography, but rather than the text, "She is a **parishioner** of **St. Luke Catholic Church** and has served as a member of **the St. Vincent de Paul Society** Board," respondents read, "She is a **member** of the **Rotary Club** and has served as a member of **its Charity** Board." This condition lets me test for whether voters perceive relevant monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms to exist in an organization which has a level of repeated interaction and group commitment without spiritual belief. Since these monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms are not linked to a spiritual congregation, I do not assume that they would strengthen the commitment signal to a policy promise made in religious terms. However, they might strengthen the commitment signal to a policy promise made in terms of rights: like participation in a service organization, recognizing a right indicates a recognition of duty toward others (Donnelly 2013, 8). In the extended analysis, I included respondents who viewed this version of the biography

[17] This extended analysis is exploratory and not part of the pre-registered analysis.

alongside the groups from the initial analysis and interact viewing this civic biography with rights justification analogously to how Hypothesis 2 envisions an interaction between the religious biography and religious justification. This interaction lets me examine whether justifying a policy promise in terms of rights can generate perceived signals of commitment to that promise by suggesting to voters that a candidate acts on other-regarding preferences in an organization which may also provide monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms. The results will show whether religious congregations are unique in any ability to provide politically relevant monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms.

I also make two other changes in the extended analysis. First, having not found evidence from the initial analysis that religious justification changed estimated commitment across the range of the dependent variable, I now explore whether it could affect estimated commitment at the high range of the dependent variable. The lack of findings across the whole range of the dependent variable may be because the survey responses for the estimated commitment question are not normally distributed but highly skewed: a full 36.9% of responses (299 of 810) in the survey believe "completely" that the candidate is committed. The second-highest category, "mostly", is the median response. Even looking just at those who received the control conditions, 30.8% (32 of 104) believe "completely" with "mostly" as the median . Since the policy promise alone creates such a high median estimated commitment, the survey is limited in the ability to capture changes due to the treatments.[18] Given this distribution, the approximation of the dependent variable as continuous was unreasonable. I convert the ordinal dependent variable into a binary dependent variable for whether the respondent "completely" agrees that the candidate is

[18] This may be an example of extreme response bias in which respondents are more likely to pick the extreme options of the discrete scale options. I tried to minimize this by avoiding agree/disagree language in the questionnaire, but this does not always remove the bias (Liu, Lee, and Conrad 2015).

committed to the policy and estimate logistic regression models rather than ordinary least squares. Substantively, this may also better model the incentives politicians might have to create perceptions of commitment: if policy promises are generally accepted to some extent but voters have many voting considerations, politicians may want to ensure that promises are believed particularly strongly so that they become greater influences on vote choice.

Second, I control for a respondent's level of education. I did not initially control for the level of education as the theory does not directly touch upon education, but recent research has shown that having a college education has become increasingly correlated with strong religious belief and attendance at a congregation (Burge 2022, 53-62). The highly educated may be more likely in the current context to understand the monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms of congregations than those with lower levels of education. Since survey respondents may have attendance patterns that do not match their religious identity (Djupe, Burge, and Garneau 2023), the control for education in the extended analysis, given the relationship between attendance and education, provides an additional measure of how likely the religious biography treatment is to remind respondents of monitoring and sanctioning practices in a congregation.

Unlike the initial models, the extended analysis for the high level of commitment finds support for Hypothesis 1. When controlling for education and including those who read the civic biography, the coefficient for religious justification is significant (table 2.5) for completely believing that the candidate is committed. The predicted probability of completely believing the candidate is committed goes from 0.326 with an upper 95% confidence bound of 0.381 to 0.469 with a lower 95% confidence bound of 0.390 when using a religious justification (figure 2.2; A table of predicted probabilities can be found in Appendix 2.6.). However, the coefficient for

Table 2.5 : Effect of Religious Rhetoric on Believing Completely that the Candidate is Committed (Party Breakdown)

	Dependent variable:					
	Candidate is Completely Committed					
	(All)	(All)	(Democrats)	(Democrats)	(Republicans)	(Republicans)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Rights Justification	0.430*	0.579**	0.647*	0.625*	0.290	0.331
	(0.198)	(0.215)	(0.291)	(0.310)	(0.315)	(0.328)
Civic Biography	0.415+	0.522+	0.352	0.321	0.377	0.417
	(0.251)	(0.277)	(0.358)	(0.388)	(0.419)	(0.452)
Religious Justification	0.551*	0.713**	0.265	0.402	0.877*	0.872*
	(0.222)	(0.241)	(0.322)	(0.349)	(0.358)	(0.375)
Religious Biography	0.146	0.103	0.059	0.002	0.161	0.129
	(0.197)	(0.214)	(0.291)	(0.311)	(0.316)	(0.329)
Christian		0.427+		0.228		0.558
		(0.235)		(0.312)		(0.468)
Religious Importance		0.152		0.249		0.155
		(0.115)		(0.173)		(0.174)
Independent		-0.872**				
		(0.271)				
Republican		-0.297				
		(0.193)				
Strong Partisan				0.220		0.320
				(0.243)		(0.267)
Pro-Life		-0.046		-0.167		-0.164
		(0.208)		(0.345)		(0.312)
Female		0.085		-0.424+		0.510*
		(0.161)		(0.235)		(0.251)
Policy Importance		0.385**		0.637**		0.145
		(0.100)		(0.169)		(0.147)
Religious Policy Importance		-0.046		-0.282*		0.140
		(0.084)		(0.136)		(0.120)
View of Nonreligious		0.010**				
		(0.003)				
View of Evangelicals		0.002				
		(0.003)				
Education		0.057		0.165**		-0.009
		(0.044)		(0.064)		(0.068)
Rights Justification*Civic Biography	-0.552	-0.649	-0.343	-0.244	-0.823	-0.784
	(0.420)	(0.452)	(0.592)	(0.636)	(0.740)	(0.777)
Religious Justification*Religious Biography	-0.377	-0.454	-0.045	-0.246	-0.527	-0.429
	(0.318)	(0.342)	(0.454)	(0.486)	(0.539)	(0.563)
Intercept	-0.922**	-3.193**	-0.655**	-3.009**	-1.022**	-2.703**
	(0.171)	(0.443)	(0.244)	(0.577)	(0.277)	(0.634)
Observations	810	768	370	364	312	310
Log Likelihood	-528.283	-466.041	-249.579	-227.007	-198.247	-187.065
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,070.566	968.081	513.157	484.013	410.493	404.131
Note:	+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01					

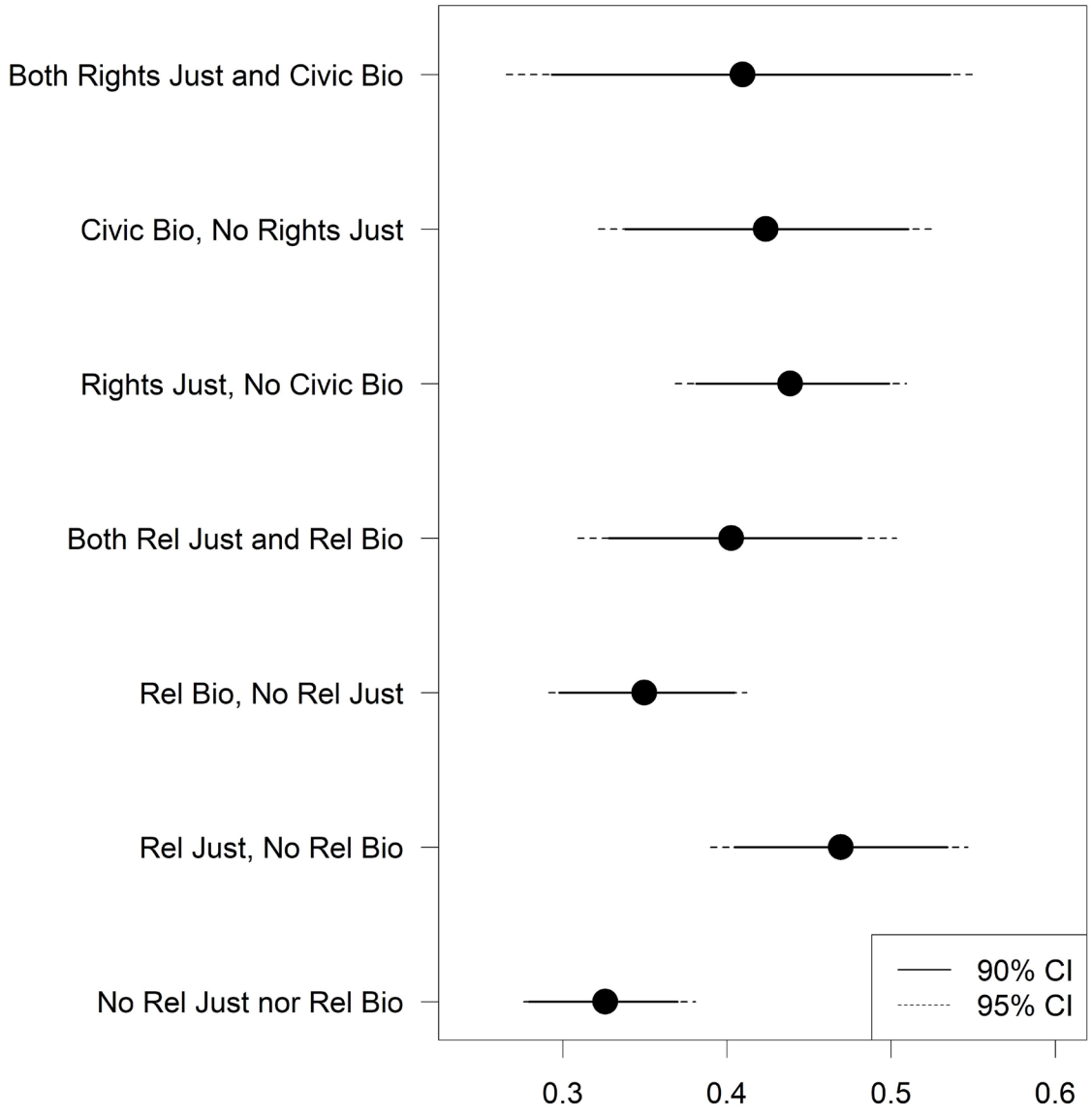

Figure 2.2: Extended Analysis: Predicted Probabilities of a Respondent Believing Completely that the Candidate is Committed, Depending on Justification and Biography (Both Parties)

using the rights framing as a justification is also significant at the 95% confidence level, and the predicted probability change from rights framing is significant at the 90% confidence level, going from 0.326 with an upper 90% confidence bound of 0.365 to 0.439 with a lower 90% confidence bound at 0.381 (figure 2.2). Moreover, the effect of each justification differs by party: Democrats are influenced by the rights justification, while Republicans are influenced by the religious justification (table 2.5; models 3-6). This extended analysis suggests that using a religious justification can increase the probability that voters consider a candidate highly committed to a promised policy, but since this does not influence Democrats for whom using a secular rights justification works better, I cannot conclude that religious mechanisms of monitoring and sanctioning generate a perception of commitment for voters of both parties.

Despite the extended analysis supporting Hypothesis 1, other aspects of the extended analysis work against Hypothesis 2. I continue to fail to find evidence that religious monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms are the cause of the effect. The religious biography does not have a significant effect, regardless of the religious justification, failing to support Hypothesis 2. The civic biography is only significant without controls and at the 10% level. Since there is no evidence for Hypothesis 2 and because the evidence for Hypothesis 1 was not significant among Democrats, the extended analysis shows that religious justification may signal a particularly high commitment to a policy promise, but I find no evidence that this attracts voters for whom religion is not also a signal of policy congruence. A perception that the candidate's views have been vetted by fellow members of a religious congregation does not seem to exist, and a nonreligious club might do just as well.

Conclusion

Politicians in the United States commonly use religious rhetoric when making policy promises even when these policies are not those usually associated with religious conservatives and when those politicians depend on the support of constituents who may not have favorable impressions of religion. I tested whether making a policy promise with religious rhetoric creates a perception of a politician's commitment to that promise and convinces voters that the promise is the politician's true policy preference, examining a noncontroversial, local issue with a student sample in the first experiment and a controversial, national issue with a broader sample in the second experiment. I also tested whether the monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms of religious congregations convince voters that religious rhetoric can be a costly signal of commitment to a policy promise for a politician. I finally examine whether voters might also perceive a signal of commitment from a politician to a policy promise through the politician's participation in a nonreligious organization which could also feature monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms. I found no experimental evidence that religion increases the confidence a voter has in a politician's commitment to a noncontroversial, local issue in a student sample and did not find evidence that it does so for a polarized, national issue in a broader national sample except among Republicans. I did, however, find that using a religious justification for such a policy increases the probability voters across the sample will be *completely* convinced that a politician is committed to the policy promise as compared with being less sure of the politician's commitment. Thus, there is some evidence that using overt religious rhetoric can create a perception of commitment.

Yet, I failed to find evidence that voters' use of the monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms of religious congregations are why religious rhetoric can create a perception of

commitment. Reminding respondents that a politician is a member of a religious congregation had no effect, making it unlikely that mechanisms of religious monitoring and sanctioning create the suggestion of commitment to voters. While perhaps mentioning participation in a congregation was not sufficient to remind voters of the possibility of religious monitoring and sanctioning, voters are unlikely to receive a more direct reminder in real life. A comparable biography mentioning participation in a secular, civic organization had no effect, either, except in two models at the 90% level. The experimental evidence provided here suggests that monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms matter little to generating perceptions of commitment, and religious monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms may not have any greater influence than nonreligious ones.

This leaves me unable to provide a possible incentive for politicians in the United States who do not depend on religious or conservative constituencies to use overt religious rhetoric. I had hoped to demonstrate that religious rhetoric in the context of a policy promise would create a perception among voters that a politician was committed to the promised policy even if the voters were themselves not religious or conservative so long as they supported the policy itself. If this had been so, this would have been evidence that politicians in the United States who do not depend on religious or conservative constituencies would have had an incentive to use religious rhetoric. While politicians might have many different considerations in their own decision to use religious rhetoric, this would have been an incentive to use it in cases where the previous literature has not found an incentive for it.

My analyses controlled for views of Evangelical Christians and nonreligious people, so the results are not explainable as the result of warm or negative feelings toward religious or nonreligious people generally. On the other hand, while using the religious justification was

never significant among Democrats, neither it nor the religious biography had a negative influence on Democrats' estimated commitment of the politician to the policy. Overt religious rhetoric may not have as much cost to politicians as previous research would suggest (e.g., McLaughlin and Wise 2014, 374), at least when used with a policy which a voter already supports. It may be, then, that voters who would otherwise be upset by religious rhetoric do not mind it when used directly with policies which they support, freeing politicians in that context to reach out to those voters who would reward religious rhetoric without losing their core supporters. Future research should specifically investigate this possibility which would offer another possible incentive which may influence politicians' decisions to use religious rhetoric.

The changing views of Americans toward religion and religious people also may have placed limits on the analysis. It is also possible that the perceptions of commitment (or other perceptions) created by religious rhetoric vary by time and place, and the analysis here is limited to a nationally balanced (though not randomly selected) sample of the United States in 2024 (or for the first experiment, an undergraduate sample at one public university in 2021). If religious rhetoric has generated different perceptions for voters in the past, politicians using religious rhetoric may be responding to outdated assumptions about the perceptions it can generate. Voters outside the United States might also respond quite differently. While this research was limited to American voters' estimated commitment at the current time, further research should expand the scope of the analysis across time and place, especially beyond the United States.

With the current, nationally balanced sample in the United States, using a religious justification did not differ from using a rights justification in the analyses: both were insignificant in the analysis for the whole range of levels of estimated commitment levels (except among Republicans in some cases), yet both were significant in the extended analysis for the

probability of perception as highly committed. While both religious and rights justifications significantly increased the probability of voters across the national sample completely believing that the politician is committed, the religious justification (but not rights) was significant among Republicans while the reverse was true for Democrats. Since the polarizing issue used in the second experiment, abortion, is commonly justified in those terms within each party, it may be that particular rhetorical justifications become suggestions of commitment among particular subsets of voters. While I cannot offer a possible incentive for left-leaning politicians' occasional use of religious rhetoric as I set out to do, it is possible that future research may do so by better understanding how particular rhetorical justifications become linked to particular issues among subsets of voters.

3

Praying for Peace: Religious Belonging and the Recurrence of Civil War

Abstract: What keeps some civil wars from resuming after violence has stopped? Among the misfortunes of intrastate conflict is the fact that the end of violence is often temporary. Religious civil wars are particularly likely to recur. Previous research has emphasized time-invariant reasons for why religious civil wars are so difficult to definitively end, especially issue indivisibility and information uncertainty from transnational religious ties. Yet, religious civil wars can and often do come to a definitive end. I argue that the ability of religious rebels to organize from religious networks drives recurrence and that, given the right incentives, these networks can be incentivized to stay at peace, making religious rebels no more likely than nonreligious rebels to return to war. Using existing data on secessionist rebels from 1975 to 2009 from and based on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, I find evidence that giving religious constituencies equal access to political power, thereby reducing a religious community's incentives to fight, discourages religious rebels from mobilizing that community for a return to fighting. I also find that religious rebels are less likely to return to conflict—no more likely than nonreligious rebels—when they have reached an agreement or ceasefire with the government, committing the religious community to peace. These findings demonstrate that a religious civil war over territorial demands is not destined to recur because rebels consider themselves religiously affiliated; rather, religious civil war recurrence in these cases comes from the potential to mobilize a religious constituency, which can be prevented from returning to arms if time variant factors like ceasefire agreements and access to political participation create incentives against recurrence.

Introduction

What keeps some territorial civil wars from resuming after violence has stopped? Among the misfortunes of intrastate conflict is the fact that the end of violence is often temporary. Nearly every civil war between 2003 and 2009 was a repeat civil war (Walter 2015, 1242-3). Consider the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which began fighting the government of the Philippines in 1990. This conflict suffered 77 battle deaths in 1990, but none at all between 1991 and 1993, until 104 died again in 1994. Then, another pause occurred in 1995 until 135 died in the conflict in 1996. In Indonesia, battles with the Free Aceh Movement saw 58 deaths in 1991 and continued fighting though 1995. The conflict saw no battle deaths at all in 1996 and 1997, however, before resuming again to kill far greater numbers of people, peaking at 935 in 2004. In Burma, the conflict between the government and the Karen National Union also saw no battle deaths in 1996 before resuming in 1997, killing 41 (Davies, Pettersson, and Öberg 2024).[19] Despite periods of time when these conflicts appeared to be over, they resumed, at times leading to many more deaths than in the initial term of conflict.

Religious civil wars, in which the rebels consider themselves affiliated with a religion (as in the above conflicts), have been shown to be particularly likely to recur after a pause (Nilsson and Svenson 2021). Yet, existing reasons for the challenge of definitively ending religious civil wars—indivisibility (Hassner 2009; Toft 2006) and transnational religious ties (Nilsson and Svenson 2021)—rarely change. I advance an explanatory factor which varies across religious wars. Religious rebels can recruit and retain members through religious networks, which create

[19] These pauses in violence were complete pauses in which zero battle deaths occurred according to the UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (Davies, Pettersson, and Öberg 2024). By contrast, the UCDP definition of war, which I use below, considers war to end when battle deaths fall below 25 in any year. I use the latter definition in the analyses because a rebel organization which formerly could fight battles meeting the threshold but can no longer do so has been practically defeated by the state even if it has not formally capitulated.

strong ties among members (Berman 2009; Mecham 2017). Since these networks exist primarily for nonpolitical reasons, they are difficult and costly to disrupt entirely. In this paper, I make a contribution to the understanding of secessionist religious civil war by identifying incentives for the individuals within these persistent religious networks to avoid conflict which can discourage religious rebels from trying to return to war.

Political incentives to encourage the religious constituency to avoid war should make religious rebels no more likely to return to war than other rebels precisely because religious belonging creates cohesion among individuals in a religious network. I focus on two kinds of incentives for a religious community to forgo a return to conflict. The first is whether the post-conflict state allows equal access to political power, giving individuals in the religious network an easier, nonviolent, way of pursuing the interests of the religious constituency, and making religious rebels who otherwise may have recruited them less likely to mobilize. The second is whether the rebel organization convinced its members to accept an end to fighting (via a peace agreement or ceasefire), which would then be contradicted by a return to war, inhibiting religious rebels from mobilizing again through the religious network. I find evidence for this argument using data on the religious affiliations of secessionist rebel organizations (those making demands for independence or autonomy of a specific territory) collected by Cunningham, Gates, Gleditsch, and Nordås (2016) and on civil war recurrence from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program Conflict Termination Dataset, Version 3-2021 (Kreutz 2010). The conflict-promoting effect of religion is conditioned by both of these factors. These results provide an explanation for the recurrence of religious civil war with rebels demanding territory that encompasses both instances of recurrence and persistent peace, improving the understanding of civil war recurrence more generally.

Why Civil Wars Recur

Most explanations for the recurrence of intrastate conflict focus on the relative capabilities of the rebels compared with the government and the conditions under which rebels and governments make their commitment to agreements credible to each other. Older explanations argue that one side, usually the government, must achieve total victory: any remaining capability of rebels to organize inevitably permits them to resume fighting (Wagner 1993, 259), though Toft (2010) argues that rebel victory is more likely than government victory to maintain peace as the latter is less able to retain an ability to organize after losing. From this perspective, total victory is unnecessary to prevent a return to violence only if the parties could be territorially separated (Downes 2004), though later findings contradict that conclusion (Pearson et al. 2006).

If rebels and governments are to retain their capacity to organize in the same territory, they face a commitment problem which makes it difficult to convince each side that the other will adhere to an agreement. If either side retains the capacity to fight, then their opponent may fear attack, but if any side gives up the capacity to fight, the it is itself vulnerable to attack. Walter (1997) argues that the difficulty in designing agreements to avoid this dilemma is the main cause of the persistence and recurrence of civil war. The dilemma may be solved externally by outside third parties credibly threatening to punish violations or internally by domestic leaders creating institutions that generate incentives for both sides to remain in an agreement (Walter 1999, 137) (or "sticks" and "carrots" [Toft 2010, 8]). External enforcement is effective in certain conditions (Fortna 2004; Pearson et al. 2006; Kreutz 2010), particularly if it is a significant military presence and accompanied by economic development (Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom 2008). Still, the importance of denying at least one side the

continued ability to organize for violence underlies the ability of external enforcement to maintain peace (Quinn, Mason, and Gurses 2007; Mason et al. 2011).

The alternative to denying capacity, either through victory or external enforcement, to prevent civil war recurrence is to create institutional incentives in an agreement to encourage the parties to adhere to the agreement (Hartzell 1999). Agreements to share military influence are particularly helpful (Hoddie and Hartzell 2003; DeRouen, Lea, and Wallensteen 2009), provided they are actually implemented (Glassmyer and Sambanis 2008). While military power-sharing is more effective than political power-sharing under some measures (Jarstad and Nilsson 2008; DeRouen, Lea, and Wallensteen 2009), more precise data shows that political power-sharing also works (Mattes and Savun 2009), including tactics like broadening the governing coalition (Joshi and Mason 2011), increasing the accountability of the executive, facilitating public participation, and improving government transparency (Walter 2015).

Increasingly, rather than considering relative capacity and institutional design separately, research has found that the effect of institutional design is contingent on the relative capabilities of the sides. If a side has demonstrated the ability to achieve total victory but nevertheless accepts power-sharing, the result is especially stable because the loser cannot achieve a better result through returning to war (Mukherjee 2006). If the balance of power later shifts, however, the rising side must be compensated with greater power in the government, or it will resume violence (Daly 2022).

Religious rebel organizations enjoy additional power unavailable to other rebels because they can recruit through networks of religious believers. These networks feature close social ties among members because of shared understandings about the world, moral standards of behavior, and mutual activities, such as prayer, which give them a common purpose and experience

(Berman 2009, 67; Mecham 2017, 55-6). Political entrepreneurs in these networks can recruit using the shared set of ideas to convince individuals of the need for fighting and the experience of common activities to identify suitable individuals (Mecham 2017, 56). These networks distinguish religious rebel organizations from others.

In this paper, I contribute to the research on civil war recurrence by considering the implications of this distinction: religious networks, originally existing for nonpolitical, spiritual reasons, are very costly to destroy (Mecham 2017, 47), so religious rebels are unlikely to completely lose their capacity to organize, making that method of recurrence prevention infeasible. Yet, religious civil wars often do not end in complete victory for the religious side. Given the other explanations for civil war recurrence depend on institutions, variation in the recurrence of religious civil wars should depend on creating positive incentives that prevent religious rebels from activating their organizing capability to return to war. Political institutions can create incentives against using a capacity to return to war if they have long-term effect, offering potential rewards indefinitely into the future, rather than being transitional incentives, designed to be phased out at a particular date (Johnson 2021). Recognizing the additional organizing capacity of religious networks and understanding incentives for the individuals and organizations in these networks to remain at peace may explain the variation in the recurrence of religious civil war insufficiently explained in existing research.

This existing research has found that religious civil wars are more likely to recur because spiritually charged items at dispute cannot be divided in negotiations (Hassner 2009; Toft 2006) and because variable, potential transnational support makes it impossible to estimate the relative strength of the sides (Nilsson and Svenson 2021), making peaceful bargaining extremely difficult. While the pattern that religious civil wars resume more often than others is clear,

evidence that these mechanisms are the most important factors remains inconclusive. Notably, the potential for transnational support and spiritual indivisibility are nearly static factors, very resistant to change, but religious civil wars do not invariably recur. I look for evidence for incentives which, when present, encourage religious rebels to remain at peace. Since religious rebels are unlikely to completely lose their capacity to organize, I clarify the problem of recurring religious civil war by showing that this persistent organizational base is a significant factor of recurrence. By finding incentives which affect the rebel ability to use this base, specifically equal access to political power and voluntary ends to conflict, I add to the study of incentives that can keep the civil peace.

Recruiting in a Religious Network and Its Limits

Individuals who participate in a shared religious community develop social ties which are strengthened by several means, forming a religious network among them. First, regular attendance in communal religious activities gives individuals with a shared worldview the chance to interact on a reliable basis (Wilcox and Robinson 2007, 11, 25), creating a body of common knowledge that can be applied to other situations, such as politics, and facilitating communication across individuals in the group (Mecham 2017, 56). Second, continuous and mutually visible participation in group activities reassures individuals in the community as to the dedication of the other members both to the shared worldview and to each other. Nearly all religious communities strengthen this mutual reassurance with membership practices including not only participation in group activities but also behavioral restrictions on dress, diet, sexual activity, medicine, and technology (Iannaccone 1997, 34-5). Third, as individuals in a religious community share these experiences, they develop stronger preferences for the activities, further strengthening ties within the community (Sherkat 1997, 69). Individuals in the community are

likely to be both committed to its shared goals and confident of other individuals' commitment in turn (Berman 2009, 17, 67). Finally, religious communities, despite these requirements, are usually inclusive of a wider variety of individuals than groups which are organized for a particular economic or political purpose (Wuthnow 1994, 53). Religious networks, therefore, consist of a variety of individuals who enjoy advantages in communication and mutual commitment.

When a rebel organization intentionally identifies itself with a religious community, it can potentially recruit and retain members through the religious network of that community. [20] This is not the case if it does not intentionally affiliate itself with the religious community: merely representing an identity group which happens to be defined in religious terms does not necessarily reach the specific individuals who are engaged in the kind of continuous religious practice that generates strong social ties. While members of an identity group enjoy some social ties that aid in communicating with and locating individuals (Habyarimana et al. 2009), and ethnic rebels not intentionally affiliated with a religious community might use those ties, without an intentional religious affiliation, rebels will have difficulty accessing the religious network, whose members have continuous, mutually visible, interaction from religious belief and practice that builds and maintains trust, giving additional advantages for rebel recruitment compared with ethnic ties alone. Conversely, while the rebel organization must have some affiliation with individuals engaged in religious practice to recruit through the religious network, it does not have to have only or even primarily religious goals though those may help. It merely needs to

[20] In this paper, I investigate whether a specific rebel organization which has fought a civil war against a state later returns to fight again. I classify a new organization as a new war. This differs from some concepts of recurrence which consider new or splinter organizations as recurrence if the new civil war is in the same state and over similar issues. Some works, notably Nilsson and Svenson (2021), include both versions of recurrence. I focus on organizational recurrence to ensure that any recurring conflict is likely to involve the same individual people deciding to return rather than a new set of insurgents who merely have similar issues to a former conflict.

declare an intention to represent the interests of participants in the religious network who participate in the religious community's activities and practices.

A rebel organization that recruits through the religious network enjoys advantages because of the particularly strong ties of communication and commitment between the individuals. For example, the common knowledge of the religious network can extend beyond religion to political situations (Mecham 2017, 55-56). Continuous discussion gives opportunities for members to develop shared preferences (Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988, 533) and links between political issues and religious doctrine (Wilcox and Robinson 2007, 8-9). Existing friendships help individuals encourage each other to take political action (Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988, 533) and connect them to resources useful for mobilization (Mecham 2017, 27). While common knowledge often exists between members of identity groups regardless of religious belief and practice, common knowledge in a religious network includes moral precepts that are strict enough that members seek to uphold them (Iannaccone 1997, 34-5; Walter 2017, 20) but flexible enough that they extend to specific political acts only when applied by the religious community to new contexts (Wilcox and Robinson 2007, 8-9). Communal religious practices help members apply common precepts to political goals and encourage each other to participate in political activity. Unlike most ethnic interactions, these communal religious practices are very frequent (for example, weekly services), and involve a larger number of people, especially when considering the network of second- and third-degree interactions that can exist in a religious community. Most importantly, individual participation in the religion is frequently visible to others, so individuals in the religious network develop stronger trust among each other than would be the case outside the religious network (Berman 2009, 17, 67). Therefore, rebel organizations that can access individuals in the religious network thereby access a pool of

potential recruits with whom they can communicate and whom they can convince of the benefits of political action at lower cost to the rebel organization than the rebel organization would incur if it could not access this network.

Rebel organizations that can access a religious network for recruitment enjoy a greater ability to resume a civil war that has ended. For a rebel organization to resume a fight, it must retain and recruit fighters to resume the conflict (Wagner 1993, 262; Walter 2004, 372-4) as well as maintain "organizational capacity and popular support" (Quinn, Mason, and Gurses 2007, 173). The religious network provides this, since even if ties have faded within the organization itself, links to religious congregations and religious elites can facilitate potential mobilization (Mecham 2017, 44-50). Since the religious network pre-exists in society before a war and was originally built for other purposes, it is very costly for the government to destroy (Mecham 2017, 47). So, these religious congregations and elites persist after the conflict is over and provide an ability to continue to communicate and coordinate after the war with more frequent and trusting interactions than alternative recruitment networks. These factors give religious rebels a greater ability to resume fighting after a war; therefore, they are more likely to resume if they are dissatisfied and can continue to access this network.

Civil wars recur because the sides are unable to remain committed to the existing status quo due to commitment problems. Since the government retains its ability to use force, the rebel side has difficulty in punishing the government for reneging on concessions to the rebel side (Walter 1997, 335-9; 1999, 133-4), giving the state a large incentive and ability to renege (Mattes and Savun 2010). Without both sides having mutual influence over the other, a pause in the war can simply become a period of rearmament for a new round of fighting (Toft 2010, 2). The promise of benefits to the rebel side must be credible in the long run or rebels will avoid

convincingly demobilizing (Toft 2010, 153; Johnson 2021). While the ability of religious rebels to mobilize from a religious network may give them some leverage over the government to deter reneging, their capability may also threaten the government, creating a security dilemma and encouraging the government to increase its repressive capabilities (Walter 1997, 340). This dilemma provides an additional reason for religious rebels to be more likely to return to conflict.

Since civil wars recur due to an inability to solve commitment problems, the question of whether religious rebels return to civil war should be determined by whether they and their governments solve their commitment problems. The government's commitment problem can be solved if the rebels can deter reneging by having the ability to organize for a new round of conflict; the rebels' commitment problem can be solved if this ability to organize for a new round of conflict is only operable in the case of the government reneging. Whether religious civil wars recur depends on whether the religious network can be remobilized if the government reneges and not if the government remains committed. This should be true when the concessions the government gives are satisfactory to the individuals in the religious network. The rebel organization as such does not necessarily have to be involved; often, state concessions are to a rebel constituency rather than to the rebel organization itself (Cunnigham 2014, 75). The rebels would still not be able to remobilize if the individuals in the recruitment pool are satisfied with the concessions (Wagner 1993, 262; Walter 2004, 372-8), but the government would be deterred from reneging because disappointing the individuals in the religious network would permit the rebel organization to recruit from the network again.

Concessions must be credible in the long term to prevent incentives to renege (Walter 1997, 340, 361; Johnson 2021). For the religious network to be satisfied with the postwar status quo, the individuals in the religious network must perceive that the interests of the religious

community can be pursued in the long run through peaceful means. The credible, permanent ability to participate in peaceful politics is particularly influential (Walter 1999, 139; Johnson 2021). If the individuals of the religious network have equal access to political power in the state compared to other social groups in the country, then religious elites and other individuals of the religious network will have the opportunity to benefit from the status quo. They will act within the network against remobilization, and the ability of the religious rebel organization to use the network for communication and coordination will be reduced. Religious rebels are less likely to be able to convince recruits to return to conflict when the religious constituency has influence in ordinary politics unlike the situation when they do not.

Hypothesis 1: When the constituents of religious rebels enjoy equal access to political power in a state, religious rebels are less likely to return to civil war than other rebels.

In addition to the post-war distribution of political power, the way that an earlier spell of war ended can affect the chance that an organization could remobilize people for war. Voluntary ends to previous fighting provide another situation where the religious rebel organization cannot easily access the religious network without the government first reneging on the status quo peace. The religious network consists of individuals with strong ties of communication and commitment to each other. For the religious rebel organization to mobilize through this network for an initial round of a new civil war, it must convince individuals in the network of the value of going to war. Individuals in the network become committed to this cause and convinced of each other's commitment to the cause, and the cause becomes tied to the religious worldview, including doctrinal precepts that provide specific guidance and potential spiritual punishments which influence individual behavior (Walter 2017, 20) unlike more general worldviews based on ethnicity alone. When the rebel organization voluntarily ends fighting, through an agreement or

ceasefire, as opposed to being defeated or weakened to the point of ineffectiveness, the organization must spread this new policy of peace through the network, explaining that the original rationale for war has changed and the end to fighting is the better option. Then, peace becomes the preference spread through the religious network to which individuals commit themselves and expect others to be committed and which they associated with the religious worldview. Having done this, the rebel organization cannot easily reverse their position yet again and mobilize the network for war without having a strong argument that the situation has changed (for example, arguing that the government has changed the status quo first). Therefore, religious rebels should be less likely to return to civil war when they have voluntarily ended fighting in the previous war rather than being defeated or weakened to the point of being ineffective.

Hypothesis 2: When a civil war has ended through a ceasefire or peace agreement, religious rebels are less likely to return to civil war than other rebels.

Empirical Evaluation

Following conventions in the field, I used survival analysis to examine conflict recurrence. Specifically, I estimated Cox proportional hazards models for the survival of peace using a dataset consisting of peace years in dyads of states and specific rebel organizations. To construct this dataset, I first used data collected by Cunningham, Gates, Gleditsch, and Nordås (2016) on the religious affiliation of separatist rebel organizations in the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, Version 4-2010 (Gleditsch et al. 2002; Harbom and Wallensteen 2010). This includes non-state organizations involved in an armed conflict demanding independence or territorial autonomy from a state in which at least 25 battle deaths occurred in a year. The focus on organizations demanding territory helps isolate the effect of religious affiliation: all the rebels

in the data necessarily represent a population in a specific territory from which they can recruit, so the analysis contrasts those who can recruit from a religious network within a geographically concentrated population with those who enjoy the benefits of geographic concentration alone (e.g., Toft 2003).

For each of these organizations, I constructed spells of peace years. Each spell of peace years begins in the year following the end of a conflict according to the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset (Version 3-2021 (Kreutz 2010)), and the peace spell ends in the year prior to conflict restarting based on the UCDP Armed Conflict Data or is right censored. [21] Because the data from Cunningham, Gates, Gleditsch, and Nordås (2016) only includes organizations which were active in 2009 or earlier, an organization must have been engaged in an intrastate conflict in 2009 or earlier to be included in the dataset. However, because the coding does not vary over time, and organizations are classified are religious or nonreligious for their whole existence, I did not right censor the data until 2019 because conflict recurrence has been observed for these organizations through that time. Control variables from UCDP External Support Dataset, Version 18.1 (Meier et al. 2022), which I describe below, limit the start of the analysis to 1976. This creates a sample of all territorial rebel organizations which were active between 1976 and 2009 and observes the peace years of these organizations from 1976 through 2019.

From this set of peace years, I removed peace years that cannot recur by definition, either because rebels have achieved secession from the state or the state itself has ceased to exist according to the Gleditsch-Ward definition (Gleditsch 2021; Gleditsch and Ward 1999). This

[21] Coding the peace spell as ending in the previous year functions similarly to a lag, ensuring that all covariates are temporally prior to the dependent variable; no matter how early in the following year peace ends, the covariates for the preceding year are related to end of peace.

leaves a total of 1668 peace years in 148 peace spells for 88 rebel organizations that fought over 52 territories in 29 states. The spells of peace years range from 1 to 43 (right censored), the maximum possible length. Since an organization must have been active in conflict at least once in 1976 or later to be included in the data, 43 is the maximum possible term of a peace spell in the data, representing an organization which fought in 1976 and never returned to conflict through 2019. Across the sample, the mean peace spell lasts 11 years across the sample. For religious organizations, the 45 peace spells range from 1 to 42, with a mean of 9 years, and for nonreligious organizations, the 103 spells range from 1 to 43, with a mean of 12.

I used the religious coding from Cunningham, Gates, Gleditsch, and Nordås (2016) because it approximately measures whether rebel organizations have chosen to recruit through a religious network. The coding indicates whether a rebel organization has "a stated religious belonging." Since all rebel organizations in the sample have made demands over territory, they all have a constituency whose identity is defined, at a minimum, by connection to that territory in addition to any other group characteristics. Rebels who have a stated religious belonging have purposely chosen to emphasize the religious aspect of the constituency's identity. This is regardless of whether the constituency's religion differs from that of the majority of the state and regardless of whether the rebel organization seeks a goal primarily motivated by religion. This intentional affiliation should be necessary and sufficient for such an organization to recruit and retain individual members through religious networks: without emphasizing the religious component of the constituency's identity, the individuals who are actively engaged in the religious network are unlikely to be interested, while intentionally emphasizing religious belonging should enable a rebel organization to communicate with this part of the constituency. The binary presence or absence of this intentional religious affiliation is my primary independent

variable. Of the 88 organizations in the sample, 26 organizations or 30% are religious, representing 412 peace years or 25% of the peace years in the sample, and 45 spells or 30% of the spells.

My theory suggests two conditioning factors that should mediate the relationship between religion and conflict recurrence, post-war political fortunes and war termination type, both of which will shape the ability of prior rebels to recruit again. To capture whether the religious constituency of the organization with which the rebel organization is intentionally affiliated can access political power in the state in a manner equal to other groups in the state, I used data from the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project (Coppedge et al. 2023b). Specifically, I employed a variable that captures the distribution of power by social group (hereafter "social power equality"). This indicates the extent to which any social groups in a state defined by "caste, ethnicity, language, race, region, religion, or some combination thereof" have "roughly equal political power" (Coppedge et al. 2023a, 206-7). Based on Hypothesis 1, I expected that religious rebel organizations would be less likely to return to conflict when their religious constituency can access power in the state equally compared with when they cannot because it gives individuals in the religious networks from which the rebel organization recruits alternative ways to pursue group interests. If the state features social power equality, religious rebel organizations should be less likely to resume conflict than if a state lacks social power equality. This measure is an index which ranges from -1.9 to 2.5 in the sample, with a mean value of 0.2 and a median value of 0.6. I interacted this variable with whether a rebel organization is religious as defined above (and so intentionally uses these networks for mobilization).

To evaluate Hypothesis 2, which suggests that the way conflict ends will condition the chance of recurrence, I included a variable that indicates whether the war ended by mutual

agreement, either by a peace agreement or a ceasefire (as opposed to the government reaching total victory or the conflict simply failing to meet the threshold of 25 annual deaths) based on the UCDP Conflict Termination Data (Kreutz 2010). Because I expected that a religious rebel organization is more committed to its position than other rebel organizations, once religious rebels have committed to a position of not fighting, they should be less likely to resume than if they had simply been prevented from continuing the fight by force of arms. Among the peace years in the sample, 549 peace years (33%) are peace years following agreements or ceasefires. This represents 41 of the 148 peace spells (28%). Of the 88 rebel organizations, 20 organizations (23%) have spells after agreements, and 15 organizations (17%) have both spells with agreements and without, while 53 organizations (60%) have only peace spells without agreements. I interacted this variable with whether a rebel organization is religious as defined above.

In addition to using robust standard errors clustered by dyad, I included several relevant control variables. First, since both organizing an insurgency from a religious constituency and giving that constituency access to political power are very different when that constituency is a minority among the state's entire population compared with when the state's leaders share that religion, I controlled for whether the rebel constituency is generally of a different religious background than the state, also using data collected by Cunningham, Gates, Gleditsch, and Nordås (2016). This is true for 51 of the 88 organizations (58%), representing 928 of the peace years (56%). This difference may or may not be present regardless of whether the rebels have an intentional religious belonging: 28 organizations (570 peace years) represent a minority religious constituency but lack an intentional religious belonging while 3 organizations (54 peace years) have an intentional religious belonging but represent a majority constituency.

Second, the influence of foreign fighters on the side of the rebels and foreign support for the state can make it harder for local actors to maintain peace (Nilsson and Svensson 2021); therefore, I followed Nilsson and Svensson (2021) and controlled for whether foreign fighters joined the rebels in the preceding conflict using data from Chu and Braithwaite (2017). However, because the explanation which Nilsson and Svensson (2021, 3) give for the recurrence of religious civil war is that the mere potential, not the actual presence, of foreign fighters creates information uncertainty over foreign involvement, I attempted to control for not only the presence of foreign fighters but also whether any potential sources of foreign interference exist. As an indicator of this potential, I controlled for the number of forms of support which both the state and the rebels received from outside actors, states and non-states, during the preceding conflict (Meier 2022, 3). This data comes from the UCDP External Support Dataset, Version 18.1 (Meier et al. 2022) and includes not only the involvement of foreign troops but also assistance with funding, logistics, and training.

Next, I controlled for other factors which influence the ability to recruit for a recurred conflict. Given that a rebel organization which was stronger in a past conflict should be better known to the population, I controlled for whether a rebel organization has been at least at parity of strength with the state according to data from Cunningham, Gleditsch, and Salehyan (2013). Since economic opportunity generally discourages recruitment to conflict, I also controlled for GDP per capita to measure the level of development of the state (with data from the Penn World Table (PWT), Version 10.01 (Feenstra, Inklaar, and Timmer 2015))[22]. Separately from the level of development, improved economic conditions since the last conflict can further discourage

[22] For the end-of-conflict level of GDP per capita, to best capture relative standard of living in the state, I used the natural logarithm of the PWT expenditure-side real GDP per capita. For the measures of growth in the state's economy after the conflict, I used the PWT measure of real GDP per capita using national accounts growth rates and calculated its growth proportional to its value at the end of conflict and then took the natural logarithm.

recruitment for another round of fighting (Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom 2008; Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Quinn, Mason, and Gurses 2007, 167; Walter 2004, 375), so I also control for economic growth since the end of the preceding conflict using the same PTW data (Feenstra, Inklaar, and Timmer 2015). Since a more repressive state may also have the power to suppress rebels while increasing grievance, I additionally controlled for the level of repression from the state using the V-DEM level of political killing in a country (Coppedge et al. 2023b). Finally, since some research has argued that total victory can prevent conflict recurrence (Downes 2004; Toft 2010; Wagner 1993; Zartman 1993), I also controlled for whether the previous conflict ended in total victory by the state according to the UCDP Conflict Termination Dataset, Version 3-2021 (Kreutz 2010).[23]

Results

I find significant, if incomplete, support for my hypotheses. In table 3.1 below, I present the coefficients from the Cox proportional hazards models, having tested for violations of the proportional hazards assumption.[24] A positive coefficient indicates a greater likelihood of the end of peace and a return to conflict. Model 1 demonstrates the baseline effect of religion without the conditioning effects hypothesized in Hypotheses 1 and 2; it includes all the variables without an interaction. Religious rebels, as the previous literature suggests (Hassner 2009;

[23] I present models without controls and controlling only for GDP at the end of conflict in Appendix 3.2. The results without controls are not significant, but when controlling for GDP only the results for a voluntary end to the previous conflict (Hypothesis 2) are significant at the 10% significance level.

[24] In table 3.1 in the text, I present models which include interactions with the natural logarithm of time to adjust for violations of the proportional hazards assumption, following Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn (2001), showing the unadjusted models and tests for the violations in Appendix 3.1, along with models stratifying by number of previous recurrence episodes (Appendix 3.3). The stratified results are similar to the models presented in the text. Tables were made using R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024), the {survival} package (Therneau 2024; Therneau and Grambsch 2000), and the{stargazer} package (Hlavac 2022). Plots were made using R software (R Core Team 2024) and the {survminer} package (Kassambara, Kosinski, and Biecek 2021).

Table 3.1: Coefficients for Cox Proportional Hazards Models for Resumption of Conflict

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Religious Affiliation	1.126*	1.141*	1.529**
	(0.303)	(0.304)	(0.327)
Social Power Equality	0.227	0.476+	0.166
	(0.158)	(0.179)	(0.161)
Rebel-Government Religious Difference	-0.556	-0.651	-0.616
	(0.293)	(0.303)	(0.298)
Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side	0.420	0.262	0.078
	(0.389)	(0.400)	(0.404)
External Support for the Government	0.029	0.092	0.041
	(0.085)	(0.084)	(0.084)
External Support for the Rebels	0.012	0.048	0.028
	(0.091)	(0.089)	(0.088)
Strong Rebels	-1.666	-2.238	-2.074
	(1.060)	(1.071)	(1.069)
GDP/cap at End of Conflict	0.248	0.448+	0.272
	(0.135)	(0.154)	(0.136)
GDP Growth	1.903	3.293	2.752
	(1.685)	(1.821)	(1.755)
GDP Growth*ln(time)	-2.465**	-3.135**	-2.806**
	(0.690)	(0.759)	(0.723)
Repression	-0.440**	-0.541**	-0.381*
	(0.139)	(0.145)	(0.139)
Agreement or Ceasefire	-0.650+	-0.375	-0.028
	(0.302)	(0.312)	(0.348)
Victory	-2.204**	-2.097**	-2.200**
	(0.499)	(0.503)	(0.495)
Religious Affiliation*Social Power Equality		-0.961*	
		(0.256)	
Religious Affiliation*Agreement or Ceasefire			-1.923+
			(0.714)
Observations	1,668	1,668	1,668
R^2	0.089	0.098	0.094
Max. Possible R^2	0.508	0.508	0.508
Log Likelihood	-513.989	-506.190	-509.597
Wald Test	50.900** (df = 13)	47.340** (df = 14)	57.080** (df = 14)
LR Test	155.949** (df = 13)	171.547** (df = 14)	164.733** (df = 14)
Score (Logrank) Test	86.505** (df = 13)	93.639** (df = 14)	97.011** (df = 14)

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Nilsson and Svenson 2021), are more likely than nonreligious rebels to return to conflict. Social power equality and ending conflict through an agreement or ceasefire return negative coefficients but are not statistically significant at conventional levels.

Model 2 evaluates Hypothesis 1. I estimate the model interacting rebel religious affiliation and social power equality and find some evidence that the influence of religion on recurrence is conditioned on social power equality. The coefficient on the interaction term is negative and statistically significant at the .05 level. Religious organizations are more likely to return to conflict than nonreligious organizations in states lacking social power equality, and social power equality has a positive relationship with recurrence for nonreligious organizations. However, the interaction term is significant and negative, suggesting that social power equality has a negative relationship on recurrence for religious rebels.

In figures 3.1 and 3.2, I plot survival curves for model 2. These show the probability of peace continuing in a state-rebel dyad as time continues after a conflict. The x-axis is time in years and each line shows the predicted chance that peace will continue. Figure 3.1 shows the effect of religion at the lowest level of social power equality. Here, as predicted by previous research, the survival plot for nonreligious organizations remains near the top of the plot until after 30 years, showing a very high, stable probability that peace will hold. (Recall that the maximum observed peace spell is 43, so there are few observations exceeding 30.) By contrast, the survival plot for religious organizations drops dramatically in the initial year after peace begins and falls to around 0.25 after 10 years, making religious organizations nearly 75% more likely to return to war than nonreligious ones after a decade.

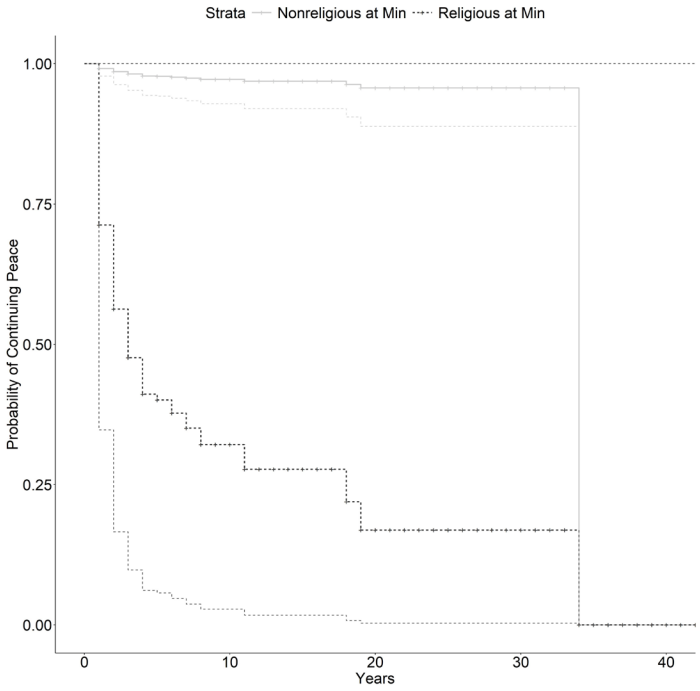

Figure 3.1: Survival Curves for Nonreligious and Religious Rebels at the Minimum Level of Social Power Equality (Model 2)

Figure 3.2 shows the effect of religion at the highest level of social power equality. If Hypothesis 1 is supported, there should be less difference between the survival plots of the religious and nonreligious rebel organizations than in figure 3.1. The difference between the plots is apparent: in figure 3.2, the survival plot for the religious rebels is *above* nonreligious rebels, suggesting that peace religious rebels are *more* likely to continue at peace than nonreligious rebels. While peace is likely for all rebels in the context of high social power equality, the conflict promoting effect of religion is especially diminished in this context.

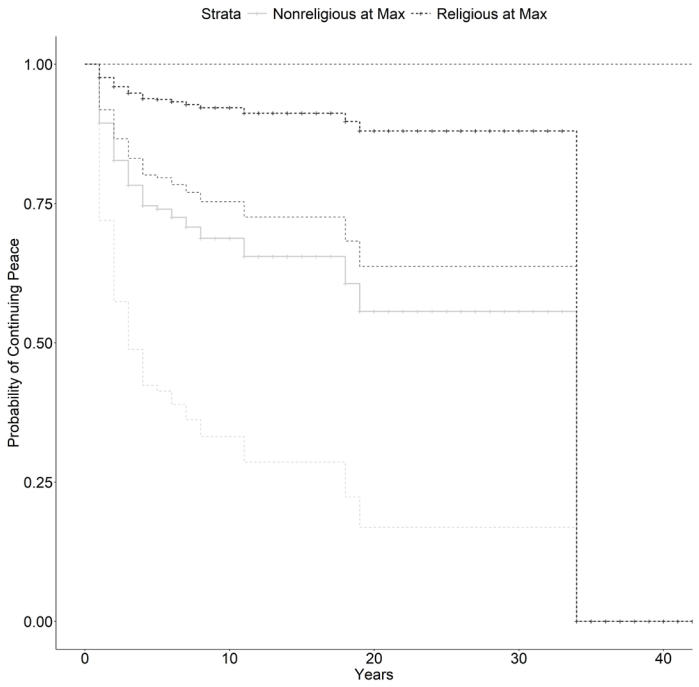

Figure 3.2: Survival Curves for Nonreligious and Religious Rebels at the Maximum Level of Social Power Equality (Model 2)

The survival plot comparison suggests a conditional effect of social power equity (Hypothesis 1). Still, despite the significant interaction term, the confidence intervals for the survival curves of religious and nonreligious organizations overlap both at low (figure 3.1) and high levels of social power equality (figure 3.2).[25] This means that I cannot be wholly confident that there is a significant effect of religion even at the lowest values of social power equality even though the survival plots are quite distinct. Taken together, the analysis provides some evidence that social power equality has a dampening influence on the effect of religion in line with my hypothesis: giving individuals in a religious network alternatives for pursuing the interests of the religious group discourages religious rebels from mobilizing a return to conflict.

[25] For curves contrasting organizations of the same type at different levels of social power equality, see Appendix 3.4.

I next evaluate Hypothesis 2, that the effect of religion is conditioned by the way war ends, including an interaction term between intentional religious belonging and a voluntary end to the previous conflict (table 3.1; model 3). (Recall that a voluntary end includes both peace agreements and ceasefires.) Religious belonging returns a positive and significant coefficient, while a voluntary end alone returns a positive coefficient, though not significant at conventional levels. The interaction term returns a negative coefficient which is significant at the 0.1 level, providing some support to Hypothesis 2. This suggests that the greater likelihood of conflict recurrence for religious rebels is smaller when an agreement to end the conflict was reached compared with when the conflict is ended by force.

In figures 3.3 and 3.4, I plot survival curves for religious and nonreligious rebels based on the presence or lack of an agreed end to the previous conflict.[26] Comparing the survival plots reveals a similar pattern to those for Hypothesis 1. In figure 3.3, where conflict did not see a voluntary end, nonreligious organizations are again very likely to stay at peace for more than 30 years. (Recall again that the maximum peace spell is only 43.) Religious organizations drop faster to about 0.40 after 10 years, making them 60% more likely to return to war after a decade. In figure 3.4, I present survival curves for rebels who voluntarily ended conflict. The evidence would support Hypothesis 2 if there were less difference between the curves for religious and nonreligious rebels than the difference for involuntary ends of conflict in figure 3.3. Not only is that the case, but the survival curve for religious rebels in figure 3.4 is actually at a *higher* probability than that for nonreligious rebels (indicating a greater chance of maintaining peace), demonstrating some support for Hypothesis 2, but there is little difference between the curve for religious rebels who voluntarily ended their previous conflict and nonreligious ones who did so.

[26] For curves contrasting organizations of the same type both with and without agreements or ceasefires, see Appendix 3.4.

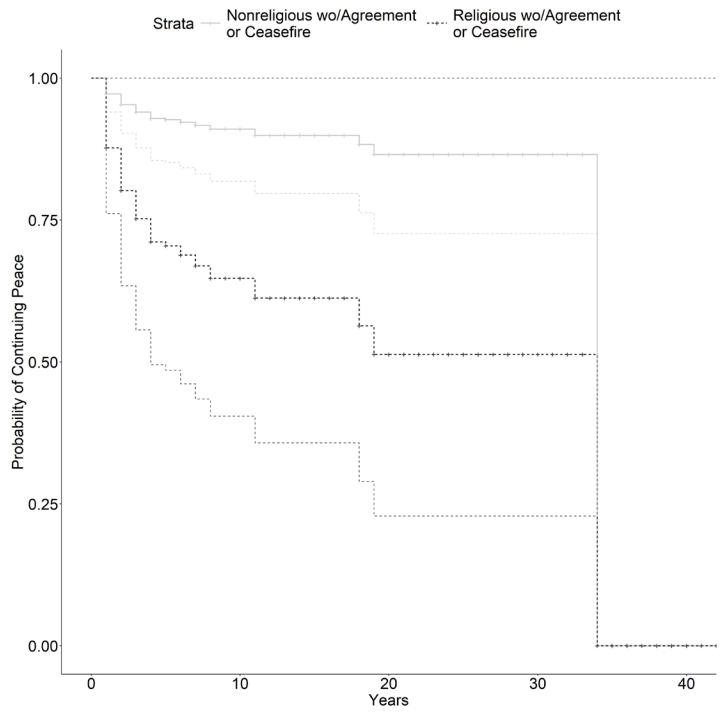

Figure 3.3: Survival Curves for Nonreligious and Religious Rebels without an Agreement or Ceasefire (Model 3)

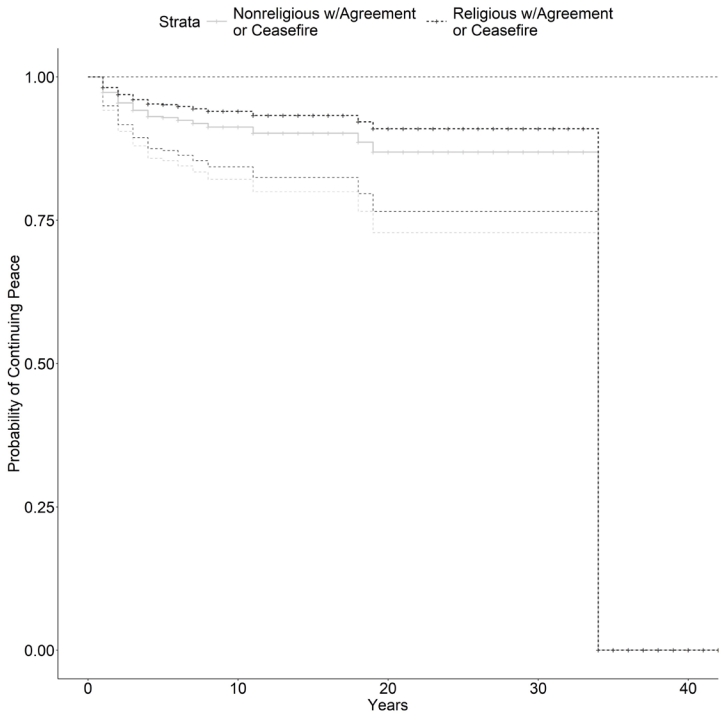

Figure 3.4: Survival Curves for Nonreligious and Religious Rebels with an Agreement or Ceasefire (Model 3)

As with figures 3.1 and 3.2, the confidence intervals overlap at all points in figures 3.3 and 3.4, which suggests limited evidence that religion is playing a central role in recurrence. Still, this shows that religious rebels can be committed to peace to at least the same extent that nonreligious rebels are (and possibly more so) when the end to the previous conflict has been mutually agreed. This indicates some support for Hypothesis 2.

Conclusion

Religious civil wars have been found to be particularly difficult to resolve. Even when peace is found, these disputes are very likely to resume again later. The primary existing explanations for this finding, information uncertainty from the potential for foreign fighters to become involved (Nilsson and Svensson 2021) and issue indivisibility (Hassner 2009; Toft 2006), remain constant in any particular case and do not provide a sufficient explanation for why religious civil wars can be resolved more durably in some cases than others. I instead examined how religious recruitment influences commitment problems leading to civil war recurrence with rebels making territorial demands and how limits on religious recruitment can discourage recurrence, specifically limits resulting from the process of war end and from the post-war fortunes of the populations that religious rebels represent. The focus on commitment problems and recruitment for religious war recurrence fits better with explanations for conflict recurrence generally (Quinn, Mason, and Gurses 2007, 173; Walter 2004, 372-4). Moreover, this paper contributes an understanding of the intractability of religious civil war that relies on variable factors, explaining both conflict recurrence and persistent peace after religious civil wars and provides practical implications to reduce it, by identifying social power equality and voluntary ends to violence as incentives to discourage religious rebels from recruiting through persistent religious networks.

I presented an argument that the intractability of religious civil war is at least partially because religious rebels organize through religious networks which cannot be entirely suppressed. Building on this, I hypothesized that these same religious networks may be harder to mobilize when their religious constituency is satisfied by access to political power and when the organization has already agreed to lay down arms, committing its religious network to that policy. I found evidence that the effect of religion on war recurrence for rebels demanding territory is conditioned by post-war power dynamics, specifically the degree to which equal access to political power is allowed for all social groups. In such cases, the individuals within the religious network see the ability for the religious constituency to address grievances through the peaceful political system in the long-term. Therefore, even though religious rebels retain a potential for remobilization through religious networks, they are unlikely to be able to use it when individuals within it see alternatives that plausibly provide a better future.

I also found a conditioning effect of war end on the effect of religion. With at least a ceasefire agreed upon, religious rebels making territorial demands are no more likely than similar nonreligious rebels to return to war. The religious network gives religious rebels a stronger sense of cohesion than other rebels. Having committed their cohesive organizations to the situation of peace and convinced the religious constituency that war is no longer reasonable, they will face difficulty in reneging on this and mobilizing that same constituency again for war.

Both sets of evidence indicate that the distinct recurrence pattern of religious rebel organizations can be explained by their persistent ability to organize from a religious constituency when that constituency is dissatisfied, at least among rebels making territorial demands. They are likely to be able to return to war if there is dissatisfaction, and while their ability to do so may help deter states from reneging on concessions, it may also make it hard for

the rebels themselves to commit to a deal, making governments fearful and creating a security dilemma. Making the rebel ability to recruit through a religious network conditional prevents this. If the individuals in religious networks are satisfied by nonviolent means, either by an agreement between the state and the rebel organization, or by ensuring that individual members of that network can independently pursue the interests of that religious constituency through the political process, the rebels have difficulty recruiting for renewed conflict. The government need not fear the rebel constituency unless the government itself reneges. This logic explains religious recurrence through a logic of commitment problems, placing religious recurrence as a special case of the commitment problems and recruitment incentives that explain recurring civil war generally (cf., Quinn, Mason, and Gurses 2007; Walter 2004) rather than requiring substantially distinct theories.

This understanding also facilitates policymaking to prevent the recurrence of religious civil war with rebels making territorial demands. Since making indivisible items divisible or attempting to solve information uncertainty by disrupting longstanding and persistent transnational religious ties are both very difficult, focusing on preventing religious rebel organizations from recruiting may be easier. Rather than attempting to suppress a religious network, which is unlikely to work, states need to ensure that members of a religious network have the opportunity to pursue the interests of that religious constituency through the political process. An agreement with the former rebels may discourage them from returning to war. Though this may not always be desirable, especially if the religious rebels are particularly extreme, even without an agreement with the rebel group, the state may still discourage recurrence by permitting and encouraging the individual members of the religious network to take part in a political system on an equal footing.

The evidence I have provided suggests these implications apply to secessionist rebels making demands for independence (or at least autonomy) for a specific territory. I have not tested these hypotheses on rebels attempting to seize control of a state's central government. This scope has made a stronger test because I have controlled for the additional cohesion rebels with territorially concentrated support bases may enjoy which previous research has long demonstrated (e.g., Toft 2003), but I cannot properly make conclusions about rebels outside this scope. While the cohesion generated from a religious network, the resulting commitment problem, and possible resolutions shown here may also apply to rebels who try to seize power at the center, future research will have to find empirical evidence that this logic applies to religious rebels who do not also have a distinct territorial constituency from that of the government. Relatedly, the data here are limited to those rebels who reached the threshold of 25 battle deaths between 1975 and 2009. While religious territorial rebels in the past 15 years may be similar to these, future research will also have to empirically show this.

Within these limits, further practical implications can also apply to the ways territorial civil wars end. Since religious rebels will retain a recruitment pool after a conflict, they and their governments need to prevent a security dilemma as a result of the rebels' relative ease in returning to war. Religious rebels should ensure the terms with the government are clear and explained through the religious network within the worldview of the members of that network as well as seeking long-term access for members to participate in nonviolent politics and also situating this participation within the religious worldview. In this way, the rebel group solves its commitment problem to the government because it will not be able to recruit as long as these terms are followed: a return to war would be both illogical, violating the group worldview, as well as irrational, passing up the incentives of the new political system. Yet, the government will

still be deterred from reneging because if the government violates its terms, it will remove the incentives and violate the group's worldview, creating an especially salient grievance that would encourage recruitment. Thus, considering territorial religious civil war recurrence from the point of view of recruiting through religious networks provides a theoretically richer and more practical understanding of territorial religious civil war recurrence than existing explanations.

Conclusion:

Religious Cohesion as a General Political Process

Whether it be President Joe Biden or members of Congress in the United States, Prime Minster Modi in India, or the Afar Liberation Front in Ethiopia, various actors use religion as a process of mobilization in politics. However, few studies of religion in politics have found generally applicable mechanisms which can explain the use and effect of religion across these cases. This dissertation contributes to the study of religion and politics by identifying religious cohesion as a generally applicable process across different tactical and religious contexts and applies it to three puzzles: the large variation in survival for self-determination organizations, the use of religious rhetoric in electoral politics by politicians who do not need support from religious voters, and the intractability of many, but not all, territorial religious civil wars.

In the first paper, I applied the process of religious cohesion to explain the large variation in the persistence of self-determination organizations. I selected organizations from a global sample without respect to tactics used by the organization, creating novel data by classifying them according to the religious basis of their political claims and according to their membership practices. This sample included organizations from Pakistan, India, Canada, and Ethiopia, particularly Hindu, socialist, and Islamist organizations. I found limited evidence within this sample that self-determination organizations which frame political claims in terms of religion persist in their political claim-making activity longer than those which do not. I found more significant evidence in this sample for an effect of membership practices, often but not always related to religion, which signal individual members' commitment to each other around the religion and political cause. This demonstrates that religious belief-- but especially related practices in a community-- can generate political cohesion across a range of religious backgrounds and tactical choices and that religious cohesion is a generally applicable political

process. I have confidence that this result applies without bias within the sample because of its random selection, but further research will be needed to demonstrate its generality.

In the second paper, I applied the mechanism of religious cohesion to the electoral context, asking why politicians use religious rhetoric even when it does not seem to be a useful signal of policy preferences. I looked for individual-level evidence that framing political promises in religious terms would allow a politician to signal strength of commitment to that promise. In the extended analysis, I found evidence that respondents across the national sample are more likely to be completely convinced of a politician's commitment to a promise on a controversial issue (in this case, abortion). However, respondents identifying with the Republican party drive this effect, while Democrats are more convinced of a politician's commitment to the promised policy when the promise is framed in terms of rights. This shows that strongly held beliefs affect the credibility of political promises, but how important it is to credibility that the beliefs be religious needs more research to determine. Also, contrary to expectations, and unlike in the first paper where membership practices had greater significance than the religious basis of the demand itself, showing respondents a biography of a politician emphasizing the politician's participation in a religious community did not signal the politician's commitment to a promise. Therefore, either the participation in a religious community mentioned in the treatment was not a sufficient membership practice to generate the effect, or membership practices do not signal political commitment in electoral contexts (or at least not the current context in the United States). Future research should pursue this issue as well.

Finally, in the third paper, I studied the puzzle of intractable territorial religious civil war from the perspective of religious cohesion. I showed that the common finding that religiously affiliated rebel organizations are more likely to resume conflict after a break in the violence is

conditioned on the ability of rebels to recruit individuals in from cohesive religious networks. When a post-conflict state allows all social groups equal access to political power, individuals in a cohesive religious network have less incentive to pursue a return to violence, and when a rebel organization has voluntarily laid down arms and justified that to its religious supporters, it will be difficult to mobilize the same group again because of their commitment to the previous position of peace. In both these scenarios, a territorial religious rebel organization has difficulty in recruiting from a religious network for further violence, making it less likely to return to conflict. This is despite the cohesion of that network giving it an advantage in mobilization that would make it easier to return to conflict if the individuals in the religious network lacked equal access to political power or the organization had not previously laid down arms voluntarily. Future research should look for other factors which make recruiting from a cohesive religious network easier or harder for rebels as well as study religious rebels seeking to overthrow the central governments of their states and those whose wars have started in the past 15 years after the end of the data I have used, but this paper shows that religious cohesion is a mechanism which can explain both a return to violence and persisting peace after territorial civil wars which began between 1975 and 2009.

Together, the three papers in this dissertation contribute to the study of religion and politics by identifying a general process of religion applicable across different religious backgrounds and political contexts: cohesion from practices, often related to religion, which allow individuals to signal their commitment to a group. Political entrepreneurs, whether candidates running for office, organizations demanding self-determination, or former rebels deciding between peace and renewed conflict, have the opportunity to use this cohesion as a resource for political mobilization. This dissertation shows that the study of religion in politics

does not need to be piecemeal, limited to particular contexts only, but can identify general processes which may become of use to political science broadly as Kettell (2024) has argued.

This dissertation contributes to the study of religion in politics by showing that religious cohesion is a political resource and thereby gives a starting point which further research can build on. First, future research should look for other sources of cohesion which might also function as a political resource; notably, the first paper shows that membership practices are more significant than religious ideology alone and, in the second paper, Democratic respondents considered a rights-based promise more credible than a religious one. This suggests that there is a need for research into what sets of beliefs make cohesion possible. Second, future research should identify which communal membership practices allow individuals to signal commitment to a larger group. While membership practices are very significant in the first paper in the persistence of self-determination organizations, showing a politician's activity in a religious community is not significant in the second paper. Third, future research should also study which other institutional factors, beyond social power equality and ceasefires, might affect the ability to recruit from a religious network after a conflict. Finally, research on religion and politics needs to find additional mechanisms beyond religious cohesion which will be generally applicable across tactical and religious contexts.

Appendices

Appendix 1.1: Model Details[27]

Table 1.7: Levels of Predicted Probability for Ending Activity by Religion and Signals[28]

Model	Ideology	Signals	Probability	95% C.I. Min	95% C.I. Max
M1: Religion Alone	0	NA	0.041	0.023	0.084
M1: Religion Alone	1	NA	0.011	0.002	0.041
M2: Membership Practices Alone	NA	0	0.061	0.033	0.117
M2: Membership Practices Alone	NA	1	0.011	0.002	0.054
M3: Religion with Controls	0	NA	0.046	0.026	0.082
M3: Religion with Controls	1	NA	0.009	0.002	0.037
M4: Membership Practices with Controls	NA	0	0.061	0.033	0.127
M4: Membership Practices with Controls	NA	1	0.013	0.002	0.058
M5: Both	0	Observed	0.038	0.021	0.085
M5: Both	1	Observed	0.014	0.002	0.049
M5: Both	Observed	0	0.053	0.028	0.105
M5: Both	Observed	1	0.012	0.002	0.054
M6: Both with Controls	0	Observed	0.040	0.023	0.086
M6: Both with Controls	1	Observed	0.012	0.003	0.045
M6: Both with Controls	Observed	0	0.050	0.028	0.106
M6: Both with Controls	Observed	1	0.013	0.003	0.053

[27] Analysis performed in R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024); predicted probabilities calculated with the R package {DAMisc} (Armstrong 2022) according to the observed values method (Hanmer and Kalkan 2013); {sandwich} (Zeileis 2006; Zeileis, Köll, and Graham 2020) used for clustered standard errors; AUC calculations follow Ward, Greenhill, and Bakke (2010); tables created with {stargazer} (Hlavac 2022); {calibrate} (Graffelman and Van Eeuwijk 2005) used on plots.

[28] Observed means the predicted probability was calculated with that variable set to the values observed in the data (as used by Hanmer and Kalkan (2013)).

Table 1.8: Area under Receiver Operator Curve (AUC) from Removing Variables (In-Sample)

Stage	Religion	Membership Practices	Number of Organizations	Liberal Democracy	GDP	Spline 1	Spline 2	Spline 3
1	0.789	0.779	0.831	0.831	0.821	0.829	0.828	0.828
2	0.704	NA	0.775	0.772	0.779	0.782	0.776	0.777
3	NA	NA	0.708	0.703	0.704	0.702	0.705	0.697

The AUC for the full model including all these variables was 0.791. Stages 2 and 3 are calculated after having removed the most predictive variable in the previous stage (membership practices and religion, respectively.)

Table 1.9: Area under Receiver Operator Curve (AUC) from Removing Variables (4-fold Cross Validation)

Stage	Religion	Membership Practices	Number of Organizations	Liberal Democracy	GDP	Spline 1	Spline 2	Spline 3
1	0.737	0.720	0.769	0.785	0.776	0.764	0.780	0.767
2	0.644	NA	0.722	0.715	0.733	0.744	0.728	0.710
3	NA	NA	0.645	0.651	0.670	0.651	0.645	0.644

The AUC for the full model including all these variables was 0.769. Stages 2 and 3 are calculated after having removed the most predictive variable in the previous stage (membership practices and religion, respectively.)

Table 1.10: Tests for the Proportional Hazards Assumption in the Survival (Cox) Models

Model	Variable	Chi.Sq	df	p
1	Religion	0.114	1	0.736
1	GLOBAL	0.114	1	0.736
2	Membership Practices	0.991	1	0.320
2	GLOBAL	0.991	1	0.320
3	Religion	0.112	1	0.738
3	Organizations in the Movement (lag)	0.990	1	0.320
3	Democracy (lag)	0.042	1	0.838
3	GDP per Capita (nat log, lag)	2.409	1	0.121
3	GLOBAL	5.057	4	0.282
4	Membership Practices	0.885	1	0.347
4	Organizations in the Movement (lag)	2.148	1	0.143
4	Democracy (lag)	1.076	1	0.300
4	GDP per Capita (nat log, lag)	3.114	1	0.078
4	GLOBAL	5.912	4	0.206
5	Religion	0.386	1	0.534
5	Membership Practices	1.179	1	0.278
5	GLOBAL	1.269	2	0.530
6	Religion	0.388	1	0.533
6	Membership Practices	1.013	1	0.314
6	Organizations in the Movement (lag)	2.905	1	0.088
6	Democracy (lag)	1.295	1	0.255
6	GDP per Capita (nat log, lag)	3.114	1	0.078
6	GLOBAL	7.569	5	0.182

Appendix 1.2: Data Descriptives[29]

Table 1.11: Summary Statistics for Binary Variables

	Count of Observations = 0	Count of Observations = 1	Proportion of Observations = 1
End of Activity	874	21	0.023
Religion	548	377	0.408
Membership Practices	321	604	0.653

Table 1.12: Summary Statistics for Continuous Variables

	Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
Number of Organizations	0	3	5	7.436	13	17
Democracy	0.072	0.666	0.726	0.655	0.749	0.846
GDP (Natural Log)	-0.661	0.372	0.938	1.311	1.623	3.866
Active Years	0	5	13	16.570	24	69

Table 1.13: Distribution of Country-Years by Decade

	None		Hindu		Islam		Socialist		Indigenous	
	Count	% of Decade	Count	% of Decade	Count	% of Decade	Count	% of Decade	Count	% of Decade
1960s	23	50	10	21.739	0	0	13	28.261	0	0
1970s	46	66.667	10	14.493	4	5.797	6	8.696	3	4.348
1980s	57	51.351	24	21.622	10	9.009	7	6.306	13	11.712
1990s	129	60.563	42	19.718	10	4.695	12	5.634	20	9.39
2000s	171	61.071	75	26.786	0	0	14	5	20	7.143
2010s	122	59.223	70	33.981	0	0	0	0	14	6.796

Note that Socialism declines as a proportion of organization-years over the course of the time period. Nonreligious organizations are more common after 1990 than before. Muslim and

[29] Analysis performed in R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024); some tables created with {stargazer} (Hlavac 2022).

Indigenous organizations are most common in the 1980s, but Hindu organizations show no clear pattern over time.

Appendix 2.1: First Experiment: Survey Questionnaire

Initial Questions

Q1. What year are you at UMD? **[SLIDER 1-6]**

Q2. Which of the following best describes your intended major? **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. Engineering
2. Computer science
3. Pre-Med
4. Pre-Law
5. Government and Politics, Political Science, or Public Policy
6. Economics
7. Accounting or Finance
8. Business
9. Psychology or Criminology
10. Humanities (such as arts, literature, or languages)
11. Mathematics or Natural Science (such as biology, physics, or chemistry)

Q3. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a: **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. Republican
2. Democrat
3. Independent **[FIXED]**
4. Other **[FIXED]**
5. No preference **[FIXED]**

Q4. **[If Q3 = 3, 4, 5, or refused to answer; otherwise skip]**
Do you think of yourself as closer to the: **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. Republican Party
2. Democratic Party
3. Neither **[FIXED]**

Q5. **[If Q3= 1 or 2 or Q4 = 1 or 2, pipe in the correspondent choice from Q1 in parentheses; otherwise skip]**
Would you call yourself a strong (**pipe in response from Q1 in parentheses**: Republican/Democrat) or not a very strong (**pipe in response from Q1 in parentheses:** Republican/Democrat)?

1. Strong (**pipe in response from Q1 in parentheses**: Republican/Democrat)
2. Not a very strong (**pipe in response from Q1 in parentheses**: Republican/Democrat)

Q6. In this past election, which of the following presidential candidates did you vote for? **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. Donald Trump

2. Joe Biden
3. Jo Jorgensen
4. Another candidate (write in): **[WRITE IN; FIXED]**
5. I did not vote in the past presidential election **[FIXED]**

Q7. If you voted in the Democratic presidential primary, for whom did you vote? **[If Q3 = 2, or Q4=2; otherwise skip] [RANDOMIZE]**

1. Joe Biden
2. Bernie Sanders
3. Elizabeth Warren
4. Another candidate (write in): **[WRITE IN; Fixed]**
5. I did not vote in the Democratic presidential primary **[FIXED]**

Q8. We would like to get a sense of your general preferences.

Most modern theories of decision making recognize that decisions do not take place in a vacuum. Individual preferences and knowledge along with situational variables can greatly impact the decision process. To demonstrate that you've read this much, just go ahead and select both red and green among the alternatives below, no matter what your favorite color is. Yes, ignore the question below and select both of those options.

What is your favorite color? **[FIXED]**

1. White
2. Black
3. Red
4. Pink
5. Green
6. Blue

<u>Experimental Treatment</u>

Q9. Please read the short advertisement below from a candidate for local office. When you have read it carefully, click continue to move to the next page. **[Randomly assign one quarter of respondents to read "control - standard", one quarter to read "treatment - standard", one quarter to read "control - moralized" and the final quarter to read "treatment - moralized" and pipe in the party according to the party questions; respondents receive the party they identified in Q3 or Q4 and independent if they identified with no party]**

[Continued on next page]

Control – Standard	Treatment - Standard
	
	
	

Control – Moralized	Treatment - Moralized
	
	
	

1. Continue

Q10. Think back to the advertisement on the previous page. Assume you are eligible to vote in this election. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

[PRESENT ON SCREEN IN GRID FORMAT – RADIAL BULLETS EVENLY SPACED, TEXT AS LISTED ABOVE 0 TO 4 AND NUMBERS ABOVE RADIAL BULLET FOR EACH NUMBER]					
TEXT ABOVE RADIAL BULLETS→ [RANDOMIZE ROWS]	Strongly disagree 0	Somewhat disagree 1	Neither disagree nor agree 2	Somewhat agree 3	Strongly agree 4
I would vote for this candidate (Taylor Morris).					
Achieving the policy stated in the ad (solving traffic problems) is important to me.					
My opinion on solving traffic problems is a reflection of my core moral beliefs and convictions.					
My opinion on solving traffic problems is deeply connected to my fundamental beliefs about right and wrong.					

Q11. Think back to the advertisement in Question 9. Assume you are eligible to vote in this election. Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

[PRESENT ON SCREEN IN GRID FORMAT – RADIAL BULLETS EVENLY SPACED, TEXT AS LISTED ABOVE 0 TO 4 AND NUMBERS ABOVE RADIAL BULLET FOR EACH NUMBER]					
TEXT ABOVE RADIAL BULLETS→ [RANDOMIZE ROWS]	Strongly disagree 0	Somewhat disagree 1	Neither disagree nor agree 2	Somewhat agree 3	Strongly agree 4
This candidate (Taylor Morris) is trustworthy.					
This candidate (Taylor Morris) is primarily interested in power and money.					
This candidate (Taylor Morris) is committed to achieving the policy stated in the ad (solving traffic problems).					
This candidate (Taylor Morris) is likely to successfully solve the issue raised in the ad (solving traffic problems).					

The candidate's (Taylor Morris's) opinion on solving traffic problems is a reflection of the candidate's core moral beliefs and convictions.					
The candidate's (Taylor Morris's) opinion on solving traffic problems is deeply connected to the candidate's fundamental beliefs about right and wrong.					

Q12. Think again back to the advertisement you read in Question 9. We'd like you to consider what you expect other people who might vote in an election to think of the candidate. Please indicate to what extent you agree with each of the following statements.

[PRESENT ON SCREEN IN GRID FORMAT – RADIAL BULLETS EVENLY SPACED, TEXT AS LISTED ABOVE 0 TO 4 AND NUMBERS ABOVE RADIAL BULLET FOR EACH NUMBER]					
TEXT ABOVE RADIAL BULLETS→ [RANDOMIZE ROWS]	Strongly disagree 0	Somewhat disagree 1	Neither disagree nor agree 2	Somewhat agree 3	Strongly agree 4
People like me are likely to vote for this candidate (Taylor Morris).					
Achieving the policy stated in the ad (solving traffic problems) is important to people like me.					
People like me are likely to believe this candidate (Taylor Morris) is trustworthy.					
People like me are likely to believe the candidate (Taylor Morris) is likely to successfully solve the issue raised in the ad (solving traffic problems).					
People like me are likely to believe the candidate (Taylor Morris) is committed to achieving the policy stated in the ad (solving traffic problems).					
People like me are likely to believe that this candidate (Taylor Morris) is primarily interested in power and money.					

Q13. Think again back to the advertisement you read in Question 9. We'd like you to further consider what you expect other people who might vote in an election to think of the candidate. Please indicate to what extent you agree with each of the following statements.

[PRESENT ON SCREEN IN GRID FORMAT – RADIAL BULLETS EVENLY SPACED, TEXT AS LISTED ABOVE 0 TO 4 AND NUMBERS ABOVE RADIAL BULLET FOR EACH NUMBER]					
TEXT ABOVE RADIAL BULLETS→ [RANDOMIZE ROWS]	Strongly disagree 0	Somewhat disagree 1	Neither disagree nor agree 2	Somewhat agree 3	Strongly agree 4
Religious people are likely to vote for this candidate (Taylor Morris).					
Achieving the policy stated in the ad (solving traffic problems) is important to religious people.					
Religious people are likely to believe this candidate (Taylor Morris) is trustworthy.					
Religious people are likely to believe the candidate (Taylor Morris) is likely to successfully solve the issue raised in the ad (solving traffic problems).					
Religious people are likely to believe the candidate (Taylor Morris) is committed to achieving the policy stated in the ad (solving traffic problems).					
Religious people are likely to believe that this candidate (Taylor Morris) is primarily interested in power and money.					

Identity

Q14. In terms of what's important about you, how much do you identify as each of the following?

[PRESENT ON SCREEN IN GRID FORMAT – RADIAL BULLETS EVENLY SPACED, TEXT AS LISTED ABOVE 0 TO 10 AND NUMBERS ABOVE RADIAL BULLET FOR EACH NUMBER]											
TEXT ABOVE RADIAL BULLETS→ [RANDOMIZE ROWS]	Not at all 0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very Strongly 10

A citizen of the United States											
A citizen of the world											
A follower of your religious faith											
A member of your race											
Part of your ethnic group											
Your gender											

Q15. Which one of these identities is **most** important to you today? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Please select one.

1. A citizen of the United States
2. A citizen of the world
3. A follower of your religious faith
4. A member of your race
5. Part of your ethnic group
6. Your gender

Q16. Please rate your feeling toward the following groups in society. A score of one hundred means a very warm, favorable feeling toward the group; zero means a very cold, unfavorable feeling toward the group, and fifty means not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to one hundred, the higher the number the more favorable your feelings are toward that group. **[RANDOMIZE ROWS; FOR EACH ROW, CREATE A SLIDER GIVING CHOICES 0 TO 100]**

Republicans
Democrats
Nonreligious people
Evangelical Christians
Catholics
Jews
Muslims
Black or African Americans
White or Caucasian Americans
Hispanic or Latino Americans
Asian Americans
Feminists
Black Lives Matter
Born Again Christians

Other Demographics

Q17. We are going to ask a few questions about your background and your family. Remember, your responses are anonymous and you may skip a question at any time. Your background and

your family have been shown by numerous studies to have an influence on your views about current events. We also want to know how closely you are reading the questions. To show you are reading the questions carefully, please ignore the question below and select both only child and one sister.

Which following statements applies to your family? You may select multiple choices. **[Randomly reverse]**

1. I am an only child.
2. I have one brother.
3. I have two brothers.
4. I have three or more brothers.
5. I have one sister
6. I have two sisters.
7. I have three or more sisters.

Q18. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic background: **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. Black or African American
2. White or Caucasian American
3. Hispanic or Latino American
4. Asian American
5. Multi-racial **[FIXED]**
6. Other **[FIXED]**

Q19. Which of the following best describes you? **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. Male
2. Female
3. Neither of these **[FIXED]**
4. Prefer not to say **[FIXED]**

Q20. What is your religion? **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. Evangelical Christian
2. Catholic
3. Ethiopian, Armenian, or Coptic Orthodox Christian or similar
4. Greek, Russian, or Serbian Orthodox Christian or similar
5. Protestant, but not Evangelical, Christian
6. Jewish
7. Mormon
8. Muslim
9. Sikh
10. Hindu
11. Other Christian **[FIXED]**
12. Other Religion **[FIXED]**
13. No Religion **[FIXED]**

Q21. Would you describe yourself as a born-again Christian? **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. Yes
2. No

Q22. How often do you attend religious services (other than for a wedding, a funeral, or similar personal event)? **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. Never
2. A few times a year or less
3. About once a month
4. A few times a month
5. Weekly
6. A few times a week
7. Daily

Q23. How often do you pray? **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. Never
2. Once a month or less
3. A few times a month
4. A few times a week
5. Once daily
6. Two to four times daily
7. 5 times daily or more often

Q24. How often do you use media for your religion, such as reading a social media account or news website, watching tv, or listening to radio aimed at your religion? **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. Never
2. A few times a year or less
3. A few times a month
4. A few times a week
5. Daily or more

Q25. How often do you participate in a group activity, other than religious services, for your religious or spiritual development (such as volunteering for a religious purpose or studying scripture)? **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. Never
2. A few times a year or less
3. A few times a month
4. A few times a week
5. Daily

Q25B. How important is religion in your life? **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Slightly important
4. Not very important
5. Not at all important

Q26A. **[ONLY ASK OF CHRISTIANS (I.E., RESPONDENTS WHO ANSWERED "Evangelical Christian", "Catholic", "Mormon", "Other Christian"; "Pentecostal"; FOR THE RELIGION QUESTION OR WHO ANSWERED "Yes" to Q18]** Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your views about the Bible? **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. The Bible is the inspired word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.
2. The Bible is the inspired word of God, but not everything in it should be taken literally.
3. The Bible is an ancient book of legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by humans.

Q26B. **[ONLY ASK OF JEWS; THOSE WHO ANSWERED "No" in Q18]** Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your views about the Torah: **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. The Torah is the inspired word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.
2. The Torah is the inspired word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally.
3. The Torah is an ancient book of legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by humans.

Q26C. **[ONLY ASK OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED "No" in Q18 and "Muslim" in Q17]** Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your views about the Qur'an: **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. The Qur'an is the preserved speech of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.
2. The Qur'an is the preserved speech of God, but not everything in it should be taken literally.
3. The Qur'an is an ancient book of legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by humans.

Q26D. **[ONLY ASK OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED "No" in Q17 and "Other Religion" or "No Religion" in Q16]** Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your views about the Holy Scripture: **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. The Holy Scripture is divinely inspired and is to be taken literally, word for word
2. The Holy Scripture is divinely but not everything in it should be taken literally
3. The Holy Scripture is ancient writing about legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by humans

Q27. Are you a US Citizen? **[Randomly Reverse]**

1. Yes

2. No

Q28. Are you registered to vote? **[Randomly Reverse]**

1. Yes
2. No

Q29. Have you voted in local elections (such as county board, city or town council, or school board) before? **[Randomly Reverse]**

1. Yes
2. No

Q30. Thinking of the candidate in Question 9 (Taylor Morris), how likely do you think it is that the candidate could be each of the following? **[Randomize]**

[PRESENT ON SCREEN IN GRID FORMAT – RADIAL BULLETS EVENLY SPACED, TEXT AS LISTED ABOVE 0 TO 4 AND NUMBERS ABOVE RADIAL BULLET FOR EACH NUMBER]					
TEXT ABOVE RADIAL BULLETS→ [RANDOMIZE ROWS]	Very unlikely 0	Somewhat unlikely 1	Neither unlikely nor likely 2	Somewhat likely 3	Very likely 4
Black or African American					
White or Caucasian American					
Hispanic or Latino American					
A man					
A woman					

Q31. Thinking of the candidate in Question 9 (Taylor Morris), how likely do you think it is that the candidate could be each of the following? **[Randomize]**

[PRESENT ON SCREEN IN GRID FORMAT – RADIAL BULLETS EVENLY SPACED, TEXT AS LISTED ABOVE 0 TO 4 AND NUMBERS ABOVE RADIAL BULLET FOR EACH NUMBER]					
TEXT ABOVE RADIAL BULLETS→ [RANDOMIZE ROWS]	Very Unlikely 0	Somewhat Unlikely 1	Neither Unlikely nor Likely 2	Somewhat Likely 3	Very Likely 4
Evangelical Christian					
Born Again Christian					
Catholic					
Mormon					
Jewish					

Muslim					
Non-religious					

Q32. Think back to the political advertisement you read earlier. Did the candidate in the ad reference God? **[Randomly Reverse]**

1. Yes
2. No

Q33. Just a few more questions. Remember that your answers are anonymous, and you may skip any question with which you are uncomfortable. To what extent do you agree with each of the following statements?

[PRESENT ON SCREEN IN GRID FORMAT – RADIAL BULLETS EVENLY SPACED, TEXT AS LISTED ABOVE 0 TO 4 AND NUMBERS ABOVE RADIAL BULLET FOR EACH NUMBER]					
TEXT ABOVE RADIAL BULLETS→ [RANDOMIZE ROWS]	Strongly disagree 0	Somewhat disagree 1	Neither disagree nor agree 2	Somewhat agree 3	Strongly agree 4
I am fearful of people of other races.					
White people in the US have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.					
Racial problems in the US are rare, isolated situations.					
I am angry that racism exists.					

Q33B. Are you currently enrolled in GVPT 200 Introduction to International Relations?

1. Yes
2. No

Q34. During this interview you were asked to read to a candidate's campaign advertisement. This ad was not real. We created it in order to better understand how the justification a candidate gives for promoting a policy impacts voter's support for and beliefs about candidates.

Please do not, therefore, base your own evaluations of policies, public officials, or candidates on the material you read in this study. Researching candidates, public officials, and public policy on your own via various information sources is the best way to make an informed choice. Finally, please do not share any information about this study with other students in the class.

We apologize for this deception as to the purpose of this study. If you would like to remove your data from the study, you may click withdraw below.

Here is your completion code [code]. Submit this code in the form attached to the sign-up email. If you do not submit this code, we are unable to verify your participation.

These are all the questions we have for you. Thank you for your time and should you have questions, please contact:
Sean Rao
3140 Tydings Hall
7343 Preinkert Drive
College Park, MD 20742
(301) 405-4156
Email: seanrao@umd.edu

1. Yes, I consent and submit the anonymous survey results.
2. No, I would like to withdraw consent and remove survey data.

[Questionnaire included a progress bar.]

Appendix 2.2: First Experiment: Complete Set of Pre-Registered Models[30]

The pre-registered analysis plan for Experiment 1 was more complex than the presentation in the text, which is simplified to focus on parts relevant to Experiment 2. Below I present all analyses from the pre-registration. The simplification does not change the interpretation of the results, which is a null finding as presented in the text. The pre-registered plan had multiple hypotheses, used logistic regression models on binary version of the dependent variables, and involved a moralized version of the religious treatment which is not used in the results presently in the text. (See Questionnaire in Appendix 2.1 above.) View the pre-registration on the OSF registry at this link: https://osf.io/x4rmf

Hypothesis 1a: Respondents will be more likely to believe that a candidate is strongly committed to a policy which the candidate justifies in religious terms outside of a moralized context.

Hypothesis 1b: Respondents will be more likely to believe that a candidate is strongly committed to a policy which the candidate justifies in religious terms in a moralized context.

Hypothesis 2a: Religious respondents should care more about achieving a policy if a candidate justifies the policy in religious terms outside of a moralized context.

Hypothesis 2b: Religious respondents should care more about achieving a policy if a candidate justifies the policy with religious rhetoric in a moralized context.

Hypothesis 3a: Respondents will be more likely to believe that other people will believe that a candidate is strongly committed to a policy which the candidate justifies in religious terms outside of a moralized context.

[30] Analysis performed in R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024), using R package {mediation} (Tingley et al. 2014). Tables created with {stargazer} (Hlavac 2022).

Hypothesis 3b: Respondents will be more likely to believe that other people will believe that a candidate is strongly committed to a policy which the candidate justifies in religious terms in a moralized context.

Hypothesis 4: Respondents who support a policy should be more likely to favorably evaluate a candidate when that a candidate justifies the policy in religious terms by means of estimating a greater commitment of that candidate to that policy.

Table 2.6: First Experiment: *t*-Test Results

Dependent Variable	Subset	Control Group Mean	Treatment Group Mean	Difference in Means 95% C.I. Lower	Difference in Means 95% C.I. Upper	t	Standard Error	p-Value
Candidate Committed	Not Moralized	0.582	0.620	-0.159	0.084	-0.613	0.062	0.540
Candidate Committed	Moralized	0.563	0.581	-0.142	0.105	-0.291	0.063	0.772
Policy Important	Not Moralized	0.415	0.571	-0.375	0.062	-1.429	0.110	0.157
Policy Important	Moralized	0.564	0.667	-0.311	0.105	-0.987	0.104	0.327
``People Like Me`` Back Candidate	Not Moralized	0.261	0.198	-0.041	0.167	1.193	0.053	0.234
``People Like Me`` Back Candidate	Moralized	0.267	0.308	-0.154	0.072	-0.715	0.057	0.476

Table 2.7: First Experiment: Coefficients for Binary Logistic Regression Models

	Dependent variable:					
	Candidate Committed		Policy Important (Religious Respondents Only)		``People Like Me`` Back Candidate	
	Non-Moralized	Moralized	Non-Moralized	Moralized	Non-Moralized	Moralized
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Religious Treatment	0.20	-0.55	1.15	1.17	-0.94^{+}	-0.48
	(0.48)	(0.51)	(1.92)	(1.09)	(0.56)	(0.48)
Independent	-2.40^{+}	-0.08	-2.60	16.79	-16.35	-15.96
	(1.25)	(1.06)	(3.00)	(3,956.18)	(1,486.56)	(1,058.00)
Republican	-1.14^{+}	-0.70	2.06	-0.30	1.16^{+}	0.53
	(0.59)	(0.62)	(1.96)	(1.05)	(0.65)	(0.60)
Evangelical/Born Again	-0.03	-0.85	5.92^{+}	-0.45	-0.92	1.41
	(0.99)	(1.19)	(3.32)	(1.93)	(1.27)	(1.18)
Jewish	1.18	-0.56	7.93^{+}	1.00	0.89	0.82
	(1.04)	(0.81)	(4.28)	(1.51)	(0.91)	(0.82)
No Religion	-0.52	-0.75	18.52	-0.52	-0.82	0.71
	(0.68)	(0.72)	(2,399.55)	(5,594.88)	(0.76)	(0.75)
Other Christian	-0.67	0.19	2.65	-0.48	-0.37	-0.17
	(0.74)	(0.81)	(2.74)	(1.34)	(0.81)	(0.84)
Other Religion	-0.83	-0.10	2.97	0.05	-1.43	1.00
	(0.84)	(0.82)	(3.04)	(1.68)	(1.21)	(0.80)
Religious Attendance	-0.17	-0.15	-0.50	-0.06	-0.02	0.17
	(0.16)	(0.19)	(0.41)	(0.31)	(0.17)	(0.20)
Believes Candidate could be Black	-0.01	-0.001	0.93	0.40	0.30	-0.14
	(0.19)	(0.20)	(0.58)	(0.42)	(0.24)	(0.21)
Believes Candidate could be Evangelical	-0.02	0.57**	2.11^{+}	0.04	0.002	0.01
	(0.21)	(0.22)	(1.18)	(0.43)	(0.24)	(0.21)
Believes Candidate could be a woman	-0.16	0.32	0.70	0.18	0.02	-0.02
	(0.24)	(0.20)	(0.95)	(0.33)	(0.30)	(0.19)
Intercept	1.56	-0.99	-14.11*	-1.02	-1.09	-0.69
	(1.08)	(0.95)	(6.65)	(1.64)	(1.25)	(0.96)
Observations	101	103	37	34	101	103
Log Likelihood	-60.59	-61.94	-12.28	-18.58	-46.23	-62.45
Akaike Inf. Crit.	147.18	149.88	50.56	63.16	118.46	150.89

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 2.8: First Experiment: Coefficients for Binary Logistic Regression Models for Mediation (Only Respondents who Agree Policy is Important)

	Dependent variable:							
	Candidate Committed		Would Vote for Candidate		Candidate Trustworthy		Would Vote for Candidate	
	Non-Moralized	Moralized	Non-Moralized	Moralized	Non-Moralized	Moralized	Non-Moralized	Moralized
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Religious Treatment	0.87	-0.90	-0.77	-0.87	4.02	-0.65	-1.39	-0.86
	(1.08)	(0.85)	(1.10)	(1.11)	(2.79)	(1.14)	(1.27)	(0.95)
Independent	-17.68	0.29	-21.45	-15.96	-22.98	-16.74	-20.99	-16.89
	(3,323.56)	(1.75)	(4,377.42)	(2,698.67)	(6,691.33)	(6,732.63)	(4,063.09)	(2,511.06)
Republican	-2.84^{+}	-1.25	5.85*	0.98	-4.97	-0.20	4.85*	0.15
	(1.45)	(0.95)	(2.44)	(1.17)	(6.04)	(1.30)	(2.02)	(1.17)
Evangelical/Born Again	-5.21^{+}	0.86	24.47	1.65	-2.96	-0.06	22.91	2.51
	(3.08)	(1.63)	(2,758.74)	(2.19)	(5,450.51)	(6,167.79)	(2,876.86)	(1.98)
Jewish	31.03	0.28	24.94	1.92	13.98	17.65	22.83	1.29
	(4,700.23)	(1.12)	(2,758.74)	(1.99)	(5,450.49)	(3,805.98)	(2,876.86)	(1.69)
No Religion	-1.44	-0.03	23.97	2.26	11.41	18.87	22.47	1.67
	(2.26)	(1.04)	(2,758.74)	(1.83)	(5,450.49)	(3,805.98)	(2,876.86)	(1.59)
Other Christian	-3.86	0.87	21.61	1.04	3.20	17.27	20.84	1.33
	(2.47)	(1.22)	(2,758.74)	(2.02)	(5,450.49)	(3,805.98)	(2,876.86)	(1.66)
Other Religion	-3.22	2.08	25.71	1.42	14.21	18.73	23.88	1.92
	(2.47)	(1.44)	(2,758.74)	(1.93)	(5,450.49)	(3,805.98)	(2,876.86)	(1.70)
Religious Attendance	0.85	-0.08	0.72	1.38*	4.85^{+}	0.49	0.52	0.69^{+}
	(0.56)	(0.25)	(0.64)	(0.58)	(2.76)	(0.36)	(0.66)	(0.41)
Believes Candidate could be Black	0.47	-0.31	0.56	0.04	1.11	-0.36	0.52	0.05
	(0.38)	(0.33)	(0.40)	(0.40)	(0.77)	(0.39)	(0.44)	(0.38)
Believes Candidate could be Evangelical	-0.83	0.54^{+}	1.27	-0.91^{+}	1.13	-0.11	1.18	-0.66
	(0.55)	(0.33)	(0.80)	(0.50)	(0.93)	(0.48)	(0.82)	(0.43)
Believes Candidate could be a woman	-0.33	0.14	0.47	-0.72^{+}	0.30	-0.40	0.06	-0.43
	(0.51)	(0.29)	(0.61)	(0.43)	(1.17)	(0.39)	(0.58)	(0.41)
Candidate Committed			1.53	3.38*				
			(1.27)	(1.41)				
Candidate Trustworthy							2.76	2.25*
							(1.73)	(1.09)
Intercept	5.06	-0.48	-33.03	-1.30	-27.24	-17.72	-28.68	0.01
	(3.49)	(1.33)	(2,758.75)	(2.19)	(5,450.49)	(3,805.98)	(2,876.86)	(1.95)
Observations	46	54	46	54	46	54	46	54
Log Likelihood	-18.60	-30.91	-16.06	-20.33	-8.18	-19.19	-15.17	-22.42
Akaike Inf. Crit.	63.19	87.82	60.12	68.65	42.35	64.38	58.35	72.84

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 2.9 First Experiment: Mediation Analysis

Treatment	Mediator	Subset	ACME Treated	95% C.I. Min. (ACME)	95% C.I. Max. (ACME)	p (ACME)	Significance (ACME)	Total Effect	95% C.I. Min. (Total)	95% C.I. Max. (Total)	p (Total)	Significance (Total)
Religious Treatment	Candidate Committed	Non-Moralized	0.014	-0.040	0.089	0.590		-0.056	-0.294	0.177	0.648	
Religious Treatment	Candidate Committed	Moralized	-0.040	-0.147	0.074	0.426		-0.139	-0.402	0.151	0.298	
Religious Treatment	Candidate Trustworthy	Non-Moralized	0.046	-0.049	0.145	0.240		-0.091	-0.326	0.151	0.432	
Religious Treatment	Candidate Trustworthy	Moralized	-0.025	-0.145	0.076	0.634		-0.142	-0.412	0.122	0.284	

*p<.05; +p<.1

Appendix 2.3: First Experiment: Summary Statistics[31]

Table 2.10: Whole Sample

Experimental Condition						
Non Religious-Low Harm	Non Religious-High Harm	Religious-Low Harm	Religious-High Harm			
134	135	121	117			
Estimated Candidate Commitment						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	2	3	2.637080868	3	4	
Policy Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	2	2	2.270750988	3	4	1
Religious Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	0	2	1.719681909	3	4	4
Belief that People Like Me Will Vote for Candidate						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	1	2	1.909270217	3	4	
Belief that Religious Will Vote for Candidate						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	2	2	2.358974359	3	4	
Willingness to Vote for Candidate						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	1	2	1.865612648	2	4	1
Party						
Democrat	Independent	Republican				
376	39	92				
Religion						
Catholic	EBA	Jewish	No Religion	Other Christian	Other Religion	NA's
97	33	69	167	93	46	2
Race						
Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other	White	NA's	
60	52	27	46	318	4	
Female						
0	1	NA's				
216	286	5				

[31] Analysis performed in R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024).

View of Nonreligious						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	50	74.5	72.43172691	93	100	9
View of Evangelicals						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	20	50	45.45867769	62	100	23
Belief that Candidate Could Be Black						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	1	3	2	3	4	223
Belief that Candidate Could Be an Evangelical						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	3	3	2.835913313	3	4	184
Belief that Candidate Could Be a Woman						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	3	3	2.881401617	4	4	136
Candidate is Trustworthy						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	2	2	1.915187377	2	4	
Religious Attendance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	0	1	1.212301587	1	7	3
Estimated Candidate Commitment-Binary						
0	1					
210	297					
Policy Importance-Binary						
0	1	NA's				
266	240	1				
Belief that People Like Me Will Vote for Candidate-Binary						
0	1					
376	131					
Belief that Religious Will Vote for Candidate-Binary						
0	1					
292	215					
Willingness to Vote for Candidate-Binary						
0	1	NA's				
408	98	1				
Candidate is Trustworthy-Binary						
0	1					

461	46					
Religious Importance-Binary						
0	1	NA's				
242	175	90				
Religious Treatment Condition (Both Harm Conditions)						
0	1					
269	238					
Harm Treatment Condition (Both Religious Conditions)						
0	1					
255	252					
Christian						
0	1	NA's				
282	223	2				

Table 2.11: Sample which Did Not Receive Moralized Treatment

Estimated Candidate Commitment						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
1	2	3	2.658824	3	4	
Policy Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	2	2	2.25098	3	4	
Religious Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	0	2	1.678571	3	4	3
Belief that People Like Me Will Vote for Candidate						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	1	2	1.882353	2	4	
Belief that Religious Will Vote for Candidate						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	2	2	2.384314	3	4	
Willingness to Vote for Candidate						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	2	2	1.85098	2	4	
Party						
Democrat	Independent	Republican				
187	17	51				
Religion						
Catholic	EBA	Jewish	No Religion	Other Christian	Other Religion	NA's
49	18	33	85	47	21	2
Race						
Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other	White	NA's	

28	26	14	15	169	3	
Female						
0	1	NA's				
106	146	3				
View of Nonreligious						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	50	70	70.58233	91	100	6
View of Evangelicals						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	20	46.5	44.60331	60	100	13
Belief that Candidate Could Be Black						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	1	3	2	3	4	113
Belief that Candidate Could Be an Evangelical						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	3	3	2.78882	3	4	94
Belief that Candidate Could Be a Woman						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	3	3	2.791444	3	4	68
Candidate is Trustworthy						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	2	2	1.92549	2	4	
Religious Attendance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	0	1	1.268775	1	7	2
Estimated Candidate Commitment-Binary						
0	1					
102	153					
Policy Importance-Binary						
0	1					
137	118					
Belief that People Like Me Will Vote for Candidate-Binary						
0	1					
196	59					
Belief that Religious Will Vote for Candidate-Binary						
0	1					
142	113					
Willingness to Vote for Candidate-Binary						
0	1					
214	41					
Candidate is Trustworthy-Binary						

0	1					
238	17					
Religious Importance-Binary						
0	1	NA's				
123	83	49				
Religious Treatment Condition (Both Harm Conditions)						
0	1					
134	121					
Christian						
0	1	NA's				
139	114	2				

Table 2.12: Sample which Received Moralized Treatment

Estimated Candidate Commitment						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	2	3	2.615079365	3	4	
Policy Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	2	2	2.290836653	3	4	1
Religious Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	0	2	1.760956175	3	4	1
Belief that People Like Me Will Vote for Candidate						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	1	2	1.936507937	3	4	
Belief that Religious Will Vote for Candidate						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	2	2	2.333333333	3	4	
Willingness to Vote for Candidate						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	1	2	1.880478088	2	4	1
Party						
Democrat	Independent	Republican				

189	22	41				
Religion						
Catholic	EBA	Jewish	No Religion	Other Christian	Other Religion	
48	15	36	82	46	25	
Race						
Asian	Black	Hispanic	Other	White	NA's	
32	26	13	31	149	1	
Female						
0	1	NA's				
110	140	2				
View of Nonreligious						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
10	50	77	74.2811245	100	100	3
View of Evangelicals						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	20.75	50	46.31404959	65	100	10
Belief that Candidate Could Be Black						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	1	3	2	3	4	110
Belief that Candidate Could Be an Evangelical						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	3	3	2.882716049	3.75	4	90
Belief that Candidate Could Be a Woman						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	3	3	2.972826087	4	4	68
Candidate is Trustworthy						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	2	2	1.904761905	2	4	
Religious Attendance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's

0	0	1	1.155378486	1	7	1
Estimated Candidate Commitment-Binary						
0	1					
108	144					
Policy Importance-Binary						
0	1	NA's				
129	122	1				
Belief that People Like Me Will Vote for Candidate-Binary						
0	1					
180	72					
Belief that Religious Will Vote for Candidate-Binary						
0	1					
150	102					
Willingness to Vote for Candidate-Binary						
0	1	NA's				
194	57	1				
Candidate is Trustworthy-Binary						
0	1					
223	29					
Religious Importance-Binary						
0	1	NA's				
119	92	41				
Religious Treatment Condition (Both Harm Conditions)						
0	1					
135	117					
Christian						
0	1					
143	109					

Appendix 2.4: Second Experiment: Full Questionnaire

Religious Demographics

Q1. First, we'd like to know about your spiritual beliefs and activities. When it comes to religion, which of the following best describes you? **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. Evangelical Christian
2. Catholic
3. Ethiopian, Armenian, or Coptic Orthodox Christian or similar
4. Greek, Russian, or Serbian Orthodox Christian or similar
5. Protestant, but not Evangelical, Christian
6. Jewish
7. Mormon
8. Muslim
9. Sikh
10. Hindu
11. Other Christian **[FIXED]**
12. Other Religion **[FIXED]**
13. No Religion **[FIXED]**

Q2. Would you describe yourself as a born-again Christian? **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. Yes
2. No

Q3. How often do you attend religious services (other than for a wedding, a funeral, or similar personal event)? **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. Never
2. A few times a year or less
3. About once a month
4. A few times a month
5. Weekly
6. A few times a week
7. Daily

Q4. How important is religion in your life? **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. Very important
2. Somewhat important
3. Not too important
4. Not at all important

Q5A. **[ONLY ASK OF CHRISTIANS (I.E., RESPONDENTS WHO ANSWERED, "Evangelical Christian", "Catholic", "Ethiopian, Armenian, or Coptic Orthodox Christian or similar", "Greek, Russian, or Serbian Orthodox Christian or similar", "Protestant, but**

not Evangelical, Christian", "Mormon", "Other Christian" FOR Q1) OR WHO ANSWERED "Yes" to Q2] Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your views about the Bible? **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. The Bible is the inspired word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.
2. The Bible is the inspired word of God, but not everything in it should be taken literally.
3. The Bible is an ancient book of legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by humans.

Q5B. **[ONLY ASK OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED "No" in Q2 AND "Jewish" in Q1]** Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your views about the Torah: **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. The Torah is the inspired word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.
2. The Torah is the inspired word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally.
3. The Torah is an ancient book of legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by humans.

Q5C. **[ONLY ASK OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED "No" in Q2 and "Muslim" in Q1]** Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your views about the Qur'an: **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. The Qur'an is the preserved speech of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.
2. The Qur'an is the preserved speech of God, but not everything in it should be taken literally.
3. The Qur'an is an ancient book of legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by humans.

Q5D. **[ONLY ASK OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED "No" in Q2 and "Hindu", "Sikh", "Other Religion" or "No Religion" or did not respond in Q1]** Which of the following statements comes closest to describing your views about Holy Scripture: **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. Holy Scripture is divinely inspired and is to be taken literally, word for word.
2. Holy Scripture is divinely inspired but not everything in it should be taken literally.
3. Holy Scripture is ancient writing about legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by humans.

<u>Religious Group Thermometers</u>

Q6. Please rate your feeling toward the following groups in society. A score of one hundred means a very warm, favorable feeling toward the group; zero means a very cold, unfavorable feeling toward the group, and fifty means not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to one hundred: the higher the number, the more favorable your feelings are toward that group. **[RANDOMIZE ROWS; FOR EACH ROW, CREATE A SLIDER GIVING CHOICES 0 TO 100]**

Nonreligious people
Evangelical Christians
Born Again Christians
Catholics
Jews
Muslims

Attention Check 1

Q7. Next, we would like to get a sense of your general preferences.

Most modern theories of decision making recognize that decisions do not take place in a vacuum. Individual preferences and knowledge along with situational variables can greatly impact the decision process. To demonstrate that you've read this much, just go ahead and select both red and green among the alternatives below, no matter what your favorite color is. Yes, ignore the question below and select both of those options.

What is your favorite color? **[FIXED]**

1. White
2. Black
3. Red
4. Pink
5. Green
6. Blue

Political Demographics

Q8. Now, please answer some questions about your political involvement. Are you a US Citizen? **[Randomly Reverse]**

1. Yes
2. No

Q9. In talking to people about the last election for Congress in November 2022, we often find that a lot of people were not able to vote because they weren't registered, they were sick, or they just didn't have time. **[from ANES]**

Which of the following statements best describes you? **[Randomly Reverse]**

1. I did not vote in November 2022
2. I thought about voting in November 2022 - but didn't
3. I usually vote, but didn't in November 2022
4. I am sure I voted in November 2022

Q10. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a: **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. Republican
2. Democrat
3. Independent **[FIXED]**
4. Other **[FIXED]**
5. No preference **[FIXED]**

Q11. **[If Q10 = 3, 4, 5, or refused to answer; otherwise skip]**
Do you think of yourself as closer to the: **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. Republican Party
2. Democratic Party
3. Neither **[FIXED]**

Q12. **[If Q10= 1 or 2 or Q11 = 1 or 2, pipe in the corresponding choice from Q10 in brackets; if Q11 = 3, "independent"]**
Would you call yourself a strong [**pipe in response from Q10 in parentheses**: Republican/Democrat/Independent] or not a very strong [**pipe in response from Q10 in parentheses:** Republican/Independent]?

1. Strong [**pipe in response from Q10 in brackets**: Republican/Democrat/Independent]
2. Independent Not a very strong [**pipe in response from Q10 in brackets**: Republican/Democrat/Independent]

<u>Abortion Questions</u>

Next, we'd like to ask you a few questions about your views regarding abortion. **[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF Q13-4, KEEPING THE SENTENCE ABOVE AT THE BEGINNING]**

Q13. With respect to the abortion issue, to what extent would you consider yourself pro-choice?

1. Completely [**RANDOMLY REVERSE]**
2. Mostly
3. Somewhat
4. A little bit
5. Not at all

Q14. With respect to the abortion issue, to what extent would you consider yourself pro-life?

1. Completely [**RANDOMLY REVERSE]**
2. Mostly
3. Somewhat
4. A little bit
5. Not at all

Q15. With respect to the abortion issue, which of the following better describes you, even if neither is exactly right?

1. Pro-Life [**RANDOMLY REVERSE]**
2. Pro-Choice

Q16. Would you like to see abortion laws in this country made more strict, less strict, or remain as they are? **[Gallup]**

1. More strict **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**
2. Remain as they are
3. Less strict

Q17. Before taking this survey, how much thought would you say you had given to issues around abortion? **[Pew]**

1. A lot **[RANDOMLY REVERSE]**
2. Some
3. Not too much
4. None at all

Q18. How important is your religion in shaping your views about abortion? **[Pew]**

1. Extremely important [**RANDOMLY REVERSE]**
2. Very important
3. Somewhat important
4. Not too important
5. Not at all important

[Continued on next page]

Experiment

Q19. Now, we'd like you to read about Representative Jennifer Harris, an imaginary member of Congress. Even though she is a fictional character we created, as you read this and answer the rest of the survey, please imagine she were your real member of Congress running for re-election and that you read this information on her campaign website. When you have read the information carefully, click continue to move to the next page. **[Respondents self-select into the pro-choice or pro-life samples based on their response to Q15 above. The 6 treatment groups of the pro-choice sample will be assigned to read the following texts in addition to the introduction above. Differences from the control version are bolded but will be shown without bolding.]**

Pro-Choice Group 1: No Policy Justification and Nonreligious Biography
Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports women and pro-choice policies. Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Choice Group 2: Rights Policy Justification and Nonreligious Biography
Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports women and pro-choice policies: **"Women have a fundamental right to reproductive healthcare."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Choice Group 3: Religious Policy Justification and Nonreligious Biography
Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports women and pro-choice policies: **"I am Catholic and pro-choice. As a Christian, I believe in compassion, tolerance, and love."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Choice Group 4: No Policy Justification and Religious Biography
Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports women and pro-choice policies. Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. **She is a parishioner of St. Luke Catholic Church and has served as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Board.** She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Choice Group 5: Rights Policy Justification and Religious Biography
Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports women and pro-choice policies: **"Women have a fundamental right to reproductive healthcare."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. **She is a parishioner of St. Luke Catholic Church and has served as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Board.** She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Choice Group 6: Religious Policy Justification and Religious Biography
Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports women and pro-choice policies: **"I am Catholic and pro-choice. As a Christian, I believe in compassion, tolerance, and love."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. **She is a**

parishioner of St. Luke Catholic Church and has served as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Board. She and her husband have three children.

[The 6 treatment groups of the pro-life sample will be assigned to read the following texts. Differences from the control version are bolded but will be shown without bolding.

Differences from pro-choice versions are *italicized* but will be shown without italics.]

Pro-Life Group 1: No Policy Justification and Nonreligious Biography
Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports *the unborn* and pro-*life* policies. Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Life Group 2: Rights Policy Justification and Nonreligious Biography
Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports *the unborn* and pro-*life* policies: "***Unborn children* have a fundamental right to *life*."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Life Group 3: Religious Policy Justification and Nonreligious Biography
Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports *the unborn* and pro-*life* policies: **"I am Catholic and pro-*life*. As a Christian, I believe in *the sanctity of human life*."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Life Group 4: No Policy Justification and Religious Biography
Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports *the unborn* and pro-*life* policies. Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She is a parishioner of St. Luke Catholic Church and has served as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Board. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Life Group 5: Rights Policy Justification and Religious Biography
Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports *the unborn* and pro-*life* policies: "***Unborn children* have a fundamental right to *life*."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She is a parishioner of St. Luke Catholic Church and has served as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Board. She and her husband have three children.

Pro-Life Group 6: Religious Policy Justification and Religious Biography
Representative Jennifer Harris unequivocally supports *the unborn* and pro-*life* policies: **"I am Catholic and pro-*life*. As a Christian, I believe in *the sanctity of human life*."** Jennifer previously served as the Executive Director of the Accountants' Association. She is a parishioner of St. Luke Catholic Church and has served as a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society Board. She and her husband have three children.

Attention Check 2

Q20. Now, we are going to ask about your background and your family. Remember, your responses are anonymous, and you may skip a question at any time. Your background and your family have been shown by numerous studies to have an influence on your views about current events. We also want to know how closely you are reading the questions. To show you are reading the questions carefully, please ignore the question below and select both only child and one sister.

Which following statements applies to your family? You may select multiple choices.
[Randomly reverse]

1. I am an only child.
2. I have one brother.
3. I have two brothers.
4. I have three or more brothers.
5. I have one sister.
6. I have two sisters.
7. I have three or more sisters.

Dependent Variables, Part I (Estimation of Candidate Compromise)

Having read about Representative Jennifer Harris, we would like to ask you several questions about her.
[RANDOMIZE ORDER OF Q21 and Q23; KEEPING Q22 IN THE MIDDLE AND THE SENTENCE ABOVE AT THE BEGINNING]
Q21. How likely would Representative Jennifer Harris be to vote for a bill to make abortion **legally available** nationwide using telehealth and prescriptions in the mail **and requiring its coverage** by publicly subsidized health insurance plans? [**RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. Very unlikely
2. Somewhat unlikely
3. Neither unlikely nor likely
4. Somewhat likely
5. Very likely

Q22. How likely would Representative Jennifer Harris be to vote for a bill to **ban** abortion using telehealth and prescriptions in the mail **and prohibiting its coverage** by publicly subsidized health insurance plans? [**RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. Very unlikely
2. Somewhat unlikely
3. Neither unlikely nor likely
4. Somewhat likely

5. Very likely

Q23. How likely would Representative Jennifer Harris be to vote for a bill to make abortion **legally available** nationwide using telehealth and prescriptions in the mail **but also prohibiting its coverage** by publicly subsidized health insurance plans? [**RANDOMLY REVERSE]**

1. Very unlikely
2. Somewhat unlikely
3. Neither unlikely nor likely
4. Somewhat likely
5. Very likely

Dependent Variables, Part II (Own Views)

Now, considering what you have read, we would like to ask several more questions about your opinion of Representative Jennifer Harris.

[RANDOMLY VARY THE ORDER OF Q24-Q27 KEEPING THE SENTENCE ABOVE AT THE BEGINNING]

Q24. How well does the following statement reflect your view?

I would vote for Representative Jennifer Harris if I were an eligible voter in her district.

1. Completely [**RANDOMLY REVERSE]**
2. Mostly
3. Somewhat
4. A little bit
5. Not at all

Q25. How well does the following statement reflect your view?

Representative Jennifer Harris is trustworthy.

1. Completely [**RANDOMLY REVERSE]**
2. Mostly
3. Somewhat
4. A little bit
5. Not at all

Q26. How well does the following statement reflect your view?

Representative Jennifer Harris is committed to [legally restricting/ensuring access to] abortion. [SHOW 1ST VERSION TO PRO-CHOICE AND 2ND TO PRO LIFE SAMPLE]

1. Completely [**RANDOMLY REVERSE]**
2. Mostly
3. Somewhat
4. A little bit
5. Not at all

Q27. How well does the following statement reflect your view?

Representative Jennifer Harris will successfully increase [restrictions on/access to] abortion. [SHOW 1ST VERSION TO PRO-CHOICE AND 2ND TO PRO LIFE SAMPLE]

1. Completely [**RANDOMLY REVERSE]**
2. Mostly
3. Somewhat
4. A little bit
5. Not at all

Causal Mechanisms

Q28. Earlier you were asked whether you thought Representative Jennifer Harris is committed to **[legally restricting/ensuring access to]** abortion. Why do you think that she is committed or not? **[OPEN ENDED TEXT ENTRY; SHOW 1ST VERSION TO PRO-CHOICE AND 2ND TO PRO LIFE SAMPLE]**

Treatment Check

Q29. When you read about Representative Jennifer Harris's position on abortion earlier, did she mention her religion as a reason for her position? This is not an attention check, and your answer will not affect whether we accept your survey responses. **[Randomly Reverse][THIS IS NOT AN ATTENTION CHECK FOR PURPOSES OF REJECTING A SURVEY RESPONSE FROM THE SURVEY FIRM BUT IS AN ATTENTION CHECK FOR ANALYSIS]**

3. Yes
4. No

Q30. Now think about the short biography you read about Representative Jennifer Harris earlier. Did it mention the church she attends? This is not an attention check, and your answer will not affect whether we accept your survey responses. **[Randomly Reverse][THIS IS NOT AN ATTENTION CHECK FOR PURPOSES OF REJECTING A SURVEY RESPONSE FROM THE SURVEY FIRM BUT IS AN ATTENTION CHECK FOR ANALYSIS]**

1. Yes
2. No

Alternate Mechanism

Q30B. Representative Harris is a Catholic Christian. How similar do you think her views are to those of other Catholics? **[Randomly Reverse]**

1. Very similar
2. Somewhat similar
3. Neither similar nor dissimilar
4. Somewhat dissimilar
5. Very dissimilar

Deception Reveal and Close

[Shown to those who pass at least one of the two attention checks]

Q31A. During this survey you were asked to read information about a fictional member of Congress. Like we said, we created this information to understand how the justification a candidate gives for promoting a policy impacts voter's support for and beliefs about candidates. However, we did not tell you earlier that this was specifically to understand how using a religious justification as opposed to a nonreligious justification for promoting a policy impacts voters' support and beliefs about candidates, as well as how learning about a candidate's religious participation affects this relationship.

Please do not, therefore, base your own evaluations of policies, public officials, or candidates on the material you read in this study. Researching candidates, public officials, and public policy on your own via various information sources is the best way to make an informed choice.

We apologize for this deception as to the purpose of this study.

If you would like to remove your data from the study, you may click withdraw below.

These are all the questions we have for you. Thank you for your time and should you have questions, please contact:

Sean Rao
3140 Tydings Hall
7343 Preinkert Drive
College Park, MD 20742
(301) 405-4156
Email: seanrao@umd.edu

1. Yes, I consent and submit the anonymous survey results.
2. No, I would like to withdraw consent and remove survey data.

[Shown only to those who fail both attention checks]
Q31B. Unfortunately, we are unable to accept your response as you did not pass enough attention check questions. Your data will not be used in the study.

During this survey you were asked to read information about a fictional member of Congress. Like we said, we created this information to understand how the justification a candidate gives for promoting a policy impacts voter's support for and beliefs about candidates. However, we did not tell you earlier that this was specifically to understand how using a religious justification as opposed to a nonreligious justification for promoting a policy impacts voters' support and beliefs about candidates, as well as how learning about a candidate's religious participation affects this relationship.

Please do not, therefore, base your own evaluations of policies, public officials, or candidates on the material you read in this study. Researching candidates, public officials, and public policy on your own via various information sources is the best way to make an informed choice.

We apologize for this deception as to the purpose of this study.

If you believe you are receiving this message in error, please email seanrao@umd.edu and using this **[code]**.

We apologize that we are unable to accept this data. Thank you for your time and should you have questions, please contact:

Sean Rao
3140 Tydings Hall
7343 Preinkert Drive
College Park, MD 20742
(301) 405-4156

Email: seanrao@umd.edu

1. Continue

Appendix 2.5: Second Experiment: Complete Set of Pre-Registered Models[32]

Below are the coefficient tables for all models that were pre-registered for Experiment 2. They include some models that were presented above, but the others do not change the overall interpretation of the results. Models here are numbered here as on the registration which differs from the numbering in the text. View the pre-registration on the OSF registry at this link: https://osf.io/ay6tf

[32] Analysis performed in R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024), using R package {DAMisc} (Armstrong 2022). Tables created with {stargazer} (Hlavac 2022).

Table 2.13: Second Experiment: H1: Effect of Religious Rhetoric on Estimated Commitment (All Respondents)

	Dependent variable:					
	Estimated Candidate Commitment					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Rights Justification	0.161	0.211^{+}	0.213^{+}	0.189^{+}	0.191^{+}	0.196^{+}
	(0.114)	(0.112)	(0.112)	(0.113)	(0.114)	(0.114)
Religious Justification	0.095	0.124	0.193	0.101	0.197	-0.153
	(0.112)	(0.111)	(0.185)	(0.111)	(0.211)	(0.238)
Religious Biography	0.059	0.026	0.024	0.009	0.009	0.007
	(0.092)	(0.090)	(0.091)	(0.091)	(0.091)	(0.091)
Christian		0.062	0.097	0.095	0.097	0.091
		(0.125)	(0.145)	(0.130)	(0.130)	(0.130)
Religious Importance		0.050	0.051	0.078	0.081	0.074
		(0.061)	(0.061)	(0.063)	(0.064)	(0.064)
Independent		-0.454**	-0.455**	-0.457**	-0.456**	-0.461**
		(0.136)	(0.136)	(0.139)	(0.139)	(0.139)
Republican		-0.113	-0.114	-0.142	-0.142	-0.152
		(0.109)	(0.109)	(0.109)	(0.109)	(0.110)
Pro-Life		0.098	0.099	0.125	0.122	0.133
		(0.115)	(0.115)	(0.117)	(0.117)	(0.117)
Female		0.068	0.069	0.061	0.059	0.072
		(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.092)	(0.092)
Policy Importance		0.275**	0.276**	0.257**	0.256**	0.253**
		(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.055)
Religious Policy Importance		-0.065	-0.066	-0.050	-0.052	-0.046
		(0.046)	(0.046)	(0.047)	(0.047)	(0.047)
Religious Justification*Christian			-0.096			
			(0.207)			
View of Nonreligious				0.005**	0.005**	0.004^{+}
				(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Religious Justification*View of Evangelicals					-0.002	
					(0.003)	
View of Evangelicals				-0.0004	0.0002	-0.0003
				(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Religious Rhetoric*View of Nonreligious						0.004
						(0.003)
Intercept	2.688**	2.097**	2.070**	1.745**	1.713**	1.839**
	(0.094)	(0.181)	(0.190)	(0.209)	(0.218)	(0.223)
Observations	675	668	668	647	647	647
R^2	0.004	0.077	0.078	0.091	0.092	0.094
Adjusted R^2	-0.001	0.062	0.061	0.073	0.072	0.073
Residual Std. Error	1.190 (df = 671)	1.156 (df = 656)	1.157 (df = 655)	1.143 (df = 633)	1.144 (df = 632)	1.143 (df = 632)
F Statistic	0.808 (df = 3; 671)	4.991** (df = 11; 656)	4.587** (df = 12; 655)	4.902** (df = 13; 633)	4.567** (df = 14; 632)	4.659** (df = 14; 632)

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 2.14 : Second Experiment: H1: Effect of Religious Rhetoric on Estimated Commitment (All Respondents)

	Dependent variable:					
	Estimated Candidate Support for Concordant Bill					
	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Rights Justification	0.154	0.175	0.191	0.146	0.156	0.160
	(0.203)	(0.200)	(0.200)	(0.204)	(0.205)	(0.205)
Religious Justification	0.317	0.298	0.789*	0.272	0.661+	-0.222
	(0.199)	(0.197)	(0.328)	(0.200)	(0.377)	(0.424)
Religious Biography	0.069	0.044	0.032	0.073	0.073	0.071
	(0.163)	(0.161)	(0.161)	(0.163)	(0.163)	(0.163)
Christian		0.073	0.322	0.079	0.087	0.070
		(0.223)	(0.259)	(0.234)	(0.234)	(0.234)
Religious Importance		-0.133	-0.132	-0.113	-0.101	-0.121
		(0.109)	(0.109)	(0.114)	(0.115)	(0.114)
Independent		-0.387	-0.396	-0.364	-0.364	-0.367
		(0.241)	(0.241)	(0.249)	(0.249)	(0.249)
Republican		0.307	0.297	0.277	0.273	0.259
		(0.194)	(0.194)	(0.197)	(0.197)	(0.197)
Pro-Life		0.318	0.327	0.357+	0.345	0.370+
		(0.206)	(0.206)	(0.211)	(0.211)	(0.211)
Female		0.346*	0.357*	0.320+	0.312+	0.341*
		(0.163)	(0.163)	(0.165)	(0.165)	(0.166)
Policy Importance		0.261**	0.269**	0.230*	0.229*	0.223*
		(0.095)	(0.095)	(0.098)	(0.098)	(0.098)
Religious Policy Importance		-0.273**	-0.275**	-0.277**	-0.283**	-0.269**
		(0.082)	(0.082)	(0.084)	(0.084)	(0.084)
Religious Justification*Christian			-0.684+			
			(0.366)			
View of Nonreligious				0.006+	0.005	0.003
				(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Religious Justification*View of Evangelicals					-0.007	
					(0.005)	
View of Evangelicals				0.002	0.004	0.002
				(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Religious Rhetoric*View of Nonreligious						0.008
						(0.006)
Intercept	1.588**	1.323**	1.124**	0.934*	0.797*	1.122**
	(0.167)	(0.322)	(0.339)	(0.374)	(0.391)	(0.400)
Observations	677	670	670	649	649	649
R^2	0.004	0.069	0.074	0.071	0.073	0.073
Adjusted R^2	-0.0005	0.053	0.057	0.052	0.053	0.053
Residual Std. Error	2.116 (df = 673)	2.060 (df = 658)	2.056 (df = 657)	2.058 (df = 635)	2.057 (df = 634)	2.056 (df = 634)
F Statistic	0.895 (df = 3; 673)	4.407** (df = 11; 658)	4.346** (df = 12; 657)	3.724** (df = 13; 635)	3.566** (df = 14; 634)	3.587** (df = 14; 634)

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 2.15: Second Experiment:
H1: Effect of Religious Rhetoric on Estimated Commitment (Democrats)

	Dependent variable:			
	Est. Commit.		Bill Support	
	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
Rights Justification	0.157	0.069	0.096	0.052
	(0.166)	(0.164)	(0.315)	(0.289)
Religious Justification	-0.120	-0.157	-0.007	-0.088
	(0.158)	(0.156)	(0.298)	(0.271)
Religious Biography	0.272*	0.211	0.209	0.229
	(0.131)	(0.131)	(0.248)	(0.229)
Christian		0.102		0.523+
		(0.174)		(0.306)
Religious Importance		0.022		-0.294+
		(0.097)		(0.169)
Strong Partisan		-0.003		-0.089
		(0.136)		(0.237)
Pro-Life		0.035		-0.062
		(0.191)		(0.335)
Female		-0.168		-0.189
		(0.133)		(0.231)
Policy Importance		0.409**		0.352*
		(0.088)		(0.154)
Religious Policy Importance		-0.140+		-0.543**
		(0.075)		(0.133)
Intercept	2.821**	2.113**	1.656**	2.011**
	(0.134)	(0.260)	(0.253)	(0.452)
Observations	304	300	304	300
R^2	0.024	0.109	0.003	0.217
Adjusted R^2	0.014	0.078	-0.007	0.190
Residual Std. Error	1.145 (df = 300)	1.111 (df = 289)	2.162 (df = 300)	1.939 (df = 289)
F Statistic	2.425+ (df = 3; 300)	3.538** (df = 10; 289)	0.281 (df = 3; 300)	7.999** (df = 10; 289)
Note:				+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 2.16: Second Experiment: H1:
Effect of Religious Rhetoric on Estimated Commitment (Republicans)

	Dependent variable:			
	Est. Commit.		Bill Support	
	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)
Rights Justification	0.205	0.264	0.245	0.269
	(0.172)	(0.170)	(0.309)	(0.304)
Religious Justification	0.354*	0.401*	0.701*	0.723*
	(0.179)	(0.176)	(0.321)	(0.316)
Religious Biography	-0.137	-0.134	-0.030	-0.012
	(0.144)	(0.142)	(0.258)	(0.255)
Christian		-0.123		-0.640
		(0.232)		(0.416)
Religious Importance		0.125		0.037
		(0.092)		(0.165)
Strong Partisan		0.071		-0.077
		(0.146)		(0.261)
Pro-Life		-0.009		0.300
		(0.167)		(0.300)
Female		0.237+		0.974**
		(0.142)		(0.254)
Policy Importance		0.216**		0.151
		(0.080)		(0.143)
Religious Policy Importance		0.050		0.067
		(0.066)		(0.118)
Intercept	2.676**	1.810**	1.652**	1.071*
	(0.146)	(0.287)	(0.261)	(0.514)
Observations	263	263	263	263
R^2	0.020	0.098	0.019	0.094
Adjusted R^2	0.009	0.062	0.008	0.058
Residual Std. Error	1.160 (df = 259)	1.128 (df = 252)	2.076 (df = 259)	2.023 (df = 252)
F Statistic	1.776 (df = 3; 259)	2.732** (df = 10; 252)	1.678 (df = 3; 259)	2.622** (df = 10; 252)

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 2.17: Second Experiment: H2: Effect of Religious Rhetoric and Biography on Estimated Commitment (All Respondents)

	Dependent variable:					
	Est. Commit.	Bill Support	Est. Commit.	Bill Support	Est. Commit.	Bill Support
	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)	(26)	(27)
Rights Justification	0.161	0.154	0.211^{+}	0.175	0.188^{+}	0.145
	(0.114)	(0.203)	(0.112)	(0.200)	(0.114)	(0.205)
Religious Justification	0.173	0.392	0.195	0.338	0.166	0.312
	(0.146)	(0.260)	(0.144)	(0.257)	(0.145)	(0.260)
Religious Biography	0.115	0.123	0.077	0.073	0.056	0.103
	(0.114)	(0.203)	(0.112)	(0.200)	(0.113)	(0.204)
Christian			0.062	0.073	0.094	0.078
			(0.125)	(0.223)	(0.130)	(0.234)
Religious Importance			0.049	-0.134	0.076	-0.114
			(0.061)	(0.109)	(0.064)	(0.114)
Independent			-0.451**	-0.385	-0.455**	-0.362
			(0.136)	(0.241)	(0.139)	(0.249)
Republican			-0.116	0.305	-0.144	0.275
			(0.109)	(0.195)	(0.109)	(0.197)
Pro-Life			0.093	0.316	0.122	0.355^{+}
			(0.116)	(0.206)	(0.117)	(0.211)
Female			0.068	0.346*	0.061	0.320^{+}
			(0.092)	(0.163)	(0.092)	(0.165)
Policy Importance			0.276**	0.261**	0.257**	0.230*
			(0.053)	(0.095)	(0.055)	(0.098)
Religious Policy Importance			-0.064	-0.271**	-0.048	-0.276**
			(0.046)	(0.082)	(0.047)	(0.084)
View of Nonreligious					0.005**	0.006^{+}
					(0.002)	(0.003)
View of Evangelicals					-0.0004	0.002
					(0.002)	(0.003)
Religious Justification*Religious Biography	-0.159	-0.153	-0.145	-0.082	-0.132	-0.082
	(0.192)	(0.340)	(0.188)	(0.334)	(0.189)	(0.338)
Intercept	2.659**	1.560**	2.073**	1.309**	1.724**	0.921*
	(0.100)	(0.178)	(0.184)	(0.327)	(0.211)	(0.378)
Observations	675	677	668	670	647	649
R^2	0.005	0.004	0.078	0.069	0.092	0.071
Adjusted R^2	-0.001	-0.002	0.061	0.052	0.072	0.050
Residual Std. Error	1.191 (df = 670)	2.117 (df = 672)	1.156 (df = 655)	2.061 (df = 657)	1.144 (df = 632)	2.059 (df = 634)
F Statistic	0.778 (df = 4; 670)	0.721 (df = 4; 672)	4.622** (df = 12; 655)	4.039** (df = 12; 657)	4.583** (df = 14; 632)	3.457** (df = 14; 634)

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 2.18: Second Experiment H2:
Effect of Religious Rhetoric and Biography on Estimated Commitment (Democrats)

	Dependent variable:			
	Est. Commit. (28)	Bill Support (29)	Est. Commit. (30)	Bill Support (31)
Rights Justification	0.157	0.097	0.069	0.052
	(0.166)	(0.316)	(0.165)	(0.289)
Religious Justification	-0.223	-0.113	-0.244	-0.200
	(0.211)	(0.399)	(0.211)	(0.368)
Religious Biography	0.197	0.131	0.149	0.150
	(0.166)	(0.316)	(0.165)	(0.290)
Christian			0.096	0.516^{+}
			(0.175)	(0.307)
Religious Importance			0.026	-0.289^{+}
			(0.097)	(0.170)
Strong Partisan			-0.011	-0.100
			(0.136)	(0.238)
Pro-Life			0.051	-0.043
			(0.193)	(0.339)
Female			-0.167	-0.189
			(0.133)	(0.231)
Policy Importance			0.409**	0.352*
			(0.088)	(0.154)
Religious Policy Importance			-0.144^{+}	-0.549**
			(0.076)	(0.133)
Religious Justification*Religious Biography	0.201	0.206	0.165	0.210
	(0.272)	(0.512)	(0.269)	(0.470)
Intercept	2.859**	1.695**	2.150**	2.059**
	(0.143)	(0.272)	(0.267)	(0.465)
Observations	304	304	300	300
R^2	0.025	0.003	0.110	0.217
Adjusted R^2	0.012	-0.010	0.076	0.187
Residual Std. Error	1.146 (df = 299)	2.165 (df = 299)	1.112 (df = 288)	1.942 (df = 288)
F Statistic	1.952 (df = 4; 299)	0.251 (df = 4; 299)	3.244** (df = 11; 288)	7.270** (df = 11; 288)
Note:				+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 2.19: Second Experiment: H2:
Effect of Religious Rhetoric and Biography on Estimated Commitment (Republicans)

	Dependent variable:			
	Est. Commit.	Bill Support	Est. Commit.	Bill Support
	(28)	(29)	(30)	(31)
Rights Justification	0.205	0.246	0.264	0.269
	(0.173)	(0.309)	(0.170)	(0.305)
Religious Justification	0.403^{+}	0.680^{+}	0.468*	0.749^{+}
	(0.226)	(0.404)	(0.221)	(0.396)
Religious Biography	-0.103	-0.044	-0.089	0.006
	(0.173)	(0.310)	(0.169)	(0.303)
Christian			-0.133	-0.644
			(0.233)	(0.418)
Religious Importance			0.122	0.036
			(0.092)	(0.165)
Strong Partisan			0.073	-0.076
			(0.146)	(0.262)
Pro-Life			-0.010	0.299
			(0.168)	(0.301)
Female			0.237^{+}	0.975**
			(0.142)	(0.255)
Policy Importance			0.219**	0.152
			(0.080)	(0.143)
Religious Policy Importance			0.051	0.067
			(0.066)	(0.119)
Religious Justification*Religious Biography	-0.113	0.048	-0.155	-0.060
	(0.315)	(0.564)	(0.309)	(0.554)
Intercept	2.657**	1.660**	1.791**	1.064*
	(0.155)	(0.277)	(0.290)	(0.520)
Observations	263	263	263	263
R^2	0.021	0.019	0.099	0.094
Adjusted R^2	0.005	0.004	0.059	0.055
Residual Std. Error	1.162 (df = 258)	2.080 (df = 258)	1.130 (df = 251)	2.027 (df = 251)
F Statistic	1.360 (df = 4; 258)	1.256 (df = 4; 258)	2.499** (df = 11; 251)	2.375** (df = 11; 251)
Note:				+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Appendix 2.6: Second Experiment: Extended Models Predicted Probabilities[33]

Table 2.20: Predicted Probabilities of a Respondent Believing Completely that the Candidate is Committed to the Policy by Religious Justification and Religious Biography

Justification	Biography	CI 95 pct Lower	CI 90 pct Lower	Estimate	CI 90 pct Upper	CI 95 pct Upper
Not Religious	Not Religious	0.276	0.280	0.326	0.370	0.381
Religious	Not Religious	0.390	0.405	0.469	0.534	0.547
Not Religious	Religious	0.292	0.298	0.350	0.405	0.412
Religious	Religious	0.309	0.328	0.403	0.482	0.503

Table 2.21: Predicted Probabilities of a Respondent Believing Completely that the Candidate is Committed to the Policy by Rights Justification and Civic Biography

Justification	Biography	CI 95 pct Lower	CI 90 pct Lower	Estimate	CI 90 pct Upper	CI 95 pct Upper
Not Rights	Not Civic	0.282	0.290	0.326	0.365	0.371
Rights	Not Civic	0.369	0.381	0.439	0.499	0.509
Not Rights	Civic	0.322	0.338	0.424	0.510	0.527
Rights	Civic	0.266	0.294	0.410	0.536	0.550

[33] Analysis performed in R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024), using R package {DAMisc} (Armstrong 2022). Tables created with {stargazer} (Hlavac 2022). These predicted probabilities are calculated using the Average Marginal Effect method of Hanmer and Kalkan (2013).

Appendix 2.7: Second Experiment: Summary Statistics[34]

Table 2.22: Second Experiment: Summary Statistics for Whole Sample

Rights Justification						
0	1					
546	274					
Civic Biography						
0	1					
685	135					
Religious Justification						
0	1					
536	284					
Religious Biography						
0	1					
476	344					
Christian						
0	1	NA's				
233	437	150				
Party						
Democrat	Independent	Republican				
376	131	313				
Strong Partisan						
0	1					
345	475					
Abortion Position						
Choice	Life					
487	333					
Female						
0	1					
406	414					
Estimated Commitment						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	2	3	2.824691358	4	4	10
Likelihood of Bill Vote						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
-4	0	2	1.799013564	4	4	9
Religious Importance						

[34] Analysis performed in R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024).

Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	1	2	1.855745721	3	3	2
Policy Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	2	2	2.124542125	3	3	1
Religious Policy Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	0	2	1.675609756	3	4	
View of Evangelicals						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	37	61	59.63138232	89	100	17
View of Nonreligious						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	49	62	62.51681196	86.5	100	17
Education Level						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
1	3	5	4.590405904	6	8	7

Table 2.23: Second Experiment: Summary Statistics for Democrats

Rights Justification						
0	1					
259	117					
Civic Biography						
0	1					
310	66					
Religious Justification						
0	1					
239	137					
Religious Biography						
0	1					
216	160					
Christian						
0	1	NA's				
131	184	61				
Strong Partisan						

0	1					
154	222					
Abortion Position						
Choice	Life					
288	88					
Female						
0	1					
180	196					
Estimated Commitment						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	2	3	2.972973	4	4	6
Likelihood of Bill Vote						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
-4	0	2	1.799458	4	4	7
Religious Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	1	2	1.763298	3	3	
Policy Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	2	3	2.338667	3	3	1
Religious Policy Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	0	1	1.539894	3	4	
View of Evangelicals						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	25	53	54.12466	82	100	7
View of Nonreligious						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	47.75	62	62.87772	88	100	8
Education Level						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
1	4	6	4.973333	7	8	1

Table 2.24: Second Experiment: Summary Statistics for Republicans

Rights Justification						
0	1					
202	111					
Civic Biography						
0	1					
264	49					
Religious Justification						
0	1					
217	96					
Religious Biography						
0	1					
183	130					
Christian						
0	1	NA's				
44	196	73				
Strong Partisan						
0	1					
153	160					
Abortion Position						
Choice	Life					
112	201					
Female						
0	1					
170	143					
Estimated Commitment						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	2	3	2.826923	4	4	1
Likelihood of Bill Vote						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
-4	0	2	1.951923	4	4	1
Religious Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	2	2	2.086538	3	3	1
Policy Importance						

Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	1	2	2.019169	3	3	
Religious Policy Importance						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	
0	1	2	1.990415	3	4	
View of Evangelicals						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	50	72	67.85484	93	100	3
View of Nonreligious						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
0	49	60	60.21824	81.5	100	6
Education Level						
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.	NA's
1	2	4	4.349359	6	8	1

Appendix 2.8: Institutional Review Board Information for the First Experiment

The University of Maryland, College Park, Institutional Review Board granted approval for research involving human participants for the first experiment on February 11, 2021, with an amendment granted on March 11, 2021. The project approval is registered under the identification codes [1693140-1] and [1693140-2]. I obtained informed consent from participants through a question preceding the survey, which I presented alongside information on how to contact me or the IRB if needed. I present other details of the application, recruitment, consent, and disclaimers below. The original application and approval letter are available upon request.

Subject Selection

a. Recruitment: Subjects were recruited through the University of Maryland Government and Politics Experimental Laboratory. The lab recruited participants from those enrolled in the undergraduate courses GVPT 170, GVPT 200, GVPT 201, and GVPT 309C during the spring semester of 2021. Participants received class credit for their participation in several studies of which this project was one. Students who chose not to participate in the research had the opportunity to complete an alternate assignment to receive the same class credit. The lab administrators made an online announcement to let students know of the opportunity to participate in this study and informing them of how to sign up to participate. In my questionnaire, I generated a randomized code for each student, collecting no other identifiable information. The lab staff gave students directions on where to submit this code to ensure they received credit for their participation, but I did not have access to the form to match the codes to individuals. The lab staff did not have access to the results of the experiment.
b. Eligibility Criteria: All students enrolled in GVPT 170, GVPT 200, GVPT 201, or GVPT 309C in the spring 2021 semester were eligible to participate. I expect that most participants were the

usual undergraduate ages between 18 and 22, but in case anyone aged 17 happened to be enrolled in the courses, I requested a waiver of parental consent. The IRB granted this on the basis that (1) any minor enrolled at UMD could understand and provide their consent as well as their older classmates could, so a waiver of parental consent would not negatively affect the rights and welfare of participants and (2) this research posed no more than minimal risks to participants and (3) it was impossible to obtain written consent forms due to the online course format during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Students in these classes were targeted for participation because they were learning about the research process in class, and the combination of the GVPT 170, GVPT 200, GVPT 201, and GVPT 309C classes created a sample size large enough to allow for reliable tests of the research hypotheses.

c. Enrollment Numbers: I requested an enrollment up to 800 participants to meet the level of enrollment in GVPT 170, GVPT 200, GVPT 201, and GVPT 309C in the spring semester and allow the experiment to have four conditions with at least 150 participants in each condition. Ultimately, 635 participants were enrolled.

Risks

The research posed no known risks to participants. The study used survey questions that were similar to other national surveys like the American National Election Study or the Critical Issues Poll at UMD. The advertisement respondents were asked to read was very brief and similar to one would come across as a mass mailing. To minimize any discomfort in answering the questions, participants were informed in the consent form that they could skip any question that they did not wish to answer.

Confidentiality

I maintained confidentiality with a descriptive text to generate a randomized code for each student. Students then received directions on where to submit this code to receive credit for their participation. No personal identifying information was collected with the answers to the survey questions. Only I had access to the survey responses. All survey information was stored on password protected computers. The only identifiers linked to the subjects were in the form in which the codes were submitted. Lab staff destroyed this form after students were given class credit for completing the lab studies at the end of the spring 2021 semester.

Consent Process

I ran the study online because of the restrictions of on campus activity due to COVID. I requested and received a waiver of written consent because (1) this research involved no more than minimal risk to subjects, (2) this research could not have been carried out without this waiver, (3) respondents were still required to give online consent, ensuring their awareness of the survey process and rights associated with their involvement in the study. I included my contact information and that of the IRB in the debrief in case participants had additional questions.

Participants indicated their consent digitally in the form of a survey question asking whether they agreed to participate in the study.

I requested and received a waiver of prospective informed consent because the project included some deception because it was necessary to keep respondents from knowing the true purpose of the experiment until after they had completed the study. I did not inform participants that the study was about religious rhetoric prior to the study because respondents may have answered questions differently if they had known the true purpose of the study, which would have negatively affected the validity of the experiment. Participants were asked to read and agree to the consent question, but the true purpose of the experiment was not stated on the consent

form. The consent forms stated that the study was about American Politics and Communication and that participants were to be asked to read a political ad and answer some demographic questions.

In addition, participants could have believed that the article they read could have been a real campaign advertisement. This deception helped ensure that the responses were similar to those in the real world, bolstering the external validity of my experiment. At the end of the survey, participants were given a debriefing statement explaining this and allowing them to withdraw their data from the study.

IRB Approval letter

The official application and approval letter are available upon request.

Appendix 2.9: Institutional Review Board Information for the Second Experiment

The University of Maryland, College Park, Institutional Review Board granted approval for research involving human participants for the second experiment on February 22, 2024, with an amendment granted on March 7, 2024. The project approval is registered under the identification codes [1923301-1] and [1923301-2]. I obtained informed consent from participants through a question preceding the survey, which I presented alongside information on how to contact me or the IRB if needed. I present other details of the application, recruitment, consent, and disclaimers below. The original application and approval letter are available upon request.

Subject Selection

d. Recruitment: Participants were recruited through Lucid Theorem, a survey fielding service. Lucid Theorem recruits participants as follows: “Lucid partners with a network of companies that maintain relationships with research participants by engaging them with research opportunities. Lucid technology matches researchers and participants based on the researchers’ desired audience.…Lucid's partnering companies find research participants from a diverse array of sources, many of which are double opt-in panels. These companies invite participants to partake in research opportunities through emails, push notifications, in-app pop-ups, or through offerwalls of engagement opportunities. These companies incentivize their users to participate in opportunities often by sharing the revenue earned for a survey's complete." This may take the form of cash, gift cards, or loyalty reward points. "Participants always have the option to opt-out of research during any point of the survey opportunity."

e. Eligibility Criteria: Members of the respondent pool recruited by Lucid Theorem were eligible to participate in the study. For this study, Lucid Theorem required that participants were US residents over 18 and verified their background, so it was not possible for anyone under 18 to be

recruited. The hypothetical campaign advertisement was similar to those used in the United States and indicated a US political party. So, respondents needed to be in the United States and over 18 to be of voting age (though they were not required to currently be citizens or voters). The Lucid Theorem respondent pool was representative of the US population.

f. Enrollment Numbers: I requested an enrollment of up to 3750 participants to allow sufficient numbers to statistically differentiate between the nine conditions for both pro-life and pro-choice respondents in the experiment, assuming that 250 participants for each of the nine conditions for both the pro-choice and pro-life would be sufficient. Ultimately, based on available funding, 1621 participants were enrolled.

Risks

There were no known risks. The study used survey questions that were similar to other national surveys like the American National Election Study or the Critical Issues Poll at UMD. The fictional policy explanation and biography respondents were asked to read were very brief and were based on corresponding documents for the real-life Representatives Stephanie Bice and Madeleine Dean. To minimize any discomfort in answering the questions, participants were informed that they could skip most questions that they do not wish to answer (all questions other than the attention check questions, party preference, and view on abortion policy).

Confidentiality

To maintain confidentiality, I collected no personal identifying information with the answers to the survey questions. Participants received their compensation through Lucid Theorem without involvement from the investigator. Lucid had no access to the survey responses.

Consent Process

I requested a waiver of written consent to carry out the survey online. The IRB granted this waiver because (1) the research presented no more than a minimal risk of harm to participants; (2) involved no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context; (3) I reminded participants of the opportunity to save or print the online consent form; (4) the only record linking the participant to the research would have been the consent document; (5) the principal risk to the participant was the potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality; (6) the waiver did not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the participants (Respondents still indicated consent online and received information on the process and their rights as well as my contact information and that of the IRB); (7) the research could not have been practicably carried out without the waiver. (I could only survey Lucid's national respondent pool online.)

Participants indicated their consent digitally in the form of a survey question asking whether they agreed to participate in the study.

I also requested a waiver of prospective informed consent because the project included some deception because it was necessary to keep respondents from knowing the true purpose of the experiment until after they had completed the study. I did not inform participants that the study was about religious rhetoric prior to the study because respondents may have answered questions differently if they had known the true purpose of the study, which would have negatively affected the validity of the experiment. They were told that the purpose was to get their opinions about politicians' credibility on abortion policy. They were also told that the Congressional position statements and biographies were fictional, but they were not told that they were being asked to focus on religious rhetoric and religious practice nor that the purpose of the study involved learning this reaction to religion specifically. At the end of the survey,

participants were given a debriefing statement explaining this and allowing them to withdraw their data from the study. The IRB granted this waiver because (1) the research involved no more than minimal risk to the participants; (2) the waiver did not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the participants; (3) the research could not have been practicably carried out without the waiver; and (4) the participants were provided with additional pertinent information after participation.

IRB Approval letter

The official application and approval letter are available upon request.

Funding

I gratefully acknowledge that University of Maryland, College Park, Department of Government and Politics International Relations Subfield provided $500 towards the cost of fielding the second experiment.

Appendix 3.1: Tests for Violations of the Proportional Hazards Assumption[35]

I estimate the Cox proportional hazards models presented in table 3.2 below based on the research based on the research design described in the text. I test the time independence of the scaled Schoenfeld residuals for violations of the proportional hazards assumption (Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn 2001) and find that economic growth always violates this assumption. (While the interaction term in model 2 also violates it I do not adjust for it.) I show the results of these tests in table 3.3. I adjust for the violation of the assumption with regards to economic growth by interacting that term with the natural logarithm of time and present the resulting models in table 1 in the text. I follow similar procedures in Appendix 3.2, where I present models with minimal control variables, and in Appendix 3.3, where I present models stratifying on the number of previous episodes of conflict. (The stratification allows for different baseline probabilities for recurrence depending on the number of times conflict has previously occurred in the dyad.) The minimal controls models do not support Hypothesis 1 (regarding social power equality) but a model controlling only for GDP has a significant coefficient at the 10 percent level in support of Hypothesis 2 (regarding voluntary ends to conflict). The stratified models support the results similarly to the models in the text.

[35] Analysis performed in R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024), using R package {survival} (Therneau 2024; Therneau and Grambsch 2000). Tables created with {stargazer} (Hlavac 2022).

Table 3.2: Cox Proportional Hazards Models without Adjustments for Violations of the Proportional Hazards Assumption

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Religious Affiliation	1.281**	1.253**	1.577**
	(0.305)	(0.306)	(0.323)
Social Power Equality	0.225	0.409	0.162
	(0.164)	(0.182)	(0.167)
Rebel-Government Religious Difference	-0.702	-0.770	-0.731
	(0.286)	(0.294)	(0.291)
Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side	0.529	0.416	0.263
	(0.387)	(0.398)	(0.404)
External Support for the Government	0.039	0.099	0.057
	(0.084)	(0.084)	(0.083)
External Support for the Rebels	-0.004	0.026	0.010
	(0.091)	(0.091)	(0.089)
Strong Rebels	-2.012	-2.508	-2.351
	(1.068)	(1.080)	(1.079)
GDP/cap at End of Conflict	0.259	0.426	0.284
	(0.138)	(0.155)	(0.139)
GDP Growth	-3.994**	-4.092**	-3.924**
	(0.512)	(0.520)	(0.507)
Repression	-0.496**	-0.579**	-0.446**
	(0.136)	(0.142)	(0.137)
Agreement or Ceasefire	-0.690+	-0.496	-0.190
	(0.302)	(0.312)	(0.353)
Victory	-1.841**	-1.654**	-1.796**
	(0.447)	(0.442)	(0.442)
Religious Affiliation*Social Power Equality		-0.780+	
		(0.256)	
Religious Affiliation*Agreement or Ceasefire			-1.590
			(0.720)
Observations	1,668	1,668	1,668
R^2	0.082	0.087	0.085
Max. Possible R^2	0.508	0.508	0.508
Log Likelihood	-520.754	-515.757	-517.887
Wald Test	60.010** (df = 12)	56.270** (df = 13)	65.980** (df = 13)
LR Test	142.419** (df = 12)	152.413** (df = 13)	148.152** (df = 13)
Score (Logrank) Test	86.458** (df = 12)	93.364** (df = 13)	96.643** (df = 13)

Note: +p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 3.3: Tests for Violations of the Proportional Hazards Assumptions in the Unadjusted Models (in Table 3.2)

Model	Variable	Chi.Sq	df	p
1	Religious Affiliation	0.366	1	0.545
1	Social Power Equality	0.638	1	0.424
1	Rebel-Government Religious Difference	1.125	1	0.289
1	Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side	0.340	1	0.560
1	External Support for the Government	0.983	1	0.321
1	External Support for the Rebels	0.770	1	0.380
1	Strong Rebels	0.003	1	0.958
1	GDP/cap at End of Conflict	2.374	1	0.123
1	GDP Growth	5.760	1	0.016
1	Repression	0.109	1	0.741
1	Agreement or Ceasefire	0.941	1	0.332
1	Victory	1.305	1	0.253
1	GLOBAL	19.663	12	0.074
2	Religious Affiliation	0.460	1	0.498
2	Social Power Equality	0.232	1	0.630
2	Rebel-Government Religious Difference	0.979	1	0.322
2	Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side	0.352	1	0.553
2	External Support for the Government	1.053	1	0.305
2	External Support for the Rebels	0.545	1	0.460
2	Strong Rebels	0.004	1	0.951
2	GDP/cap at End of Conflict	1.444	1	0.230
2	GDP Growth	5.039	1	0.025
2	Repression	0.006	1	0.937
2	Agreement or Ceasefire	0.864	1	0.353
2	Victory	1.478	1	0.224
2	Religious Affiliation* Social Power Equality	6.613	1	0.010
2	GLOBAL	24.046	13	0.031
3	Religious Affiliation	0.273	1	0.601
3	Agreement or Ceasefire	0.795	1	0.373
3	Social Power Equality	0.628	1	0.428
3	Rebel-Government Religious Difference	0.996	1	0.318
3	Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side	0.285	1	0.593
3	External Support for the Government	1.367	1	0.242
3	External Support for the Rebels	0.780	1	0.377
3	Strong Rebels	0.004	1	0.949
3	GDP/cap at End of Conflict	2.503	1	0.114
3	GDP Growth	5.154	1	0.023
3	Repression	0.113	1	0.737
3	Victory	1.439	1	0.230
3	Religious Affiliation* Agreement or Ceasefire	1.480	1	0.224
3	GLOBAL	23.415	13	0.037

Appendix 3.2: Minimal Controls Models[36]

Table 3.4: Models with Minimal Controls without Adjustments for Violations of the Proportional Hazards Assumption

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Religious Affiliation	0.292	0.341	0.565	0.707^{+}
	(0.227)	(0.228)	(0.248)	(0.249)
Social Power Equality	0.043	-0.338		
	(0.103)	(0.125)		
GDP/cap at End of Conflict		0.584**		0.370**
		(0.097)		(0.069)
Religious Affiliation* Social Power Equality	-0.110	-0.457		
	(0.197)	(0.209)		
Agreement or Ceasefire			0.030	0.023
			(0.272)	(0.273)
Religious Affiliation* Agreement or Ceasefire			-1.146	-1.417^{+}
			(0.603)	(0.609)
Observations	2,464	2,445	2,464	2,445
R^2	0.001	0.018	0.003	0.015
Max. Possible R^2	0.444	0.444	0.444	0.444
Log Likelihood	-723.132	-694.584	-720.530	-698.590
Wald Test	0.620 (df = 3)	17.260** (df = 4)	2.740 (df = 3)	21.250** (df = 4)
LR Test	2.160 (df = 3)	44.363** (df = 4)	7.364^{+} (df = 3)	36.352** (df = 4)
Score (Logrank) Test	2.280 (df = 3)	40.144** (df = 4)	7.875* (df = 3)	34.888** (df = 4)
Note:				+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

[36] Analysis performed in R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024), using R package {survival} (Therneau 2024; Therneau and Grambsch 2000). Tables created with {stargazer} (Hlavac 2022).

Table 3.5: Tests for Violations of the Proportional Hazards Assumptions in the Unadjusted Models with Minimal Controls (in Table 3.4)

Model	Variable	Chi.Sq	df	p
1	Religious Affiliation	1.952	1	0.162
1	Social Power Equality	0.003	1	0.957
1	Religious Affiliation* Social Power Equality	9.095	1	0.003
1	GLOBAL	12.515	3	0.006
2	Religious Affiliation	1.228	1	0.268
2	Social Power Equality	0.026	1	0.873
2	GDP/cap at End of Conflict	1.324	1	0.250
2	Religious Affiliation* Social Power Equality	9.400	1	0.002
2	GLOBAL	12.355	4	0.015
3	Religious Affiliation	1.880	1	0.170
3	Agreement or Ceasefire	0.331	1	0.565
3	Religious Affiliation* Agreement or Ceasefire	0.125	1	0.724
3	GLOBAL	2.029	3	0.566
4	Religious Affiliation	1.060	1	0.303
4	Agreement or Ceasefire	0.585	1	0.444
4	GDP/cap at End of Conflict	1.520	1	0.218
4	Religious Affiliation* Agreement or Ceasefire	0.024	1	0.876
4	GLOBAL	2.762	4	0.598

Appendix 3.3: Models Stratified by Previous Number of Previous Conflict Occurrences[37]

Table 3.6: Models with Stratification for the Number of Previous Occurrences of Conflict without Adjustment for Proportional Hazards Violations

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Religious Affiliation	1.149*	1.120*	1.844**
	(0.325)	(0.322)	(0.351)
Social Power Equality	0.460	0.611+	0.382
	(0.170)	(0.182)	(0.167)
Rebel-Government Religious Difference	-0.526	-0.592	-0.570
	(0.301)	(0.310)	(0.305)
Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side	0.476	0.297	-0.055
	(0.413)	(0.430)	(0.428)
External Support for the Government	0.069	0.108	0.098
	(0.092)	(0.091)	(0.092)
External Support for the Rebels	0.088	0.104	0.146
	(0.096)	(0.096)	(0.094)
Strong Rebels	-2.134	-2.682	-2.934+
	(1.075)	(1.094)	(1.098)
GDP/cap at End of Conflict	0.043	0.223	0.075
	(0.155)	(0.169)	(0.151)
GDP Growth	-4.510**	-4.618**	-4.741**
	(0.595)	(0.595)	(0.601)
Repression	-0.505**	-0.590**	-0.401*
	(0.136)	(0.142)	(0.134)
Agreement or Ceasefire	-0.779	-0.462	0.238
	(0.318)	(0.336)	(0.367)
Victory	-1.418*	-1.275*	-1.208+
	(0.461)	(0.459)	(0.457)
Religious Affiliation*Social Power Equality		-0.745+	
		(0.265)	
Religious Affiliation*Agreement or Ceasefire			-2.935**
			(0.758)
Observations	1,668	1,668	1,668
R^2	0.079	0.083	0.089
Max. Possible R^2	0.428	0.428	0.428
Log Likelihood	-397.800	-393.634	-388.588
Wald Test	52.180** (df = 12)	55.610** (df = 13)	66.550** (df = 13)
LR Test	136.758** (df = 12)	145.091** (df = 13)	155.182** (df = 13)
Score (Logrank) Test	88.291** (df = 12)	94.127** (df = 13)	108.896** (df = 13)
Note:			+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

[37] Analysis performed in R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024), using R package {survival} (Therneau 2024; Therneau and Grambsch 2000). Tables created with {stargazer} (Hlavac 2022).

Table 3.7: Tests for Violations of the Proportional Hazards Assumptions in the Unadjusted Models with Stratification for the Number of Previous Occurrences of Conflict (from Table 3.6)

Model	Variable	Chi.Sq	df	p
1	Religious Affiliation	0.011	1	0.917
1	Social Power Equality	1.225	1	0.268
1	Rebel-Government Religious Difference	2.060	1	0.151
1	Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side	0.934	1	0.334
1	External Support for the Government	1.373	1	0.241
1	External Support for the Rebels	2.638	1	0.104
1	Strong Rebels	0.073	1	0.787
1	GDP/cap at End of Conflict	4.895	1	0.027
1	GDP Growth	11.607	1	0.001
1	Repression	1.307	1	0.253
1	Agreement or Ceasefire	1.424	1	0.233
1	Victory	0.604	1	0.437
1	GLOBAL	30.415	12	0.002
2	Religious Affiliation	0.026	1	0.872
2	Social Power Equality	0.895	1	0.344
2	Rebel-Government Religious Difference	1.704	1	0.192
2	Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side	1.085	1	0.298
2	External Support for the Government	1.671	1	0.196
2	External Support for the Rebels	2.367	1	0.124
2	Strong Rebels	0.090	1	0.764
2	GDP/cap at End of Conflict	3.631	1	0.057
2	GDP Growth	10.829	1	0.001
2	Repression	1.201	1	0.273
2	Agreement or Ceasefire	0.767	1	0.381
2	Victory	0.676	1	0.411
2	Religious Affiliation* Social Power Equality	5.338	1	0.021
2	GLOBAL	33.509	13	0.001
3	Religious Affiliation	0.024	1	0.877
3	Agreement or Ceasefire	0.323	1	0.570
3	Social Power Equality	0.849	1	0.357
3	Rebel-Government Religious Difference	1.413	1	0.235
3	Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side	0.742	1	0.389
3	External Support for the Government	1.714	1	0.190
3	External Support for the Rebels	2.015	1	0.156
3	Strong Rebels	0.101	1	0.750
3	GDP/cap at End of Conflict	3.404	1	0.065
3	GDP Growth	10.535	1	0.001
3	Repression	0.942	1	0.332
3	Victory	0.604	1	0.437
3	Religious Affiliation* Agreement or Ceasefire	1.338	1	0.247
3	GLOBAL	29.816	13	0.005

Table 3.8: Models with Stratification for the Number of Previous Occurrences of Conflict, Adjusted for Proportional Hazards Violations

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Religious Affiliation	0.613^{+}	1.020*	1.736**
	(0.305)	(0.322)	(0.357)
Social Power Equality	0.134	0.626*	0.359
	(0.162)	(0.182)	(0.165)
Rebel-Government Religious Difference	-0.378	-0.534	-0.536
	(0.282)	(0.314)	(0.307)
Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side	-0.102	0.234	-0.073
	(0.426)	(0.425)	(0.422)
External Support for the Government	0.040	0.101	0.078
	(0.079)	(0.092)	(0.094)
External Support for the Rebels	0.116	0.105	0.134
	(0.091)	(0.095)	(0.093)
Strong Rebels	-0.845	-2.364	-2.515
	(1.051)	(1.081)	(1.093)
GDP/cap at End of Conflict	0.427^{+}	0.298	0.113
	(0.145)	(0.168)	(0.148)
GDP/cap at End of Conflict*ln(time)	-0.645**		
	(0.084)		
GDP Growth	-0.458	2.116	0.882
	(1.446)	(1.995)	(1.997)
GDP Growth*ln(time)	-0.236	-2.777*	-2.304*
	(0.610)	(0.810)	(0.795)
Repression	-0.191	-0.560**	-0.365*
	(0.143)	(0.146)	(0.137)
Agreement or Ceasefire	-0.494	-0.392	0.219
	(0.303)	(0.333)	(0.365)
Victory	-0.912*	-1.710*	-1.595*
	(0.430)	(0.519)	(0.510)
Religious Affiliation*Social Power Equality		-0.890*	
		(0.265)	
Religious Affiliation*Agreement or Ceasefire			-2.884**
			(0.748)
Observations	1,668	1,668	1,668
R^2	0.190	0.090	0.094
Max. Possible R^2	0.428	0.428	0.428
Log Likelihood	-290.328	-387.349	-384.107
Wald Test (df = 14)	170.560**	43.110**	50.850**
LR Test (df = 14)	351.702**	157.661**	164.144**
Score (Logrank) Test (df = 14)	336.508**	94.141**	108.919**
Note:			+p<0.1; *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Appendix 3.4: Additional Survival Curves[38]

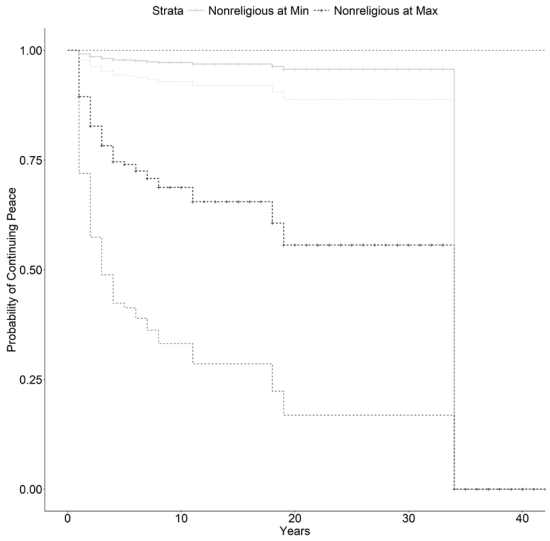

Figure 3.5: Survival Curves for Nonreligious Rebels at Minimum and Maximum Levels of Social Power Equality (Model 2)

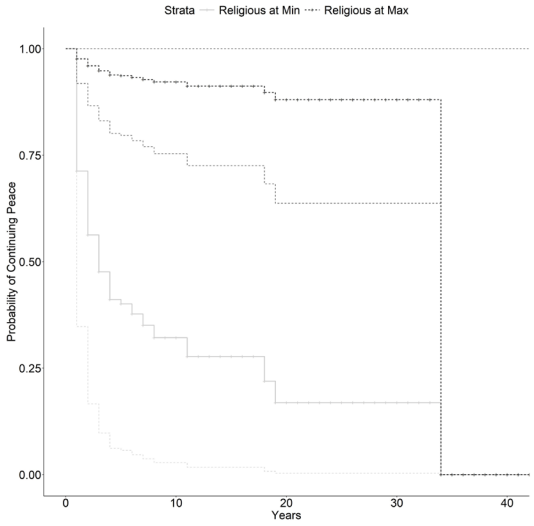

Figure 3.6: Survival Curves for Religious Rebels at Minimum and Maximum Levels of Social Power Equality (Model 2)

[38] Analysis performed in R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024), using R package {survival} (Therneau 2024; Therneau and Grambsch 2000). Survival plots use {survminer} (Kassambara, Kosinski, and Biecek 2021).

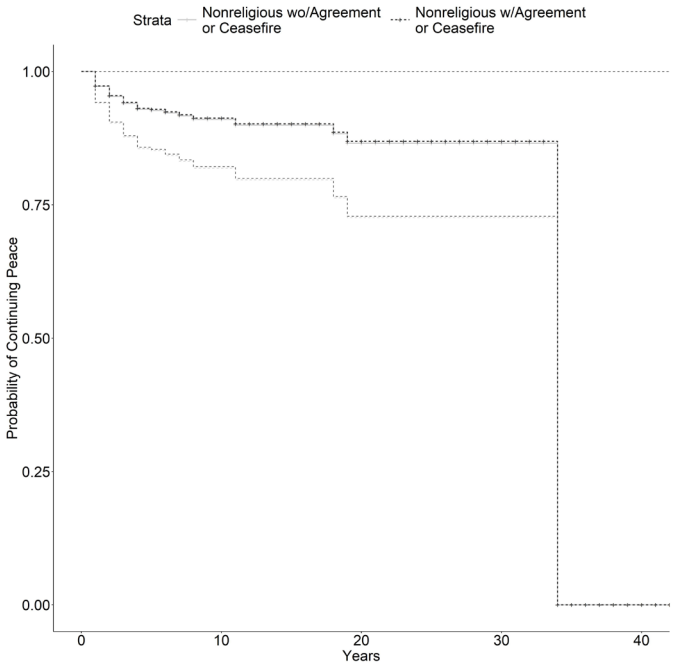

Figure 3.7: Survival Curves for Nonreligious Rebels with and without an Agreement or Ceasefire (Model 3)

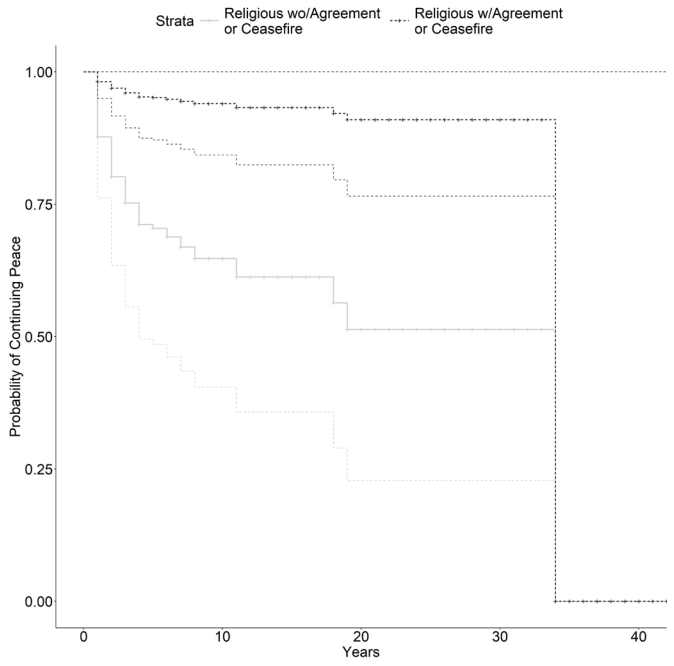

Figure 3.8: Survival Curves for Religious Rebels with and without an Agreement or Ceasefire (Model 3)

Appendix 3.5: Summary Statistics[39]

Table 3.9: Summary Statistics (Peace Years Whole Sample)

Recurrence (Peace Termination) Event					
0	1				
1586	82				
Religious Affiliation					
0	1				
1256	412				
Rebel-Government Religious Difference					
0	1				
740	928				
Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side					
0	1				
1511	157				
Strong Rebels					
0	1				
1568	100				
Agreement or Cease Fire					
0	1				
1119	549				
Victory					
0	1				
1358	310				
Social Power Equality					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
-1.918	-0.815	0.581	0.241833	1.064	2.475
External Support for the Government					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
0	0	1	1.305755	3	6
External Support for the Rebels					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
0	0	0	0.859113	1	6
GDP/cap at End of Conflict					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
6.336793	6.800447	7.601344	7.791879	8.379515	10.50244
GDP Growth					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
-0.5445	0.090641	0.303729	0.4807	0.716474	2.195986
Repression					

[39] Analysis performed in R 4.4.0 (R Core Team 2024).

Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
-2.691	-0.787	0.177	0.374752	1.45825	3.061

Table 3.10: Summary Statistics (Peace Years Rebels with Religious Affiliation)

Recurrence (Peace Termination) Event					
0	1				
384	28				
Rebel-Government Religious Difference					
0	1				
54	358				
Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side					
0	1				
363	49				
Strong Rebels					
0					
412					
Agreement or Cease Fire					
0	1				
292	120				
Victory					
0	1				
287	125				
Social Power Equality					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
-1.836	-1.266	0.611	0.185614	1.064	2.408
External Support for the Government					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
0	0	0	1.25	3	6
External Support for the Rebels					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
0	0	0	0.368932	0.25	5
GDP/cap at End of Conflict					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
6.336793	6.629399	7.335546	7.787673	8.434263	10.48973
GDP Growth					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
-0.07301	0.109141	0.290488	0.526983	0.80462	2.162622
Repression					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
-2.361	-0.787	0.177	0.290667	1.214	2.19

Table 3.11: Summary Statistics (Peace Years Rebels without Religious Affiliation)

Recurrence (Peace Termination) Event					
0	1				
1202	54				
Rebel-Government Religious Difference					
0	1				
686	570				
Foreign Fighters on the Rebel Side					
0	1				
1148	108				
Strong Rebels					
0	1				
1156	100				
Agreement or Cease Fire					
0	1				
827	429				
Victory					
0	1				
1071	185				
Social Power Equality					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
-1.918	-0.753	0.514	0.260274	1.128	2.475
External Support for the Government					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
0	0	1	1.324045	2	6
External Support for the Rebels					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
0	0	0	1.019904	1	6
GDP/cap at End of Conflict					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
6.399187	6.83953	7.614879	7.793259	8.29752	10.50244
GDP Growth					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
-0.5445	0.081889	0.309364	0.465518	0.691489	2.195986
Repression					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
-2.691	-0.733	0.262	0.402334	1.56525	3.061

Table 3.12: Summary Statistics (Length of Peace Spells)

Length of Peace Spells (n=148)					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
1	2	6	11.27	20.5	43

Length of Religious Organization Peace Spells (n=45)					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
1	1	3	9.16	15	42

Length of Nonreligious Peace Spells (n=103)					
Min.	1st Qu.	Median	Mean	3rd Qu.	Max.
1	2	8	12.19	23	43

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