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Divine Intervention?

The Influence of Religious Values on Support for U.S. Interventionism

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ABSTRACT

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The 2008 election cycle awakened us to the possibility that religious communities, which are often thought of as veritable constants in their political preferences, are open to change. Though a key Democratic Party campaign theme, the evangelical community was arguably the best example of *change* in 2008. Mike Huckabee, a former Baptist preacher and Arkansas governor, waged a serious election effort by proposing innovative (relative to historical evangelical preferences) solutions on poverty, climate change, and foreign aid. These issues were certainly *not* emphasized in Pat Robertson's run for president twenty years ago (Watson 1999), nor have they constituted the evangelical community's traditional concerns (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2007).

Importantly, Huckabee was not a community aberration among his brethren. There is evidence that evangelicals were either taking notes from the former Governor, or were otherwise spurred to revise their collective political agenda in the last few years. Polls of the evangelical community show evidence of shifting community views on issues ranging from loyalty to the Republican Party to abortion (Pew 2006, 2007).[1] And, while the opinion data suggest both conservative and liberal swings within this religious cohort, the bigger story here may be that there are community opinion swings in the first place.

After all, political shorthand, often espoused by media pundits and other observers, tends to pigeon hole voter groups into preference and policy categories based largely on past behavior. Indeed, conventional wisdom about American evangelicals and their policy preferences is only beginning to move beyond the imposing shadows cast by the "culture warrior" class of community leaders—Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, James Dobson among others. Of course, evangelicals are not the only religious community showing signs of political change. Americans Muslims, broadly speaking, have done so, especially in terms of participation in American political life (Pew 2007,

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[1] These shifts, while not dramatic turnarounds of historic community preferences, are sizeable enough to warrant attention.

Calfano, Djupe, and Green 2008). At the same time, the American Jewish community, long concerned about church and state separation, has been found to exhibit flexibility on the teaching of intelligent design in public school curricula (Robinson 2007).

These shifts in policy opinion within religious communities beg the question of why. If religion is known for inculcating life-orienting values among believers, and any change in these values has been considered to be, at best, glacial (Stark and Glock 1968; Leege 1993; Green, Guth, Smidt, and Kellstedt 1996), what explains fluctuations in community preferences in relatively short time spans? While this phenomenon may be attributable, in part, to differences in generational cohorts, increased political and economic assimilation among group members, or some combination thereof (see, e.g., Haddad and Esposito 2000), we believe that an overlooked explanation concerns the potentially variable hierarchy of the basic value concepts communicated in religious organizations to and among adherents (see Djupe and Calfano no date; Leege et al. 2002: 40-49).

Without doing violence to other explanations concerning why religious communities shift either their locus of policy concerns or preferences, we are intrigued by the possible explanation for community change that is inherent in the influence religious values have on individual believers. Aside from its focus on the metaphysical (see Pals 1996), religion's primary contribution to human existence concerns the values it establishes and promulgates relating to appropriate forms of human relationships (Geertz 1973; Glock and Stark 1965; Leege 1993; Rokeach 1973; Wuthnow 1988). While it may be tempting to consider these values to be stable influences on believers, we argue that a *prima facie* expectation of this kind misses the inherent reality that undergirds the influence of all ideas, including religious values—they are instilled by some external agent and communication may alter value hierarchies over time. the willingness of people to accept and interpret them more or less uniformly. Arguably, another essential aspect of value acceptance and interpretation is generally uniform exposure among group members.

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Importantly, and owing to recognition for how collectively held ideas gather consistency, the stability of religious value interpretations? hierarchies? cannot be based on some irrefragable characteristic of the values themselves. Rather, value stability, if it is to be understood within a political behavior framework, must be the product of collective interpretation by the population in question. In other words, values may constitute stable influences on groups because the group is generally monolithic in how it interprets and acts on the values, not because of any inherent properties the values have. Given the evidence of systematic shift in political opinion within religious communities described above, we ask whether religious value influence can have a malleable effect on believer opinion formation. Value malleability would be presumably based on variation in the exposure to and interpretation of religious values believers encounter. If this type of influence is found, it would suggest that the behavior of religious publics is conditioned, at least in part, on the very values often assumed to be a stable influence on it.

To gain leverage on the possibly dynamic nature of religious value influence on attitude formation, we consider whether the variable presentation of religious values affects believer policy attitudes. We do not attempt to trace changes in value influence over time among large religious cohorts. Our focus is, instead, on whether religious values, presented as variable experimental stimuli in disparate religious settings, produce distinct attitude shifts outcomes among believers compared to those not exposed to the values. If evidence is found to suggest the variable exposure of religious values affects attitudes, we believe it would show religious values to have the kind of dynamic influence on policy opinion that would explain shifts in religious community policy opinion.

While this type of study is new in the examination of religion, the political science literature has already adopted the perspective that values interact with beliefs to affect attitudes in a dynamic way (Barker and Carman 2000; Feldman 1988; Hurwitz and Peffley 1987; McClosky and Zaller 1984; Tetlock 1986; but see Goren 2005; Jacoby 2006). Newer work has engaged experimentation to

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evaluate when and for whom framed values operate (for a review, see Brewer and Gross 2005). For instance, research has been done to assay what values are engaged when (Tetlock 1986), which factors affect whether individuals adopt particular value frames (Barker 2005), and the degree to which individuals think through value frames (Brewer 2001). The combination of findings allows for considerable movement in attitudes given the variable ways that values can be engaged.

Our work differs from the value framing investigations in the political science literature on at least two counts. First, we *prime* religious values, elevating the primed value in the respondent's mind. That is, we do not present a political situation in particular terms, as in framing, but simply offer the values for subjects to consider before being exposed to policy questions. In this way, our work takes the same strategy as Katz and Hass (1988), who selectively primed certain values to assess their effect on racial attitudes. Second, though we prime values, this is not a test of the passive-receiver model (Zaller 1992) in the sense that this is not a straightforward example of (for instance) priming individualism to predict individualist attitude-taking (Brewer and Steenbergen 2002). For one, the religious values we employ are far removed from politics. They also differ significantly from the religious values, such as salvation, that Rokeach (1969a, 1969b) used. Instead of dealing with an individual's relationship with God, our values are concerned with the individual's relationship to others.[2]

To use the settled public opinion idiom, we treat "religious values" as conceptions of how things should be (see e.g., Rokeach 1973). Leege and Welch's "foundational beliefs" are clearly referring to such values: "Foundational beliefs guide individuals to what is problematic about the world, offer ways to cope with or avoid problems, and provide ultimate solutions to these problems" (1989: 140; see also Rokeach 1969a: 24). The most critical works on or related to religious values are Rokeach's (1969a, 1969b) two part series on the matter (but see Christenson 1976;

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[2] In this way, the values in our experiment more closely resemble Stark and Glock's (1968) ethicalism measures.

Moberg 1970), Leege and Welch's (1989) characterization of religious values as individualist or communitarian, Allport and Ross' (1967) famous formulation that religion can either serve the self (extrinsic) or transcend narrow self-interest and guide the individual through religious principles (intrinsic), and Benson and Williams' (1982) multi-axis typological framework, which shows that religious values can be thematically grouped into vertical (God-centered) and horizontal (community centered) systems (see also, e.g., Williams 1996).

In contrast to work in political science, these perspectives on religious values share a common problem from our point of view: the values are assumed to be part of the personality, or are at least invariant. Though the particular focus varies, researchers most often have looked for people with religious identities to hold different value sets, and then correlated those values with attitudes and behaviors. While this approach has yielded insights, we believe that it obscures considerable fluidity in the presentation of values within particular religious settings, and, thus, assumes stability in individuals' value hierarchies (Rokeach 1973). Perhaps motivated by the normative role of values in society (e.g., Parsons 1937), this traditional approach imposes much more stasis on religious populations than might be warranted.

A Dynamic Approach to Religious Value Influence

Working from the assumption that value exposure is key in determining how it is interpreted by believers, we hone in on two key mechanisms in the exposure process. The first is the exposure itself—elevating a value's salience or importance in a subject's mind. The second is the context (or cue environment) in which this exposure occurs. Much of the work on the cue environment (Goffman 1959, 1963; Barker 1968; Forgas 1976) shows that these contexts function as "symbolic codes representing social norms and expectations about appropriate and inappropriate behavior" (Forgas and Brown 1977: 636). Thus, consideration of context is a stimulant for reflection on the particular experiences and interpretations believers associate with the religious values made salient to

them. This is not unlike the importance researchers have attributed to self-referencing in shaping attitudes (Brumbaugh 2002; Burnkrant and Unnava 1989).

In considering the role and nature of one's individual religious context in affecting value influence, attention invariably turns to the organizational properties of this context—the church, synagogue, or mosque. Religious communities have been famously called the "plausibility structures" (Berger 1967) that inform and sustain value influence. This process can occur through sermons, informal discussion, and even less direct modes of communication (Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Leege and Welch 1989). Applying a modified version of self-referencing encouragement (Sujan, Bettman, and Baumgartner 1993) might spur believer subjects to consider how values are understood in their own religious context. As such, we use reference to a believer's religious identity as a way to tap the influence of religious context.

The importance of focusing on both value exposure and context is that context may alter the aggregate directional effect of value priming to the extent that there are divergent understandings of a value's meaning with and across religious communities. Hence, we are concerned with two causal elements concerning religious value influence—1) the effects of the primed (exposed) values themselves, and 2) the interpretive effects that a subject's religious context has on the application of these values in shaping policy opinion.

Focus on these two mechanisms makes for a truly dynamic vision of religious influence. A values focus allows for variation within religious bodies and across houses of worship and individual believers as the presentation of values varies with organizational needs and theological dictates. Other perspectives assume away intra-denominational or even intra-traditional variation through a measurement strategy that assumes religious traditions to be adequate proxies for political information exposure (Kellstedt et al. 1996; Layman 2001). Since the emphasis on particular values may change from week to week, or even within a single communiqué in a particular religious

Deleted: interaction

Deleted: religious identity (as reflected through their personal

Deleted:)

Deleted: determining

context, we cannot ignore this potentially important variation. It is also important to note that our approach provides a distinctly religious argument for flexibility and adjustment in religious bodies, which neatly tucks into a line of research exploring the social dynamics of religious contexts. (Djupe and Gilbert 2009; Gilbert 1993; Jelen 1992; Johnson and White 1967; Lenski 1962; Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988).

Religious Values and U.S. Foreign Intervention

In order to begin to address the dynamic and contextual influence of religious values, we examine the conditional effects of a religious value set on believer attitudes about U.S. interventionism (both military and non-military). Considering the sheer weight given to debate about America's proper international role in recent years, this issue choice lends policy relevance, but also creates a difficult test for our forthcoming hypotheses. As it stands, issues of U.S. intervention are highly charged politically, so any effects found should gain greater credibility. Focus on interventionism is also useful because it moves consideration of believer policy attitudes away from the more traditional "culture war" concerns that have occupied much of the research agenda on evangelicals (see Wilcox and Larsen 2006; Green et al. 1996).

Though consideration of the religious legitimacy of foreign intervention dates at least as far back as the Thirty Years' War and the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 (Philpott 2001), since the end of the Cold War, and especially after September 11th, scholars have devoted increasing attention to the rather complex relationship between religion and international relations. In fact, investigation of the relationship between religion and U.S. foreign policy may be more important now than during the Cold War. Without the ability to organize their thoughts around a Manichean world, citizens are now left to their own devices to assess U.S. foreign policy. One important fallback resource, according to Brewer and Steenbergen (2002), is how individuals view human nature—trusting citizens tend to favor cooperative forms of intervention, while cynical ones hew to isolationism.

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Others have addressed the moral and religious dimensions of foreign intervention in support of national interests (Appleby 2000; Carlson and Owens 2003). Of central concern has been whether and how particular religious and political values should determine when an intervention might be justifiable (Childress 1978; Johnson 1981). In the twentieth century, theologians, such as Reinhold Niebuhr (1940; Wiersma 1995), considered the complex relationship between articulated religious values and the realistic understanding that self-interested actors, including religious elites, develop and promote these values (see McAfee Brown 1986 for an in-depth review). Ratifying that concern, Hoeber Rudolph (2003) suggests the motivating tension of greatest historical intensity lies between fragmentation and ecumenization, which we take as our inspiration to examine the essential religious values of exclusion and inclusion (Stark and Finke 2000).

Regarding religious exclusivity, Appleby suggests, "Enclave builders portray their religion's truths, 'rights,' and responsibilities as inherently superior to those of their rivals. . . . the strength of a religious community's claim to the loyalty of its adherents rests on the community's ability to present itself as the exclusive bearer of specific moral and/or material benefits" (2003, 181-182). On issues of international importance, religion and its institutions have an even heightened stake in maintaining their role as the primary lens through which believers interpret events and policy (see Sahliyeh 1990; Hanson 2006). Of course, religious values relating to *inclusion* seek openness and communion with others, including and especially those not part of the particular community (Sowle Cahill 1994), are the obvious foil to the exclusivity of the "enclave builders."

The emphasis placed on group-centered activities by exclusive religious values should center subject views on the immediate needs of individual believers and their religious group. Exclusive values, which accentuate the importance of maintaining intra-group integrity and personal piety, are often held most dear by evangelicals or those identifying themselves as "born again" (Carroll and

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Roozen 1990), but they may resonate strongly in other communities that emphasize tensions with the world (Stark and Finke 2000).

In order to impact believer opinions on U.S. intervention policy, we expect that exposing believers to exclusive values is akin to priming group categorization as seen in the social identity literature (see Billig and Tajfel 1973; Tajfel and Turner 1979; Tajfel 1981). We maintain that primed exclusive values should lead recipients to think about the world in a particular way. This means that the in group/out group distinction that the exclusive values engender would be mapped onto an international-level in-group/out-group categorization by the believer. Evidence showing believer subjects exposed to the exclusive values form opinions favoring in-group (or U.S.) outcomes on the intervention policy items will serve as confirmation that the exclusive religious values transcend basic religious categorizations.

Of course, value priming constitutes only half of our experimental design. Elevating the personal context in which a believer is exposed to the values themselves may play a critical mediating role on whether a believer is able to link the exclusive values to the consideration of the secular intervention policies. Context elevation may also impact believer opinions on a policy. This may be especially the case in circumstances where one's religious context places the believer at odds with the United States and a state-centered approach to intervention. Obvious examples of this might be Muslims whose religious context might place them at odds with U.S. policy. In such cases, we would expect that, depending on the intervention item in question, religious context would diminish the effect of the exclusive value priming on believer opinion formation.

Research Design

Our design variably primes inclusive and exclusive religious values and individual religious context prior to soliciting opinions on six questions pertaining to U.S. foreign intervention (both military and non-military). The intervention survey uses a 2x2x2 design that randomly assigned 1)

subject exposure to exclusive religious values, 2) the priming of these values prior to the intervention policy questions (our dependent variables), and 3) the placement of a religion identity battery (with inquiries as to subject attendance at religious services, view of the scared religious text associated with the subject's faith, and an indicator of how much the subject is guided by religion in daily life) to trigger consideration of a believer's religious context prior to the religious values. Placement of the identity battery ahead of the religious values is intended to trigger subject reflection on contextual characteristics that we hypothesize will moderate value influence.

Unlike some studies whose experimental findings are considered less reliable because of concerns with the use of a convenience sample (see Sears 1986), we elected to conduct the study of religious values among subjects in actual houses of worship. By doing so, we have not only cleared a significant methodological hurdle in the use of experimental designs, but have positioned our examination of the role religious values play in determining attitudes on U.S. intervention within the actual milieu that we hypothesize conditions policy opinion.

Our surveys were distributed in houses of worship in the evangelical, mainline Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim communities in northeastern United States in the spring and summer of 2008. In all, one mainline Protestant congregation, two evangelical congregations, two Jewish congregations within the Reform tradition, two Mosques and one Islamic Center agreed to participate on the condition that the names of the houses of worship are kept confidential.[3] Leaders (lay and/or ordained) from the houses of worship granted the authors and/or their research assistants access to an agreed upon set of worship services where the surveys (which were condensed onto two sides of a legal sized document) would be randomly distributed.

In most cases, the surveys were inserted at random via the weekly bulletin provided by the house of worship. In a select set of cases, the surveys were distributed separately during the service

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[3] This was also a stated condition of the Institutional Review Board's permission to sanction this project.

itself. In order to maximize survey distribution to the religious communities, each house of worship made the survey available to anyone who had heard that a survey was distributed, but who did not receive one to complete for whatever reason at the service. All subjects present at the time the survey was distributed were instructed (usually by the leader of the worship service) to complete the survey either during the service or immediately thereafter (where they were collected by the authors and/or their research assistants). A minority of subjects elected to return the surveys the following week, which were then returned to the authors or their research assistants.

In all, 734 surveys were returned across the nine houses of worship used in this study. Just as Wald, Owen, and Hill (1988) found in their survey of religious service attendees, however, not all surveys were returned with usable data. We follow Wald et al.'s approach of incorporating only those surveys that contained information for all items used in our analysis. This drops our n to 524, which contains usable responses from 87 evangelical Protestants, 135 mainline Protestants, 151 Muslims, and 152 Jews. Since we are exploring a between-subject group effect, we do not believe that the relative difference in subject group n is problematic.

While not as controlled a delivery mechanism for the stimulus as would normally exist in executing experimental designs, we believe that, given the constraints involved in conducting experimental designs in houses of worship (which is, to our knowledge, and unprecedented undertaking), any problems with validity posed by duplicated survey submissions or subject substitutions in completing the survey are minimal. We have this confidence, in part, because leaders in the houses of worship were very cooperative in monitoring who in their communities returned completed surveys. Since most of the houses of worship have 300 or fewer regularly attending members, the leaders themselves were very familiar with members of their faith communities. This gave them a rough idea as to who had likely not been present during the service where the surveys were originally distributed. At the same time, the notion that a single person would take the time to

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request, complete, and return a large number of social science-based surveys strikes us as slightly unrealistic given the nature of concerns on the minds of most people attending religious services. Finally, concerning the possibility of subject substitution—whereby a subject passed the survey off to another person to complete and return—we argue that only in the case of a subject giving the survey to a person not sharing their religious identity (e.g., a Muslim giving the survey to an evangelical to complete), would subject substitution affect response validity. We also find this scenario unlikely.

Of course, this does not mean that we present the subjects participating in our experiment as broadly representative of their respective religious traditions—only that we feel great confidence that our design addresses the growing concern political scientists have with reliance on convenience samples. While executing survey-embedded experiments in designs reaching representative samples is ideal, given that subjects are likely to respond to stimuli in roughly the same way as average Americans (especially once appropriate controls are applied—Lucas 2003), we have increased confidence that the results found have adequate external validity. Finally, we are not concerned with generating point estimates of religious value effects, but, instead, knowing if conditional value presentations instigate some attitudinal response (Kam, Wilking, and Zechmeister 2007). This also lessens the complications inherent in not using a representative sample of the religious communities.

Contextual Value Effects on Interventionism

Our six dependent variables constituting U.S. interventionism are taken from the survey items that were asked of subjects during the course of the experiment. In conditions where the exclusive values are primed, the dependent variable questions came after the values. In conditions where the religious battery was primed, the dependent variables came after the religious battery. Where both the values and battery were primed (and in which case the battery preceded the values) the dependent variables were placed after both the values and religious battery.

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Each of the six dependent variables deals with a particular aspect of U.S. intervention in the affairs of other entities—either states or terror groups. Dependent variable one (DV1) reads "The U.S. should intervene in the affairs of foreign states to prevent genocide." DV2 states "The U.S. is justified in waging a pre-emptive strike against states it believes pose a threat to its national security." DV3: "The U.S. should intervene in the affairs of foreign states only if it has the support of the United Nations." DV4: "The U.S. should use its influence and resources to shape the political environments of other nations." DV5: "The U.S. should intervene in the affairs of foreign states to protect its own economic and political interests." DV6: "The United States is justified in warring against states and terror groups espousing radical Islamic ideology."

Values for the dependent variables are based on responses to two 0-10 scales per variable that asked subjects to list the number of *arguments in favor* and *arguments opposed* to the each dependent variable statement. Subjects were free to create the affirming and opposing arguments on their own. They were asked only to enter the numerical count of the affirming and opposing arguments they could think of in each of two boxes on the survey sheet (which were designated "arguments in favor?" and "arguments opposed?" respectively). To create our dependent variable measures, we took the numerical difference between the two argument scales for each variable by subtracting the number of arguments opposed from the number of arguments in favor. This created a variable range of -10 to 10.

Based on the assumption that primed exclusive values lead subjects to emphasize in-group/out-group differences, we take it as evidence that these group differences are imputed to U.S. intervention policy if the values create a significant and *negative* influence on subject arguments relating to genocide (DV1), a significant and *positive* influence on arguments concerning pre-emption (DV2), a significant and *negative* influence on intervention based on U.N. approval (DV3), a significant and *positive* influence on the U.S.'s ability to shape the political environments of other

nations (DV4), a significant and *positive* influence on U.S. intervention to protect its economic and political interests (DV5), and a significant and *positive* influence in warring against states and terrorists espousing radical Islam (DV6).

Our six models contain the three experimental conditions—the priming of religious values, subject exposure to exclusive values, and the priming of one's religious identity. We interact each of these three conditions in the models. We also include the following six controls: 1) frequency of subject attendance at religious services, 2) subject political ideology, 3) subject sex, 4) an evangelical dummy, 4) a Muslim dummy, and 6) a Jew dummy (mainline Protestants serve as the baseline category).

Before moving to a consideration of our results, it is important to comment on the expected influence of the religious identity battery given the setting in which the experiments were conducted. Arguably, priming a subject's religious identity while she is participating in an experiment at her house of worship is unnecessary. We suggest, however, that there is no way to tell what types of concerns were salient to the subjects prior to the experiment. In other words, while the subject may have been sitting in church that morning, the nature (and potential influence) of his personal religious identity may not have been on his mind, especially if attendance at religious services is a routine event for him. In order to address this possibility, we believe that the religious identity battery, while perhaps a redundant influence in some cases, is a necessary inclusion in the experiment to ensure that any mediating influence of one's religious context is directly represented in the experimental mechanism.

Primed and Contextual Value Effects on Interventionism

As mentioned above, we expect that the influence of one's primed religious identity will counter the influence of exclusive values, at least on some policies. Logically, the policies on which this countervailing effect would be found likely depends on the religious context in question. Since

we draw on subject responses from all three monotheistic faiths, it is worthwhile to create interactions between the religious identity and subject religious tradition dummies to examine whether priming a Muslim religious identity (for example) has an effect distinct from priming an evangelical one.

In doing so, we found that only in the case of DV3, which pertains to U.N. approval of U.S. intervention, were these interactions statistically significant. Specifically, both Jews and evangelicals who had their religious identity primed prior to receiving the dependent variable statements had a higher number of arguments in favor of subjecting U.S. intervention to U.N. approval (results not shown), while those exposed to the exclusive values in the absence of identity priming had a significantly high number of arguments against the U.N. approval statement. That these interactions were not insignificant in the remaining models, and in the interest of parsimony, we present the six models without the identity interactions. Results from the first three models are reported in table 1. Significant interactions are graphed in figures 1-4.

[Table 1 about here]

[Figures 1-4 about here]

As expected, the priming of exclusive religious values significantly affects subject arguments for and against the six intervention policy statements. Overall, the effect is as we hypothesized—priming the exclusive values makes subjects more supportive of the U.S. having *carte blanche* in how it deals with out-group entities. That said, the results from model one are a little more complex than expected. There, the priming of exclusive values has a positive effect on supportive arguments among subjects (albeit one just outside of significance), while the triple interaction between the three experimental conditions serves to significantly reduce the number of positive arguments. Specifically, the priming of exclusive religious values increased the number of arguments in favor by

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1.961 (p <.055), while the triple interaction (which included the priming of subject religious identity) decreased arguments in favor by 2.745(see Figures 1 and 2).

In this instance, at least, what to expect from the influence of primed religious identity is not entirely clear. Neither, for that matter, is the influence of the exclusive values themselves. This is because the issue of intervening to prevent genocide, when considered from the vantage point of a U.S.-based outcome, could be viewed either as the U.S. determining it wants to intervene in pursuing some national interest, or as the nation being forced to act in addressing an international crisis. This dualism in interpreting the genocide intervention may explain the significant and countervailing results between the variables 6 and 7 in model one. What we can say from this first model, however, is that the elevation of religious identity in tandem with the primed exclusive values reduces the arguments in favor of genocide intervention among the subjects

In contrast, results from table one's second and third models in are directly in-line with our expectations concerning the role of exclusive values in moving subjects toward the acceptance of intervention arguments favoring the U.S. In terms of justification to wage a pre-emptive policy (DV2), subjects exposed to the exclusive religious value have an increase in the arguments in favor of 3.352 (the triple interaction priming religious identity is not significant). The exact opposite is true in regard to the U.S. needing U.N. approve to intervene (DV3), as subjects primed with exclusive values have a decrease in arguments in favor on that measure of 6.322 (again, the triple interaction is not significant) (see Figures 3 and 4).

[Table 2 about here]

Table 2 contains results for last three models. Again, our expectations are confirmed in regard to primed exclusive religious values and their effects on subject views of interventionism. On the question of whether the U.S. should shape the political environments of other nations (DV4), subjects primed with exclusive religious values had an increase in the arguments in favor of 3.242

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(see Figure 4). An even larger effect on arguments in favor was found for DV5, which concerns U.S. intervention to protect its economic and political interests. Subjects exposed to exclusive religious values had an increase in arguments in favor of DV5 of 5.457 (see Figure 5). The expected effect of exclusive values is also present in for the DV6 model, although it is located in the triple interaction. There, the number of arguments in favor of the U.S. warring against states and terrorists espousing radical Islam increases by 2.425 when subjects when both the exclusive values and the religious identity have been primed (see Figure 6). Overall then, we are confident that our research expectations concerning the priming of exclusive religious values has been confirmed.

Discussion & Conclusion

Our research expectations were that exposure to religious values and elevation of a believer's religious context (via religious identity) would show significant influence on policy measures. The results are generally consistent – primed values otherwise disconnected to politics can influence the direction of support for a wide variety of policy measures. Given the distance between the exclusive religious values and state intervention policy, it is plausible, and the results support the explanation, that those encountering the exclusive values transpose the value's message to international policy considerations, perhaps in a manner similar to social identity theory in which the in-group is preferenced over the out-group. In this case, the primed exclusive values consistently move subject policy arguments in the direction of favoring U.S. latitude in pursuing intervention, an effect consistent with favoring the in-group. In contrast to the value elevation, believer religious identity was found not to have the kind of intervening effect we envisaged. This may be because the experiments themselves were conducted in a religious context, thereby diluting the effect of the identity battery on subjects. It is left to future research to disentangle any differences in effect between priming identity in religious vs. non-religious settings.

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Overall, these results point to quite a different conception of the two message model (in which stable values encourage adoption of consonant messages and rejection of oppositional communication, tempered by reception and motivation) (Zaller 1991). Instead, the values here appear rather unstable, subject to priming even in the artificial context of an opinion survey. This finding raises an objection to conceptions of values as fixed or at least stable, though stability may come from the stable presentation of values over time, a role that religious communities have long been credited as having (e.g., Tocqueville 1994[1835]). Moreover, value priming fixes attention on particular messages, and consonance is gauged by how they are framed, not by their direction.

The implication is probably not rampant instability in public opinion, but the findings do suggest a number of forces acting to sustain opinion stability: stable involvement in social organizations, the consistent emphasis in those organizations on particular values, divergent interpretation of those values across society, consistent interpretation in a particular community, and skepticism about how others attempt to interpret the values. Since a significant number of these forces do change for individuals over even short periods of time – see, for instance Djupe, Sokhey and Neiheisel (2008) – we should expect to see turbulence in individual opinions that more or less maintain aggregate stability. This helps to explain some of the changes occurring in the religious communities discussed at the outset of this project—changes that are not dramatic departures from the historical positions these communities have held, but are noticeable fluctuations nonetheless.

This perspective should be marked as a significant shift in the study of religion and politics, which has shied away from operationalizing the politically salient values religion imparts (though see similarly oriented work by Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Leege and Welch 1989; Mockabee, Wald, and Leege 2007), refrained from acknowledging a significant amount of diversity within religious communities, or hesitated emphasizing communication within churches (though see Djupe and Gilbert 2003, 2009). The fact that we can vary the presentation of values and see opinions shift

while holding religious tradition constant (by statistical control and research design) suggests why religious traditions contain considerable variance in the politics of affiliated members.

In this dynamic view of religious influence, the effect of core religious values will vary as individuals, in consort with a particular religious community, wrestle with vague dictates and secular policy issue domains. There is little doubt, then, that religious communities can arrive at attitudes and behaviors that may differ considerably from other collections of people wearing the same religious label (Djupe and Gilbert 2009; Gilbert 1993; Jelen 1992; Roozen, McKinney, and Carroll 1984; Wald, Owen and Hill 1988).

This conclusion is a far cry from the commonly accepted operationalization of religion's political content using a measure as blunt and static as a religious tradition (Kellstedt et al. 1996: 175-177; Layman 2001). Moreover, it is notable because of the dozens of studies done with the American National Election Studies (ANES) measure since 1992, none include an operationalization of religious values, or the broader notion of religious worldviews. As Leege and Kellstedt note, the ANES measures are simply not suitable for this purpose (1993: 220). Instead the ANES measures have examined "vertical" religious links (i.e., with God), instead of emphasizing the far more politically salient "horizontal" links (i.e., with other humans) that religious organizations also attempt to establish (Leege and Welch 1989). Overall, these results represent an important first step in the investigation of variable value influence, and are clearly not the end. More research is needed with older adults, special religious groups, and different policy domains. We also urge consideration of different civil society domains beyond American religion.

Appendix: Variable Coding

Intervention dependent variables: The six statements read, (1) The U.S. should intervene in the affairs of foreign states to prevent genocide (2) The U.S. is justified in waging a pre-emptive strike against states it believes pose a threat to its national security; (3) The U.S. should intervene in the affairs of foreign states only if it has the support of the United Nations; (4) The U.S. should use its influence and resources to shape the political environment of other nations; (5) The U.S. should intervene in the affairs of foreign state to protect its own economic and political interests; (6) The United States is justified in warring against states and terror groups espousing radical Islamic ideology. Construction of the variable used is described in the text.

Political ideology: "Now, thinking of your general political views, which of these labels best describes you?" 1) strongly liberal, 2) liberal, 3) moderate, 4) conservative, 5) strongly conservative.

Attendance: "Aside from weddings or funerals (weddings or bar mitzvahs/weddings or funerals), I typically attend church (synagogue/mosque)" (1) once a week or more (2) once or twice a month (3) about once a month (4) several times a year (5) rarely, if ever

Sex: "What is your gender?" (0) Male (1) Female

Religious values: The treatment variable is coded 1 if the subject was exposed to the exclusive value statements. The values were preceded by the instructions: "There are many values that make a person a good person of faith. Think seriously about it and then please tell me if you agree that the following values are important to being a good religious person." *Exclusive Religious Values:* "To be true to your faith, it is important to keep company with other people of your faith." "To be true to your faith, it is important to shop as much as possible at stores owned by people of your faith." Both statements are followed with response options (which we do not use in this analysis): strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

Religious Identity Battery: If the identity battery preceded the religious values, it is coded 1, otherwise it followed the dependent (intervention) variables and is coded 0. In addition to the "attendance" indicator already discussed, the identity battery included the following questions. (A) How much guidance does religion provide you in your daily life? (1) no guidance at all (2) some guidance (3) quite a bit of guidance (4) a great deal of guidance; (B)—included on evangelical and Mainline Protestant instruments only— Do you agree with this statement? I consider myself a "born again" or evangelical Christian. (1) strongly agree (2) somewhat agree (3) neither agree nor disagree (4) somewhat disagree (5) strongly disagree; (C) Which view comes closest to your view of the Bible (Torah/Koran)? (1) The Bible (Torah/Koran) is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word (2) The Bible (Torah/Koran) is the inspired word of God but not everything in it should be taken word for word (3) The Bible (Torah/Koran) is a good book because it was written by wise people, but God had nothing to do with it (4) The Bible (Torah/Koran) was written by men so long ago that it is worth little today.

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Table 1
The Effects of Religious Value Priming and Religious Context on Subject Attitudes Concerning U.S. Intervention and Pre-emption

	DV1: U.S. should intervene in foreign states to prevent genocide.		DV2: U.S. is justified in pre-emption if states pose threat to national security.		DV3: U.S. should intervene in foreign states only with United Nations' approval.	
	β	p	β	P	β	p
1) Religion battery primed	1.962	.163	1.471	.016	-.101	.985
2) Values primed	.551	.435	.553	.408	.795	.188
3) Exclusive Values	-2.934	.000	.668	.268	.079	.885
4) Identity * Values	1.343	.168	-.853	.355	-1.026	.218
5) Identity * Exclusive	1.072	.224	-.952	.254	.118	.875
6) Values * Exclusive	1.961	.055	3.352	.001	-6.322	.000
7) Identity * Exclusive * Values	-2.745	.050	.862	.516	1.322	.270
Controls						
8) Religious attend	-.165	.186	.063	.593	-.286	.007
9) Political ideology	-.120	.424	.438	.002	-.162	.208
10) Sex	-.113	.750	-.200	.553	-.024	.937
11) Evangelical	.575	.294	.116	.823	.789	.093
12) Muslim	-1.201	.020	-.346	.477	.136	.757
13) Jew	-2.170	.000	.750	.105	-.360	.390
Intercept	3.698	.000	-1.595	.033	1.579	.020
Adjusted R^2	.159		.160		.284	
F	8.641	.000	8.68	.000	17.008	.000

Note: The DV statements are shortened for space considerations; see the Appendix for full coding.
n =524. OLS coefficients in two-tailed tests.

Table 2
The Effects of Religious Value Priming and Religious Context on Subject Attitudes
Concerning U.S. Political and Economic Interests and Radical Islam

	DV4: U.S. should shape other nations' political environments.		DV5: U.S. should intervene in foreign states to protect its economic and political interests.		DV6: U.S. justified in warring against states and terrorists espousing radical Islam.	
	β	*p*	β	*P*	β	*p*
1) Religion battery primed	.086	.890	-.083	.883	.590	.371
2) Values primed	.233	.731	-.061	.921	1.805	.013
3) Exclusive Values	.109	.859	-.064	.909	.061	.925
4) Identity * Values	-.307	.743	1.416	.098	-1.648	.098
5) Identity * Exclusive	.611	.471	.645	.405	-.284	.752
6) Values * Exclusive	3.242	.001	5.457	.000	.974	.350
7) Identity * Exclusive * Values	-1.522	.259	-1.996	.105	2.425	.091
Controls						
8) Religious attend	.181	.130	.216	.048	.250	.050
9) Political ideology	.308	.033	.361	.006	.376	.015
10) Sex	.109	.750	-.786	.012	-.056	.878
11) Evangelical	-.217	.681	1.646	.001	.694	.216
12) Muslim	-1.366	.006	-1.599	.000	-1.144	.030
13) Jew	-.722	.125	-.816	.058	1.374	.006
Intercept	-.648	.394	-1.486	.032	-3.673	.000
Adjusted R^2	.083		.300		.118	
F	4.662	.000	18.260	.000	6.396	.000

Note: The DV statements are shortened for space considerations; see the Appendix for full coding.
n =524. OLS coefficients in two-tailed tests.

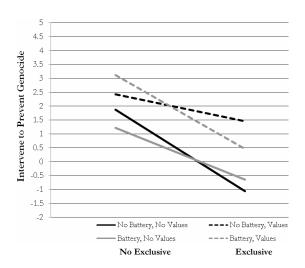**Figure 1: U.S. Should Intervene in Foreign States to Prevent Genocide (Triple Interaction)**

Figure 2: U.S. is Justified in Pre-emption if States Pose Threat to National Security
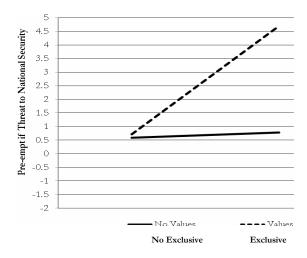

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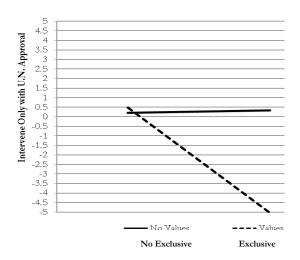**Figure 3: U.S. Should Intervene in Foreign States only with United Nations' Approval**

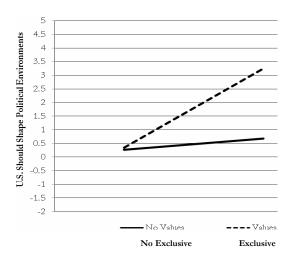**Figure 4: U.S. Should Shape Other Nation's Political Environments**

Figure 5: U.S. Should Intervene in Foreign States to Protect Its Economic and Political Interests
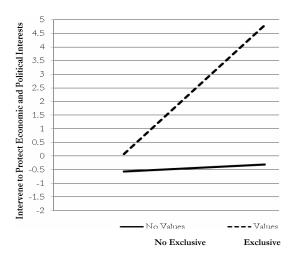

Figure 6: U.S. Justified in Warring against States and Terrorists Espousing Radical Islam (Triple Interaction)