

Religion's Effects on Foreign Policy Public Opinion and Crisis Bargaining

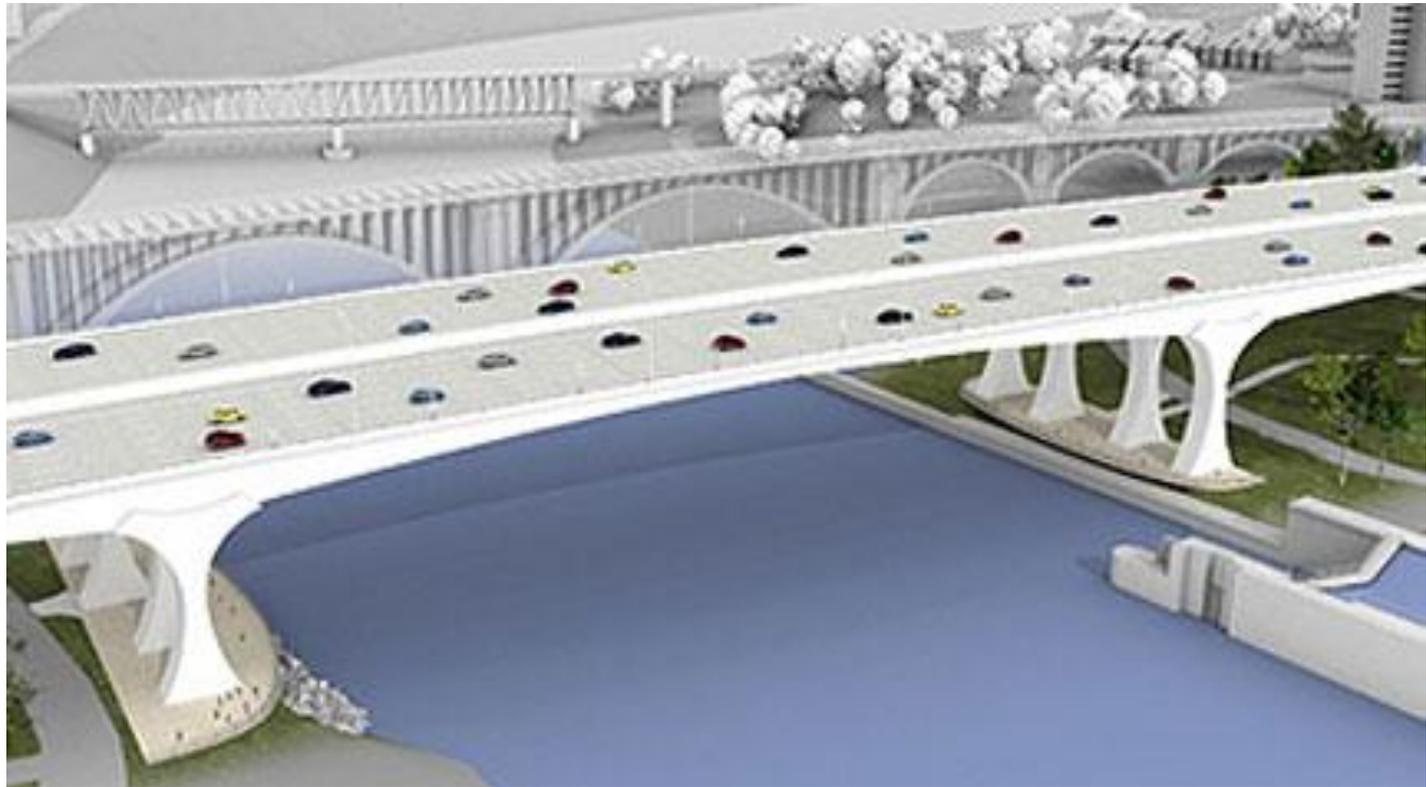
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Presentation Synopsis

1. Research Motivation
2. Argument
3. Domestic effects of religious rhetoric on domestic publics and elites
4. Strategic effects of religious rhetoric on strategic bargaining
5. Empirical testing strategy
6. Conclusion

1. Research Motivation

- Increasingly, scholars agree that religion matters in international politics, but we don't know *how* or *when* it matters
- Focusing on religion's effect on foreign policy, my project answers 3 research questions:
 1. How to observe when religion is “activated” and its effects?
 2. What is the effect of religion (religious rhetoric) on domestic audiences?
 3. What are the strategic implications of changed domestic foreign policy attitudes on states' crisis bargaining?

State of the IR/Religion lit.

- The dominant research strategy in IR is to focus on states' religion "type"
 - Measured through state-religion laws and governance (Fox) or % religious composition (Maoz & Henderson)
- However, while having broad temporal and international coverage, these datasets do not really capture the contextual effect of religion and religious communities
 - Slow moving measures
 - No clear mechanism of how religion matters

2. Religious Rhetoric (RR)

- I argue that to best examine religion's political effect, we must focus on how political actors (mis)use **religious rhetoric**
 - Jose Casanova: “the actual concrete meaning of whatever people denominate as religion can be elucidated only in the context of their *particular discursive practices*”
 - Religion may be influential but is not always activated, and religious rhetoric is a primary way that polities' religious identities and belongings become salient

The power of religious rhetoric

- When political actors use religious rhetoric, they leverage two characteristics of religious rhetoric that can have significant social and political effects
 - Illocutionary power
 - Rhetorical coercion
- The effect of presidential religious rhetoric translates into increases in FP support
 - Though it could also reduce support

RR's Illocutionary power

- Illocutionary rhetoric (Austin) is discourse that contains explicit motivations and imperatives for social action
 - Pennington: RR does not just contain “propositional meaning (locution) but also are a **call for action, response, change of view, and commitment** (illocution)”
- Thus, when used by political actors, RR can be an authoritative framing discourse that compels and motivates audiences to new political action

RR as Rhetorical Coercion

- RR is a conversation stopper (Rorty) that is authoritative and difficult to argue against
- RR is also a type of rhetorical coercion (Krebs & Lobasz) that constrains opposing rebuttals and justifications
 - It does not change preferences per se, but makes it difficult for other actors to rhetorically argue against a religiously-supported claim
- RR has an effect of dampening counter rhetorics or diverging political opinions

3. RR's political effects

- Leaders' use of RR is religious **framing** that changes how domestic audiences perceive and understand a particular foreign policy crisis
 - RR → increase in domestic FP support
- Leaders' use of RR is **rhetorical coercion** that makes it difficult for domestic elites to oppose his/her foreign policy
 - RR → decrease in elite FP opposition → elite cue effects on domestic FP support



RR's differential effects

- The effects of RR on domestic audiences and elites are not homogenous
- Expected political effects are moderated by:
 - Type of religious rhetoric
 - Implicit non-divine election / Explicit non-divine election / Explicit divine election
 - Partisanship of domestic elites and audiences
 - Majority / Minority (**magnitude** of effect)
 - Religiosity of domestic audiences
 - Religious / Secular (**direction** of effect)

PRR effects on domestic elites

PRR effect on elites

- $\Delta EFP_M = PRR_t D_{MR} + PRR_t + D_{MR} + \varepsilon_3$
- $\Delta EFP_O = PRR_t D_{OR} + PRR_t + D_{OR} + \varepsilon_4$
- Only two elites (Majority, Opposition)
- $D_R = \frac{V_R}{V_{R+\sim R}}$ where V_R are religious supporters and $V_{R+\sim R}$ are total supporters
- The higher elites' dependence on religious voters, greater effect of PRR on elite FP support

Cumulative PRR effect

- $$Y_{t+1} = Y_t + (\tau PRR_t R + \theta PRR_t + R) + (\Delta EFP_M P + \Delta EFP_O (1 - P) + \Delta EFP_M + \Delta EFP_O + P) + \varepsilon_5$$

Restriction Conditions

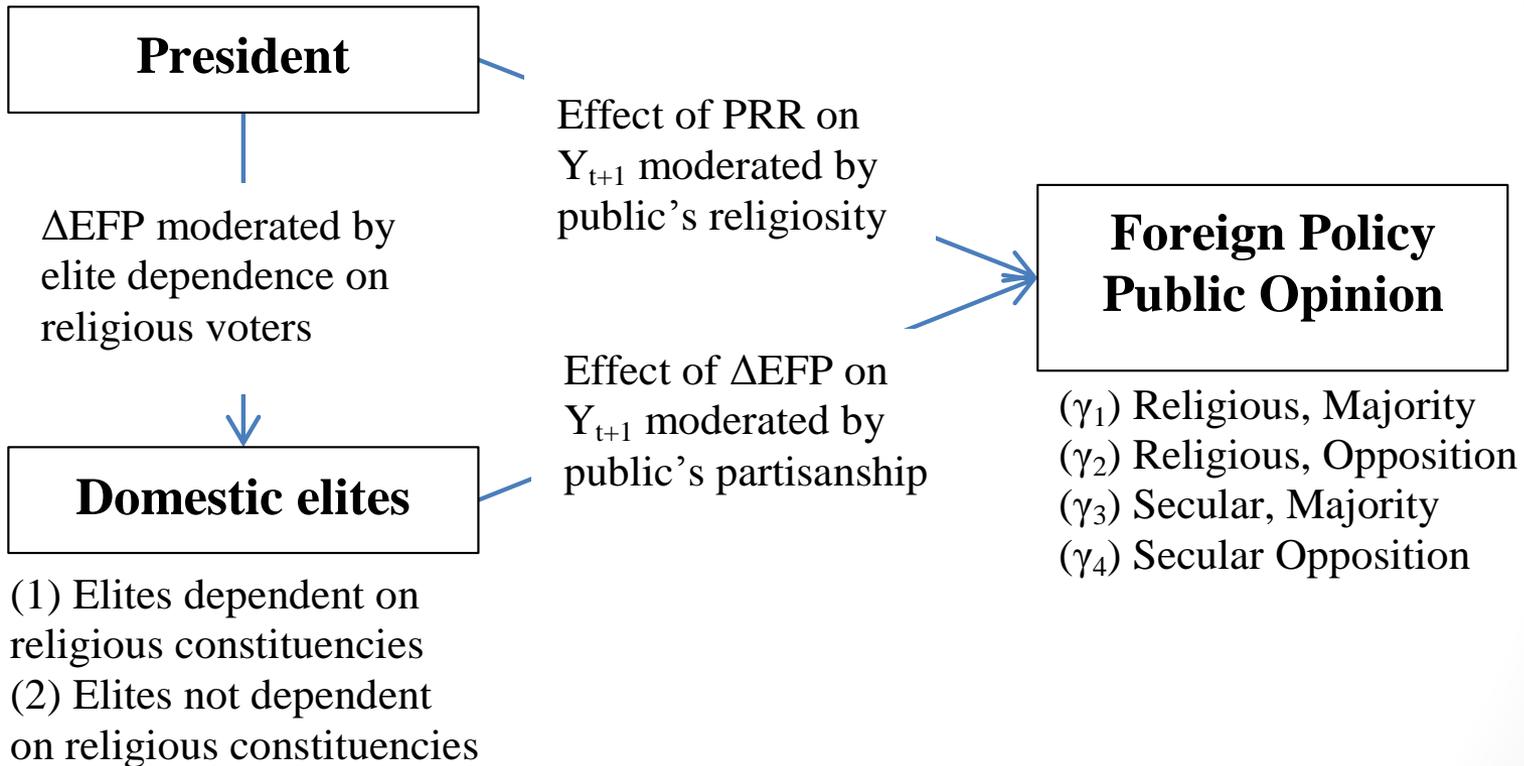
- $\theta \leq 0, \tau + \theta \geq 0, |\tau| \geq |\theta|$
- PRR **increases** FP support among **religious** public
- PRR **decreases** FP support among **secular** public

Cumulative PRR effect

- $$Y_{t+1} = Y_t + (\tau PRR_t R + \theta PRR_t + R) + (\Delta EFP_M P + \Delta EFP_O (1 - P) + \Delta EFP_M + \Delta EFP_O + P) + \varepsilon_5$$
- Elite cues are weighted based on partisanship
- Public is more responsive to elites with same partisanship than elites with different partisanship
 - Greater audience aligns with majority, the greater it accounts majority elite FP opinion (ΔEFP_M) and discounts minority elite FP opinion (ΔEFP_O)

PRR effects on elites and public

Figure: Effect of religious rhetoric on foreign policy public opinion



Maximizing FP support

(γ_1) Religious, Majority (R=1, P=1)

- $Y_{R,M} = Y_t + \tau PRR_t + \theta PRR_t + (PRR_t D_{MR} + \varepsilon_3) + \varepsilon_5$

(γ_2) Religious, Opposition (R=1, P=0)

- $Y_{R,O} = Y_t + \tau PRR_t + \theta PRR_t + (PRR_t D_{OR} + \varepsilon_4) + \varepsilon_5$

(γ_3) Secular, Majority (R=0, P=1)

- $Y_{S,M} = Y_t + \theta PRR_t + (PRR_t D_{MR} + \varepsilon_3) + \varepsilon_5$

(γ_4) Secular, Opposition (R=0, P=0)

- $Y_{S,O} = Y_t + \theta PRR_t + (PRR_t D_{OR} + \varepsilon_4) + \varepsilon_5$

President uses PRR that maximizes total foreign policy support

- $Y_p = \gamma_1 Y_{R,M} + \gamma_2 Y_{R,O} + \gamma_3 Y_{S,M} + \gamma_4 Y_{S,O}$

- Unclear how to max w/ differentiation (12 variables)

Recap of RR's domestic effects

- So far, I have argued that political leaders can use religious rhetoric to leverage the illocutionary and rhetorical coercion power of religious rhetoric **domestically** to change domestic publics' foreign policy support
 - The effect is moderated by the type of RR used, elites' dependence on religious consistencies, domestic audiences' alignment with elite partisanship, and domestic audiences' religiosity

4. Strategic implications of RR

- Changes in domestic foreign policy opinion have strategic implications on bargaining during foreign policy crises
- Changes in domestic publics' foreign policy opinion can be signaling or new constraints
 - Signaling: reveals information about the type (resolve) of an actor
 - Constraints: domestic publics constrain the range of acceptable bargains a state can (will) accept

Modeling RR's strategic effects

- I choose to focus on the **bargaining effect** of RR, not the signaling effect (at least for now)
- Thus, I use a **complete information** model of FP crisis bargaining found in Tarar & Leventoglu's "Public Commitment in Crisis Bargaining" (2009)
 - Audience costs model where actors can endogenously choose the level of audience costs to create (as opposed to Fearon 1994/97 where audience costs are exogenous)

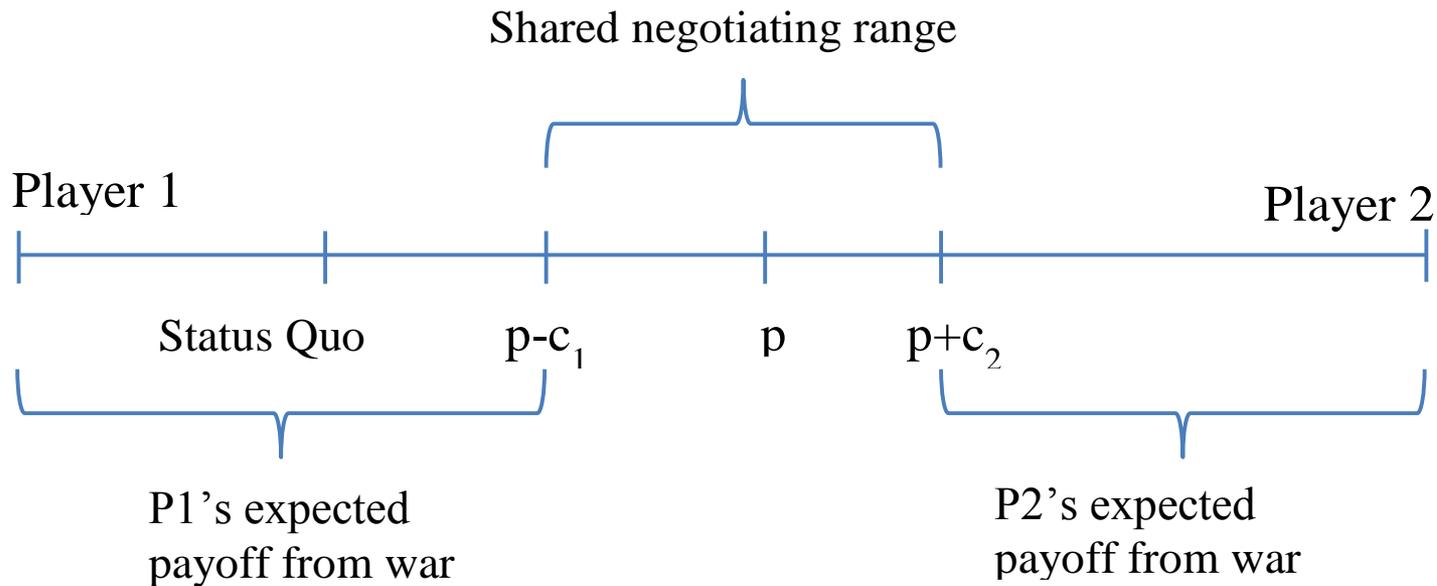
Tarar & Leventoglu (2009)

- Key insight: by making (rhetorical) commitments, leaders activate the audience costs mechanism, increase opponents' concessions, and make bargaining gains
- While state's payoff increases, there is no direct increase in leaders' personal utility
 - Opponent only offers enough to make leader indifferent between the settlement and war
 - Perhaps there are down-the-road benefits as publics that receive more public goods are more likely to support the leader in the next election

My tweaks to T&L 2009

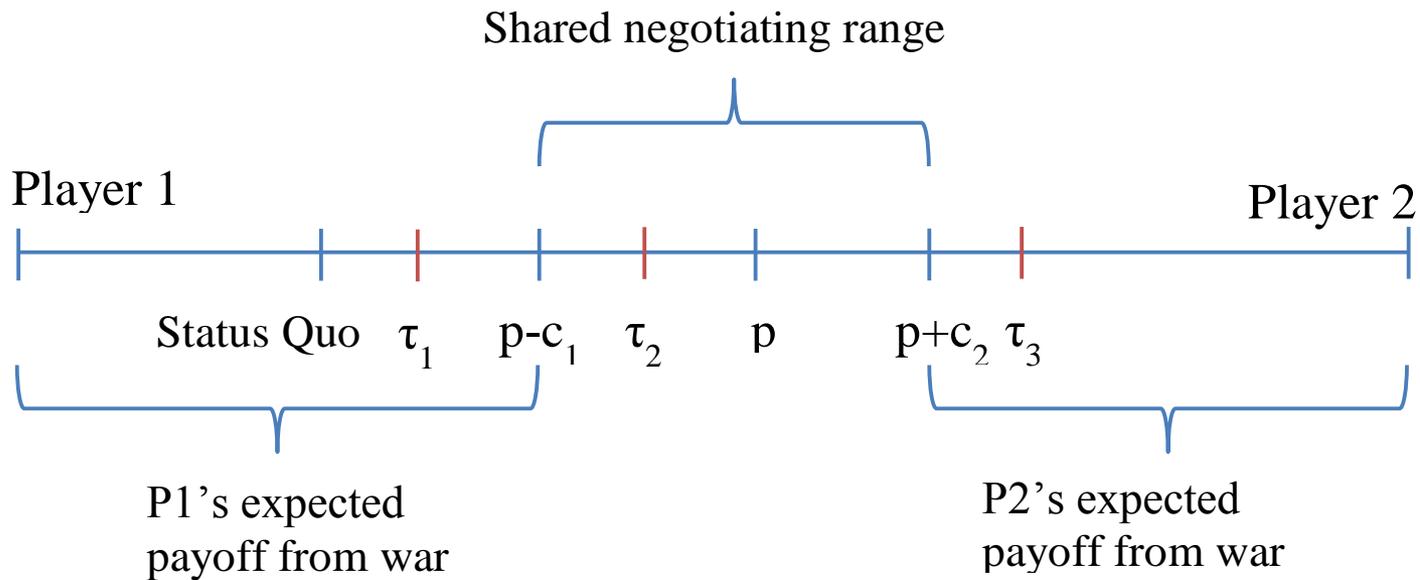
- They claim that commitments can only be made *before* the crisis
 - I argue that commitments can be anytime made *during* crises
- The only endogenous variable in their model is a state's public commitment (τ_i)
 - I argue that the audience costs coefficient (a_i) can also vary depending on the use or non-use of religious rhetoric
 - For simplicity, I assume that player always make the pie-maximizing offer

Baseline bargaining model



- Player 1 makes offer $x^* = p + c_2$ and Player 2 makes offer $y^* = p - c_1$
 - Subscripts 1=D, 2=S

Bargaining with Commitments



- Player 1 is dissatisfied ($p-c_1 > \text{Status Quo}$)
- Player 1 can make different types of commitments
 - a minimal commitment ($\tau_1 < p-c_1$)
 - a moderate commitment ($\tau_2 > p-c_1$)
 - an extreme commitment ($\tau_3 > p+c_2$)

Types of commitment

- A minimal commitment ($\tau_1 < p - c_D$) has no effect on bargaining (as if Player 1 had made no commitment)
- A moderate commitment ($p + c_S > \tau_2 > p - c_D$) results in bargaining gains for Player 1
- An extreme commitment ($\tau_3 > p + c_S$) results in war because Player 2 would rather fight than accept a suboptimum offer

Critical values for P1

Offer P2 makes to make P1 indifferent

- $y^* = \frac{p - c_D + a_D \tau_D}{1 + a_D}$

P1's war threshold

- $\tau_{dw} = \frac{(p + c_S)(1 + a_D) - (p - c_D)}{a_D}$

- If $\tau > \tau_{dw}$, P1 needs more than $p + c_S$ to avoid war; since that is more than P2's reservation value, war occurs

Power of Religious Rhetoric

- When a leader uses religious rhetoric to make a public commitment, he creates greater audience costs (a_R)
 - a_R (audience costs with RR) $>$ a_D (audience costs with non-religious rhetoric)

Justifying $a_R > a_D$

- While my specification of foreign policy support also suggests that $a_R > a_D$, I use a survey experiment to empirically test this
- The experiment emulates audience costs experiments (Levendusky and Horowitz 2012; Tomz 2007; Trager and Vavreck 2011)
- If public disapproval when the president uses religious rhetoric to make a commitment and backs down is greater than if he uses non-religious rhetoric to commit and back down, there is evidence that $a_R > a_D$

Justifying $a_R > a_D$

- Vignette: developing crisis between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan
- Treatment: 3x3 factorial design
 - Factor 1: Crisis outcomes (Commit to stay out, Commit to intervene and Uzbekistan backs down, **Commit to intervene and backs down**)
 - Factor 2: Rhetoric (Secular, explicit non-divine election, explicit divine election)
- Sample: Mturk sample, ~900 respondents (98-104 respondents in each of the 9 treatment groups)

Sample treatment vignette

Rhetoric Treatment

	Secular Rhetoric	Blessedness Rhetoric	Chosenness Rhetoric
<p>Back Down (One week later, the Uzbek army crossed the border. The US did not send troops, and Uzbekistan successfully invaded Tajikistan.)</p>	<p>The president said that “the US would protect Tajikistan from any potential Uzbek offensive.” He said that “freedom is the right of every nation” and stated “America is committed to protect those whose freedoms are threatened.”</p>	<p>The president said that “the US would protect Tajikistan from any potential Uzbek offensive.” He said that “freedom is the right of every nation” and asked for “God’s continued blessing on America as we protect those whose freedoms are threatened.”</p>	<p>The president said that “the US would protect Tajikistan from any potential Uzbek offensive.” He also said that “freedom is the right of every nation” and stated that “America is God’s ordained defender of those whose freedoms are threatened.”</p>

Experiment findings

Table: Comparisons of Audience Costs (Support when crisis outcome=Back Down)

Group	7 (Secular Rhetoric)	8 (Blessedness Rhetoric)
8 (Blessedness Rhetoric)	$\mu_8 - \mu_7: .09$ ($p=.84$)	
9 (Chosen Rhetoric)	$\mu_9 - \mu_7: -.70$ ($p=.08$)	$\mu_9 - \mu_8: -.78$ ($p=.05$)

- There is (preliminary) evidence that $a_R > a_D$
- Specifically, $a_{R(\text{divine election rhetoric})} > a_{R(\text{non-divine election rhetoric})} \sim a_D$

Implications of $a_R > a_D$

- Using religious rhetoric to make commitments generates higher audience costs; to account for that, the opponent must make a bigger offer to make Player 1 indifferent

- $$y' = \frac{p - c_D + a_R \tau_D}{1 + a_R} > y^* = \frac{p - c_D + a_D \tau_D}{1 + a_D}$$

H1: Only P1 uses PRR

- If an actor can make public commitments, it generates bargaining leverage
- Using religious rhetoric to generate audience costs (a_r) generates greater payoff gains (y') than using secular rhetoric (y^*)
- In both cases, P2 concedes more than P1's reservation value $p - c_d$
- $y' > y^* > p - c_D$

P2 can also use PRR

Offer P1 makes to P2 to make it indifferent

- $x^* = \frac{p+c_s+a_s(1-\tau_s)}{(1+a_s)} > 1 - p - c_s$

P2's war threshold

- $\tau_s = \frac{c_s+c_d+a_s(1-p+c_d)}{a_s}$

- If $\tau > \tau_w$, P1 needs more than $1-p+c_d$ to avoid war; since that is more than P1's reservation value, war occurs
- As w/ P1's use of PRR, when P2 uses PRR, it generates greater audience costs ($a_r' > a_s$)

H2: Only P2 uses PRR

- If an opponent can make public commitments, it generates bargaining leverage
- Using religious rhetoric to generate audience costs generates greater payoff gains ($1-x'$) than using secular rhetoric ($1-x^*$)
- In both cases, P1 concedes more than P2's reservation value $p+c_s$
- $1 - x' > x^* > p - c_D$

Both P1 and P2 uses PRR

- Four types of cases:
 - ϕ_1 : Both make commitments less than their reservation value: settlement
 - ϕ_2 : Only one side commits more than reservation value: settlement
 - ϕ_3 : Both commit to more than their reservation value but less than war thresholds: settlement
 - ϕ_4 : Both commit to more than war thresholds: war

Both P1 and P2 uses PRR

- In the original model, only in ϕ_4 does war occur (and even then, it does not if there are sequential moves)
- The difference between the two sets of equilibria is whether audience costs are sufficiently high that actors are pushed from ϕ_3 (settlement) into ϕ_4 (war)

Both P1 and P2 uses PRR

- What are “sufficiently high” audience costs?
- If they produce $\tau_{\text{war}} > 1$, war is not equilibrium; however, if $\tau_{\text{war}} < 1$, players can make offers where the other player would rather fight b/c its payoff in a potential settlement is less than its reservation value
- If $a_d > \frac{c_s + c_D}{1 - p - c_s}$, $\tau_{\text{dw}} < 1$
- If $a_s > \frac{c_s + c_D}{p - c_D}$, $\tau_{\text{sw}} < 1$

I think I know
what you want...
this, right?



Translating empirics into the model

- The algebra of the equilibrium solutions and critical threshold/cutoff values (a_d , a_s , τ_{dwar} , τ_{swar} etc) are in terms of probability of victory (p) and each sides' cost of war (c_d , s_s)
- How to translate empirical measures such as foreign policy public opinion) into a_i ?
- T/L model assumes constant audience costs coefficient; I argue that it varies based on use of PRR *and* initial public opinion support

- $$a_i = \frac{Y_{t+1} - Y_t}{Y_t}$$

Next steps

- Incomplete information?
- What if using religious rhetoric also changes actors' perceptions?
 - The T/L model assumes that strategic interactions are driven by changes in audience costs → religion only has an effect through changes in domestic mobilization and political support
 - Religion could also have direct strategic effects on opposite actor (experiment suggests this...)

Smith & Stam (2004)

- They argue that even in perfect information, actors can have different beliefs about their probability of victory
- Thus, instead of an exogenous P value, each actor has their own assessment (p_D, p_S)
 - Through war, p_i converges to P
- Can I incorporate this w/ existing model?

4. Empirical testing

- Observational empirical data
- Inferential challenges
- Experiments for more robust inference
- Process-tracing case studies

Hypotheses

- H1: Using PRR leads to more concessions
- H2: Using PRR increases the likelihood of the use of force and war
 - Implied but not yet explicitly proved
- H3: When both states in FP crisis use religious rhetoric, the probability of use of force and war is highest

Measuring variables of interest

- Crisis outcomes
 - Off-the-shelf conflict datasets (ICB, PRIO, MID etc)
- Elite foreign policy support
 - Content analysis of elite FP discourse
- Presidential use of religious rhetoric
 - Content analysis of leader FP discourse
- Public FP support
 - Polls
 - Content analysis of newspapers/editorials

Problems with empirical data

- Political actors are strategic, leaders and elites only use RR (or other rhetoric) when it serves their interests
 - The observed record of crisis rhetoric and elite FP support is biased, leading to biased estimates of effects of RR (we don't have the full range of possible uses of PRR)
- Problems with FP public opinion polls
 - Polls are not fielded regularly (if at all)
 - Inconsistent questions
 - Data is very noisy and susceptible to other confounders

Using experiments

- Allows manipulation to identify effects on audiences' FP opinion across the full range of observed and potential religious rhetoric
- Better measurement of domestic audiences' religiosity than in public opinion polls
- Use of survey experiments can increase external validity through better sampling
- Use of panel survey experiment can reduce potential priming effects from questions about respondents' religiosity

Different types of experiments

- Survey experiments
 - Mturk: over-sample non-religious respondents; can also field to non-US samples
 - Replicate results with representative national samples (YouGov, KN, TESS), pending funding
- Mturk panel experiment
 - Cost-efficient way to create 2-wave design
 - Wave 1: battery of questions on politics and religiosity
 - Wave 2: no demographic questions; only experimental vignettes

Process-tracing case studies

- Complement large-N analysis to further demonstrate the causal mechanisms of RR's effects on domestic FP attitudes and crisis bargaining
- Allows me to examine key (important, critical) FP crisis episodes
- Process-tracing can identify effects of RR on elite FP support in states whose publics cannot really impose audience costs (i.e. non-democracies)

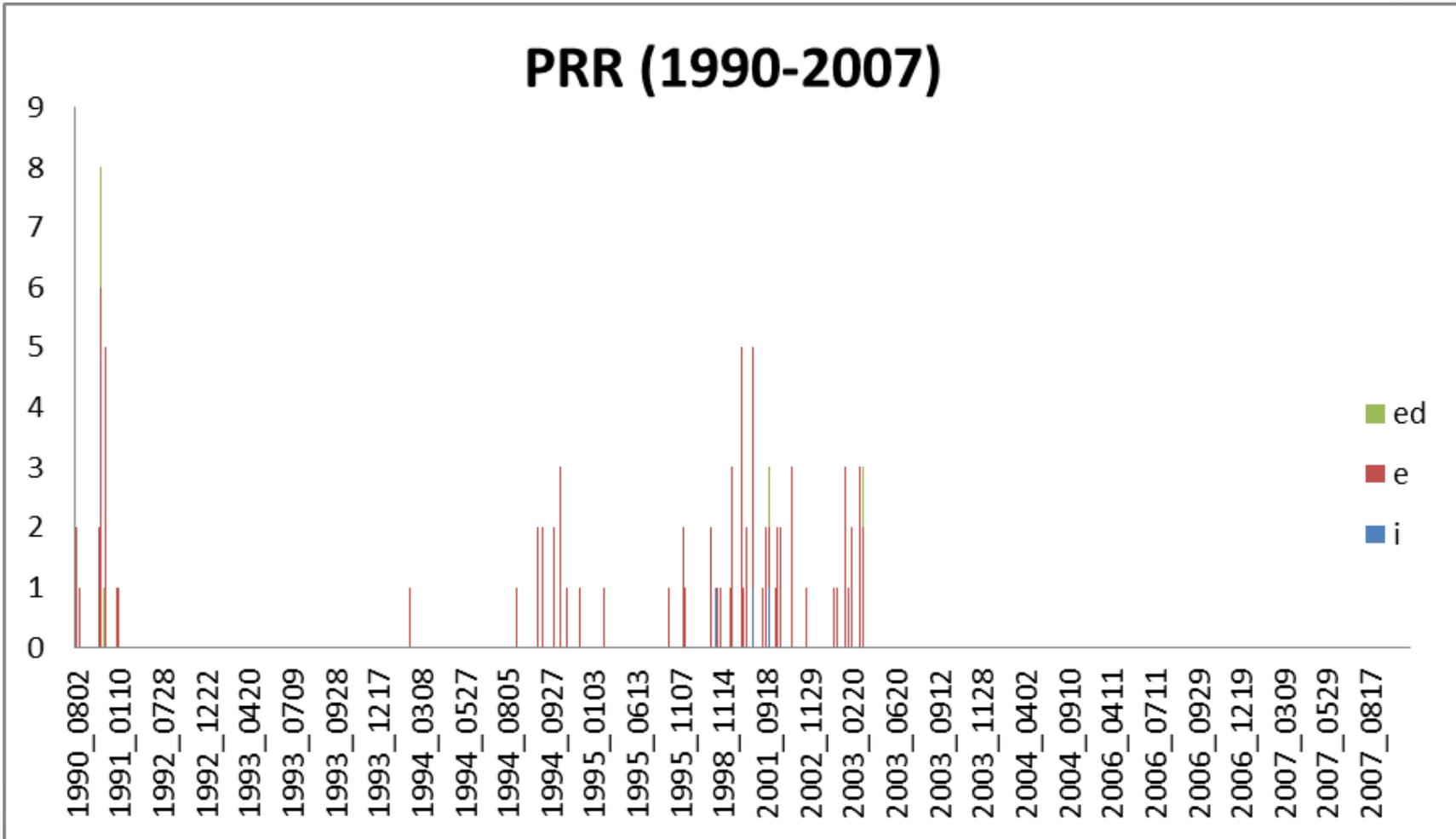
Preliminary empirical results

- As a preliminary test (and b/c of highest data availability), I examine the domestic and strategic effects of presidential religious rhetoric (PRR) in US context
- Focusing on US FP crises as identified by the *International Crisis Behavior* group in post-Cold War era (15 cases) using both empirical and experimental approaches

Empirical examples of PRR

- From *Public Papers of the Presidents*, I collect all FP crisis rhetoric and code religious rhetoric
- Bush (11/2/90): “we Americans have turned to God in prayer and, in so doing, found strength and direction.”
- Clinton (2/17/98): “And we still have, God willing, a chance to find a diplomatic resolution to this and, if not, God willing, a chance to do the right thing for our children and grandchildren.”
- Bush (2/9/03): “Liberty is not America's gift to the world. What we believe strongly and what we hold dear is, liberty is God's gift to mankind.”

PRR (from *Public Papers of the Presidents*)



Average of .13 instances of PRR per crisis week (90 total PRR, 712 crisis weeks)

RR's effect on public opinion

Does PRR increase public's FP support?

ICB Crisis #	Crisis	Foreign Policy approval	Presidential approval
393	Prelude to Gulf War	No (p=.83)	No (p=.35)
403	Bosnia	No (p=.21)	No (p=.84)
411	Haiti	No (p=.14)	No (p=.27)
412	Iraq 2	No (p=.60)	Yes (p=.00)
419	Iraq 3	N/A	N/A
422	Iraq 4 (UNSCOM)	Yes (p=.10)	Yes (p=.07)
427	Embassy bombings	N/A	Yes (p=.06)
429	Iraq 5 (UNSCOM II)	No (p=.82)	No (p=.39)
430	Kosovo	No (p=.40)	No (p=.50)
434	Prelude to Afghanistan	N/A	No (p=.59)
440	Prelude to Iraq War	No (p=.49)	No (p=.15)

Tajik-Uzbek Experiment

- Examine full results from the audience costs experiment I discussed above
- Scenario: Developing foreign policy crisis along the Tajikistan/Uzbekistan border
- 3x3 factorial treatments: Crisis outcome, presidential use of RR (9 treatment groups)
- President always stays out of crisis
- Post-test measures of respondents' religious preferences and religiosity

Testing RR's differential effects

- Mturk sample allows me to “oversample” non-religious (49% vs. 10-14% in population)
- Two ways to test
 - Include religious preference (comparing those with affiliation with the no-affiliation “none’s) and religiosity variables as IV
 - Divide full sample into religious/non-religious subsamples

Religiosity as IV

DV	Specific religion dummies (baseline: non-religious)	Non-religious vs. religious (1 dummy)
Presidential Approval	No religion-specific effects	No religion-specific effects
Presidential Affect	No religion-specific effects	No religion-specific effects
Affect for America	P, C, E, LDS/J/M/H have higher affect than NR	NR have lower affect
FP approval	C have higher approval than NR	No religion-specific effects
“Doing the right thing”	P, C have higher “right thing” belief	NR have lower “right thing” belief
Voting for president	P, C higher electoral support than NR	NR have lower electoral support
US success is God’s plan	P, C, E, LDS/J/M/H have higher belief than NR	NR lower belief that US success is God’s plan
Overall support	P, C have higher support	NR have lower support

Subpopulation analysis

- Three different ways to create religious/non-religious subpopulations
 - Religious preference
 - Religiosity (mean)
 - Religiosity (median)

Religious Variable	None / No	Yes
Religious Preference	447	459
Religious (mean religiosity)	548	358
Religious (median religiosity)	484	422

Subpopulation analysis

Model	E8	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6
Population	All	relnone=1	relnone=0	religious=0	religious=1	religious2=0	religious2=1
DV	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support	Support
Treatment							
Crisis Outcome	-1.12*** (.17)	-1.49*** (.24)	-.57** (.23)	-1.47*** (.22)	-.33 (.27)	-1.51*** (.23)	-.47* (.24)
Rhetoric	-.52*** (.17)	-.58** (.24)	-.27 (.24)	-.70*** (.22)	-.04 (.26)	-.65** (.24)	-.16 (.24)
Outcome x Rhetoric	-.02 (.13)	.09 (.18)	-.22 (.19)	.11 (.17)	-.35* (.21)	.10 (.18)	-.29 (.18)
Constant	7.06*** (.76)	7.20*** (1.05)	5.26*** (.84)	8.45*** (1.12)	3.96*** (.96)	7.50*** (.98)	4.74*** (.87)

RR has expected negative effect on non-religious but no stat. significant effect on religious

PRR and crisis outcomes

ICB Crisis #	Crisis	RR	Bargaining Outcome	Use of Force
393	Prelude to Gulf War (Iraq 1)	11	Victory	Yes
403	Bosnia	4	Victory	Yes
406	Iraq 1	0	Victory	No
408	North Korea 1	0	Compromise	No
411	Haiti	6	Victory	No
412	Iraq 2	3	Victory	No
419	Iraq 3	3	Victory	Yes
422	Iraq 4 (UNSCOM)	2	Victory	No
427	Embassy bombings	2	Compromise	Yes
429	Iraq 5 (UNSCOM II)	5	Compromise	Yes
430	Kosovo	11	Victory	Yes
434	Prelude to Afghanistan	3	Victory	Yes
440	Prelude to Iraq War (Iraq 5)	20	Victory	Yes
441	North Korea 2	0	Compromise	No
442	Iran Nuclear 1	0	Compromise	No
448	Iran Nuclear 2	0	Compromise	No
450	North Korea 3	0	Compromise	No

Preliminary findings

- In the US context...
 - PRR has differential effects on the public's FP support depending on audiences' religiosity
 - PRR has statistically significant effect on opponents' concessions
 - $\text{Prob}(\text{victory}) > \text{Prob}(\text{compromise})$
 - Perhaps evidence that using PRR (at least unilaterally) increases the use of force and violent outcomes

6. Conclusion

- I argue that religion matters when political actors use religious rhetoric in their FP crisis discourse
 - Domestic effects
 - Strategic effects
- I use formal game (based on Tarar & Leventoglu 2009) to translate the effects of domestic politics to FP crisis bargaining
 - Perhaps under-specified or too simple to capture the full dynamics of differential domestic effects of RR

Ongoing / Future Research

- Figure out other formal model equilibrium
- How to better translate domestic dynamics into strategic bargaining
- Continue data collection of FP rhetoric (president and elite) and public opinion polls
- Designing / fielding survey experiments
- Theoretical questions
 - Does RR also have direct effects on opponents and foreign publics?